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INTRODUCTION
Main research question: What spatial conditions create opportunities for slow process economic upgrading in the Shenzhen region and how can interventions in the development process of these villages, both formal and informal, contribute to a more inclusive city?
The role of informal development in the urbanisation of the PRD

- In recent decades the Pearl River Delta region experienced massive urbanisation.
- Spatial growth was combined with rapid demographic growth.
- The pattern of urbanisation was that of factory compounds and informal development around these compounds.
- The informal developments in China became known as urban villages.
- The urban villages offer many opportunities for migrants to find a job.

The informal village as... a solution

The government was unable to meet the demand for housing

Positive spiral of increasing economic opportunity

- Income for migrants
- Economic opportunity in village
- Informal investments in village
- Higher income landlords
- Real estate development by landlords
- Money and information send back to home village
- More migrants migrate to city
- More migrants migrate to city

Economic opportunity

Development process
The informal village as... a solution... a problem

As density of the villages grew, the problems increased too

Positive spiral of increasing economic opportunity

- Economic opportunity in village
- Real estate development by landlords
- Increasing land price and gradual sale to government and developers
- Lower economic opportunity in village
- Government develops negative perspective on villages
- Migrants return to home village
- Lower urban quality of village
- Less possibility to invest for inhabitants

Negative spiral of decreasing economic opportunity

- Economic opportunity in village
- Real estate development by landlords
- Increasing land price and gradual sale to government and developers
- Lower economic opportunity in village
- Government develops negative perspective on villages
- Migrants return to home village
- Lower urban quality of village
- Less possibility to invest for inhabitants
The informal village as... a solution... a problem... a opportunity

The villages have a crucial role in the system of migration

Positive spiral of increasing economic opportunity

- Higher income for migrants
- More economic opportunity in village
- Real estate development by landlords
- Increasing landprice and gradual sale to government and developers
- Government develops negative perspective on villages
- Lower economic opportunity in village
- More informal investments in village
- Higher income landlords, government and migrants
- Integrated urban plan between villages and rest of city fabric
- Money and information send back to home village
- More migrants migrate to city

Negative spiral of decreasing economic opportunity

- Lower urban quality of village
- Less possibility to invest for inhabitants
- Migrants return to home village
- Lower economic opportunity in village
- Higher income landlords, government and migrants
- Real estate development by landlords
- Increasing landprice and gradual sale to government and developers
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- Lower economic opportunity in village
- More informal investments in village
- Higher income landlords, government and migrants
- Integrated urban plan between villages and rest of city fabric
- Money and information send back to home village
- More migrants migrate to city
Current development strategies are not able to integrate informality

The problem statement of this project is that because of a failure to recognize the integrative role of the informal villages, the villages are not integrated into the formal planning practice, which prevents migrants from successfully entering a slow process socio-economic upgrading process.

The aim of the project is to formulate a spatial language for understanding informal development that will allow me to integrate the informal urban villages in a spatial development plan for the Guangming district in such a way that development of the villages is directed away from its current trajectory towards a more inclusive model that creates opportunities for slow socio-economic upgrading.
The Guangming district as a research site for my project

A new district in Shenzhen scheduled for new development
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK
Informal development is not a singular development, but can be understood from different perspectives. Different perspectives influence the relation between formal and informal development.
Different perspectives influence the relation between formal and informal development.

- Informal development is a more academic way of describing, what is often called a slum.
- In short, informal development is the process of self-organisation, usually related to the urban poor.

**Poverty perspective**

"Informality is something bad, that can be resolved through an increase in formal planning."

**Cultural perspective**

"Informality is a natural part of daily live, separated from formal planning."

**Legal perspective**

"Informality is a reaction to failures in the formal planning."

**Dualistic perspective**

"Informality always acts in co-existence and precedes formal planning."
The perspectives on informality inform the main stakeholders and by their decisions they shape the development of the village. The spatial transformation of the village and the transformation of rural migrants to urbanites happen together.
The urban village has an intermediate role in the city

The urban villages does not only supply houses, but has a much larger role in the system of migration.

