EVOLUTION OF A TYPE

STREET VENDING AS URBAN STRATEGY

IN CHINA

YUYING SHEN
RISD MLA 2019

Evolotion of a Type:
Street Vending as Urban Strategy
In Guangzhou, China

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MLA Landscape Architecture, RISD

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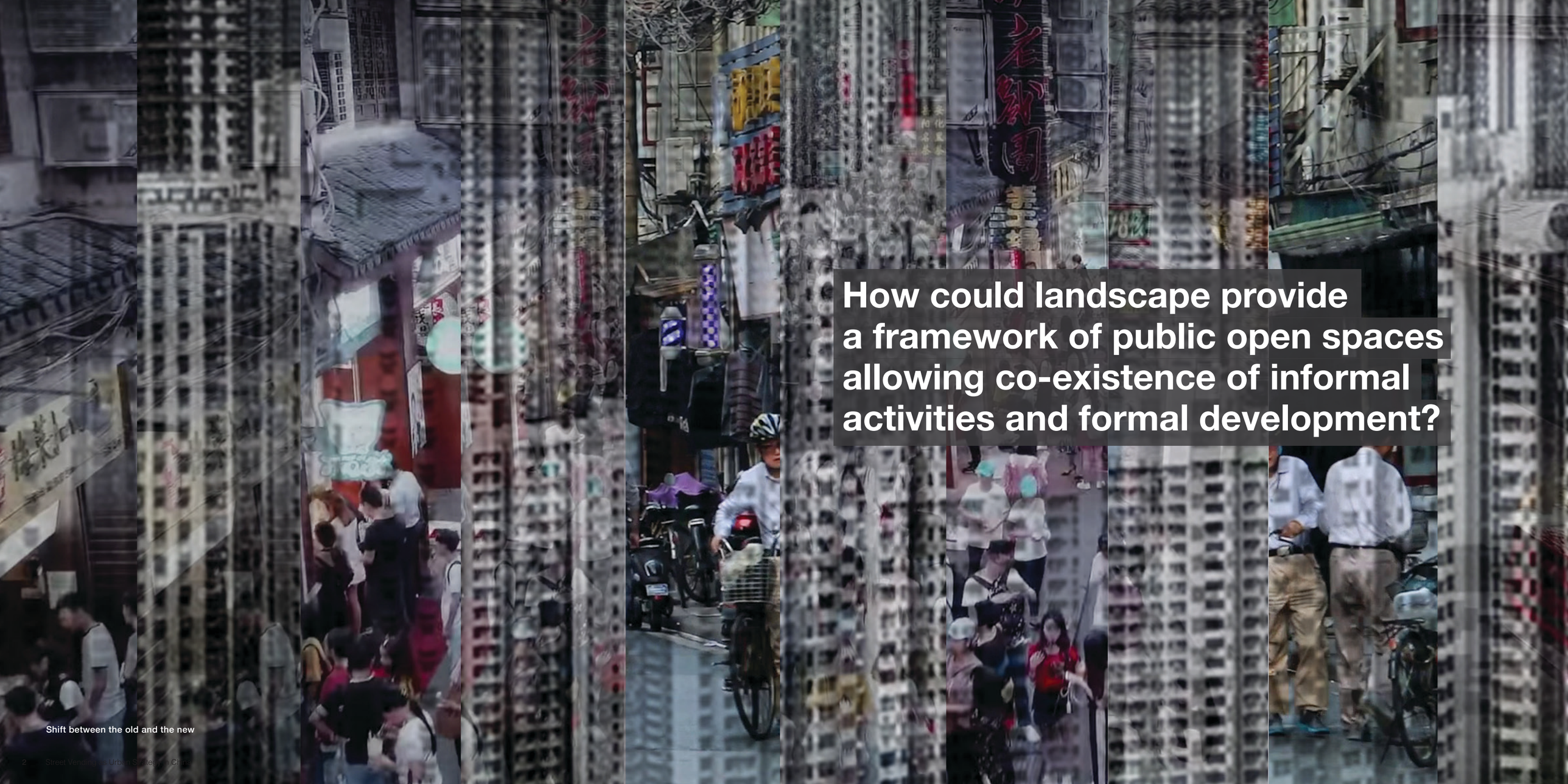


How could landscape provide a framework of public open spaces allowing co-existence of informal activities and formal development?

Shift between the old and the new

Introduction

As China continues its program of building new cities and encouraging urban resettlement from smaller towns and the countryside, informal activities that were once typical of urban areas – such as street vending – are being evicted by the government in the name of cleanliness and beautification. In reality, the motivation of eviction has to do with land values and the desire to replace the low-end population: street markets in the downtown areas could be developed into programs that bring large-scale money-making, like shopping malls; street vendors are viewed as undisciplined, messy and outmoded.

If we recognize the conflict between the government and the public, how can landscape provide a framework of public open spaces that coordinates, compromises and bridges the gap? Can designers use street vending as urban strategy to revitalize urban development?

This thesis takes street vending as activism. Through creating a matrix of spatial types for street vending worldwide, the next step of the evolution is discovered. Using a series of strategies to different urban conditions in Guangzhou, the project considers the direction of urbanization towards the east for three city areas: the historic city, the modern city and the new city. Finally, a new vending prototype is proposed to improve living environment and boost individual businesses in the urban village, New city.

Night of old town in Shanghai:
Liveliness and neighborly contact with street vendors

Everyday life with street vendors

Street vendors sell fresh vegetables, fruits, produce, and groceries every day. It adds convenience to the neighbors and has been integrated into urban life.

Before, a vital night market.
Pengpu Night Market, Shanghai

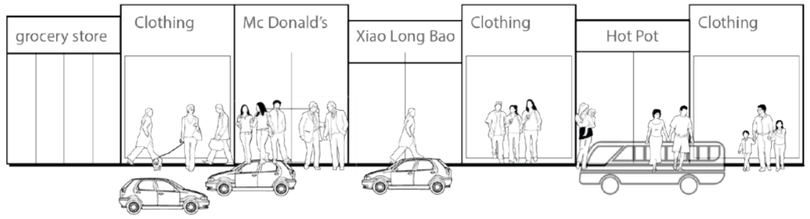
Before being evicted in 2014, Pengpu Night Market was the most famous and busiest night market in Shanghai. It gathered thousands of street vendors and provided food, shopping, and entertainment. The business and vitality could be compared to Nanjing Road in Shanghai or Times Square in New York.

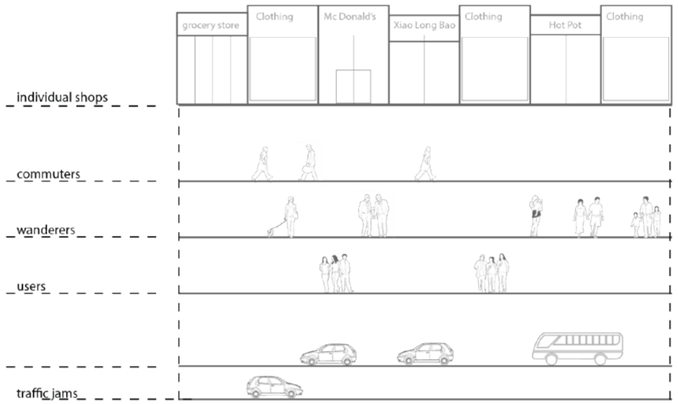
Afterward, a quiet and tidy road.
Linfen Road, Shanghai

Linfen Road is where the night market used to take place. Because of the large amount of trash, social disturbances to the neighborhoods and traffic congestion, the night market was evicted and replaced with branded retail stores. It is automobile-driven with little human interaction. It functions well like a robot, while it loses feeling and emotion as a human.

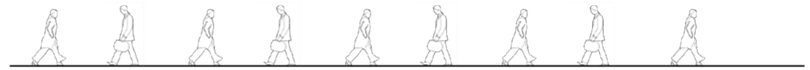
Illustration of before and after

Vital street life, the personality of the cities and livelihoods of street vendors are replaced with homogeneous urban development, wide roads for automobiles, branded chain stores.

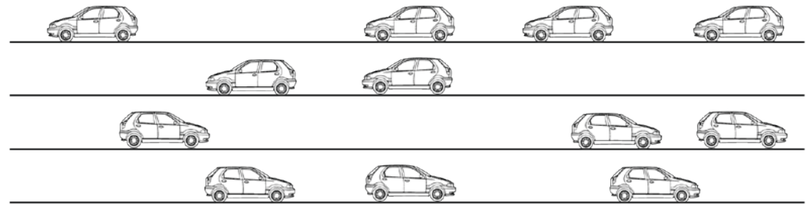




chain stores



less human contact



widen for automobiles

01 Understand The System

18 System at Play
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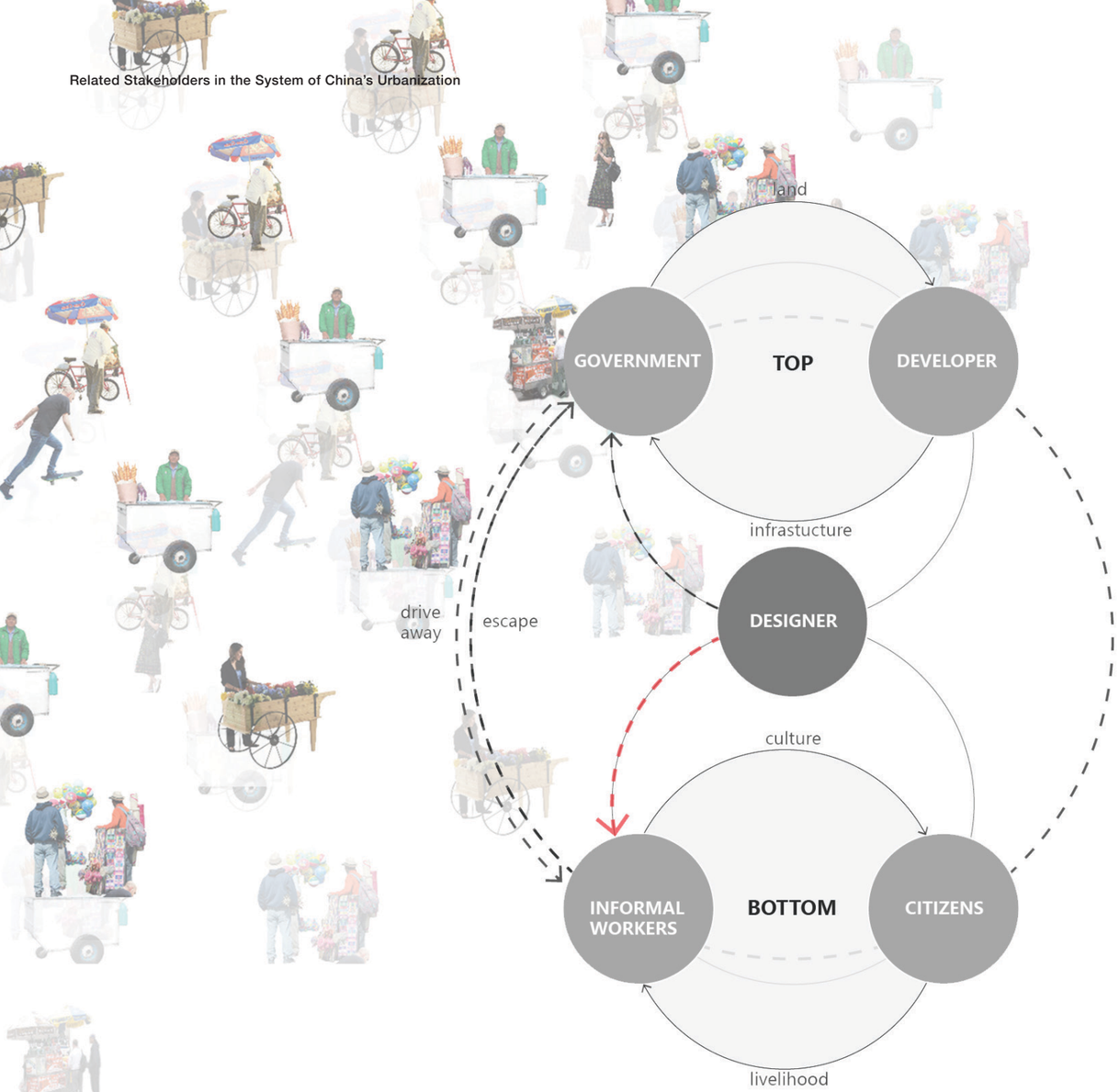
Related Stakeholders in the System of China's Urbanization



How can the designer as a bridge coordinate, compromise, and mitigate the gap between the "top" and the "bottom"?

System at Play

The contemporary Chinese city is a “developmental city” - the city conceived and built for excessive profit. Because its industries and service sectors were poorly developed, the state put to use its most abundant asset - state-owned urban land. The land was divided into large plots and sold to developers, minimizing the burden of infrastructure provided by the state; so the developers must provide infrastructure and public goods within the plot. While the developmental city relies on market speculation as its modus operandi; it requires that planning strategies and parameters have minimal developmental restriction and political resistance in order to attract developers and financiers; it is often legitimized as “rational planning” or the “scientific method” - euphemisms for a resistance-free utilitarianism. It is an efficient planning apparatus that allows the government to urbanize rapidly. The basic parcel of a master plan, the megaplot is represented by a colored patch indicating use. The lack of architectural and spatial attributes promotes efficiency in planning and land transactions. Within the large plots, homogeneity forms as buildings are regulated by planning parameters that result in either freestanding towers in large, unconsolidated open spaces or colossal superblock housing developments, gated luxury communities or, in the cheaper version, unrelenting rubber-stamped blocks.

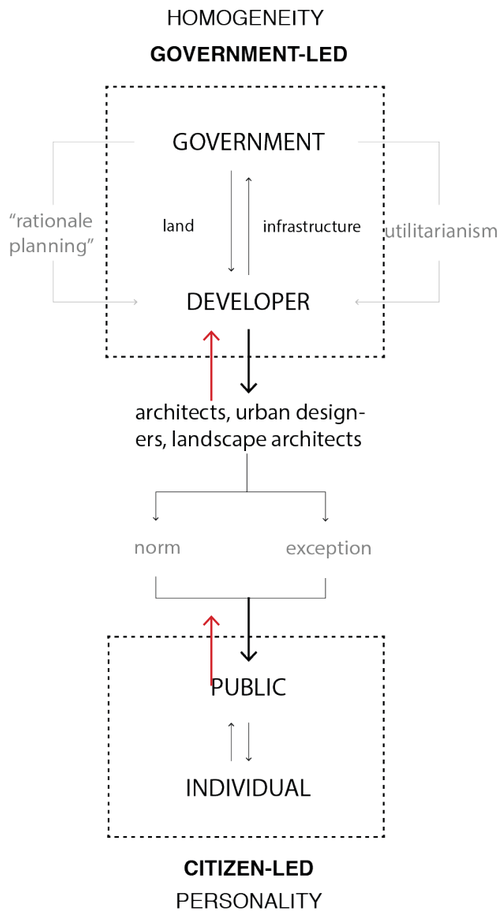
The architecture of the megaplot can be divided into two categories - the norm and the exception. The former is the efficient one, a product of pure real estate logic that maximizes the number of units or the amount of the floor area allowable on a plot with the lowest construction cost alongside an image sufficiently tolerable for purchase. In cases where the megaplot is utilized to serve up an alluring image of the city, the architecture is designed as the exception. As a result, the architecture of both norm and exception serves up urbanism of enclaves fragmented and closed off according to social class. They are fragmented by inflated and duplicated roadways, spaced-out towers, giant building blocks, remedial decorative landscape, and lifeless ground planes. Moreover, they are closed off by fences, security gates, hoarded open spaces and luxury amenities, and roads so broad that they make walking onerous if not hazardous. This sea of urbanization is not what constitutes the true meaning of the city: the space of co-existence.

The whole system is a top-down and profit-driven process and happens at almost every new cities or megaplots. As a landscape architect, it worths reflection on what is my role in the process. The urbanization of these megaplots results in the dissolution of the city as a legible artifact; the civic dimension and public sphere play no part. In this one-way, top-down system, is there bottom-up public engagement led by professionals that can change the space we live in and build our own named city?

Christopher C.M. Lee, Common Frameworks, Rethinking the Developmental City in China, Harvard University Press, October 2016

Break down in the system

In the relationship of either “top-down” or “bottom-up”, each part serves each other’s needs. While between the two groupings, the relationship is not circulated but broken.



Land Use as Catalyst

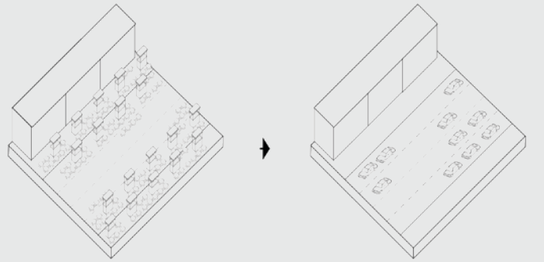
In the name of cleanliness and beautification, informal activities like street vending are evicted. In reality, the motivation has to do with land values, attracting foreign business investment, and the desire to be viewed as a modern global economic and political force on the world stage.

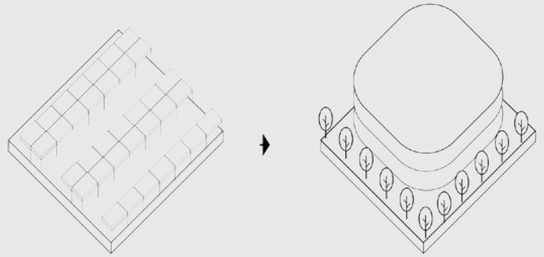
Random street vendors are viewed as undisciplined and pre-modern. The trash they leave, the fast food they provide, and the vendors themselves do not look appealing to attract investment at home and abroad. Street markets are also evicted because the land they occupy has a higher value if the government sells it to be developed into large-scale money-making programs like shopping malls.

Street vendors occupy any piece of space where they can sell their wares and make a living. It is reported that there are 300 million rural-urban migrants who work in China's biggest cities. Street vending is the primary way of making a living.

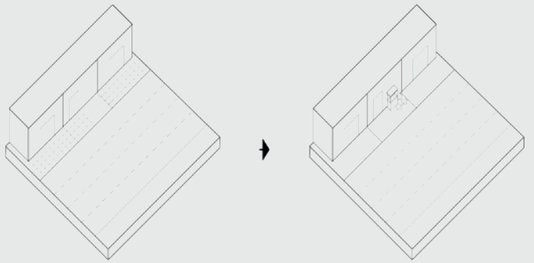
The public enjoy diversified urban life where all kinds of people can gather, various activities can happen, and the whole can create a community. Street vending is one of the activities that contribute great vitality to urban life, convenience to citizens, and the informal economy to the nation.

Government
clean street vendors for automobiles
clean street market for large scale money-making ventures

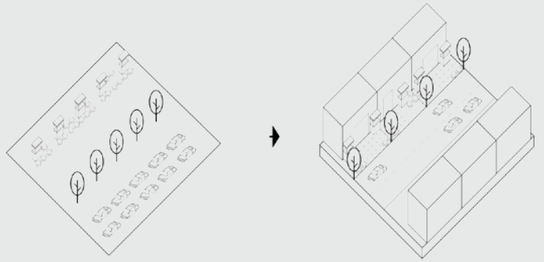




Street Vendors
get access to spaces to make a living



Public
diversified urban life



Cicada Market, Thailand
Online photo + personal experience

Individual Street Vending, Thailand

Precedent: Cicada Market, Thailand

Formal Development Based on Informal Activities

Cicada Market is located at Hua Hin in Prachaup Khiri Khan Province in Thailand. The ideal name of “Cicada” was brought to represent the wholly enjoyable nightlight activities in this place where it was operated to combines variety of activities, arts (from underground art to international art), exciting events and peaceful green atmosphere through day and night. Besides, Cicada Market was created to be a connection center for all artists, creators, designers, tourists, students, and community through integrating culture and arts with lifestyles.

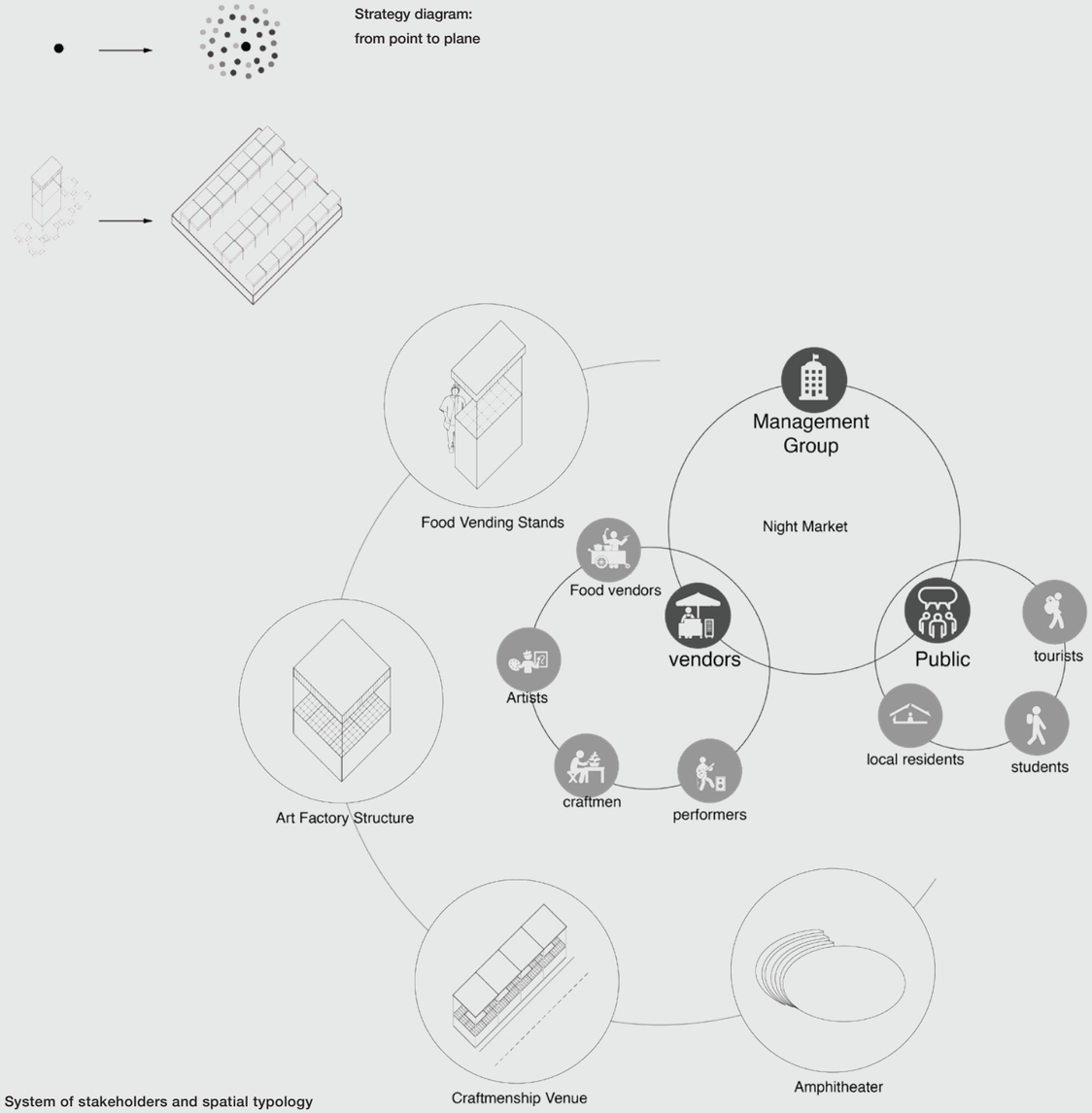
Landscape Strategy: From Point to Plane

From individual street vending to tourist destination

It is considered as a new model of public open space that transformed from informal activities to formal development. Spatially, it is from point to plane. The traditional activity of street food vending is a point, and the market park consisting of points of various vending is considered as a plane. It now becomes the leading destination of Hua Hin City. It gathers multiple stakeholders and creates new sustainable communities.

