

# PhD

## THESIS SERIES

HUANG YI HUA

Everyday Practice in Public Living Environment: Contesting  
Space in an Ever-transforming Urban Area in Hong Kong

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# PhD

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The emerging processes of globalisation and privatisation of urban space trigger debates on the right to the city. With regard to the context of Hong Kong, the spatial differentiations between modern urban areas and traditional living areas deprive authentic everyday life that has been characterised by alienating behaviour in multiple ways. This research develops a conceptual framework which investigates the wide range of micro-spatial practices (struggle, conflict and negotiation) in public space of the city. Utilising the findings from an empirical study of Wan Chai District in Hong Kong, the study explicates how urban reclamation and multimodal urban spaces result in a hybrid regime. Through an analysis of street-life rhythms and the themes of reconstructing public space, four quadrants are suggested following the city's segmented urban fabric: the definitive modes of space of transudation, transference, translation, and transgression. The result provides a valuable narrative for understanding the production of space and the practice of planning.

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**EVERYDAY PRACTICE IN PUBLIC LIVING ENVIRONMENT:  
CONTESTING STREET SPACES IN AN EVER-TRANSFORMING URBAN AREA IN  
HONG KONG**

**HUANG YI HUA**

**Ph.D**

**The Hong Kong Polytechnic University**

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**The Hong Kong Polytechnic University**  
**School of Design**

Everyday Practice in Public Living Environment:  
Contesting Street Spaces in an Ever-Transforming Urban Area in Hong Kong

HUANG YI HUA

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

February 2016



## **CERTIFICATE OF ORIGINALITY**

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**HUANG YI HUA**





## **Abstract**

Hong Kong is dedicated to being the world city of Asia, and it has thus undergone an ever-transforming process of urbanisation. Reclamation programmes, an import to Hong Kong, have become the dominant approach to urban planning, and these have generally been conducted by professionals who claim to be acting in the public interest. Hong Kong's urbanisation has been largely based on modernist urban planning, and it has been assumed by many people that this is the only proper means of directing the community towards the ideal of social harmony. As a result, everyday life for ordinary citizens in urban regions takes place within a highly organised society. The rapid growth of high-rise building and economic- and effectiveness-led urban planning is resulting in the erosion of public space and street life.

The emerging processes of globalisation and its continuous effects on the ambiguity and privatisation of urban space have triggered debate over the right to the city, 'a cry and a demand' in a range of micro-spatial practices (struggle, conflict, and negotiation) over public space. Thus, the main objective of this study is to examine the modernist production of space in relation to the everyday life (practice) of people in Hong Kong by asking the following questions: (a) To what extent do city composition and morphology relate to urban planning and development in modernist ideology? How do the physical order and organisation of the city represent current society-space relations? (b) What does an everyday perspective offer for rethinking and reassessing the modernist urban planning system? How will modernist planning change the nature of public spaces and everyday lives? (c) In what ways does the ongoing discussion of rights to public space relate to the debate over the modernist production of space? What particular lessons could be learned from the dynamics of 'practiced space' that are reconstructing the socio-spatial order?

Research on Hong Kong typically highlights the significance of modernist planning principles for the city's radical urban transformation. As such, it is necessary to develop a conceptual frame for this study that focuses on discourses on everyday space within the Hong Kong context. Taking Hong Kong's Wan Chai District as a case study, this study seeks to go beyond the city as spectacle by illustrating the tendency towards specific urban development strategies, and by offering a detailed account of streets. Derived from more than three years of intensive fieldwork, the findings show that urban reclamation and multimodal urban spaces illustrate hybrid regime and that the spatial differentiations

between modern urban areas and traditional living areas can deprive everyday life of authenticity in multiple ways (e.g., design practices, ordinances, management, and land regulations) and continue to be characterised by alienating behaviour.

The findings also show that the inhabitation is important for citizens for whom street space in the city may be the only resource for citizenship and belonging. Within a larger context of urban informality and messiness, such everyday social processes of reconstructing space can be observed in specific settings that embody the insurgent potential of urban spaces and an alternative urban order and are to be inhabited and used as a paradigm of ‘grounded’ trans-urbanism providing for and reclaiming the right to the city. These settings thus provide a microcosm for those excluded from the planned, formal city. Through an analysis of street-life rhythms and the themes of reconstructing public space, in accordance with the segmented urban fabric of the city, four quadrants are identified—the definitive modes of space of *transudation*, *transference*, *translation*, and *transgression*—to provide a valuable narrative in understanding the production of space and the practice of planning.

Using a well-structured framework that responds to the shift in global city research, emphasising the ‘everyday politics of the inhabitant’, this study aims to provide insight for policymaking, planning/design, and social development and to serve as a reference for planning/design research and application in Hong Kong and for other cities.

## **Publications Arising from the Thesis**

### ***Book Chapters:***

Coppoolse, A., & Huang, Y. H. (2016). Political street ecology. In S. H. Kowk (Ed.), *I'm street observer: Fa Yuen street's cultural landscape* (pp. 258-265). Hong Kong: Joint Publishing.

### ***Peer-reviewed Journal Papers:***

Huang, Y. H., & Siu, K. W. M. (Under Review). Ordinary people's practice in everyday place in a rapidly changing metropolitan city. *International Development Planning Review*.

Siu, K. W. M., & Huang, Y. H. (Accepted). Folding designs and streets: Everyday life practices of hawkers in Hong Kong. *Zhuangshi*.

Siu, K. W. M., & Huang, Y. H. (2015). Everyday life under modernist planning: A study of an ever-transforming urban area in Hong Kong. *URBAN DESIGN International*, 20(4), 293-309.

Huang, Y. H., & Siu, K. W. M. (2015). Design everyday city space: Reflection from modernist urbanism of Hong Kong. *Design Magazine*, 216, 43-47.

Huang, Y. H., & Siu, K. W. M. (2014). Reception of space: Is a designer necessary for urban design? *Design Research*, 4, 11-16.

Huang, Y. H., & Siu, K. W. M. (2014). Planning and response in transforming everyday space: Intervention and invention. *The International Journal of Design in Society*, 7(3), 29-50.

Siu, K. W. M., & Huang, Y. H. (2013). Back to everyday life: Inspiration for urban design in the continuous metropolitan transformation of Hong Kong. *The International Journal of the Constructed Environment*, 3(2), 129-146.

### ***Conference Proceedings:***

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## List of Abbreviations

AADT	Annual Average Daily Traffic
BLD	Building and Lands Department
CCTV	Closed-Circuit Television
CSD	Census and Statistics Department
CBD	Central Business District
DC	District Council
GD	Geographical Division
GISD	Government Information Services Department
HAD	Home Affairs Department
HKCEC	Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre
LDC	Land Development Corporation
LegCo	Legislative Council Complex
MTR	Mass Transit Railway
OZP	Outline Zoning Plan
PD	Planning Department
PELB	Planning, Environment and Lands Branch
RNH	Road Network Hierarchy
SMO	Survey and Mapping Office
TPU	Territorial Planning Unit
TPB	Town Planning Board
TPO	Town Planning Office
TTSD	Traffic and Transport Survey Division
TD	Transport Department
URA	Urban Renewal Authority

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Introduction

In *The City Experience* (1977), Raynor and Harris characterise cities as dynamic, uncertain and multiplex: ‘the city is too big and complex to understand as a whole ... and to plan ... as it is always on the move-always changing from being one thing to becoming thing else’ (pp. 5-8). Considering the city as a vessel containing people’s everyday lives underscores the importance of urban planning and design. According to *Plan of General Development* (Green, 1929), the purpose of the plan is to look to the future and present, to plan with vision but not be visionary. This sentiment draws attention to the term *vision*. As Hsia (1993) points out, ‘a city, as a kind of environmental arts, is the long-term accumulative result of different individual wisdom’; furthermore, the ‘living environment is the reality, and urban planning is the discourse formed by text, sketches and language’ (p. 335). Thus, the daily interactions between different individuals or groups and the rest of the rapidly changing city constitute a tangible vision in which multiple experiences and everyday lives are carried out (Chase, Crawford, & Kaliski, 2008; Davis & Herbert, 1993; Lynch, 1960; Whyte, 1988).

The last century was a time of intense urban change and transformation. The rapid industrialisation and urbanisation of many cities generated various problems, such as environmental pollution, traffic congestion, safety hazards, chaotic streetscapes and inefficient use of land developed in Western Europe from the latter part of the 19th century. In response to increasingly complex urban issues and growth pressures, many cities continued to expand spatially, spreading outwards from their original city centres and acquiring more land for development. At the same time, urban planners embraced the

idea of rational, comprehensive planning, focusing on the spatial and physical nature of urban areas. These planners began to deploy new urban design and planning strategies to achieve a ‘modernist city’ with a neat, ordered and highly efficient environment (UN-Habitat, 2009). Writers such as Calthorpe and Fulton (2001) have pointed out that the period from the beginning of the 20th century to the 1970s constituted an era of specialisation, mass production and standardisation. Urban planning was considered a scientific and technical process, carried out by trained experts and mostly concerned with comprehensive physical planning and spatial design. The practice of planning changed significantly ‘from a kind of craft based on personal knowledge of a rudimentary collection of concepts about the city, into an apparently scientific activity in which vast amounts of precise information were garnered and processed’ (Hall, 1988, p. 317). The modernist city planners assumed that a strict segregation and control of land usage would produce a ‘transparent, predictable and informally disciplined’ urban form (Pløger, 2006, p. 203). Users of the space enjoyed an intensively built-up environment and a high quality of life along with the proper regulation of pollution and safety hazards (Aharon-Gutman, 2009). Indeed, this top-down, expert-led form of planning and thinking continues to hold influence today (UN-Habitat, 2009).

As a process of guiding and controlling land usage and environmental management, urban planning aims to facilitate the provision of a quality living environment. To this end, urban planners seek to ensure that a city’s physical, social, economic and environmental developments are both favourable and sustainable. Over the past century and a half, Hong Kong has expanded from a fishing village into a major entrepôt, from an industrial centre into a service hub and more recently into today’s modern metropolis, serving as a global financial and tourist centre. At its beginning (1841), Hong Kong adopted a laissez-faire attitude towards urban planning, relying on a leasehold system that allowed market forces to determine the use of the land. The traditional layout and dimensions of buildings created a compact urban form in which most people conducted their daily lives and activities. In these concentrated urban areas, crowded city streets and public spaces were the main sites for activities such as meeting other people, doing business and seeking entertainment (Leeming, 1977). Since the end of the Second World War, Hong Kong has undergone rapid urbanisation and seen a large increase in its immigrant population. This rapid population growth has put pressure on Hong Kong’s resources, particularly in terms of the demand for land and facilities. In response, government authorities have been obliged to implement an increasing number of urban planning projects (e.g., land reclamation, new towns, urban renewal and the Metroplan) to fulfil development needs (Smith, 1999; Tang, 1997; see also Siu, 2001). Moreover, as

a 'land-hungry' place, Hong Kong strongly relies on land reclamation to provide inhabitable city space for people and maintain its status as a world city in Asia. Modernist approaches and rational planning have been privileged throughout these developments, with the latter deemed the 'best method, or process, of doing planning' (Taylor, 1998, p. 66) and an approach that can 'transform an unwanted present by means of an imagined future' (Holston, 1998, p. 40). In other parts of the world, rational planning is being replaced by a more user-oriented planning approach, but urban planning in Hong Kong has not kept abreast of the times. Numerous large-scale reclamation and modernisation development projects have been successively launched. New forms of street patterns, buildings and urban communities have been created on these 'clear' urban lands based on planners' visions. Many of these criticisms are related to unsatisfactory planning policies, a shortage of public and open space and facilities and urban areas considered overly systematic, formal, restrictive and repetitive.

Today, as a result of functional segregation in modernist urban planning and the use of rational design, human factors have arguably been neglected in many major cities. Many modern cities have become rational mechanisms used to routinise and program everyday life. A number of public spaces no longer belong to the 'ordinary' and the 'everyday' for unceasing interaction. Many streets have been transformed into car parks or efficient transportation hubs to meet the demands of heavy circulation. The real estate market has forced empty and insular corporate spaces onto the city, with a limited number of spaces designed for the public. It is very common for public spaces to be owned by private entities and operated under state control, with the understanding that environmental issues such as street clutter, illegal parking, informal street vending and procession can be fixed by separating the individual from society. On the face of it, urban diversity has been diminished by rational planners who identify all city users as 'average people' to easily manage and control city space. Public spaces with restrictive standards cannot really fulfil the needs and preferences of users. All of these changes have tended to deprive everyday life of authenticity and continue to be characterised by alienated behaviour (Kwok, 1998; Lefebvre, 1984; Siu, 2007a). Many urban planners, researchers and sociologists have criticised our top-down planning paradigms on the grounds that cities and societies have become inhuman and alienated as a result. They argue that the everyday life of a modern society has become rationally organised and neatly subdivided and programmed to fit a controlled timetable (Hsia, 1994; Kwok, 1998; Lefebvre, 1991a; Sennett, 1970, 1990; Siu, 2001, 2007b). These social issues have triggered a desire to rethink and reassess the planning perspective vis-à-vis our built environment. Alternative perspectives have been presented that provide insights into the responses and reactions of users that are seldom

considered by policymakers and governments.

In contrast to these principles of city planning, some sociologists such as Henri Lefebvre, Michel de Certeau and Michel Maffesoli have presented a new perspective on the ‘sociology of everyday life’ that strives to discover the essence of and explore everyday practice—the ways of operating—of ordinary people in an urban environment (see Siu, 2007b; Siu & Huang, 2015). As Leuilliot (1977) points out, ‘everyday life is what we are given every day (or what is willed to us) and what holds us intimately from the inside’. Lefebvre (1991a) further states that everyday life should be ‘a work of art and the joy that man gives to himself’. These authors generally seek to prove that people do not strictly follow the orders imposed by authorities and the production process in their lives. Accordingly, the ways in which the inhabitants of a city—city users—operate cannot be defined merely as unchanged customs or traditions. People’s everyday lives address the unknown with variety and vitality in such places where they may be segregated and alienated and render places meaningful over time through the ‘artful practice’. In short, the domain of everyday practice seems like a collective arena in which personal, interactive and creative spatial practices reflect instinctive demands and artistic lives through a radical reorganisation of modern life. In fact, the process of negotiation with sanctioned authorities represents a kind of ‘art of the weak’, practised to not only represent one’s occupation over a thing, but also claim one’s right to society. As Lefebvre notes in *Writings on Cities* (1996), ‘[T]he right to the city cannot be conceived of as a simple visiting right or as a return to traditional cities. It can only be formulated as a transformed and renewed right to urban life’ (p. 158). Central to Lefebvre’s work, the ‘right to the city’ holds that *inhabitancy* itself should confer the right to appropriate and participate in the making of *lived space*. Although this theoretical setting provides insights into the everyday practices of city users, whether and how it can be worked out are both areas prime for exploration. In considering this particular sociologist’s viewpoint and to give suggestions for urban planning and design, the place-making approach to public realm can be applied to understand what happens in the streets during spatial restructuring and is helpful for examining the normative issues of planning institutions. In addition, as commonly recognised in literary theory, property rights have often been identified as one’s ownership or possession of the resource itself to the exclusion of others (Jacobs, 2003; Krueckeberg, 1995; Lai & Webster, 2003; Marcuse, 1996; Strong, Mandelker, & Kelly, 1996; Zhu, 2002). Regimes can also be reconstructed based on the new knowledge of social practices and their potential benefits (Demsetz, 1967; Silbey & Ewick, 2003).



In responding to a shift in global city research, the author uses a theoretical framework to emphasize the everyday as well as tensions in which the formal and the informal are closely intertwined. Taking Hong Kong's Wan Chai District as a case study, this study seeks to go beyond the city as spectacle by illustrating the tendency towards specific urban development strategies, and by offering a detailed account of streets to understand how city users compete for an alternative urban order. Through an analysis of city users and their daily lives as well as of the urban morphology, the author examines the struggle for rights to the production of space as it relates to physical environments, society and community and cultural reconstructions of the public realm. This examination uncovers some of the insurgent ways in which city users inhabit unceasing interaction in scrutinising built form undergoing transformation and how they cope with the structure of control of space. Thus, the production of space and practice of planning on the notion of trans-urbanism developed in this study acquire more nuanced dimensions. The definitive modes of space of *transudation*, *transference*, *translation*, and *transgression* are recognized as being practiced by local agents who in turn imbue built environment with life and spirit of place, which would make a substantive contribution to the critique of actually existing democracy.

In exploring the alternative perspectives of these theorists and of the 'ordinary' or 'everyday' nature of cities, the author mainly conducts intensive observations and interviews within a comparative framework to reveal some of the issues associated with the urban order and reflect on the understandings and struggles of city users and their right to the city within the current rapidly transforming urban environment. By providing an in-depth understanding of how city users interact with other users, living environments and facilities, this study argues that applying a user-oriented perspective can help the planner or designer arrive at a better public space and contribute to a sustainable quality of street life.

## **1.2. Aims and Objectives**

Based on an understanding of the practices of city users and unique urban development and strategies, this study aims to discuss the significance of an everyday life perspective in urban planning and to provide a reference for the government, professionals, local authorities and policymakers to plan, design and manage the public living environment, particularly in relation to streets as a kind of important public space in the modern city.

Based on a representative empirical study, this investigation has the following five objectives:

- ∞ To elaborate on the tendency of urban developmental strategies to achieve the goal of building a world city in Asia and in turn highlight the limits of knowledge about ‘ordinary cities’, by relating to particular empirical and theoretical debates;
- ∞ To provide an in-depth understanding of how city users practise their everyday lives in the public space of Hong Kong under current government policy and management and rapid urban development due to different factors;
- ∞ To explore the public-space-use system of Hong Kong, including a) formal and official city policies and implementation along with codified ordinances and government departments; b) informal ways of practice along with well-established customary, traditional, local and individual practices; and c) an intermediate realm in which city users tactically respond and then create their own inhabitable place;
- ∞ To improve research methods and tools and make them more rigorous and disciplined, with the goal of ultimately constituting a useful resource for researchers and professionals to conduct further investigation into public space in different regions and countries; and
- ∞ To arouse awareness of rights controversies and yield insights into conducting user-oriented urban research.

### **1.3. Hypothesis**

The research hypothesis is that in the midst of globalisation our use of city space—typically set a priori and immobilised to allow optimised problem solving by designers and planners during programming and design—has been missing the ordinary (i.e. ordinary people) in a continuously transforming city and significant dynamics about the everyday struggles over public space by failing to consider street environments.

Thus, some research questions might be raised below to develop a better understanding of everyday public space.

#### 1.4. Scope and Research Questions

Although Hong Kong has been transformed into a planning-oriented society in recent decades (PELB, 1998; Pryor, 1993), the street along with other types of street-level public space have been indispensable to the everyday lives of the Hong Kong people. Based on a user-oriented research approach, this study tries to uncover some of the practical interactions prompted by everyday space, focusing on human-human, human-environment and human-product interactions (see Figure 1.1).

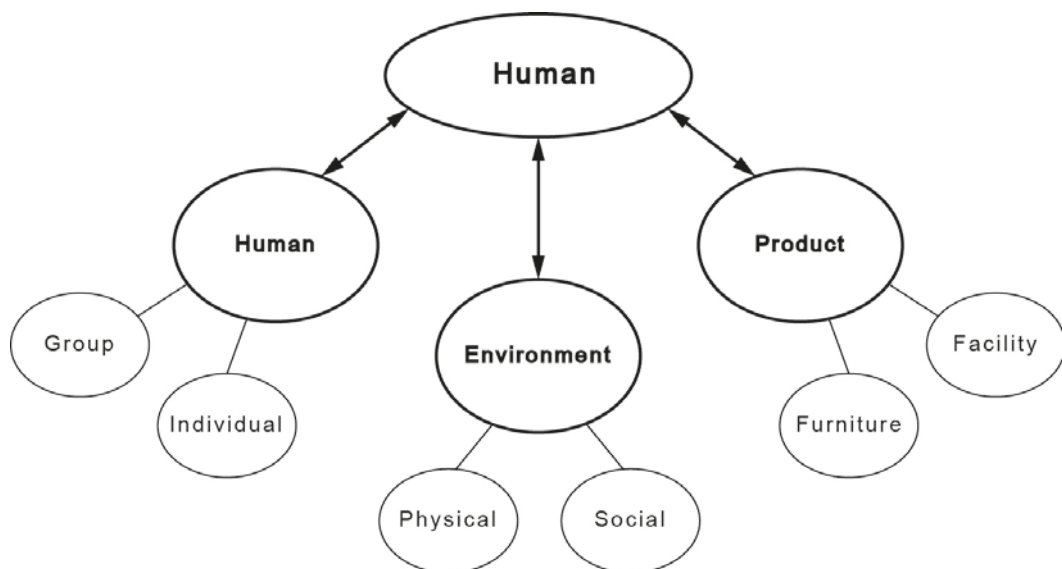


Figure 1.1. Research scope of the study

Based on these interactions, the following basic research questions are raised.

- ∞ To what extent is a city's composition and material formation affected under the modernist development? How do the physical patterns and organisation of a city represent current society-space relations?
- ∞ In what ways does an everyday life perspective offer for rethinking and reassessing the modernist urban planning system? How does modernist planning involve changes to the nature of public spaces and everyday life?

- ∞ In what ways does the ongoing discussion of rights to public space relate to the debate over the modernist production of space? What particular lessons could be learned from the dynamics of ‘practiced space’ that are reconstructing the socio-spatial order?

### **1.5. Significance and Value**

Most large-scale studies focus only on developmental matters. Many piecemeal and short-term consultancy projects are biased towards the particular interests of certain parties (e.g., developers, politicians and individual beneficiaries of urban projects). Beyond developers’ biased investment in development and architectural construction, government grants also rarely support street-focused studies of the quality of public life of ordinary people. Indeed, the street is the most overlooked public space. However, many individual studies have been interested only in old and historical streets. Comprehensive qualitative studies offering in-depth and well-organised analysis of different kinds of urban spaces have been rare. Although the street is an essential public space in Hong Kong, qualitative street studies remain limited.

In dealing with these issues and problems, this study makes a conceptual and empirical contribution to the literature related to the sociology of space by providing a perspective of everyday life in urban planning. To examine the social issues surrounding the modernist production of space in Hong Kong, this study provides research references and experiences related to the concept of public space rights and a new perspective according to which city users may engage in tactical practices in response to city strategies, policies and plans. Its empirical contribution serves as a microcosm for the lives of ordinary people beyond the confines of rapidly changing, increasingly programmed street environments and reflects a more empathetic understanding of inhabitants’ lives, acts and needs. Moreover, its conceptual contribution is its account of how the right to the city is enacted by the ‘community’ and ‘civil society’ through reconstructions of public realm and how these reconstructions exploit ambiguities in the spatial boundaries of the current urban landscape. The emphasis of this study on the user-oriented perspective; people’s everyday lives and ability to address the unknown with variety and vitality; and good public space design drawn from an understanding of place-making should inspire the unilateral policies, plans, management and developmental directions of governments, planners and administrators seeking to achieve sustainable development.

## 1.6. Thesis Outline

Figure 1.2 provides the outline of this study. The study consists of eight chapters, four of which are levelled in the overall hierarchical structure. The author distinguishes four levels of spatial and temporal information: *socio-spatial formation*, *physical environment*, *everyday life* and *understandings and struggles*, which help to structure the equivalence of space and time (see also Parkes & Thrift, 1978). Thus, the study accounts for factors of societal representation at every level, characterising the inner city and the experience-in-place of ordinary people that reveals their relationship to society.

Chapter 1 introduces the research background and rationale and outlines the aims and objectives of the study. It identifies the hypothesis and research questions as they pertain to the scope of the study. It also emphasises the necessity of design research to Hong Kong's urban transformation.

Chapter 2 reviews the related literature and defines the relevant terms. To generate a distinct insight into the adopted theoretical framework, it discusses the relationships between each term and important theoretical perspectives that are relevant to this study from a variety of disciplines. Based on the review, a research void is identified by providing a review of precedents of empirical research at the end of the chapter.

Chapter 3 investigates the connection between contemporary strategic and spatial discourse in Hong Kong in terms of *socio-spatial formation*. It begins by addressing the totality of the city's political economy and its three elements: a development ideology, a political system and a socio-economic structure (Parkes & Thrift, 1975). The public concerns associated with the reclamation-based development strategy are addressed to reveal the spatial discourse involved in modernist city planning, and an effectiveness-led principle is highlighted to identify the shift in the role of street space. The systematic order of street syntax is addressed under the modernist ideology. The discussion also sheds light on the contested nature of the street in terms of freedom and control.

Chapter 4 describes the study's methodology; specifically, the QUAL-quant mixed approach. Following a brief review of the design research with reference to the methods adopted in the precedents of empirical research, an integrated research framework is built that includes three aspects: physical attributes, activities and conceptions. Its purpose is to explore the relationships between environment and action, action and meaning and

meaning and environment. An interesting case is discussed as the major methodological focus on three stages. Qualitative core components including a pilot study, units of study, time arrangement, behavioural mapping, field observations and interviews are mainly used, and quantitative components including the space syntax approach are adopted to complement the lack of a qualitative physical survey. This chapter aims to provide a user-oriented lens through which to view the research scope and objectives.

Chapter 5 explores the *physical environment* and development situation of Wan Chai according to the spatial properties of morphology. This chapter is divided into two parts. The first part conducts physical analysis of the general spatial properties, changes in urban form and hybrid regime of Wan Chai. It provides a basic understanding of the area's urban configuration and spatial differences. The second part conducts syntactic analysis of the area's changes in urban morphology and the relationships between the different parts of its urban structure. This part of the chapter explores the underlying spatial structures that appear to influence accessibility and constrain pedestrian movement in Wan Chai.

Chapter 6 elaborates on the *everyday life* of ordinary people in an effort to reassess the modernist urban planning approach by analysing six dimensions. It begins by highlighting the modernist ideology informing urban planning in Hong Kong and Wan Chai. According to the area's diverse urban fabric, a comparative approach is adopted to examine Wan Chai North and Wan Chai South. Six dimensions (i.e., buildings and facilities, management, traffic and pedestrian flow, public activities, pedestrian diversity and social capital) are proposed to reveal the modernist production of space related to the everyday lives of the people in Wan Chai.

Chapter 7 goes beyond the notion of everyday lives under modernist urban orders by uncovering the *negotiations and struggles* associated with public space. This chapter provides a microcosm for the competing uses of urban space in Wan Chai. Considering the area's rapid urban transformation in the globalised context, it focuses towards a 'grounded' trans-urban paradigm in which *inhabitants* begin by contesting the planned uses of street space and seek to change the nature of everyday space for the benefit of the 'new order'. The purpose of this chapter is to consider the constructed identities of a place and its inhabitants through a detailed portrayal of the inner life of Wan Chai and streets via behavioural mapping and photography. To examine how the dynamics of these spatial practices define contemporary public space with a 'trans-' attitude, the concept of spatial modal frames is adopted for analysis with a focus on four quadrants: space of

*transudation*, *transference*, *translation* and *transgression*. This relates to the continued gaps in urban theory, unveiling the limits of knowledge about the production of space and practice of planning.

Chapter 8 presents the conclusions of the study, summarises its findings and highlights its contribution to design knowledge. In addition, possible directions for future work are discussed from the perspective of everyday life in planning and design.

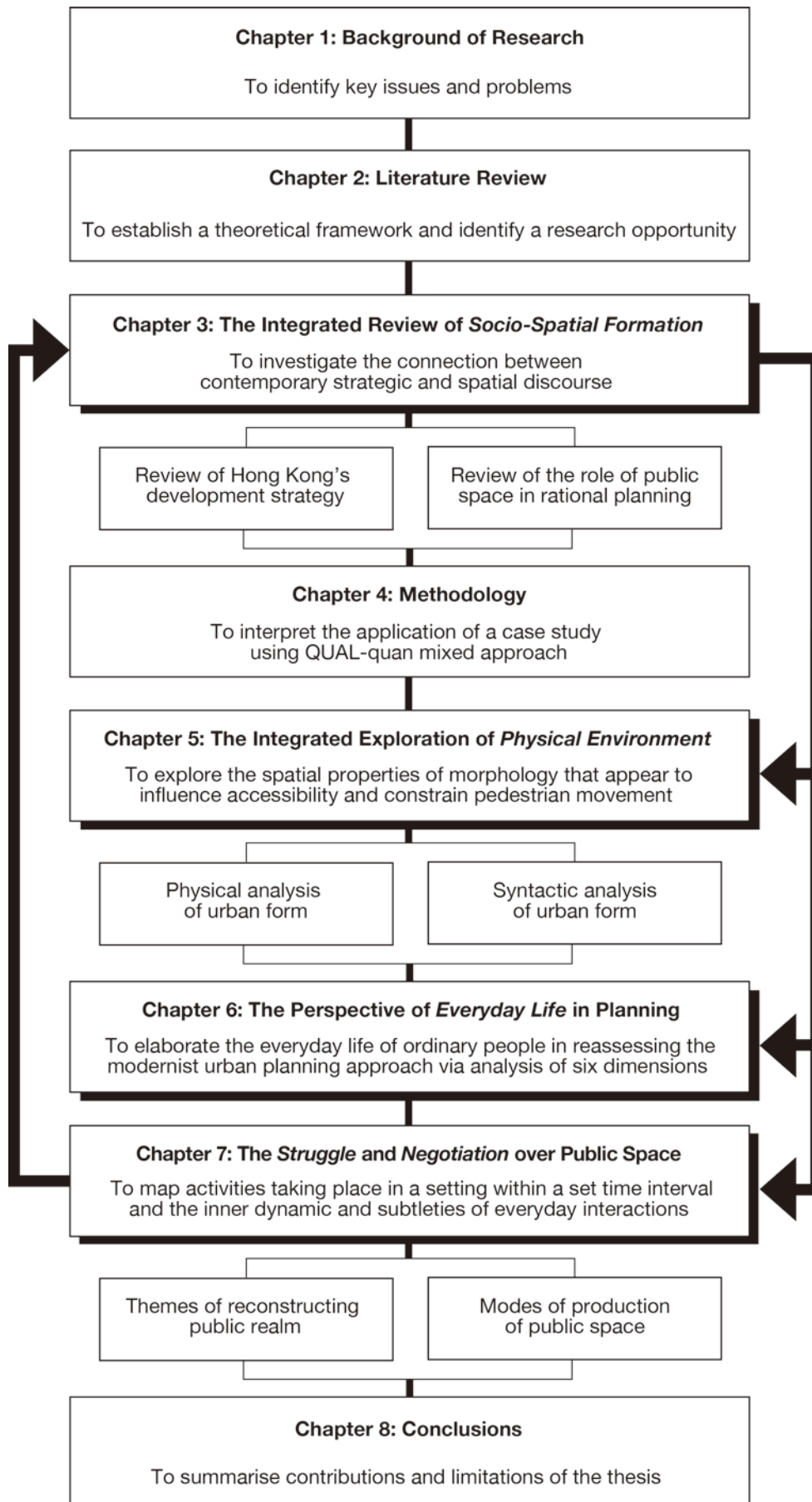


Figure 1.2. Thesis outline



## CHAPTER 2

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### LITERATURE REVIEW

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#### 2.1. Preamble

The first part of this chapter provides a theoretical discussion of the terms related to this study. This discussion is based on interdisciplinary efforts made in everyday life and urban planning to understand the connections between human behaviour and the built environment. The terms include (a) 'everyday practice', (b) 'public living environment', (c) 'contesting street spaces' and (d) 'ever-transforming urban area'.

Based in the field of environment-behaviour studies, the second part of this chapter introduces a theoretical framework from three concepts: streets as behaviour settings, affordances of urban environments, and making of everyday places. This amalgamation has advanced over time. It is used to obtain an in-depth understanding of how city users practise their everyday lives in public living environments and to provide insights into the importance of planning concepts focused on a user-centred approach for planners, administrators and governments.

According to the discussion of the terms and theoretical framework, the third part of this chapter communicates the necessity of the present study. Through a critical review of empirical-based precedents, it provides an opportunity to conduct a street study in Hong Kong from a user-centred perspective with the aim to reveal the physical environments, activities and understandings of city users. The empirical studies reviewed in this chapter serve as bases for selecting suitable research design and specific research methods.

## **2.2. Discussion of the Terms**

Before commencing the in-depth examination of human and environment included in this study, it is important to discuss and extend the meanings of the terms used herein. Discussion of the terms should provide an overview of the study along with its usefulness to the relevant literature. As discussed in the following sections, these terms demonstrate that the current study considers relationships with everyday life from both the human behaviour and environmental planning perspectives.

### **2.2.1. Everyday Practice (and Urban Planning)**

Within contemporary urban development, the modernist ideology of formal planning is intended to provide government administrators with an appropriate means of directing a community towards an ideal of social harmony based on deliberate forms of operational rationalism. It is also identified as the only way to provide a suitable place for humans defined as average people with standard needs and to accommodate them in scenarios characterised as happy and harmonious (Harvey, 2000; Le Corbusier, 1991). However, the government also follows the planning principles of private sectors '[who] conceive and realize without hiding it, for the market, with profit in mind' (see also Hall, 2001; Lefebvre, 1996, p. 84). As Pløger (2006) writes, modernist planning 'produces the highly organized, rational city, always under surveillance and an everyday life that is governed and regulated discretely in detail' (p. 203). This approach to planning allows the everyday life of a civil society to be highly organised and neatly subdivided or programmed to fit a controlled timetable and development agenda (Lefebvre, 1991a; Sennett, 1970, 1990). In the striving for 'putting everyday life in order', many planners with expertise in social science and technology have made value judgements about what are considered good measures to save people from misfortune and catastrophe while denying the possibility that ordinary people are able to manage and determine a better way to live in environments that suit their everyday lives. As a form of modernist planning and management discourse, the built form design is a concealed practice of programming everyday life in every planning project.

In dealing with these issues, this study aims to develop a perspective of everyday life in urban planning that 'makes room' for the practices, experiences and needs of people to be theorised as constitutive features of urban life and development. In the past few decades, many philosophers and sociologists have talked about life models as a point of departure

for city planning (see Gardiner, 2000; Vaiou, 2000). Although the notion of everyday life as a premise for social thought is derived from the cultural innovations of modernity, the dominant discourses of the era remain lacking (e.g., see Chaney, 2002). Considering social theory along with the philosophical tradition of phenomenology to analyse the 'social construction of reality' (see Berger & Luckmann, 1967), much of the research has emerged from taken-for-granted aspects of social life, individual activities and the flow of repetitive experiences in the context of time and space; the constitution of meanings in those processes; and forms of the everyday that are seen as natural and given, covering up the sociocultural and socio-spatial conditions of their construction (Mavridis, 2004).

Through brief reference to these approaches, the thread presented here reveals two methods for making the perspective of everyday life a concrete planning tool. First, it refers to time-geography as a more feasible method of studying the organisation of everyday life (Hägerstrand, 1985). Time-geography refers to an emphasis on the involvement of time in the notions of 'paths' and 'projects' (i.e., daily movements and activities of individuals organised in time and space). Second, it refers to the performance of 'everyday practice' in relation to 'experience' and 'concepts of space and time flow' (de Certeau, 1984) along with the notion of the *habitus*, which offers a view of the material culture of everyday life in relation to acts of habitation as it proceeds through the habitat, (in)habitant, habitation processes and habits (Bourdieu, 1977). Such a concept of practice or *habitus* relates to how the meanings of concrete subjects can be negotiated with particular *tactics* of individuals as opposed to the definitions of subject identities or used to develop strategies in an everyday context. Apart from the major strengths involved in studying 'individual spaces and times in social life', this argumentative thread makes two omissions. First, it makes little sense of how the practice of space has shifted across different periods in history. Second, it seriously neglects the discourses of 'everyday practice', including the operational methods that are meaningful to everyday life, and downplays the meaning of practice as users acting in response to government orders. Hence, practice comes across as a more dynamic attempt to incorporate not only the milieu and daily routine, but also the scenarios of its transgression in accordance with people's beliefs, needs or interpretations of urban space.

Given the connection between everyday life and the dynamics of the urban, this study is inspired by or comes close to Lefebvre's idea of a 'contrasting diptych' (Lefebvre, 1984), implying 'the misery of everyday life' with 'its tedious tasks and humiliations' and 'the power of everyday life', the manifestations of which include:

[i]ts continuity...the adaptation of the body, time, space, desire: environment and the home...creation from recurrent gestures of a world of sensory experience; the coincidence of need with satisfaction, and, more rarely, with pleasure: work and works of art; the ability to create the terms of everyday life from its solids and its spaces. (p. 35)

This dichotomy of everyday life foregrounds not only the lack of authenticity and pervasive domination of daily life by continuous adaptations, but also the presence of collisions with various structures of space and time in terms of redefinition and negotiation (Lefebvre, 1991a). People do not always give up their everyday practices and powers over the alienation of everyday conditions. According to this line of thinking, the varied actions and consciousness within space and time create potential for the reconstruction of meaning and transgression of alienation (Heller, 1984) and are reflected and constituted in urban space as a mediating force between individuals and groups and the broader structures and organisations of society. The provision of spatial practices involves the body as a material site where abstract top-down concepts of imposition of power are formed and the bottom-up construction of identities takes place through the totality of the activities, practices and strategies. The practices of cultural life further extend the body into the habitat with historical and social specificity and relate it to other bodies. Such ways of living within planned space seek to appropriate and create, visualise the city as more representational and vernacular and demonstrate the needs manifested by local and concrete experiences of spatial production.

After presenting ideas of 'layers', the world of ruling and the everyday world of individuals, Smith (1988) shifts attention to considering urban planning from an everyday perspective in terms of how the structured programmes of social relations and structures define daily routines and repetition and the different engagements in various activities and perceptions of time and space. Urban planning can be treated as world that is mediated by texts and discourses and focuses on the environmental conditions of everyday life. The conditions for coping along with the obstacles and possibilities of a concrete surrounding insinuate the interpretation and explanation of urban issues. Thus, starting from ordinary people's everyday practices enables us to involve 'user-oriented' snapshots in the mutual constitution of urban space and planning.

### **2.2.2. Public Living Environment (and Quality of Life)**

In common parlance, the public living environment is associated with a greater spatial area and an attachment to one's place of living in terms of specificity, scale, quality of life and sustainable development.

From the perspective of social cognition, concepts such as the environment or geographical scope are more general, referring to unfolding backdrops that support the on-going personal and social events in our everyday lives and are more similar to the biosphere than any specific location. When conceived as a place, the environment presents a distinct way of living in the world that draws attention to the self-environment relationship while emphasising the associated meanings and concepts that social researchers sometimes overlook (Cresswell, 2004). Looking at a good example of 'favourite places' to account for the importance of the environment in on-going processes of emotional and self-regulation, the environment is more than just its functional requirements; indeed, it is 'important in itself for the individual' (Korpela, 1989, p. 244; see also Korpela *et al.*, 2009). Furthermore, a specific environment may have specific meanings of living for human individual and collective well-being and contribute to people's general satisfaction and quality of life in multiple ways. According to the World Health Organization's (1994) definition, quality of life is composed of the 'individual's perception of their position in life in the context of the culture and value system in which they live and in relation to their goals, expectations, standards and concerns'. By explicitly considering individual aspects of quality life, well-being is exhibited not only in one's satisfaction with interpersonal relations, family life, employment, career, health and finances, but also in one's relationship with multiple environmental aspects (see Poortinga, Steg, & Vlek, 2004). In this context, the ideological voice of the quality-of-life concept seeks to emphasise health, individual life satisfaction, objective standards of living and environmental sustainability (Uzzell & Moser, 2006) in an attempt to establish a person-environment fit based on financial resources, availability of a certain number of amenities, neighbourhood facilities and objectively measurable environmental qualities (Jackson, 2002). Nevertheless, the material wealth of the physical environment is generally not a prerequisite of subjective well-being and an individual's living environment (Belk, 1985; Richins & Dawson, 1992). To some extent, this echoes the phenomenological perspective on the perceived quality of the living environment (Van Poll, 2003), which claims that individual health and social well-being are subject to not only the quality of the built environment and characteristics of the open space, but also 'public' aspects that are designed and managed to serve the needs of city users, are accessible to all groups and provide freedom of action, allowing people to make strong connections between their place, their personal lives and the larger world (Carr *et al.*,

1992, pp. 19-20). As defined by Oxford English Dictionary (2007), the word ‘public’ refers to public means ‘of, concerning, or open to the people as a whole; involved in the affairs of the community, especially in government or entertainment; done, perceived, or existing in open view; and of or provided by the state rather than by an independent commercial company’. Given that the definition establishes the relationship between the term ‘public’ and people and their concerns, the evaluation of the perceived right to quality of life in the public environment raises the question of how one makes a place of living. Place-making (Schneekloth & Shibley, 1995) infers a people-place bond that individuals develop over time to develop social lives in public spaces. It encompasses creative usage patterns reflected in psychological correlates, with particular attention paid to the physical, cultural and social identities that develop the quality of the public environment, and results in a sense of place that contributes to people’s health, happiness and well-being, which are elements as important as the physical properties of an object or an environment. The composition of the public domain in the environment is thus appropriated based on everyday needs and wants, and the political realm emerges for the purpose of maintaining public order and environmental quality. The living environment is structured around the public discourse of conflict, negotiation and political freedom over the public space. Thus, it is not the objective quality of the environment, but the way in which people interact with it that offers the principal explanation for their well-being (Uzzell & Moser, 2006).

Searching for public discourse conditions in the people-environment relationship means considering general standards of living in terms of the objective environmental qualities of a living environment and subjective judgments made based on people’s everyday experiences, actions and living expressions in response to their environment. This integrated approach provides a clearer image of people’s relationships to their environment. The effect on the perceived quality of the public environment may be evaluated by looking at both the relationship between objective facilities and functions and the ways in which quality lives are led, as these two factors may differ substantially according to personal factors such as gender, age and cultural background (see Diener *et al.*, 1999). Integrating the objective features of the environment and the individual’s subjective evaluations permit action to be taken on not only the environmental aspects of common quality of life, but also the subject-identified aspects of environmental appropriation, which are considered as aspects that capture the transgressions of people-environment mismatches (Moser, 2009). In light of sustainability, as Bonnes, Uzzell, Carrus and Kelay (Bonnes *et al.*, 2007) advocate, ‘there has to be a place-specific and more “social psychological based” approach’ (see also Bonnes & Bonaiuto, 2002; Uzzell,

Pol, & Badenes, 2002). To understand multifaceted living in the public environment, a research approach that considers the behavioural aspects of people-environment congruity is required and must involve diverse forms of identification with specific places or more general environments (i.e., people-people, people-environment and people-product interactions) that enhance a sustainable quality of life.

### **2.2.3. Contesting Street Spaces (and the Order)**

In many accounts of city development and sustainability around the world, the new orthodoxy of the high-quality living environment may tally with a general interpretation of planning's ascendancy as ones gripped by enthusiasm for all things 'modern'. However, existing social arrangements being dismantled as discourses emphasizing the desirability of order, cleanliness, speed and efficiency are disappointing such a 'mass consensus' in a new era of improvement (Berman, 1982; Harvey, 1989; Latour, 1993). We are presently witnessing the growth of such modernization, and state's interest in a range of reconstruction and planned comprehensive redevelopment of cities. Indeed, much of what has been written of this move towards the continuing hold of modernization vision from the politician's or planner's point of view is made against the realities and complexities of everyday life in the city (see for example, Huang & Siu, 2014; Siu & Huang, 2013). Miles (2002) argues 'view from above' unifies disparate elements of urban form, reducing 'human participants in its spectacle to a role equivalent to the figures in an architectural model' (p. 132). At present, we are not quite sure how to get a true and accurate record of a city's built environment, while repressing the agency of those who experience and live the city at 'street level'. Thus, as Rodman (1993) suggests, to understand urban processes, we need 'a synthesis of experience-based approaches...with those that treat space as socially constructed and contested' (p. 137). Therefore, to understand the impact that the street may have on the realms of everyday life, this view offers a spontaneous characteristic of such spatiality that is recognized in the built environment from the perspective of those who inhabit there, albeit with a (capitalist) spatial order in the city.

From a strictly morphological perspective, the street is defined as 'the more or less narrow, linear space lined by buildings found in settlements and used for circulation and, sometimes, other activities' (Rapoport, 1987, p. 81). This emphasis on circulation portrays the street as more a channel for movement and connection rather than a public space for everyday use. The effectiveness-led ideology is jarringly visible in the character

of the modern city streets, which show little or no concern for the people who use them. This is manifested in geometric layouts of streets that accommodate efficient flow and form the basis of city organisation. According to Le Corbusier's (1929) considerations of the ideal city in the new machine age, speed and order are paramount. Thus, fast-moving streets are not only the measure of a city's efficiency, but also a symbol of spatial order and power.

Streets and sidewalks compose the public right-of-way in our experience of the city. Like streets, sidewalks grant people a legal right to move along a specific way through grounds or property belonging to another. Sidewalks have often been considered to fulfil the purpose of facilitating daily trips between two destinations. Although sidewalks are part of a public roadway system that satisfies the primacy of movement, they are also spaces attached to abutting property owners for the sake of daily maintenance and obstruction clearance. The adjacent property rights may present an additional level of control that has precedence over others. As a result, cities depend on two constructs to assume right-of-way. First, as primary users, pedestrians and drivers remain conceptually important in street regulation, and right-of-way has been designed based on a 'logic' of unimpeded movement (Blomley, 2007). Second, in considering a textured street and space, right-of-way is linked to abutting properties to eliminate any obstructions (see also Loukaitou-Sideris & Ehrenfeucht, 2009). Both soft design and hard control practices that use regulations and ordinances not only restrict pedestrian accessibility, but also ultimately determine a street's users and uses.

There has been a growing and resurgent interest in rethinking the role of streets in terms of how they cater to functional, social and cultural activities; travelling, shopping, playing, meeting and interacting with other people; leisure and recreation; and even domination and resistance. This has resulted in a new consideration of streets as the most important symbols of the public realm (Appleyard, 1981; Carmona *et al.*, 2003; Gehl, 1987; Hass-Klau *et al.*, 1999; Jacobs, 1993; Jacobs, 1961; Lofland, 1998; Moudon, 1991; Southworth & Ben-Joseph, 1997). In addition to being a channel for movement, the street is increasingly being endowed with meanings of use as an everyday place. As Tuan (1977) states, 'the ideas "space" and "place" require each other for definition...if we think of space as that which allows movement, then place is pause, each pause in movement makes it possible for location to be transformed into place' (p. 6). Many scholars have suggested thinking about the various functions of streets in positive association with our daily lives (Appleyard, 1981; Bain, Gray, & Rodgers, 2012; Ehrenfeucht & Loukaitou-Sideris, 2010; Gehl, 1987; Hass-Klau *et al.*, 1999; Jacobs,



1993; Moudon, 1991). Considered as everyday places rather than paths, streets can be conceived as the best element affecting the overall quality of life for local people in a variety of ways, especially in areas of high population density.

Accordingly, recent trends in urban design have involved developing an everyday life perspective for urban travel experience and a meaningful lived environment and proposing the reclamation of city streets for people. More and more governments have realised the value of even relatively small parcels of land and improved their design manuals with new inhabitable street policies. For instance, New York, San Francisco and Seattle have been on the forefront of this movement. According to Dan Bertollet (2011), 'people want to live in places that cultivate connectedness—to the physical city itself as well as the people in it'. Overall, although high-density cities no longer count on specific open spaces for daily needs, there has been a renewed interest in everyday places along with a growing belief that street right-of-way is ripe with opportunity for reforming one's relationship to modern society.

