

# **SENIOR REJUVENATION**

**Reconfiguration Of Community Public Space And Interpersonal Relations**

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Master of Architecture Thesis  
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May 2022

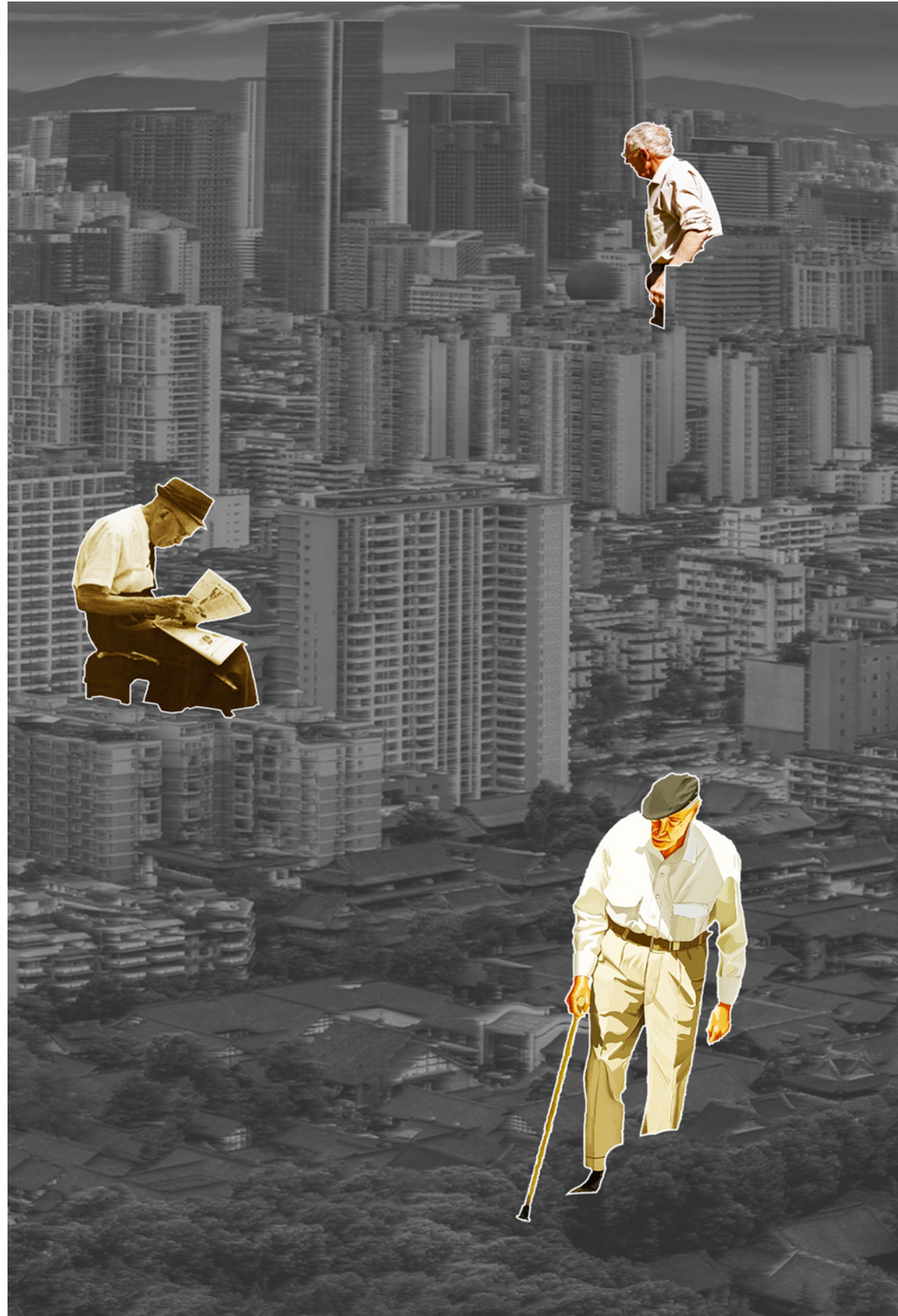


FIGURE 1. SENIORS IN MEGA CITY.  
EDITED BASED ON: YIHAO ZHANG. DACI COMMUNITY. 2018

## ABSTRACT

With the development of China's urbanization and the expansion of the urban scale, according to the National Bureau of Statistics of China, China's urbanization has exceeded 60% by 2021, also in order to meet the demand of population growth in urban, the process has led to a change in the residential pattern of the population, so that gated communities, which are commercial housing, dominate the residential pattern of cities and towns.

Along with the aging process, this living model brings advantages and disadvantages to the aging population.

Currently, because of the expansion of cities and the lack of large public outdoor areas, the transportation distance of at least one hour makes most of the urban seniors prefer to be active in their communities. However, as the outdoor activities of the seniors groups are affected by the monotony of the community public areas, incomplete facilities and pandemic, as well as the use of smartphones and the Internet, the outdoor activities of the seniors groups, as of 2021, according to Asian Development blog, outdoor activity among seniors in China has decreased by 30 percent. According to the W.H. O, a complete or near-complete lack of contact between people and society leads to social isolation, and the report states that long-term social isolation can seriously increase loneliness and endanger the mental health of seniors, so this reduction in outdoor activities is dangerous for seniors.

Therefore, my project aims to reduce social isolation and enhance mental and physical health by rebuilding the public areas of the community and enhancing the attractiveness of the community to promote outdoor activities and communication exchange among the seniors.

## POSTITION

Based on the study, I learned that the prefabricated building can provide diversified options and fast installation, and can improve the community public area in the shortest time, also suitable for different sizes of communities, and has sufficient advantages in terms of cost and environmental friendly, so it is worth the attention of existing community managers, real estate developers and architects.

## Topic

In general, my thesis design is a modular, prefabricated, demountable building that can be combined with options for communities of various sizes to quickly build public space that improve and secure the social needs of the seniors. This device encourages outdoor activities for the seniors and enhances communication to reduce social isolation and the potential dangers of social isolation. Based on this I need to investigate which kind of activities can be appealing to seniors, how to establish interaction between seniors through these activities, which materials and which types of elements can be incorporated into the design of such buildings.

In China's Rapidly Aging Society, How Can The **Community Retirement Model** Reactivate The Public Space Of The Community Through A **Modular Design Approach** And Rapidly Improve **The Quality Of Public Space** In Order To **Secure** And **Stimulate** The Social Activities Of Seniors?

1. SOCIAL BACKGROUND:

Since the foundation of the People's Republic of China in 1949, the government has required by law that all adult children take care of their parents, and only childless elders are cared for in welfare institutions by the government. These elder institutions for the childless were actually stigmatized before the 1980s (Shang, 2001) and the mainstream viewpoint that 'sending parents to nursing homes is unfilial' had been formed. Families with adult children had no expectations of institutional care for elderly parents due to the social background

2. INSTITUTIONAL CONDITION

There is still a degree of disparity in the facilities of China's nursing homes, and the problems and solutions of institutionalized aging in China. The problems are mainly related to unregulated nursing homes, shortage of caregivers, lack of family recognition and psychological comfort.

*“Although supportive policies on institutional care and nursing homes have increased rapidly in recent years, studies show that Chinese elders repel the idea of the nursing home and consider institutional elder care as the last choice ”*

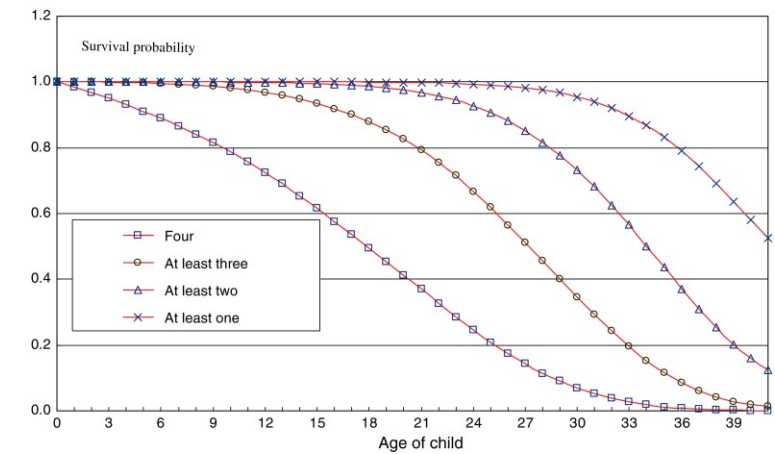


FIGURE 1. Age-specific survival probability curves concerning the coexistence of three generations in the 4-2-1 family structure

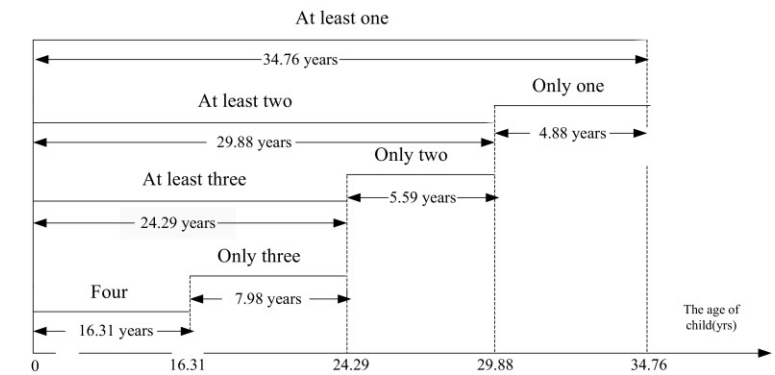
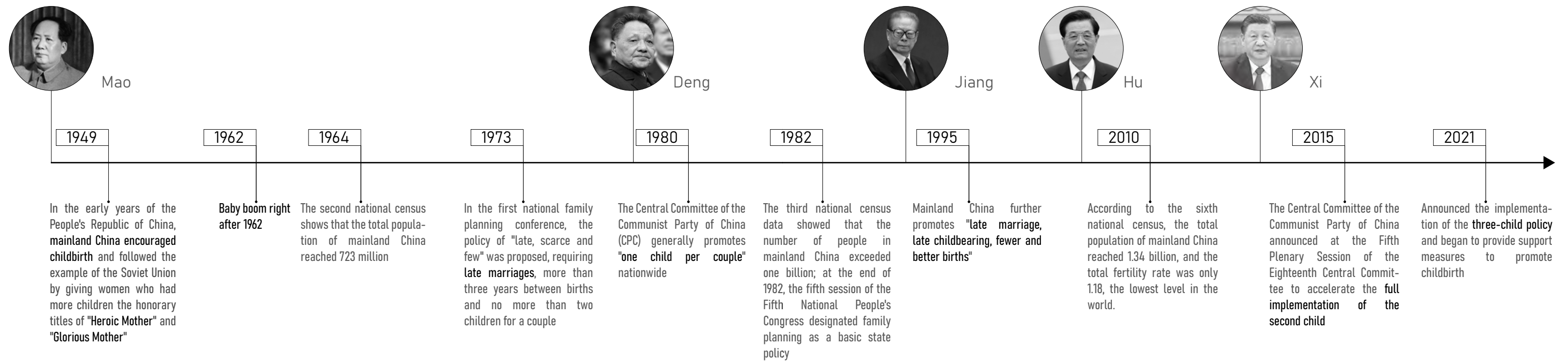
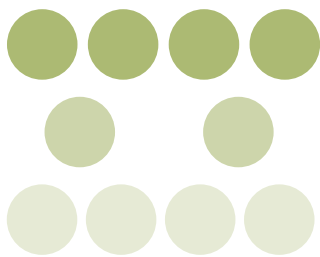