A New Model of Public Open Space
From Individual Street Vending to Tourist Destination

It is an excellent example of community-based destination and sustainable development. There are five sorts of roles of participants and four types of creative activities; recreation based, art based, cultural based, and live events. Integration of local characteristics, arts, and cultures was presented creatively and interestingly. Participants are various. The roles of the participants found in the Cicada Market are a group of the property and area management, entrepreneurs, leisure (entertaining persons), local people, and tourists. The sound impacts on local communities are those in terms of economy, environmental-friendly, and local arts and cultures promoting. On the other hand, traffic congestion, waste, and increasing energy consumption are negative impacts on area development.



System of stakeholders and spatial typology

Before (Online photo)

Precedent: Parckfarm, Belgium

Formal Development Supporting Informal Activities

Situated next to the canal, Parckfarm is a large urban area in Brussels that will be transforming in the next fifteen years. It is seen as an inspiring and rare sunken linear space punctuated by bridges is to be activated.

Before the formal development interferes, there are informal activities like micro-farming happening on the site. It is discovered an impressive network of local actors that contributed to turning the edges of this wasteland into collective gardens, animal farms and a pigeon shelter. The proposition aimed to support these existing informal practices at the scale of the park Thurn & Taxis. Here a new model of public space that combines the characteristics of a park and local micro-farming was tested through the Parckfarm.

Initiated by Brussels Environment that aims to experiment with different ways to make public space in Brussels, Parckdesign is a design biennale of the duration of 5 months. The site of the Biennale represents the first Chapter of the largest regional park being created in Brussels.

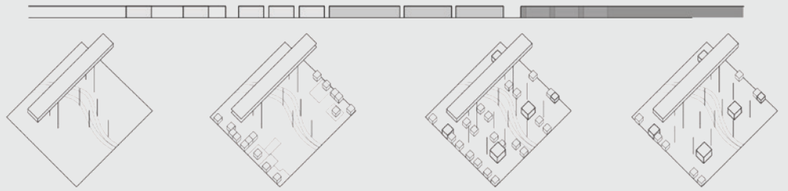
After (Online photo)

A Model of Placemaking:
From Culture Niche to Common Parckfarm

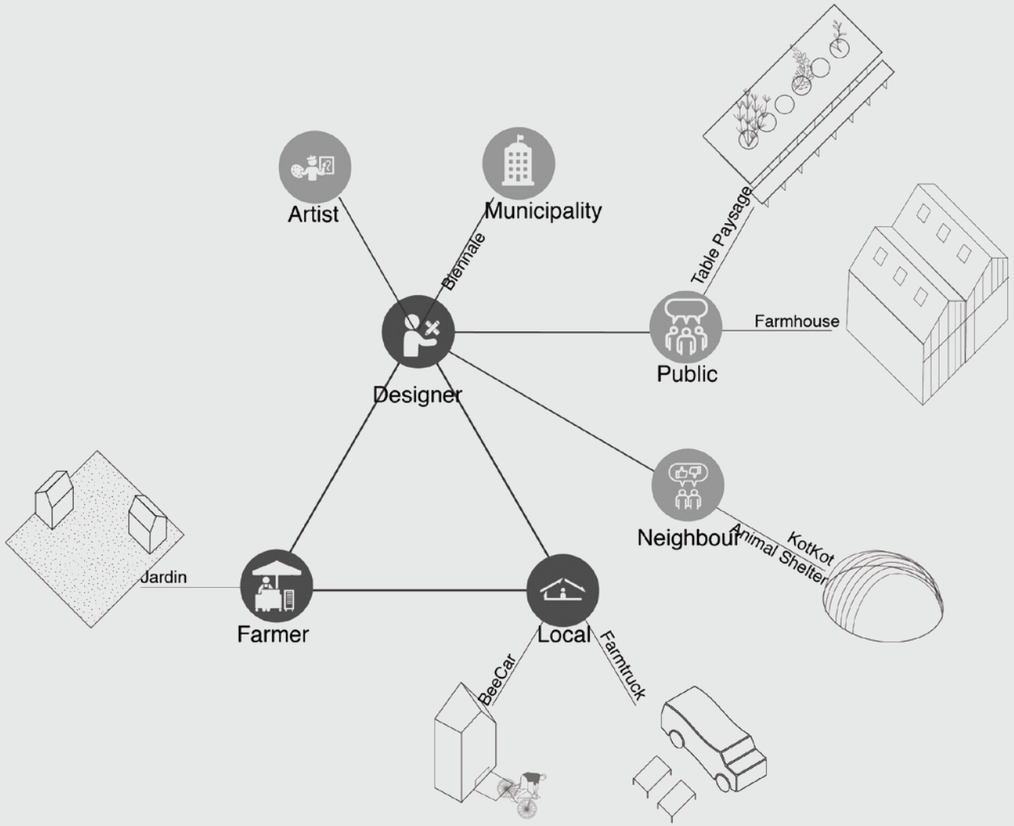
Participative construction site
Several installations were realized through co-production processes on site. Ruth Plaizier and Ewoud Saeys invited all neighbors to participate to co-produce the animal farm KotKot. The Farmhouse by 100 a+u relied strongly upon the collaboration with JES/JOTA who involved several young people.

The design of the installations looked for a balance between bricolage and professionalism. It is an integral part of the process of appropriation. Because of their great success, the following seven urban installations exist up to: Farmhouse, Kotkot animal farm, Beecar, Table Paysage, Electric Rainbow Farmfair, Jardin bes Recettes and Farmtruck.

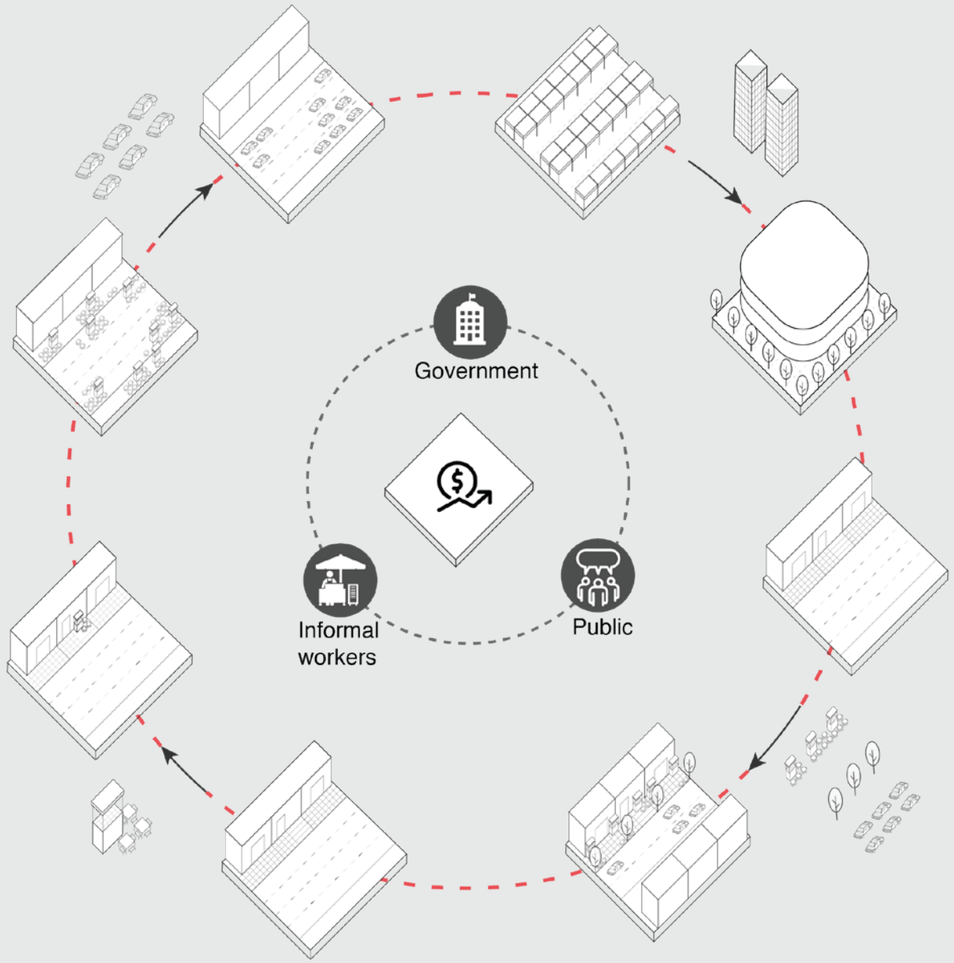
It was an enormous public success. Above all, people appreciated the fact that they could engage with the installations. Besides the artistic installations, several local initiatives invited people to engage.



Phasing diagram: from ephemeral to durational



System of stakeholders relationship with space



Summary:
A Healthy Circulatory System

If the problems mentioned above are triggered by the value of the land perceived by each stakeholder, how can landscape provide a framework of public open spaces that reconcile the conflicts and allow the co-existence of informal activities and formal development?

This Chapter proposes strategies to fix China's current broken system of urbanization. It calls for a healthy circulatory system that realizes the win-win strategy among the three disparities: the government, the public, and street vendors.

The new development needs to meet the following criteria. For the government side, the proposal should increase the value of the land, through programs in the site or attracting large-scale venues around the site. Second, the site should have diversified activities that enrich urban life, which could meet the needs of the whole community. Third, it should be an inclusive community that advocates for informal workers and gives them opportunities to make a living.

A Healthy Circulatory System involves all stakeholders, meets their needs and creates a community.

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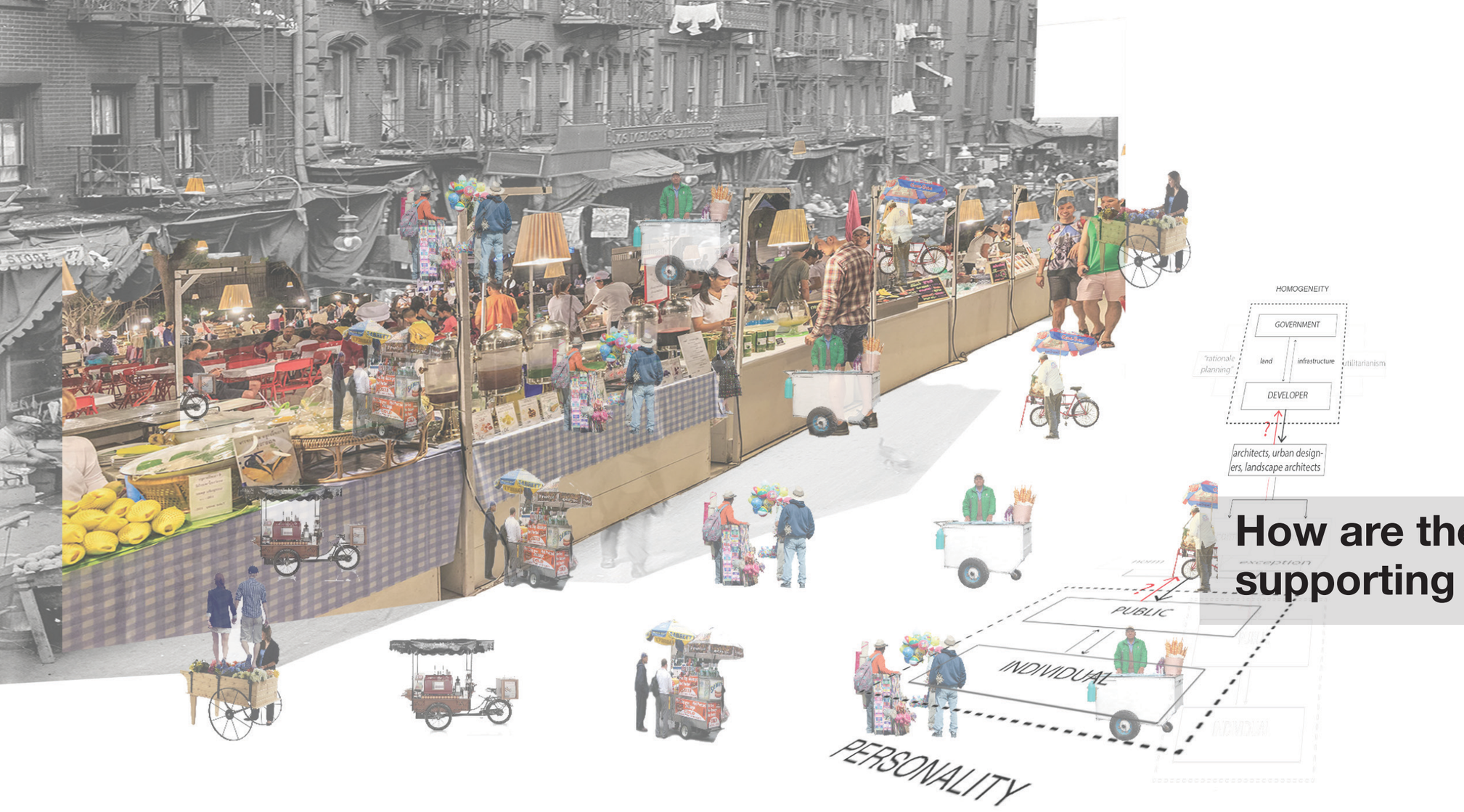


How are the models supporting street vending?

Individual Street Vending

Street vending is a self-organized commercial behavior in China, which means it has not been legislated. It is usually rural-urban migrants or laid-off employees who sell many kinds of foods, wares, or any kind of vending. Street vendors usually claim the in-between spaces and concentrate at hectic places like train stations, schools, commercial pedestrian sidewalks or workplaces, where they fit in with communities of laborers, workers, businesspersons, students, and others.

Individual street vending can gather people and create urban life on the streets. When it gets to a particular scale, it can create a sense of place and the destination for neighborhoods and visitors. Historic and successful places of street vending usually evolve to urban markets and become city characteristics, like Haymarket in Boston and Bastiile Boulevard in Paris.

However, at the same time, it creates traffic congestion and social disturbances to the neighborhoods. The large-scale self-organized markets in China and most Asian developing countries can cause substantial social disturbances to surrounding neighborhoods.

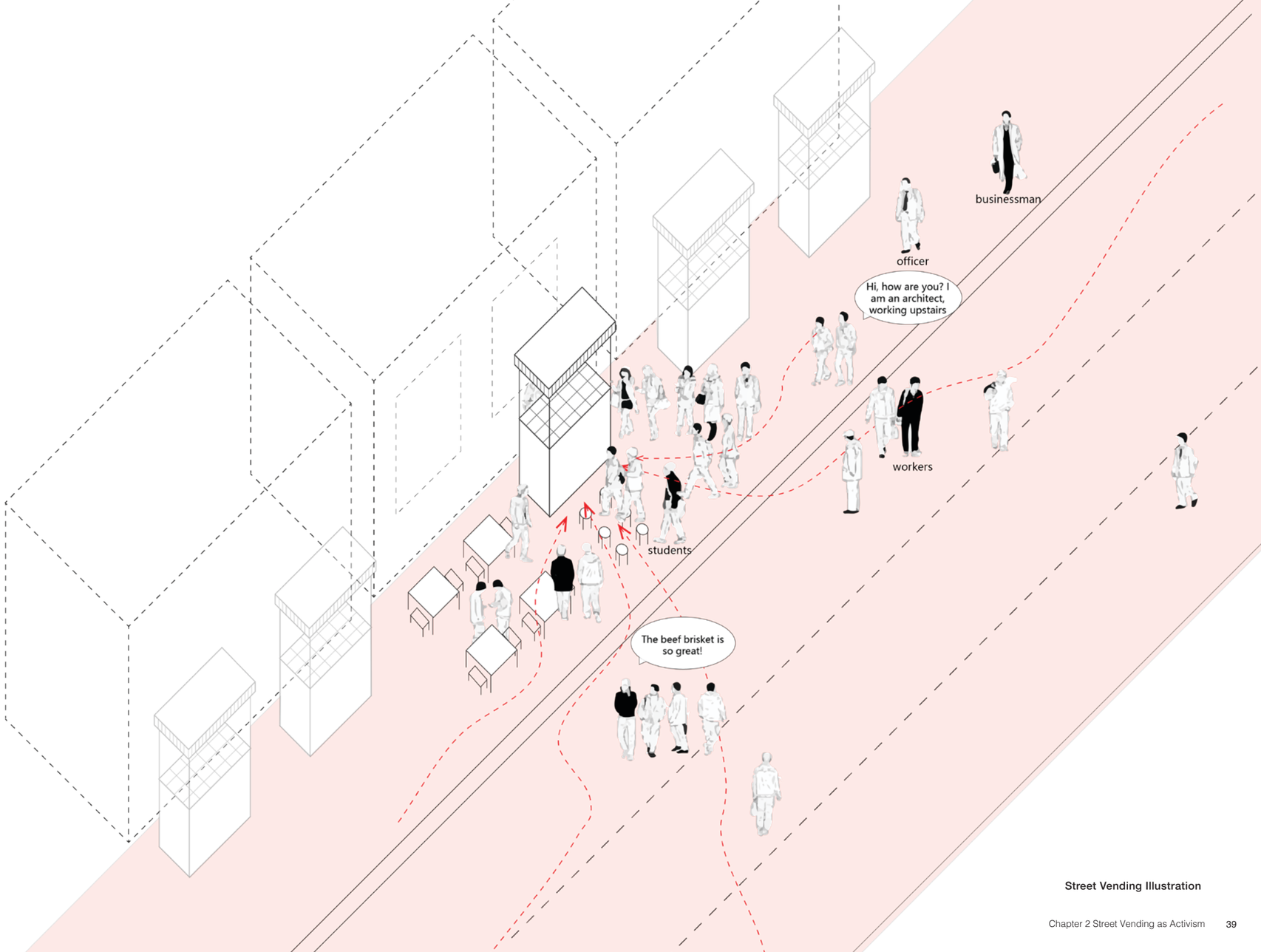
In recent years, when China had enough power and capital to host grand events like the Beijing Olympic Games in 2008 and the Shanghai World Expo in 2010, the government wanted to clean cities up. In the name of cleanliness and city beautification, street vendors were evicted by city inspectors called “cheng guan”. They played the “game” of cat-and-mouse every day on the streets. There are still individual street vendors around, but they are always on the lookout. According to one street vendor, they spend 80% of the time scanning for inspectors, and only the other 20% on the food preparation.

The eviction of street vending is not only the disappearance of such activities but also reflects the breakdown in the system of China’s urbanization as described in Chapter I. The legislation system still has a long way to go in China. In this ever-changing age, when online shopping and take-out orders are so accessible globally, in what value system is street vending worth making a comeback? What are the different models worldwide to support street vending?

This chapter looks into street vending in China’s history, different models worldwide and studies the spatial attributes of street vending. At the end of the Chapter, it concludes with a matrix of spatial typologies for street vending with different variables. A growing system of structure for street vending is demonstrated to support the transformation of street vending in China in the contemporary age.

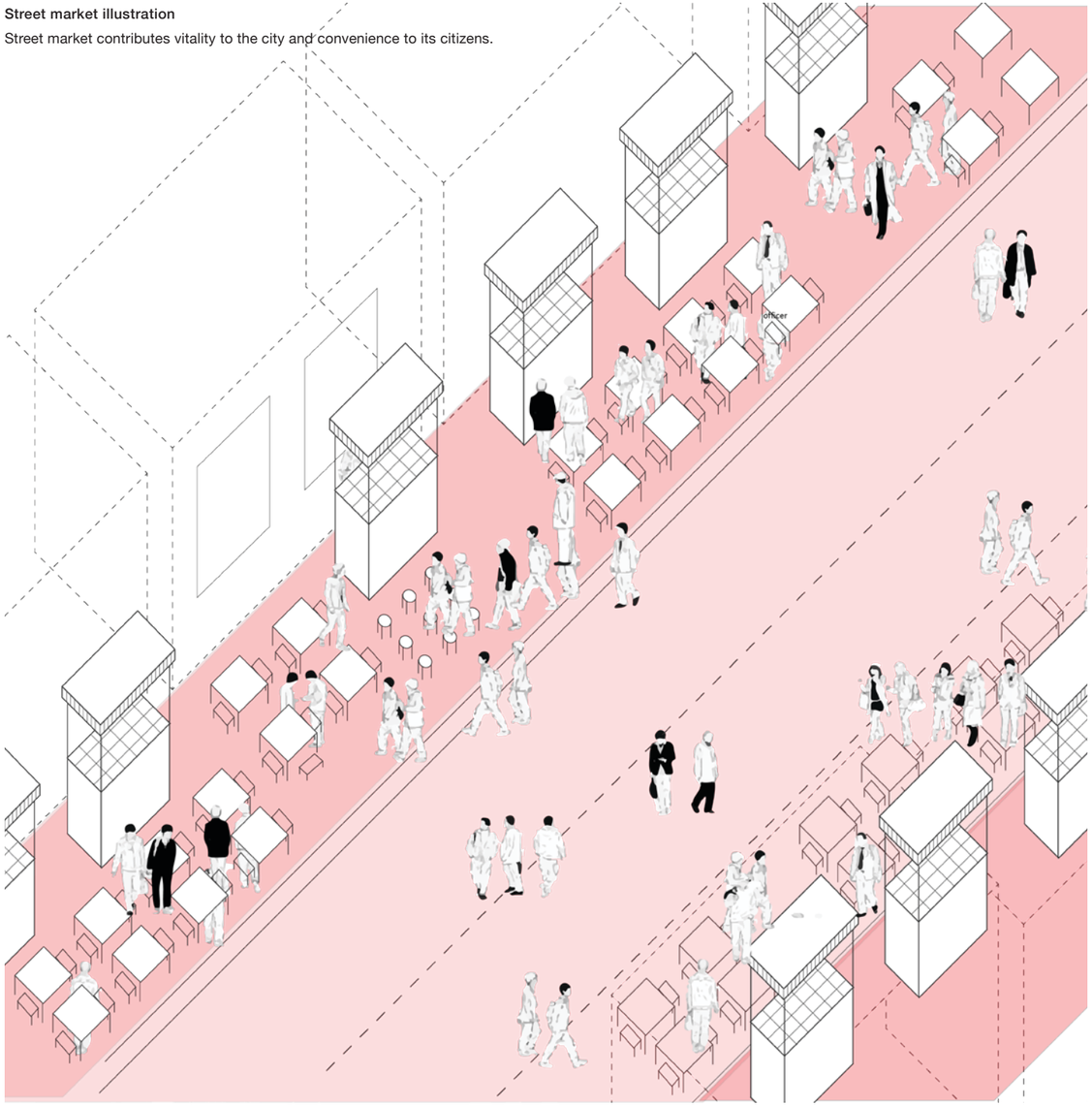
Creating Urban Life

Street vendors usually claim the in-between spaces and concentrate near train stations or workplaces, where they fit with communities of laborers, workers, businesspersons, students, and others. Street vending attracts all kinds of people to come outside and generates various activities on the street. People eat, meet, exchange, and interact, at an affordable cost in the public space. It is also common to see informal public furniture installed by street vendors, like seating elements, a bench, a light, and a bin. Street vendors shape public space and influence the way that people gather to create community.



