Enabling Wild Be[ij]ing: 
Try-Out for the Future of Hyper-Density 

by 

Shuo Wang 

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APPROVED, THESIS COMMITTEE: 

Douglas Oliver, Professor in Practice, Director 
School of Architecture 

Lars Lerup, William Ward Watkin Professor 
Dean of School of Architecture 

Fares el-Dahdah, Associate Professor 
School of Architecture 

Houston, Texas 

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ABSTRACT

Enabling Wild Be[ij]ing
Try-Out for the Future of Hyper-Density

by Shuo Wang

EWB is a direct attempt to deal with numerous uncontrolled urban emergences in Beijing; instead of the current stratifying process, it offers strategies for intensifying the dynamic density through enabling the massive subversive forces. In turn, EWB exposes the city’s future of unprecedented three-dimensional congestion -- a hyper-dense city.

EWB respond to the all-encompassing wildness with an approach that merges two opposing concepts of urbanity into one: the top-down plan that treats developments as lockdown enclaves; the unregulated activities that flood the urban ground. It propagates a new urban process by using the vast developments as a framework to proliferate street commerce – instead of being parasitical, unregulated activities can weave into the rigid structure of existing residential blocks and disturb it like a virus infection. Once they reach the critical masses, the city will reinvent itself as an uninterrupted hyper-dense urban landscape capable of accommodating all manners of street life.
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Introduction:
Notes for an urban research project

1. EMERGENT WILDNESS

Paradoxical as it may be, the emergent voices of urban research over the past decade has been opposing to the integral approach that our discipline have struggled to construct over a century. Architects and urbanists seeking instruments that would allow them to intervene effectively in the contemporary space turn to ‘terrains vagues’ or virus area as filed of investigation. (projects including USE by Stefano Boeri and Multiplicity, Project on the City by Rem Koolhaas, BBT by Dynamic City Foundation.) From an urbanistic point of view, the execution of modernism’s ideal of urban planning have, in turn, generated a reality to its opposite end. To the point where today the urban condition can be anything but a defined one.

The urban transformation that have come to pass around the world, in American, European, and above all, Asian is filled with wild mutations. In a way, the physical transformations of urban field is parallel to what’s embodied in Emmet Gowin’s landscape photos: The plan of the pivot agriculture as a presupposed unitary control is disturbed by its harvest traffic. The dynamic interaction which bring the static back to life finally results in a chaotic pattern... In the same way, the current urban condition consists of hamperings, congestions and violent eruptions in different directions. These emergences present something metaphorical about the structure of the order, or non-order, by which the city actually grow.
At this moment, the Chinese metropolises (Beijing, Shanghai, PRD) are developing a new urban landscape which raises many questions, and because the sheer number of Chinese population, it also opens up to a new level of hyper-density. One thing is for sure, that urban planning can never hold up the energy of constant eruptions. We are bound to encounter the emergent wildness.

(RE)SEARCH FOR ALTERNATIVE

Questioning of contemporary cities now constitute the privileged theme of conferences and exhibitions. Like the curator of the nineteenth UIA congress in Barcelona said "[we are searching]...approaches which escape the traditional way of describing the city and of intervening in the urban fabric."

The EWB project starts from such embeddedness of the emergent urban situation. It is an attempt to grasp the trajectory of a perpetually shifting reality, and to describe and interpret the potential of contemporary urban wildness.

However, the desire to encompass the physical mutation of the city, should not lead to an exhaustive system for analyzing the city. Its relation with real time inhabitation is still one of tension, of resistance, allow alternatives.

The unpredictable vitality of today's cities, results from an excess of possible scenarios for the future of the cities. This new thrive is not an accidental fluke, and it

Ruth Glass, spatial territories of social groups in Middlesborough; illustration from 'A City Is Not a Tree' 1965. Christopher Alexander's essay offers a discourse disclosing initial questioning of the organised complexity of the built environment.
is connected to the important notion of spatial practice acquired in the later half of last century. One end-century reflection is that modernism, when applied to certain contexts, actually generates a far more complex condition than a homogenized one. In the contemporary metropolis, it even intensifies diversities.

Such concern of the emergent wildness is well connected to the approaches of various French philosophers in the 60s, who have attempt to decode the urban transformation underway. The prophetic ideas, from Benjamin's notion of "flâneur", to Foucault's definition of the space of "heterotopia", and the discourse of the "everyday" led by Lefebvre and Micheal de Certeau, all refer to spaces that are heterogeneous among the projected homogenizing order, and apply an alternative reading of such spaces in order to generate new potentials.

The definition of "alternative" has more meaning in the contemporary transitional metropolitan than that of a simple 'subversion of common'. It helps one to generate a sensibility that stand against the tendency of modern urbanism to treat the city from a top-down view, and to create blank new order out of tabula rasa.
URBAN AS FIELD OF ACTION

In testing the capacity of the evolutionary model to deal with the phenomena and the process of physical mutation of the city, as a basis for understanding the new relationship between architecture and the metropolises of today, we make evident that the urban is a field of action. Juxtaposition, intersecting, rupture, and eruption, all of these dynamic layers work together toward a new hyperactive situation.

Instead of the current stratifying process, EWB will re-examine the urban surface where points and lines of dense activities are viewed as “vertical” eruption of the underlying dynamics. Their intensified changes are understood as the link between urban rupture and temporal conflict. Varies evolution of urban wildness will build up a programmatic catalogue used to activate the urban space and offer strategies for intensifying the dynamic density through enabling the massive subversive forces.
MOBILE DENSITY

The explosive urbanization in Beijing opens a new level of growing urban density. Under the desire of development, the city is giving all way to consumer economy, leading to the relent disappear of historical identity, rapid construction of world-class skyscrapers. But even the wildest reality contain certain profound quality.

The urban as a complex situation involves the active participation of the masses. The question is how the overflow of density will land in a way that does not kill its unique vitality, constructing an alternative city based on multiplicity and heterogeneity.

Such approach is exemplified in Yona Friedman’s ‘Ville Spatial’ and Constant Nieuwenhuis’s ‘New Babylon’. Attempts to grasp a shifting reality, encompass the urban wildness have never been stopped.
A CITY (NATION) UNDER CONSTRUCTION
Focus on Wild Be[i]jing

PARADIGM OF WILDNESS

EWB inspects Beijing, in a way that it is not a direct answer of how to solve the urgent pressure, which may lead to a synthesis plan that trying to control the city over chaos. Rather, it take the temporal dimension of the change as an opportunity of dynamic situation to question the city's profound quality in the present reality. Such focus on Beijing is overdue. It has been experiencing an incredible magnitude of urban growth since the last quarter of the past century. The largely uncontrolled economic upheavals presented its domestic urban condition as full of hamperings, rampant congestions and violent eruptions in different direction. In a word, It is a paradigm of urban wildness that thrives against any prediction from the discipline.

Beijing is undergoing one of the largest urbanization process in the world. Within twenty years it is likely to gain 11.6 million new urban migration.

"The 2nd Great Leap forward" The government has boldly projected that the 30%/70% urban/rural population proportion will be inverted to 70%/30% by the year 2020.
Beijing’s urban transformation shows an accelerated evolution process from the single and simple to the diverse and manifold. Although undergoing a series of revolutions, its totality largely remained before 1980s. It is only after the thriving of private markets that the city starts to detach from the concentric organization. Within the last two decades, the city had inverted itself to a formless buildup of marketization. Entering 90s, huge rural-to-urban migration started. Their new vision of the city reshaped the urban ground in an unprecedented explosive way. In a decade, 5 million rural migrants have rushed into the city. Because of no secured employment, they flooded any open public space and smash it to small pieces of street trades. The mobile realm almost became an envelope for the human condition. While this untapped fast growth happening in such a large scale, Beijing’s future is unpredictable.

