PRACTICE IN HONG KONG WITH OPTIMISM OVER DESPAIR

“Onlookers are changing China”
New Weekly, 2010
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Zhenghao Guo

Thesis Program spring 2022
Royal Danish Academy
School of Architecture
Political Architecture: Critical Sustainability
Thesis Supervisor: Niels Grønbæk

Royal Danish Academy
Welcome to the program.

This program is intended to provide a framework for understanding my project, for myself, and for all those who need to make a proper evaluation of it. This project, including last semester's research, is based on my observation of the applied spatial strategy in Hong Kong’s social movements. These strategies have been developed into those we can see in 2019, the Anti-extradition Bill movement. But the changing circumstances of the present make the continuation of the social movement almost impossible.

This project is firstly an investigation and research, including a review of those spatial strategies and spatialities in social movements in Hong Kong and an attempt of proposing new strategies for architects to engage in the new situation. The propositional work of this project will be an application of such strategy, as an open possibility, which expresses in the form of design and space to manifest localization and contextualization.

First, my previous research will be shown in the chapter **Hong Kong & Its Political Context** as the premise and the theoretical base. The broader context of this project is Hong Kong, and I will introduce the unique historical and political factors of Hong Kong to illustrate the ground that nurtured civil disobedience and the main political agendas of the contending parties.

In the next chapter **Mobilization of Social Movements**, we can see how these factors have shaped the spatiality of social movements in Hong Kong, which has been changing from the rise of civil society in Hong Kong, to the
Anti-extradition movement in 2019. These spatialities will be interpreted through various theories. What’s most important is the dialectic and reciprocal relation between social movement and its Resistance Space will be revealed. Then Based on that, these spatialities would be introduced as a design methodology for communal architecture design.

The next chapter is **Mobilization of Community**, which is my speculation about the future situation and the chance for architecture to intervene. Due to the extreme inequality between counterparts and the impact of Covid-19 on public gatherings, social movements in Hong Kong are in a predicament. Combined with the new political agenda of the HKSAR government and a non-discursive approach to political participation, I will thus present the funding model and the political diagram of this project.

The fourth chapter **Socialization In the Grey Zone** will be the elaboration of choosing the rooftop as the site of this project. Then I will introduce my site, Sham Shui Po, one of the most crowded areas in Hong Kong with several visual references and material preferences.
Hong Kong & Its Political Context

premise
In 1842, Hong Kong became a British colony. The colony of Hong Kong was established to cater to British commercial activities in the Far East, and thus the British Hong Kong government mainly served the interests of British merchants in China. The colonial background of Hong Kong set the tone, and nearly became the legacy, of the social form of Hong Kong and the its governance for the next two centuries. It is fair to say that the collusion between business and politics is deeply rooted in Hong Kong. As Leo Francis Goodstadt wrote: “Until the end of the colonial era, the foundation of British governance was firmly and shamelessly built on the alliance of colonialism and capitalism.”

After 1949, because of the establishment of the Communist regime in mainland China, the border between the China and Hong Kong became solidified. Hong Kong became an ‘isolated island’. This isolation from mainland China effectively contributed to the formation of an Hong Konger-Chinese identity, whereupon the conflict between the colonial government and the population was intensified. In order to maintain the legitimacy of the colonial government in power, the British Hong Kong government began to gradually incorporate Chinese into the governmental decision-making mechanism, targeting businessmen who were the opinion leaders of the Chinese society.
This alliance became stronger as the British Hong Kong government adopted *laissez-faire* economic policy and gradually established a set of administrative system, legislative system and judicial system for the sake of market economy. After Hong Kong’s sovereignty being handed back to China in 1997, the new HKSAR (Hong Kong Special Administrative Region) government was established on the basis of the British Hong Kong government. The new political body basically followed the original “tripartite” political system. Therefore, the administrative system and legislative system did not fully comply with the principle of representative democracy. Take the Legislative Council of Hong Kong in 2016 as an example, of the total 70 legislators, 35 are elected by the public and the remaining 35 are elected by functional constituencies.