Street Vending Illustration

Street market illustration
Street market contributes vitality to the city and convenience to its citizens.

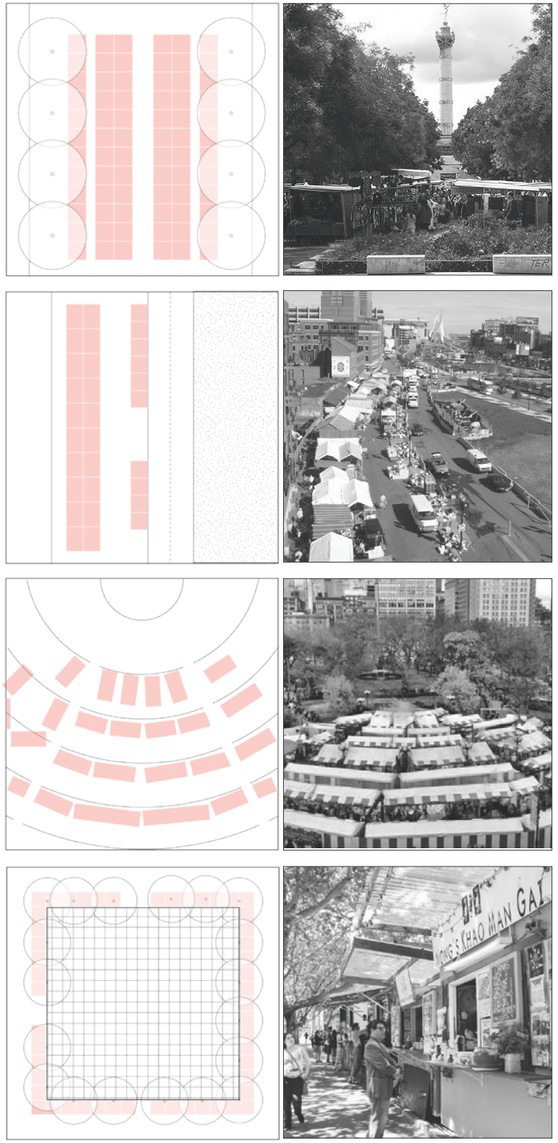


Creating a place and destination

When vending reaches a specific scale to a street market, it creates a sense of place and a destination. For example, food carts tours in Portland, Oregon, became a must-go place for visitors. It intertwines with the local culture. Bastiile Boulevard in Paris is another must-go for Paris explorers.

Character of City

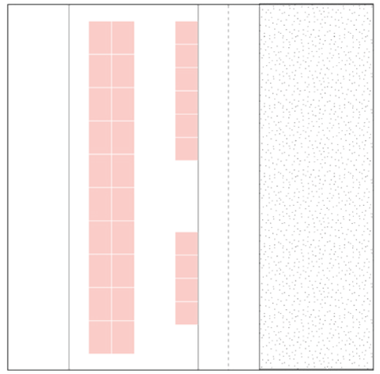
Street vending reflects characteristics of the city. The local food and crafts provided carefully by individual vendors make cities unique. Often, markets become a must-go on the list of tourist destinations.



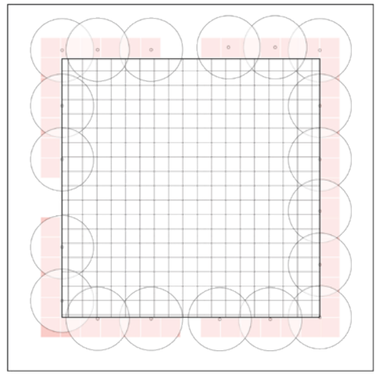
Markets in difference cities
from top to down: Bastille Boulevard Market, Paris; Haymarket, Boston; Union Square Market, New York; Food Carts Tours, Portland

Movability

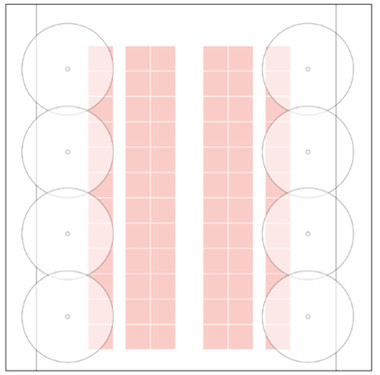
Street vendors use movable structures to do their business. The characteristic of popping up and moving around creates the rhythm of city life. In terms of location, they may form different spatial scenarios. For example, street vendors will distribute along the streets or gather together around the subway station.



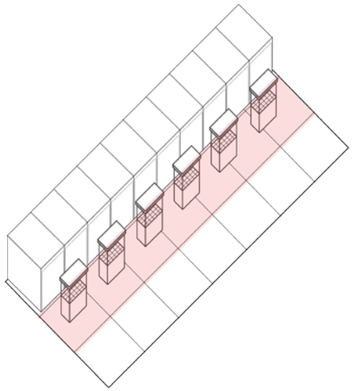
Linear

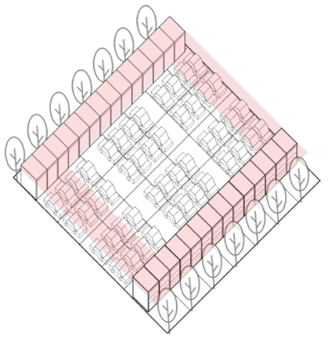


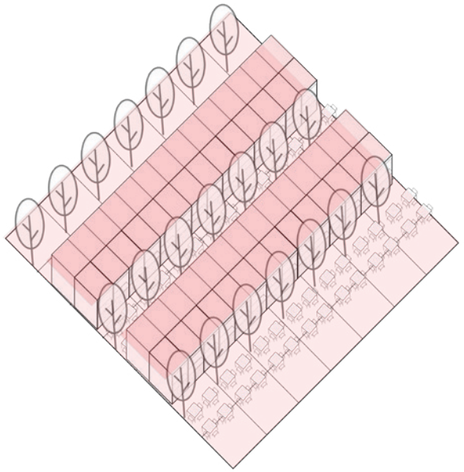
Enclosed

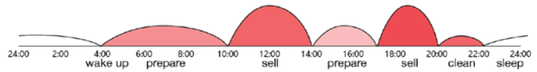


Matrix





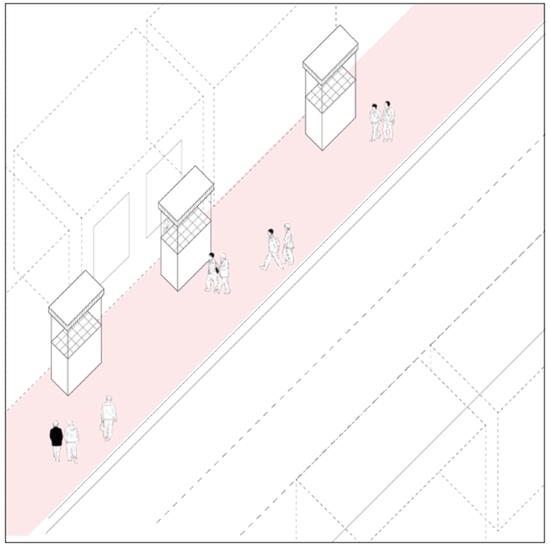




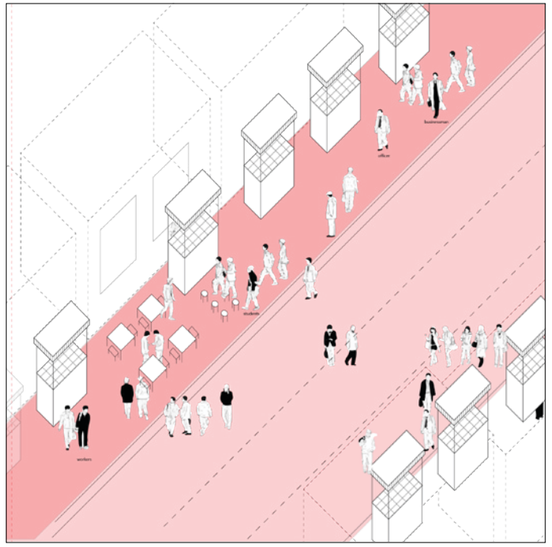
A day of a street vendor

Temporality

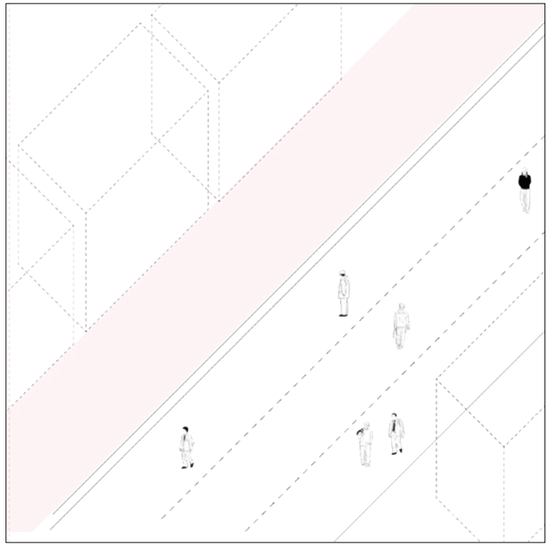
According to the time of the day, street vendors prepare food at home and come out for selling. In the summer, there is most often cold food. In winter, there will be more warm food.



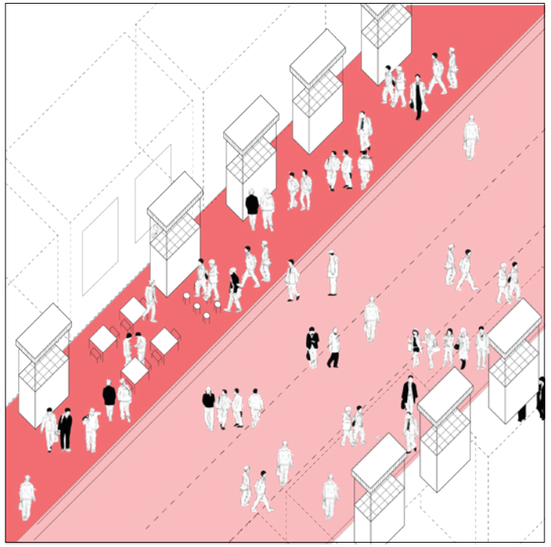
8:00 am | few people



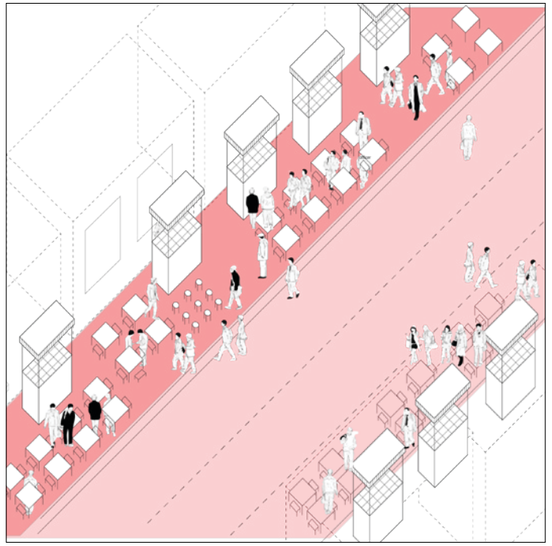
12:00 pm | gathering



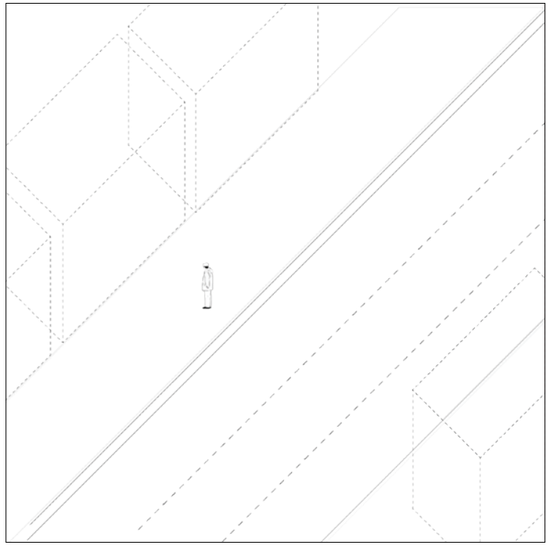
4:00 pm | empty again



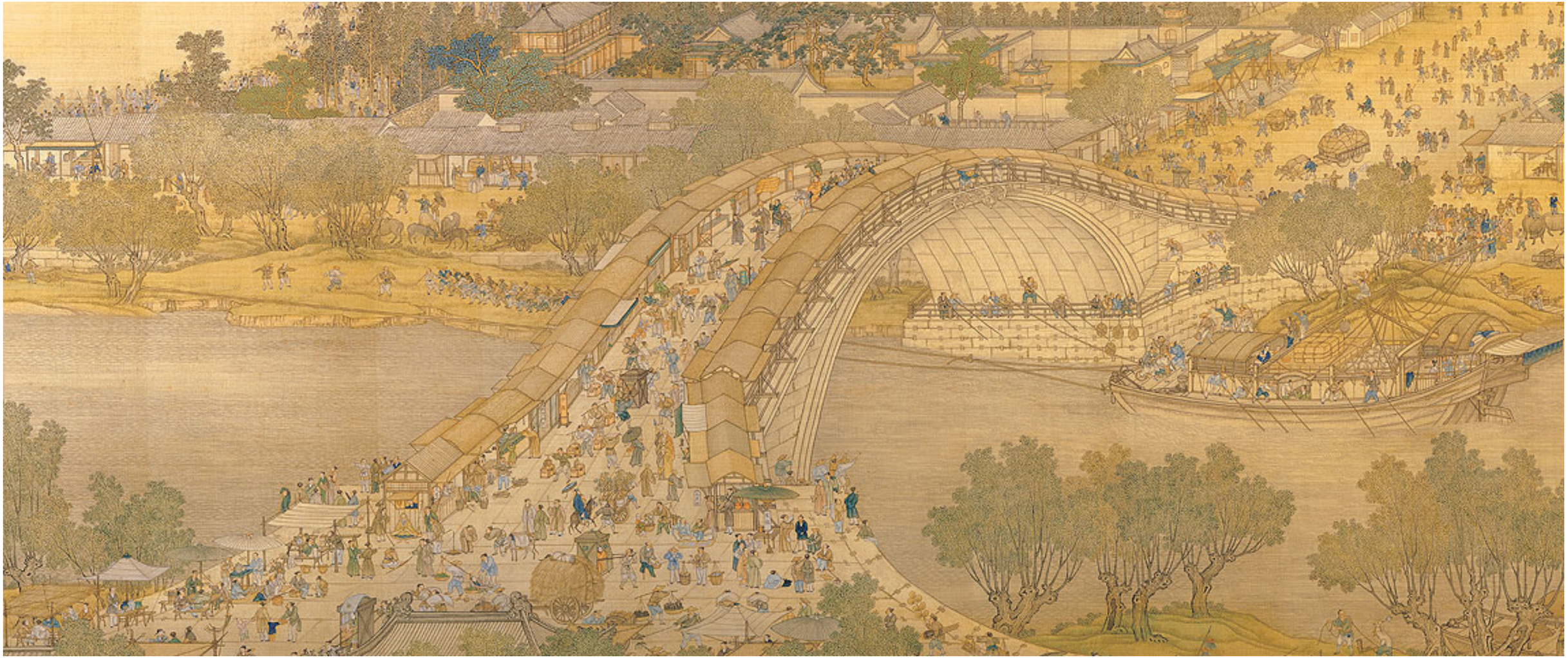
6:00 pm | dinner time



10:00 pm | night food



2:00 am | quiet



Ancient street life through street vending activities

Along the River During the Qingming Festival, a distinguished Chinese traditional landscape painting, captures the everyday life of ancient Chinese people, and represents the street vendor, in Bianjing (now as Kaifeng), from the Northern Song period. This shows that the ancient livable space has been translated through the features of street vendors into contemporary Chinese cities.

Street Vending On Chinese Streets: A History Of Informality

China's treatment and regulation of street vendors have witnessed a number of shifts ranging from tolerance to outright hostility on the part of state and local administrations.

Song Dynasty
thriving of street vending, in Bianjing, from North Song Period

dynastic period
a long history of informal emplotment on the streets

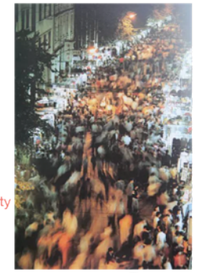
1911
The end of empire era
start to regulate because of modernization, mainly prevention of nuisance

the People's Republic of China

1958-1961
The Great Leap Forward
vending was condemned and prosecuted during the Mao years as a result of ideological fervour against capitalism.

1960s-1976
The Cultural Revolution
social fabric destroyed; an economic slowdown

1978-1990
An Age of Prosperity
Open Door Policy, permitted foreign businesses;
the number of street food vending increased from less than 1% in 1970 to more than 60% by the mid-1980s.



the proliferation of street vending: night markets are set up to provide employment

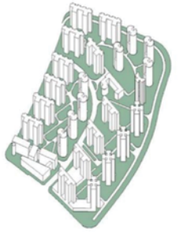
1997
Hong Kong Handover
Guangzhou rises

rural-urban migration,
increase from 30 million in 1989 to 150 million in 2009. The group represents an important political and economic force

2003-2008
National Sanitary City
increased internationalism;
Beijing holds Olympic Games in 2008

towards hard control practices

2010-2014
Building Mega Cities
350 million Chinese citizens will become urban dwellers by 2025.



2015- 2019
Clean the street of vendors in the name of city beautification, tourist development, and 'in the interest of large-scale money-makeres'

Timeline of street vending along with China's urban development

Street Vending Situation Worldwide

Many countries have realized the importance of street vendors and make regulations to support it. Singapore established the Hawker Centre in the 1950s. Los Angeles recently legalized street vending after a hard-fought campaign. However, a lot of developing countries such as Thailand are suffering some of the same issues of city beautification and modernization as in China.

Timeline of street vending in general

SINGAPORE
1950S-1960S
The Hawker Centre
Sprang up in urban areas following the rapid urbanisation; to address the problem of unhygienic food preparation by unlicensed street hawkers.

PORTLAND, USA
1975
Food Cart Square
Ordiance was signed in 1975. The culture originated back to 1910s. Fast forward to 2000, food carts were seen in the downtown area and in empty lots.

City Council votes to legalize street vendors. Officials have estimated that there are 50,000 street vendors It is already become LA's culture.

THAILAND
There are rising evictions across the country start from Bangkok. Street food is deeplu tied in Thai people's culture.

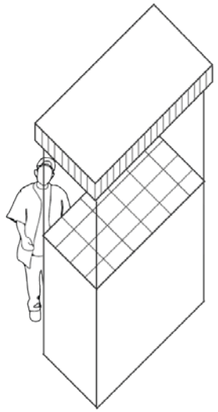
City's informal patterns
Market at Lagos, Nigeria, the late 1990s

Rem Koolhaas: "There is a constant ordering going on, and a constant disordering at the same time."
Kunlé Adeyemi: "If you just look at this image of the market without the lines drawn on, you get a sense that nothing's happening; there's no order. But then you see people selling tomatoes on one line, and everyone is organized across their little paths…"

Photo Credit:
Koolhaas and Adeyemi rented a helicopter to discern patterns in the apparent Lagos chaos. Photograph: Rem Koolhaas/OMA

Temporary Open-air Stand

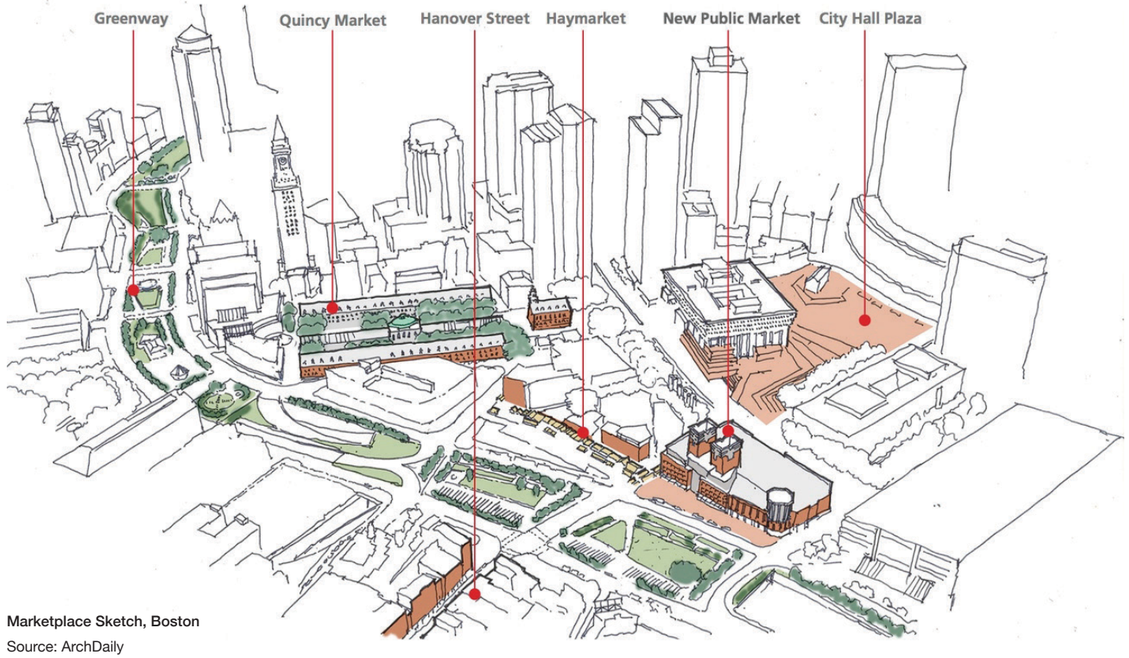
Haymarket, Marketplace, Boston



Haymarket is an open-air market selling fresh, affordable produce with 300 years' history and roughly 50 vendors. The market is open from dawn to dusk every Friday and Saturday. A study conducted for the Boston Redevelopment Authority in 2009 by the Project for Public Spaces found that Haymarket attracts one of the most diverse populations, including almost every imaginable ethnic group and income level.