FIGURE 2. Survival years of grandparents in the 4-2-1 family structure, conditional on the survival of two parents and one child

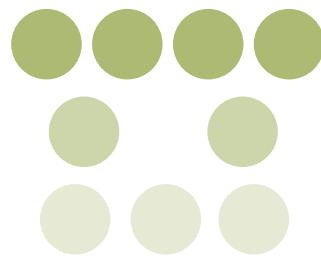
POSITION SITUATION AUDIENCE METHOD OUTCOME



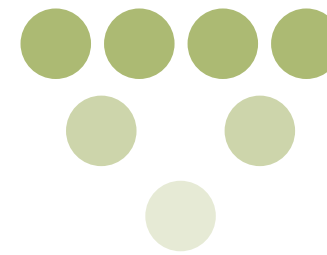
1ST GEN



2ND GEN



3RD GEN



4TH GEN

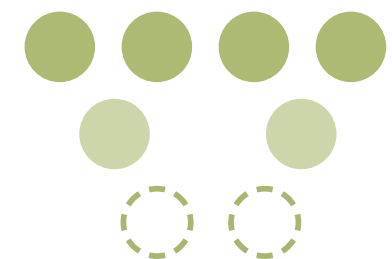


FIGURE 3. Generation and changing with Chinese Family Structure  
Drawing based on: Attane, Isabelle. China's Family Planning Policy: An Overview of Its Past and Future. 2002

FAMILY STRUCTURE DIAGRAM

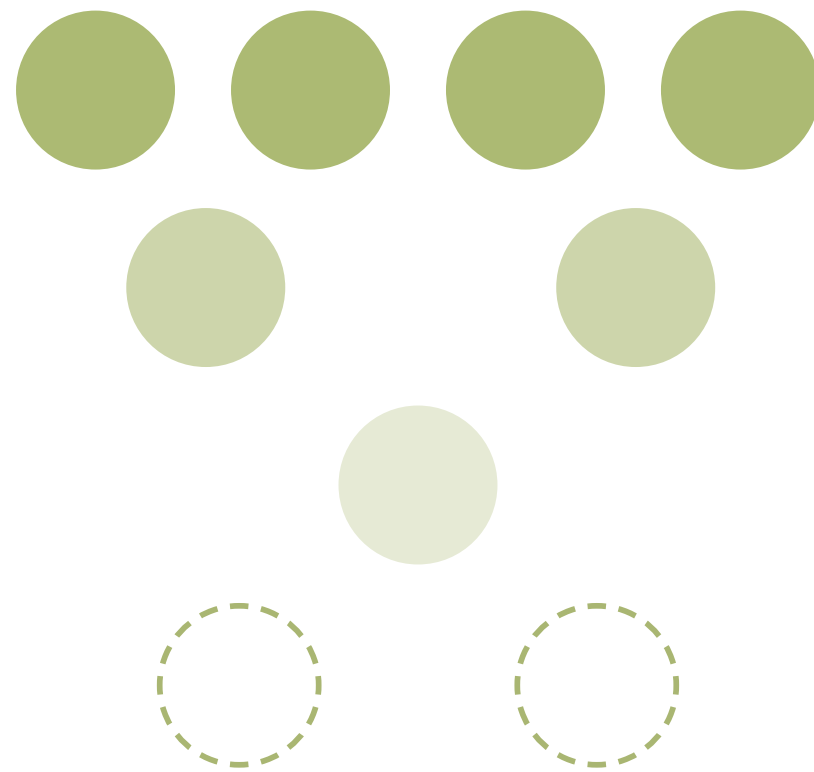


FIGURE 4. Currently Chinese Family Structure  
Drawing based on: Attane, Isabelle . China's Family Planning Policy. An Overview of Its Past and Future. 2002

3. SPECIFIC FAMILY STRUCTURE

The 4-2-1 family structure refers to a family in which three generations coexist in multiple family forms. The structure emphasizes social living communities based on marriage, kinship and adoption relationships and includes four older adults (grandparents and maternal grandparents), two parents and one child.

Once all grandparents reach "old age" (60+), the probability that all four will survive is only 0.61. Four grandparents are likely to co-exist for 16 years after the birth of a grandchild, then one will die and the remaining three may spend another 8 years together; finally, after the death of the other, the surviving two will co-exist for another 5 years. There is no significant difference in coexistence time between urban and rural families. As parents have children at an older age, the duration becomes shorter. The pressure of old age in this type of family is not as severe as expected.

Chinese culture is rooted in filial piety, which is the foundation of Chinese society. Filial piety is central to the system of public opinion monitoring that emerged from the traditional intergenerational support model; in addition, public opinion and law have reinforced the centrality of family support for the elderly. Traditionally, the security of the elderly has depended on the family, and corresponding social norms and policies have emerged. Family support will continue to be the dominant model of aging in China, so the proper use of community functions and forms is a necessary part of completing family support.

Source: Haomiao Zhang. Sending parents to nursing homes is unfilial? An exploratory study on institutional elder care in China. August 22, 2017  
Eur J Ageing. The 4-2-1 family structure in China: a survival analysis based on life tables. May 20, 2011.





FIGURE 5. Unknown artist, The Classic of Filial Piety, Song Dynasty (960-1279)

Confucian ethics does not view filial piety as a choice, but rather as an unconditional obligation of the child

There has not been any revolutionary change in elderly care in mainland China, family obligations are still strong and still "almost automatic"

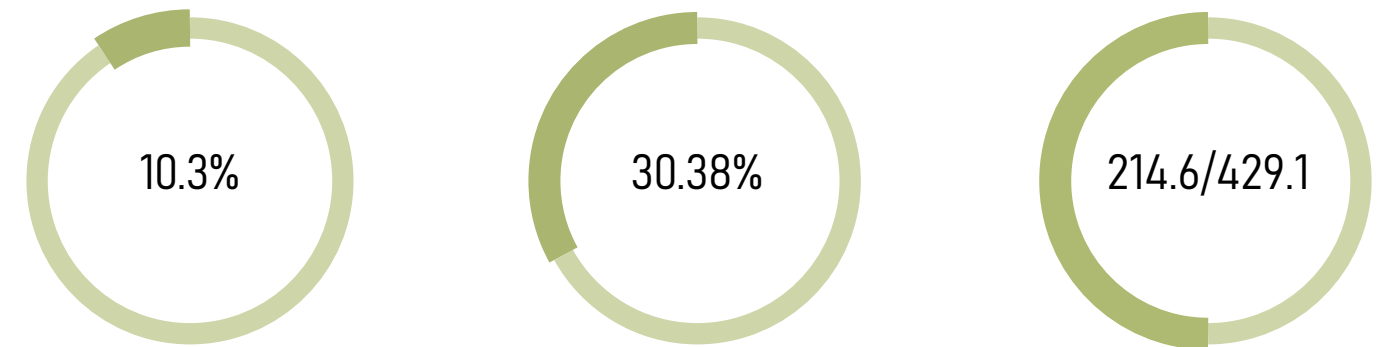


FIGURE 6. Survival years of grandparents in the 4-2-1 family structure, conditional on the survival of two parents and one child. Drawing based on: Chenyan Li. Shaking your head at the mention of nursing homes? The national average occupancy rate of nursing homes is only 50%, what is the problem. Wenhui Times, 2021.

There are 42,300 elderly care institutions of all kinds nationwide, with 4,291,000 beds and 2,416,000 elderly residents. It is not difficult to see that the vacancy rate of elderly institutions is close to half.

In the choice of retirement, the vast majority of parents will choose to age in the community at home, only 10.70% of those who choose institutional care, while the questionnaire fillers themselves have a greater acceptance of the elderly institutions, 30.38% choose institutional care, this proportion is three times that of parents.

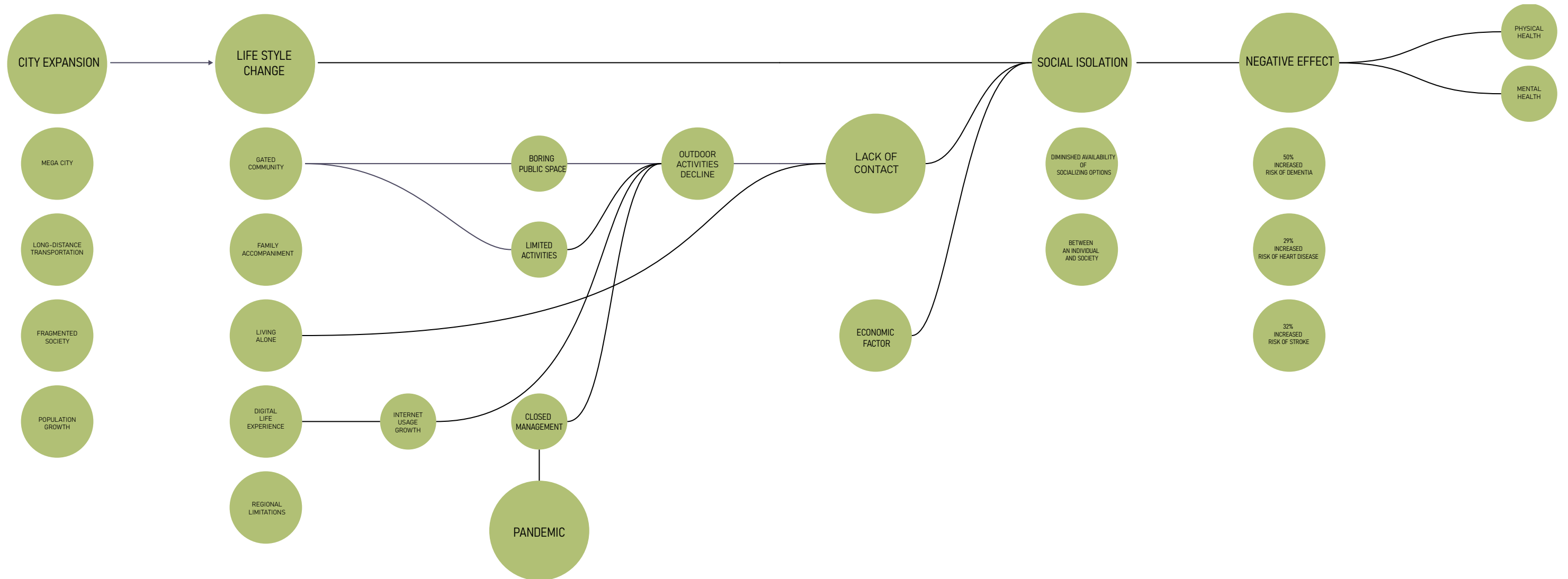


FIGURE 7. Development of Aging Issues in China

With the beginning of China's urbanization process, in the early 1990s, residential construction in China began to enter a period of real estate development, in the true sense of the word, and people were escaping more from unit compound dormitories into more free, dispersed and diversified living. The vast majority of them adopted the planning and design concept of closed communities, one of the factors of which is that Chinese people like the sense of security that comes with the love of a closed community.