While the conditions presented as a wild battlefield that normally call for a purifying procedure. Beijing simply subverts that attempt—instead of suspension of urban pressure, it offers intensification.

The only way we can describe the city is a state of constant instability: There is a huge urban migration resulting in 20% floating population without settled jobs and an exacerbating income gap between the newly rich and the remaining poor. This presents Beijing as a serious challenge and at the same time a paradigm for wild construction/reconstruction.
The annual amount of constructions in Beijing nearly equals to that of the whole Europe. In order to cope with the wild construction, since 2000, an average of 50 square km of land was acquired for urban development annually, but this figure is expected to more than double during this decade.
Beijing and U.S cities

Defined urbanized area, 1988
173.4 km²

Defined urbanized area, 2004
1096.9 km²

Beijing Built at Houston Urbanized Density 1,140 persons/km²
10175 km²

Built at L.A. Urbanized Density 2,700 persons/km²
4296 km²

overlap of Beijing and Houston

overlap of Beijing and L.A.
DIFFERENTIATING OWNERSHIP

The main driving force of the recent rapid economic development is the acceptance of a powerful and uncompromising ideology of late-capitalism. With a socialism structure, Beijing as a city-state, have introduced substantial modification to its development strategy, resulting in a Chinese-featured socialism. Mostly urged by free market forces, there is no time to think or reflect. The strain on infrastructure are becoming increasingly apparent. Old buildings are torn down and cleared up the next day for new constructions. In contrast, the rapid urbanization is paired by over-population, joblessness and poverty in the rural area. Rural migrants have entered the city. Because of no secured employment, they rushed into any open public space and flooded it with innumerable street trades. This has inevitably resulted in the spread of squatter settlements and shanty “village in the city”.

At this moment, there is no given urban grammar for the haphazard development in Beijing. However, there are some inductive quality in some of those area, which can in turn, be developed or already developing, a subversive logic of urban nomad strategy. That is one based on the ill-defined public ownership and its relation to private initiative. Private initiative appeared as the most possibility to fulfill demands of growing masses and move economy from the previous centralized planned to a chaotic stage of dispersed developments, shuffling the urban ingredients to keep their variety and vitality. The grammar might be transitory, but is constructing to a large scale of development.
Characters of the private initiatives:

- usually small in scale, most private enterprises are simple workshops or family business. They lack the amount of capital to make big profits or advance to large-scale production.

- most of them are labor intensive. The low degree of mechanization limits their development of branding, but prevents them from vicious competition, therefore stimulates their coexistence.

- Their wild growth in huge amount rather than in scale of ownership reveals a totally new way of development for the late-capitalist city. Although in a current unstable status, they have the potential energy to spring up from parasitical to overwhelming.
BEIJING “DOUGHNUT”

Urban morphology study has been able to generate code from the explicit transformation, but it remains descriptive to the volatile and often haphazard growth by which the city actually develops.

As the multiplicity of urban contents growing increasingly disconnect with its original forms, the land become an immense repository of emerging transformations, indifferent or even incompatible with their context, leading to the detached city. Will this disjunction of urban space and its function reveal the underlying structure of the city, the real desire of our city’s future?

The city have exploded to the point that Architecture has taken over urban planning.

The question rises: Can Beijing with stand 15 years more of uncontrolled expansion?
While this untapped fast growth happening in such a large scale, the Law of Diminishing Returns tells us that if one factor of production is increased while the others remain constant, the overall returns will relatively decrease after a certain point. Land, as a factor of production in limited supply, would lead to diminishing returns. The upcoming 6th and 7th ring roads seem already go beyond the point where infrastructural development in the newly established area becomes economic unfeasible.

The subversion of the law lies in enabling the diversity and dynamic relations between the elements involved. This is suggesting a development toward new compactness through fluctuation...
Due to the concentric ring roads set up, the old city within the 2nd Ring is proceeding to thin out. As a synthesis results of the density, floor area per capital, land cost, most of these new constructions will happen between 3rd Ring and 5th ring. Formally diffused boundary of the city is becoming intense urban battlefield.

**Locating Beijing's New Developments**


Population density in Beijing is processing “thinning out”, due to the exacerbating urban pressure in old city at the moment.
BEIJING "DOUGHNUT" WHERE EVERYTHING GOES IN

As developers optimizing the location of new constructions between 3rd Ring and 5th Ring - the formally diffused boundary of the city is becoming intense urban battlefield.

The discourse of urban wildness is at its most application when it is connected to real time life in the city. Where points/lines/areas of dense activities are viewed as "vertical" eruption of the underlying dynamics. The varies evolution of each typology will be used as anchoring points to activate the urban space. The developers' logic maybe elusory, but it is inseparable with the evolution of the city.

*Instead of suspension of urban pressure, it offers intensification...*[Coney Island] defines completely new relationship between site, program, form and technology. The site has now become a miniature state, the program its ideology, and architecture the arrangement of the technological apparatus that compensates for the loss of physicality. ...in what will become a standard remedy against the spontaneous urbanism of the masses.

Delirious New York, Rem Koolhaas, 1978
The centralized plan of Beijing used to maintain a strong hierarchy around the city, from inner core - dense residential fabric to diffused boundary, and to outer city - huge industrial Work Units. Since the last decade of 20th Century, accelerated developments have exploded the city into splinters. New developments filled in any left over space in the periphery, putting the city's totality into nullity. This disjunction of urban space is revealing the city's underlying structure, and the real desire of the city's future.
Research and experiments

LOOKING AT THE URBAN FIELD
At this moment, Beijing produces itself as an urban laboratory of innovative substances, from which new strategy will be drawn that allow urban interventions tapping into the real time evolution of lived space.
The formal boundary area of the city, which are being intensely urbanized, are filled in with a multitude of isolated objects heterogeneous in dimensions and functions, juxtaposed without an evident criteria. As the multiplicity of urban contents growing increasingly disconnected with its original forms, the land becomes an immense repository of substances indifferent or even incompatible with their context, Witnessing a DETACHED CITY.
Working components

In order to tap into the real time transformation of the city, there are several co-operating components go through the research:

1. Specific locale, i.e. particular sections of the city in a specific period of time. They are taken as inductive to certain quality, and even zoomed into certain block for detached analysis.

2. Discontinuity / heterogeneity, new program, wild growth which cannot be represented by the “plan”.

3. New language and techniques to tap into the situation, restate them in certain aspects.
FIELD RESEARCH

Da Hong Men Migrants Area

Since late 1980s, the flux from the rural populations to the urban area has been poorly matched by land reclamation. The way they carve into the urban surface, is like scars disfigure a face - migrants share common hometown concentrate in the camp, formally termed “village in the city” - scattered in between ring roads.

During one and a half decades, Da hong men area grew from a diffused suburban area with small villages and a wood factory to the most contested urban area of the city. With a distinct 0.11 million migrants [mostly from the Zhejiang Province] and 40 thousand original inhabitants concentrated in less than 10 km2 of land. The density reaches 15000 p/km2. As the continuous low residences near the inner city is replaced by new block/tower development, the small villages grows quickly to accommodate migrants. The land of the wood factory is encroached by small initiatives and sold illegally to residential developers for making profits. As the new developments are forced out, the migrants start to look for sites within former oil refineries to build their new “migrant village”.