Temporary structures add convenience for citizens and provide employment for low-income groups. It usually takes place on the open plaza in the city center and around communities. Depending on different programs, it happens from time to time or seasonally. In short, temporary markets are fit for open spaces in dense urban conditions. Additionally, it can function as a plug-and-play for festival scenarios.

Haymarket, Boston
online photo + personal experience



Marketplace Sketch, Boston
Source: ArchDaily

Connection to Urban system

Different types of vending structures and activities come together in the green and busy downtown area in Boston. Originally, Marketplace has endowed the characteristic of the market because of the Faneuil Hall that was built in the 18th century. Later, Quincy Market was built near it to provide an expansion of shop space. Both of Faneuil Hall and Quincy Market are protected as historical sites. As it evolved, open market Haymarket was established as complementary to meet the needs of diverse groups and programs. They still operate well today and increase their value to society.

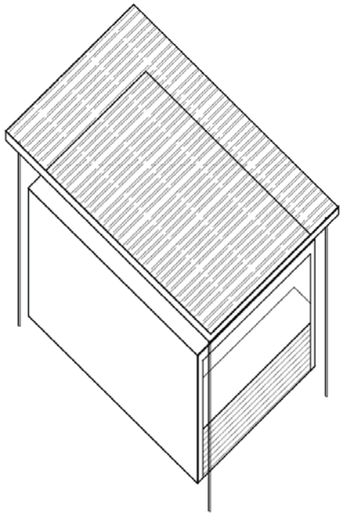
Faneuil Hall Marketplace was established almost 400 years ago. With the long history of the transformation of programs and space, the current market holds various types from the indoor food-stalls, fast-food, and restaurants to further food vending. The most interesting spatial usage is that there is an extension of other vending types selling souvenirs and clothing under a glass enclosure outside the building. Furthermore, the open spaces at both the east and west ends of the market place are a popular venue for street performers and public life.

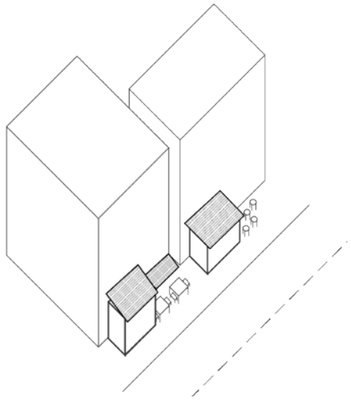
Public Market was newly-built in 2015. It features local and sustainable food and supports over 40 vendors. The freestyle stalls and signage are designed to express individual vendor personalities, while tenant design standards safeguard the appearance and performance of the market as a whole. An ingenious system of regularized rental modules, sign supports, and plug-and-play utility service connections eases vendor start-up and supports flexible change over time.

The combination of different spatial typology complement each other and create a dynamic marketplace for citizens, visitors, and businesspersons. Haymarket consists of temporary open-air stalls; Public market is an individual building block; Faneuil Hall Marketplace is a building collective. Vending activities gather people and create a vital urban life. Street performance happens at the open spaces around the market building; users and visitors wander around and thread through streets and buildings. Vendors run their business in the bustling environment.

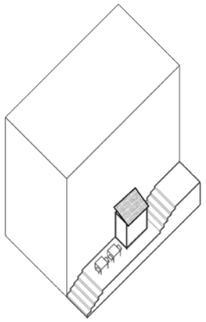
Structured Open Stall

Dai Pai Dong, Hong Kong

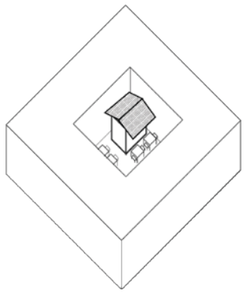




Single unit type



Terrace type



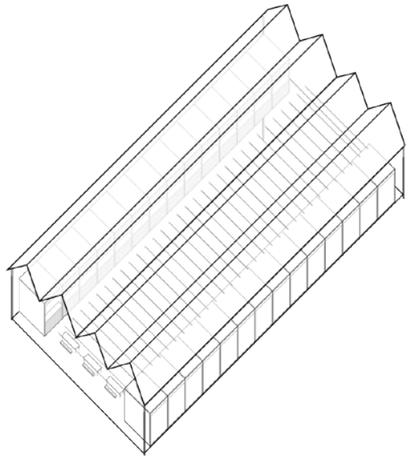
Courtyard type

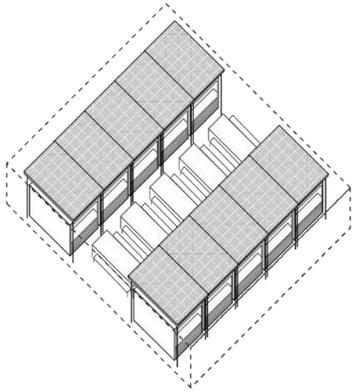
Dai Pai Dong is the Chinese word for an open-air food stall in Hong Kong. It was founded after the Second World War, for the families of deceased and injured civil servants to earn a living. It makes the best use of leftover urban spaces in the highly densified urban area, like the single unit type, terrace type, and courtyard type. It remains in the collective memory of local. However, Only 25 Dai Pai Dongs are remaining and become more like tourist sites. The Hong Kong government was criticized for not trying its best to preserve Dai Pai Dong as part of the Hong Kong culture.

Dai Pai Dong, Hong Kong
online photo + personal experience

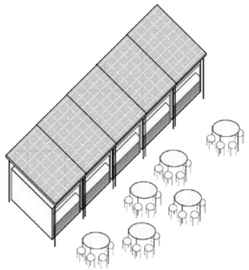
Open-air Building

Hawker Center, Singapore





Indoor



Outdoor

Hawker center in Singapore is an open-air complex housing many stalls that sell a variety of inexpensive food. Instead of mobile food hawker carts, permanent stalls in open air buildings are provided for the hawkers. This type of space was transformed from street hawkers in Singapore and has eliminated since the 1960s. Such a cooked food center is also common in Malaysia, Indonesia, and Hong Kong.

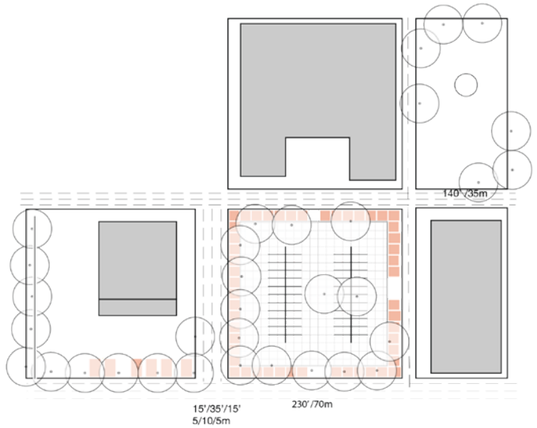
Hawker Center, Singapore

online photo + personal experience

Street Interface

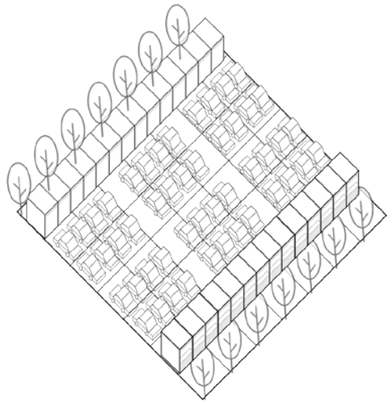
Food “Cartology”, Portland, Oregon

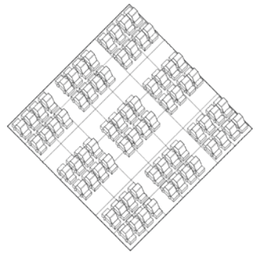
Food carts in Portland utilize the edge of vacant parking lots. The food cart industry is integrated into Portlanders’ everyday life and the city’s personality. It brings benefits to the three parties. For the government, food carts provide interim use for vacant parcels. For the public, they foster social interaction and walkability of the public space. For vendors’ goods, carts provide employment opportunities for immigrants and low-income individuals to begin their own business.



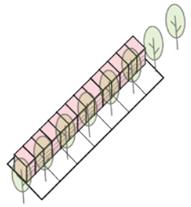
Plan study

Connect to urban system





urban vacant parcels



Street interface

Food cart and social interaction

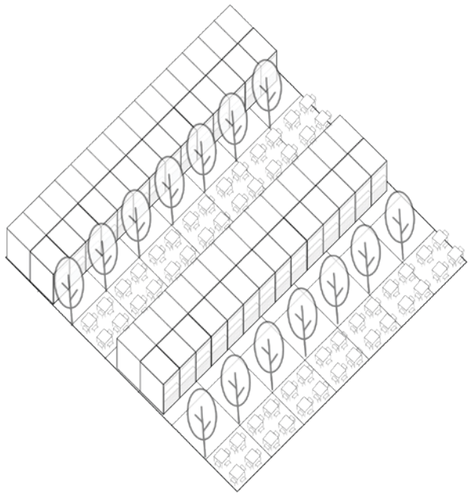
Food Cart, Portland, Oregon
It stimulates social interaction on the outside.
online photo + personal experience

Food Cart, Portland, Oregon
It hides parking lot on the inside.
online photo + personal experience

Open-air Space

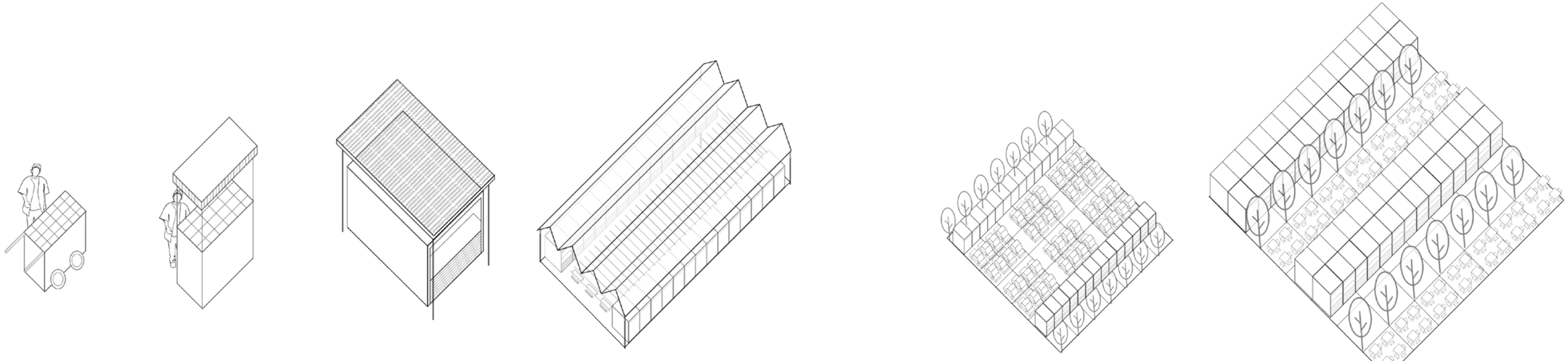
Cicada Market, Thailand

Cicada Market is considered a new model of public open space that transformed from informal activities to formal development. It is a connection center for all artists, creators, designers, tourists, students, and the community through integrating culture and arts with varied lifestyles. The transformation from individual street vending activity to of market park with multiple vendors is incredible and most fit for China's needs.



Cicada Market, Thailand
online photo + personal experience

A range of structure for street vending



Street Vending, mainland China

Dai Pai Dong, Hong Kong

New market, Senegal

Hawker Center, Singapore

Food Cart, Portland, Oregon

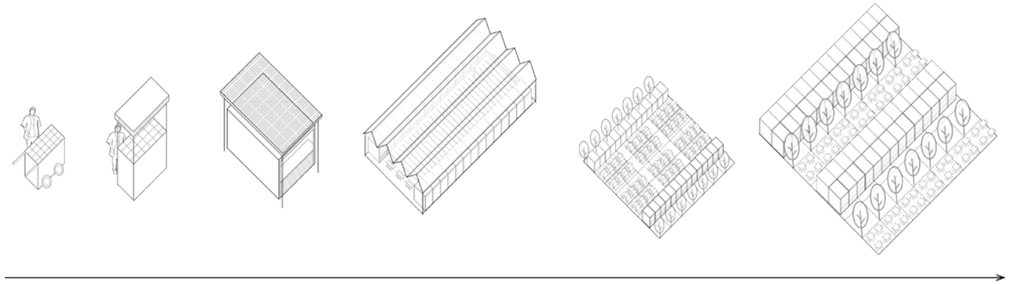
Cicada Market, Thailand

Informal street vending → Formalized vending structure

Indoor structure → Outdoor structure

Singular → Collective

Matrix

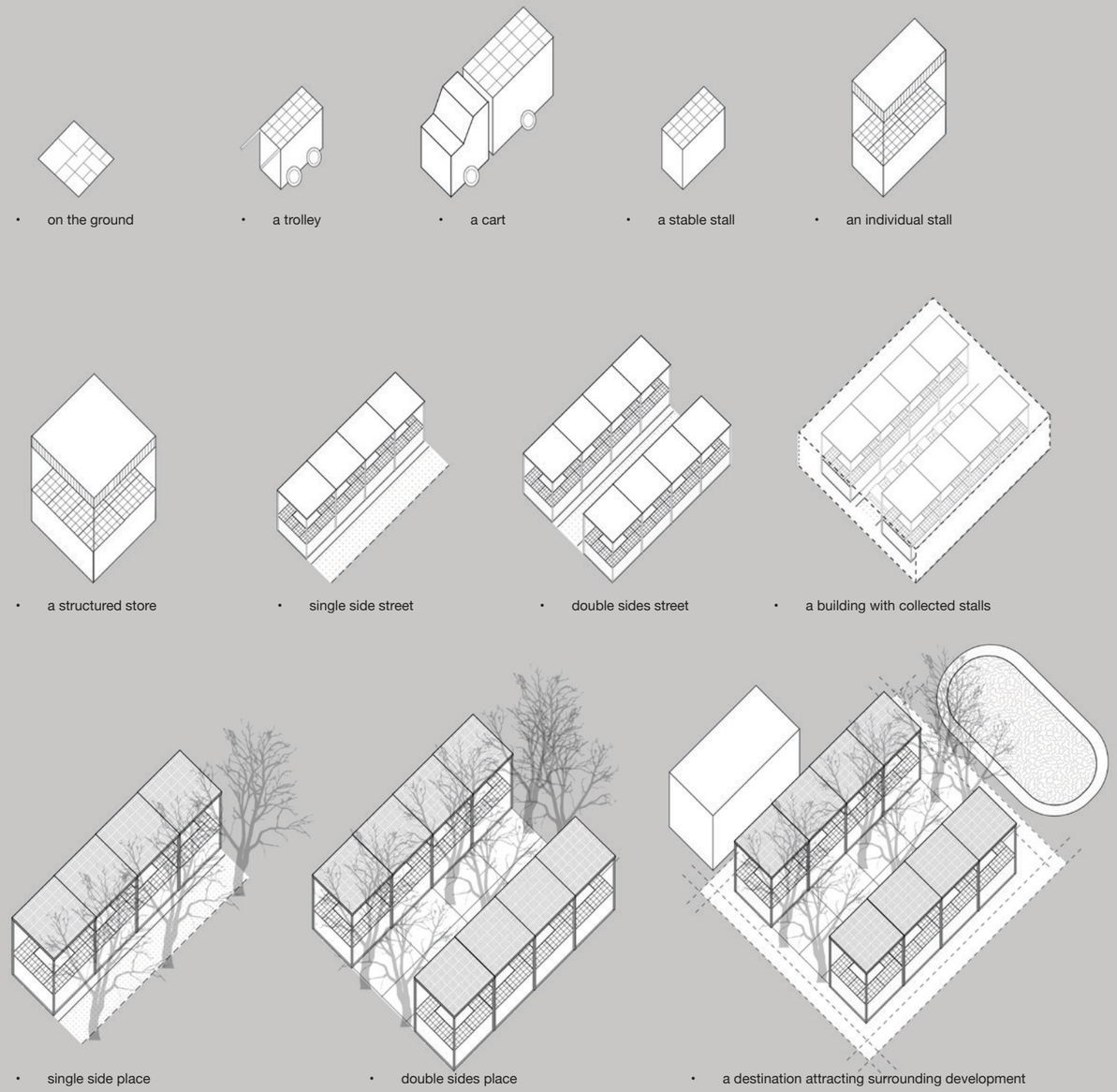


	Licensed	Temporary	Open Space	Density	Arrangement	Cost	Profit	Sheltering Structure	Human Scale (gathering activities)	engaging with site (location with urban area)	Sheltering structures
Individual Street Vending mainland China		●	●	●					individual	hectic places	along the street
Dai Pai Dong, Hong Kong	●		◗	◗			$	P	neighbors	hectic places, neighborhoods	make use of left over space
Marketplace, Boston	●				●	$	$	P	citizens, visitors	city center	Historic sites
Public Market, Boston Public Indoor Market	●				●	$	$	P	visitors	city center	In the building
Hawker Center, Singapore	●			◗	●			P	neibors, visitors	city center, communities	In the structure
Food Cart, Portland	●	◗	●		◗			◗	citizens, visitors	city center, communities	vacant land edge of parking lot
Open Market Haymarket, Boston	●	●	●	◗	◗			◗	citizens	aside existing market	on the plaza
Market Park, Thailand	●	◗	●	◗	●		$	◗	citizens, visitors	open space of emerging city	open space

Summary: A Growing System

Through case studies worldwide, a matrix of spatial typologies for street vending is devised with dimensions of space, time, politics, and economy. The variables include density, temporality, arrangement, dimension, open space system, legislation, cost, and profit. The matrix shows the evolution of spaces for vending, from informal street vending to formalized vending. The vending structure ranges from point (any piece of place), line (street interface) to plane (park or fields). It also evolves from non-structure, indoor-structured and outdoor-structured. It starts with self-organized individual street vending, and transforms into organized temporary market stands, structured open stalls, open-air buildings, street interfaces, and open space areas.

There is a growing system of business as well as the spatial typology, from informal to formal, indoor to outdoor and singular to collective. The next step of evolution is presented in the next Chapter.

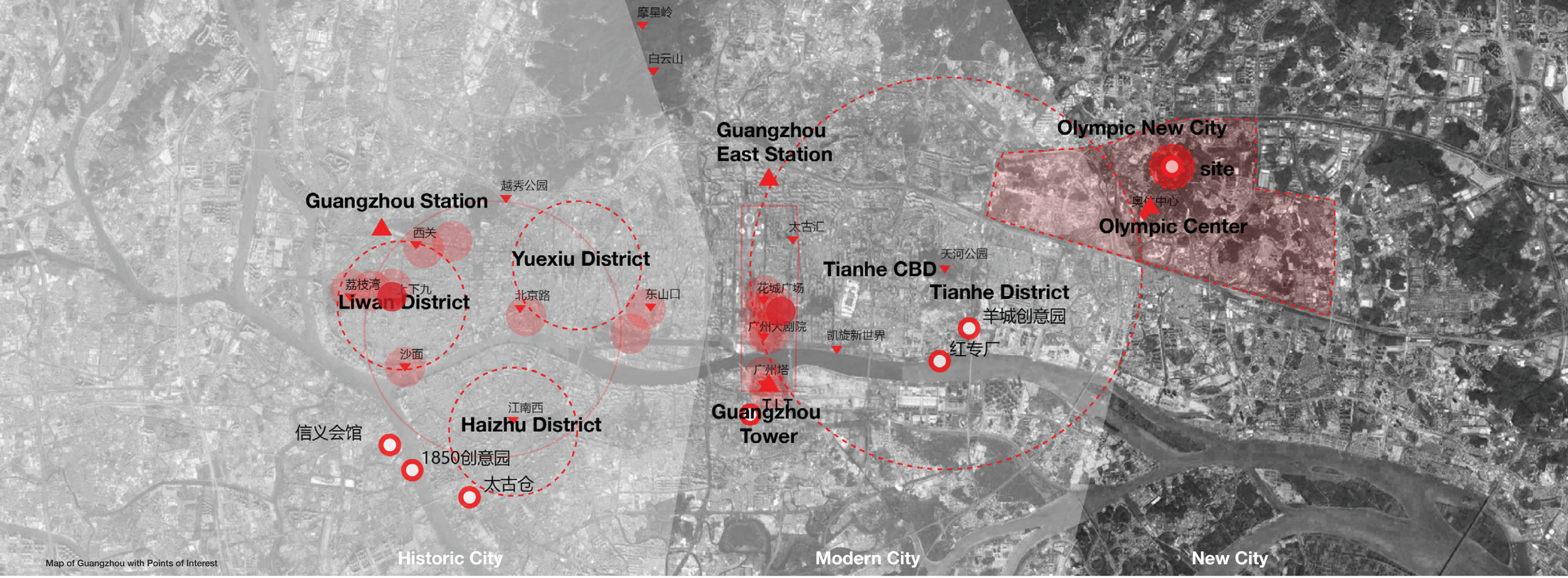


The growing system

03 Urban Scenarios

76 Urbanization of Guangzhou
78 Existing Conditions
the Historic City
the Modern City
the New City
86 Urban Strategies

How can street vending as strategy reactivate the urban development?



