

Architectural Association School of Architecture  
City/Architecture PhD Programme  
*End-of-Term Presentations*  
March 27, 2018

*Tuesday, March 27*  
*Programme*

11.00 Lukas Pauer

11.45 Ioanna Piniara

Lunch break

14.00 Brendon N. Carlin

14.45 Georgios Eftaxiopoulos

15.30 Angela Gigliotti

Tea break

16.30 Cyan Jingru Cheng

17.15 Olivia Neves Marra

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## STAGING FACTS ON THE GROUND

On Territorial Markers in Contested Territories



Andrea Mantegna, *Trionfi di Cesare I: Trombettieri e Portatori di Insegne* (c 1485-1505)

The research investigates an architecture of seemingly minor or banal objects with nevertheless enormous territorial implications: markers, outposts, stations, and centers of sovereignty. While scholarly discourse predominantly focuses on the conceptual means envisioned to frame territorial sovereignty, the actual material means implemented and executed as often primitive but specific devices on the ground have rarely been subject to theorizing in a historical genealogy: ancient megalithic pillars and sanctuaries, medieval factories and missions, modern telegraphs and lighthouses, and contemporary co-located data centers.

In its hypothesis, the research claims the possibility of defining sovereignty as a material condition becoming apparent through human-made spatial facts on the ground at various scales and technologies. Based on this working hypothesis, the research postulates a co-presence and dialectic between material form and wider immaterial forces. The research claims the possibility of identifying a paradigm shift in the facticity and rationale of this material condition; from a more belief-based figurative semiotics to a more fact-based literal logistics of territorial markers.

In its larger aim, the research seeks to interrogate the ability of architectural design practice to construct sovereignty in contested conditions where stable and extensive means of demarcation are challenged, as a materially rather than merely intangibly staged process. A case study review and object survey shall identify historical design techniques in their specific temporal, regional, and cultural context to establish typological continuity and similarity rather than difference. Drawing and design studies shall validate the research hypothesis and test its applicability by forecasting applicable design techniques for new understandings in architectural design practice. As such, the project formulates a series of applicable design techniques as individual design interventions, which shall collectively form a kit-of-tools.

## *Thesis Structure*

### *Introduction*

Identification of Theoretical Framework

#### *I. Semiotics Sanctity Markers*

Ancient Megalithic Pillars and Sanctuaries

#### *II. Post-Semiotic Mercantility Outposts*

Medieval Factories and Missions

#### *III. Pre-Logistic Signal Stations*

Modern Telegraphs and Lighthouses

#### *IV. Logistic Distribution Centers*

Contemporary Co-Located Data Centers

#### *V. Projective Kit-of-Tools*

Identification of Applicable Design Techniques

### *Conclusion*

Discussion of Implications and Recommendations

## Abstract of Chapter I

*which will be presented on Tuesday, March 27*

### Semiotic Sanctity Markers

#### Ancient Megalithic Pillars and Sanctuaries

The chapter describes a paradigm shift in ancient Hellenic to Roman cultures' understanding of the 'right to sanctuary', tracing a ritual concept and practice capable of projecting identity through sacred ground. In ancient Hellenic, Hellenistic, and Roman cultures, ritual activity served to build, preserve, and incorporate the uniquely constituent identities of politically organized communities within a larger context.

Ancient Hellenic and Hellenistic culture had no common intercommunal law code valid for a subject outside the jurisdiction of local justice. Authority and power were distributed unevenly. However, a quasi-diplomatic practice of intercommunal relations provided compensation to this condition; the acquisition of reciprocal agreements and granting of honorary titles and privileged statuses. Sanctuaries facilitated ritualistic activity by virtue of their titles and statuses afforded by reciprocal agreements. Their presence in the landscape was indicative of an authority's self-image and recognition among its peers. A significant paradigm shift took place with the gradual integration and annexation of formerly 'fragmented' multi-polar Hellenistic polities as subordinate provinces to the 'unified' mono-polar Roman empire. Roman culture perceived sacred ground through jurisdiction rather than spectacle. Imago imperial cult image statues and Signum military standards were institutionalized as customary refuge against momentary acts of violence. Spatially, the 'right to sanctuary' was limited from large-scale extramural sacred ground and monumental structures to small-scale intramural sculpture and poles. Temporally, the 'right to sanctuary' was limited from long-term admission based on a rolling basis to short-term admission based on a deadline.