#### **2.2.4. Ever-Transforming (and Land Reclamation)**

In this study, the term 'ever-transforming' is defined as the revolutionary transformation of a society from an export centre into a world city, which represents a spatial evolution from absolute to abstract space and then differentiated space (Lefebvre, 1991b, p. 48). The starting point for urban transformation is an industrial stage that forms absolute space with religious, magical and political symbolism. Industrialisation becomes a negative factor for the absolute space built up under the power of the ruling class. The functional scenario of urban transformation conceptualises the planning vision of an industrial metropolis. Co-occurring in part with the industrial stage, the expansion of industrialisation helps urbanisation to prevail, become the dominant societal condition and control everyday life. These developments have been based on the reclamation of huge tracts of land and rely on a leasehold system that allows market forces to determine the use of this land to boost the government's coffers. In a general understand and professional planners' point of view in Hong Kong, the reclamation in Hong Kong means not only to provide valuable economic space on the 'borrow area' for development purposes, but also to trigger comprehensive urban renewal inside spread onto adjoining areas in attempt to improve life space with well-designed open spaces, landscapes, infrastructure services, and so forth. As a result of globalisation, the built environment emerged in a modern metropolis with form and control is quite abstract. Moreover,

transformation with an ‘ideologically dominant tendency’ that produces an indefinite multitude of space (Lefebvre, 1991b; Lefebvre & Enders, 1976) involves delimitating the ambiguousness of everyday space and compelling city users to remove themselves from built environments in confusion. It is clear that the space yielded by governments, stakeholders and planners is conceived rationally by combining ideology and technical knowledge with the socio-spatial to serve those in power in a particular mode of production and exploited simply as ‘a tool of thought and of action’, ‘a means of production’ and ‘a means of control, of domination, of power’ (Lefebvre & Enders, 1976, p. 31). The ‘art of living’ has been destroyed, leaving fragmentation, homogeneity and hierarchical contradictions in everyday life.

Although the everyday space of modern society has decayed in accordance with the social division of labour and the hegemony of the ruling class, the reproduction of urbanisation attempts to build ‘differentiated space’ by enabling the ‘right to the city’, which gives citizens the rights of freedom and individualism; the right of habit and to inhabit; the rights of creation and participation; and the right to be different. The ordinary turns daily life from practices of quotidian dullness, boredom and estrangement into temporally creative, self-actualising and harmonious experiences in places otherwise characterised by segregation and alienation. In fact, the process of transformation to officially sanctioned urbanisms represents a kind of ‘art of the weak’. Activities are not simply a reaction and a response to everyday space, but also everyday time-based tactics fuelled by the same self-motivation that propels users to fulfil their local needs and hope for a better life and living environment. In contrast to the aforementioned transformations, this vision of a triumph of space relies on a ‘grounded’ ‘trans-’ attitude, deemed as ‘ordinary’ included in the ‘everyday’ nature of cities, as an operational method in which urban dwellers seek to create, adapt, appropriate and negotiate. As one part of the transformation, ordinary place-making visualises a city as more representational and vernacular and demonstrates the need to consider local contexts and concrete space production experiences when analysing overlapping urban issues. In *Performing the City*, Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (2008) points out that space and place of vernacular – ‘of architecture without architects and urban space without planners’ – can be artfully considered as ‘the urban revision on exhibition’ to inspire the limits of planning and design (p. 19). This process resonates with the idea of ‘autonomous and creative intercourse’, which is driven by a series of shifts of assembly among ‘persons, and the intercourse of persons with their environment’ (Peattie, 1998, p. 247). Although urban transformation theory was originally derived from Lefebvre’s observations of Western

society, a similar process is distinctly happening in Hong Kong, albeit under a different composition of forces and historical periods.

### **2.3. Theoretical Bases for Research on the Everyday Life Perspective**

The theoretical framework of this study is formed through three aspects: streets as behaviour settings, affordances of street environments, and making of everyday places. All three of these theories have been recognised as foundations for developing environment-behaviour research and ecological psychology in the last four decades (see Lang, 1987; Rapoport, 1990). This study tries to integrate the three theories to form a basis for critical thinking in urban planning and design in terms of an everyday life (practice) perspective.

#### **2.3.1. Streets as Behaviour Settings**

In contrast with Lewin's (1936) subjectivist conceptualization of the psychological life space, Barker (1968) focuses on 'ecological units' with an alternative, objectivist perspective of 'behaviour setting' in which the behaviour and the physical environment are indissolubly connected. The concept of the 'behaviour setting' is associated with particular organisational and behavioural programs that are directly (objectively) observable and recur at regular, specified intervals. Wohlwill (1973) argues that '...environments are not in the head', in order to assess the responses and reactions of users to that environment. A 'behaviour setting' is composed of a milieu (a particular layout of the environment), a stationary pattern of behaviour (an experience-based activity) and their synomorphy (the congruent relationship between the two) (Barker, 1968; Bechtel, 1977, 1997; Lang, 1987). By addressing the concept of ecological psychology in the context of larger social contexts and issues, as further suggested by Allan Wicker (1979), behaviour setting theory recognises the most immediate and 'behaviourally significant, human environments' (p. 5).

The present study of street space adopts the behaviour setting concept and identifies streets and street segments as the milieu (see Chapter 4 for details). Investigating the relationship between the characteristics of streets or street segments and the human activities taking place there is essential for understanding the impact of urban planning

and design on human behaviour, for determining how the ‘behaviour setting’ is able to afford to live in the city.

### **2.3.2. Affordances of Street Environments**

According to Gibson (1979), the term ‘affordances’ refers to the perceived properties of the physical environment that provide an opportunity to engage in activity. The concept helps to understand how the physical components of built environments not only afford activities but aesthetic experiences as well. Compared with behaviour settings, environmental affordances do not contain ‘coercive’ or ‘invitational qualities’ (Gibson, 1979; Lang, 1987). In other words, no matter how much an object or setting is altered, its usefulness and meaning may change with the needs and cultural understandings. For Gibson and Pick (2000), what gives the relationship between perception and action is that the concept of affordance potentially reveals the both about the functional properties of the environment and about themselves by using the environment in relation to their developing abilities. In the context of street environments, this study adopts the concept of affordance to understand the phenomenon’s variables among behaviour settings by revealing physical properties that offer specific behavioural responses.

Moreover, environmental affordances do not always refer to the appearance of human behaviour. On streets, the various affordances of an object or a setting may limit activities and not necessarily generate or ‘trigger’ an outcome (Heft, 1997). According to Gibson (1979), ‘[t]he affordances of the environment are what it offers...what it provides or furnishes, either for good or for ill’ (p. 129).

### **2.3.3. Making of Everyday Places**

The theoretical discussions in the previous sections argue for an ecological approach towards the phenomenological world with an emphasis on the relationships linking the elements. In *Genius Loci* (1980), as asserted by Norberg-Schulz, one term that can be used to define the environment in which phenomena manifest themselves is ‘place’ — the space in which events ‘take place’ (p. 6). Drawing on this idea, place is understood broadly as spaces that people are attached to, or ‘meaningful location’ (Cresswell, 2004, p. 7). One of the best-known Phenomenological approaches to ‘place’ is Relph’s (1976) *Place and Placelessness*, which points out that:

distinctive and diverse places are manifestations of a deeply felt involvement for those places by the people who live in them, and ...for many such a profound attachment to place is as necessary and significant as a close relationship with other people. (p. i)

In other words, as the basis for a state of 'existential insiderness', the conditions for an authentic relationship with place are 'a complete awareness and acceptance of responsibility for your own existence' (Relph, 1976, p. 78). Specifically regarding the attachment aspect, according to Tuan (1977), place is the product of and inextricably linked to experience (p. 201), and experience of a place is through 'all the senses as well as with the active and reflective mind' (p. 18). Moreover, the almost unconscious repeated, routine activities that we conduct in our daily lives contribute to the intimacy of place attachment and a sense of place, although '[a]t the time we are not aware of any drama; we do not know that the seeds of lasting sentiment are being planted' (Tuan, 1977, p. 143). With an emphasis on the everyday and experience-in-place, phenomenological approaches offer a way of incorporating the often-neglected users' view into more complex understandings of the city. However, by focusing on the complexities of power in place, a critical approach to place in a world of social hierarchies points out that phenomenological approaches are blind to diversity and difference in the experience of place, and suggests understanding it as a tool in the creation, maintenance and transformation of relations of domination, oppression and exploitation (Cresswell, 2004, pp. 25-29). Thus, the lived experiences of places reveal resistance, suggesting that 'people are able to resist the construction of expectations about practice through place by using places and their established meanings in subversive ways' (Cresswell, 2004, p. 27). In this context, understanding these entanglements of power requires a thorough grounding in 'the nature of places' and in 'the order of understanding' to correspond to physical, biological, and social domains. This section, as proposed by David Canter (1977) presents a discussion of *place theory* based on its components and a critique of the theory through the interpretive lens of *urban orders* developed by N. J. Habraken (1998).

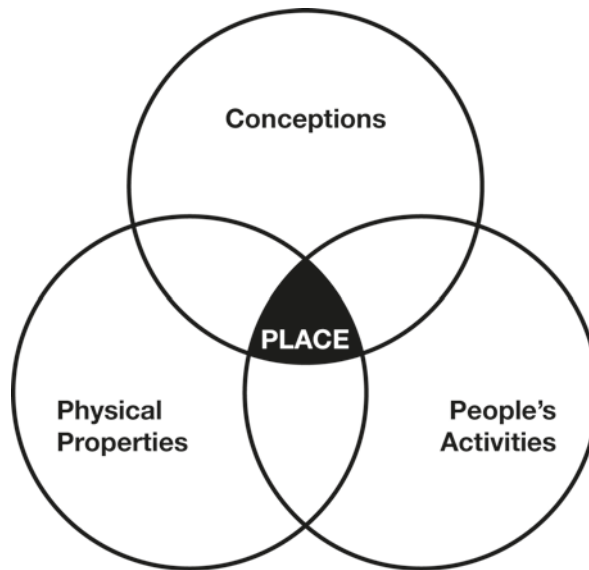


Figure 2.1. Canter's place model

*Source: Canter, 1977*

In his seminal book *Psychology of Place* (1977), Canter's place theory has been applied in many environment-behaviour studies as an underlying theme (see Habraken, 1998; Montgomery, 1998). The author describes a 'place' or an 'environment' as the juxtaposition of three major constituent elements (see Figure 2.1):

(a) the physical properties of the place, as they are evaluated—or better represents—in relation to the activities; (b) the activities which are understood to occur at a location and the reasons for them. Here we would add the consideration of the individuals—actors of these activities—as parts of the same component of activities, and (c) the evaluative conceptualizations, or, better the representations which are held of the occurrence of those activities (Sepe, 2013, p. 10).

In *Environmental Psychology: A Psychosocial Introduction* (1995), by referencing Canter's concept of place, B. Bonnes and G. Secchiaroli affirm that:

places can be readily distinguished from behaviour settings and situations. Unlike behaviour settings a) they are not created by the investigator on the basis of observing behaviour and b) they have distinct evaluative and physical components. Unlike situations, they have a distinct enduring existence as well as being inevitably intertwined with the physical properties of their location (p. 173).

Therefore, place is ‘what takes place ceaselessly, what contributes to history in a specific context through the creation and utilization of a physical setting’ (Pred, 1984, p. 279). Instead of considering a quality of setting or environment, the theory makes available ‘a unit of study that encapsulates a mixture of processes that create out experience of our socio-physical surroundings’ (Canter, 1991, p. 118). This understanding of the process is related to the multiple meanings and values people attach to everyday places. As de Certeau (1984) argues, place is rendered meaningful through the ‘artful practice’ of everyday life.

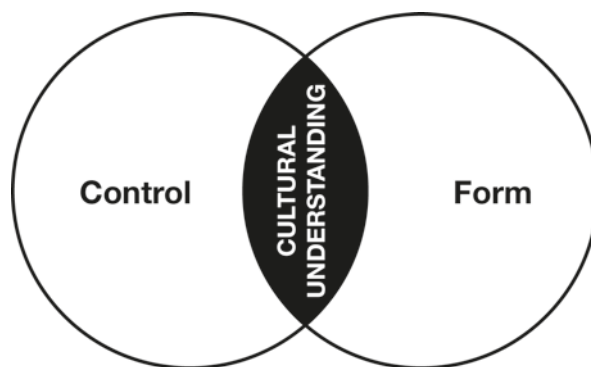


Figure 2.2. Habraken’s concept of everyday environment

*Source: Habraken, 1998*

Similar to Canter’s concept of place outlined above, in *The Structure of the Ordinary* (1998), Habraken realizes a recognition and analysis of everyday environment as the wellspring of urban design, and argues that a fundamental and fascinating aspect of built environment derives from a deep association with intimate and unceasing interaction between the forms and people they inhabit uniquely, which is universally organized by the Orders of ‘Form’, ‘Place’, and ‘Understanding’. In this regard, Habraken (1998) gives each term a very particular meaning:

The Order of Form engages the built environment as part of all physical matter. The Order of Place, encompassing control of space, reflects territorial behavior observable among all living creatures and thereby connects environments to the biological realm. It is only with the third order that we find ourselves within a purely human organization. It is characteristic of people that they reflect and weigh alternatives before they act. People must choose; therefore, they must deliberate and achieve consensus for any act concerning more than one person. The Order of Understanding is primarily social (p.12).

As shown in Figure 2.2, Habraken posits that the interrelationship of the first two orders is the result of the third order of cultural understanding. This interrelationship constructs several themes and variations in different urban patterns, types and systems. These three orders establish a public realm that is heterogeneous, complex and contested. Accordingly, this study attempts to scrutinise more closely everyday places in which ordinary people make use of particular *tactics* in response to changing urban forms and an increasingly programmed urban environment.

#### **2.3.4. Applying User-Centred Focus to Urban Design**

Phenomenological re-conceptions and empirical studies reveal a place-based approach as the best inspiration for guiding ‘messy urbanism’ that would otherwise lead to various malpractices (see Chalana & Hou, 2016). It is also the inevitable foundation for sustainable development and redemption from urban planning, acquiring some fundamental design approaches from everyday life.

First, Husserl’s notion of everyday life inspires the significance of urban planning and design research. The movement ‘back to the things themselves’ reveals the results of direct experience, which throw off scientific biases or prejudices and ignore theoretical modes to return to the life world and acknowledge the everyday perceptions and experiences of users. The human sensory system is the real foundation and source of a varied life of subtle perceptions and ever-transforming areas. Architectural shapes and spatial theories cannot always satisfy the need for rich sensory experiences, leaving inhabitants with growing limitations like the ones that Alexander (1979) identifies in his article *The Timeless Way of Building*, in which he strives to change the current deadlock of traditional theory.

City users are often fooled by fantastic appearances that make it difficult to think clearly or directly perceive things. Moreover, Friedmann (1973) points out that:

[T]he planner works chiefly with processed knowledge abstracted from the world and manipulated according to certain postulates of theory and scientific method; his client works primarily from the personal knowledge he draws directly from experience. Although personal knowledge is much richer in content and in its ability to differentiate among the minutiae of daily life, it is less systematized and orderly than processed knowledge. It is also less capable of being generalized and, therefore, is



*applicable* only to situations where the environment has not been subject to substantial change (pp. 172-173).

Habermas (1981) suggests that rationality does not exist in logical inference without life experiences, but rather grows from the communicative actions of daily life. Thus, to evade the deficiencies of rational design, the everyday interactions of builders, patrons, and users must be made a focus. Indeed, it is necessary to accomplish the communicative consonance required to attain a neutral equilibrium arising in city users' everyday practices that is continually altered by the interactions between policymakers, professionals and users (Siu, 2001; Thackara, 1988). In *Design Resource Book for Small Communities* (1988) and *Community Participation Methods in Design and Planning* (2000), Henry Sanoff suggests dialogue between professionals and those who will use their work — city users:

The professional's job is no longer to produce finished and unchangeable solutions, but to develop solutions from a continuous dialogue with those who will use his or her work. The energy and imagination of the professional are directed to raising the citizens' level of awareness in the discussion. The solution will come out of the exchanges between two; the professional states opinions, provides technical information, and discusses consequences of various alternatives, just as citizens state their opinions and contribute their expertise (p. 12).

As Lefebvre mentions in *Critique of Everyday Life* (1991a), the 'everyday and the everydayness' of the modern life world create a fragmented state and process dominated by numerous consumption systems; that is, a substitute for diverse systems that constitutes a stratified heteroid reality. Large numbers of intangible systems ubiquitously penetrate the life world and gradually control everyday life (Elden & Lebas, 2003). Lefebvre also thinks that a poetic language revolution could deter the dissimulation to which broken abstract symbols lead. Although it is quite difficult and impractical to use poetic language in real life, it does narrate and inspire the expression of variety in the use of space and the organisation of territory. Scientific technologic knowledge is just one aspect of a broad knowledge system that encompasses cultures, histories, stories and experiences. In this system, the knowledge of separate individuals is paramount (Hayek, 1960). The cognitive styles of everyday life are derived from native experiences and inherent, culturally intuitive knowledge via communication, songs, stories and visual elements, rather than the merging of diverse design resources such as censuses, simulations and models (Sandercock, 1998).

Lefebvre (1984) notes that everyday life is ever-changing and shaped by social histories and ethnic differences that constitute social diversity and a varied life world. Dynamic and microcosmic tactics are needed to draw realistic variety from the view of individual temporary status. No singular theory can include all of the aspects of everyday life. When government, administrators and planners initiate our cities, they do so through physical forms and control that are put in the built environment to change spaces from their natural state to a dominated and graded state. However, seeing place as process offers a way of reframing urban dwellers as agents, acting within the orderly structures, but also embodying the possibility of conflict and negotiation to these structures through everyday interactions. When the government's executive policies and management do not satisfy the people's demands, people who have a longstanding association with a particular place experience demonstrate self-adjusting and self-organising characteristics. Everyday place cannot be dismembered and colonised by professionally advanced approaches or assimilated through the process of modernisation. Getting back to urban design, it allows a view of cities as 'human settlements that are full of challenging experiences' (Sennett, 1970, p. 138). Discussing about dialogue, Friedmann (1973) suggests that we should seriously rethink the role of designers, and 'accept conflict as an inevitable part of dialogue and not its termination' (p. 182). Thus, urban design methods gradually generate a focal point on everyday place that serves as a reasonable boundary of communication and participation—a dynamic edge that balances the life world. With the introduction of the users in the decision-making process, Sanoff (1992) states that:

It does not mean that their creativity has been obliterated. Designers need to face the problem of balance between, not only what administration wishes, and what individual user groups desire, but also what seems best in terms of allocation of limited community resources (p. 56).

In this context, based on ecological psychology theories, a user-centred perspective is proposed to focus on city users (ordinary people) of the environment, especially in terms of everyday practices. Observing human behaviour provides an effective way of revealing users' needs and preferences under the current rapidly changing urban environment (Michelson, 1975). As Studer (1969) comments:

The most commonly accepted unit for design purposes is 'human need'. Such a concept has relevance perhaps, what it lacks is empirical substance. That is, we cannot observe need, but we can only infer its existence through observation of its

empirical counterpart, behaviour...Human behavior to be more correct unit of analysis, it has characteristics, which are relevant, empirically verifiable and operationally definable.

In extending the field of environmental design, Perin (1970) advocates the concept of behaviour circuits, implying 'an anthropological ergonomics, tracking people's behavior through the fulfillment of their everyday purposes at the scale of the room, the house, the block, the neighborhood, the city, to learn what resources—physical and human—are needed to support, facilitate or enable them' (p. 78).

Thus, following the theories applied to understand city users' everyday practices, the best and most practical option is to study the interrelationships between the physical attributes of the street and the activities and concepts of users by observing and listening to them. The user-centred approach framed in this chapter provides two valuable implications for this study. One emphasis is on the framework using critical social geographic conceptions of 'place' that enables one to contribute to the objective of highlighting gaps in urban theory. The second emphasis is methodological towards application of specific approaches to measure 'the order of understanding' in the built environment.

#### **2.4. Void in Research**

Many scholars have relied heavily on empirical studies over the last fifty years. The impact of empirically-based research becomes evident with the passage of time, allowing for the application and dissemination of findings. Regarding chronology, context, key actors, and crucial decision points, the empirical studies provide 'road maps' to guide the present study for searching major themes of potential significance.

Two types of threads are revealed as follows: 1), the translation of knowledge; and 2), the stimulation of new research. Bent Flyvbjerg (1998), Elijah Anderson (1999), Brent Flyvbjerg, Nils Bruzelius, and Wernter Rothengatter (2003), and Lynne Sagalyn (2003) have fruitfully presented the behaviours and actions of key actors in urban planning activities, while Martin Meyerson (1963), Jonathan Barnett (1974), Francis Tibbalds (1992), Jerold Kayden (2000), Timothy Beatley (2000), and Alexander Garvin (2002) provide exemplars for improving physical environments. Urban design and planning literature emphasises the role of and need for public space for the right to the city and human experience of the public realm. There is a growing awareness that while modern

urban societies regular many of space functions (i.e., political, religious, commercial, civic and social functions) in the privatisation and parochialisation of the city (Banerjee, 2001; Brill, 1989, 1990; Chidister, 1989), urban public open spaces are required for the context of everyday spaces within ordinary places. Examples of the great influence of empirical studies are realised in various fields related to urban studies, contending that it is the streets, squares, plazas, promenades, and other urban open spaces that is instrumental to situate public life, which is an essential counterpart to our perceived, private, conceived spaces (Appleyard, 1981; Banerjee & Southworth, 1990; Carr *et al.*, 1992; Cooper-Marcus & Francis, 1998; Crowhurst-Lennard & Lennard, 1987, 1995; Gehl, 1987; Jacobs, 1961; Lynch, 1981; Madanipour, 1996; Massengale & Dover, 2013; Oldenburg, 1981; Soja, 1996; Sorkin, 1992; Whyte, 1980; Vernez-Moudon, 1991; Zukin, 1996).

Given a temporal and spatial sensitivity to variations of public space, there has been a remarkable belief that there are differences in the way public space is conceived of and operates in various places, which defy the dominant logic of the contemporary rearrangement of public space, and point to its countercurrents (Bourdieu, 1977; Fainstein, 2010; Habermas, 1989; Hall, 1966; Harvey, 2012; Healey, 2010; Holston, 2008; Lofland, 1998; Massey & Jess, 1995; Robinson, 2006; Roy & Al Sayyad, 2004; Sennett, 1970; Shields, 1991; Trotzky, 1973). The urban habit of living with diversity can condition a habit of solidarity with others, which can make societies better: ‘the good city might be thought of as the challenge to fashion a progressive politics of well-being and emancipation out of multiplicity and difference and from the particularities of the urban experience’ (Amin, 2006, p. 1012). Thus, as evident from Table 2.1, interest in the politics of public space has been addressed through two main fields of study: public space and the urban situation and variations on the public and public realm.

By the 1990s, the widely proclaimed end of public space once again illuminated the beginning of an extended debate on the topic of public space itself. Mike Davis (1992) warned that Los Angeles was ‘inexorably...mov[ing] to extinguish its last real public spaces, with all of their democratic intoxications, risks, and undeodorized odors’ (p. 180). In the unambiguously entitled edited volume *Variations on a Theme Park: The New American City and the End of Public Space* (1992), Michael Sorkin described how, along with non-place urban sprawls, the new urbanity was programmatically recreating the bare minimum of urban form devoid of the formal and social mix that had once made cities lively and political. This transformation, involving the spread and disruption of urban space, has given rise to a whole body of critical literature. As Joel Garreau (1991) points

out, these have been dubbed 'edge cities'. They have all the functions of a city, but they have tended to develop the infrastructure of transportation, associated with growing demands for mobility. Roads have been the primary tool of urban expansion and the principal agent of urban transformation. Looking at outlying urban zones, we can indeed see an upheaval in the classic urban form with the creation of new kinds of urban elements and new constructions, in which the road plays a central role in reducing the social mixing of crowds that happens in zoning and the reduction of the street for movement. Social segregation works against mixing, often aided by urban design, which operates on conscious policies of reducing encounters with difference (Ellin, 2001; Smithson, 2010).

The modern city has undergone radical changes in its physical form, not only in its vast territorial expansion, but also through internal transformations. Traditional public space was being co-opted in the process of urban change, perhaps most visibly in the character of economic process (Whitehand, 1992). It often goes unsaid that the modern city means as a site of capitalist economy. Consumption and commerce have been fundamental to the modern city (Miles & Paddison, 1998), which certainly makes it worth revisiting the role of commercialisation and privatisation in the transformation of public space bringing its decline (Banerjee, 2001). As Zukin (1998) points out, 'consumption is understood to be both the means and a motor of urban social change' (p. 835). According to a business strategy in both consumption and urban renewal, public space needs to be secured for the turnover of investment, and sorts the public as potential consumers who want to feel safe and neat, not forced to face the grim reality of a polarising city. Contemporary discussions of safety go further; Samara (2010) claims that safety is translated into policy as the securitisation of public spaces, becoming a central element of urban regeneration. At the cost of excluding undesired users, safety can close public access, and herald increasing private influence for designing business. The commercialisation of public space goes hand in hand with its privatisation.

Although privatisation does not mean manner of purely private control, the triad of public access, public ownership and private management has become the new recipe and norm for public space regeneration closely followed by the model of privately owned public space (Nemeth, 2009; Zukin, 2010). This condition is most prominently captured in the private enterprise (e.g., shopping malls, plazas, paseos, gallerias and so forth). Even though many European and US cities plazas or shopping malls may well function as the cores of new towns, it is not only that their main function is commercial and their clientele is filtered by private security guards, but also their political potential is different

from those of public spaces (Loukaitou-Sederis & Banerjee, 1993; Lowe, 2000; Staeheli & Mitchell, 2006). Additionally, technology and design such as the installation of closed-circuit television (CCTV) (Brown, 1995) and the design of ‘bump-proof benches’ (Davis, 1992) facilitate the increased surveillance and control of public space (Loukaitou-Sederis & Banerjee, 1998). As Sorkin (1992) writes, comprehensive commercial centres and theme parks strip ‘troubled urbanity of its sting, of the presence of the poor, of crime, of dirt, of work’ (p. xv). The modern city can turn people outward, however, ‘in the presence of difference people have at least the possibility to step outside themselves’ (Sennett, 1990, p. 123).

According to sociologists such as Henri Lefebvre, Michel de Certeau, and Michel Maffesoli, the ‘sociology of everyday life’ has been constantly advocated in the critical discourse about modernity (Buchli, 2000; Debord, 2000; Prakash & Kruse, 2008; Vaneigem, 1994). This concept of the everyday is primarily gripped with practices for consideration under banners such as ‘insurgent’, ‘do-it-yourself’, ‘guerrilla’, ‘everyday’, ‘participatory’, ‘grassroots’, and/or ‘messy’ urbanism (Borasi & Zardini, 2008; Burnham, 2010; Chalana & Hou, 2016; Chase, Crawford & Kaliski, 2008; Haydn & Temel, 2006; Hou, 2010; Zeiger, 2011), calling for the necessary attention to ordinary and spontaneous practices of appropriation as the essential engine of urban transformation, which paradoxically manifest both in the support and creative energies revitalising neighbourhoods in the Northern hemisphere, and in the dramatic growth of ‘urban informality’ responding to the overcrowding of the metropolises of the South (Davis, 2006). In the era of globalisation, the labor market manifests spatially as a ‘dual’ or ‘quartered’ (see e.g., Garrido, 2013; Karaman & Islam, 2012), taking the form of an organised center occupied by global capitalist order and disorderly peripheries fragmented by the spatial imprint of the ordinary (Mollenkopf & Castells, 1991; Sassen, 2006). Echoing the many characterisations identified by the critical discourse on cities qualified with terms as partitioned, quartered, layered (Marcuse, 2002), splintered, divided (Graham & Marvin, 2001), binary (Sibley, 2001), edge (Garreau, 1991), fluid (Dovey, 2005), mongrel (Sandercock, 2003), as pointed out by Marcuse and Van Kempen (2000, p. 219), globalisation elucidates the current direction of spatial transformation — towards greater ‘inequality and walling’. In this regard, Tripodi (2011) favors the term ‘segmented’, insofar as cities today seem not only partitioned but ‘plural’ — ‘a fragmented, polyphonic, contradictory and conflictive one’ (p. xv).

With the effects of globalisation being complex and fundamental empirical studies involving the social polarisation, conflict and negotiation, ethnicisation and segregation are critical to comprehend how the theoretical framework can be objectively applied to probe the ‘order of understanding’ from a focus on the conditions of the everyday life of ‘ordinary’ people. Much of the research has focused on plazas (Crawford, 1995; Low, 2000; Yeoh & Huang, 1998), streets or sidewalks (Drummond, 2000; Elsheshtawy, 2008, 2013; Kim, 2015; Loukaitou-Sederis & Banerjee, 2009; Schindler, 2014; Thomas, 2002; Yasmeen, 1996), informal settlements (Auyero, 1999; Dovey & King, 2011; Lombard, 2014; Sletto & Palmer, 2016), communities and residential spaces (see e.g., Chang, 2000; Eubank-Ahrens, 1991; Sullivan, Kuo & DePooter, 2004), to identify what made some urban environments vital places and others dead places. Indeed, these studies help to highlight the importance of the everyday life of people and demonstrate the meaning and value of public spaces to city users. For instance, Low (2000) provides extensive documentation to emphasise the value of user perception and naturalistic observation in noting people’s activities and behaviours in places. Identification of opportunities for small urban spaces in city centres is pragmatic and sensitive to how spaces are used in people’s daily life. Regarding strengths of the studies, scholars employ empirically-based research to help understanding the users’ feelings, perceptions, and attitudes towards the contested environments that were inspiring the present study.

Table 2.1. Examples of empirically-based study arranged chronologically and by themes

<b>A study of the politics of public space</b>	
<i>Worldwide</i>	
<b><i>Public space and the urban condition</i></b>	<b><i>Variations on the public and public realm</i></b>
Garreau (1991), <i>Edge city: Life on the new frontier</i>	Eubank-Ahrens (1991), <i>A closer look at the users of Woonerven</i>
Mollenkopf & Castells (1991), <i>The dual city: Restructuring New York</i>	Crawford (1995), <i>Contesting the public realm: Struggles over public space in Los Angeles</i>
Sorkin (1992), <i>Variations on a theme park: The new American city and the end of public space</i>	Yasmeen (1996), <i>Plastic-bag housewives and postmodern restaurants?: Public and private in Bangkok’s foodscape</i>
Loukaitou-Sederis & Banerjee (1993), <i>The negotiated plaza: Design and development of corporate open space in downtown Los Angeles and San Francisco</i>	Yeoh & Huang (1998), <i>Negotiating public space: Strategies and styles of migrant female domestic workers in Singapore</i>
Loukaitou-Sederis & Banerjee (1998), <i>Urban design downtown: Poetics and politics of form</i>	Auyero (1999), <i>‘This is a lot like the Bronx, isn’t it?’: Lived experiences of marginality in an Argentine slum</i>
Marcuse & Van Kempen (2000), <i>Globalizing cities: A new spatial order?</i>	Chang (2000), <i>Singapore’s Little India: A tourist attraction as a contested landscape</i>
Ellin (2001), <i>Thresholds of fear: Embracing the urban shadow</i>	Drummond (2000), <i>Street Scenes: Practices of public and private space in urban Vietnam</i>

Graham & Marvin (2001), <i>Splintering urbanism</i>	Low (2000), <i>On the plaza: The politics of public space and culture</i>
Sibley (2001), <i>The binary city</i>	Thomas (2002), <i>Out of control: Emergent cultural landscapes and political change in urban Vietnam</i>
Marcuse (2002), <i>The layered city</i>	Sullivan, Kuo & DePooter (2004), <i>The fruit of urban nature: Vital neighborhood spaces</i>
Sandercock (2003), <i>Cosmopolis II: Mongrel cities of the 21st century</i>	Davis (2006), <i>Planet of slums</i>
Dovey (2005), <i>Fluid city: Transforming Melbourne's urban waterfront</i>	Jimenez-Dominguez (2007), <i>Urban appropriation and loose spaces in the Guadalajara cityscape</i>
Staeheli & Mitchell (2006), <i>USA's destiny? Regulating space and creating community in American shopping malls</i>	Elsheshtawy (2008), <i>Transitory sites: Mapping Dubai's 'forgotten' urban spaces</i>
Nemeth (2009), <i>Defining a public: The management of privately owned public space</i>	Loukaitou-Sederis & Banerjee (2009), <i>Sidewalks: Conflict and negotiation over public space</i>
Samara (2010), <i>Policing development: Urban renewal as neo-liberal security strategy</i>	Dovey & King (2011), <i>Forms of informality: Morphology and visibility of informal settlements</i>
Smithsimon (2010), <i>Inside the empire: Ethnography of a global citadel in New York</i>	Kim (2012), <i>The mixed-use sidewalk</i>
Zukin (2010), <i>Naked city: The death and life on authentic urban places</i>	Elsheshtawy (2013), <i>Where the sidewalk ends: Informal street corner encounters in Dubai</i>
Tripodi (2011), <i>Everyday life in the segmented city: An introduction</i>	Lombard (2014), <i>Constructing ordinary places: Place-making in urban informal settlements in Mexico</i>
Karaman & Islam (2012), <i>On the dual nature of intra-urban borders: The case of a Romani neighborhood in Istanbul</i>	Schindler (2014), <i>Producing and contesting the formal/informal divide: Regulating street hawking in Delhi, India</i>
Garrido (2013), <i>The ideology of the dual city: The modernist ethic in the corporate development of Makati City, Metro Manila</i>	Sletto & Palmer (2016), <i>The liminality of open space and rhythms of the everyday in Jallah Town, Monrovia, Liberia</i>
<b>Hong Kong</b>	
<b><i>Public space and the urban condition</i></b>	<b><i>Variations on the public and public realm</i></b>
Wong (1995), <i>Provision of district and local open space in urban area: A case study of Hunghom</i>	Cuthbert (1995), <i>The right to the city: Surveillance, private interest and the public domain in Hong Kong</i>
Abbas (1997), <i>Hong Kong: Culture and politics of disappearance</i>	Constable (1997), <i>Maid to order in Hong Kong: Stories of Filipina workers</i>
Adams & Hastings (2001), <i>Urban renewal in Hong Kong: Transition from development corporation to renewal authority</i>	Cuthbert & McKinnell (1997), <i>Ambiguous space, ambiguous rights: Corporate power and social control in Hong Kong</i>
Kinoshita (2001), <i>The street market as an urban facility in Hong Kong</i>	Kwok (1998), <i>The production of space in Hong Kong</i>
Moir (2002), <i>The commercialisation of open space and street life in Central District</i>	Law (2002), <i>Defying disappearance: Cosmopolitan public spaces in Hong Kong</i>
Ng (2002), <i>Property-led urban renewal in</i>	Siu (2003), <i>Users' creative responses and</i>



<i>Hong Kong: Any place for the community?</i>	<i>designers' roles</i>
Huang (2004), <i>Walking between slums and skyscrapers: Illusions of open space in Hong Kong, Tokyo, and Shanghai</i>	Siu (2007), <i>Guerrilla wars in everyday public spaces: Reflections and inspirations for designers</i>
Tso, Germano & Ho (2006), <i>Urban renewal of Wan Chai: A collision of people and policy</i>	Constable (2009), <i>Migrant workers and the many states of protest in Hong Kong</i>
Tang & Wong (2008), <i>A longitudinal study of open space zoning and development in Hong Kong</i>	O'Connor (2011), <i>Everyday hybridity and Hong Kong's Muslim youth</i>
Ng <i>et al.</i> (2010), <i>Spatial practice, conceived space and lived space: Hong Kong's 'Piers saga' through the Lefebvrian lens</i>	Ku (2012), <i>Remaking places and fashioning an opposition discourse: Struggle over the Star Ferry pier and the Queen's pier in Hong Kong</i>
Kwok (2011), <i>Dong ya cheng shi kong jian sheng chan: Tan suo Dongjing, Shanghai, Xianggang de cheng shi wen hua</i> (Chinese ed.)	Leung (2012), <i>Marginalization of space and the public realm: Achieving sustainable development through the 'production of space'</i>
Chan (2014), <i>Review on planning and design of public open space for ageing population in Hong Kong</i>	Siu (2013), <i>Regulation and reception of public space in Hong Kong</i>
Ley & Teo (2014), <i>Gentrification in Hong Kong? Epistemology vs. ontology</i>	Tam (2016), <i>Little Manila: The other Central of Hong Kong</i>

Within the literature about Hong Kong, Ackbar Abbas (1997) draw on 'culture and the politics of disappearance' to look at Hong Kong's rapid change and modernisation. With an emphasis on the processes of socio-spatial restructuring, much of what has been revealed has been concerned with the problems associated with the renewal of obsolete urban areas (Adams & Hastings, 2001; Ley & Teo, 2014; Ng, 2002; Tso, Germano & Ho, 2006), the (re)development of public open space (Chan, 2014; Huang, 2004; Kinoshita, 2001; Moir, 2002; Ng *et al.* 2010; Tang & Wong, 2008, Wong, 1995). However, there are only a handful of studies that adopt a critical social geographic perspective to pursue a range of questions above related to the field, including talking about the death of public space in relation to those physical artefacts and the resulting discrete spatial configurations as an explanation for the predicament of 'dual city', in Kwok's (2011) phrase. Following Calhoun's (1992) examination of the public from a gender, class and racial perspective smashing the idea of a unitary public, the proclamation of the end of Hong Kong's public space prompted debates about the meaning of the public realm: its variations by place and culture (Constable, 1997, 2009; Cuthbert, 1995, 1997; Ku, 2012; Kwok, 1998; Law, 2002; Leung, 2012; O'Connor, 2011; Siu, 2003, 2007, 2013; Tam, 2016). These studies have become empirical records of special occasions and locations (i.e., street markets, corporate open spaces, ethnoscapas, etc.) based on the personal interests of researchers. Overall, only limited research has questioned the streetscape and the reconstruction of public space where attitude towards diversity and difference rules

bearing on the right to the city and idea of the public realm. Scholars suggest that if ‘...we do right by our streets we can in large measure do right by the city as a whole—and, therefore and most importantly, by its inhabitants’ (Jacobs, 1993, p. 314). As pointed out by Kohn (2004), public streets and sidewalks are the only remaining sites of public expression and ‘unscripted political activity’, and their main function is making poverty and inequality visible (p. 3).

Depending on the issues under consideration, most studies have been conducted at a macro-scale and engaged ‘geographic literature’ and ‘personal, intuitive and aesthetic criteria.’ Only a few studies from the social sciences field have dealt with perceptual characteristics of spaces, and these studies have ignored the physical environment (Rapoport, 1990, p. 254). Many urban research scholars realise that ‘it remains difficult to isolate physical features from social and economic activities that bring value to our experiences’ (Jacobs, 1993, p. 270). Given that streets as primary urban public space are peculiar to cities, the history of the street has largely encouraged studies of the changes in how streets are defined (Celik, Favro, & Ingersoll, 1996; Fyfe, 1998). When considering the transformation of the forms of the city—age I (the age of the traditional closed city) and age II (the age of the modern open city) (Portamparc, 1997, as cited in Levy, 1999), there is a conflict between traditions and the search of a modern development, specifically in the context of the ‘fast world’ globalisation and of ordinary response to its consequences, as illustrated by the ‘slow city movement’ (Knox, 2005). Few studies have considered the hierarchical view of the city structure according to a set of fundamental physical elements (i.e., buildings, plots, and blocks), and the street as a behaviour setting for people’s everyday interactions and places. Especially as the urban area of Hong Kong has the highest population density and crowded environment in the world, ‘streets and their sidewalks, the main public spaces of the city, are its most vital organs’ (Jacobs, 1961, p. 29). There is therefore a need and an opportunity to study the politics of public space from the perspective of everyday street life by focusing on the interrelationship between physical characteristics of the urban fabric, daily activities and meanings.

This thesis fills a gap in the literature by exploring the meaning and form of public space embedded in the urban condition—its historical transformation but also its dynamics by place-making, in order to open up the potential for constructing a overview of the production of public space in Hong Kong. Within the fields of urban studies, planning and development, geography, and environmental studies, this study brings together phenomena such as the relationship of the modern urban fabric and the ‘dynamism of

lifeworld’ using critical social geographic conceptions of ‘place’. In addition, the empirically-based studies discussed here serve as not only examples of applying the theoretical constructs, but also precedents for selecting suitable research design, and specific research methods and strategies. As such, they are helpful in developing a methodology for the present research around three themes: 1) measuring the physical properties, 2) perceiving daily activities, 3) understanding place meanings. For example, Dovey, Woodcock & Wood’s (2009) focus falls mainly on the physical characteristics of the urban fabric by showing a series of layered maps: street network, zoning, building footprints, entry types, heights and graffiti. To perceive daily activities, behavioural mapping approach is useful to visualise activities taking place in a setting within a set time interval (Elsheshtawy, 2013; Kim, 2012). Following Siu (2001), it is possible to depict the idea of place meaning as symbolic of individual or collective experience in terms of longitudinal observations and direct interviews. All the studies have, however, concentrated only on one type of interrelationship. The complexity of the urban environment suggests that a multidimensional approach addressing a range of possible interrelationships may be needed to conduct a comprehensive study of the public realm.

## **2.5. Summary**

Through the discussion of the terms—‘everyday practice’, ‘public living environment’, ‘contesting the order’, and ‘ever-transforming’, as a basis for inquiry, the current chapter primarily presents a theoretical framework and a user-centred focus based in the field of environment and behaviour. Through the lens of everyday urbanism, the essential concept is that behaviour is a function of the person and environment (Lewin, 1951). Accordingly, three theories are recognised in the fields of environmental and ecological psychology.

- ∞ Behaviour setting theory helps to examine human behaviour in relation to its physical environment.
- ∞ Environmental affordance theory suggests measuring the affordances of physical properties in sustaining activities and experiences.
- ∞ Place theory proposes an understanding of the public realm in terms of the attitudes that people attach to everyday places.

The synthesis of these three theories essentially forms the basis of behaviour research related to urban planning and environmental design. Drawing on the idea of 'place', a user-centred perspective is generated to reveal the underlying logic of everyday life and understand the needs and hopes of city users in achieving a better life and living environment.

As this study focuses on the street as a behaviour setting, a theoretical discussion of its terms should clarify its contents related to everyday life (practice) and urban planning, public living environments and quality of life, the everyday struggle over rights and urban transformation. This study tends to focus on these terms from interdisciplinary and integrative perspectives.

When reviewing the empirical studies of the past half-century, a research void is discovered from an everyday life perspective and the politics of public space using the death of public space as a counterpoint, in particular as relates to the problem of the modern urban fabric, capturing the idea of 'place as process'. As suggested by critical geographic approaches, examining for evidence of how everyday public spaces are portrayed as places in ordinary discourses and conducting comparisons across different physical environment settings are good ways of enhancing the significance of the study and widening its application to urban planning and design.

## CHAPTER 3

### URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING IN HONG KONG

#### 3.1. Preamble

The first part of this chapter traces Hong Kong's history of development from the 1840s until today. It explores how land reclamation has emerged as the state's modernisation and economic development programme and how it has played a dominant role in the political economy of the city.

The second part of the chapter constitutes a critical review of the reclamation-based development strategy and the different strands of the associated debate. This review encompasses the desirability of further reclamation practices from the government's viewpoint and emphasises public concern and debate over potential changes in the inner city. It focuses on the arguments surrounding the reclamation programmes in Hong Kong's central business district (CBD) and the social implications of Hong Kong's formation as a world city.

The third part of the chapter looks at the question of urban syntax in modernist city planning. The objective is to highlight an effectiveness-led principle in the rational planning of Hong Kong. Through highlighting the importance of modernist planning in the present-day development of Hong Kong, largely in response to problems of rapid industrialisation, overcrowding, and chaotic and poor infrastructure, this part addresses the systematic order of street syntax under the modernist ideology.

Finally, the last part of the chapter demonstrates the disappearance of public street spaces by considering the principle of 'openness' and calls the right to the street into question.

### **3.2. Development Strategy and Political Economy of Hong Kong**

Hong Kong's urban development and economic boom are inextricably related to its unique mode of production of urban space, emphasised particularly in terms of economic-oriented land usage. The decisions to enforce urban renewal and reclaim more land, which hasten the restructuring of Hong Kong's economic structure, are explicitly associated with the vision of building Hong Kong as Asia's world city of the future.

#### **3.2.1. Development Process**

##### *Before the 1950s: City development and early reclamation*

Looking at Hong Kong in the Song Dynasty (907-1279 AD), most people initially inhabited boats and walled cities (Ho, 1994). After the birth of Hong Kong as a British Colony in the early 1840s, Sheung Wan, Central and Wan Chai were the first areas developed to accommodate 5,650 people, and Central District became the economic and political heart of the city. In 1841, the first land auction and zoning policy enacted for sales and Crown use, respectively, occurred in those areas to dictate control rights over land usage. Later, Sai Ying Pun, Wan Chai and the land east of Spring Gardens were developed to meet a rising population, and the government further extended the land area near Wan Chai (between Morrison Hill and East Point) and Sheung Wan to settle new immigrants flooding over from mainland China. By the early 1880s, a series of reclamations stretching eastward and westward from Central were carried out west of Shek Tong Tsui and Causeway Bay as the population increased to about 130,000. As Hong Kong prospered, developable land became increasingly scarce in Central (see Siu, 2001). The government provided more reclaimed land to indicate the importance of areas for business and clearly delimited the boundaries of Victoria in the early 1900s. Overcrowding quickly became a problem, and in 1921 a large-scale reclamation project was implemented in Wan Chai to address the housing shortage. During the 1930s, reclamations amounting to about 500 hectares of land were extended to accommodate the booming urban growth and a population of 1.8 million. Business and accommodation remained the core roles of Sheung Wan, Central and Wan Chai until well after the Second World War. At that time, demands and expectations of local residents were the key determinants of development and planning in those areas, despite the government enacting land auctions and policies to dictate land usage.

### *1950s-1970s: Urban decentralisation and the standard of living*

The foundations of today's Hong Kong were drawn up in 1948. Patrick Abercrombie was commissioned to propose various physical planning schemes to the city of tomorrow, such as the provision of a cross-harbour tunnel, reclamations, railway relocations, the creation of industrial and residential zones and the eventual formation of new towns in the rural New Territories and urban fringe (BLD, 1988, p. 12).

In the 1950s, land demands for industry and housing aroused coordinated expansion of urban areas along the north of Hong Kong Island. Although urban development continued to lag behind the requirements of the population growth, most of the people continued to live in either squatter tenements or overcrowded dwellings. The government began to estimate the possibilities of a new town programme in the mid-1950s (BLD, 1988, p. 12), a decentralisation strategy later recommended by the Colony Outline Plan. Before long, the Ten-Year Housing Programme was announced to provide 'permanent self-contained accommodation, in a reasonable environment' for 1.8 million people (Castells, Goh, & Kwok, 1990, p. 18). According to the decentralisation strategy, following a review of additional land requirements for the new housing programme, development started to spread to New Territories, where river estuaries and shallow waters were suitable for reclamation. From the early 1970s, the new town programme was repeated consistently to develop a satellite town that provided more sites for the increasing population and industrial development. According to the New Territories Development founded in 1973, more than 3,000 hectares of reclaimed land was allocated to various new towns simultaneously and the provision of spatial practice was increased. However, conflict arose as a result of the quality of life of the new town residents and the repetitive construction of high-rise communities. A review of the first generation of city planning after the Second World War based on a 'problem-solving-oriented' strategy revealed that standard designs and facilities involving repetition were characteristic of those areas, not only to provide basic accommodation for the increasing population but also to create more 'standard' everyday spaces for people living in the public realms. Hence, land usage planning gradually became involved in urban policies that concentrated on the basic standard of living and made the additional restriction of everyday space the main criterion for good city management (McGee, 1973).