Location of Da Hong Men Area in the city Between 3-5 Ring Roads on N-S main axis
Growth: residential
- low residence
- block building
- tower

Growth: industrial/commercial
Da Hong Men Migrants Area

Figure:
area 10 km²
population 150,000
migrants 110,000
markets 38
commercial floor area 1/5 of built floor area

study of programmatic transformation link

field survey of void urban programs

street commerce typology:
- mobile
- insertion
- lightness
- temporary
- solidified
- concentration
- hybrid adaptation
EVOLUTIONAL ANALYSIS

Blossomed along the lines of flux, street trades rapidly intensified towards any possible open public square. The fast-fluctuating, horizontal movement of this huge network simply find its way around any institutional authority, remaining mobile to escape prosecution. Consequently, circulation of currencies became the only controller of spatial growth. All available city space gradually turned into testing grounds for new commerce through dense juxtaposition of formally unrelated units. The resulting transformation into new spatial and organizational typologies was largely due to dynamic relations between individuals. Profitable trading spots were compressed while new public centers formed. The heterogeneous constellation of changing territories, ownership, diverse types of trade, all presented in the spontaneous architecture.
actions of transformation

mobility

aggregating

solidifying

inserting

attachment

expanding

Samples of evolutionary process
scenarios of evolution

[Heterogeneity]

[shifting bound]

[invert explosion]
scenario: garment market

spontaneity  clearing / empty  linear growth  plug-in  in between

[hetereogeneity]
In early stages, garment vendors blossomed along the lines of transportation flux while rapidly intensified towards possible open public space and take hold of it. Then in a moment, the local administrator did consider legitimate those spontaneous market. Clearing is processed and empty temporary structure is provided. But that is only the cutting mat for the heterogeneous spatial transformation to take place. The intense movement within the frame appears through ranges that are achieved in every spatial parameter of different scales, of quality of solidifying/mobile, of different type of goods, of different ownership. As a result of incessant spatial reconfiguration, the possibility of arranging programs are far more stretched than ever conceived.
The study of street trade evolution will not lead to the conclusion that the wildness will develop its own form of intelligence, it can’t offer conclusion itself. But it teaches us how these things might works with others. Its relation with real time inhabitation is still one of tension, of resistance, not compliance. Its potential allows us to test our own possibility of interventions to steer the condition without killing the quality.
SITE SIMULATION: coexistence of opposing urbanity
    top-down plan v.s. unregulated activities
Studying everyday life, the ensemble of personal territories, shows that the periphery of Beijing is not an archipelago, it does not work as a collection of detached enclaves held together by infrastructure. Its urbnity moves in between the masses. In between the flooding of surface area by people.
section of street

current street trade

mobility

program distribution
ENABLING = INTERVENTION \times STIRRING ?
ENABLING: INTERVENTION

EWB intended to underline the necessity of respond
to an inevitably all-encompassing urban realm through
enabling the unregulated street trade. It propagates a
new urban process of using the vast urbanizing develop-
ments as a framework for the street commerce to prolif-
erate – instead of being parasitical, unregulated activities
can weave into the rigid structure of existing residential
blocks and disturb it in a way like virus infection. They
gradually take hold of the space and in turn back-engi-
neer the entire city.
It cuts across the two seemingly opposing concepts of urbanity: the top-down plan that treats urban developments as lockdown enclaves and the informal, nomadic activities that flood the urban ground.
Projecting Scenarios

SCENARIO #1: PRIVATIZED SPACE

This paradox urbanity reveals itself as an interactive between seemingly opposing elements: the lockdown developments and the street commerce, and suggests merging them towards one system of dynamic density.

Existing
[lockdown]

Stage 1
[attachment]

Stage 2
[expand + fertilizing]

Stage 3
[reproduction]
SCENARIO #2: PUBLIC SPACE

Densifying the fast-growing mobile population within the restrict existing urban structure. Vivid spatial connections inserted into the blighted structure, stimulating a multitude of scenarios that offer new possibilities of blending urban ingredients, and adapt them to the all encompassing dynamic system.
paloti

trades insertion

bridge connection

integrate network

vertical core

skywalk connection
The “violence” is unavoidable in the urban filed. The truth that every urban form intrudes human occupancy, in the reciprocal way that human intrude the urban space will serve as the fundamental blue print for a new intervention. Rather than submerge in the detached environment, EWB try to enhance the oscillation between the fields of action of the real urban space.
SCENARIO #3: ALL-ENCOMPASSING IMPLOSION
no individual ownership of the ground; temporal mobility only parasitical to "plan"

definition of occupied territory; forming "tanks" with speciality

cultivation; by minimal rules; sewer; light; circulation; plug-in; break; parcellation

transient or parasitical programs, that are subjective to declining

- emerging active programs, but built as isolated enclaves
- programs integrated into the new system

STAGE 1

STAGE 2
STAGE 2
sketches of the elevated promenade
EARLY PROLIFERATION

overlapped circulation system
FUTURE OF HYPERDENSITY

nested circulation network
Animating Wild Be[ij]ing
Appendix I

Trajectory Project:

Alternative Space

Introduction:
One end-of-century reflection of the 20th Century is that modernism, when applied to certain contexts, actually generates a far more complex condition than a homogenized one. In the contemporary metropolis, it even intensifies diversities. Realizing that the modernism rationale fails to explain the diversifying condition, the discourse that follows the slogan “Back from Utopia” is exemplified in post-colonialism, post-modernism, multiple modernities, critical regionalism, and the recent Deleuzian notion of “smooth space”. They all refer to spaces that are heterogeneous in the projected homogenizing order, and apply an alternative reading of such spaces in order to develop their own.

My project starts with looking at the phenomena of “alternative space” in the cityscape. If one spends sometime in today’s metropolis, just as a roaming visitor, the intriguing alternative spaces are felt everywhere. The notion of “alternative space” has more meaning in the contemporary transitional metropolis than a simple subversion of common. It helps one to generate a sensibility that stand against the tendency of modern urbanism to create tabula rasa. My main goal in this project is to develop a new way of understanding the emerging urban condition through assembling an interpretive history of “alternative space” and then build on this perspective to identify and analyze zones of “alternative space”. In the end, I will produce a framework of a particular mode of urbanism for effectively intervening in such spaces.

The trajectory project is like a roaming visitor also. It collecting fragments and stitches them into a new way of knowing. For the purpose of argument, I will go through a sequence from Benjamin’s notion of “flâneur”, moving to Foucault’s definition of the space of “heterotopia”, the discourse of the “everyday” led by Lefebvre and Micheal de Certeau, and then goes to Deleuze’s idea of “nomad space”. What should be mentioned here is that such trajectory has no beginning, no end. By extrapolating from each concept what is relevant to the analysis of the present situation, every piece serves for the whole.

Benjamin’s Flâneur: from his perception to their occupation.
There is a whole class of an idle populace, -- window shoppers, roaming visitors -- increasing in the metropolis. From my view, they share a common relation to the figure of Walter Benjamin’s “flâneur”. A flâneur is by tradition defined as “an idle man in town, endowed with enormous leisure.” Based on a point of view led by Charles Baudelaire, Benjamin identifies the city dweller as someone who “...refuses to be alone... He is the man of the crowd”. Even further, he finds himself in the figure of an isolated flâneur, because he himself is easily lost in Paris. He then walks in the crowd of the street, becoming the audience of the drama of everyday life, yet remains “lonesome in the crowd” in order to grasp the atmosphere of Paris. The relevance of the flâneur to the cityscape is that it is a reception organ, open to the aura of the post-modern urban condition. Benjamin possesses the organ to read the dream side, the living reverse of the urban surface, and to find the traces of the indeterminate urban context.

