

Interstitial DenCity

An Architectural Apparatus of Political Mediations
in Chinese Urban Villages

by Jinhui Huang

Bachelor of Science in Architecture
University of Virginia, 2011

Submitted to the Department of Architecture in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of Master of Architecture
at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology

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ABSTRACT

Since the 1979 Economic Reform, the Chinese government's authoritarian interference with land use development to serve developers and its own interests has led to incongruent development between industrialization and urbanization. This process of land commodification has resulted in the demolition of existing productive urban fabric such as urban villages. And yet paradoxically suffering from both high vacancy rates and exorbitant property prices, developed cities such as Guangzhou exemplify the impending crisis wrought by this flawed mode of urbanization. Furthermore, the urbanization does not take into account the massive urban migration that fulfills the low-wage labor force necessary to sustain a metropolis. The native villagers, who collectively own rural residential land, have elected to house the urban migrants within their own buildings.

With high density, occupancy, and adaptability, the urban villages represent a resilient form of urbanism. The Xiancun village in Guangzhou is encircled by the Tianhe CBD area and epitomizes the utmost contradiction of an agricultural land enclave encircled development. The CBD is

the nexus of real estate development and also houses over 20,000 urban migrants who are excluded from public amenity access.

The villages have exhausted the capacity to grow as their expansion cannot encroach upon the boundary between urban and agricultural land. The rural-urban land ownership system also prevents the urban village from receiving governmental support to develop formal amenities. At the same time, the government cannot regulate the village with its current urbanization tools or its urban policy framework. The distribution of governance remains unresolved between the city government, the village committee, and individual villagers.

This thesis argues for the further densification of Xiancun and proposes an architectural framework to create a new social contract between the city government, the villagers, and the urban migrants. A series of anchoring structures with centralized infrastructure and amenities re-territorialize the distribution of resources and a strategy of architectural infill achieves higher densification.

Thesis Supervisor: J. Meejin Yoon, MAUD
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FOREWORD

The thesis seeks to test out the political power of architecture in a time when the political role of the discipline as well as its social capacity for change is being questioned. In many ways, the Chinese urban villages epitomize the long-standing and unresolved conflict between the Communist Party, the city government, the village committee, the villagers and urban migrants ever since the economy reform.

Instead of an architecture that advocates for a particular side of the conflict, what interests me more is to create a balance that responds to the different parties' interests. How can architecture act as mediating device that negotiates the relationships between different political parties and agendas? How does one construct an architecture that conveys different intents to different groups of population, and can be interpreted differently through different ideologies? How does a design inherent the valuable qualities of a place in spite of an overwhelming desire towards change and progress?

Starting with an analytical assessment on Chinese urban villages and a critical appraisal of Chinese urbanization, the book reassembles concrete data, spatial research, and state's policies that provide new ways to rethink the

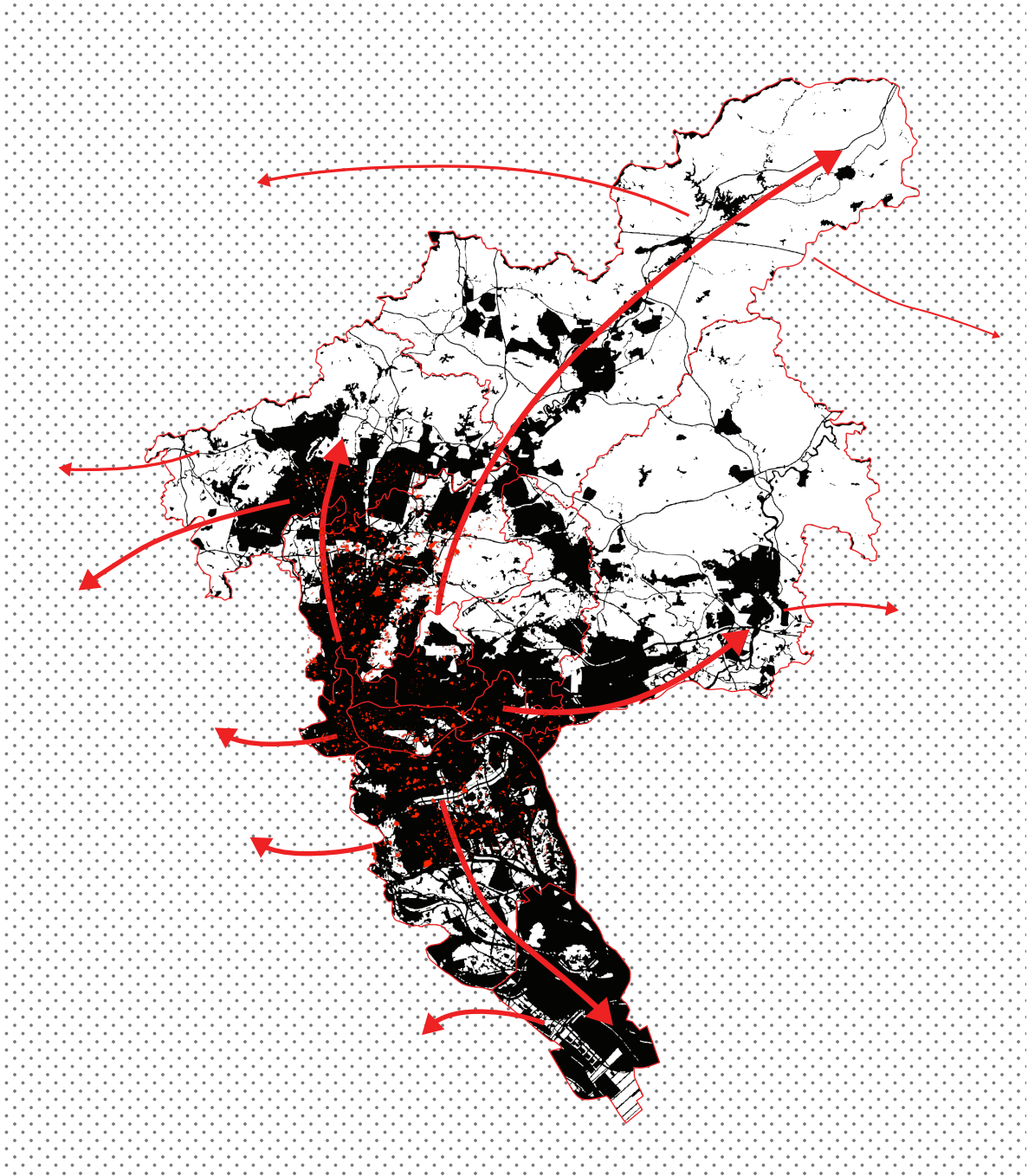
role of architecture. The research chapters are followed by a discussion about new possibilities for social relationships that are mediated by notions of architectural scale, program and representation. The last chapter will propose a new design methodology and rules of articulating architecture in this particular context.

1 *CITY SCALE*

URBAN VILLAGES IN CHINESE CITIES







THE FORMATION OF URBAN VILLAGES

Urban villages are villages located both at the heart and outskirts of cities, which are surrounded by the modern urban developments. There are two kinds of land ownership in China: state ownership and collective ownership. The villages are collectively owned by the villagers instead of the state. Therefore, the urban villages are characterized by their dual urban-rural structure.

Prior to the establishment of the new government, very few cities were industrialized. Villages were surrounded by the farmland, and were located far away from the city center.¹ Between 1949 and 1978, cities started to develop its manufacturing industries and saw the emergence of industrial areas at the urban fringe. The city government requisitioned farmland from villages located at the urban fringe to develop its industries.² Meanwhile, the new civic center and other major public buildings were also planned and constructed on the agricultural land, while the residential land of the villages were left intact. New constructions of the public infrastructure such as roads and subways also avoided the villages. As the urban development intensified, more and more agricultural land was taken away and the villagers lost their main source of income. These traditional village would gradually become “urban villages”.³

The thesis will look at the new opportunities for one of the urban villages, XianCun in Guangzhou.

Located northwest of Hong Kong on the Pearl River Delta, Guangzhou has been one of the major port cities in China. Up to 2009, Guangzhou Port had conducted trade with more than 80 countries. The state government has been supporting the trade through its policies – “cheap labor and land were encouraged in order to attract foreign capitals in the development of processing industries and import and export industries.”⁴

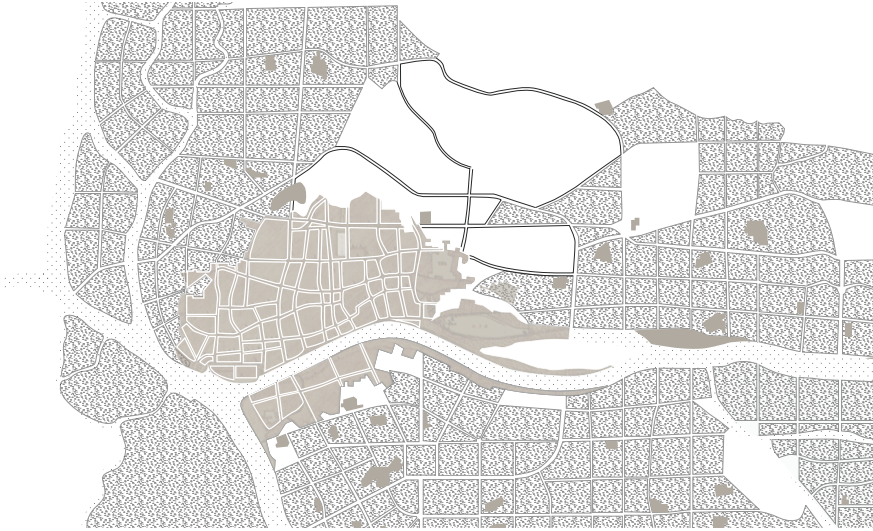
In the year of 1984, Guangzhou was appointed as one of the 14 coastal open cities, which allows the city to revise its role as a commercial center and trading port. Since then, the city has remarkably expanded its urbanized territory from 136 km² to 276 km² in 1998. The 15th master plan of Guangzhou seeks to further expand it to 555 km² in 2010. A large amount of village land was swallowed by the rapid urban development, whereas the ones which demanded exorbitant compensation sums and relocation assistance were left alone.⁵

In 2002, the Guangzhou government published a plan to redevelop 138 urban villages in 10 years. The policy would convert the collectively owned land into state owned land.⁶ Among the 138 urban villages, the Xiancun village epitomizes the utmost contradiction of an agricultural land enclave encircled by the Tianhe CBD area, the current nexus of real estate in Guangzhou. This malleable urban landscape currently houses over 20,000 urban migrants who do not hold the local residency passport, and thereby excluded from public amenity access.

NEXT PAGE:

The transformation of urban land and the agricultural land in the city of Guangzhou: the formation of urban villages

The highlighted red in the 3rd drawing indicates the villages in the city



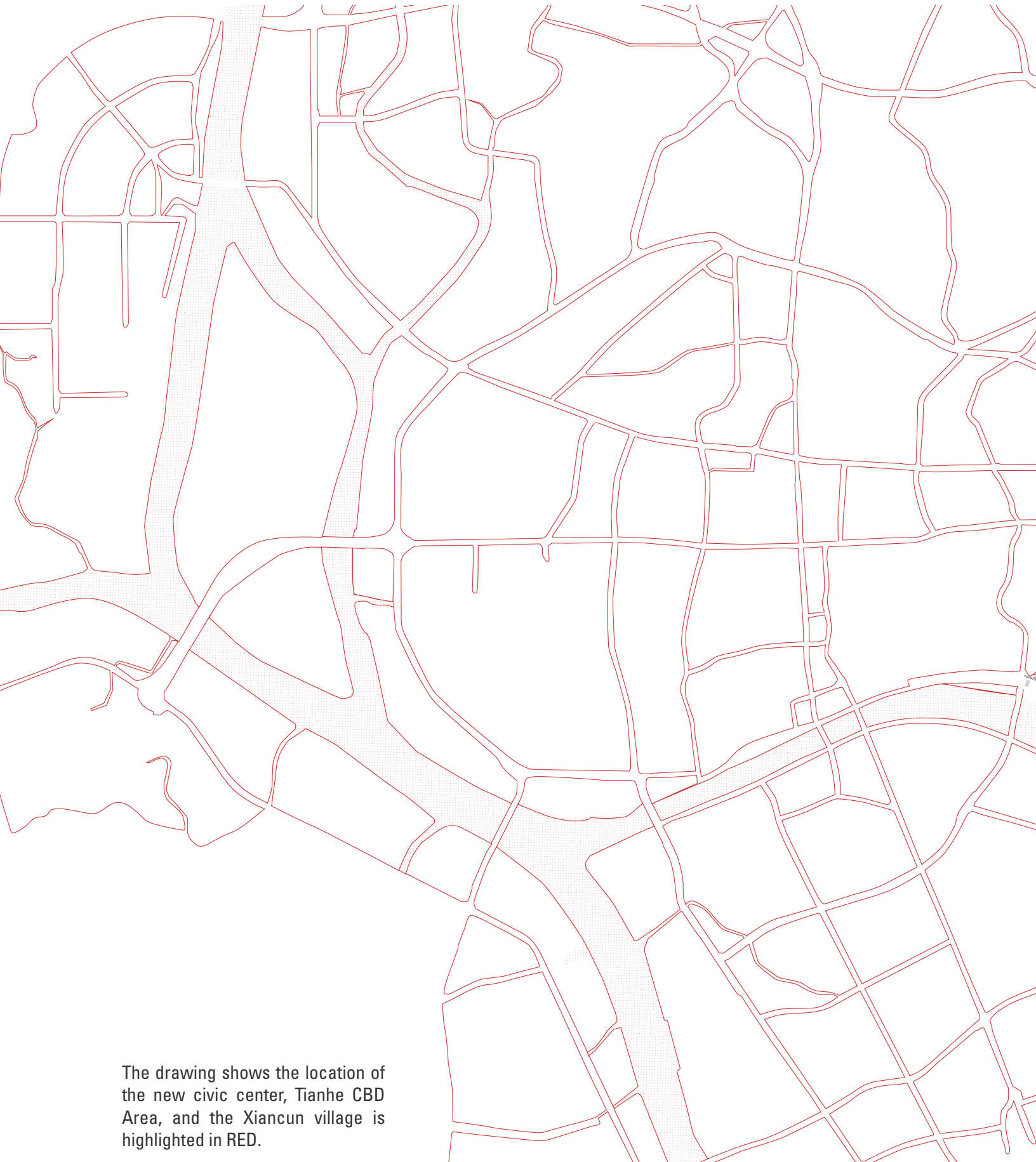
Min Guo Twenty-One Year
(1932)



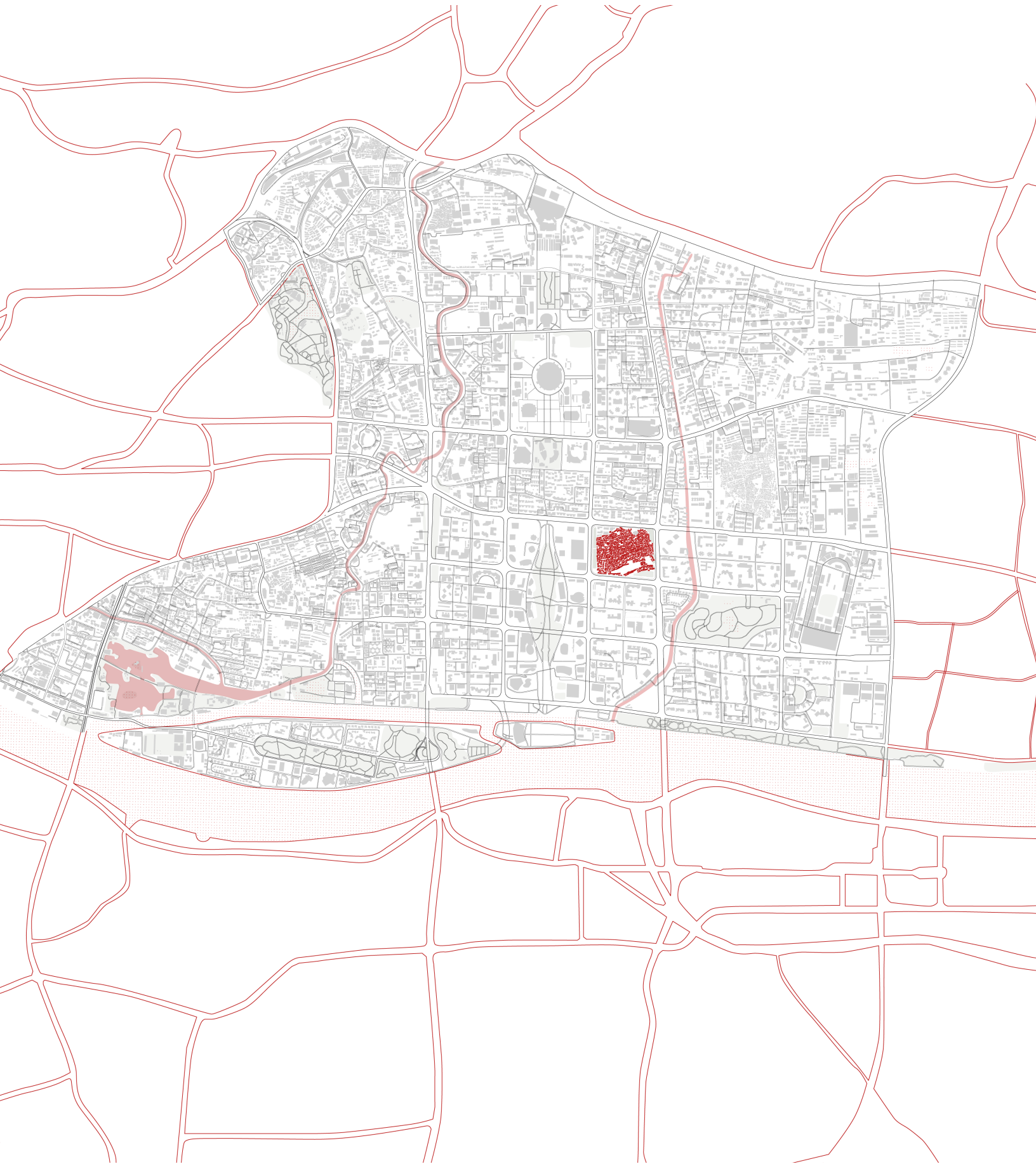
Early 1980s
Transition from Mao's Era to
Economy Reform



Post - 1990s



The drawing shows the location of the new civic center, Tianhe CBD Area, and the Xiancun village is highlighted in RED.





SPATIAL CHARACTERS OF URBAN VILLAGES

Traditionally, the villages are organized by clan authorities. Due to the dual land ownership system in China, the settlement morphology and economy structure of urban villages are not monitored by the city government. The collective ownership system inherited in these settlements differs from the city land's ownership structure.⁷ The constructions within the red lines of a settlement region often do not follow the city masterplan's zoning guidelines nor building restrictions.⁸ Furthermore, the governmental policies and restrictions on economy activities are rarely implemented within the village settlements.⁹

This section will list key spatial characters of urban villages, and the social factors that shape these characters.



SHIPAI CUN (VILLAGE)
石牌村



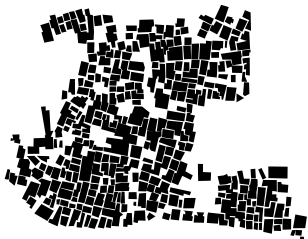
SHANGSHE CUN (VILLAGE)
上社村



XIAN CUN (VILLAGE)
洗村



CHENGJIE CUN (VILLAGE)
程界村



YUAN CUN (VILLAGE)
员村



SONGGANG VILLAGE
松岗村

LAWS OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

Chapter II Land Ownership Rights and Land Use Rights

Article 3 The whole people, that is the state, shall hold title to the following types of land:

- (1) land in urban areas;
- (2) land in rural and suburban areas which has been legally expropriated, occupied, requisitioned, requisitioned by purchase or returned to the state
(except land legally designated or confirmed as **collectively owned land**);
- (3) forest areas, grassland, mountain ridges, wasteland, beaches, river banks and other land not confirmed by the state as being collectively owned.

THE LAW OF LAND ADMINISTRATION OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

Chapter II Ownership and Right of Use of Land

Article 8 Land in urban districts shall be owned by the State. Land in the rural areas and suburban areas, except otherwise provided for by the State, shall be collectively owned by peasants including land for building houses, land and hills allowed to be retained by the peasants.

LAND ALLOCATION

Land allocated to each household

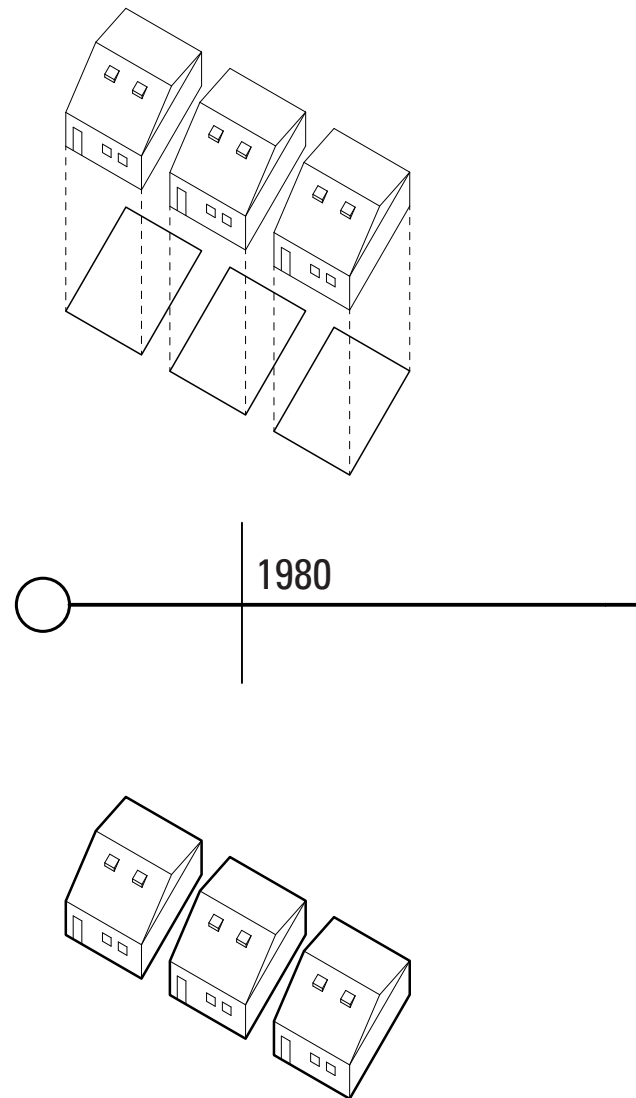
HIGH DENSITY

The urbanization of cities is dependent upon large sources of low-wage labor, often comprised of urban migrants. Since they are the disadvantaged group in the city, urban migrants can hardly afford the houses in the city. Therefore, they have settled in urban villages which offers significantly low rental rates. The flood of migrants fueled the demand for more living spaces in urban villages, which resulted in its rapid growth of building density. **The 138 urban villages, which comprises of 20% of Guangzhou's urban area, currently house over 70 percent of the urban migrants who represent 40 percent of the total urban population.**¹⁰

Source:

Guangzhou Redevelopment Department. "Guangzhou "Urban Village" Redevelopment Cost Accounting Guide." Guangzhou Urban Redevelopment Department Office. August 9, 2011. Accessed January 8, 2016. <http://www.zcsjb.gov.cn/2011/0812/203.html>.

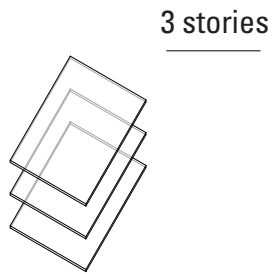
Y.P.Wang, Y. Wang and J. Wu (2009), "Urbanization and informal development in China: Urban villages in Shenzhen." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 33 (4): 957-973.



HOUSEHOLD SUBDIVISION TO GET MORE ALLOCATION

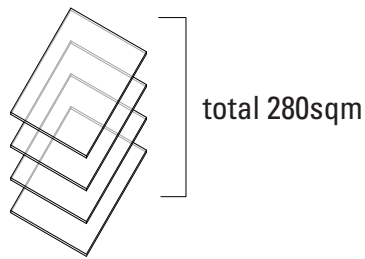
UPPER LIMIT

All the buildings are required to maintain three stories height.



BUILT AREA LIMIT

The maximum GFA was regulated at 280 m². Anything more than 280 m² cannot be approved for future compensation.



APPROVAL SUSPENDED

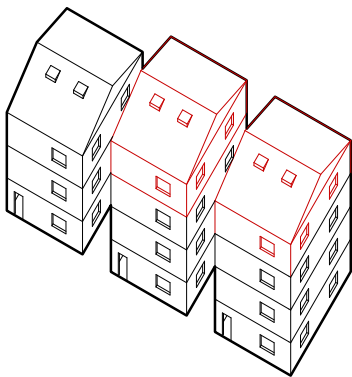
The informal construction before June 2007 can be counted as part of compensation fee; however, any informal construction later than June 2007 receives no compensation.



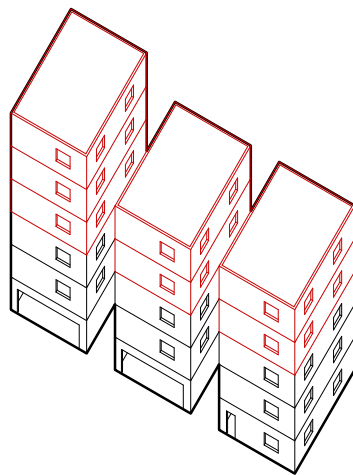
1986

1993

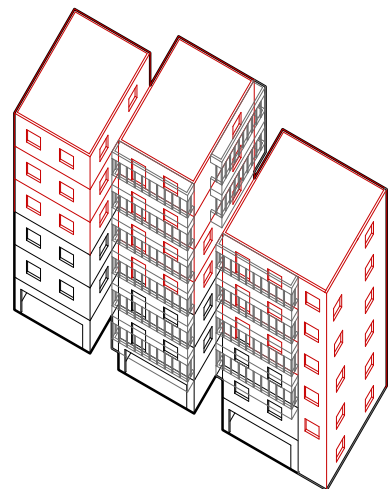
2011



BUILDING RECONSTRUCTION



IGNORED REGULATIONS



IGNORED REGULATIONS

LACK OF FORMAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Since the modern urban developments have avoided interfering with the villages, there were no formal construction of urban infrastructure such as water sewage pipes and electricity wires in the villages. The electricity wires are often hung above the alleys in between buildings, and they have been built up as the village continued to densify.

The rural/urban hukou disparity results in the lack of amenity provisions for the rural hukou holders in the urban villages. Normally, the city government constructs hospitals and schools in the city for the urban citizens, while their city-born children receive 9 years of free fundamental education in the city. The villages had to build their own schools and clinics, and they must operate without the support from the city government. In many cases, they lack the necessary resources to operate normally.

