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Community Art Projects in Baishizhou: A Debate about Urban Villages in Shenzhen through Socially-Engaged Art

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Community Art Projects in Baishizhou: A Debate about Urban Villages in Shenzhen through Socially-Engaged Art

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"Art should comfort the disturbed and disturb the comfortable"

- Banksy

Abstract

The global process of urbanization brought severe changes to the spatial and physical characteristics of places that had to adjust drastically and often lost their previous appearance and functions. However, the phenomenon of urban villages in China represents a unique concept of social and physical environment which survived practically untouched the rapid urbanization in Chinese cities. Only a few decades ago, Shenzhen, one of the fastest growing cities in China, was composed of several fishing villages which were later 'swallowed' and turned into a unique combination of rural-urban places that nowadays serve as an important housing market for migrants, as well as partially independent social and economic units which keep the cost of living down for the whole city. Nonetheless, in the upcoming plan of urban renewal, these villages are scheduled to be demolished to build a new modern city that has no place for what are considered backwards, dirty, constructions resembling slums.

The aim of this master thesis is to explore urban villages and their representation through newly-emerged community art projects in the largest urban village of Shenzhen –Baishizhou, as it offers an alternative notion of an urban village from a perspective of both participating actors and local residents. Community art projects use a form of socially engaged art that transforms social reality into an art form, as their aim is to create a unique image of a place for the wider public. Moreover, these projects use a place and community-based perspective which highlights the importance of collaboration of various actors and the geographical and social role of place that is depicted by the use of non-invasive methods of artistic expression. In Baishizhou, the role of art practices in a new established art studio, Handshake 302, will be explored in terms of the participant's capabilities to build an image of urban village that differs from a generalizing picture of the villages offered by the media. Finally, the methods of the studio will be compared to other artistic activities occurring in Baishizhou and their role in place identity building in the urban village.

Key words: socially-engaged art, community art projects, urban villages, place identity and representation, urban renewal

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1. INTRODUCTION

Urban development in China has been progressing rapidly for the past few decades, especially in the Pearl River Delta region which has become one of the most dynamic areas in China. The city of Shenzhen is one of the fastest growing city in the world (Hang, 2006; Hao, 2012; Ng, 2003). It consisted of a few villages about five decades ago, and now forms an agglomeration of officially ten million people, however, unofficial estimates set the fire over eighteen million. These traditional villages that originally formed Shenzhen were not destroyed in the process of urbanization but were instead 'swallowed' by the emerging urban design, and were included in it partly or completely intact as an extraordinary element of the city (Hang, 2006; Hao, 2012).

Nevertheless, with the rapid urbanization, there has been pressure from the government to eradicate the phenomenon of urban villages altogether, since they are considered 'backwards' and not compatible with the idea of modern city (Wang, 2009). Therefore, there are various redevelopment projects scheduled to be carried out in the urban villages to transform them in to a modern urban space suitable as a residence for middle class households (Smith, 2002; Hin, 2011). However, urban villages, as partly autonomous places that are owned collectively by the indigenous villagers, offer cheap accommodation and amenities for the floating migrant population, and this helps solve the problem of social housing in Shenzhen, which is often insufficient for incoming migrants or too distant from the newly-established city centre in Futian district (Hang, 2006; Hao, 2012; Wang, 2009). Moreover, they are not subjected to strict top down governance due to property rights that allow for an emergence of spontaneous social activities of informal character (Hao, 2012; Wang, 2009).

These attributes give urban villages a specific identity which can be perceived in both in their spatial and social characteristics as urban phenomenon. This thesis aims to explore the emergence of informal bottom up activities, namely community art projects, connected to the specific identity of Baishizhou as the largest urban village in Shenzhen, and how these projects can be identified in terms of their character, participating actors, and collaboration with the local community, which is an integral part of community art making (Coutts, 2012). A primary focus will be laid on an art studio, Handshake 302, that was established two years ago in Baishizhou, and which works with the concept of socially-engaged art that uses art works as a social manifestation (Bardham, 2010) of socio-spatial challenges that the urban village faces in a time of upcoming redevelopment plans. In the past, other urban villages

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were studied as places for emergence of community art activities; however, they functioned as a top down projects (Krop 2013) without an involvement in representing the social reality of the place. But Baishizhou is not an 'art' village, its main purpose still lies in providing cheap accommodation and services for migrants, nevertheless, spontaneous bottom up activities, including the art space Handshake 302 appear there without any attention of the government or other institutions and without any knowledge of how these projects are connected to the urban village, who are the actors, and what is their main purpose for making art works in a place that has not been established as an 'art' village or a space for emergence of a creative industry. Therefore, community art projects emerging in Baishizhou will be examined in terms of their position in the village by identifying their perception by the local residents and what kind of image of the urban village do they create in times when the urban villages are condemned to gradual disappearance (Wang, 2009).

1.1. Problem definition

The rapid urbanization and aim for a uniform modern city led to the lack of understanding of the physical and social structure of urban villages which is, however, crucial for estimating the social implications of the redevelopment plan, since the urban villages represent unique cultural units that offer an alternative to the often inadequate social housing (Wang, 2009) as well as foundations for emerging bottom up community art initiatives that can elaborate on those sensitive social issues in a socially acceptable way of artistic expression. However, it is unclear whether the purpose of initiatives organizing community art projects in Baishizhou corresponds with the perception of those projects among the local residents, who normally lack the ability or will to express their feelings about their environment and their rights to the urban village (Hao 2012, Wang, 2009). Thus, the image of an urban village which prevails in media and thus represents a general picture of it that is rather negative when the urban village is depicted as 'the place that needs to be get rid of' (Hao, 2012), and when an insider perspective or a thorough exploration of the village is very much missing.

1.2. Research aim

My research aim is to identify newly emerged community art projects in Baishizhou, and to try to reveal the purpose of those projects not just as artworks but as a manifestation of ongoing social challenges that are present in the urban village. I attempt to explore how these recent art projects depict social reality, identify the specific projects and examine the community practice of involved actors during project building and the conditions for

emergence of these projects in the sense of physical (geographical location) and social (social networks) environment. Finally, I aim to examine the perception of creative projects by the current population of Baishizhou villagers who both participated in the process of making these projects and/or observe the outcome, since most of the topics depicted in the creative projects are expected to reflect on the socio-spatial issues that Baishizhou faces. The perception of art projects by the current villagers can identify the place identity of the village, as well as get an insight into the function of the current community ties within it and reflect on the villagers' 'mood' about the forthcoming redevelopment plan and other social issues experienced in Baishizhou. Finally, I attempt to determine the background of the community art projects and their future prospects, and set them in the context of community and art in China.

1.3. Scientific and social relevance

There are lot of studies describing social challenges in the urban villages, such as the issue of redevelopment or the housing situation, however no studies depict the urban villages as places suitable for emergence of creativity nor do they elaborate on the existence of bottom up community projects that would use art as a form of social manifestation. Baishizhou is no longer a traditional urban village that serves as shelter for poor working migrants. Both, the location of Baishizhou and its changing population towards young and educated people, gives Baishizhou a foundation for establishing creative spaces (Bonje, 2013) and accommodating community artistic projects especially in regard of the position of urban village as a partly autonomous and self-governed unit (Hao, 2012), which allows more independence for an emergence of creative spaces and cultural projects. Furthermore, community art projects serve as a unique platform for a discussion about the social reality that the art work depicts (Bode, 2010), which could help to reveal the feelings of local residents about their living environment and every-day life in the urban village. This in turn could help detect social challenges in the urban village and offer an alternative solution to the promoted one-sided plan for a complete demolition (Hin, 2011).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Urban villages

An urban village represents a unique phenomenon in Chinese urban development that can be considered as a typical example of rural - urban dichotomy (Wang, 2009). In the beginning of its urban development, Shenzhen consisted of several fishing villages that were annexed to the emerging city during the process of urbanization, and left partially intact and thus created a 'by product' of urban development (Hao, 2012; Hang, 2006). An exact definition of an urban village is hard to establish, since every urban village has a different story of origin. However, for the purpose of this thesis a definition provided in Ma Hang's dissertation will be used:

> *[Urban villages are] constructed on the house sites of original villages by villagers. [They are a] community based on consanguinity, clan, traditional regulations and other deep configuration of social relations* (Hang, 2006, p.8).

Moreover, urban villages have a specific social and spatial structure which might resemble a slum or a shanty town at first, however, their unique features suggests that this classification would be incorrect.

2.1.1. Physical characteristics of urban villages

The diversity of development and spatial structure of each village depends mainly on its geographical location, which determines the position of the village in respect to its neighbourhood environment (Hao, 2012). Some villages have clearly distinctive boundaries, some of them are composed of typical handshake buildings which are tall and in a close proximity from one another (usually closer to the centre where there is not much space to expand); or their borders with the rest of the city can be gradual, sustaining smaller buildings and wider streets between them, mostly in the suburbs with more land area available (Hao, 2012). Furthermore, most of the urban villages are located outside of the SEZ, however with the ongoing expansion of the SEZ, this ratio is constantly changing. In general, urban villages lack formal planning, which leads to informal constructions and poorer living conditions. Furthermore, since the villages are usually densely populated, their unregulated conditions can lead to safety and health hazards such as uncontrollable spread of diseases or fire. These environmental issues further worsen the living conditions, and so far there is not much hope for their improvement (Wang, 2009; Hao, 2012).

2.1.2. Socio-economic and cultural aspects of urban villages

Since the urban villages can be marked as third categories of spaces between urban and rural (Wang, 2009), their socioeconomic structure differs from the exclusively urban or rural status. They are not governed only top-down but also in a bottom-up approach that is largely present because of their special administrative status. The villages are formally owned by collectives of villagers who are also, to a great extent, responsible for the governance of the villages (Hao, 2012; Hang, 2006). The village collectives represent landless farmers who in the process of rural to urban transformation lost their land and became landlords who provide cheap accommodation for the never-ending flow of migrants coming to Shenzhen (Bach, 2010; Hang, 2006). Due to the administrative status and the population sprawl, the villages are not strictly controlled by the government, which leads to an outburst of informal activities. Particularly, when some of them are highly convenient for the urban village residents, such as with the thriving diversity of small business, e.g. shops of all kinds that are open until late hours. However, informality also brings negative consequences in the form of high criminality rate and a sprawl of illegal activities such as prostitution (Hang, 2006; Wang, 2009). Moreover, the social diversity of urban villages dictates what type of facilities and job opportunities will the village offer, depending on the prevailing social group and the position of village within the city (Hao, 2012).

Nevertheless, the position and purpose of urban villages must be looked at in the context of the whole city, as the urban villages play an important role in Shenzhen's development. The most important factor lies in their ability to absorb the migrant surplus by offering a type of social housing which is more or less centrally located, allowing for cheap work force to remain in Shenzhen. This means that the villages enable Shenzhen to continue developing rapidly in a relatively sustainable way (Bach, 2010; Hang, 2006). However, the mainstream opinion about urban villages falls into a category of 'backwardness', 'eye sores' that form an obstacle in the formal urban development that needs to disappear in order for Shenzhen to become a truly modern city in a 'Western' style (Wang, 2009; Bach, 2010; Hao, 2012).

2.2. Urban renewal and redevelopment of urban villages

Building a modern city comes along with a process of urban regeneration which is a world-wide phenomenon that does not apply only to the Western world. The global South, including Chinese cities, follows this process in order to become developed (Swanson, 2007; Smith, 2012). Thus, it is important to discuss the process of urban renewal in Shenzhen in a global context of urban revanchism and gentrification:

> *Gentrification refers to the migration of affluent households to neighbourhoods containing poorer households and generally lower-value property in both urban and rural settlements* (Atkinson, 2012, p.269).

The character of gentrification fits the model of Chinese urban development, since its pro-economic growth approach is compatible with the strategy of reclaiming space for the more affluent classes. This tendency is naturally stronger if the poorer household, in this case an urban village, is located in the city centre, such as the case of Baishizhou. However, the redevelopment of urban villages represents a complex process because of a complicated system of property rights in which the land still belongs to the village collectives (Wang, 2009; Hin, 2011). This means that three parties are involved in the process of redevelopment, the government, the private developer and the village collective, which often makes collaboration between actors difficult. Hin (2011) made a comparative study of two villages that has been redeveloped and discussed the degree of success of the cooperation. Yunong and Gangxia villages were redeveloped in the same way, however with different outcomes. Raising of Yunon village went smoothly, all actors reached agreement quickly and there were no significant obstacles preventing the redevelopment. On the other hand, the case of Gangxia village presents a confrontational approach where the resistance from the villagers was so great that until today only half of the village has been redeveloped. According to Hin (2011), the resistance originated in the diversity of clans within the village which were not taken into account. She criticizes the top down approach towards redevelopment that does not consider the diversity of actors among the urban villages and applies 'one form fits all' which is most likely to evoke collaboration in one village and resistance in the other (2011).

The universal approach of applied redevelopment does not represent the only issue in the whole process. To fully understand the social implications that come out of the redevelopment of urban villages, the migrants' perspective cannot be missed out. Since, the migrants are excluded from all discussions involving the redevelopment plan (Hao, 2012; Hang, 2006), the

question arises, what is their fate after the demolition of their houses? This inquiry is yet missing in the majority of literature as the focus primarily goes to the institutional character of the redevelopment. Nevertheless, the migrant population forms a majority in the urban villages, since most of the landlords move out as they can afford it due to the considerable income that they receive from renting their properties. This means that the redevelopment represents, on the one hand, an eviction of thousands people who would not be able to afford rent after new designed houses are built (Hao, 2012); and on the other hand, it could turn the landlords into millionaires due to a generous compensation for the lost land, which could further deepen social inequality (Li, 2009). Therefore, the social implications of redevelopment can be characterized as one of the biggest social challenges that urban villages are about to face, adding more distress to the every-day life of the local residents.

2.3. Place representation and place identity building

2.3.1. Place production and representation

As the literature on the every-day life in the urban village is scarce, it is necessary to identify what the real image of the urban village is. More precisely, how could a place be represented in terms of its social attributes, especially in an urban context. An increasing number of social scientists and geographers consider place as a socially constructed phenomenon that can no longer be identified only with its physical characteristics, such as area or altitude, but with much overlooked social meanings and perception of place (Shields, 1997; Agnew, 1993). No place is located in a social, cultural and political vacuum with no effect on its own representation. Place becomes produced through a process called social spatialization that depicts it as a collection of diverse places, each with a distinct social mark that together create a complex socio-cultural system of space with all of its parts interconnected Moreover, this system rapidly changes in face of globalization, which brings a spatial stress to the existing space classification; the connection of global and local creates new cultural, social and political values that have changed the perception of place as a source of stability and rootedness (Shields, 1997).

Instead, proximity and distance gain different meanings and thus one's connection to place must be identified in a spatial and social context separately, since they differ distinctly in an urban context. The phenomenon of 'being close and far away' at the same time accompanies the modern notion of space in terms spatial connectedness versus social disconnectedness which reflects on the fact that people live close to each other in a city but hardly interact with

each other (Allen, 2000). This 'stranger phenomenon' is, according to Allen (2000), caused by the city-based money economy that *produces extreme reactions of detachment, reserve and a kind of blasé indifference to metropolitan life* (p. 60). This representation of place is becoming more common in big cities, especially in young ones where the physical domain of space becomes a shelter for a great social diversity of people that have come to the city from various reasons, such as Shenzhen. The nature of Shenzhen as a migrant city raises a question of how is the city perceived and who gets the voice to decide how the image would/should look like. This brings us to another topic of why some representations of place become 'correct' and are pursued in the plan of urban development and some are not being heard or considered at all. The reason might lie in the discourse of 'Other' which refers to the anchor mindset that the Western image of the city and its diverse parts is the natural way of representation of places (Duncan, 1993). This is reflected in the building of so-called 'zones of success and zones of failure' where the former serves as a template of how the city should look like, and the latter shows what should be get rid of (Miles, 1997). Following this analogy, urban villages belongs to the 'zone of failure', since they spoil an image of a clean, modern and a Western city that is desired, even in a non-western Chinese society, and thus the discussed process of urban regeneration does not count with any 'zones of failure' in the future.

Nevertheless, the representation of space discussed above serves as an image of the city that has already been conceptualized and based on scientific language. For the purpose of this thesis, the concept of representational spaces used is that defined as "lived and felt spaces of every-day life known through its associated images, and [which] involve non-verbal communication and other aspects of life in the street" (Miles, 1997), since socially-engaged and community art is based on a perception of diverse social groups that are in touch with the depicted physical environment though an every-day life social practice (Kalkman 2013; Coutts and Jokela, 2012). Therefore, the representation of an urban village from the institutional perspective as backwards, dirty places might not correspond with the perception of the local community or it might, since places are always tainted with the state/city ideology that is imposed on their residents (Shields, 1997), especially in a case of a non-democratic country as China. Either way, the sets of perception of how the city is represented can provoke a debate about a place from a perspective of different actors that usually set the image of a 'good' representation of the city which is very much needed for identifying the socio-spatial relations of place.

In conclusion, the representation of place becomes an important part in identifying and creating an image of one, in this case, a socially and spatially unique part of the city, the urban village. As place is socially constructed, its representation determines its very nature and characteristics, however, only a perspective 'from above' can never have as strong informative value as if it came from the side of the civil society who has a more direct contact with the place (Shields, 1997; Agnew, 1997). Therefore, art as a non-verbal tool of representation could help express the perception of a place within the local community leading to asking new questions motivated by the art work. Moreover, it could potentially serve as a springboard for a more accurate place representation.

2.3.2. Place identity

Place identity and a sense of place were depicted in several studies as a crucial factor for socially engaged and/or community based art (see for example Kwon, 2004; Kalkman, 2013, Hannigan 2011; Thomson, 2013). However, for examination of the relationship between place and art making, the definition of place identity is in order. According to Hernandez et al. (2007), who examined place attachment and place identity in native and non-native populations of particular areas, a place identity can be defined as:

> *The process by which, through interactions with places, people describe themselves in terms of belonging to specific place. In other words, place identity would be a component of personal identity, which develops according to the elements that typify a specific area and the nature of the interactions that occur there* (p.2, 2007).

Place identity is thus built based on both spatial and social structure, which creates a unique sense of place experienced by an individual. Nonetheless, place identity and a sense of place do not have to be constructed only among people currently residing a given place. Perkins et al. (2012) point out that a sense of place is often completed after the familiar environment changes or the person leaves the place (2012). This could mean that a former resident, who has a deep connection with the place but does not necessarily live there anymore, could also contribute with interesting insights to the reflection about the particular site. In the case of urban villages, this theory is especially valuable, as the length of residence is short and therefore former inhabitants could contribute to the discussion about place identity from the perspective of both insider and outsider.

Moreover, in relation to the community art projects, the participants do not necessarily have to be a part of the community; they only have to possess knowledge and a certain image about

the place. Kwon (2004) and Hannigan (2012) define this image as artists' notion of place meaning, which does not necessarily have to mean that the connection to the place lies only in the physical realm of dwelling. Hannigan states that, in some cases, places even rely on arts to bring the community together (2012) and thus community art can offer an alternative by bringing the artists as well as local residents together to identify social issues within the place.

2.3.3. Place identity and community building

It is worth mentioning that the definition of place identity and community itself is not sufficient in determining the effect of community art projects on creating a representation of an urban village based on both insider and outsider perspectives. The process of building place identity and community is equally important, since it informs how places are constructed and what brings communities together. According to Zimmerbauer (2011), who examined the creation of regional identity, a place is identified on two levels: an individual scale, which is characterised by personal identification with the place that could be connected with the characteristics of the particular region; and a collective idea of what the region is, which is usually constructed on the basis of a place image that has been formed outside of the region (2011). Thus, the place identity formation depends on two perceptions - the place identification of the local inhabitants, which is marked as more genuine and stable, and a place image which is created as a general representation of place that is formed outside, however that has a farther outreach and can thus be considered more powerful than the locals' association with the place (Zimmerbauer, 2011).