While the public space contained in such a large closed environment provides an easy place for the elderly community to move around, the large number of urban highways built during the same period to meet urban expansion also cut off the connection between the various communities, and the travel of the elderly community, which relies on traditional transportation, became more limited with the expansion of the urban landscape and the change of transportation patterns, and the development of the city left them trapped within the confines of the community.





FIGURE 8: Typical Gated Community in China



FIGURE 10: Men playing Chinese Chess, Beijing CN



FIGURE 9: Unoccupied fitness area in Shanghai

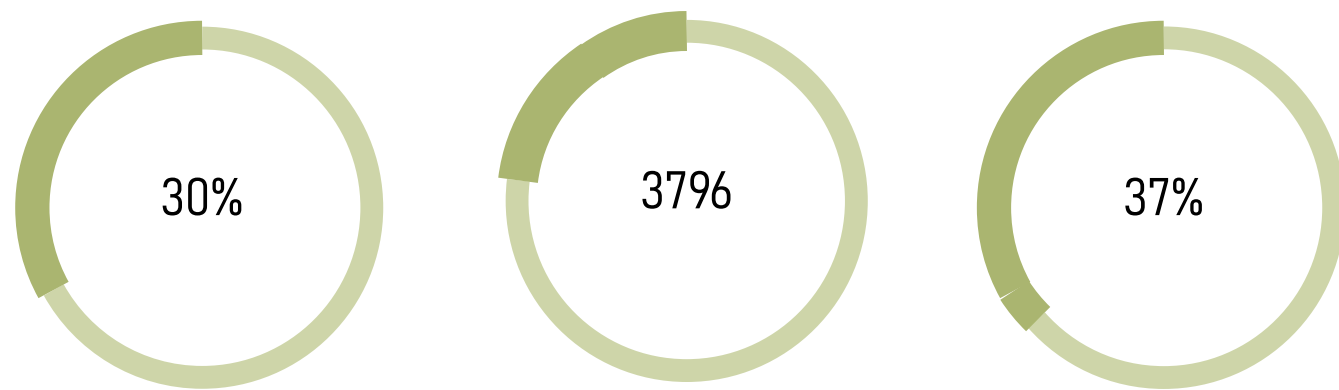


FIGURE 11: Women playing Cards, Guangzhou CN

*"Large-sized, high-rise, privately managed gated residential developments have become a dominant feature of the built environment in China's growing metropolis during the last 15 years."*

--Luigi Tomba, Gated Communities

One of the problems with gated communities is the environmental design and public building configuration that places the residential street interface, which has significant public and commercial value, inside the community through walls or railings. However, the **INADEQUATE CONSTRUCTION** of supporting facilities has resulted in existing closed communities that are severely lacking in vitality and diversity of activities, and are therefore unfriendly and unattractive to the elderly.



By 2021, according to the Asian Development blog, outdoor activity among older adults in China has decreased by **30%**. One set of statistics, based on a study of senior citizens in Shanghai, shows that the epidemic's lockdown policy has reduced the average number of daily steps taken by seniors by **3,796**, which is **1/4** the miles they spend outdoors in a day. According to the World Health Organization, a complete or near-complete lack of contact between people and society leads to social isolation, and the report states that prolonged social isolation can seriously increase loneliness and endanger the mental health of older adults, with statistics showing that **37%** of Chinese seniors experienced depression and anxiety during the pandemic.

FIGURE 12. HOW PANDEMIC INFLUENCE THE ELDERLY'S OUTDOOR ACTIVITY.  
Source:1.Ding Ding, Minna Cheng, Borja del Pozo Cruz, Tao Lin, Shuangyuan Sun, Li Zhang, Qiping Yang, Zhicong Ma, Jing Wang, Yingnan JiaHow COVID-19 lockdown and reopening affected daily steps: evidence based on 164,630 person-days of prospectively collected data from Shanghai, China.International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity  
2.

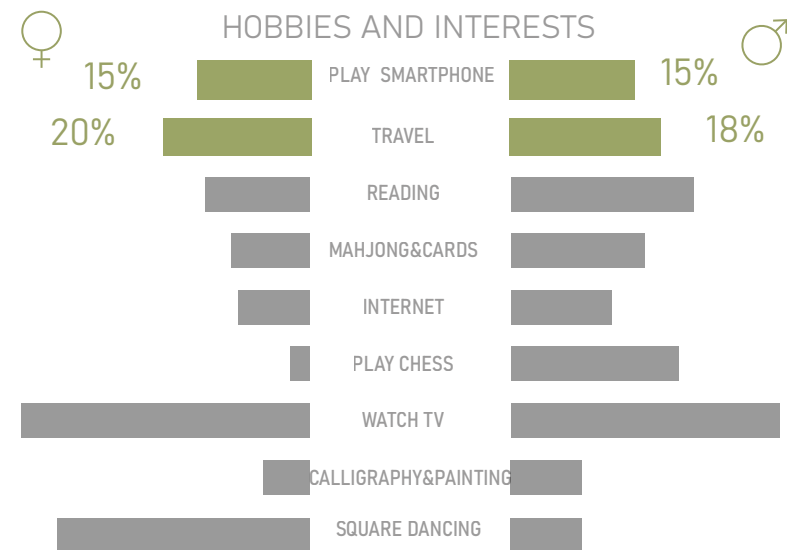


FIGURE 12, Research on the interests of the elderly.  
Drawing based on:Sequoia,China Urban Aging Consumption Insight Report,2019

Playing with smartphones (15%) and traveling (18%-20%) are the new favorites of the older adults surveyed. This feature is particularly evident among the 50-70 year olds surveyed, which is more than two times the average.

*“According to data from last year’s census(2020), China is home to 260 million people aged 60 and over. Of these, just 110 million – or more than one in three – described themselves as “online.”*  
--Jiang Qiaolei, Associate Professor , Tsinghua University

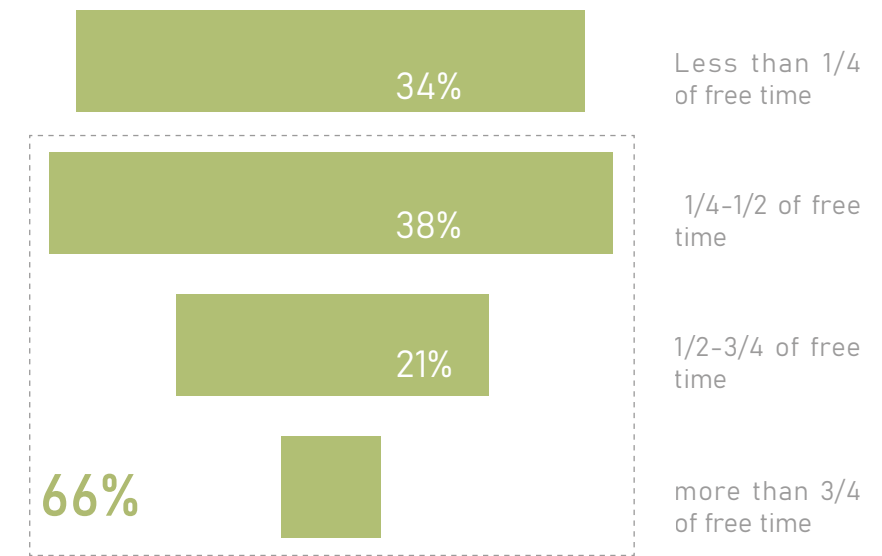
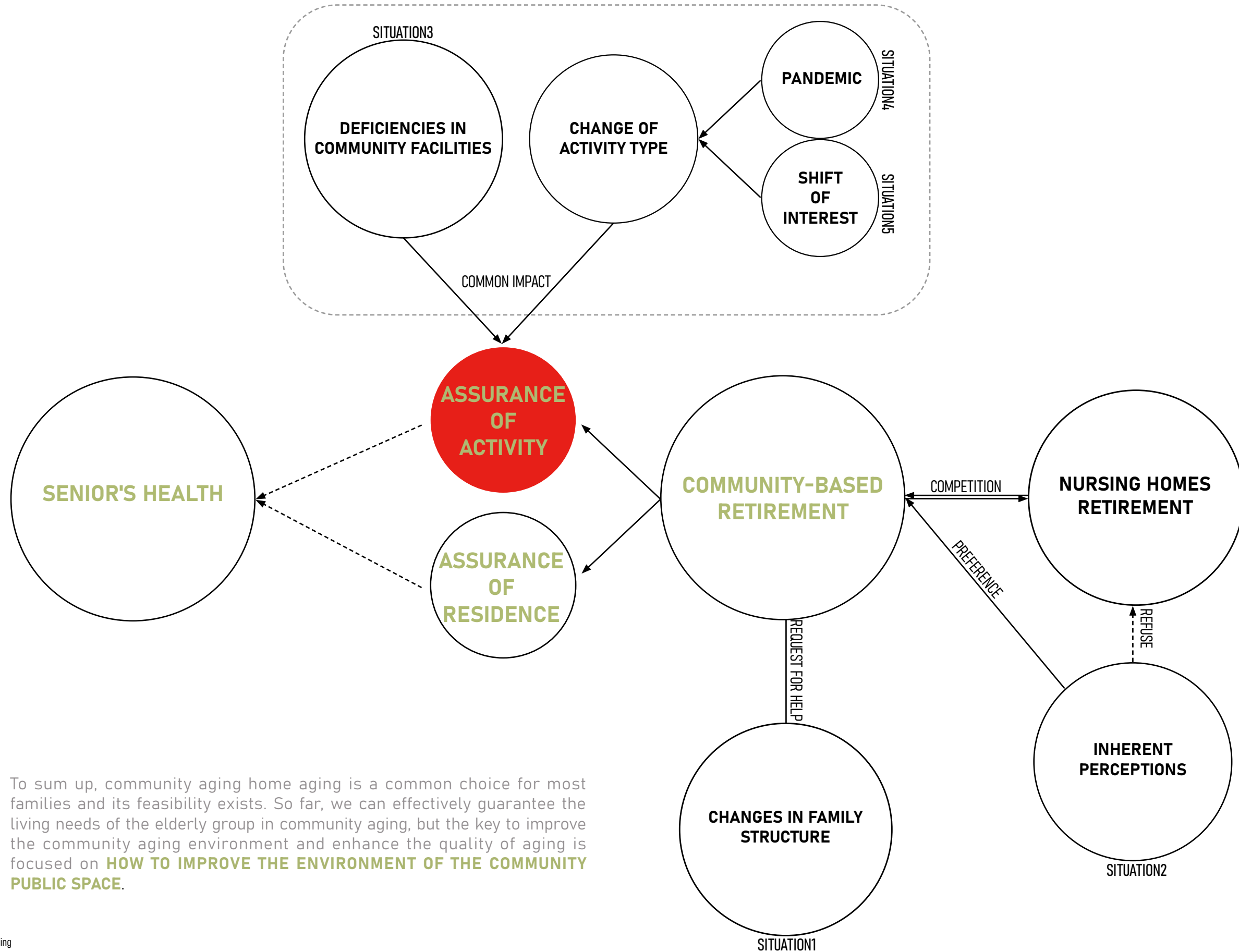