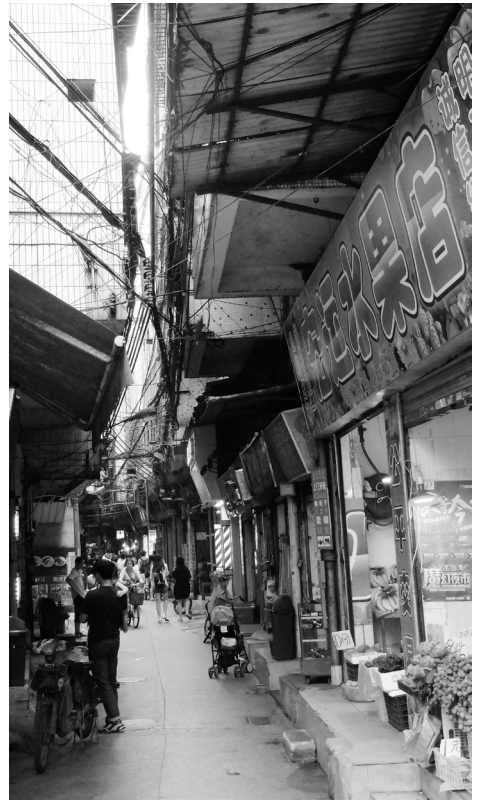
NEXT PAGE:

Top Left - a busy alley in Shipai Cun

Top Right - a traditional temple located at one of the gathering spaces in Shipai Cun

Lower Left - a small kindergarten in Sanyuanli Cun

Lower Right - a busy alley in Shipai Cun



POLITICAL LANDSCAPE IN URBAN VILLAGES

INTERNAL NEGOTIATION THAT CONSTRUCTS THE VILLAGE SPACE

According to Organic Law of Village Committee, the urban village is governed by a village committee that is elected by individual villagers. The villagers also have the right to directly intervene into the decision-making process of the village's development. I call such political system as an internal negotiation system, **whereby the decisions are reached through negotiation and consensus with other members of the community.** The internal negotiation results in a highly adaptive use of the village space. There is not a deterministic plan of the programmatic distribution and the division of individual spaces. Therefore, it formulates a rather resilient model that is highly responsive to changes.

ORGANIC LAW OF VILLAGE COMMITTEES

Article 11

The chairman, vice-chairman (vice-chairmen) and members of a villagers committee shall be elected directly by the villagers. No organization or individual may designate, appoint or replace any member of a villagers committee.

Article 12

Any villager who has reached the age of 18 shall have right to elect and stand for election, regardless of his ethnic status, race, sex, occupation, family background, religious belief, education, property status and length of residence, with the exception of persons who have been deprived of political rights in accordance with law.

The Organic Law of Village Committee provides a framework for the local democracy of villages in China. In compare to the top-down governing in cities, the self-governing allows the responsive growth of urban villages. Instead of adapting an urban plan, negotiations about property usage among villagers are the usual form of growth.

SPATIAL FLEXIBILITY






ECONOMY CLUSTERING & FLEXIBLE USE OF SPACE

Without agricultural land, villagers lost their main source of income, therefore, they heavily rely on the informal economic activities and the rent collected from their houses. Thus, both the morphology and program of the urban village buildings have been evolving to better serve the urban migrants and informal industries.

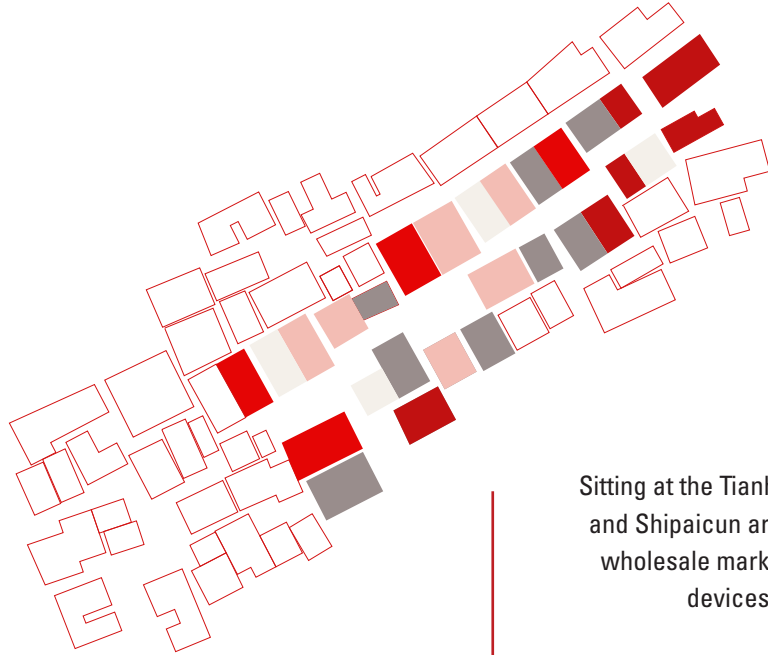
The lack of zoning control and the application of internal negotiation allow the consistent transformation of spatial organization in respond to the external and internal demands.

The spatial juxtaposition of production and consumption thus results in both a highly efficient use of spaces as well as high programmatic flexibility embedded within it.

LEGEND FOR THE CASE STUDIES

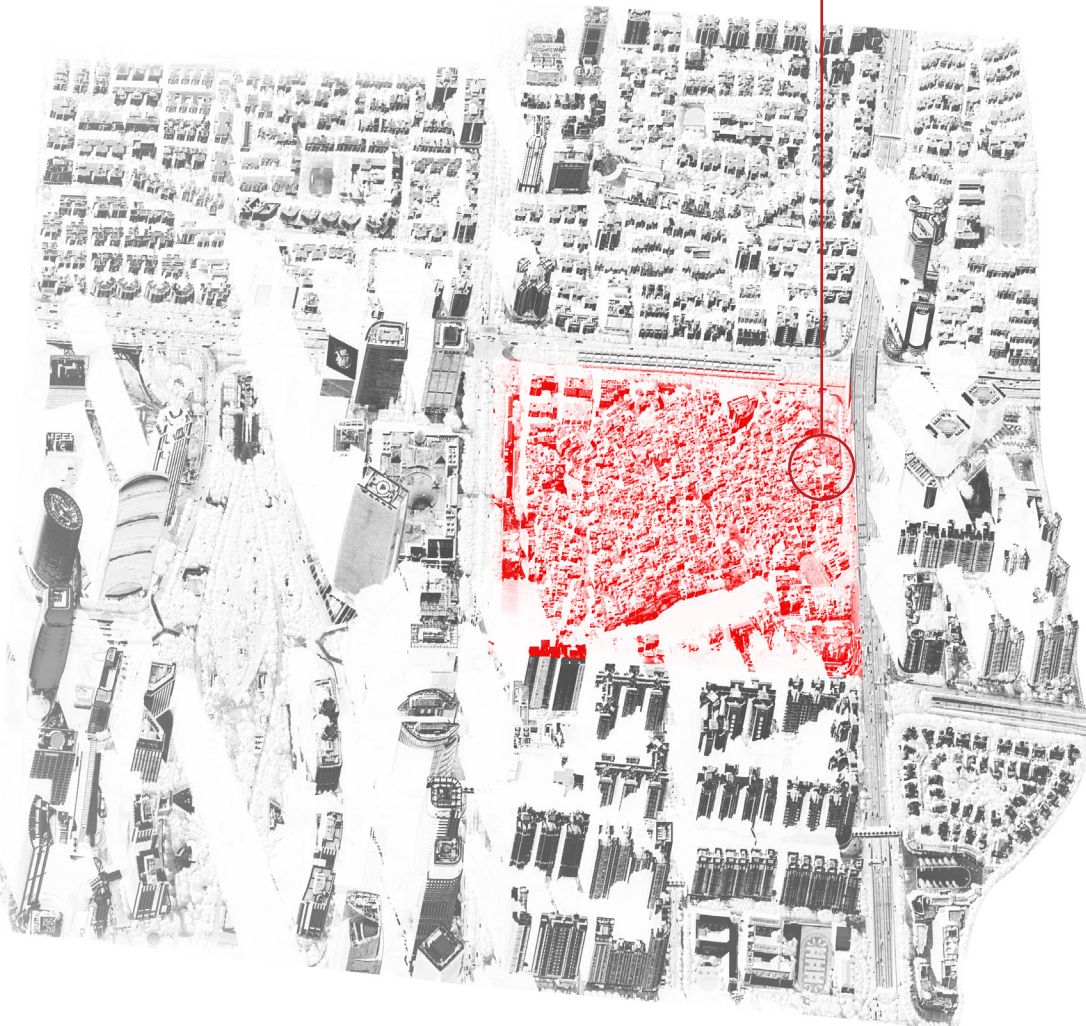
-  PRODUCTION
electronic product/ vehicle service
-  SERVICE INDUSTRY
health/ beauty
-  RESTAURANTS
-  PUBLIC SERVICE
-  RETAILS FOR DAILY NECESSITY
markets/ convenience store

Source: Ai, Stefan, Paul Hoi Shan Chu, Claudia Juhre, Ivan Valin, and Casey Wang, eds. *Villages in the City a Guide to South China's Informal Settlements*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong Univ. Press, 2014.



XIAN CUN

Sitting at the Tianhe CBD, Xiancun and Shipaicun are famous for the wholesale markets of electronic devices and hwarewares.

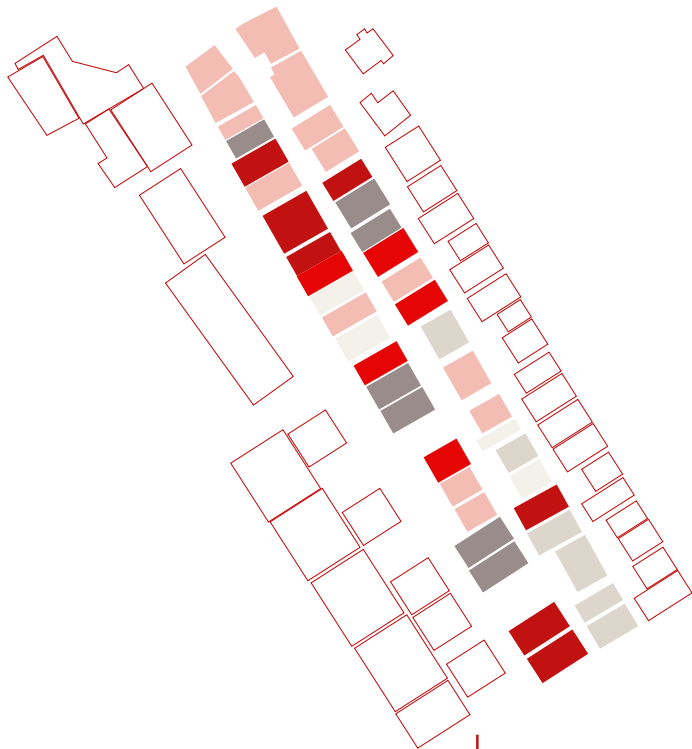




SAN YUAN LI CUN

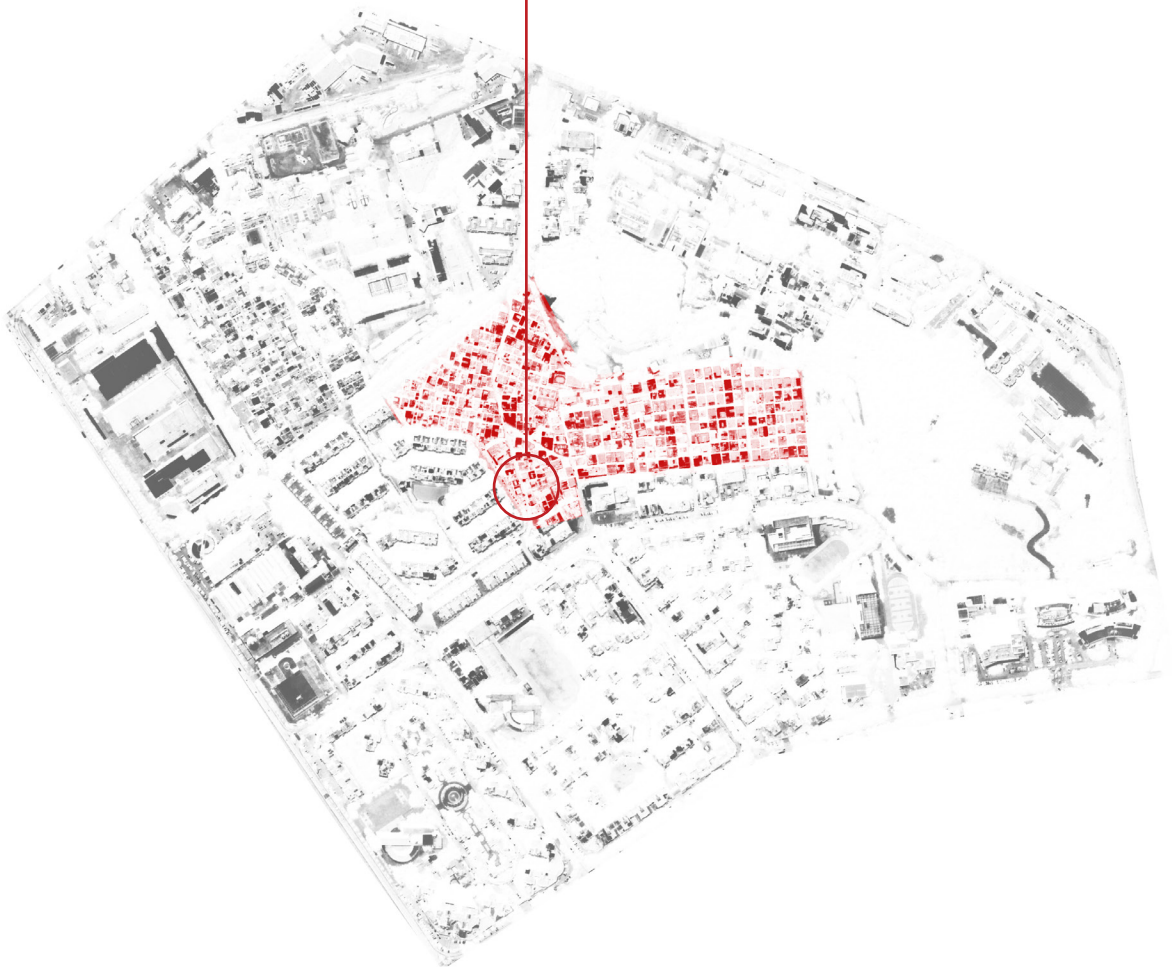
There are various types of wholesale markets can be found in the village, featuring with leather hardware markets and hair salon industries.

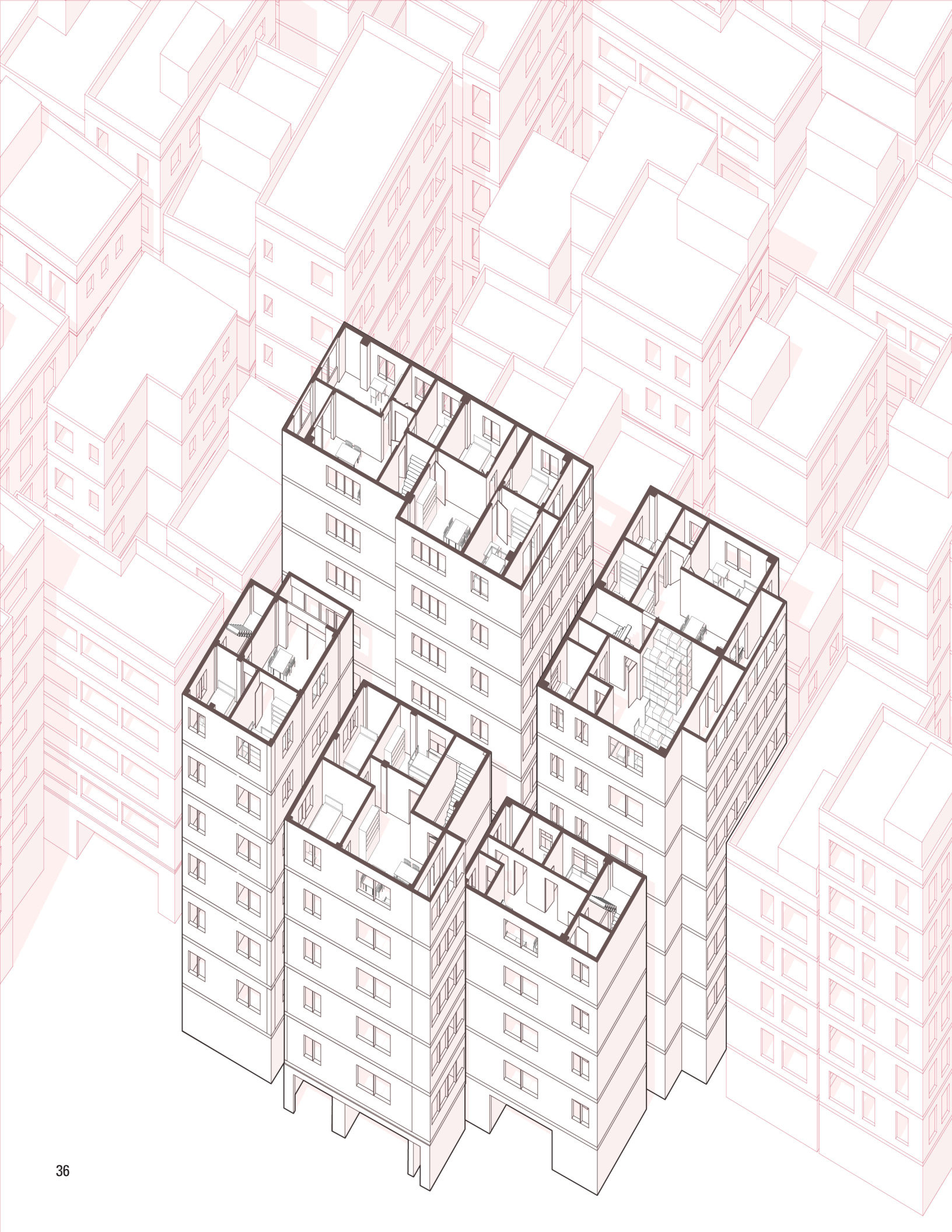




SHI PO CUN

This village is famous for its wholesale food market, and low price public services such as community center and kindergarten.

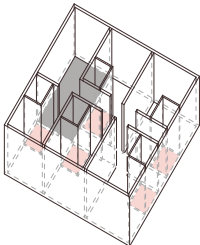




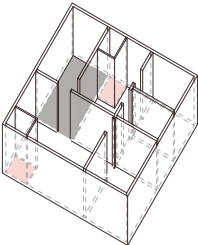
The typical structure of existing village buildings are open floor slab loading on concrete column structure, which allows the flexible reconfiguration of the building plans.

left:
Axonometric drawing of typical village buildings in Xiancun Village

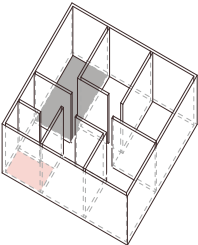
right:
Possible reconfigurations of a typical village building plan



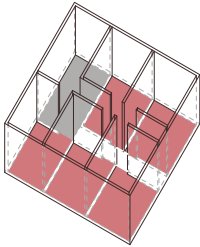
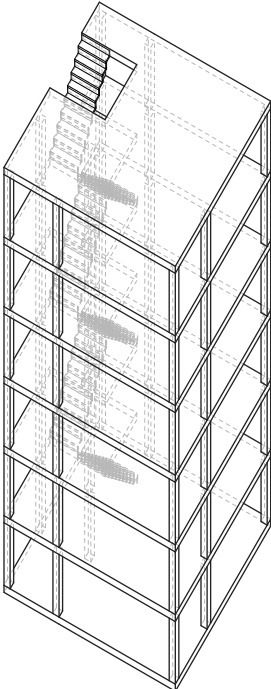
motel



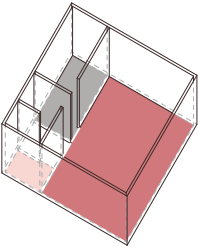
rental apartment (suite)



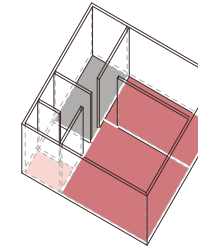
rental apartment



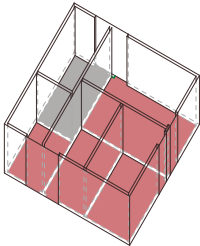
warehouse



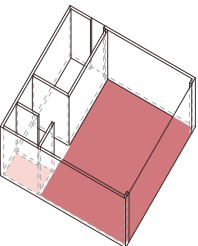
workshop



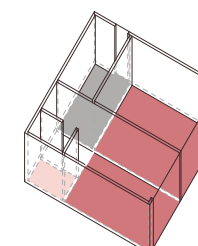
restaurant



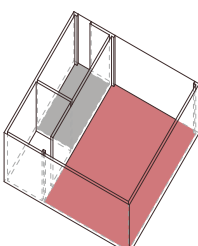
warehouse



shop type 1



shop type 2



shop type 3



URBAN MIGRANTS

80% of the residents living in urban villages are urban migrants. Since the economic reform, the rural dwellers became a floating population that moves from city to city to search for work. This phenomenon has become one of the key features of the developing China. The unhistorical migration has both launched the economic development as well as posed significant challenges to social coherence and stability.¹¹ An estimation of 78 percent of total annual urban growth was contributed by urban migration from 1980 to the early 1990s.¹² The Chinese media and propaganda cast the urban migrants as the urban poor while they are in fact productive individuals with jobs. Most of the migrant workers are working in secondary or tertiary industries such as building construction and low-skill services.¹³

However, urban migrants cannot access the welfare provided by the local city government due to their rural hukou status. China has long implemented the Hukou system, which dictates the scope of civil rights of the resident vis-à-vis where they live. Unless the employers are willing practice the government policies to support migrant workers in their Hukou transferal, the migrant workers with foreign Hukou accounts cannot exercise their rights to access locally governed amenities such as social security, employment, education and social welfare. In other words, this two-tier social structure is part of a larger scheme for domestic control and resource management. It represents a set of policies that segregates the urban population from the rural population based on citizenship rights and their access to the city.

From the migrant's perspective, the urban village is not a 'slum' per se but an important, affordable, and well-located entry point into the city where they can become full urban citizens after a few years of steady jobs.

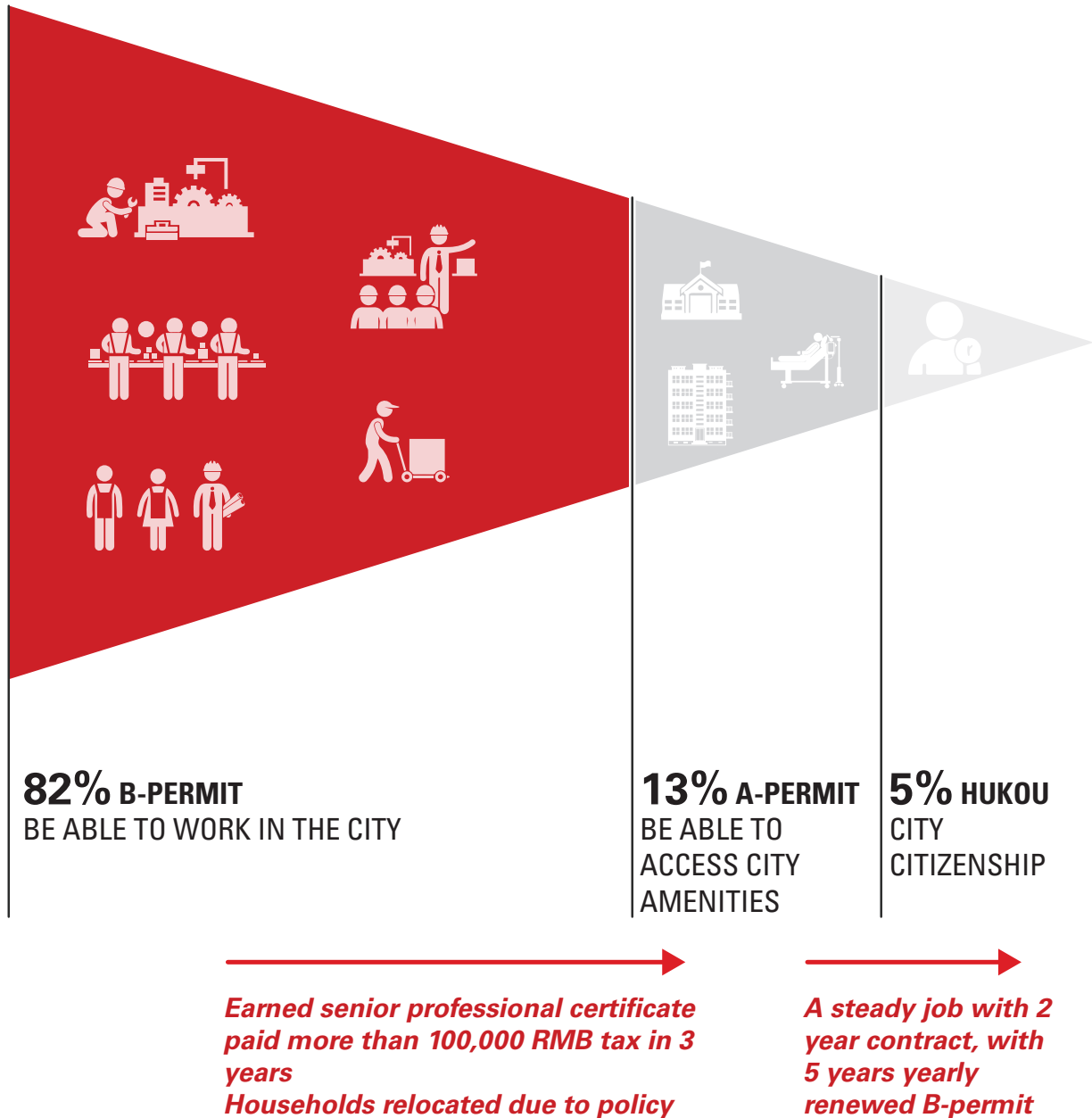
NEXT PAGE:

Limited Rights of Floating Population

Source: Al, Stefan, Paul Hoi Shan Chu, Claudia Juhre, Ivan Valin, and Casey Wang, eds. *Villages in the City a Guide to South China's Informal Settlements*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong Univ. Press, 2014.

By 2014, The floating population in Guangzhou is around **8,370,000**, which is more than the registered population of **8,320,000**.

80% of population in the **urban villages** are **URBAN MIGRANTS**.



