Domesticating Dalang
Finding home in a productive cityscape

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Finding home in a productive cityscape

MSC THESIS

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MOTIVATION

According to Saunders (2011), the world’s population shift from agricultural into urban life will remain nearly the most remarkable phenomenon of the twentieth century. Millions of migrants flow to the cities following the dream for a better life. Many people in cities feel alienated (Gehl, 2010). So I questioned myself, how do all these migrants manage to adapt to the new urban environment?

Open policies of China’s government accelerated urbanization and rapid economic growth making the country one of the most competitive players in the worldwide market. ‘In only thirty years, urbanization in China has caught up with what has taken two hundred years to accomplish in western countries’ (Yu et al., 2014). China’s floating population is a result of its residents’ movement within the country’s borders, of which the incredibly huge extent became the driver of boosting economy. However, top-down planning is inadequate for human scale needs (SUD Strategy Report, 2010) and results in many social problems. Shenzhen was nominated as ‘world factory’, but it also refers to ‘the city of migrants’. This immense conflict between urban domain and social capita in the case of Shenzhen reflected my interest the best.

This thesis is based on spatial planning and design strategy development with a strong social perspective. The outcome proposes insights for alternative governance and planning solutions translated into spatial design. It seeks to find the way for the city of Shenzhen to create a fertile urban ground for migrants to find the feeling of home.
INTRODUCTION
1. CONTEXT

1.1 CHINA’s URBANIZATION

Shenzhen is a southern coastal city located in the Pearl Delta, Northern part of Hong Kong. In 1980 the Central government decided to open investment policies and designated Shenzhen as the first Special Economic Zone (SEZ) for ‘experimental learning’. In only thirty years, the city has developed from a small fishing township into a vast...
urban-industrial agglomeration having the highest income level in the country (fig. 1).

Due to its geographic advantage of being a port city and being located aside Hong Kong border, Shenzhen managed to attract large overseas investments from foreign capitals, which consequently accelerated rapid urbanization lead by significant growth of population (from 30,000 to almost 16 million). Many factories were re-located from Hong Kong. High human capital and low wages increased the competitiveness of manufacturing industry (Ping & Shaohua, 2005). Shenzhen became know as ‘world factory’. This fast transformation was entitled as ‘Shenzhen speed’ and represents one the most successful new town’s development in the world.

1.2 THE FLOW OF HUMAN CAPITA

Urbanization and modernization of a city increase the level of migration. Since 1982, the size of the urban population in China has risen from one in five people to almost 52% of the total population by 2014 (Simpson, 2012; UN, 2014). Industrialization became a driving force for peasants to flood the cities. In 2010 the proportion of rural and urban population became even and the latter keeps on growing each year (World bank, 2015) (fig. 3). Better job opportunities ensure more income and the possibility to support poor family members remained at home in rural areas. Migrants settle on the urban periphery and displace agrarian work to work in factories and construction (Walcott, 2007). This group is called ‘temporary migrants’ of ‘floating population’. The main direction of migration proceeds from the central and western regions to the eastern and coastal
regions. This phenomenon makes the cities face the challenge of dealing with such flows of migrants.

The specific household system in China has also strongly contributed to labor mobility. In the Mao era, hukou system acted like an internal passport system, regulating mobility and granting people citizenship in their hometown (Chan, 2010). The scale of migration enlarged due to decollectivization of agriculture, hukou reforms and relaxation in migration control since the early 1980’s. These temporal migrants are not being considered as urban workers, which means being neglected from welfare and other urban amenities that are accessible for urban residents. Unregistered migrants cannot apply for public schools, ask for social housing or expect any support from public services. Hence, floating population has significantly changed the social structure of hosted areas. In some places, the number of migrants greatly exceeds the number of permanent residents (Ping & Shaohua, 2005) (fig.4). As an example, Dalang neighborhood, which is the focus location of the thesis, maintains the population of only 2% of local inhabitants.

According to individual intentions of floating population, Friedmann (2005) distinguishes five groups of migrants: serial (move from place to place), cyclical (come back to their village during special occasions at regular intervals), permanent (go to the city to remain there), repeat (go back and forward from their village to the city), return (comes back after a long time of absence to start a business or retire) (fig.5). The new generation of migrants can be assigned to serial or permanent settlers’ group. This group shifts to the cities not only seeking to find a job and increase their income, but also leading the ambition for the new experiences they can gain (Xia & Chunguang, 2003, cited from Ping & Shaohua, 2005).

Fig 5. Type of migrants
INTRODUCTION

Fig 6. Street view of urban village
1.3 URBAN VILLAGES

The enormous amount of migrants’ flow creates a contradicting situation. From one hand it provides inexhaustible human resources for the factories fulfilling the need for numerous labor, but from the other hand it provokes the critical necessity of accommodating those thousands of migrant workers. Being neglected from the right to social housing and inability to afford newly constructed apartments, migrants have the only options currently available at the market for accommodation which are dormitories attached to employing industrial parks and so-called ‘urban villages’.

Urban village is known as ‘village-in-the city’ (VIC) (Hao, 2011) and stands for a particular residential domain in the Chinese context (fig.6). Successful accommodation of foreign investments relied on urbanization, which meant the transformation of land from rural to urban use (fig.7). Seeking the cheapest way to ensure this conversion, the government left administrative status and land use of those villages unchanged. Hence, the compounds of villages remained while the surroundings changed dramatically (fig.8). Gradually, ‘such villages are spatially encompassed or annexed by new urban development, leading to the formation of urban villages’ (Hao, 2011).

The indigenous inhabitants, so-called villagers, originated from the settlements located in the territory of Shenzhen, also played crucial role in the urban transformation. Some cooperatives established industrial parks, others, leased the land for developers to construct factories on their land supplying the migrants’ employment opportunities.
Also, villagers informally developed collectively managed settlement compounds to provide affordable housing for floating population (Bi-City Bienalle in Shenzhen, 2013).

In 1992 the municipal government nationalized all the land within the SEZ (Wang et.al, 2009). Therefore local villagers gained urban hukou opening the right to city's social and economic services. Village residents became shareholders who acquired the right to develop agricultural land and took over the planning control of village residential land. This policy ensured the compensation for villagers in case of aimed redevelopment by third parties. However, in this model, the biggest group of actors, the residents, is omitted from the negotiation, moreover, has no rights for any compensations or relocation. Being powerless to impact ongoing processes increase migrants’ vulnerability.

The explanatory schemes reveal different development stages of this specific urban domain where industries and housing merge together by almost eliminating the gap between working (most likely industries or other sectors in case urban village is located within the central...
city areas) and living. Since the bulk of migrants work long hours in manufacturing, commuting time from work to residence place plays an important role. Migrants seek the best accessibility and the closest location of accommodation to work, as they tend to commute by foot. So this specific urban domain with close distance between working and living has also a social meaning rising from daily life and habits of its users.

1.4 SHENZHEN TODAY

Today Shenzhen is experiencing a transitional period. The government pursues to upgrade city’s manufacturing and shift to more service oriented market; from the ‘world factory’ to the ‘world city’. Yet this transition puts less pressure to the periphery, but causes even greater spatial differences between them (Anzhi, 2000). Lacking monitoring system and urban planning policies influenced the development of Shenzhen, which resulted in a productive urban landscape. The central district has already changed unrecognizably (fig.9). As increasing labor wages forced factories to move to the periphery, vacant factory buildings were replaced by modern high-rise
Fig 10. City scale duality. Bird view comparison Shenzhen vs Dalang
source: www.carbonsolutionsglobal.com

Fig. 11. District scale duality.
Source: Ruben Hoek, field trip 2014
constructions surrounding urban villages like islands. Approximately 50% of Shenzhen’s area is under ecological protection, thus, the available land is completely urbanized. Land shortage looks for room for urban regeneration.

Although the Master Plan of Shenzhen 2010-2020 eliminated the division line and the SEZ was extended through the whole city’s territory, the uneven planning system created contrasting landscapes within Shenzhen.

This spatial duality can be recognized in two scales:

- **City scale (fig. 10)** – the central district stands for the image of ‘global city’ with high-rise modern buildings, worldwide known headquarters and very well planned urban amenities for registered residents, while the periphery carries the image of gloomy industrial area with intermingled urban villages and factories, and barely present public facilities;

- **District scale (fig. 11)** – massive hard infrastructure projects like road widening and provided extension of metro line are currently under the construction. In the future perspective they will ensure better accessibility through the whole city area making convenient for strong high-tech industries settle in. However, it seems there is always enough space only for hard infrastructure and political ambitions, while local residents have no room for their daily life needs.

The periphery still remains a productive area. After analysis Shenzhen’s progress in planning, Zacharias & Tang (2010) remarks that the current fascination of international start architects’ projects addresses the Shenzhen’s image of a global city, but has nothing to do with the daily life of its population. Regardless of all the efforts to integrate the outer territory into the ‘world city’, the real human scale needs patiently waits for government’s more accurate attention. More planning should be focused on the qualities of public spaces and liveable environment that would foster local communities.
1.5 DALANG - FOCUS LOCATION

Dalang neighborhood is a typical industrial area (*fig. 13*). It has been chosen as a pilot project location because it strongly reflects the main concerns explained in this research.

Dalang is located outside the former Special Economic Zone (*fig. 12*). Spontaneous urbanization resulted the great mixture of intermingled residential and industrial areas and hardly any public facilities. Currently Dalang accommodates a population of 500,000 inhabitants of which 98% are floating population. Thereby, lacking public facilities and limited social interaction aggravate the integration into the community and adaptation to the urban life. Changing planning trends, moving factories and increasing government’s awareness of the well-being of migrant workers provide the possibility to look for new ways of urban transformations to satisfy the needs of Dalang’s residents.
1.6 RELEVANCE

Social relevance

The main goal of Shenzhen is the transition from an image of ‘world factory’ to ‘world city’. As a result, the market becomes more service oriented and upgrades its industries. The new tendency among migrants reveals the preference to stay in urban areas. According to Chan (2011), the urban life demands for a challenging societal transformation from farmers to citizens.

The majority of migrants in Dalang are under 30 years old. They reflect the characteristics of contemporary society that is more willing to change, transform and move. Consequently, for the bulk of Chinese today a ‘civic society’ means more than financial stability. Contemporary society is more willing to adjust, transform and move. New structures of interpersonal relationships appear. Migrants are more self-determined; the need for personal hobbies and a whole range of leisure pursuits gradually grows (Dutton, 1998; Friedmann 2005).

Unfortunately Dalang lacks of places that could help migrants’ convert the city into their home. This issue seems to be very relevant in the chosen case, because even 98% of Dalang inhabitants are expats. Empirical studies and theories about the role of public space in relation with specific urban fabric and human behavior allow to investigate possible spatial potentials and draw a framework characterizing the activators of space, which could facilitate domestication of the urban environment.

Scientific relevance

Urbanity influences daily life and behavior of human beings including, while in change people give their input transforming the urban fabric. Although having a clear link, ‘the quality of the social environment may have a more important role in the well-being of people than the physical environment’ (van Dorst, 2012, pp. 223).