Map of Guangzhou with Points of Interest

Urbanization of Guangzhou

Guangzhou is the third largest city in China and a world trade center. Located at south-central Guangdong Province, Pearl River Delta, it ranked the 3rd and 6th in terms of GDP and population, respectively, among the 36 provincial and municipality cities in China in 2018.

Like other metropolises in China, Guangzhou is undergoing unprecedented urbanization, and thus forms the unique city pattern as the historic city, the modern city, and the new city. With a two-thousand-year nonstop history of commerce,

Guangzhou is an industrial city featuring small business, with a two-thousand-year nonstop history of commerce. It is the pioneer of China's reform and "opening gate" since the late 1970s and the end of the Cultural Revolution.

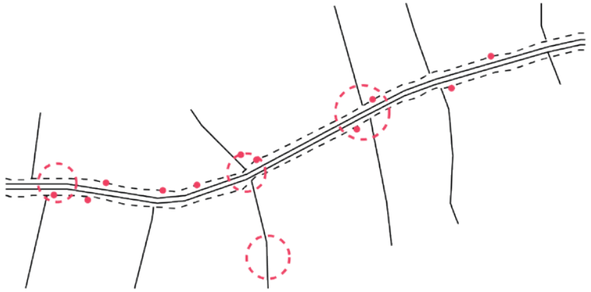
Guangzhou dishes, also known as Cantonese cuisine, is famous all over the world for its quality and variety. Street food as an extension of Guangzhou dishes serves the everyday life of Guangzhou people.

Existing Conditions

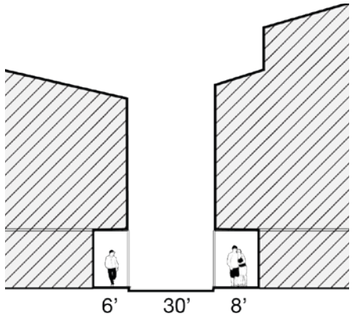
Historic City

"Up and Down 9 street" (Shangxiajiu)

Satellite map of Shangxiajiu



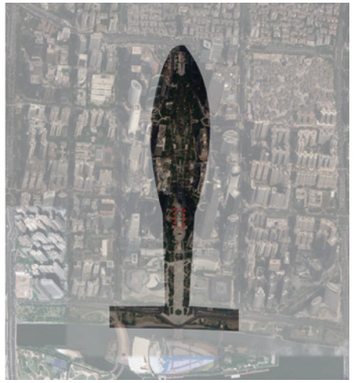
Plan with Points of Interest



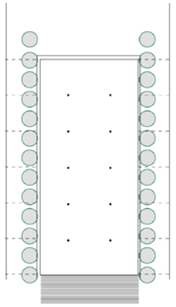
Section with human scale

Modern City

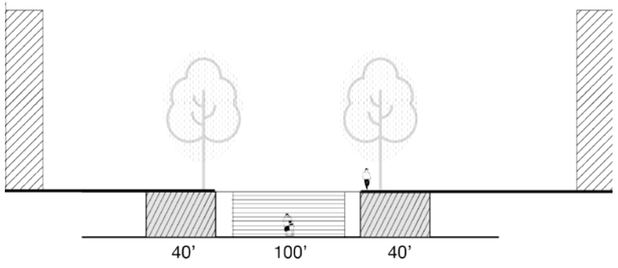
"Flower City Sunken Plaza" (Huacheng Plaza)



Satellite map of Huacheng Plaza



Plan of Huacheng Plaza



Section with human scale

New City

"World Grand Urban Village" (Daguan Village)

Satellite map of Daguan Village

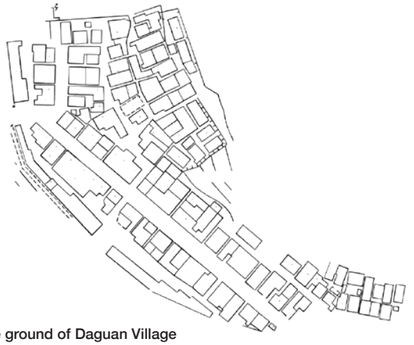
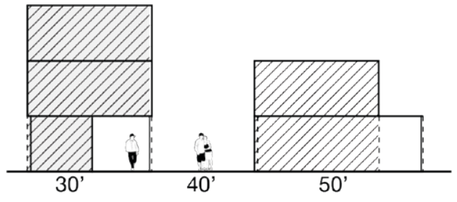


Figure ground of Daguan Village



Section with human scale

Historic City

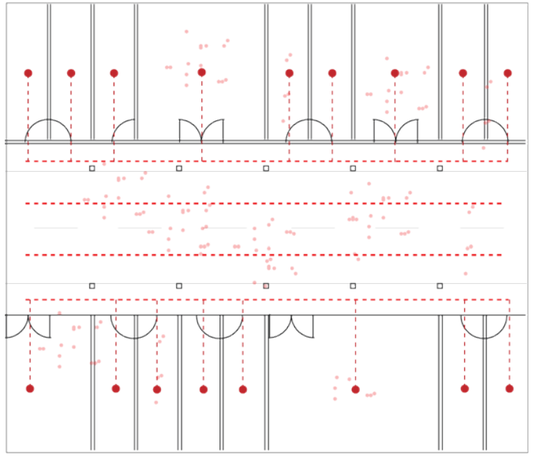
“Up and Down 9 street” (Shangxiajiu)

The historic city has the densest urban fabric of the three. Given the unique spatial feature of the arcade, the historic city has the most walkable and human-scale open space. Shangxiajiu, the busiest commercial pedestrian street, is an example of the historic city.

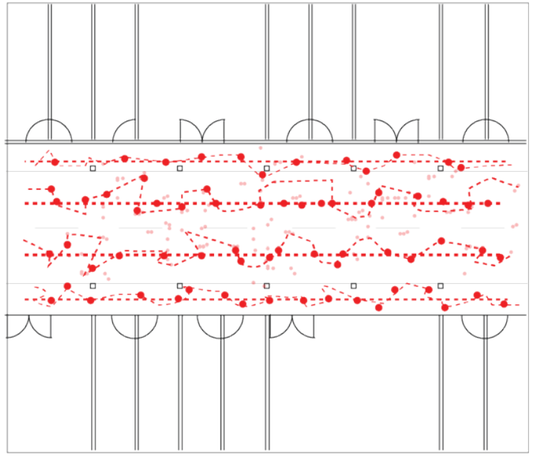
Arcade, the unique spatial feature of Guangzhou historic city

View of the self-organized large-scale night market

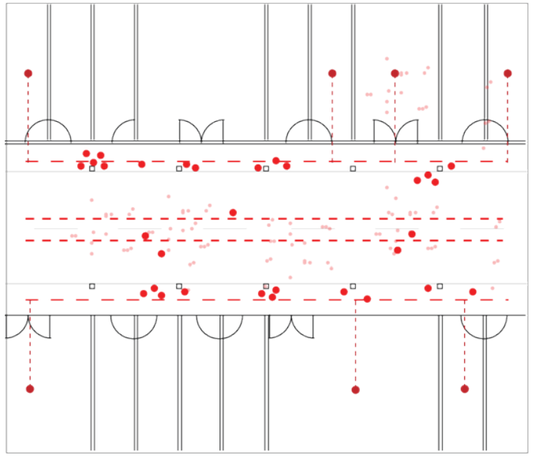
Shangxiajiu Commercial Pedestrain Street



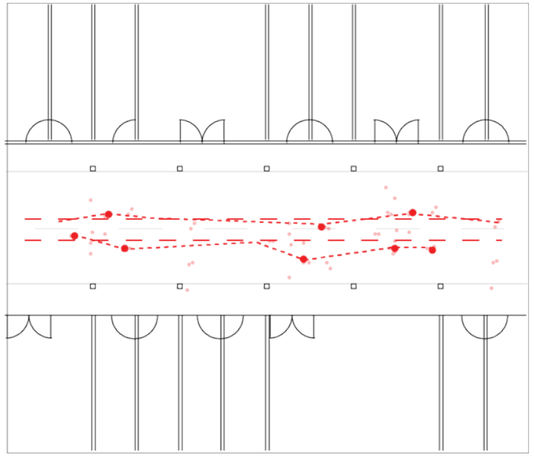
Daytime
people on the streets or in the stores



10:00 PM
When city inspectors off work, street vendors come out and self-organized large-scale street market come into being in a very short time.



9:30 PM
Street vendors gather under the arcade and wait inspectors off work.



2:00 AM
A few street vendors stay untill early in the morning which causes social disturbance to the neighborhoods.

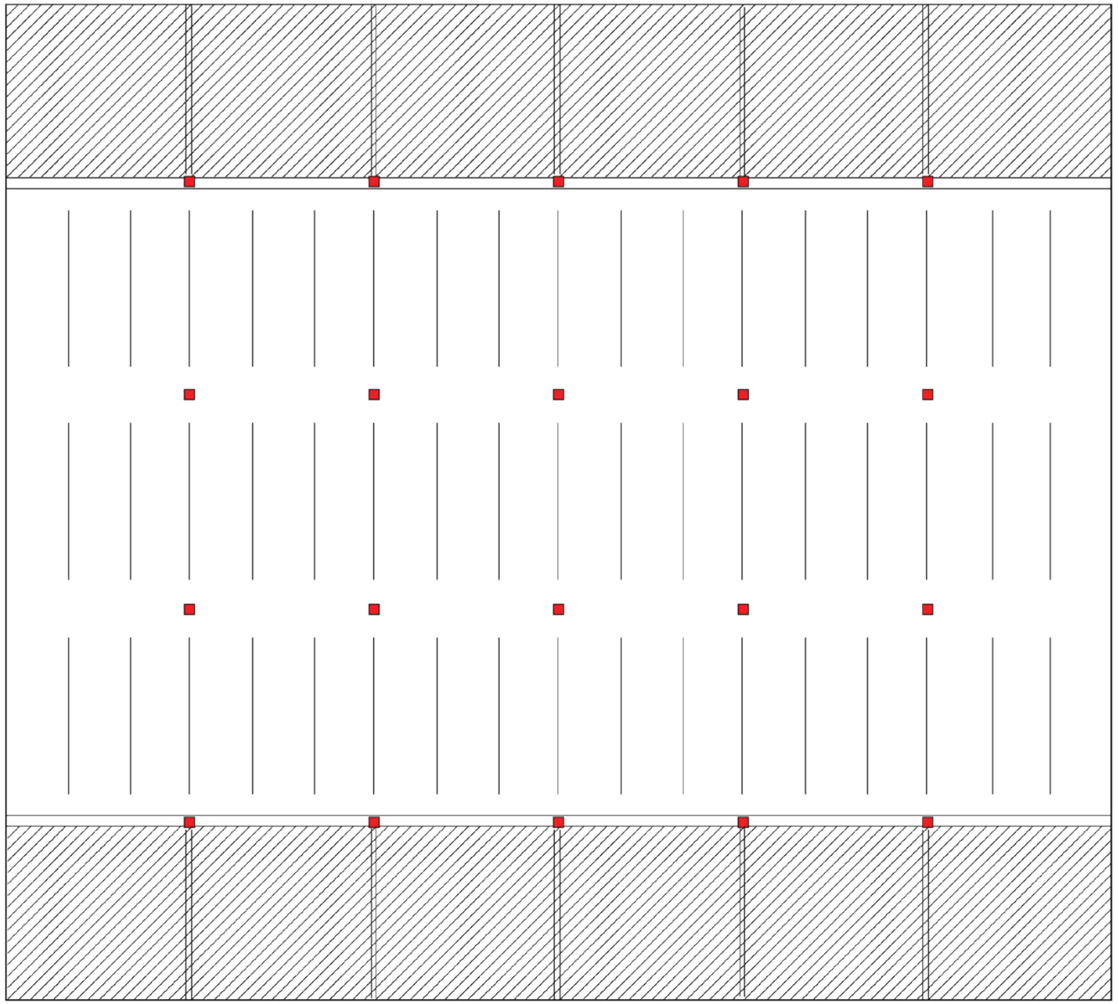
Modern City

“Flower City Sunken Plaza” (Huacheng Plaza)

The modern city has a vast scale of open spaces, so it looks imposing and spectacular, especially under the contrast between high rises and the large plaza. “Flower City Sunken Plaza” (Huacheng Plaza) is an example. The vast scale of open space leads people to indoor places. Few people hang out on the plaza especially in the day time in summer for lack of shades on the plaza. At night, people come out to walk, jog and enjoy the night views.

Above the Sunken Plaza
The vast scale of granite paving holds people back from engaging varied activities, of which walking and jogging are the most common.

On the Sunken Plaza
People hesitate to come outside into the uninviting ground, while individual stores provide shelter places for people to gather and stay.



Plan of the Sunken Plaza with column framework in red

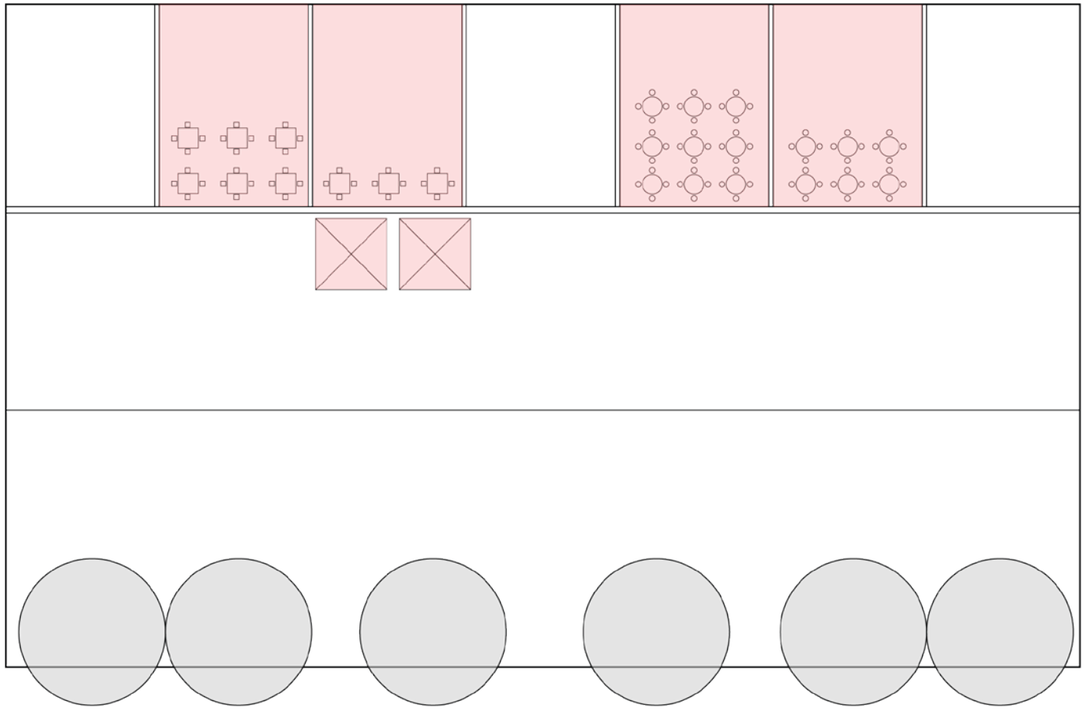
“World Grand Urban Village” (Daguan Village)

The new city is the direction of Guangzhou’s urbanization and is going to be developed in a few years. The center of the new city, which is an abandoned scenic park, is viewed as the carrier of the whole city and will become a commercial-residential complex. The new city mixes different communities like high-end residences and urban villages whose living condition is poor. According to the master plan of the park, the developers want to isolate and separate the urban village adjacent to it.

The street profile on the right is a single-sided interface with one side hosting urban villagers’ food stalls and the other the abandoned park. How can street vending as an urban strategy extend the existing fabric into the park and reactivate urban development?

Street inside Daguan Village
The streets in Daguan Village are three lanes wide and allow for both parking and traffic. They are not as narrow as the urban villages in the existing urban fabric.

The street on the edge of Daguan Village
The street is open to the public and serves businesses like restaurants. The structure of the restaurants is open-air, like Dai Pai Dong in Hong Kong, that extends seating elements to the street.



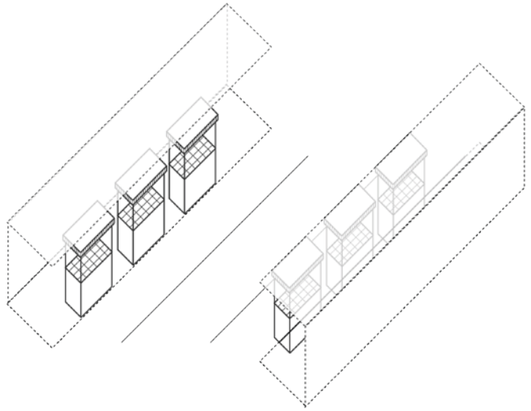
Plan of the street profile
The street is a boundary between Daguan Village and the abandoned scenic park. Due to the negative surrounding, there is a low flow of people and the business of the restaurants is declining.

Proposals

the Historic City
“Up and Down 9 street” (Shangxiajiu)

Temporary Stalls under Arcade

Given the condition, it is suggested to vend under the arcade as the extension of the indoor stores within designated area and certain time of operation.

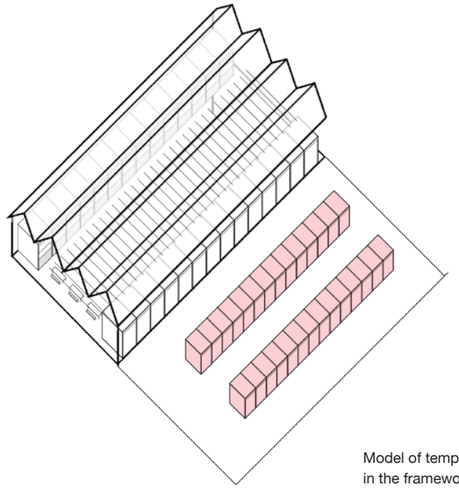


Model of temporary stalls under arcade

the Modern City
“Flower City Sunken Plaza” (Huacheng Plaza)

Temporary Market in the Framework

Using the existing framework of the plaza’s columns, a proposed temporary market would consist of individual stands and form street interfaces to create pop-up, flexible and human-scale market to gather people and activities.

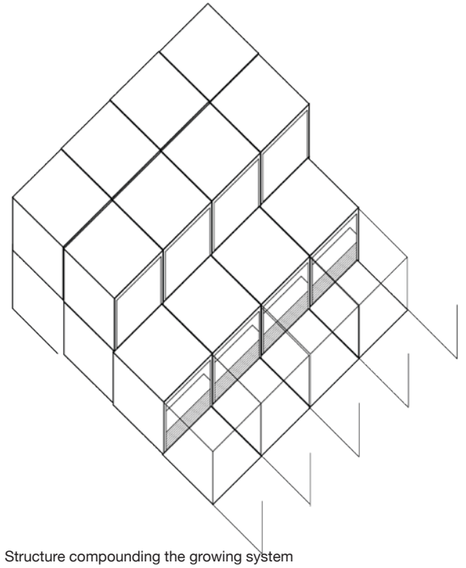


Model of temporary market in the framework

the New City
“World Grand Urban Village” (Daguan Village)

A New Model of Public Open Space

Considering the urban village is a unique archetype as the outcome of urbanization in Guangzhou, it needs a new model of a prototype that evolves from the previous two urban conditions and speaks for itself. The proposal breaks the boundary between inside and outside, combines the typology of structured open stall and structured individual stores, and proposes a growing system. As indicated in the last Chapter, the system allows street vendors to grow their business and improve their living condition by themselves.



Structure compounding the growing system

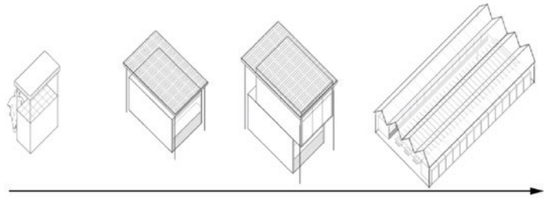
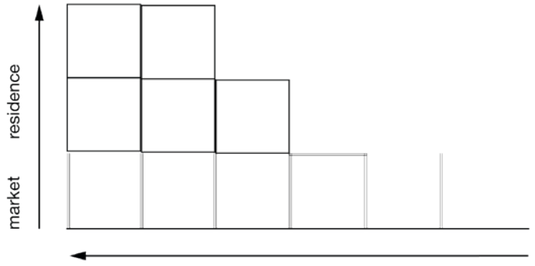


Diagram of a growing system of the vending structure



Section of compound structure

04 PROTOTYPE

92 Guangzhou and Urban Village
94 Olympic New City
98 World Grand Scenic Park
102 Principle
106 Design

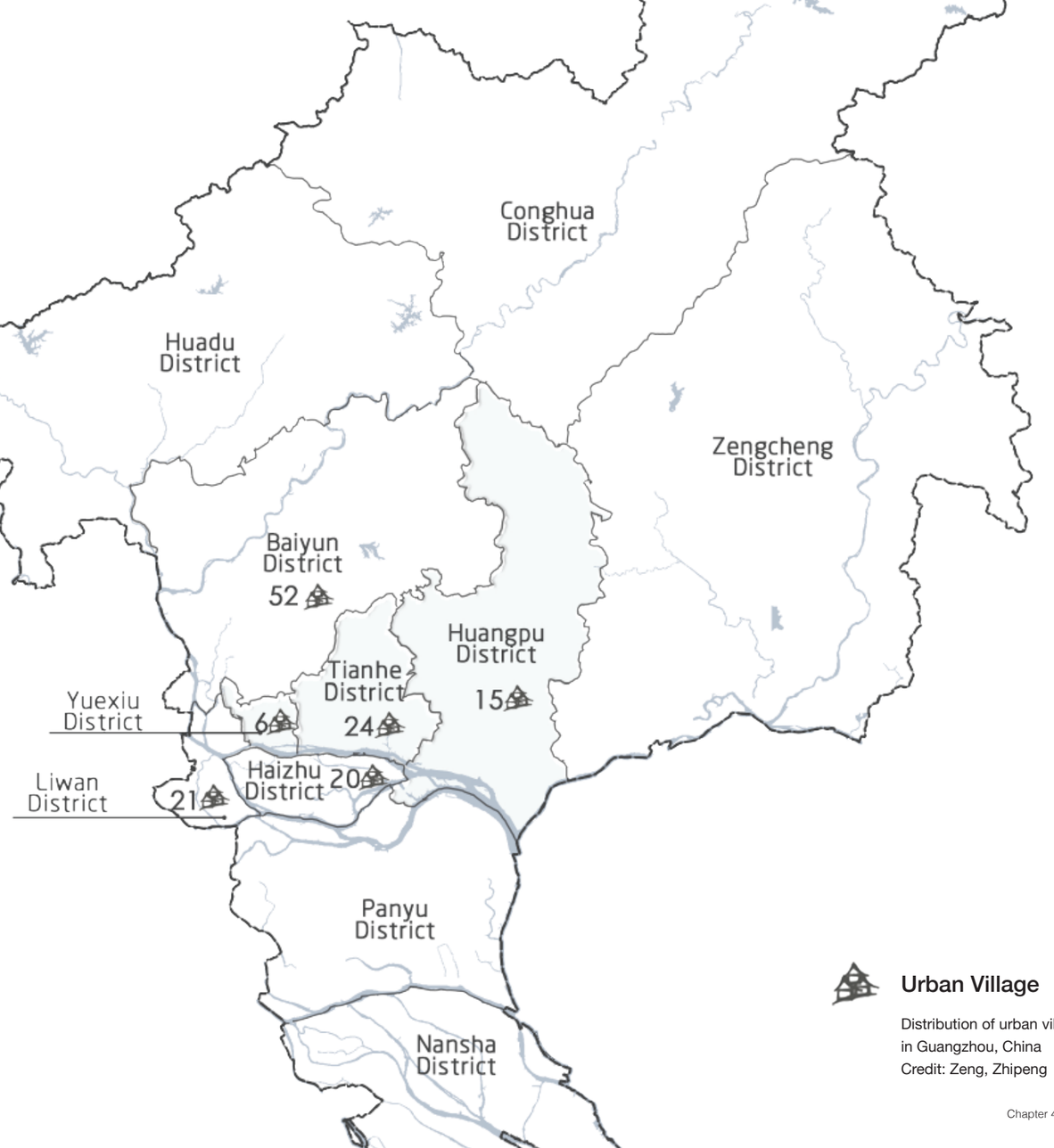
What prototype demonstrates the growing system of street vending?