2 *URBAN SCALE*

THE FAILING OF CHINESE URBANIZATION







COMMODIFICATION OF LAND

“In the last two decades, the pace at which China has urbanized has been extraordinary: the urbanization level in the country has doubled from 25 percent in 1987 to roughly 50 percent in 2010.”¹⁴

“Guangzhou – the capital of Guangdong Province and the largest city of the Pearl River Delta – is an urban agglomeration whose population has doubled from about 6 million to 12 million people between the late 1980s and 2010. It is estimated that nearly 80% of the built stock is less than 30 years old.”¹⁵

LAND-ORIENTED ECONOMY

Ever since the economy reform, land has become the central issue for local politicians. It is now one of the main factors in shaping the Chinese state power and state-society relations.¹⁶ The country's land leasehold market is formally established in 1988, when land ownership is disassociated from land-use rights. As such, urban land-use rights are to be leased for profit. Therefore, city and countryside land can be commoditized without being privatized.¹⁷

*"Land Revenue comes from two sources. The government-as-regulator derives revenues from taxes and surcharges on land appreciation and transactions from various development projects. The government-as-proprietor collects receipts from direct land-lease sales and from renting government-built industrial and commercial structures."*¹⁸

The local government has been heavily reliant upon the taxation of land development and land transactions to generate its annual income. For the first half year of 2013, the taxation of land development and land transaction was 2.7 billion Yuan, which represented 76.7% of the total taxation revenue.¹⁹ "In the post-Mao China," Hsing argues, "urban land-use planning has replaced economic planning as the main vehicle of state intervention in the local political economy."²⁰

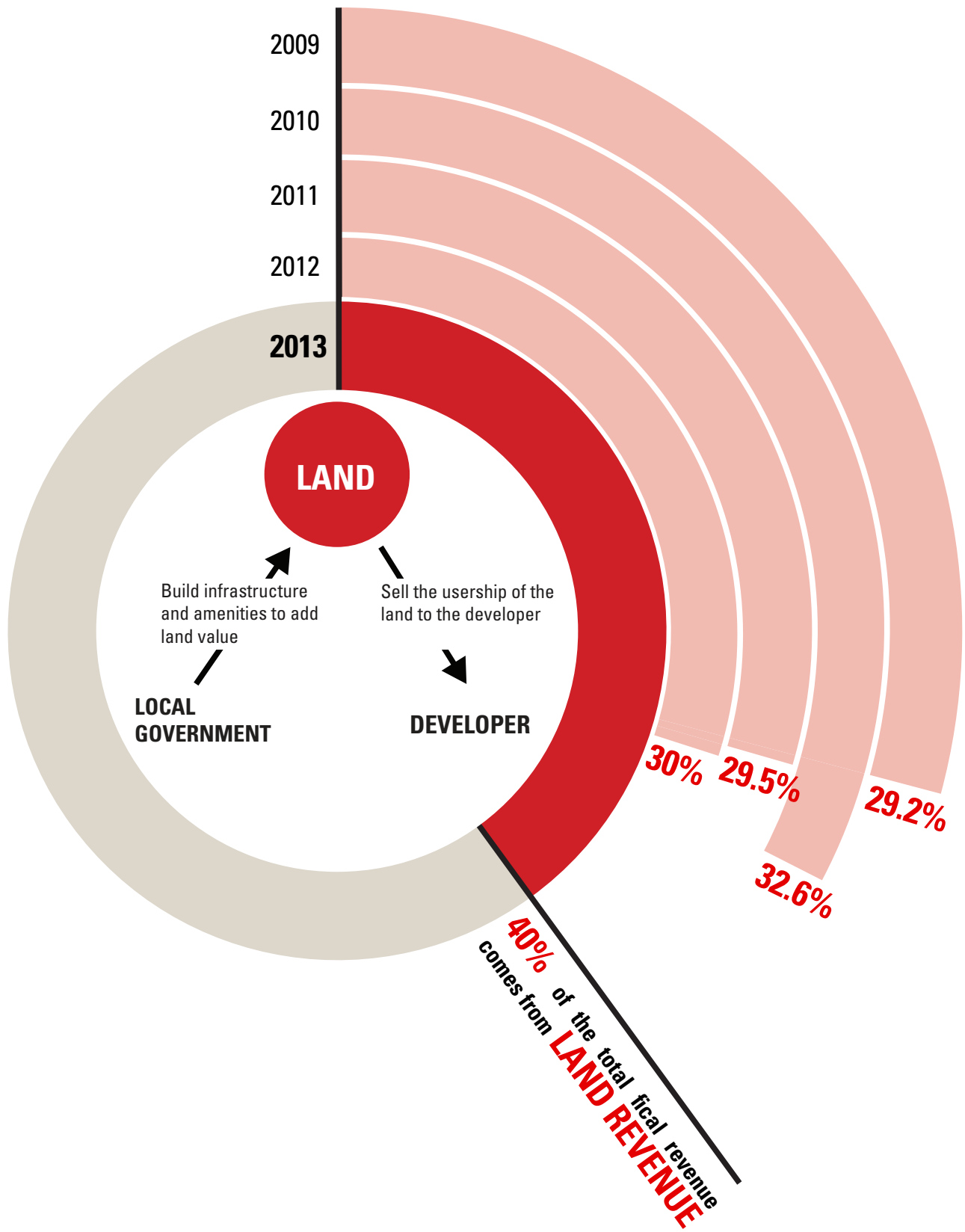
The local government fulfills multiple roles: the landlord, the lord, the developer, the city planner and the urban booster, which reshape the logic of market regulation and competition in the new economy.

NEXT PAGE:

the mechanism of land-oriented economy

&

Guangzhou land revenue and total fiscal revenue



LAND-ORIENTED POLITICS

“City marketing and property value boosting are performed at both the ideological and political levels.”²¹

First of all, high-profile urban projects and property values are used as measurements of local government’s achievements. They are the indicator of the degree modernization accomplished by the local state leaders.²²

Secondly, the local state governments have become more and more aware of the role that urban image can play in attracting investors, thereby enhancing the local economy. Cities such as Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou have dramatically transformed in response to the increasing peer-pressure between cities to establish an exemplary reputation for successfully marketing themselves in order to attract global attention and international capitals.²³

Determined to create a favorable business climate for their own city, the local state government has oriented its city’s urban development goal towards creating a progressive image which can attract real estate and economic development. The methodology deployed in urban development has resulted in the negligence of other aspects of city life under the local state governance. The city is decreasingly viewed as a home, a place for self- and collective representation, and a public sphere where local politics are debated.²⁴

NEXT PAGE:
Iconic buildings in Tianhe CBD
(where the site is located)

Pearl River Tower
珠江城大厦

HEIGHT: 1,015 FT
FLOORS: 71
FLOOR AREA: 212,165 sqm

construction started: 2006
opened: 2011

The Pinnacle
广晟国际大厦

HEIGHT: 1,149 FT
FLOORS: 60

construction started: 2007
opened: 2012

Guangzhou International Finance Center
广州国际金融中心

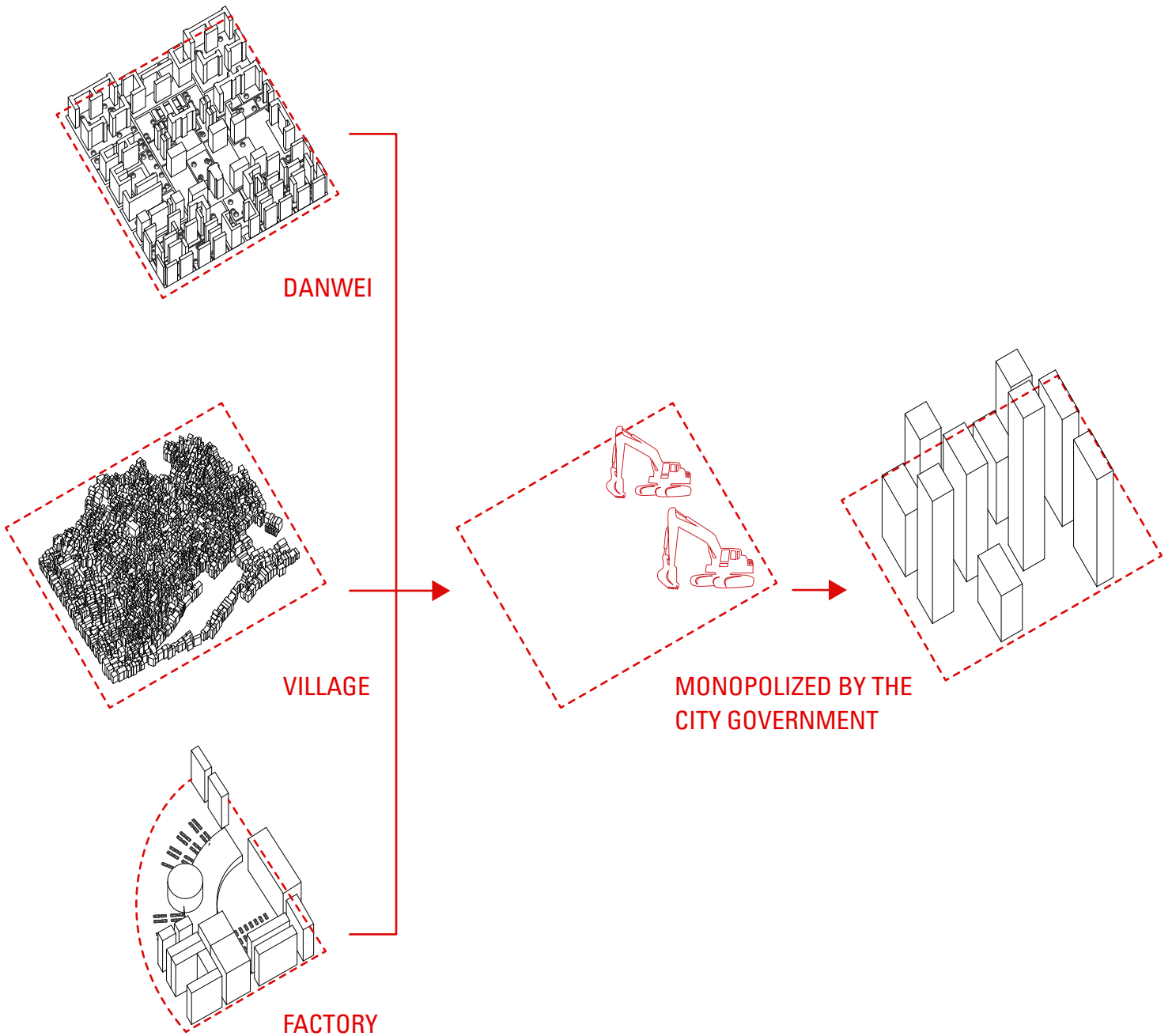
HEIGHT: 1,439 FT
FLOORS: 103

construction started: 2005
opened: 2010





MONOPOLIZATION OF THE LAND



The current mode of urbanization heavily relies on the monopolization of the land, resulting in demolition of the existing and the displacement of its inhabitants. Such methodology of development leads to an inequitable relationship between the state government, local government and its people. This methodology has been tested in the major cities such as Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou and Shenzhen, where acres of working class neighborhoods were leveled, making way for highrises, luxury hotels, and motorways, under the name of progress and modernization.²⁵

CONSEQUENCES

One of the consequences of the current mode of urban development is the low occupancy rate of urban spaces. The high land price and the high taxation on real estate has kept the housing price at an unaffordable level. Under such circumstance, the rapid construction of large urban projects has resulted in the over-supply. According to a report conducted by Colliers International, it was expected that some 477,000 sq m of office space in Pearl River New City will be available to the market by 2013. However, the vacancy rate of the office towers has been rising from 15.9% in 2010 to 23.7% in 2013.²⁶

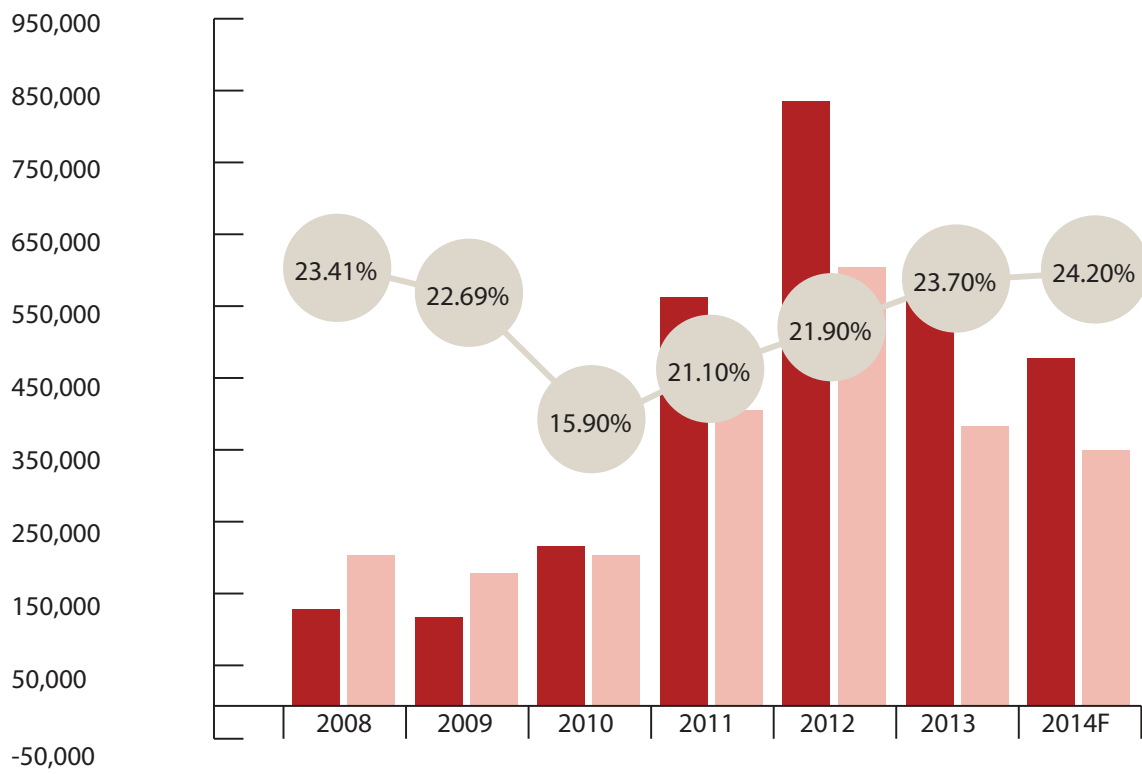
Another significant consequence of the current urban development is the increased distrust amongst different parties. Forced eviction and inadequate compensation in urban redevelopment projects, coupled with the abrupt retreat of social welfare provision by the state, has often triggered widespread contestation and given rise social activism that seeks to challenge the legitimacy of the state.²⁷

NEXT PAGE:

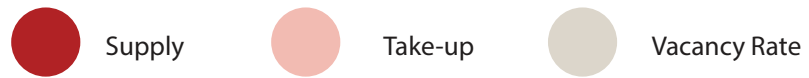
Guangzhou Grade A office supply take-up and vacancy rate

Source:

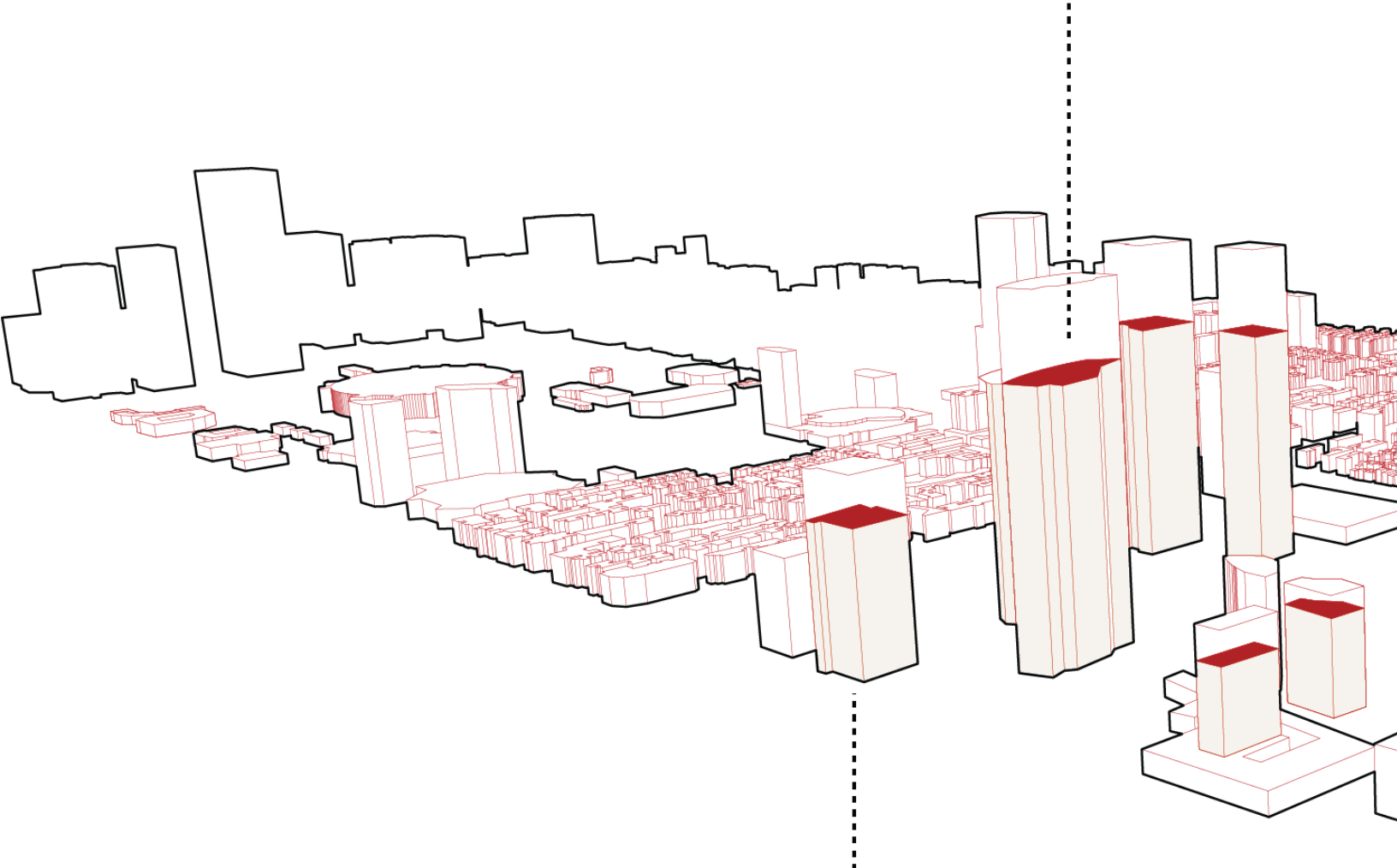
Lam, Eric, and Bryan Chan. *Guangzhou Office Property Market. Report.* Guangzhou: Colliers International, 2013.



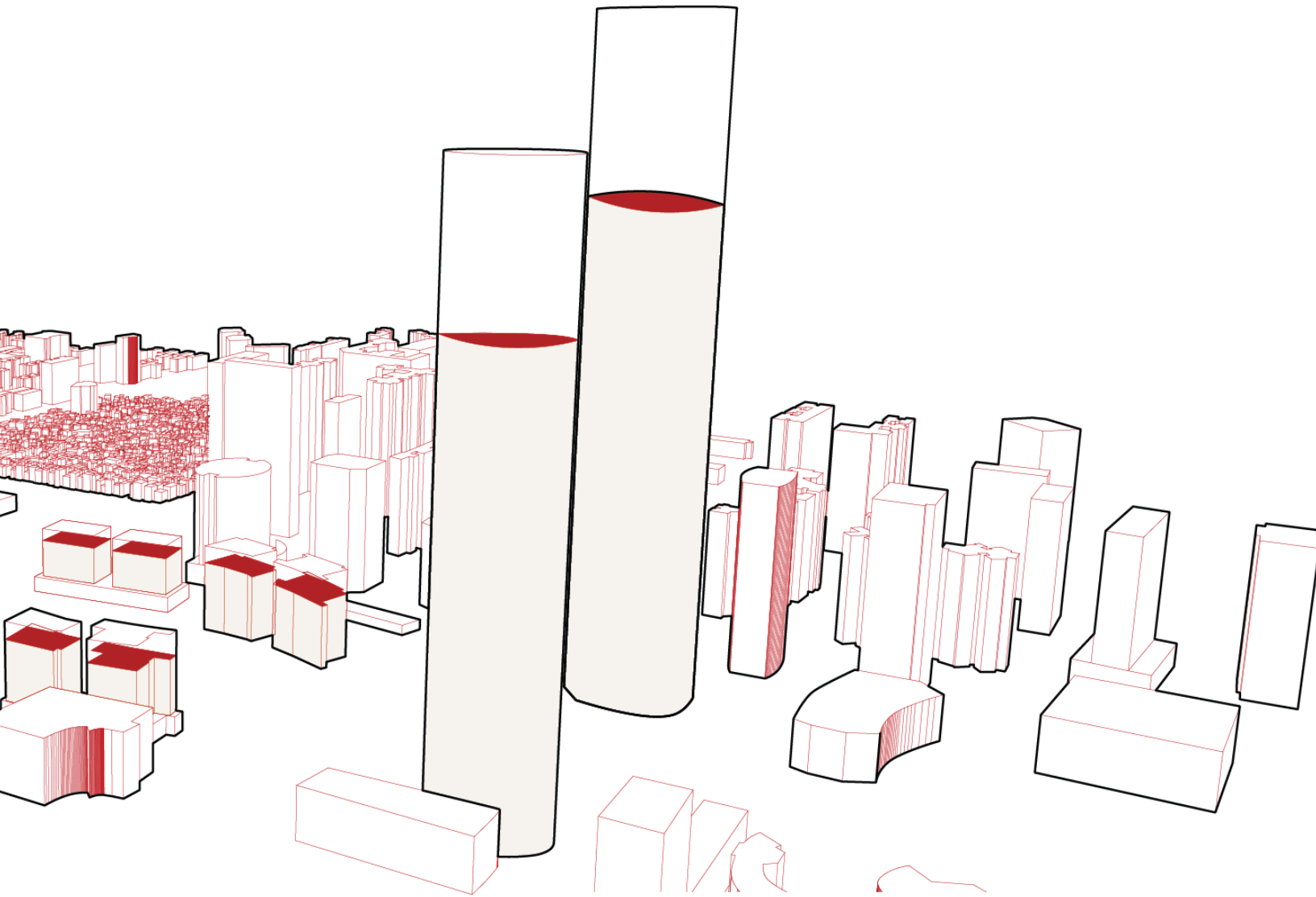
Source: Guangzhou Statistic Bureau, Colliers International Guangzhou



The vacancy rate of the Grade A Office Building is above 20%, which is considered as "dangerous condition"

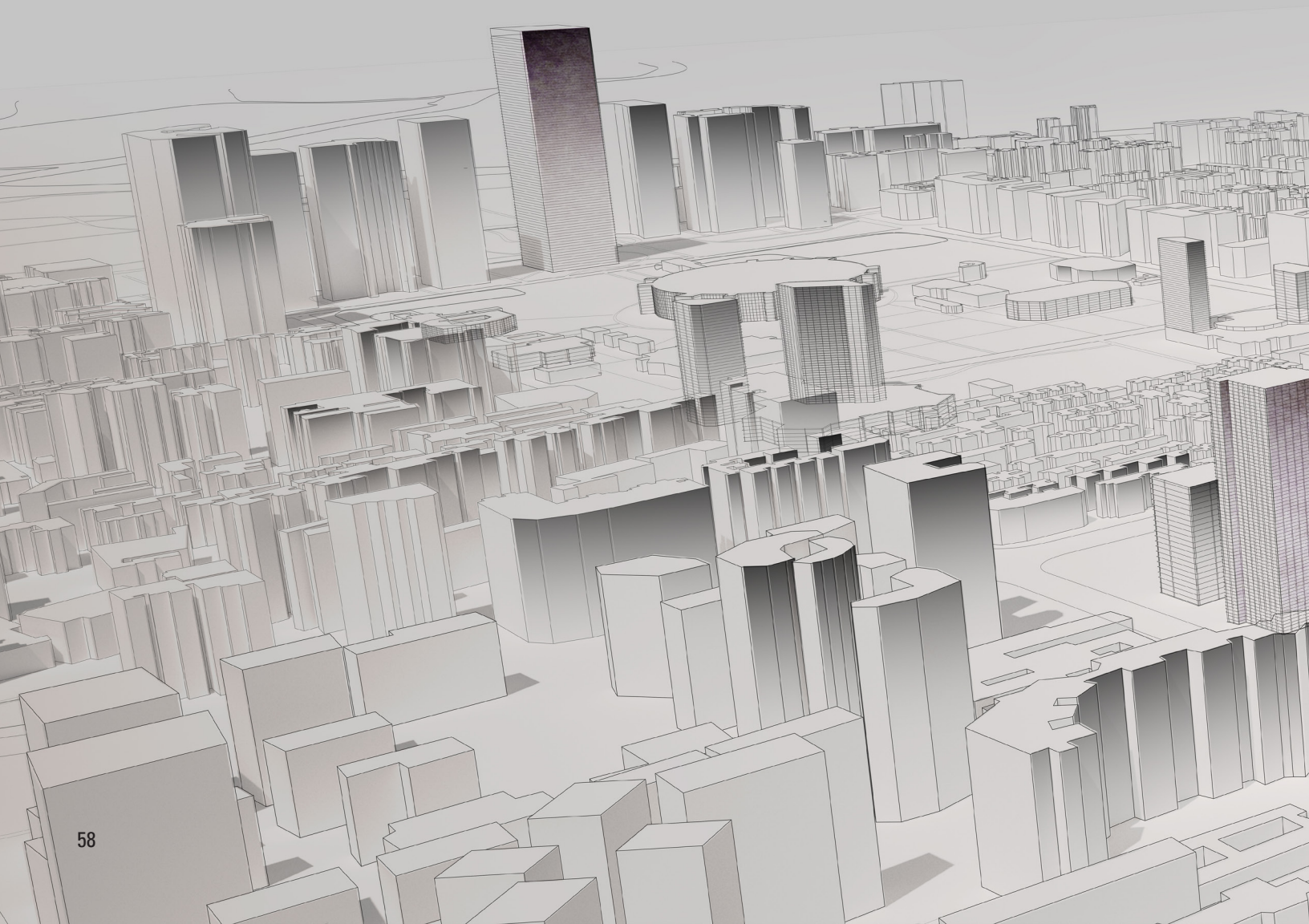


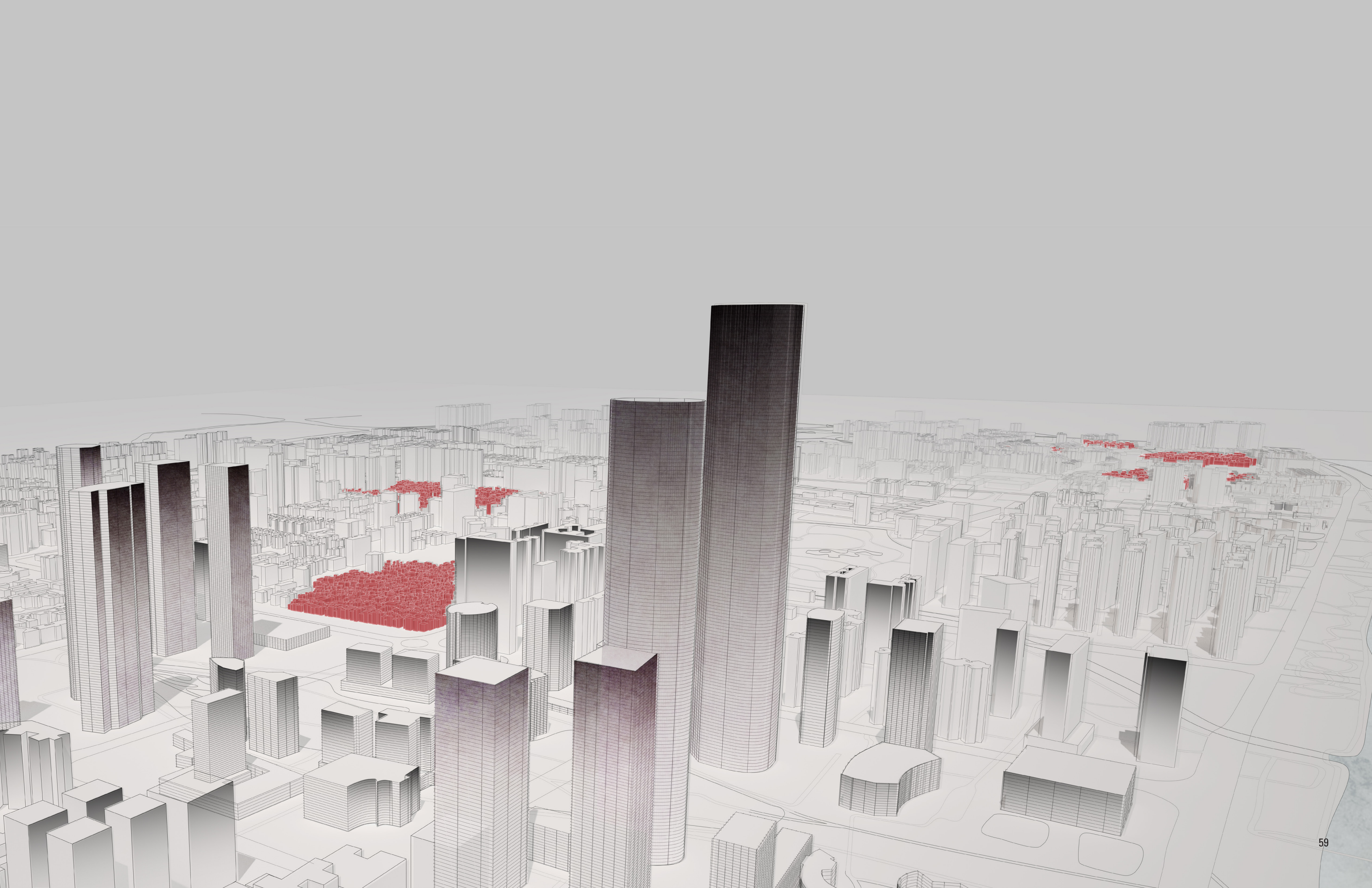
The Black Outline shows the "VISUAL" height of the city
The Grey Infill shows the "ACTUAL" "height" (occupancy) of the city



The criticism against the consequences of Chinese urbanization compels a revisit to the existing urban fabric: the urban village. With its capacity for high density, social and economic clustering and its spatial resilience, urban villages serve as potential sites of instigation to develop alternative forms of urbanism.