### *1980s onwards: Re-centralisation and policy space*

When Hong Kong proposed carrying out the new town programme, its economy had undergone restructuring from a post-industrial centre into a major business and financial

centre that followed physical urban formation patterns and infrastructure at each stage (Taylor & Kwok, 1989). The transformation within the economic sphere, along with the deterioration in older districts, development without proper planning, lack of infrastructural facilities, shortage of open space, community facilities and changes in social aspirations and living standards, aimed to reorient the land usage to correspond with a post-industrial economy (TPO, 1988). In 1984, the Hong Kong government drew up the Territorial Development Strategy to provide a long-term planning vision, according to which planning activities and new development (reclamation) and redevelopment (renewal) approaches would be re-centralised in the *metro area*, and to respond to the change of focus in the urban development plan known as the ‘Metroplan’ in 1988 (PELB, 1989, p. 12). In accordance with its vision, the government came up with some ‘basic principles’ that stemmed from ‘feedback from public consultation and further technical studies’ and then finalised a ‘planning framework’ (PD, 1991, p. 12). In reality, the public consultation was mainly established via a mode of partnership formed by the government and private sector, which was facilitated by the Land Development Corporation (LDC) and accepted in principle by the Executive Council. Its establishment was meant to encourage private-sector participation in the selection of suitable areas for new development and redevelopment to improve the ‘standard of housing and environment’ in Hong Kong (Lai, 1992, p. 2). Although a series of questions and arguments have emerged since the late 1980s, the LDC’s land ordinance policies gave the corporation and its subsidiaries the authority to assume land and properties (Chiu & Lau, 1991), and urban redevelopment tended to cope with urban decay by adopting a ‘clear and rebuild’ approach to improve the living and working conditions of the area (Lai, 1992). In other words, ‘this clear and rebuild approach arising from the redevelopment process would affect the urban built form of a city’ and destroy the everyday practices of ordinary people in the existing urban areas (Tang, 1997, p. 2).

### **3.2.2. Development of a Land-hungry City**

From its beginnings as a ‘barren island with hardly a house upon it’ (Sayer, 1980, p. 80), Hong Kong has been labelled a ‘land-hungry’ place due to its limited land resources. Over the past few decades, ideas about the historical transformation of Hong Kong into a modern metropolis have followed the idea that ‘the planning mechanism started from informal and ad hoc development without any official supervision in the 1950s (moving) to an organised hierarchy of public space systems under the management of official recreational agencies’ (Lau, 1995, p. 68). With the establishment of professional



government departments and the production of technical studies and reports, the government has carried out massive reclamation projects, which have generally been spread around the business or commercial areas (see Figure 3.1) and considered as necessary actions to accommodate the growing population and sustain the expanding economy. According to Tilman Spengler (1993), 'space explains everything in Hong Kong. Power and wealth are based on space; the stronger the social pressure, the richer and more powerful is the one who controls these properties' (p. 1). In reality, the Hong Kong government, as both an administrator and Hong Kong's biggest landlord, has favoured functional and rational space redevelopments that have relied heavily on land auctions as a major source of revenue. This process has given priority to 'economic space' rather than 'life space' (Ng, 2011). However, it has also been instigated by private sector initiatives that tempt a reciprocal policy response from the government and are aimed at transforming the living conditions, physical patterns, infrastructures and institutions in Hong Kong into forms that match with the private sector's urban investments and are better suited for economic restructuring (Taylor & Kwok, 1989). A common demand in this duet between the government and private sector has been the creation of a 'city of vision' with an increasingly forward-looking posture in contrast to the ad hoc and reactive stance towards development that preceded it. When reviewing this current development strategy of greater centralisation, it is easy to notice that 'harbour-based reclamation can best provide the most needed economic space for expanding the hub functions of Hong Kong within Pacific Asia and supporting Hong Kong's status as an international city' (Mahtab-uz-Zaman, Lau, & Mei, 2000, p. 258). Moreover, it not only provides a 'natural' extension of the current urban areas to accommodate expanding urban growth in response to the congested metropolis (PELB, 1995b, p. 26), but also has as much to do with subjectivity as with the political economy, on which a prevalent *leitmotif* towards urban gentrification has resulted in social and land usage changes incorporating eviction, displacement, demolition and redevelopment. As part of this process, the urban fabric of Hong Kong has undergone a metropolitan transformation process characterised by 'destructive creation' and 'creative destruction', in which the market economy has played a dominant role (Castells & Henderson, 1987). Harbour reclamation may also provide 'solution spaces' for the current problem that few people spend time at the waterfront and also help to visualise the current 'Metroplan' concept in which the 'city meets the harbor and the harbor meets the city' (PELB, 1995b, p. 9).

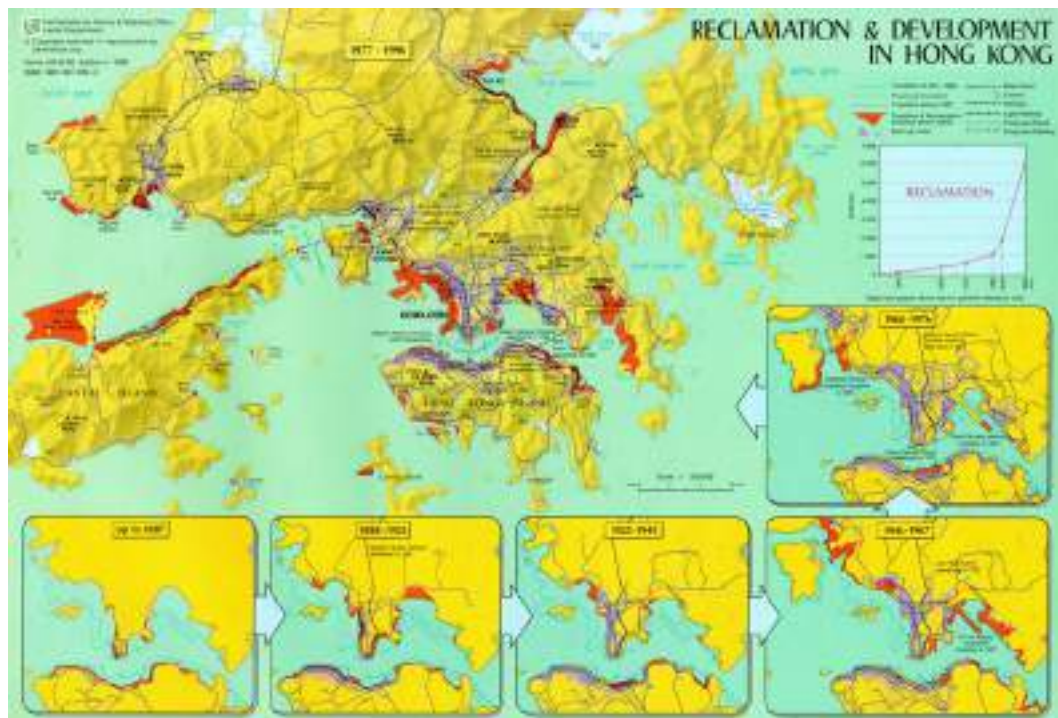


Figure 3.1. Reclamation and development in Hong Kong

*Source: SMO, 1996*

In sum, this so-called ‘land-hungry’ place has overcome topographical defects through a reclamation-based urban development strategy that focuses on maximising government revenue and fulfilling private sector interests to meet the demands of the political economy. This has resulted in not only a radical metropolitan transformation that created an urban sprawl, but also a money machine that buried Hong Kong in cash. The subsequent transformation of social structures and economic activity saw the economy shift its basis from the manufacturing industry to the service industry and the ultimate development of Hong Kong into a world city to sustain its economic growth and maintain economic vitality. The city must continuously comply with constant expansion strategies, as it is intuitively beneficial to do so within the range of the political economy.

### 3.2.3. The Political Economy of Harbour Reclamation

The developmental mode postulates a sequence of stages through which an export manufacturing phase evolves into an information service phase and ultimately into an international business phase, with an enhanced and expanded role at each stage for the business interests in the political economy (Daniels, 1982; Friedmann & Wolff, 1982; Robinson, 1984; Thompson, 1965).

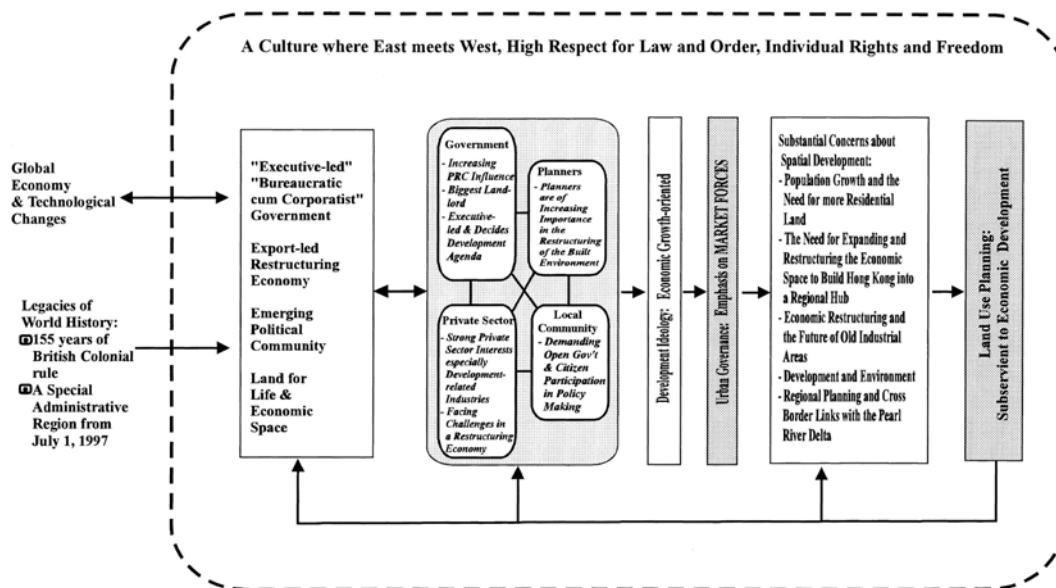


Figure 3.2. Political economy and urban planning of Hong Kong

Source: Ng, 1999, p.12

The socioeconomic and political transition of Hong Kong can be ascribed to its hybrid political system along with its geographical location and natural attributes. Since the inception of the colony, the colonial government adopted a laissez-faire attitude towards urban planning that relied on the leasehold system and permitted market forces to determine land usage. In 1984, the signing of the Sino-British Joint Declaration marked a new step in the running of Hong Kong and a watershed moment in socioeconomic and political development. The Chinese government tried to not only protect Hong Kong's world-class service providers in enabling cross-border deals and partnerships for Chinese enterprises, but also set a good example for the mainland cities (i.e., Shanghai, Guangzhou and Shenzhen) by playing a pivotal role in China's economic reform. As the largest landlord and major developer in the territory, the Hong Kong government adopted a 'minimum intervention and maximum support' economic policy in pushing its development agenda around land sales, property development, infrastructure investment, urban renewal and redevelopment and housing development. This dominance of interest in maintaining economic growth implied a strong control and governance over land supply and development within the bureaucracy. According to Cuthbert (1985), 'the monopoly ownership of all land by the State combined with the principle of sale by auction to the highest bidder set the context for super-profits on land both by the Government and finance spatial generally' (p. 154). It could be said that the government deliberately pursued reclamation to boost the public coffers (Ng & Cook, 1997) and commanded a strategic location for capital accumulation by the private developer,

contributing to a unique mode of ‘managerial-cum-corporatist’ governance. As mentioned by Dovey (2005), land reclamations promote ‘flows of capital and desire’ that resonate with the new urban brand and visual identity. Reflecting concerns about spatial development, the Territorial Development Strategy Review published in 1996 identifies a series of economic motives: restructuring the urban fabric to provide economic space for Hong Kong as a regional hub; rapid population growth and the need to provide more land for residential development, economic restructuring and the future of old industrial areas; a mismatch between residential locations and employment opportunities; environment and development; improvement of cross-border links with the Chinese hinterland; and the need for more Mass Transit Railway (MTR) systems (PD, 1996). In terms of administration, management and planning, reclamation is a much more effective method of maximising profits and satisfying demands for land than reconstruction, redevelopment and renewal and can offer a way to accelerate and consolidate urban competitiveness. Within the past decades, large areas of reclamation have been deemed as ‘take-off’ opportunities that promote city improvement (see also the tendency of reclamation rates in Figure 3.1). Additional land along with the consequent infrastructure needs confronting the CBD (i.e., the Central and Wan Chai Reclamation Project) have been proposed to face the great development pressure under China’s accelerated economic growth and service-oriented economy, provide the space required for Hong Kong’s expanding hub functions and improve the quality of life. However, the regnant manifestation of global capitalism indicates that the main path for development and planning involves the further elimination of depressed industries and the conversion of land usage to meet the new demand for city growth. The action to add more land in the Central Harbour area can be considered closely related to the vision of building Hong Kong as ‘Asia’s world city’ for the twenty-first century (Ng, 2006).

In the on-going process of reclamation, the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong SAR Government first proclaimed the idea of ‘branding’ Hong Kong as ‘Asia’s world city’ in his 1999 Policy Address, in which he stated the following:

Hong Kong possesses many of the key features common to New York and London.... If we can consolidate our existing economic pillars and continue to build on our strengths, we should be able to become world-class. Then, like New York and London, we will play a pivotal role in the global economy, be home to a host of multi-national companies and provide services to the entire region. (para. 44, pp. 10-11)

Hong Kong lags behind other international world-class cities in many respects, in particular human capital and living environment. However, we should not forget our unique advantages. We have the thriving Mainland next to us. We are a melting pot for Chinese and Western cultures. We are a highly liberal and open society. Our institutions are well established. With such a strong foundation, we should be able to build on our strengths and develop modern and knowledge-intensive industries, erect new pillars in our economy and open up new and better prospects. (para. 45, p. 11)

Given Hong Kong's core values in terms of its status as a 'melting pot' for Chinese and Western cultures, the Chief Executive's Commission on Strategic Development recommended that 'Hong Kong needs to promote its unique position as one of the most cosmopolitan and vibrant cities in Asia to a wide range of international audiences. A successful external promotion program can have a significant positive impact on Hong Kong's ability to achieve a number of key economic, social and cultural objectives' (see also Brand Hong Kong, 2007; Commission on Strategic Development, 2000, p. 33). As a result, the January 2008 issue of *TIME Magazine* (Asia edition) coined the term 'Nylonkong' to indicate the commonality of the three connected cities that 'drive the global economy' (Elliott, 2008) and portray Hong Kong as fulfilling a role in Asia similar to the roles of New York in North America and London in Europe.

In its effort to become a world-class city, Hong Kong has strived to change from a city filled with industrial centres to one characterised by international business and financial centres, with an economic structure tending towards high-value-added business service industries (Enright, 1999). Its strategy has been to absorb the best of what other world cities demonstrate, such as major centres of political power; seats of national and international government; loci of trade, finance and communications; and concentrations of talent in education, research, the arts and culture. All of these elements tend to sustain high-income elites rather than anyone else, as the high cost of living in such a place is beyond the reach of most plebeians (Hall, 1966). In an effort to enhance the global competitiveness of Hong Kong, the government has continuously carried out urban renewal projects and set up developmental trajectories beyond Hong Kong's geographical confines to expand urban areas and encourage tourism, the economy and transnational investment. The process of urban sprawl creation in Hong Kong has involved borrowing 'world-class' to infuse reclaimed landscapes with foreign aesthetics, alien designs and corporate properties and to dominate market operations and control the obtained spaces to accommodate the needs of major economic interests. Hong Kong has made remarkable progress and pulled off economic miracles via its unique mode of urban-space production

through reclamation. However, the public living environment in Hong Kong remains controversial when considering the intricate relationship between the various actors (i.e., government, private sector and local people) in a wider context.

### 3.3. The Controversy over the Harbour Reclamation

When British troops first landed at Possession Point near the Central District, the reclamation process probably began to dump soil and rocks from road construction into Victoria Harbour (Ng & Chan, 2005, p. 146). According to a review of its history, almost the entire CBD was built on new land in Victoria Harbour. Between 1980 and 1997, 2,009 hectares of reclaimed land were created in the harbour area (Ho, 2004, p. 205). By 1997, the reclamation projects in Victoria Harbour comprised a dominant strategy to accommodate urban growth with little apparent distrust of the rationality of the government.

Although the government has followed a consistent harbour reclamation strategy, a growing civil society has voiced resistance and opposition to the effect of reclamation on the public living environment. This is in contrast to the private sector, which has a vested interest in the harbour front. As listed in Table 3.1, the controversial debate can be seen in the pre-1997 reclamation projects in the CBD, two of which were originally scheduled for completion in 2000 and 2002 but are still in progress (see Table 3.1). The controversial debates are examined in the following sections.

Table 3.1. Reclamation projects in the CBD

Reclamation Phase	Area (ha)	Functions
<i>Reclamation projects completed before 1997</i>		
Central Reclamation Phase I	20	Airport Core Programme Project - to provide land for the Hong Kong Station of the airport railway and the western portion of the Central-Wan Chai Bypass - to provide land for the expansion of the CBD - to provide land for the re-provisioning of piers, cooling water pump houses and other facilities displaced by the reclamation
Central Reclamation Phase II	5.3	- to provide land for five commercial

		development sites
Wan Chai Reclamation Phase I	7	- to provide land to extend the HKCEC
<i>Projects planned as medium or long term (planned for completion in 2000-02) yet remain in progress</i>		
Central Reclamation Phase III	30 (as at 2010=18 <sup>a</sup> )	Planned for completion by the end of 2000 (above-ground construction was completed on 30 September 2012, but the underground Central-Wan Chai Bypass is scheduled for completion in 2017) - to provide land for the Central-Wan Chai Bypass and the airport railway overrun tunnel expansion to relieve traffic congestion in the CBD
Wan Chai Reclamation Phase II (renamed the Wan Chai Development Phase II in 2009) (OZP, S/H25/2, explanatory notes, p. 1)	48 (as of 2010=5.7 <sup>b</sup> )	Planned to start in 1998 for completion in 2002 (construction has not begun as of early 2011) - to provide land for the completion of the Central-Wan Chai Bypass, public cargo working area and waterfront promenades

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Notes: <sup>a</sup> Owing to fierce public objection, the amount of reclamation was cut down to 18 hectares.

<sup>b</sup> The current approved Outline Zoning Plan (OZP) (TPB, 2009, p. 4) indicated a reclaimed area of only 5.7 hectares.

Source: PELB, 1995a, pp.58-59; TPB, 2009

### 3.3.1. State-led Efforts on Harbour Reclamation

Since the early years of Hong Kong, the government and planners have had to rely heavily on reclamation to improve the quality of life in spaces to suit the demands of everyday living and to create an enabling economic space and institutional infrastructure that attract global capital.

*Reclaiming quality of life in spaces.* The government has estimated that the present population of 6.2 million may expand to 8.0 million over the next few decades, causing a quest for more land to the amount of approximately 25% of the current development land (PELB, 1995b, p. 5). The planners also agree that the solution spaces can be used to quickly decentralise people and alleviate the congestion of the city core to create a more inhabitable living environment. Pryor (1992) further points out that spreading

development onto adjoining harbour reclamation and comprehensive urban renewal projects would help to revitalise derelict urban zones and decrease population densities overall.



Figure 3.3. Comprehensive urban planning project<sup>1</sup>

Source: <http://www.roadtraffic-technology.com/projects/wan-chai/wan-chai2.html>



Figures 3.4a-b. High-quality waterfront promenade as new public facility for the community<sup>2</sup>

Source: [http://www.pland.gov.hk/pland\\_en/p\\_study/comp\\_s/wcii/wcii\\_booklet.pdf](http://www.pland.gov.hk/pland_en/p_study/comp_s/wcii/wcii_booklet.pdf)

The reclaimed land also offers community facilities that help to relieve congested urban areas and enhance quality of life. For example, the government proposed to plan a fascinatingly landscaped waterfront promenade between Wan Chai and Central that will ‘bring the city to the harbour and the harbour to the city’ (see Figure 3.3), which would create a great variety of open spaces with thriving tourism potential and enrich the public living environment for locals (see Figures 3.4a-b). According to the government, the reclamation will effectively rectify the current issue that it is ‘very difficult for people to get to the waterfront’ (PELB, 1995b, p. 9).

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<sup>1</sup> The yellow line shows a comprehensive urban planning project along the northern shore of Hong Kong Island, which aims to divert traffic flow to enhance accessibility and create an attractive waterfront landscape for the enjoyment of the public.

<sup>2</sup> The government proposed the creation of a high quality waterfront promenade as a new public facility for the community. The recreational open space, based on the Metroplan concept, aims to provide a unique opportunity ‘to bring the people to the harbour and the harbour to the people’.



*Reclaiming for economic space.* As a ‘land-hungry’ place, Hong Kong has a long history of reclamation in the CBD in terms of producing new land in response to the demand of economic restructuring. Arising from the rapid modernisation and globalisation of Asia Pacific, urban competition forced Hong Kong to impose different land requirements to expand the economy and develop infrastructure. To satisfy the growing demand, the government advocated that ‘reclamations in or near the Victoria Harbour provide land for the expansion of port facilities, for housing and community uses to facilitate urban renewal of old urban districts for the growth of business activities and for other key infrastructure to reinforce Hong Kong’s role as a regional hub’ (PD, 1998, p. 48). Stated explicitly in its objectives, the harbour reclamation would enhance Hong Kong’s hub functions as an entrepôt and a service centre for South China; a centre for professional and academic expertise; a city of culture; a base for high-tech industry and research; a nodal point for regional communications and information dissemination; and a major tourist destination and conference (PELB, 1995a, p. 32).

Table 3.2. Uses for newly formed and proposed harbour reclamation and associated areas

Uses	Ha	Percent
Commercial	63	4.9
Residential	244	19.1
Comprehensive Development Areas	42	3.3
Government/Institution/Community	145	11.3
Industrial	66	5.2
Open Space	314	24.7
Road and Others	404	31.5
Total	1278	100.0

*Source: Modified from PELB, 1995a, p. 125*

As the government proposal in Table 3.2 show, central harbour reclamations, which provide a ‘natural’ extension of the current urban areas, is a logical response to serve the various sectoral developments and port uses (PELB, 1995a, p. 26). The different lands levelled for reclamation have reflected development demands at various times and yielded the highest value to fit the urban development strategy in those times (see Table 3.1 as a reference). For instance, Wan Chai Reclamation Phase I was a project implemented to create an island that would provide a site for building an extension to the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre (HKCEC) (see Figures 3.5a-b). This expansion has created more spaces for international trade exhibitions, meetings and banquets to further activate Hong Kong’s hub function. Moreover, the planners have

stated that the project will present numerous opportunities for developers and designers to create Hong Kong's image as a world city.



Figures 3.5a-b. Wan Chai Reclamation Phase I and HKCEC<sup>3</sup>

*Source: Modified from PELB, 1995a, pp. 60-67*

### 3.3.2. Dissents of Civil Society

In terms of the far-reaching implications of the regional development of the Pearl River Delta, the government has been eager to acquire economic space in central areas since 1997. Although the government has followed planning principles to announce a series of reclamation programmes for the sake of urban growth in public interest, the general public has expressed concerns that on-going reclamation would result in the deterioration of amenities and liveability in the harbour environments and cause aggravation in relation to social distance and spatial differentiation.

*Effects on the deterioration of amenity and liveability in harbour environments.* The anti-reclamation movement mainly constitutes members of green groups (i.e., Society for Protection of the Harbour) and the general public who are concerned about the environmental changes presented by a narrower and more inaccessible harbour area. Their main purpose is generally to preserve the harbour as one of 'our priceless assets' and the 'lung of the city', and to stop the government from turning the 'beautiful Victoria Harbour into a river, if not a nullah'.<sup>4</sup> As a result, when the government further focused the need for reclamation around the Victoria Harbour, many green groups and individuals objected to the recent Central and Wan Chai reclamations (i.e., Central Reclamation

<sup>3</sup> The HKCEC is located in Wan Chai, north of Hong Kong Island. Numerous fairs such as international trade fairs, the world's largest leather fair and Asia's largest fashion, jewellery and electronics fairs are held each year.

<sup>4</sup> The information was acquired from an interview conducted on 11 July 2012.

Phase III and Wan Chai Reclamation Phase II) and counteracted the economic rationality of harbour reclamation. Most people are also concerned that the function of Victoria Harbour in the ecology and public environment will soon vanish through the expansion of the core urban areas and the consequent increase of related road traffic (Barron, 1997; Chu, 1995, p. 3). The dredging and dumping of the amount of marine sand as the source of fill materials may cause irreversible damage to the marine ecology with the release of heavy metals (PELB, 1995a, p. 28; Wong, 1995, pp. 1-2). Furthermore, the multiline arterials may create a physically inaccessible harbour area due to the megablock modernist planning segregating it from the congested inner city. For example, the last stage of the five-stage reclamation plan in the CBD (Wan Chai Reclamation Phase II) proposed the reclamation of 26 hectares of land, in which a 2-hectare park was planned with the aim of bring people to the harbour. However, the majority of objections questioned the necessity of the park and the scale of the reclamation. As the Citizens Party observed, 'the Harbour is indisputably Hong Kong's greatest natural asset, as the basis for its commercial and industrial growth, as a primary tourist attraction, and as part of our natural and cultural heritage. Much of this is being eroded through the Administration's planning for excessive and unrelenting reclamation' (Citizens Party, 1998, p. 5). In July 2003, the High Court ruled that the Town Planning Board (TPB) contravened Section 3 of the Protection of the Harbour Ordinance, stressing that every reclamation project should be compatible with the principles of 'compelling overriding and present need, no viable alternative and minimum impairment' (Chu, 2003, para. 95). Although the board sought to uphold the legal principles behind the ordinance, the Court of Final Appeal rejected the proposed reclamation that failed to comply with compelling and present demand along with pressing economic, environmental and social needs (Hong Kong High Court, 2004).

*Effects on the aggravation of spatial differentiation and social distance.* Within the examination of the various measures of a city's global presence, Hong Kong is explicitly deemed as a key node in the global traffic of business and international tourism (Short *et al.*, 1996). Reclamation plays a remarkable role in urban renaissance, particularly in the creation of distinctive cityscapes with a number of vibrant open spaces. Thus, the metropolitan transformation process is exposing some internal influences in shaping its spatial differentiation and social distance. The reclaimed lands are always used as spaces to enact branding that will enhance the function of the Hong Kong hub. Part of the branding includes solution spaces to meet people's needs for open space, and these are proposed as community facilities to cater to the everyday lives of people and upgrade the public living environment. In addition, elites and tourists may be lured into the city as the

result of the emerging symbolic and iconic image of Hong Kong in these new spaces. The government and planners also think the reclamation works as an active force to direct the community towards the ideal of social harmony, but they seldom consider cultural identity and city users' differentiation in their planning. Urban reclamation has triggered a series of urban changes such as the destruction of old spaces and the removal of former activities and inhabitants (Lees, Slater, & Wyly, 2008). More importantly, it has explicitly created a stratified area and gradually classified human behaviour and lifestyles. As a basic component of city space, streets manifest a kind of intangible boundary between the spaces in the integrated urban. However, the reclamation projects have tangibly converted the street into a stratified boundary that is gradually divorced from the local. The loss of a sense of space not only classifies human behaviour, but also increasingly widens social distance. According to a survey conducted by Myers (1981), resettlement estate residents described their estates as places 'where ordinary people live'. Indeed, the twin policies of reclamation and renewal can be deemed typical cases of inward gentrification. Reclaiming the local is actually an urban gentrification method that proposes packaging a space according to a so-called high quality of life and cultural life from which middle-class residents can obtain enjoyment. The land cost increases that follow modernised urban development tend to drive away locals, who cannot afford the increased cost of living. For instance, Lee Tung Street, known as Wedding Card Street due to its high number of print shops and selling cards, has been located in Wan Chai South for over half a century. In December 2007, this street, which was considered the original home of Hong Kong's publishing industry, was torn down by the Urban Renewal Authority (URA). The redeveloped street would become a multifunctional commercial area specialising in weddings to facilitate economic restructuring with sociocultural capital (see Figure 3.6). This has generally meant that residents and shop owners find themselves unable to afford rising real estate prices and forced to move to remote and prosaic communities. These great, redeveloped infrastructures and facilities create a community with high living standards to encourage a more affluent consumer base. Furthermore, when spaces are operated by the private sector, people have little motivation to establish social networks or a sense of belonging in these places. Restructuring aims to rehabilitate deteriorated construction and improve the living environment of decayed communities, and the battle over maintain a lived space for ordinary livelihood demonstrates a series of tactical conflicts against the imposition of repressive demands. In doing so, the urban area has clearly been designed in such a hybrid way that people must move through it.



Figure 3.6. Current Lee Tung Street with new cultural capital

In sum, instead of considering it as a rational solution for facing population growth and economic restructuring, the general public are concerned that harbour reclamation not only creates saleable land in an environmentally unsustainable way, but also reinforces domination in the heart of the city via alienation under a top-down planning process.

### **3.4. Urban Syntax in Modernist City Planning**

The unique nature of Hong Kong's political economy is almost exclusively apparent in either the total or partial changes to appearance, form and structure of its living environments. It has accelerated due to a radical metropolitan transformation, with living environments buried in cash through the commodification of urban space and form.

Furthermore, the transformation process is the most effective way to sterilise urban space by 'removing any historical referents, building on landfill and in the purging of nature; the simplification of urban form through lease agreements, standard details and the use of a standard building prototype (the pavilion with several floors of parking under) and the sanitization of social space through corporate architectural ideology' (Cuthbert, 1995, p. 298). As a result, it is quite debatable whether urban planning and environment design

can be used to cope with the main problem of overcrowding and disorder, as planned space is provided to circumscribe the use of space or to propose 'zoning' concepts in conjunction with efficient transport systems. With an emphasis on urban and especially street syntax, the effectiveness-led principle is explored as follows, and a brief commentary is presented.

#### **3.4.1. Modernist Requirements for the City**

The primary goal for restructuring our city over the long term was...to bring about a better organised, more efficient and more desirable place in which to live and work (Strategic Planning Unit, 1990, p. 2).

... it is not town planning which directs development, but development which directs planning (Cuthbert, 1987, p. 143).

With such a lofty goal proposed, the importance of urban planning came to the fore in the present-day development of Hong Kong, largely in response to problems of rapid industrialisation, overcrowding, and chaotic and poor infrastructure. This emphasis on planning provided a strong contrast to the traditional image of Hong Kong as a city with minimal government intervention and a laissez-faire approach. In a *1999 policy address*, the first chief executive of SAR set up macro-plans to position Hong Kong as Asia's premier world city for the twenty-first century (GISD, 2000). Hong Kong featured prominently in corporate-services provisions for accountancy, advertising, banking, and law as an alpha city (Beaverstock, Taylor, & Smith, 1999, p. 456). Friedmann classified Hong Kong as a semi-peripheral world city, in recognition of its role as a regional centre for economic and financial articulation. The main concern for the future was to maintain Hong Kong as a metropolitan area that was conducive to business activities in face of population growth and land requirements. This goal needed to be pursued in line with Hong Kong's development strategy, which provided a strategic framework to guide planning and development in a way that maximised multiple economic and development benefits. Hence, urban growth and expansion resulted in Hong Kong's ingenious mode of space production: 'removing mountains and reclaiming seas'. From the perspective of administration, management, and planning, reclamation is an effective approach of maximizing profits and satisfying demands for land than reconstructing. Furthermore, the government also regards reclamation to be the primary—or sole—solution to problems such as densely populated residential areas, uninhabitable city space, traffic congestion,

and a disorderly city (PELB, 1995a). In this context, the rational planner is seen as a technical expert who makes 'maximising' decisions to serve the 'overall public interest' and shape the 'ideal future' of urban areas in which social problems could be controlled (Altshuler, 1965; Harvey, 1992). They view cities as 'machines' or 'organisms' that can be 'planned as an engineer plans an industrial process, breaking it down into its essential functions (housing, work, recreation, and traffic), taylorizing and standardizing them, and reassembling them (in the Master Plan) as a totality' (Sandercock, 1998, p. 23). Faludi (1973) identified this approach as a significant change in the idea of planning:

Its direction is away from a concern purely with the physical environment and towards intentionally rational, comprehensive planning; away from a primarily practice-orientated profession towards greater reliance on theoretical understanding; and away from the domination of planning by architects and engineers towards opening its ranks to various disciplines notably in the social sciences (p. 41).

Whether Hong Kong has realised the goal to become a city of world prominence, the modernist images demonstrate that Hong Kong is indeed an:

Active participant in the global economy and the economic resources generated through this process of engagement have assisted in the construction of infrastructure and hardware facilities. The performance...in terms of social and physical health, environmental management and enlightened governance is... rather less certain (Ng & Hills, 2003, p. 161).

### **3.4.2. Plans in Hong Kong**

In this way, some of key ideas of rational (modernist) planning are the result of ripple effects from other features.

The arguments put forward by modernist urban planning fall into five categories, which are outlined below. Cumulatively, these show that the numerous demands of social development have been forcing the area to transform in functional ways.

*a) Specialisation:* this is used to create an ordered, efficient, and structured city space. Modernist planners separate land into specialised zones (areas are zoned as residential,

commercial, industrial, educational, recreational, or administrative) that are connected by a hierarchical road network.

*b) Mass-production:* modernist urban planning promotes the application of industrial mass-production techniques to deal with the myriad of urban problems. For example, the modernist planner Le Corbusier advocated that houses should be mass-produced to meet the huge demand for housing after the Second World War: 'We must arrive at the 'house-machine', which must be both practical and emotionally satisfying and designed for a succession of tenants' (Hall, 1988, p. 209). Levinson and Krizek (2005) similarly stated that, 'like a house is a machine for living, cities are the machine for accessibility'. Likewise, as modernist planners give preference to private motor vehicles as the primary mode of mobility, large-scale road construction works are carried out to connect each metropolitan centre.

*c) Standardisation:* standardised design brings about cost saving as well as efficiency. Precise and universal standards are established under modernist approaches. These cover lighting, heating, ventilation, structure, and aesthetics, and are considered to be valid in all latitudes for all needs (Le Corbusier, 1964). Thus, in modernist contexts standardised planning, using 'scientific' and 'objective' methods, is applied to all aspects of planning practice (Sandercock, 1998).

*d) Vehicle and pedestrian separation:* modernist urban planners often replace pedestrian crossings with footbridges or subways to minimise waiting time for motorists and to eliminate other vehicle-pedestrian conflicts. These 'private' or 'sanitary zones' within a given space and the directed pathways tend to keep people from interacting within the public space.

*e) Urban sprawl:* large urban areas must be cleared for redevelopment and renewal into the new modernist space. However, clearing a large site in an old city may be difficult because of the established street patterns, buildings and communities. Opposition from vested interests is another difficult-to-solve problem. Therefore, modernist planners often attempt to expand spatially, spreading outward from their original city centres and acquiring more land for development.

The modernist approach to urban planning in Hong Kong therefore requires the government to exercise control over the use of land and the intensity of development, such that 'each activity has been assigned its territory... the overall result is an urban landscape characterised above all by its tidy patchwork of functions, a place for everything and everything in its place' (Relph, 1987, p. 165). When industries are located in specific zones—far from commercial and living areas, for example—inhabitants can enjoy a high quality of life with regard to air quality, noise level, aesthetics, safety, and



cleanliness. This also makes it more straightforward to plan the circulation of pedestrians and motor traffic. Further segregation of slow from fast-moving vehicles increases the accessibility and efficiency of transportation along the area. In addition, social geographer Paul Knox (1995) has noted that residential segregation of different communities (for instance, differences in ethnicity or religion) helps to minimise conflict between social groups, and to allow the government to provide services that are targeted for specific social groups. He argued that this segregation matches ‘the desire of [a community’s] members to preserve their own group identity or lifestyle’.

These representations largely characterises Hong Kong’s development, and can be attributed to the ideology of modernist planning.

### **3.4.3. The Order of the Ground Plan**

Although the government is the ultimate landlord for almost all land in Hong Kong, its officials have followed the ideology of laissez-faire in urban development since the early days of the colonial government in the mid-nineteenth century. Under the leasehold system (i.e., the city’s land is not sold, but leased to the private sector), the government mainly acted negatively. However, a disastrous fire on 25 December 1953 in Shek Kip Mei forced the government to actively intervene in urban planning. To provide shelter for the approximately 58,000 victims and implement longer-term measures to improve the overcrowded living environment of middle- and low-income citizens, the government set up the Resettlement Department and the Hong Kong Housing Authority. These agencies commenced with the construction of functional and affordable public housing for rent in 1954 (Hong Kong Heritage Museum, 2004). In the following decades, as Hong Kong further expanded its urban areas into New Kowloon and the New Territories, the city developed huge low-cost public housing estates, industrial zones and new towns. Since that time, as in many other major cities of the world, Hong Kong’s urban planning has adopted a modernist planning approach. The government has intervened not only in decisions regarding land use and urban planning, but also in the management of economic affairs and the everyday lives of local people.

As Hobson (1999) argues, ‘new town planning is the ultimate form of modernist planning’ (p. 1). Hong Kong’s planners and related professionals have sought to create a new urban form according to their own visions of order, control and socially appropriate interaction. The planners have attempted to do this through a top-down process of

rational comprehensive planning for mono-functional zoning systems (UN-Habitat, 2009). 'The rational modernist built environment is intended to break with tradition and initiate social change, with a vision of a new urban society in an ideal physical urban structure' (Hobson, 1999, p. 3). In the 1960s and 70s, such planners viewed traditional buildings, streets and urban structures as inefficient and backward. Therefore, many of these structures were demolished and replaced with rationally planned environments to make the city function according to the planners' idealised concepts. Open spaces were taken up by motor traffic and parking facilities. Streets became systematic, regularised and specialised in their circulation functions, but not as places for pedestrians to interact or take part in community activities. Furthermore, as mono-functional zoning became the major principal planning tool, land in the new urban area was divided into different zones based on land use designation (residential, commercial, industrial, institutional and so on). Hence, 'each activity has been assigned its territory . . . The overall result is an urban landscape characterised above all by its tidy patchwork of functions, a place for everything and everything in its place' (Relph, 1987, p. 165).

The government has attained a higher level of order, both physically (or spatially) and socially, in the new or redesigned urban areas than in the remaining traditional urban areas. According to Murray (2008), modernist planners aim to build a city that will be a perfectly disciplined, rationally and efficiently managed, and smoothly functioning spatial order (pp. 335-337). They aim to achieve this by using a top-down approach that focuses on state control. These planners believe that traditional urban problems such as street clutter, illegal parking, informal street trading and congestion can be solved through stringent managerial oversight and design. They use their 'professional judgement' to determine what, when, where, how and by whom the use of space is appropriate. Through controlling the built environment and prohibiting 'informal' behaviour, they hope to make everything ordered, structured and exactly as they want it.

For example, hawking goods in the street is a small-scale economic activity with a long history. Such activity can help local unemployed people by enabling them to at least earn a living. The trade also provides goods and services at affordable prices to urban residents, which has benefits for the local economy (Bhowmik, 2005). Therefore, in the past, the government usually adopted a lenient or tolerant attitude towards hawkers. However, with increasingly complex social problems, rising public expectations, and the pursuance of an ideal social-spatial order from the late 1960s onwards, new and more stringent regulations have been introduced to address issues created by on-street activities, in particular the obstruction problem arising from hawking and trading along

the streets. In his famous book, *Street Studies in Hong Kong*, Leeming (1977) recorded the boom of hawking activity in Hong Kong: 'the city is crammed with anomalous and often illegal activities and situations which the government does not usually challenge, many of them involving land use. Land surrounding the government's resettlement buildings is commonly packed with hawkers, sometimes to the extent that the roofs of hawkers' stalls form a complete cover between the blocks. Some streets, especially in Yaumati and Mongkok, are virtually blocked by hawkers' (pp. 18-19). In response to such issues, the Hong Kong government determined to clean up the streets through removing all unauthorised hawking, licensing the hawkers, and relocating them to appropriate locations such as indoor market complexes. In fact, the hawker control team also drove many other 'informal activities' away (such as begging, street sleeping and busking), with removal of obstructions or harassment cited as the reasons. This enforcement effort has put pressure on local people to utilise the street spaces only in 'formal' or 'appropriate' ways. As many urban planning experts and sociologists like Gehl (1987) and Jacobs (1961) mentioned, such policies have left local areas lifeless, with no activity on the streets.

#### **3.4.4. Street Syntax**

Although cities are three-dimensional objects – their organisation is largely two-dimensional (Shelton, 1999; Unwin, 1997). It is because of this that one could select a chunk of Hong Kong whose greatest dimension was in the vertical direction, but that urban chunk would still be more significantly represented as a two-dimensional organisation. But things are more subtle than this. Figure 3.7 shows a distinction between two kinds of topological pattern, referred to here as 'archipelagos' and 'jigsaws' in Marshall's phrase (2009).

On the left-hand side, at the Earth's surface, every landmass is surrounded by the all-encircling sea. At the urban level, plots form 'islands' which are ultimately surrounded by the street system. An alternative shown on the right-hand side gets us to the structure of a 'jigsaw' that the sub-components are typically of a roughly similar order of magnitude, and add up to make an exact whole, with no leftover spaces. While in one sense streets are 'leftover', from another perspective they are crucial in linking everything up. In this sense, street system is the 'missing piece' in the jigsaw (Marshall, 2009, pp. 70-71).

This gives streets their significance for organising urban layout, precisely because the streets all connect whereas the land parcels do not (Lillebye, 2001; Roberts & Greed, 2001). The street system's contiguity is a kind of regularity, a kind of systematic urban order.

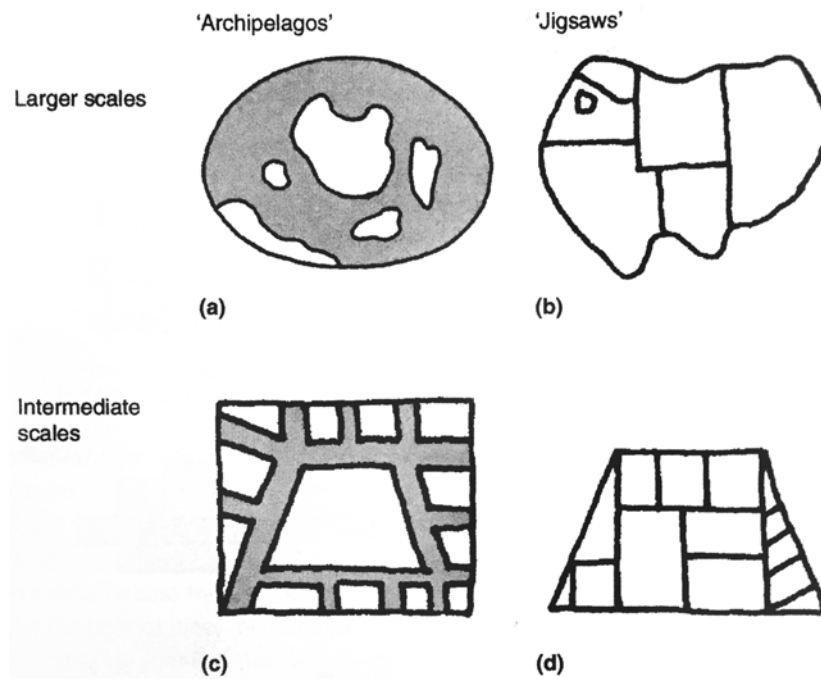


Figure 3.7. Two types of topological pattern—'archipelagos' and 'jigsaws'

Source: Marshall, 2009, p. 73

In terms of modernist thinking about planning and design, in *Precisions on the Present State of Architecture and City Planning* (1991), Le Corbusier considers the concepts of 'standard' and 'average' as 'the needs of men' in the undertaking of modern cities. As he suggested:

Our needs are daily, regular, always the same; yes, always the same. ... All men have the same needs, at the same hours, everyday, all their lives. ... Our needs are the needs of men. We all have the same limbs, in number, form, and size; if on this last point there are differences, an average dimension is easy to find. Standard functions, standard needs, standard objects, standard dimension... (p. 108)

Based on these beliefs, the concepts constrain designer and planner to a 'constant' and 'regular' way with average dimensions and standard needs of humans, and to an aim of evenly distributed density within urban space by 'substituting virtually equal densities all over the cities' (Hall, 1992, p. 58). With the intention of decreasing the amount of

pressure placed on the urban, different functional zones were developed along major transport routes to cope with uneven density. Looking at the new town development of Hong Kong, one may notice that the policies are intended for a widely distributed density over the whole city, following the main method of *thinning out* or *dispersion*. Just as the ground plane organisation of cities gives the city plan its potency, the fact that all land parcels or uses connect to the route system gives the transport network its pivotal significance.

To cope with the volume of pedestrians in comparatively dense core areas, many downtown plans have been proposed to separate pedestrians from vehicular traffic, an approach that European planners were already adopting by the 1960s (Hass-Klau, 1990). In Hong Kong, the conflicting movements of pedestrians and vehicles have mainly been segregated by implementing a form of vertical separation such as a footbridge. As a result, a complex system of elevated walkways represents a unified system of pedestrian facilities that integrate the CBD at the planning level. Although the large-scale pedestrian separation scheme provides a smooth pedestrian flow, a sense of safety and comfort in inclement weather, it in turn makes people hesitate to venture into the streets.

People who work or live in Hong Kong thus have to use either footbridges or circuitous routes to cross roads as their major route options to meet their everyday needs. It has been noted that the footbridge network in Hong Kong is packed with pedestrians at all times. In addition, the crowds always move in the same direction, at the same speed and at the same time. As Hill (2006) points out, 'people are going to follow the paths they're directed to. And they will form habits of taking those paths, the path of least resistance' (p. 3). Pedestrian walking patterns are generally adopted to achieve the highest efficiency, which has increased walking tempos. In addition, the footbridges connecting buildings can be identified as an integral part of owned buildings, with a lower potential for serving the public (Robertson, 1988, 1993). On the whole, necessary rather than optional or social activities are always relegated to footbridges, as the space does not influence people to value traditional social interaction and culture.

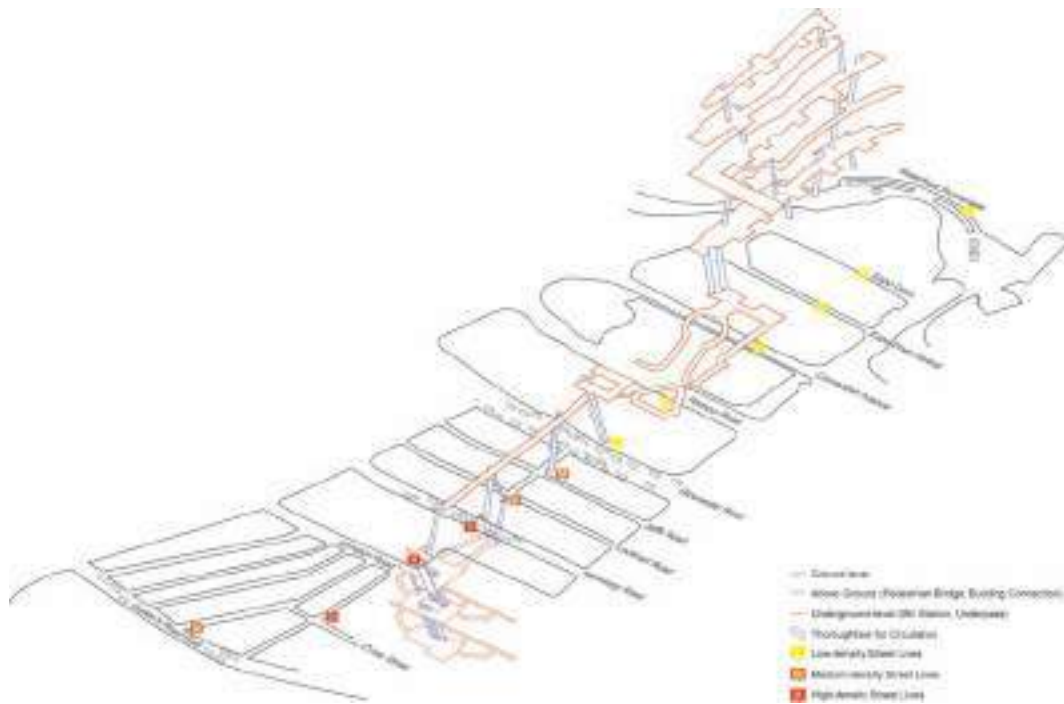


Figure 3.8. Perspective shows that the street lives have been gradually stripped away by the effectiveness-led streets

*Source: Huang and Siu, 2014, p. 42*

It is clear that the term ‘road’ is perceived as a path from one place to another, in contrast to a ‘street’, which is used to provide access to a viable social or living space. Instead of claiming that the zoning approach is still workable to ‘obtain a more evenly distributed population’ in Hong Kong, it may be better interpreted as an elimination of the ‘poor’ and ‘waster products’ (de Certeau, 1984, p. 94) or a ‘handy weapon to keep out undesirables’ from the urban space (Perloff, 1985, p. 94). This change reflects a shift in the role of the street as a result of modernist planning. It is ironic that something invented to facilitate the movement of pedestrians has now become the most threatening competitor of the living environment (Ilf & Katayev, 1962). In terms of the modernist notion of the street, the change in physical structure simply allows the street to function as a buffer zone between the mode of walking and the speedier means of travelling by vehicle (Bullivant, 2000), and the commodification of urban space, encouraged by the private sector and ideas of ownership, can logically be extended into the street environment. This process has been used to perpetuate the state’s ideology and power. Consequently, the street has suffered the biggest loss of place as a result of planning and design, and the idea of the right to the city has become fragile and undefined in terms of the concept of a public realm.