Moreover, the outsider's perspective of how the place identity is constructed is based on the example of the so-called central places that are at the top of urban hierarchy, places of a high interest that serve as role models for place identity building, such as modern gentrified city centers that stand out in contradiction to 'low places' –unstable, constantly in a flow 'non places' which lie on the bottom of an urban hierarchy (Crow, 1994). This perception comes from complex of socio-economic relationships that construct place from the outside and give it meaning. However, a connotation assigned to the location represents only one part of place identity, the physical characteristics of place and the observable activities of people create an important component of place identity formation which is intertwined with the outsider's perspective (Crow, 1994). Therefore, when examining place identity building, both factors of local place identity formed by the identification with the place and the associated meaning must be considered, especially when the observed place lies in the realm of a 'low place' such

as the urban village, where these two factors might be in a strong opposition to one another. This raises the question of how these places are organized from within and how do people cope with negative stigmatizations of their environment and the often unfavourable physical characteristics of their place.

According to McNeely (1999), the answer could lie in a community building among local residents which contributes to:

> *neighbours learning to rely on each other, working together on concrete tasks that take advantage of new self-awareness of their collective and individual assets and, in the process, creating human, family, and social capital that provides a new base for a more promising future* (McNeely, 1999, p. 2).

Therefore, community building can be especially useful in 'marginal' places that are not considered to be models for a 'proper' urban growth and where strong community ties could significantly improve quality of life. Moreover, it suggests that community building also lies in strengthening links outside of the community, creating opportunities for local residents to escape potential exclusion and isolation (McNeely, 1999). Nevertheless, the author does not further elaborate on the conditions under which community could be built in such places. One way could be seen in community social activities that operate under a common goal of bringing people together, or to point out the challenges that are connected to the place. Community art projects that are based on the concept of socially engaged art could serve as a successful example for achieving these goals by bringing people together in order to accomplish a project with a theme that is tightly connected to its site of origin (Horsford et al., 2014).

2.4. Socially engaged art

Socially engaged art is not easily conceptualized, as this term is usually used as a part or instead of experimental, dialogic, community based or participatory art (Roche, 2008), which is understandable, since socially engaged art can be community based, participatory or dialogic but not necessarily in every case. In an elaboration about socially-engaged art practices, Badham (2010) emphasizes that there is no theory about socially engaged art which is seen rather as a practice than as a concept itself. She further creates her own definition of this special art form:

> *Community and cultural development art processes that intend positive social change and facilitate individuals and communities in active participation in their cultural identity* (Badham, 2010, p.86).

In other words, socially engaged art connects social reality with art by engaging individual artists or communities to participate in making an art work that has a certain connection with reality. A study of Simone Kalkman (2013) who analysed an artistic project Morrinho that was created by children coming from the 'favelas' (slums in Rio de Janeiro) and reflect social issues of each favela (2013) could serve as an example of a concept of socially-engaged art depicting a similar environment as the urban village. Kalkman identifies these types of art as a community involvement in which artists engage a social group that is usually marginalized to "combine artistic goals with a tangible social-political relevance" (Kalkman, 2013). Moreover, J. Miguel Imas (2014) elaborates on the 'favela painting' further, since the idea of one community art project spread into the painting of the whole favela, which turned into an art park with the outside help of Dutch painters and the local community (2014). He further believes that the art project truly started a social transformation in the favela that empowered the local community and managed to improve a quality of life there and start a debate about favelas with a less negative connotation (Imas, 2014). This approach could be applicable to the urban villages as well, which are often considered to be slum-like and are perceived negatively.

Furthermore, socially engaged art practice can function as a supplement of a research methodology which was used by artist Jay Mead, who combines art with current research practices to raise awareness about social-environmental issues. He believes that "art makes systems more visible while creating a sense of immediacy and adding resonance to a given problem" (Stucker, 2012, p.47). Learning about one's environment through combining art making and fieldwork is not a new concept in geography and social sciences either (Miles, 2006). For example Amanda Thomson, an artist-researcher, explored the visual representation as a tool for understanding a particular landscape in Scotland:

> *My work is concerned with the familiarization of place that can come through repeated visits, processes of coming to know, and exploring how others' knowledge can be brought to bear on process, practice, and outcome* (Thomson, 2013, p.264).

Thus, manifesting social issues in the form of art gives an opportunity not only for expressing individual feelings about one's environment but also enables a more general discussion in a

public realm, debating topics could originate at the place but whose implications surpasses its physical boundary. Kwon characterizes three paradigms of art when the third paradigm art-in-the-public-interest that "foregrounds social issues and political activism and engage community collaboration" (2004, p. 60). This paradigm could easily relate to the situation of urban villages, since the social challenges in the villages are tightly connected to the political situation in the city and in the country.

Besides, socially engaged art can serve for educational purposes as well, more precisely in character building, as Kim Hyungsook (2014) calls the social learning process:

> *While engaging in these activities, participants develop the ability to make democratic decisions, the ability to make the right decisions and judgments, and a strong collaborative and volunteer spirit* (Hyungsook, 2014, p.59).

He further argues that this unusual art practice can contribute to promoting creativity and self-expression as well as to enhancing collaboration with others and gaining a new social experience whilst learning how to communicate with others (Hyungsook, 2014). Nevertheless, based on the review of the discussed articles, it seems that there are two common denominators for conducting the social art practice –a democratic base[1] and a community work. Indeed, the concept of socially-engaged art turns out to be built on a community effort to pursue the process of social learning and creativity building which needs to be further elaborated on.

2.5. Community-based art and art spaces

In all reviewed studies that depicted art as a form of expression of a social challenge, the community played a key role either as a context for a certain artistic project (Coutts and Jokela, 2012), or an active participant in the project-making (Leichner, 2014; Hannigan, 2012). Coutts and Jokela (2012) claim that "community art is a form of education through art" (p.2), raising awareness about the social concerns within a certain community. Kalkman's (2013) and Stucker's studies (2012) argue that the artistic expression of social reality requires a community to accomplish the goal that was established in the beginning of the project, which is to understand the shared environment of the community.

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[f] The question of democracy will be further discussed in the last chapter.

Apart from learning about the social issues of a particular environment, community art projects also help to enhance community building among the artists and improve their communication skills. As Coutts and Jokela (2012) argue: "It's not possible to be an effective community artist unless one can communicate well and work in a team, in a flexible, confident matter" (p.2). That means that community art projects do not serve only as an individual expression of artists' abilities but also as an acknowledgment of others, of their ideas and presentation (Hannigan 2012). In other words, in order to build strong community ties, one needs to learn to become a team player first and learn how to listen and accept thoughts and opinions from other players.

However, the process of making a community art projects requires a certain community of practice which includes three critical elements: engagement, imagination and alignment, where engagement is seen as "sharing practices on regular basis", imagination as creating "new images of the world and ourselves" and alignment as "coordinating our energies and activities in order to fit within broader structures" (Bettiol, 2011, p.470). Therefore, a community practice that is needed for developing creative projects, requires that participants be in regular contact, a will to embrace new experiences and a structured cooperation by all actors (Bettiol, 2011). On the other hand, regular contact and structured cooperation require a proper environment where the community art projects can be carried out. Art spaces can serve this purpose very well as they are multifunctional, including their function as community centers where artists can share and exchange information as well as create a new social network (Grodach, 2010). Moreover, art spaces can usually facilitate more than one discipline which creates an opportunity for a variety of actors, hence not only do they support a community and social network building but also nurture the artistic potential of individuals who normally would not have a chance to explore their talents (Grodach, 2010). Hannigan (2012) further adds that school children in particular do not have access to display their art works in high art places, such as museums and exhibitions, and thus community art projects advance the possibility for them to use their creative abilities. Finally, she argues that community arts not only reflect but also respond to society and help to highlight the construction of place and identity in which the art project is displayed (2012). Thus, there must be a reflection on the site and social variety of the place and its socio-artistic relation must be examined farther in the context of the art location (Comunian, 2010), in this case that of the urban village.

Nevertheless, the following question must be asked when dealing with the concept of place identity building: to what extent can a general literature be written from a Western perspective for establishing a connection between art and a space in the Chinese context? The answer lies in exploring community ties and art in China and making a comparison between these two perspectives in the final section of the literature review.

2.6. Art and community in the Chinese context

In order to examine community-based or socially-engaged art in the Chinese context, a general overview of the art perception and art education will be given to position the debate in a broader context.

2.6.1. Art and art education in China

Art in China and art education in China are still formed by a traditional perception of Chinese art and its teaching, which could be divided into four main categories: industrial arts, architecture, sculpture and painting called the Chinese fine art. Fine art can be characterized by high technical and aesthetic quality of the artwork which dates back to ancient China but is still popular today. For example, the art of calligraphy or sculpture and pottery making is still being appreciated as high art and learning about it is a part of school syllabus. On the other hand, due to the rising influence of Western culture, a free drawing based on an expression of feelings without the necessity to follow a prescribed pattern occurs more often nowadays (Chang, 2005).

Young children and teachers are often caught in the middle of fulfilling other purposes of Chinese art than art appreciation and cultivating beauty, namely the tool for an ideological pursuit. Therefore, the 'free' artistic expression must, to a certain extent, coincide with the official curriculum, which causes a fragile balance between a creation based on imagination and one that nurtures patriotism and socialism (Perry, 1998). Moreover, the lack of trained professionals as art teachers leads to the lesser accessibility of art at schools, when students who are trained in social sciences, humanities or art studies can achieve high quality education, whereas students of natural sciences receive minimal art background and awareness (Perry, 1998; Chang, 2005).

Furthermore, the literature depicting an alternative art education and alternative art platforms is scarce, when only a few sources describe non-formal education in China, which are however still supported by the central government. For example, the study *Mass Cultural*

Education System of China by Nai-Kwai Lo (1989), which is an organization supported by the Ministry of Culture that provides art education to the low income class in the urban and rural areas for two reasons: first, there is a lack of amateur artists and thus non-existing cultural life in the poor areas; and second, by attending a non-formal education program, the participants experience a personal development and knowledge acquisition. However, this non-formal education does not provide students with the necessary certificates that the 'privileged' students enrolled in formal education have, and thus they cannot successfully compete on the labour market (Lo, 1989).

In conclusion, art in China appears to have a fixed representation of highly aesthetic quality work that still has a strong connection with traditional Chinese art forms and excludes alternative art practices from its definition. Moreover, community-based art in China that would be built from the bottom up is also unknown, and this raises the question of how community functions in China and how it could be defined.

2.6.2. Community in Chinese villages

The term community is widely used today in several different contexts, however especially when dealing with cultural differences, it is important to establish what the concept means in an examined environment - China in the case of this research. Chinese community is often considered as a homogenous group, a collectivist society with strong family ties and social networks (Xu et al., 2005). In reality, there is strong cohesion among community members, however, there is a large amount of communities in China to which the universal term 'Chinese community' cannot be applied so simply. Moreover, diverse communities are closed to outsiders and members of other communities, which is a especially significant phenomenon in migrant cities like Shenzhen, and more specifically in places where different cultures and communities come together, like the urban village (Hao 2012; Bach 2010; Hang, 2006).

Taking into account the heterogeneity of social structure in urban villages, the picture of community cohesion is slowly vanishing. Both urban and rural villages are experiencing hierarchy in power relations leading naturally to social inequality (Dai, 2013; He et al., 2010). As the Chinese government cut the welfare policy drastically in the transition to market economy, it tried to shift the responsibility of 'caring' to the local communities in within the villages. However, even in the rural communities, social hierarchy and internal conflicts are present and thus it is difficult to establish an alternative welfare program in the form of community protection (Dai, 2013). However, Dai's study (2013) shows that if there is a

common goal that the villagers try to accomplish and which reaches beyond the village, they will mobilize into one community and act as a whole (2013). The urban villages as a combination of urban and rural share hierarchical structures and conflicts among different social groups, however, the social diversity in the urban villages is much larger than in the case of natural villages. They are three social groups present in villages within the city: indigenous villagers, holders of non-local urban *hukou*, and rural *hukou* owners (He et al., 2010). Moreover, each of these groups, except for the original villagers, overlap in several communities, since migrants come to Shenzhen from different provinces. Finally, not all migrants come to the city of opportunities with their families, which reduces the possibility of both community and family ties being built in the urban villages.

In conclusion, the concept of community rapidly changed after the economy transformation began in 1979 when the new socio-economic relations magnified the gap between social classes and broke community ties that had been strong until then. Furthermore, in regard to community participation, migrants face double exclusion from social activities in the local community, as that is reserved for privileged groups of residents –the original villagers (He et al., 2010). First, as outsiders from different ethnic and social group, they are not welcomed in joining community activities and second, their length or residence is too short to build any attachment to the neighbourhood and build social networks that could help them integrate in the community (Wu, 2012). And lastly, due to the decline of social interactions among urban communities in general, which can be caused by the growing diversity of the urban population and the decline of social welfare (He et al., 2010), the participation in any community activity which does not necessarily have to have an art character depends on several factors such as the feeling of being welcome, calculation of time consumption when deciding to take part in the activity and the strength of attachment to the neighbourhood and community (He t al., 2010; Wu, 2012).

3. RESEARCH AREA

3.1. Shenzhen

Shenzhen is one of the fastest growing cities in the world, both population and spatial growth is truly remarkable. It went from approximately 300.000 inhabitants in 1980 to 10,6 million[2] in 2013, covering a land area of almost 20.000 km^2 sustaining 10 districts: Futian, Luohu, Yantian, Nanshan, Baoan, Longgang, Guangming, Pingshan, Longhu, and Dapeng (Shenzhen Statistical Yearbook, 2014). The rapid urban development was evoked by Shenzhen being established as an experimental city for trying a new model of economic development though socialist market economy – SEZ, based on more flexible economic measures and opening up to foreign capital (Ng, 2003). The connection to foreign markets was a lot easier due to Shenzhen's proximity to the city of Hong Kong, which served Shenzhen as trade partner as well as the source of inspiration for urban development (Ng, 2003). Moreover, opening up to new economic opportunities, Shenzhen soon became a migrant city, which apart from economic growth caused numerous social and environmental problems (Ng, 2003) that are to a great extent present in the urban villages.

3.2. Baishizhou

Baishizhou is the largest urban village in Shenzhen. In fact it comprises a total of five urban villages: Baishizhou, Xin Tang, Tangtou, Upper and Lower Baishi. This makes it one of the most diverse urban villages in Shenzhen. The population of Baishizhou includes diverse communities that consist of migrants coming to Shenzhen from various provinces in China and creates a unique social mosaic (O'Donnell, 2013). Moreover, Baishizhou represents a special type of urban village, since it does not attract only low skilled workers but also young and highly educated professionals who are searching for cheap accommodation after graduation, as their initial salaries are not high enough to afford lodgings elsewhere (Bontje 2013; Veeken, 2013). The potential of Baishizhou as one of the most popular cheap places to live lies in its convenience in terms of easily accessible amenities of all kinds, multiple choices of public transportation and a favourable geographical location, Baishizhou is located next to the theme park Window of the World, the creative centre Overseas China Town (OCT) and a High-Tech park. This translates into convenient cheap housing right next to attractive working opportunities (Li et al., 2014). However, both OCT and Window of the World are physically separated from Baishizhou with fences and green spaces, the one side of

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[2] This estimation counts only with registered inhabitants, the total number might be as twice as high.

the theme park facing Baishizhou has even a tall wall so that visiting tourists cannot see to the village, hence highlighting the stigmatization of the urban village (O'Donnell, 2013).

3.2.1. Social and spatial challenges in Baishizhou

Baishizhou shows typical socio-spatial attributes of urban villages such as high density, poor living conditions and polluted environment with a high concentration of migrant population searching for a cheap accommodation. However, as Baishizhou represents one of the most convenient villages in the city due to its strategic geographical location, the consequences of social diversity and overpopulation are magnified. For example, the size of public space as well as the access to it is limited due to the dense infrastructure and flow of people (Li et al., 2014). Moreover, the spatial distribution of buildings at some parts rather resemble 'kiss' style buildings, meaning that the building are taller and the space between is even narrower than for a handshake (Bach, 2010), which increases the environmental hazard as well as worsens the living conditions when, for example, the lack of natural illumination presents is evident for the majority of Baishizhou's population. Furthermore, social diversity apparently increases crime rate in the village and thus safety is becoming a serious issue of physical and social characteristics (Li et al., 2014).

3.2.2. Prospect of redevelopment

Despite the fact that Baishizhou is a special kind of urban village, it has not been excluded from the process of urban regeneration. On the contrary, the location of the village is convenient not only for migrants looking for affordable accomodation, but also for urban planners who would like to give Baishizhou the same design as its neighbour OCT and turn it into a modern space. Mary Ann O'Donnell elaborates on this topic further:

> *The plan to renew 'the five Shahe villages' was submitted by the Shenzhen Baishizhou Investment Company Ltd. It calls for razing 459,000 square meters of built area. The area has been zoned for residential and commerce [spaces], with at least 135,857 square meters of public space* (O'Donnell, 2014).

The redevelopment process already started earlier this year with the demolition of the Northern part of Baishizhou (see figure 3.2). However, based on previous literature, the redevelopment plan for the village was planned almost over a decade ago, therefore it is not expected that Baishizhou will disappear altogether any time soon (Bontje, 2013). However, the precise plan for demolition is already known and the residents are informed about it through distinctive orange boards that include both the precise locations for upcoming

demolition and the drawing of the final image of Baishizhou after the redevelopment (see figure 3.3, 3.4). The course of the negotiation between the government, the private developer and the village collective is not yet known, nevertheless, as goes for other urban villages as well, the migrants will be excluded from the discussion (Veeken, 2013).

Figure 3.1 - List of villages that are planned for redevelopment in the Nanshan district (Baishizhou villages are those of number 3)

Serial number	Area	Street	Unit Name	Subjects of declaration	Proposed demolition and reconstruction of the land area (Sqm)	Remark
3	Nanshan	River Street	Shahe five villages of urban renewal units (range adjustment)	Shenzhen Investment and Development Co., Ltd. Baishizhou	459542	① Intend to update direction for residential, commercial and other functions; ② Land for public interest projects, no less than 135.857 square meters.
4	Nanshan	River Street	Golden Triangle Building, Urban Renewal Unit	Shenzhen Shahe Industry (Group) Co., Ltd.	12050	① Intend to update the direction of business and other functions; ② Land for public interest projects, not less than 3000 square meters.
5	Nanshan	River Street	Beauty industry Court of urban renewal unit	Shenzhen Greenview Real Estate Development Co., Ltd.	13865	① Intend to update the direction of new industries and other functions; ② Land for public interest projects, not less than 3000 square meters.

6	Nansha n	Xili Street	World of Concrete Urban Renewal Unit	Shenzhen World of Concrete Co.	12475	① Intend to update the direction of new industries and other functions; ② Land for public interest projects, not less than 3000 square meters.
7	Nansha n	Taoyua n Street	Pearl Village Urban Renewal Unit (range adjustment)	Shenzhen, Beijing-based Real Estate Co., Ltd.	135520	① Intend to update direction for residential, commercial and other functions; ② Land for public interest projects, not less than 31.575 square meters.

Source: Shenzen Statistical Yearbook (2014)

Figure 3.2. Beginning of redevelopment of the Northern part of Baishizhou

Source: http://shenzhennoted.com/2015/04/02/baishizhou-withering-practices

Figure 3.3 - Map of Baishizhou and a redevelopment plan displayed in the village

2014年已批沙河五村城市更新单元拆除重建范围示意图

拟拆除重建范围面积：459542m²

Source: http://shenzhennoted.com/2015/04/02/baishizhou-withering-practices

4. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1. Research questions

Based on the research aim and the literature review, the following research question and six sub-questions are generated:

What is the aim of community art projects in Bashizhou and how are they connected to the socio-spatial characteristics of urban villages in the sense of place identity and community building?