The fieldwork in Guangming revealed many cases of people in transition. One example is of a migrant arriving in Guangming little over a decade ago. He started working in a factory for the first years of his arrival. When he had saved enough money, he was able to open a small groceryshop in one of the urban villages. Business was good and he was able to hire some employees. After another period of saving, he was able to buy his own car and work as an illegal taxi driver.
Informal development will go through a fixed set of phases in which informal economic opportunity will firstly increase and then decrease again. The goal is to achieve an situation in which integration is optimal.
Informal development follows a fixed pattern of development

**Altough informal developments appears chaotic, it follows a certain logic**

**Urgency to intervene in Guangming**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Development process</th>
<th>Development patterns, Hao</th>
<th>Resilience, Name</th>
<th>Types of informal growth, Dovey</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Expansion (as development pattern)</td>
<td>Growth</td>
<td>Settling (as type of growth)</td>
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<td>constructing housing on unclaimed land</td>
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<td>without any legal transaction</td>
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<td>Densiification (as development pattern)</td>
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<td>constructing in leftover fragments of urban space</td>
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<td>housing are being demolished</td>
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<td>Conservations (as development pattern)</td>
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<td>the new mode of production are balanced by the risk of new structural changes</td>
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<td>Release</td>
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<td>Re-organization</td>
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<td>new modes of production are being developed</td>
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<td>Redevelopment (as development pattern)</td>
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<td>tabula rasa planning of new high-end functions</td>
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**Informal development follows a fixed pattern of development**

- Settling (as type of growth): constructing housing on unclaimed land without any legal transaction.
- Inserting (as type of growth): constructing in leftover fragments of urban space.
- Attaching (as type of growth): housing is constructed onto formal urban structures.
- Reverse growth (as type of growth): housing are being demolished.
- Conservations (as development pattern): the new mode of production are balanced by the risk of new structural changes.
- Release: external forces push the system over a threshold.
- Re-organization: new modes of production are being developed.
- Redevelopment (as development pattern): tabula rasa planning of new high-end functions.

**Altough informal developments appears chaotic, it follows a certain logic**

- Urban areas take the opportunity to exploit the new mode of production.
- New modes of production are balanced by the risk of new structural changes.
- External forces push the system over a threshold.

**Urgency to intervene in Guangming**

- Rural villages take the lead in the industrialization and urbanization of the city.

**Development Patterns, Hao**

- Expansion (as development pattern): abundant agricultural land is developed as housing areas.
- Densification (as development pattern): new houses are constructed within the village on open spaces that are left.
- Intensification (as development pattern): floors are added to the existing buildings.
- Demolishment (as development pattern): old buildings are demolished to make way for new buildings.
- Redevelopment (as development pattern): tabula rasa planning of new high-end functions.

**Resilience, Name**

- Growth: the urban area takes the opportunity to exploit the new mode of production.
- Release: external forces push the system over a threshold.

**Types of Informal Growth, Dovey**

- Settling (as type of growth): constructing housing on unclaimed land without any legal transaction.
- Inserting (as type of growth): constructing in leftover fragments of urban space.
- Attaching (as type of growth): housing is constructed onto formal urban structures.
- Reverse growth (as type of growth): housing are being demolished.

**Rural Industrialization, Desakota, McGee**

- Rural industrialization: rural villages take the lead in the industrialization and urbanization of the city.
ANALYSIS OF THE EXISTING SITUATION
When applying the theoretical framework to the informal development in Shenzhen, different elements appear to be of importance to the slow process socio-economic upgrading of migrants.
Every village starts out as an rural village.

No rural villages left in Shenzhen

A rural village is a village that is self-sufficient in its consumption and production

No migrants in the village
Sub-urban village

First signs of urbanisation

A sub-urban village develops industry and small commercial facilities, while still having a large share of agricultural land.

Migrants can find a cheap residential space here, and work in the informal factories. Using their skills as farmers, they can also continue to work in agriculture.

No village → Rural village → Suburban village → Peri-urban village → Urban village → Demolished village

- Urban gymnastic equipment have been installed in most urban villages.
- These racks are used to dry laundry.
- The recreation ground offers space for the people to temporarily store their construction material.
- Most of the halls are several hundreds years old and still have most of the original.
- The ancestral hall is the center of the original community that lived in the village.
- The halls are maintained by collective funds from the village committee.
- Village is still under heavy construction.
- All buildings comply with the height limit of 12 floors.
- Village is still under heavy construction.
- Older buildings that were constructed under different planning regulations.
- The market hall varies between actual concrete buildings, to covered outdoor squares.
- Very busy with people.
- Fresh food constitutes the biggest part of the market.
- A truck supplies new goods to the market.
- The ancestral hall is the center of the original community that lived in the village.
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Peri-urban village

All land has been occupied with informal activities

A peri-urban village is defined as a village with a strong mix between industry, agriculture, housing and commerce.