In terms of effectiveness-led planning, much like reclaiming function, urban mobility in reclamation areas involves rectifying the city form and recreating an accessible urban environment for everyone to be a ‘great city’ in the eyes of the world. As argued previously, recent reclamations in the city were performed with the intent of making life more inhabitable for people. However, the expected scenario is completely different from the users’ image of everyday life. As shown in Figure 3.8, when the routes of such elevated contraptions are fixed to promote effective movement in Wan Chai, this has a negative effect on a variety of activities at ground level, eventually diminishing urban street life (Huang & Siu, 2014).

### **3.5. Where is Public Street?**

Following the previous sections, the main thread of modernist planning is to negate existing conditions so that plans are proposed with the intent to ‘subvert and then regenerate the surrounding fabric of denatured social life’ (Holston, 1999, p. 160). Furthermore, as mentioned by Kusno (2000) in his discussion of postcolonial cities, the developmental continuity considering globalisation with a modernist ideology not only reflects on the imagination of planners but on the preferences of elite consumers for exclusive space. With an emphasis on globalisation, many urban scholars have pointed out cities have represented confounding spatial polarization with segregation. As stated by Marcuse and Van Kempen in *Globalizing Cities: A New Spatial Order* (2000), world cities have long been segregated, and spatial polarization has tended mainly to strengthen existing patterns of segregation. In short, globalisation makes sense of the current direction of spatial change towards greater ‘inequality and walling’ (p. 219). As pointed out by Huang and Siu in their article *Planning and Response in Transforming Everyday Space: Intervention and Invention* (2014), Hong Kong is dedicated to being a world city, and so has undergone a vibrant, ever-transforming process of urbanization at a dizzying pace.

Walking through the streets of Hong Kong, amid the bewildering array of brands, advertisements and bill posters, sometimes we lose sight of what is really important. Like how spectacular Hong Kong is (even if you are just visiting for a week of art) and why you are proud to call this city home or that perhaps ‘less is actually more’... (Huang & Siu, 2014, p. 29).

The transformation of the city has increasingly been making us alienated from everyday space. As shown in Figure 3.9, the phrase ‘A Hong Kong second is a New York minute’ aims to convince that ‘Hong Kong ... has the potential to become, not only a major city within one country, but also the most cosmopolitan city in Asia, enjoying a status similar to that of New York in America’ (The 1998 Policy Address, 1998). The target of such globalisation is to create cosmopolitan spaces that do not account for the everyday life of the ordinary people.



Figure 3.9. The posters, printed on A4-sized sheets of paper and combined together were posted on the walls, and displayed the slogan: ‘A Hong Kong second is a New York minute’.

The continued expansion of commercial zones and the increasingly strict spatial separation of activities have run the street with linear (skeletal) structure in a hierarchy. The changing perception of the street and the role played by government planners has developed the street either as an abutters’ spillover (archipelagos) or as a circulation system (jigsaws). These changes redirect people’s daily routines, limit how their spaces can be used, and decide who is able to use the available space. For example, the components of stringent management control found in Hong Kong involve the following: planning and zoning of activities; outsourcing the work of managing spaces to private management agencies; posting extensive sets of regulations governing the appropriate use of spaces; and proactive monitoring with strict enforcement of the rules. Through these measurements and practices, both the space users and their behaviour are controlled. At the same time, ‘undesirable people’ and ‘informal behaviour’ can also be kept out of the



monitored spaces. It is very common for open spaces to be owned and operated by private entities and management companies. Private sector firms have the complete right and freedom of management over the spaces they own. They can govern the use of those spaces by posting extensive sets of rules, and by hiring doormen to determine who is able to pass through. According to Jacobs (1961), these employees may not actively enforce the rules set by the private managers, but may simply provide ‘eyes on the street’ to keep surveillance on the public and encourage civility. For private sector managers, a clean and ordered appearance fronting their building is important to promote a beneficial and positive corporate image. Therefore, private sector firms tend to implement stringent management practices to control and monitor who uses their spaces, and how their spaces are used. In many cases, these rules and monitoring activities unduly restrict the rights of pedestrians to access and use the space freely. As a result, it is commonly observed that few spontaneous social activities occur in privately owned public spaces. For the government, outsourcing the management work to private sector firms is a simple, efficient and cost-effective way of supervising an area. Over and above this, stringent management control also involves political implications with regard to public order and the control of demonstrations.

Reclamation practices always been a dominant strategy for accommodating urban growth have defined the concept of ‘functional rationality’ (Ng, 2011) in which the government is ‘the sole arbiter of what constitute acceptable trade-offs between its own development agenda and the environmental and health concerns of the community’ (LegCo, 1996, p. 186), and seeks greater authority with top-down planning process to cope with social problems such as densely populated residential areas, uninhabitable city space, traffic congestion, and a disorderly city. It has been viewed as an ingenious and rational solution similar to modernist ideas in planning that can be ‘planned as an engineer plans an industrial process, breaking it down into its essential functions (housing, work, recreation, and traffic), taylorizing and standardizing them, and reassembling them (in the Master Plan) as a totality’ (Sandercock, 1998, p. 23). In this context, the professionals (including policymakers, planners, designers, executives, and implementers) are seen as the *only* experts who make ‘maximizing’ decisions to reclaim an inhabitable place for city-users defined as average people with standard demands as conditions for everyday happiness and harmony, and shape the ‘ideal future’ of urban areas based on ‘overall public interest’ in which a true urban order under the hybrid of industrial society, contemporary cities, and the modern age could be constructed with rectifying existing misused city elements (Altshuler, 1965; Harvey, 1989; Le Corbusier, 1991; Siu, 2007b). Another remarkable change brought about by new zoning regulations is the decrease in the number of people

staying in the streets. Following the process of modernisation, the majority of newly created street spaces were dedicated to private motorised vehicular transportation. Le Corbusier criticised modernists who seek to create 'entirely new urban forms', but at the same time to 'kill the street, to make the street into a traffic machine' (Relph, 1987, p. 241). The circulation of traffic has become the only function of streets. Street spaces have been designed for the efficient use of vehicles rather than the convenience and needs of people or for public congregation. This can be seen by the inadequate provision of crossing facilities for pedestrians, which encourages people to use the footbridges instead of walking in the street, and has therefore allowed an efficient, non-stop, fast-moving traffic network to be developed. As a result, the roads are filled with high-speed danger, noise and poisonous exhaust fumes, such that people cannot stay in the street for any length of time.

In the article *The City as Environment*, Lynch (1990a) points out that, in the current tightly controlled urban texture, it is quite hard to find open space (or streets) in cities that allow free-form activities by users who wish to manipulate space and objects as they wish. Lynch and Lee's (1990) comments on current city form, for instance, can be seen in their study of Nanjing in China:

Local open spaces are lacking despite some magnificent historic parks. Sidewalks and scraps of open ground are used intensely. Eating, washing, and economic activity spills into the street. While that is picturesque for the tourist, it may be less than comfortable for the inhabitants (p. 231).

In considering the degree of openness of the current form of most streets, it is obvious that streets are not taken as open space even though they are always reputed to be belonging to the public. This questionable degree of 'openness' aims to argue that 'streets should have more lively activities and be opened to all kinds of people in the cities' and that more uncommitted voids inside the city should be organised as open space for inhabitants (Banerjee & Southworth, 1990, p. 767). Given that, the most important question here is not whether people can pass in and out these reputed open spaces, but whether people still have the chance to make the spaces open.

### **3.5.1. The Street as Contested Space**

It is undeniable that the government and administrators have achieved a certain degree of successful management (or control) in the city, and they always believe that rational plans of expertise and administrative control are synonymous with a good quality living environment (Siu, 2007a; Smith, 1989). However, more researchers have indicated that a 'great' city is not only the result of government plan and control, but also strongly attributed to a good city form in terms of vitality, sense, fit, access and control of the city space (Lynch, 1981). In *The Openness of Open Space* (1990b), Lynch further identifies that 'open space has many meanings in the planning of cities'. Furthermore, high quality open space derives from good urban form, which mainly in terms of fitness, openness and 'accessibility' for city users.

According to Siu (2003), city users in fact play a 'reader response' role in the fitness of a space. This role can be compared with that of government planners of modernism, who tend to standardise spaces in a quantitative way:

We are attracted to numerical data, which are so much more precise, firm, and impressive than the soft, subjective stuff of patterns and feelings. The numbers that stand for traffic congestion outweigh the frustrations of pedestrians who cross the street. The square foot requirements of a room (itself distantly derived from feelings of adequate size) override the characteristics of patterns for easy social intercourse. (Lynch, 1981, pp. 152-153)

In the article *The Possible City* (1990c), Lynch describes an expectation of more openness in terms of freedom and control: 'It is crucial for our purpose that the future environment be an "open" one which the individual can easily penetrate, and in which he can act by his own choice' (p. 779). The proximity of city users to open space definitely depends on the accessibility of the space: 'Open spaces, particularly those for daily or weekly use, should be physically proximate to their users, and connected to them by visible easy paths' (Lynch & Carr, 1990, p. 400).

However, some difficulties and constraints arise when the expectations are placed into reality. It is not difficult to notice that specific functions set up by the government usually conflict with the individual's choices in the city. Although most open spaces seldom cater to locals with different needs and preferences, policymakers and government planners blindly yield a number of open spaces with standardised functions and constructions. Meanwhile, more difficulties and constraints arise from finding a balance between freedom and control in issues of management. Lynch and Carr (1990) advance an ideal of

balance in terms of freedom and control: open space, like an open society, must be free and yet controlled. The street as open space inherently displays a series of advantages for urban diversity that has been seen as a 'prerequisite for vitality, vibrancy, cultural activities and social interaction' (Williams, 1999, p. 168). In addition, reclamation works to provide new and spacious lands in which different types of modernised spaces are positioned, and the government struggles to wipe clean all kinds of deviances and misbehaviour through ordinances and management to maintain the appearance of order. The openness of street lives and political management of open spaces have become typical examples of this dilemma in Hong Kong. Moreover, urban sprawl and expansion that create open spaces located far from inhabitants present a new dilemma to Hong Kong.

Lefebvre suggests that urban planning and everyday life are closely connected. As governments, authorities and modernist urban planners have tried to create a homogeneous, orderly society and to exploit or control the existing diversity, local people's everyday lives and practices have changed accordingly (Lefebvre, 1991a). Even though urban development and planning has demonstrated the concept of mighty power hold by those with privileged access to authority and capital, it neglects the possibility that city users are able to counteract properly conceptualized strategies and act their 'value tactics' to reproblematised issues for transformative changes. In other words, 'a tactic is determined by the absence of power just as a strategy is organized by the postulation of power' (de Certeau, 1984, p. 38). Hence, strategy and tactic distinguish from each other due to their collapse and negotiation of lived distances, purification and re-construction of public space, and manipulation and mediation of power relationships over time. Inspired by the literature on tactical urbanism and the 'right to the city' (Harvey, 2006; Lefebvre, 1984), investigating the urban condition of Hong Kong may discuss the extent to which the street space is contested and changed. The urban transformation of Hong Kong offers a layered environment in which to seek the value of the various tactics and the appropriation of indeterminate spaces employed by city inhabitants.

An emergent body of research dubbed 'spaces of insurgent citizenship' by James Holston (1999) is beginning to concern how inhabitants' acts of insurgency are articulated spatially. Consequently, a more heuristic is being used—tactical urbanism, defined as 'struggles by communities and individuals to find their place and expressions in the contemporary city and in doing so redefine the boundaries, meanings, and instrumentality of public sphere' (Hou, 2010, p. 27), and as a platform, or plane for the notion of 'loose

space', 'ludic space', and 'liminal space' (Franck & Stevens, 2007). According to Mitchell (2003), struggle 'is the only way that the right to public space can be maintained and only way that social justice can be advanced' (p. 5).

One significant concern is for research on ordinary places to be 'grounded' in a range of micro-spatial everyday practices that are reconstructing public realm and claiming the right to the city. Ordinary people's everyday lives are characterised by continuous adaptations and collisions with the city's various emerging structures of time and space (Lefebvre, 1984). It is now understood as a process of contestation providing possibilities of subversion and appropriation in support of a more democratic, inclusive, and diverse society. Looking at in this way, this study drawing on the Lefebvre's concept of *inhabitation* to reveal conflict and negotiation over everyday space as a break in and challenge to the current structure.

### **3.6. Summary**

This chapter illustrates the tendency of urban development in the historical context and highlights reclamation as urban development based on modernist ideology. In examinations of the political economy in Hong Kong, reclaimed lands are always used for new place branding to enhance the city's hub function. Those solution spaces meet people's needs for open space and help community facilities to cater to the everyday lives of people and upgrade the living environment. They also make Hong Kong a site of invention in which a distinctive new way of life can be planted and provide more appropriate spaces for city innovation. Thus, the metropolitan transformation process is exposing internal influences in the shaping of its social distance and spatial stratification.

External competition has a great influence on urban transformation, and places must exhibit inventiveness to communicate a new identity to the world. Urban transformation has also become a process that places ordinary people in a passive role. Nevertheless, the meanings of these spaces tend to depart from the origins of everyday life and create a serious friction with urban governance. Effectiveness-led planning can be used as an active force to segregate people and streets. As a result, the design becomes a display and loses its functional meaning for the everyday lives of potential users.

In a great city, the ordering of urban life should exhibit a creative synergy between the motivations of individuals and the ambitions of government (Rose, 1992), and the

government must play a seductive role to facilitate the diverse creativities and powers of individuals without any intrusion or regulation. The open space in Hong Kong should convey a positive and active force to improve life for locals and create an 'accessible city' to open up the native identity and users' diversity rather than control unruliness. In sum, this chapter aims to shift the focus of urban planning and public design away from the producers (policymakers, administrators, developers, planners) and products (an international centre of finance, a popular tourist destination, a residential district, a street) and towards the city users (locals, citizens, ordinary people). It emphasizes the users' insurgent response to the everyday space in which their everyday lives are carried out, and provides planners a new design approach based on city users' everyday practices. This shift of attention has developed a user-oriented perspective in the urban planning and design process.

## CHAPTER 4

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### RESEARCH METHODS

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#### 4.1. Preamble

This chapter presents and explains the research methods in greater detail. By modifying the directions and research methods of the European and American researchers (such as Andranovich & Riposa, 1993; Lee, 2000; Lofland & Lofland, 1994; Webb *et al.*, 1999; Whyte, 1988; Yin, 2003), a QUAL–quan mixed methods design is applied to gain an in-depth understanding of the topic. Using the Wan Chai District of Hong Kong as a case study, this chapter includes an empirical study with a physical survey, intensive field observations and interviews to fully consider everyday life (or practice) in planning and design. On the basis of the user-centred investigations, the author develops narrative mapping methods to visualise the data and to reflect on the *fine-grain* of everyday life. The research methods redirect the focus of the research from the interests of the administrators, developers and planners towards city users.

#### 4.2. Overview of the Research Design

Urban transformation in Hong Kong is the object of this study. Thus, the street, which is the most dynamic public space, full of diverse needs, expectations, values, rules, communication, and opportunities (Anderson, 1978; Appleyard, 1981; Celik, Favro, & Ingersoll, 1996; Fyfe, 1998; Hass-Klau *et al.*, 1999; Jacobs, 1993; Leeming, 1977; Mourdon, 1987; Southworth & Ben-Joseph, 1997), and other types of street-level public space are selected as the research focus to consider the quality of the public living environment given local needs and existing lifestyles. Furthermore, a long-term (more

than three years of study) user-oriented approach was adopted to obtain an in-depth understanding of how city users live in the public living environment. This study attempts to go beyond the 'lived' dimensions that rely on formalistic interpretations of the public living environment and focus on developmental matters with a top-down approach, instead using time changes, such as everyday practices or experience-in-place, which have dynamic potential in an urban environment. By situating the production of space within the everyday practice of ordinary people, as with Heidegger's notion of being-in-the-world, person-environment bonds become the fundamental unit of analysis for both physical location and the nature of the experience. In *On the Plaza: The Politics of Public Space and Culture* (2000), using the modern urban plaza as example, Low complains of the neglect of 'local stories' of place in the mainly western discourse on public space:

[M]acro-political interpretations...are not sufficient for understanding the plaza because they leave out the people who use the plazas and its importance in their everyday lives. These perspectives exclude the indigenous archaeological and ethno-historical past, as well as the memories, stories, and meanings of plaza life. Instead, Eurocentric explanations of the origins of plaza architecture and formalistic readings of political symbolism determine what is known, while the local stories go untold (pp. 33-34).

Highmore (2002) writes the following concerning the research of everyday practice (or life) as a concept relating to the nature of urban life and urban development:

[E]veryday life studies will require from the start more than one perspective. It also suggests that one cannot look simply from above, by looking at established and dominant assemblages of writings supplemented by empirical ethnography. After all, the kinds of knowledge that can be assembled through observation and questioning are also likely to express that which can be most easily articulated. It might also be necessary to grasp the texture of the everyday through experience in art and literature. Everyday life experience may in fact be situated between the kinds of attention that would focus either on subjective experience or on the institutional frames of cultural life (p. 30).

Hence, to construct a research design framework, this study is in line with the focus of the phenomenological project engaged in QUAL-quant mixed research to reveal the social construction of reality (Berger & Luckmann, 1967; Morse & Niehaus, 2009), considering changes in urban morphology, transformation of social life, individual



actions, and the flow of repetitive experiences in space and time, as well as the meaning in these processes, forms of the everyday which are seen as natural and given, thereby concealing their history and the socio-spatial conditions of their construction (Mavridis, 2004; Vaiou & Lykogianni, 2006). This rationale is consistent with understanding the everyday practice of ordinary people in terms of ‘how they perceive it, describe it, feel about it, judge it, remember it, make sense of it, and talk about it with others’ (Patton, 2002, p. 104), which is the most appropriate direction and approach in outlining the design research used in the study.

#### 4.2.1. An Integrated Research Framework

To understand and analyse the public realm through the behavioural process of ‘complexification’ with experiential and temporal dimensions instead of fixed typologies, drawing on Canter’s Place Model necessitates a comprehensive research design that address enquiries on three domains from an integrated perspective. As such, this study proposes an integrated research framework (see Figure 4.1) by assembling materials from various sources to indicate possibilities of understanding leading to visual representations of spatial relationships.

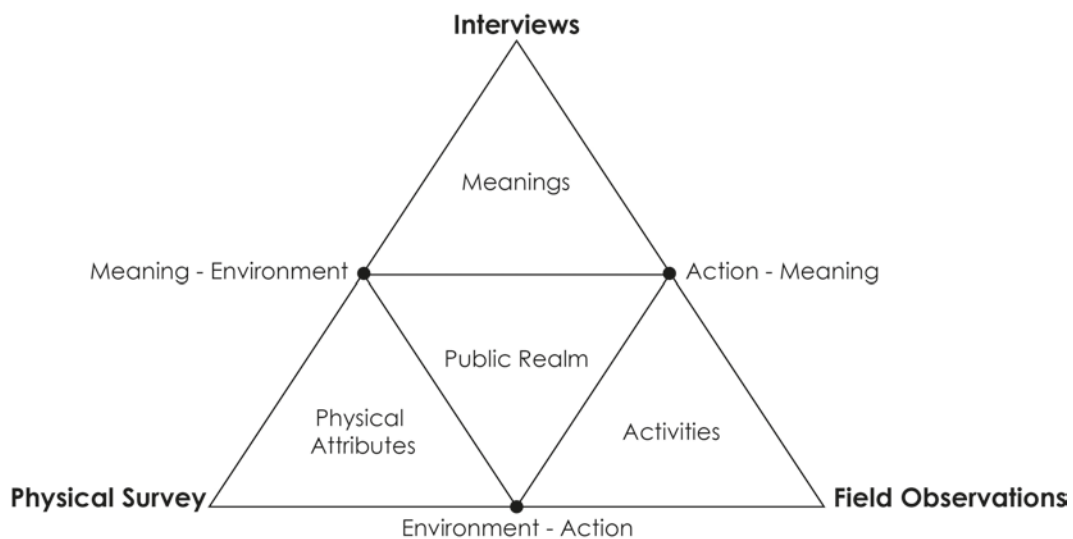


Figure 4.1. The integrated research framework

With new vision to investigate hidden relationships, the three methods through which the author presents the materials in the case study follow a cartographic logic that produces dynamic montages compressed in time to identify knowledge and themes in spatial practices. First, the spatial properties of the case were studied using physical and

syntactic morphological analysis to explore the tendencies of urban development, morphological evolution, and underlying spatial structure. Second, a longitudinal intensive observation of spatial behaviour was carried out to determine how people interact with their public living environment. Third, face-to-face interviews were conducted with government officials and administrators, an urban planner and designer, residents, workers, and visitors to collect information on perceptions and attitudes towards the public realm of living environment.

This study constructs a new method from three perspectives: the spatial properties, narrative images and anecdotal evidence together with a series of meanings and themes of the construction public space with an emphasis on the sense of ‘practiced space’—the construction of the living dimension of urban space and its itineraries from the everyday practices of ordinary people.

#### **4.3. The Case Study as Research Design**

The case study approach used in the study includes a description phase, explanation phase, and evaluation phase and needs to be confirmed as a suitable strategy in line with the research purpose. As Andranovich and Riposa (1993) and Yin (2012) state in their discussions of urban research, descriptive and explanatory research elements should be applied initially; this study presents some descriptions of the everyday practices of ordinary people and the collected data bearing on cause–effect relationships. In agreement with Merriam (1988), a case study was adopted because it is ‘an ideal design for understanding and interpreting observations of social phenomena’, with the understanding that it is ‘impossible to separate the phenomenon’s variables from their context’ (pp. 2, 10). Yin (2003) also points out that a ‘case study can investigate a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident’ (p. 13). In addition to ‘[arriving] at a comprehensive understanding of groups under study’ (Barker, 1968, p. 233), an appropriate study can dissect ambiguous urban phenomena with sufficient details and be used to evaluate contemporary urban design plans. Therefore, the case study approach has been adopted in this case to provide an in-depth exploration and a better understanding of the objectives of this study, and to generate a strategy to inspire urban design and planning for inhabitable urban spaces.

To demonstrate this notion in terms of socio-cultural and -spatial changes in Hong Kong, the selection of the case study area is subject to the following criteria:

- ∞ The area should be representative of Hong Kong's indigenous culture but should also juxtapose cultural differences and diversity.
- ∞ The urban form of the area should be consistent with the trajectory of historical development to emphasise rapid urban transformation.
- ∞ The area should comprise different kinds of environment settings and affordances that provide opportunities to engage in activity.



Figure 4.2. Wan Chai's location and urban configuration with street layout

Centrally located on the northern shore of Hong Kong Island, Wan Chai is one of Hong Kong's oldest districts. Wan Chai was an ideal setting for in-depth study because it has the potential to shape city spaces in two distinct modes: 'The conservative mode restricts co-presence to conserve or reproduce cultural patterns; and the other generates the maximum co-presence to optimise the material conditions for everyday life' (Hillier & Netto, 2002, p. 182). In terms of its urban form (see Figure 4.2), Wan Chai's main streets run north-and-south, which is a characteristic that epitomises Hong Kong's urban development history. Tso and Ho (2006) note that Wan Chai exemplifies some of the typically controversial debates regarding people, space and policy. Urban transformation is contested in Wan Chai; debate centres on the preservation of culture and community networks and on spatial fragmentation related to social polarisation. Given its long history and traditional cultural characteristics, Wan Chai's many historical sites and local

communities comprise essential social capital. Wan Chai has many heritage and historical sites that have been evaluated and conserved by legislation and the URA, including three legislatively historical sites, 38 historical buildings and six conservation projects. However, a recent development strategy based on Hong Kong's desire to become Asia's world city requires more space; this has generated a series of conflicts between people, the environment and policies.

Wan Chai is both one of Hong Kong's busiest commercial areas (in the North), featuring office towers, hotels, and an international convention and exhibition centre, and a decaying residential zone (in the South) with market streets, local communities, and open spaces; the two areas are divided by Gloucester Road. The unique nature of the 'exhibition economy', spurred by the building of the HKCEC, has led to a new brand image for Hong Kong and has driven the development of related service industries, including tourism, commerce, lodging, and advertising. As the first area of Hong Kong to be developed, it is reasonable to conclude that Wan Chai's historical reputation is not only a charming trait for increasing the growth of the exhibition economy but also a valuable resource for promoting urban regeneration, renaissance, revitalisation, and renewal. The changes in population between 2001 and 2011 (see Appendix I) reported in publications by the Census and Statistics Department (CSD) (2011c) suggest that the district has undergone an overwhelming socio-spatial transformation through upgrading. This process manifests itself in a variety of ways, such as rapid changes in the distribution of commercial development (Tang, Choy, & Wat, 2000), social distance and spatial differentiation (Forrest, Grange, & Yip, 2004), and physical sprawl, decayed communities, and political conflict (Tso, Germano, & Ho, 2006). Wan Chai's restructuring may be representative of current changes in Hong Kong's wider urban areas. This restructuring aims to restore deteriorating buildings and improve the living environment of these decaying communities. The battle for living space by ordinary people in these areas involves a series of tactical conflicts against the imposition of repressive demands. On the surface, urban reclamation and multimodal living spaces constitute hybrid urbanism in this area.

#### **4.4. Research Structure and Analysis**

In this dissertation, Wan Chai District is examined using an integrated research framework. Understanding and analysing the public realm via Habraken's urban orders and Canter's Place Model necessitates a comprehensive research design that addresses

three components: physical form, actions and meanings. Thus, the QUAL–quan mixed approach is used in two stages of the research, with the qualitative approach yielding an ideal that can then be supplemented via the quantitative approach (see Figure 4.3). Qualitative and quantitative data were collected simultaneously and sequentially and merged together to make the study exploratory, inductive, and deductive.

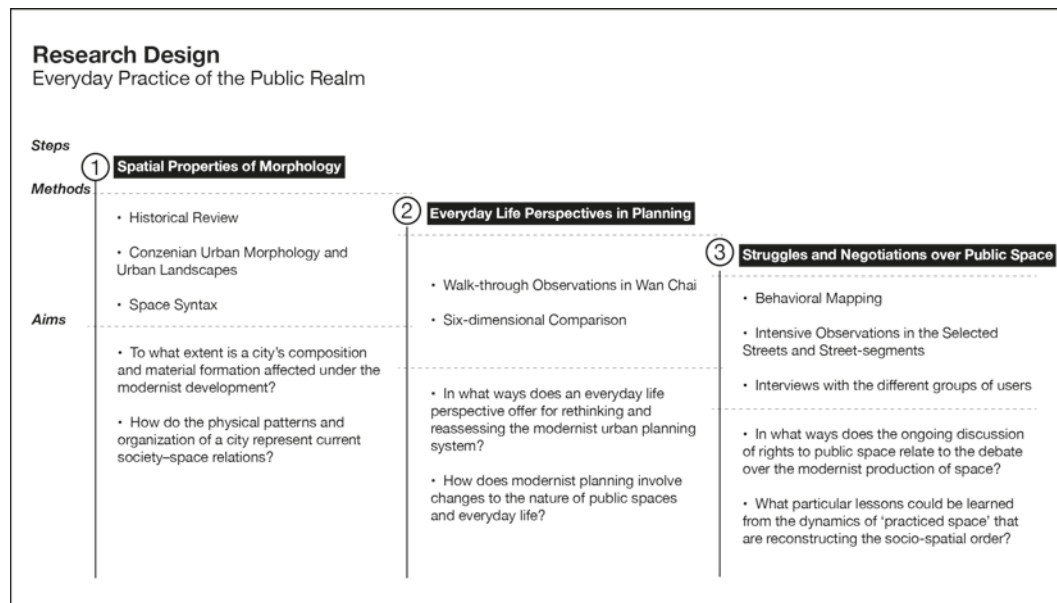


Figure 4.3. An overview of the research design used in this study

To investigate ordinary people's practice in the context of a rapidly changing urban environment, qualitative methods and tools were chosen as the principal component to investigate 'different sites in the ambiguous urban space, such as reclamation area[s]' (Yin, 2003, 2012). Furthermore, the cross-sectional studies using the longitudinal perspective have been used to consider time-related processes from different groups at a single point over time or the same group at different points over time. A variety of techniques in the qualitative component, including behavioural mapping, field observations (with extensive field notes and time-lapse photography), and direct interviews were utilised to 'process particular rhythmic qualities' (Edensor, 2010, p. 3), 'tap attitudes and behaviours' (Andranovich & Riposa, 1993, p. 79), and 'better understand people's behaviour in the environment' (Sanoff, 1978, p. 12; see also Schatzman & Freeman, 1973). Thus, the theoretical underpinning to everyday practice is that research thinking can provide inspiration from the morphological approach on tracing historical urban evolution and identify the underlying spatial structures relating to properties of the physical environment. This enables a comprehensive understanding of the urban system as 'a spatial and functional whole' (Hillier, 1996) and bridges a gap that is currently debilitating to both research on and the practice of city building (see also

Conzen & Conzen, 2004; Ganiggia & Maffei, 2001; Moudon, 1997). Thus, supplementary quantifiable evidence on urban morphology is included to reveal whether Hong Kong's high density gives everyday life there unique features. This adds quantitative thinking to the qualitative component and establishes an integrated evaluation system for the urban study.

In this regard, 'time', 'space', and 'methodological' triangulations have been incorporated into the longitudinal study to shed light on the dynamic aspects of everyday places through the examination ordinary people's use of these spaces (see also Denzin, 1970). As Cohen and Manion (1994) said, 'Triangular techniques attempt to map out, or explain more fully, the richness and complexity of human behaviour by studying it from more than one standpoint' (p. 233). This research principle and methodology not only maintain a chain of evidence and increase 'the overall quality of the case' (Yin, 2003) but also illuminate a panorama of real-time activities and show a lived vision with vernacular contexts—both aspects that are lacking in many recent studies.

#### **4.4.1. Qualitative Core Components**

Qualitative data collection, which has a number of advantages over the quantitative approach, was adopted in this study. As reviewed above, over the past half-century, Hong Kong has lacked a serious and objective plan, long-term objectives and a user-oriented approach. Thus, the basic rationale and direction of the qualitative approach used in this study follows Lynch (1981):

We are attracted to numerical data, which are much more precise, firm, and impressive than the soft, subjective stuff of patterns and feelings.... Planners will strain to increase the quantity of open space and forget to monitor its quality. The amount of something is one of its important characteristics.... But the key test is the behavioural fit. There are two ways of observing that fit. The first is to watch people acting in a place.... The second method is to ask the users themselves, whose sense of the appropriateness of a place is the final measure of its fit (pp. 152–153).

Adopting field observation and direct interviews for qualitative research is useful for 'telling the story from the participant's viewpoint [and] providing the rich descriptive detail that sets quantitative results into their human context' (Trochim & Donnelly, 2007). This study uses structured field observations and direct interviews conducted since

2011, focusing on ordinary people's minor practices in everyday places within the large area of reclaimed land in Wan Chai District.

#### 4.4.1.1. Pilot Study

Before conducting the field research activities for the core study, a pilot study was designed and conducted in Wan Chai between May and August 2011 on normal weekdays and weekends to test and improve the data collection instruments. According to the different functions in the urban system associated with the most variously spatial behaviour, the samples for the pilot study were initially intended to verify the feasibility of observation method, estimate the time schedule and determine optimal size of the street segment for the formal field study.

*Verifying the Feasibility of the Observation Method.* For observation, preliminary visits and walk-by observations with photo capture and notes were conducted in the selected area for the following purposes:

- ∞ To identify the environment setting and spatial structure that are representative of and conducive to urban transformation;
- ∞ To find which parts of the street, space, and furniture respondents usually used;
- ∞ To record dynamic movement and static occupancy based on different users' profiles;
- ∞ To produce a set of new methods and tools for observation to identify the rhythms of everyday life.

The streets running north-and-south in the different layout patterns could be a unique characteristic of the nature of urban development. The footbridge system, another unique spatial structure feature, was considered as a street-level facility that influences the practices of city users. Thus, the locations and routes for observation were situated alongside the footbridge structure to consider as much 'practiced space' as possible. Following this, to fully capture the streets' inner life (e.g., pedestrian movement, stationary behaviour, and informal activities), time-lapse photography was used to study the same locations over time and to identify the nature and causes of change.

*Estimating the Time Schedule.* During the pilot study, preliminary observation was carried out to test:

- ∞ The differences in everyday spaces according to the days devoted to labour or rest;
- ∞ The multitude of patterns and routines of people at different times of day.

The pilot study showed that days of rest featured more varied street activity patterns. Circulation of time (e.g., commuting hours, availability of time and manpower, operation time of street-level facilities and services, and so forth) was considered as a determinant influencing the cyclical repetition of daily routines and the appropriateness of a range of street activities. Thus, the visits for the core study would include public holidays, special days and events, and would include the most typical periods of time (e.g., rush hour, early morning, noontime and so on).

*Determining the Optimal Route for Field Observations.* Given the aforementioned criteria for the core study, the observations for recording data required a specific north–south observation route to determine:

- ∞ The units of study based on the diversity of environmental affordances with the segment-line characteristic of the urban area;
- ∞ Where the time-lapse photography should occur to capture the subtleties of everyday interactions.

Therefore, it is rational to record the observations by the specific units of study since a large-scale case study may not be recorded accurately. Thus, the optimal unit for the core study was determined to be the street segment.

#### 4.4.1.2. Units of Study

Larger-scope research in the area is essential to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the perception of public space. The field study was conducted at two levels—street and street segment—within Wan Chai District. The streets to be studied



were selected first. The street segments constituted smaller units of study within the selected streets and their surroundings.

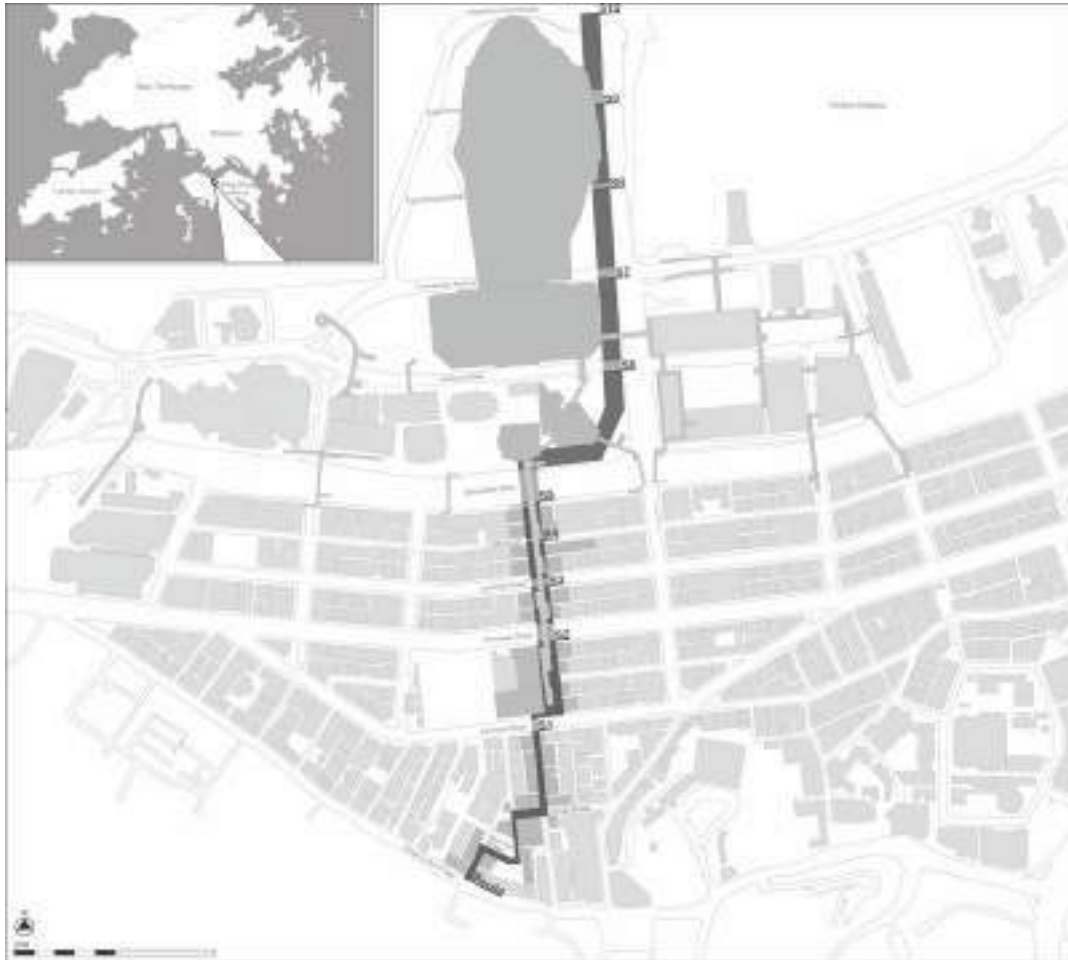







Figure 4.4. Figure-ground analysis of Wan Chai, indicating the observation route, with the streets and street segments marked




To study rapid changes in the urban environment, several walk-bys were carried out in the study area to make preliminary observations. The streets were selected based on (a) differences in historical background, environment setting and physical configuration, scale, and nature and characteristics of activities due to reclamation programmes over the last 100 years and (b) local life in the same or similar street context. Hence, 12 streets (Waterfront Promenade, Expo Drive, Expo Drive Central, Convention Avenue, Harbour Road, Gloucester Road, Jaffe Road, Lockhart Road, Hennessy Road, Johnston Road, Cross Street and Queen's Road East) in Wan Chai were selected as the core cases for field research (see Table 4.1). The selected study sites comprise different types of streets, including traditional market streets for buying and selling, main arterial roads used only for circulation, connecting avenues for parking, and waterfront promenades for leisure.

The physical fabric and configuration of the original shoreline (Queen's Road East) were changed to the present waterfronts, which are over one kilometre apart; these changes are part of an ever-transforming globalised process that has spanned 100 years. With urban reclamation and multimodal living spaces, the area is a crossroads of the old and the new. In addition, following the pedestrian schemes implemented in the crowded parts of Wan Chai (see Appendix II), Triangle Street, Tai Wo Street, Stone Nullah Lane, Tai Yuen Street, Spring Garden Lane, Lee Tung Street, Amoy Street, Swatow Street, Tai Wong Street East, Ship Street, Lun Fat Street, and Gresson Street in Wan Chai South were selected as supplementary cases to strengthen the evidence and argument of this study (Yin, 2012).

Table 4.1. A general description of each selected street for the core study

Street	View	Description
Waterfront Promenade		The promenade is an open area that offers access to the waterfront for public enjoyment. It has become a popular tourist destination in Hong Kong, but the local residents seldom come to enjoy the splendid landscape.
Expo Drive		Expo Drive is mainly used for on-street parking, and was constructed beneath the HKCEC. The street primarily serves as a place for the loading and unloading of tourists visiting the centre, as well as a place of replenishment.
Expo Drive Central		This is another passage constructed beneath the HKCEC for the purposes of improving circulation. However, few vehicles and people select this street as a bypass because the way is dark and narrow.
Convention Avenue		Convention Avenue provides major traffic thoroughfares between the HKCEC and the Wan Chai ferry pier and nearby areas. During the special events such as fireworks, celebration, election, this street usually implements as blockade line to divide the area.

Harbour Road		Because it adjoins the HKECE, hotels, and business towers, Harbour Road is always very busy with a continuous flow of automobile traffic. Therefore, pedestrians are more likely to use the footbridge rather than walking alongside the street.
Gloucester Road		Gloucester Road is the existing principal east-west route through Wan Chai and observed to be presently overloaded with vehicle traffic. The area north of the road is often called Wan Chai North. It is one of the busiest commercial areas in Hong Kong, and is composed of business towers, hotels, spectacular buildings, and landmarks.
Jaffe Road		Jaffe Road is a one-way vehicular street with on-street parking and a narrow sidewalk. It is located between and parallel to Gloucester Road and Lockhart Road. There are different types of buildings along Jaffe Road, dating from the 1970s to the 2000s, generally used for residential and commercial purposes on the upper floors, and for retail and restaurant purposes on the ground floor. Because there are always cars parked by the roadside, the street is much more lively and interesting.
Lockhart Road		Lockhart Road connects Wan Chai to Causeway Bay, and is located near Hennessy Road. The vicinity of Lockhart Road West is renowned for its red-light district, and was the node for the navy and sailors in the Vietnam War during 1960s. Although the number of bars and clubs has gradually declined due to the end of the war, urban re-development, and decreasing customers, that area remains a favorite place for locals and visitors to drink and socialize.
Hennessy Road		This street mainly comprises multi-story commercial and office buildings, shopping arcades, and a variety of retail shops; it is one of the most popular shopping streets for locals. Due to its width (six traffic lanes) and flat character, public processions from Victoria Park would frequently use the road for access to the Central Government Complex.

Thomson Road		Thomson Road contains two traffic lanes and middle-wide sidewalks. It is composed of mixed-used buildings (shops on the ground and residences on the floors above), commercial buildings, restaurants, and schools. Due to the frequent loading and unloading activities along the street, it has become overcrowded with parked vehicles.
Cross Street		Cross Street, located between Queen's Road East and Johnston road, is a typical open-air bazaar in the old district of Wan Chai. It has an 80-year history, and some hawker pitches have been serving the local community for over 70 years. To local people, the open-air bazaar is not only a place for buying daily necessities, but also a favorite place for people to meet and interact. It is an important hub for social encounters and exchange.
Queen's Road East		Queen's Road East is one of the oldest thoroughfares in Hong Kong and has historical significance to the island, as it was built over 170 years ago. With the passage of time, it has become a major shopping and business area for local residents in Wan Chai, with diverse new and old shopping arcades, commercial buildings, Chinese furniture stores, and historic buildings on either side of the road. The last include Hung Shing Temple, Wan Chai Market, and old Wan Chai Post Office.

Intensive fieldwork was undertaken in the selected streets and street segments to highlight the segment-line urban area using morphological analysis in the context of reclamation work (see Figure 4.4). The series of street segments comprises a sufficient number of public spaces (e.g., promenades, plazas, open bazaars), street-level facilities and services (e.g., retail, commercial services, stalls/kiosks, restaurants), and transportation facilities (e.g., parking, bus routes, transit entrances, footbridges). Thus, the selected street segments in the area are representative in terms of the objectives of this study and are conducive to conducting intensive observations on street users' spatial behaviour, which includes meaning, sense-making and subjective experience.

#### 4.4.1.3. Time Arrangement

As shown in Appendix III, following the pilot study, the intensive fieldwork was conducted from September 2011 to February 2013 (supplementary walk-by observations

were carried out in the ensuing year and a half), with a focus on the everyday practices of city users in Wan Chai's reclamation area. The additional observations were to collect updated and relevant information during some special events, such as the annual Hong Kong 1 July marches and the Umbrella Revolution that began in September 2014.

To capture the rhythms of everyday practices and performances, this study follows Lefebvre in *Rhythmanalysis: Space, Time and Everyday Life* (2004):

Cyclical repetition and the linear repetitive separate out under analysis, but in reality interfere with one another constantly. The cyclical originates in the cosmic, in nature: days, nights, seasons, the waves and tides of the sea, monthly cycles etc. The linear would come rather from social practice, therefore from human activity: the monotony of actions and movements, imposed structures. Great cyclical rhythms last for a period and restart: dawn, always new, often superb, inaugurates the return of the everyday (p. 5).

Given this rhythmic interaction, the study considers what days of visits are reasonable. In this regard, observations and direct interviews—the main research activities—were conducted on *weekdays*, *weekends*, and *public holidays, festivals* and *special occasions*.

Lynch states in *The Image of the City* (1960) that a city has different 'appearances' based on time, and the 'fitness' of a place for its users may not be consistent as time passes. In the pilot study to determine the time scale, it was observed that the time colonisation of user behaviour was concentrated in different periods (e.g., early morning, rush hour, noontime). This schedule was expected to provide a complete understanding of human activity in the streets. In addition, some field activities were planned to include special occasions. For example, after learning the specific time and route the day before, the author conducted a field study for the annual Hong Kong 1 July marches. This instance also considered social temporality as a part of behaviour studies in everyday space.

#### 4.4.1.4. Behavioural Mapping

Behavioural mapping is used to understand the relationship between the temporal and spatial forms of the setting and activities (Marusic, 2011; Mehta, 2009). Based on the concepts of *environmental affordance* and *behaviour setting* in Chapter 2, behavioural mapping now offers an efficient method for recording the location of subjects and

measuring their activity levels simultaneously within a set time interval. For this specific study, a north–south stretch of 1.1 kilometres in Wan Chai consisting of 10 street segments was selected for mapping (see Figure 4.4). A walkthrough method was used to record stationary activities (any activity taking more than one minute) on a sheet. People standing for waiting for trams, cars, buses or traffic lights were considered as part of movement and were not recorded in the observations. Each person meeting these criteria was represented by a dot on the sheet. In addition, people who were interacting with others or who were engaged in a common activity were indicated as a group on the sheet. Standing, sitting and instrumental were recorded as variable activities. Data were collected every two hours between 5:00 AM and 11:00 PM on normal weekdays and weekends on each street segment.

The walk-by observations entailed walking along the stretch using manually transcribed maps, notes and photographs to visualise how activities are distributed over space and time. However, they did not capture the inner dynamics and subtleties of everyday interactions. Thus, time-lapse photography was also used to assure data consistency.

#### 4.4.1.5. Field Observations

The best practical way to identify and understand everyday life practices is to *observe* users' everyday lives and *listen* to them without imposing any obstructive changes to their daily routines and living environment (Lee, 2000; Whyte, 1988). Observation has many advantages for street studies, as it can 'cover events in real time' and 'covers context of event' (Yin, 2003, p. 80). Observation enables the author to 'better understand people's behaviour in the environment...it is a method of looking at action between people and their environment' (Sanoff, 1992, p. 33), and it is conducive to discovering 'what goes on in the subculture or organisations being studied' and gaining 'insight into their operation (especially hidden aspects not easily recognized) and how they function' (Berger, 1998, p. 105). As the primary data collection method, field observation illustrates the significance and uniqueness of the real-time practices of users, which have been limitations of a number of recent studies of open space in Hong Kong.

To be effective, field observations should focus on appropriate methods and objects (Rutledge, 1985). Sanoff (1992) further points out that 'observing unobtrusively allows the study of people's behaviour without their realizing that their activities are important'



(p. 33). Whyte (1988) interprets the purposes of this observation approach in *City: Recovering the Center*:

We tried to do it unobtrusively and only rarely did we affect what we were studying. We were strongly motivated not to. Certain kinds of street people get violent if they think they are being spied upon (p. 4).

Thus, unobtrusive direct observations that do not affect ‘natural’ behaviour and events in their original settings were adopted in the study to illustrate how city users interact with their living environments and deal with public spaces and products.

