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Spatial planning and urban development

Alessandro Balducci

The Phd programme in Spatial planning and urban development was founded three years ago in order to provide english speaking education offer in the field of planning at Politecnico di Milano. A series of reason has convinced us to take this initiative for several reasons: the first is linked with the fact that Italy, as a in-between land can offer interesting contributions between the anglosaxon culture of planning and the mediterranean one, coping at the same time with the attention to process and product. The second reason is linked with the growing number of international students attending since several years our master of science in planning and policy design and the one in architecture at Politecnico: on the base of our interest in deepening their education in planning, we have started evaluating this perspective, acknowledging the importance of their presence and contribution in qualifying our educational offer.

In our Phd program in Spatial planning and urban development we try to look at planning and urban design problems with a special attention to the issue of global cities.

In fact we believe that the standardized character model of urbanization in use throughout the world makes clear the difficulties of the discipline to cope with the problems of an accelerated urban development. Starting from the italian and european tradition we believe that we can contribute to contrast this weakness opening spaces for reflection and research aiming at understanding urban process and building new perspectives for action.

The workshop on Expo Shanghai 2010 held in november 2009 is part of this picture and has been an important occasion to know an extraordinary city, the incredible problems of development it is copying with, and to start a critical reflection on the topic of the International exhibition, going beyond the rhetoric of the event: the link between urban quality and the quality of life.

The meaning of Expo 2010 Shanghai

Zheng Shiling

Expo 2010 Shanghai has written down several records in the history of the World exposition, among which the most numerous participating bodies; the largest Expo surface area; the largest number of pavilions; the most estimated attendances.

The key meaning of the theme Better city, better life is the sustainable urban development in a globalization context: it has been developed and expressed not only in the exhibitions and the actions pro-moted by participants but also in the overall process and concept.

Due to the World Expo, Shanghai is undergoing a total new transformation, about 2000 kmq of the metropolitan area and suburb area has been planned to a new area. Both in the sense of ecological environment but also in the preservation of urban context and identity, the city itself is also one part of the Expo. Shanghai has displayed the theme deduction with its urban reality The selection of the site itself (originally a cultivated green field far away from the city, then changed into a brown field along the Huangpu river in order to transform the industrial waterfront into a public open space and a significant green waterfront, also a business and residential district for the city) works as an investigation of the global issues of the future city and its development. Thus continuing in a new course promoted by the city of Shanghai characterized by more attention to urban planning, where the urban construction and the city's image are becoming the main mission. The revision of the Masterplan of Shanghai 1999–2020 is a milestone of urban construction in Shanghai, in a period of large scale of urban development which is affecting China, in which the Expo 2010 will speed up processes.

At the same time Expo 2010 Shanghai shows that an international platform for the cultural exchange is so important and creative: it is in fact also an international architecture exposition, announcing a new architecture tendency of ecological development in a sustainable urban era, it has displayed a limitless possibility for architectural expression.

Between the glorious past and the splendid future at the opening of the world Expo 2010 China

Yongyi Lu

A hundred years' dream. The opening ceremony of the world Expo 2010 in Shanghai is a great celebration of the whole country, not only for its miraculous achievements of the 30 year opening and reform, but also for the coming of 'a long-awaited dream', that of hosting a world Expo in China, fed for more than a hundred years. Several are in fact the historical attestations of the great interest in world Expo not only in terms of the traditional chinese 'open their eyes to the world' attitude and strong willing of catching up the modernization process of the western world, but also in terms of participating actively and hosting an Expo, also in time period when China was experiencing difficult moments. Therefore it is not surprising to see how proud the country is as only after less than 30 years from the last difficult participation in Usa in 1982, it can be able to host more than 240 countries and regions gathering on such a big world Expo.