The thesis does not advocate for the preservation nor the conservation of urban villages, but rather seeks to reconfigure the relationships between the village and the city state.





3 *BLOCK SCALE*

**RETHINKING THE POLITICAL RELATIONS
IN THE URBAN VILLAGE**

中国精神 中

讲文明树新风 公益广告



国形象 中国文化 中国表达

中国
我的

梦

始信泥土有芬芳，
转眼捏成这般模样。
你是女娲托生的精灵，
你是夸父追日的梦想。
让我轻轻走过你的跟前，
沐浴着你的童真的目光。
让我牵手与你同行，
小脚丫奔跑在希望的田野上。
呵，中国，
我的梦



CONFLICTS OF INTERESTS BETWEEN DIFFERENT PARTIES

The thesis argues for a progressive development strategy of the urban village rather than one based on preservation. However, it necessitates a different social relationship between the city government, villagers and urban migrants to further the urban village's development based on the urban village's inherent spatial characters while maintaining the valuable qualities of it.

The existing structure of relationships and power between parties have been quite one-sided. According to Hsing, the thesis of current state-led urbanization is directed by the state's planning power, its determined land occupancy, and its control over social mobility. The overarching power dictates the direction and pace of the urban growth in Chinese cities.²⁸

The hierarchical relationships between the different governing departments are: the city government -> the district council -> The street council -> urban villages. While both the city government and street council provide guidance and policy suggestions to the village committee, neither of them have the right to directly interfere with the developments of the villages. The dual land ownership system also delimits the influence of the city government over the village committee on the decision-making process of village development.

The missing link between the city government and the villagers denies the opportunities of dialogues and consensus between the two parties, thereby resulting in conflict and distrust between the two. The motivating factors that creates the tension between the two parties is two-folds:

[FINANCE]

Since the government converted the agricultural land that once sustained the villagers' livelihood into state-controlled land, villagers must rely heavily on the rental business and informal industries taking place in the urban villages. Meanwhile, villagers are increasingly aware of the real estate market and their rights over their property. Therefore, they are not willing to give up their land for a little compensation.

Meanwhile, the city government does not see enough reasons to compensate villagers since the villagers are using some of the public infrastructure around them, such as mass transits and public parks, without paying the regulated property tax.²⁹

[GOVERNANCE]

Urban villages are seen as places in the city where the order is not carried out. The constructions within the red lines of a settlement region usually do not follow the city masterplan's zoning guidelines nor building restrictions.³⁰ Furthermore, the governmental policies and restrictions on economy activities are rarely implemented within the village settlements.³¹ Thereofre, the city government often produces negative images of the urban village in order to advocate for the demolition of these places.

Meanwhile, the villagers of the urban village are increasingly conscious of both their rights to land ownership as well as their rights to self-governance.

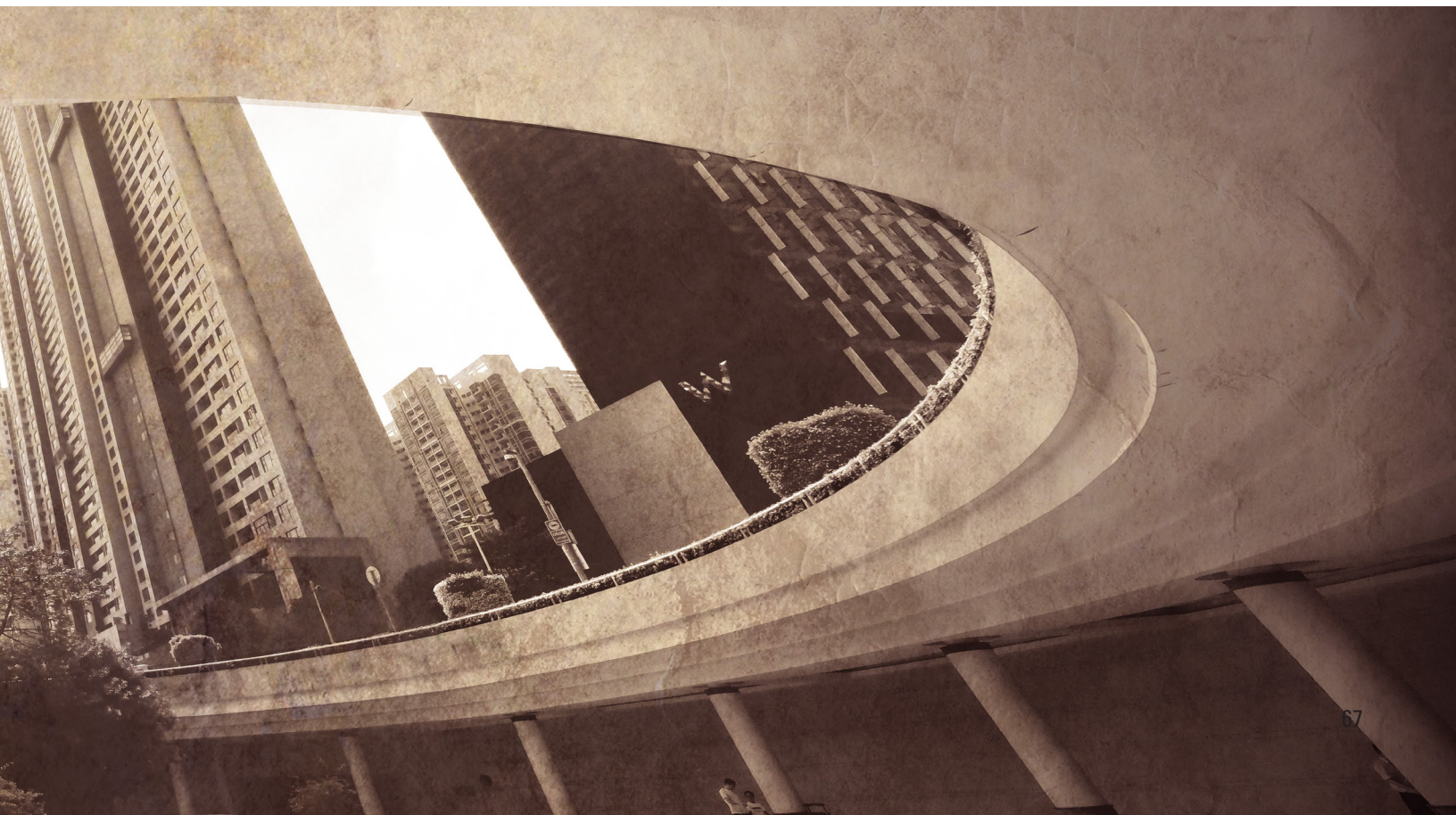


[THE CURRENT RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN VILLAGERS AND THE MIGRANTS]

The villagers and the migrants rely on each other for their livelihoods. Since the government monopolized the agricultural land that used to be occupied by the villagers, villagers had lost their means of generating income. Therefore, the villagers heavily rely on the income from renting the informal housings to the urban migrants. The low rental price offered by the villagers in compared to the new developments outside makes the urban village as a source of affordable housing for urban migrants.

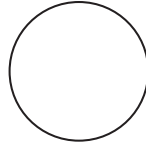
[THE CURRENT RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND THE MIGRANTS]

Urban villages are seen as places in the city where the order is not carried out. The constructions within the red lines of a settlement region usually do not follow the city masterplan's zoning guidelines nor building restrictions. Furthermore, the governmental policies and restrictions on economy activities are rarely implemented within the village settlements. Thereofre, the city government often produces negative images of the urban village in order to advocate for the demolition of these places.

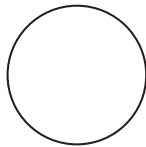




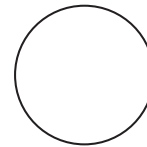
PROPOSED RELATIONSHIPS



CITY GOVERNMENT



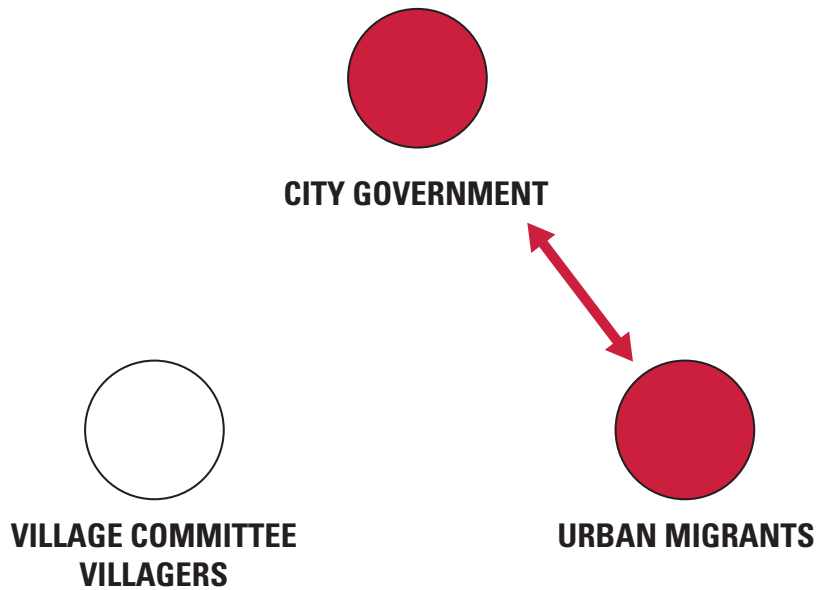
**VILLAGE COMMITTEE
VILLAGERS**



URBAN MIGRANTS

The thesis questions the existing relationships between the parties, and intends to explore the potential role of architecture as a political apparatus to mediate new relationships between the city government, villagers and urban migrants.

The proposal seeks to identify the architectural factors, **necessary agency, program, location, formal articulations and construction logic of this architecture**, that shapes individuals' behavior and their perception towards their social status, so that the relationships between different groups of population can be reconstructed.



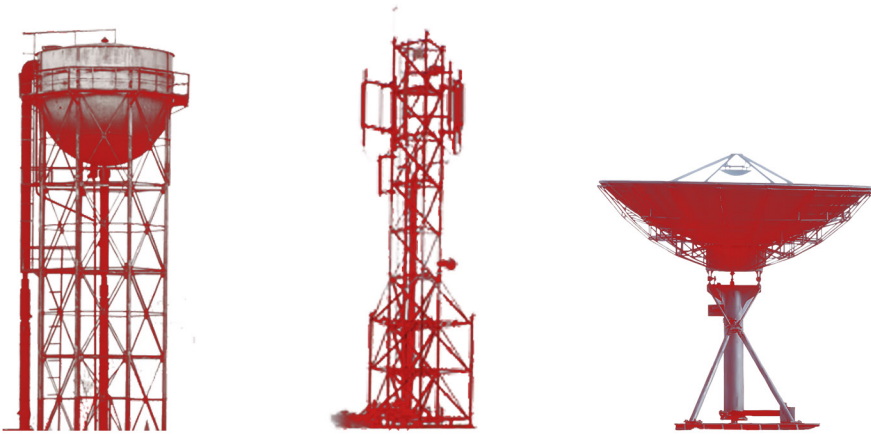
CITY GOVERNMENT & URBAN MIGRANTS

[FINANCE]

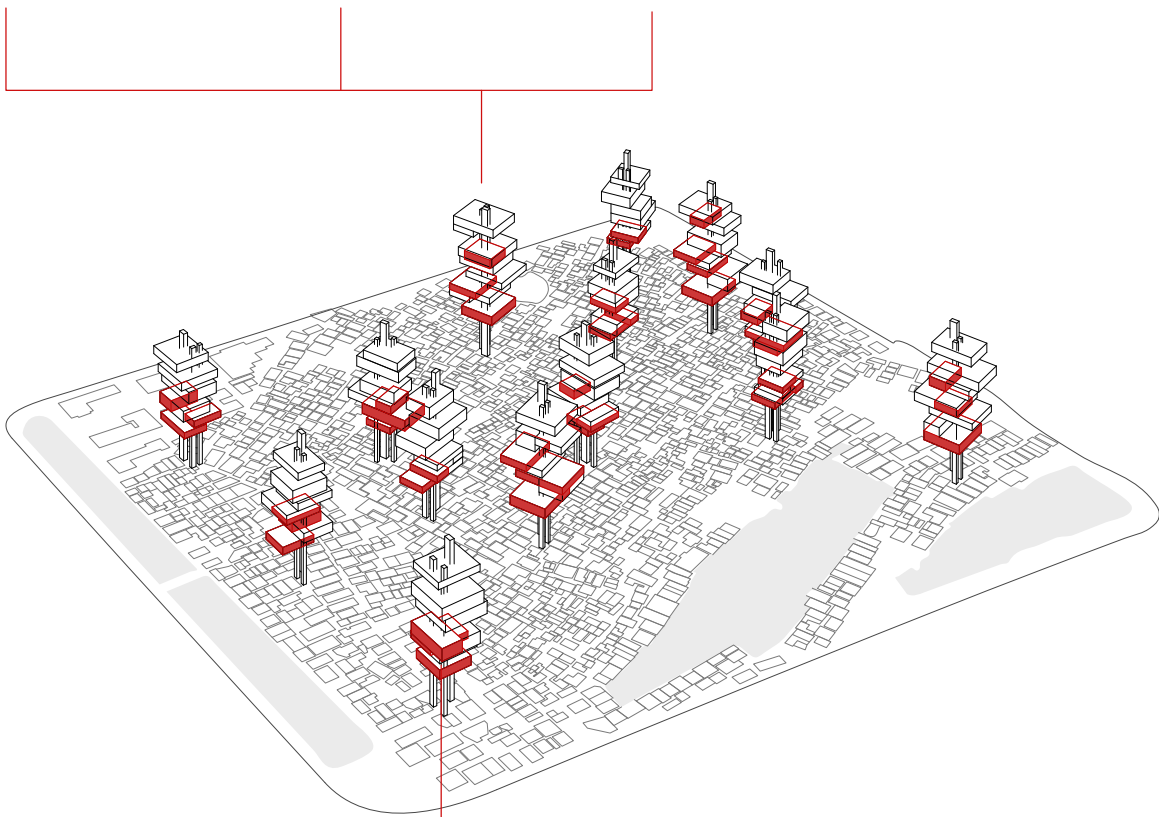
The government will finance the construction of series of outpost that are inserted in the urban villages. These outposts inform three specific intentions:

[PROGRAM]

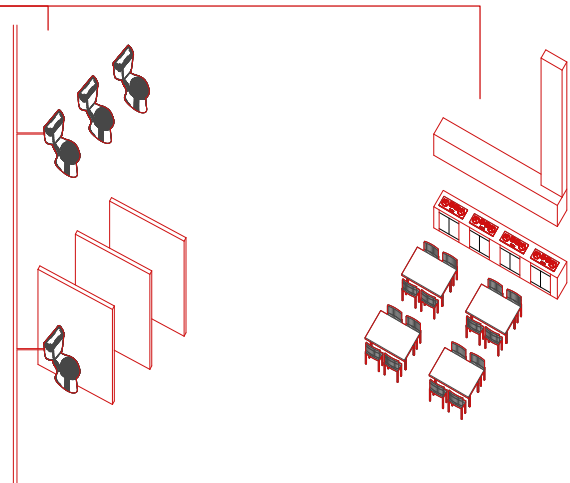
First of all, the design proposes to **centralize the fundamental infrastructure** such as restrooms, kitchens and the bathrooms into cores, known as beacons. **The externalization of usership rights** of urban infrastructure allows the government to monitor the population of urban migrants, thereby further **formalizing their social status**.

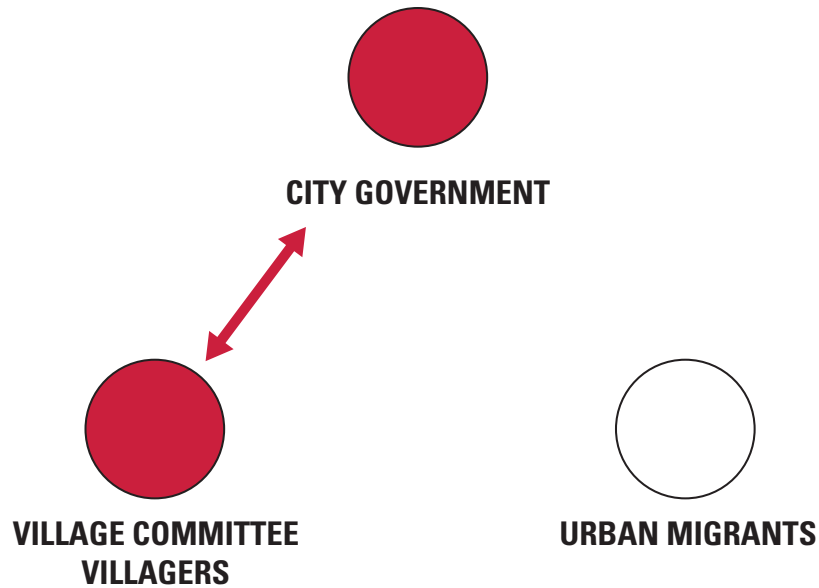


Each station has the water tank, telecom station and antenna at the top for public use. They also act as the showcase for the local state government.



Each station carries the infrastructural programs that are open to village residents (both villagers and urban migrants): the toilets, showers, kitchen and dining.

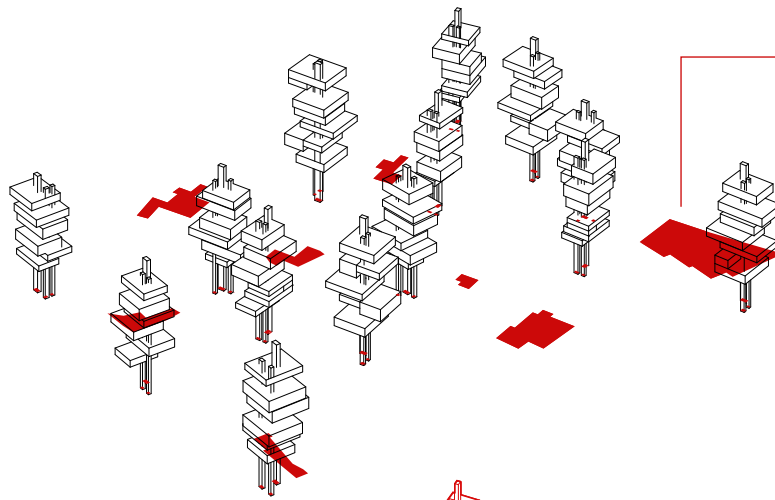
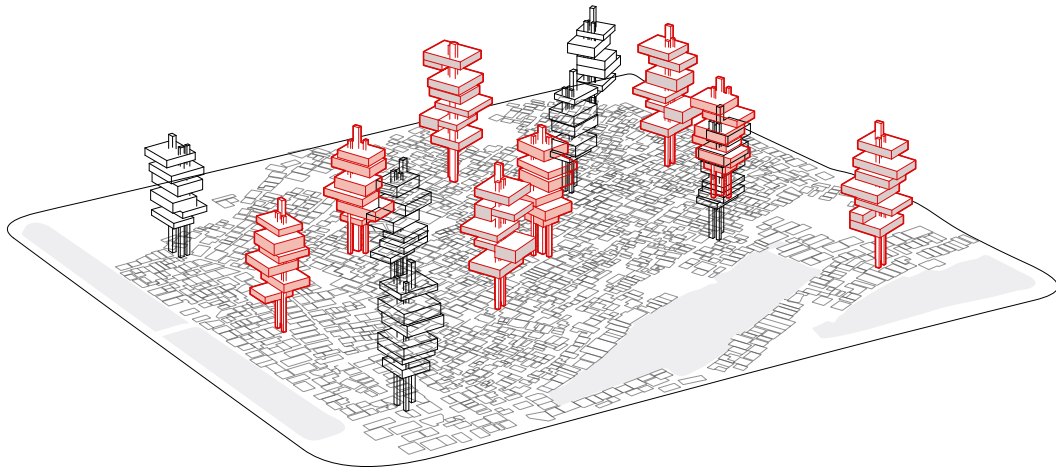




CITY GOVERNMENT & URBAN VILLAGERS

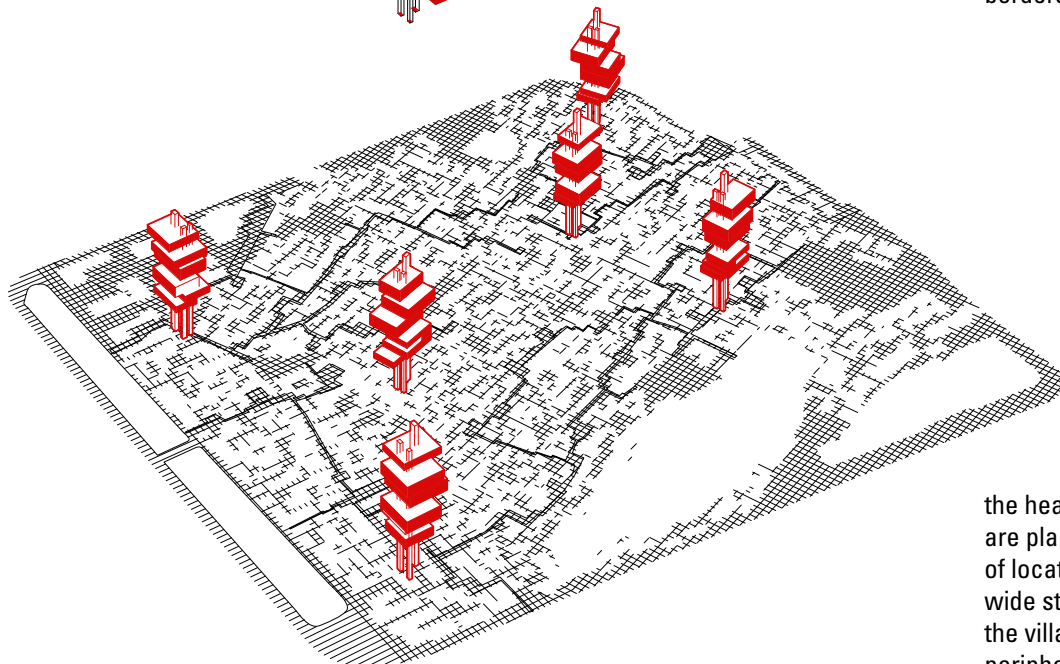
[LOCATION & SCALE]

The placement of the beacons intends to help ***preserve the existing form of democracy between the villagers.*** Xiancun has five major open spaces for public gatherings. These public spaces are right adjacent to the village committee office, and traditional temples of the village, where people gather and discuss and vote. Instead of building at these public spaces, the placement of beacons regard these public negotiation spaces as centered points of zones, and locate at the borders of these zones. Instead of drafting a process of densification growing radially from points, ***the design intends to redistribute resources across the urban village through an infilled densification.***

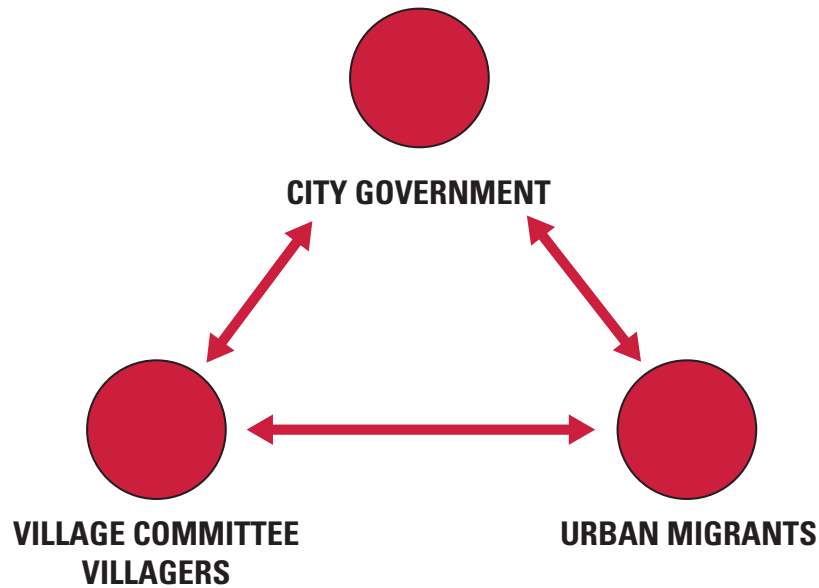


existing public gathering spaces

the placement of beacons regard these public negotiation spaces as centered points of zones, and locate at the borders of these zones.



the health care stations are placed at two types of locations: along the wide streets within the village, and at the periphery of the village where the ambulance can access.