FIGURE 13, Mobile Internet use time as a percentage of free time.  
Drawing based on:Sequoia,China Urban Aging Consumption Insight Report,2019

Although smartphones can be a good way to alleviate the loneliness in the minds of the elderly, excessive use has affected their lives and such behavior limits their time spent outdoors. For empty-nesters who lack an offline social circle, as a way to ease their loneliness, they risk falling into long-term dependence on the Internet. Online scams and fake news targeting older adults are also common problems. However, our research shows that access to the internet is a net positive for older adults, opening up new worlds that allow them to find companies, access emotional support, find a variety of information and resources, and live happier lives life.

*“According to a report on the internet use of China’s elderly people released by mobile content aggregator Qutoutiao last year, 38.6 percent of people aged 60 or older were internet users. The report showed around 0.2 percent of surveyed elderly spend at least 10 hours online per day.”*

-- Ma Chi ,CHINA DAILY



To sum up, community aging home aging is a common choice for most families and its feasibility exists. So far, we can effectively guarantee the living needs of the elderly group in community aging, but the key to improve the community aging environment and enhance the quality of aging is focused on **HOW TO IMPROVE THE ENVIRONMENT OF THE COMMUNITY PUBLIC SPACE.**

FIGURE 14.The Importance of Community Aging

Based on the previous conclusions, it is easy to see the importance of community aging and the key factors to improve the environment. In order to reflect these importance and get these key factors improved, I believe that **ARCHITECTS**, are think architects are still the main audience, because their participation can essentially suggest solutions and better raise the public's awareness of the elderly in terms of performance, also **COMMUNITY RELATED MANAGERS, REAL ESTATE DEVELOPERS** and **GOVERNMENT RELATED DEPARTMENTS** are potential audiences.

# WHAT CAN WE DO TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES FOR THE SENIORS

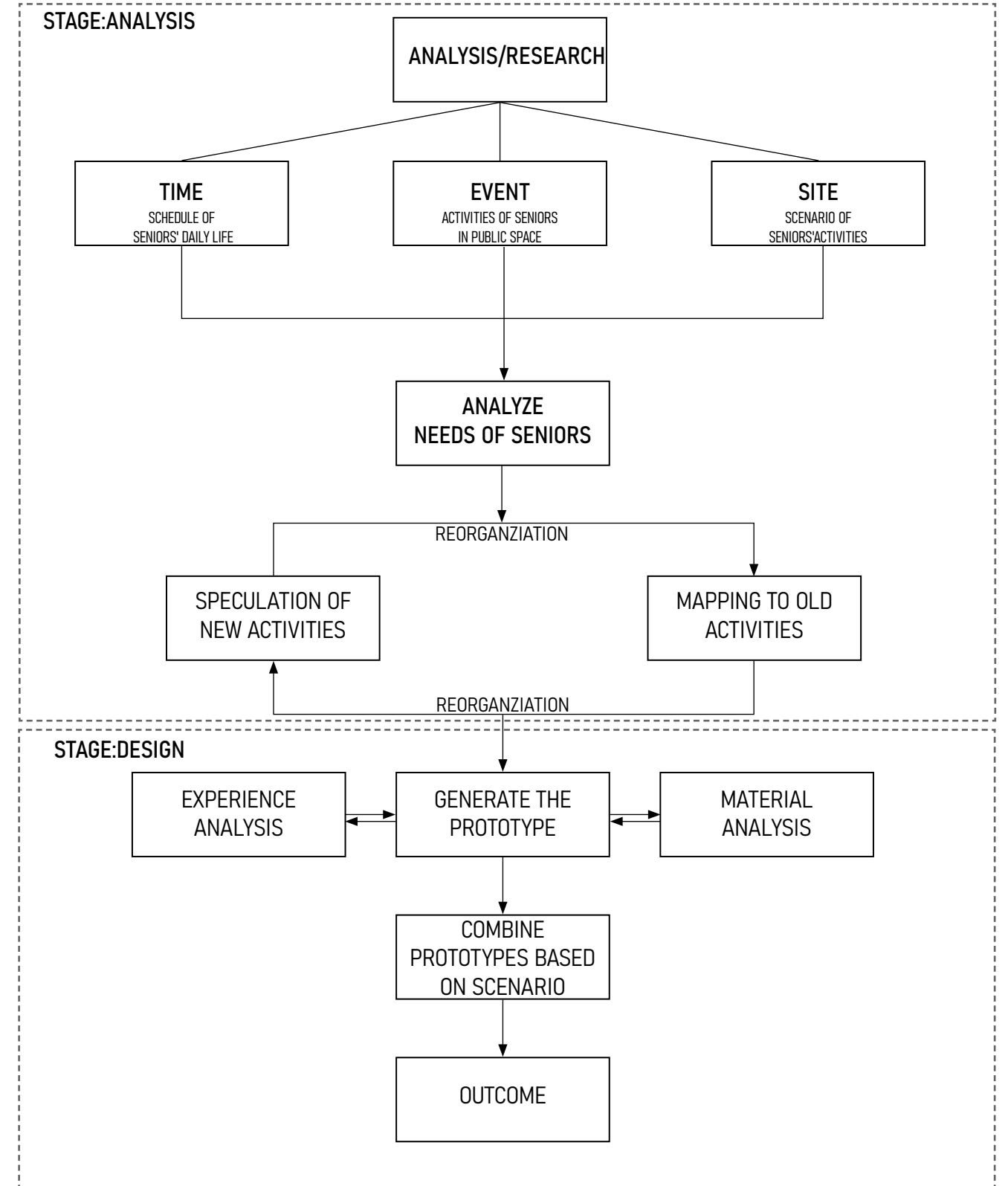


FIGURE 15. Method of "Senior Rejuvenation"

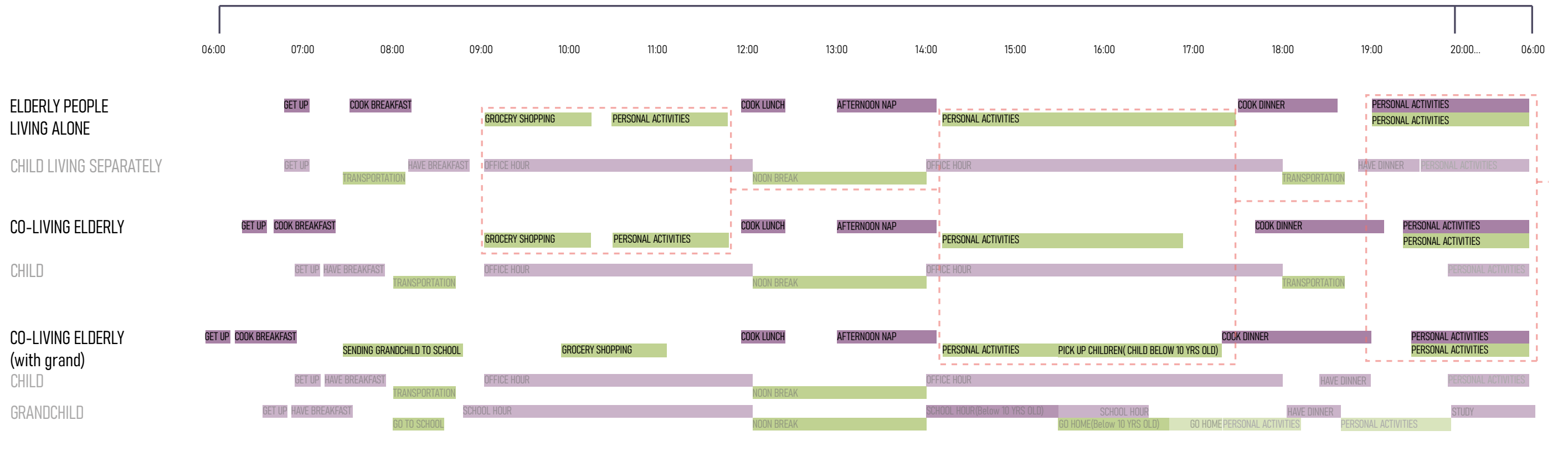
1. WHAT IS THE **NEEDS** OF SENIORS' OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES?
2. WHAT KIND OF ACTIVITIES WOULD BE MORE **APPEALING** TO THE SENIORS?
3. HOW TO ESTABLISH THE **INTERACTION** BETWEEN SENIORS?
4. WHICH TYPES OF **MODE** CAN BE USED?
5. WHAT KIND OF ELEMENT CAN BE **INTEGRATED** IN THE DESIGN?