Guangzhou Is Expanding and Urban Village Are Born

As Guangzhou keeps urbanization, the city boundary is increasingly expanding. Once villages in the rural area now become villages in the city, called “urban villages”. Because villages and cities are two different administrative systems, the “urban villages” as a unique city pattern is both critical and typical in Guangzhou.

There are 138 urban villages in Guangzhou, and they are mainly distributed in 6 center districts. The urban villages surrounded by urban land can be identified as “mature urban villages”. This type of urban villages cannot expand externally and are usually seen as a thorn in the government’s side because most villages are very messy and chaotic. The indigenous villagers rely on rent revenue for living, as the cheap rental apartments in their villages have attracted many migrants who work nearby but cannot afford the high living expense in the city. These urban villages have significant impacts on the city because they are located in the urban center, Most of them are in Tianhe and Yuexiu Districts, which is the newly planned central business district and existing urban center respectively.

However, existing urban villages are more like urban slum enclaves, because the government does not take care of the urban villages due to the separate systems. The living condition there stays weak, and inhabitants are usually rural-urban migrants because of the low rents. The testing urban village is adjacent to the center of the new city, which is an abandoned scenic park and is going to be developed as a commercial center.



Olympic New City

Olympic New City will be the next city center

The Olympic new city has a great mission to implement the strategy of “urbanizing towards the east” and becomes the new urban image of Guangzhou. It is envisioned as an ecological living community and city center. The new city covers an area of 21.9 km2 (5,400 acres), with a construction volume of 16.8 km2 (4,148 acres), which mainly consists of residential buildings and public facilities. The planned resident population is 311,000.

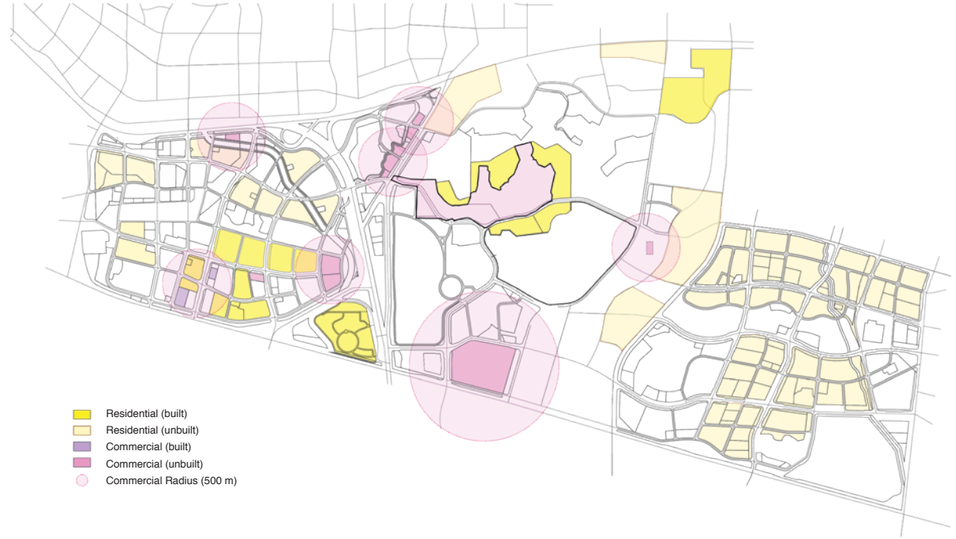
A residential, commercial and ecological city

According to the zoning, the primary land use will be residence, commerce, and green space. Metro Line 19 and Line 21 are going to be built through the new city. The site is surrounded by mixed communities, recreational park, and green space. Located at the center of the center, it plays a significant role in the area.

Zoning map for
Olympic New City

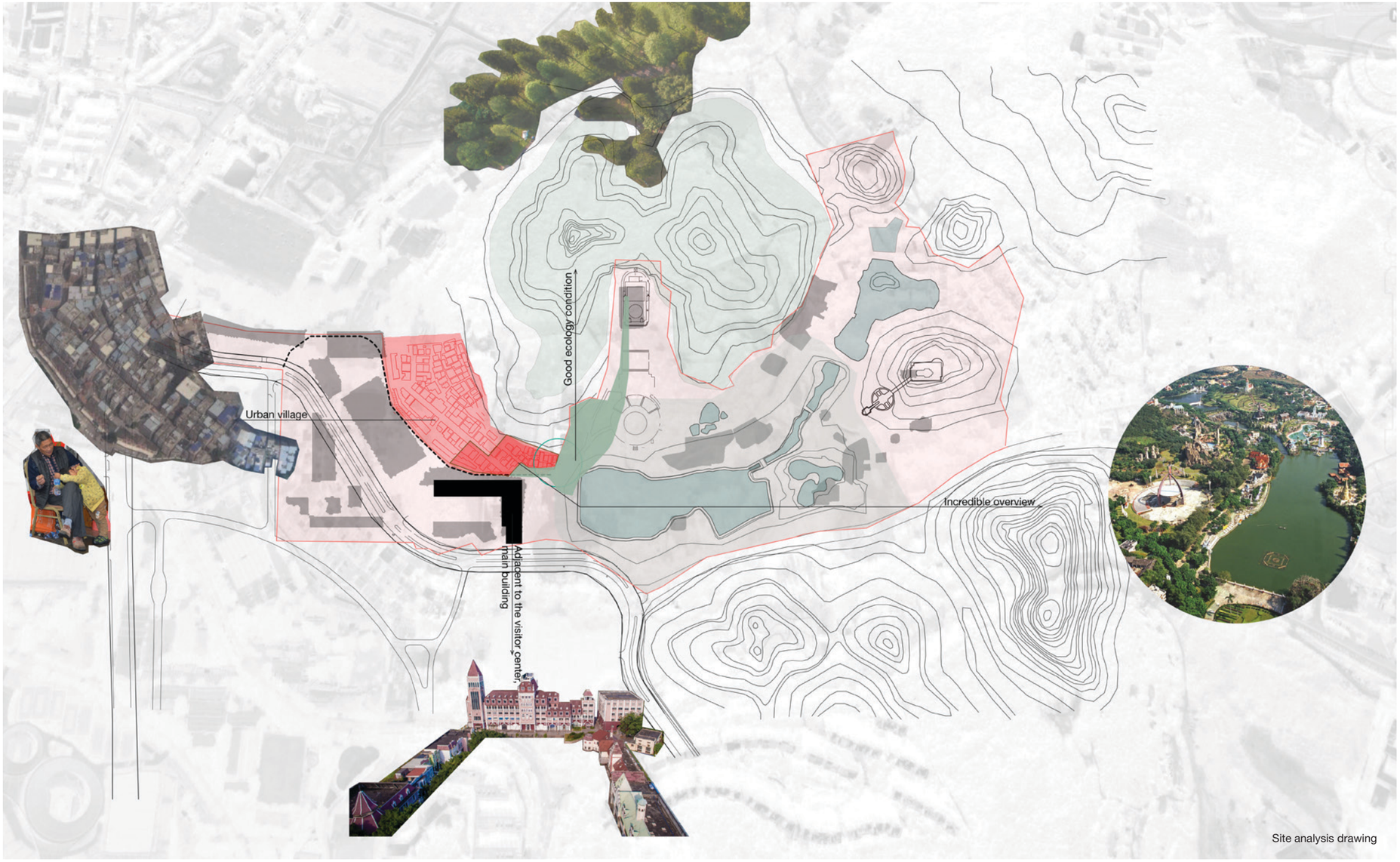
Mixed Communities

Residential And Commercial Land Use



Recreational Land Use

Ecological Land Use



Site analysis drawing

World Grand Scenic Park

Good ecological condition of the scenic park

It was a scenic park in the late 1990s, the first generation of theme parks in China. However, it decayed within a few years and closed in 2009. Abandoned over ten years, the ecological condition of the park turns verdant and luxuriant without human intervention.

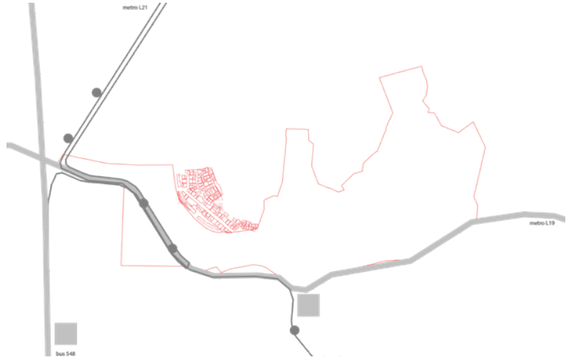
Conflict

In the center location of the new city, World Grand Scenic Park, an abandoned park, is viewed as the heart of the community. Surrounding residential development have already increased their house prices. As the government zones it as commercial land use, the developer has already given it a masterplan. However, the plan intends to separate and isolate the Daguan urban village, because urban villages are declined as urban slum enclaves, and people living there are most rural-urban migrants who are viewed as the low-end population.

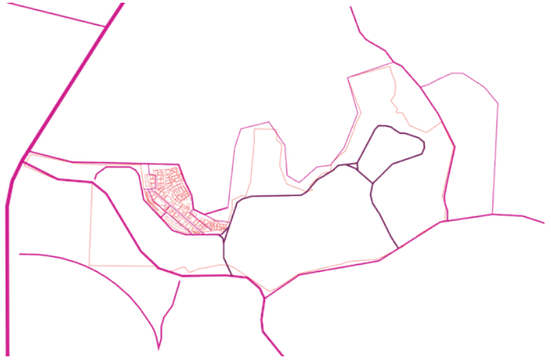
Demographic of the urban village

People who live in the Daguan Village now are the most indigenous villagers and rural-urban-migrant workers. The current business pattern in the village is a small business like family restaurants, barbershops, and grocery stores. The village suffers a certain percentage of the unemployment rate around 15%.

Site analysis diagrams



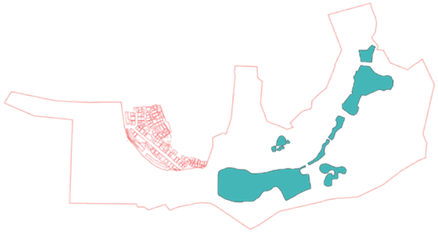
Public Transportation



Road System

Woods

Inner Road Network

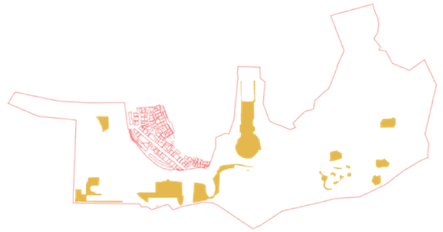


Water Body

Orchard

Building

Grass land



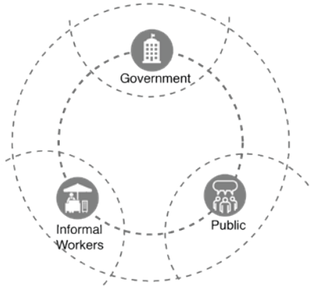
Hard Paving

Principle

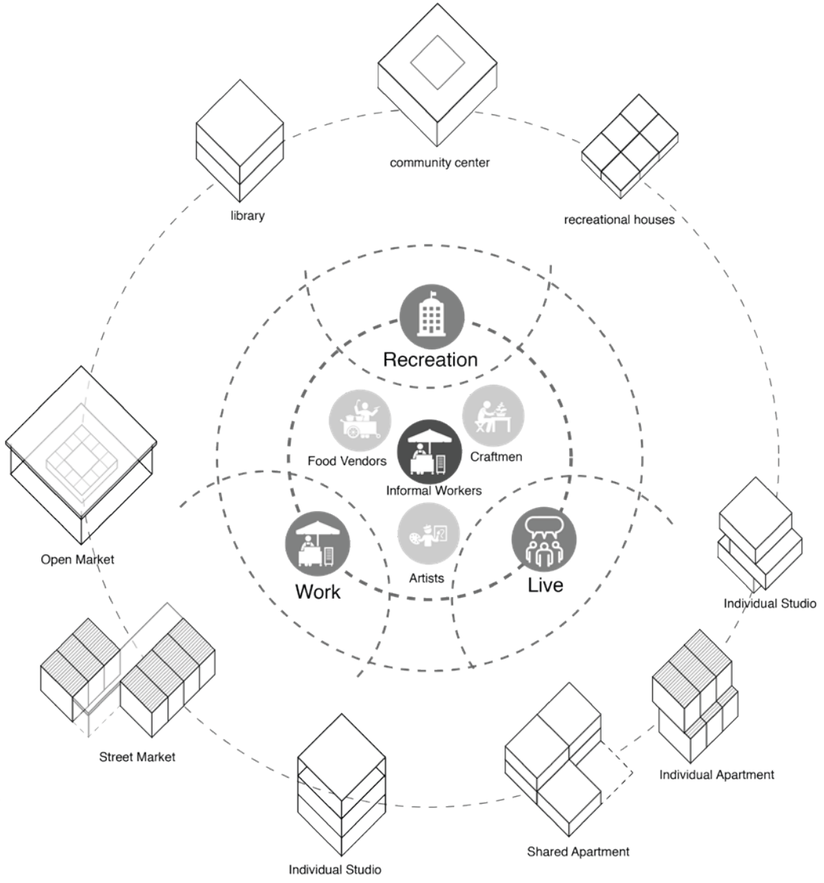
Create a community that puts informal works first

The prototype should circulate the system between the three disparities: the government, the public, and the informal workers. The prototype should be an inclusive community that can improve the living condition of the urban villagers and individual businesses at the same time.

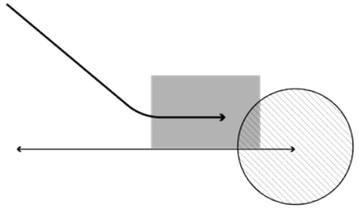
The prototype puts street vendors first, thinks about their needs of living, work, and recreation, and creates the model of the live-work complex, where street vendors can work on the ground floor and live above the markets. According to the publicness of space and scale of the business, the community is zoned in three areas: Open Market Area, Street Market Area, and Individual Market Area. Each area has customized markets. They are Open Market as collective stalls selling fresh and grocery products, Street Market as individual structuralized stores selling clothing and crafts, and Individual Markets as studios selling personalized art and services. The public open spaces in each area are tailored to different needs. The plaza at the Open Market area is integrated with the transportation system, while it becomes a temporary market twice a week and at festivals. The courtyards in-between the street market clusters are playgrounds, gardens, and sports ground. A yard sale can occasionally happen at courtyards. Gardens and wood decks are designed for individual markets, if artists, businesspersons, and visitors want to exchange goods and ideas in the open air.



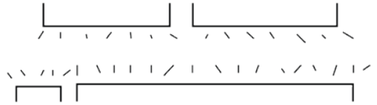
A circulatory system between the government, public and informal workers.



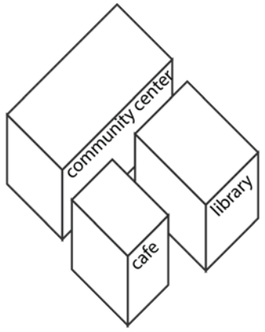
A Circulatory system including essential needs and spatial typologies of street vendors. First is to meet their needs of life, work and recreation. Various programs of markets, house types, community amenities, and public open spaces are generated.