The concept of flâneur works in two ways. On one hand, from the eyes of the flâneur, Benjamin sees the street as an interior. In this interior he feels “at home in the street” -- he is able to look at the city from a kind of perception like a narrative dream. Thus the chopped fragments of modern life are reassembled in a coherent manner. On the other hand, the flâneur is not only attracted by the city but also repelled by it. By keeping a distant view, he reads the cityscape as stage for the everyday living drama and grasps the overall pattern of the urban composition. Yet this changing pattern is not about taking abstraction, it
always deals with concrete exchanges, fully represents the modality of occupancy.

The Benjamin art of “charting the underground reverberations of the city, mediating them through the look of the flâneur”, is required today in the metropolitan context more than ever before. Realizing that the city is preoccupied with traces and residues, it is necessary to find the real desires that compel people to roam and drift.

In a sense, Benjamin’s flâneur is an isolated figure that can never become engaged in his chaotic surroundings. However, in the contemporary context, the flâneur should be more engaged in the grassroots activities. He will become one in the crowd of the urban idler without any sense of estrangement. The emerging situation is especially obvious in the metropolises of developing countries, like Beijing — because of the loose transformation from the pre-capitalist society to a rapid consumerist market, the labor division is not realized to a successful level. Ambivalent about whether to find a stable job or make a living by his own independent labor, the sub-social group of the grass-roots idler fills in the public space. Some of them wait beside their rickshaws for an entire day just to get several customers for enough money to eat. They move in the city at a speed much slower than any mechanical means of transport and their idleness is a silent protest against the reifying labor division. Therefore, they belong to the realm of the flâneur. In a generally transitional era, the urban idle class not only exists in Beijing but also in other developing cities all over the world such as Bombay in India, Kinshasa in Congo. Such cities all share an almost out-of-control booming population and a rapid development.

Let me dedicate a few more lines to Beijing. As an original imperial capital transformed over one century by communism, and then by consumerism, into today’s whirlpool of 13 million, Beijing has become a palimpsest of layered history. The material traces thus get deposited as signs of inhabitancy in certain alternative spaces, the accrued growth even generates a wild growing scene. For example, in some slum areas, the television antennas reaching up from the low-pitched roofs almost form a dense forest, because poor people also demand entertainment.

The city is proof of how the occupation of a grassroots populace can dramatically transform the cityscape. Therefore, understanding the alternative spaces in such cities requires that the flâneur not walk the street but become the street. The contemporary flâneur is not an isolated person, but is plural, multiple, standing for the masses. The flâneur takes his flight from a receptive organ to a creative organ, rebuilding the concrete side of urban life. It is then not just a way of looking at the city, but is about finding its own mode of being in the city, or even producing the city space. The trajectories of the new urban flâneurs reformulate a syntax — a series of codes gathered from the urban splinters. From this new way of occupying the spaces in the city, the possibility of using effective interventions to transform the urban condition emerges.

The question that now needs to be readdressed here is whether the alternative space of contemporary metropolis, can be conceived as the testing bed for a revitalized grass root mass culture in the face of the modern strategies of tabula rasa.

**Zones of Heterotopia**

The concept of the heterotopia — introduced by Michel Foucault in the late 60s, takes on a new relevance in light of this contemporary spatial development. Heterotopia is an alternative term pointing to various institutions and places that interrupt the apparent continuity and normality of ordinary, everyday space. As Foucault put it in an unpublished lecture in 1967 entitled “des espaces autres”:

“There are… probably in every culture…real places – places that don’t exist and that are formed in the very founding of society – which are something like counter-site, a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which… all the other real site that can be found within the culture are simultaneously represented, contested and inverted.”

Foucault used many examples— the honeymoon, the old people’s homes, prison, barrack, asylum, cem-
eteries, theater, cinema, libraries, fairs, brothels, colonies, and the ship--to show the vast proliferation of the concept in every culture. In contrast to utopia's hypothetical space that inverse the normal existing society but does not exist as such, the heterotopias are actual sites that are fundamentally "other" spaces. They are "other" because they are often outside of the common.

One of the main traits of heterotopia is its heterogeneity. It usually contains diverse, essentially contradictory elements in one spatial composition--"the heterotopia is capable of juxtaposing in a single real place several spaces, several sites that are in themselves incompatible". Its lack of clear defined purpose can be linked to the unfocused gaze of the flâneur. Both discover a new field for a variety of projections of our fantasies and real desires.

The contemporary query of the heterotopia is that if we bring the "other" space back into the everyday life, will its function change? To put it another way, beyond interrupting normality, does heterotopia now realize or assimilate common experiences of everyday life; turn them into an alternative organization? According to Benjamin Genocchio's critique to Foucault, heterotopia failed to explain how separation is enacted between itself and its surroundings. The contemporary heterotopias find themselves in sites of common "non-places". We should then realize that, although often appearing to be exclusive, heterotopias belong to the inclusive character of the metropolis. Their emergence is a result of injecting alterity back into the common.

The discourse on the "everyday" is brought out by Lefebvre and de Certeau, in which they speak, respectively, of a fully lived space, or the urban unconscious life. In The Production of Space, Lefebvre distinguishes that beyond the spatial practices (based on our perception), there is the representations of space (based on our conceptions); even beyond that there is also a fully lived space (about everyday interaction). Lefebvre insists that space is lived before it is perceived, and produced before it can be read. This is a new perspective to counter Foucault's emphasis on the extra-ordinary by mapping the potentiality of the ordinary. The risk is that whether an attempt toward an architecture of everyday does not merely reinforce the ever more encompassing homogenizing normality – globalization.

To answer this question we have to put our eye on zones of heterotopia in the contemporary metropolis; on its grassroots populace. The migration of rural populations to the metropolis has become a fixture of the globalizing modernity, of which Beijing can serve as a gross index. The flux from the agrarian hinterland has been poorly matched by land reclamation. In this context, the feature they carve into the urban surface, is like the way scars disfigure a face - migrants concentrate in the camp-like communities scattered in the heart of the city. This camp-like condition serves as paradigm of the proliferation of heterotopias in the normality of the contemporary metropolis.

Unlike the prison, which is an extension of the law to its extreme opposite, the camp is where law is suspended, and where the integrating sense of the polis is dissolving. While it moves into the heart of the city, it fragmentizes the polis to its exception. As globalization further disintegrated any form of holistic state, such condition will last for a long time and even become more and more severe.

In such zones of heterotopia, there are serious voices of warning of the developments towards economized society. The government tried hard to sweep them from the urban surface only find them erupting yet again in other places. Current architectural practice still tends to take an optimistic position in accepting the challenge to design for new programs for a clean environment or for efficient work and more pleasure. It serves as a regulatory agency to solve unpalatable and problematic spaces by the proposal of a projected healthy order, while still trying to cover up the vibrant underside.

**Criteria of Alternative – eruption in a layered condition**

How is the flâneur useful in analyzing the contemporary situation? What is the heterotopia's significance in the contemporary manner? Facing such questions, the flâneur becomes a modality of occupancy, and the heterotopia is reinterpreted as renewing the importance of the "other" both relevant to the criteria of distinguishing alternative space from the overall plan.
As I have mentioned in the introduction, “Alternative space” is inherently heterogeneous in the modernist domesticated plan. The plan as a means of unitary control presupposes a long-lasting static state, while the growth of alternative is a result of dynamic interaction. If we seek to build the link between the controlling plan and the spontaneous growth, we will discover that the urban surface’s recurrent transforming process can be compared to a dynamic layered condition, in which the action of eruption takes place.