> *1. What is the character of community art projects and to what extent do they appear in Baishizhou?*

The aim of this question is to get a general idea about the nature of community art projects in Baishizhou, and determine the exact locations and frequency of occurrence of these projects.

> *2. What is the aim of those projects and who are they targeted for?*

This question is meant to identify the purpose/s of the community art projects, the incentive of the main actors for establishing an art space, performance and etc., and the intended target group.

> *3. Who are the actors responsible for the creation/organization of the community art projects and what is their incentive for organizing and participating in such projects in Baishizhou?*

Using this question, the profile of all curators and participants in the community art projects will be established in order to identify the motivation for joining these projects and determine their relationship with the urban village.

> *4. What topics emerge in particular art projects and how are they connected to the subject matter of urban villages?*

Particular community art works will be analysed to establish a connection with the urban village and compare the artists' intentions with the local community perception.

5. Who belongs to the audience of these projects, local residents or outsiders? Does their perception correspond with the aim of the projects?

The aim of this question is to determine the actors belonging to the audience, especially whether they are part of Baishizhou's local community or not. Moreover, their opinions about art and community will be examined.

6. To what extent does the image of an urban village offered by the community art projects influence the general perception of urban village among local and outer communities?

Finally, the influence of community art projects will be put into question, especially their ability to inform about the urban village from a different standpoint than that being offered by official reports regarding the redevelopment plan.

4.2. Design

Based on the literature review and the nature of my research questions, I have decided to apply interdisciplinary research framework and a qualitative research design with a combination of a visual analysis, as the analysed materials are partly in visual form. The research design will be mainly descriptive, interpretative and exploratory, since I wish to research the characteristics of the community art project as well as to interpret how place, in this case an urban village, is represented in art.

Moreover, an emergent design based on an inductive approach was used in order not to rely too much on existing theories for two reasons: first, ideas about the research topic which are too specific might lead to researcher's bias and to make conclusions abruptly when basing the findings on theory rather than preliminary data; second, the rapid urban development that Shenzhen is facing does not allow for fixating on theoretical knowledge, since these materials become outdated already during the research period, especially in regard of the urban villages that in the face of redevelopment start disappearing or changing their physical and social characteristics completely. Simultaneously, a method of grounded theory was used to generate categories and later themes using a thorough coding system. This method is especially fitting for this type of research, as it allows for flexibility during all research phases by implementing change into the process (Corbin, J. & Strauss, A., 1990), which is very much needed when dealing with multiple sources of data and actors in a rapidly changing area.

On the other hand, a strictly inductive approach was combined with a deductive approach, as it was not possible to go to the field completely 'native' to generate all the findings out of pure observation within six weeks. Theoretical concepts as well as their operationalization for generating the interview guide and an observational plan were conducted as a solid base for a more objective and structured fieldwork. Finally, the theoretical concepts used for literature review were confronted with the newly emerged concepts in the discussion session.

4.3. Conceptual scheme

In order to answer the main research question and its sub-questions, the definition of all concepts is necessary as well as their proper operationalization. The conceptual scheme below (Figure 4.1) shows the relations of all concepts.

Figure 4.1- Conceptual scheme
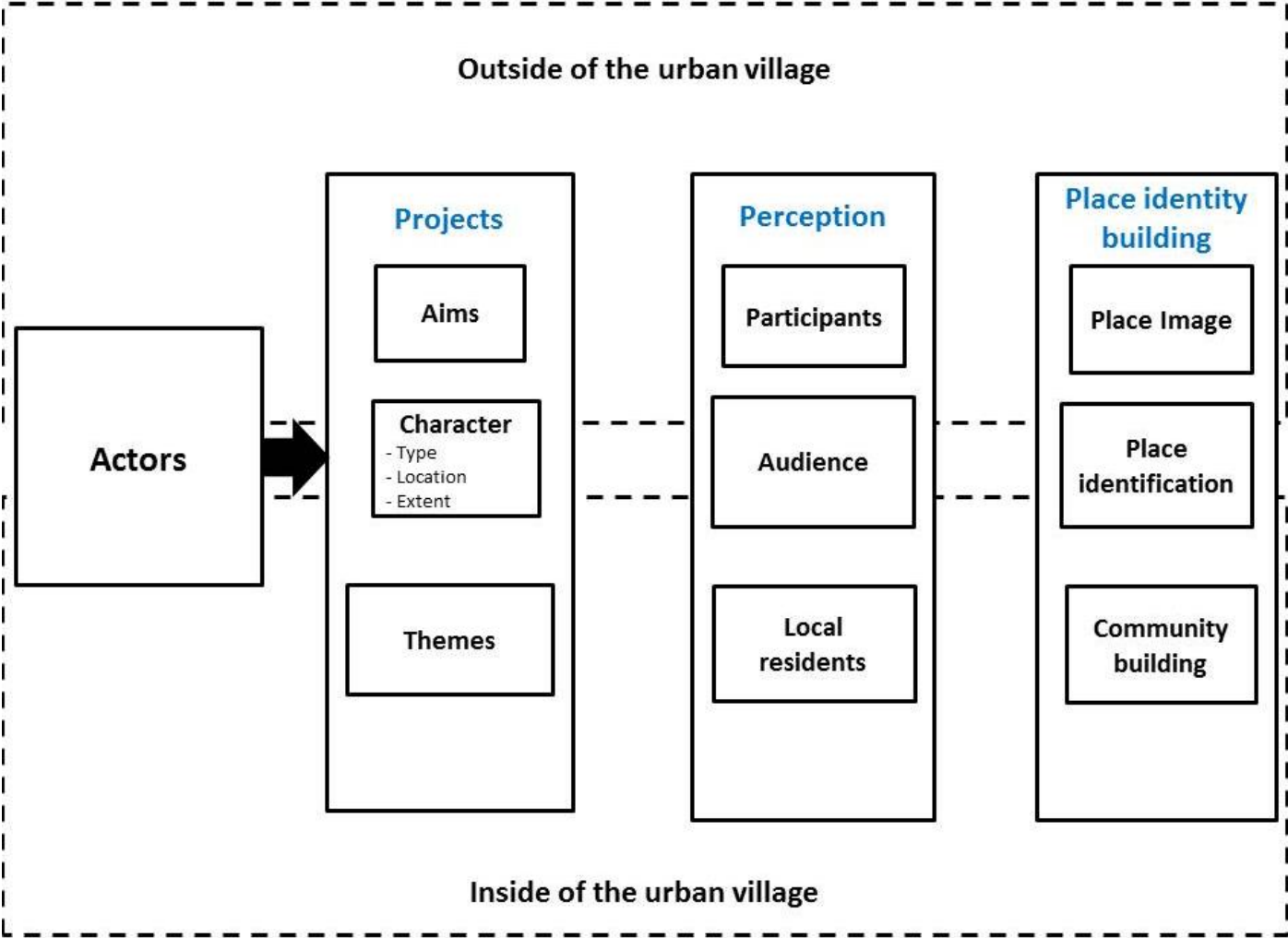
Definition of concepts

Actors: All actors involved in the community art projects, either directly attending or only following the projects.

Aims: The goal of community art projects - Plural is used, since there might multiple aims that they are trying to reach.

Character: The type of community art project, its location and extent of occurrence.

Themes: Motives that emerge on the art works, a content of the paintings, drawings, songs and etc.

Participants: Actors that actively participate in the project making.

Audience: Followers of the community art projects that do not directly participate but are interested in the art works and the process of their making.

Local residents: A perception of the projects by local residents of Baishizhou.

Community building: A formation of community among local residents of the urban village through participation in common social activities (McNelly, 1999) such as community art projects.

Place identity building:

- *Place image: A socially constructed image of a place, formed from the outsider's perspective, based on Zimmerbauer's concept of regional identity (2011).*
- *Place identity: "A component of personal identity, a process by which, through interaction with places, people describe themselves in terms of belonging to a specific place'' (Hernandez, 2007).*

Operationalization

The scheme is divided into two rectangles which represent the most important indicator for examining community art projects in Baishizhou and their contribution to place identity and community building - the relationship of the actors and projects with the urban village. The scheme begins on the left with actors as the most important variable that serves as a base unit for the whole process of analysis. The main topic of community art projects has been divided into three units of analysis: aims of the projects; their character and their emerging themes. The dimension 'character' was further operationalized to identify the factors that will be used

for the data collection and analysis, type of project, its location and extent of occurrence. Moreover, a dimension perception will be explored from the perspective of participants, audience and the local residents who do not necessarily have to be followers and belong to the audience. Finally, the question of place identity building will be investigated, by dividing the concept into three main dimensions: place identification, place image and community building. Place identification represents the attachment with place built by the urban village's local inhabitants or by the outsiders who might potentially identify with the places through the projects. On the other hand the place image portrays a general image of the urban village that has been socially constructed from an outsider's perspective that can influence the residential perception, however comes outside of the village and therefore is listed as a concept belonging to the rectangle 'outside of the urban village'. In the end, it will be determined whether the community art projects can contribute to the community building among local residents or alternatively among the participants themselves.

4.4. Case study selection

I have chosen an intensive study designed to shed a light on a larger number of cases in the population as a single case study (Gerring, 2007). However, first of all it is important to establish what type of case Baishizhou is, and this largely depends on the definition of urban village. If the urban villages were perceived in a traditional sense as places for poor working migrants (Hang, 2006; Hao, 2012), Baishizhou could certainly not to be considered as a typical case but rather a deviant one (Gerring, 2007) that could nevertheless clarify where the future of urban villages lies. In this perspective, Baishizhou fits into the scheme of my research design, since it offers a foundation for a relatively innovative research combining qualitative research methods with visual analysis.

4.5. Data collection

Since qualitative research is an interpretative research design that always introduces some subjectivity into the research, it is necessary to use more sources of data to support data triangulation (Creswell, 2009). In the case of this research project, observation, semi-structured interviews, and mental mapping were used to acquire as much in-depth information as possible, as the interpretation of visual materials always brings some subjectivity and bias into the research process. Therefore, the size of sample and the choice of participants attempted to include as much diversity of actors as possible to collect truly relevant material.

4.5.1. Sample

A purposive sampling was used due to the specificity of studied phenomena which includes particular groups of actors from the side of artists and the audience. In total, 15 in depth interviews[3], 10 short interviews, and several observations were made. In addition, 21 open questionnaires with the participants of an observed ongoing project were carried out to replace the interview process. The participants were high school and secondary school students with a very tight schedule so an in-depth interview was not an option. Nonetheless, this method allowed for a larger sample that would not be possible in the case of interviews. Finally, 11 mental maps were collected as a part of the questionnaires to enable the younger participants to express their opinion about the urban village in a more visual and entertaining way which, in some cases, had more informative value than a verbal or written expression. Unfortunately, not all of the respondents were willing to make a map due to their lack of confidence in their drawing skills.

Finally, the conclusions drawn from the chosen samples took into an account the educational background and the relationship with the urban village, since these factors are highly relevant for answering the research questions. Gender and age were not considered, as their significance for this research purpose was secondary to the former variables.

4.5.2. Observation

There was a community art project starting in Baishizhou during my field work period, thus I chose a method of being partly participant and partly in complete observation (Creswell, 20090. I was present at all meetings that included activities of Handshake 302. I also explored the village itself and searched for other public art activities such as street art or performances. Regarding my participation in Handshake 302, I attended all debates, during which I focused on the process of project making. My role as a researcher was known and, to avoid a bias from my part, I decided to choose the role of complete observer (Creswell, 2009) and did not join the discussions about the procedures of the project preparations in order not to influence the process in any way.

The observed art project *Shaking Hands with the Future* aims to compare the insights of two groups of high school students, one from a very prestigious high-quality education, the Shenzhen Junior High School, and the other, the low-income class Guandong Xin' An

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[3] In depth interviews lasted longer than 30 minutes. Shorter interviews usually lasted between 10 -20 minutes.

Polytechnic College, about the urban village environment. These two distinct social groups observed urban villages independently and then communicated their opinions and painted on the walls in the Handshake apartment together to express their moods about urban villages. Therefore, I followed the participants of both groups to see how they proceeded with their own observations and attended meetings where they shared their first impressions and feelings about Baishizhou and other urban villages.

4.5.3. Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews were chosen for the purpose of this thesis as they enable the researcher to ask follow up questions based on the situation. Moreover, participants open up more easily and talk freely about their opinions and perceptions (Bryman, 2008). All in-depth and short interviews were conducted with the help of translators from Shenzhen and Beijing universities who used this opportunity to improve their language skills and experience a cultural exchange at the same time. An interview guide with several questions, including the personal background of the respondent, his/her relationship with the urban village and the experience with community art projects in Baishizhou or other urban villages was created to structure the interview into a direction suitable for my research interest. Furthermore, taking into account the language barrier and limited time spent on the field, the interview guide helped to create a basic outline for the translators before each interview that was consulted for potential ambiguities and inconsistencies. Finally, all interviews were recorded on an Iphone 5 device if the respondent approved it. In cases when participants refused to be recorded, thorough notes were made during the interview process.

4.5.4. Mental mapping

A mental mapping technique was chosen to first learn about the involved actors and their perception about the urban village, and second, to see with what mind set they approach the village. The reason behind asking the respondents to draw a mental map was to acquire a more accurate representation of place and identify people's attitudes towards it as their actions are always guided by mental images and maps of particular places (Tuan, 1975; Lynch, 1960). According to Lynch (1960), a place becomes remarkable with the individuals' meanings and connections with the place which transcends the physical dimension and creates a complex phenomenon that is based on pre-construction and perception more than on the physical characteristics, which adds symbolic value to place (1960). In the case of an urban village, which represents a truly unique place both spatially and socially, mental maps provide

an image of the space from a perspective of a variety of actors whose level of involvement with the village differs greatly and thus offers an interesting image of the urban village perception.

4.6. Data analysis

An interdisciplinary approach composed of a method of a qualitative coding, and of a visual analysis, was used. This methodology allows acquiring data from visual materials, such as photography, film, painting and etc.

4.6.1. Qualitative analysis

Before the actual analysis, a transcription of all data –including interview recordings and field notes– was conducted together with a translation of questionnaires in order to create a general overview of the raw data. Later on, data was coded in Atlas.ti, a software enabling manipulation of big sets of data, including visual materials (Creswell, 2009). A combination of open and axial coding was used to first find all possible categories in the data and later axial coding served as a tool for looking for codes that were repeated several times, to see if they perhaps fit an emerging pattern. Finally, codes with a similar pattern were grouped together into categories and later into themes which became the main points for the findings chapter, as well as topics for discussion. In the process of data coding, a list of respondents was created to obtain information about actors' profiles, especially their relationship with the urban village, which turned out to be one of the most important factors influencing the incentive for participation, as well as the perception of the community art projects in Baishizhou. Finally, questionnaires were coded in the same way as the in-depth interviews, unlike mental maps, which were analysed visually.

4.6.2. Visual Analysis

A visual analysis of the art projects, such as drawings, photographs and mental maps, determined the connecting patterns of art and social reality that these projects aim to symbolize. Visualization in general is an important part of geography, since the integrated visual knowledge acquired from maps or other visual materials can reveal new cultural landscapes (Flowerdew, 2005) and make them more accessible for the reader. Moreover, art and photography can serve as powerful *"geographical representations […] viewed as cultural images that represent, structure and symbolize our surroundings –the images become places that can be analysed to better understand lived experience"* (Flowerdew, 2015, p. 256).

Nevertheless, to fully understand the relationship between image and space, the context of the artist's background should be established to get a broader perspective about the conditions under which the image was made. Furthermore, the knowledge obtained from the visual analysis must be positioned within the theoretical framework of place (2005), in this case, urban villages. During the fieldwork, I fulfilled these conditions by interviewing both the artists, who made the art works, and their audience, who were asked to express their opinions and feelings about these paintings. Moreover, the profiles of all actors were examined in terms of their relationship with the urban village, which helped me obtain the necessary context behind the art making and its perception in relation to the explored environment. The same procedure was repeated with mental maps that were also treated as a special type of artwork themselves, as some of them showed an extraordinary artistic quality.

4.7. Validity and reflexivity

Ensuring validity is a crucial part of the research process to ensure the legitimacy and relevance of the research theory (Kitchin, 2000). That can be achieved by data triangulation and avoiding excessive subjectivity, which is especially difficult to elude in qualitative research design (Creswell, 2009; Bryman, 2008). Data was triangulated by using multiple sources, namely, a variety of actors to gather as many viewpoints as possible; multiple methods of data collection; specifically in-depth and short interviews; observations and open questionnaires with the inclusion of mental maps; and finally, multiple theoretical perspectives, especially a comparison of Western and Chinese literature about art and community that was used to gather a broader perspective on the subject.

Objectivity was also ensured by including critical reflexivity in the research (Hay, 2010). This was achieved by integrating critical reflection into the research process itself. I evaluated the collected data in the context of the socio-spatial situation of the urban village, and combined it with a cultural relativism perspective while attempting to avoid any ethnocentric prejudices of my own culture. Peer review feedback from both respondents and translators allowed me to evaluate the collected data and their inclusion into the text within the process of thesis writing.

4.8. Ethical Considerations

The purpose of my thesis lies in an exploration of social phenomena in a visual form of several artistic projects, which requires manipulation of sensitive data, especially taking into

consideration the complex situation around the redevelopment plan. Therefore approval from all participants and gatekeepers was obtained and participants were informed that the acquired data will be used only for the research purposes of this master thesis. Names of participants were omitted to ensure their anonymity unless they wished for their names to be published. Moreover, the aim of the research project was explained to all respondents as thoroughly as possible, answering all questions from their side.

4.9. Research limitations

The limitations that I faced during the fieldwork were not scarce: first of all, the language barrier was an omnipresent issue that sometimes could not be overcome, even in the presence of a translator. For example, in cases when literal translation was used for a particular expression without knowing how to explain its meaning. Because of this it was very difficult to understand what the respondent's standpoint was. Therefore, the cultural barrier combined with the language barrier may have a caused certain data distortion and a partial bias during the process of data collection. Secondly, due to the redevelopment plan that is being carried out in Baishizhou, access to respondents from the local community was limited, as they were very cautious about discussing any matter connected to the urban village with strangers. A great deal of negotiation takes place in Baishizhou these days regarding the renewal process and the local residents are very careful to share any information that could possible render them victims to future discrimination.

Moreover, some topics for discussion, especially the living conditions in urban villages and their upcoming fate in the form of urban renewal turned out to be a very sensitive issue, and thus the responses among interviewees contradict each other greatly, which at times also goes for the answers of the same respondent. Therefore, making a conclusion based on such great diversity of contradicting statements was not easy. Furthermore, the perception of art projects is subjective in general, as in my research case it required a thorough process of interpretation to avoid a bias in my conclusions. Finally, a general comparison to other villages and even other community art project was not entirely possible due to the uniqueness of the observed phenomena, which originate out of the special socio-spatial characteristics of the urban village of Baishizhou. Therefore, the role of this research lies exclusively in a deeper understanding of the research topic and its connection to socially relevant issues.

5. FINDINGS

The urban village of Baishizhou represents a unique design in both its spatial and social form that provides an opportunity for the emergence of bottom up creative projects due to its low cost of housing and other easily available amenities. (Hao, 2012; Hang, 2006) However, theis paper's findings show that the concept of community art work and community itself differs in China, particularly in the urban villages. This chapter summarizes research findings that are structured according to the research questions, beginning with a definition of community art projects in Baishizhou, a discussion of the motivations of involved actors, and and examination of the perception of local residents. Lastly, several barriers that prevent local residents from participating in art projects were found during the observation and interviewing process which are explained in the last chapter.