Building chinese modern

How to build chinese modern turned to be the central task in china at the beginning of 20th century, particularly in the architecture field. The Expo is in this sense a great challenge, where the issue at stakes are on the one side how to represent the national identity and search for an approach of 'our time' without losing chinese identity. The China pavilion is the most symbolic building in this sense: with its color, size and forms, it apparently represents a new version of an ancient palace crowned with a new version of the 'big roof'. The architect, winner of an international competition of more than 300 projects among chinese architects all over the world, summarized his design as 'both chinese character and spirit of time': the columns supporting the continuously cantilevered structure inspired both from the form of a bronze and the timber-structure of the chinese traditional architecture; and the pattern of the structure on the roof recalling the ideal city structure in ancient China. At the same time it reveals the great effort of the architect to present its face of the 21st century, in so far, for example, the brackets, the most representative element of the traditional chinese architecture, have been transformed into a modern steel and concrete structure. But it is more than this. The most advanced character emphasizing its 'spirit of time' is its 'green' design ideas: the huge 'roof' has stretched a vast sunshade to protect visitors underneath from strong sunshine and the generous opening is also good for ventilation. Energy saving design has been introduced from using special materials for storing solar energy to collecting raining water for recycling use, all strategies reducing 25% of the energy consumption than usual.

Recalling history for the future

Cultural exchange becomes the dominant activity of the world expo nowadays. Actually globalization not only implies something as 'global homogenization' but also intensifies the willing to present different regional identities identity. The China pavilion in this sense it has had some critical response especially from the young architects, for it is a too powerful and centralized state image but still an illogical combination of the building structure and the traditional architectural form. Actually the solid platform underneath stages the 31 provinces' exhibitions, each pavilion presenting its identity reflecting the history actually rich enough for the country to build its cultural diversity. At the same time many other buildings designed by chinese architects on the expo site are apparently close to the 'global homogenisation', the 'green' or the 'low-carbon life style': this has been explained not as a globalizing language but as a reference to the tradition of our ancestors of 'nature and human being are in harmony', well displayed in the famous ancient painting Along the river during the QingMing festival, which has been reproduced into a screen, symbolizing how the achievements nowadays can be deep-rooted in the ancient chinese culture, and how the past can be beautifully bridged to 'better city and better life' of our future. Whether or not the cultural diversity and the 'green' of the Expo will imply an emerging new horizon for chinese architecture and urban construction, replacing the 'mhattanized' version of the last decades is difficult to say. It is however important to recognize the importance of our cultural memory keeping in mind that history is not only a collective memory but also a selective memory.

The Regional and Town Planning of Shanghai

Li Qin

The urban planning system in China has gone through three historic stages, since the founding of Prc. After 1949, it was regarded as a fundamental to build a new China. Suspended during the 1958-78 period when the central government took radical political and economic policies, until 1979 when, China adopted the reform and open policy and formal urban planning efforts were restored as a tool to actualize the new dream of building modern city and modern country. At the same time several key policies decided by the central government pushed chinese cities racing off. As a result of Deng Xiaoping new course towards a socialist market economy, housing was no longer regarded as public welfare. This greatly accelerated urban development: since 1998 in Shanghai central city the averagely completed housing floor area is over 10 million square meters annual. In the meantime, plenty of old built environments were renewed accompanying the dismantlement of state-owned enterprises and demolition of old Linong style buildings. Together with the ideology change came a gradual and continuous decentralization of authority and responsibility to the local governments, opening the opportunity for developing independently local economy. Urban land system was also gradually altered, where the land use right had to be bid openly. Over time, these use rights could be traded and quickly give rise to a flourishing property market. Unexpectedly had become the great fortune for local governments. Shanghai history's is in this sense relevant. The first comprehensive planning, approved by the state Council in 1986, defined the orientation of Shanghai urban development. In the 90's, opening and developing Pudong brought Shanghai a new development opportunity. Pudong was to be developed as an export-oriented, multi-functional new zone with international standards. Since then, Shanghai has entered a fast developing track and has been undergoing an economy booms for a recorded double-digit growth for 15 consecutive years. In 2001, the state Council gave its ratification to the revised Comprehensive planning of Shanghai (1999-2020). Its aim is to build Shanghai into a prospering, civilized and beautiful international metropolis and the world center of economy, finance, trade and shipping.