Migrants have a large range of opportunities to find employment, start a business or use facilities specially meant for the floating population.
Urban village

- Village in the city, surrounded by formal development

A urban village is defined as a village that is reduced to its residential core, as it has sold of all its other land

Much land with informal activities sold off. Especially caters to the formal city as cheap housing and food related program

- Village in the city, surrounded by formal development
- Rural village
- Suburban village
- Peri-urban village
- Urban village
- Demolished village

Village developmental stages

- Village is still under heavy construction
- All buildings comply with the height limit of 12 floors
- Older buildings that were constructed under different planning regulations
- Urban gymnastics equipment have been installed in most urban villages
- These racks are used to dry laundry
- The recreation ground offers space for the people to temporary store their construction material
- The markethall varies between actual concrete buildings, to covered outdoor squares
- A truck supplies new good to the market
- Fresh food constitutes the biggest part of the market
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- Most of the halls are several hundreds years old and still have most of the original
- The ancestral hall is the centre of the original community that lived in the village
- The halls are maintained by collective funds from the village committee
- Most land with informal activities sold off. Especially caters to the formal city as cheap housing and food related program
- Economic opportunity
- Development process
Demolished village

- Demolished village, redeveloped in tabula rasa fashion
- A demolished village is completely sold off to and replace with private development
- No opportunities left for migrants to upgrade their lives

No village
Rural village
Suburban village
Peri-urban village
Urban village
Demolished village

Most of the halls are several hundreds years old and still have most of the original

The ancestral hall is the centre of the original community that lived in the village

The halls are maintained by collective funds from the village committee

The market hall varies between actual concrete buildings, to covered outdoor squares

A truck supplies new goods to the market

Urban gymnastics equipment have been installed in most urban villages

These racks are used to dry laundry

The recreation ground offers space for the people to temporary store their construction material

Urban village

Village is still under heavy construction

All buildings comply with the height limit of 12 floors

Older buildings that were constructed under different planning regulations

Fresh food constitutes the biggest part of the market

Very busy with people

The halls vary between actual concrete buildings, to covered outdoor squares

A truck supplies fresh goods to the market

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Most of the halls are several hundreds years old and still have most of the original

The ancestral hall is the centre of the original community that lived in the village

The halls are maintained by collective funds from the village committee

A demolished village is completely sold off to and replaced with private development

No opportunities left for migrants to upgrade their lives
What elements are important for the integration of migrants

**POVERTY PERSPECTIVE**
- No village: No basic utilities
- Rural village: Poor urban community
- Suburban village: High density urban environment that is crime ridden
- Peri-urban village: All signs of poverty are gone
- Urban village: Completely legal

**LEGAL PERSPECTIVE**
- No village: Legal farming community
- Rural village: Village inside municipal boundaries
- Suburban village: Security of tenure
- Peri-urban village: Much illegal activity
- Urban village: Completely legal

**CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE**
- No village: Ancestral hall
- Rural village: Implementation urban facilities
- Suburban village: Cultural square
- Peri-urban village: Social network
- Urban village: Room for a global culture

**DUALISTIC PERSPECTIVE**
- No village: Starting point for migration
- Rural village: Initial commercial activity
- Suburban village: Market hall
- Peri-urban village: Residential space for migrants with employment in city
- Urban village: No room for the floating population

**Development process**
The informal network is historically grown under the impact of the landscape, Chinese perception of the build environment and informal growth. Through the informal growth process, an ‘interior’ space was created between different neighborhoods that act as the main urban space of the village.
An overview of the Guangming district

- almost 1,000,000 migrants
- 42,000 residents with hukou (±4% of total)
- 156 km² (Amsterdam has 166 km²)
- Two subdistricts:
  - Gongming (100 km²)
  - Guangming state farm (56 km²)
- Encircled by hills, only 53% suitable for construction
At the front of the house is the kitchen and the bathroom. The ceiling is flat and lower than the rest of the house. The central part of the house is the living area. A ladder takes you to the second floor. The back of the house is used as a bedroom or storeroom. The second floor is reserved for sleeping. The toilet is not connected to any sewage system. Posters above and beside the main door are a sign of good luck for the Chinese new year.