Sanctuaries played a fundamental role in reinforcing and projecting a symbolic relationship between what is contemporarily referred to as state identity, faith, and politico-economic intent.

## WE HAVE NEVER BEEN PRIVATE! The Housing Project in Neoliberal Europe



*'Polykatoikia, my love'*, image by Point Supreme architects  
that identifies Athens, like any Greek city, with this particular domestic typology.

The thesis puts forward an interpretation of the management of domestic space through the transformation of the concept of the *private* within the socio-economic regime known as neoliberalism. In this light, the thesis proposes a critical reassessment of housing *privatization* not as the by-product of an abstract market apparatus but as a public-private partnership strategy to establish not only new contractual relationships, but also a change of ethos, culture and organization of the housing project.

For this purpose, urban housing schemes in London, Berlin, Athens and Madrid are selected as case studies throughout this history of repeated spatial and economic crises from the 1970's until today. To date, the research has investigated two models of inner-city living; the Barbican Estate (1952-82) in London, which represents council housing in the transition from post-war austerity to the vision of ever-increasing economic growth, and the International Building Exhibition (IBA) of 1987 in Berlin, which puts forward housing policies to provide an urban identity for a divided city in a globalizing world.

Athens, which is currently surveyed, and Madrid will be studied within the same framework of the last two decades (1999-2018) since they share commonalities with respect to the cultural roots of private property, as a means of class reproduction and wealth accumulation, and the subsequent impact of the 2008 mortgage crisis on welfare and housing in their urban settings. As contested a terrain as neoliberalism has become, in this context it is not to be identified with specific political doctrines – such as Thatcherism or Reaganism- rather it is scrutinized as a broader cultural project to recapitalize on urbanity by building a certain subjectivity based on living accommodation.

In fact, the design methodology aims to illustrate how such specific episodes became laboratories for the construction of spatial agendas and practices which acted as realised applications of an unaddressed planning rationale only retroactively identified as neoliberal.

## *Thesis Structure*

### *Introduction*

#### *I. The Public Production of the Private*

A Brief Genealogy

#### *II. Neoliberalism and the Housing Sector*

#### *III. Neoliberalism as a Project of Urban Marketing*

Ideas tested at the Barbican Estate (London 1952-1982)

#### *IV. 'The Inner City as a Place to Live', IBA Berlin 1984/87*

Urban Identity Policies for a Divided City in a Globalising World (Berlin, 1978-1989)

#### *V. Household Debt as Private Property*

The Peak and Fall of the Asset-Seeking Society (Athens, 1999-2018)

#### *VI. Chronicle of a Death Foretold*

Eviction as a Lever to State-led Gentrification (Madrid 1999-2017)

#### *VII. Towards a Design Policy*

Redesigning the Private

Abstract of Chapter V *which will be presented on Tuesday, March 27*

#### Household Debt as Private Property:

The Peak and Fall of the Asset-Seeking Society (Athens, 1999-2018)

This chapter is dedicated to the late neoliberal phase in Athens marked by the 2008 mortgage crisis; it illuminates both the explosive (sub)urbanization fired in 1999, when the city was commissioned the Olympic Games of 2004, and the economic recession and collapse of the Greek housing market afterwards. These events accordingly signal the reinvention and death of the poly-katoikia (the multi-storey apartment building), the building type which for almost a century became the symbol of construction simplicity, economy and durability in Greek cities. Since the post-dictatorship era (mid 1970's), the polykatoikia stood as the – literally- concrete form of democratization; of the individually owned habitable space for a vast middle class constructed and educated by the Progressive Leftist (PASOK) agenda for 'modernization' and the life-long dream of 'security'.

Before the crisis, homeownership had been pushed by state strategic planning towards private indebtedness to such an extent that it caused a third wave of suburban sprawl in Athens and the speculation bubble to inflate. The affluent society dictated the reconfiguration between the 'urban' and the 'villa', density and privacy, economy and luxury in the polykatoikia type, which was gladly undertaken by the architectural profession and resulted into the broad category of the 'poly-mono-katoikia' (multi-single-family house). But the housing reformation was cancelled in 2009 by the reformist agenda of the Institutions, namely the EC, ECB and IMF, channeling the demands for disproportionate property taxation and the abolishment of legal protection of the primary residence in 2011.