The understanding of a layered condition starts with decomposing the urban surface into distinct fields of social relations overlapping each other. As layers of different social forces superimposed onto one another, each layer tries to define space differently in its own structure. Realizing that the alternative space is actually filed of incompatible relations pushed into extreme conflicts, the selecting criteria of alternative space then can be deployed.

Therefore, the potential sites of alternative spaces are:
Spaces that are purposefully marginalized or even excluded by the institutional planning, yet process a vulgar vitality to grow by themselves; e.g. some “illegal” migrant village in the city.

Spaces that render an uncontrolled eruption of daily grassroots activities, initiated by individual subjects; e.g. sites where street trades flood in the public space.

Spaces where all different social forces are simultaneously exposed, contested and clashing with one another within a defined circumscription; e.g. some places in Beijing where the urban fabric is partly replaced with high-tech development while the rest remain untouched. In such sites, incompatible urban substance is juxtaposed with a seemingly ignorance to one another.

**New Mode of Intervention**
The ultimate question is how architecture and urbanism can take a critical stance to deal with today’s alternative space, such as the increasing tendencies of marginalization of certain groups, the out-of-control explosion of the urban underside. The notion of an alternative space “resurfaces the way to empower the grassroots” leading to a new mode of spatial intervention that is a continuous engagement by all of those involved.

If the contemporary urban surface can be understood as layers of different social forces superimposed onto one another, the alternative approach offers a device to reorder the different strata, to cut across the seemingly stable division of these strata, and to reclaim places of otherness that is erupting from inside of the homogenized, economized society.

In the context of current urban transformation, this new mode of intervention should be distinguished from other alternatives of the rational conformity. It means more than a commitment to what Kenneth Frampton calls “critical regionalism,” which aims to preserve the differences in local culture, climates, and topographies. The regionalists put themselves in opposition to the technological progress of modernization. It also differentiates from the post-colonial approach, which is caught in a state of “in-betweenness” – a constant recto-verso play of the master and the servant.

This alternative space is linked to Deleuze’s nomad space in many ways. In the chapter on nomadology Deleuze writes about the reclamation of locality or local place “The nomad...does not appear at a particular place but becomes a nonlimited locality; the coupling of the place and the absolute is achieved not in a centered, oriented globalization but in an infinite succession of local operations”. The flâneur’s occupancy and the zones of heterotopia are not nomad space; they are distinguished, concrete sites in the city. A series of operations that map their traces, follow their trajectories, and synthesize their spatial codes are in the realm of nomadology.
Conclusion
The concept of “alternative space” should be developed in 3 main approaches.
1. Identification of such spaces according to the criteria.
2. Research of the concrete relations and interaction within the identified spaces. Examine the structure in each social stratum.
3. Tracing the trajectories of individual subjects, plotting cartography of the site, then synthesizing appropriate spatio-temporal syntax which is still open to the indeterminate modification of spontaneous growth.

The alternative space is open to a multiplicity of possibilities. It never loses its intrinsic character of indeterminacy in the process of narrowing down to certain modes of intervention. Its meaning should be understood as learning to act in a context directed by different, highly variable subjects, which have evolved with their own singularities.

Bibliography:


Appendix II

访问记录
interview with Xuming Huang
General Manager of Beijing Financial Street developing Co., Ltd.

采访人：王硕
被采访人：北京金融街开发建设公司总经理 黄旭明
时间：2008年7月18日

有关北京城市生长发展
间：我今天想和您谈的是有关北京城市生长发展以及房地产开发里面发挥作用的话题，您觉得从这一角度来，房地产公司在过程中起到了什么样的作用。

开发商在政府“改造城市”的意图下进入了城市，而具体去完成城市改造的就是开发商。因为政府有总体规划，但是没有钱去执行，所以要看企业以它的资金作为运作模式的主体，从这一点上说，可以说是开发商推动了城市改造的步伐。如果说现在推动的比较成功，那基本上解决了城市历史上遗留的问题，政府和开发商在这里在有这不亦乐乎的协议，你做一定的融资，政府也规定在扩大范围的面积由你来负责拆迁，有时是其它的地块也包括在你要完成的任务里，甚至是一个项目道路得你来修，但这地不归你用，所有的开发商都面临这个问题。政府通过这种方法不用花钱，就达到了城市改造的目的，而这城市改造是谁来完成的呢？开发商。

间：有人说，如今北京的城市面貌，最终的结果不是完全是由政府规划的，也不是建筑师设计的结果，而是地产公司推动的，你对此的看法。

应该说政府还是起到整体规划的作用的，尤其是对旧城里面，做了很多的限制，但是因为缺少资金，政府没法自己完成改造开发的任务，尤其是80年代后期《城市改造》刚刚起步的时候更是这样，而开发商因受企业自转的融资手段，社会投资、合并、私有化等等，都有限，政府也有地，开发商有钱，所以达成这么一种默契，政府借给开发商的钱把拆迁解决，然后再卖给开发商，那么开发商给政府解决了问题，政府也剧本了资金，都在这个方面是主体，有决定权的，可以说现在除了政府自用，单位自建，他都是开发商来开发的。

间：国有企业和私营开发商的角色有什么不同呢？是否国有企业对政策做更大的配合？比如金融街的发展和北京市更大的格局，加入WTO、奥林匹克总体规化的关系。比如西环广场的位置，因为商务楼租金的问题，更像一个政府的开行行为，个体房地产商是否更多地会租于建在门等租金更贵的地方。

在很多方面是差不多的，但是要做的是他们还不是很相同的，我们做国有企业由于属于政府，首要的任务还是城市改造，企业目标是所有方，因为政府对城市开发有个总体规化，那个地方要开发改造，即便不太挣钱也要去干。当然政府的主的配给，也会有一定的优惠政策，私人开发商以利润为唯一的目标，不挣大钱的绝对不行，所以你会看到开发商炒作一个比较清晰的概念。所以我们没有那么多商业概念，而且开发商有时候会开发自己那片地，刚才提到的政府拨出去的路迟迟不完成，得不到政府的信任。

间：北京每年的建设量加起来比在整个欧洲一年都多，您怎么看待这种建设热潮？

对于这种热潮，我想有三点很重要。第一是经济发展更新的周期，我们国家经济现在正处于更新的阶段，历史上也证明，每种经济快速更新时，就要求有新的建立新的，不然无法适应社会发展，第二是市场的需求，人们对消费品质的追求提高，这个力量是很大的。比如我们有批发市场，服装市场，往往是一个系列都要发展，第三是投资的需求，因为房地产业巨大的成本收回，很多人就会想投资，时间，市场，资金共同刺激了这样一种状况。

间：和国外的城市相比，北京还处于未完成状态，看起来还有些混乱，但从国外来看都是认为这种混乱也蕴涵着巨大的转化能力，使北京比其他的城市更有活力，比如国外一个国际A级商务楼的开发周期要10－15年，为什么我们的开发周期就能这么短，我们是在政策上优惠还是经济上有更好的支持？