CITY GOVERNMENT & URBAN MIGRANTS & VILLAGERS

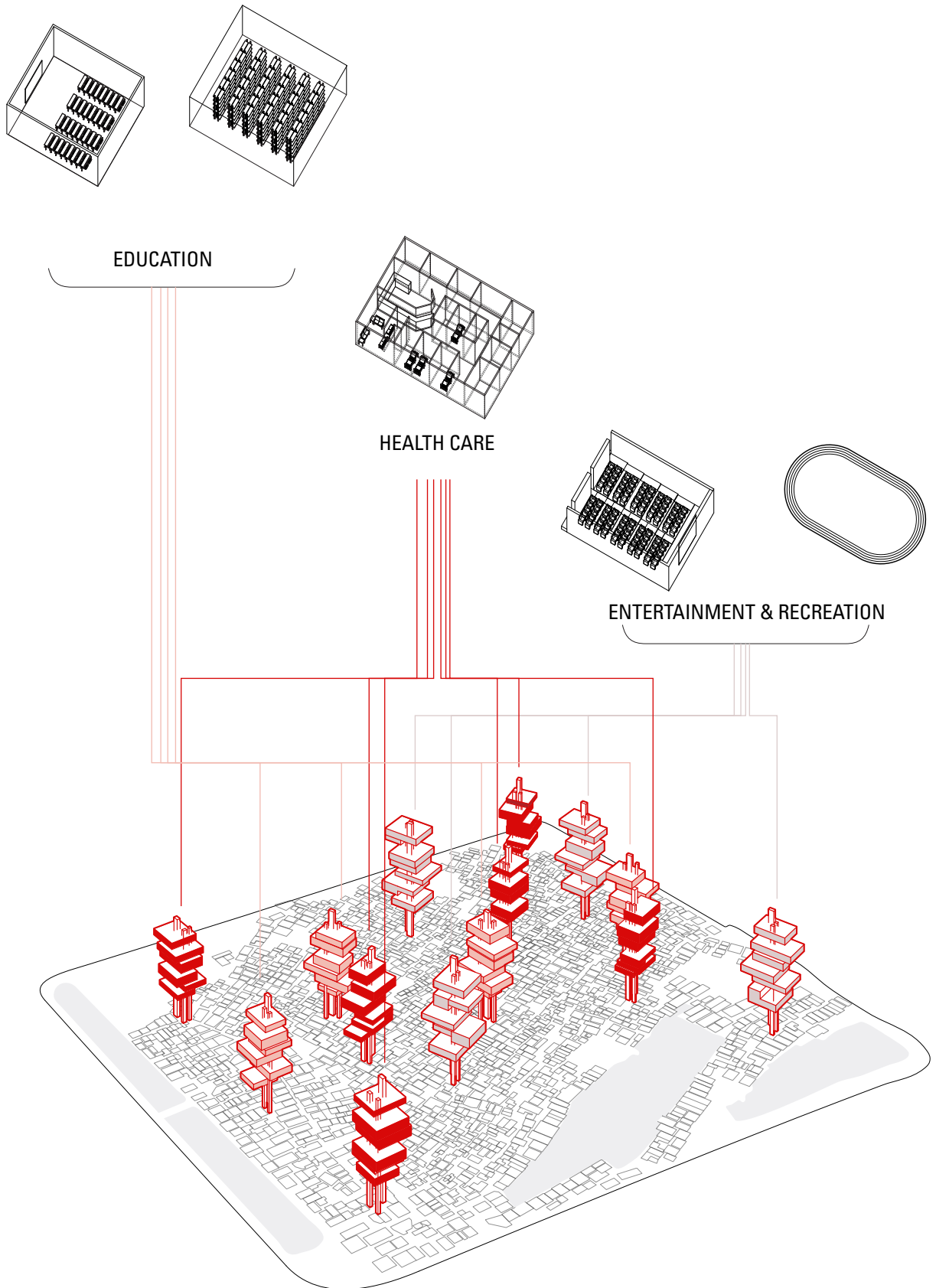
[PROGRAM]

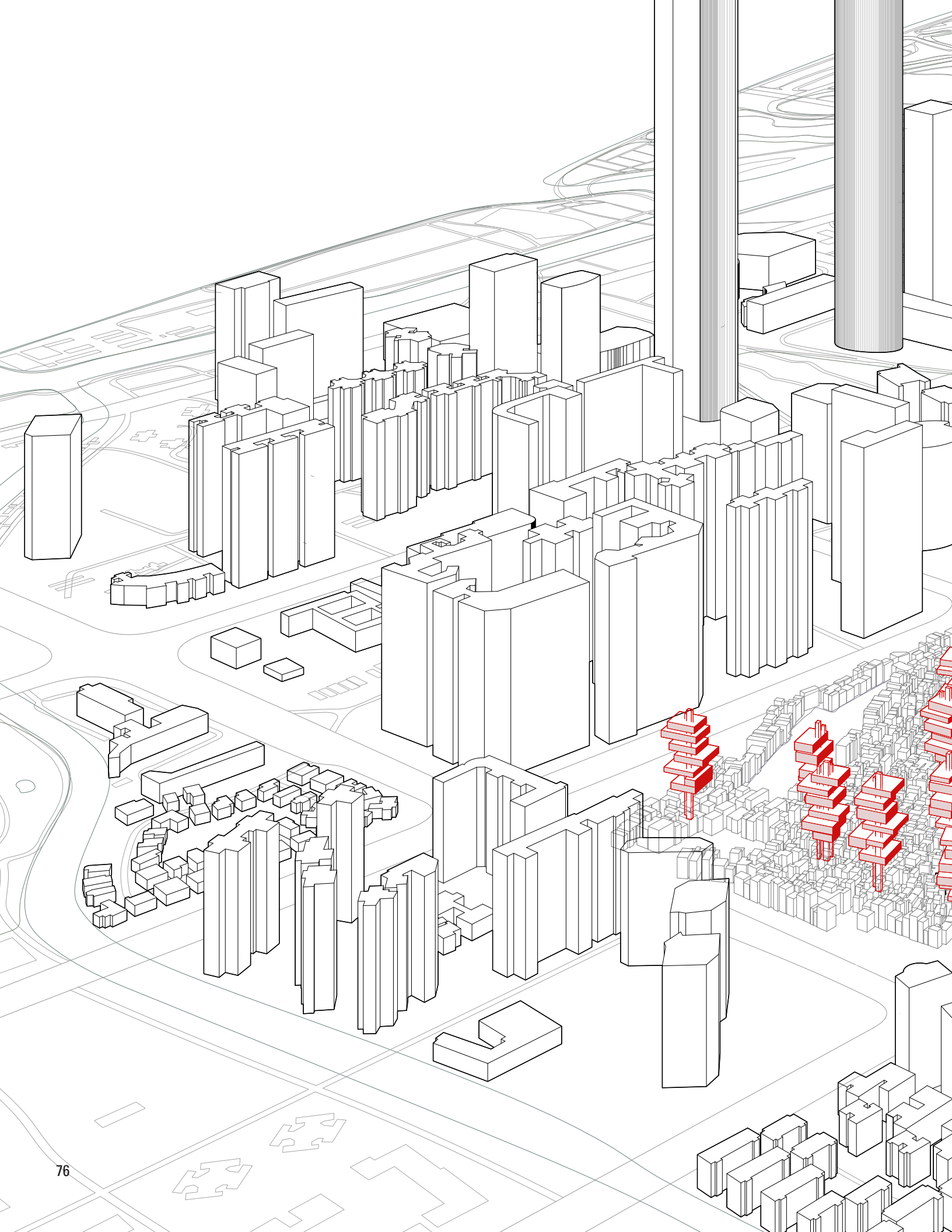
Once the city government **give tenure rights** to the urban villagers and urban migrants in the villages, The public amenities become formally deliverable –

the education, health care and recreation.

[IMAGE]

Last but not least, the implementation of the beacons results in a new image of the city government. The “transparent” structure and façade allows the activities within the beacons to be perceived. Therefore, the beacons become **tools of propaganda** for the city government to showcase their power over urban villages as well as their dedication in providing public amenities for its people.







4 *ARCHITECTURE SCALE*

THE MAKING OF NEW LIVING EXPERIENCES





THE MAKING OF ARCHITECTURE

The making of architecture is rooted in a systematic logic and response to the dynamic village fabric of Xiancun. The design generates a set of customized building codes for building in this hyper densified context. The nuance tension and coordination between the state and villagers coexist within this new structure. For instance, to protect the tenancy rights of the urban villagers, the structures built by the state cannot touch the existing buildings. However, it can provide structural elements where the villagers can connect their future construction. The design provides opportunities for further growth of both the new structures by the city government and the buildings in Xiancun Village.



ARCHITECTURAL RULES

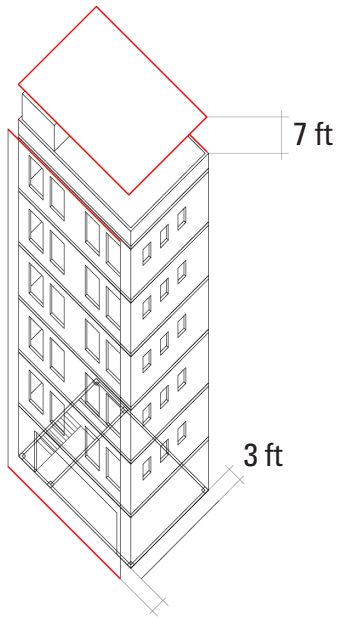
Fundamental Rules of Amenity Stations:

1. Minimum footprint that gives away large open floor plates.
2. Monolithic formal articulation that represents the power of the government.
3. Layers of massing and voids: the solids are assigned particular programs while the voids are the flexible use spaces.

Education Station: the void space can be the extension of classrooms or outdoor learning spaces.

Health Care Station: the void spaces can be categorized as open-public space and patients' only public space.

Entertainment and Recreational Station: the void spaces are for outdoor activities.

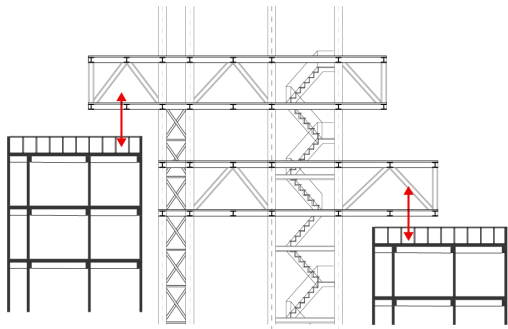


BUILDABLE VOLUME

The new intervention built by the government does not touch the existing village buildings. In contrast, it should respect the existing circulation flow and overhead space of the village buildings.

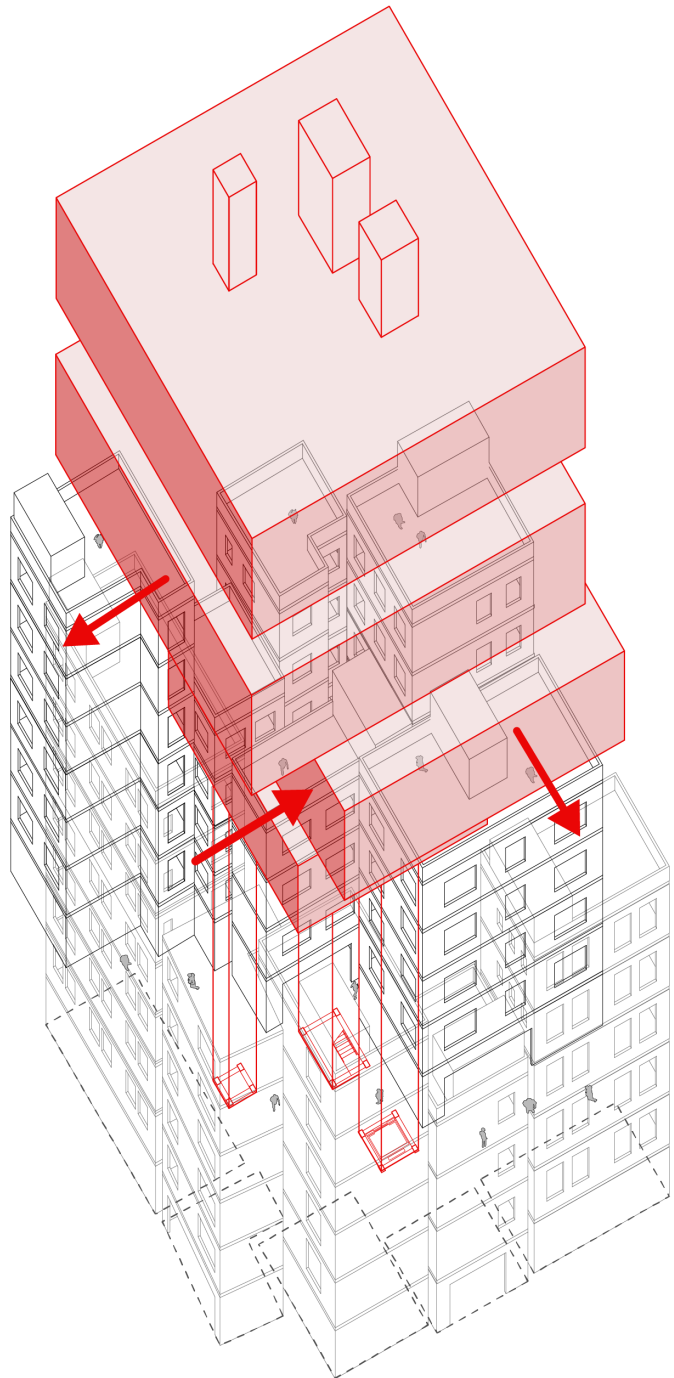
Each beacon has three cores: **the fire-stairs core, the elevator core and the shaft core**. The distances between three cores should be maximized within the buildable volume.

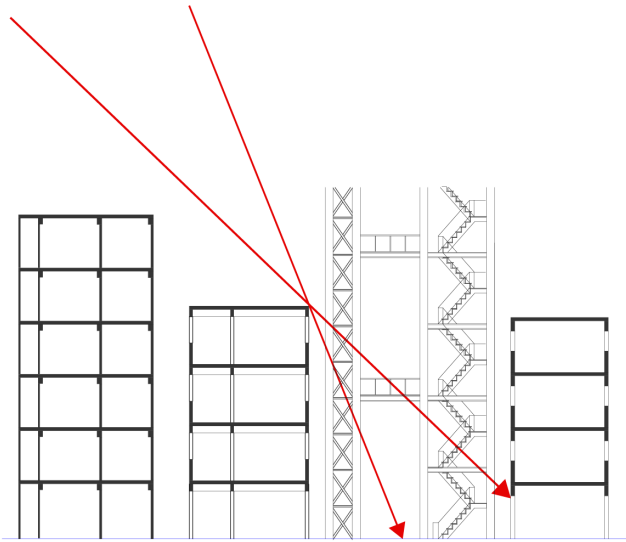




CONNECTION WITH THE EXISTING

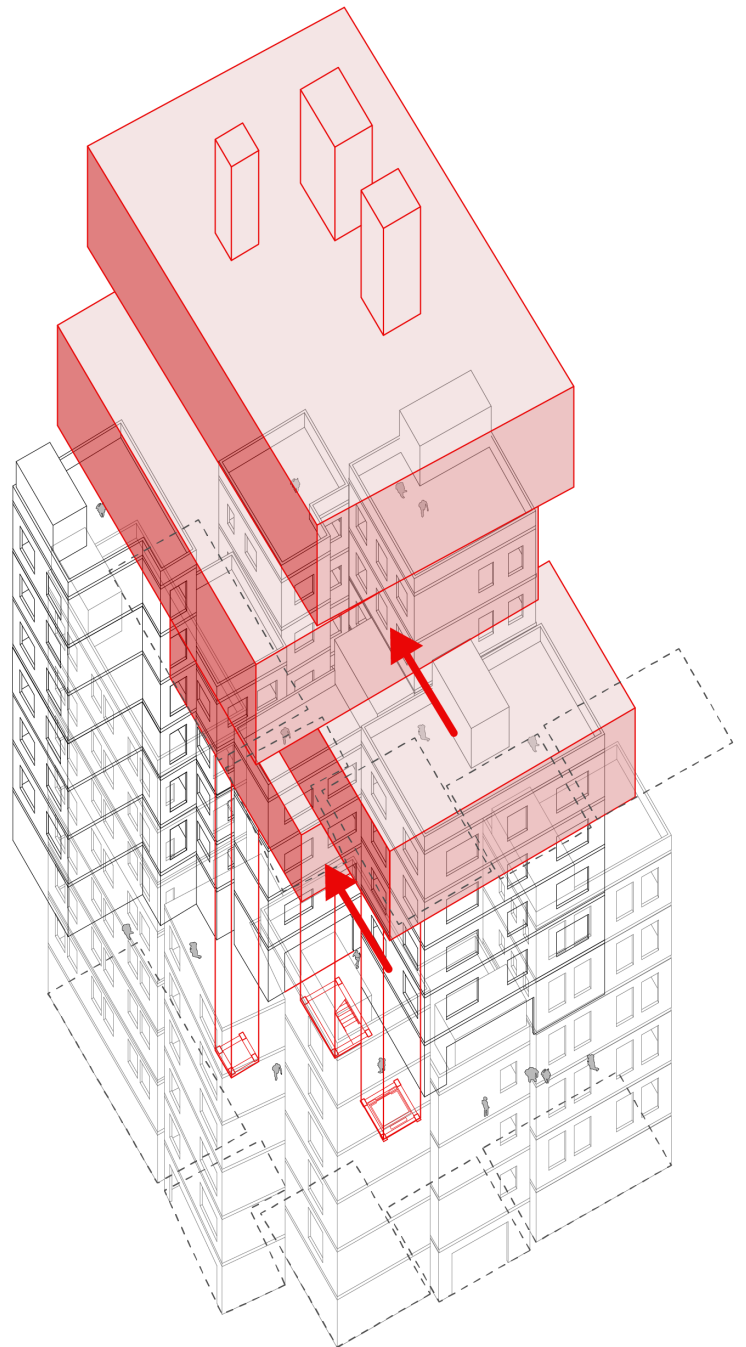
the overhang structures branched out from the intervention would allow the connectivity between the rooftop of the village buildings and the stations to be established. **Villagers can construct scaffolding structures to access the nearby station.**





MAINTAINING THE LIGHT QUALITY

The building should allow sunlight to come in to the existing public space where the structures land. It should also cast as little shadow as possible on the existing village buildings.



AN ARCHITECTURAL STORY

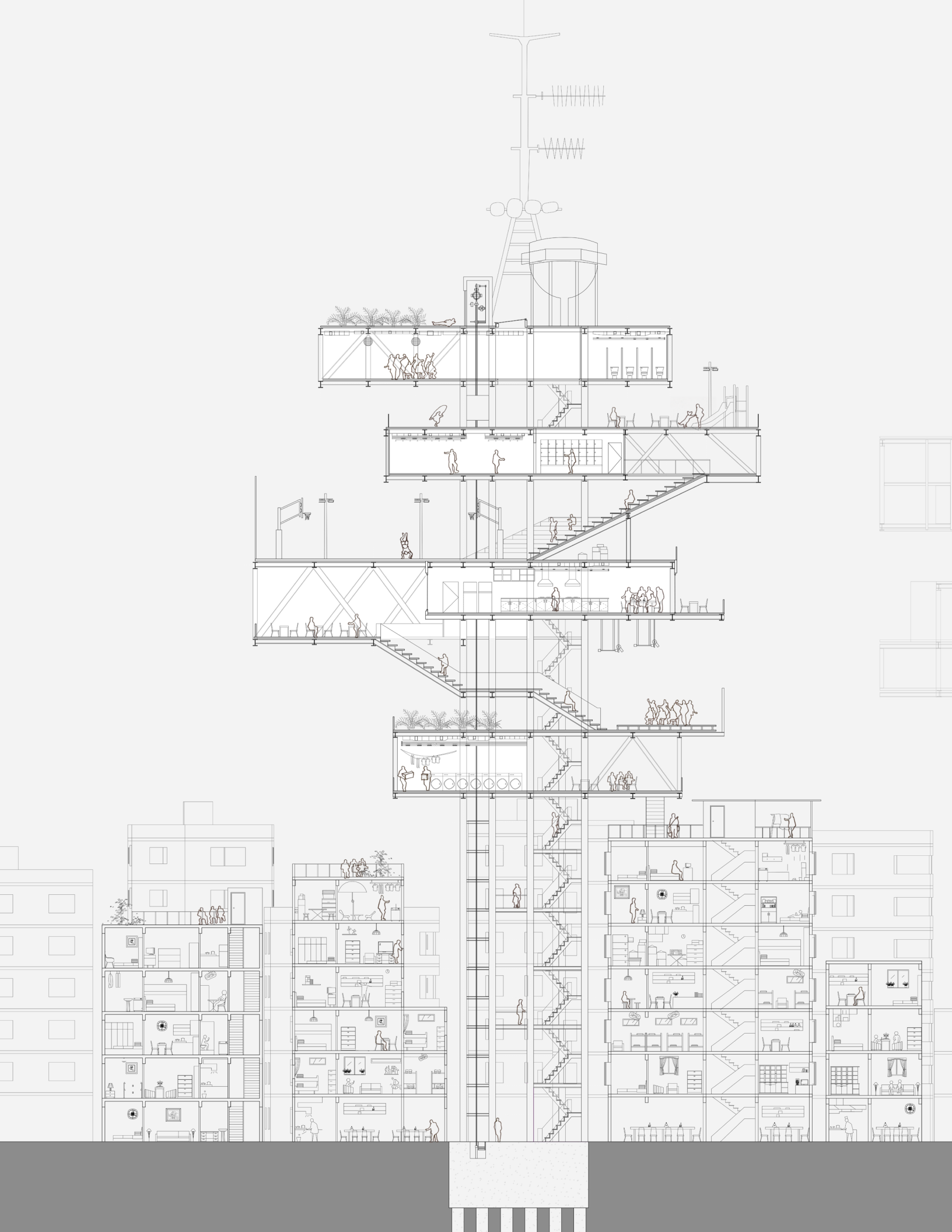
Q: How can architecture reshape the social relationships within the urban villages?

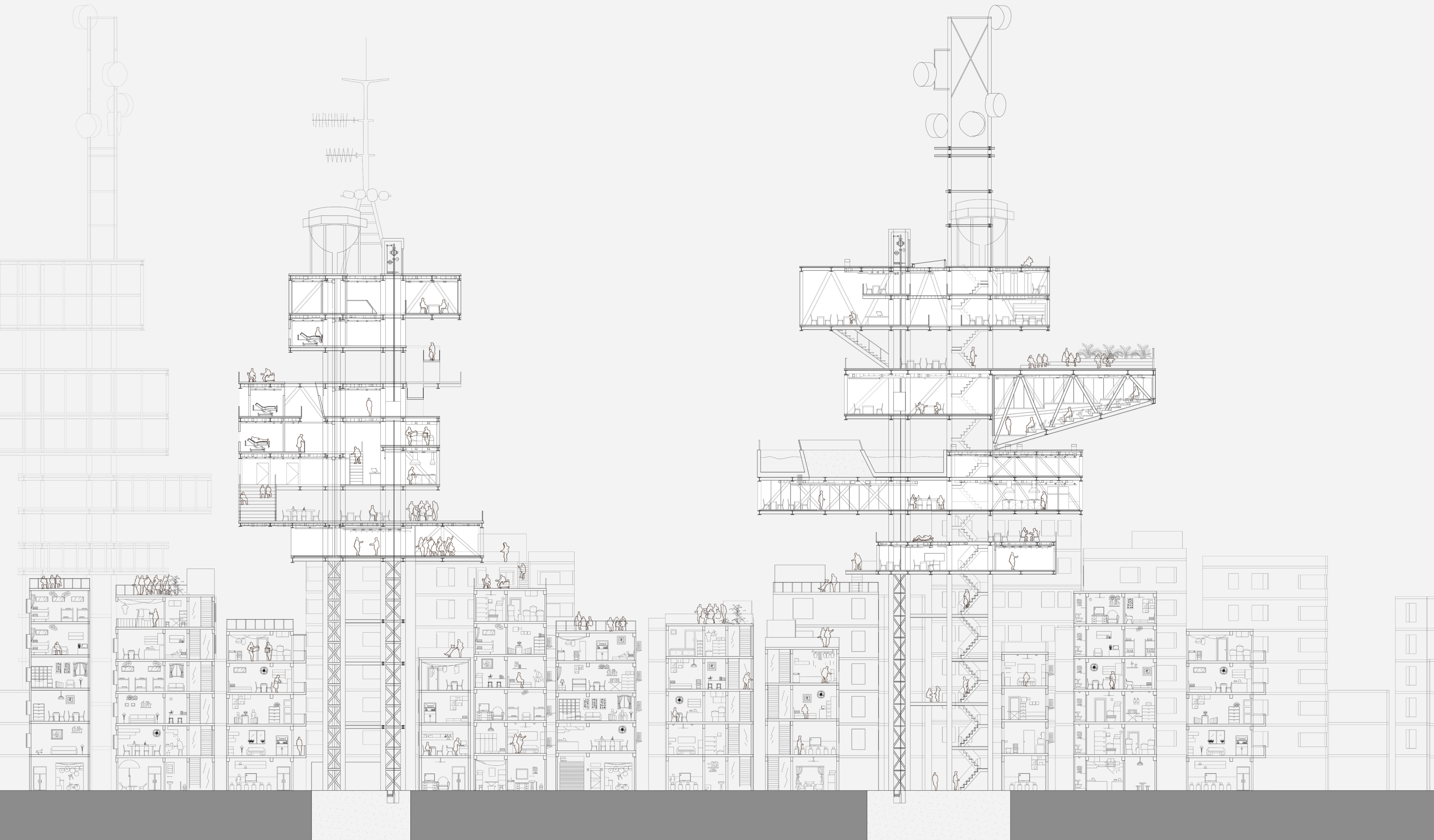
A: To design this architecture is to design a new living experience in the urban villages.

The articulation of the architectural apparatus intends to reshape the daily life experiences of the village residents.

Walking on the narrow alleys, they don't see the electricity wires covers their heads anymore. A glimmer of light reflects off the windows of the building facades, enlivening the usual murkiness of the streets. From these minor gaps to the outside one can see the big steel structure located down the street – it appears like a cloud from the distance, but as one approaches, its mass bears more and more onto the ground. This structure has become the beginning of everyday.