The result has been a plot twist in this ill-practiced model based on debt where one can neither sustain nor get rid of their asset, which has caused extreme conditions of excessive desolated and decaying building stock in the Athenian centre. This chapter aims to explore how current neoliberal processes of assault to internal mass petit-bourgeois ownership culture by external big investment capital make contemporary claims for the distribution of the housing wealth and the single-family-apartment building model.

## TERRITORIALISING INTERIORS

### Non-Typological Housing in Contemporary Japan



Hiromi Fujii, *Project E-2* (1968-71).

The thesis will put forward a critique of domestication through a close reading of selected examples of Japanese housing since 1950 which tend towards a condition to be referred to here as *non-typological*. *Typology* in architecture refers to the knowledge of *Types*, which can be described as composed of abstract ideas, criteria, categories, and rule systems for the distribution of form, programme and symbolism. Type can be evolved through versions and constitutes a key form of architectural knowledge. Housing became an architectural, typological project when the strategically managed *reproduction* of life emerged as the focus of political strategies; a development becomes distinctly visible during the early middle ages in Europe and more significantly during periods of mass-industrialisation elsewhere. Reproduction here refers to both the bare reproduction and maintenance of life, but also to its ideological domestication or imbuing of values through practices, rituals, space and symbolism. Since the end of the Second World War in Europe the U.S. and Japan several examples of housing have emerged which tend towards being devoid of, or effacing typological composition, whether spatio-strategic, representational or symbolic.

In Japan, examples of housing referred to in the thesis as tending towards non-typological have emerged during periods of unprecedented socio-economic rupture. Examples can be traced to the 1950s following the destruction and ‘openness’ left in the wake of the Second World War, to the early 1970s following the rapid economic growth and de-politicisation and finally, to the period following the economic bubble of 1991. This thesis will focus on 3 selected examples of houses and housing during these 3 periods. These examples highlight moments of distinct historical rupture in Japanese domestic architecture which become intimate portraits of architecture in Japanese society. A sophisticated deployment of coercive and suppressive managerial strategies, policy and cultural production disseminated via emerging technologies contributed in large part to the institutionalisation of an idealised Japanese nuclear family and housing type (*nLDK*), one which remains the popular ideal today. Like many of the economic and cultural ‘projects’ undertaken at the scale of the city, factory and house during these periods in recent Japanese history, most of these examples of housing which tend towards the non-typological remain largely unknown.

The thesis departs from an argument that a great majority of popular dissemination and discourse surrounding Japanese architecture, especially in the West, by and large, misses moments of vital historical significance. Because Japanese houses are so influential for architects and the production of the city today, superficial interpretations - lightness, blurriness, *kawaii* (cuteness) and narratives of the soft-spoken genius, humbly positioned behind allegories - have become auras which undermine the radical indications and implications of these projects. When de-romanticised, contextualised, considered with historical distance and stripped of meandering narratives, these examples might reveal knowledge and a set of strategies crucial to trajectories that are clearing way thousands of years of domestication and opening alternative possibilities for architecture and life.

## *Thesis Structure*

### *Introduction*

#### *I. One Room*

Towards Non-Typological Housing in Post War Japan

#### *II. Concrete Voids*

Non-Compositional Housing in 1970s Japan

#### *III. Nomadic Interiors*

A New Primitive Condition

#### *IV. Conclusion*

Design Project

### Abstract of Chapter II

*which will be presented on Tuesday, March 27*

#### Concrete Voids

#### Non-Compositional Housing in 1970s Japan

In the early 1970s Japan was continuing to push through the long economic ‘boom’ of the post-war era explicitly initiated with the historical 1946 decision of the government and American occupation to pursue economic growth as the *primary goal* of the nation. Amongst the influential figures in architecture at the time, there was an abrupt shift away from the Metabolist Architects visions of, predominately, mass-produced individual living pods plugged into mega-frames and vast scientifically managed urban network infrastructures. Many architects began to call themselves ‘anti-Metabolist.