关于周期短，混乱，我想是这样。首先是这个中国人口的量，它导致了经济增长，市场增长的量是非常大的，这个国外和我们不一样，其次是我们处在经济增长的膨胀期，有一定的无法控制的膨胀，（您是指是内部还是外部），不管外部还是外来，大都有这个问题，一下子起来1000个中小企业，然后倒掉10个。我们国家的破产法其实没有限制这种膨胀，一个企业破产，但是保留了资本，很快改头换面又出来了，所以很快又起来100个。外国的公司也是大量的涌入中国，这些对房地产市场的需求很大的。另外还有一个因素是现在一个项目10年运作下来，资金充足，一半都是很好的。而在中国项目，谁都想拿到石头过河，你一个人要面对规化，道路，园林绿化，各种计费，而且资金不一定很充裕，最后出来的势必是一个综合了各种因素的妥协性甚至畸形产物，人家建一个精品，我们建几个不好的，所以快，所以乱。我想就是这样。
问：北京的房地产开发。基本模式是拆除旧的，以新的点或板来代替，密度功能也都从新规划。在国内这么做不多。您个人认为这种模式的优劣，以及有没有可行的替代模式。

不管在国内外，大规模城市更新都这么一个阶段，因为有太多的遗留问题急需解决。你刚才提到一个市场的自生，那是经济，但我们谈到管理上，要从社会历史文化功能角度出发，有时就要做坚决果断。

问：主要想听你讲讲开发中遇到的各个层次之间的冲突协调问题如何解决的。比如开发模式的变化，是上面的影响还是市场的推动，或者平衡在这过程中的影响。

我体会到最大的矛盾是城市保护与经济发展之间的对立。从保护讲，当然的密度，原有居民比较有受重视。从经济来讲，社会经济模式的改变，利益的追求，势必为城市带来了新的要求。协调这种关系，我想就是提高经济的自我消耗能力，一个综合的项目，各方面自己需求自己解决，就好。

开发商实际上是在计划与市场，一上一下的夹缝中生存，拿到一块地，干什么性质、高度、绿化率、面积，交通评价基本都定了，再一调整市场。留给开发商的时间不多。但是开发商因为有利可图，又是经济上的主体，说的算，主动进行沟通协商的一方也是开发商。

下面说说金融街。

问：金融街作为国有房产公司，成立时如何确定一级开发模式。何时开始二级开发，上市之后有什么开发模式上的区别？不断涌入的开发商对于金融街的开发模式有什么影响？

这是一个沿着石头河过的过程。最早92年底成立的金融街，模式就相当于政府下面专管那块地的管理部门，土地一级开发就是指的征用这块地的管理部门，土地二级开发就是政府把这块地拿出来招标，周边环境规划起来。这样来吸引投资。后来把金融街建设公司和其他一些公司合并成立了华融集团，作为开发股份公司，下属11个子公司进行开发。这时候的模式就是“政府项目，企业运作”，背后有一个资金问题，我们没有钱进行完全的开发。问题是我们是政府给我们提供了一部分资金，另外是企业自己找资金。造成了一部分每部分不一，可又千篇一律。在这之后，我们有了一点经验，开始对地块进行细分，每个楼都有定位。同时2000年金融街控股公司成立上市。建立了融资渠道，争取到了社会资金。在这个过程中，我们开始了二级开发，并且找SOM做了总规划和中央区的单体设计。这以后就是都是独资了。比如我功能上需要公寓，我就会自己来做，有利于整个街区的协调。

问：大约在2000年前后，首都规划建设委员会出面举办了金融街总体规划的竞赛，最后选中了SOM公司的方案，您一定参与了这个事。在美国看，SOM设计的金融街是一个相当高于CBD规模的庞大项目。虽然他们也知道在北京这样的CBD不止一处，您能谈谈这个竞赛吗？

这个竞赛是在当时的背景下，通过国际知名公司，争取突破规划指标（高度112，限高80）把金融街提高到国际化水平的一个手段。其实金融街就是一些CBD，只不过内容有所偏向，以后会逐步综合的。

问：这里和朝阳CBD及海淀的金融街发展相比有什么特点？以后的发展道路是不是不同？

朝阳主要是商务，海淀是高科技。

问：据我所知，这种大型项目搞招标或竞赛，策划阶段非常重要，参赛的公司不要按照投标来达到密度，功能上的很多要求，那么金融街在密度、容积率和功能上的考虑是怎样的？

这个都是规划定的，我们要配合，我们要的配合他的配置。

问：北京是从90年代初开始提倡全球化，大力吸引外资。金融街也是从那个时候开始崛起的。可是我看过1991－2001的北京综合发展战略，当时是把儿子金融街附近的发展定位为国际的金融市场。比如最早的中银大厦，工商银行等，东城区CBD才是主要的面向外资机构的。而金融街成功地吸引了大批外资，逐步发展成对企业。请问这是如何获得这种成功，和市政府的支持。吴良镛曾批评您忽略了北京的外资流向和交通问题。您觉得这种说法是不是？

虽然吸引了大批外资，但一些国际知名的外资机构如花旗，汇丰等银行巨头却聚集在金融街一带。外资金融机构在金融街地带的集聚，会不会影响金融街诞生国际化呢？

其实国内金融中心这个事最早只是区里提出来的，（明确的是上海为金融中心）后来随着建设我们逐渐有了实力，现在甚至提出国际化的金融中心，这里一部分是政府的支持一部分是市场决定的。金融街处于北京这个国家行政管理中心，使得我们在金融管理上有特殊的权利，证监会、保监会、证监会都在这这里，现在金融街管理国内资金的总量占到2/3，但金融街缺乏市场化，我们没有证券交易所。上海相对就是营业额比较低，随着加入WTO，外资银行肯定要和国内银行合作，所以金融街也会有外资银行的入驻。
问：回过头来说，金融街这103公顷地，如此大的开发量，是怎么拿到土地使用权的，是政府划拨还是有偿出让。（ 93—98国有划拨仍占土地征用的70%）要交钱吗？
政府划拨，土地开发性质是政府批准，但建设企业运作，除了拆迁费给了居民，土地出让金上交国家。

问：90年代，金融街可以算是北京最大的土地开发工程，我听说金融街拆迁了4800户，100个企业，在那个时候，执行起来一定有很多难度，请问当时是怎么处理这个难题的。
交还拆迁公司，他们很多都有政府背景，国有企业产权本来归国家，会给他们找地方的。

问：我小的时候也在8中附近丰盛胡同一带生活过，记得那里是低矮的小平房。1990年，北京市政府作出了“危旧房改造和房地产开发相结合”的决定，所以我想问问金融街早期开发是否是和危旧房结合的，拆迁的过程您能说说吗？后期西直门外，德胜门外
对，就是开发和城市改造相结合，出台了一系列文件，不止这一个。

问：金融街考虑和周围尚未拆迁的住民共处？这之间有过不好的问题吗？比如原来的市场、医院、活动的地方被拆除了，他们能找到新的地方吗？开发中有没有预留混合功能？
这个规划局都给我们安排好了，光对付他们提出的已经很困难了，我们不会再考虑增加自己的限制。

西直广场

问：西直广场是您开发的？我看了网上您和法国人的一个论坛，您提出了一个“把经济的价值和枢纽的功能结合起来”的概念。我真的很想了解西直广场和城市站的结合，请问您是怎么考虑的。
是的。这个项目首先是一个政府的任务，要建西直门枢纽。政府没有资金，所以需要参考香港地铁模式的，由我们来平衡拆迁、开发枢纽设施的资金，政府则相应平衡我们的商业及办公面积，这种背景下就形成了结合的局面。

问：6万平米的商业是不是要面向各种档次的？比如休闲娱乐的内容那？超市面向普通百姓吗？消费群体的定义？
主要是中高档，功能上是将市场策划公司根据消费群体制定的。商业、超市面向客流和周边居民，但不会有低端的。（北京的低档就是路边的小摊）对，周围会有点，我们不会有。