Even though the handover of Hong Kong’s sovereignty to China is described in the mainstream narrative as a “reunification,” what cannot be changed is that a larger colonial power, disconnected from the popular base of Hong Kong, remains suspended above Hong Kong, and thus Hong Kong has still not been emancipated from Colonialism. This metaphor of being out of colonialism but still being colonized in essence has been the greatest driving force behind the growing social movements in Hong Kong over the past thirty years.
Before the 1980s, there were several social movements against the British colonial government in Hong Kong, but Hong Kong society by and large showed a tendency of political apathy.

In the 1980s, as the negotiations of the sovereignty of Hong Kong between Britain and China began, “reunification” gradually became the focus of all sectors of Hong Kong society. 1989 saw the outbreak of the June 4th Incident in Beijing, with Hong Kong people watching the students in Tiananmen Square and witnessing the bloody repression. In the early 1980s, Hong Kong people’s vision of democracy in Hong Kong turned into fear and panic. As a result, political organizations were formed in Hong Kong that were no longer just about submitting ideas, and political parties emerged that were interested in participating in elections and working to improve the system.

June 4 Incident in 1989 was the first class for many Hong Kong pro-democracy activists and citizens, and it also aroused the general public’s fear of a trend of institutional convergence between Hong Kong and China, and brought unprecedented support to Pan-Democratic parties.

Szeto Wah, Chairman of the Hong Kong Alliance in Support of Patriotic Democratic Movements of China (HKASPDMC), said in an interview.
From 1989 to the early 21st century, the Pan-Democrats were the backbone of social movements, focusing on traditional democratic agenda and mobilizing their supporters in a centralized manner to generate more social influence to help their intramural politics. Young people who grew up in the social movement era began to participate in the social movement in the 2000s. The inefficiency of institutional politics and the lack of a well-established representative democracy made them more enthusiastic about diverse forms of social movements. They focused on more localized and detailed issues, which symbolized the awakening of local identity. More young people began to participate in social movements in the 2010s and the forms of social movements and political advocacy became more diversified, from the streets to the Internet, from the left to the right. The political ecology of Hong Kong has entered an era of pluralism and decentralization.

“There is a slogan in the march that best reflects the mentality of Hong Kong people: “Today’s Beijing is tomorrow’s Hong Kong”. Hong Kong is about to return to China. If China does not democratize itself, what will happen to Hong Kong? Can human rights and freedom exist in Hong Kong?”

July 1st protests, 2003
Fig. The timeline of social movements and changing identity as well as narratives

Major Demonstrations

1989 Support June 4th Movement
Showing support for the protesters and to condemnation to the atrocities of Chinese government in Tiananmen incident.

1997 The Handover

Civil political agenda

1984 Sino-British Joint Declaration

Official narrative

“One country, two systems”
The previous capitalist system and way of life shall remain unchanged for 50 years.

1997 Basic Law

Important official document

2003 National Security Bill (canceled)
Opposing the anti-subversion Hong Kong Basic Law Article 23 and defending freedom of speech along with other freedoms.

2003 Protest against National Security Bill

Chief executive

Tung Chee-hwa

2001 China joins WTO

Donald Tsang

2003 National Security Bill (canceled)

2014 Umbrella Movement

Major events in China

1984 Tiananmen Massacre

2018 Xi Jinping’s presidency

2019 China’s Greater Bay Area Plan

2019 An-T-Extradition Law Amendment Bill Movement

1989 Support June 4th Movement

(max: 1.5 million)

1997 The Handover

(max: 0.5 million)

2003 Protest against National Security Bill

(max: 90,000)

2003 Protest against National Security Bill

(max: 1.2 million)

2003 Protest against National Security Bill

(max: 2 million)
**Major Events in China**

- 1949: China's Communist Revolution
- 1950s: Collectivization and Industrialization
- 1960s: Cultural Revolution
- 1970s: Reform and Opening Up
- 1980s: Economic Liberalization

**Important Documents**

- **One Country, Two Systems**: The previous capitalist system and way of life shall remain unchanged for 50 years.
- **Freedom of speech and freedom of the press**: are not incompatible with this law.