To record data during the observations conducted in a ‘natural’ and ‘unstructured’ setting, walk-by observations were used to find out information about behaviour in particular (i.e., social or informal activities). The author walked slowly through the streets and street segments in the study area and recorded the activities city users were engaged in and their posture. Simultaneously, to consider the complex and multi-faceted temporal unfolding of everyday practice and the ways in which various rhythms intermingle and affect the playing out of these practices, time-lapse photography techniques were used in the longitudinal studies at the sites, and then to compare differences over time. As suggested by Latham and McCormack (2010), a series of images can be useful in rhythm analysis and can ‘provide techniques for thinking through the rhythms of urban life’ (p. 256). Hence, the format of the observation used in this study differed from the piecemeal type of walk-by observation. In contrast to the behavioural mapping that showed the activity distribution over time and space, the intensive observations were carried out systematically on 10 street segments, especially at the most used locale, and photos were taken during different periods of time (e.g., rush hour, noontime), spread out on weekdays and weekends but also during special days and events (e.g., Christmas Eve, Christmas, the 1 July marches).

The combination of walk-by observations and intensive observations offered a ‘snapshot’ of everyday practices on the selected streets and street segments at different periods of time from morning to late evening over more than three years in all weather conditions. In suggesting the utility of field observations in understanding human-environment relationships, the study is considered to provide ‘answers to these five questions: what was done (act), when or where was it done (scene), who did it (agent), how he did it (agency), and why (purpose)’ (Asplund, 1979, p. 12). As such, the field observations classified these questions into three groups—what; when and where; and who and with

whom—to obtain an in-depth understanding of how city uses practiced everyday life in the study area, including how they interacted with other users (i.e., human–human interaction) and the living environment and facilities (human–environment and human–product interactions).



Figure 4.5. An example of observation content and corresponding questions in a physical environment

Echoing the above interpretation of the relation between physical settings and what people do in them, in *Inquiry by Design* (1984), Zeisel suggests that observing environmental behaviour ‘means systematically watching people use their environments’, which ‘generates data about people’s activities and the relationships needed to sustain them; about regularities of behaviour, about expected uses, new uses, and misuses of a place; and about behavioural opportunities and constraints that environments provide’ (p. 111). Here, an observation sample (e.g., Hennessy Road) with time-lapse photography data was exemplified according to obvious changes in everyday space in terms of use and function. Figure 4.5 illustrates an example of observing environmental behaviour in a physical setting. The demographic factors of the users were the subject of the behavioural observation, which was closely related to individuals’ propensity to engage in activities. Additionally, the physical factors of the setting (e.g., scale, facility, service, etc.) were also measured to reveal the opportunity to engage in activities, such as the perceived quality and availability of the setting. Thus, the observations probe the interactions of individuals with others and with the physical environment.



#### 4.4.1.6. Interviews

Although observation was the primary data collection method, interviews were also conducted to clarify these observations.

According to Yin (2003), the interview process should ‘follow your own line of inquiry, as reflected by your case study protocol, and...ask you actual questions in an unbiased manner that also serves the needs of your line of inquiry’ (pp. 89–90). Thus, this study used two kinds of interviews. Semi-structured interviews were carried out with Wan Chai District Council (DC) members (i.e., Mr. David Lai and Mr. K. C. Suen), officers of the Wan Chai Home Affairs Department (HAD), a spokesman from the Wan Chai Street Market Concern Group (Mr. Tsui), a group formed by Wan Chai’s residents and users, research scholars, and planning consultancies to obtain information about urban planning and development, public policy, quality of the living environment, management of city space, and public facility design. To facilitate the process, visual elements such as maps, photo-captures of special locations and activities, and historical records and archives related to the streets accompanied the interview questions, which were designed in advance. In addition, direct interviews were used to assess not only ‘What have people done?’ but also ‘Why have people done it?’ (Berger, 1998, pp. 55–62). The questions typically ‘were not structured, or predetermined...but were asked in an open-ended manner’ (Punch, 1998, p. 222). Direct interviews were conducted as opportunities arose during the field research with local residents and users; these took the form of casual conversations. In this study, the direct interviews were used to delineate and synthesise a picture of everyday life in the public spaces and to obtain information regarding the way the interviewees perceived public spaces.

Taken together, these observations and interviews help identify the practical nature of the spaces arising from people’s lived experiences in Wan Chai.

#### 4.4.1.7. Qualitative Data Analysis

The study’s goal is to consider the issue of repetition and change of everyday spaces across time to identify the underlying thoughts of ordinary people on the production of space. However, this issue poses a serious challenge for large volumes of data: Is it

possible to distil a real-life panorama into an analysable form? How is the everyday considered as an indexical picture for emerging phenomena? How can such phenomena be drawn with the proper struggles and meanings?

The study of such questions requires an understanding of the actual making and practice of public space by field observations and interviews. Given the nature of this study, qualitative data analysis should lead to better knowledge of people more than space. As suggested by Andranovich and Riposa (1993), qualitative data analysis ‘provides information about the ‘human’ side of an issue—that is, the often contradictory behaviour, beliefs, opinions, emotions and relationships of individuals’ (p. 1). The user-oriented lens can identify ‘who’ is on the street and what they are doing on a different scale and realm through qualitative exploration of particular events or ideas. However, the key issue of the study is not to label the various pieces of data with reference codes but to obtain design knowledge. To meet this challenge, instead of relying only on different types of data or methods, the author acquires clues from the field observations and interviews as well. Bateson and Mead (1942) point out that photo captures are useful for overcoming habituation and limited memory and perspective. As Relieu (1999) observes, photographs offer the opportunity to access human conduct as it unfolds by freezing the movement of people, and to account for their activities with demographic variables, enabling the identification of details that would otherwise remain undetected. To analyse these photos, the coding of mundane behaviour is necessary to identify their important and meaningful characteristics. As Cochoy and Calvignac (2013) state, aggregating intrinsically observed information is a powerful way to uncover hidden facts and to obtain emerging patterns and effects. Applying the coding approach to the field of everyday life is helpful not only to measure human–environment–product interplay for a given period, and but also to trace its changes.

Through comprehensive analysis of the collection of photographs, the observable variables were obtained for the grid. It was oriented to code opportunities to engage in activities with specific purposes, allowing the identification of themes of ‘who was doing what’. The different periods of time refer more to noticeable changes, such as the reconstruction of everyday space in the selected sites. By considering the broader public’s physical and social dimensions of everyday life in the selected sites, the author notes the necessity of integrating the narratives of both space and the physicality of space to achieve the major findings of the study. The photo narratives can be a key bridge to communicating what current planned spaces have been missing from people’s socio-spatial context (Duneier & Carter, 1999). However, in what way might the narratives

consider more than the conventional role that qualitative data plays in illustration and detection and be a significant medium of analysis to discuss social reconstruction for institutional change?

Given the need to communicate spatial relationships, the author developed a mapping approach to go beyond representing points of view by including user-oriented investigations into how urban spaces are actually used. The strategy is to map the confederation of people who engaged in contact with each other and the competing narratives of what the space is for and how users understand their environments within it. These narratives involve daily activity but rarely receive a great deal of attention. Thus, mapping provides a visual narrative of living dynamics such as the social negotiation of the streets. Furthermore, instead of demarcating built objects and land parcel boundaries in planning maps, the streets can be delineated in a series of superimposed epistemologies to map certain kinds of dynamic subjects (e.g., people, place, time, etc.). The process of realisation calls our attention to how such elements are related to each other spatially. By using the language of the social science tradition rather than that of physical urban design, knowledge creation through these maps presents more local spatial facts for the ongoing public debate about urban design paradigms. Therefore, mapping the inner dynamics is not only a positivist approach to locating and measuring everyday activities but also in examining the negotiation process and its narrative form to communicate in official settings for the planning, design and management of public space.

In sum, the purpose of the analysis is not to account for flow or activity by but to discover the subtle dynamics of people's everyday practices.

#### **4.4.2. Quantitative Supplementary Components**

The quantitative supplementary components are mainly composed of key measures of space syntax with assigned values of spatial properties to investigate the underlying structures of the various layout patterns. While archival analysis of the physical surveys commonly used in morphological studies is carried out to provide a general understanding of urban layouts in terms of their geometrical properties, space syntax analysis focuses on the relational properties of the physical environment to identify how each part derives its identity by being differentiated in terms of the spatial logic of the city as a whole.

In examining the relationship between human beings and their environment, the physical variables people seek or need constitute all aspects of a person's environmental milieu, including social and psychological components (Lewin, 1951). As Burnett (1976) asserts, perception and cognition are intervening psychological processes, filtering mechanisms of human behaviour in the environment. This involves qualitative spatial learning developed from an understanding of topological relations to metric properties of the physical layout and to Euclidean concepts of the environment. However, the physical and spatial complexity of the built environment suggests the question of how to comprehend a large urban space all at once.

According to space syntax theory, the spatial configuration of the environment can be better explained through the formal properties of geometry, typology, location, orientation and natural movement (Hillier & Hanson, 1984). Thus, due to the complexity of street systems in Wan Chai District, the space syntax approach is applied to identify the morphological logic of the city with representation, description, quantification and interpretation of the spatial configuration.

#### 4.4.2.1. Space Syntax

To deal with the complex language of the city, the system of spaces created by buildings and spatial interconnections is considered the underlying nature of the whole structure. For instance, in *The Architecture of the City* (1982), Rossi describes a city as 'a work of art to one artistic episode having more or less legibility rather than to a concrete, overall experience' (p. 35). This view assumes that each part composed of space units is independent of the others and autonomous. Instead of differentiating between two objects in terms of shape or size, there is a relation among others through continuity or consistency. By investigating space as a pattern in itself,

Space is described in terms of abstract properties of topological nature rather than in terms of geometric regularities... Space is described as a relational pattern which can be explored and understood without being directly visible in its entirety (Peponis, 1989, p. 102).

Hence, space syntax applications tend to analyse spatial representations of each part's differentiation to meaningfully depict the structure of the whole and to investigate the relationship between the function and the structure of the city. More specifically, in

syntax analysis, the object of concept is represented in the convex space and the axial map of a plan to considered well-correlated urban space in graphs (see Figure 4.6).

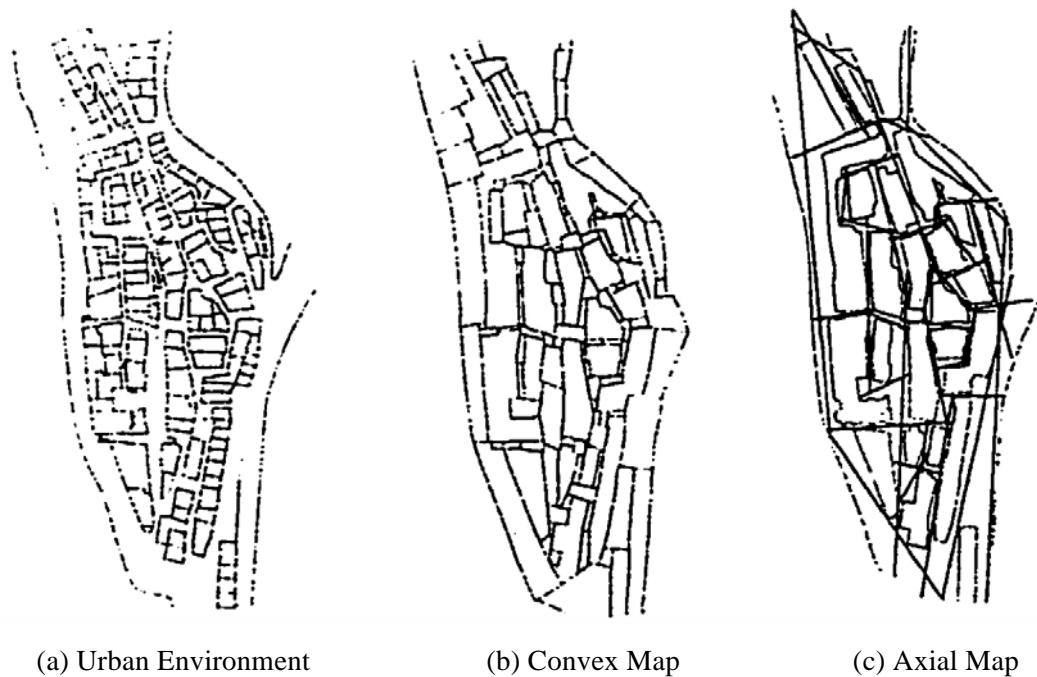


Figure 4.6. Example of convex and axial modelling

*Source: Hillier & Hanson, 1984*

As mentioned previously, the street network of the urban configuration is the representation of the urban environment. In this context, space syntax analysis begins with the spatial properties of the street network, with axial lines indicating the fewest possible largest convex spaces. The convex spaces are defined by polygons where no line drawn between any two points in the space goes outside the space (Hillier & Hanson, 1984, p. 98). The longest and fewest straight lines of permeability, also known as axial lines, cover all the possible spaces of the urban area and street network connection. Axial lines are associated with physical properties, providing information related to how people experience the use of space.

The description analysis of the spatial configuration of the urban space is modelled by an axial map. Constructed through computer-based analysis (i.e., DepthmapX), the axial map is coloured according to different assigned values to permit quantitative analysis of different spatial patterns in its whole and parts. The map includes various measures of relationships of the urban space in question.

#### 4.4.2.2. Representing the Street Network

As suggested by space syntax, part of the physical survey is based on axial map analysis. Before modelling the axial map through the layout, it is necessary to identify the spatial scope for axial mapping. The edge effect is a phenomenon in axial analysis that occurs when the routes that lie along the periphery of the axial map become segregated purely as a function of the size of the boundary selected for analysis (Penn *et al.*, 1998, p. 61). As Wan Chai is midway between Hong Kong's two important commercial districts, Central and Causeway Bay, the edge effect should be reduced. To deal with the issue, the space syntax model used in this study was based on an axial map of a larger system restricted to the Wan Chai area. As suggested by syntactic analysis, natural boundaries (e.g., rivers, hills, highways, etc.) that have few connections to their surroundings are treated as the proper edge for determining the scope. Accordingly, the scope selected for the axial mapping of Wan Chai is bounded by Victoria Harbour to the north; the mountains (Queen's Road East) to the south, which are natural boundaries; the flyover on Cotton Tree Drive to the west; and Victoria Park to the east, as these interrupt the urban fabric (see Appendix IV).

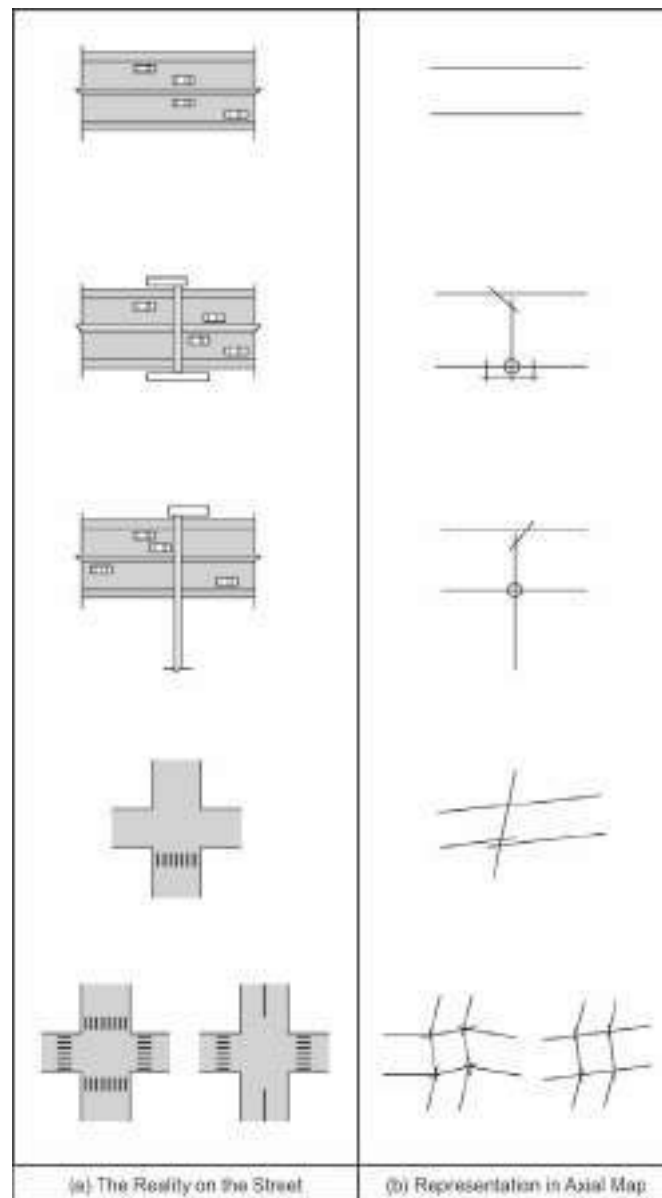


Figure 4.7. Axial mapping in Wan Chai

Axial mapping involves the question of how to represent the lines according to Wan Chai's unique spatial characteristics. Since the lens of this study is on people–environment relations, axial modelling should use pedestrian pathways rather than robust approximations of the effects of the road network. As shown in Figure 4.7, a variety of contextual features are modelled on the map. The axial mapping is subject to the following criteria:

- ∞ As the main streets in Wan Chai are obvious interruptions in the urban fabric, pedestrian pathways are drawn as two parallel lines.

- ∞ Excluding the extensive footbridge system in Wan Chai North, pedestrian bridges are modelled as three or more levels connected to the ground-level axial lines.
- ∞ Considering the perceptions of pedestrians on the effects of strict traffic light control, the street network should be treated as one depth.

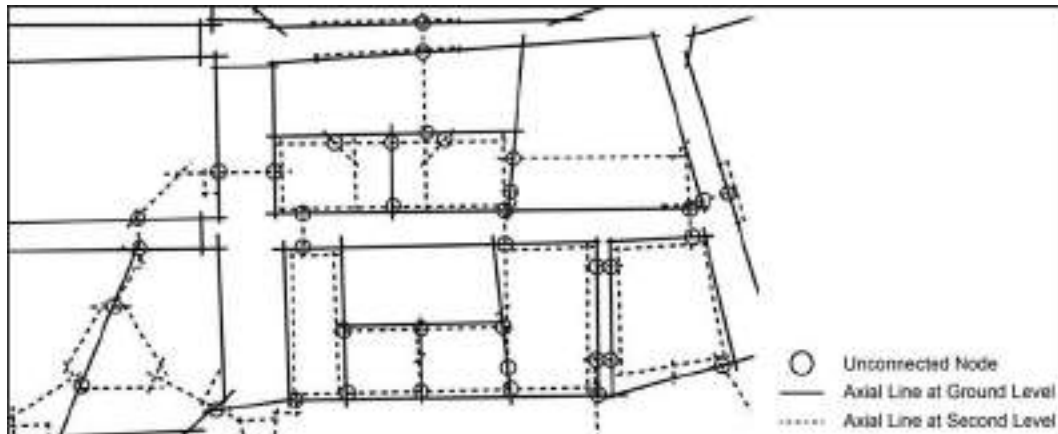


Figure 4.8. Representation of the footbridge system

The footbridge system in Wan Chai North is treated as a separated structure connecting the ground-level street network with transition spaces, including staircases and escalators. Most of the connections between buildings also allow movement across streets, and the axial mapping traces the pedestrian pathways at a single depth to explore the second-level networks. Figure 4.8 presents a complex footbridge system with axial lines as determined through field study. The principles of axial mapping allow the spatial properties to be displayed in both graphical and quantitative terms in light of the theory of ‘natural movement’.

#### 4.4.2.3. Measuring the Syntactic Properties

To understand the inherent interrelationships between spatial and social system, the space syntax analysis based on sophisticated computer-based techniques (i.e., DepthmapX) assigns specific quantitative values to each street space (the basic unit of study) and applies key measures to evaluate the spatial configuration of the urban layout. In this regard, the following syntactic properties are measured in this study:

*Global Integration (Rn)*: This is a measure of accessibility that indicates the depth of a location and easiness to reach that location from all other points within the whole system.



The numerical integration value can be represented in the axial map visually so that we can easily and visibly recognize each space from the perspective of how it fits into the urban system as a whole. A high global integration value means that a space is shallow and easily accessible from all spaces, and thus well-integrated, whereas a low global integration value means that a space is relatively inaccessible and segregated.

*Local Integration (R3)*: This is a measure of integration within a radius of space. It defines how each space is related to radius of three lines around it whose integration is being measured, nor to all other spaces of a system.

*Integration Core (Syntactic Core)*: This is to represent a basic property of a system as a whole. The rank order of integration values of its constituent space is represented by the concept of an 'integration core'. The integration core helps us to represent the syntactic centrality and major order of integration in the spatial configuration. The integration core conventionally comprises the 5 to 25 percent most integrated lines of the total number of spaces according to the highest integration rank. The integration core allows us to identify the distribution of integration in a system. It shows us the general shape of the integration core (i.e., spine, tree, or wheel structures). According to these structural properties, the integration core can be recognized either as a localized part in the layout or its global relation to the layout as a whole. We can characterize integration as fragmented or well-distributed, shallow or deep, and so on. Parts of urban space can be analyzed as independent systems and the relationship between their integration cores can then be described in terms of syntactic centrality (Peponis *et al.*, 1989). By the comparison of integration cores in sub-areas, the spatial logic and differential identification of parts and wholes becomes apparent in the urban spatial structure as a whole.

*The Strength of Core*: This is a measure of the degree to which the mean integration of core is strong. It can be identified through the comparison of the mean integration value of the core to the whole area, and shows how far the depth of the whole area is differentiated from that of the core. The greater the difference in mean integration value between the whole area and the core, the more the core stands out as the syntactic center of the area.

*Integration Continuity*: The extent to which integration in a given system is distributed locally or globally can be determined through a comparison of global integration ( $R_n$ ) and local integration ( $R_3$ ). The greater the difference, the more the layout stands out as a

locally oriented plan, which strongly distinguishes local and global scales and shows a gradual transition from global to local.

*Intelligibility*: The space syntax theory uses the concept of ‘intelligibility’ to represent the relationship between the global and local properties of connectedness. Local properties can be seen from a given line while global properties cannot. A local property is connectivity, which measures how many other connections are accessible from a line. A global property is integration value, which measures the vertices and intersections of a line from all the lines in a system. Thus, syntactic intelligibility is the degree of correlation between how many intermediate neighbors each line has intersecting it, and how integrated it is into the system as a whole. In measuring intelligibility, a value of 1 means a perfect straight line and 0 a random scatter (Hillier, 1993). Perfect intelligibility means that well-connected lines are integrating line, allowing the structure of the whole to be understood from the structure of the part.

#### **4.5. Summary**

To reveal people’s practices in the various spaces of a rapidly changing urban environment, this chapter introduces the research design and methods of the study. An integrated research framework is proposed in relation to three aspects: physical attributes, activities, and conceptions. This framework requires integrating the field observations and interviews with the physical survey.

By adopting the ‘fundamental study’ methods of Andranovich and Riposa (1993) and Whyte (1980), the study draws on field research in the reclamation areas of Wan Chai, which feature a mixture of modern development and traditional culture. Through the case study, the social issues related to modernist planning in Hong Kong can be revealed with the understanding of people’s practices in everyday places.

The research design is represented in three stages in an interdisciplinary synergy of qualitative core components and quantitative supplementary components. The qualitative approaches of data collection in the field study are mainly carried out on six components: the pilot study, units of study, time arrangement, behavioural mapping, field observations and interviews. Through the case study, these core components substantially direct the research design in a qualitatively driven way. The value of qualitatively driven designs is their ability to capture human experience and lived realities and enable the evaluation of

urban design issues and quality of life. The analysis process begins with the coding of observed photographs since observational data are considered the most important evidence in environment–behaviour research. Then, photo narratives are developed to map the spatial dynamics.

Quantitative analysis based on space syntax theory is also necessary to supplement the qualitatively driven designs. Through a human-focused approach, space syntax aims to investigate the relationships between spatial layout and a range of social, economic and environmental phenomena. Representing the street network of the study area, physical spatial analysis measures syntactic properties, such as global integration ( $R_n$ ), local integration ( $R_3$ ), integration core (syntactic core), strength of core, integration continuity, and intelligibility.

The outcome of the user-oriented research approach is expected to raise awareness of the current living environment and reveal design interventions.

## CHAPTER 5

### SPATIAL PROPERTIES OF URBAN MORPHOLOGY

#### 5.1. Preamble

As discussed in Chapter 4, Wan Chai was chosen as an ideal case for an in-depth study of public living environments in Hong Kong. This chapter subjects Wan Chai to morphological analysis in three parts. It simultaneously analyses the physical and spatial structure of its urban space using diachronic, synchronic and syntactic methods to precisely understand the morphological logic of the city.

The first part illustrates the tendency of urban development in the historical context, and the discussion focuses on the nature of reclamation programmes to insinuate the relationship between people and city spaces.

The second part focuses on physical analysis to provide a common understanding of spatial properties (i.e., density of population, general land-use, and transportation networks) and probes the changes in urban form that result in a hybrid regime of Wan Chai based on demographic profiles and urban landscape units.

The third part adopts an axial line-based approach of space syntax to discover the relationships between the underlying spatial structures and human behaviour. The syntactic study of Wan Chai is presented beginning with the historical transformation of its urban configuration based on different stages of reclamation. In the case of the current urban configuration of Wan Chai, the decomposition of the whole system is considered to identify the differentiation or identification of parts, and the parts are embedded in a whole that underlines a spatial duality in the syntax of the urban environment.

This chapter elaborates the spatial properties of Wan Chai with comprehensive analysis to show how the coastline of a Hong Kong district has been repeatedly modified by reclamation over time based on modernist planning principles. It also identifies how two distinct planning regimes in one urban area have been generated by a main street in response to physical urban fabrics and grids.

## **5.2. Historical Review of Urban Development**

When asked to think of the first urban area in Hong Kong that comes to mind, the average Hong Konger is most likely to consider the oldest and ever-transforming area of Wan Chai. Wan Chai was first settled on the northern shore of Hong Kong Island in the early 1840s and has long been a place of rapid change and development. Between the 1850s and mid-1990s, six major land reclamations were carried out in the area for various development purposes. Mr Ma Fung-kwok, former Chairman of the Hong Kong Arts Development Council, said in a speech that the district passed ‘from the early focus on residence, to the ‘Suzie Wong’ district under the shadow of Korean War, to the latest site for exhibition and convention, culture and education, and political ceremony’ (Hong Kong Arts Development Council, 2005). Today, Wan Chai covers an area of about 976 hectares, has a permanent resident population of approximately 160,000 people and has a floating population of over 600,000 (HAD, 2013). It is estimated that the total population will decrease, and its aging trend is becoming a major concern.<sup>5</sup> According to a 2011 census, the proportion of the aging population over 65 is 15.6%, with 10.2% of the population falling under 14 and 45.3% (i.e., homemakers, students, retired persons) qualifying as economically inactive. In addition, Wan Chai is one of the most densely populated areas in Hong Kong, with 15,477 persons/km<sup>2</sup> on average. As a result, each reclamation and major development project has exerted a considerable pressure on the population and highlighted a significant stage in the social and cultural evolution of the district’s urban structure.

### **5.2.1. Urban Development in Wan Chai**

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<sup>5</sup> According to the 1981 census, the oldest age group (65 years and older) comprised 8.6% of the population, and the median age was 26. The proportion of the oldest age group increased to 11.8% in 1991 and then to 12.9% in 2001 and jumped again to 14.7% in 2006. The median age also increased from 31.5 in 1991 to 39 in 2001 and further to 47 in 2006.

The history of Wan Chai can be traced back to 1841, when Hong Kong was a British colony. As such, it was one of the earliest metro urban areas to be established in Hong Kong. In the early years, Wan Chai was little more than a thin stretch of land that inhabited by Chinese villagers and sailors. Residents lived along the coastline in proximity to Hung Shing Temple, which is now located on Queen's Road East. As a prime waterfront site, the coastal section of Wan Chai was developed into a European residential and commercial centre known as 'Spring Gardens' (near present-day Spring Garden Lane) from the 1840s onwards. With the development of entrepôt trade and the increase in commercial activities, the area east of Spring Gardens was mainly occupied by warehouses and shipping facilities by the 1850s (see Figure 5.1). To cope with the population surge between the 1850s and 1860s, the areas around Stone Nullah Lane were gradually developed into a residential zone that became a favourite hangout for Chinese residents. This shift 'marked the beginning of the Chinese people settling in Wan Chai' (Xu & Chan, 2002). At that time, urban streets were spaces that small traders relied on to earn their living, as street stalls required little cost to operate (see Figure 5.2).



Figure 5.1. Warehouses and dockyards in Wan Chai, 1920

Until World War II, both British and Chinese were accommodated in the most fashionable residential area near the present Spring Garden Lane. Over time, a number of bars opened along Lockhart Road, and flourishing clubhouse (present-day Mass Mutual Tower) served for the British Navy, characterising the area as an entertainment centre

(see Figure 5.3). The northwest of Wan Chai has gradually become a popular red-light area and known as ‘Susie Wong’s World’.



Figure 5.2. Street market in Wan Chai, 1930



Figure 5.3. Nancy Kwan as Suzie Wong in the 1960 film

Initially, Wan Chai District was primarily a residential area rather than a commercial centre. Due to population growth and limited land, the traffic jams gradually became a serious concern for sustainable development. After the construction of the MTR, Wan Chai was considered an attractive alternative for ‘economic space’ in association with the urban development of Hong Kong. Consequently, more land was provided for commercial uses through gradual urban renewal and land reclamation. In the 1990s, the remarkable HKCEC was built on Gloucester Road North via this reclamation. The influx of a large number of international commercial centres and luxury office buildings converted Wan Chai to a highly mixed-use urban area. Nowadays, Wan Chai is part of the CBD of Hong Kong, and as such it has manifested a modernist image of reclaimed development and presented a paradigm for cosmopolitan urban areas. However, the traditional living area in the south of Gloucester Road still retains essential heritage characteristics, such as the street markets and itinerant hawkers that are giving the area distinct nature.

### 5.2.2. Reclamation as Urban Development

Wan Chai was initially named Ha Wan (下環), which literally means ‘a bottom ring’ (Wordie, 2002). This refers to the geographical regions of Wan Chai, Central, Sheung Wan, and Sai Wan were locally called ‘the four rings’ (四環). However, the urban configuration of Wan Chai was not the consequence of systematic planning, but rather was formed through reclaimed development in a piecemeal manner (see Figure 5.4).



Figure 5.4. Different reclamation stages in Wan Chai

*Source: Tang Lou Chuang Yi, 2007*

Historically, the lifestyles of ordinary people in Wan Chai were based around the Hung Shing Temple located on Queen’s Road East. With the development of the shipping industry and with population growth, land demand became a determinant for urban development. To relieve the pressure, the first reclamation project planned to provide land outward from Queen’s Road East. Johnston Road—where trams presently travel back and forth—was added to mark the shoreline in the early 20th century. A further reclaimed project, known as Praya East Reclamation Scheme, had a significant effect on the urban configuration of Wan Chai. This scheme resulted in the provision of 36 hectares of land stretching to Hennessy Road and Gloucester Road for more than half a century. The land was built into small street blocks and three- to four-storey tenement buildings. In the post-World War II era, economic prosperity that resulted from globalisation created a carnival of land reclamation. In the 1980s, the government carried out a large-scale reclamation along the coastline from Gloucester Road, to supply extensive land for the first-class high-rise buildings. Meanwhile, the remarkable HKCEC was established in 1988 (see Figure 5.5). This development was supported by a consistent



increase in commercial and office land-use and characterized by a rapid decrease in residential land-use. The modernist planning principle evidently navigated this area. When reviewing the street network, for example, the spaces between buildings became sparse, and the street blocks more large and less well-defined than in the traditional context.



Figure 5.5. Land expansion for the HKCEC, 1994

Source: <https://www.sokolniki.com/en/aboutus/excenters/cn/hong-kong-convention-and-exhibition-centre#tab4>

Today, the urban fabric of Wan Chai exhibits a layout pattern of a ‘segment-line city’, wherein traditional and modernist spatial layouts were juxtaposed over the period of a century. This continuous transformation reminds us that there is a need to study the resultant urban layout, and to reassess the impact of modernist urban planning in relation to ordinary people’s everyday practice.

### 5.2.3. The Nature of Urban Development

This case study uses the lens of developmental typology to investigate the production of space in Hong Kong. However, two unique characteristics of Wan Chai as a spatial entity needed to be highlighted. Since the Colonial era, the theme of ‘reclaiming the city’ has

led to an ingenious mode of space production in Wan Chai to minimise the effects of population growth, to create territory for physical expansion and environmental improvement and, eventually, to build the image of world-class city spaces, which have little connection to former Hong Kong that began as a derelict cove used by the shipping industry. Drawing on the literature concerning Wan Chai's reclamation, the author initially pays attention to its variants and consequences to differentiate the different forms of reclamation over six distinct time periods.

Table 5.1. A typology of Wan Chai reclamation over six periods of time

<i>Periods</i>	<i>Type of urban reclamation: What has been reclaimed?</i>	<i>Purpose: Why has the reclamation proposed by the agents been necessary?</i>	<i>Urban image: What has been the short-term vision of the reclamation?</i>
1842-1890	Reclaiming function  (i.e., Spring Garden Lane as one of the first focal area of development)	- To carry out uncoordinated residential development due to the influx of numerous migrants  - To add land according to the public's needs	A metropolitan area within Victoria City <sup>6</sup>
1890-1930	Reclaiming function  (i.e., Southorn Playground was used to construct a healthy living environment)	- To enhance the inhabited environment that was filthy and alleviate population pressures	A industrial metropolitan area based on self-need driven developments
1930-1945	Reclaiming function  (i.e., Part of Lockhart Road was one of Hong Kong island's two main bar strips, with bars, pubs, restaurants and discos)	- To provide land for trade and investment after the period of Japanese Invasion.	An export-manufacturing metropolitan area between China and the West
1960-1972	Reclaiming function and access	- To decentralise people in the face of increasing population	A post-industrial metropolitan area under an infrastructure-led

<sup>6</sup> The City of Victoria occupies the areas that are known in modern times as Central, Admiralty, Sheung Wan, Wan Chai, East Point, Shek Tong Tsui, the Mid-levels, the Peak, Happy Valley, Tin Hau, and Kennedy Town, on Hong Kong Island (see Appendix V).

	(i.e., The cross-harbour tunnel provided the first road link between Kowloon and Hong Kong Island and an opportunity to build the coast expressway to bring this connection to new towns)	growth in accordance with the <i>New Town Programme</i>  - To improve the traffic network linking the new towns to the main urban area and the CBD	plan
1980-1990	Reclaiming function  (i.e., The HKCEC was built on reclaimed land off Gloucester Road)	- To build a unique regional brand based on economic restructuring  - To maximise the function of reclaimed land on waterfront	An economically vibrant metropolitan area with information-oriented businesses
Since 1990	Reclaiming function and access  (i.e., The formation of an island at the northern side of the HKCEC and reclaimed land used that was used for the construction of the Central-Wan Chai Bypass <sup>7</sup> and the Island Eastern Corridor Link)	- To support the extension of the HKCEC  - To reclaim waterfront space for citizen use  - To supply reclaimed land for key traffic infrastructure and public facilities	An accessible metropolitan area with economic spaces

*Source: BLD, 1988; He, 2004; PELB, 1995b*

The typology in Table 5.1 serves as a heuristic guide to sensitise readers to the types of reclamation in Wan Chai that these agents support and the purposes of this reclamation for realising idealised images of the future. The dual considerations of function and access emphasise the vision that conceptualised planning has for reclamation projects. Most of the forms of reclamation in Wan Chai are functional, fuelled by entrepreneurial interests or the government who view the city as a growth machine (Logan & Molotch, 1987). Urban planning is also subject to the functional demands and purposes of different agents in terms of the currently urban morphology. A common goal of the different periods of functional reclamations in Wan Chai has been to maximise capital returns through the optimisation of urban land use based on temporal public interests and

<sup>7</sup> The Central-Wan Chai Bypass is a four-kilometre trunk road under construction, running through Wan Chai from Central and Fortress Hill on Hong Kong Island.

developmental pressures. There has been no hesitation to weed out declining industries and convert decayed places into economic spaces. Throughout the process of Wan Chai's reclamation, it is not difficult to detect how the urban morphology has developed along the pattern of a 'segment-line city' in which varied spatial practices are juxtaposed without reference to a comprehensive master plan. Taking place at a prime waterfront urban site, this means that the waterfront has become 'a primary scene of experimentation in architecture, planning and urban governance' due to its visibility in terms of urban branding in response to the 'flows of capital and desire' and tourism's predilection for waterscapes (Dovey, 2005, p. 9). The constructions of the HKCEC in Wan Chai North not only testifies to the area's attainment of world-class status but also the development of an 'exhibition economy' that helps to effectively kick-start and drive high-profit industries. However, this process raises a second issue in terms of reclaiming access, which involves spatial 'repossession' to re-construct city spaces that are allegedly accessible to all. With the theme of 'reclaiming the city', despite functional reclamation having been practiced primarily in Wan Chai, the process of reclaiming access involves providing strategic supplements to these forms of urban change that are predicated on considerations of the accessibility of 'effectiveness-led planning' and the abstract spaces accessible to global capital. Given that planning is characterised by the use of footbridges as a solution to the contradiction of a three-dimensional transport vehicle separation, these practices have opened up the potential for the sweeping of 'hard edges', which were left after each reclaiming phase with a homogeneous and repetitive character at several different increments of growth. In addition, these relentless changes result in post-reclamation open spaces that reinforce domination through alienation and deprive everyday life of its authenticity (Surborg, 2007). Through the re-destruction of formerly concessive spaces as part of the process of reclaiming concept, spatial repossession necessarily implicates some form of dispossession. Cowell and Thomas (2002) defined dispossession as follows.

[T]aking, both materially and symbolically, places and spaces from those who have enjoyed them to date – so that newly valorized places, new kinds of places, can be created in their stead: places for new kinds of people (p. 1243).

Therefore, reclaiming function and access in Wan Chai implies a need for everyday places that aim to reclaim the local and to argue for these ordinary spaces as sites of latent creativity between reclamation and dispossession, tactic and strategy and globalisation and vernacular.

### **5.3. Physical Analysis of Urban Form**

In the current study, physical analysis is initially conducted to highlight the segment-line urban area using a morphological frame based on different stages of land reclamation (see also the concept of city composition and morphology by Conzen & Conzen, 2004; Whitehand, 2005).

As discussed previously, the change in growth pattern with the coastline movement in the early 1840s through the desultory reclamations extends out of the zoning city typology in a 'segment-line' model with several major roads as separators. Showcasing its hybrid identity, the urban area has undergone a century-long process in which a range of local and global factors has created different urban grids. According to the spatial variables involved, physical analysis is conducted through three lenses related to urban morphology. The first lens relates to the general spatial properties of Wan Chai, including its population density, general land usage and transportation networks. The second lens focuses on the area's urban form as revealed by its streets, blocks and land usage, which are believed to influence not only the degree to which people interact with one another (Appleyard, 1981; Bosselman, Macdonald, & Kronmeyer, 1999), but also the ease of both vehicle and pedestrian access and the social function of the street spaces (Banerjee, 2001; Gehl, 1987; Jacobs, 1993; Moudon & Untermann, 1991; Whyte, 1980). In contrast, the third lens focuses on the hybrid regime of the area in terms of its population structure and urban landscape units, which are assumed to have a particular effect on street users' spatial behaviour in the context of 'place' and 'placelessness' (Relph, 1976). In short, physical analysis is conducted to provide a general understanding of the urban form and structural metric properties of space attached to the aforementioned historical review of Wan Chai and to gauge the public realm of everyday life as a site of latent creativity between reclamation and dispossession; tactic and strategy; and globalisation and localisation.

#### **5.3.1. General Spatial Properties**

Before conducting in-depth analysis of ordinary people's everyday practices in relation to the urban environment, a spatial survey involving three aspects of the physical properties of Wan Chai is offered here and comprehensively sheds light on the city profile.

### 5.3.1.1. Population Density

Given the development of the land across different periods of reclamation, the area of Hong Kong increased slightly from 1,037 km<sup>2</sup> in 1981 to 1,080 km<sup>2</sup> in 2011. However, the population rapidly increased by 40%, and the median age changed from 26.3 to 41.7 over the period. As show in Table 5.2, the land population density of Hong Kong increased from 4,879 persons/km<sup>2</sup> in 1981 to 6,544 persons/km<sup>2</sup> in 2011 (an increase of 34%).

Table 5.2. Change in land population density in Hong Kong and Wan Chai, 1981-2011

Year	Hong Kong		Wan Chai	
	<i>Persons</i>	<i>Persons/km<sup>2</sup></i>	<i>Persons</i>	<i>Persons/km<sup>2</sup></i>
1981	5,060,065	4,879	236,149	23,781
1986	5,457,935	5,225	200,403	20,182
1991	5,656,494	5,385	180,309	18,209
1996	6,207,366	5,796	171,656	17,235
2001	6,702,494	6,237	167,146	16,986
2006	6,861,280	6,352	155,196	15,788
2011	7,070,388	6,544	152,608	15,477

*Source: Data compiled from CSD, 1986, 1996, 2011d*

Comparing the population change of Wan Chai with that of Hong Kong, the land population density differed significantly from 1981 to 2011. The population density in Wan Chai decreased by 35% from 236,149 to 152,608, a figure inversely proportional to the overall density change. In response to the preceding anomaly, the sustained decline in density can be attributed to two factors. First, the land reclamation, as a spatial practice, was the most effective approach to improving the quality of city space for such a thriving and demanding population. Second, with an important source of land production to secure its political economy, more land was required in the urban renewal and redevelopment scheme, and the density in the old congested area in Wan Chai showed an obvious decrease over the period.

### 5.3.1.2. General Land Usage

As a result of the urban growth and political economy along with the progressive land reclamations, the zoning approach influenced the way in which Wan Chai classified land

usage. Although the colonial government has criticised the approach for its drawbacks and contradiction with the fundamental goal for a century (Bristow, 1984; Gregory, 1964), the Outline Zoning Plan, which is mainly based on modernist planning principles, continues to influence the urban configuration along with the classified land usage pattern at the district level to this day (see Appendix VI). Hence, adopting the zoning approach as the major planning mechanism results in an uneven distribution of land usage throughout the district. As shown in Table 5.3, major land usage in Wan Chai has been identified for major road, commercial/residential and government/institutional usage. According to a physical survey associated with urban layout, highly mixed land usage patterns that exhibit no functional separation from a morphological perspective are widely distributed south of Gloucester Road, and the purely commercial usage is mostly concentrated in Wan Chai North.

Table 5.3. Land usage in Wan Chai District

Uses	Approximate Area and %	
	Hectares	Percentage
Commercial	23.70	16.42
Comprehensive Development Area	1.65	1.14
Residential (Group A)	13.59	9.41
Residential (Group B)	1.70	1.18
Residential (Group C)	0.35	0.24
Residential (Group E)	0.27	0.19
Government, Institution or Community (G/IC)	20.12	13.94
<b>Open Space</b>	<b>12.69</b>	<b>8.79</b>
Other Specified Usage	21.67	15.01
Major Roads, Etc.	46.47	32.19
Land Development Corporation/Urban Renewal Authority	2.14	1.48
Total Planning Scheme Area	144.35	100.00

*Source: Data compiled from Planning Department of Hong Kong, accessed 24 May 2013*

When the relationship between public environment and quality of life in Wan Chai is investigated, the provision of open space in the Wan Chai Outline Zoning Plan can serve as a reference for understanding the quality of the public environment for everyday practices in the area. According to the 2011 population census (CSD, 2011c), the population of Wan Chai is 152,608. For the standard 15 hectares of open space per

100,000 people, 22.9 hectares of open space should be offered in Wan Chai. Thus, in terms of the actual area of open space, there is an obvious shortage of more than half of the standard. Through a longitudinal field study, the characteristic of open spaces in Wan Chai can be considered in terms of three aspects: a) uneven distribution of open space; b) small and scattered in nature; and c) unattractive design and management. As mentioned in Chapter 4, more than two thirds of the open space (8.75 hectares) is located north of Gloucester Road, and most of the space is commercial in nature. In the densely populated areas, only the relatively larger open space occupied by the southern playground is provided for everyday life. Amenity plots and sitting areas are mostly located in open space, which is usually quite small and scattered. Although most of these open spaces are mainly provided for public use, their relatively unattractive design and management control are not considered negative factors in terms of the public order. This detail is discussed at length later.

Of the many common spaces appearing in the urban environment, the streets in Wan Chai usually serve as public spaces in which people have the opportunity to interact with others, all of whom have different expectations given the lack of adequate open space.

#### 5.3.1.3. Transportation Networks

Based on the current planning process in Hong Kong, land usage and transport planning are mutually interdependent in practice (Pryor, 1998), and the development of transport technology has been attributed to its role in shaping the urban form of Hong Kong (Dimitriou & Fouchier, 1994) and Wan Chai (see Appendix VII).

Table 5.4. Wan Chai's Road Network Hierarchy (RNH) on five street groups

<b>Road Type<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>Street</b>	<b>Typical Right-of- Way Width, (m)</b>	<b>AADT<sup>b</sup></b>	<b>Surface Transit</b>	<b>Flow Characteristic</b>
Urban Trunk Road (UT)	Gloucester Road	56-67	162,200	Preferred	Free-flow (grade separated)
Primary Distributor (PD)	Hennessy Road	30-35	27,470	Preferred	Uninterrupted except at signals and crosswalks
District Distributor	Queen's Road East (and	20-25	19,640	Permitted	Uninterrupted except at signals



(DD)	Johnston Road, <sup>c</sup> Convention Avenue, Harbour Road)				and crosswalks
Local Distributor (LD)	Lockhart Road (and Jaffe Road)	12-23	15,550	Generally not provided	Interrupted flow
Other <sup>a</sup>	Cross Street (and Waterfront Promenade, Expo Drive, Expo Drive Central)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Notes: <sup>a</sup> Roads in Hong Kong have a specific classification, as noted in the official document under the heading 'Hierarchy of Roads' (see Appendix VIII). The last street group is not part of this classification system, as some streets here have specific uses, such as street markets, parking streets and promenades.

<sup>b</sup> The annual average daily traffic (AADT) volume data are derived from a report entitled 'The Annual Traffic Census 2013' (TTSD, 2014).

<sup>c</sup> Johnston Road's low traffic volume (10,080) was caused by the implementation of pedestrian schemes.

To secure easy traffic links between the two commercial districts of Central and Causeway Bay, a highly efficient traffic network is required in Wan Chai, which follows a hierarchical pattern in terms of road type. The subdivision of the whole area creates in a segment-line layout pattern that can be credited to several roads, categorised into five types, including UT, PD, DD, LD and other, which run through the city core from west to east. As indicated by Table 5.4, the first three road types mainly provide mass transportation services (i.e., buses, minibuses, MTR and trams) to ensure smooth movement and fulfil everyday commuting needs. To cater to an advanced and easily accessible public transportation system, different transport facilities and street structures (i.e., the number of intersections, pedestrian bridge supply) are interrelated to plan daily routines and facilitate effective flow. The rest of the road types (i.e., LD, other) fulfil a variety of functions in each subdivided area. As illustrated by the physical typologies, a fundamental assumption is that the behavioural patterns are in duality or subdivided and must be driven by RNH as shown in Table 5.4.