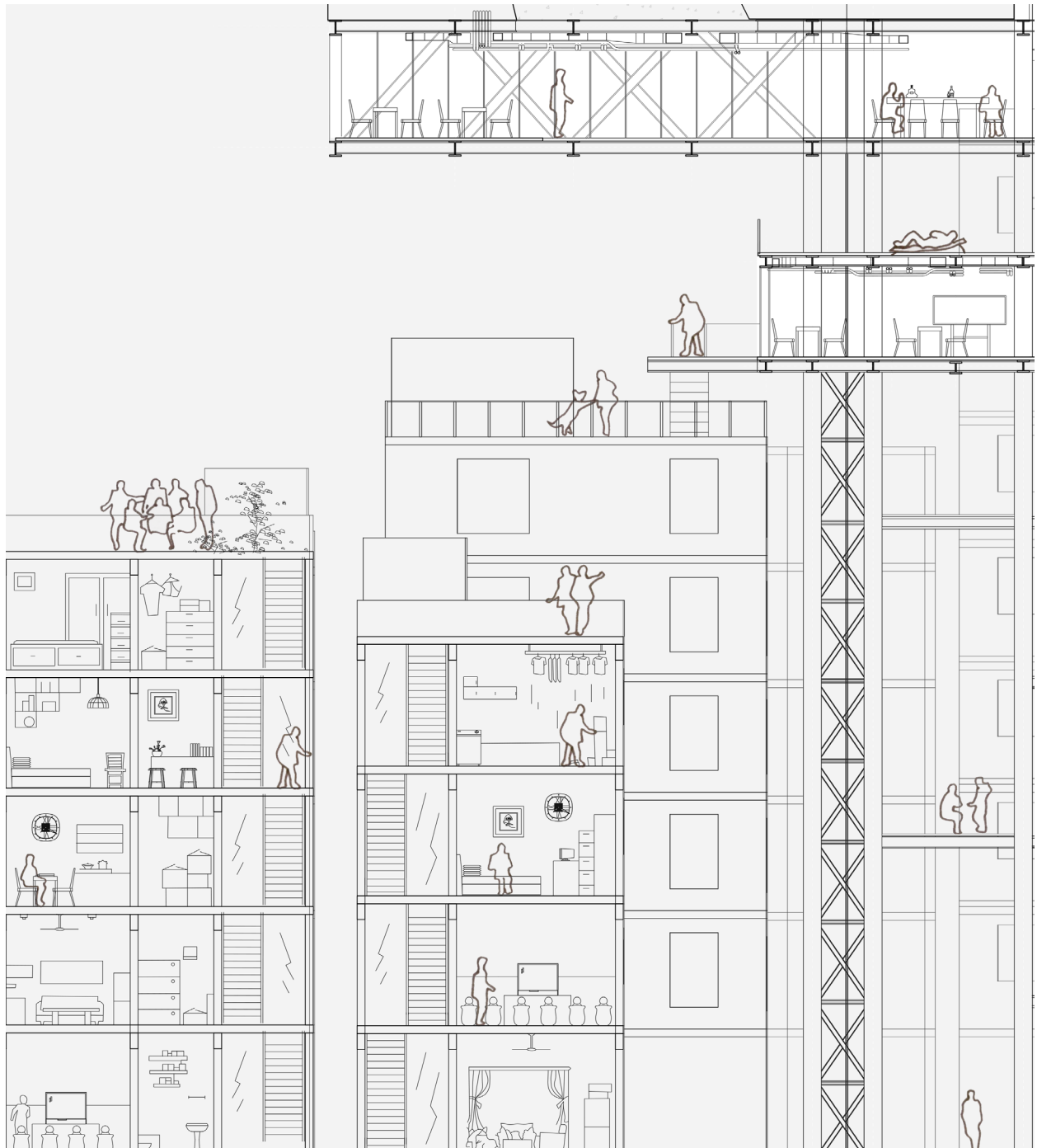




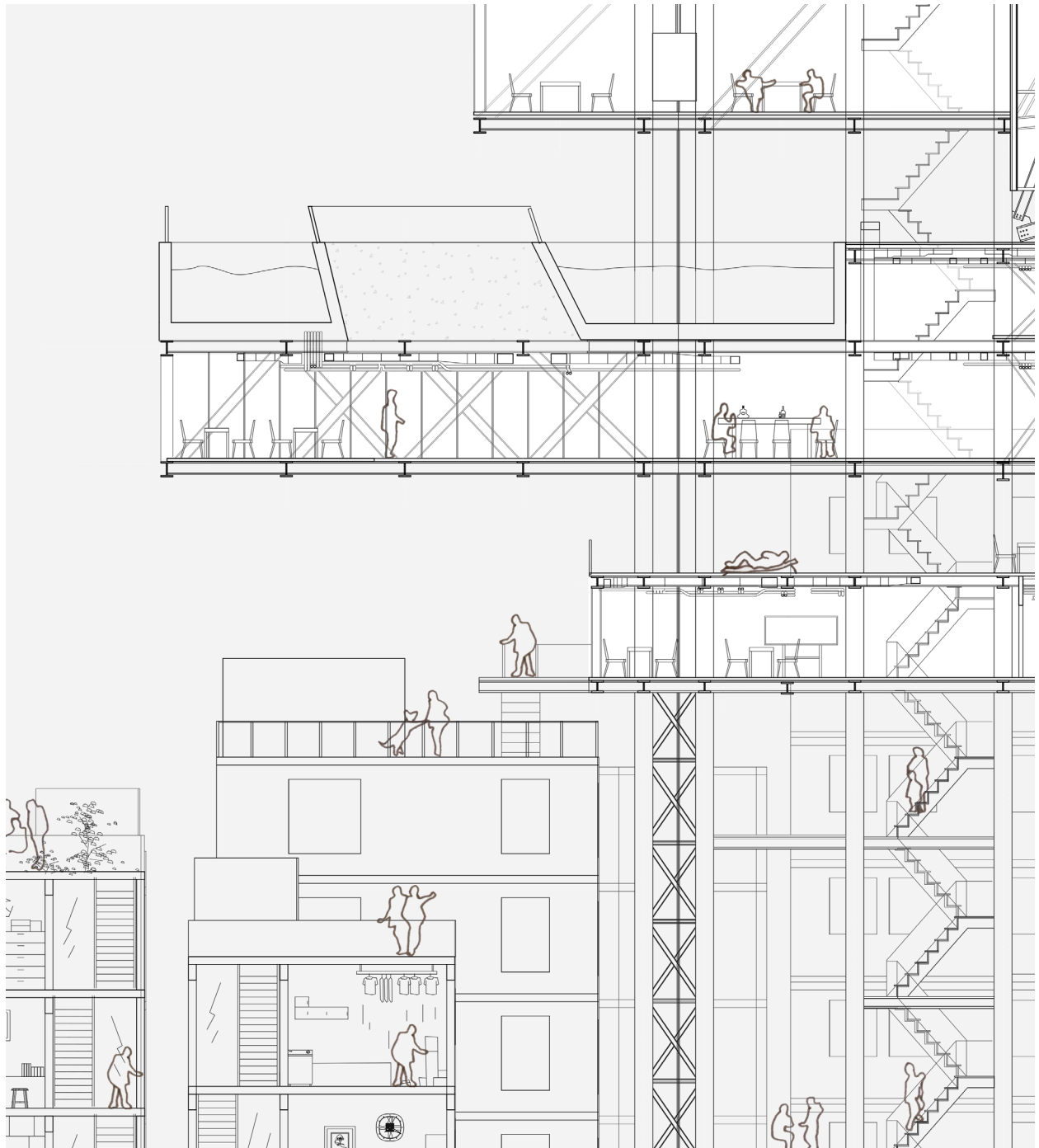
EDUCATION

Ever since the education stations were implemented, migrant workers can finally raise their children in the city. Every morning, they walk with their children to the education station. Along the way, they would buy food ingredients to prepare breakfast at the common kitchen of the station. Some children don't like to walk on the alleys anymore, so they journey from roof to roof through the bridging connections that villagers have built. Since the roofways were open to all, commercial activities are no longer confined to the bottom floors. The roof has increasingly become the new heart of social life in the urban village.

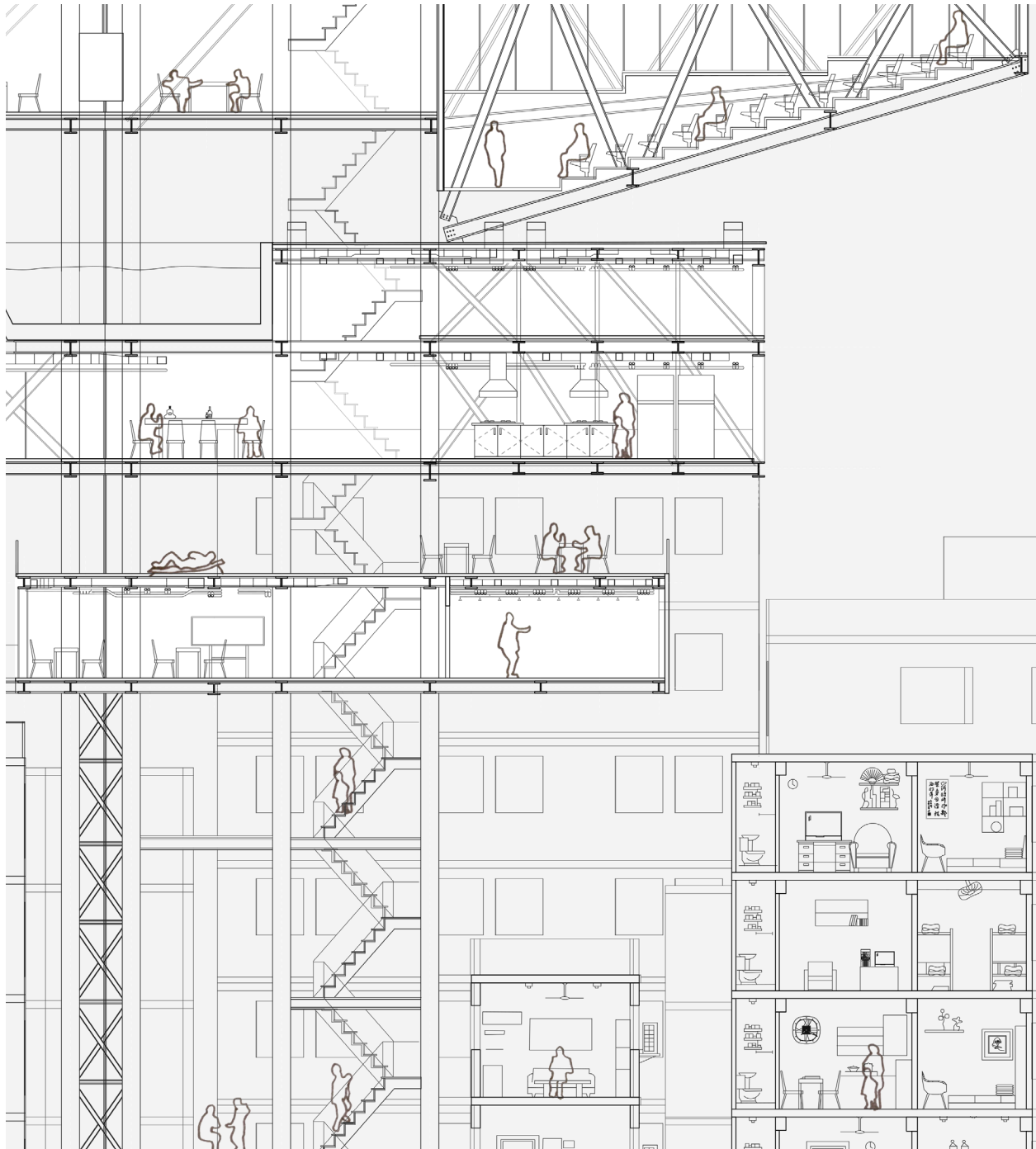
Before they enter into the structure, they must verify their identities by swiping their village ID card at the gate. It is a monitoring system implemented by the government to collect data about them. At first, people refused to register, but they soon got along with it. While the adults are making breakfast, some children play on the rooftop, others browse through the latest collection of artwork, and the rest sit at the corner quietly reading the book they just borrowed from the library.



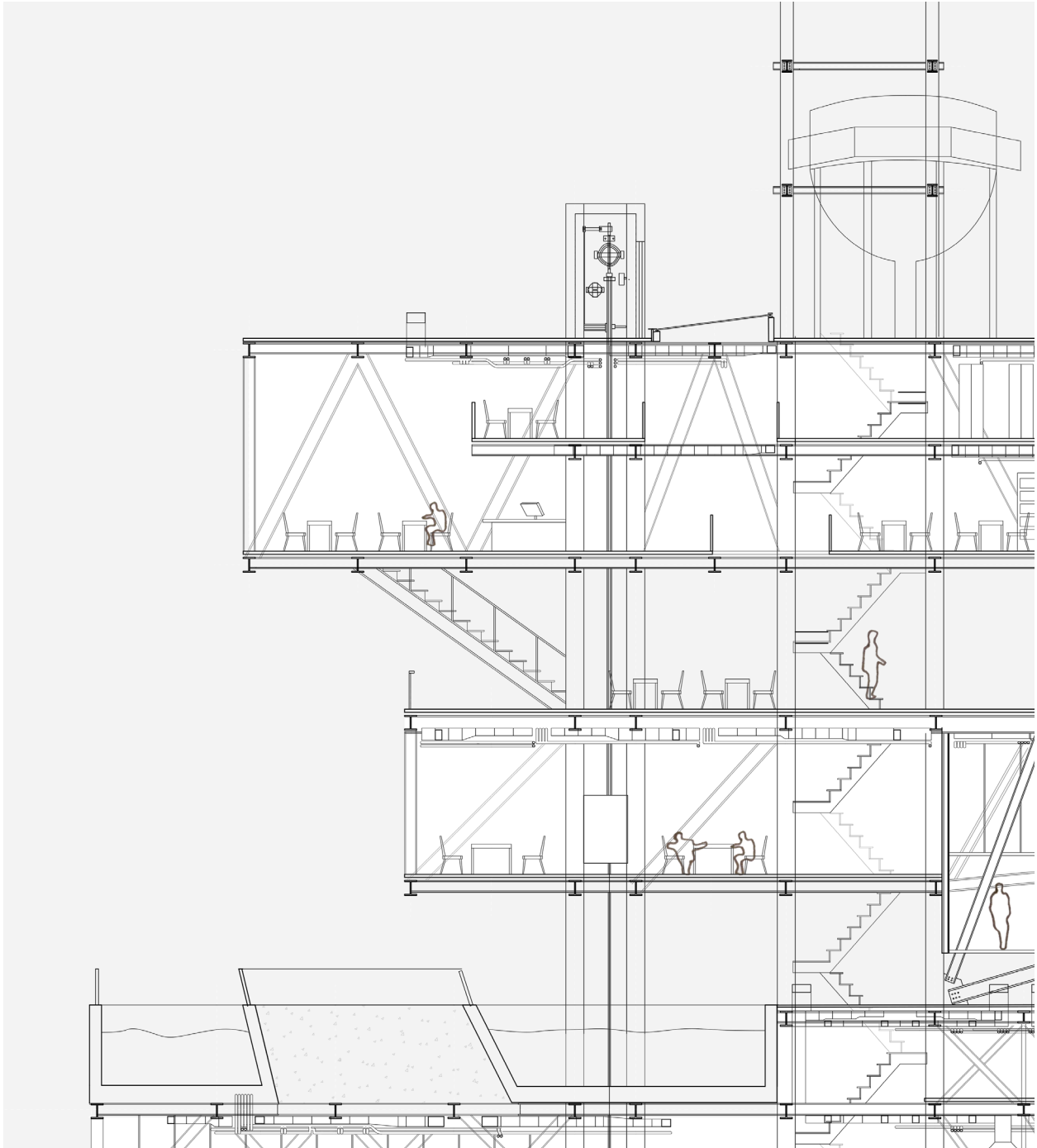
RE-INVENTING THE ROOFSCAPE FOR PUBLIC LIFE



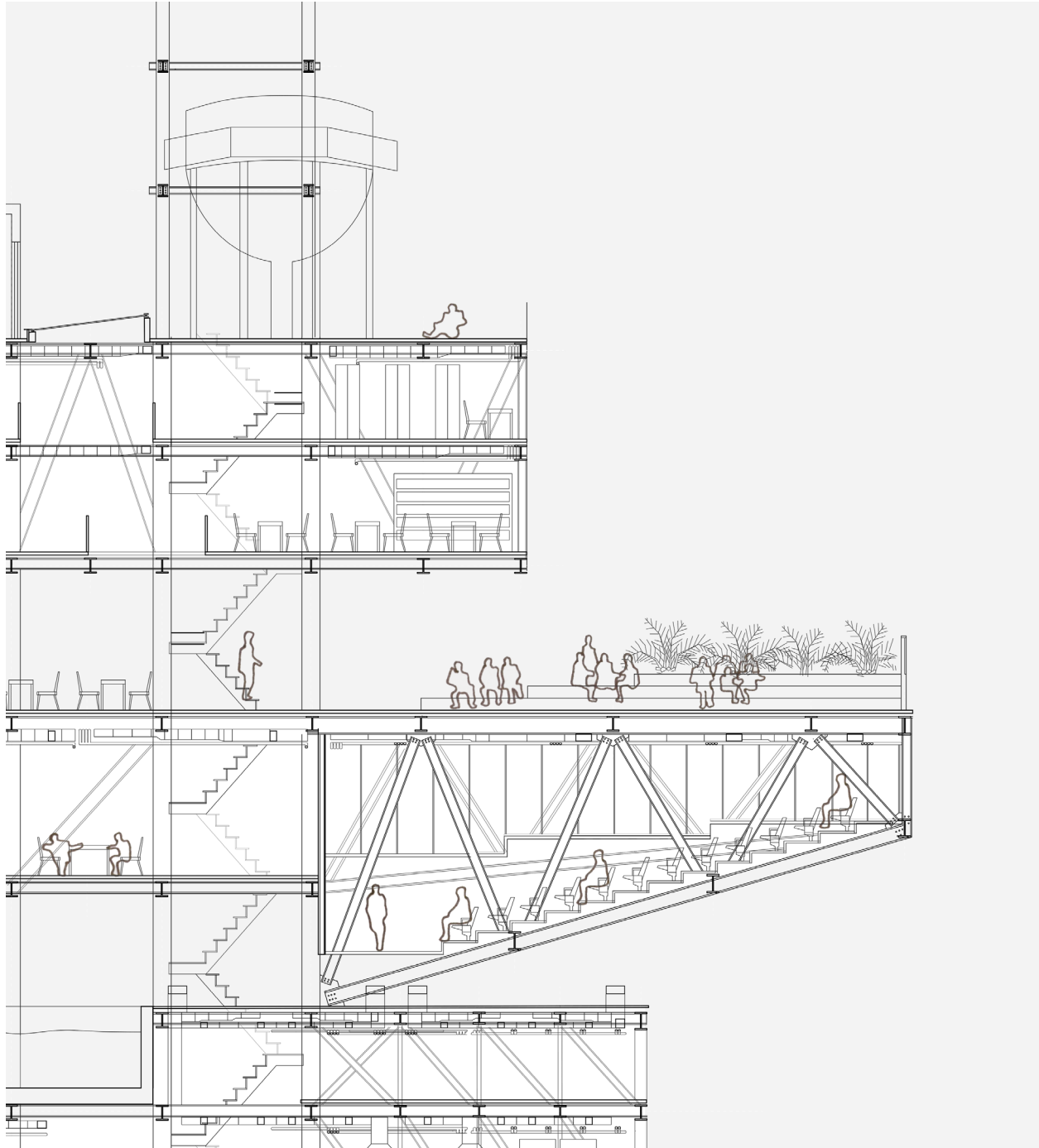
SYMBIOTIC GROWTH BETWEEN FORMAL & INFORMAL



A NEW HUB FOR DAILY NECESSITIES



PROGRAMMED SOLIDS, MUTABLE VOIDS

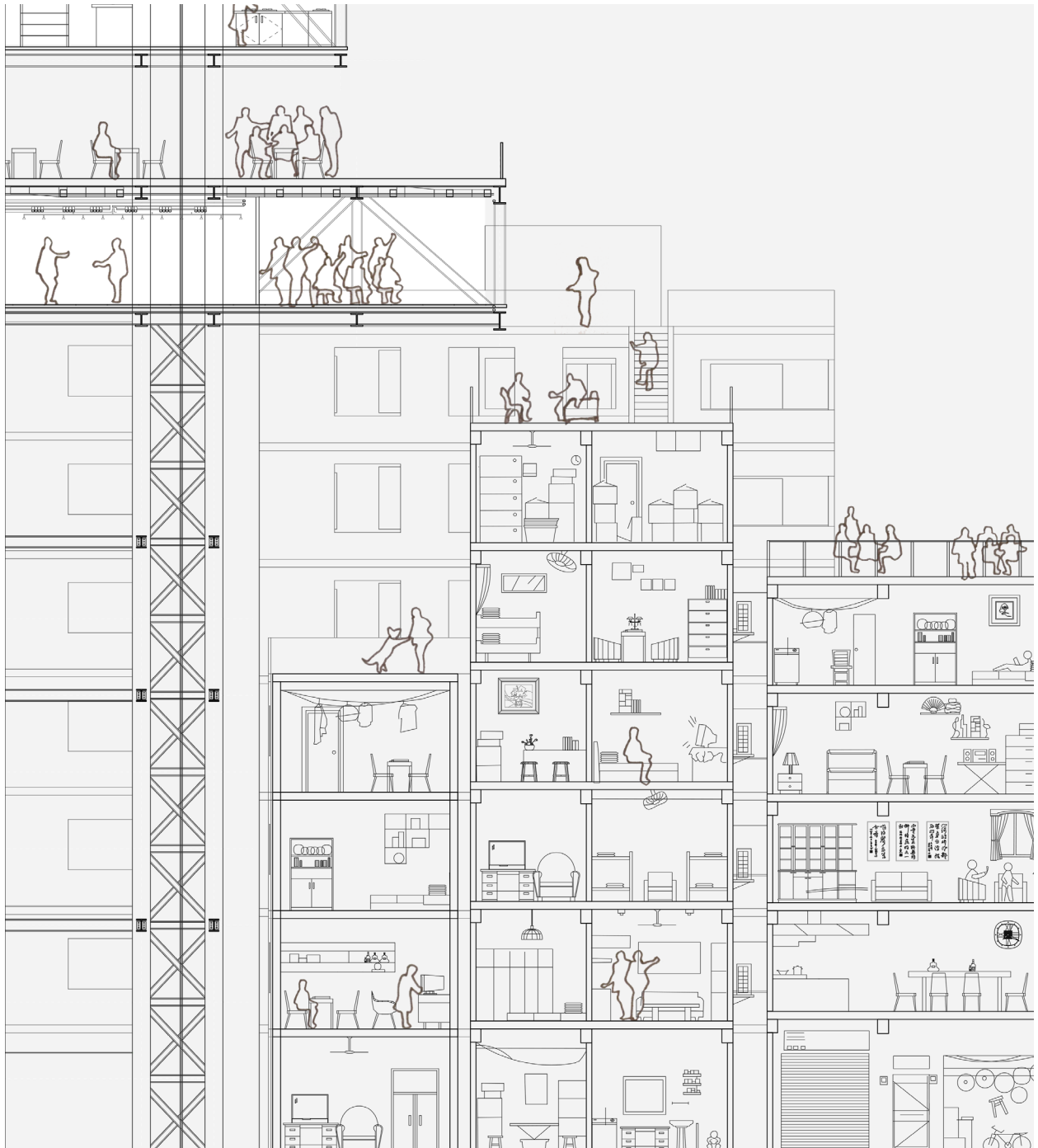


PANORAMIC SKYDECKS FOR PUBLIC GATHERINGS

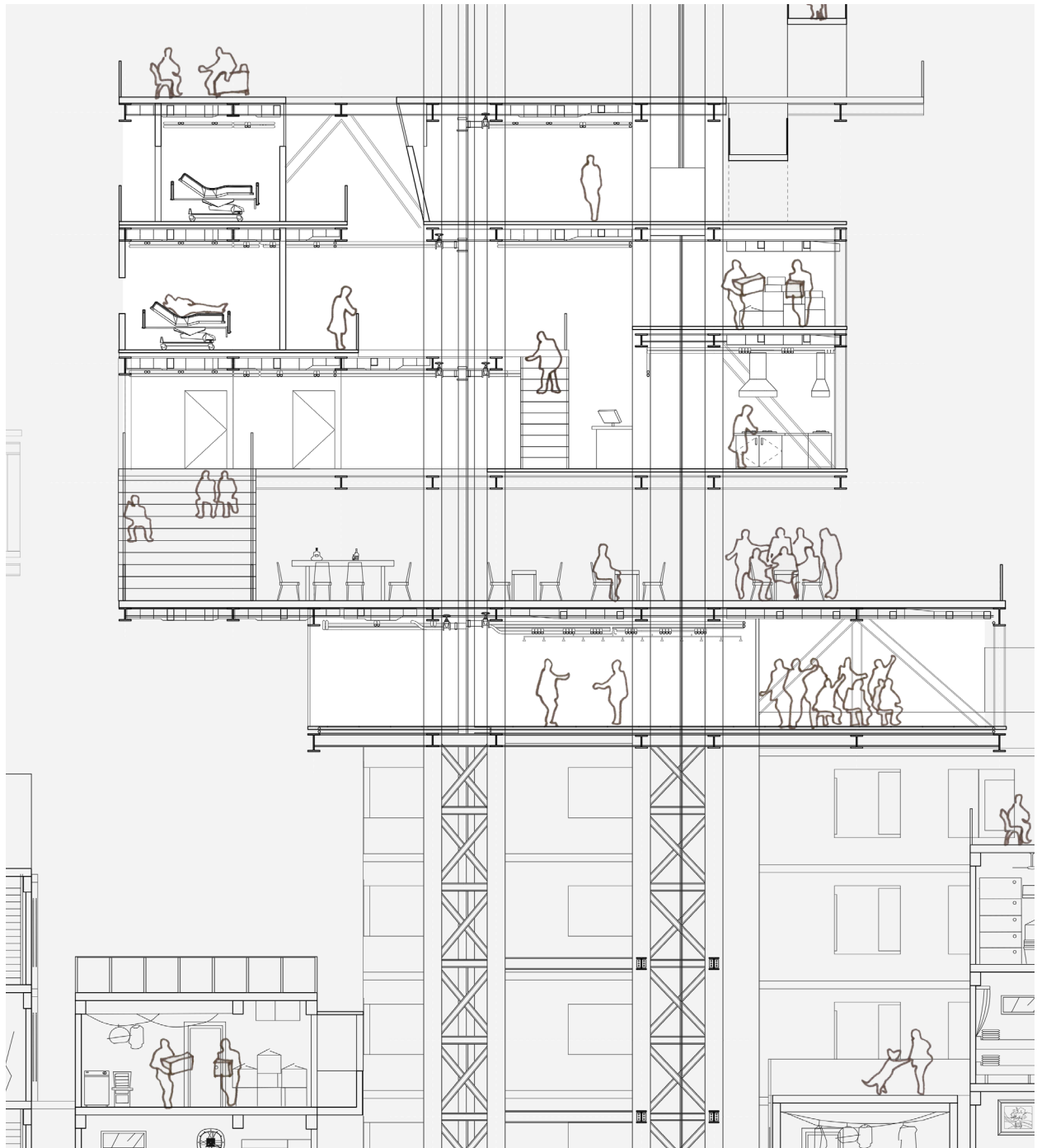
HEALTH CARE

Even though people move in and out of the village quite frequently, they do get to know each other relatively well in a short time. Most can recall their neighbor's dog name, they know each other's daily schedule, and they even know what their neighbor like to eat, as many cook together at the common kitchen quite often.

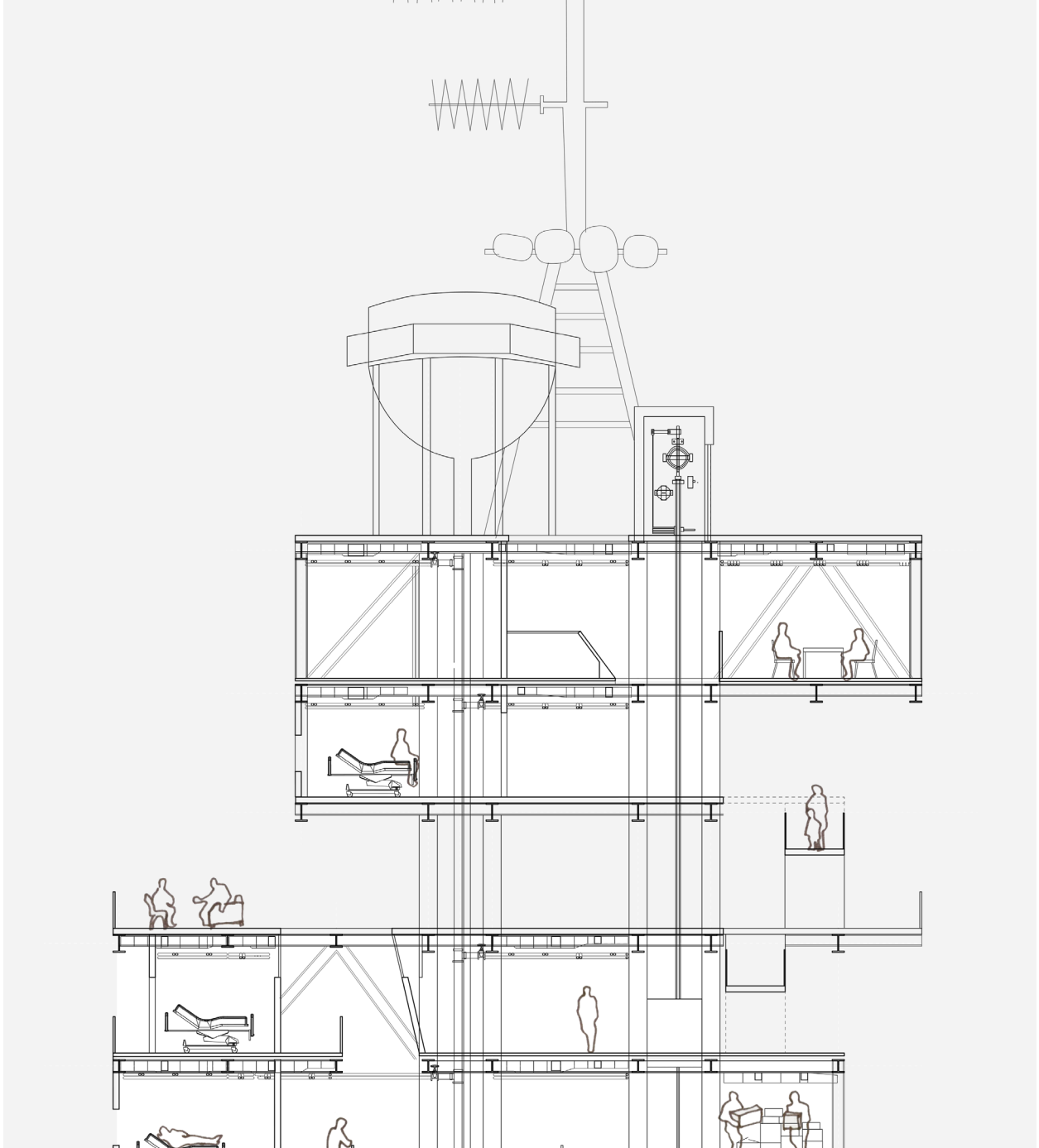
A few alleys away from the education station, you can find the health care station. The kitchen and shower rooms in this station are busier since there are patients staying at the top floors. The patients' family would come and help them to wash and dry their laundry at the rooftops. Sometimes, when the family members of a patient are too busy with their work, their neighbors would come to help out. The elders love to grab chairs and sit on the roof to chat about gossips. They would chat about which girl is still single, and which guy has a good personality, and whether they would make a love-match with each other.