**Key Officials**

- **Tung Chee-hwa**: 1997-2002
- **Donald Tsang**: 2002-2007
- **Leung Chun-ying**: 2007-2012
- **Carrie Lam**: 2012-2017

**Major Demonstrations**

- 1989: Support June 4th Movement
- 1997: The Handover
- 2003: Protest against National Security Bill
- 2012: Anti-National Education protest
- 2014: Umbrella Movement
- 2019: Anti-Extradition Law Amendment Bill Movement

**Recognizing themselves as Hong Konger**

- 2019: 1.2 million
- 2020: 2 million

**Recognizing themselves as Chinese**

- 2019: 0.5 million
- 2021: 1 million

**Extractions from Official Narrative**

- **3 August Decision**: Terminating the Chief Executive of Hong Kong will be decided by China government appointed mainly by Chinese government.
- **Fugitive Offenders amendment bill**: In response to the decision regarding extradition in school textbooks.
- **Patriotic education in school textbook**: Demanding unversal suffrage.
- **Chauvet-ching Exam**: In response to the controversial Fugitive Offenders amendment bill.
2019, the Anti-ELAB movement

The Anti-Extradition Law Amendment Bill Movement, also known as the 2019 Hong Kong protests, or the 2019–2020 Hong Kong protests, are a series of demonstrations since 15 March 2019 in response to the introduction by the Hong Kong government of the Fugitive Offenders amendment bill on extradition. Yet this extradition law was just a spark which ignite the tension between Hong Kong government, as the representative of Chinese government, and pro-democracy Hong Kong citizens.

Just as BBC reported:
“Critics feared this could undermine judicial independence and endanger dissidents. Until 1997, Hong Kong was ruled by Britain as a colony but then returned to China. Under the “one country, two systems” arrangement, it has some autonomy, and its people more rights. The bill was withdrawn in September but demonstrations continue and now demand full democracy and an inquiry into police actions.”

(BBC, 2019,11,28)
Hong Kong was always meant to have a security law, but could never pass one because it was so unpopular. So this is about China stepping in to ensure the city has a legal framework to deal with what it sees as serious challenges to its authority. After the Anti-ELAB movement got halted by Covid-19, the Chinese government imposed the National Security Law (NSL) regardless of all the legislative procedures of the legal institution of Hong Kong. It gives Beijing the power to shape life in Hong Kong it has never had before. Critics say it effectively curtails protest and freedom of speech - China has said it will return stability.

The security law has helped curb protests in Hong Kong and has silenced much of the outspoken dissent that was once commonplace here. Most leading activists are either in custody or in exile. Others have censored what they say publicly. Dozens of civil society groups, including protest organizers and pro-democracy unions, have shut down because they have become the subjects of national security investigations or fear their work would make them a target.

From January to September of 2021, at least 49 civil groups have announced their dissolution. 

The Being Dismembered Civic Society
Problem Statement

The social aspect is an extremely important aspect of architecture. In the present Hong Kong, where citizenship is deprived from political expression, the connection between citizens and these political spaces is severed. This problem can obviously be solved by carefully designing the corresponding architectural spaces, but more questions arise. How should these spaces be designed? On what criteria should they be designed? Who will initiate these projects? Who will invest in these projects? Can the legitimacy of the architectural function be recognized by the regime in Hong Kong at the present time?
Mobili-
ization of Social Move-
ments

Theoritical method
The Spatial Form of Hong Kong

In 1956, The British Hong Kong government started to restrict less about individual building construction as they were applying laissez-faire economic policy. This has led to a marked increase in the density and height of buildings in urban areas. Soaring housing prices and land prices have further contributed to overdevelopment. Driven by personal gain, private property developers try to exploit every inch of land. Since there are no building setback restrictions in Hong Kong, many buildings are built as close to the boundary as possible, which leaves no room for sidewalks. The British Hong Kong government later introduced a policy of rewarding property owners who contributed ground space to sidewalks with additional floors beyond the limit. But this only ensured basic traffic needs and came at the cost of more depressing street space because buildings were allowed to be built higher.

Thus some disadvantageous factors to social movements can be pointed out here. First is its extreme crampedness, which limits participation. Second as mentioned...
earlier, given Hong Kong’s colonial history, the decision-making mechanism has never been monopolized by selected elites, its urban fabric has never reserved enough space for political activity. As a consequence, the third factor is the lack of meaningful space.

A suitable space is often crucial to a social movement, by which is meant not only that certain spaces may have more positive meaning to certain social movements in physical terms than others, but also the meaning ascribed to that space by those who act in it. The meaning of a space is not merely monumental, it is like a right of claim that transcends legal ownership of a certain space. In the context of Hong Kong, this can only be achieved by practice spatially as a battle with the already established spatial order and meaning dictated by the regime.