Bettencourt (2007) remarks that the rapid urbanization and dense population increase the influential relation between the urban and social environments. However, finding new home becomes greatly challenging when the city itself neglects you as an equitable urban user.

Many writers address the importance of public space as a social product (Lefebvre, 1974; Whyte, 1980; Gehl, 1980). Dalang is a very monotonous industrial area lacking open space and public facilities. As migration and urban population gradually increase (UN, 2014), urban and social interaction and migrants’ adaptation to a new environment is prioritized in the thesis. Activating space lays as the initiator for societal integration into to the city. The strategic network of such places will help to open migrants’ mind and will facilitate the sense of control over their own life.
1.7 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Individual’s migration from the rural to the urban environment requires personal transformation from a farmer to a citizen (Chan, 2010). Citizens should have the right to freely choose their education, occupation (Friedmann, 2005), and have a capacity to stay in the city. However, the present situation shows a high migrants’ isolation from a society, their locality and absence of awareness that the control of individual’s life is in one’s hands. Although migrants’ manage to make friends, they still miss home and feel lonely. This isolation also prevents from discovering the alternatives in daily life activities, which strengthens the feeling of being just a stranger in the city. Public space can activate positive relations between social and urban interaction enriched with the sense of belonging to the community and the urban locality, which is fundamental to facilitate personal attachments to one’s environment (van Dorst, 2012), therefore, domesticate the urban environment.
1.8 RESEARCH QUESTION

How can public space become activating space (activator) that encourages socio-urban interaction and therefore stimulates greater adaptation to the new urban environment?

*Sub research – questions*

How can activating space empower migrant workers and increase the sense of belonging to the community and the locality?

What are the spatial criteria for activating space in the particular urban domain of Dalang?

How can local scale interventions complement the strategic redevelopment plans of municipality and contribute to urban vitality?
METHODOLOGY
The research of the thesis focuses on spatial characteristics and planning strategies through a highlighted social perspective, so to say, there are two main research directions: social and spatial. It consists of the two main methods – literature review, empirical study. This division helps to clarify the whole structure of methodology and interrelation of discovered results. What is more, it reinforces the strategy due to the various fields of investigated resources. The thesis emphasizes the need for a deep analytical work in this particular environment. The pilot project in a target area in Dalang will be presented as a showcase revealing the possible spatial interpretation of strategic model based on discussed findings. The main goal of pilot project is to convince involved stakeholders with the benefits of its implementation and encourage further urban transformation. Alternative strategic planning model guidelines will explain how can mentioned approach be achieved (fig.14).
How can public space become activating space (activator) that encourages socio-urban interaction and therefore stimulates greater adaptation to the new urban environment?

three main criteria
- permeability
- proximity
- places

ANALYSIS

social
- Chinese society
- Dalang social structure

spatial constrains & potentials
- policies & governance
- urban fabric

references
- comparing local & international examples

Fig 14. Methodology
Methods

Literature review / theoretical framework

- consists of various books, academic texts and journals; also non-academic material like websites, movies, documentaries, articles, pictures, observations by travelers. It sets the first impression of existing situation, which is now seen as an extraordinary phenomenon. Review of planning strategies let get familiar with the Chinese policies that turned Shenzhen into the shape we can witness today. Theories helped to understand the evident role of public space to human well-being, the immense importance of creation the synergy between social and urban interaction. Visual media shaped emotional bonds with the problem field by visualizing the main problems of Chinese social capita, by introducing real time street life and representing the contrasting spatial conditions found in China.

Empirical study / analysis

- one thing is to collect the published information, but the actual understanding of the problem field came only after the field study. Experiencing the context I am working at was, and will always remain, the most essential part of the research. Especially since I come from the completely different cultural background. I believe that being an outsider brings more critical point of view, although there might be a bigger chance to misinterpret the complex and unfamiliar context. During the field trip to Shenzhen, our research group had a great opportunity to meet academics, practitioners, NGO’s, representatives of district organizations and communities, even interview local residents.
Additionally, taking pictures, notes, mapping and purely observing indigenous daily life of Dalang helped to collect a great amount of priceless knowledge. Empirical study also involves few references that investigate indigenous and international examples in order to learn what factors or spatial improvements facilitate liveability within public space. High attention was paid at spatial elements and conditions that activate people to use the space, and what organization and outcome is behind it.

2.2 PROJECT APPROACH

The main goal of master thesis is to develop an alternative perspective on urban planning model of Shenzhen productive areas. This new perspective involves social needs, which are integrated into strategic redevelopment model of Dalang. Social integration into a planning system brings benefits not only for the city, but the most important to its residents, who are already searching for a place in urban areas that could call home, but still face many difficulties to find this feeling because the city rejects their needs. Implementation of this new development would revitalize monotonous industrial areas like Dalang with respect of existing urban patterns and let liveability find its path to flourish (fig. 16).

The way to achieve main goals is represented through the design of space that would activate residents of Dalang. But how can space
activate people? The urban environment provides clues for human behavior and creates non-verbal communication (Rapoport, 1977), which can be initiated through the certain spatial characteristics. Activating space hosts various activities, which provides a rational reason to use the space, to get involved in public affairs. Participation, increase the familiarity feeling with the city, thereby facilitates belonging to a society, and this indicates status and social identity (Rapoport, 1977).

Undoubtedly, people are attracted by other people (Gehl, 1987). So activating space provides a reason and simultaneously spatial clues to stimulate human behavior that is transmitted as an invitation to gather. It encourages migrants to find common interest and bond with each other, stimulates attachment to the urban environment through self-empowerment, sense of control, social learning and participation.

This approach also contributes to the present approach of municipality that concerns occupation of migrant workers, integration into society and the urban life. However, urban design itself might not have a real chance to thrive without collaboration with various local stakeholders. Additionally, an essential role of strategy is to show how the interest of stakeholders could be triggered to gain their sympathy towards proposed alternatives.
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK
A modern city supposes to be a place of opportunities and help people to develop themselves (Xiaodong, 2000). Present situation in Dalang shows that the quality of the living environment from a perspective of public facilities is relatively low that evidence the neighbourhood for production rather than the liveable urbanity. Therefore it creates social disparity and isolation, hardship to finding the feeling of home. Finding a feeling of home in a new location means developing the attachment or adapting to the place (Anton & Lawrence, 2014). Bonding with the urbanity deeply ‘relates to one’s emotional connection to physical and social environments’ (Comstock et al., 2010). In this research, public domain is seen as the major platform through which the integration into the community and the city life could take place (Francis et al., 2012). The following chapter will introduce the theoretical research closely related to thesis approach and research questions. Firstly it will reflect on the position towards public space as a societal and urban activator. Later, it will represent the impact on human capita, and lastly, spatial characteristics that allow public space to posses the definition of an activator will be identified.

**Definition:** activating space, or activator, is a public platform embracing the power to create ties within the community members and their urban locality. Consequently, these indirect ties invite to domesticate one’s living environment (Anton & Lawrence 2014; Gehl, 1987; Rapoport 1997; van Dorst 2012).
3.1 PUBLIC SPACE AS AN ACTIVATOR

Public space is an essential element, which contributes to human well-being. Alexander (1979) claims that ‘a person is so formed by his surroundings, that his state of harmony depends entirely on his harmony with his surroundings’. ‘Surroundings’ refer to not only the physical environment, but also the possibilities and opportunities to build own life within it. Public space is the place where the very first social and urban interaction takes place, so, if critically studied and creatively elaborated, eventually it can become a key activator.

Rapoport (1977) presents a range of different meanings of a space. Both designed and non-designed space consists of rules and symbols, but the most crucial factor is the movement created by the use of individuals within space. In the perceptual environment people are conscious actors and embrace the exchange of behavioral ‘rules’ that fit to the certain place. Brown & Moore (1971, cited in Rapoport 1977) entitle this place as ‘behavioral space or action space’. The exchange of behavioral rules is a phenomenon defined by social learning (Friedmann, 1987) that will be further discussed in upcoming chapter.

People apt to adapt to the physical environment in different ways, thereby preferred one involves participation in the local social network and activities – ‘conscious and active, i.e. creative’ (de Lauwe 1965 (b), p.164, cited in Rapoport 1977). In other words, in order to domesticate the urban environment, people must be keen on participating in the city life. Public space must be appealing for an active use so migrants would be stimulated to awake from personal stagnation.

A successful activating space creates non-verbal communication by which human behavior is influenced (Rapoport, 1997). The greatest performance of spatial clues grants the flexibility to alter the space due to the demand for bigger or smaller events, one or other activity. In this way, an extensive variety of temporal activities can be achieved which allow wider range of interests to be involved simultaneously. Thus, it creates the vitality in the area and eliminates the feeling of alienation, coldness and monotony.
3.2 SELF-EMPOWERMENT

Lefebvre (1974) defines a space as a ‘result of social superstructures’. Friedmann (1987) links ‘selective de-linking, collective self-empowerment, and self reliance’. Ordinary people do not have social power by themselves, thus, only a collective approach can achieve changes. Self-empowerment links the existing struggles, relevant issues, and common interests. The role of space is to ensure a sprawl of transformations. As it is shared with others, injected modifications can easily spread through the social networks.

In his book ‘China’s urban transition’ Friedmann (2005) talks about self-empowerment and its role in ‘civil society’. It increases the awareness of living conditions therefore strengthens the sense of control over migrants’ own lives and the world around them. Sense of control prompts decision-making starting with basic daily ones like choosing to go out and play chess, or maybe basketball, but later it can stimulate hidden personal ambitions towards self-upgrading. Personal control of making a choice increases self-confidence and helps to recognize the alternatives. The exemplified storyline of the path from activating space to the sense of control is conceptually drawn. Ongoing activities organized by formal or informal groups stimulate curiosity. Firstly, passengers just observe various performances. While observing people learn from each other how to behave in a certain place, what activities are tend to be hosted by the particular space, what are the possible alternatives. These clues are temporal, non-fixed, although they suggest a specific use and therefore behavior. Later, in case the observer finds something relevant to current interest, one can become a member of a selected group or organization, which immediately embrace successful step towards personal development.

Belonging to a group enhances the feeling of belonging to a place, makes connection with locality, which symbolizes status and social identity (Rapoport, 1977; Dorst, 2012). Gehl (1980) remarks that ‘being among others, seeing and hearing others, receiving impulses from others, implies positive experiences, alternatives to being alone’, which is crucial beating loneliness, stimulating adaptation and integration processes of migrants workers. Through active free time, social network and regular use of space people personalize the physical environment. Enhanced familiarity feeling gradually domesticates the living environment (Rapoport, 1977).
3.3 SOCIAL LEARNING & PARTICIPATION

Freedmann (1987), in his book ‘Planning in the public domain’, analyses the concept of social learning. Social learning is strongly linked to a bottom-up transformation practices that have societal origins. The main goal is to tackle intentional actions made by an individual or a collective within its own environment. Actors that appear in this approach vary from a single person to communities, in general, all ‘urban social movements’. The actor and learner, being one and the same, learn from their own practice.