Starting in the late 1960s the outlines of a lesser known, yet historically pivotal ‘movement’ of Japanese architects visibly emerged. This movement has been referred to as the *Japanese New Wave*. The movement was heavily influenced by Austrian and Italian ‘radical’ architects like Peter Pichler and Hans Hollien, Archizoon and Superstudio, and by the preceding Japanese generation, most notably Arata Isozaki and Kazuo Shinohara. This chapter will focus on a reading of 3 houses by 3 architects of the New Wave – Nirvana House by Takefumi Aida, Project E-2 by Hiromi Fujii and URBOT 002 by Toyo Itō. These projects might easily be interpreted as being concerned with an ‘autonomy of architectural form’ and therefore detached from all but a morphemic reference to their historical and contemporary context because of their ‘blank’ features and symmetrical-rational compositions. Comparisons can be drawn, especially in the case of Fujii, to the early 1950s work of John Hejduk in his nine-square grid exercise and contemporaneously in the late 1960s, to the 10 houses of Peter Eisenman.

While this assessment is in a sense true, this chapter will argue that these projects are, like minimal, or serialist art and music, in fact distinct historical actualities. It is no coincidence that these examples emerged at a moment when Japan had rebuilt society into a streamlined economic machine and had begun to develop the features of a post-fordist economy. Despite unparalleled economic achievements, wide access to an exploding consumerist market, and material abundance, at the end of the 1960s and early 70s there were several ecological disasters which had caused disfigured births, there was widespread depression, suicide and especially amongst intellectual and artists, expressions of rejection and retreat from contemporary Japanese society.

The Kyoto School philosopher Keiji Nishitani wrote that before the people had noticed it, an emptiness, a void had opened up beneath Japanese life, and most had not even yet realised it. The houses discussed in this chapter paint a blunt portrait of how architecture was, amidst technological and economic development, stripped of its historical tasks and relegated, from that point forward, to the role of fabricating veils to drape over the void opened up by the total and perpetual destruction of Japans economic project.

## STASIS

### Towards a Critique of Flexibility in Architecture



: General View of the Eastern, or Foreign Nave, looking West. The Great Exhibition, 1851 (Calotype Photograph)

Flexibility, nowadays, constitutes the canon. Within an environment of constant estrangement and uprootedness, it is applied as a technique in order to achieve living spaces that are able to accommodate a series of different occupations, lifestyles and needs. This thesis argues that flexibility, antithetically, operates as an architectural tool towards the transformation of spaces that become far from being ‘free’, and instead alienate and restrict their inhabitants. In a period during which production has become a totalizing condition and has spread into the entire city, flexibility translates into a contemporary disguise covering the rigidity and stiffness of the market. Camouflaged through its rhetorical etymology, it produces a strange paradox; on one hand, enabling change and potential, and on the other hand, dictating it.

Introduced as a concept in parallel to the rise of industrialization, flexibility’s embodiment became the architecture of the industrial city. Providing a more efficient organization of production and larger construction possibilities capable of housing the grand machines of the eighteenth and nineteenth century, it manifested itself through the implementation of capital’s demands. From the early warehouses and textile mills, to the invention of the assembly-line and the single-story multi-functional shed, it offered a high level of optimization, surveillance and control. It was its embedded attribute - to anticipate changes and develop a fertile ground for production to advance -, which at the end of the twentieth century emerged into a rationale for the unfolding of the domestic life and the guarantor of new ways of living. Problematising this positive aura, the project will read flexibility in its critical dimension and conceptualize it through the idea of stasis. In particular, it will claim that, within our constant flux, flexibility unfolds as a technique to achieve a state of stillness and stability, relinquishing change and fixity as a mutually exclusive condition. Conclusively, with the intend to look beyond its phantasmagoria, the thesis, rather than distinguishing between ‘bad flexibility’ and ‘good flexibility’, will claim that flexibility can neither act nor represent the potentiality and the refuge from production and exploitation; suggesting a new condition. A design system that rethinks the city as a storage.