As a response, activists and citizens in Hong Kong developed a strategy of “appropriating” existing space for political expression in a city where public space is cramped and resources are monopolized by a coalition of business and politics. After 1989, “The nascent civic society needed to carve out its own political space in the cramped city to serve as a carrier of its own political agenda which was achieved through relentless spatial practices (eg. protest).”

Apparently here we should ask what did they do and how did it work? To answer these two questions I will introduce the Space Triad theory from Henri Lefebvre in his book, *The Production of Space* and the later development of this theory from Byron Miller in *Conclusion spatialities of mobilization: Building and breaking relationships* which incorporate the notion of Spatiality to have a peak of the dialectic relation between spatial practices and the mobilization of social movements.
Theory
Space Production

Material space
(material resources)

Distribution of resource
Occupation of space
Mobilization etc.

Resistance Space

Conceptual space
(signification)

Common understanding
Ideology
Values
Identity etc.

Lived space
(legitimation)

Interpretation
Signifying etc.

Theory
Space Production
In Henri Lefebvre’s book, *The production of Space*, he argued “every mode of production with its subvariants, i.e. all those societies which exemplify the general concept - produces a space, its own space.” For Lefebvre, it’s very clear social practice is important for the production of space. Later he also mentioned that, “Space has become the most important political tool of the state. The state uses space to ensure local control, strict hierarchy, general coherence, and segregation. He also pointed out the necessity of producing a proper space of changing lifestyles and society.” Here is 陳澤宗 and You-Ren Yang’s comment on Lefebvre’s opinion, “So the state exercises social control through space, social movements can also produce resistance space to challenge the established spatial order and power relations, thus space is the venue and product of class and social conflicts.”

As I quoted from *The production of Space* in my essay *Becoming through politicization: A study of social movement in Hong Kong Shopping Mall*: “From a epistemological perspective, a space triad is inherently whithin space, which consists of material space, conceptual space and lived space which in the production of space correspond to spatial practice, representations of space and representational space.” Here Henri Lefebvre points out a triad in the production of a certain space. Then he explains their characters in the production of space: “Spatial practice, which embraces production and reproduction, and the particular locations and spatial sets characteristic of each social formation.” “Representations of space are the more dominant one which are abstract and tied to the relations of production and to the ‘order’ which those relations impose, and hence to knowledge, to signs, to codes, and to ‘frontal’ relations, i.e. ideology.” “Representational space is the dominated - and hence passively experienced space which the imagination seeks to change and appropriate. It overlays physical space, making symbolic use of its objects.”

It’s important to point out the dialetical relation within the traid and there is a connection of logic between them but not necessarily be coherent. “So a mode of production of space is never a finished whole or closed system, which implies instability”. So the instability of the the mode of production of space and its internal dialectic relationships imply, The produced space is always determined by the mode of the production of space, which is determined by the mode of production of society.
## Theory

### Spatialities of social movements

(dependent on Lefebvre 1991; Harvey 2006; and Jessop et al. 2008)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spatial technologies of power</th>
<th>Material space (material resources)</th>
<th>Conceptual Space (signification)</th>
<th>Lived Space (legitimation)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social condensation and amalgamation through relations of co-presence; areal differentiation and segregation</td>
<td>Social condensation and amalgamation through relations of co-presence; areal differentiation and segregation</td>
<td>Create conditions conducive to the construction of strong ties, common understandings, shared values, shared identities</td>
<td>Define grievances, diagnoses, legitimate motivations for mobilization based on perceived shared place-based values and interests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bordering, enclosure, claiming on an areal basis</td>
<td>Lay claim to and/or controlling people, wealth, income, etc.</td>
<td>Create shared flows of information, common understandings, shared identities; Imagined communities</td>
<td>Define grievances, diagnoses, legitimate motivations for mobilization based on perceived shared territorial/regional values and interests; Determine which political actors have standing in political contests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hierarchical ordering of territorial institutions; Horizontal nesting of territory and regionalized processes</td>
<td>Hierarchical ordering of territorial institutions; Horizontal nesting of territory and regionalized processes</td>
<td>Construct hierarchical territorial identities and imagined communities; Prioritize particular hierarchical identities, e.g., national vs. regional</td>
<td>Define appropriate institutional/state arena for political contention—scale jumping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connectivity among individual actors, institutional actors, and nonhuman actants</td>
<td>Generate topological connections and associations to mobilize people, wealth, income, skills, etc.</td>
<td>Create conditions conducive to construction of mostly weak ties, information sharing, common understandings, common associational identities</td>
<td>Define who may join the network; Determine who has power and influence within the network; Conform to or challenge dominant network discourses</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
But how to change the production of existing space or to produce a new space based on existing space? Byron Miller developed the space triad theory further though incorporating with the notions of “Spatiality” as spatial technologies of power in a Foucauldian sense. “This tripartite schema, which should be regarded as a heuristic guide through simultaneously overlapping spatialities, can be adapted to address the core concerns of social movement and contentious politics theory. Each of the specific spatialities we have considered can be viewed as a spatial technology of power, with associated material and representation-al practices that shape socio-spatial power relations.”