### 5.3.2. Changes in Urban Form

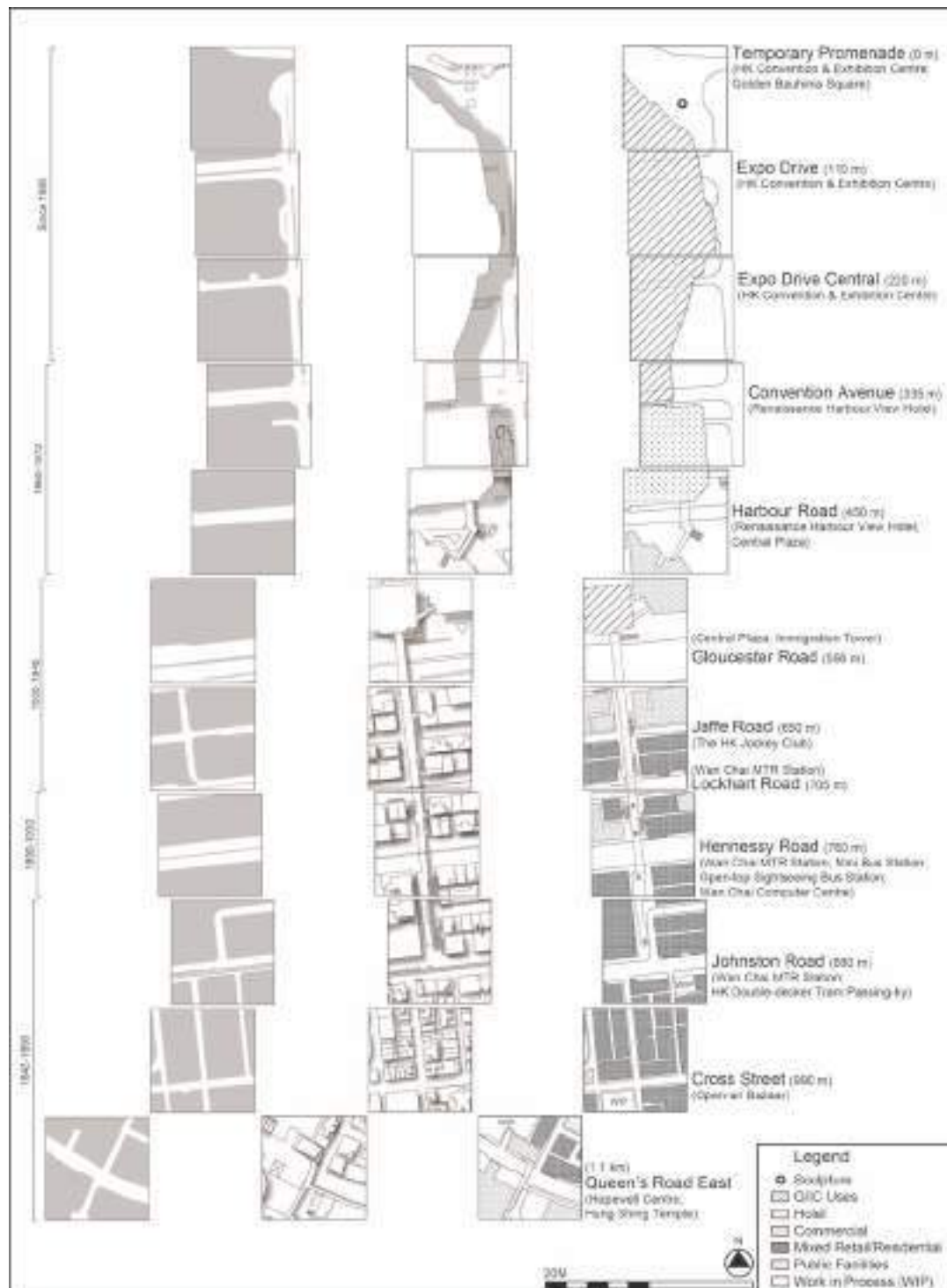


Figure 5.6. Over one kilometre of land has been reclaimed in Wan Chai. The trajectory of land reclamation runs from Queen's Road East along to the original northern shoreline of Hong Kong Island and then up to the present waterfront

Previous planning strategies are a testament to the fact that a stratified extension of Wan

Chai is a logical response to the need to provide valuable level land for development purposes with diverse functional reclamations but bereft of any connection to the past. In tracing these urban changes, we reflect on three key dimensions: the street, block, and land use as part of the urban fabric. The deconstruction of a map-delineated walk of 1.1 kilometres is an illustrative strategy that can help to elaborate the urban forms that have resulted from a century-long process in which a range of factors have resulted in different city patterns (see Figure 5.6).

With street patterns being the basic skeletal structure of a community, neighbourhood and block scales both affect spatial connectivities and environmental interactions by dictating the available route options and degree of accessibility. The orientations and typologies of these street patterns determine how individuals interact with their environment, shaping distinct senses of place in a homogeneous world. Using Queen's Road East as a starting point, the urban edge expanded on a 'gridiron' pattern with a twenty-three to thirty foot right-of-way and sidewalk widths of three to six feet with no adjacent planting strips on either side. However, this street pattern offered a broad variety of route choices and created a walkable neighbourhood based on a less automobile-oriented street construction. This pattern guided growth in the area for half a century. Although still gridiron in character, the grids that were begun in different parts of the town usually ended up converging at oblique angles and eventually resulted in a haphazard framework for fringe expansion, which began in the 1890s. Subdivisions began increasingly to give way to an 'interrupted parallels' pattern (to the North) that internally stretched blocks into long rectangles to reduce the number of street intersections and spatially separated communities with an arterial (Hennessy Road) for automobile owners, rather than reclaiming street expansion for city-users' access and practices. In this regard, urban growth in these longer blocks provided optimal frontage for retailing business development. The reduced number of access points in this framework emerged from a trend towards self-contained, private subdivisions and an undue restriction of the rights of the public to access and use these spaces freely. This process resulted in a community with a specialised functional zone offering the potential for later 'incremental infill' other than proper supplements that rely on users' demands. Here, an intermediate stage appeared, primarily in a more incremental manner, as small-scale subdivisions gradually filled with a much greater variety of building types after the Japanese Invasion in 1941. The notion of community in a civic sense was eclipsed by an increasing focus on self-contained enclaves, which eroded the integrity of the public street framework but prevented the development of large-scale planned subdivisions. With the construction of the MTR that began in 1975 and the proliferation of automobiles, Wan Chai began to be

more suitable for high-density development. The movement towards automobile subdivision became more obvious in the infill developments that experienced a steady degradation in pedestrian accessibility as a result of the increasing use of the 'fragmented parallels' pattern. Consequently, Gloucester Road as a major traffic thoroughfare, midway between Wan Chai South and North, exhibited these two dominant forms of urban edge expansion. The responsibility for street layout shifted from the government to the private sector, as part of a transition of the physical environment that allowed more land area to be used for lots and infrastructure construction. Moreover, the government policy supported developers in setting aside open spaces for private or semiprivate recreation amenities, meaning that the blocks tended to be more unified and frequently penetrated by elevated walkways in accordance with the government's environmental management policies. Since 1980, a more controlled subdivision process has resulted in very few and oddly shaped blocks constructed on a reclaimed insular topology to emphasise control and separation under the powerful influence of single-use zoning. Functional reclamation has given way to a disconnected pattern of specialised zones characterised by the exhibition industry and separated spatially by an arterial roadway (Convention Avenue). The street system has thus evolved into a 'parallel separated pattern' in an apparent effort to create a clearer conceptual vision than was afforded by the fragmented parallel approach. As a whole, Wan Chai represents the increasingly hybrid nature of urban expansion that has included the patterns of gridiron, interrupted parallels, incremental infill, fragmented parallels and separated parallels.

Land use patterns during times of reclamation and urban expansion have been generally related to reforms in transportation and functionalisation that have boosted the supply of land over which to distribute uses. Two distinctive areas, Wan Chai South and North, have showed extreme variations in their main influences under this hybrid regime. The obvious differences between these two areas are their functional uses and lot sizes. Wan Chai North's large specialised zone in which the exhibition industry is dominant reflects its hub functions. These functions suggest a modern urban area bounded by extensive areas of private or semiprivate open space and weakly connected to the surrounding areas and living environments. When Wan Chai North often emphasizes modern urban expansion as antiseptic with the administrators' vision of operational rationalism, it has emerged out of Wan Chai South commonly as a counter in attempt to fortify local belonging, since having contained housing, commerce, local retail outlets and services, reflecting a multiplicity of social functions as a traditional residential area in which most residents commute elsewhere to work. All of these changes fuel a trend towards a result of pro-automobile and anti-pedestrian urban environments due to the vehicle-pedestrian

separation principle and the interweaving of open spaces and the incorporation of private open space amenities, and reinforcing the bimodal nature of spatial orders within the existing hierarchy.

### 5.3.3. Hybrid Regime of Wan Chai

Several major phases of reclamation in Wan Chai have resulted in the area's present heterogeneous, segmented and complex urban layout. One can span 100 years of history by taking a 15-minute walk, a spatial paradox generated by the physical characteristics of the area's urban form. This 'Janus face' is imbedded in the social ecology through urban transformation, building better or worse conditions for on-street interactions and revealing the hybrid nature of the area's planning regime.

#### 5.3.3.1. Demographic Profiles

According to the numbers of the Wan Chai District Board, the officers of the Wan Chai HAD and government publications, field studies and interviews, Wan Chai has repeatedly been modified by reclamation in response to physical urban fabrics and grids that have incurred a dual planning regime demarcated by Gloucester Road, along which the CSD (2006b) officially divides the area into Wan Chai South (1.3.1) and North (1.3.4) at the Territorial Planning Unit (TPU) level<sup>8</sup> (see Appendix IX).

Table 5.5. Demographical analysis as shown in two TPUs of Wan Chai

Characteristics	Attributes	TPUs	
		1.3.1	1.3.4
Demographic Characteristics	Chinese	84.5	43.2
	Ethnicity (%)	White	25.6
	Other	12.5	31.2
	Usual language (%) (excluding persons aged under 5 or mute)	Cantonese	23.4
		Putonghua	7.7
		English	50.5

<sup>8</sup> For town planning purposes, the whole territory of Hong Kong is divided into 289 TPUs by the Planning Department.

Economic Characteristics		Other	9.6	18.5
		0-19	12.3	14.1
	Age group (%)	20-59	63.9	62.2
		60+	23.7	37.7
	Aged 5 and over (not) and internal migration status (%) (area of residence 5 years ago)	Internally migrated	12.2	37.2
		Not internally migrated	74.3	38.0
		Place of residence outside HK	13.6	24.8
		In same district	31.2	19.6
	Place of work (%)	In another district	54.4	56.1
		Work at home	9.5	14.0
	Occupation (%)	Managers, administrators and (associate) professionals	48.4	86.3
		Other	51.6	13.7
	Monthly income from main employment (%) (excluding foreign domestic helpers)	≤ 7, 999	16.0	6.3
		≥ 25,000	32.5	64.2
		Unpaid family workers	148	-
Housing Characteristics	Type of housing (average number of domestic households per 1,000 units of quarters)	Private permanent housing	1,021	1,000
		Non-domestic housing	1,000	1,000
		Temporary housing	1,045	1,000
	Tenure of accommodation (%)	Owner-Occupier	59.0	24.7
		Tenant	32.9	56.3
		Others	8.1	19.0

Domestic households	≥ 15,000	20.0	97.4
renting the accommodation they occupy on a monthly basis (%)	None	5.6	1.0

---

*Source: Data compiled from CSD, 2011a, 2011b*

Given that the explicit boundary defines both areas in the study, it is necessary to articulate how distinctive the characteristics of city users are based on the raw data extracted from the 2011 Hong Kong population census and 2006 Hong Kong population by-census (CSD, 2006a, 2011a, 2011b, 2011d). As shown in Table 5.5, three main features shed light on the hybrid urbanism in Wan Chai. Perhaps the most noticeable feature is the demographic characteristics, which state that the proportion of the population of Wan Chai South by Chinese ethnic group (84.5% across its total population of 30,538) was nearly more than double that of Wan Chai North (43.2% of its total population of 1,174). Those who commonly spoke English in Wan Chai South and North accounted for 8.4 and 50.5% of the population, respectively. In addition, 62% of the population aged 5 and over changed their residence to Wan Chai North between 2006 and 2011, including 37.2% of the population who had internally migrated across Geographical Divisions (GDs) (i.e., moved from a DC district to another DC district), compared with 25.7% who had moved to Wan Chai North (including 12.2% of the population who internally migrated across GDs). Although this high figure is only a microcosm of postcolonial Hong Kong, it represents ‘a purely geographical location devoid of national boundary and cultural identity’, a place in between China and the West ‘without any national imaging of a common territory, tradition, or origins’ (Lee, 1994, p. 12).

The economic characteristics are also distinct in both areas. Wan Chai’s economic development since the first reclamation practice has followed a sequence of stages through which an industrial centre has evolved into a post-industrial metropolis and then into an international metropolis, with an enhanced and expanded role at the last stage for the new service industry in Wan Chai North. The increase in the service sector working population was accompanied by a significant decline in manufacturing sector workers in Wan Chai South. The territory’s physical form and infrastructure have adapted to the needs at each stage. The different socioeconomic structures of both areas are also reflected in the categories of occupation and monthly income from main employment.

The proportions of managers, administrators, professionals and associate professionals in the working populations of Wan Chai South and North were 48.4 and 86.3%, respectively, and the median monthly income from main employment varied greatly between South (\$15,000) and North (\$40,000). The reclaimed land had as much to do with subjectivity as with economics, on which a prevalent *leitmotif* towards urban gentrification resulted in population migration, with poorer residents replaced by the middle class.

There was also a disparity in the housing characteristics between Wan Chai South and North. As there were no *public rental housing* or *subsidised home ownership housing* estates for low-income residents in Wan Chai, *private permanent housing* estates became the most popular type of housing, offering better living conditions. However, the degree of sharing, as measured by the average number of domestic households per 1,000 units of quarters, revealed the distinct conditions of living in Wan Chai South (1,021) and North (1,000). The changing distribution in accommodation tenure indicated that although the majority (59%) of domestic households owned the quarters they occupied in Wan Chai South, only 24.7% of those in Wan Chai North owned their accommodations. In addition, all of the types of tenants (i.e., sole tenant, co-tenant/main tenant/sub-tenant and others provided by employers) in Wan Chai South paid \$9,500 or 24.7% of their monthly household income for rent, as compared with \$37,000 or 34.8% paid by those living in Wan Chai North. This suggests a relative lower housing cost for the former group of households and a lack of pressure from higher housing costs for the latter in conjunction with their income. In other words, the difference in living conditions, fed by class divisions, reflects a quality of being different, diverse or varied within the organisational space. On the whole, the extreme receptivity of Wan Chai may be related as much to its 'floating' identity as to its current preoccupation with globalisation in the postcolonial discourse, in which each individual who can be broadly defined as a city user of the street claims allegiance to more than one culture, invokes different identities and acts at different times and in different places (King, 1991, p. 16). Thus, by reviewing the ideas of Mitchell (1997), the formulation of this study under such hybrid urbanism must be more grounded in everyday practice to be meaningful.

#### 5.3.3.2. Urban Landscape Units

In relation to the lack of formulated intuition underpinning the morphological units of the reclamation area, the Conzenian approach of mapping the urban landscape is particularly



fundamental and relevant to historical record. To identify the current urban landscape of Wan Chai, it is necessary to map three 'systematic form complexes' individually: the ground plan, building type and land and building usage. As Conzen (2004) mentions, the long-term persistence of the ground plan is of particular importance, providing a framework within which the building fabric and land and building usage have developed (pp. 118-125). Based on a plot-by-plot survey of walk-by observations, past plans and historical archives, maps of the basic triad of form complexes have been produced for the Wan Chai reclamation area and its immediate surroundings (see Figures 5.7-5.9).

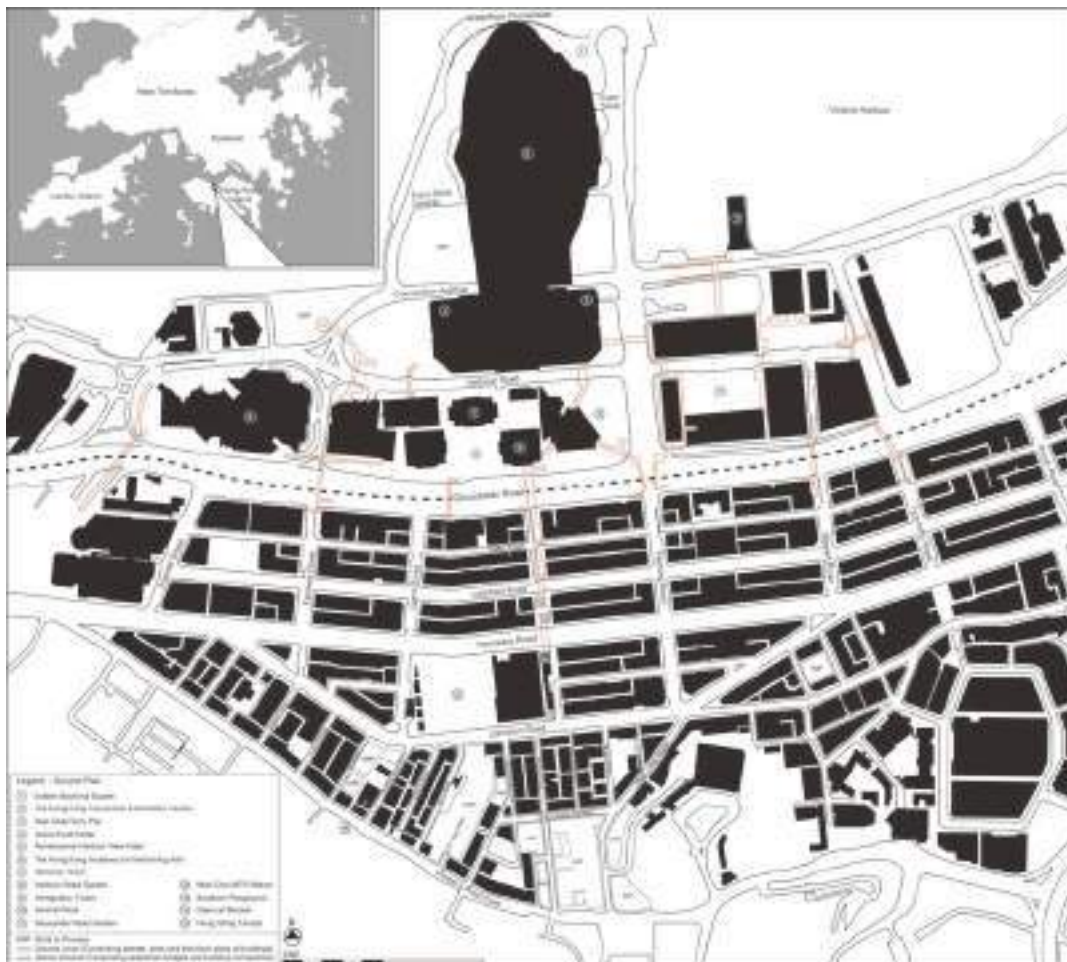


Figure 5.7. Ground plan

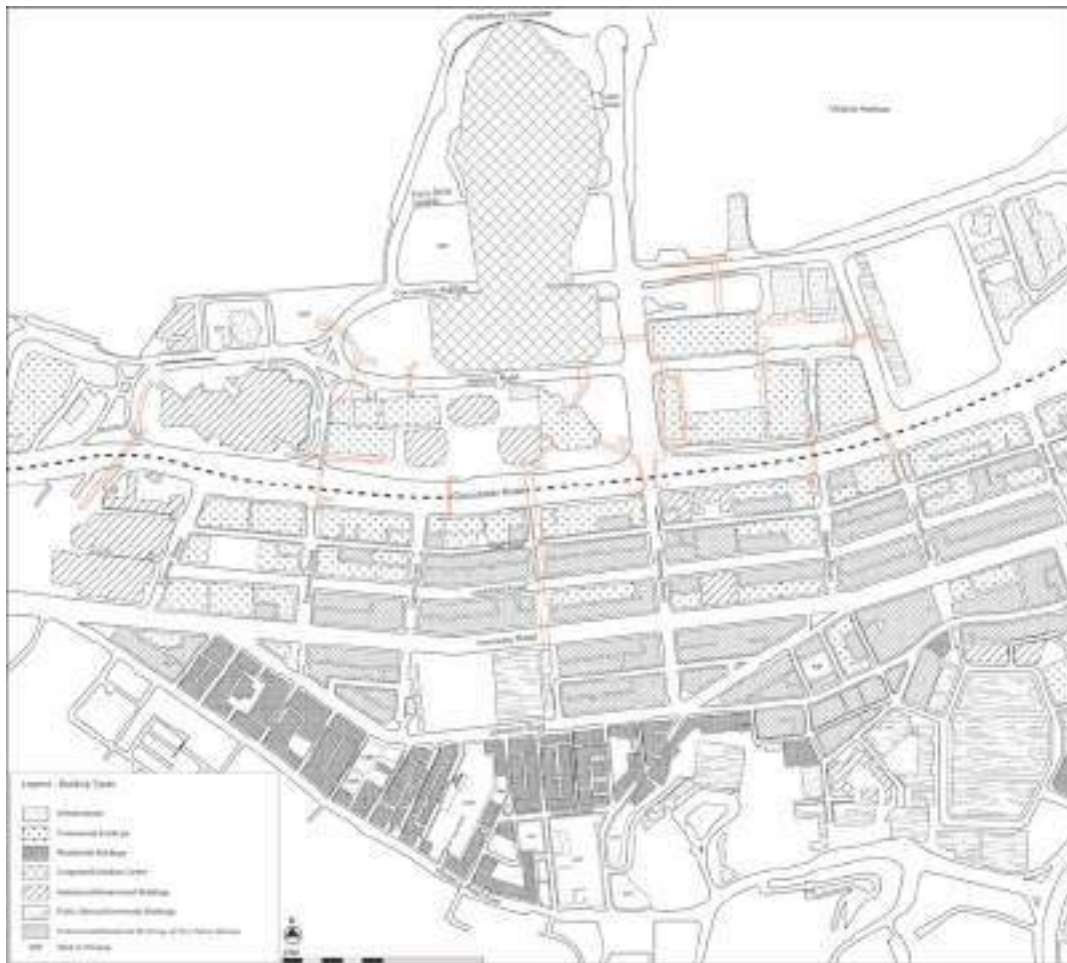


Figure 5.8. Building types

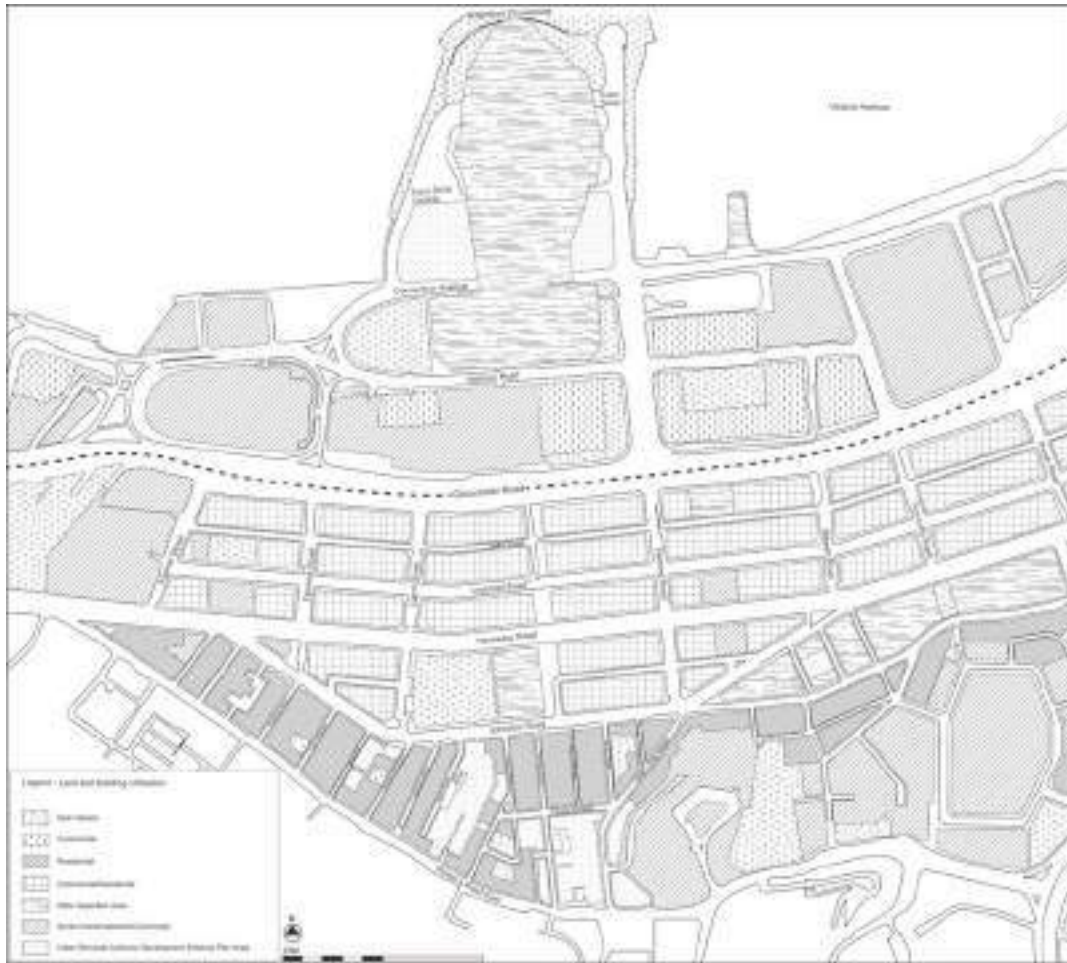


Figure 5.9. Land and building usage

The three maps and their synthesis provide a basis for recognising the urban landscape units and their hierarchy. Based on a physical survey conducted in Wan Chai, Table 5.6 delineates the urban form features of the urban landscape units in terms of the aggregation of streets, plots, buildings and open spaces that differentiate it from the surrounding environments. Instead of Conzen's five-tier hierarchy, the urban landscape units of Wan Chai contain a two-tier hierarchy of units ranging from majorly divided to subdivided areas (delimited by major and minor boundaries in Table 5.6). Four sub-units are respectively within the major two units (i.e., Wan Chai South and North) as a result of continuous reclamation over a century. Given the streets and plots that exist today, the partition of all of the units corresponds closely to the features of the aforementioned spatial properties and is particularly recognisable in accordance with the RNH of Wan Chai. The minor boundaries of the urban landscape units divide areas that are markedly distinct, but still essentially homogeneous within the major units, and the major boundary separating the city from the major thoroughfare (i.e., Gloucester Road) emphasises the two poles of the urban landscape according to the mixing of indigenous and universal

languages in Wan Chai so as to claim a basis for hybrid regimes. In this sense, the area can be considered as both a *traditional living area* and a *modern urban area* in terms of its physical characteristics.

Table 5.6. Urban landscape units of Wan Chai

Plan Units in Wan Chai	Reclamation Stages	Urban Landscape Units	Streets	Plots	Buildings & open spaces
	Since 1982	NRCEC unit	Dispersive streets	Large scale plot in an irregular typology	Landmark & public spaces
	1960-1972	Government administrative & commercial unit	Mainly regular through streets	Mix of large through plots & irregularly shaped plots	Medium rise towers & moderate spaces
	1890-1960	Most rural residential unit	Through streets in planned grid	Medium-sized plots	Mixture of different types of buildings & home street spaces
	1840-1890	Traditional living unit	Suburban line pedestrian streets	Small-sized plots	Dispersed housing & local based spaces

In the area south of Gloucester Road, the units are distinguished by a second-order boundary — Johnston Road. There are within it two second-order units, each of which has a distinctive plan, building fabric and land usage. As practically all of the plots are quite nearly covered by buildings, the ‘traditional living unit’ located between Queen’s Road and Johnston Road, which generally have a building coverage of more than 50% and a plot ratio of approximately 7%, is particularly dense with a street network density of 0.027. That the streets are narrow and messy for motor cars implies a friendly pedestrian environment due to a higher degree of permeability. For instance, as shown in Appendix II, a series of pedestrian schemes have been implemented in this unit. As one of the most historical areas in Hong Kong, the majority of the buildings, which stand about 14 storeys tall for habitation compatible with a portion devoted to 5-storey historical buildings, mostly form the traditional residential landscape. The large majority of second-order units inside the area are located between Johnston Road and Gloucester Road, and the main arterial of Hennessy Road, which runs from west to east through the centre, further subdivides the unit in relation to the reclamation projects. In the cases where high-rise

buildings with podium levels for commercial use have been constructed, a vast majority of the ground floors with many separate building frontages and numerous entrances are provided to serve a number of substantial commercial, retail and other economic activities in Wan Chai, according to the decline of building coverage, relatively wider right-of-ways and traffic-oriented street networks compared with traditional living units. In terms of the spatial connectivity and environment interaction dictated by the route options available and degree of accessibility, an elevated pedestrian bridge extending through different units from Johnston Road to the north of Gloucester Road is packed with a dense pedestrian flow throughout the day. Thus, the few commercial deviations in this landscape from the traditional unit form provide a major basis for distinguishing second-order units in Wan Chai south.

Within the modern urban area located to the north of Gloucester Road, differences in current ground plans, building types and land usage also distinguish two second-order units. Although the second-order unit boundary particularly reflects geographical variations, all of the second-order units have been developed in reference to modernist planning principles, in which modern skyscrapers appear to cover the whole block with spacious open spaces. The unity of the two in this case is mainly derived from their internal principle of automobile-oriented planning and limited pedestrian access, which is especially manifested in an enormous second-level pedestrian bridge system connecting many official and commercial buildings inside the area. To separate pedestrians from vehicles and provide a climate-free environment for daily life, the permeability of the street network is thus quite low due to the lack of adequate intersections. The sparse grid and huge size of the HKCEC built in recent decades have not only reinforced the contrast with other units, but have also resulted in a more clear-cut layout according to its insular topology that further fits ill with the whole area. That the HKECE unit has drawn a focal point with well-equipped infrastructures to which it gives special consideration is liable to influence the building of the new brand of Hong Kong. In short, the principal arguments for urban landscape units reflect the mostly irreconcilable relationship between traditional and modern urban areas that is widely recurrent in Hong Kong.

#### **5.4. Syntactic Analysis on Urban Form**

To investigate the relationships between the built environment and the constituent units, a space syntax approach can be applied to describe the spatial properties of Wan Chai using rigorous analytical tools. According to morphological analysis conducted on a set of axial

lines, the syntactic properties and their correlations constitute various measures to establish an evaluation system integrated as a part of the urban study. The specific objective of analysis is to seek out the measures of connectivity and integration in Wan Chai to represent the connections and accessibility of its urban configuration.

In an analytical and descriptive way, this morphological study involves three levels of analysis related to how the current urban layout came into being and how the urban morphology has changed accordingly, how the spatial logic is identified in the urban spatial structure as a whole and how both of the first-order units are differentiated from each other in the global and local contexts. The first level requires an extension of the historical review of the urban transformation of Wan Chai using morphological analysis of space syntax. As illustrated by a series of axial maps, the spatial structure based on the major reclamation projects in the past is represented to trace the changes in the Wan Chai configuration. The second level focuses on the two major syntactic properties of the whole urban environment, including the integration core/core strength and syntactic intelligibility, both of which are advanced variables used to investigate the configuration of the urban layout. The third level focuses on how the units as an embedded system relate to the whole, which is considered to insinuate the implications of spatial configuration for everyday practices. In sum, syntactic analysis enables the physical environment to be studied to reveal the deep structure underlying various urban layouts rather than their surface characteristics.

#### **5.4.1. Changes in Urban Morphology**

Given that historical review of the urban development of Wan Chai has disclosed changes in urban morphology due to the imperatives of periodical social and economic considerations, tracing the spatial structure at different historical periods in association with the progressive urban development should have social and functional implications rather than implications for the surface characteristics of the physical environment. As the urban configuration is the result of a series of reclamation programmes, five axial maps representing the transformation of the spatial layouts from 1842 to the present were selected to analyse the urban morphology.





Figure 5.10. Morphological analysis of Wan Chai's transformation

As shown in Figure 5.10, the most integrated lines along Queen's Road East and Johnston Road in the axial map indicate that most residents routinely organised their everyday life along the coastline and near the hillside in the 19th century. With housing spreading along the hillside to the east, Johnston Road increasingly became the most accessible everyday space connected with other parts of the system. Starting with the urban expansion northwards, the distribution of peoples' movement behaviour shifted significantly to Johnston Road. One of the oldest transportation services in Hong Kong, the tramway situated along the street to this day also insinuates a comparatively high quality of access to everyday space at the time, consistent with the highest integration value within the whole area. When a substantial land area with a planned grid was added north of Hennessy Road, the distribution of Rn expanding over Johnston Road implies that the new development followed the existing spatial structures and had good continuity and connectivity to the past, despite the changes in surface properties of the urban morphology. In the ensuing reclamation projects in the 1960s, a new spatial structure was imposed north of Gloucester Road in accordance with modernist planning principles. This resulted in a fragmented spatial morphology that constrained the penetration of integration across Gloucester Road, causing weak connections to the whole urban system. Moreover, the movement towards automobile subdivision might have led to its unintelligible spatial organisation, implying that the emergence of a footbridge network further eroded the integrity of the public street framework. Such a labyrinthine plan structure failed to orient people's everyday practices. As indicated by the current distribution pattern of the integration value, the overall urban morphology has demonstrated a poor 'part and whole' relationship with the boundary between the integrated and segregated spatial structures, which fail to relate to the layout as a whole.

#### **5.4.2. The Whole Area**

By treating the urban form as a whole, the basic syntactic properties of the axial map reveal the current underlying structure of Wan Chai on a quantitative basis, including first-order measures of connectivity, global integration and local integration.

The mean connectivity indicates the average number of connections (i.e., intersection with another line) each axial line has in the urban system. The mean value of connectivity (3.19956) indicates that the spatial structure of Wan Chai as a whole has a relatively low level of connection. The axial map of the current whole area (see Figure 5.10) shows that



the most integrated lines are aggregated in the geometrical centre of the area, not in the peripheral. The streets with greater integration values include Gloucester Road South, Johnston Road and the pedestrian bridge extending from south to north, all of which may have a significant effect on the structure of the urban fabric. Gloucester Road displays a 'barrier effect', with values totalling 0.845305 and 0.655025 in the south and north, respectively, constraining the penetration of integration across the road. The mean  $R_n$  of the whole area (0.55583) thus results in a comparatively low level of accessibility. In contrast to the  $R_n$  results, the  $R_3$  results present a different distribution pattern in Wan Chai (see Figure 5.11). Unlike the global integrators, the local integrators tend to be spread over the whole. The difference between the two scales of integration reveals that the urban form has a poor local/global relationship. Taking an overview of both maps, Johnston Road, Gloucester Road and the pedestrian bridge are integrated locally and globally, and the peripheral areas (i.e., waterfront) are separated from the neighbouring areas. Thus, the mean  $R_3$  value of the whole area (1.50986) also implies a comparatively low degree of accessibility in reference to local neighbours.





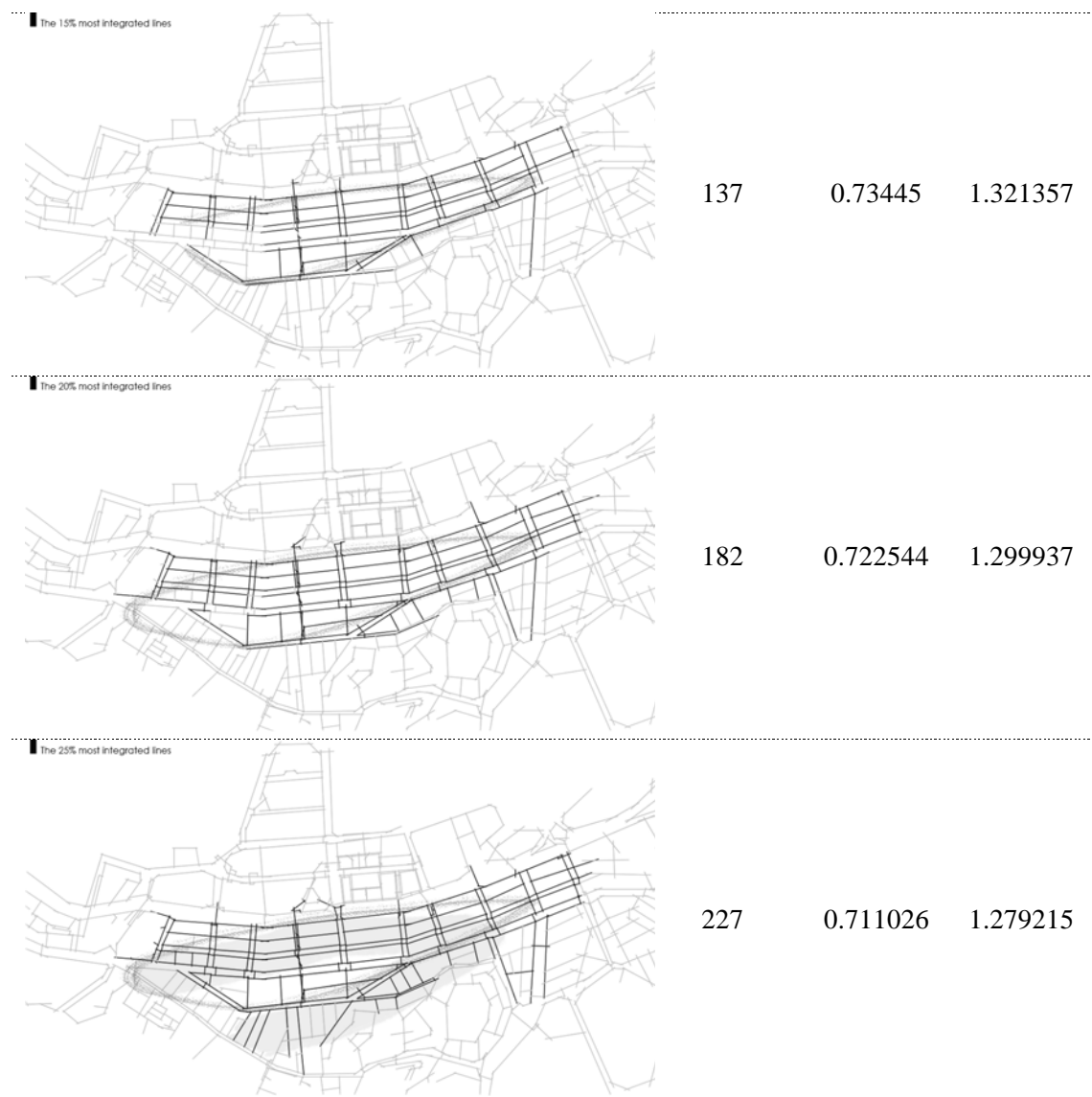
Figure 5.11. Local integration map of Wan Chai

#### 5.4.2.1. Integration Core/Core Strength

As mentioned in Chapter 4, the integration core property is often considered an important variable for identifying the distribution of integration in a system. To investigate the major order and change in integration in the spatial layout, the different degrees of integration core are highlighted respectively by 5-25% of the most integrated lines in the total number of spaces, and the changes in geometric shape of the integration core are further supposed to reveal the underlying structure of the urban configuration (see Table 5.7).

Table 5.7. Analysis of 5-25% integration core of Wan Chai

Integration Core Maps	Number of Integrated Lines	Mean Rn of the Core	Strength of the Core
	46	0.764944	1.376219
	91	0.747144	1.344195



As illustrated by the 5% integration core, the area with the greatest integration value begins to reveal a figure between Gloucester Road and Johnston Road. The shape of the core is not clear in the geometric sense until the 10 and 15% most integrated lines of the whole system are considered. Thus, the following maps gradually show that the core is shaped like a ring, running along Gloucester Road South, Canal Road and Johnston Road. The strength of the 10% integration core over the whole area is 1.344195, indicating that the syntactic core is slightly differentiated from the whole, but somehow segregated within the configurational fabric of the system. Looking at the 20 and 25% most integrated lines, the hollow part of the ring shape tends to be filled with more lines inside as a complete core and commences to leak outwards to the south. Accordingly, the degree of strength of the core gradually decreases with the drop in mean Rn of the core, implying that the syntactic core becomes integrated southwards into the traditional living area, but

not northwards. Thus, analysis is consistent with the previous physical characteristics in terms of the hybrid regime of Wan Chai.

#### 5.4.2.2. Continuity of Integration and Syntactic Intelligibility

The measure of integration continuity reflects the cohesion of the whole system. The extent to which integration in a given system is distributed locally or globally can be determined through the correlation of the  $R_n$  and  $R_3$  values. In Figure 5.12, the scattergram between  $R_n$  and  $R_3$  presents a comparatively lower correlation ( $R^2 = 0.504329$ ) when compared with other cases, indicating that Wan Chai shows no constant underlying structure uniting the local and global systems. As a result, the whole system is characterised by a series of fragmentary enclaves rather than a unitary nature.

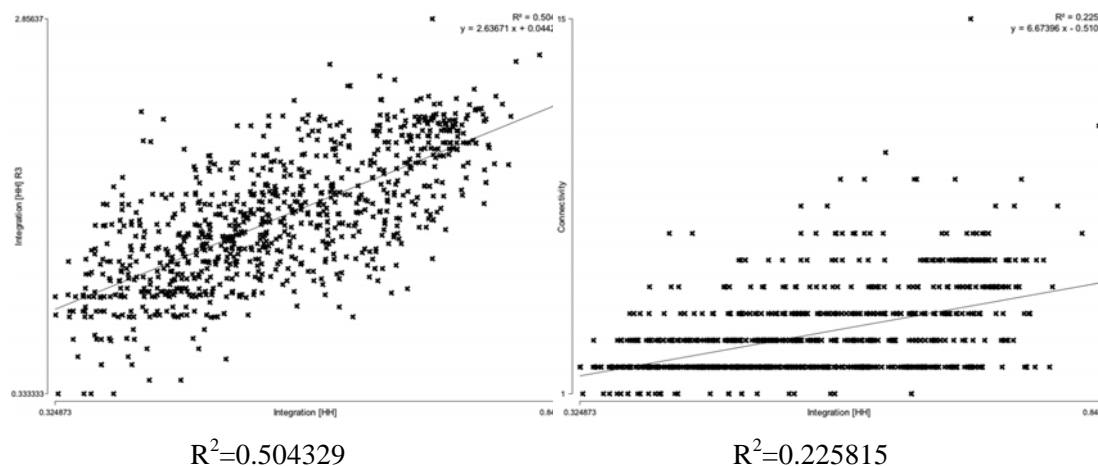


Figure 5.12. Measure of integration continuity

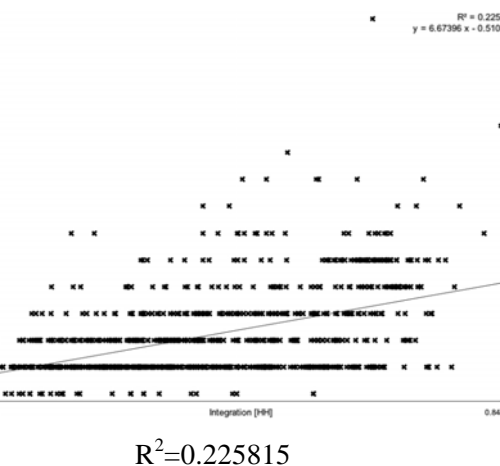


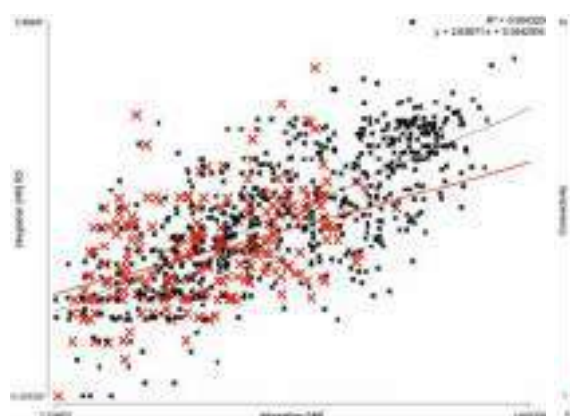
Figure 5.13. Measure of syntactic intelligibility

Quantified as a significant second-order measure, the property of intelligibility is defined as the degree of correlation between connectivity and  $R_n$  values in spatial morphological analysis. As mentioned by most of the current studies (e.g., Chang & Penn, 1998; Hillier, 2002; Hillier *et al.*, 1993), intelligibility is proposed as a property that not only reflects the local/global relationship of the spatial configuration, but is also linked to space cognition and spatial use patterns. An intelligible system is one in which axial lines are both locally and globally integrated, resulting in a smooth interface between the local and global scale of movement (Hillier, 1996, p. 129). As shown in Figure 5.13, the intelligibility value of Wan Chai is markedly lower, with  $R^2 = 0.225815$ , implying that the global properties (integration) of the overall urban layout are quite weakly related to the

local properties (connectivity) when compared with the intelligibility of the parts of London ( $R^2 = 0.61$ )<sup>9</sup>. In other words, there may be relatively segregated local areas that have much weaker connections to the whole system so as to stand out as a single structure. This infers that ordinary people have a hard time comprehending the structure of the whole system of Wan Chai as they move around.

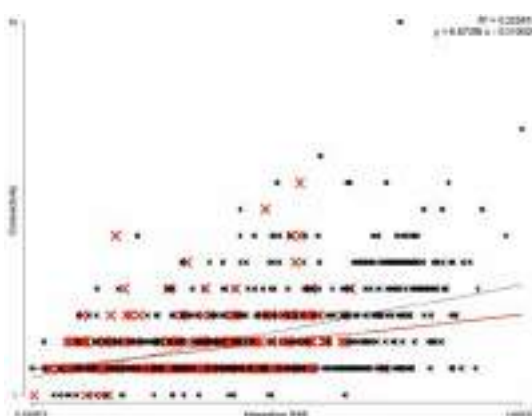
### 5.4.3. Parts

Given the hybrid regime apparent in physical analysis, the parts chosen for examination as sub-areas and structures are Wan Chai North and Wan Chai South. In such cases where two urban systems communicate with each other, Ratti (2004) observes that the most integrated part becomes the line connecting the two systems. When selecting their urban portions and boundaries, none of the pedestrian bridges connecting Wan Chai North and South are included in analysis of the sub-areas to decrease the edge effects (see Appendix X). When determining how to identify the relationships between the part and whole, Hillier points out in *Cities as Movement Economics* (1997) that an intelligibility (or integration continuity) scattergram of the sub-areas by their slope and degree of linearity within the whole system is capable of reflecting the degree to which their spatial properties are understandable in terms of pedestrian and vehicular movement, based on which a locally oriented plan can be formulated. Accordingly, the scattergrams of Wan Chai North and South overlapping the varying embedded areas (red dots) in the whole system (black dots) are plotted as follows.



$$R^2=0.211332$$

Figure 5.14. Integration continuity of Wan

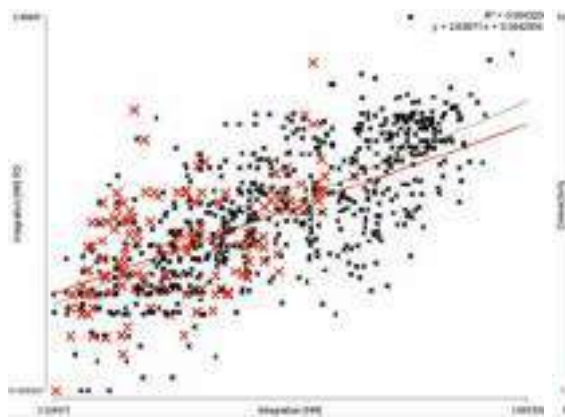


$$R^2=0.083791$$

Figure 5.15. Intelligibility of Wan Chai

<sup>9</sup> The intelligibility data of parts of London were derived from analysis in Bill Hillier's *The Architecture of the Urban Object*, 1989.