## *Thesis Structure*

### *Introduction*

#### The Genealogy of Flexibility

### *I. Just-in-Time*

#### Accumulation and the West India Docks

### *II. Flexibility Takes Command*

#### The Rise of Liberalism and the Great Exhibition

### *III. Permanent Flexibility*

#### Revisiting the Fun Palace

### *IV. Frangar, Non Flectar*

#### A New Grammar

### Abstract of Chapter II

*which will be presented on Tuesday, March 27*

### Flexibility Takes Command

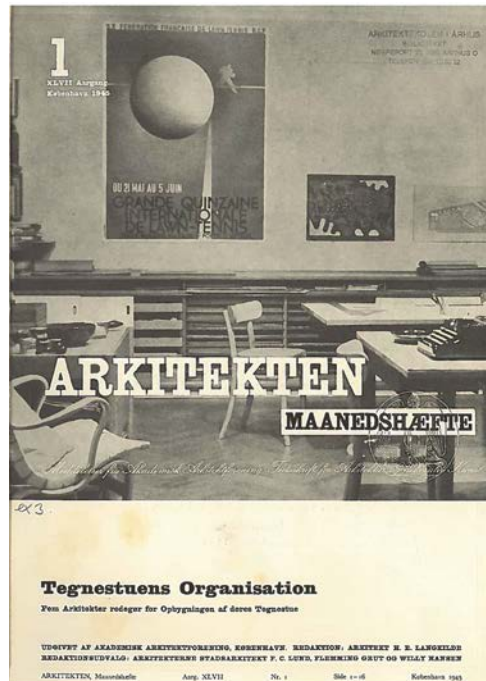
#### The Rise of Liberalism and the Great Exhibition

As a principle that defined the rise of industrialization, this chapter will argue that flexibility, during the nineteenth century, expanded beyond the spaces of production. It responded to the shift towards an affordable manufacturing and greater availability of goods, catering the new emerging consumerist culture. This transition was expressed architecturally through the design of new structures that became direct extensions of the logic of the factory and the multi-story warehouse. Shopping arcades, department stores and exhibitions began to appear by capitalizing on one hand, on cast iron's mouldability and transformability, and on the other hand, on its ability of modularity and mass production.

The most paradigmatic case was The Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations [1851]. Broadly known as Crystal Palace, Joseph Paxton's proposal was designed as a sophisticated system of simple and light standardized prefabricated components inscribed in a 24 feet module. Capable to get assembled and disassembled quickly, the temporary building resembled the highly developed British industry and simultaneously signified the advancement into a new era. It symbolized not only the shift from a handicraft society to a mechanized one, but through the display of the new machines and processes allowed production to be expressed as a festivity. It was a place of celebration of labour and simultaneously a method of mass distraction where the conviviality transmitted a feeling of pride, hiding the monotony, harshness and physical damage prevailed within the factories. As a technique of seduction, similar to the national exhibitions, beyond aestheticizing production, generated a phantasmagoria where, ultimately, the people became victims of progress.

It was a narrative project within which flexibility became not only a technical problem-solving condition but instead a venture that in reality shaped—by means of comparison—an urge towards a greater productivity. At the same time, the internationalization of the exhibited pieces established a deviation from the national context that was present in the first half of the nineteenth century, stressing a free and liberal conception of economy. Negating the pre-existed mercantilist spirit, the free trade, the free communication and the free competition constituted three key parameters of an all embracing vision. This new emerging economic doctrine was a synthesis that signified the reduction of restrictions and placed freedom at the epicenter. An economical enthusiasm that was reflected through a spatially and structurally flexible architecture.

## BEHIND THE SCENES OF THE CONTEMPORARY MODES OF ARCHITECTURAL PRODUCTION



The organization of the drafting rooms: five architects explain the structure of their practices, January 1945 (Arkitekten).

There is a controversial – but even close, real and urgent - topic in the architectural discourse that faces the delicate, undeniable, relationship between the economic system and the modes of production within practices. Architecture is a liberal profession that needs money to be realized as *work* but it is, or it should be, also able to generate an economic turnover to sustain the life of the *labourers* involved in it. The nature of the *work* in architectural profession is a crucial point of departure that this research addresses, and probably the reason of many dissatisfied architects.

Scholars have extensively focused both a genealogy of the main exporters of modes of production and, also, those cases where the friction between *labour* and *work* has been more evident. However, the cases of the knowledge-importers instead, and Scandinavia as one of those, have rarely been discussed. In this latter an investigation of the profession in relation to the economic system has not been a priority of scholars yet, concerned instead on the *works* of the architects, as welfare outcomes.