Although material space is more often dominated by conceptual space. But according to Byron Miller’s opinion, spatial practices in material space can influence conceptual space in reverse. Thus in social movements, the spatiality of the forms of its spatial pratice within material space or the form of the material space itself that hosts social movements can influences the power relations within g conceptual space through the dialectical interconnectedness within the space triad.

Here we will look into several cases of Resistance Spaces in Hong Kong to see how protestors in Hong Kong produced these Resistance Spaces in a cramped city.
Resistance Space for Social Movements
The production of Resistance Space

Victoria Park
Famous park for public discussion and gathering but was a symbol for Colonialism

Old Supreme Court Building
As a symbol of colonial power and its judicial system

Support June 4th Movement
Showing support for the protesters and to condemnation to the atrocities of Chinese government in Tiananmen incident.
(Max: 1.5 million)

Anti High Speed Rail protest
Opposing the anti-subversion Hong Kong Basic Law Article 23 and defending freedom of speech along with other freedoms.
(Max: 0.5 million)
Anti High Speed Rail protest  

Anti-National Education protest  
Umbrella Movement  
In response to the decision regarding proposed reforms to the Hong Kong electoral system from Chinese government, demanding universal suffrage.  
(Max: 1.2 million)

“Harcourt village”  
Sha Tin New Town Plaza  
Famous shopping mall in Hong Kong

“Civic Square”  
An open space in front of the East Wing of the Central Government Complex

In response to the controversial Fugitive Offenders amendment bill on extradition, demanding its withdrawal and universal suffrage as a total outbreak of all the historic political conflicts.  
(Max: 2 millions)

2012 2014 2019

2012 Anti-National Education protest  
Opposing the inclusion of patriotic education in school textbooks.  
(Max: 90,000)

2014 Umbrella Movement

2019 Anti-Extradition Law Amendment Bill

Street space  
An appropriation of street space for protest
Victoria Park is a public park covering 190,000 square metres. Victoria Park is the most important Resistance space in Hong Kong. It is the “public commons” for all Hong Kong people. As Chen Jia Li pointed out in her article, the location of Victoria Park in Hong Kong is a “concealed openness.” For walking or strolling, people usually assume it is a very ordinary and ordinary place; however, when people in Hong Kong go for a walk, they will find that there is a Resistance Space. People will find it a place where they can gather and express their political ideas and tendency of political activism. Since 1989, a lot of the events for Hong Kong political policy changes have been held in Victoria Park. In recent years, the Resistance Space in Victoria Park has been slowly established.

Civic Square

The Old Supreme Court Building, housed the former Su-
preme Court from 1912 to 1983 and the Legislative Coun-
cil from 1983 to 1997. It stands on the boundary of the former British colonial government and the current HKSAR government. It is a monument to the British colonial government, which was installed as a Resistance Space to protest in the real Hong Kong government. The Old Supreme Court Building is highly political and symbolic. It is an important place for the space of decolonization. The event was broadcasted live through the media. Beside the demonstrators who had gathered in the vicinity of the Old Supreme Court Building, large numbers of citizens arrived at the site to express their opposition. The event is considered as a significant moment in the history of Hong Kong. The Old Supreme Court Building is highly political and symbolic. It is an important place for the space of decolonization.