**WHAT  
SHOULD WE  
FOCUS ON  
IN THIS PROCESS**



TIMELINE OF A ELDERLY (WEEKDAY)

BASED ON INFORMATION FROM DOCUMENTARY: AGING PROBLEM IN CHINA



TIMELINE OF A ELDERLY (WEEKEND)

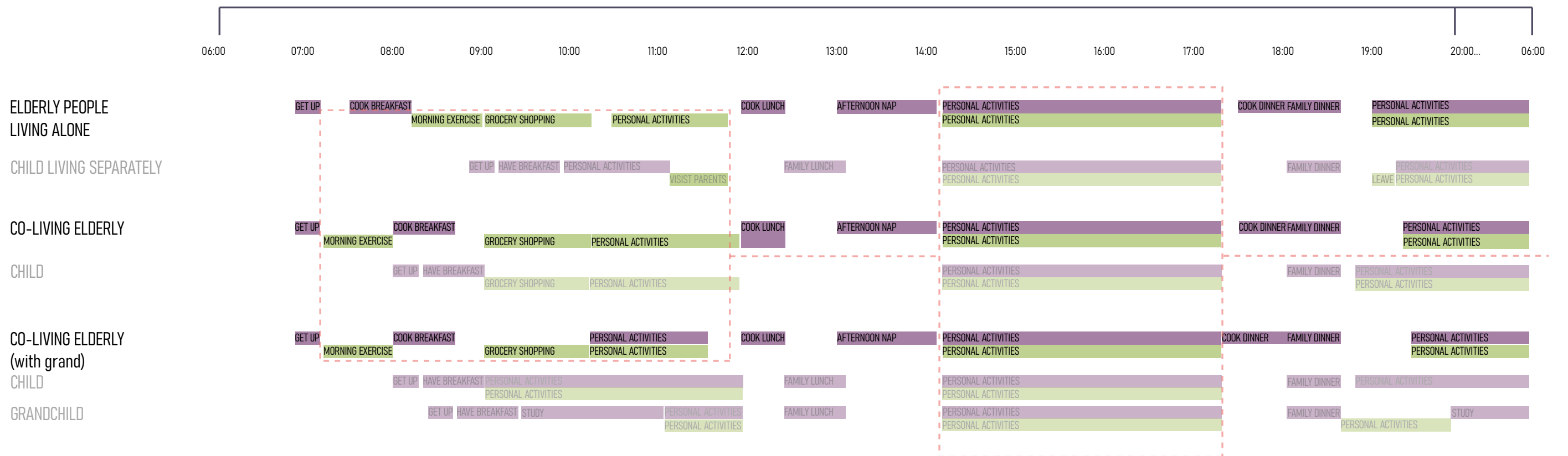


FIGURE 16. Seniors' daily life analysis

INDOOR ACTIVITIES OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES



FIGURE 17. Aging in China: Aging Home, 01:20

- P. 5 Seniors
- O. iPad
- E. Outdoor of Community
- M. Sunny, Standing
- S. Group Communication



FIGURE 18. Aging in China: Aging Home, 01:48

- P. 3 Seniors
- O. Cardboard
- E. Exterior Wall of a House
- M. Sunny, No Chairs & Desk
- S. Playing Cardboard and Chatting



FIGURE 19. Aging in China: The Age of Silver Hair, 04:05

- P. 8 Seniors
- O. Instruments
- E. Exterior Corridor of the Building
- M. Cloudy, Dark, Immersion
- S. Playing Instruments and Singing



FIGURE 20. Aging in China: Cultural Retirement, 07:17

- P. 5 Seniors
- O. Instruments
- E. Public Space of Community
- M. Sunny, Sitting Around, Immersion
- S. Playing Instruments and Singing



FIGURE 21. Aging in China: Aging Home, 08:05

- P. Single Senior
- O. Flower Terrace
- E. Community Garden
- M. Sunny, Lonely
- S. Sitting on the Flower Terrace Alone



FIGURE 22. Aging in China: Aging Home, 01:35

- P. Single Senior
- O. Flowers and Clothes
- E. Balcony
- M. Floating, Lonely
- S. Watering the Flowers



FIGURE 23. Aging in China: Aging Home, 01:25

- P. 4 Seniors 1 Child
- O. Bench, Garden
- E. Exterior Wall of a House
- M. Cloudy, Relaxing
- S. Chatting around their Grandchild



FIGURE 24. Aging in China: Aging Home, 16:48

- P. 6 Seniors
- O. Taichi Exercise
- E. Terrace Between the Buildings
- M. Cloudy, Dynamic
- S. Playing Cardboard and Chatting

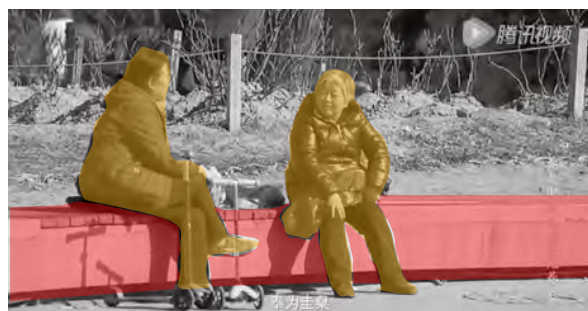


FIGURE 25. Aging in China: Cultural Retirement, 16:43

- P. 2 Seniors
- O. Bench of Public Area
- E. Public Space of Community
- M. Sunny, Relaxing, Waiting Grandchild
- S. Chatting



FIGURE 26. Aging in China: Aging Home, 01:52

- P. 8 Seniors
- O. Group Exercise, Wheelchair
- E. Public Space of Community
- M. Sunny, Shady Location
- S. Recovery Exercise



FIGURE 27. Aging in China: Aging Home, 21:54

- P. Single Senior
- O. Exercise Facility
- E. Exercise Area of Community
- M. Lonely, Exercise
- S. Using Exercise Facility

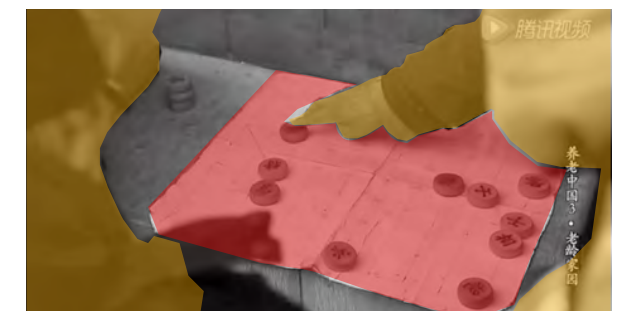


FIGURE 28. Aging in China: Aging Home, 02:05

- P. 2 Seniors
- O. Chinese Chess
- E. On stairs
- M. Crowded, Solid
- S. Playing Chinese Chess





FIGURE 29. Aging in China: Aging Home, 21:54

Situation: lack of interactivity, restricted by the weather factors

Original Activity Time:

Upgraded Activity Time:



FIGURE 33. Aging in China: Aging Home, 08:05

Situation: lack of comfort, potential for increased group communication

Original Activity Time:

Upgraded Activity Time:



FIGURE 37. Aging in China: Cultural Retirement, 16:43

Situation: lack of comfort and safety concerns for children

Original Activity Time:

Upgraded Activity Time:



FIGURE 30. Aging in China: Aging Home, 01:35

Situation: restricted communication methods

Original Activity Time:

Upgraded Activity Time:

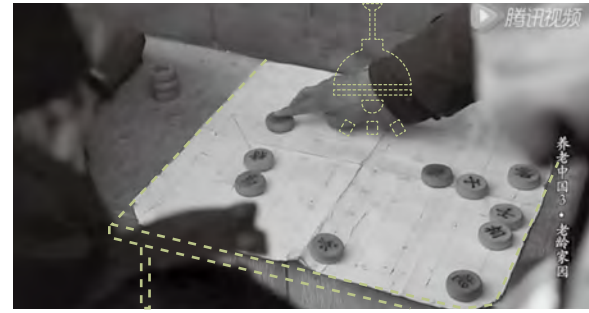


FIGURE 34. Aging in China: Aging Home, 02:05

Situation: uncomfortable environment, lack of sunlight

Original Activity Time:

Upgraded Activity Time:

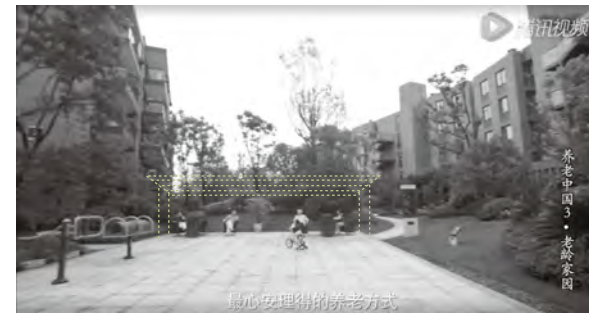


FIGURE 38. Aging in China: Aging Home, 01:25

Situation: highly restricted by weather

Original Activity Time:

Upgraded Activity Time:



FIGURE 31. Aging in China: Aging Home, 01:48

Situation: lack of comfort due to lack of facilities

Original Activity Time:

Upgraded Activity Time:



FIGURE 35. Aging in China: Aging Home, 01:20

Situation: lack of comfort due to lack of facilities

Original Activity Time:

Upgraded Activity Time:



FIGURE 39. Aging in China: The Age of Silver Hair, 04:05

Situation: limited space, bad light, bad acoustic environment

Original Activity Time:

Upgraded Activity Time:



FIGURE 31. Aging in China: Cultural Retirement, 07:17

Situation: restricted by weather, inadequate support, bad acoustic environment

Original Activity Time:

Upgraded Activity Time:



FIGURE 36. Aging in China: Aging Home, 01:52

Situation: poor activity and single project

Original Activity Time:

Upgraded Activity Time:

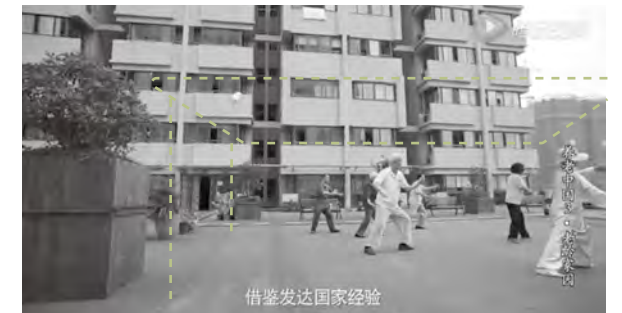
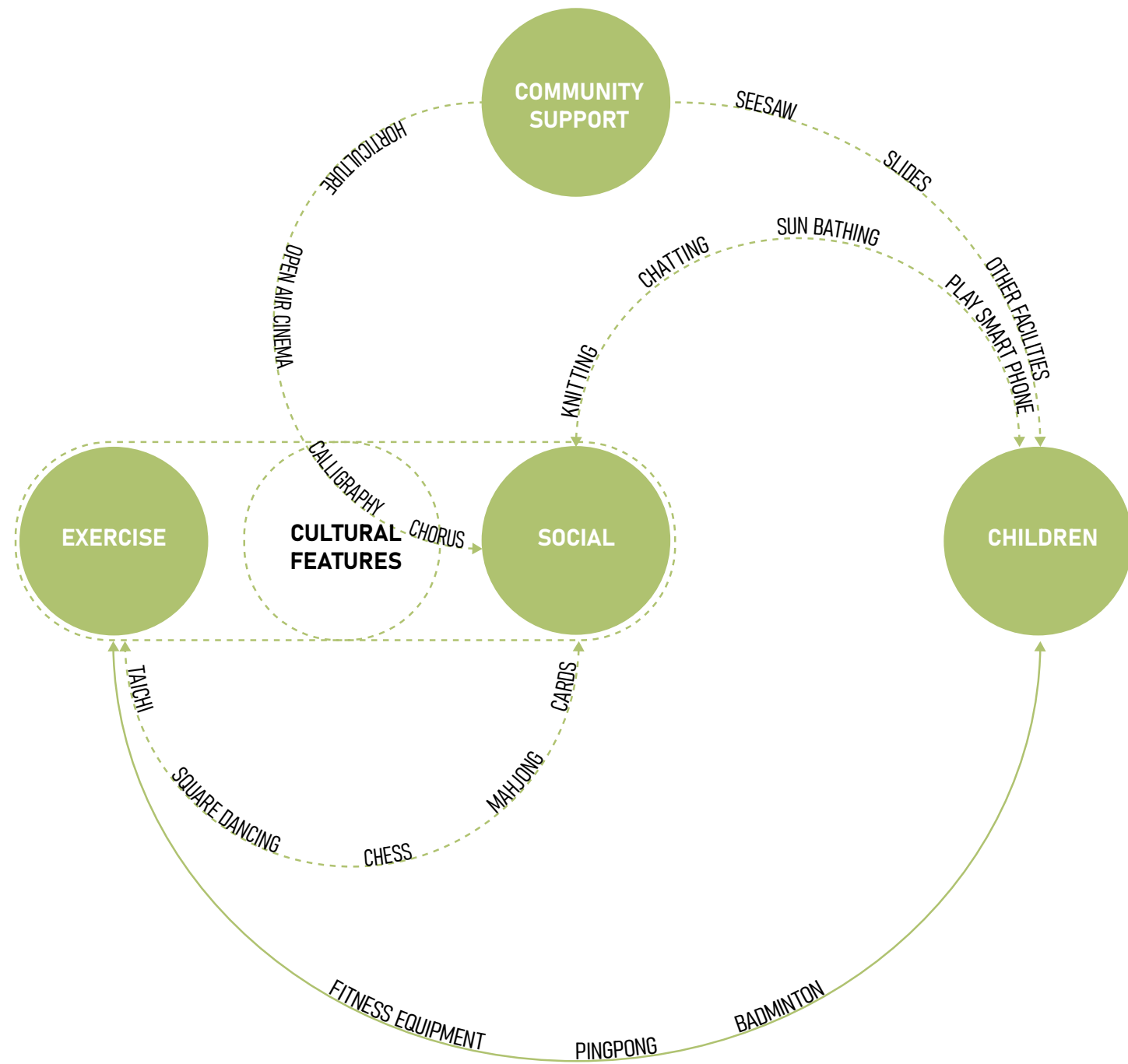


FIGURE 40. Aging in China: Aging Home, 16:48

Situation: lack of light, limited by weather factors

Original Activity Time:

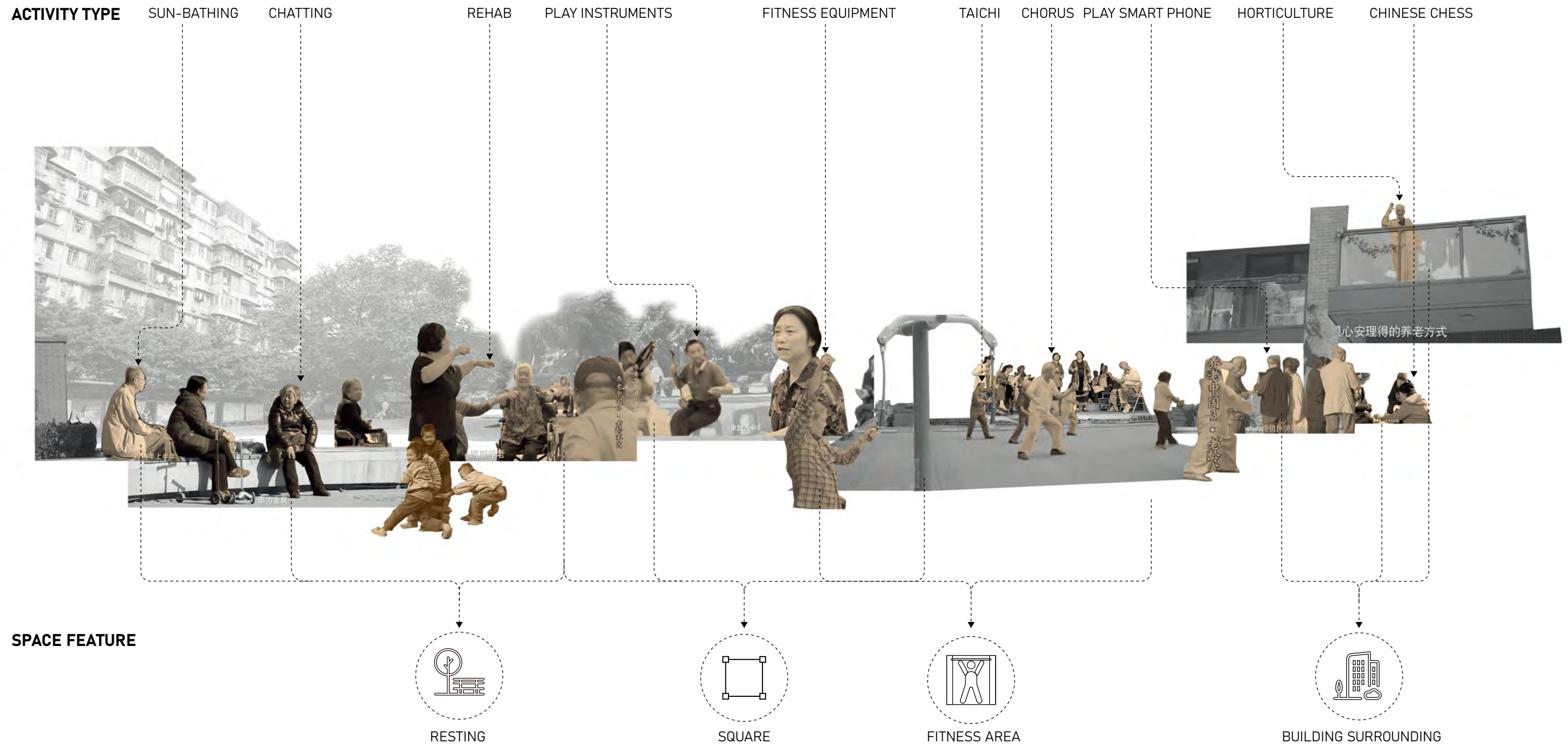
Upgraded Activity Time:



From the existing analysis of activities, it is possible to divide the community activity areas of the older population into **THREE CATEGORIES**, and they revolve around **SOCIALIZATION, EXERCISE,** and **CARE FOR GRANDCHILDREN**. It is easy to see that these outdoor activities do not only belong to one category, but there is also a lot of potential for correlation among them. Therefore, based on this trend and potential, and the shortcomings of the previous scenarios, architects should be able to combine and improve **SPACES** and **SCENARIOS** that can accommodate different activities at the same time, so that the scenarios can not only stimulate the motivation of activities, but also expand the circle of interpersonal communication and realize the health benefits of outdoor activities for the elderly.



POSITION SITUATION AUDIENCE METHOD OUTCOME  
SENIOR ACTIVITY COLLAGE



According to the previous analysis, we can see that the activities of the elderly groups have certain **SIMILARITIES**, they can show a certain degree of **OVERLAP** in the types of activities and venues, these overlaps can lead to design potential, these potentials can be good to **COORDINATE** the needs of various types of activities and stimulate new types of activities.

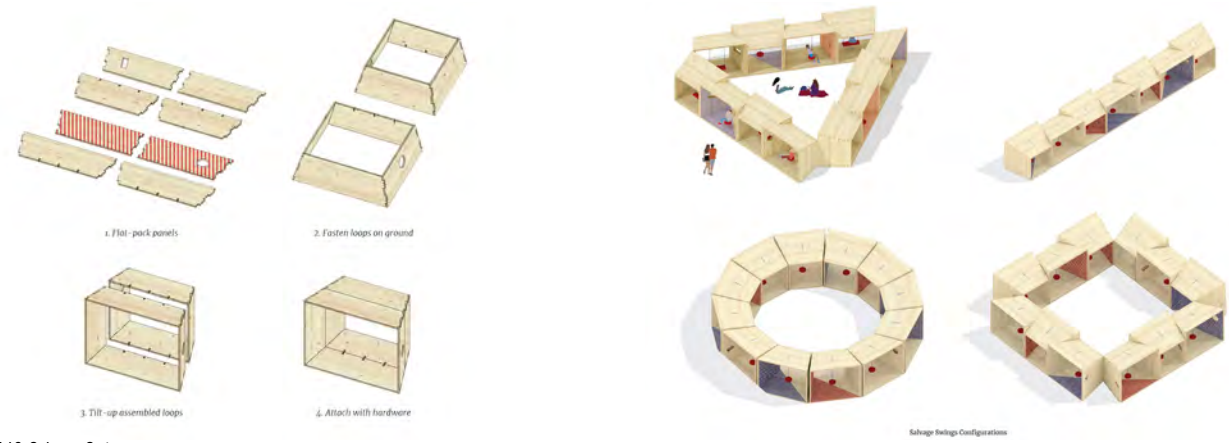


FIGURE 43. Salvage Swings

"The pavilion consists of 12 repetitive modules that frame individual swings and views of the park and surrounding city. The swings are organized collectively in a triangular form to create a new communal space within the park. The open framework of the pavilion can host a variety of activities including swinging, picnicking, concerts, and hide-and-seek games. The swing seats come from the window cut-outs between modules and activate a large-scale peg game for kids. Integrated LED lighting in the swing windows transforms the pavilion at night into a beacon from the banks of the East River in Manhattan and Queens."

**MODE**

**MATERIAL**

MODULAR

WOOD

METAL

**PROS**

**CONS**

RECYCLABLE

DEMOUNTABLE

STATIONARY

EXTENDABLE

MULTIPLE  
COMBINATION

AFFECTED BY COLD  
WEATHER

**POTENTIAL SCENARIO**

FITNESS PLACES

TEA ROOM

PUBLIC THEATER

COMMUNITY MARKET

CHESS ROOM

"The project proposes how a temporary pavilion design can utilize construction waste and also avoid ending up in the landfill after its initial period of use. The swings are designed to be easily assembled and disassembled with a small group of volunteers. Prefabricated finger joint connections and manageable piece sizes allows for the project to be flat-packed, shipped, and site assembled in a matter of days. The modular design allows the pavilion to live beyond the summer activities in new places and configurations."