The research aims to occupy this niche: to investigate the relationship between the Danish Welfare State and the contemporary modes of architectural production to unveil which are the *mechanisms* that the architectural practices (*tegnestuer*) have deployed to face economic junctures. The thesis addresses two time-spans. The first one, after the WWII (1945-75) covers the *Trente Glorieuse* and the production of the architects blossomed under the *Great Optimization*. The second one concerns the recent Neo-Liberal turn (1993-2016) focusing on: the national policies aimed to a flexible labour market; the supranational agreements of the European Union related to the free circulation of service; and, the adjustments to public procurement below the EU threshold. In both time-spans, the call to *efficiency* and *standardization* and the consequent *division of labour* will be addressed. Using a mixed method, the research will define how global and local *influencers* have *shaped* the Danish architectural modes of production and which are the current *mechanisms* developed by the offices. The argument sustains that after the WWII, the influences on architectural profession were direct and boosted its blossoming intentionally (“*hidden recipes*”); while in Neo-Liberal times those have been indirect and perceived as brakes to the architectural profession (“*red tapes*”).

## *Thesis Structure (extract)*

### *I. Framework*

- 1.1 Labour and Work in Architecture
- 1.2 When did “being architect” become a profession?
  - \*\* Glossary and Timeline

### *II. The Influencers*

- 2.1 The Danish Condition

### *III. The Shapes*

- (a) 1945-1975
  - 3.1 The blossoming of the Welfare Architecture Production
    - \*\* Exhibition Design: Index Room
  - 3.2 The Golden Years of Welfare State: DK and US
- (b) 1993-2016
  - 3.3 How many architects are there in Denmark?
    - \*\* Exhibition Design: Red Tapes
  - 3.4 The Neo-Liberal Welfare State: DK and EU

### *IV. Behind the scenes: the interviews*

- 4.1 Shapes Representatives on Labour
- 4.2 Union Bodies: Employees and Employers
  - \*\* Interview Chart and Tools

### *V. The Mechanisms*

## Abstract of Section 1.1

*which will be presented on Tuesday, March 27*

This section starts from the need of establishing a clarification in the lexicon used in the discipline related to the condition of “being an architect”. To support this need, two examples are here mentioned. Firstly, starting from daily communication in architecture, while sharing projects among peers, the stress is widely on the *work* - *works* of the architect, referring to an authorial and artistic root of the profession. This imply, as consequence, the dependency of the profession from a yearned outcome, both in terms of professional ambition and, unfortunately, economic wise. Secondly, when the professional rights of architect are reclaimed, the stress is on the acknowledgement of the architect as either *worker* or *labourer* according to the sources, using sometime these terms as synonyms.

Mentioning these examples helps to clarify some points that this section is aiming to investigate: how to define the work of the architect and which is the nature of this work in the architectural profession. To do that, this section specifically starts from the path traced in the “The Human Condition”( Hannah Arendt, 1958) forcing the dichotomy between two fundamental terms in the architectural profession: *labour* and *work*; and relating this dichotomy to the use of a series of other terms affiliated with those two ones, in the architectural profession, especially when considering the Danish condition.

In particular, the argument claims how the separation of the *labour* and *work* in the architectural profession is instrumental in the understanding of the above mentioned nature.

As a mean to trigger this argument, the section uses a support glossary using both the literature review and some findings related to the case in object. The glossary, without the pretentiousness of being exhaustive at this stage, creates a support for the understanding of a professional context, like the Danish one, in which the relationship between architecture and labour are not discussed as an urgency for the discipline.

Cyan Jingru Cheng

## THE SOCIO-SPATIAL DESIGN OF RURALITY

A Project of Territory, Community, and Household in Rural China



A farmer in Suburban Chongqing. Photo by Tim Franco, 2009-13.