5.1. Type of community art projects in Baishizhou

Two types of community art projects were observed in Baishizhou: a volunteer group ,Handshake 302, which specializes in linking its art making with a discussion about the urban village and other type of artistic activities that the local residents are involved in, such as street performance and traditional community Chinese art activities –dancing or singing. However, these types of activities have nothing to do with the concept of socially-engaged art and some of them cannot be classified as a community collaboration either, therefore, the purpose of their examination lies in identifying what kind of art works and performances are carried out in Baishizhou by the villagers, and compare them to the art studio of Handshake 302 to challenge the notion of art itself, since the unique environment of the village offers a special kind of social activities that gives the place a specific character.

5.1.1. The case of Handshake 302

Handshake 302 became a primary focus of this thesis for its direct connection with the urban village and because it is a unique example of a bottom up initiative engaging in research within the villages in the city throughout community art activities that include a variety of diverse actors. Handshake 302 (a name resembling the proximity of 'handshake' buildings common in urban villages) was established in 2012 as "a group organized to engage Shenzhen's urban villages through art, theatre, and social media documentary projects", takes part in the creative development of urban villages (O'Donnell, 2013). Handshake is located in an apartment on the Shangbaishi rd. 49, Baishizhou, Shenzhen and provides an art space for

activities such as painting, and musical and theatrical performances that are always accompanied by a discussion of the artists and the audience of a certain project after the art work is completed (Interview 1-3, 2015). However, despite the variety of projects and actors involved, the art space itself consists only of one room with a small bathroom that serves as a base for conducting art projects and holding an occasional exhibition which means that the walls are being repainted after each project and the space is in an ongoing flux. There are no permanent exhibitions held in Handshake 302 and no established group of actors that would be involved in all projects. This is because Handshake 302 is a voluntary organization based on a mutual interest in the urban village and an alternative artistic experience without any monetary benefit (Interview 1-3, 2015). Therefore, Handshake could fit a definition of art spaces "that focus on the presentation and support of regional art work, are publicly accessible, do not contain a permanent collection or resident company, and do not consider art sales their primary function" (Grodach, 2010, p.77). Nevertheless, in the case of Handshake 302, its art products are not sold, and it does not serve as an employment base, in fact, the group functions exclusively as a free space for artistic expression and a discussion about social issues connected to the urban villages or the city of Shenzhen in general (Interview 1, 3, 2015)**.** As for the size of the space, Handshake 302 is smaller than a small sized art space as defined in the literature, which leads to a collaboration with public spaces in Baishizhou, such as the Cultural Plaza or other locations in other urban villages or neighbourhoods, namely Dalang or the Xiasha village (Interview 1, 2015). Moreover, it is important to mention that Handshake 302 is located inside a the building, on the third floor and does not serve as an open public art platform, as it is customary in Western countries (Miles, 1997). This finding will later play an important role in establishing the purpose of the art studio.

It is worth mentioning that the founder of Handshake 302 is an American anthropologist, Mary Ann O'Donnell, who moved to Shenzhen 20 years ago to conduct a research and document Shenzhen's rapid urban development (Interview 1, 2015). This raises questions about a possible cultural clash and the choice of participants for the community art projects , as it might lead to a distorted image about the art and community perception in the Chinese context. Therefore all outcomes that were generated out of the observations and interviews about Handshake 302 will be discussed in the next chapters within a theoretical framework of community art projects from both Western and Chinese perspectives, as well as related to the social and spatial nature of the research area of Baishizhou.

Figure 5.1 - Location of Handshake 302 and other cultural hotspots in Baishizhou

Source: http://shenzhennoted.com/2013/10/18/handshake-302-sneak-preview

5.1.2. Other type of artistic activities in Baishizhou[4]

Other types of artistic projects were observed on the streets of Baishizhou, mainly on the Shahe road, in the community centre and at the Cultural Plaza. These activities include a graffiti project, painting on the street, community dancing and singing and music performances on the street by individuals or small groups of artists. An example of a unique case of a street art (see Figure 5.2.) is that of 70 year-old beggar who draws on the pavement on a small space leading to Shahe Road[5]. He draws exclusively with chalk and the motives appearing on his drawing are always animals, such as a horse or a rat but the most frequent image is a cow. Some of his drawings have an explanatory note next to it such as in the case of Figure 5.2.:

> *"The cow is very powerful, it fears nothing in the world. In the goat year, you have a great luck. May wealth arrive in your house"* (Beggar, 2015).

When asked about his motivation for drawing on the pavement, he stated that he likes drawing animals but no person would want to buy his work, so he is just drawing on the street and if somebody gets interested in his work, they can buy it.

In conclusion, these art activities are relatively frequent in Baishizhou, however, they reflect on the social reality to a lesser degree or not all, and if they do, the topics usually correspond with traditional Chinese mythology or culture but not with the urban village. Therefore, since the research interest of this thesis lies primarily in the representation of place through art, the focus will be on the Handshake 302 and revealing its purpose as a unique art practice that forms a direct link with the urban village. However, Handshake 302 operates on a small scale and not on a public venue, so this paper's exploration of other artistic activities serves to reach a deeper understanding of the place itself and its unique atmosphere.

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[4] These findings are only based on secondary sources materials and observation, as none of the artists were willing to or had time to talk me.

[5] The information about the beggar was obtained as a secondary source from a student participating in the project 'Shaking hands with the future'.

Figure 5.2 - A local beggar and his art work

Source: Author (2015)

Figure 5.3 - Disabled artists performing in Baishizhou near the metro A exit

Source: Author (2015)

Figure 5.4 - Graffiti made by unknown artist(s) and Musicians performing in Baishizhou on Shahe Road

Source: Author (2015)

Figure 5.5 - Music performance training in the Community centre (left). Community dancing at the Cultural Plaza (right)

Source: Author (2015)

5.2. Actors' profile and their incentive for participation

To determine what brings a great variety of participants to Handshake 302, it is first necessary to create actors' profiles, especially their relationship with the urban village, in this case to one of the most diverse urban villages in Shenzhen (Interview 10, 2015). Thus the scale of possible topics depicted either through an art work or just in a discussion is truly broad, attracting actors from Baishizhou as well as from other, mostly commercial neighbourhoods. The actors differ both in their motivation to participate and in their occupation; only a minority of participants are artists, whereas the other professions include urban planners, social scientists, architects and designers (Interview 1, 2015). Since similarities in answers were found among actors who share the same experience with the urban village, the actors were divided into groups: current urban village residents, and outsiders who have an indirect experience with the village. In the end of this chapter, a relationship with the urban village is discussed in order to estimate the significance of the place and its potential to influence the actors' motivation to participate in community art activities.

5.2.1. Urban village residents

Only one artist out of five that made observed art works is a current long-term resident in Baishizhou. She moved to Shenzhen three years ago and thus belongs to the long(er) term Baishizhou residents (Interview 10, 2015). The participant is a designer and her main motivation for joining a project called *Floating desire* was to deepen her interest in transferring social phenomena into art. She believes that Baishizhou is a very diverse and complex neighbourhood which should be documented, despite of the fact that Baishizhou might not be perceived as a particularly 'nice' place for living (Interview 10, 2015). Furthermore, she found doing her own project in Handshake 302 valuable because:

> *302 is a good place to communicate with different people and it helped me a lot in my own project. There is a specific line to define what art is, specifically in urban planning or in architecture. Once they think about the aesthetics, it is related to art. But art itself cannnot exist without the common people and society because the art represent the feelings of the artist who is influenced by the social feature and the environment. And 302 is a very good place to communicate with other people about it and they don't have restrictions and rules in that place* (Interview 10, 2015).

Her relationship with the urban village is very personal, since she comes from a natural village and therefore feels like that she can identify herself with the issues that people in the urban village experience, and with the help of her designer skills she can apply this

knowledge in the art project and display the life of the local residents in a visual form (Interview 10, 2015).

5.2.2. Outsiders

However, the majority of actors organizing and participating in the community art projects in Handshake 302 do not belong to the local community of Baishizhou or to the same artistic group outside of the village. This raises the question of what motivates actors outside of the urban village to get involved in artistic activity in the middle of it? According to the data collected through interviews, the main interest of the majority of actors, including the organizers, had to do with the urban village itself, while art and community art projects served more likely as a secondary bonus for most of them, as the founder Mary Ann O'Donnell suggests:

> *The original goal [for establishing Handshake 302] was to see what we would learn and how we would learn differently about the villages by actually living there but that failed because it's really hard to make a living there. So then we decided we are going to use it for an art space and make the art projects about investigating the space"* (Interview 1, 2015).

The co-founder of Handshake, who is a designer, also shares a long term interest in the urban villages, and besides that she finds art as a better way of expressing herself than by verbal or written expression:

> *I think art is a good way to tell the truth and to build a real connection between the feelings and the heart and between the outside and inside. And for example, sometimes language is very tricky, even talking and writing is not truth because you have lot of the laws and rules already inside your mind, like with writing you cannot write this way until you have a good practice about the writing and saying, so I think art is more realistic* (Interview 2, 2015).

Other participants from an observed project, *Shaking Hands with the Future*, described their motivations also mainly in relation to the urban village. The actors come from two different social groups –high school students who belong to the second generation migrants and have the opportunity to acquire the best quality education; and students from a Xin' An polytechnic college, first generation migrants who come from a lower income class and their education is focused more on a practical work, as they major in design. Their common motivation for participating in the project was to get to know the urban village better, since they consider it to be a unique part of an urban development that cannot be omitted when learning about the

city history and culture (Questionnaires, 2015). However, there was a discrepancy found between the answers of each group based on their age and social status. For example, the students from the polytechnic college thought about the urban village from a practical perspective of graduates-to-be and their future home seeking:

> *Urban village is the most possible place I will stay after graduation, as it is the first stop for all who come from another place and want to thrive in this city. You're not a Shenzhener unless you come out of it. Understanding it is important, and taking part of this project is a good way* (Questionnaire 1, 2015).

On the other hand, students from Shenzhen Junior High School expressed curiosity about a place that they rarely get in touch with, resulting in a use of theoretical knowledge about the urban village in their answer to the question of motivation, or reflecting on ideas that come from different unknown sources:

> *Urban village has given a bad impression to the citizens but actually it is many people's dream's birth place. I hope this project may help to change the passive thoughts in citizens' mind and we can even bring a good and new repair to the urban villages* (Questionnaire 20, 2015).

All respondents thus showed a great interest in exploring different villages from a different perspective. Moreover, the reason for participating in an art project is based on an unusual opportunity to conduct their own project without a pressure to perform well at school (Questionnaires 17-21, 2015).

5.2.3. Main motivation: a relationship with the urban village?

In conclusion, the main incentive for participating in art projects under Handshake 302 greatly depends on the participant's relationship with the urban village, which is derived from the actor's background –level and type of education and place of residence. The long-term members of Handshake 302 who have a personal experience with the urban village –they either used to live there themselves or have relatives or partners there, which strongly influenced their decision to participate in art activities– stated a desire to work with the local community or building community among participants themselves (Interview 2, 4, 5, 2015).

On the other hand, participants who had little or no experience with the village, preferred to conduct an individual project and focus only on grasping the concept of an urban village and its display in an art form. Since the last project *Shaking Hands with the Future* had not been

completed as this thesis was written and therefore the opportunity to collect primary data about the project topics was limited, mental maps were used to identify a relationship of the participants and the urban village. Moreover, the use of mental mapping was considered as the most appropriate form of gathering data, since half of the respondents were only 13 or 14 years old and thus they could experience difficulty describing a relationship to a place, especially to one as complex as the urban village.

Based on the mental maps, students from both schools focused on a detailed description of the village, especially its poor living conditions, and its contrast to the rest of the city. Their motivation to participate appeared to lie in a deeper understanding of the urban village and in some cases even trying to change the negative mind sets about the urban village that is being propagated in Chinese media (Questionnaire 21). Unexpectedly, there did not seem to be many differences between the drawings of both schools, as the majority of respondents drew the village in comparison to the whole city; nevertheless, students who have more experience with the village, such as living there or regularly using its services, tended to draw more detailed images of the village.

Here are some examples of mental maps drawn by students from both schools, answering the following question:

Do you know what an urban village is? Can you draw it for me and explain what you drew and why?

Figure 5.6 - Respondent 1
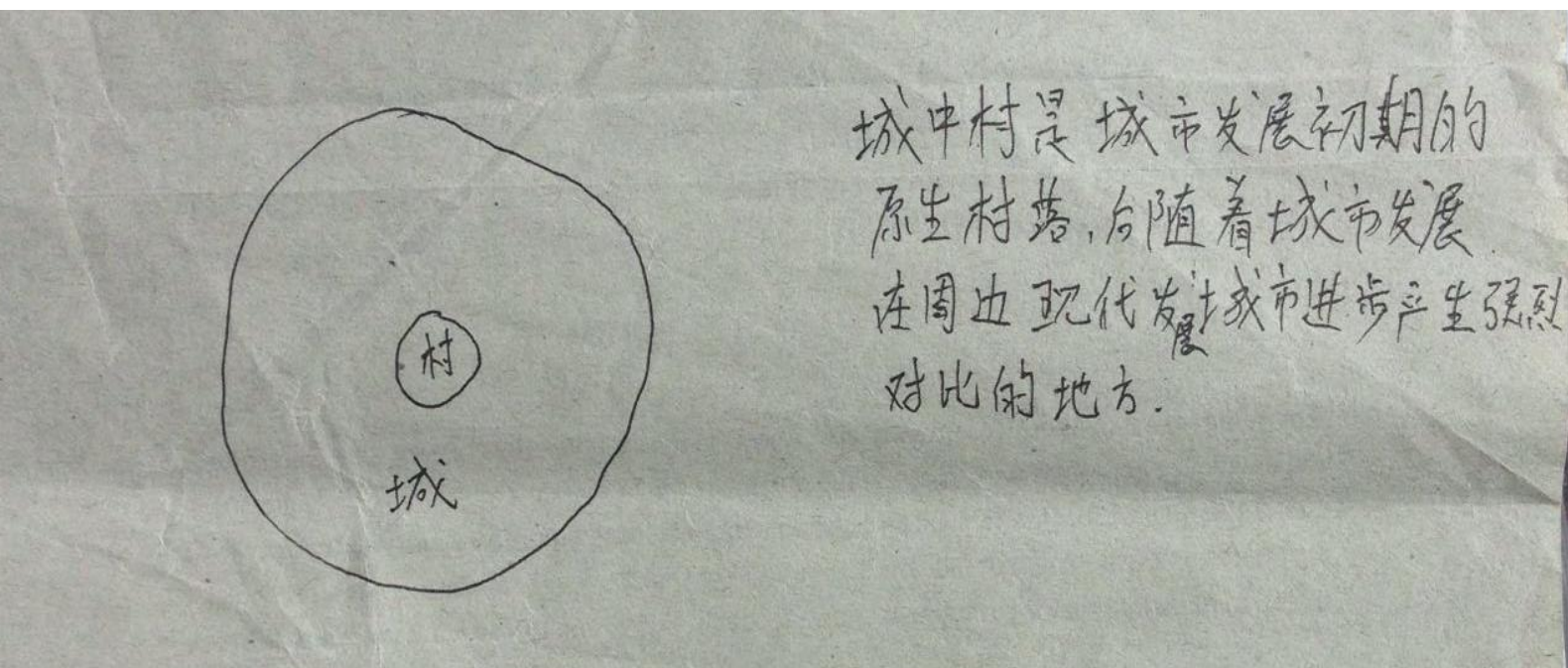
"**Inside the small circle is a village and inside the large circle is the city**"[6].

> *Urban village is the primary village that was developed in the early stage of urban development, and as the city grows, it creates a huge contrast between itself and the fast-development of other areas* (Respondent 1, 2015).

This respondent chose to depict the urban village in the context of a whole city in a simplicity form[7] of two circles. Furthermore, the remark suggests that the respondent based her drawing on theory rather than personal experience. She stated in the questionnaire that her experience with the village is "only to eat" (Respondent 1, 2015). On the other hand, she admitted that she will probably have to live there one day.

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[6] Quote in bold represents the explanation of the picture. Quotes in italics a description of the urban village, since not all students provided mental map drawing or the explanation of what they drew.
[7] The references for reading mental maps were taken from the book The Image of the city (1960).

Figure 5.7 - Respondent 8
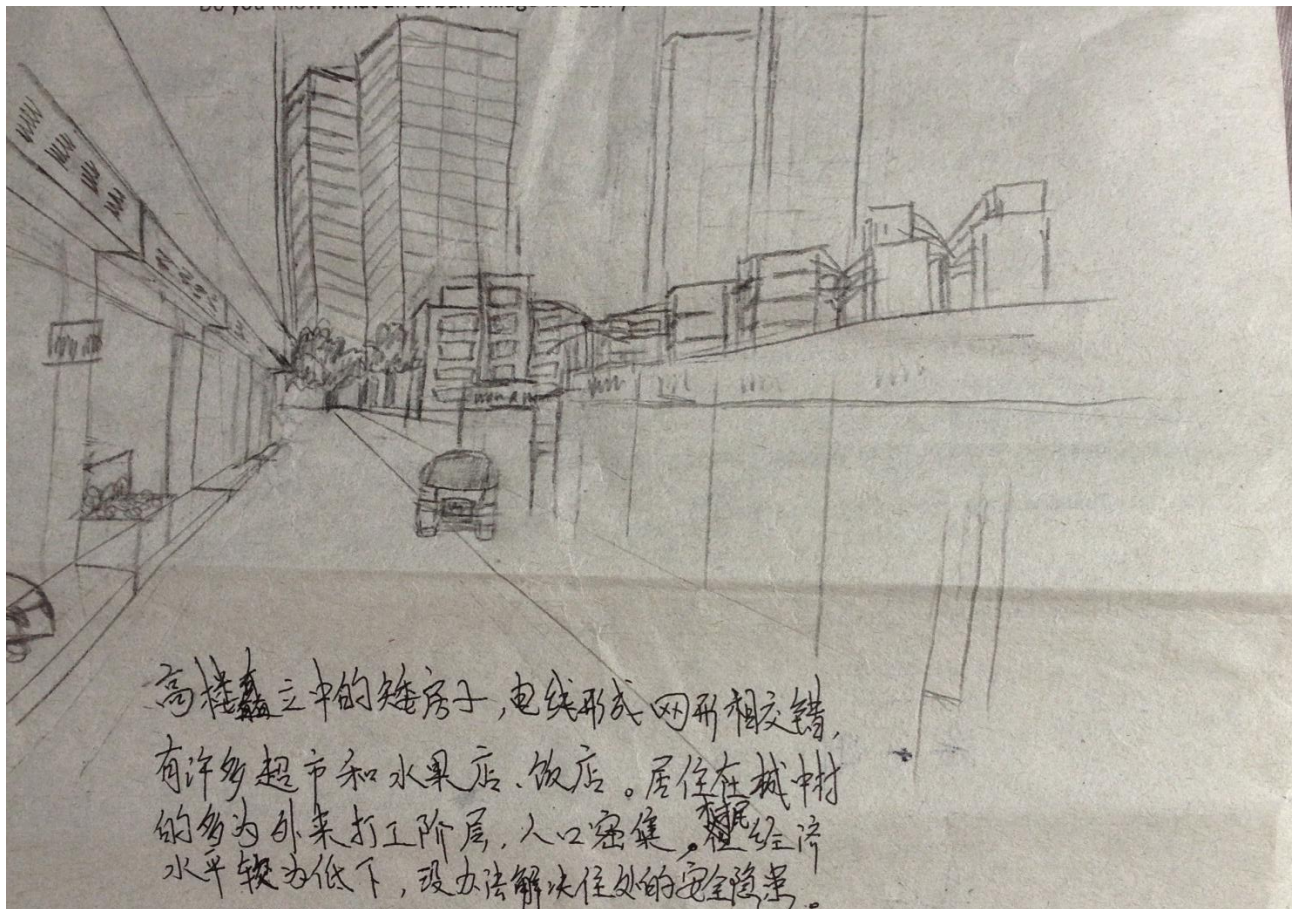
Surrounded by high buildings, these low and cramped houses stood on a patch of land, above which the sky is meshed by scrambled electric wires. Here and there are lots of stores, fruit shops and restaurants. The habitants, economically straitened, who can't solve the huge safety hazard of their dwelling places, mostly come from elsewhere and work here for a living (Respondent 8, 2015).