The municipality of Shanghai has 17 districts and 1 county, with a land area of 5.643,5 square kilometers. The central city within the outer ring road consists of 11 districts, totaling 664 square kilometers, with an existing population of about 9,76 million people. In accordance with coordinated development of the urban and rural area, a "multi-axes, multi-levels and multi-centers" spatial structure was proposed for the metropolitan with a radial pattern along preferential corridors for future development. Space between the corridors was to be conserved as a system of greenbelt or cultivated land.

Target population for satellite cities were set at 800.000 to 1.000.000 people; with suburban central town, close to the city, at around 50.000 inhabitants; and peripheral small towns at from 3.000 to 10.000 people.

According to the master planning, the cities and towns structure is called '1966', which means 1 central city, 9 satellite cities, 60 towns, and 600 central villages. The new cities and towns are intended to absorb the regional immigrants, coming from both the metropolis and other provinces in the nation.

Based on a top-down approach, the regional and town planning in Shanghai has constituted a hierarchy system, with an aim to guide and facilitate land use and construction activities. Plenty of aspects have been advanced and promoted, including economy, housing, transportation, public space, ecological environment and social facilities, substantially improving the living conditions of urban and rural areas alike. In the meantime, Shanghai has increased its role in finance, banking, and as a major destination for corporate headquarters. Great events have been promoted as a strategy and tool to realize the goals of urban planning and urban development. While In the 1990s, the Pudong new area development highlighted Shanghai fast growth, in 2000s, the Shanghai Expo was promoted in the same direction, with an investment of near 330 billion Rmb (50 billion dollars), among which 90% expended on the city infrastructure construction. The next main event in Shanghai will be suburb construction. However, the former regional and town planning and development are mainly concentrating on physical elements. Accompanying breakthrough urban development, many social issues come up, such as affordable housing, social differentiation, floating migrants and social fair and justice. How to combine and balance both social and physical goals will be a great challenge in the future development of Shanghai.

The design process for the Expo Shanghai site planning

Gan Jing

As a complex and systematic mega project, the planning and design of Shanghai Expo site intended to create a 'process design' based on traditional planning method, in order to be more scientific and effective to guild the overall process. From the 'lifecycle' perspective, this can be divided into five phases, namely preliminary scheme, planning and design, construction and implementation, operation, post-use and redevelopment. Among all these phases the phase of planning and design from may 2004 to the end of 2007 has been the core of the overall process, which specifies the objectives set in the preliminary scheme, and provide feasibilities for the following implementation, operation and post-use phases.

A Time management mechanism was produced in order to control the planning and design tasks at different times and in different levels: it was based on checkpoints, milestones and baselines. The base-lines were time points for a series of particular planning results to be formally reported, which would be the basis for the following tasks after formal review and inspection. There were two different kinds of baselines: those set by the Bureau of international expositions, regarded as the most important external requirements; and those set by domestic authorities: the central government established the Executive committee of Shanghai Expo as the official authority. On november 29, 2005 the Executive committee examined and adopted the Masterplan of World Expo 2010 Shanghai as central baselines. In addition the regulatory plan of Expo should be reported to Shanghai People's congress for approval as a legal document to guild the following design and construction process. In terms of milestones, the first type concerned the construction period of Shanghai Metro network, according to which the plan of transportation should be completed in advance to ensure the four metro lines be constructed and operated as scheduled, and the construction period of other infrastructure and permanent pavilion, concerning the necessity to set ahead of the schedule the infrastructure construction and the most important pavilions. In terms of checkpoints different levels were proposed to remind the coming of the baselines.

