

## Collecting Knowledge on China's New Space

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Since 1949, China has engaged in a number of spatial makeovers of its territory. The periods of the Great Leap Forward (1958), the agricultural production brigade system and the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution brought drastic changes mainly to the countryside in the form of new land division, coupled to extensive rural water and resource management plans. With an urban population of less than 20% of the overall population until the mid-60s, Chinese cities were (with the exception of Beijing) for the large part left unaltered. This status quo changed drastically in the mid-eighties, and projections regarding levels of urbanization in China predict a percentage of 60% of the overall population by 2030 or even earlier. Thus cities (new and old) have undergone radical changes in the past twenty years, and the textual, statistical and visual material generated by these changes is as varied and important as the nature of the development itself. Architectural drawings and floor plans of individual buildings (such as the new Koolhaas Tower in Beijing) constitute the smallest individual units of these new materials. At the other end of the spectrum we find the ten or twenty-year urban projection designs of entire mega-municipalities, such as Tianjin, Shanghai, Beijing or Lhasa for that matter (Lhasa City Comprehensive Urban Plan, 1995-2015). These materials are difficult to access, and even more difficult to collect in a comprehensive manner. For starters, they are issued by national, provincial or local agencies and offices not usually targeted by traditional book vendors. Not seldom only very limited "editions" exist, being issued on a need-to-see basis, to and by planners and developers. They come in odd formats, from huge, rolled up drawings 5x5 meters to vast digital repositories of regulatory planning policy documents compiled in highly technical and legal verbiage.

To introduce this subject matter to a wider audience, my presentation is divided into three parts:

1. An overview of the multiple types of materials either in existence or in preparation;
2. Which agencies are involved in their production and distribution;
3. What types of paradigms govern the design and the implementation of these new spatial schemes.



Projected modification of Shanghai modeled on the core urban area of Shanghai in 1966

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