This respondent also experienced the village only through shopping which is surprising in relation to the detailed drawing, using a perspective to represent the place as realistically as possible. Moreover, the note signifies a use of theoretical as well as practical knowledge of the village.

Figure 5.8 - Respondent 2
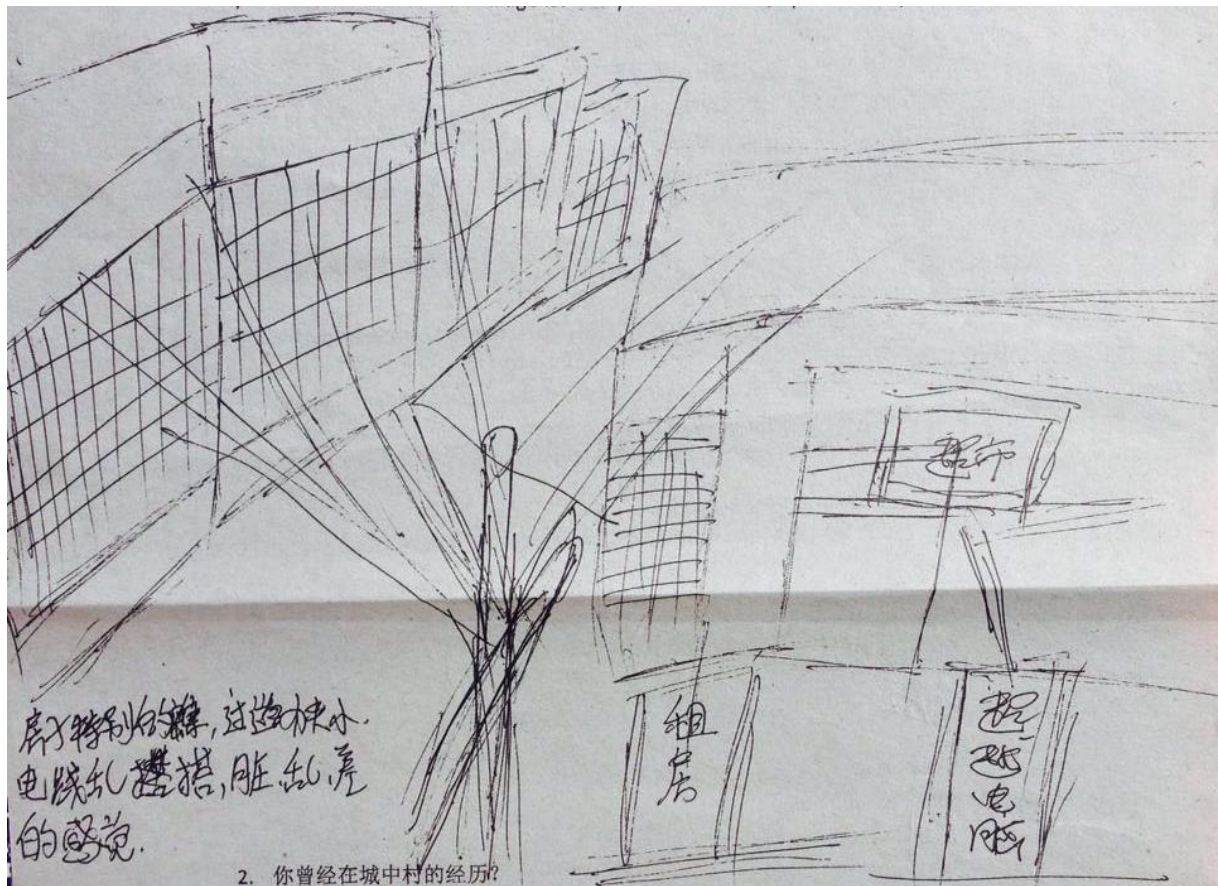
"**Supermarket, House rental, Computer reparation**"

> *The houses are located concentrated, with narrow roads, disorder cables, dirty, messy, bad feeling* (Respondent 2, 2015).

This mental map shows a representation of an urban village which reflects on the negative feelings that the respondent has for the place. The drawing also focuses on the wire structure which dominates the picture to stress out the 'disorder cables' that became a symbol for the urban village. Moreover, the respondent has a friend living in the urban village and thus he visits often.

Figure 5.9 - Respondent 13
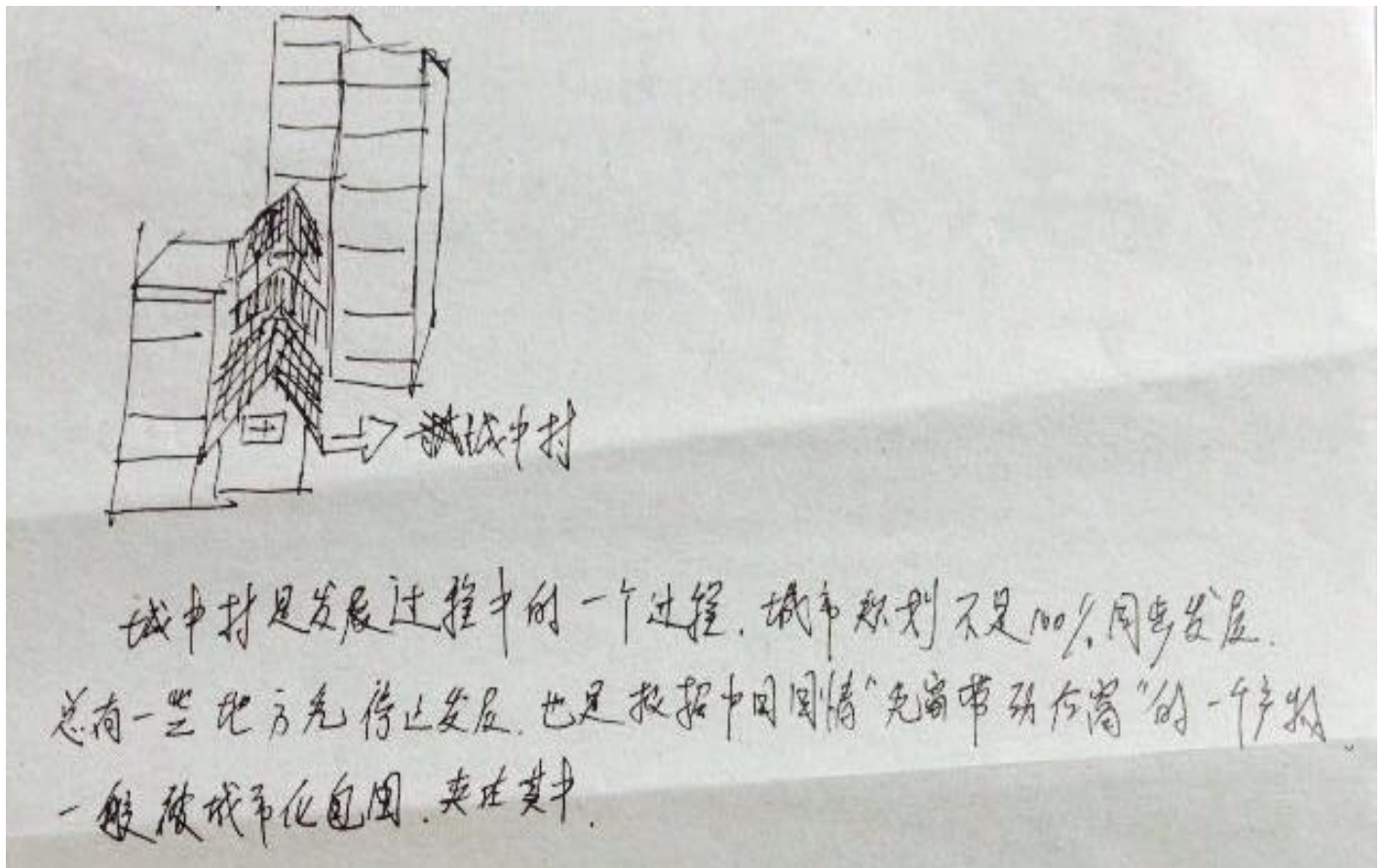
This example shows a unique relationship between the respondent and the urban village. Her house became a part of it during the process of urbanization, and the respondent expressed confusion about that fact:

> *My house in my hometown used to be a place which we built ourselves and it is quite good, but due to the surrounding parts redesign, my house turned into an urban village* (Respondent 13, 2015).

The map reflects on the situation, showing her house among others in an urban village with taller buildings next to it, while also reflecting on the special case of urban development in Shenzhen.

Figure 5.10 - Respondent 19

第二部分：关于城中村经历
Part 2: Urban village experience
1. 你知道什么是城中村吗？你能把它画出来？请简要解释，并说明理由。
Do you know what an urban village is? Can you draw it and explain what you drew and why?

In my opinion and life, an urban village, is a place that is very crowded and a bit dirty. It's very crowded at night because lots of people are selling lots of goods such as clothes and shoes. The picture is a part of an urban village near my home, & they're selling kinds of things and food. Behind them & are lots of buildings that is not very tall. That's where they live in.

This respondent pointed out the variety of shopping possibilities, including the street vendors as a significant mark of the urban village. The drawing shows the shops in small buildings surrounded by tall buildings. Moreover, there is a detail of a cart used by street vendors drawn on the top which emphasizes the importance of goods selling for the respondent. Finally, the map draws exclusively from a personal experience, as the respondent lives near an urban village.

Figure 5.11 - Respondent 20
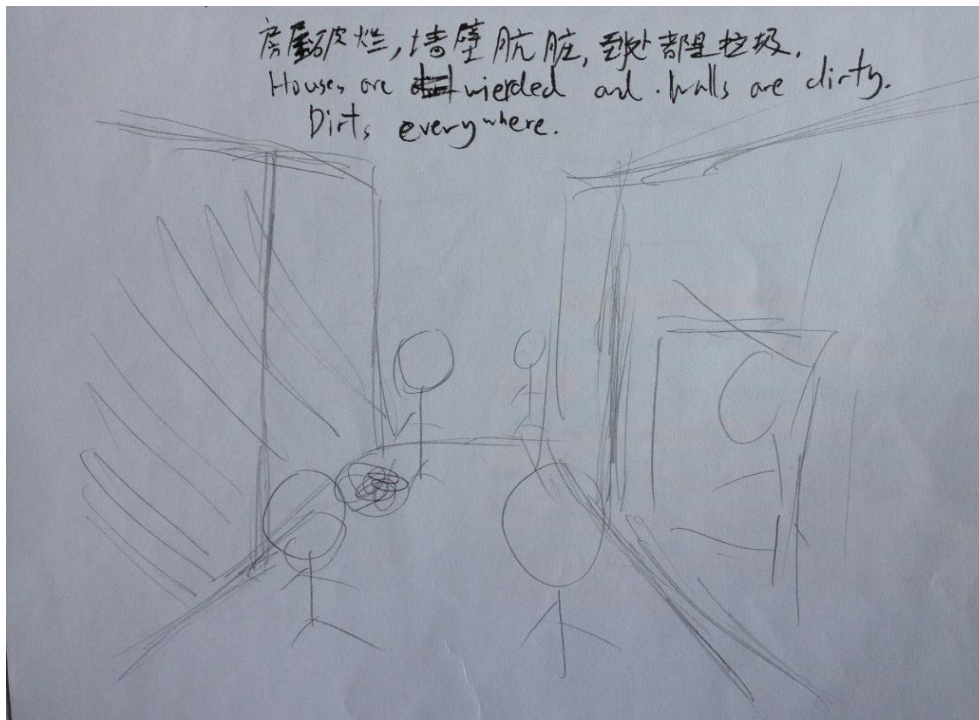
Finally, this drawing emphasizes people in the urban village surrounded by small buildings; a special prominence is giving to the representation of dirt which is put in the middle. The respondent also drew from a personal experience, since she stated in the questionnaire and in the interview that she lives next to the urban village of Minle, which is convenient for her and her family because of cheap shopping and eating facilities (Interview 19, 2015).

In conclusion, the mental maps show the perception of an urban village among the students of the Polytechnic college and Shenzhen Junior High School which unexpectedly do not bring any crucial difference in representation between the two schools. Furthermore, the only correlation between the respondents' profiles and their own drawings can be seen in the relationship they have with the urban village: the drawings of the participants who have more or less personal experience with the village, had more detailed images with a dominance of one particular element that was important for them; while the respondents who did not have a significant relationship with the village usually drew an urban village as they know it from theory –mostly a spatial character of the village in relation to the rest of the city.

Finally, the following topics were depicted: the physical environment of the village; its convenience –accessibility of diverse amenities–; its position within the city; and the personal story of each respondent. However, all respondents show an impressive knowledge of the

urban village which could also come from an opinion by their teachers, which should be considered in a further evaluation of the overall perception of the village.

5.3. Project themes and their relationship with the urban village

The motives appearing on each project do not seem to have a connection with the urban village at all at first sight, as the nature of each project has a rather abstract character (Observation, 2015). Therefore, the comparison of interpretations from the side of both artists[8] and the audience rather than focusing on the content of several paintings was necessary for determining the association with the urban village. The following paragraphs discuss the interpretation of three of the latest (one is still on-going) art projects that were available for analysis and whose curators agreed to take part in an in-depth interview.

5.3.1. Floating desire

Figure 5.12 - A project made by a local resident of Baishizhou

Source: Author (2015)

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[8] Meaning by artists - any participant who actively contributed or created an art project will be referred as an artist which does not necessarily mean an artist by a profession.

The author of this project is a local resident in Baishizhou and thus his experience with the urban village is the strongest out of all the examined projects. The artist is dedicated to the socially-engaged art practice and its power to reflect on social phenomena through artistic expression (Interview 10, 2015). In this case she chose to depict the life and desires of migrants living in Baishizhou by creating a 'map' of streets in Baishizhou out of a red cheap plastic material that was bought in Baishizhou. In fact all materials were purchased cheaply in the village to maintain the authenticity of the project. Moreover, the art work is not glued to the wall and there are three fans placed on the ground to ensure its constant floating (Interview 10, 2015). According to the artist, the map represents the numerous streets in Baishizhou and the plastic material represents people's "own desires, dreams and opinions". Finally, the floating element serves as a metaphor for an urban village as being a transitional place and the population that is always 'floating'.

The perceptions of *Floating desire* by local residents and former inhabitants of Baishizhou were examined in two parts: first the participants were asked to share their opinion about a photograph of the project without knowing the artist's actual intention to ensure unbiased insights. All respondents showed unexpectedly similar reactions to the art work, even though there is no chance that they could influence each other and twist their answer based on somebody else's opinion. Following statements come from four respondents who were willing to share their opinion:

> *This one is messy, it's like you are locked or constrained by something, is it in 3D?* (Interview 6, 2015) - local resident

> *Very messy, like a construction* (Interview 8, 2015) - local resident

> *It is very messy, very complicated emotions, it's like you are standing in the middle of the crossway and you don't know which way to go* (Interview 9, 2015). - local resident

> *From this one I see some colours, it's like a building but some of them are destroyed, not like in a good shape and it's in a rush, in a mess. It's just a state of this moment* (Interview 13, 2015). - former resident

The expressions used 'messy', 'constrained', 'crossway', 'in a rush' suggests a resemblance with the physical environment of the urban village, however, the fact that messy and constrained could be other things and the term 'messy' does not have to represent only dirty things must be taken into account. Another interviewee, a second generation urban villager who does not live in the village anymore, expresses a different opinion on the painting:

It's like from the past when somebody needed money like in a pub, so they will make marks like that (Interview 16, 2015).

Thus, a 'messy' look in a painting might evoke different emotions in different people. The artist perceives her work as a 'maze-like', messy design of an urban village, however, the audience might see only the painting itself being messy without any special meanings assigned to it.

After the explanation of author's intention, the respondents expressed surprise and started sharing their own experience with the urban village and the difficulty of a migrant's life:

It is like all the migrants living here, they are fighting for survival and they have to their hometown in Shenzhen and eventually maybe they will get something that they want but it's not easy for them (Interview 9, 2015).

In conclusion, *Floating desire* was perceived by the local people as the most accurate reflection of the life in Baishizhou, leading the respondents to open up and share their own thoughts about the village more deeply, no matter what their first impression of the painting was.

5.3.2. Paint in Black

Figure 5.13 - A project made by two main curators of Handshake 302
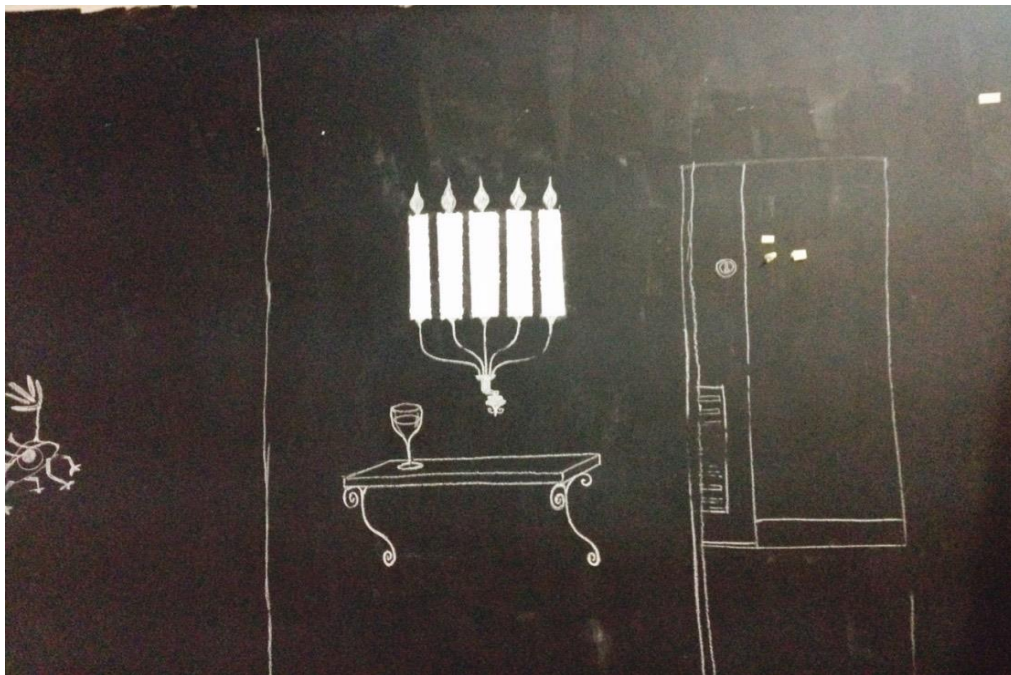
Source: Author (2015)

Paint in Black is the outcome of cooperation between two actors, both designers, who came up with this idea after spending some time looking for job opportunities in different cities in China. The project depicts a journey of a person who moves to another city and struggles in a new environment before s/he settles down (Interview 3; 4, 2015). The project has been made in three stages: first the wall was painted black without anything, symbolizing that a newcomer does not have anything yet and feels depressed; the second stage depicts a furnished three-bedroom apartment, drawn by a chalk on a black wall which symbolizes a desire for a dream home; in the last stage, the audience was invited to draw anything they would like to have, however, they were given only a small piece of chalk and thus the number of things that they could have drawn was limited like limited material sources and possessions that people have in real life and must work hard to obtain (Interview 4, 2015).