RE-INVENTING THE ROOFSCAPE FOR PUBLIC LIFE



USERSHIP OVERLAPS AT PROGRAMMED INTENSITIES

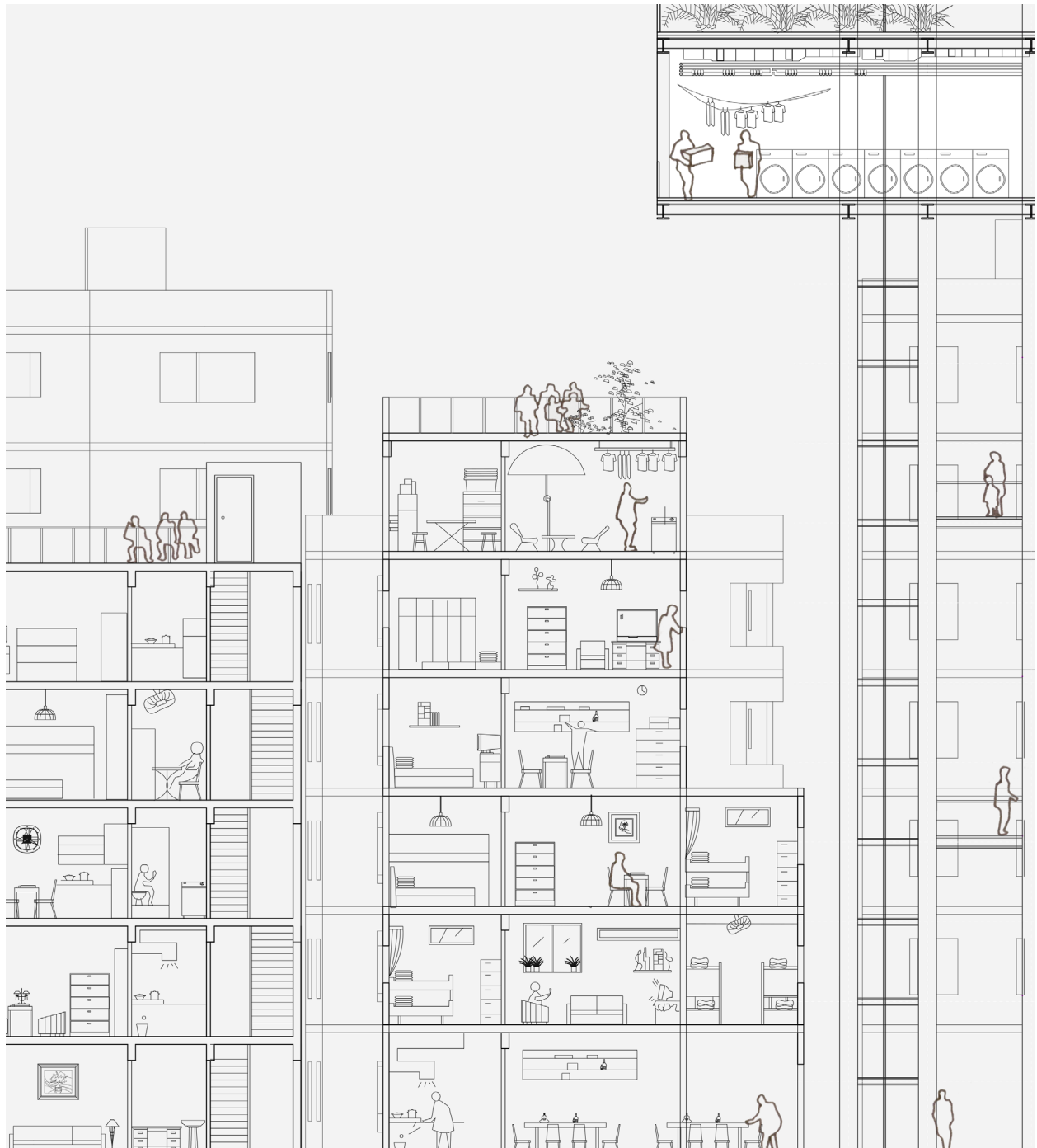


PATIENTS' WARD

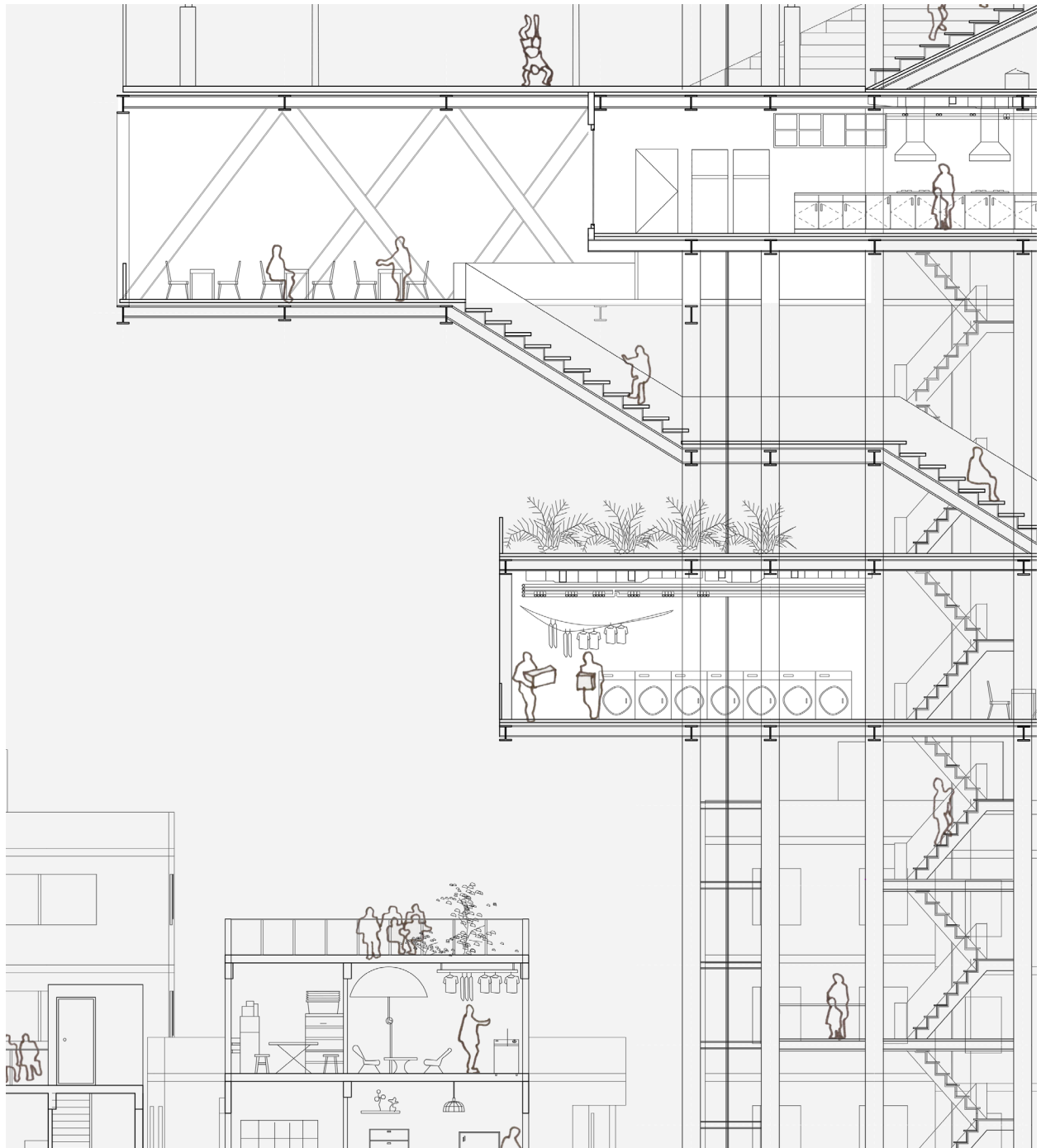
ENTERTAINMENT & RECREATION

The entertainment and recreational stations are the tallest and the most popular ones. They are the epicenters of the village. The roofs are all connected through the building such that people can hike on the building, almost akin to hiking on the hill. Even though most of the sport facilities are outdoor, people still come to the station no matter it is a sunny or rainy day.

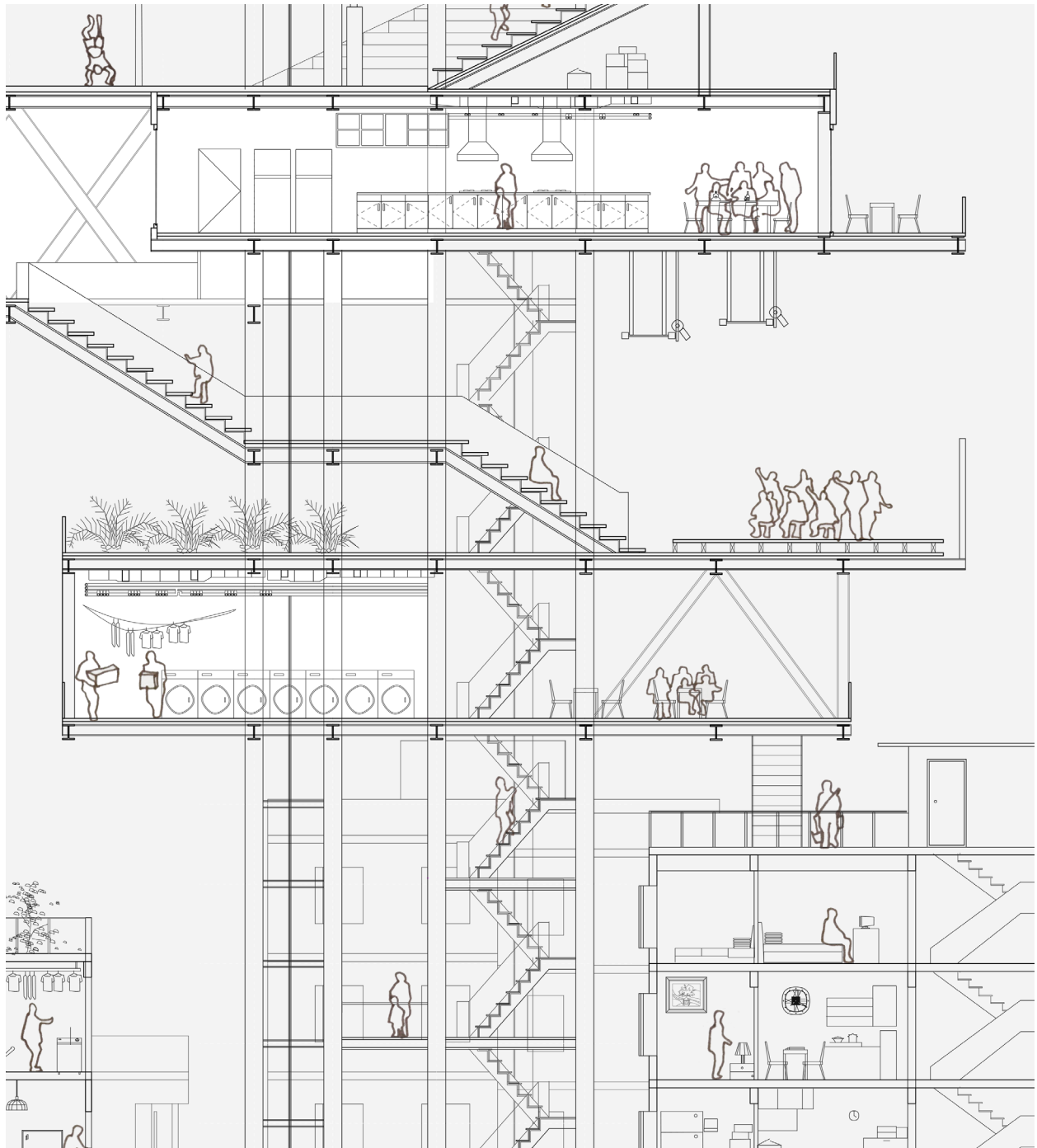
At the nighttime, the bright spotlight at the basketball field, disco light at the dancing floor, and the animated lighting at the children's playground animates a giant play in the village. Tables are set up on the rooftop where people sit together and have a cup of tea after dinner, gossiping about their bosses at work and their political opinions about all sorts of current policies. It becomes a deliberating ground under the government's supervision.



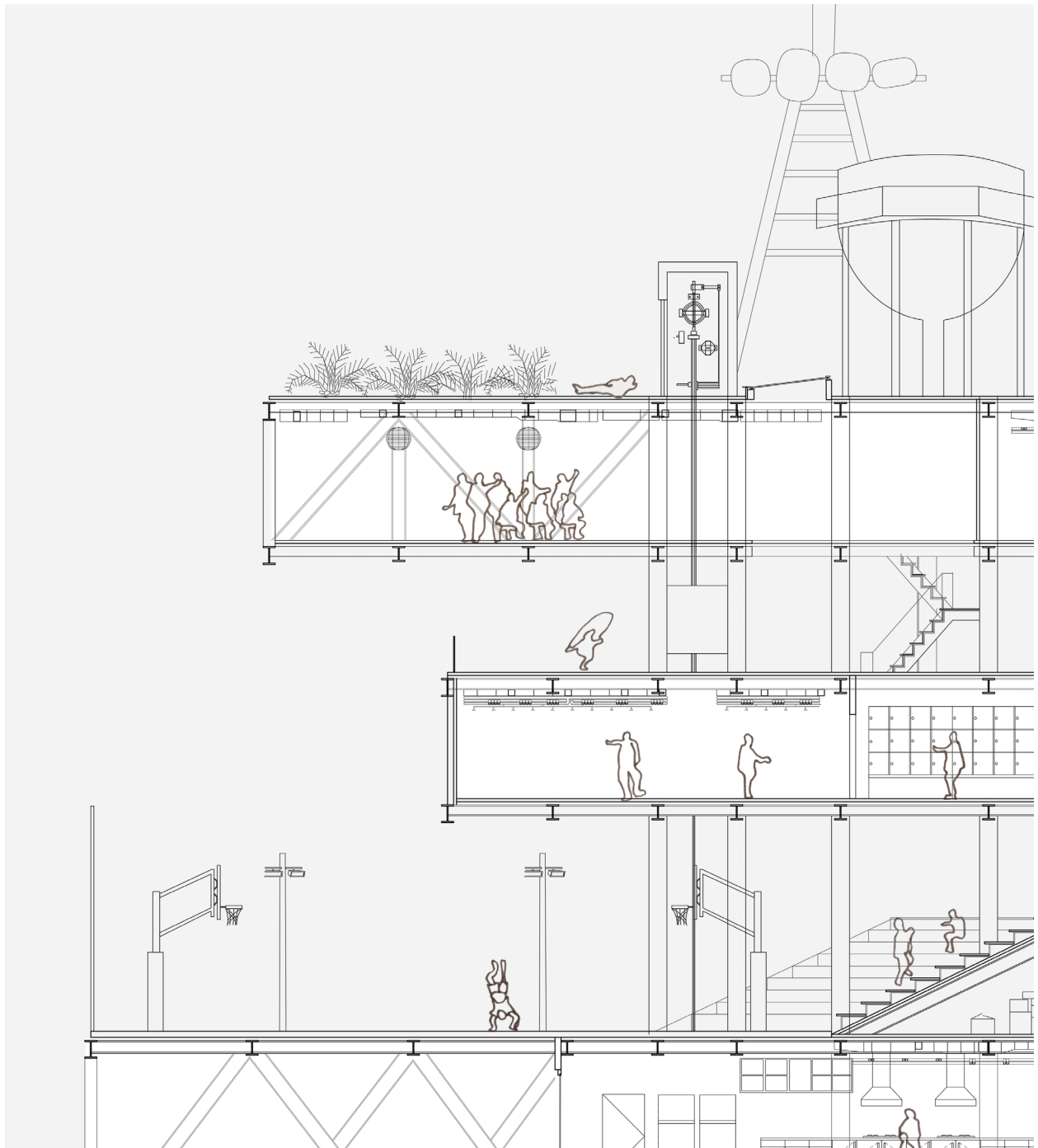
RE-INVENTING THE ROOFSCAPE FOR PUBLIC LIFE



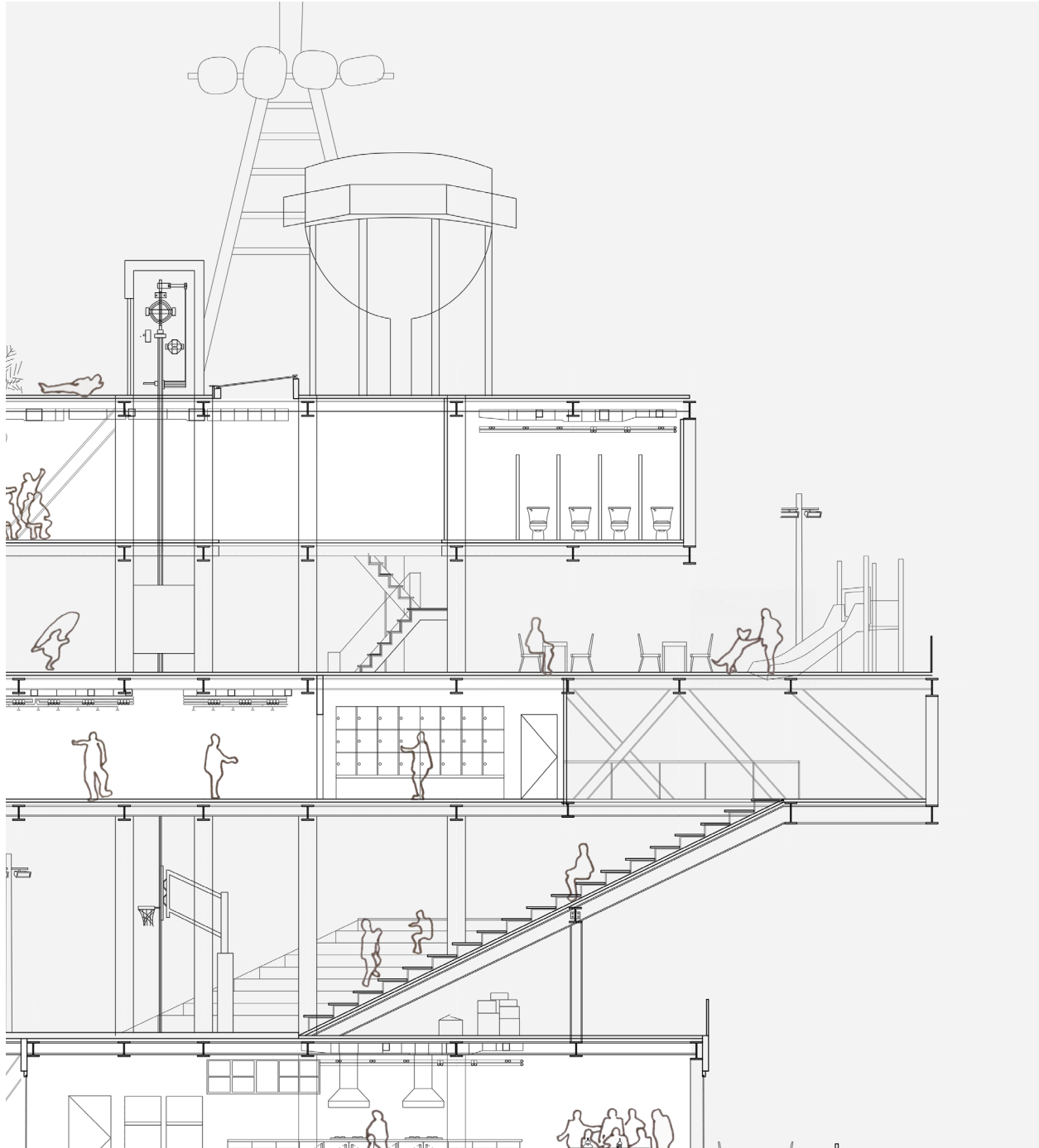
CHOREOGRAPHING SOCIO-CULTURAL FLOWS



THE URBAN SPECTACLE



THE URBAN SPECTACLE



THE URBAN NEXUS OF URBAN VILLAGE LIVING

HIKING TO THE TOP

They love to hike to the very top of the station where the whole village and beyond transforms into dramatic panorama. As they enjoy the sun for a brief moment,

they can see clusters of people negotiating about the new constructions in the village;

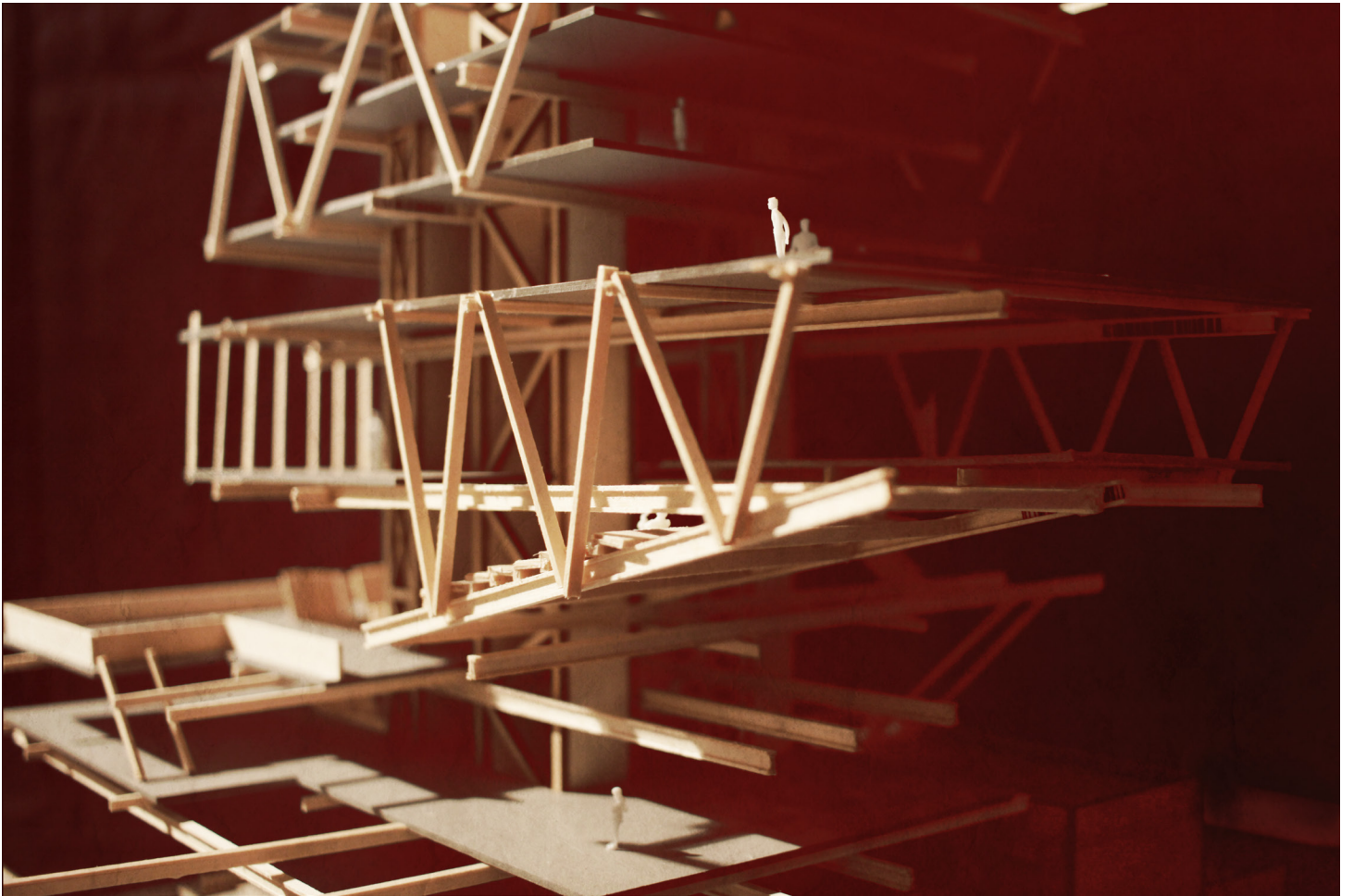
they can see families set up their new workshop on the rooftop;

they can see the kids jumping from one building to the other to find their favorite snack store;

they can see their new neighbors connecting telecom wires from the stations to their new house;

they can see people collecting water from the water tower to put out a small kitchen fire...

they can see so much has changed that they can almost believe a new kind of life is unfolding here in the village.



THE “UNFINISHED” PROJECT

a postscript

When the government comes into the village to construct the first building, the relationship between the village and the government will inevitably transform from an adversary conflict into a complex interplay of tension and coordination. The new social contract no longer stays on a piece of paper printed with people’s signatures. It is rather actualized through the actually construction of spaces. Architecture, therefore, seeks to engage itself with the policy making as well as the physical manifestation of ideologies. The power is realized through an architecture that steps beyond its autonomous formal logic and expands its spatial articulation into the habitus of everyday life. The architectural logic, the placement of the stations, the programs assigned to each stations, the monolithic form, the transparency of the façade... every formal decision is informed by the rules that constitute the makings of a new social contract.

This is an unfinished project. Migrants will continue to flow into the village, the structures will keep increasing and growing, the dialogue

between different parties will continue, the tension between the democratic political landscape and the supervision imposed by the government will continue to transform the living landscape of the village... Under these fluctuating circumstances, the architect can only set up the spatial framework that anticipates a relationship of mutual benefit between the parties.

On one hand, architecture can embed particular ideologies as its spaces reshape human daily routine and behavior through programming and formal manipulations. On the other hand, design cannot guarantee perpetual control, as it does not have the power to materialize a deterministic future. Ultimately, it is about how much guidance that design can provide to ensure that the fundamental premise of these social relationships can be resilient to peripheral change in the future to come.







CHAPTER TITLE IMAGES CAPTION

Chapter 1.

The aerial view of Xiancun Village

Source: Icerui. "Xiancun Village." LOFTER. March 15, 2015. Accessed October 18, 2015. http://icerui.lofter.com/post/1cc4006c_6318718.

Chapter 2.

Guangzhou Skyline

Source: MOMU. "The Spring Memory." Gaoloumi (Skyscraper Fan). March 9, 2013. Accessed October 18, 2015. <http://www.gaoloumi.com/forum.php?mod=viewthread&tid=618262&page=1>.

Chapter 3.

The Chinese Dream

(In order to process the demolition of Xiancun Village, the city government built a wall surrounding the Xiancun Village. On the wall, there is a poster called "The Chinese Dream")

Chapter 4.