Three main principals of social learning can be distinguished. Firstly, learning reveals as a transformation in the practical activity in the form of implicit and informal learning (Polanyi 1966, cited in Friedmann 1987). Secondly, a certain guide needs to be involved. His role is to introduce formal knowledge and facilitate changes in social practices. And finally, major cognition is needed in order to organize the actions making simple modifications in the present strategy to solve ongoing problems or adjust to the governing norms and change the values of an actor.

Following these concepts, activating space implies active participation in social life that is also a key of creating ties within the community. Process starts from visually accessible contact that reveals the possibilities and attracts to consider the alternatives. In that phase the sense of control acts as an empowerment to freely choose whether integrate oneself in an active urban life or stay behind. A greater attachment to the place is closely related to greater proportion of home ownership within the urban block or neighbourhood (Brown et al. 2002; Anton & Lawrence 2014). However, migrants living in Dalang cannot purchase neither unaffordable newly constructed residing units, neither apartments within urban villages or dormitory rooms. Therefore, activating space can provide a chance to claim the space and personalize it by participating in temporal activities.

Participation plays an important role towards domestication of the alien urban environment. If neighbours working for collective efficacy seem to express stronger ties with the locality (Comstock et al. 2010). When people feel they have a control and can influence the environment, they show a bigger appreciation of it than those who do not (Rapoport, 1997). Cities have the capability of providing something for everybody, but only when they are created by everybody (Jacobs,
So participation has two intermingled definitions. Firstly, activating space should allow migrants to participate in the daily life (Solnit, 2001) by providing proper spatial conditions, diverse urban amenities, and invite for social interaction and participation, and secondly, it should reflect the needs of its users in order to ensure the successful usage of it.

3.4 SPATIAL CONFIGURATIONS

As people are so influenced by their living physical environment, their behavior can be also modified by certain spatial characteristics. In order to transform productive urban domain, Speck (2012) introduces walkability as a trigger, which contributes to making cites more liveable and more successful the most. Iacono et.al. (2008) explain that the emerge of an urban sprawl increased the concern and interested of urban planners to return to the creation of liveable communities that contain closer destinations to its inhabitants residence and working places. In the case of Dalang, residents already apt to live in a short walking distance from working places for several reasons; firstly, commuting by foot is cost free and, secondly, the most convenient concerning time consumption. The majority of migrants works in manufacturing that means very limited amount of spare time, which is preferably used fulfilling personal needs rather than spent on commuting. So walkability seems to play an indeed essential role towards activation of people and improvement of their alien living environment.

Literature review offers plenty of social benefits ensuring the proper maintenance of social capita using walkability as a tool. Rogers, et.,al. (2010) argue that the well-being of social capita can be enhanced by facilitating walkability. People are enabled to interact with other they otherwise might not meet (Gehl, 1987). Hence, individuals learn how trust each other (Lund 2003, in Rogers et al. 2010). Safety issues are very relevant, especially in the areas accommodated by migrants, like Dalang, were people themselves have very weak interpersonal relationships; they are all strangers who came from various rural areas, although being unified by the present locality. What is more, communities with higher level of social capita perform better economically (Putnam, 2000), which supplements the aim of floating population seeking better future life opportunities.
Through empirical observations within the communities and discussions with academics, the organization of scholars called ‘Community builders’ highlights three key principles of walkability: physical access, places and proximity. Physical infrastructure has to provide a safe and attractive path for individual’s transition in order to make it be used. Walkability also demands to have a purpose of one’s destination. In other words, the itinerary should possess a meaning and entertainment, which would convince the user to choose this certain path. It should fulfill at least some of the daily or weekly needs of the passenger, offering diverse options in different kind of personal necessities. What is more, the time consumption needed to reach preferred objects is essential. According to the General Theory of Walkability Speck (2012) explains that ‘a walk has to satisfy four main conditions: it must be useful, safe, comfortable, and interesting’. More in detail these conditions mean that ‘most aspects of daily life are located close at hand’, priority to pedestrians versus automobiles, pass ways should be transformed into ‘outdoor living rooms’, which are surrounded by appealing and pleasant physical fabric. Moreover, walkable neighborhoods allow participating in community affairs instead of spending time for commuting (Southworth & Ben-Joseph, 1997).

In order to define walkability as a measure, the thumb rule is usually applied. It is assumed that people are willing to walk from $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ of a mile (0,4-0,8 km) to their destinations, in terms of time 5 to 8 minutes (Rogers et al, 2010). Less than one hundred twenty meters represents the most walkable patterns (Speck, 2012). Small blocks provide more choices, shorter distances between destinations, and fewer and smaller streets, therefore, fewer lanes for vehicles. Jacobs (1961) accompanies that short blocks create ‘intricate cross use’ of among its users, while ‘frequent streets are effective in helping to generate diversity’. Lively and diverse area stimulates walking. She also adds that being located in inconvenient distances urban amenities loses their advantage. From the perspective of spatial composition, Speck (2012) states that people need ‘a sense of enclosure to feel comfortable’ and intermingled feelings of prospect and refuge. Additionally, living closer to nature increases social activity, and makes residents feel a greater sense of belonging (Kuo et al.1998 cited in Francis et al. 2012; van Dorst, 2010).

In contemporary China top-down plans have omitted social interests and human needs. Dalang, a typical Chinese industrial
neighbourhood is a result of it. All big Chinese cities accommodate millions of migrant workers looking for better life opportunities, yet, hardly providing conditions to find the feeling of home. Attachment to the place is directly linked to the adaptation to one's locality and the feeling of home. Many scholars agree that personal attachment to the home and the neighborhood is based on positive relation between the physical and social interaction (Amerigo & Aragones, 1997; van Dorst, 2012; Comstock et al., 2010; Rapoport, 1997). It can be achieved by building up a sense of belonging to community (Francis et al., 2012) and the locality through social empowerment (Friedmann, 2005) and liveable environment (van Dorst, 2010; Iacono et al. 2008). Public space is considered as a core activator in the process of domesticating the alien urban environment.

3.5 CONCLUSION

Activating space contains a potential to empower its users, increase the sense of control over one's life. It provides a platform for social interaction and invites actively participate in the outdoors life and enjoy urbanity (Solnit, 2001). The impact on human capita can be embodied by the assistance of spatial characteristics (Jacobs, 1961; Speck, 2012). The findings of various authors researching spatial configurations that stimulate great performance of public space were represented. They can be all categorized into three main criteria: permeability, proximity and places (fig.17).

Fig 17. Three main criteria and their relation to discussed authors
Permeability (fig. 18) means easily accessible and having direct connection from one to another place. It also refers to a safe an attractive path for, in this case, slow mobility (pedestrians & cyclists).

Proximity (fig. 19) is defined through two measures; in terms of distance and in terms of urban vitality. By distance it is meant that places should be in a walkable time interval, which is ¼ to ½ of a mile (0.4-0.8 km) or 5 to 8 minutes. Urban vitality refers to diversity of programs that could invite and please greater mixture of social groups living within the community.

Places (fig. 20) are defined as physical indoor, outdoor, or both, domain, hosting mutually working activities, and embedding qualitative spatial identity.

Implication of spatial requirements influence on how the neighborhoods look like, how they work for people and how they feel within them (Southworth & Ben-Joseph, 1997). Public space embracing those three criteria can stimulate discussed results on social capita and transform Dalang from the area for production to the area for living with the feeling of home. Spatial characteristics give perceptual clues and notions for what purposes the space should be used (Rapoport, 1997; atelier Bow-Wow, 2009).

Domesticated place in this case means being transformed and applied for people to live in, which is a very close concept of liveability (van Dorst, 2010, 2012) that is dramatically needed in Dalang. Activating space embeds spatial criteria that invite migrants to use the space, but in order to increase the influence, residents should also...
participate in designing and implementation process. According to Cogan and Sharpe (1986, p. 284 cited in Parker, 2002) identify benefits of citizen participation to the planning process as providing information and ideas of public issues, public support for planning decisions and spirit of cooperation and trust. Putting own hands on implementation increases the pride of the place, empowers actors and gives a sense of ownership (Haas & Hahn, 2014). Consequently, in order to achieve it simultaneously with finding a room for spatial reconfigurations within Dalang, the alternatives in governance and planning model is needed to ensure the productive collaboration between various stakeholders.
ANALYSIS
Dalang has been chosen as a showcase for this master thesis because it reflects the problem field of this research the best. It is a migrant neighborhood located just outside the border of the former SSEZ. In 2011 Dalang became an official sub-district of Longhua New District. As a result of fast urbanization and random growth, the neighbourhood is completely urbanized and consists mainly of urban villages and industries. Currently Shenzhen is facing the transition from manufacturing to more diverse economy, forcing lots of industries shift to hinterlands leaving vacant factory buildings behind. Creative industries, like Fashion Valley that is now under construction, shows the effort of government to attract strong industries, while road widening projects improves accessibility between central districts and the periphery. However, public facilities are still lacking and cultural life of Dalang migrant workers is still immensely poor.

This situation reflects the concern set out in a problem statement of the thesis. Dalang is a productive area of which residents face difficulties in finding the attachment to the place. From the point of view of migrants, complete urban redevelopment as in the showcase of Shenzhen’s central district does not represent the best future scenario. Even productive areas have potentials to fulfill the needs of its inhabitants.

The following chapters will analyse the former and current government policies that have resulted in the existing problem field. The deep analysis of social structure of Dalang and the spatial conditions is crucial in order to understand the needs of residents and current state of the urban domain. Through this matrix, the conflicts are identified and potentials for the future redevelopments revealed.
4.1 SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE / PLANNING POLICIES

After the inception of the SSEZ, city’s master plan 1982-1996 included only four districts – Nanshan, Futian, Luohu and Yantian. This exclusion of central area caused different land use development creating a completely contrasting cityscape within and outside the SEZ territory (Plan-led Urban Form, 2012). The periphery had a rural land status and was competing with the SSEZ by seeking to attract industrial development ‘though the establishment of their own mini-economic zones inside villages and the conversion of arable land into factories’ (Bruton et al., 2005). Lacking monitoring system let almost random developments. It attracted lots of migrants, but gradually destroyed ecological balance.

The Master Plan of Shenzhen 1996-2010 (fig.23) already covered the whole city setting land use regulations for both the SEZ and the non-SEZ. The future developments were directed along the western, central and eastern axes, supplemented by nine clusters and six independent towns. The spatial arrangement was set as the development for urban space (W shape formed by the three vertical development axes) and the development of the natural landscape protection space (M shape). This interplay encouraged the establishment of high-tech industries and also ensured the easy access to the nature reservoir for the citizens. While the SEZ experienced the increasing pace of city’s urban regeneration, the outside zone, therefore current Dalang area was expanding due to the construction of the high-tech industrial parks, logistic parks and transportation hubs.