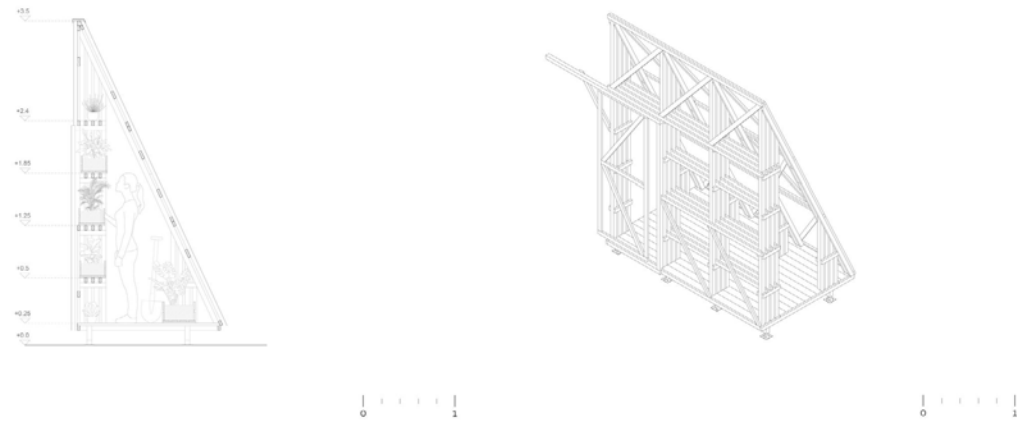


FIGURE 44. Instalación micro invernaderos / Iván Bravo Arquitectos

"The micro-greenhouses are an academic exercise of practical experimentation, which seeks to exploit to the maximum the capacities of a constructive system from minimal elements. Through repetition and density, it is possible to form larger structures capable of filling the uncertain space that remains between the furniture and the building. This scale allows the implantation of the rural landscape to the city in an effective and precise manner, triggering the active crossing of these worlds that have been urged to separate."

**MODE**

MODULAR

**MATERIAL**

WOOD METAL ACRYLIC

**PROS**

DEMOUNTABLE MOVEABLE  
 EXTENDABLE GOOD VISIBILITY

**CONS**

POOR TEMPERATURE  
 REGULATION  
 LIMITED AVAILABLE  
 SPACE

**POTENTIAL SCENARIO**

HORTICULTURE SUNBATHING COMMUNITY GREEN HOUSE

"The structures are composed entirely of 1x2" and 2x2" elements, through a simple and intuitive fastening system. The two versions explore different ways of inhabiting a space that is designed from the modulation of plants, over the human scale. One of them, the triangular shape, is made to be walked horizontally flanked by a side of plants, while the other is walked vertically between the plants that are arranged all around the central void."

**DEMOUNTABLE  
MODULAR  
ECONOMICAL  
GREEN**

The advantage of **DEMOUNTABLE, MODULAR** buildings is that they can be assembled directly at the target site from **PREFABRICATED** components. The advantage of this type of building or structure is that it is fast to build, less constrained by weather conditions, saves labor and improves the quality of construction. For each community, they can adapt their needs to their own scale, while the components are **REUSABLE** and can be disassembled repeatedly without generating excessive construction waste.

***“DOING MORE WITH LESS.”***

***- Buckminster Fuller***

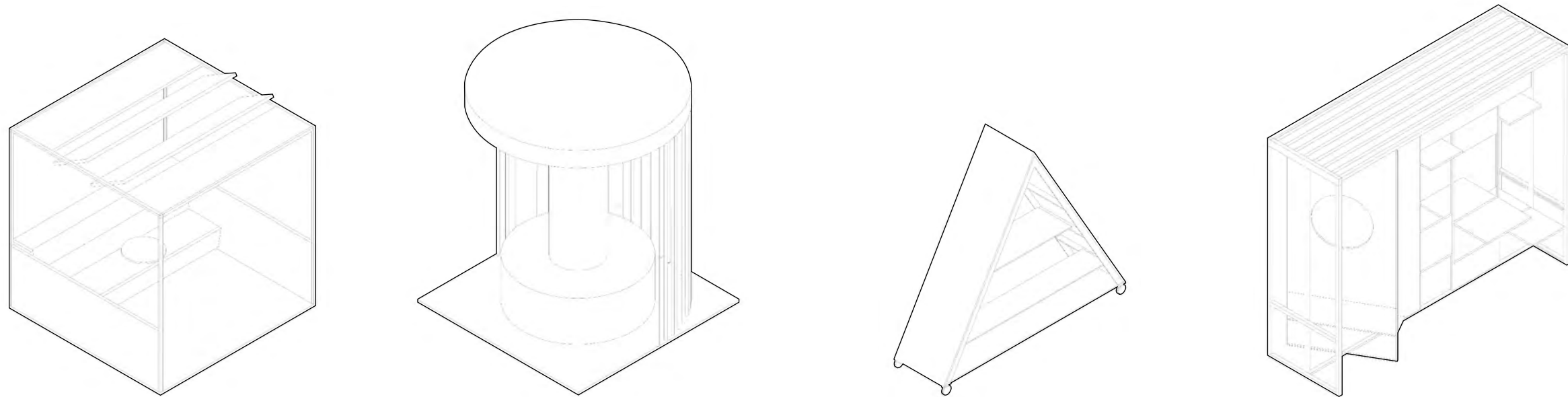
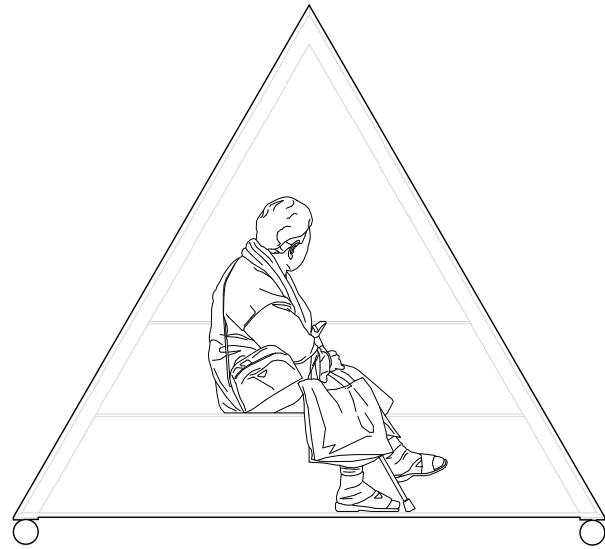
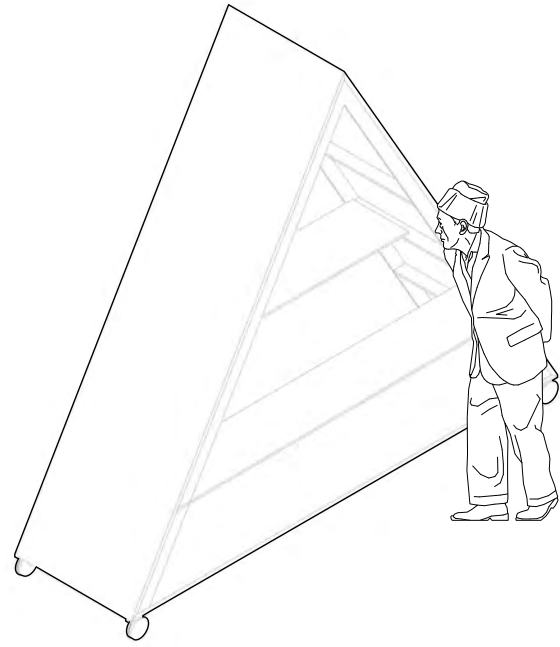


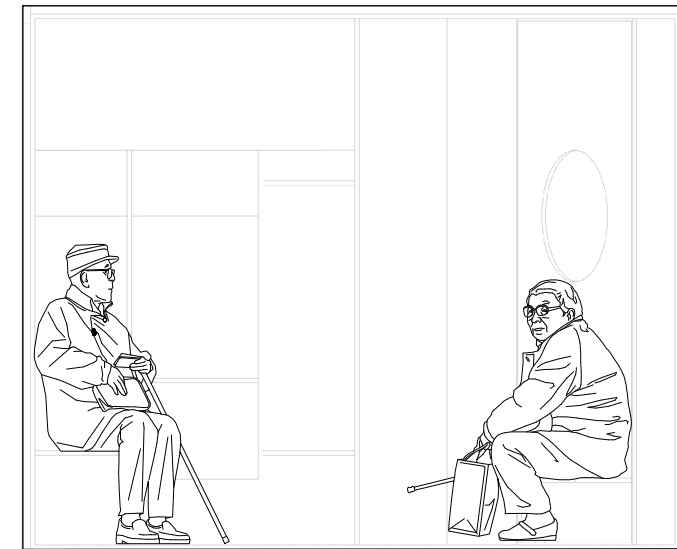
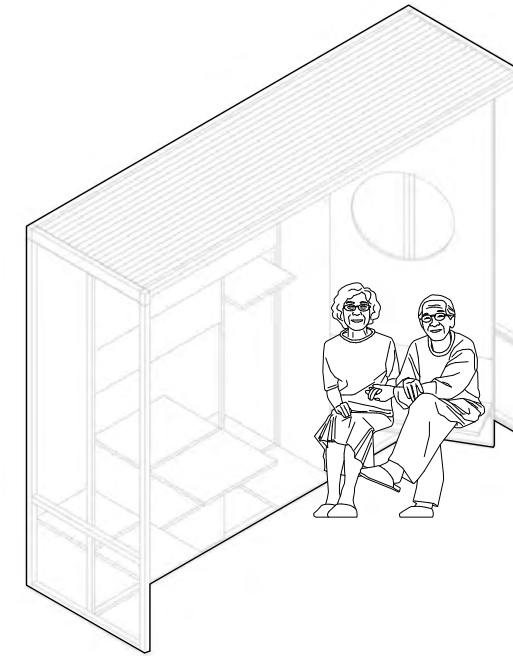
FIGURE 45. Aging in China: Aging Home, 16:48

<b>MODE</b>	MODULAR	MODULAR	MODULAR	MODULAR
<b>MATERIAL</b>	WOOD METAL	WOOD METAL	WOOD METAL	WOOD FABRIC METAL
<b>PROS</b>	COMFORTABLE SEATING	GOOD VISIBILITY	MULTIPLE COMBINATION DEMOUNTABLE	MOVEABLE EXTENDABLE MULTIPLE COMBINATION DEMOUNTABLE MOVEABLE EXTENDABLE
<b>CONS</b>	STATIONARY POOR TEMPERATURE REGULATION	STATIONARY LIMITED AVAILABLE SPACE	?	?
<b>POTENTIAL SCENARIO</b>	SUN ROOM TEA ROOM	SEAT AREA	CHESS ROOM TEA ROOM COMMUNITY MARKET	FITNESS PLACES PUBLIC THEATER TEA ROOM HORTICULTURE CHESS ROOM



This is a movable wooden structure activity station, it can function as a seat or table by installing moldings of different heights, and through different combinations he can meet the activity needs of but people living multiple people. This design is concerned with the relationship between the body and space. This transcendent and extremely narrow hut may lead to a temporary escape from the collective unconscious state.