The Chinese countryside is in a state of crisis, now more than ever. Through a centralised planning regime and the on-going household registration reform, the Chinese state is extending the hierarchical urban structure from the province down through cities, counties, towns and eventually to every single village. New rural settlements are being built based on an urban xiaoqu (small district) model. Urban nuclear family flats are being employed as the template to reconstruct rural dwelling. Eventually, through the practice of everyday life, desired subjects - a cheap labour force and a consumer class - are being constructed. The rural is largely considered not just economically but also culturally and intellectually under-developed. When confronting issues of rural regeneration, approaches of urbanisation - not only the space but also the people - are seen as given, and thus unquestioned.

In this context, to recognise the countryside as a specific social, cultural and political construct, rather than ancillary to the city, is the base of the thesis. Then the question to answer is: What does being rural mean socio-spatially? Or how to understand rurality as a spatial question?

To address this question, the thesis is constructed through three main approaches – the rural-urban relationship, cross-scale and research by design. The rural-urban relationship is, on the one hand, a subject of study of the thesis, and on the other, a method of research. In the thesis, the definition of rurality is constructed through comparisons to the urban in various aspects, in order to draw out the differences between them and therefore to give the rural a higher resolution. The definition of the rural is explored at three scales: territory, community and household. Aiming to construct a cross-scalar understanding, the entire thesis should be understood as one synthetic project of rural China. This approach is itself a critique to the current situation in China where design disciplines, namely planning, urban design and architecture, are largely separated. Across these three scales, the thesis examines three distinct moments in the trajectory of transformation: China before modernisation, the collectivisation era (before economic reforms of the 1980s), and the contemporary on-going process of rural regeneration. For each scale (also chapter), a design component is put forward at the end. On the one hand, it is a continuation along the line of the aforementioned three moments of transformation. On the other, the design component should be seen as, rather than a solution, a conclusion of the research. This design approach enables the thesis to answer the question of rurality by problematising rural spatial characters, instrumentalising the socio-spatial diagrams in China's rural society, and then (re)constructing a spatial definition of rurality, based on which an alternative model of rural regeneration can be advanced from within.

## *Thesis Structure*

### *Introduction*

#### *I. Territory*

- 1.1 Concentration: The Rural Planning Doctrine
- 1.2 Hierarchy: Urban System Planning
- 1.3 Territorial Unit: From Territory to Community
- 3.4 A Project of the Territory
- \* Design Scenarios

#### *II. Settlement*

- 2.1 Collectivity: People's Commune Settlement and Traditional Kindred Village
- 2.2 Governmentality: The Xiaoqu Model for New Village Community
- 2.3 The Cultural Nexus of Power: From Community to Household
- 2.4 A Project of Collective Forms
- \* Design Scenarios

#### *III. Household*

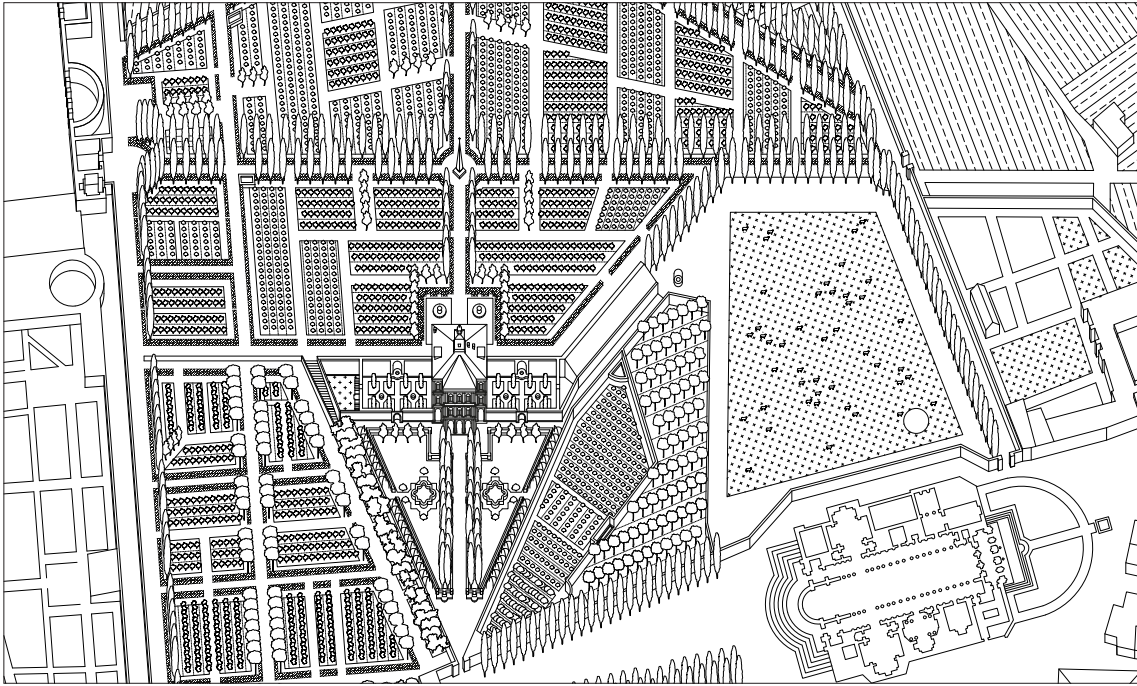
- 3.1 Domestic Space and (Non)Family Relations: Three Rural Dwelling Models
- 3.2 Removing the Yard: The Nuclear Family Flat Goes Rural
- 3.3 The Dissolved Household: An Alternative to the Nuclear Family
- 3.4 A Project of Jian
- \* Design Scenarios