The Master Plan of Shenzhen 2010-2020 (fig.24) eliminated the division line and the SEZ was extended through the whole city’s territory. As the SEZ is relatively considered as ‘planned’, the non-SEZ attracts more attention. The goal of the government is to reinforce the urban spatial layout proposed by the previous master plan. Also, ecological control line (fig.25), so-called ‘urban growth boundary’ is set down, which constrains the future developments, ‘maintains ecological security of the city under the pressure of fast urbanization and then achieve sustainability’ (Jia, 2009). Shenzhen faces land shortage that means the higher redevelopment probability of old residential neighbourhoods, vacant industrial parks and, of course, urban villages. Yet the biggest pressure of urban regeneration is directed to the urban villages within the central district, but soon it
might shift to periphery.

It is fair to argue that Shenzhen does not lack planning, but the absence of micro-level urban design allowed ignoring the demands of people. As a result, industrial neighborhoods like Dalang were developed, which are unable to enrich daily life of its residents through public facilities. A similar effect occurs when public space that should serve people is too far from human scale. It remains anonymous and barely used by ordinary individuals (like CBD area in the central zone). Most of the constructions are focused on the building the physical environment, rather than the future use of its participants.
The goal of Shenzhen’s Action Plan is to ‘select characteristic places or spaces in Shenzhen, to stimulate and promote vitality and attractiveness of the urban space, enhance urban design quality, strengthen the urban design effect through creative urban design. Use the experience of the selected spots to promote and improve the overall environment quality of the city’ (Plan-led Urban Form, 2012). It emphasizes the shift from industrial production to human life implementation. The policy suggests investigating worldwide example of public spaces in global cities and adjusting their practices into the urban fabric of Shenzhen. However, this strategy should be evaluated very carefully, involving the unique Chinese context and specific demands for the society. Otherwise new guidelines will overshoot the main goal and new public spaces will remain vacant.

To sum up, the record of Shenzhen, as we see it now, is counted to reach barely 35 years. We must admit the clear evidence of no historically valuable neighborhoods or sanctuaries as in Beijing or other ancient cities. However, Shenzhen has its own character. Yet not appreciated, still existing urban fabric expose an incredible development of the city over the last three decades. Especially in the periphery the whole storyline translated into the urban domain can be discovered. Therefore, new redevelopment policies should take this into account and bring the guidelines of urban regeneration adjusting to current patterns rather than replacing them. Later, spatial analysis will introduce mentioned characteristics.

4.2 SOCIAL STRUCTURE

As an industrial area, Dalang became a major attraction locale for young migrants searching for jobs and better opportunities. As a result, currently Dalang accommodates 500 000 inhabitants, of which 98% are migrants (fig.26). So as to understand the needs and daily life of migrants residing in Dalang, it is important to talk with local people and examine their apprehensions and expectations. During the field trip, 96 questionnaires were collected. The listed questions investigated the migrants’ background information like the place of origin, their age, current occupation and leisure time activities, and, of course, the future plans (fig.27).

The majority of respondents (93%) are indeed young, 15-34 years old. More than a half of them (52%) earns for living in manufacturing (fig.28) and works from 10 to 14 hours per day, mostly 6 days per
week (69%). Migrants prefer walking and cycling as a way of commuting. Traveling time consumption home – work – home is relatively low, less than 15 min. Migrants are fond of having an active leisure time. Meeting friends, shopping, mountain climbing, sports like badminton, basketball and running, or just walking around and exploring were listed as preferable activities. The other category of spare time activities reflects as individual hobbies like reading, watching TV and browsing in the Internet, which do not require specific environment and facilities or extra people with common interests. Migrants do meet new people and are enable to make friends in long term, but they still miss their home because it is hard to find a sense of belonging. Some respondents were very honest and admitted feeling a lack of love for life and positive energy.

According to the questionnaires, the conceptual timeline of a casual workday of a migrant worker is illustrated. It shows that due to long working hours, spare time for personal needs is extremely short. Time consumption and proximity of public facilities turn out to be essential criteria. There are barely two time gaps when the greatest potential to attract migrants to become daily actors of public space can be expected – during the lunchtime and in the evening (fig. 29). This gives a clue that proposed interventions should be located near urban villages (main housing facility) and within/nearby industrial parks where the majority of population works.

Although the differences of new migrants’ generation were carefully discussed in the introduction, the fundamental character of society has been shaped through centuries spend in rural land. Dalang population...
distinguishes of being very young and inspired to discover themselves within the city, the relations to land and nature, therefore rural roots are obvious since so many urban gardens in empty land lots are detected (fig.30). The research of Chinese society roots is acknowledged as the potential trigger due to learning the aspects that can contribute to successful activation of Dalang migrants.

According to Wu, naturalistic view was always a core of farmers’ lifestyle. The close relation to agriculture is emphasized in the Chinese term describing society, which means an ‘agricultural product’. ‘She chi’ refers to ‘the god of earth’ (she) and ‘the god of crops’ (chi). A farmer has to be very patient, because one cannot

![Fig 28. Most of migrants work in manufacturing](source: www.dreamstime.com)

![Fig 29. Time line of migrant’s day](chart.png)
rush the nature phenomena or accelerate the growth of harvest. Chinese prefer walking as a way of commuting, buying groceries and cooking the same day rather than using half prepared products from the freezers of supermarkets. Urban farming in any empty lot is one the most obvious examples of how migrants try to rebuild their relation to land and their roots.

In Chinese culture, family plays a significant role. ‘In traditional China, privileges and liabilities, honour and shame, and even crimes of one single individual were shared with his family’ (Wu). The new generation of migrants is less attached with their families; personal needs are prioritized. However, in the city they usually feel lonely, not only because of the unfamiliar environment, but also because of the lacking social networks. Coming to the city means the loss of close relationships between individuals that were flourishing in the village. In the rural areas people work on common interests, while city life requires to focus on personal paths, therefore the feeling among individuals could be described as ‘constant competitiveness’ rather than ‘common well-being’. Having no bonds within the community increase vulnerability distracts social cohesion and hinders integration into the city life.

All in all, the social structure of Dalang perfectly reflects the image of Shenzhen as the ‘city of migrants’. Coming from rural area also brings the naturalistic view of life, which resembles harmony with nature, social networks and close interpersonal relationships. Questionnaires show that migrants are the most critical about their environment, they lack of greenery, social facilities and public spaces, also wish to have more and better opportunities to develop themselves. Although the needs of migrants has changed, triggering the right senses hidden in the social roots and daily life features can help the most vulnerable inhabitant to find the way domesticate the urbanity.
4.3 LOCAL INITIATIVES

The location of Dalang decreases the political pressure for the future developments. Most investments initiated by developers target the territory within the initial SSEZ, which favourably gives an opportunity to make inspiring changes worth to be kept when powerful developers will turn their interests to peripheral area.

The Government of Dalang wants to build a more sustainable society and the lower pressure for redevelopments allow implementing strategic actions. The priority is given to educational programs and leisure activities. Over the past few years cultural infrastructure for volunteer organizations and individuals has being introduced by the Department of Cultural Affairs. It subsidizes community centres and five volunteer teams.

One of those teams is called Little Grass. Established in 2007 it had only several members, while currently the number has reached 3000 and keeps growing. The volunteers organize different activities: helping to find directions in the metro, helping elderly, organizing theme parties. Qian Zhen Girls’ School (1891) is being renovated for educational purposes (fig.31a). The government is also organizing the ‘Dalang Star’ singing competition since 2010, which also gets a support from the local enterprises.

Community centres create a network (fig.31a,c). Each centre provides interior space adjusted to various functions: small library, a playground for children, youngsters day centre, classroom for self-upgrading courses, gym, etc. Outdoors basketball court should be also integrated into supervision of each community center. Unfortunately, due to the lacking open space, it fails to be carried out.

‘Dream Centre’ located in the Northern part of Dalang has been also initiated by volunteering organizations and supported by the government. The government collaborated with the owner of an industrial park in order to be allowed to transform the ground floor of a block of dormitories into public facilities. ‘Dream Centre’ hosts several NGO’s, includes indoor and outdoor space for common activities and specialized courses.

Also, the programme called ‘8 hours project’ was launched. It
addresses one of key social problems of Dalang – occupation of migrant workers during their free time, and collaborates with community centres and volunteering organizations (fig.31b). The title refers the division of an ordinary workday which consists of even time proportion dedicated for working, sleeping and resting. However, the reality occurs opposite. As collected data has shown, the most common workday lasts from 10 to 14 hours, which extremely decreases the amount of spare time.

Commercial centre (fig.32) recently appeared reflecting the needs of local community. It is the very first rudiment of Dalang’s future centrality, moreover, a good example of successful transformation of former industrial park initiated by the government and other stakeholders. After a successful realization of the first six buildings, currently the area is being expanded. Despite of many commercial

Fig 31. Local initiatives & activities
a | library
b | cycling tour
c | community centre with basketball court
d | Girl's school
activities within the area, singing contest also takes place there. Also a library of Dalang is located just across the street from Commercial centre.

One of the key places for leisure time is Labor Square (fig.33). It was built in 2007 by the government as an entertainment area for local residents. As commercial centres being developed in the same urban block, only originated on the opposite side, eventually these facilities will merge and complement each other creating a centre of Dalang neighborhood.

‘Public space is a relatively new urban concept in China simply because it was never a part of the traditional Chinese city; public space only consisted of streets and their immediate surroundings’ (Bi-City Bienalle in Shenzhen, 2013). Extra attention to the importance of public space started to be paid only after China opened its economy in 1979. New demands are arising for the public domain, as contemporary Chinese society finds leisure, shopping and sport crucial part of their daily life. When commercial areas disregard certain social groups offerings unaffordable entertainments, public space like Labor Square serves as vibrant meeting place accommodating various activities and fulfilling the needs of migrants, who preferably
spent their time outside the overcrowded dormitories and shared apartments.

Plenty of various activities flourish inside and around the square. Little Grass has an information station; some performances take place on and around a stage constructed in the square. The owner of rolling-skate shop located next to Labor Square has a club and a group of active members. They practice in the square and welcomes everyone who is willing to how can learn how to skate. Migrants gather in the square to dance, sing or just relax and observe. These activities provide a wide ‘social network through meetings, performances and competitions’ (Bi-City Bienalle in Shenzhen, 2013). It serves as an active platform for migrants providing ability to meet new people, extend their limited social networks, gain more self – confidence, which leads to personal – upgrading.

To conclude, social dynamics enhances the potential of a city. Active individuals and various organizations make first steps towards the empowerment of themselves and the others. Dalang authorities have already broken the ice and let the transformation begin. Yet, if the spatial resources are so limited, where else can these activities flourish?
4.4 URBAN DOMAIN

The previous sections explained how governmental policies influenced the development of Shenzhen which resulted in a productive urban landscape. The needs of migrant workers were identified concluding the collected questionnaires. Now this paragraph will analyse the spatial structure of Dalang recognizing its urban characteristics and potentials for activating spaces.