As Toolkit of planning lifecycle management a task diagram was used to establish a hierarchical structure of the tasks, and to clarify the framework for following steps and a time schedule for individual plan, to set time schedule for each individual plan and design, were provided to ensure that all plans will be implemented in time. Among the most relevant principles, we can read that transportation facilities in accordance with the requirements of the city's overall development, have priority to design and completion; finally together with these an annual work plan based on the time schedule table to guild the yearly task and implementation graphs including the

scope of development in each period of time were provided to manage the planning process.

The site of Expo, selected at both riversides of Huangpu river covers a planned land whose control area totals 6,68 kmq. Within the control area, the planning site is about 5,28 kmq, while the enclosed area is about 3,282. This downtown waterfront sit is anchored within existing urban fabric, forming a triangular relationship with the Old town quarter and the Lujiazui financial centre. The Expo theme Better city, better life for the first time in the history of Expos uses the 'City' as theme, expressing common expectation of people all over the world for better urban life in the future. The over 70 million visitors expected at the Shanghai World Expo during its 184 exhibition days from 1st may to 31st october, will be faced with this challenge. In march 2004, the expo planning proposal of Tongji University utilized 'H-City' as its guideline, later accepted by the organizing committee of Shanghai Expo as the core philosophy within the planning and design. 'Harmony cities' refers to three dimensions: harmony between human-being and nature, harmony between human-being and society, as well as harmony between history and future. The enclosed area is 3,28 kmq wide and split between Pudong (2,39 kmq) and Puxi (0,89 kmq); it is divided in 5 zones (60 hectares) and into 12 groups (plots of 10 hectares each) reserved for large exhibition areas.

26 clusters, each encom-passing 4 hectares are the basic organizational unit of the planned Expo site. Each cluster is subdivided into approximately 35 exhibition units, each of which with 500 mq (18m x 27m) of construction space. The 5 zones are dedicated to A: east Asian and west Asian pavilions; B: Expo center, Theme pavilions, China pavilion area, Culture center, International organizations pavilion, east-south Asian and south Asian pavilions; C: European, American and African pavilions; D: Expo museum, Footprint pavilion and Corporate pavilions; E: urban best practice area and Corporate pavilions.

Notes of travel. Hybrids

Valeria Fedeli

Shanghai is a hybrid. Like many other fast growing cities in developing countries, those who visit it today for the Expo 2010 cannot but realize about the fact that it is an hybrid in many ways unique and special.

We can in fact recognize a first trace of hybridization in the second half of the nineteenth century, when the city (founded in the tenth century as a fishing village on alluvial soils along the Yangtze river delta) becomes the favorite economic and cultural exchange point between east and west. The establishment of foreign concessions, following the Treaty of Nanjing and the subsequent treaties of 1843 and 1844, assigns to England, and later also to France and the United States, the possibility of settling in territories outside the historic city to conduct economical business. Juxtaposed cities and trade exchanges provide since then a process of exchange between urban cultures, as well as political, social, institutional, economic. The Lining houses, built in the late nineteenth century until the thirties of the twentieth century, in the territories of the concessions, mixed the culture of english terrace house, with the settlement rules of the chinese living. Now subject to recovery and rehabilitation, after hosting for a century the massive population growth of the city, after becoming the symbol of a past to be erased to move towards a new China, these mixed types have constituted the Dna of a city hybrid for more than a century and a half.

A second, among the many possible traces, is to be found in more recent times: with the introduction of the reforms of 1978-70 and the new orientation towards the social market economy and a global economy, Shanghai is once again the place par excellence of hybridization and exchange with the world. A special place where the market economy and private property had room for rooting and growth. The construction of Pudong, the engine of economic development on the banks of the river has brought international strategic capital for the whole country, but also new urban types and forms back to the city, that have been absorbed, reworked, modified, hybridized. They have produced parts of the city we would call globalized, reaching out spaces and forms intended to show to the world China's capacity to assimilate and play technology and languages: on these Shanghai has built its symbolic contribution in opening China to the world.