The meaning found by the local residents revolved around topics such as loneliness, depression and an entrance to another place, after the explanation of the artists' intention, all respondents identified themselves with the topic:

> *She thinks that the topic of this painting is really similar to her own experience of living here in Baishizhou because when she first came here she had nothing, then she got a job and then gradually she could buy more things. And another thing is that living in urban village you really cannot talk with your neighbours. Because first, they don't want to, and secondly, urban villages are quite temporal for the migrants* (Interview 10, 2015).

The motif of a transitional place was mentioned during all interviews and not just in the case of art projects displayed in Handshake 302. Many interviewees mentioned a feeling of loneliness, since they are often left alone in the village after their friends or relatives, who were the reason for moving into the village in the first place, move on financially and move out of the village (Interview 10&12, 2015). Moreover, building social networks tuned out to be extremely difficult for all of them, since people are constantly moving in and out.

5.3.3. Shaking hands with the future

Figure 5.14 - Projects symbolizing life in the urban village

Source:http://shenzhennoted.com/2015/06/01/handshake-with-the-future-shenzhens-maker-plus-culture

This is a community art project still in progress; it is made of several paintings that were created by two school communities, and is based on their experience of researching the urban village independently and then discussing the outcome together. However, so far only art works of Xinan Polytechnic college have been displayed, therefore the description of the art works will be more informative than explorative in character.

Shaking Hands with the Future differs from other community art projects displayed in Handshake 302 in that the connection with the urban village was established as an assignment before the project began. Therefore, in this case, the art works represent a true expression of artists' feelings about the urban village and not the other way around when a connection with the village is perceived by the audience after the work is done and when it even did not have to be artist's intention in the first place.
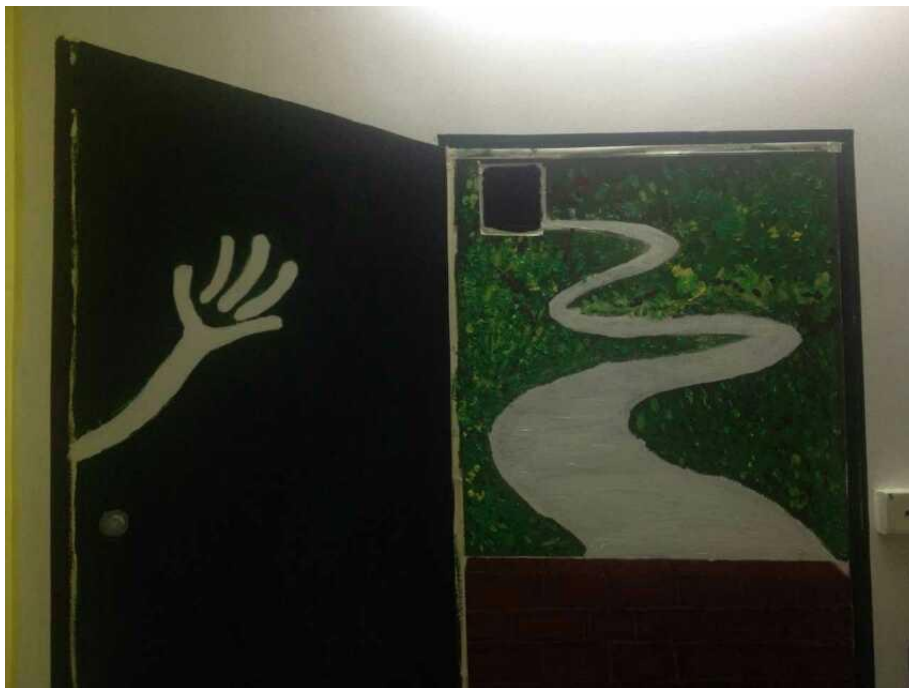
The title of the project comes from an idea of a metaphor of the classical handshake buildings –which are by far the most typical spatial mark of the urban village– in a sense of collaboration with the future generation of Shezheners –shaking hands with the future, since

both groups of students are either second migrant generation (Shenzhen Junior High) or plan their future in Shenzhen (Polytechnic college) (Interview 3, 2015).

The topics that emerged from the project resemble the ideas that were already mentioned in the mental maps: an urban village as a transitional place; the harsh life that migrants experience (Figure 5.13); or the ambiguous future which appears to be bleak and dark (Figure 5.14) either for the migrants or the students themselves (Questionnaires 1-16, 2015). Figure 5.15 on the other hand symbolizes that the hands were already shaken when the inhabitants of the urban villages and other neighbourhoods needed each other and had a contact with one another (O'Donnell, 2015).

In conclusion, it is important to reflect on the fact that, on the one hand, students of the Polytechnic college have all at least an indirect connection with the urban village, be it by using amenities or visiting friends or relatives. On the other hand, students from Shenzhen Junior High School generally do not have any connection with the village, except for theoretical knowledge obtained either at school or in the beginning of this project (Questionnaires, 2015), therefore, it would be interesting to see if their representation of an urban village will differ from the previous group or if the topics displayed will be similar.

Figure 5.15 - Project depicting future of urban villages that seems bleak

Source:http://shenzhennoted.com/2015/06/01/handshake-with-the-future-shenzhens-maker-plus-culture

Figure 5.16 - Project portraying a connection between Baishizhou and the outside world

Source:http://shenzhennoted.com/2015/06/01/handshake-with-the-future-shenzhens-maker-plus-culture[9]

5.4. The aim of Handshake 302: similarities and discrepancies between organizers' and participants' perception

5.4.1. Experimental art platform

Bottom up experimental art spaces such as Handshake 302 are not common in a state-led country where top down approach dominates all spheres, including the cultural. According to the respondents, there is a lack of bottom up art spaces that would provide possibilities for artists to display their work and try an alternative art style (Interview 2, 5, 10, 2015). This finding corresponds with the existing literature about art in China. As Shu Cao noted in his remark on public art in China, the cultural outreach is not thought through, since the government builds large cultural buildings such as museums, which are empty, and education is "too narrowly confined to science and technology" (Cao, 2012). Therefore, several respondents who agreed that Handshake 302 offered them an opportunity to learn more about a different art form expressed a wish for smaller grassroots art spaces that could provide an opportunity for the creation of different art projects characterized by flexibility in order to

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[9] The same source has been used for the title picture.

include a diversity of actors and choose topics based on creativity and not prescription (Grodach 2010):

> *The art world is changing and the public art is changing too, so we need to see -- to get used to new roots in the future. You need to challenge things, challenge people's minds and Handshake is doing that* (Interview 2, 2015).

Another respondent from the local resident's perspective also believes that there is a need for alternative activities:

> *I think it is a very good idea because nowadays in your normal life you have got a lot of pressure from your life, from your job, it's good that you have a place here where you can express your feelings, your true feelings freely and it's a very good space to do what you really want to do* (Interview 9, 2015).

Lastly, a former resident of Baishizhou emphasized the importance of free expression without any monetary pressure:

> *I feel peaceful, it's not about the money, there is no rush and I don't know what to do before,I just do it. Handshake likes to tell people that there is lot of possibilities, not just work, it's not just about money, it's about more, so there are a lot of other things"* (Interview 14, 2015).

Therefore, Handshake 302 represents a truly alternative platform on the Chinese cultural scene, since there is no prescription for doing art in a correct way, meet a deadline or worry about any kind of approval (Interview 1, 2015).

5.4.2. Research and educational purposes

Another similarity in opinions among local residents and curators of Handshake 302 was found in terms of researching and learning about the urban village, especially in a time of upcoming developments. Most of the respondents felt the need to understand urban villages before they disappear, as they are considered to be part of a Chinese cultural heritage and an important stage in an urban development (Questionnaires, 2015).

A direct connection with the urban village through a personal experience appeared to be an important part of several art projects. In the project *White Rat* participants lived in the 302 apartment in Baishizhou for a week before they began their actual artwork (Interview 3, 2015). Another example can be found in a current project, *Shaking Hands with the Future*, where students conduct their own fieldwork searching for inspiration to create artworks. The

majority of respondents stated that the opportunity to explore the urban village by themselves through fieldwork was the primary incentive for participating in the project:

> *I want to practice to be in touch with people, you don't know the skills to communicate with them. By breaking away from the theory framework learning from the class, I can throw myself to the social practice so that I can learn more because maybe I will live there after graduating"* (Questionnaire 7, 2015).

Moreover, other participants expressed a further aspiration that goes beyond pure observation; they wanted to change the bad impression of the urban village and help in improving the living conditions in it (Questionnaire 21, 2015). Thus, the participants explored life in urban villages by interviewing local people and observed their every-day activities (Observation, 2015) just as a researcher would do, which most of them considered as an exciting experience, especially when they had the opportunity to document a specific type of place that will most likely disappear in the future (Questionnaire 18, 2015).

5.4.3. Art as a cover

A safe way of discussing social phenomena connected to the urban village could be seen as a third purpose of Handshake 302, especially if the resulted project is in abstract form. The founder of Handshake 302 describes art as "silent and ambiguous" when asked what is the reason for using art as social manifestation. She further adds that art allows for more possibilities than directly telling people about the space (Interview 1, 2015). An artist and a former resident in Baishizhou believes that the community art projects in Handshake 302 are trying to cover or uncover something, since the actual art form is very simply, almost trivial, thus he estimates that there is a reason behind it (Interview 12, 2015). The simplicity of the projects does not draw too much unwanted attention and allow to stir up a debate about sensitive issues such as the living conditions in the urban villages or the redevelopment plan. For the purpose of this study, the respondents currently living in Baishizhou were shown photographs of previous projects with an explanation of the artist's intention to find out more their every-day lives and start up a conversation about unpleasant topics, which proved to be successful in most cases. After the conversation about meaning of the art projects, respondents showed a will to answer questions that they had not been eager to answer before. Once they found out that the motives resemble their lives, they began to communicate more freely and less cautiously.

5.5.4. Ambiguous purpose: The rich man's game?

In contrast to the mostly positive perception of the aim of Handshake 302 among former local residents and the actors coming from outside the urban village, the current inhabitants of the were a lot more sceptical about the purpose of having an art space there. First, the majority of respondents from all interviewed groups expressed their interest in the unusual concept; however, when asked about the meaning of the whole project, they were uncertain about what it is actually about, which goes especially for the local residents. Even one of the artist participating in a project admits that the purpose of these activities is ambiguous to her, since the art works differ from each other and there does not seem to be a clear a pattern for making them (Interview 10, 2015). Moreover, the immediate neighbours of the 302 apartment do not have a clear idea about what is happing in there, and usually are not willing to find out: "I don't need to have any opinion about others, everyone has his own opinion so there is no need that I talk with you about my opinion about others" (Interview 7, 2015), claimed one of the neighbours who was very cautious during the interview process. In the end, he was very surprised that the apartment functions as an art space, since he could not imagine that anyone would do something else besides living in here.

A woman living in the same building expressed an even more radical opinion about the purpose of the art space. She is a follower of the project because she finds the topic interesting, however, she called the idea of making art in an apartment in the urban village "a play of the rich" which excludes the truly local inhabitants of the village:

> *She finds the projects fascinating and very interesting, she likes to follow the debate on wechat but she said that she and other residents can't even dream about doing something like that because people are very busy making their living and stability, she said that she perceives Handshake as a rich man's game when Mary Ann can afford to pay for an apartment which she doesn't even live in but most of them must live there and the rent is quite expensive and takes a bit chunk of our salaries* (Interview 8, 2015).

This finding invokes a question about the involvement of the local community in the art projects of Handshake 302, since the idea behind community art projects primarily focuses on the inclusion of local the community, whose members would otherwise not have the opportunity to express an opinion about their living environment (Kalkman, 2013). The question arises then, what are the reasons for excluding the local residents from a conversation about the urban villages when the curators of Handshake projects aim for a

deeper understanding of the village? The findings show that the reason lies in several barriers originating in the curators approach to the local community as well as in the Chinese art education in general. Finally, the redevelopment process underway appeared to be one of the main obstacles for the exclusion.

5.5. Discussion about us without us: barriers preventing participation of the local community

The final chapter discusses the main barriers that complicate the inclusion of local inhabitants in the art projects of Handshake 302, namely a complex social structure of the urban village population; cultural differences between the organizers of Handshake 302 and the local residents, including diverse perceptions of art in the Western and Chinese contexts which lead to miscommunication and misunderstandings among the curators and residents; and lastly, the limited opportunities for both parties to organize/participate in bottom up projects of all kinds due to the starting process of urban renewal.

5.5.1. Social diversity and exclusion

The main barrier represents a great social diversity in the urban village. Baishizhou belongs to the largest urban villages in Shenzhen and as a collection of five urban villages, there are several diverse communities living next to each other but not communicating with each other, since they come from different provinces and different cultural and social backgrounds (Interview 10, 2015). Even though the residential pattern in urban villages is changing and the young graduates belonging to the creative class choose to live there in the beginning of their professional career, low skilled workers and entrepreneurs still prevail as the most numerous social group in (Interview 10, 2015). Therefore, in order to examine the reasons for in/exclusion of the local residents in the community art projects in Handshake 302, it is first necessary to elaborate further on the migrant patterns of community ties, social stratification within the urban village and the leisure activities of different social groups.

According to Fulong Wu (2012) who examined the neighbourhood attachment and social participation in Chinese migrant communities, the lack of willingness to participate in social activities strongly depends on the type of social group and the duration of residence in the village (Wu, 2012). Baishizhou, as a transitional place, creates a high diversity of migrant groups who are often excluded from social activities that are organized by local villagers[4] or activities that are arranged by other migrant groups. Moreover, even if the involvement was

possible, the fact that the place attachment in Baishizhou is low among newer generations of migrants[5], the interest to participate in any social activity held in the village is also low (Wu, 2012).

Therefore, interest in participating in community art activity organized by individuals from a different social groups will more likely be low due to the overall social situation in the urban village, where there is a general mistrust among the residents to engage in an unfamiliar activity. This is something which one of Handshake 302 neighbours confirms:

> *I think it would be very difficult to include more people in the projects because there is a general mistrust in China or in urban villages as well, even if you invite them very friendly, most of them will not accept their invitation* (Interview 9, 2015).

This finding is akin to another issue related to the lack of willingness to participate in community art projects in Handshake 302 –the cultural differences between the organizers and curators of these projects, and local residents.

5.5.2 Cultural barrier

The fact that the main organizer and founder of Handshake 302 is an American anthropologist could generate a clash of American and Chinese cultures that would affect the whole process of curating the art projects, from the choice of topics to the choice of actors. It was established that the actors participating and following initiative 302 have a relationship with the urban village, however, most of them do not have a direct contact with the urban village anymore. Furthermore, despite the diversity of occupations such as artists, designers, urban planners or architects, the common denominator is the fact that they are all highly educated and some of them even spend a significant time abroad. This factor anticipates the exposure to other cultures which could bring an interesting perspective to the art making in China but cannot guarantee the inclusion of local community members who will most likely lack the knowledge and thus a will to participate.

Moreover, there can be crucial differences found between Western and Chinese approaches to work patterns and time management. All participants have full time jobs and Handshake 302 is a volunteer activity and more like a hobby for them, since their free time is extremely limited (Interview, 2015). On the other hand, migrants, especially a low income group living in Baishizhou, practically do not have a free time at all. They usually have at least two different jobs or own a small business, for example a noodle shop that operates about 16

hours a day, every day. Therefore, these particular social groups do not have the capacity to care about anything else but how to make a living. An artist who made the project *Floating desire* about the population in Baishizhou elaborates on that problematic further:

> *During a field trip, you can have local people participate but when you make the art, it's not likely to have local people participate because they only care about how to survive here, they don't care about this art or something like that* (Interview 12, 2015).

Thus, what could a local person do with their precious amount of free time? She will probably spend it doing something else than on a community art project.

Another cultural barrier mentioned in several interviews was shyness and mistrust towards trying new things, which mainly influences generational differences among groups of participants. Two of the curators mentioned a situation where children wanted to participate in a project held outside in the Cultural Plaza, however their parents forbid them to take part. When asked what could be the reason for that, one of the curators mentioned the following:

> *In China, [first of all] most of the Chinese, their art education is not so spread and second, Chinese people are shy. And they don't understand art. She thinks that the education is a problem. A lot of people here have just a basic education (Interview 4, 2015).*

The misunderstanding of art in China opens a new chapter about art education and perception which represents one of the main factors for the involuntary exclusion of the local community.

5.5.3. Art perception and education in China

After several discussions with translators who pointed out that the respondents became very uncomfortable when hearing the word art and engaging in a conversation about it, it became clear that the term art and its perception might be by itself problematic. Thus, art education in China was explored to find a reason behind such stigmatized expression. According to Piscitelli (1999), art education starts already for children in kinder garden, however unlike in the West, children do not play but they have a proper learning course, since in China there is a request for "high technical proficiency in the visual arts" (1999, p.7). Therefore, the importance of 'art perfection' puts pressure on young children to do well in traditional Chinese arts, such as paintings and calligraphy, to which design is added later on, as in

sculpture making (Chang, 2005). Moreover, in theory, children should be motivated to express their own emotions through art, however, strict manuals for making an 'approved art' often do not allow for individual expression (Piscitelli, 1999).

In conclusion, on the one hand there is a need for high aesthetic quality in art; on the other hand the ideological message creates a template for making art that needs to be followed in a 'correct way' which reduces the diversity in produced art works (Piscitelli, 1999). This factor leads to a problematic art perception, especially in a harsh environment such as the urban village. Taking theory and respondents' statements into account, the local residents expressed their worry to participate for two reasons: first, the art works in Handshake 302 do not correspond with the known Chinese traditional art and thus people might not be willing to engage in a different experience; and second, most of the interviewees expressed their concern that the art is too basic, after all their expectations is high quality and technically advanced art, although they are not skilled in it (Interview 8, 9, 10, 12, 2015). Moreover, despite the great attention paid to art, the main focus in primary and secondary schools is rather on natural sciences (Interview, 14). An interview with one of the teachers involved in the project *Shaking Hands with the Future* shows the gap in art education when her motivation for her students to participate is to allow them to express themselves freely, since she is worried that they might not have a connection with social reality and their emotions due to the large amount of testing and prescribed learning which relies mainly on natural sciences:

> *You know, my students are good at math and physics and chemistry, they are the best students so I think they need more ways to express their feelings and know something about art. We have music and art classes but only few of us really pay attention to these classes, we only focus on natural science classes. I'm worried that my students might not have true feelings about things. They have too many text papers, they think more about the numbers, they lack some contact with the real world. That is why I can't lose any chance [of participating in the project] (Interview 14, 2015).*

This way, art education in China creates a specific art perception among people who usually think either that art is not important for them, since it is a highly skilled profession which is not available for them (Interview 9, 2015); or that their idea about art does not go beyond a set template that was learnt at school and the alternative art scenes are looked frowned upon.

5.5.4 Redevelopment as a political and institutional barrier

A redevelopment process which has already started in Baishizhou cannot be omitted from the discussion about bottom up organizations that try to depict social reality in the urban village in the form of socially engaged art. Urban renewal is a very sensitive issue when it comes to the destiny of the urban villages, since four types of actors are involved in the process, which makes progress extremely difficult –the government, private developers, and villager collectives are currently negotiating conditions under which Baishizhou will be raised. The plan is to build a modern neighbourhood such as OCT or Futian and completely demolishe the old village. Furthermore, migrants who form the most numerous group in Baishizhou face relocation without any entitlement to compensation. This situation creates a tension in the village which leads to a greater lack of trust and an increased cautiousness from all involved parties (Interview 2, 4, 2015).