4.4.1 Environment

Dalang is located in the valley surrounded by Yantai and Jiulong mountains, two national parks. Interviews noted that migrants like to go hiking and mountain climbing, however limited access and little spare time makes the park be used more as weekend activity rather than daily life pleasure. There are few nice parks to play with children, as well a big Longhua park on the east borderline separating Dalang and Longhua districts. A narrow canalized river crosses Dalang connecting the two mountains. Although very few, these natural resources should be used to its best potential.
4.4.2 Program

Dalang urban program mainly consists of industrial parks mingled with urban villages (fig. 37). On the ground floor more diverse economy is emerging including shops, restaurants, various workshops, etc. Public facilities like schools and hospitals are also found, however, according to professor Li (personal communication, November 26, 2014), way too little. Recreational areas were never planned; therefore, their existence is very limited.

Empirical study during the field trip has revealed the emerging centrality of Dalang neighbourhood – Commercial centre (described in 4.4). It is a great example of productive collaboration between local authorities and various stakeholders transformed into an actively used public area which serves for the whole neighbourhood.
4.4.3 Open space

Open space immediately refers to potential locations for public activities. There is plenty leftover space that is a result of unplanned development ([fig.38](#)). Some areas can give the wrong impression to be a leftover space, but actually the site is being cleaned before the new construction starts. It is obvious that Dalang is lacking vacant land, which puts the rooftops in the loop. Factory buildings have the greatest potential since possessing the biggest size of the surface area. Also, the roofs of residential dwellings (most likely the later stage of urban villages, cause traditional Chinese houses have gabled roofs) could compensate the lack of vacant ground floor.

![Fig 38. Open spaces](#)

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4.4.4 'Pocket' spaces

Pocket spaces define tiny places that evidence human activities (fig. 39). Usually they do not have any special spatial characteristics than a spare plot of small-scale outdoor ground floor. Originally these ‘pockets’ are public, open and seemingly being useless. However, interesting things happen. The closest inhabitants start bringing out their own belongings. Elderly put seatable furniture, sometimes a table, next to the front entrance of the house and gather around to chat with neighbours and observe surroundings. Especially popular pool table founds its spot to be most likely used by the youth. A family uses a cleaned corner nearby their residence to hang the laundry and cultivates small plot of ground for gardening. Children start playing with a pile of sand just left due to some proximate ongoing constructions. Migrants, although having no tangible ownership, claim the space and personalize it by shaping it to serve personal needs. This reveals the extreme lack of public space and also the willingness of Dalang residents to be a part of city’s life. Additionally, migrants are apt to act in outdoor public environment. As if there are adequate spatial conditions, greater extent of activities would be stimulated.
Fig 40. Urban morphologies
4.4.5 Four types of urban morphology

Due to the unplanned development, the physical environment of Dalang resulted in specific spatial compositions. These are characterized by four major urban morphologies (fig.40):

- type I – industrial parks
- type II – urban villages
- type III – intermingled factories with urban villages
- type IV – mixture of all typologies.

The latter has the most diverse morphology demonstrating all stages of urban development; from traditional dwellings, different stages of urban village development and industries.

Ownership

The territory of Dalang was excluded from the Master plan of Shezhen till 2010. While poor neighborhoods in informal settlements worldwide experiences difficulties to access plots with potential to become public space due to the lack of clarity in land tenure (Flavio & Rohm, 2012), there were always very active two other big stakeholders that managed the development processes in Dalang. Each urban village has the Joint-Stock Company (JSC), which works as an executive board. Their members are the villagers who own a building unit in particular urban village. One of the roles of JSC is, for instance, to collect the money from each building owner to maintain the urban village. The other major stakeholders are industrial park owners. Some land of current industrial parks once belonged to villages. Hence, in the process of industrialization, JSC’s leased the land to industrial developers or invested in the construction of industrial zones and rented out the buildings. The management of an industrial park entirely depends on the owner.

Accessibility

Roads’ upgrading improves connectivity within the Shenzhen’s territory, but also lays the foundation for heavy traffic. The main street network shapes urban blocks. Some of them, especially industrial parks, are walled to regulate the movement of random passengers and serve only for their workers. Each compound has its own street network serving the private mobility, but eliminates the ability to
cross the area for strangers. Some urban villages also have walls and gates. Cases are found when dwellings in urban villages are built so densely leaving only a thoroughly narrow gap in between blocking a way for even a single person to go through. Infrastructural network system within urban blocks has many dead ends and poor integration in the greater structure, which reduces accessibility in the scale of the whole neighbourhood.

Functions

Functional distribution is quite mono-functional. Industrial parks consist of factory buildings, dormitories to accommodate workers and, in some, office of headquarters. Urban villages provide more diversity on the ground floor, however mainly work for housing. Along the main street network, informal economy is emerging with various shops, markets, restaurants or services. Public facilities are very few or in all absent.

Open space

The open space filter examines spatial potentials for public facilities. Due to specific construction regulations, industrial parks have a limited height of building and wide distances between them. This spatial configuration provides bigger plots of open space and is open for more sunlight. Meanwhile urban villages lack such characteristic; wider open space follows the main street network that cross the village, but usually there are only few of them and the rest – narrow corridors. Urban amenities along the streets in the narrow pass ways force the passenger to move on after, let’s say, buying a souvenir. Greater leftover space or a square could offer to sit for a while and take a rest. Due to mentioned feature, open space can provide different range of activities - centrally focused, longitudinal deployed activities, or both. The first group requires more space as it suppose to make passengers stop and spend time, while the latter one promotes constant movement.

So from the analysis of urban domain it can be seen that Dalang, although lacking urban vitality, has great potentials for activating space development. But in order to establish activating space and ensure its maintenance, the collaboration with major stakeholders (industrial park owners and JSC) must be achieved. Keeping in mind very enclosed environment of workers in factories, functional mixture,
especially within industrial parks, becomes a key factor for urban vitality and employees' well-being. Also, industrial parks have the biggest open space resources. Looking in the future perspective, as factories are moving to mainland, vacant buildings have plenty of space to host public facilities. The main street network maintains the biggest flow of passengers, therefore, the most diverse urban program. It shows that accessibility is directly related to a higher scale of urban vitality and is necessary for a better integration of fragmented urban blocks' into the whole structure of Dalang. Urban distribution map (*fig. 41*) shows the location of all urban morphologies. The majority of urban blocks are mono-functional and posses less different building typologies, but there are few units that reflects type IV and represents the whole spatial development of the area – the transition from traditional dwellings into newly constructed residential housing intermingled with factory buildings.

*Fig 41. Spatial distribution of four main urban morphologies within the neighbourhood of Dalang*
4.5 REFERENCES

Selected references will represent two types of relevant examples: local - within the context of Dalang, and international. Indigenous cases look over spatial conditions that accommodate people by investigating the questions what elements do stimulate and embed social activity? Is spatial composition supported by other components? Worldwide examples will enquire into the ways how personal ties with local community and inhabited place are created. All discussed projects are located in informal settlements and poor neighbourhoods. Hence, at the same time the conditions for in situ mobility will be explored.

I11 ‘Dream centre’

It represents a good example of how still working industrial park can be diversified. Dream Centre is ran by non-governmental organization called KIDO. Centre has been established by transforming the ground floor of two facing each other dormitories accommodating workers of industrial park. The specific U shape buildings form a quite enclosed courtyard divided into two parts by a transitional axis, which also functions as courtyard entrance. Entrances to the dormitories face the courtyard, which means, the inner open space is daily used. This spatial configuration embraces high potential to activate its users.

First of all, the courtyard territory can be easily defined (fig.42). Small spatial dimension is close to human scale allowing its users to personalize the space. Two types of activities are promoted in the square. More informal area invites to play badminton, volleyball or basketball, while the opposite one has a stage constructed for bigger events (fig.43). Outdoors activities support the content around. Activating space spreads into physical building units and covers the whole ground floor. Interior is divided into separate rooms and classrooms where educational program takes place. There is also a library, offices of leading NGO’s. Continuous corridor around the square functions as connector and transition space between inside and outside. In order to ensure better physical accessibility, the wall facing factories was demolished.

Highlights: synergy between outdoors and indoors public facilities, enclosed but easily accessible, permeable, diverse program, close to living and working, human scale, easily definable territory.
Fig 43. ‘Dream Centre’

a | stage for performances
b | volleyball court and interior spaces
c | common room
Fig 44. Longhua park. Outdoor karaoke

Fig 45. Longhua park. Square dancing
Longhua park

It is a very nice and big recreational park located just outside the administrative Dalang border. Of course, park itself attracts many people to enjoy the greenery while walking along the riverbank, invites to climb up the hill and visit some expositions. But the research here is made regardless of obvious values. The goal is to find out spatial elements that stimulate social capita to choose a certain spot for daily gatherings over the others. Visual observations spotted people sitting on the benches integrated into landscape design solutions, which means users need proper facilities to sit down, take a break or have lunch. Square dancing practitioners have chosen a platform which contains a feeling of a small stage (fig.45). This spatial effect is created by certain elements like a curb, differing ground covers green vs. pavement, also a row of trees. The stage forms a niche located just aside the main pass way, giving partial privacy to the group. Meanwhile karaoke singers feel free to bring their own portable audio player with microphone. Activity is cheering the passengers engaged by curiosity or fairly by an accident. However, the participants have consciously gathered under the promenade, which kind of lets claim the space accurately determined by spatial elements (fig.44).

Highlights: sitting places, human scale spatial division within large area, enclosed and open at the same time, personalization by claiming the space for individual desires or group activities.
Fig 46. ‘Favela Painting Project’
source: www.favelapainting.com

Fig 47. Integral urban project. Constructed walking routes
source: www.designother90.org
I3I Project 'Favela painting'

It is a project in Santa Marta favela in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Two artists, Jeroen Koolhaas and Dre Urhahn, fight the poverty and rundown appearance of slums with the paint buckets in their hands. The artists employed local youth to paint 34 houses in bright cheerful colours in order to raise the pride of community. The similar project was implemented in the North Philadelphia, USA, called 'Philly Painting Project'. A group of locals were not only provided with jobs, but also educated as painters (Haas&Hahn, 2014). Another remarkable moment in this case is that the design for each house along the projected street was created together with community members (fig.46). As a result, the neighbourhood became more lively and appreciated.

Highlights: participation and involvement of local communities into a design process, common goal, collaboration with professionals who can educate and teach new skills.

I4I Integral Urban Project

The city of Caracas is located is surrounded by informal settlements covering the steep slopes of mountains (fig.47). ‘The existing pedestrian walkways were a series of resident-built stairs, narrow in width, with variable step size, no handrails, high slopes, and no stairs higher up the hill. To connect neighbourhoods and improve residents’ daily commute, the team designed a network of stairs, which incorporated basic services such as electricity, drainage, sewer, gas, and water. Every spare space was integrated into walkways, and public landings inserted at intervals acted as new spaces for social interaction’ (designother90.org). Pedestrian friendly environment ensures accessibility, acts as public spaces and creates better living conditions.

Highlights: permeability, slow traffic mobility, safety, sidewalks facilitate social interaction.
4.5 CONCLUSIONS

This chapter explained that Shenzhen is a result of rather lacking monitoring system than a planning itself. At first the rapid urbanization caused a productive development leaving no space for liveability, and afterwards a massive urban renewal repeated former experiences by running barely human scale developments and pushing away migrants from the city center, although they remain the major driving force for Shenzhen’s economy. However, the situation is changing, and in the transition period the authorities of the city are more willing to turn to people needs. Migrants are searching for a place that could call home while residing in the urbanity. So it is important to use existing urban domain and adapt it to human needs by spatial reconfigurations rather than urban replacement.