Old Supreme Court Building

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Old Supreme Court Building
In short, in these Resistance spaces, protest could appear in a lot of ways with different performance. They contributed to mobilize the larger scale protests while they are also the result of the mobilization of social movements. Following the two theoretical frameworks of space triad and spatiality, I have come to two conclusions.

The meaning of space is not necessarily empty and ideologized. A symbolic or ideological space requires one or more powerful spatial practices, often dramatic, and the practitioners are usually under great political pressure or are themselves somehow unshakable political authorities. A more penetrative approach is to gradually practice spatially in a low-key way through a more everyday and collective approach, which establishes a meaning that exists in the abstract space without the grand narrative and being more invited to the citizens.

Spatial practices, through different spatialities as methodologies, become a medium between spatial practices and abstract imaginations of politics. Civil society mobilizes citizens through spatial practices, and participants can move through spatial practices to shape different imagined communities. Co-presence confirms the existence of community (Place and Space). the difference between “them” and “us” is identified through the confirmation of similarities or differences (Region and Territory). the re-distribution of power or resources possessed by participants ensures the decision-making and the legitimacy of decision makers (Scale). The democratization and decentralization of decision making is ensured through individual communication between participants (Networks). These spatialities become the bridge of the bodily experience in resistance space and the mobilization of social movements.
Communal Space for Community

Place and Space

 Territory and Region

Scale

Networks

- GATHERING CO-PRESENCE
- FUNCTIONALITY THEME
- SCALE HEIRARCHIZATION
- PRIVATE COMMUNICATION CONNECTION ACCESSIBILITY
In the current Hong Kong society with the National Security Law, all civil society organizations with a clear non-mainstream ideology are in danger. The dissolution of these civil society organizations, which have been the core driving force of the social movement in Hong Kong, means that the social movement will not be able to continue, and the connections to those Resistance Space that have been established through years of protests will be lost. In a city like Hong Kong, where the urban fabric lacks public spaces with social and political significance, this loss means the absence of a bodily experience of political participation through civil society organizations.

However, social movements are by definition a form of civil society organization, so the above research on *spatiality* in the mobilization of social movements can be applied to other forms of mobilization of civil society organizations, such as communities.

As an architect, the mobilization of communities can be intervened through community architecture, applied with the *spatiality* theory of social mobilization as a design methodology to build connections between participants, community architecture (material), and community building (abstract).

This project will be an attempt to restore civil society through community architecture, as a response to the absence of a bodily experience of the engagement of political participation. As Hong Kong gradually turning into a police state, strengthening social connection can be a compensation of the lost of political engagement.
Mobilization of Community Proposal
開門七件事 Market Promenade

Photo: Fan Ho
1960s
Before the enactment of the National Security Law, Hong Kong’s political system could be called a Half-representative democracy, in which citizens could participate in elections to provide legitimacy for the government’s administration. When the National Security Law was enacted and all politicians with different political agendas were disqualified from participation in politics, how could the government establish a new legitimacy?

Apparently, the relation between Hong Kong and Beijing transformed from “China-Hong Kong” with Colonial governmentality to “Center-Periphery” with Authoritarian governmentality. So the HKSAR government’s solution is the same as that of the Chinese government, which has begun to emphasize the importance of the “right to development” in lieu of rights defined by universal values such as freedom of speech. According to the report of South China Morning Post, “When Hong Kong leader Carrie Lam Cheng Yuet-ngor announced in her policy speech on Wednesday that enough land had been found to tackle the public housing shortage for the next decade, she lauded it as an achievement, saying the government’s efforts had started to pay off.” Solving housing problem along with other infrastructure project started to become one of the important instrument to fix legitimacy.
Urban fabric
in Hong Kong
Private Led
Urban Renewal

Urban fabric
in China
Large-scale
Re-development

**Carrie Lam policy address: massive housing plan near Hong Kong’s border to play starring role in speech, but vision has its critics**

- Blueprint calls for expanding on existing plan for New Territories North and will be comparable in scale with Lantau Tomorrow Vision, sources say
- Proposal could make it easier for villagers to sell ancestral land, releasing abandoned farmland and earmarking funds to buy private holdings
Non-discursive Political Participation

District Councils are local councils and district organizations at the district level in Hong Kong that advise the government. They are important institutions for the public to exercise democratic supervision of the government and express their views on community affairs. District Councils are the bridge between the government and the public. The advice they provide to the government can largely influence the direction of government funds.