问：周围的建设用地，能讲讲那里今后的发展方向吗？
周围是政府道路规划用地（很宽啊），我们只是临时借作建设用地。

问：您认为像平安大堂、南中轴线永定门的建设是否有地产公司，地产商的参与那？是不是以后的基本建设如地铁线路都要引进各方面的资金？
借香港地铁就是一例，要改变单一化的开发模式。

问：作为访谈的结束，请问金融街公司以后会增加这种分散的投入（离开金融街区域）作为拓展吗？总体来说，金融街今年的投资者是逐渐上升的？有没有混搭的图象吗？
都是以拓展开发方向为目标，金融街这块地2007年就建完了。我们肯定大力向外拓展。数据你可以去网站找。

Annotated Bibliography


The basic premise of this book is that the modern movement was bound up with a utopian impulse. "Back from utopia" is a stand point that witnesses both the positive and negative results of the modernism endeavor. Rather than the rapid condemnation by the post-modernist critic, a more balanced reassessment in made based on the investigation into the current situation. Authors critically constitute a multi-faceted portrait of modernism - its promise, failures, and potential.

"Kinshasa, the Hereafter of Modern Archtiture" by Marie-Francoise Plissart
A photo essay about the post colonial condition of Kinshasa. Based on observation of the over-riding of colonial modern architecture by the roaring everyday life, the implication of an inverted condition is analyzed.

"The Dynamism of East Asian New Urbanism" by William S.W.Lim
In this essay Lim theorizing the failure of the modernist planning in Asia and by introducing the dynamic occurings in East Asia he raises the question of a new urbanism, which is singular to western gaze of the area.

"Revisiting Chandigarh" by Jagdish Sagar
The most provoking essay about contemporary Chandigarh. From a flaneur-like casual narrative of the city, Jagdish manages to get rid of the post-colonial approach of the city – being caught in-between the master and the servant, and turns to a real paradoxical condition of lives after a master planning.


This book combines space, urban, cinema, moral and political to trace the genesis of a postmodern urban condition. From the chapter called "postmodern bloodlines", Dear begins to construct the fabric of a postmodern urbanism by employing the precepts of Henri Lefebvre and Fredric Jameson, who overturn an assumptions about urban as an exposed exterior to a contested interior. Then with a careful reading of the landscapes of contemporary cities, mainly of the prototypical metropolis of Los Angeles, he begins the task of defining an urban agenda for the twenty-first century. It uncovers a new ways of understanding how global megacities are made through these concerns.

André Corboz. The land as palimpsest in Diogenes 121. Unesco, 1983

"Most layers are both thin and filled with lacunae, ...certain strata are willfully done away with. ...The land so heavily charged with traces, seems very similar to a palimpsest." André argues that the urban configuration exhibits traits of a palimpsest, a text persistently erased and rewritten. The urban territory is read as field of accumulated maps layers onto one another. From here, he further addresses cartography as a methodological to describe and intervene in the transformation of urban form. I think the notion of palimpsest is useful only when it is distinguished from the archaeologi- cal concept of stratification. The accumulation of growth collides and is represented in the space simultaneously. You can’t trace them back to historical period.
Readings about Benjamin's "Flaneur":


Based on a point of view led by Charles Baudelaire, Benjamin finds himself in the figure of an isolated flâneur as "an idle man in town, endowed with enormous leisure" yet remains "lonesome in the crowd." To him the flâneur is a reception organ. He possesses the organ to read the dream side, the living reverse of the urban surface, and to find the traces of the expression of the urban context. To my interest, the Benjamin art of "charting the underground reverberations of the city, mediating them through the look of the flâneur", is required today in the metropolitan context. There is a whole class of an idle populace, -- window shoppers, roaming visitors -- increasing in the metropolis. Realizing that the city is preoccupied with traces and residues, it is necessary to find the real desires that compel people to roam and drift today. This approach read the city from the roamer's eyes, from the city's underside, not top-down.

Readings about Foucault's "Heterotopia":


In an unpublished lecture in 1967 entitled 'des espaces autres,' Foucault brought out the concept of heterotopia: "There are... probably in every culture... real places -- places that don't exist and that are formed in the very founding of society -- which are something like counter-site, a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which... all the other real site that can be found within the culture are simultaneously represented, contested and inverted."

In contrast to utopia's hypothetical space that inverse the normal existing society but does not exist as such, the heterotopias are actual sites that are fundamentally "other" spaces. One of the main traits of heterotopia is its heterogeneity. It usually contains diverse, essentially contradictory elements in one spatial composition.

By defining the "heterotopia," Foucault's main objective is to point out that in a society there are always spatial characters outside of normality. Once they got repressed, such spaces will reemerge in other places or in a converted organization. I am interested in heterotopia because it changes the focus of contemporary metropolis to its "others"- the grassroots populace, and the none complying minorities.

In this book, Lefebvre wants to analyze the form, structure, and function of "social space" and explore how such spaces have been produced by, and produces society. He distinguishes that beyond the spatial practices (based on our perception, the 1st space), there is the representations of space, based on our conceptions (2nd space), beyond that there is also a fully lived space (3rd space). Lefebvre insists that space is lived before it is perceived, and produced before it can be read, and the decoding of the spatial text is to help us understand the transition from lived spaces to representations of space.

The understanding of urban condition in contemporary megapolis cannot be derived solely from a top-down perspective, rather, it is a lived space charged with mediocrity inhabitation. How does one identify the emergent spaces? Lefebvre suggest that the determinations are partly a task of determining the appropriate spatial codes, and the proper periodization, the study of spatio-temporal rhythms of nature and the modification of those rhythms and their inscription by human social practice.


Certeau speaks of the urban unconscious life as subversive agency. Even the most oppressive and controlling of cultures cannot eradicate the subversive underside. De Certeau relates his ideas to the theoretical work of Foucault; yet in essence, he is challenging the vision of Foucault's panopticon. Certeau focuses on everyday practices to see how people do in fact escape the all-seeing gaze of the panopticon. I feel that the discourse of "everyday" works actually in countering Foucault's emphasis on the extra-ordinary by mapping the potentiality of the ordinary. In particular, his distinction between "strategy" and "tactics" share a relevance in light of contemporary "emergent" urbanism. Strategy refers to the top-down exercise of power. Tactics refer to the bottom-up opportunistic manipulations that always escape or subvert the controlling power.

Alexander, Christopher. "A city is not a tree". in Zone 1/2 : The Contem- porary City ed. Michel Feher and Sanford Kwinter Zone Books, 1987

Tree vs. Semi-lattices. Alexander argues that the hallmarks of designed cities (Garden City, Brasilia, Chandigarh) are invariably tree-structures, where all sub-units only link to a single super-unit, which creates an artificial simplification. He contrasts this with the social study of Middlesbrough, which shows that the different social forces organized as semi-lattices. Overlap and shared function is the order of the urban growth. This essay is important about the definition of the plan vs. the growth in my thesis.

Introduction - Rhizome:
The rhizome is a successful model for understanding the complex interwoven, and dynamic growth. Contrary to hierarchically organized tree-like structures, rhizomes are unruly and rampant root systems that cannot be derived from a prior understanding of order.

“The rhizome operates by variation, in favors of mutations.” The rhizome does not develop along linear genealogical paths. It operates by transgressing (deterioralizing) rigid and obligatory lines of communication, rules of governing, and structures of power.