Dalang has a very specific social structure that was accurately analysed with a help of during the field trip collected questionnaires. The findings revealed that population is very young, mostly working in manufacturing, which means long work hours and very little spare time. Walking seems to be the most preferable way of commuting. It is not surprising why migrants favour living close by their working places. Proximity guarantees that the commuting would consume the least time and financial resources. Short travelling ensures more time for personal development or leisure activities, which are exceptionally prioritized in comparison with the older generation. Walking also represents naturalistic lifestyle that is deeply rooted in Chinese society (Wu). What is more, natural resources a river could be use as a trigger to bring migrants closer to their naturalistic life perception. Combined with active ventures public spaces could start working as activating spaces.

There are already some supported by the government actively performing organizations in Dalang. Volunteering group called ‘Little grass’, network of community centres, Labour square and emerging commercial centre enrich the daily monotonous life in an industrial neighbourhood. Migrants seem to have a room to develop themselves and fulfill personal expectations. However, it is far from being even close to enough. The dramatic lack of public facilities for social interaction forces to explore spatial potentials within the existing urban fabric.
Four types of urban morphologies were distinguished. Type IV has the most vibrant urban fabric embracing all stages of urban villages development intermingled with industries. This type recorded the ‘history’ of Shenzhen’s earlier development stages in one unit. It will be used as a showcase for the pilot project for the very simple reason; as it covers all possible urban configurations, spatial solutions proposed in type IV can be adequately used in other morphologies.

The analysis of current situation in Dalang researched existing patterns simultaneously reflecting on potentials to implement free main activating space criteria – permeability, proximity and places. Spatial injections seeking more liveable environment could be achieved only by collaboration between various stakeholders and involving local residents, so they could build their ties with the community and the locality. References show few examples of already implemented projects with the similar expected outcomes. Bringing all the finding together, strategy that will lead towards discussed goals offering alternative insights in planning and governing system is proposed in the following chapter, which later on will be transformed into a pilot project.
STRATEGY
Literature review and empirical research helped to define main challenges and proposed many recommendations for sustainable future solutions for Dalang. It is clear now that the main reason migrants face difficulties in finding home is due to lacking public facilities; therefore, the chance to bond with community and locality significantly declines. The urban environment offers very few other possibilities to intervene the linear daily routine home – work – home. Built on those findings the strategy will introduce the alternatives for governance model and spatial strategy. This strategy shows, how the main activating space criteria – permeability, proximity and places – can be achieved through a modified planning model and later on, translated into the pilot project. (fig.48).
5.1 GOVERNANCE MODEL

Research has overviewed the executive governance model. Municipality of Dalang district gives more attention to the needs of migrants and supports local initiatives, but all good ambitions also need the space to be materialized and thrive.

As we can see in the current situation, a mismatch between stakeholders is found (fig.49). While municipality puts effort to govern Dalang district, the research has proven urban compounds being under the governance of Joint-Stock Companies and industrial park owners, which tend to take autonomous control over their property. In order to transform Dalang from productive area into liveable city, close collaboration escorted by mentioned stakeholders is a key for successful strategic activating space implementations.

New governance model, which involves JSC’s, industrial park owner and big future developers, is proposed as the following:

Municipality of Dalang prepares a pact that offers subsidies’ system for stakeholders, if they initiate the establishment and further maintenance of public facilities (fig.50). Despite of subsidies and

Fig 49. Schematic governance model
regulations, municipality also forms a new official unit ‘Control Office’. It is needed to avoid speculations and short-term solutions. According to the pact, acting stakeholders firstly have to invest into public facilities following the certain spatial regulations. After that, ‘Control Office’ checks if the developer complies with the regulations. If the conclusion is negative, subsidies are not given and vice versa. And lastly, subsidizing is a long-term benefit that can be continued only if public facilities are properly maintained, which again is monitored by ‘Control Office’.

Legend of icons

- Dalang municipality
- NGO ‘KIDO’
- Designer
- Collaboration
- Small businesses
- Community centers
- Individuals
- Clubs
- NGO’s
- Kids
- Families
- Elderly
- Youngsters
- Villagers

Fig 50. Division model of subsidies
- ensuring pedestrian friendly environment
- transforming leftover open spaces within urban village into public spaces
- giving the room for new indoor functions to emerge on the ground floor supporting open public space facilities
- the maintenance of the whole urban village territory, especially public facilities
- renovation of squalid dwellings

Vacant buildings

--> invest into minor renovation and allow young entrepreneurs and creative industries to locate themselves
--> entrepreneurs can decorate the area they claim as wanted by own hands, effort and finances
--> up to one year the municipality of Dalang subsidies entrepreneurs by helping to pay the rent

Currently working/new industrial parks

--> partly open walled industrial parks by integrating multifunctional program and public facilities accessible from outer ‘world’

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Fig 51. Planning model. Regulations
5.2 PLANNING MODEL

Future redevelopments can be realized only within the existing urban fabric, because Dalang territory is already fully urbanized. Spatial regulations and recommendations for major urban morphologies are designed. Offered strategy gives alternative solutions for the future redevelopments. There is no need to destroy the existing to create the new. A much more sustainable way is to adapt, transform, reshape, as presented in the following schemes (fig.51).

Within the governed area of urban villages and industrial parks, some spatial regulations are proposed in both urban units that would ensure the conditions for activating spaces’ inception and further prosperity. The priority goes to highlighted three criteria – permeability, proximity and places. The pedestrian friendly environment contributes to liveability in the area. Leftover open spaces and tiny ‘pocket’ spaces in the urban villages could be transformed into public spaces or urban gardens providing a chance for neighbours to gather and chat. Small business could be encouraged to settle on the ground floor facing those potential public spaces by providing indoors space to establish retail shops or restaurants. It would contribute to urban vitality and exchange of various groups of interests.

Bringing new programs into industrial parks increase the sense well-being of its workers. As in the near future more factories might become vacant, empty building can provide the room for creative industries, and give the opportunity for users to transform their working environment according to personal ideas. This approach contributes to building ties within the place, increasing appreciation feeling and sense of control. In this case, not only outdoor space, but also interiors work as activating spaces.

Walkability is believed to be one of the major factors in creating livelihood in the neighborhood (Rogers, 2011; Inacota 2008). Open space resources in Dalang are very limited. However, as Penalosa once said ‘cars have no rights, people have’, the priority in Dalang is given to facilitate the pedestrian friendly environment. Here immediately the conflict appears. Although the bulk of migrant prefer walking as the way of commuting, moreover, they can not afford owning a car, car use is gradually increasing. Better slow-traffic infrastructure make people unconsciously choose this way of travelling, but it is easy to estimate that dedicating more space for
slow mobility facilities steals the space from car users. To prevent the congestion within urban blocks, few solutions are proposed (fig.52).
- in agreement with industrial park owners and/or new developers, vacant factory buildings could be converted into parking garages;
- underneath empty open plots, the developer could build underground garage as long as the rooftop is turned into a square. The developer financially benefits from money collection for the parking, therefore has to maintain the public space as it is a part of the same property;
- involving local communities into design process by facilitating the dialogue with residents while interviewing, collecting surveys, observing, meeting representatives of local initiatives and community centers
- inviting volunteers to contribute in physical transformation of potential activating spaces

Fig 52. Regulations for parking lots

Fig 53. Participation model
new developments should also build underground parking or install garages into the bottom one or two floors.

Another essential factor also included into proposed planning model is participation (fig.53). The position of this thesis claims that only providing the room for public facilities is not enough. ‘Participation in programmatic and location decisions as well as in the design process generates unusual commitment with the place, other neighbours and the neighbourhood itself that from beforehand imprints a special significance to the resulting public spaces’ (Flavio & Rohm, 2012). The example of ‘the Favela Painting’ project shows that after being involved in the beautification project of accommodating settlement, the awareness of the locality increases, and inhabitants start feeling proud of their neighborhood. It is also a great opportunity to meet neighbors, work for common goals and start sharing important things. In this way, the synergy between social and urban interaction can be achieved. Besides, investing stakeholders can also benefit from participation of locals. Construction and maintenance expenses can be reduced by voluntary contributions. Participation empowers migrants to believe they are a part of Dalang; it creates a feeling of engagement with their living environment.

Planning activating space

To understand how activating space can be established including the main concept of actors, the scheme was built (fig.47). It explains the planning process from the starting point of initiator or the concept generator, who in this case is set to be the local NGO called ‘KIDO’.

Planning process requires to answer four main questions: Where is activating space going to be located? How it can be achieved? What is needed for activating space? Who is going to fund the whole design process and implementation?

Diagram shows which stakeholders should collaborate to answer specific question (fig.54). Potential solutions are given form the perspective of planning and design. Design solutions have to consider the needs of local stakeholders in order to figure out the demands of various social groups and the different levels of socio-spatial influence. Funding possibilities relies on obstinacy of the initiator to look for not only local, but as well international financial support.
Fig 54. The establishment of activating space planning
Shenzhen municipality
- strengthen the image of global city
- keep migrants in the city to

Dalang municipality
- proof the successful project management by local officials in front of Shenzhen’s authorities
- more diverse economy
- increase liveability in the district
- enhance the concept of ‘8 hours project’ which is focused on the qualitative occupation of migrant workers during their free time

Industrial park owners
- profit
- labour efficiency

JST
- profit
- better living environment

Small businesses
- profit
- more opportunities to establish various businesses

Migrant workers
- establishment of social networks
- finding the feeling of home
- self-upgrading
- more activities, richer leisure time
- better quality of the living environment

Interests of stakeholders

Fig.55 represents the interests of major active stakeholders in Dalang. Without an involvement of governing actors, public spaces might remain just in a conceptual level. In order to make activating spaces work, stakeholders must be convinced with proposed ideas and alternative strategies so they would be willing to contribute. Hereby the benefits of activating spaces implementation targeting each interest are discussed.

Municipality – activating space brings creative insights for municipality’s ambitions towards a better integration of migrant workers into the city life. Activating space helps to create ties with the community and the locality, and also, provides opportunities for personal development that is highly required of migrants who relate their life to urbanity. Satisfying inhabitants increase the chance of permanent residency. Urban transformation model ensures more liveable environment that also stimulates more diverse economy.

Industrial park owners – currently there are two scenarios of industries. The majority keeps on manufacturing, but the tendency shows that more and more enterprises tend to move to hinterlands. Working industrial parks usually are relatively mono-functional and closed, besides dormitories supply very little private space; sometimes eight or more people have to share a single room. Opening the walls and diversifying the program within the industrial park, owner would upgrade the living environment. Better balance between work and leisure time give migrants an opportunity to refresh their minds after hard
working day, therefore, to work more efficiently. In case of vacancy, letting in creative industries with other small business would bring financial benefits from rents, and save the owner from expenses for maintaining an empty building. As participation in terms of physical inhabitants involvement into the transformation process towards creating activating spaces is emphasized in the strategy, it ensures industrial park owner a share of implementation and further maintenance.