A third form is that of contemporary Shanghai, which coexists and multiplies powerful and promising forms of hybridization. Expo 2010 can be read back as a special effort in this direction: it is a new gamble on the city, on its ability to be an environment capable of ensuring a better life. It is an important choice, namely to reverse years of profoundly anti-urban investment, but because it carries with it a renewed attention to the contradictions

and openings contained in the slogan Better Cities, Better Life, as shown in the Urban Best Practices Hall reproducing to the reality scale examples of urban fabrics and technologies considered as a possible answer to this question, in fact the whole city is now a huge area of experimentation and exhibition.

From the minute cells of the apartments of the new residential towers through the rediscovery of the historical buildings, up to the nine new satellite towns around the central city, which cannot sound but strange and in many ways distorting the idea of hybridization, we can recognize a series of new emerging hybrids, perhaps simply destined to fail, some destined to produce interesting paths of experimentation, like the great project for settlement on the island north of Shanghai, where a settlement based on the principles of sustainable growth and km zero is designed. Joined together and put into a sequence, these experiences tell us about a world from which somehow one cannot come back but with great curiosity and amazement, where the city is a wide open space for experimental projects on the hybridization, cultural, social, etc. Despite the obvious limitations and the undeniable contradictions of contemporary world, an enviable condition.

Notes of travel. Milano-Shanghai: round-back trip

Corinna Morandi, Luca Gaeta

Our travel notes come from the perceived gap between two cities, both committed to host great events. Though it can be risky to compare such diverse experiences, having reflected on how Milan is reshaping its initial proposal one year after the bidding, and having reflected on the event's expected legacy for the city as a whole, we have been looking at Expo2010 to find evidence for our hypothesis. Legacy is an elusive concept. It includes physical assets together with, i.e., the city positioning in the international ranking. From that point of view, the Chinese experience is the outcome of a top-down decision process aimed at proclaiming Shanghai's economic supremacy in the Asian world. As a consequence, site selection was made according to a large scale and long lasting planning strategy. On the one hand the Expo site provides an urban window for rural China, on the other hand it is a Chinese window for the world. Expo2010 may be considered as the last possible link in the chain of great exhibitions since the 19th century.

The series of design proposals in Milan is perhaps leading to a different way of conceiving the role of great events. The concept masterplan by Herzog, Burdett, Boeri e McDonough is based on the immaterial value of experience as the primary attraction for visitors. Fixed spatial elements are reduced to a minimum. If this claim is confirmed it is an opportunity for the positive development of the project. It seems appropriate to consider the choice not to propose at this stage a detailed design. However, this technically acceptable choice would become weak if not immediately supported by the political and administrative system.

On the subject of future uses for the site also Expo2010 does not seem to give clear options, beyond general information on creating a large riverside park. Legitimate hypothesis is that there are redevelopment plans for a site very rapidly reclaimed but also highly accessible. Such plans are not made public. It seems certain at present the preservation of monumental pavilions arranged along a wide avenue perpendicular to the river Haungpu. Of course the legacy is not reducible to the provisioning of new urban hardware. For some cities the main outcome was the listing in the upper ranks of the urban hierarchy ('to be on the map', as in the case of Saragoza). The case of Shanghai is amazing. The city is concentrated in using the event on several fronts. The main objectives are to outweigh Tokyo and Hong Kong, becoming the leading global city in Asia, and achieving accelerated modernization of the infrastructures. Costs and risks? Of course very high from both the environmental and the social point of view. But there seem to be other interesting legacy effects. The first is tied to the location on a large industrial site along the river, both broadening and balancing the urban core. The second is related to

spreading the attention to environmental issues and to the quality of urban life in other Chinese cities. A didactic effect of the great exhibition that would attract millions of national visitors.