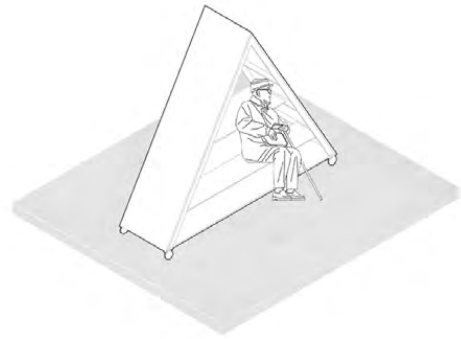
FIGURE 46. PROTO 3 INTRO



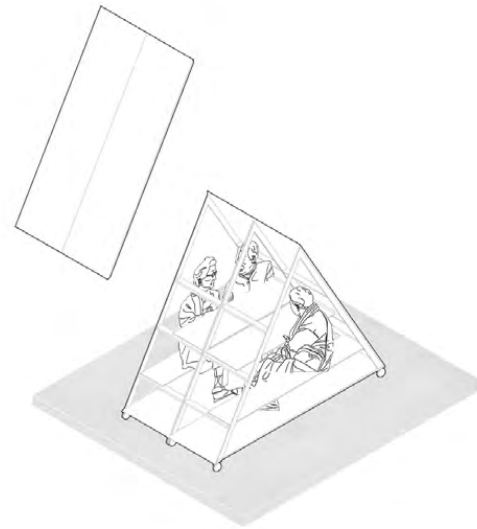
This is a timber gazebo, this gazebo consists of a metal frame. The program is organized to provide a variety of qualities and environments for different event needs. The project combines the advantages of an open plan (flexibility, informality, interaction) with the advantages of closed and semi-closed spaces (definition, structure and concentration). The installation is also equipped with a rolling module as well as three rotating modules that enable the entire installation to be combined according to different needs.

FIGURE 47. PROTO 4 INTRO

SINGLE PERSON ACTIVITY



MULTI-PERSON ACTIVITY I



MULTI-PERSON ACTIVITY II

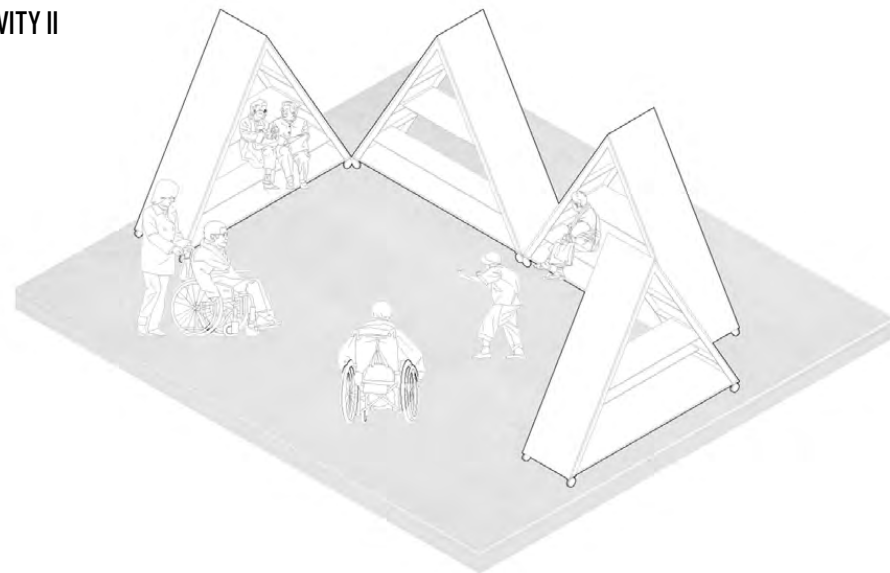
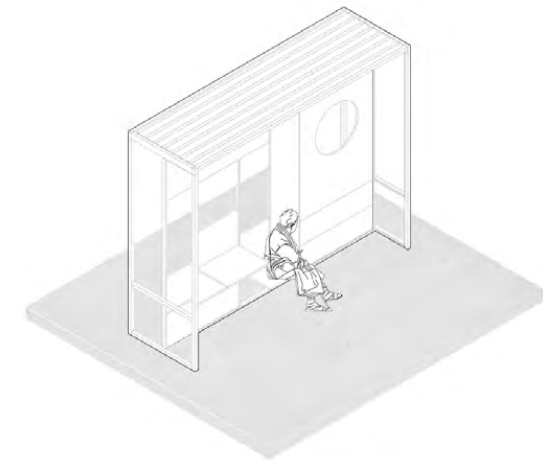
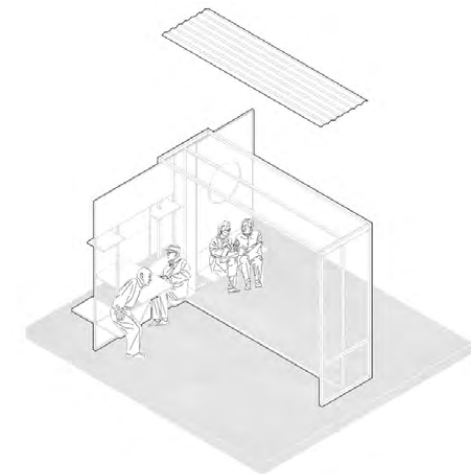


FIGURE 48. PROTO3 SIMULATION

SINGLE PERSON ACTIVITY



MULTI-PERSON ACTIVITY I



MULTI-PERSON ACTIVITY II

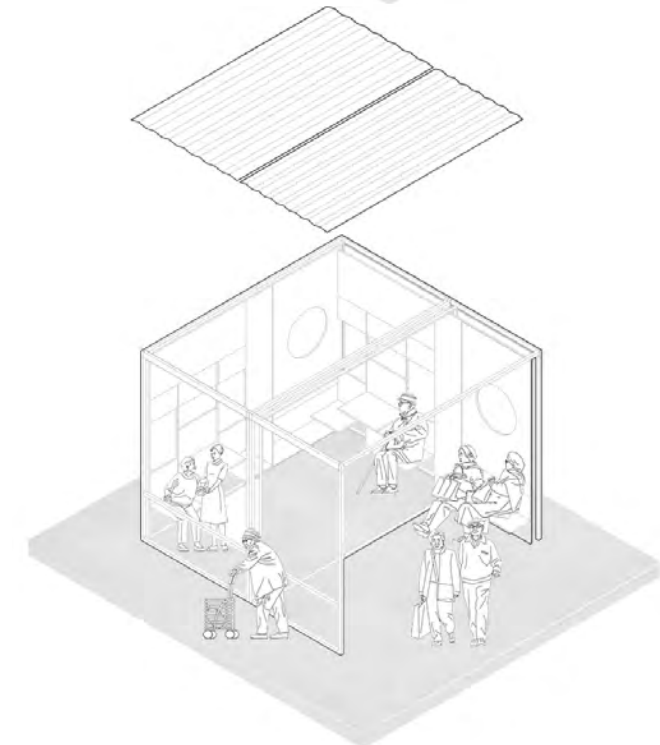


FIGURE 49. PROTO 4 SIMULATION



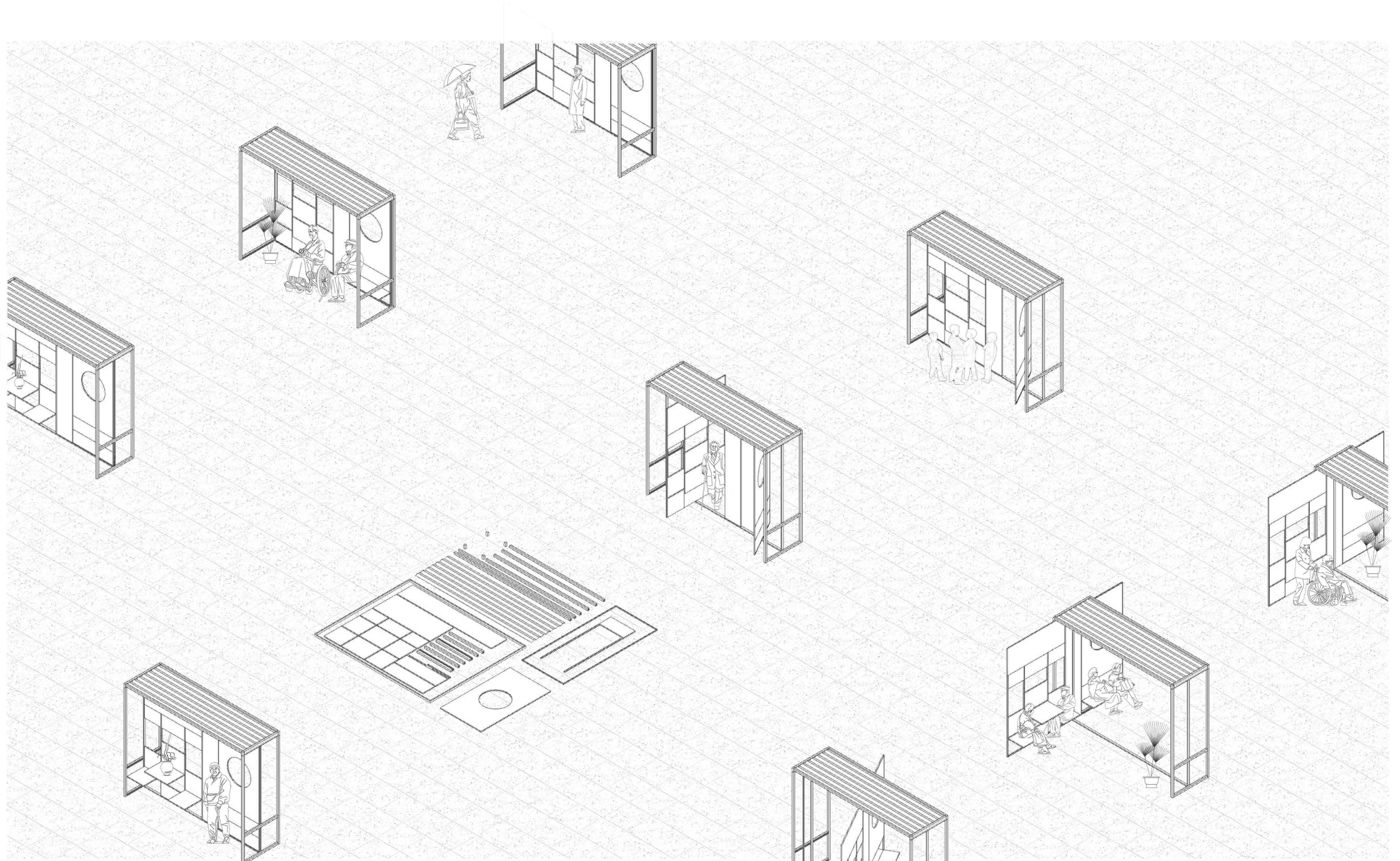


FIGURE 50. PROTO 4 DISPLAY





FIGURE 51. Aging in China: Aging Home, 16-48