Under these circumstances, any type of bottom up projects that does not agree with the tone of redevelopment or raise too much suspicion will not be approved (Interview 1, 4, 2015). Moreover, since the demolition of part of the village is already in progress, outdoor activities such as public art projects –graffiti or other outdoor exhibition– would not last very long. Two curators of Handshake 302 expressed the difficulty to organize any type of project outside of the apartment:

> *We did things in Baishizhou previously and people came, but for about a year now it hasn't been allowed to be outside. For example, we wanted to do a graffiti project in Baishizhou and we went to the person we normally talked to and he said, it is a great idea but then it got banned. Then we wanted to do another project with the community centers but all proposals were rejected. So basically no one told this to us but they are closing down Baishizhou. Two years ago we could be outside, we had superhero outside [art project held 1,5 year ago], we held a concert in a public area. So when we started 2,5 years ago, it was much easier to do things in public than it is now (Interview 1, 2015).*

Another project organizer expressed her will to work with the local community, however, she was worried about the obstacles that the redevelopment might bring:

> *Last year we did some project just to invite people into an urban village and see something different and some arts. And this year, we want to do something with the people living in the urban village. Maybe we can do some performance or communication and do something useful for them. But Baishizhou will face demolition and the community that we worked before and the government didn't want us to do anything, so it might be a difficult thing to do (Interview 4, 2015).*

Therefore, nowadays the art projects in Handshake 302 take place behind closed doors in the Handshake 302 apartment or outside of the urban village, which limits the involvement of the local community. As the artist living in Baishizhou and cooperating with Handshake 302 mentioned −'it is only possible to involve local people through a fieldwork' (Interview 12, 2015) but if there is no field work possible anymore?

Furthermore, intriguing answers were noted among the respondents when generally asked what their opinion is about the redevelopment of the urban villages. There was a discrepancy in answers among respondents, however, a mismatch was found even between statements of the same respondent. The majority of answers indicated that the participants would like to maintain the villages, since their importance is too great to be erased. One respondent, a current Baishizhou resident argued that even though the redevelopment will drastically change her life, she trusts that the government will offer an alternative solution (Interview 6, 2015). It is, however, necessary to say that she works at the community centre in Baishizhou, which is governed by the local government and thus the statement might be biased. Moreover, some respondents expressed clear distress when asked about the topic. A woman who participated in one of Handshake's projects showed a great deal of anxiety when asked about this sensitive issue:

> *First of all, I don't want to live in an urban village, and second, it is a very complicated issue where there are lot of parties involved* (Interview 5, 2015).

The interviewee tried to avoid the subject and answered in a very general way. After I asked her a vignette question −what would she do with the villages if it was up to her− after a while, she answered:

> *If it was up to me, I would choose to let them free (*Interview 5, 2015).

During the conversation with my translator after the interview, he added that she works for the Shenzhen Urban Planning Institute, which that is technically responsible for the redevelopment of urban villages. This partially clarified her anxiety during the interview process.

In conclusion, the redevelopment process represents a truly sensitive issue and thus it was very hard to obtain information about the respondents' true feelings on the plan, which shows that the process of redevelopment has a strong influence on 'social doing' in Baishizhou, where people are afraid to express alternative opinions about it.

5.5.5. Miscommunication between organizers and local residents

As a last found barrier preventing the local residents to participate in Handshake 302, there is the miscommunication between the curators and the local community caused by a fragmentation of opinions about the future prospect of Handshake 302 and a division in approaches towards the locals. The multifunctional purpose of the initiative allows for a variety of projects and actors to fulfil their own idea but it also allows for difference of opinion among the curators, each of whom follow a different path in art making, including a different choice of actors. There is a prevailing agreement to engage the local community in Handshake activities, but not everybody is happy with that opinion, including one of the main curators:

> *I think that maybe the number of people who will get the message is limited. You need to have some knowledge to participate in this kind of project but I think it is an advantage because in this way we can approach some people who have influence and can bring some topic into the discussion* (Interview 3, 2015).

This statement clearly indicates that the organizers would prefer to learn from a person who has a particular knowledge about the subject rather than cooperate with local community members who do not have experience with a dialogical art.

Another type of miscommunication, this time in a literal sense, was found in the lack of information that the local residents possess about the clear purpose of the initiative and each project. The founder of Handshake 302 writes a blog about each project and thoughts about the urban village, however, it is censored in mainland China and therefore unavailable for the local residents. Another communication channel used when organizing a project is a wechat group which is available for everybody who is interested in Handshake 302; however the discussion on this site is often on a theoretical level, which is again not easily accessible for low income migrants who lack higher education (Interview 8, 2015). However, the projects themselves are simple in nature and depict the social life in the urban villages themselves. Moreover, despite their difference of opinions, the organizers welcome anyone who wants to participate, although they do not provide sufficient information. A respondent who belongs to the low-income group of migrants, and who is now on maternity leave, expressed her will to participate if only she had more information about it (Interview 10, 2015); and so did another neighbour who was cautious at first but showed interest in participatint after obtaining more information about the projects (Interview 9, 2015).

In conclusion, it seems that the will to cooperate is on both sides, despite the barriers discussed above. Nevertheless, the communication between those two sets of actors is insufficient, especially the lack of information about the projects from the side of curators, which prevents participation in the first place, since the local residents in almost all cases express their wish to participate in the projects when they obtained more detailed descriptions and explanations of the concept of Handshake 302.

6. DISCUSSION and CONCLUSION

In the following chapter, the research findings will be positioned within the debate together with theory about urban villages and community art projects, and discussed from the comparative perspective of Western and Chinese contexts in order to answer the main research question:

What is the aim of community art projects in Bashizhou and how are they connected to the social and spatial structure of urban villages in the sense of community and place identity building?

First, the unique nature of community art projects in Baishizhou will be discussed in relation to the socio-spatial situation in the village, and the Handshake 302 art studio will be compared to other art spaces in the West in order to place its extraordinary character in a broader context. Second, the purpose and accomplished goal of Handshake 302 will be discussed in relation to theory on community art projects, especially in terms of the scarce community involvement that was observed during this research. Third, the role of art as a tool of and for depicting social manifestation will be challenged in relation to the importance of such connection and confronted with the known theory of socially-engaged art practice. Finally, the question of if and how can the community art projects contribute to community and place identity building will be discussed respectively based on the nature of the projects and community characteristics in Baishizhou.

6.1. Handshake 302 as an open platform behind locked doors: the position of art in Baishizhou

The aim of community art projects and art spaces in the Western countries lies in certain openness to its potential participants and audience. Even in small and medium size art spaces, exhibitions are held regularly and the local community is aware of what is going in the building. Moreover, the multifunctional purpose of the art spaces usually allows for several activities that happen at the same time on a different floor and the entrance is clearly marked (Grodach, 2010). In this sense, Handshake 302 cannot be positioned within any existing theoretical framework, as it is located on the third floor of an apartment in the middle of an urban village where nothing indicates the existence of an art space, except for an indistinctive drawing on the door (a logo of Handshake without any inscription), which does not necessary means that something special is happening there but more likely that the resident likes a

peculiar style of a door design. There is also no sign at the entrance of the building and even the immediate neighbours often do not know what is happening there, since many of the art projects are take place behind closed doors (Interview 8, 10, 12). The question then arises, why does an art studio that invites a variety of actors to join the projects keep the space so private, especially when a strong connection exists between the art projects and the urban village? First, the original purpose of renting an apartment in an urban village was to try to make a living there, no matter what the activity would be; the idea of turning the space into and art studio came up later (Interview 1, 2015). Second, the upcoming redevelopment does not allow for any public display of an activity that might put the renewal plan into question and thus all 'suspicious' activities must be carried out behind closed doors. Nevertheless, Handshake 302 was established more than two years ago when the implications of redevelopment plans were not as harsh as today. Moreover, it does not explain why the curators did not establish the art studio on the ground floor in the style of pop shops as it is often seen in Western countries. The answer might lie in the multifunctional purpose of the studio, which also serves a 'saloon' for an intellectual debate, as well as an experimental platform for investigating the potential of a tiny space which requires a more intimate scene (Interview 1&2, 2015). Another reason could be that in Baishizhou, despite it being a lively environment full of diverse social activities, community art projects and occurrence of art shops are not common. There are other truly artistic urban villages in Shenzhen such as Dafen, DaWang or Wutongshan that are famous for having art centres and pop up art shops, however, these villages were planned to be art centres and are supported by the government (Observation, 2015), therefore the nature of these villages is completely different than what happens when truly spontaneous bottom up art activities occurr in Handshake and on the streets of Baishizhou in general. This could potentially be a reason for 'keeping Handshake private', since it might not be accepted by the local community or it might even raise a suspicion from local authorities, which brings us back to the future planning of Baishizhou – demolition and renewal. However, these ideas remain only speculation, as there is not sufficient proof to support them yet. In any case they are worthy of further research.

6.2. Community art projects or art projects building community: the image of an urban village outside of the village

The separation of Handshake 302 from public space in Baishizhou puts into question the involvement of the local community in its projects. However, the findings showed that there are several barriers preventing the local residents to participate in the projects; the seclusion of the art studio and lack of information is only one of them. Handshake 302 mainly cooperates with actors outside of the urban village who work together and help each other to achieve the desired results. This collaboration of actors is grounded on the base of a new experience and work together to accomplish a project which is temporal, while its creation does not depend on the inclusion of local knowledge, despite its themes being based on the every-day life experience of the urban village (Floating Desire, *Paint in Black, Shaking hands with the future*). This observation sets Handshake 302 as a unique case of an art space that enables for making community art projects that reflect on the identity of the urban village without including the local communities in the process. In comparison to other community art projects depicted in the literature, the initial phase of art work making always starts within the local population by identifying an issue at the place and providing local residents with an opportunity to participate and speak up their minds through it (Kalkman, 2013, Coutts and Jokela, 2012). In that case, a potential conclusion could be that Handshake 302 'failed' in the concept of community art projects, since its art making does not involve the local community and does not really help building new community ties either, it seems like that the art space is spatially connected but socially disconnected from the village, since the access for participation for the local community appears to be limited, as most of the village residents do not know what is happening in Handshake 302, and even the participants themselves are uncertain about the purpose of the initiative. Nevertheless, the main accomplishment of Handshake 302 lies elsewhere –to raise awareness about the urban village and emphasize the positive features of urban villages that are left out of the general media picture of them as backwards and messy (Wang, 2009). The art studio offers its participants to explore the urban village themselves or even trying living there for a while and let them create the image of an urban village themselves though a personal experience which can be later compared with the that of other participants and then discussed in the broader context of Shenzhen's urban planning and socio-spatial issues facing the villages.

Furthermore, the inclusion of actors from outside the urban village could help extend debate about it beyond its physical borders and raise awareness among diverse social groups of

actors. These in turn might become important in terms of an ongoing redevelopment which often does not fully consider the urban villages' potential, let alone their significant diversity (Hao, 2012; Hin, 2011). The question of whether it really matters to include the local community in the Handshake's art activities remains, since it can be argued that there is no purpose in discussing the situation of urban villages without the participation of local villagers. The answer is however not as straightforward as it may appear. The social diversity of the urban village where there is not in fact one strong local community but several ones that are ethnically and socially diverse (He et al. 2012) makes it harder to establish one target group that could be focused on and supported in active participation. Moreover, the length of residence in Baishizhou ranges from several months to a few years, which does not allow people to build a strong attachment to place and community based networks (He et al., 2010). This could explain the villagers' lack of will to get involved in the projects. According to this research's observations, local residents used their place of residence only for sleeping and using basic amenities. Indeed, they aim to move out as soon as they will have enough finances to do so. In most cases, the residents were interested in improving their living environment but they did not feel like wasting time in making an art work that would only raise a debate about living conditions but technically would not solve anything (Interview 8, 2015).

Therefore, this finding leads to following question: what is the actual role of art in the community art project making in Handshake 302 and by extension other street artistic activities that occur in Baishizhou, especially when the perception of art in China makes it harder for the locals to perceive the simple nature of the art projects that are being made in Handshake 302.

6.3. Art as an instrument: an important mediator or the icing on the cake?

During fieldwork in Baishizhou, especially in the art studio Handshake 302, the notion of art had to be challenged in order to understand the nature of artistic expressions depicted in respective projects. Local residents that were asked about their opinion on the paintings were mostly unable to express their opinion or they did not manage to form any opinion at all, either because they lacked confidence in their abilities to appreciate an art work, or because they considered the painting to be too abstract to be discussed (Interview 7-11). Based on my observations, some paintings were truly not abundant in high aesthetic quality, which is especially desirable in art works in China (Chang, 2005), for example the project *Floating desire* sustained of pieces of red plastic taped to the wall, was considered as 'messy and dirty'

and not exactly a beautiful piece of work (Interview 8, 9, 13, 2015). Therefore, the connection of the art works and the urban village is fulfilled only through participation in the project or the subsequent interpretation of the artist, which raises the question of how important art is as a manifestation of social reality in Baishizhou?

In the case of Handshake 302, art appears to have a secondary value when it comes to the aim of the organization in general. Based on the research material obtained, including interviews and questionnaires, art served more as a 'fun part' of the motivation to participate in the Handshake projects, whereas the main incentive lied in the opportunity to explore and learn more about the urban villages. It is also intriguing that most of the students from Shenzhen j

Junior High School who joined the project *Shaking hands with the future* stated that their interests lie in hard sciences such as mathematics and physics and not in the humanities or art studies. However, a few respondents expressed their interest in trying a 'special form of art' (Interview 17, 2015) that would not require too much time, precision and an emphasis on results. The simplicity of the art form used in the Handshake studio thus allows for attracting wider range of participants who would not normally consider getting actively involved in an art project. Moreover, expressing feelings and opinions about a certain phenomenon through art turned out to be a beneficial way of finding a representation that would be as accurate and close and to reality as possible. Some participants perceived art as a better tool for expression, as it requires less skills and rules than the use of language. Thus there is no barrier in communicating, and the result in a visual form can represent the topic in a more realistic and evoking way (Interview 2, 5, 2015) when potential participants prefer a chance to paint a picture in a simple way than having a complicated discussion on the topic. Debate follows every project, however, the art work itself usually serves as an ice breaker, which was proven during the interview process when the respondents became more open after the discussion of the paintings. Furthermore, drawings of mental maps helped to create a more powerful image of the urban village than the text itself and some of them even became art works of their own, showing a high aesthetic quality ranging from abstract representations to three dimensional units.

In conclusion, there is a contradiction between opinions about what the role of art is in the debate about urban villages. According to the observations and the majority of data collected, the role of art is secondary for most participant,s as well as for some curators in terms of exploring the urban village and debating its socio-spatial characteristics. Nonetheless, art

draws attention of different kinds of actors due to its visual yet simple character, minimum rules and limitations for artists, and also offers an entertaining and 'light' way of sending a message about what often are very sensitive societal issues. In the end, the purpose of the art project and the story that it attempts to tell about the place becomes more important than the aesthetic quality of the artwork itself. This goes for street art in Baishizhou as well. For example, the beggar who draws on the pavement dos not create complex 'high' art, however, there is a purpose behind choosing the types of animals he draws and the reason why he draws them. Therefore, art and artistic activities differ in the urban village of Baishizhou and contradict theory depicting Chinese art, since in the Chinese context art generally represents high art (Chang, 2005), where even community art projects are made according to a prescribed way of making art (Perry, 1998). This does not include art as a tool for social or political activism because of the absence of democratic principles. However, no existing literature focuses on the appearance of truly bottom up art activities that occur on a small scale in Baishizhou without, on the one hand, any significant clustering or strong formation of strong community ties among participants, and on the other hand, having a clear aim for doing them and a story that they want to tell which makes them a valuable asset for building a place image from the bottom up.

6.4. Conclusion: place identity building and a future development of art projects in Baishizhou

Place identity as part of personal identity inferred from socio-spatial interactions with place represents a complicated issue in urban villages, especially in Baishizhou, since the place attachment and a sense of community that are components of place identity (Hernandez et al., 2007) are really weak in Baishizhou. This can be seen both in literature and collected data that show that local residents do not feel attached to the village (except of elderly groups that have lived in Bashizhou for years), as they consider it to be only a temporary stop before they can afford a higher standard of living (Interview 7-11, 2015), which also prevents them from participating in various social activities, including community art projects of all sorts. Since each type of art activities in Baishizhou attracts a different type of actors (a different kind for every project the in case of Handshake 302), community building through participation is not possible, as each activity is carried out by a different social class: highly educated group sparticipating in Handshake 302; diverse social classes, mostly of low income origin conducting street painting and musical performances; and a group of long-term residents who practice singing or dancing as community hobby. Thus, community art projects in Baishizhou

do not contribute to community building or place identity building in terms of place identification (Zimmerbauer, 2011). As the following question puts it: which community? Including what social class, what ethnic origin? The diversity of art activities and their participants is too great and their accessibility too limited and therefore it cannot be a strong community built out of the initiative of one volunteer organization or several informal street art projects, especially when the relationship among the respective communities is hierarchical and only a minority of local residents has a right to the urban village. This refers to a right to participate in social activities and have a voice in the decision-making process of what will happen to their place of living (Hao, 2012; Hang, 2006).

What is more, the second component of place identity building, the place image, defined as the significance of the place seen from outside, or in other words, a general image of a place that has been socially constructed from the outsider perspective (Zimmerbauer, 2011) appeared to be formed by the community art projects in Baishizhou. Art works conducted in the art studio of Handshake 302 reach out to a variety of actors outside of the urban village and enable them to study the village and experience a community activity that takes place in the heart of Baishizhou. This enables them to have a close experience with the urban village combined with the detached view of a foreigner/observer that allows for a higher chance of a place representation based on the reality of the urban village itself. Therefore, as Handshake 302 does not help community building and does not actively involve local communities in its projects, it successfully creates an alternative image of place which shows the urban villages from a different perspective,, offering an alternative to how they are viewed as 'eye sores' of the city, which is the current prevailing image of the villages.

As for the other street community projects in Baishizhou, they show either strong community ties or connection with art but more in a way of commercial purpose to make some money out of it or draw things that reflect on the Chinese culture but does not challenge or criticize it. In any case, they do not attempt to point out the socio-spatial challenges in the urban village and do not consciously build a picture of Baishizhou to make the outside world aware of its special attributes. However, they belong to the place and reflect on the specific nature of Baishizhou just by their character. They are truly bottom up informal activities which most likely could not emerge in commercial neighbourhoods, or they could to a lesser extent and they would have to fulfil at least some conditions dictated 'from above' or risk their prohibition (Interview 11, 2015), such as performances by disabled artists or a beggar painting on the pavement of a public space with a chalk. Moreover, the variety of these

projects shows the great diversity of the population itself and thus truly paints a picture of the village and it gives it a unique character.

In conclusion, street art activities that have been identified in Baishizhou do not actively discuss any challenges that appear within it, however, as a part of socio-economic activities, they are challenges by themselves, since they show an example of how the every-day life in the urban villages looks like and where the difficulties of their social structure lie in terms of population diversity and density, and their spatial characteristics that involve for example polluted environment and a lack of public space (Li et al., 2014), since the artists perform or even live on the streets.

On the other hand, the art space of Handshake 302 is partially, spatially, and socially disconnected from the village, as it operates mostly behind closed doors and does not collaborate much with local communities. Therefore, it does not have the power to attract a large crowd or contribute to community building among the local residents. However, the influence of the studio is slowly increasing and its existence as an art space that raises awareness about a unique urban phenomenon. In fact, it was recently recognized even on a city level by winning a Shenzhen Design Award for creative synthesis, hence there is a chance that the thoughts and ideas about urban villages might be spreading onto wider circles of Shenzhen's society. If this does not happen, a volunteer art studio that allows for cultivating free artistic expression and a place for people to openly express their ideas and display their art works could substitute the absence of democratic experimental platforms that are, according to the respondents, 'very much needed alternatives' in opposition to the prescribed art forms that would not allow an investigation of a space which is worth investigating – the urban village.

7. Reflection

In this thesis, I elaborated on the community art projects in the urban village of Baishizhou in Shenzhen, and attempted to define their purpose and a connection with the urban village. Moreover, I tried to identify a link with the local community, however, several barriers were found preventing the Baishizhou residents from participating in these projects. The main focus was put on the art studio Handshake 302, which aims at representing the urban villages in the form of socially-engaged art practice and a saloon discussion following the artwork making.