**JST** – many villagers live in urban villages themselves, so increasing the quality of the living environment is a relevant issue not only for migrants renting the accommodation, but also for the owners of dwellings. Activating spaces redefines urban structure; therefore redirects flows of people, and those people strengthen the potential for street level economies. Small businesses establishment in rented ground floor interiors would diversify income sources for dwelling owner, contribute to urban vitality and ensure the demand for future tenants to rent an apartment closer to an attractive urban amenities. Inhabitants of urban village can participate into transformation of leftover spaces, therefore reducing the costs for JST and saving some time for additional effort figuring out the needs of expected users.

**Small businesses** – by convincing stakeholders to provide physical space for individual businesses, inhabitants would have more room for alternative income source than manufacturing. As activating space redirects people to follow the upgraded urban structure, a greater concentration of potential customers will hang around.

**Migrant workers** – what is the most important, activating space concentrates various users that can socially interact in one place. Activities become more open, more accessible and supplementary engaging. New actors like creative entrepreneurs are introduced. Migrants have greater opportunities to adapt to urbanity and enjoy city life amenities.

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PILOT PROJECT
DESIGN STRATEGY

Design strategy will show how the three distinguished criteria for activating spaces can be translated into the physical domain. Urban morphology analysis concluded that the biggest potential for activating space development has the type IV. To recall shortly, it consists of the most diverse urban configuration and building typologies. As the Northern part of Dalang already has emerging centralities, the pilot project will be located in the strategic place for the expected Southern centrality. Also it acts as a showcase that focuses on spatial reconfiguration. Since typology IV combines all possibly found spatial compositions in Dalang, lessons learnt from pilot project can be applied to other location within existing urban units.
First of all, spatial analysis for the site must be done in order to discover the potentials. Hard infrastructure unquestionably cuts the area from the other urban units. Inner zoning can be distinguished fairly due to the concentration of functional building typologies. Streets serve for the city as the very first and essential public spaces. The main flows of human capita and urban amenities are indeed located along them, which guarantee the highest potential for successful businesses. If we look more accurately what spatial qualities mentioned street network offers, the results seem to be disappointing. Massive traffic with ten lanes both ways surrounds the area accompanied with noise and pollution (fig.56). As the outer edge is dedicated for vehicles, the attention shifts to explore the inner axis, which predictable to offer an escape from noise, and try to find feasible spatial potentials there (fig.57).
Schematic section shows urban typologies that embody earlier discussed spatial qualities (fig.58). Few compounds are distinguished. Industrial park has the greatest resources of continuous open spaces and in the near future might remain vacant since manufacturing tends to move to mainland. River is a natural element, while traditional Chinese housing maintains cultural value. Spatial arrangement gives a potential to create and link two different types of activating spaces by regenerating industrial zone and reviving riverbank.
Permeability

**Definition:** permeable means easily accessible and having direct connection from one to another place. It also refers to a safe an attractive path for, in this case, slow mobility (pedestrians & cyclists).

The potentials for spatial reconfigurations of urban typologies were identified. Currently industrial park is accessible only through the street crossing the focus area (middle green line). Although riverbank is well integrated into street network, it has no sidewalks adapted to recreational use along it. In order to make those areas recover, the direct connections and pleasant spatial conditions has to be ensured. New infrastructure network is proposed, yet, firstly it has to overcome few obstacles. The scheme presents detected spatial conflicts and proposes solutions so permeability could be achieved (*fig.60*).

1 - a connection between activating space and the high traffic street. This path acts as an advertiser for people driving in the cars and walking on the sidewalk by facilitating their curiosity. A building that currently
blocks the physical and visual access can be demolished or opened for passengers. Openness gives a clue that everyone is welcome;
2 - surface topography. In some places a height difference seeks four or even more meters. Staircases can ensure direct and safe path down the scarp;
3 - high traffic street. It blocks the way from other side of the street to reach activating space. Both a pedestrian bridge and a crossing upgrade connection between fragmented urban blocks;
4 - sidewalks. Usually cars or informal activities occupy sidewalks and push the pedestrians into the street area. To avoid conflicts, there should be a clear division for different means of street users. Cars should be parked in adequate places like garage or parking lines aside the street. Greenery and decorative fences would separate and secure pedestrians from the car flow;
5 - riverbank. Nature resources add value to public spaces and increase attractiveness of constructed walking routes along it. Water treatment using plants help to clean the water and add extra greenery.
Proximity

**Definition:** proximity is defined through two measures; in terms of distance and in terms of urban vitality. By distance it is meant that places should be in a walkable time interval, which is ¼ to ½ of a mile (0.4-0.8 km) or 5 to 8 minutes (Rogers et al, 2010). Urban vitality refers to diversity of programs that could invite and please greater mixture of social groups living within the community.

To exemplify how proximity can be translated into the actual location, industrial park is taken as a starting point. The importance of this measure is highlighted referring to the results of collected questionnaires. The majority of migrants work in manufacturing, therefore a casual working day has very limited spare time. Additionally, the preferred way of commuting is by foot. Migrants consciously choose to live close to their working place to save precious time. A volunteer from KIDO...
organization mentioned that ‘Dream Center’ face difficulties in attracting people because there very little residents around (Ms. Ceo 2014, pers. comm., 24 November). For these reasons, the proximity plays an essential role to make activating place used.

The drawing (fig.61) shows the influence zone of activating space based on proximity measures. Installing a pedestrian bridge or a crossing could extend the influence zone. Industrial park itself is regenerated and enriched with various urban amenities – community centre, creative industries, and space for offices, a recreational park, restaurants, and shops.

However, not in all cases great mixture of users is welcome and not every space can facilitate great variety of activities (fig.62, 63). Therefore, the guidelines that indicate expected users, influential zones and mutually working activities are proposed. Open space within urban village supposes to serve for its inhabitants rather than accidental passengers. It is quite enclosed giving a clue to be more collectively private. Corner space could serve for local needs, but welcome neighburs from surrounding dwellings outside the urban block where this empty corner is located. In the meanwhile, industrial parks exhibit wide-open spaces and spacious building units that can host various activities from small restaurants to performance stages and basketball courts. Various social groups can please personal interest. So it is crucial to evaluate carefully to what extent each urban unit can facilitate activating space to avoid conflicts between the demands and reasonable possibilities.
Fig 64. Design strategy. Places

Fig 65. Surfaces that are used to create places & purpose - to move or to stay
Places

Definition: place is defined as physical indoor, outdoor, or both, domain, hosting mutually working activities, and embedding qualitative spatial identity.

Place should impart a goal to come and proper facilities to be used. In this case, place has to provide diverse activities for a pithy leisure time nearby residential areas due to a critically low amount of spare time migrants have (fig. 64). Although the majority of Dalang population is young workers, other social groups like elderly, children and young families cannot be excluded from activating places. Bringing all different actors may cause a conflict between interests. However, this conflict could be used as trigger to activate places. The main concept is that each users’ group would find a place and purpose to claim and use a certain part of public space. In this way, various social groups are enabled to act in the same area, but spatially separate territory. For instance, while elderly are cultivating urban gardens on the rooftops of industrial buildings, youth can practice skateboarding in the park, climbing facilities constructed on the wall of one of the buildings, or go shopping in a commercial zone. Exchange of visual information perfectly reflects the concept of social learning, because the actor and learner, being one and the same, and they learn from their own practice (Friedmann, 1987).

According to Holland et.al. (2007), each place has its own identity, which might impact behavior of those who are aware of it. Also, creating an identity adds value to the place. It can be reinforced through urban regeneration and remediation of natural resources. Transformation of industrial park explores different perspective how to treat vacant buildings, while revival of river brings nature closer to migrants’ home and enriches the daily life. Therefore, various surfaces of the area are used (fig. 65). Activating space exploits the potentials of ground level, walls and roofs of the buildings, and interiors. It offers places to stay and hang out like playgrounds, and places for constant movement, like a shopping street or a recreational sidewalk along the riverbank. Some facilities are fixed, but others can be adjusted to users needs allowing bringing out personal table, chair or cards and initiating temporal activities with neighbours, like pocket spaces that represent inspiring way to personalize space.
Design strategy is visualized through two detailed interventions. The first one represents the transformation of an industrial park, and the second one – a reconstruction of a riverbank. In both cases three criteria are illustrated in separate schemes, so it would highlight which spatial interventions reflect permeability, proximity and places.

Fig 66. Industrial park transformation

Permeability  Proximity  Places

Impression a  Impression c
The core element in this location is river. After strategic spatial improvements, it becomes a liveability stimulator for surrounding area. While in the purely urban domain identity has to be created through program or specific spatial perceptions, natural resources have this power itself, therefore it can immediately bond with people.

Fig 67. Riverbank transformation

Permeability  Proximity  Places

Impression d
Fig 68. Program & stakeholders
Illustrations visualize various programs installed into transformed industrial park (fig. 68, 69). It shows the potential to adapt mutual activities to different surfaces; ground, building walls, rooftops and interior. In this way, perception of space activates its users through three-dimensional perspective. At first it might look overcrowded, but actually when users distribute through the space due to personal interests, they bond with a particular spot stronger than with the rest of the area, therefore expressing different levels of attachment.
Fig 70. Visualization a. Before...
.........after
Fig 71. Visualization c. Before....
.........after
Fig 72. Program & stakeholders
In this case the priority is to upgrade the riverbank for recreation \textit{(fig.72, 73)}. Walking along the water attracts people, therefore it stimulates surrounding areas to support the program by providing restaurants, shops and other urban amenities. The Northern side of the road offers more active, while the Southern side more passive recreation with gardens and ‘pocket forests’. Both riverbanks are connected by a pedestrian bridge.
Fig 74. Visualization d. Before....
........after
REFLECTION
This reflection is an overview of the whole project process turning back to research approach and its link to strategic proposals.

1. The relationship between the theme of the graduation lab and the subject/case study chosen by the student within this framework (location/object)

This thesis is done within the graduation lab ‘Shenzhen scenarios’ organized by the research program ‘Metropolitan Spatial Structure’ collaborating with INTI (International New Town Institute). Following the innovative Shenzhen’s direction towards transformation from ‘world factory’ to ‘world city’, the collaborative project researches the key factors from social, economic and environmental perspective. It explores which strategic improvements could strengthen the city’s potential. The neighbourhood of Dalang is one of three indicated locations that ‘The New New Towns’ program based in INTI is focused on.