Unlike the Legislative Council in Hong Kong, the election and operation of DCs can be non-ideological. DCs have very close ties with local communities, which creates conditions for some DC members who are keen on community building. In 2021, a large number of DC members from oppositional parties were forced to resign due to the introduction of the National Security Law, and some of them were more enthusiastic about community building, creating connections among community members and vitalizing community life.

In this post-Anti-ELAB era, there may be a new way of political participation that, unlike the traditional ideological electoral politics of the past, is rooted in the District Councils and focuses solely on community building. The result of this political practice will be strengthened communities with citizens who are actively involved in public affairs. These will be the ground for future political change in Hong Kong.
Departing District Council members who are committed to community building

Public Offices (Candidacy and Taking Up Offices) (Miscellaneous Amendments) Ordinance 2021:

“The Ordinance clearly explains the meaning of a reference to "upholding Basic Law and bearing allegiance to HKSAR"; introduces the oath-taking requirement for members of the District Councils (DC); specifies oath-taking requirements; standardises the arrangement of oath administrators; enhances the mechanism to deal with breaching of oaths; and introduces restrictions on participation in public elections for related situations.”

“Upholding Basic Law and bearing allegiance to HKSAR" is a fundamental obligation and responsibility of public officers. The Ordinance further ensures that the public officers understand their constitutional responsibility, and safeguards that only a person who meets the fundamental requirement of "upholding Basic Law and bearing allegiance to HKSAR" could hold the relevant public office.”
Reproduction of Communal Space

- National Security Law
  - De-Democratization
    - New Legitimacy
- Restoring Civil Society
  - Non-Discursive Political Participation
MORE GOVERNMENT FUNDING (INFRASTRUCTURE)

DISTRICT CONCIL (GOVERNMENT ADVISOR) (COMMUNITY ORGANIZER)

RESTORED COMMUNITY

COMMUNAL SPATIAL PRACTICE

SPACE FOR COMMUNAL ACTIVITY

ADVISORY WITH OWNERS CORPORATION

ACQUIRING ROOFTOP (PRIVATELY OWNED) (COMMONLY OWNED)

COMMUNAL ARCHITECTURE

"WHITE ELEPHANT" PROJECT

FACE PROJECT + CORRUPTION
Socialization in the Grey Zone

Proposal
開門七件事 Market Promenade
A housing crisis developed in the 1950s and 1960s when a large number of refugees left mainland China and moved to Hong Kong, creating a large, unmet demand for affordable housing options and squatting in rooftop slums. The census of 1971 reported 27,000 people living in rooftop dwellings.

Hong Kong is now one of the most densely populated places in the world. According to the Hong Kong population census, there were 47,091 rooftop dwellers in 2011, 48,570 in 2006 and 77,930 in 2001.
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The appropriation of rooftop space reflects the fact that rooftop is the grey zone in Hong Kong. Unlike urban space on the ground, rooftop space is semi-invisible in urban life. Physically it is open space but in the context of Hong Kong it becomes a corner of urban space. This invisibility allows it to be appropriated more out of public control.

The number of rooftop slum dwellers has been decreasing year by year, and in the context of NSL, the future influx of public housing will cause more demolition of rooftop slum, and the vacated rooftop space will become the site of this project.
Site:
Sham Shui Po
Sham shui po, one of the most crowded areas in Hong Kong. Most of the buildings here were built between 1950 and 1970, which corresponds to the time of the influx of refugees from mainland China. Each street block today has between 1,000-2,000 residents, or 400-800 dwelling units.

In pursuit of efficiency, buildings are placed close to each other. So the proposed communal architecture can also be one that connects the roofs. By creating a place to connect and gather, communities based on street blocks will be formed.
Material & References
Metal scaffolding

Modularity
- Demountability
- Assembling speed

Stability
- High load bearing capacity

Endurability

Recyclability
Material & References
Bamboo scaffolding

Flexibility
- Site adaptation
- Approachability

Affordability

Recyclability

Desposability

Local material
- Accessibility