Most Hutongs face water, dictated by Feng Shui rules. There is little public space between the houses. The alleyways around the house are called hutongs. The hutong that lies in front of the house is called a front alley. The side walls are bearing walls and the back walls are non-bearing walls. The natural landscape of hills, rivers, and small villages is spatially analyzed. The alleyways around the house are called hutongs. They are narrow and曲折 (winding). Most Hutongs face water, as dictated by Feng Shui rules. There is little public space between the houses. The central part of the house is the living area. The toilet is not connected to any sewage system. Posters above and beside the main door are a sign of good luck for the Chinese new year.
The village development is related to the Chinese built environment

- A grid of 10x10 meters, as determined by the village committee. Each family is given an equal amount of lots and has the right to develop their own lots.
- Height of buildings varies between 4 and 12 floors.
- Shops or workshops on the ground floor.
- Metal bars in front of windows against the threat of burglary.
- With the exception of the main shopping streets, all alleyways are roughly 2 meters wide.
- One single apartment costs between 2000 yuan.
- All electricity, gas and water utilities are placed on the facade of the building, allowing cheap and easy maintenance.
- One single apartment houses 2 to 4 persons.
- Buildings operate with a single staircase and without elevator.
- Single front door gives access to the central staircase.
- Buildings are related to the Chinese built environment.
The village development is related to the Chinese built environment.

The individual single-storied buildings are approximately 30 by 10 meters. The units are arranged in a loose grid formation. A single opening in the facade gives access to the multifunctional space. In this space a small communal or shop unit is usually four or five units per building.

All buildings are painted white to reflect the summer heat.
The village development is related to the Chinese built environment.
The bussystem as indicator of informal activity

Busses are flexible and therefore a good way to find human movement patterns
The amenities as an indicator of informal activity

Many amenities for the floating population are organized by the villagers against relatively high prices.
Formal shops as an indicator of informal activity

Markets are pivotal in the commercial system
Formal shops as an indicator of informal activity

Markets are pivotal in the commercial system
Natural landscape before 1980
Orientation of villages towards river before 1980

Spatial analysis
Collective space in front of village before 1980
System of old routes connecting villages before 1980
Perpendicular roads connecting hills, village and river before 1980
Village expansions in coherence with regional structure after 1980
Market buildings at the crossroads of roads after 1980
Commercial activity along lines in the network after 1980

Spatial analysis
Urban highway follows regional structure after 1980
Full network after 1980

Spatial analysis
A system of village interior spaces connected by a regional network
The informally created network has a quality to provide slow process socio-economic upgrading for the floating population. The integrative quality of the village can be described in terms of its embeddedness in the regional structure and the quality of the interior space.
Quality of the regional fabric

- The leafy structure of the fabric allows for natural concentrations
- The hierarchy of the fabric allows for a spectrum of opportunities
- Spatial continuity over time allows from gradual change

Grid structure
Leafy structure
Non-hierarchical structure
Hierarchical structure
The village interior space is the space that is created between the different phases of expansion. Because this space is embedded in the regional network it is the main space for informal activity in the village.

Qualities in 3 parts: fabric, facilities and edge.
The edge of the village interior space

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shelter</th>
<th>Accessible</th>
<th>Informative</th>
<th>Flexible</th>
<th>Encroachment</th>
<th>Vertical Encroachment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lighting</td>
<td>Pedestrian bridge</td>
<td>Advertisements</td>
<td>Workshop</td>
<td>Street market</td>
<td>Laundry</td>
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<td>Natural shadow</td>
<td>Busstop</td>
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<td>Shops</td>
<td>Eating house</td>
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<td>Motorcycle</td>
<td>Exhaust fumes</td>
<td>Residences</td>
<td>Local performance</td>
<td>Construction site</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gateway</td>
<td>Load/unload</td>
<td>Landmarks</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Informative

Shelter, accessible, flexible, encroachment, vertical encroachment, capturing the quality of informality.
When the empirical data from the spatial research is applied to the theoretical framework, the villages in Guangming can be categorized in five different developmental stages. The spatial distribution of the different village types follows a logic that can be explained using the informative framework.
7 characteristics plotted for 52 village in Guangming

Subdistrict

Village size

Presence of gated housing

Presence of urban facilities

Presence of commercial activity

Presence of old core

Presence of agriculture

Number
Relating patterns to informative framework explains differences

The commercial activity of a village is closely related to the size of the village. A market building seems to boost the commercial activity of a village strongly. The commercial activity is not only related to its size and the presence of a market, but also to its position to other villages.
Overview of villages in Guangming per stage - Peripheral village