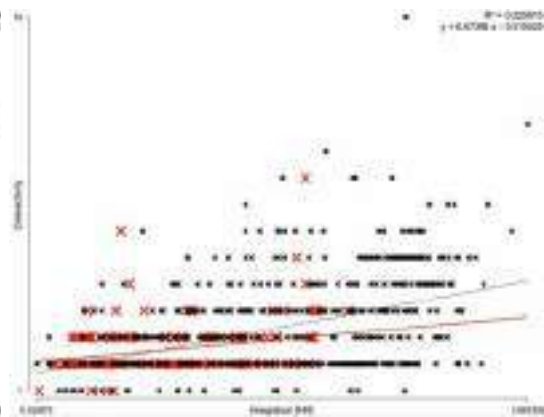
Chai North



$$R^2=0.261303$$

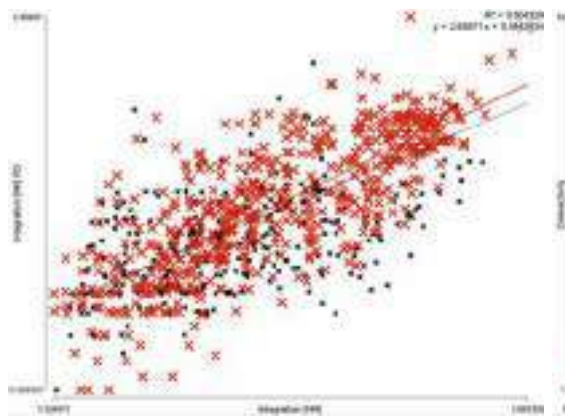
Figure 5.16. Integration continuity of Wan Chai North excluding pedestrian bridges

North



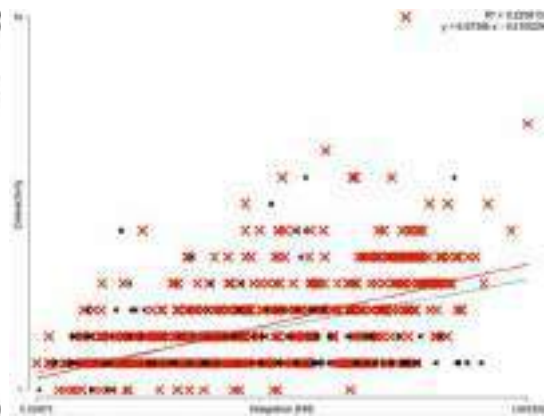
$$R^2=0.068370$$

Figure 5.17. Intelligibility of Wan Chai North excluding pedestrian bridges



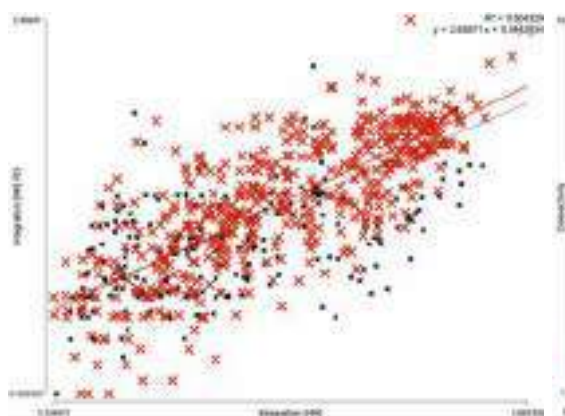
$$R^2=0.599458$$

Figure 5.18. Integration continuity of Wan Chai South



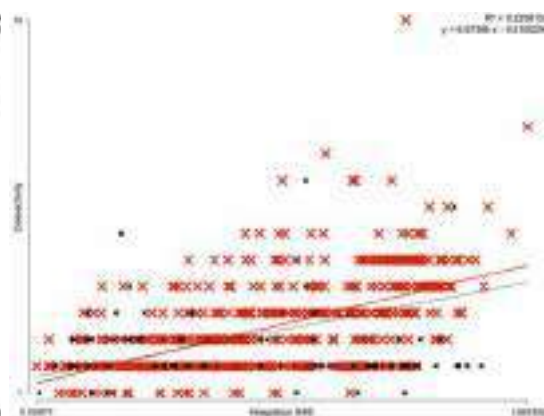
$$R^2=0.296641$$

Figure 5.19. Intelligibility of Wan Chai South



$$R^2=0.591361$$

Figure 5.20. Integration continuity of Wan Chai South excluding pedestrian bridges



$$R^2=0.309827$$

Figure 5.21. Intelligibility of Wan Chai South excluding pedestrian bridges

As shown in Figures 5.14 and 5.15, the red dots representing Wan Chai North are mainly concentrated on the left side of Axia-X and form a linear red line with a low slope, indicating a poorer relationship between global and local patterns in the system compared with the whole. The low intelligibility indicates that this area is segregated from the whole, which means that people find it difficult to infer the global structure from the structure of this part and to orient themselves in the area. The intelligibility of Wan Chai North is only  $R^2 = 0.083791$  with pedestrian bridges and  $R^2 = 0.068370$  without pedestrian bridges (see Figures 5.15 and 5.17), implying that the ground level may disorient people more than the insertion of the pedestrian bridge system. Thus, the elevated pedestrian bridges in the street system in Wan Chai North play an important role in the syntactic spatial configuration.

In contrast to Wan Chai North, Figures 5.18 and 5.19 show that the evenly distributed clusters (red dots) representing Wan Chai South with an uphill slope across the main regression line appear to indicate a better global and local relationship when compared with the whole. The intelligibility value is greater than that of the whole system ( $R^2 = 0.296641$ ), indicating that the spatial structure of Wan Chai South is relatively comprehensible in terms of inferring the global pattern from the small parts. Another distinctive feature of Wan Chai South is its intelligibility excluding pedestrian bridges ( $R^2 = 0.309827$ ), which is higher than that of the whole part (see Figures 5.19 and 5.21). Thus, in the high-density living environment of Wan Chai North, the elevated pedestrian bridges inside the area may cause a decrease in the intelligibility, which is diametrically opposite to the result of Wan Chai North.

## 5.5. Summary: Disoriented and Oriented

The polarised layout of the physical environment with the mixing of localised and segregated spatial languages in Wan Chai has been claimed to represent the basis of a hybrid planning regime, and in this sense should be considered to represent the disorientation of a built form in the north and orientation of a built form in the south.

The north is characterised by foreign aesthetics, alien designs and transnational businesses, private and semiprivate spaces, extensive automobile traffic and footbridge networks and long travel distances between buildings and functions. Modernist ideas in reclamation-based planning are of great importance to the government (the largest landlord), which favours an efficient and rational land supply and urban development to



meet economic and strategic needs. As such, one sees buildings and cars but few people on the streets, as the footbridge system separates pedestrians from vehicles to maintain order in the city. Apart from this, the subject is framed in a political situation that is integrated with the built form and institutional structures. The order that seeks the spatial framing of everyday life amounts to an unintelligible structure based on urban designs of the state. In sharp contrast to the south are areas with reasonably small-scale blocks, closely spaced buildings, accommodation for foot traffic and mixed-use areas for outdoor stays along the streets in direct relation to retail shops, restaurants, commercial/social services, stalls, places of work and so forth. The physical properties of dense urban spaces create a relatively intelligible order when moving through the city and allow for one to encounter specific physical contexts and social situations in different sequences, undermining the possibility of any stringent constraint of movement. It can be inferred that such areas are part of a synergistic system based on a loose and adaptable relationship between form and function.

Thus, spatial-oriented analysis of Wan Chai's morphology conducted in this chapter provides significant data for investigating how the morphological configuration of a city is associated with the everyday practices of ordinary people in the following chapter.

## CHAPTER 6

### EVERYDAY LIFE UNDER MODERNIST PLANNING

#### 6.1. Preamble

The main objective of this chapter is to reveal the modernist production of space in relation to the everyday life of people in Wan Chai. Governments usually consider modernist urban planning to be an active force, and assume that this is the only proper means of directing the community towards the ideal of social harmony. As a result, the everyday life for citizens—ordinary people—in urban areas is embodied within the experience of a highly organised society.

This chapter firstly highlights the significance of this modernist ideology for building Hong Kong, and refines five key features (i.e., specialisation, mass-production, standardisation, vehicle and pedestrian separation, and urban sprawl) of planning in Wan Chai.

In accordance with diverse urban fabrics and units discussed in previous chapter, a comparative approach is then used to examine the southern and northern parts of the district (i.e., Wan Chai North and Wan Chai South). Six dimensions are proposed to analyse differentiations with everyday life between modern urban areas and traditional living areas.

Finally, the results shed light on planning issues that are relevant to a modernist urban planning approach in this area.

## **6.2. Everyday Life under Modernist Planning**

As Hillier and Netto (2002) points out that, a series of reclamation projects have potential to shape city spaces in two distinct modes: ‘the conservative mode restricts co-presence in order to conserve or reproduce cultural patterns; and the other generates the maximum copresence in order to optimise the material conditions for everyday life’ (p. 182), a comparative model has been outlined in accordance with diverse urban fabrics for assessing modernist urban planning system in a hybrid urban area (Siu & Huang, 2015). This should allow us to identify design issues that are relevant to a modernist urban planning approach in this area.

The data of the study was mainly derived from intensive observations of Wan Chai North and South, with descriptions and photographs. The captured images are used to make sense of the activities of city users in everyday spaces. Although the study here is qualitative in nature, a more quantified *six* dimensions are used to analyse differentiations between modern urban areas and traditional living areas. The analysis presented in the later paragraphs is also based on these dimensions. The six dimensions are as follows:

- (i) the disparity between both buildings and facilities in the two areas;
- (ii) the degree of difference between the management of both areas;
- (iii) patterns of peoples’ movement behaviour in the area;
- (iv) how city-users interact with the urban environments in Wan Chai North and South, respectively;
- (v) how everyday spaces are used, and who uses the spaces; and
- (vi) whether or not both urban areas provide people with high-quality social interactions.

Through these observations, the detailed studies of everyday life provide a new perspective for rethinking and reassessing a modern/rational urban planning system, and will prompt further research design on potential planning processes and methods.

### **6.2.1. Buildings and Facilities**

This dimension involves the view, placement and usage of the built environment, as well as elements installed in the public space.

The most obvious distinguishing difference between the modernist urban area and the traditional living area is the built environment. Wan Chai North, like many other modernist cities in the world, is composed of a number of free-standing single buildings, which are characterised by mono-function as well as cubic shapes, clean lines and unembellished exteriors (see Figure 6.1). Glass curtain wall design is adopted for most buildings in Wan Chai North, which makes the space aesthetically pleasing and clean-looking and provides uninterrupted views of the skyline. Wan Chai South, by contrast, consists of compact urban layouts with mixed-use spaces and buildings of various scales. These mostly involve ground floor retail shops and restaurants with residences, offices and other uses for the rooms above. In many cases, some households—or even one particular household in the building—will erect advertisement signboards on external walls of buildings to help promote their own businesses. These signboards are often as high as the buildings. Overhanging signboards abound in the territory and have been identified as a characteristic of Hong Kong's cityscape for a long time. As the external walls of the buildings are communal, the size, numbers and position of signboards may be poorly maintained. As a result, some of these signboards create visual barriers and chaos in the street, potentially endangering the safety of pedestrians (see Figures 6.2a-b, 6.3).



Figure 6.1. Curtain wall buildings provide an open view and ordered layout to the cityscape. However, the monotonous building pattern can result in boring and repetitive business clusters in Wan Chai North.



Figures 6.2a-b. Each mixed-use building and communal external wall in Wan Chai South has its own characteristics and purposes due to the variety of businesses and households. They are not only used for advertising but also serve as a site for political and cultural expression.



Figure 6.3. A comparison of traditional (left) and modernist (right) buildings in Wan Chai. The glass curtain wall design of modernist building makes it feel mysterious, as the



function of the building is hidden to pedestrians. By contrast, the external wall of traditional building shows pedestrians, at a glance, the exact function of the rooms.

The public facilities in Wan Chai North are orderly arranged by a wide variety of public and private entities based on the space's function. For instance, a number of benches are scattered at various designated recreational areas: including the waterfront promenade, sports ground, parks and gardens (see Figure 6.4). Some of the public facilities may contain conditions of use and other restrictions. Most of the time, people comply with the instructions, orders and terms of use given them by the officers. On the other hand, public facilities in Wan Chai South are not well planned or coordinated by the government. Most of them are very old, placed in the wrong position, inadequate or non-existent. As fewer public facilities (especially recreational ones) are provided, the public fulfils their needs in their own ways. For instance, railings are designed and used to provide safety on the road, but people may also use them for sitting or leaning; because of the shortfall of public parking spaces, shop owners will put chairs on the road to 'create' a parking space outside the shop in order to facilitate loading activity. In summary, compared with Wan Chai North, people in Wan Chai South use the public facilities more arbitrarily, flexibly and freely (see Figures 6.5a-b, 6.6a-b).



Figure 6.4. Some constraints appear on the use of public facilities in Wan Chai North. For example, people are not allowed to sleep or lay on benches.



Figures 6.5a-b. Wan Chai North public facilities are well planned and thoughtfully placed for various public needs. The public is encouraged to use the facilities appropriately. People in Wan Chai South are freer to decide how to use the public facilities to fulfil their needs.



Figures 6.6a-b. This is a comparison of formal parking space in Wan Chai North and a parking space that has been created by a shop owner in Wan Chai South. Most of the time, the shop owners use their own objects to reserve a parking space. But in some cases, public facilities, like traffic cones, are ‘borrowed’ by them to occupy a temporal parking space.

### 6.2.2. Management

The management dimension of an urban area refers to both the spatial order and the mechanisms used to control the public use of space. In Wan Chai North open spaces are often owned and operated by private entities and management companies. Private sectors have complete rights to manage the spaces they own. For example, they can post extensive sets of rules and hire people to filter who is able to in and out, as well as govern

the appropriate use of the space. In fact, even for the open spaces that are managed by the government, various restrictions are imposed on the public on the use of the space: such as limiting the opening hours, requiring authorisation or banning pets. Furthermore, vigilant security officers and enforcement officers enforce the rules stringently to keep the area clean, prevent unexpected situations arising and maintain social order and stability. Arguably, these rules unduly restrict the rights of pedestrians to access and use the space freely.

To facilitate management, the government separates urban areas into various specialised mono-functional zones, and segregates all activities in accordance with the space's function. For instance, the area between Convention Avenue and Gloucester Road is zoned for commercial and governmental use; while the area around the Golden Bauhinia Square functions as a focal point for tourists and venue for official events. This zoning approach contributes to a more clear-cut and orderly urban layout, and as a result the process of management becomes more refined and efficient. For example, all demonstrators are required to apply for permits and protestors have to enter in a restricted zone, such that the government can control the spatial environment and public order (see Figures 6.7, 6.8a-b).





Figure 6.7. There are clear demarcation lines between public and private space in Wan Chai North. These contribute to a clean and orderly streetscape and spatial order. In the figure, a security controls the entering of a building.



Figures 6.8a-d. In Wan Chai North, Some rules (a) and a public activity area (b) are set up to ensure to secure ideal social order and discipline. In Wan Chai South, officers of the Food and Environment Hygiene Department often set up ‘lightweight rules’ (c), and carry out inspections (d) along the street in an attempt to prevent excessive chaos.

Most of the open spaces in Wan Chai South are not controlled by private developers, but managed by government-public partnership. Although the traditional living area is of a high density with a compact urban layout and mixed land use, the demarcation lines between public and private spaces are ambiguous (Jacobs, 1961; Mandanipour, 2003). This situation renders management more difficult. As a result, in Wan Chai South, a relatively liberal, flexible and pragmatic manner is used to enforce the legislative requirements (i.e., verbal advice), and the public are allowed to manage the space by themselves (see Figures 6.8c-d). As a result, the urban spaces and streets in Wan Chai South are often complex and untidy (see Figures 6.9a-b).



Figures 6.9a-b. Because of the authorities' overly lax enforcement, many stall owners intentionally encroach upon the public space in order to expand the areas that they can use. Some people may occupy a space in the public sphere for their own use. However, those goods owners restore the street and surrounding area to its original cleanliness after they have finished their work.

### 6.2.3. Traffic and Pedestrian Flow

This dimension refers to the situations and patterns of people-moving behaviour. In Wan Chai North, the road network is designed to facilitate fast and efficient automobile traffic movements: traffic lanes are wide and straight, at-grade pedestrian crossings are rare, and most developments are linked by footbridges (see Figure 6.10). Officially, the government views separation of pedestrians from vehicles as the best measure to provide a pleasant and safe environment for pedestrian, as well as ensure an efficient and rapid traffic network.

Vehicle-pedestrian separation has been an important principle of urban planning in Hong Kong for a long time. In order to minimise the waiting time of the motorists and vehicle-pedestrian conflict, at-grade pedestrian crossings have been largely replaced by footbridges or subways. Hence, the footbridge network in Northern Wan Chai has been well developed: from Wan Chai Ferry Pier to Southorn Garden (Wan Chai MTR station) and from Fenwick Street to Tonnochy Road, pedestrians can cross these areas without getting on the street. Because the footbridge landings are fixed, the walking route and direction of pedestrians have been formulated and restricted in a set way. In peak hours, the pedestrian traffic on footbridges moves in columns and everyone must move at the speed dictated by the pedestrian stream (see Figures 6.11a-b, 6.12).



Figure 6.10. Wan Chai North is mainly designed and scaled for vehicles, such that a large proportion of space is devoted to cars. Traffic lanes are designed wide and straight and at-grade pedestrian crossing is uncommon. These measures attract vehicular traffic through this area.



Figures 6.11a-b. As the majority of Wan Chai North space is planned for office and commercial uses, people have to walk or drive long distances to fulfil their needs (such as dining or shopping). The two figures show that pedestrian flow will rapidly increase from people coming to the working places in the morning (a: from South to North) and going to retail shops and restaurants during lunch hours (b: from North to South).





Figure 6.12. Sometimes the administration or private entities use metal fences to guide and direct pedestrians.

By contrast, Wan Chai South evidences a relatively slow traffic and pedestrian movement as the roads are shared by all users—including motorists, pedestrians and cyclists—at the same level and time. In Wan Chai South, pedestrian flow is not governed by fixed or planned routes. People cross the street freely, anywhere and anytime as if there were no vehicles on the road. Motorists and cyclists exercise patience and decrease their speed voluntarily at places where people converge. By combining commercial, residential, retail spaces and restaurants, the mixed-use Wan Chai South area offers more choices for people to fulfil their needs within the same urban area, and this decreases their reliance on long distance travel (see Figure 6.13).



Figure 6.13. Without footbridges or subways, in Wan Chai South street space is shared by motorists, pedestrians and cyclists alike.

#### 6.2.4. Public Activities

This dimension refers to how a public space is used, and to the activities that are available in the space.

Public activities support social, cultural and political expression, as well as bringing economic benefit to the people and society. Gehl (1987) divided activities into three categories: *necessary activities* (such as walking), *optional activities* and *social activities*.

During the observations, there were obvious differences between the activities of Wan Chai North and South. For the former, necessary activities were always seen on streets and footbridges, but few optional or social activities occurred, as such activities are restricted through various rules and management decisions (see Figure 6.14). For the latter, optional and social activities would occur spontaneously in streets, parks, and other recreation spots at any time.



Figure 6.14. There was no place for social activities where spaces had to be ordered, efficient and structured. Only walking, waiting for a bus or window-shopping took place during the observation period.

Wan Chai North is divided into separate areas for various activities. As a result, the types of activities were limited and tended towards a unitary mode. For instance, tourist activities have been zoned and regulated in Golden Bauhinia Square, such that photo-taking and patronising licensed hawkers are the only activities that the tourists are able to do in that place.

Also, in Wan Chai North many mega events or formal events are organised by the government: especially in the areas around the HKCEC. The overt presence of crowd management tools (such as physical barriers) in public places gives the message that the government has the ability—and the absolute right—to manage these places to facilitate these events (see Figures 6.15, 6.16, 6.17).





Figure 6.15. Tourist activities have been zoned and regulated in specific areas. Only permitted hawkers are allowed to do business there. The trading areas and types of commodities have been controlled by the administration: only painting and photographing are approved for commercial trading.



Figure 6.16. The flag-raising ceremony includes a party of Hong Kong police officers, accompanied by a rifle unit all in ceremonial dress. The national anthem is played by the police band, followed by a ten-minute musical performance by the police pipe band. During this special event, the government administrators temporarily convert the open space into functional venue, exerting some of the barriers for management purposes.



Figure 6.17. During 15th Anniversary of Hong Kong's Return to China, the police pays exceptional attention to prevent any unexpected activities.

In traditional living areas like Wan Chai South, streets serve as public spaces. They are spaces for people to meet, interact and connect. They are owned by the community, and managed by all people. Various kinds of public activities can be found on Wan Chai South's streets, depending on the context of place and time. In the Johnston Road, near MTR station and places of work, public activities will generally be conducted for business reasons; in the traditional street market areas such as Tai Yuen Street, public activities can be quite comprehensive, such as buying and selling, chatting, discussing, playing chess and even sleeping. Gehl (1987) suggested that these optional and social activities occur because the absence of an explicit controls presence (see Figures 6.18, 6.19a-b).





Figure 6.18. Although unauthorised street hawking activities are not allowed in Wan Chai South, the administration adopts a lenient policy and flexibility in taking enforcement actions, such that the hawkers are verbally warned to disperse.



Figures 6.19a-b. Activities on the street in Wan Chai South include having meals and sleeping. As demarcation of public and private space in Wan Chai South is ambiguous, workers and stall owners see the area around their workplace as available for their own use.

### 6.2.5. Pedestrian Diversity

This dimension refers to the people who use the space. There is growing interest in incorporating pedestrian diversity analysis into the urban planning. This involves extending focus from the quantitative indicators (i.e., pedestrian flow and walking speed) to include the qualitative indicators that can help to make a pleasing urban environment. Public activities are largely dependent on the planning approach and management of the urban space. Zoning and mixed land use not only affect how spaces are used, but also the type of people who use this space.

Due to the segregation of land use and activity in Wan Chai North, each zone usually only attracts people with homogeneous backgrounds, classes, needs and similar behaviours. On the surface, all people have the right to access or use the space, however the functional zoning approach and over-management that is identified above, encourages the segregation of people of different backgrounds and exclusion of certain undesirable users (Burgess, 1994; Maantay, 2002).

The observations for this study illustrate that Wan Chai North has a remarkably low level of pedestrian diversity. During the fieldwork the author observed that people wearing shirts, suits and ties made up the majority of pedestrians in Wan Chai North: especially the footbridges along Gloucester Road and its nearby vicinity, as these areas function as the centre and rendezvous of economic activity. Likewise, over 90 per cent of visitors in Golden Bauhinia Square were tourists, as the space was designed to attract tourism (see Figure 6.20).



Figure 6.20. Mono-functional space tends to attract same types of people, likewise public facilities and activities organised by the government also only attract certain people. In Golden Bauhinia Square, all parking spaces are labelled for coaches, and leave no room for small cars. Only tourism-related products or services (i.e., painting and photographing) are approved for sale in that place. Such measures have restricted the function and publicness of space.

In contrast, Wan Chai South is composed of a number of different types of buildings (residential, commercial, storage and service), shops and market stores, restaurants and recreational venues. In addition to attracting various on-street activities (like street performances and hawking) Wan Chai South attracts a diverse cross-section of people, including both neighbourhood residents and visitors from outside the district (see Figure 6.21). The observation of the pedestrian diversity in Wan Chai South indicated that the elderly are more likely to stay here rather than in the new and clean recreational venues in North. The explanation is that the footbridge system is not convenient or accessible for them. Long footbridge ramps, stairs and lifts are physical and psychological barriers when entering the north, and further decrease its pedestrian diversity.



Figure 6.21. Tai Yuen Street in Wan Chai is a street market, residential area and public space. It attracts local and foreign visitors with diverse backgrounds. Sometimes, women, children and the elderly like to chat there.

#### 6.2.6. Social Capital

Social capital refers to the quantity and quality of social interactions and relationships in a community. The interplay between social capital and urban planning is a comprehensive topic. Generally, social capital is a concept that describes the social contacts both between groups and within groups. A high level of social capital is associated with strong social networks and social relationships and feelings of trust and civic engagement. Social capital influences the collective action, social solidarity and inclusion of an area (Leyden, 2003; Putnam, 1993).

In this study, the author found that levels of social capital tend to be significantly higher in Wan Chai South than North. This can be reflected by more spontaneous social activities and collective actions in Wan Chai South. The availability of space for social activities is important for developing social community as well as social capital in an urban area. As residents have greater opportunities to participate in different types of social and informal interactions, social networks, cohesion and solidarity are easily



created among them. During the observation, planned and spontaneous meetings and casual conversations with acquaintances were often found in many places around the open-air bazaars. This shows that the community is well networked. Furthermore, the community formed concern groups such as ‘Street Market Concern’ (discussed below) to take action to protect collective interests and the environment (see Figures 6.22a-b).



Figures 6.22a-b. The wide range of social and informal activities contributes to the social capital. In Wan Chai South, residents spend time in communication activities in or alongside the access roads. This helps to maintain a positive and united relationship between residents and the place.

In modernist cities, zoning not only divides the integrated functions of a city into fragments, but also undermines the ‘potential for integrated neighbourhoods and local social capital’ (Barton, 2005). The separation of land into zoned mono-functional does not take the psychological and social aspects of the space into consideration. When people spend considerable time in traffic and at workplace but not in their residential community, they do not have a sense of belonging necessary to engage and to contribute to the civic society. Most people are merely sojourners in Wan Chai North (see Figure 6.23). Furthermore, the lack of social activity actually leads to low social capital.



Figure 6.23. For most people, Wan Chai North is a workplace and not a place for developing social networks. Although the planners provided spaces (parks and gardens) for people to stay in the area, no social activity occurs in these spaces.

### 6.3. Reflections of Everyday Life on Modernist Planning

The people ‘construct their everyday life, their personal identities and relations, drawing upon – and simultaneously negotiating with – existing macro-level spatial, temporal and discursive structures or meanings’ (Lykogianni, 2008, p. 133). In this regard, polarized layouts superimpose the modern languages on the deformed traditional languages in such a way the two principles of organisation tend to account for the *modernist organized pattern* and the *democratic urban arrangement* in association with everyday lives of ordinary people.

As a result, Figure 6.24 provides a visual representation of the difference between the *traditional living area* (long dash line) and *modern urban area* (solid line), with ratings for each of the dimensions outlined above. The closer the point is to the centre of the chart, the poorer it is for that dimension.

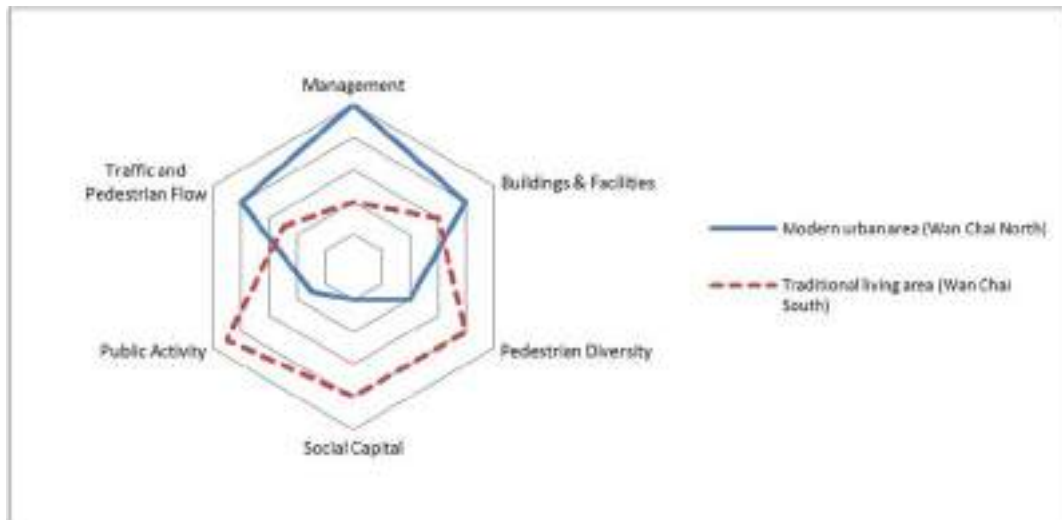


Figure 6.24. Comparative profile of Wan Chai North and Wan Chai South, using six dimensions.

In Wan Chai North, uniform mono-functional buildings and public facilities are well located, carefully maintained, efficiently managed and functionally appropriated to meet the public needs. Most buildings are privately owned and highly managed by the government or private sector. Due to the proactive management and maintenance practices, the space often feels organised, and looks ordered, structured and controlled. There is conspicuous demarcation between the private and public space, and various restrictions and monitoring are imposed upon the public on the use of the space. Also, strict enforcement actions are taken to manage behaviours. According to Lefebvre (1991b), such spaces to be read are:

[T]he most deceptive and tricked up imaginable... Monumentality, for instance, always embodies and imposes a clearly intelligible message... monumental buildings mask the will to power and the arbitrariness of power beneath signs and surfaces which claim to express collective will and collective thought. In the process, such signs and surfaces also manage to conjure away both possibility and time (p. 143).

One sees buildings and cars, but few people stay on the streets. A vehicle-pedestrian separation principle and footbridge system adopted in Wan Chai North may take influence on that. Pedestrian routes have been set up within the footbridges. The average speed and volume of traffic and pedestrian flow is high, especially during the peak hours of the mornings, lunch hours and evenings. Nevertheless, the level of pedestrian diversity was observed to be low, because each zone had a specific function that attracted only a single type of pedestrian user.

Activities in Wan Chai North are segregated into mono-functional zones. Hence, the observations of the streets showed a great deal of necessary activities, but rarely found optional and social activities. On the one hand, over-management and zoning restricted the types of public activities that could occur, and therefore many people performed similar activities within the same venue. On the other hand, a range of governmental and formal activities were routinely organised in Wan Chai North.

The spaces in Wan Chai North—both streets and open spaces—do little to serve as public spaces for community interactions. They provide a circulation route without any social meaning, and thus, Wan Chai North cannot easily build social capital.

In sharp contrast to the north, Wan Chai South had several varieties of mixed-use buildings. Uses included housing, commerce and services. Many types of people were observed using public facilities in non-traditional ways to fulfil their needs. In addition, the demarcation between private and public was ambiguous. The relatively liberal and generous management approaches have meant that the urban area is somewhat disorganised and cluttered.

The author observed that the speed of traffic and pedestrian flow in Wan Chai South was relatively slow, and people coming and going were free, because roads are shared by people on foot, on bikes and in vehicles. The volume of pedestrian flow was generally stable but particularly busy in the street marketplace. Moreover, a high degree of pedestrian diversity can be observed in the urban area. The author found many women, children and elderly residents on the street, participating in different activities. It can be argued that Wan Chai South is a synergistic system based on its loose and adaptable relation of form to function. It is defined by fluid, flexible, permissive, and malleable character typical of a context of disorder in the social ecology of Wan Chai.

Streets have long been important public spaces in Wan Chai South. They support activities that are spontaneous and simple in nature, and do not require official sanction or organisation. As there are opportunities for residents to communicate and interact, a high level of social capital was identified from the strong social networks and civic associations in the community.



## **6.4. Changes in the Nature of Everyday Lives**

As a result of functional segregation in modernist urban planning and the use of rational design alone, Wan Chai has become rational mechanisms that are used to routinize and program everyday life. A number of public spaces no longer belong to the public for everyday enjoyment. Many streets have been transformed into car parks or efficient transportation hubs to meet the demand of heavy circulation.

### **6.4.1. Modernist Planning Exerts Greater Management Control**

In Wan Chai, the government tends to attain a higher level of order, both physical (spatial) and social, in the modern urban area than the traditional living area. The top-down approach focuses on state control, with the understanding that common urban problems, such as street clutter, illegal parking, informal street trading and procession, can be solved by stringent management controls.

The components of stringent management control are as follows: planning and zoning public activities; outsourcing of the management work of spaces to the private developers, enterprises and management agencies; posting extensive sets of regulations to govern appropriate use; and proactive monitoring and strict enforcing of the rules. These measurements and practices, both control the users of the space, and at the same time exclude undesirable people.

Stringent management controls are also adopted by the private sector. In Wan Chai North open spaces are often owned and operated by private entities and management companies. Private sectors have complete right and freedom of management of the spaces they own. Cleanliness and ordered appearance is usually important to them, as this promotes a positive corporate image. For this reason, owners often post extensive sets of rules and hire people to govern appropriate use of the space. As a result, few spontaneous social activities occurred in privately-owned public spaces.

Stringent management control also has political implications in regard to the public order and demonstrations. The findings illustrate that the potential for demonstrations in the modernist urban area was a concern for the administration. Firstly, all demonstrations were required to apply for permits. Second, protesters (or people who resembled protesters) and their movement were zoned, controlled and even driven out by force. For

instance, on 1st October 2012, several black-shirted citizens were hauled away minutes before a National Day flag-raising ceremony at the Golden Bauhinia Square. An official spokesman stated that these official actions were based on the ‘code of ceremony’, and were to prevent disruption of public events. However, in fact, there was ambiguity in respect to the code of ceremony: including its legal authority and definition of ‘prevention’, since those black-shirted citizens did not shout out any slogans or display any unacceptable behaviour before security guards led them away.

#### **6.4.2. Walking and Living under Effectiveness-led Planning**

In general, Wan Chai North has a great deal of pedestrian and vehicular traffic, but these both move quickly such that street spaces have a ‘lifeless’ quality. On the other hand, pedestrians in Wan Chai South are likely to move slowly and spend more time on social activities, which presents a more lively and dynamic streetscape. Gehl (2010) noted that ‘walking is a form of transport, but it is also a potential beginning or an occasion for many other activities’ (p. 120). He suggested that walking tempo has a significant effect on the level of on-street activity and urban space life: if people walk slowly on the street, they have more chances to closely survey their surroundings, to meet and communicate with others, to understand the place, or to initiate or participate in any activities. The following focuses on how planning ideology influences the quantity as well as quality of walking, and the influence of this on life in urban spaces.

Naturally, the nature of street spaces is an important factor influencing people’s movement behaviour. When streets are designed for traffic movement, they become less attractive and uninviting to people. Wan Chai North’s road planning, like many other cities in the world, is based on automobile-oriented planning approach suggested by modernist urban planners Le Corbusier and Frank Lloyd Wright. In their view, as the zoning approach divides the city into separate functional zones, to effectively connect each separate space a fast, dense and efficient transportation system is absolutely necessary. As the pedestrian networks in Wan Chai North became more complex and indirect, the crossing of roads also became more difficult and inconvenient. Pedestrians now have to use a circuitous route for crossing the roads or getting to the footbridges to reach other areas. At the same time, streets and footbridges have become specialised in their function, as conduits for traffic instead of public spaces. For the modernists, activities like busking, small trading or even staying on the streets or footbridges may be

seen as an obstacle to the speedy and continuous pedestrian stream, especially during peak hours.

Indeed, the problem of the policy of segregation not only considers the physical aspects of route planning, but also the neglect of the psychological quality of pedestrian walkways (Sauter & Huettenmoser, 2008). More and more, urban planners have come to realise that the measurement of the 'perceived distance' is as important as the 'physical distance' in street planning and design. Physical distance, according to Gogel, Wist, and Harker (1963), can be defined as 'the distance from the eye to the object', and perceived distance as 'the observer's perception of the distance of the object'. The street spaces in Wan Chai North are safe, wide and well-maintained, when compared with those in the older urban area of Wan Chai South; on the other hand, the streetscape is dominated by motorised traffic, office buildings, long closed walls, and boring facades. These unattractive 'hard edges' (Gehl, 2010) make pedestrians unconsciously think the street is long, and they are encouraged to walk faster with greater step length, or inclined to use the underground tunnels or elevated footbridges, even if it is inconvenient.

To make a streetscape attractive, physical planning (such as well-designed and thoughtfully placed street furniture) is important; but more important is the stimulation of active facades, activities and people. Wan Chai South is composed of mixed-use buildings with the street level devoted to commercial uses, which means pedestrians can see different shops and activities when walking along streets. The display windows, signage, building entrances, outdoor restaurant seating, hawkers and kiosks encourage pedestrians to slow down or even stop. In some areas of Wan Chai South's area, such as Cross Street and Tai Yuen Street, pedestrians, bicyclists and motor vehicles share a common street space, and they do not move fast. Shared street spaces can be seen as a public outdoor room for the use of the general public, which make an urban area liveable and vibrant (Hamilton-Baillie, 2008). Certainly, in a shared space, all road users slow their speed and pay more attention to the surrounding area as well as people rather than just keeping moving, and such 'psychological traffic calming' (Kennedy *et al.*, 2005) can help to prevent serious accidents. Furthermore, free-flowing movement means pedestrians can change direction, speed up or slow down, or stay on the street for the social activities or other reasons. Street spaces in traditional living area are multifunctional and open for a wide range of activities, such that walking is only one of the moving activities. In the absence of designated walking route people can walk freely and naturally and enjoy street life (see Figures 6.25a-b).



Figures 6.25a-b. Perceived distance: a horizontal facade (a) makes walking distances seem longer and boring; streets with vertical facades (b) makes distances seem shorter and more fun.

### 6.4.3. Disappearance of Community

The preceding sections have discussed issues related to behaviour. The section that follows discusses the impact of land-use zoning—the core idea of modernist urban planning—influence on the development of urban community.

The concept of community is associated with many circumstances and has many dimensions. Generally speaking, community can be defined as ‘a group of people who live in a local area and who therefore have certain interests and problems in common’ (Hunt & Colander, 1996, p. 129). In recent years, many researchers have adopted Robert Putnam’s idea of social capital as a framework for understanding and building strong communities in an urban area. Putnam (2000) defined social capital as ‘grease that allows the community wheel to advance smoothly’. He embraced the notions of civic engagement, sense of belonging, trust and community cohesion.

The findings of this study show that a strong community and high degree of social capital exist in the Wan Chai South, since there are a great number of residential and commercial buildings, schools and parks, restaurants and shops and historic open-air bazaars, with plenty of opportunities to interact and become involved in social activities for people with different backgrounds. In such mixed land-use area, no one is isolated or recognised as an outsider. Therefore, it is widely believed that provision of services is essential to community cohesion (Holdsworth & Hartman, 2009; Kwok, 1998).

The community in Wan Chai South did not develop based on official plans or blueprints. Rather, it was built by the people who used the space and was expanded over many years. For example, the open air bazaars in Wan Chai were transformed from informal street trading activities in Tai Yuen Street, Cross Street and Wan Chai road that began in the 1920s. The streets were not built for commercial purposes, but people utilised them for trading, assembling and interacting with others. In this way, a community was gradually formed, consisting of nearby residents and shop owners. Furthermore, although the space is shared by the community, the members obtain a sense of belonging and close relationship with the space from 'the sharing of interests and activities' and also the 'shared history' (Collamer, 1999). Therefore, residents in the community will take collective action (such as assembly and procession) to maintain or protect their 'sharing of interests and history'. Putnam (1993) described such collective action as 'civic engagement', and noted that this requires a high level of sense of belonging, common goals, and healthy social networks. For instance, when the government put forth a plan to relocate all open air bazaars' hawker pitches and shops into the new indoor market complex in 2006, residents, individual hawkers and others united together and formed a group called 'Street Market Concern'. They argued against the plan, saying that it would destroy local identity, history and culture, disrupt the social network of occupants and adversely affect the local economy.

Zoning is a planning approach that divides the city arbitrary into separate functional zones for the purpose of regulating land use and development, and it affects the growth and development of urban community (Kwok, 1998; Siu, 2001). This mono-functional zoning system separates home from school, shopping, work and other activities, leading to the decline in sense of community. Alexander, Ishikawa and Silverstein (1977) indicated that the separation of home and workplace 'reinforces the idea that work is a toil, while only family life is living'. Great distances between different zones force people to spend substantial amounts of time travelling, and this further reduces their participation in outdoor activities, as well as their involvement in the urban community. In addition, when spaces are occupied by private developers, people have little motivation to develop social networks or a sense of community (Kwok, 1998).

Cultural and social diversity are widely understood to be important components in developing social capital. A noticeable effect of the zoning approach was the creation of spatial and social exclusion. Through physical separation of different land uses into zones, the urban areas have been re-configured as disjointed fragments, creating a number of urban islands that were both surrounded and linked by bridges, tunnels, expressways and

bypasses. With mono-functional planning, those urban islands only invite certain types of people. They limit social encounters and thus generate strong physical and social segregation (Rio, 2004).

### **6.5. Summary: Modern and Traditional**

This chapter examined the daily behaviour of city users in two areas where the environment was differently planned and managed. Its aim was to determine the difference between a modern urban area and a traditional living area. Based on an empirical investigation in Wan Chai, the author identified six dimensions of difference between the modern urban area and the traditional living area: the built environment and facilities, management issues, traffic and pedestrian flow, public activities, pedestrian diversity and social capital. The results suggest that the rational top-down approach to planning lacked consideration of the psychological and social aspects of space. Conversely, the traditional living area—the place that we recognised as primitiveness—has long been an important public space for city users, and contributes to the vitality of the city and the sense of community. It was precisely the high density living offered by the compression of population, space and human experience, which transgressed any rational response to the public living environment in time and in function so as to build the interactions between plans/designs and practices, even though crucial urban issues are identified such as density and crowding.

From this chapter the author can identify three key points. First, the stringent management control that was widely implemented in the modernist urban area, to ensure the efficiency, functionality and order of space, made the space less public and more ‘soulless’. Second, traffic planning, streets patterns and the design of the streetscape influenced pedestrian walking behaviour and experience, as well as the quality of life in urban spaces. Effectiveness-led planning segregated pedestrians. Although this focused on safety and fast movement, it neglected the psychological qualities inherent to walking, as well as the social function of walkways. Third, that modernist planning completely failed to develop urban community in the urban area. Land-use zoning created a spatially and socially segmented city, as most people had to use a great part of their time commuting to and from work, or moving to school or market every day. As a result, the opportunity for people to interact and have close contact was reduced, and no community was formed. In short, modernist planning neglects real situations and human factors. The

‘ideal urban plan’ formulated by one social group of experts will exclude the various desires and needs of other social groups.

From the examination of modernist planning, we can identify if the notion of modernist planning produces the best urban environment. Indeed, the modernist approach has proved resistant to change over the years, and more and more planners ask to develop new approaches to urban planning. The case study of the Wan Chai South suggests that traditional approaches are not out-dated, and contain human factors that modernist approaches have ignored. In addition, high density as a function of urban life has provided more positive benefits to extend immediate experience of place both qualitatively and quantitatively. In sum, when undertaking urban development projects, the government must look carefully at all the components including the physical, psychological and social aspects, which constitute effective urban planning.

## CHAPTER 7

### ORDINARY PEOPLE'S PRACTICES IN EVERYDAY PLACES

#### 7.1. Preamble

The previous chapters discussed that the modernist production of space related to the everyday life of people. Reclamation programmes, an import to Hong Kong, have become the dominant approach to the practice of urban planning, and modernist planning has been highlighted as the most useful and effective concept in the planning practice. The process has been largely based on rational plans that take a 'command and control' approach. The quantified six dimensions are used to reveal the extent of which contemporary development has changed the forms of urban areas, and it has transformed the nature of everyday lives of ordinary people.

Nevertheless, what we are given every day is an everyday practice that is not 'banal and meaningless'. The acts of city users cannot be defined merely as mechanical or according to a stereotype. Although people's everyday lives to their living environments have been changed gradually with the urban transformation, their practices are not simply passive reactions or responses to space, but a kind of tactic in the creative acts or art performed in the public space. A society is constituted by insurgent attitudes, and these practices cautiously seek equilibrium among the daedal spaces, various regimes, tangible desires, and metropolitan transformation.

Based on a large context of tactical urbanism where citizens begin to subvert established political order, this chapter seeks to go beyond the city as spectacle by providing a microcosm for the 'practiced space' of city user. To understand ordinary places in response to a changing city environment, the author examines how ordinary people are



involved in place-making to generate a physical, social, and cultural reconstruction of the public realm in the contemporary urban life. The result is a detailed discourse of constructing public realm, which argues that such processes can be observed in specific settings, which as well as embodying insurgent potentials of public space, are used by the inhabitants—city users—for their daily needs, and thus provide an empirical account of those excluded from the modernist production of space. Using a systematic frame, the dynamic nature of these practiced spaces can provide a valuable overview of the production of public space, and an alternative urban order in the city. Finally, this chapter argues that cities must be thought of as ‘transductive’ entities in which to constitute a new form of urban politics that might give birth to the right to the city.

## **7.2. The Inner Life of Wan Chai and Streets**

In surveying Wan Chai’s urban public spaces the main criteria for identification were that they should be primarily upon a layout pattern of the ‘segment-line city’, and contain a variety of environmental affordances catering for activities and users. Thus, given the basis of a field survey of Wan Chai, the following four units and the segments within them fulfilled these criteria: *traditional living unit*; *mixed retail and residential unit*; *government administrative and commercial unit*; *HKCEC unit*. These units are represented by street-segments within a transformation framework of Wan Chai. The separation of land uses into various units was an important aspect of urban planning in Wan Chai. The continued expansion of the northern commercial zone and the increasingly strict spatial separation of activities have changed ordinary people’s lives. Activities were ‘appropriately’ segregated in accordance with each unit’s function and space. For instance, the HKCEC unit between Waterfront Promenade and Drive Central functions as a focal point for tourists and a venue for official events. In addition, as governments, authorities and modernist urban planners have tried to create a homogeneous, orderly society and to exploit or control the existing diversity, multiple strategies are exercised in a manner which tends to govern street behaviour, that is through development incentives, land-use regulations, codified laws and ordinances, political space, and design practices. Consequently, as Sennet (1992) states, the ‘unbalanced personal life and empty public life’ are manifested in the dead public space of modern city with few opportunities for interaction (p. 16). Mitchell (2003) also argues that, ‘in a world defined by private property, and formation of public sphere that is at all robust and inclusive of a variety of different publics is exceedingly difficult’ (p. 34). Unlike widespread perception, which defines city users as passive inhabitants of space,

people's everyday lives are characterised by continuous adaptations and collisions with the city's various emerging structures of time and space, and the production of space is a contested process (Lefebvre, 1984, 1991b).

As shown in the previous chapter, the hybrid planning regimes emerge from a nexus of the physical and the social characters of a space. The observations not only match with the above phenomena, but also uncover the formal characterization with perceived activities in different street layouts, each of which generally places various rhythms on the spatial practices (e.g., optional activities and social activities). It is significant to see the dynamics based on the segment-line characteristic, and to unveil hidden perceptions and experiences accordingly.

In order to observe the interaction between the street environment and human behaviour, the study also follows in the article *Look Closely and You Will See, Listen Carefully and You Will Hear* (Mehta, 2009). In this study mapping activities taking place in a setting within a set time interval, in cases where Wan Chai's urban form offers varying conditions for hybrid identity, apparently great difference of daily lives. The distinction is based on how streets accommodate spaces, rhythms, and users. According to urban morphology and plan units in Wan Chai, a fundamental assumption is that behavioural patterns are in a specific quadrant or subdivision. The four units that the author identified: traditional living unit, mixed retail and residential unit, government administrative and commercial unit, and HKCEC unit aim to represent the segment-line pattern and land-use claims of Wan Chai. Moreover, segments of each unit are representative of rhythm of everyday space, to the extent that they are main locale for city inhabitants. It is essential to classify perceptions and experiences accordingly. The author will discuss briefly the inner life of each of these below.

### **7.2.1. Portrayal of Stationary Activities**

Bounded by Johnston Road and Queen's Road East, an environmentally-friendly approach is committed to cater for the confluence of the old residential groups and pedestrians. A high level of pedestrian priority along with property access opens up one's relationship to society rather than making it primarily about ownership or control over an object. The social relationships signify person-place bonds, but often also involve notions of local community, shared historical experiences, economic livelihoods, and so forth. It is the result of a community process where the individual and group become attached to

places wherein they may practice, and thus preserve their cultures (see also Fried, 1963; Michelson, 1976). In this context, the local attachment arises from both socio-cultural and -economic features over the physical environment.