I faced several constraints during my research. They revolved mainly around the search for local residents who would know about Handshake 302 or other community art projects being held in Baishizhou. Soon enough, with the help of my translators, I recognized that the community art projects are still on a small scale in Baishizhou and that people who live there are too busy making a living and surviving in the challenging conditions of the village so that art is considered to be either a waste of time or out of their reach. Moreover, the respondents who provided me with the information about Handshake 302 were either contacts I received from the curators of the projects or from a wechat group. This might put a slight bias on my findings since, even though the respondents were sometimes fairly critical of Handshake 302, they are followers of this organization and therefore their interpretations could have been to a lesser extent influenced by that fact. Furthermore, the language barrier was often an issue, as some of the Chinese students were very young and experienced difficulties in translating personal feelings about abstract art forms, undoubtedly a great challenge at the beginning of university studies.

Finally, despite the results revealing some interesting facts about urban villages, community development, and art perception in China, there are still remaining discrepancies and confusions that could be probably resolved with further research. For example, why is there no cooperation between current street artists and Handshake 302? Why is there only a minimum of artists and designers who live in Baishizhou participating in these projects? What could be a future prospect of community art projects in relation to redevelopment? And lastly, how could be the potential of Handshake 302 be used for the emergence of other volunteer organizations in urban villages? Based on the respondents' views, the purpose of Handshake 302 still lacks focus, and there is tension between the art studio and its perception by the local

residents. A future study could elaborate more on this issue and explore under what condition could the local community be involved in such projects.

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9. APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Interview guides

Two interview guides were conducted for each group of respondents - the participating artists and curators of Handshake 302 or performing street and community artists (see Interview guide 1) and current and former local residents and to identify their perception of these projects (see Interview guide 2).

Interview guide 1 - artists/curators

Part 1: Personal background

- Where are you from?
- What is your educational background?
- What is your current occupation?
- Do you have any artistic background? Experience with art projects/art school?

Part 2: Urban village experience

- How would you characterize an urban village?
- What is your experience with an urban village?
- What does an urban village mean to you?
- Can you name a particular urban village that you have an experience with?
- There is a heated debate about the future prospect of urban village. What do you think the destiny of urban villages should be?
- Any particular encounter with Baishizhou?

Part 3: Handshake 302

- What projects did you participate in? Can you briefly describe it?
- What motivated you to paint...?
- How would you evaluate the experience of creating this project?
- How did you discover Handshake 302 initiative?
- How long have you been involved with Mary Ann and the initiative?
- What do you think the goal of Handshake 302 is?
- Who are these projects targeted for? Both participants and audience?
- What was your motivation for joining this initiative?

- What do you think about the concept of expressing social reality with art?

Part 4: Current project: *Shaking hands with the future*

- What do you know about the current project shake hands with the future?
- Do you think you would follow it?
- What do you think about the concept of putting two different social groups together to work on one project?

Part 5: Future projects, ideas?

- Would you like to continue working with Handshake 302?
- What ideas/discussion would you like to see in Handshake 302 in the future?
- If you can reflect on the past cooperation with Handshake 302, what did it bring you?

Interview guide 2: local and former Baishizhou residents

Part 1: Personal background

- Where are you from?
- What is your educational background?
- What is your current occupation?

Part 2: Urban village experience

- How long have you been living /did you live in Baishizhou?
- What was your motivation for moving there?
- What is your experience with living in the urban village?
- There is a heated debate about the future prospect of urban village. What do you think the destiny of urban villages should be?

Part 3: Handshake 302

- How did you find about Handshake 302?
- What do you know about this initiative/ How long have you been following?
- What is your opinion about having an art studio in an apartment in the middle of an urban village?
- Can you look at these photographs and tell me what do you think about them? What are your feelings and opinions about them?

- What purpose do you perceive in this organization?

Appendix 2: Questionnaire - participants of the latest project *Shaking hands with the Future* - two schools: Shenzhen junior high and X'ianan Polytechnic college

调查问卷

Questionnaire

同学们好：

我正在白石洲做一个关于公共艺术课题的研究，对你们以及你们为什么想参加马立安发起的"握手302"项目非常感兴趣。我向你们保证你们所有的信息都将**只是**供研究使用，而且你们的名字不会出现在正式的论文中。如果你们不愿透露姓名或回答其中的某些问题，我完全可以理解，所以你们可以自己决定分享哪些信息。最后，非常感谢您的参与。

Dear students,

I am doing research about community art projects in Baishizhou and I am very much interested about you and your decision to participate in the project of the Mary Ann's initiative Handshake 302. I guarantee that all information will be used only for my research purposes and your names will be omitted from the actual paper. If you do not feel like sharing your name or answer a particular question that is completely understandable and it is up to you what you want to share.

Thank you very much for your cooperation.

第一部分：个人情况

Part 1: Personal background

1. **你叫什么名字？**

   What is your name?

2. **你来自哪里？**

   Where are you from?

3. **你的年龄**？

How old are you?

4. **在学校，你最喜**欢的科目是什么？

What is your favourite subject at school?

第二部分：关于**城中村**经历

Part 2: Urban village experience

1. **你知道什么是城中村**吗**？你能把它画出来？**请简要解释，并说明理由。

Do you know what an urban village is? Can you draw it and explain what you drew and why?

2. **你曾**经在城中村的经历？

What is your experience with an urban village?

3. **城中村**对你来说意味着什么？

What does an urban village mean to you?

4. 请写出你想去的某个城中村的具体的名字**?以及**为什么想去？

Can you name a particular urban village that you would like to go to and why?

5. **你**认为城中村应该何去何从？它是应该被拆掉、修建还是任其发展，无人看管？请简述理由。

What do you think it should happen to the urban villages? Should they be destroyed/repaired/left untouched? Can you say why?

第三部分：**"握手302"**

1. **你之前听**说过**"握手302"和马立安么**？

Did you ever hear about Handshake 302 and Mary Ann before?

2. 你为什么要参加这个课题？

What was your motivation for participating in this project?

到目前为止，**关于**这个课题，**你确定了什么主题？你想探索城中村的哪些**

方面？

3. Do you have any idea so far what topic would you like to do for this project? What would you like to explore in the urban village?

4. **你是喜**欢画画还是写作**多一点？**为什么？

Do you prefer drawing or writing? Why?

如果你们还有什么补充的问题和观点，请写下来！

非常感谢你们的参与☺！！！

Appendix 3: List of respondents (All interviewees)

This list of respondents (Figure 9.16) includes all in depth and shorter interviews that were conducted with both participants of community art projects in Handshake 302 and local residents whose perception was crucial for this study. Last participants on the list belong to the traditional community who perform music in the community center of Baishizhou. Interviews with other participant of the same kind of activity were usually carried out in a rush and thus their poor quality does not allow me to list them even as short interviews. Information about street artists were collected only through observations for the reasons mentioned earlier.

Figure 9.16 - List of respondents: in - depth interviews

No.	Actor	Occupation	Profile	Urban village relationship	Redevelopment
1.	Female	Anthropologist, teacher, translator	Handshake 302 founder	Former resident	Not in this form
2.	Female	Designer	Handshake 302 co-founder	Relatives and friends	Not at all

3.	Male	Exhibition curator	Active participant	Only Handshake 302	Not in this form
4.	Female	Designer	Active participant	Former resident	Not in this form
5.	Female	Urban planner	Participant	Only Handshake 302	No
6.	Female	Community center Baishizhou	Follower/ Local resident	Resident /dissatisfied	Yes
7.	Male	N/A	Local resident/neighbour	Resident	N/A
8.	Female	Translator	Local resident/ neighbour	Resident/ dissatisfied	Not in this form
9.	Female	Maternity leave	Local resident/ neighbour	Resident/ dissatisfied	No
10.	Female	Designer	Local resident/participant	Resident/satisfied	Not in this form
11.	Male	Artist	Former resident/follower	Former resident/satisfied	Not in this form
12.	Male	IT programmer	Local resident/follower	Local resident/satisfied	Not in this form
13.	Female	N/A	Former resident/follower	Former resident/satisfied	Not in this form
14.	Female	Teacher	Follower	Only convenience	Not at all
15.	Female	Teacher	Follower	Only convenience	Not at all
16.	Male	Rocker	Follower/participant	Second generation urban villager	Yes
Short and group interviews					
17.	Group 1 (2)	Students	Participants	Only convenience	Not at this form
18.	Group 2 (2)	Teachers	Participant supervision	Only convenience	Not at this form
19.	Female	Student	Participant supervision	Local resident[10]	Not at all
20.	Group 3 (10)	Elderly community	Participants	Local residents	N/A

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[10] The participant is not a local resident in Baishizhou, however, she comes from a natural village that is similar to the conditions of urban villages and is thus considered as a local resident for the similarity in experiences.

Figure 9.17 - List of respondents: questionnaires - students from Polytechnic college (PC) and Junior high (JH)

No.	Actor	Motivation	Urban village relationship	Mental map
1.	PC	To discover potential future home	Convenience - eating out	YES
2.	PC	To learn more and help to solve problems in the villages	Relatives and friends	YES
3.	PC	To be part of the discussion and offer opinions	None	NO
4.	PC	Interested	N/A	YES
5.	PC	Interested	Convenience - shopping	NO
6.	PC	To learn more about the urban village environment	Current resident	NO
7.	PC	To Learn about the city and a potential future home	Handshake 302	YES
8.	PC	To learn about the village and herself	Convenience/potential future home	YES
9.	PC	To gain better understanding of the villages	Spent several months in an urban village during summer.	YES
10.	PC	To discover an urban village	None	NO
11.	PC	To learn more about urban villages	Studied in the village	NO
12.	PC	To learn about living conditions	Former resident	YES
13.	PC	To learn about the city from a different perspective	Complicated -her house as part of the village	YES
14.	PC	To learn about urban villages	Convenience - shopping	NO
15.	PC	To learn about the village	None	NO
16.	JH	To experience different kind of art and people	Little experience - occasional visits	YES
17.	JH	Interested	Handshake 302	NO

18.	JH	To learn about the city development	Convenience-shopping	NO
19.	JH	Interested in people in urban villages and the 'special art form'	Convenience - food from his home town	YES
20.	JH	To learn more about the city	Convenience - lives nearby	YES
21.	JH	To change the current notion about the urban village	Visit friends	YES

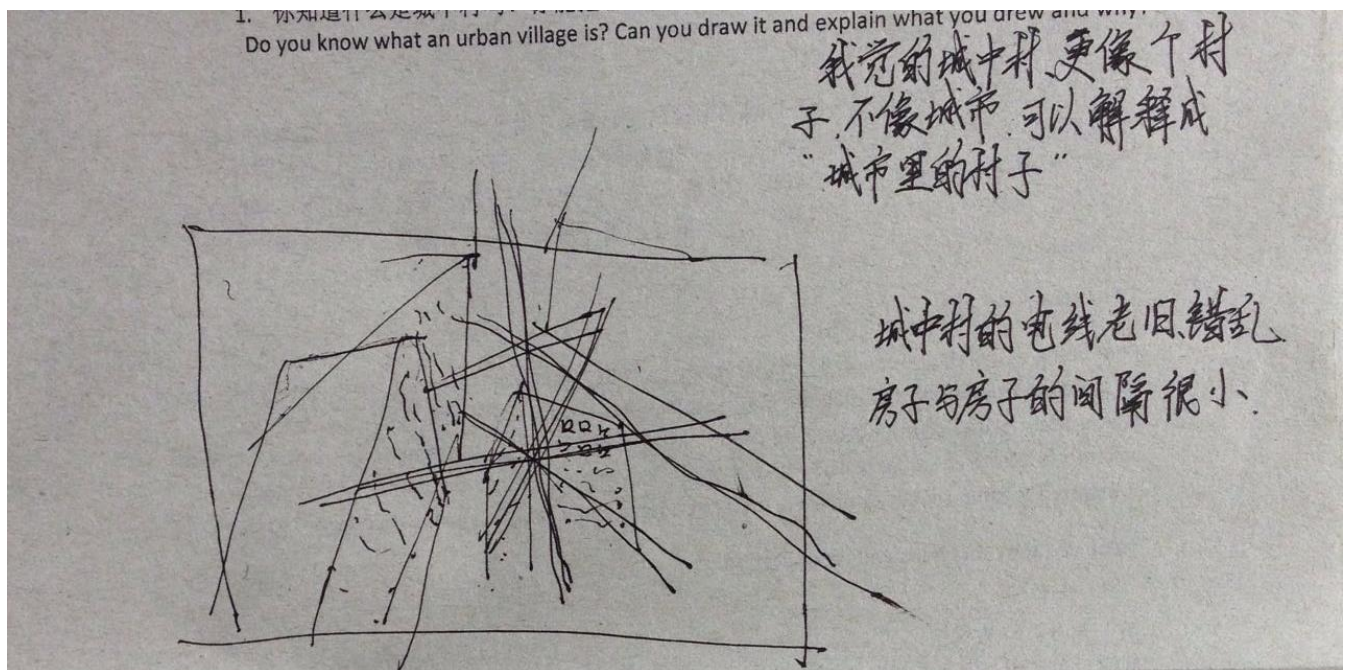**Appendix 4: Mental maps that were not included in the text**

Figure 9.17

Figure 9.18

Part 2: Urban village experience
1. 你知道什么是城中村吗？你能把它画出来？请简要解释，并说明理由。
Do you know what an urban village is? Can you draw it and explain what you drew and why?

按我自己的理解，城中村是一个城市城市化进程中遗留下来的，城市发展征用土地来建高楼大厦，而本地农民转为居民后居住在这个地方，而又疏于管理。

Figure 9.19

Part 2: Urban village experience
1. 你知道什么是城中村吗？你能把它画出来？请简要解释，并说明理由。
Do you know what an urban village is? Can you draw it and explain what you drew and why?

知道．

被高楼大厦包围的小房子
"城中村" 城市里的小村庄
囧哈哈．笔下功夫不够．见谅！

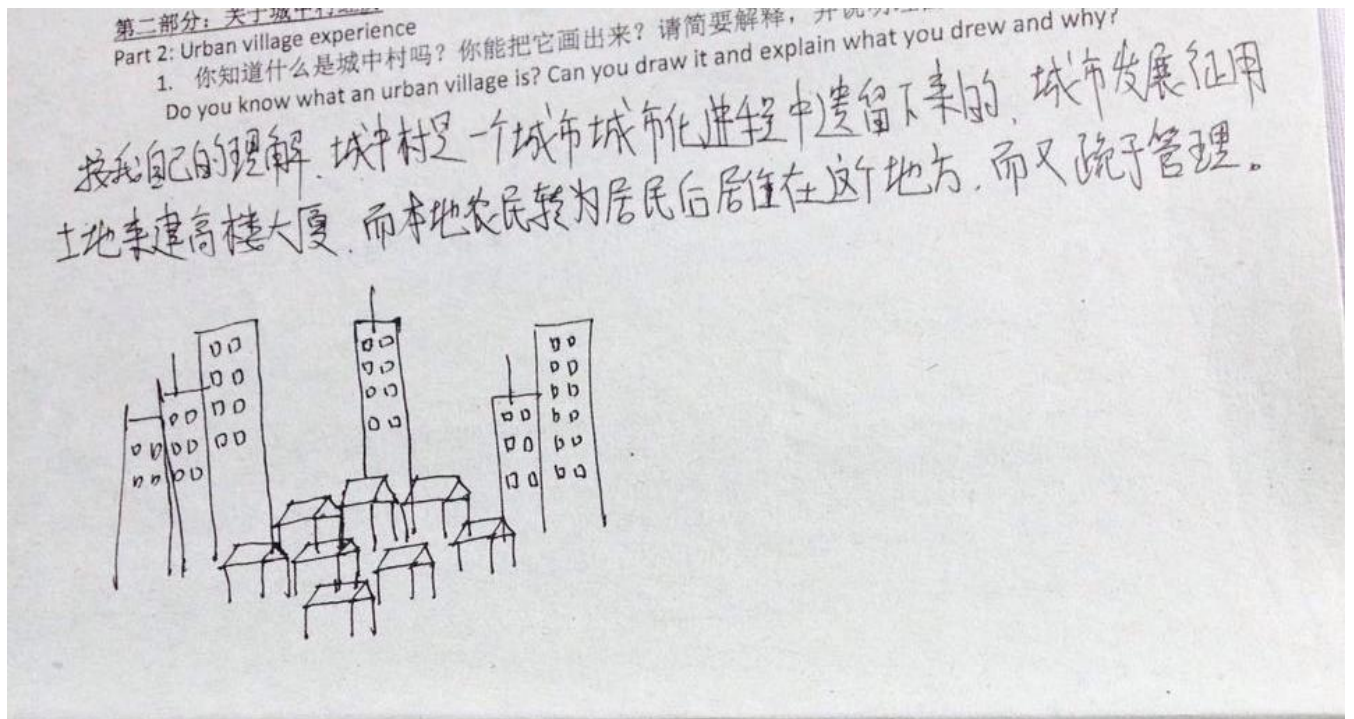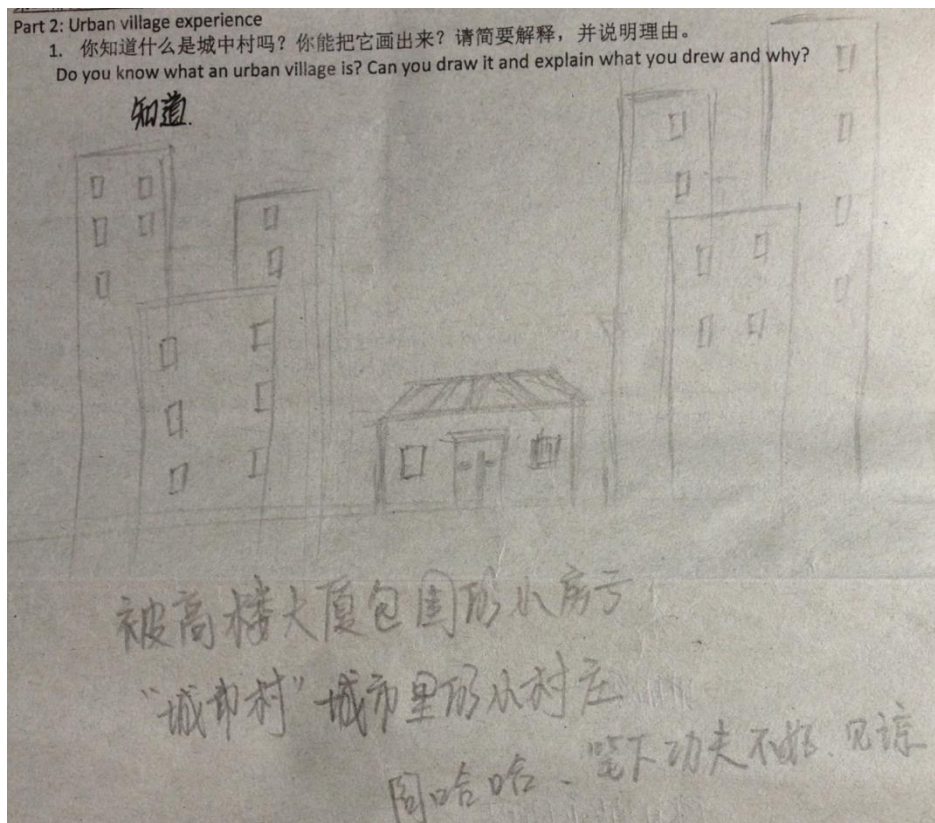*Figure 9.20 A postcard sent to me by one of the participants of Shaking Hands with the Future. It represents her perception of an urban village Minle that is close to her home.*