- Dependant on horticulture, no industry. Established in communist era.
- The location of the villages coincides with the Guangming subdistrict.
- Main challenge is the development of industry.
Overview of villages in Guangming per stage - Production village

- Villages with only residential and industrial development
- The location of the villages is around the Gongming and Guangming centre
- Main challenge is the expansion of commercial activity
Overview of villages in Guangming per stage - Market village

- Villages with market
- The location of the villages coincides with the two main river arteries
- Main challenge is the diversification of existing program
Overview of villages in Guangming per stage - Administrative village

Agglomerated village

- Restructured urban plan
- The location of the villages coincides with seats of government
- Villagers grown together
- The location of the villages coincides with centre of Gongming
- Main challenge is the restore the fabric

Economic opportunity
Development process
The five village types form the basis for the regional development proposal.
DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL
The current interaction between informal and formal process creates an undesirable path towards decline of informal opportunities in the villages. Based on the five village types and the historic sequence of networks, a integrative carrying structure is proposed for the region. This structure has five layers which are discussed separately.
A regional carrying structure should steer development

- The functioning of the informal activity is highly dependent on a good network.
- The threat is that this system is currently under pressure for development.
- My proposal is to use the existing structure to steer development.
The functioning of horticulture in Guangming offers a job for many new. The threat is that this system is currently under pressure for development. My proposal is to maintain the existing horticultural lands.
Transformation of historical areas

- The function of historical areas is lost
- The threat is that these places are the cheapest to develop
- My proposal is to transform the historical areas into new functions
The functioning of public transport is currently very poor in the Guangmin district.

The threat is that the implementation of this system will not contribute to the situation of the population.

My proposal is to integrate the metrosystem in the informal villages, using the existing structure.
New industrial development

- The functioning of industry is the economic backbone of the district and
- The threat is that the development of new factories will happen is isolated compounds
- My proposal is to link the development of new factories to the development of peripheral villages
The functioning of commercial activity is an essential element in the inclusion.

The threat is that the existing streets will be neglected and will concentrate in shopping.

My proposal is to extend and complement the existing system with new connections and market halls.
New informal opportunities

The interventions in the Guangming district should lead to maintenance of opportunities and the creating of new opportunities

Opportunity through transformation of historical area
Opportunity through new market hall
Opportunity through existing market hall
Opportunity through new metrostation
Opportunity through existing horticulture
Opportunity through new industry
The current interaction between informal and formal process creates an undesirable path towards decline of informal opportunities in the villages. Based on the five village types and the historic sequence of networks, a integrative carrying structure is proposed for the region. This structure has five layers which are discussed separately.
Interventions at village scale should fit developmental stage

- Using informal quality as rules for development
- Extension of village interior space to create more opportunities

Social fabric
Ancestral hall
Sheltered edge

Uniform fabric
Market hall
Accessible edge

Continuous fabric
School building
Informative edge

Balanced fabric
Cultural square
Flexible edge

Encroachable edge
Agglomorated village - Restoring fabric

Focus on green lines

New interior space

Regional fabric

Village design

Restructuring edge
Metro station
Tram station
New businesses
Semi-private space
New interior space
Interior space
Existing fabric

Square
Park
Parking places
Markethall
School
Ancestral hall
Performance stage

Interior space
Park
Production villages - New commercial activity

Yellow commercial streets connect agglomerated village with two production villages

New interior space

Regional fabric

Village design

Restructuring edge

Metro station

Tram station

New businesses

Markethall

School

Performance stage

Parking places

Park

Square

Ancient hall

New interior space

Existing fabric

Interior space

Semi-private space

New businesses
Focus on green lines

Market village - Balanced growth

Regional fabric

Village design

New interior space

Restructuring edge

Metro station

Tram station

New businesses

Semi-private space

New interior space

Interior space

Existing fabric

Markethall

School

Performance stage

Parking places

Park

Square
Peripheral villages - New industrial development

Blue urban highway connects to highway

Regional fabric

Village design

New interior space
Peripheral villages - Maintenance of horticulture

Focus on horticulture
Current approaches to informal development address different issues. My own interventions are based on a village specific approach.
Existing approaches address different issues, depending on the perspective.

The existing approaches are either physical interventions or social programs, and either state-led or self-organized.
THE CULTIVATION OF URBAN VILLAGES