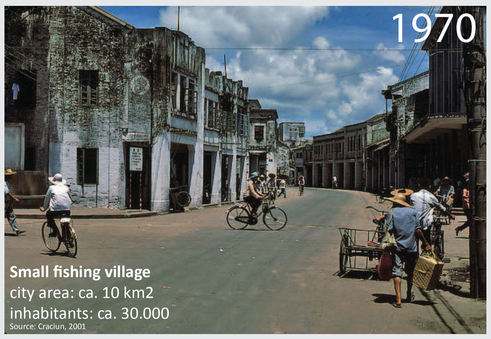
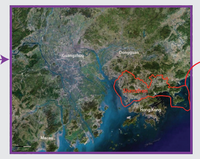
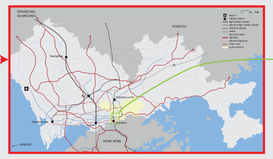
A Network to Network

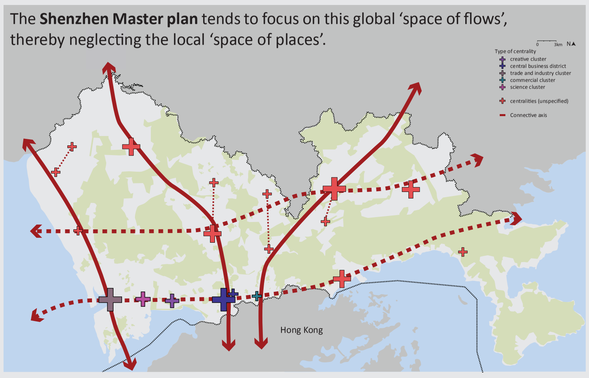
Creating a system of places, integrated into the urban network, that supports inhabitants in their everyday lives and stimulates the integration of the migrant population . The case of Shenzhen, China

the modern-day city of SHENZHEN









CITY DEVELOPMENT

..is mostly commited by city government
..follows a top-down hierarchical system
..uses planning through master plans

The master plan points out cores of development which are functioning as key centralities within the bigger network of capital flows. **This kind of city planning leads to a splintered city:** the main hubs are very well developed and connected to each other in a bigger network, whereas the left over areas in between lack a basic system.

> *'It is this distinctive feature of being globally connected and locally disconnected, physically and socially, that makes mega cities a new urban form.'* - Castells, 1996: 405

LOWER CLASS MIGRANTS

Lower class migrants form a segregated group within the existing urban system. The segregation is two-fold: **social and spatial segregation** (Liu, Li and Breitung, 2012; Madrazo and Kempen, 2012; Putten, 2011). This is the inhabitant groups that suffers most from the local disconnection that Castells describes.

Migrants tend to group together in so-called **'urban villages'**, since these areas offer low rent residences.

GOVERNMENT INTEGRATION APPROACH

The current approach conducted by the Shenzhen government is aimed at spatial renewal:
- remove old housing
- relocate villagers
- room for new development

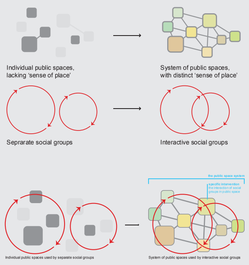
This approach improves the spatial quality of the site but does not adress to the socio-spatial problems of the local inhabitants.

ALTERNATIVE INTEGRATION APPROACH - PUBLIC SPACE

Inter-group social interaction is of great importance in stimulating the integration of migrants into the urban environment (Liu, Li and Breitung, 2012; Gordon, 1964; Massey 1986). But the spatial segregation prevent these contacts from happening. However, **public space** helps to reduce tension and promote exchange among different social and economic groups (Kohn, 2004). *Thus, public space is able to play a key role in the integration of migrant groups into the urban system.*

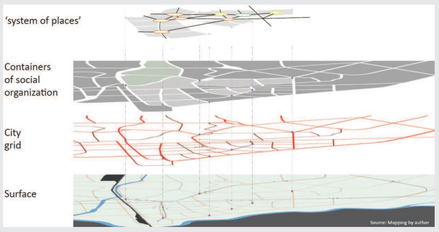
However, current problems in public space prevent the spaces from actively helping the migrant integration in Shenzhen.

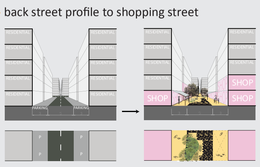
- Lack of a public space network
(Yu and Padua, 2010; Miao, 2011)
- Lack of sense of place
(Cosgrove, 1998; Yu and Padua, 2010; Miao, 2011)
- Priveledged target groups
(Amin and Graham, 1999; Miao, 2011)

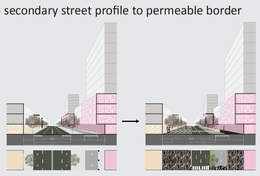


STRATEGY

The city structure of Shenzhen is build up out of an extensive main city grid, embodying the global connection Castells talks about. The strategy is to imply a system of places on the intermediate scale, to bring structure to the lower scale levels and connect the city grid to the local level as well.



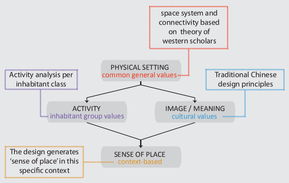




DESIGN

The design proposal is aimed at creating 'sense of place' in order to improve the public social life. An increase in the amount of activity will lead to improvement of social interaction. Moreover, the conducted activity analysis takes the preferences of all social classes into acount, without excluding certain groups.

Scheme for creating context-based 'sense of place'

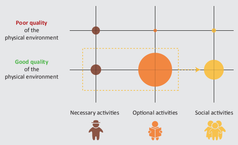


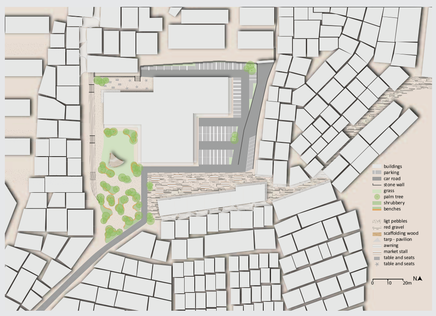
adapted from Montgomery, 1998

Local site analysis

Hubei Village square needs the most improvement

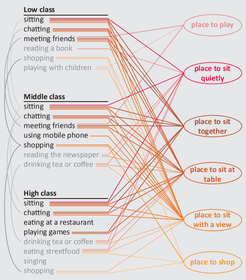
Activity analysis - theory





Market place

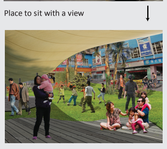
Activity analysis - interview results



Place to sit quietly

Place to sit with a view

Place to sit at a table



Solutions

1. **creating a SYSTEM OF PLACES**
(Heidegger, 1971; Montgomery, 1998; Friedmann, 2006)
2. **designing SENSE OF PLACE**
(Cullen, 1961; Jacobs, 1961; Lynch, 1961; Montgomery, 1998)
3. **aim at SOCIAL INTERACTION**
(Kostof 1992; Massey, Allen and Pile, 1999; Kohn, 2004; Sennett, 2004)

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