Treatise on Nomadology - the war machine:
The notion of “nomad space” or “smooth space” is developed here in contrast to a sedentary space that is striated.

“The nomad...does not appear at a particular place but becomes a nonlimited locality; the coupling of the place and the absolute is achieved not in a centered, oriented globalization but in an infinite succession of local operations.” For me the question is not whether the actual site is a demonstration of nomad space or sedentary space, rather, it is whether the spatial interventions, that map their traces, follow their trajectories, and synthesize their spatial codes are in the realm of nomad space.
Readings about USE (uncertain states of Europe) project:

Multiplicity. USE: uncertain states of Europe: a trip through a changing Europe Milano: Skira 2003

Boeri, Stefano and Multiplicity. "USE project" in Mutations / Rem Koolhaas, Harvard Project on the City: Stefano Boeri, Multiplicity Sanford Kwinter; Nadia Tazi, Hans Ulrich Obrist. ACTAR 2000

Websites:

MULTIPLICITY http://www.multiplicity.it/
Stefano Boeri http://www.stefanoboeri.net/
http://www.archined.nl/archined/Archi-TV.html
Stealth group http://www.stealth-g.net/

USE (Uncertain Spaces in Europe) is an ongoing collective research that deals with the territorial transformations taking place in contemporary Europe. It is carried by a networked research team, in twenty-six different sites from Athens to Moscow.

The basic premise is that paradoxical to the political unification in Europe, the current situation heightens the uncertain scenarios, the lived space in the European territory. They observe territorial mutation in real time, sample portions of time and circumstances of transformation, and generate syntax to understand how the individual acts within the major waves of change. Through a set of new vocabulary (syntax) to analysis this spatial metamorphosis, a code will be built to understand the trajectory of urban metamorphosis in specific territories.

The multidimensional interpretation of the contemporary city, the bottom-up generated syntax, will explain the wild territories as not chaotic, but generate from evolutional patterns and periodic major revolutions. The coded large scale spatial upheavals, which I am interested in, are:

Subversions – Paris Inundation – Belgrade Eruption – Slovenia
Transplant – Pristina Intensification – Benelux Disseminations – Elche
among others.

"Escaping this condition of powerlessness simply implies accepting the ungovernability of a great deal of the contemporary territory," writes Boeri. This in its turn would mean "learning to act in a context directed by different, highly variable subjects." Is this a situation of radical democracy?


L.A. Now is a collaborative design initiative to focus on downtown Los Angeles and provide the foundation for its future development. The two volumes bring together the work of UCLA architecture students under the direction of studio leader Thom Mayne (Morphosis), CalArts and Art Center students. Realising that Los Angeles faces rapid, continuous growth in the new century, how to prepare for this tremendous growth becomes a new challenge to the city, which is the same question that hovers in the future of Beijing. The first volume offers a virtual snapshot of Los Angeles now and is put into four sections: natural habitat, artificial habitat, people, and money. In the second volume - the Studio, the starting point is that the city must reconsider its planning strategies as well as the revitalization of the downtown core. Seven architectural proposals are presented and discussed.
Angelil, Marc M. *Inchoate: an experiment in architectural education.* Zürich: Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (ETHZ), 2003

Marc’s own understanding of the city as a rhizomatic assemblage leads his studios to a series of exercises in search of new urban intervention. While learning the principles of contemporary urban theory, the students are simultaneously questioning the bases on which it stands. How the cartography means to architecture. How could the conceptual operations translate information to a effective intervention? Such are also my concerns of what I could develop my thesis in fall 2005.


From the lens of an urban nomad, Biswa and other authors look at life in metropolitan centers in a participating manner—how people use and change the city? Be it in China or in Central Europe, a city reflect a state of mind – its progress, betterment and its failure and destruction. The portraits of seventeen contemporary metropolises, each exemplify one of the great themes of our era: globalization, migration, civil justice, environmental destruction, homelessness, the limits of planning and government, the consumer world.

Wolff, Richard *Possible urban worlds: urban strategies at the end of the 20th century* Basel; Boston : Birkhäuser, 1998

The volume is a result of the 7th Conference of the International Network for Urban Research and Action (INURA) “Possible urban worlds” held in Zurich’s Cultural Centre Rote Fabrik and in the School and Museum of Art and Design, 1997. Through practical experiments and theoretical analysis of the most pressing urban issue, new concepts of local action and new ideas for a democratic and sustainable city is presented and debated.

The 6th chapter: The city as a contested terrain explores the relationship of physical public space and the invisible human actions. Although mostly from a social-political view, it helps to understand the urban from global-local dualism, and raising the question of a possible new urban strategy.

Lim is a leading intellectual in South-East Asia who argues against applying western “tabula rasa” strategy to Asian urban context. In this book, he continues to search for alternative Asian perspectives to Eurocentric modernity and globalization. The title Alternative (Post)modernity, describes the prevailing status quo in Asian developing countries and suggests the complex relational hybridity between modern urban strategy and post modern condition. In the essay “space of indeterminacy” he interpreted the contested spaces in contemporary Asian cities in relation to the postmodern theory – of Benjamin’s notion of the Flâneur, Jamson’s distinction of slack postmodernism and Lyotard’s idea of the Differend. Lim brings a new dimension to the discourse about the glocality and social justice. Taking cities such as Bangkok, Manila and Singapore as examples, he sees their potential as sites of explosive, novel change.

Robbie, B.H. Goh and Brenda, S.A. Yeoh *Theorizing the Southeast Asian City as Text: urban landscapes, cultural documents, and interpretative experiences.* World Scientific, 2003

Examines the ways in which culture, ethnicity, languages, traditions, governance, policies and histories interplay in the creation of the urban experiences in contemporary Southeast Asian cities.

In this book Robbie summarize on the many ways, in which urban spatial forms can be understood as textual experiences. Using contemporary Southeast Asian cities as paradigm, it analyzes the experiences of modernization in such cities, but also in terms of the strategies of containment, refurbishment, and loss which are happening now. This book also has much value in bridging theory and real experience of a city.

Rowe, Peter G. *Architectural Encounters with Essence and Form in Modern China.* Cambridge, Mass. MIT Press, 2002

This book is built upon a Beijing design studio. It explores attitudes toward architecture in China since the opening of the Treaty Ports in the 1840s. Central to the discussion are the concepts of “ti” and “yong”, or “essence” and “form”, questioning what should be considered modern and essentially Chinese. The book consists of a historical survey of cultural developments in China in response to the forced opening to the West. The discussion is highlighted by the consideration of the return of overseas-educated Chinese architects and foreign influences on Chinese architecture, which is also a crucial question for me.


Another book derived from design studio – but this time is a joint studio of Princeton University, Hong Kong University, and Tongji University from China. I find it intriguing to see the works from 3 universities juxtaposed together, representing how their approaches reflect different state of minds.
Gutierrez, Laurent and Valérie Portefaix. Mapping Hong Kong
Hong Kong : Map Book, 2000

This book begins with the visual impression of Hong Kong, a unique synthesis of both global flow and local character. Yet Gutierrez and Valérie manage to turn the images into a cartographic “map” of the urban territory. They take the visible as expression of concentrated social relations. While omitting chronology and statistics, they adopt the technique of mapping in order to unravel the multi-dimensional tensions that spread across the surface of Hong Kong. They also try to code the dynamic vision into 6 categories: fluid machine; running scape; chip planning; dynamic labyrinth; appropriated place; soft disappearance.


About the historical development of Beijing From the end of imperialism to the republican period. Some detailed narrative record about commercial market and TianQiao district is really valuable.