Dalang was chosen as key area for the thesis as it represents my personal interest the best. It tackles the concern of alienation within the city and difficulties in finding the feeling of home within the urbanity. Dalang is a productive neighbourhood, which existing spatial patterns highly dissatisfy the needs of social capita (INTI). As stated in the problem statement ‘the present situation shows a high migrants’ isolation from a society, their locality <…>. Although migrants’ manage to make friends, they still miss home and feel lonely. This isolation also prevents from discovering the alternatives in daily life activities, which strengthens the feeling of being just a stranger in the city’. Dalang has a population of 98% of migrant workers and critically limited public facilities to enrich monotonous living environment.
It is proven by many scholars that public space can act as an activator stimulating the attachments with the community and the locality. Supplementing the ‘The New New Towns’ goal of finding alternative strategies towards a sustainable future, this research looked for new potentials to install public facilities and transform productive urbanity to a liveable neighbourhood, or in other words, sustainable ways to domesticate Dalang through within its existing urban domain that would be spatially reconfigured according to the needs of inhabitants.

2. The relationship between the methodical line of approach of the graduation lab and the method chosen by the student in this framework

The methodology of the research program ‘Metropolitan Spatial Structure’ embeds ‘the frame for discussion about changing urban localities and identities, social, functional and migration patterns, and scales and institutions of governance’ and focuses on ‘urban form and structure at all scale levels from that of the street and neighbourhood to that of whole regions’ (MSc Coordination, 2014).

In relation to this, first of all, I must admit that one of the key challenges during graduation, for me as a foreigner, was to understand the Chinese context. Now that I look back and evaluate the process, the field trip to Shenzhen inevitably contributed to the purification of my thoughts towards the current problems. Hence, in order to achieve set thesis goals, it was crucial to investigate multiple layers of the context. The influence of policies, governance models, and the development strategies on urban domain were analysed from the scale of the whole region to the local scale. Also, the thesis investigated multiple levels from the social perspective – the past and current trends, and the roots of the Chinese society in order to understand both the differences and similarities.

The identity of Shenzhen city was researched through its urban morphology and social patterns. Its urban structure contains all stages of the development of the physical environment (fig. 75) from traditional dwellings, urban villages, and industrial parks to unaffordable for casual migrants high-rise housing. Walkability is a very specific social pattern, which led to three criteria – permeability, proximity and places. Implementation of these criteria is the key factor that is enabled to bring urban and social interaction closer to each other.
To achieve this, alternative governance and planning model is developed, which would convince collaboration between various stakeholders by offering direct benefits.

3. The relationship between research and design

The research was based on built theoretical framework and empirical study reflecting the main research question ‘How can public space become activating space that encourages socio-urban interaction and therefore stimulates greater adaptation to the new urban environment?’ and sub-research questions. Literature review helped to identify the importance and role of public space in the process of bonding with the community and the locality, therefore adapting to the urban environment. As spare time of migrant workers in Dalang is very limited, the measure of easy accessibility and physical proximity to activating spaces plays an essential role. If activating space is located in a walkable distance from home, it has more chance to become a part of migrants’ daily life and trigger a greater extent of users.

Many scholars like J. Sepck (2012), J. Jacobs (1961), etc., analysed spatial configurations that contributes to liveability in the neighbourhood, therefore inhabitants’ well-being through attachment to the place of residence. All the findings were categorized into three main criteria – permeability, proximity and places that would empower public space to convert into an activating space. Thus, the pilot project introduced

![Fig 75. Different stages of urban village development](Source: Ruben Hoek, field trip 2014)
how these criteria are translated into the urban domain and visualized in two detailed locations – industrial park and riverbank. Transformed industrial park provides diverse public facilities like shopping area, community center with educational facilities, playgrounds, square, outdoor sport facilities, urban garden, etc. A walking route along the river offers recreation and more passive urban amenities. Community members are invited to contribute to maintenance and construction of activating spaces. They can make urban furniture and household decorations, establish urban gardens and change the knowledge with neighbours. Therefore, migrants can have an opportunity to work for common goals, build ties, empower themselves and learn new skills.

Another important issue that needs to be highlighted is the ability for migrants to claim and alter the space according to their ambitions. Some areas within the activating space have a greater variety of potential uses than the single fixed one. Let's take an example of Green square as an example (fig.76). Neighbouring residents can cultivate empty plot of land and apply mono-functional or multi-functional program. Land can be turned it into an urban garden or mini forest; huge playground with various facilities for different age groups or plant a lawn or pave the surface and leave the plot open with few green zones and benches for daily temporal activities like square dancing, morning exercising or outdoor workshops. Flexibility of spatial program empowers migrants to be creative, make decisions, collaborate with other people, extends their social network and engages with the place.

Mentioned criteria intermingle among each
other. Permeability increases accessibility and eliminates physical obstacles. However, even the best permeable location would not use its potential without being proximate to people concentration points and places, which would give a reason to reach that location. It also would face difficulties to be established without collaboration with various stakeholders. The idea of criteria is to influence the behavior of social capita through improved spatial conditions and stimulate the transformation from feeling lost in the city to starting feeling like at home.

4. The relationship between the project and the wider social context

The project concerns the possibilities for urban fabric to precede the migrants’ adaptation to the city life. According to the World Bank (2015), the proportion of rural vs. urban population in China is gradually increasing, as in the whole word. Domestication of the urban environment is a substantial for each newcomer. Urban regeneration can be a key factor for inspiration by showing the value of a place that tend to be considered as poor living environment. Improved spatial conditions and participation can increase community pride of their locality (like ‘Favela painting project’, HAAS & HAHN, 2010), and hopefully, implementation of bottom-up initiatives will slow down the current Chinese urban redevelopment model, which is based on complete demolition of an old human scale urban domain and constructing shiny, far from ground level new developments.

Proposed urban development model strongly emphasizes the involvement of local voice into top-down planning process. At this moment, all the power of decision-making is concentrated in the hands of governmental authorities and wealthy stakeholders. Couple of weeks ago I had a very promising discussion with Brechtje Spreeuwers, from MLA+ office based in Rotterdam. She made lot of research in Shenzhen and shared her experience. She noted that ‘some time ago authorities were very critical about asking people what they want. Gathering people means arguments, loud discussions and many complain that are hard to control. But once they were convinced to try organize a workshop and invite locals to participate, it brought such a success, that nowadays each time when we meet authorities they ask when the workshop could be held again’. This proves that situation in China is really changing, slowly, but changing.
CONCLUSIONS
The title ‘Domesticating Dalang’ presents the ambition that has guided the research. Domesticated urbanity refers to being transformed and applied for people to live in or in other words, ‘Domesticating Dalang’ means taming a productive area so it can serve the needs of its residents through activating public space empowered to create ties within the community and their urban locality, therefore help to find a feeling of home. This definition directly tackles the identified socio-urban conflict of Dalang. Thesis primarily attempts to change the attitude towards the existing urban structures in Shenzhen’s periphery and migrant workers.

Bach (2011) notes that ‘ninety-five percent of Shenzhen’s population was born elsewhere’. Dalang represents an even more extreme proportion; only 2% of residents are born in the land of present Shenzhen’s territory. What does this mean? It is a clear evidence of absent migrants’ attachment within the society and their locality. Migrants feel neglected from the right to feel real citizens also due to political reforms like the still quite stringent ‘hukou’ system. Adapting to urbanity stands for individual’s appreciation of his environment based on daily physical and social interaction in a settled location (Gifford, 1997), but lacking public facilities limits the opportunities to achieve it. There is hardly any room for personal development and diverse alternatives for leisure time activities, where migrant workers could enrich their daily life.

Dalang embodies a typical industrial neighborhood in Shenzhen which embraces the consequences of production oriented fast urbanization (Walcott, 2007). Great obstacles like land shortage and destructive projects seeking only financial benefits ignores the necessity for alternative urban development strategies. Nevertheless, the concern about liveability within the periphery has been slowly rising. Instead of being focused only on the migration to the city
and working to provide financial support for families, new generation of migrants seeks for permanent residency (Friedman, 2005; Chan, 2011). The municipality of Dalang has supported plenty of bottom-up initiatives that tackle social problems. As periphery experiences less pressure for the redevelopment in comparison with the former SSEZ, it gives the opportunity to implement human scale oriented strategies, reveal the potential to create well-being and supplement Shenzhen’s image of a global city.

Public space can activate positive relations between social and urban interaction enriched with the sense of belonging to the community and the urban locality, which is fundamental to facilitate personal attachments to one’s environment (Dorst, 2012), therefore, domesticate the urban environment. So I raised the concern of how Dalang, an area for production, could become a place for living; how it could be domesticated allowing the facilitation of harmony with its inhabitants.

Research aimed to figure out what influence on social capita is needed to activate people, and identify spatial characteristics that allow this to happen. The greatest social value of public space is ability to empower, bring the sense of control and learn from other users. Jacobs (1961) argued that cities have the capability of providing something for everybody, but only when they are created by everybody, which reminds that if a place for people to live in is apt to be created, those people must participate in a creative process. Spatial configurations that invite to act are usually easily accessible, let define small-scale territory, provide a shelter or offer to take a rest, etc. All kind of outdoor facilities give a clue what ventures and behavior are expected.

Theoretical findings were grouped under three criteria – permeability, proximity and places. In order to make these criteria be implemented, thesis suggests alternatives in governance model, planning and design strategies. The governance model encourages collaboration between the major stakeholders, the most importantly Joint-Stock Companies and industrial park owners. Stakeholders can be subsidized in return to permission intervene their territories. Also, financial support from municipality reaches collaborators in return to establishment and constant maintenance of public spaces. A role of designer is emphasized to ensure creative spatial designs that reflect the needs of local inhabitants. New policy guarantees the involvement of local representatives and encourages welcoming conditions for personal participation in decision-making processes. In this way all stakeholders become engaged with the environment, which increases the awareness of local needs and living conditions.

The pilot project acts as a showcase. Its urban composition involves all discovered urban variations within Dalang that allows strategic solutions to be implemented in other similar locations. I believe that spatial reconfiguration brings more value to the place than replacement. Design solutions physically embrace permeability, proximity and places. Few spatial guides are offered for each criteria as various conflicting situations has to be solved. Activating space has to represent a particular identity, otherwise it remains unrecognized and the

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societal influence declines.

However, it is hard to evaluate to what extent the approach of activating space might work. Although Dalang experiences less pressure for urban renewal, industrial park owners and villagers, as new landlords, are highly profit-orientated. Central district of Shenzhen undoubtedly proves it. Baishidzhou urban village within the former SEZ refers to only one of plenty cases. During the field trip in late 2014 November, our research group visited Baishidzhou. Back then, agreements for renewal plans between villagers and developers were already ongoing, and it was predicted to take several years till the first actions take place. Unfortunately, despite of all the benefits and values of urban villages, the demolition has already started. The pace of China’s urbanization remains unpredictably fast that no urban planning is able to catch up. So there is a big chance that even after establishing activating spaces in Dalang, the actor holding the biggest financial power would overcome bottom-up approaches.

The showcase of pilot project should inspire to use spatial potentials to make Dalang liveable, therefore domesticated. The lessons learnt can improve the planning and design strategies and later be adapted to other similar locations. It is clear that current planning model does not lead towards sustainable future; yet, uncertainty always exists if proposed ideas would consolidate and spread through the area or remain just as a vision. Nevertheless, I believe that this approach could make essential changes in the existing attitude of socio-urban interaction in Shenzhen.


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