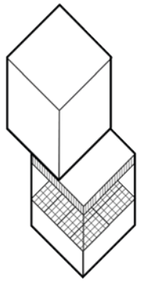
Connect to larger system



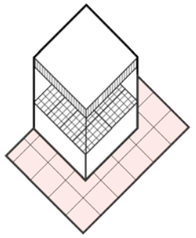
Active live-work environment



Community amenities complement

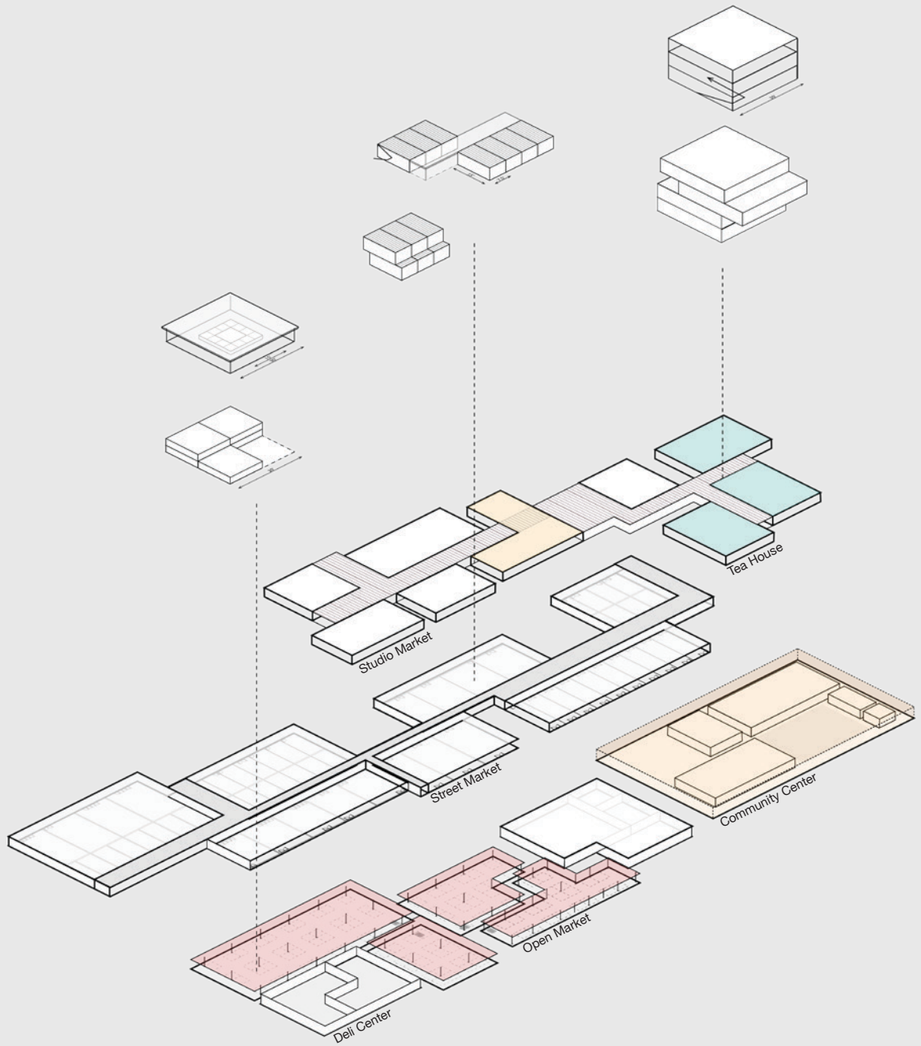


Customized Vending Programs

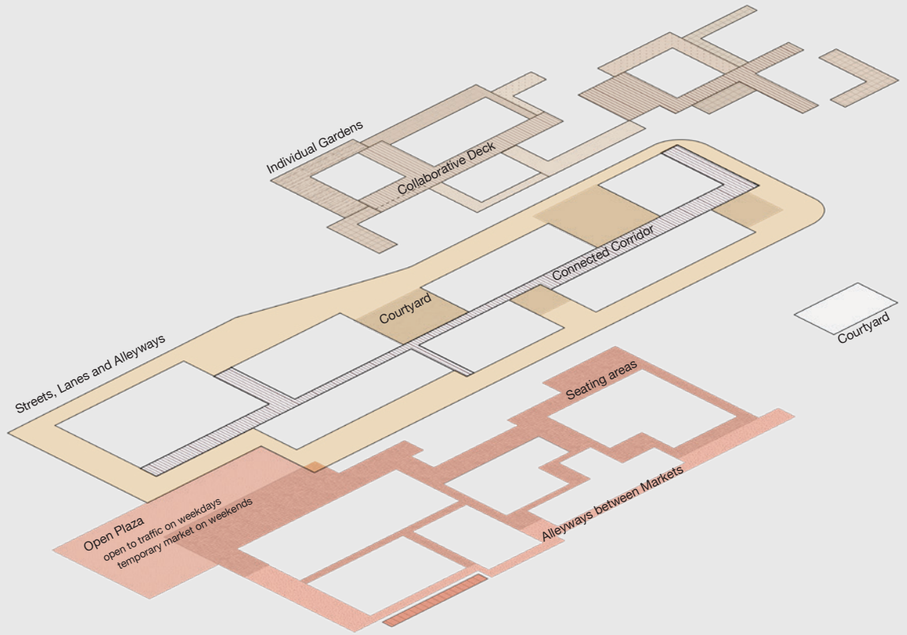


Well balance between in-and-out

Building Program

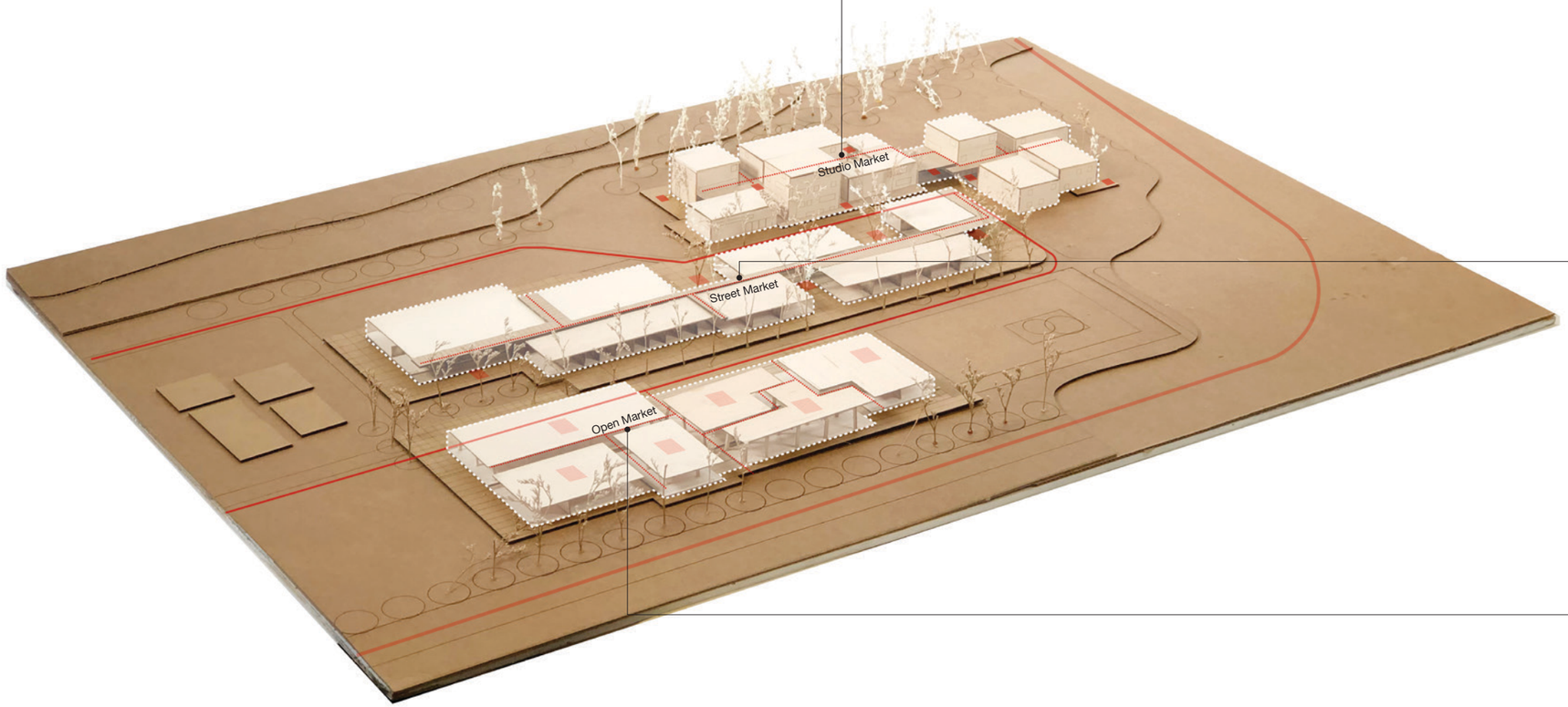


Public Space Program



Axonometric Drawing

The prototype provides integrated live-work experience that can improve villagers' living condition and business at the same time. With the holistic improvement, it changes the image of urban villages. Informal Workers can make a better living; neighbors and visitors are attracted here to enjoy a hustle-bustle life; government can share the profits through appropriate taxes so that the system between the three disparities can circulate. The existing fabric will extend to the surrounding development and revitalize the abandoned park. Ultimately, using street vending as a media creates a community, sense of belonging and stewardship. The goal is to shift away from the top-down mono-cultural program to community-stewardship-driven methodology.



Studio Markets

Street Markets

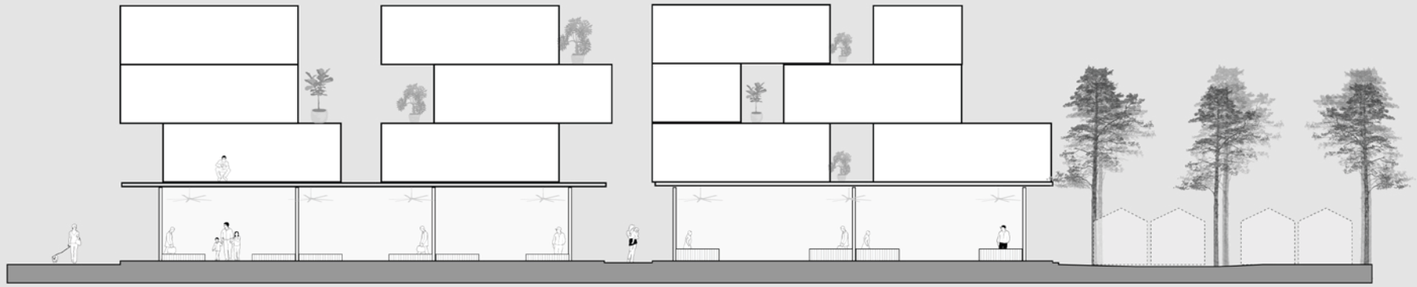
Open Markets

Photo Diagram

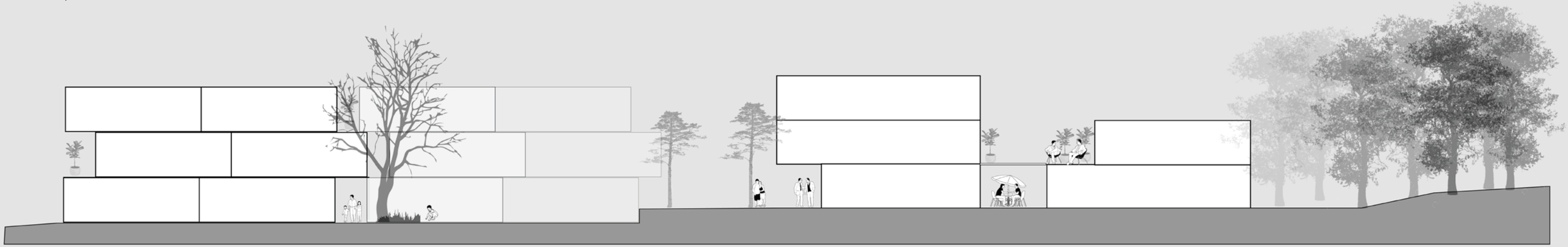
Model Perspective
the central area of the community

1 Open Market
2 Street Market
3 Studio Market
4 Community Center
5 Tea House
6 Recreation Rooms
7 Deli Houses

1 Open Plaza
2 Seating Decks
3 Courtyard
4 Yards
5 Shade Corridor
6 Meadow
7 Woods



Section of Open Market Area



Section betwee Street Market and Studio Makrets

05 REPRESENTATION

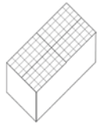
120 Video Frames: A Growing System
130 A Pattern Language
132 An Object: Street Vending Live Show

Video Frames: A Growing System

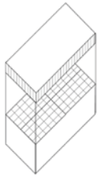
This 30-second-long video shows the growing process of the structure for street vending. It starts with a movable cart and then gradually become a community of street vendors. It animates how a self-organized individual street vending transforms into organized temporary market stands, structured open stalls, open-air buildings, street interfaces, and open space areas. Below are the frames from the video.

A temporary and movable cart

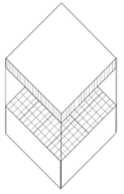
A stable cart



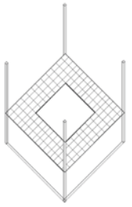
A larger scale stable cart



A temporary stall

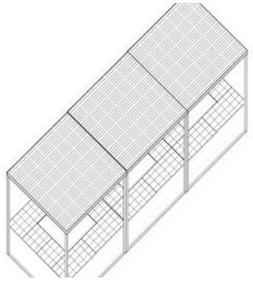


A larger scale temporary stall

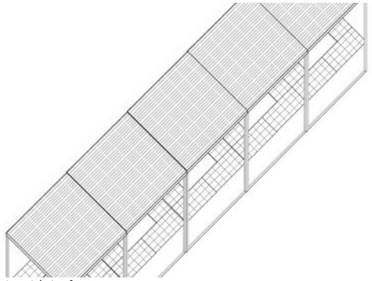


A stable stall without shelter

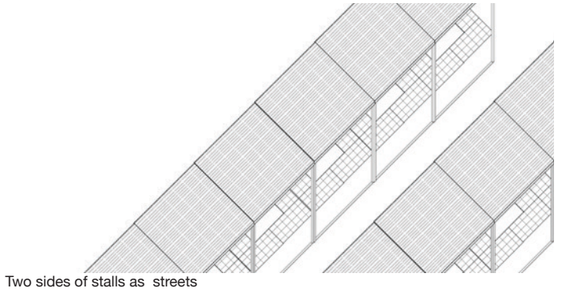
A permanenet stall



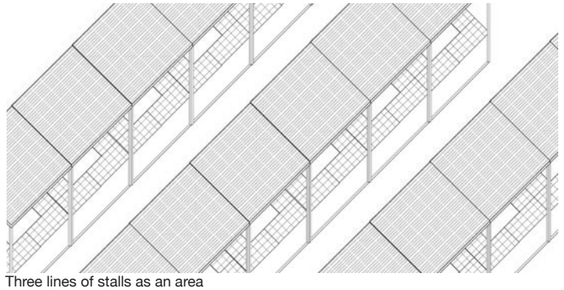
A series of permanent stalls



A line of stalls qs street interface

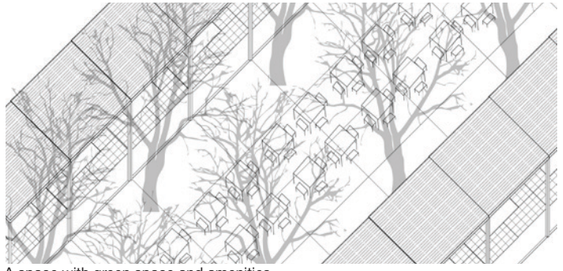


Two sides of stalls as streets



Three lines of stalls as an area

A space with green space

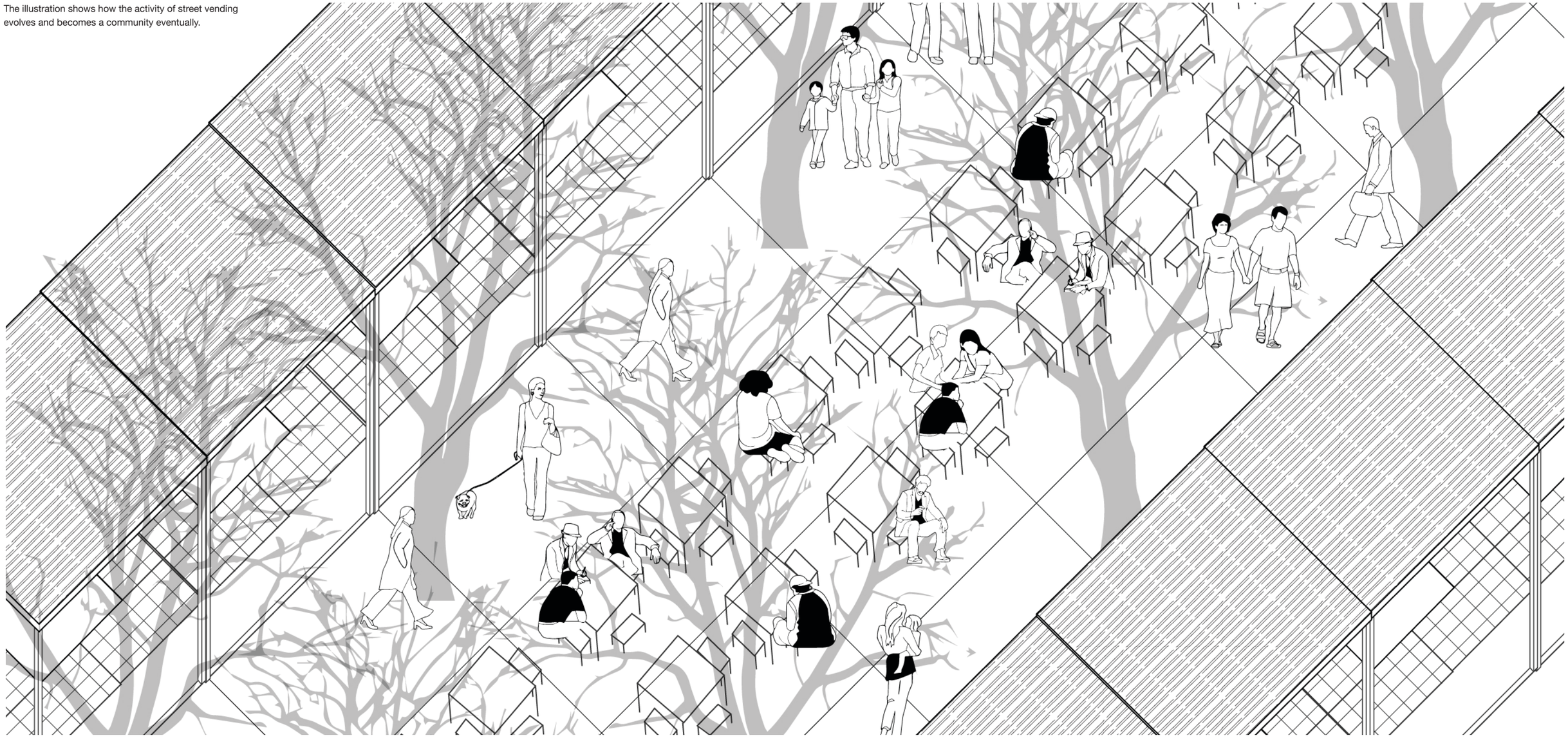


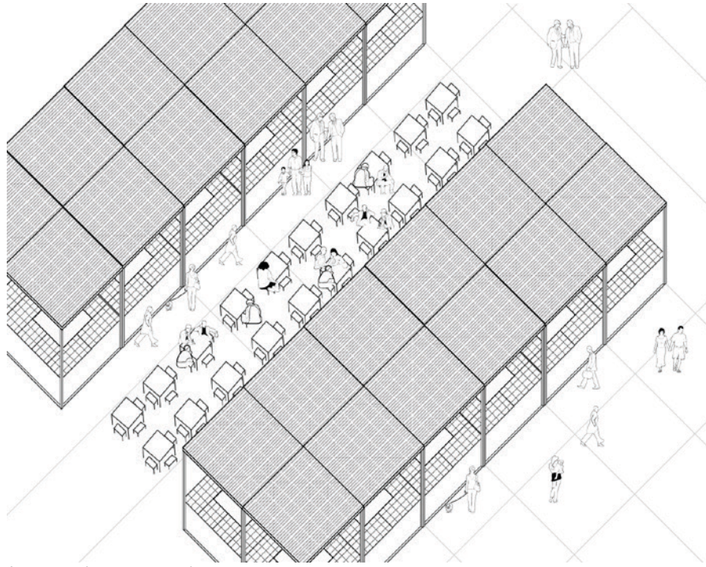
A space with green space and amenities

A space gathers people and generates activities

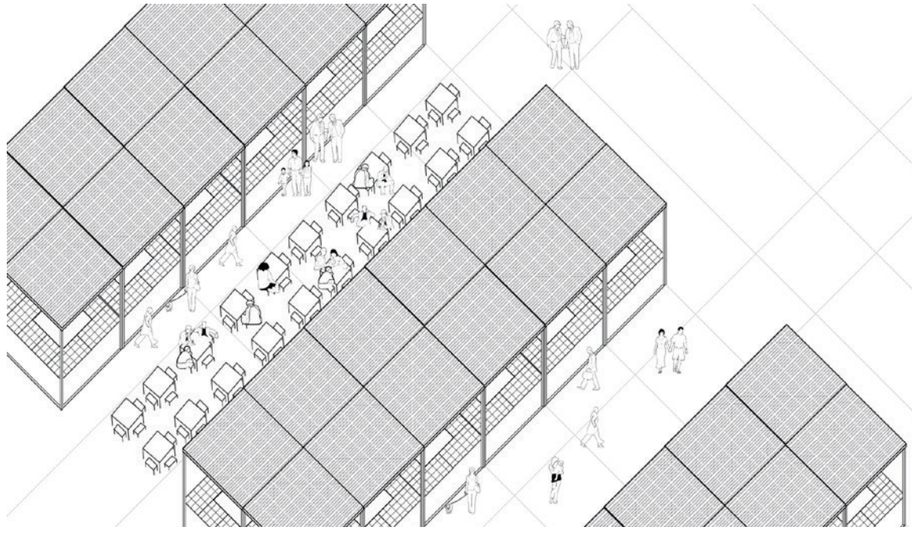
A space gathers people and generates activities

The illustration shows how the activity of street vending evolves and becomes a community eventually.

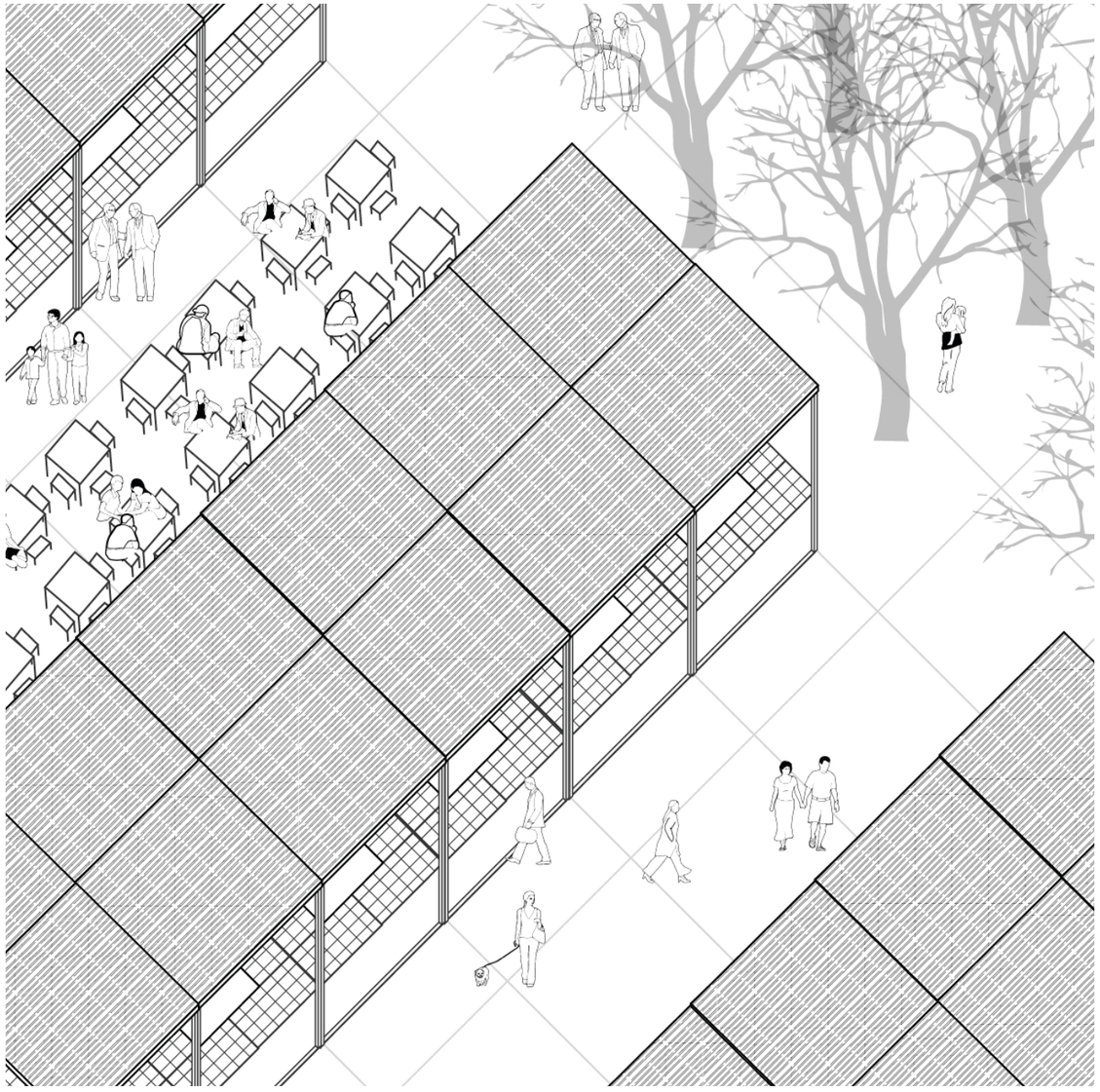




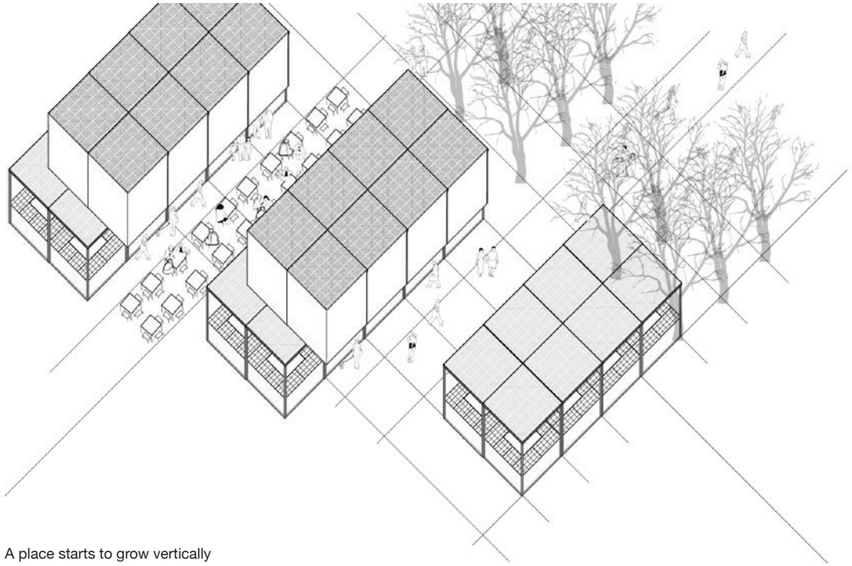
A space gathers more people



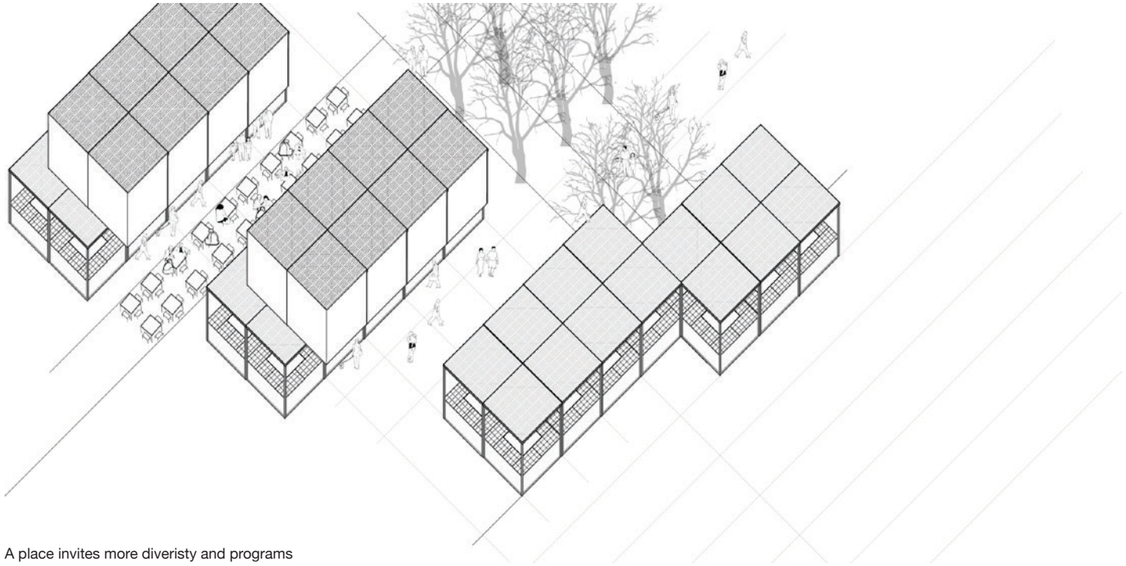
A space gathers more people and structures