Photo of the model

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5

APPENDIX

GREEN ARCHIPELAGO

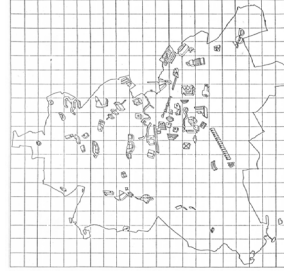
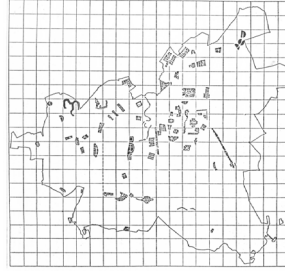
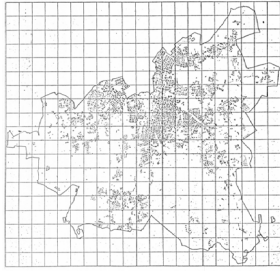
Oswald Mathias Ungers and Rem Koolhaas

In September 1977, a publication entitled *City within Cities* (Green Archipelago) appeared in German. It was a manifesto envisioning the future planning of West Berlin. Between the postwar rebuilding and the Cold War period, any reconstruction of Berlin at the time must display a dual interest: the postwar reconstruction of west Germany was guided by the Capitalist West who competed against the Soviet Union who guided the redevelopment of East Berlin.

The Green Archipelago challenges the traditional concept of urban repair, which focuses on the restoration of historical elements. Instead, it proposes to repair the city by re-evaluating the existing conditions and completing selected parts of the city, thus producing multiple identities within a single city.

"The idea of the city in the city is the basic concept for a future urbanistic model of Berlin. It is substantiated in the image of Berlin as a city-archipelago. The urban islands have an identity in keeping with their history, social structure, and environmental characteristics...they are a collage of "identity-spaces" ..."

reference:
Ungers, O. M., Rem Koolhaas, Peter Riemann, Hans Kollhoff, Arthur Ovaska, Florian Hertweck, and Sébastien Marot. *The City in the City: Berlin. A Green Archipelago*. Zürich: Lars Müller Publishers, 2013.

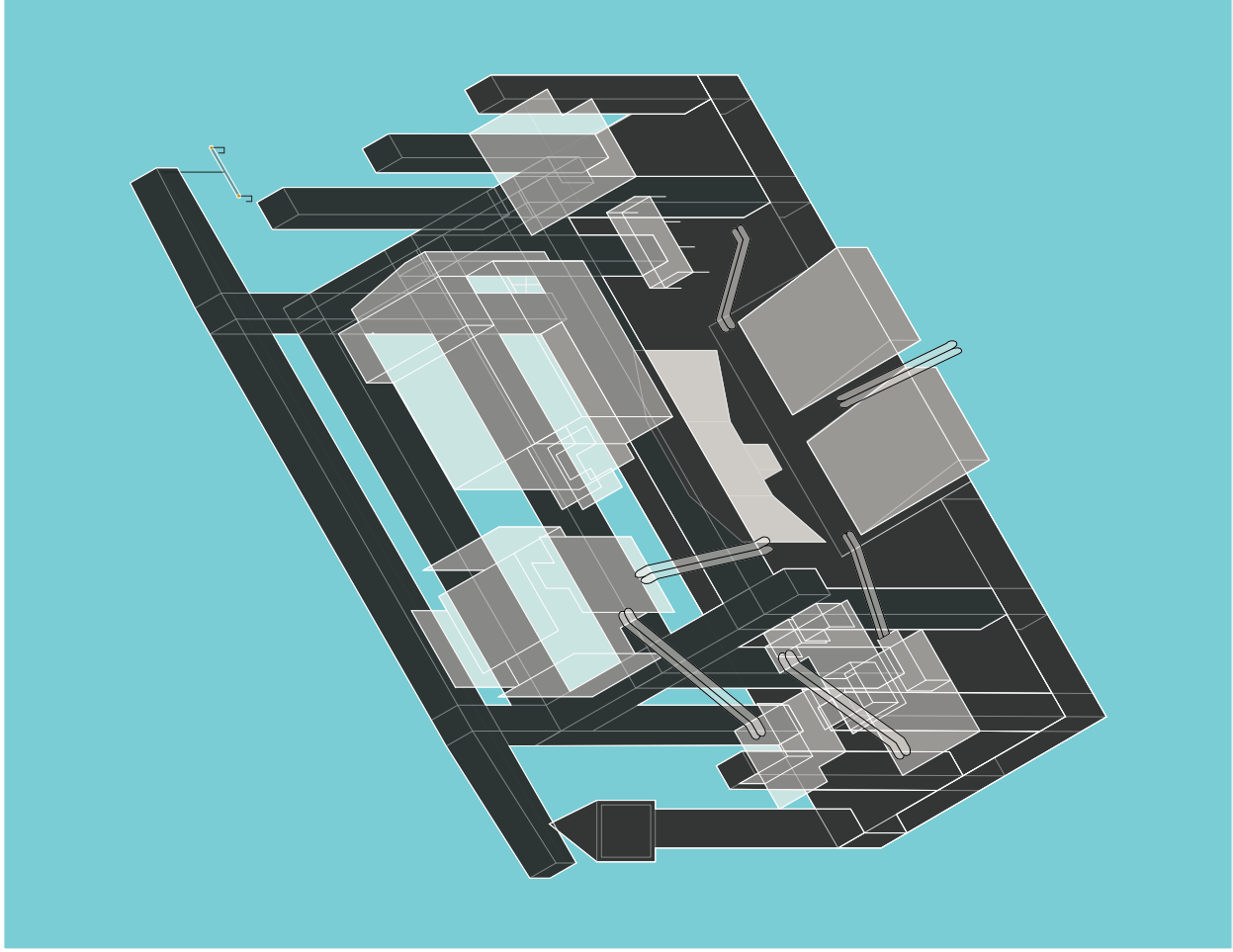
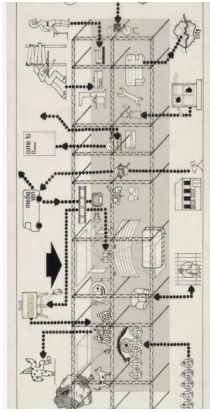
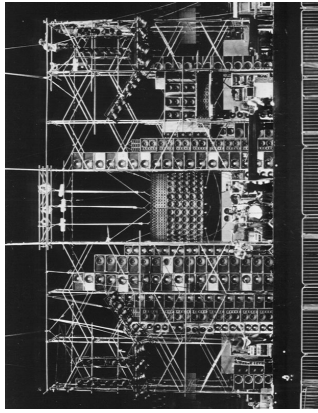


FUN PALACE Cedric Price

"Fun Palace was conceived and commissioned in 1961 by renowned theatre director and producer Joan Littlewood. Price developed plans for the project through 1964, both for the main project and for a smaller, more mobile "pilot" project. Neither were realised. Attempts to get planning permission for a wide variety of sites within and around London continued through 1970, amidst opposition from church, citizen groups and confounded city councils.

Fun Palace is Cedric Price's most celebrated work. Whether characterised as a giant toy or as a building-sized transformable machine, the project's interest resides in its radical reliance on structure and technology, its exemplification of notions of time-based and anticipatory architecture. With Fun Palace, Price addressed social and political issues that go far beyond the typical bounds of architecture."

--CCA (Canadian Center for Architecture)



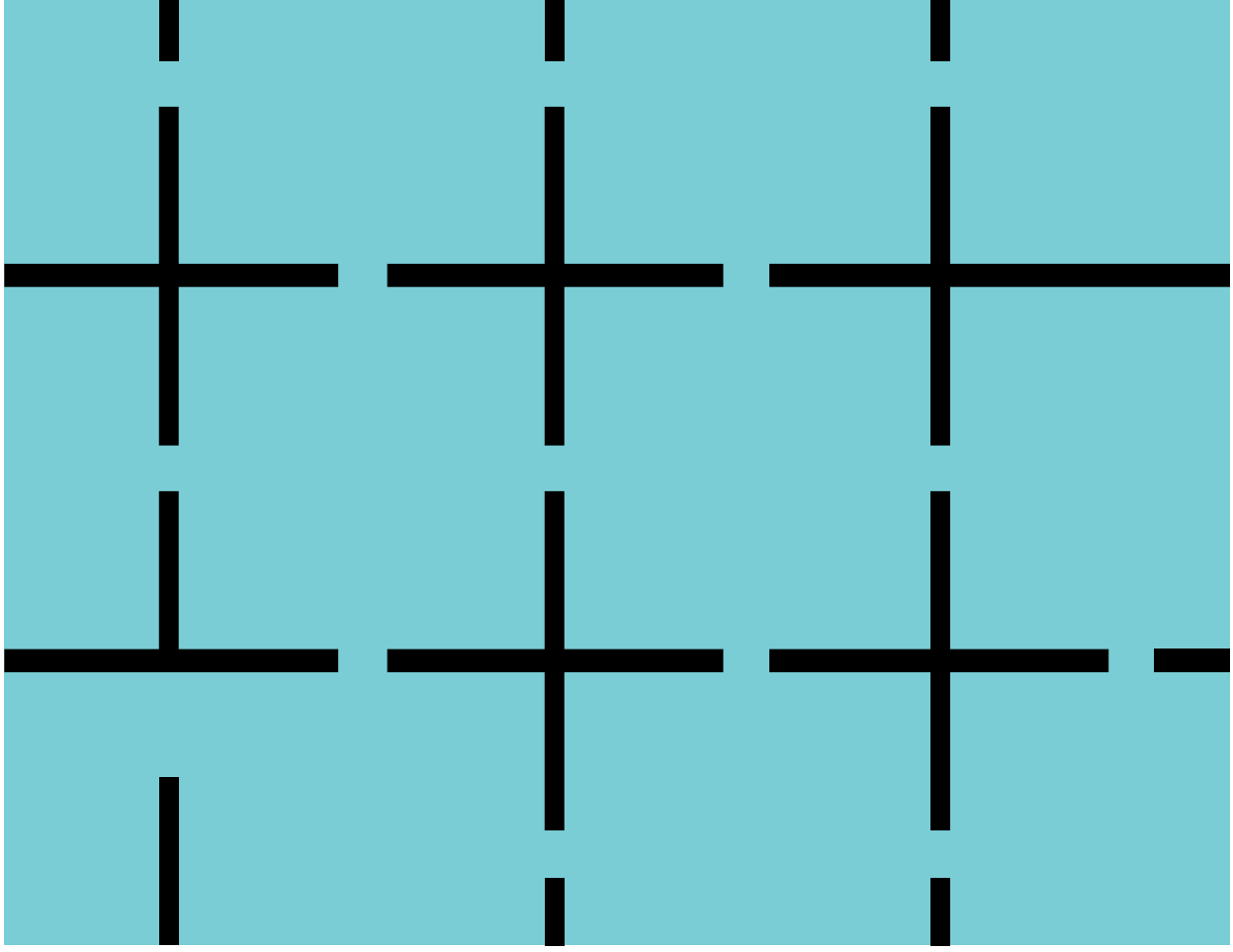
reference:
"Cedric Price Archive," CCA RSS. Accessed October 18, 2015. <http://www.cca.qc.ca/en/collection/540-cedric-price-archive>.

STOPCITY DOGMA

In the project StopCity, Dogma continues to develop the concept of the "limit."

"Stop City is the hypothesis for a non-figurative architectural language for the city. By assuming the form of the border that separates urbanization from empty space, Stop City is proposed as the absolute limit, and thus, as the very form of the city. Stop City develops vertically."

Stop City is an archipelago of islands of high density. The growth of Stop City happens by virtue of its limit, i.e. by the punctual repetition of the basic unit, which is a city of 500.000 inhabitants made of eight slabs measuring 500 by 500 meters, 25 meters thick. These eight slabs are positioned on the border of a square with side length of 3 kilometres, thus demarcating an "empty" area. Each slab is a "city within the city," an Immeuble Cité that is in itself a self-sufficient city not characterized by any specific program or activity, being the support of multiple programs or activities."

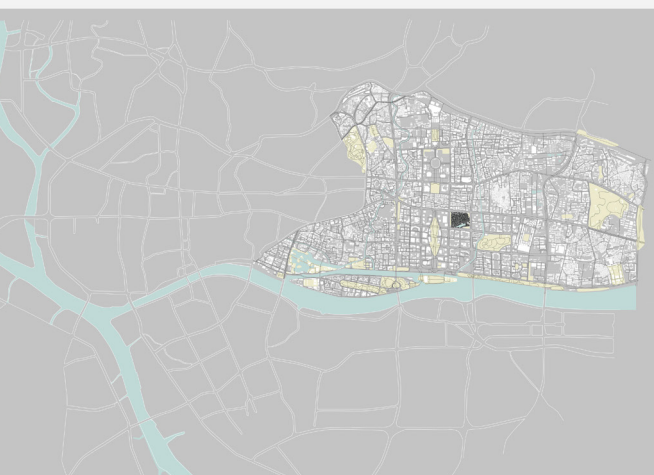
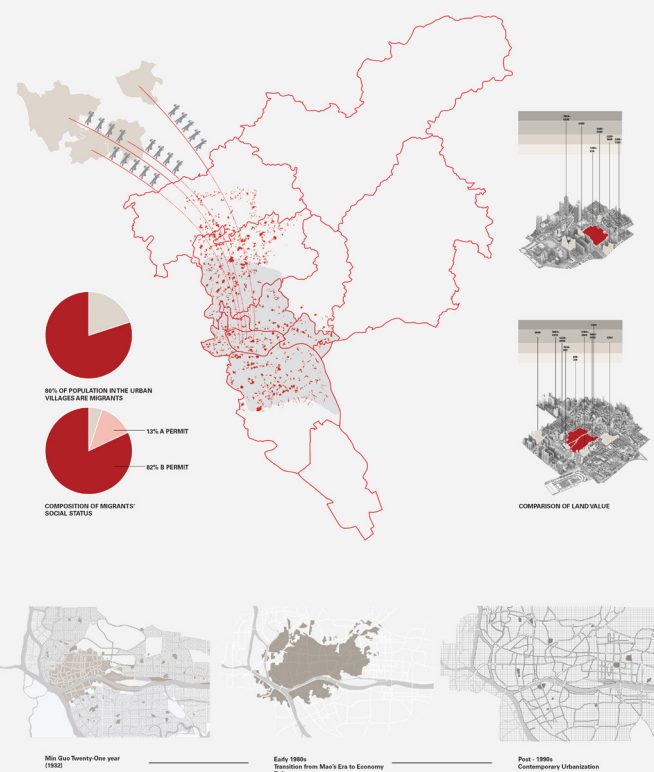
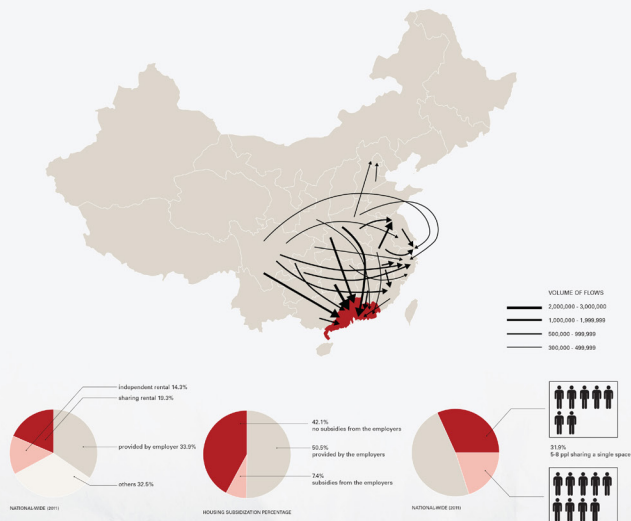


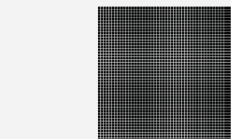
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NEW BABYLON
Constant Anton Nieuwenhuys



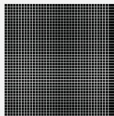
FIRST REVIEW





90013 m²

grid: average footprint per household: 42.7 m²



64549 m²

grid: average footprint per household: 42.7 m²

Volume:
25,785,000 m³



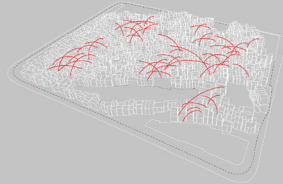
Individual occupation
15 m³
the volume can house
1,719,048 individuals

with 3.5m floor height
FAR: 38



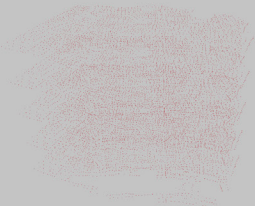
CURRENT CLUSTER EFFECTS

2-D CONNECTIVITY

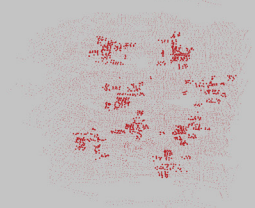


3-D CONNECTIVITY

DAILY LIFE



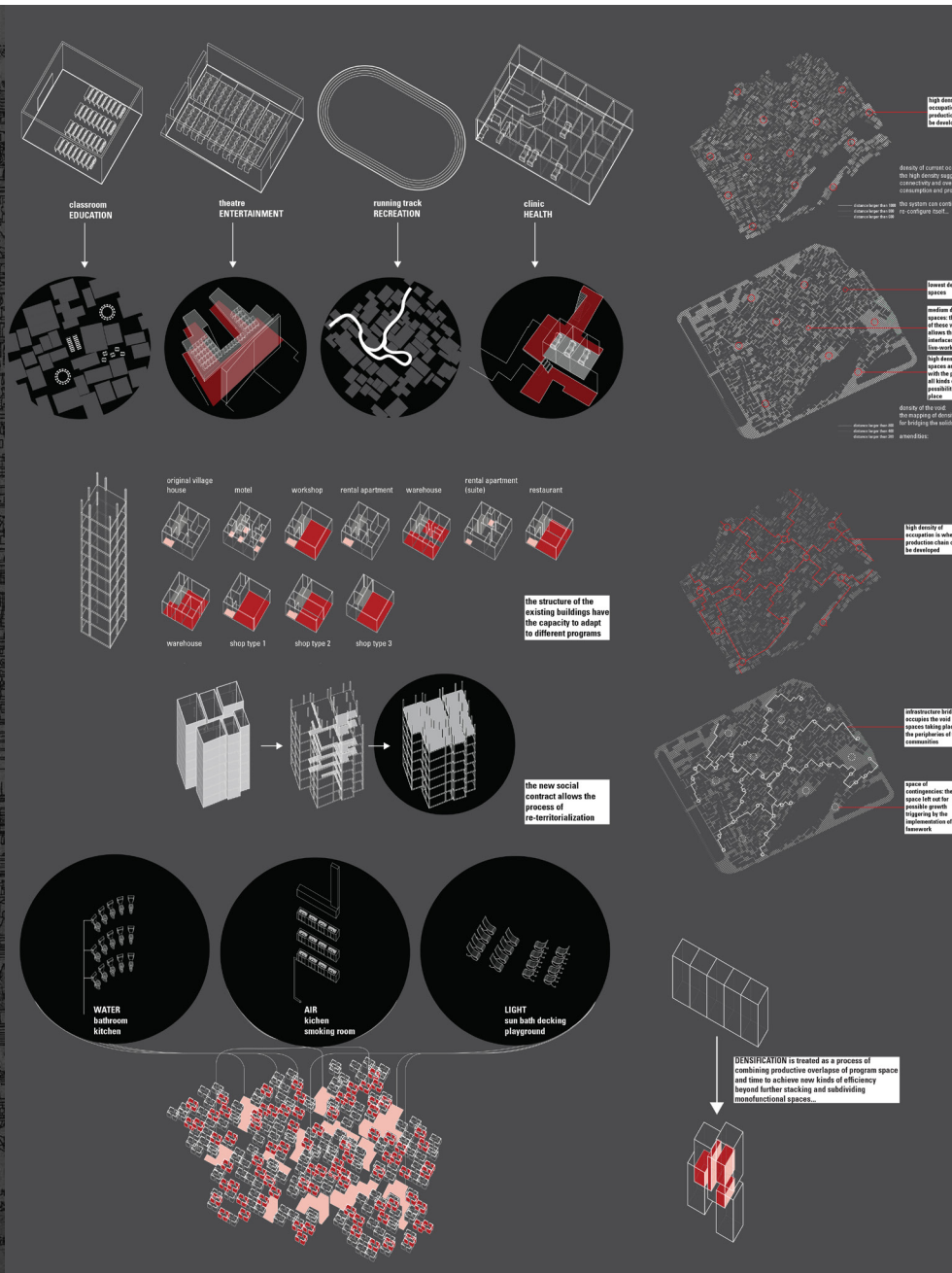
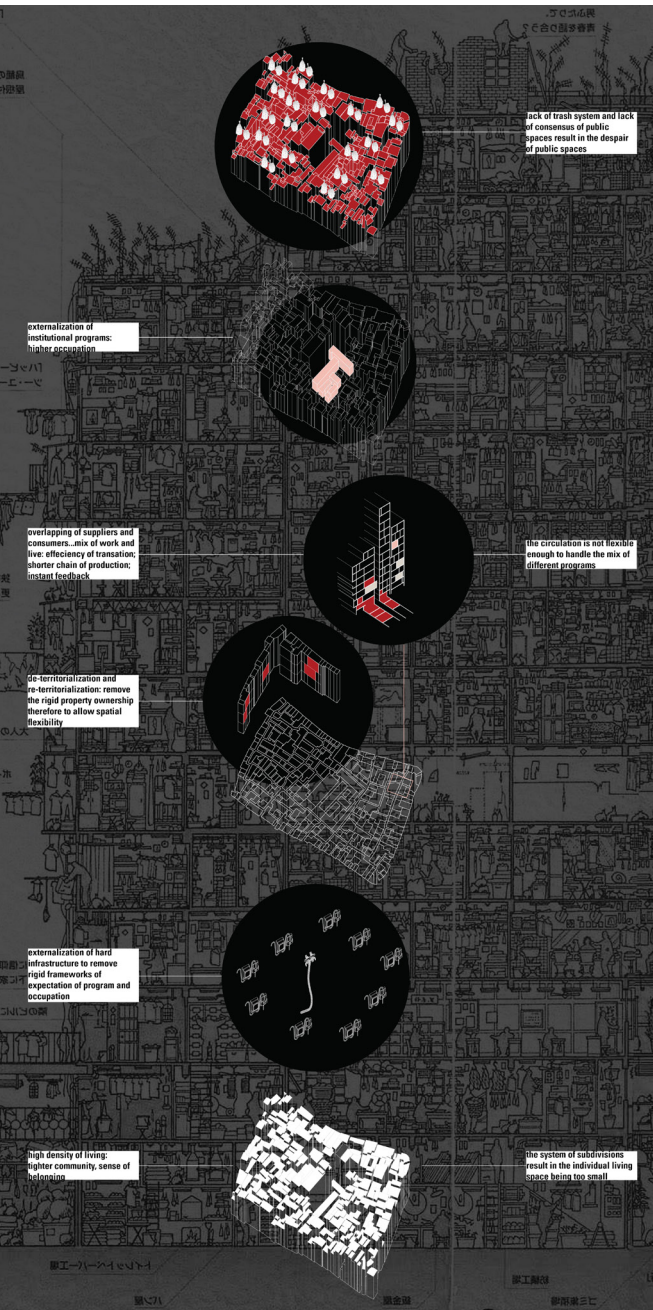
PRODUCTION



OTHER PUBLIC AMENITIES



SECOND REVIEW



city of
which is where
to obtain can
and

operation
with a higher
frequency of
interaction
between

density of void

density of void
as continuity
of space
to large
voids

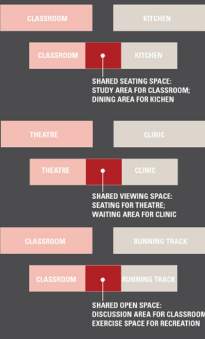
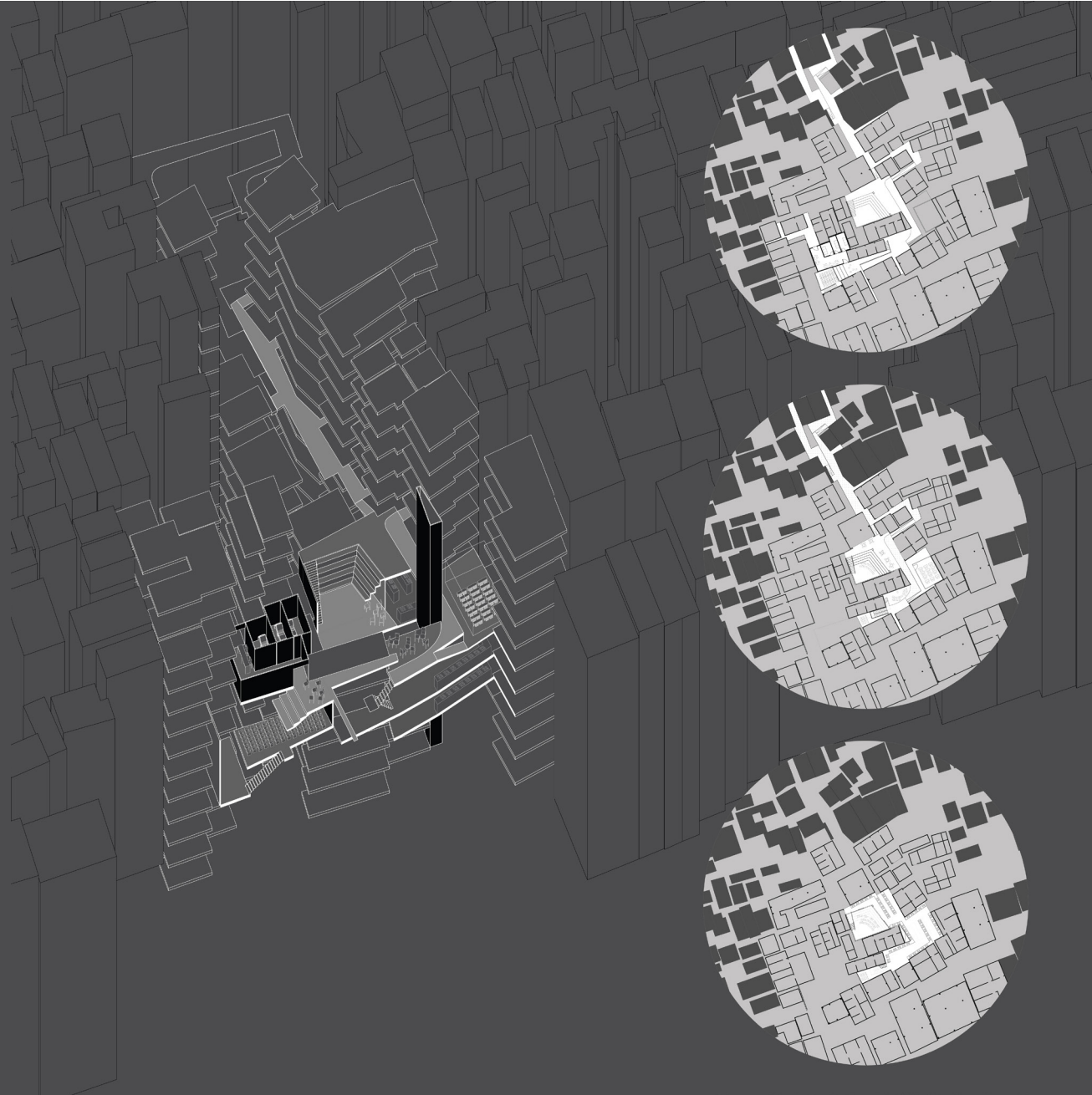
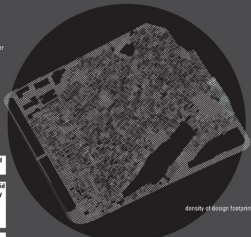
density of void
is embedded
within the
fabric to take

density of the void provides a guide
to the...

the

at

the



FINAL PRESENTATION