Another form of legacy is the relationship with planning strategies. Two years before the awarding of Expo, Shanghai approved a masterplan with the primary purpose of making the city by 2020 a world capital of commerce and finance. We are impressed by the full integration of Expo in the implementation of the planning strategy. Expo2010 has promoted revitalization, accelerated the construction of mass transit infrastructures, aroused more attention to the quality of public space and the recovery of the architectural heritage, created a new relationship with the river so far considered an urban edge. Shanghai wants to make itself a huge exhibition hall. Even though the city cannot conceal its many contradictions, the coherence of purpose is evident from the combination of urban development with the best practices exhibited in the Expo site, first located in a very remote area, then along the Huangpu thanks to the design competition launched in 2000.

Milan has not selected the site for Expo2015 according to any urban strategy, nor the reasons for that choice have emerged from public debates. The strong thematic intentions towards sustainable development contained in the slogan of Expo2015 should be reflected primarily in land use decisions concerning the future of the site. We hope that Expo2015 can become for Milan, as it was in many other cases, a catalyst for local opportunities and resources, including the intelligence that many people have managed to express in the past. This exceptional heritage could still be the best chance for Expo2015 to succeed.

Notes of travel. The flowing river

Remo Dorigati

When, in the late '90s, an international workshop, coordinated by Tonji University, concluded that the most suitable area for the future home of Expo was the turn of the Huangpu River, next to the financial district of Pudong all seemed a suitable and a strategically correct choice. Other alternatives had explored the possibility of locating it near the new airport, or delta waterfront, or even in support of the numerous satellite towns to the city's crown. The river won, in a place where this meets the city's history, strengthening its central characters of public institutions as opposed to the centrifugal force with which Shanghai is expanding. The choice was not entirely indifferent to the 'after use' because a place of dismantled production site was assumed into a policy of urban renewal through a sequence of urban public spaces organized by the large area of river. It is not a small thing for a city and a culture that only now rediscovering their tracks.

The river is a fundamental strategic asset for the city: Shanghai means 'placed over or on, or near water'. The territory Shanghai is born is drawn from the river which feeds a network infrastructure that powers inland transport and irrigation systems of campaigns. In 1842 when the British opened the first concession opted for a city-port, an alternative to the old town, aligned along the northern shores. The Bund became the public place par excellence with a unique mix of public institutions, banks, warehouses, docks, market, houseboats, etc. But the decisive impetus to the transformation of the city takes place in 1991 when Deng Xiaoping chose the city as Sezs (Special economic zones) as an experiment for the new strategy known as 'socialist market economy' with the intention of transforming the delta region of Yangtze: the new Pudong financial district location along the river opposite the Bund proved the most direct solution to represent the new economic 'hub' strengthening the centrality of the river, and opposes a new image colonial vision.

So it seemed only natural that the area chosen for the Expo was along the river, continuing the process of strengthening the Huangpu as new backbone of development. The urban plan of the Expo is divided into large blocks (strategy that allows to absorb many future features), a linear park along the river on a plank and monumental bridge which would connect the parts across the river (the area of the halls of companies). It is also a virtual connection with People Square direction and with Pudong. The significance of the river as a structural public space is readable also for the role that water treatment has into the strategy of the plan: the river water is collected within the area and, after a series of purification processes, produces a sequence of events and environmental landscape (fountains, waterfalls, lakes, gar-

dens and various energy issues. The image of the river as a kind of ecological corridor that enters the lake area in the metropolis bringing with it quality and energy that attracts public spaces (because the space of the river itself is public space) is one of the most significant traces of the rediscovery of a new urban order. The territorial scale of the river is measured by the metropolitan order.

Notes of travel. The framework of open spaces for the Expo in Shanghai

Andrea Rolando

The implementation of a Great event requires the solution, among others, of the problems related to the relationship between the area of the event and the urban environment as a whole. The organization of open spaces, one of the most relevant strategic action carried on by the city to fulfil the theme 'better city, better life' has brought to a better harmony between city and nature, according to the idea that that a better city, as such, is already a good starting point to provide its citizens with the opportunity of a better life. In this sense, though such reading has been done through an eye influenced by european-italian experience of urban space, outsider to Chinese culture, nevertheless it is possible to assess the impressive upgrading work carried on by Shanghai (also) with reference to the Expo. The same exact care has not only been applied to the specific gated area as well as to a throughout design approach to the whole city. This is due to the attempt of making at least acceptable the extraordinary process of growth of Shanghai, but also to set a standard (addressed to China and to the world), qualifying the city as an example and to a country where every year 30 million people try to move from the countryside to the metropolitan areas.