### *Conclusion*

An overview of the entire Thesis  
*will be presented on Tuesday, March 17*

## THE GARDEN AS POLITICAL FORM

### From Archetype to Project



An allotment holder cultivates his plot in front of Albert Memorial on Kensington Gardens, May 1942. (Photo: Getty Images).

What is a garden? On an essay from 1980 J.B. Jackson responded that question with a better one: “Why is there so much literature about this object and yet is it so difficult to define it? Because too many books make us accept the garden at second-hand; to accept the image without perceiving anything of the archetypal garden itself”. Four decades later, one must ask again not only what *is* a garden but also what is *not* one. Vis-à-vis state-of-the-art botanist Gilles Clément sees the entire planet as a “petit jardin”. As seductive as it is scary, his metaphor may soon become reality since the term is increasingly ubiquitous in architecture. This ubiquity is often sprinkled with a revival of misconceptions, such as “garden equals landscape” and “landscape equals the natural environment”. Moreover, with the success of so-called “green space” in design competitions, now anything vaguely planted goes as either a garden or park or urban-farm.

These words however refer to enclosures that are far from interchangeable. The garden differs from them insofar it is conceptually a domestic space. Because even when it is not physically attached to a house, the garden implies the limit and the form of a “household”. That of course does not apply to all, but to the most recognisable form of a garden: the hortus, a walled or hedged compound for either mineral or organic cultivations where only familial rules apply. Precisely for making its autonomous reality spatially tangible, the hortus is an archetype of ideological enclosure within which a given group of people may recognise and practice an idea of living together – in other words, a *political form*. The problem is how & why had the garden ultimately ceased to be legible as such. Further on, what is left of it as an alter concept of enclosure within the city today?

These questions are argued through a possible history of three paradigms, in which the archetype was gradually opened up and stripped of its self-ruling character to become mere tool for urban reparcelisation: from the Cistercian hortus conclusus to the roman suburban villa and to English allotment. The project is to raise an understanding of these gardens not as metaphors but as architectures that, as such, had enabled specific practices of “household” while legitimizing their appropriations with very compelling images. Thus each analysis produces a design knowledge for a collective garden that challenges present frameworks of ownership in cities quite pressured by real-estate market.

## *Thesis Structure*

### *I. Archetypal*

Hortus conclusus as idea of settlement:  
Cistercian cloister & the Persian chaharbagh  
*Paradise is here and now*  
Hortus conclusus to construct shared spaces:  
A protocol with Tehran plot-grids

### *II. Monumental*

Gardens as analogical reconstructions of the city:  
6 suburban villas in Rome (1511-90)  
*Otium Cum Dignitate*  
Gardens to stage collective enjoyments of idle land:  
A policy with Roman borgate

### *III. Pastoral*

Garden plots as (final) naturalisation of Enclosure:  
3 allotments in London  
*Allot in common*  
Garden enclosure to revoke Acts of Enclosure:  
A practice with London commons

### *Conclusion*

The garden, a project with the city

An overview of the entire Thesis  
*will be presented on Tuesday, March 17*