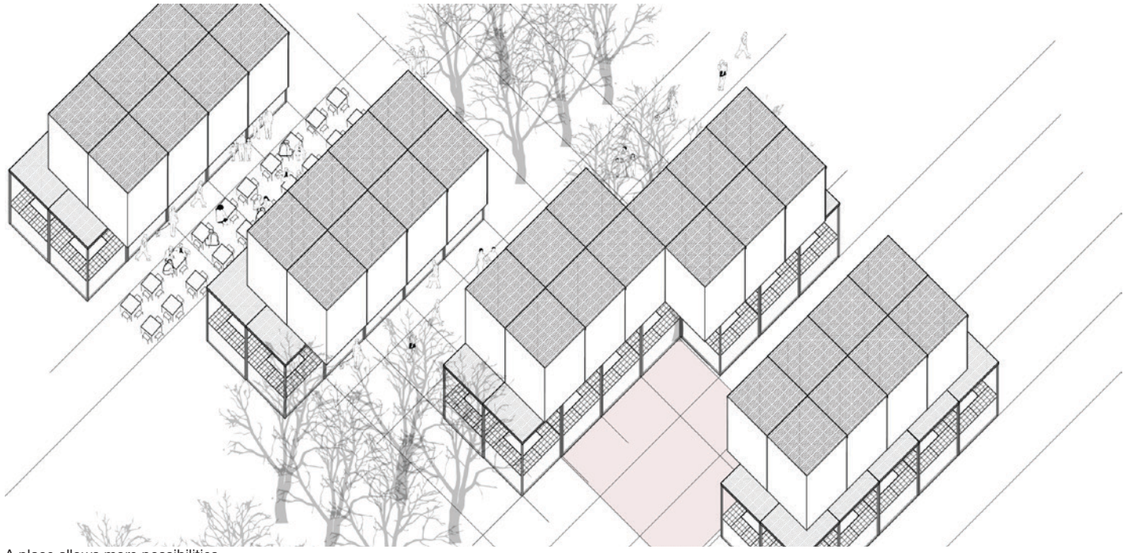
A space becomes a place



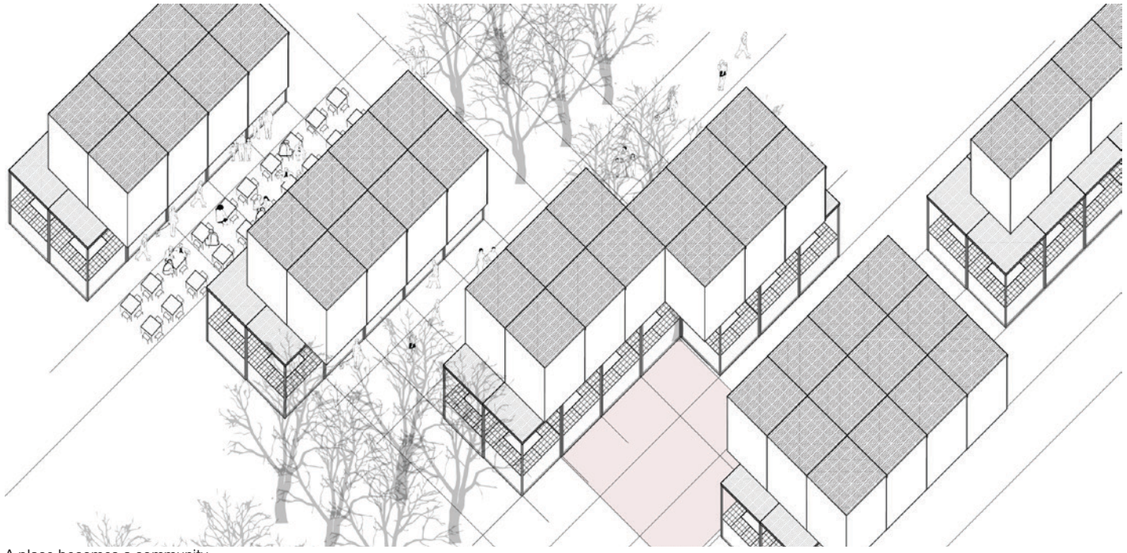
A place starts to grow vertically



A place invites more diveristy and programs

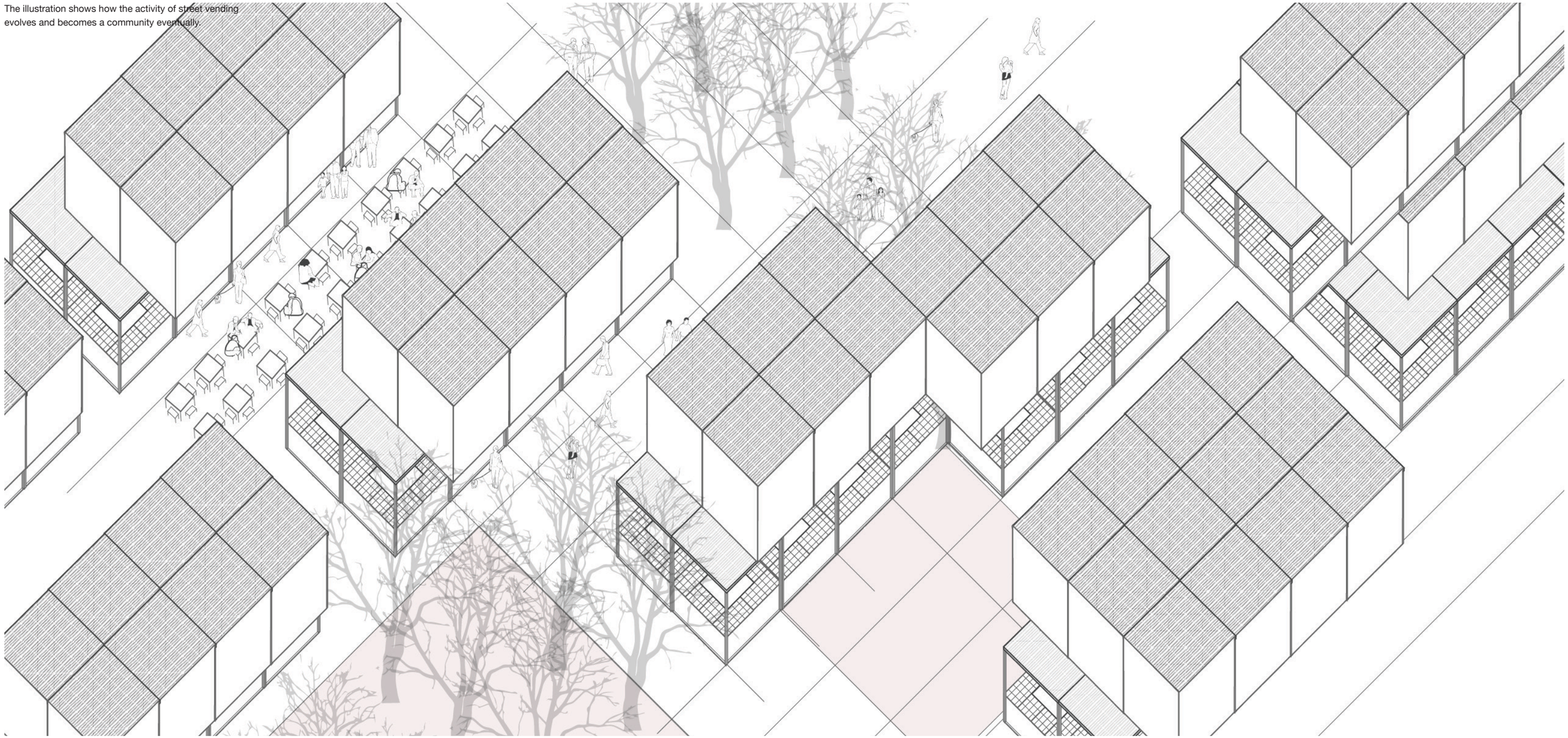


A place allows more possibilities



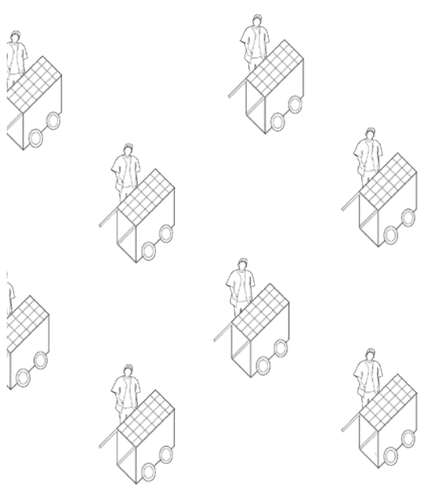
A place becomes a community

The illustration shows how the activity of street vending evolves and becomes a community eventually.

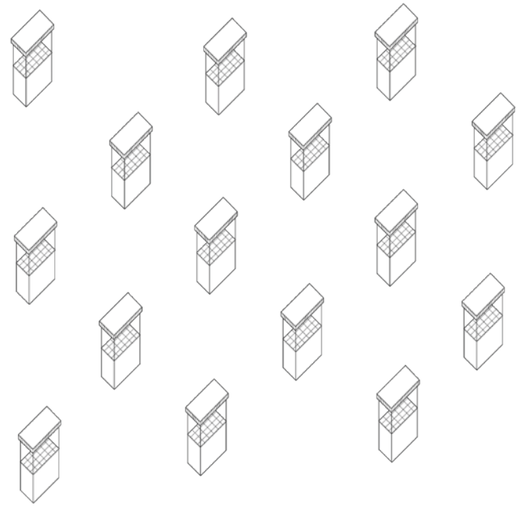


A Pattern Language

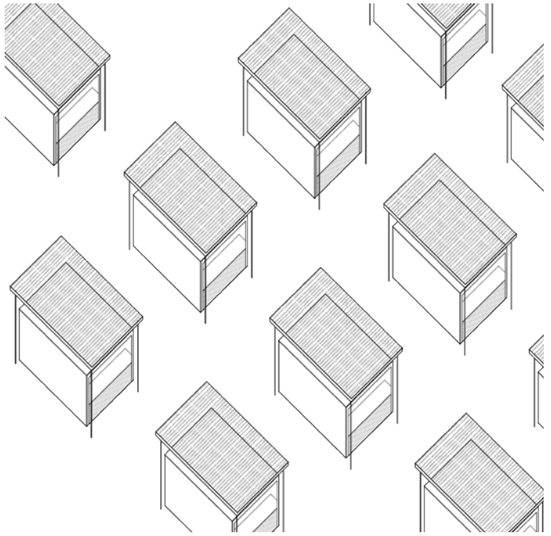
This group of visualization is created to explore the ideas and possibilities of public open spaces by images themselves. The pattern of different types of street vending indicates the spatial layout, business structure, and social activities. It can also be tools of publication through social media that advocates for the vulnerable groups.



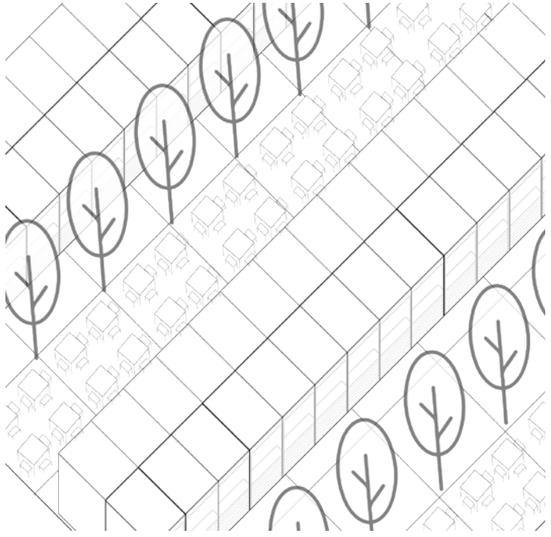
Individual street vending structure



Temporary open stall



Permanent structure



Open-air Space with individual stalls

An Object Series:
Street Vending Live Show

This series of plates is created as a metaphor for street vending. Utilizing the plasticity of wax, I create a series of plates showing the disappearing of street vending and transformation today.

Here on the scene of the final review, four display tables are created to generate free and vivid atmosphere like street vending does. Meanwhile, food always increases social interaction and that's one of the purposes of the objects as well as the prototype design.

A photo took on the scene
This object series serves as catalyst and generates social interaction as street vending does.

06 CONCLUSION

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Findings

This thesis was originally set out as the “Personality of the Cities”, a term created by the author, who dislikes the homogenous urban development in China. Landing on the eviction of street vending, this thesis challenges the current system of China’s urbanization and tries to reframe the complex socio-economic-political issue by design strategies. Through case studies, first-hand experiences, academic inquiries, material explorations, and social engagement experiments, a series of conclusions and design strategies are discovered:

- The system at play in China’s urbanization is broken down between the “top” and the “bottom” group. The “top” group, including the government and the developers, dominate the decision-making process through which they make a profit instead of building a better place. On the contrary, the “bottom” group, consisting of the public and the rural-urban migrants, can barely engage with the process. What’s more, migrants are usually the victims during urbanization. Eviction of street vending not only expropriates street vendors’ livelihoods but also drives the population back to the rural area without employment.

- The first part of the strategies is a healthy circulatory system made up of stakeholders and their needs translated into spatial typologies. The space and the action are the key factors. A new prototype of street vending, which can provide livelihoods for street vendors, vitality to urban life and make profits for the “top” group, is needed for circulating the system and achieving a win-win strategy.

- Through researching and experiencing different types of street vending, a matrix is constructed with the following variables: engagement with the site, human scale, the massing of sheltering structures, the economy of materials, goods sold, cost, profit and licensed. With these references, different urban conditions can be applied to and suggested with appropriate strategies.

- A growing system is discovered in the matrix. As an evolutionary process, the next step will be a community of street vendors that has a positive impact on the surrounding urban development.

- In the case of the urban village, a live-work complex community is proposed to both improve the living condition and boost individual small businesses. Involving building programs, a public open space system and lifestyle of street vendors can reframe the socio-economic-political issue.

Assessment

Good job, keep going!

- Frame the question
- Case study and conclusion with matrix
- Discover the growing system and propose with the new prototype

They need more attention

- informal urbanism, emergent, improvisation, messiness
- temporary urbanism, transient
- larger urban system
- political framework

This thesis did a good job in framing the question, moving forward with three phases and propose the prototype that reframes the socio-economic-political issue. For as many conclusions and strategies were made, questions and possibilities were brought to the surfaces and left to answer.

In the first phase of framing the question, it clearly stated the current system of China's urbanization and set up the case for why temporary street vendors are important to the future of China's cities. Street vendors provide vital street life, a measure of unpredictability, and act as a countervailing humanizing element to contemporary Chinese developments. On the other hand, what is the informal pattern, the qualities of temporary activities and the "messiness" remain unclear. Literature review on informal urbanism, temporary urbanism, study on messiness can complement the findings and translate to the deployment of street vending.

The second phase suffers from site selection, and it turned out a series of "sites" that each address a different urban condition that street vendors currently affect or have the potential to affect in the future.

In the third phase with the urban condition analysis and the matrix diagram, a series of strategies is suggested to different scenarios. If given more time, the analysis and proposals could be more sound and detailed. The prototype provides a new lens on how landscape can reframe socio-economic-political issues and revitalize urban development. However, it did not demonstrate clearly how street vending could change and alter the urban strategies.

Written Comments from Theodore Hoerr

Phase I Review

"Your thesis question is compelling in positioning food carts and temporary street vendors as a positive and humanizing activity for Chinese cities that present an alternative to current governmental policies. Your investigation could be strengthened by choosing a site that offers the possibility for two different alternatives: introducing food carts and temporary street vendors into existing urban fabric and using food carts as temporary/transient urbanism that can help activate edges of cities that are poised for development in the future. Selecting a site to test your question that has both existing urban structures and edges that are slated for future develop would help strengthen your argument to show flexibility in your idea and remove the burden of designing your test site from scratch.

Another area that could be beneficial to your study is to take a closer look at a couple case studies such as the Portland food cart block and understand in greater detail how this works and how it affects the edges or surrounding public spaces. For example, in the Portland model all of the service is located in the interior of the block while the vendors line the perimeter. The consumers primarily use the block as an area to purchase food, but utilize the surrounding spaces to consume the food. So one of the primary benefits to the Portland model is how it charges the surrounding public spaces located close to the block. Perhaps you could create several models that produce different temporary urban structures depending on how the vendors are organized – blocks, clusters, distributed field, and etc. You may also imagine what kind of ancillary activities could pair with the vendors. Are they distributed in different ways to accommodate different scaled events or activities? How do the cultivate and support compatible activities such as sports, cultural, and recreational events?"

Phase II Review

"You have a done a commendable job to set up the case for why temporary street vendors are important to the future of China's cities. Your observation that vendors provide vital street life, a measure of unpredictability, and act as a countervailing humanizing element to contemporary Chinese developments. A couple of items would help to strengthen and legitimize your proposal moving forward. The "site" you have selected is in an area that is entirely slated for new development. It would be more compelling to think about a series of "sites" that each address a different urban condition that street vendors currently affect or have the potential to affect in the future. You have indicated three parts to the city you are working in: the Historic City (existing historic development), the Modern City (existing modern development), and the New City (development that is planned for the future).

I would suggest that you do a more detailed analysis of how street vendors currently operate in a small part of the Historic City, and how street vendors could be inserted into a small partof the existing Modern City to add vitality and life. Finally, it would help to do a more extensive study of a small piece of the New City and how it could be shaped by street vendors before, during, and post construction. How can it activate temporarily vacant land proposed for construction? As your critics suggested it would be best if you find proposed plans for the study of the New City so you do not need to design/manufacture a context for these studies."

Final Review

"Your methodical and nuanced understanding of street vending and its evolving history in China was excellent. The research you provided of street vending in China and other parts of the world was clearly communicated in a way that naturally pointed at other ways that this activity could be deployed in urban environments to serve as a countermeasure to some of the sterile modern developments that are currently being constructed in China.

As your critics mentioned, your thesis question could be positioned in divergent ways that could have fundamentally different points of view. One possibility is to utilize street vending as a tool to help promote change to current government regulations that apply to development. The other is using street vending as a mechanism to operate outside/beyond regulations that are in place because of its agility and temporal nature. Your model diagrams of current street vendors operations within the night markets illustrated latent potential quite effectively through currently found conditions.

The intervention plans you showed were well thought out, but did not demonstrate clearly how the varying contexts that you would deploy the street vendors in could change and alter the urban strategies of point, line, and field.

The video was the most effective tool to show the adaptability and flexibility of this system. It would be helpful moving forward if the video were also able to show how this new form of urbanism is affected by the existing conditions. "

Next Step

In the short turn, the next step is to continue with design development, to understand how the prototype grows and integrates into the urban fabric.

In the long run, the goal of this thesis is to reframe the politics through design strategies, to empower the public with the tools and know-how, and address the stewardship and ownership. It can gradually shift away from top-down mono-cultural programs and infrastructure to community-stewardship-driven methodology.

Thank-you

To the following people, thank-you for teaching me the rules like a pro and inspiring me to break them like an artist:

Leslie Lee, Theodore Hoerr, Elizabeth Dean Hermann, Nadine Gerdts, Helen Kongsgaard, Anne West, Peter Carney, Carla Edwards, as well as my classmates, my family and my friends.

I am grateful to you all, this thesis would not be possible without you.

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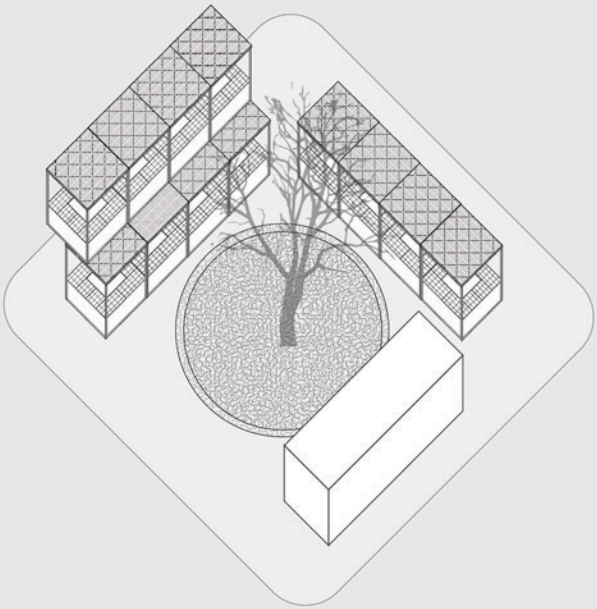
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