If we consider the relations between the Expo site and the main elements of the central area of Shanghai towards the Expo, there is a new a north south axis, bridging the city from the poles of Suzhou creek (place of creativity, where important buildings of industrial heritage are being brought back to city life), reaching down to Xizang road and the new Expo axis on the southern banks of Huangpu river, realizing a new direction of urban development able to connect some of the most qualified functions of the present and future city and that tends to offset the balance of the city centre, adding a third pole after the two, already existing around People's Square and the Financial District of Pudong.

In terms of structure of open spaces within the Expo site the whole system contributes to tie very lively areas like that of Tian Zi Fang, the axis lined with the four pavilions that will remain as a legacy for the City after the Expo, together with the beautiful garden developed along the southern banks of Huangpu river, the new ecological village on the northern banks, building innovative relationships between the City and the river. It is not possible to walk the gap between the two banks (450 m) of the river, directly at the level of open spaces, but the connection is assured by bridges and under water tunnels, both for cars and for metro lines. The out and out relation, at human scale, is therefore limited to the visual one, even if it is strongly supported and emphasised by the extraordinary open space at the end of the main north south axis of the Expo, that terminate as a true balcony spanning over the southern banks of the river, looking over

the city of Concessions that grew on the opposite side, referring as a model to the solution of urban integration of the site for the 1889 and 1900 Exposes in Paris, where a positive relationship between river and city has been carried on.

In terms of relations of higher scale, in a framework of metropolitan and regional scale, the structure supporting such strategy sets a new one based upon a concept of integration of systems of open spaces (green belts, axis, corridors, parks and forests). In this sense, the area of the Expo could therefore be considered to be a pivot between the lake from which the Huangpu is originated and the new environmental resource (agriculture, forests, wetlands) of the Chongming Island, located to north of the city, on the Yangtze estuary.

Notes of travel. 2010 Shanghai, a profile for a changing city

Antonio Longo

The workshop was implemented as an intensive knowledge test of interpretation of the city. The contact with Shanghai came about through a set of clues, structured information, guided visits, 'drift' in the city, which enabled us to identify a profile of the city of the Expo 2010 and indirectly to reflect on the contemporary European city, and Milan in particular, beyond the contingency of the forthcoming Universal Exposition.

In 2006, Shanghai had about 18 people: 13.5 million residents and 5 million migrants. In addition to this one most add the so-called floating population, 3 million people. The projection now, 2010, is of 19 million inhabitants. The government's development plan (2020), involves the construction of nine satellite towns with differentiated roles and functions, 60 new small towns, 600 villages. The 970 km of new transmission lines form a grid system which can reshape the relationship between the city and its territory. 160 new Metro stations have been completed connected by 223 km of lines, estimated to double a system linked by intermodal hub of urban highways 9. 384 km and 1582 km of roads. The maximum enhancement of the soil surface rights granted to international companies in property development has led to a profoundly changed skyline: over a thousand more towers a hundred meters high have been built in the last ten years and forty above two hundred meters. These transformations are perceivable for an observer the city: they provide a great visual representation, through the rhetorics of development tested in height and speed: the World Financial Center was completed in 2008 and will measure over 492m. In 2014 the Shanghai Tower will reach 632 m. The Maglev, the magnetic suspension shuttle that connects the Pudong Airport reaches a speed of 430 kmh. This representation also is part of the historical places of the city, Xintiandi is where in 1921 the Chinese communist party was founded: demolished and reconstructed by integrating old and new buildings on a new artificial soil, the neighborhood has been transformed into a center of trade and International entertainment.