#### 7.2.1.1. Traditional Living Unit

As the century old transport tramway goes through Johnston Road to mark the shoreline until today, the physical feature that might suggest the border of indigenous culture nurtures the enclaves and old communities contained close-knit social networks and interweaving relationships, and in which economic livelihood arguments might be typically invoked by street vending that provides a means of making a living for the grassroots and low-priced supply of goods and services to the public. Subsequently, long-term relations with places and people also tend to be inclusive to transgressive activities and apparent disarray with place-bound traditions and cultures. Thus, large portions of the area not only serve as street markets for selling and buying activities, but also encompass a rich variety of settings for different uses. The charts in Figure 7.1 illustrate the street's rhythm and the presence of a general pattern on traditional living unit. The intensity of activities increase at 9 AM, and dip towards the evening, i.e., 7 PM. In order to probe settings that are more heavily used than others, the mapping results show that the most used locale is street markets and frontage of MTR entrance on Johnston Road. Within the range of pedestrianisation types, with their lessening of control and their roots in traditional culture, there are many more possibilities for rights to public spaces through the diversity of acts and users it tempts. As is the case between competing livelihoods and lifestyles that are related to socio-economic structure and spatiality here, the informal economy most visible in the unit sustains small-scale working spaces and extra living (e.g., as workshops, storehouses, showcases, or as secondary kitchens and parlors), and serves as a site for political and cultural expression. In addition, the frontage of MTR reveals the presence of features and spaces that contribute to a large number of flows and stays and a general perception that the site is popular spot to be in. Further opportunities for stay and gathering are offered by widening in the sidewalk and illegal vending is further shielded from the crowding, thus creating a personal sense of place. The author has observed a number of people standing and sitting while waiting, engaging in conversation or using their mobile phone. Finally, the existence of commuting along Johnston Road acts as a magnet of sorts, drawing more illegal activities (e.g., hawking, scavenging, and panhandling) into its vicinity.

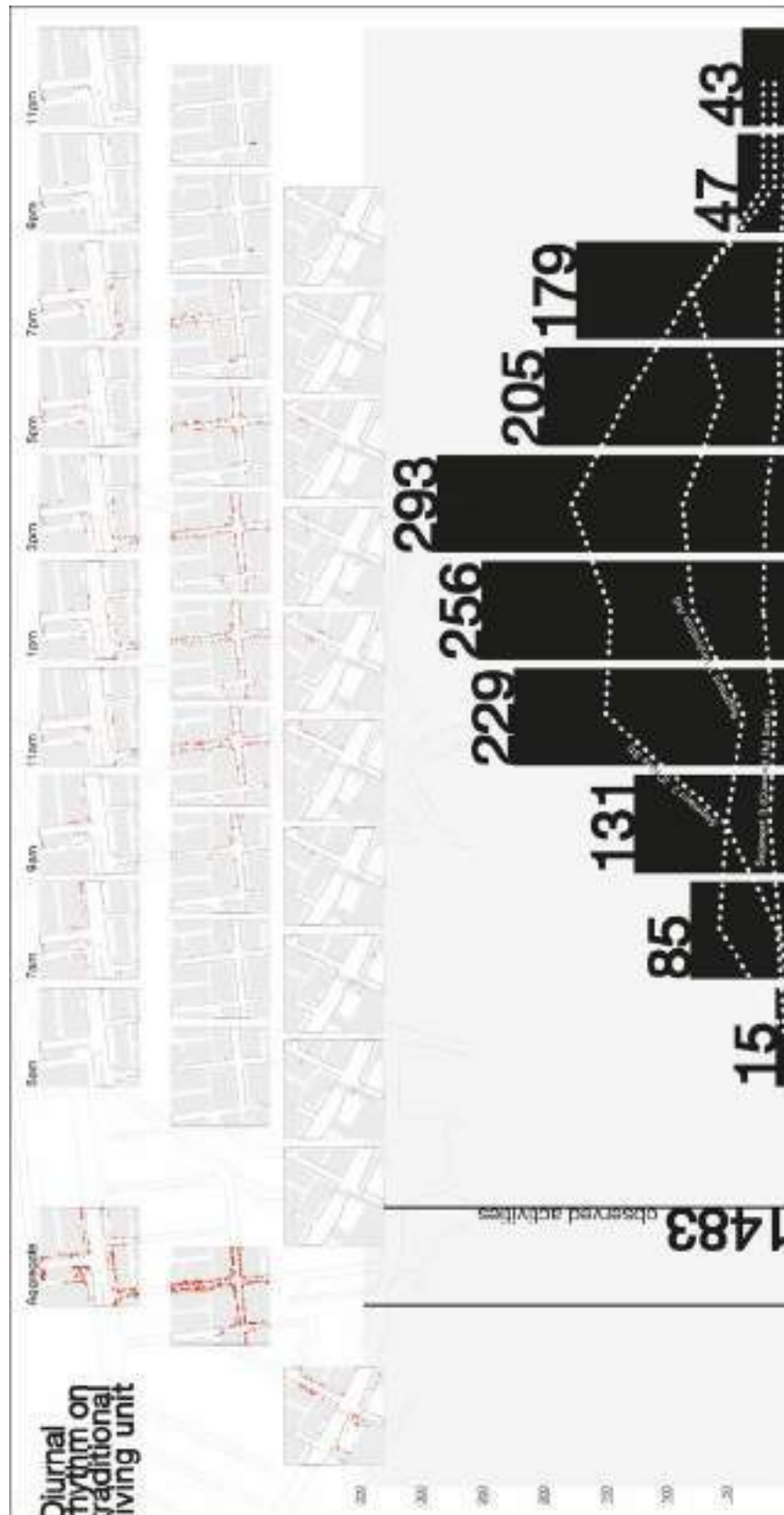


Figure 7.1. Behavioural map of people engaged in some stationary activity for individual time-segments on weekdays and weekends on three street-segments on traditional living unit

### 7.2.1.2. Mixed Retail and Residential Unit



Figure 7.2. Behavioural map of people engaged in some stationary activity for individual time-segments on weekdays and weekends on three street-segments on mixed retail & residential unit

The urban grid between the present Gloucester Road and Hennessy Road is used as a starting point 'to assemble people and functions in time and space and ways to integrate, invite, and open up rather than close in activities through city and site planning' (Gehl, 1987, p. 131). The quantity and quality of social interactions and relationships tends to be reformed increasingly on general demands such as walking, standing, and sitting, as well as seeing, hearing, and talking, but it also means that the character and content of everyday life will have a good foundation for development. These basic activities within Wan Chai South are subject to a primary interplay between the perception of the streets and the experience of the routes, both with regard to freedom and stimulation en routes. This relationship is illustrated by the observations of the everyday practices starting from the southern side of Gloucester Road. The landscape of the streets firstly gives pedestrians space to walk in a free and leisurely manner and to use direct routes instead of detours over short distances, since a relatively slow traffic and loose pedestrian movement result in the spaces shared by all users at the same level and time. In response to a walking network with the small-scale streets and alternating public spaces, here the use of long footbridge, stairs and escalators completely depend on whether or not all movements upward and downward require more specific. When the problem with equal use of the various levels is mediated in the context of demands, walking flow tends to be sensitive to optional activities that involve in designing the individual links in the network so that the spatial system becomes more attractive. As Gehl (2010) stated, 'walking is a form of transport, but it is also a potential beginning or an occasion for many other activities' (p. 120). While walking as a linear movement becomes more chaotic and unimpeded in the unit, city-users can effortlessly switch to a different type of activity that are more demanding on the individual space, but the key of most activities is staying. The space here gives city users relatively high priority to the short casual stop, and further to a real staying demand. Walkers can freely pause for a moment to take a look at attraction or to contact with a good acquaintance without being shoved by others and scared by vehicles. The sense of freedom of walkability demonstrates a prerequisite of 'right to the city' to open the space to other possibilities.

In doing so, the development of commercial and residential mixed-use is a determinant to further support multiple livelihoods, and contribute to an authentic, living environment. As shown in Figure 7.2, the most used locales are the shop fronts and the spaces under the footbridge and next to MTR station entrances in which there are physical and social possibilities for casual, spontaneous encounters and behaviour. The rush and flow as well as the control of regulations and surveillance have become detached from the spaces

leaving it open to appropriation. Specifically, the intensity of activities usually increases at 9 AM, 1 PM, and 5 PM to 7 PM, since most of people occupy the street frontages to buy or eat the food. On Saturday night, spaces under the footbridge become the most used by occupancy of Filipinos.

#### 7.2.1.3. Government Administrative and Commercial Unit

The area between Convention Avenue and Gloucester Road is zoned for commercial and governmental use, and organisation of the open spaces is subject to monopolistic practices in the realm of ownership (see Figure 7.3). In fact, this situation arises from the government policy of allowing a plot ratio that benefits to the developers that donate public space at ground or podium level, and allowing them to manage the donated space, such as the Central Plaza. Hence, private sectors have the complete right to keep out 'undesirable people' and 'informal activities' by posting extensive sets of rules or by hiring security guards to provide 'eyes on the street' to keep surveillance on the public and encourage civility (Jacobs, 1961), so that such spaces feature little engagement with most people simply passing through. In addition to stringent management control in the semiprivate spaces, few facilities open up the possibility to make people deal with city furnishings, such as footbridge steps, flowerbeds with wide bases, and so forth, as well as many of the building facades, since they serve as casual lookout points allowing resting, hearing, talking or even smoking as well. Here the road network designed for efficient automobile movement is also devoted to management and control, and inadequate provision of crossing facilities compels people to use the footbridges that the walking route and direction have been formulated and restricted in a set way. The footbridges connecting buildings force people to traverse long distances to fulfill their everyday needs, and in order to facilitate efficient flow of pedestrian sometimes the administrators and private property managers utilise metal fences and signs to warn that 'people are going to follow the paths they are directed to' (Hill, 2006, p. 3). On the whole, if necessary activities are always stuck on the streets and footbridges in the unit, but few optional or social activities occur. The *placeless* directed towards outsiders, spectators and passers-by who move around and who do not 'belong' to the places where they are staying for the moment (Appadurai, 1996; Hannerz, 1996; Rojek & Urry, 1997) does not so much tell a story as make a focus, usually dominated temporary point.

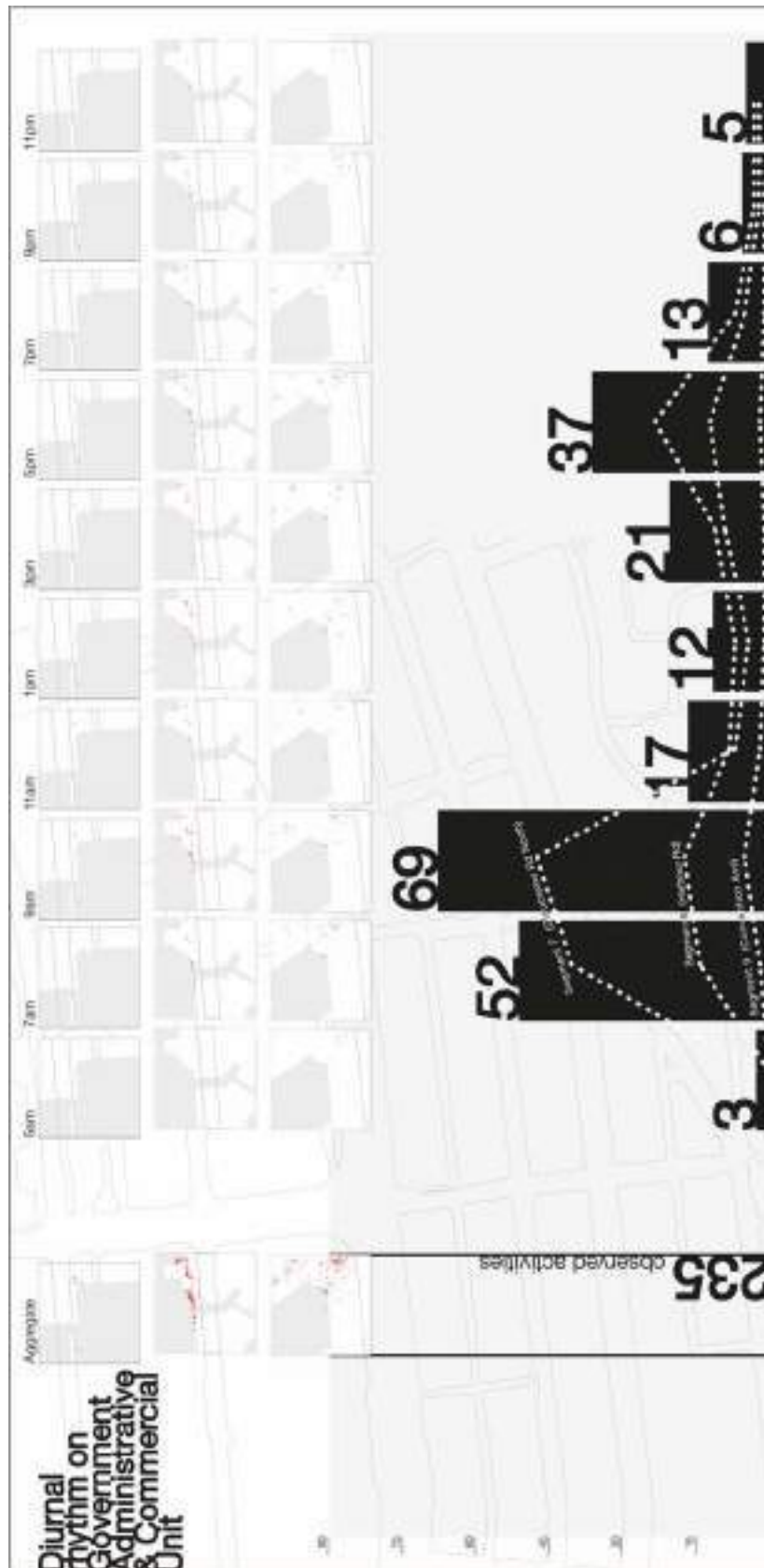


Figure 7.3. Behavioural map of people engaged in some stationary activity for individual time-segments on weekdays and weekends on three street-segments on government administrative and commercial unit



#### 7.2.1.4. HKCEC Unit

The government buys into the vision of an economically vibrant metropolis in Wan Chai North, believing that a good quality of physical environment is synonymous with increment of diversity of outdoor activities. Reasoning that a 'city on the move' serves a 'public good' (Sandercock & Dovey, 2002), the government or private sectors separate the area into different specialised zones where the types of activities are limited and tended towards a unitary mode, and they post extensive sets of rules or deploy security guards to control the types of activities that should (or should not) take place in most open spaces of Wan Chai North. As a result, the space between Waterfront Promenade and Drive Central that shrouded by the HKCEC merely functions as a focal point with well-equipped infrastructure and on-street parking spaces for tourism, and venue for official events. As shown in Figure 7.4, most of the time, tourist activities have been regulated here, especially in the waterfront and Golden Bauhinia Square, such that photo-taking and patronizing licensed hawkers are the only activities, but few spontaneous activities for 'local banal spaces' except for civil practices in festivals such as HKSAR Establishment Day, New Year's Eve and Lunar New Year, celebration of which turned the space into a carnival due to pyrotechnics display over Victoria Harbour and light show around skyscrapers, meanwhile, enhancing the reputation of the iconic HKCEC. That continues to draw attention to the 'absolute power', of which the space is dominated with use values. For instance, an official flag raising ceremony conducted by the Hong Kong Police Force at the Golden Bauhinia Square is held everyday at 8:00 AM, which presents a demonstration of power relations for 'a means of control, of domination, of power'. According to Flyvbjerg (1998), power relations are more characteristic of stable political, administrative, and planning situations is borne out. Thus the zoning approach here contributes to a more clear-cut layout in terms of its insular topology, and as a result it is easy for the government to strictly control the area by setting up management instruments.

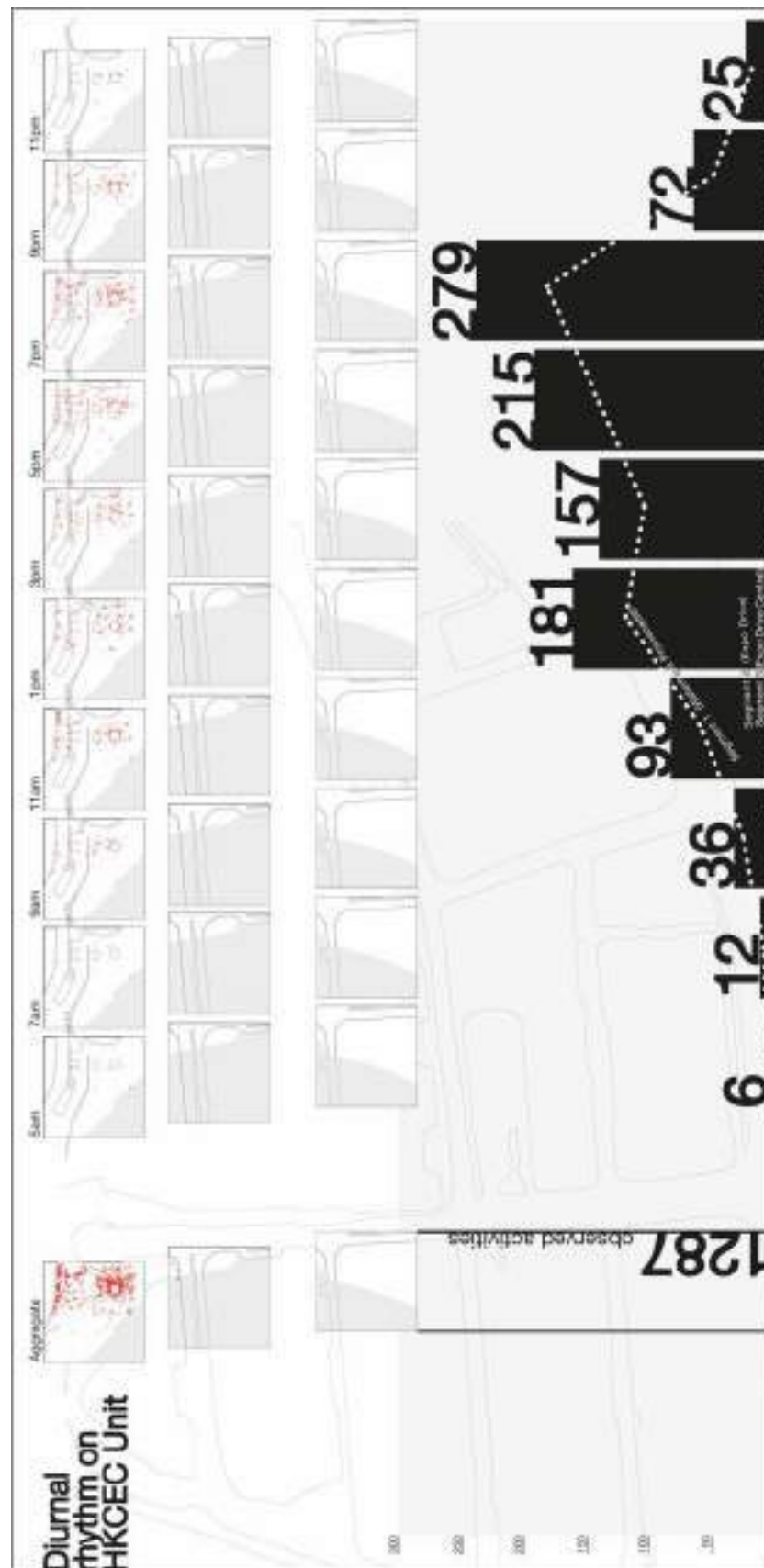


Figure 7.4. Behavioural map of people engaged in some stationary activity for individual time-segments on weekdays and weekends on three street-segments on HKCEC unit

### 7.3. Negotiation in Retaining Everyday Places

The previous reviews of this study show that Hong Kong's recent urban planning has been based on a top-down, technical and expert-driven approach. This approach gives little consideration to the effect of development plans on the everyday lives of ordinary people. Many planners and designers believe that they know best. They commonly view the city as a 'machine' or 'organism' whose social problems can be controlled by experts at the top. Such notions are described as 'technological optimism' or 'objective science' (Harvey, 1992; Sandercock, 1998). For instance, in 2005, a group of local residents responded to an urban renewal project (known as the Lee Tung Street Project) by getting together and developing a bottom-up proposal called the 'Dumbbell Proposal'). This proposal offered an alternative that kept the street's traditional characteristics and social life. Although the Dumbbell Proposal received the silver award from the Hong Kong Institute of Planners and was approved by the Wan Chai District Council, it was rejected by the Town Planning Board without any reasons given. For the government, master plans (or blueprints) drawn up by experts are the most comprehensive way to define the best use of land to serve the needs of all groups (UN-Habitat, 2009).

However, in practical terms, this approach completely fails to accommodate citizens' patterns of everyday life. Therefore, a power struggle between the authorities and citizens ensues. According to the findings, the government sets up strategies to impose order and control on 'disorderly' urban spaces. In so doing, it aims to bring about a more functional and efficient environment in Wan Chai. In response, ordinary people have tried to appropriate spaces or manipulate the rules through varying tactics to sustain their everyday practices in the ways best suited to them. As a framing of spatial texts, the built environment implies both the construction of power relations with established orders and boundaries and also provides a means for ordinary places to mediate the *strong's* spaces through place-making. Accordingly, the practice of seeking opportunities to remain in public spaces presented in this study depends on an intermingling of respect for a spatial, social, and cultural life to provide new kinds of flexibility and possibilities in street space. Such accounts indicate that ordinary people's experience-in-place often derives from 'the order of understanding' that have the potential to build everyday places and that offer functional connections through various settings and physical elements that create the layered meaning of places.

To start with the key points stated previously, the author follows the methodologies of environment-behaviour research to survey the use of streets. This study follows the work of pioneers such as William Whyte who observed public spaces in New York City and Jan Gehl who looked at public life in Scandinavian cities (Gehl, 1987; Whyte, 1980). In the case of Wan Chai, by capturing the messy, dynamic and contextualised process that reconstruct the public realm as a place of everyday urbanism, the analytical lens of place-making reveals the inner dynamics and subtleties of everyday struggles in the streets. Accordingly, Wan Chai's orders of understanding are primarily grounded in these themes of reconstructing the public realm that shape an alternative city through the contested practices of place-making.

### **7.3.1. Spatial Life**

'The physical form of a building can always be seen as dominator of place, because it forms and determines the place. Thus, the precondition, physical shape, always provides a domination of space' (Fokdal, 2008, p. 49). The dynamic nature of place can be located in its ongoing contribution to specific histories through the creation of a physical setting (Pred, 1984, p. 279). This suggests the importance of location, and physical or spatial element.

As mentioned, it is clear that the government and urban planners use the physical design of space to 'shape' people's spatial practices and everyday lives. These planners aim to put the city in an ideal order and achieve an homogenised modern society (Lefebvre, 1991b). From the planners' point of view, urban streets exist to serve the simple and strictly utilitarian function of conveying people from point A to point B. Thus, streets are designed as movement corridors, with as little space as possible left for any other function. Any use of the space for other purposes by local residents would create obstacles to the smooth and speedy flow of traffic. Furthermore, the authorities use restrictive policies to manage and control how ordinary people use street spaces, so the spaces will be used more 'appropriately' (Lynch & Carr, 1990). However, ordinary people still try to appropriate street spaces and use them in the ways best suited to their own needs. According to the observations, ordinary people use their own living experiences and creative acts to negotiate the physical environment. They seek to re-territorialize boundaries or re-building the planned environment, regardless of the planners' restrictions on their use of those spaces.

Moreover, a personal sense of place is one's relationship to society using the construct of 'place identity' and 'place dependence' (Williams & Vaske, 2003), which is often involved in notions of self-identification, shared culture and economic livelihoods.

#### 7.3.1.1. Streets as places of economic survival

An individual's perceptions, habits and motivations determine whether physical places can afford them the power to pursue their demands. Certain places become meaningful specifically because an object or setting affords usability and usefulness to facilitate particular behaviour and intent.

Here, large portions of Wan Chai South not only serve as market streets for selling and buying activities but also encompass a rich variety of settings for informal activities and an apparent disarray of place-bound practices and cultures (see Figure 7.5a). Similar to the competing livelihoods and lifestyles that are related to socio-economic structure and spatiality, the informal activities that are most visible on the streets sustain small-scale business spaces and extra living spaces for basic needs (such as workshops, storehouses, showcases or secondary kitchens and parlours). In some cases the interface of the small business with the street is invisible to the outside. Its structure not only fuses into the 'loose space' to be a permeable object of street front, but embellished with flexible personal touches also leaves the place wide open and varied. To evade the hawker control team's persecution, unlicensed street hawkers avoid any use of permanent structures (booths or stalls) to sell in public spaces. Instead, they claim space by the use of *time* (de Certeau, 1984). They usually do their street peddling after office hours in the evening. For instance, after the banks close in Hennessy Road unlicensed hawkers try to use the privately owned spaces of closed shops, and establish their temporary business sites there. Just as stall owners on market streets try to find more space for their business activities, they utilise suction hooks to hang their goods for sale on the entrance gates and windows of banks or display their goods within the banks' entry areas (see #6 in Figure 7.5a). As a result, the entrances of banks have been re-built as simple vending spaces. If all their goods are placed within the banks' space and do not intrude into the public area, no enforcement action can be taken by the hawker control team, so long as the property owners make no complaint. These hawkers do not have their own space. In de Certeau's (1984) words, their vending space is 'the space of the other' (p. 37).

(a)



A group of unlicensed hawkers conduct their business outside Wan Chai Station entrances, feeding the lunchtime crowd, using simple supports (designated cartons) to display their goods. (Segment 2: Johnston Road)



Stall owners use collected paperboards and concrete stands to re-territorialise the business boundary. (Segment 1: Tai Yuen Street)



Itinerant hawkers have a more contentious relationship with property abutters, so they sometimes find sites for their modified 'stalls' by renting small 'public areas'. (Segment 1: Tai Yuen Street)



Illegal hawkers use auction hooks to hang their goods for sale on the entrance gates and windows of banks or display their goods within 'the bums' entry areas after the building has closed. (Segment 2: Hennessey Road)



As a consequence of pedestrian schemes, space used to sell merchandise grows at 12 a.m., moving toward the curb to get closer to commuter customers. (Segment 1: Johnston Road)



Before the store opens, an informal newsstand sets up to sell newspapers to commuters on a corner stop. (Segment 2: Hennessey Road)



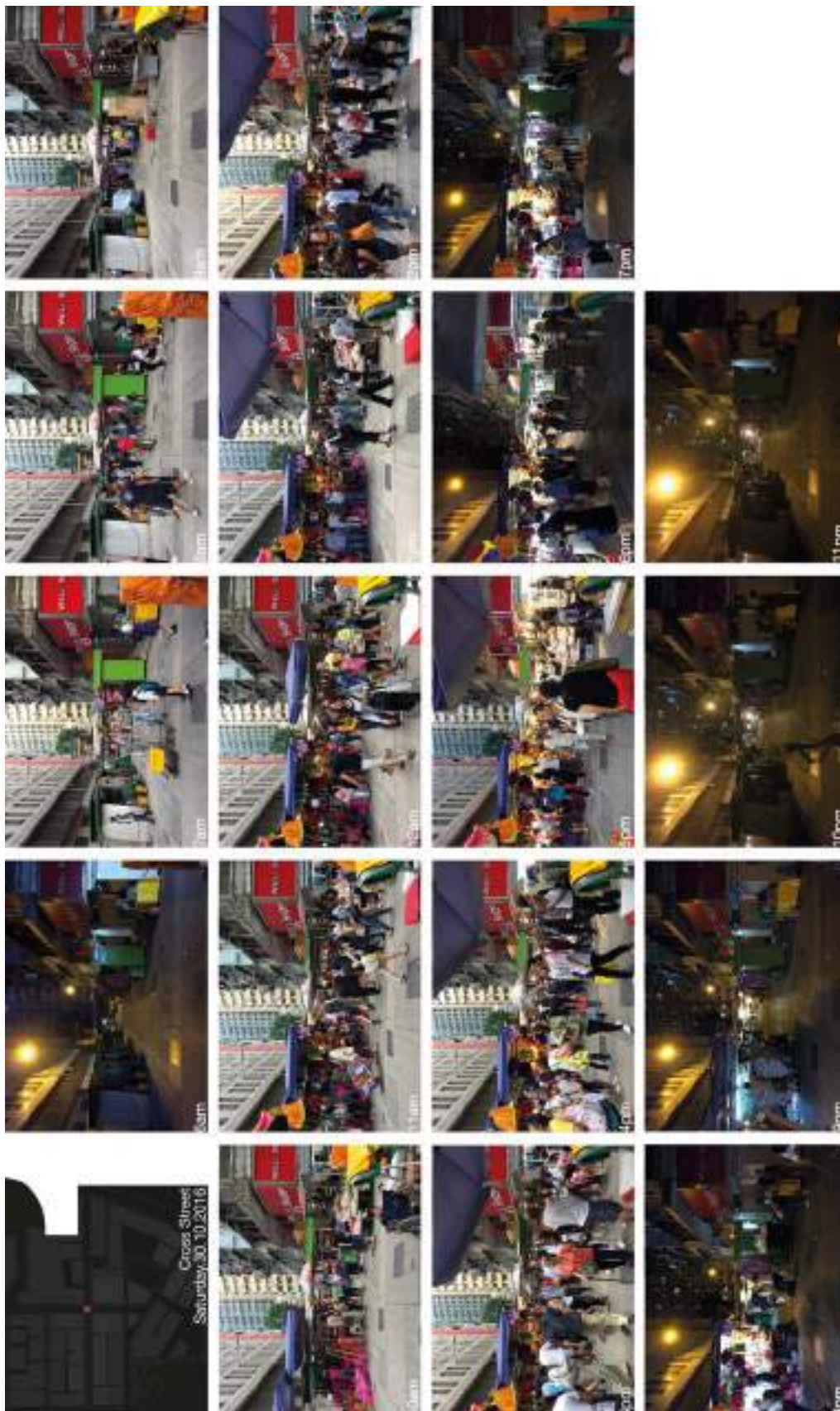
Before night falls on the Lunar New Year's Day, many unlicensed hawkers show up and display their goods on the sidewalks along the edge of the street market. (Segment 1: Johnston Road)



In addition the MTR entrances' a 'bottleneck' effect caused by gathering crowds and passersby, leads itinerant hawkers to make use of the sidewalks underneath the footbridge for their business. (Segment 3: Lockhart Road)



(b)



Figures 7.5a-b. Versatility over time and space for vending allow for many diverse individuals and groups to use the streets.

Street vending is one of the activities that the authorities view as a nuisance to be removed from sidewalks, although many people view vending as a survival strategy. After the stringent enforcement of the Hawker Regulation since the early 1970s, the number of street vendors or hawkers (both licensed and unlicensed) has declined significantly in Wan Chai. As the Street Market Concern group's spokesman explained, today there are no more than 20 unlicensed hawkers in the district, most of them being indigent elderly people. Many elderly people do not have any retirement protection, and for various reasons are often ineligible for the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance Scheme. These people can only rely on the Old Age Living Allowance, which amounts to around HK\$2,000 per month. As a result, some of them became unlicensed street vendors or itinerant hawkers, moving around the market streets and MTR entrances in Wan Chai, selling flowers, toys, clothes, traditional pastries and daily necessities to pedestrians. For instance the tramway that goes through Johnston Road to mark the shoreline is a physical feature that might illustrate the border of indigenous cultures, natural enclaves and crowded environment, containing close-knit networks and interweaving relationships. In this area, economic livelihood arguments typically would be invoked by vendors and hawkers who make a living at the grassroots and via the low-priced supply of goods and services to the public (see Figure 7.5b).

As the confines of stalls are not clearly defined by legislation, the boundaries between the bazaar's public and private areas are still ambiguous and constantly changing (see #1 in Figure 7.5a). For hawker stall owners, stools and chairs are tools not only for establishing social gathering places, but also for setting 'fences' that extend their private (and business) areas into the public space, and turn parts of the street into 'open-air living rooms'. In fact, most hawker stall owners in the open-air bazaars use objects to appropriate the street space for their own personal purposes. Here, they extend their home living patterns into the street, as we can find daily necessities such as tea accessories, coffee tables, lamps, fans, radios and televisions within their open-air living rooms. The vendors make their working spaces as comfortable as possible. As Gehl (1989) points out, 'the boundaries between working hours and leisure time have become increasingly fluid' (p. 15). However, as the hawker stall owners 'privatise' public areas into their living rooms, they also share these areas with the public, and offer *Kai Fongs* a public social gathering place. Especially on horse racing days, hawker stall owners share their radios and televisions so that other passers-by can join in listening or watching horse racing programmes.



As discussed in the previous chapter, when Wan Chai North often emphasizes iconic spaces aimed at a strategic effort to project Hong Kong's global image as antiseptic with the administrators' vision of operational rationalism. It has emerged out of Wan Chai South commonly as a counter in attempt to fortify local belonging, since having retained local architecture and original lifestyle in despite of modernization efforts. A vast majority of the ground floors with many separate building frontages and numerous entrances are used for small businesses, and it is directly connected to the sidewalk, often exactly at the same level. Being the typical structure type fronting the streets, the sidewalk is usually occupied as an overspill space for the activities at the shop front, apart from providing a daily circulation. In defiance of city ordinances, shopkeepers who abut sidewalks often personalise their street frontages spent considerable time and effort in maintaining the claimed territory by frequently bringing out wares, goods, and services on the sidewalk, and thus adding a personal touch associated with goods on sale into their appearance. Here sidewalks are the sites of dining, commerce, leisure, parking and store spillover.

These practitioners do not have a defined space but this tactical re-construction of space remains with them over time.

#### 7.3.1.2. Streets as shelter

Another theme of one's relationships to places stems from individual advocacies for nomadic livelihoods. In Wan Chai South, the street spaces are organised in messy manner and are more difficult to control. The right to use these spaces is less associated with individual possessions. When people appear to be panhandlers, scavengers, or homelessness, the public usually adopts a lenient or tolerant attitude towards these individuals who may force others to confront this use of the space (see Figure 7.6a). Those who intend to use places for shelter generally are either seeking a hideout for survival or seeking to control that place for their livelihood.

(a)



Even in the rain, people who are physically disabled often sit or lie to panhandle on the street market's corner. (Segment 1: Cross Street)



Homeless people are present with public sleeping or panhandling on the sidewalks. (Segment 2: Johnston Road)



A number of drug addicts usually gather in front of the clinic, which is near the MTR station. (Segment 2: O'Brien Road)

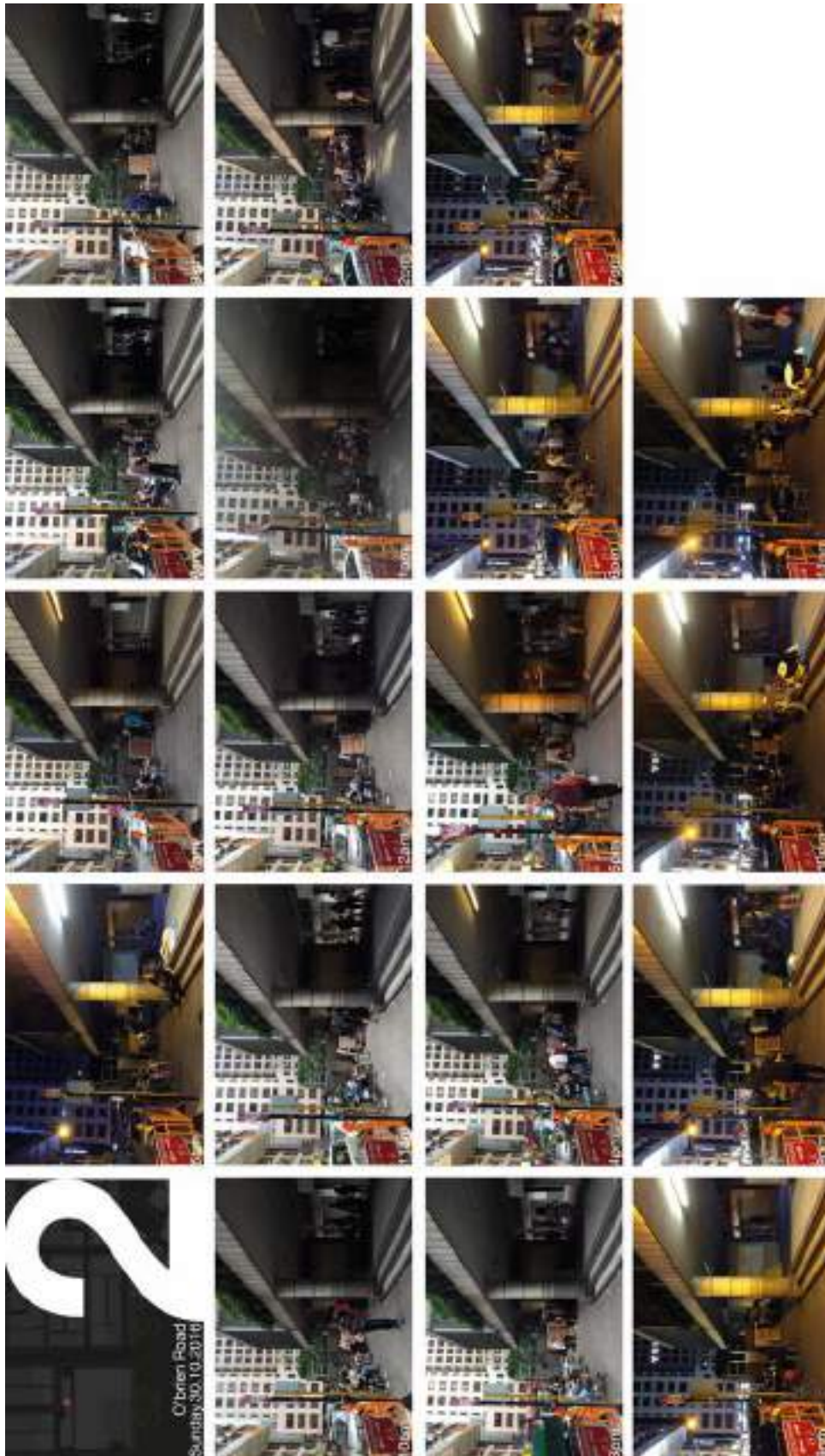


Physically disabled panhandlers are frequently seen at the MTR entrances for their day-to-day survival. (Segment 2: Kennedy Road)



Old men who are homeless or garbage sleep on a park facilities. (Segment 4: Lockhart Road)

(b)



Figures 7.6a-b. Street activities associated with panhandling and homelessness compete for ordinary access to public spaces to meet basic needs.

Many informal activities and social services fed with the shelter next to the MTR station entrances have been identified as one of the most important characteristics to make people stop or look instead of keeping them for the movement. For example, since the provision of MTR station entrances has very strong effect on generating pedestrian movement in a daily cycle, it is general to note that panhandling protected with the shelter may be entitled to an adjunct on spatial placement (see #4 in Figure 7.6a). Some of them intentionally encroach upon the underside for their own uses (e.g., storage) as long as the potentials of space and action maintain with an 'orderly chaos'. With a variety of public transportation services catering for a large number of commuters on Wan Chai South, the periphery of the MTR station entrances may contribute as an everyday place involving in appropriating at particular times of the day (see #2, #3 in Figure 7.6a).

Through the actions people make use of the physical features and facilities; the footbridge network built to connect MTR station entrances cannot merely embody single appeal for circulation. Specifically, spaces under the footbridge and next to MTR station entrances usually publicly owned but without assigned functions, present physical and social possibilities for interaction. The rush and flow as well as the control of regulations and surveillance have become detached from the spaces leaving it open to appropriation.

In Wan Chai South, the footbridge is preferred over the roof as the place for outdoor activities. When people require protection from unpleasant weather, the underside of a footbridge can work simultaneously with shelter from bad weather while assuring good access for temporary activities. As Bishop (1988) mentioned, 'bridges gather to them an underside; they have an underworld. They are outside the rush and flow taking place above, over the bridge' (p. 96). Such 'leftover spaces', with a limited number of primary seating opportunities and a great variety of secondary places to sit or stay, play an important role in creating a sense of shelter for homeless residents and provide an unobstructed view of the surrounding situation, which enables them to support discretionary activities and social belongingness. In proximity to the Violet Peel Methadone clinic, some drug addicts usually place chairs and tables outside for gathering and sometimes use carton boards to set up a temporary living place. Some of them stay overnight, and put a rug on the ground for sleeping (see Figure 7.6b). Here, the main reason for them to consider sitting out on the street is not the quality of the environment, but the chance of meeting and dealing with someone (drug dealer) they know. Such environmental setting with one's back covered, a good view and a comfortable microclimate often induces them to rest, look around and socialise.

### **7.3.2. Social Life**

The term ‘community’ is based on a systemic model of connection between residents and their communities (Kasarda & Janowitz, 1974). For many years, researchers and theorists have suggested that the increasing anonymity of social and community life is associated with the functional specialization of street spaces (Gehl, 1987; Jacobs, 1961; Lusher, Seaman, & Tsay, 2008). As mentioned in the previous section, street spaces in Wan Chai have long been important public and social spaces, but they are now filled with danger and pollution, and their uses are being restricted by modern rational planning. As most of the open spaces in Wan Chai are dominated by motorized vehicular transport, the rules and regulations governing traffic drive people away from spending time in the streets or zoned public space. Therefore, people have less opportunity to interact socially. The observations, however, show that local residents do actively seek to maintain their social activities, community relationships and traditional ways of life. Ordinary people continuously ‘find creative ways of appropriating spaces and creating places . . . to fulfil their desire as well as their needs, to tend the spirit as well as take care of the rent’ (Fenster, 1998).

The term ‘social’ refers to a community attachment that is an important constituent of a model of individual connections and local social networks. The social connections to a place that are developed on the notion of the personal tend to strengthen place meanings using a variety of constructs that can disperse or diffuse according to the temporary uses that may evolve from that member’s use of the space for their changing everyday needs. In contrast with a personal attachment to places for livelihoods, the quantity and quality of social interactions and relationships considers more than basic needs. Taking this point into consideration means that the character and content of local life based on the interactive process will have a good foundation for developing and spreading outwards.

#### **7.3.2.1. Streets as urban places of encounters**

Social connections used to rely on a long-term bond to a community and neighbourhood through the integrative element of social interaction (Hay, 1998).



(a)



Shop and stall owners and residents establish their own small place for gathering socially and chatting with their neighbours. (Segment 1; Tai Yuen Street)



Stall owners and residents play chess together in the street market as part of the community activities. (Segment 1; Tai Yuen Street)



When a horse race is scheduled over the course of a particular day, the street fronts near the Hong Kong Jockey Club open their interiors to the exterior to create a sense of communion. (Segment 4; Jaffe Road)



People usually spend time sitting outside restaurants on the streets because there are opportunities to interact with others. (Segment 5; O'Brien Road)



Most old residents, including those who have moved to other districts, still prefer to go to the Central Plaza when the climatic conditions are suitable. They may wait for old friends or participate in morning exercise and shared experiences. (Segment 6; Gloucester Road)



Chance events such as a tortoise basking on the ground, can produce spontaneous, entertaining gatherings. (Segment 6; Gloucester Road)

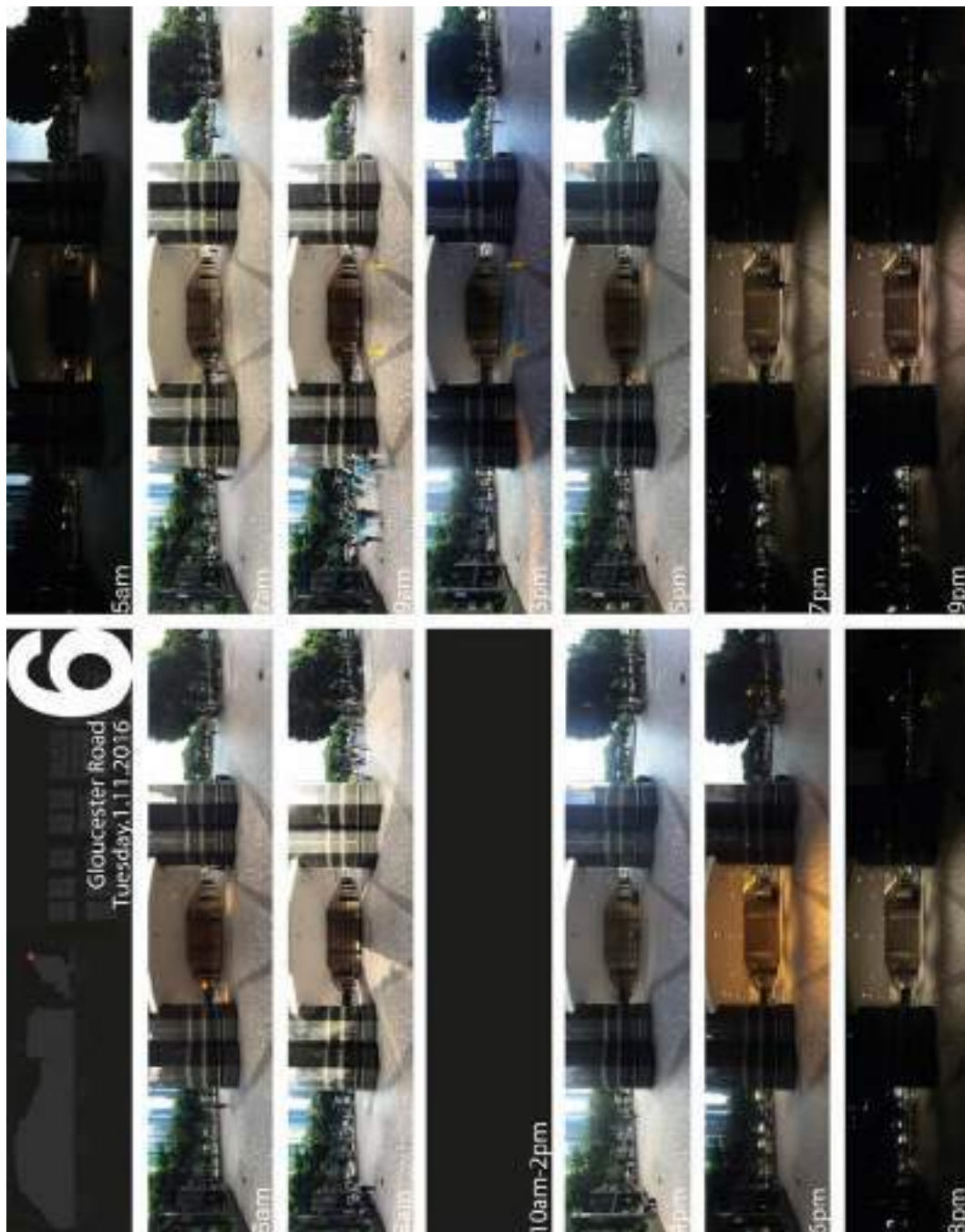


In the evening, most of people gain psychological, social and cultural pleasures from different kinds of exercises (martial arts, Taiji). (Segment 6; Gloucester Road)

(b)



(c)



Figures 7.7a-c. In association with street spaces and characteristics, for many the street is a place to regularly connect with companions, friends and the community.

With a prevalent leitmotif towards urban renewal in traditional living environments, the government has intermittently tried to enact a policy of moving street hawkers into indoor market complexes. The government also issued an ordinance strictly controlling the vending area of each stall in market streets because market streets, as symbolically constructed social places, tended to be in a state of collapse due to the traffic and public health problems they caused. Instead of going to zoned public spaces, many local Wan



Chai residents (known as *Kai Fong* in Cantonese) go to meet their friends and neighbours, to socialise and experience entertainment in the traditional street market with open-air bazaars at Tai Yuen Street and Cross Street. The term *Kai Fong* is not limited to those currently living in Wan Chai. Many old *Kai Fongs* moved out to other districts a long time ago, but are still familiar with the place and people, and thus like to visit the bazaars frequently (see Figure 7.7b). As one of the first developed districts, this Wan Chai community has a long history and a complex connection with the urban area. According to the interview with the Street Market Concern spokesman, most of the hawker stall owners or their family members have conducted business and lived around this area for over 80 years. Therefore, the *Kai Fongs* and hawker stall owners usually have a strong sense of belonging to the district. They prefer to meet their friends in ‘their place’ (Wan Chai South), rather than go to the new ‘well planned’ public spaces.

In the view of government planners, a bazaar should be a venue for economic activities only. However, hawkers and residents have appropriated street space for community activities and everyday interactions. They provide places where people can meet, socialise, shop and find entertainment (see #1, #2 in Figure 7.7a). According to the observations, nearly all hawker stall owners set out stools and chairs within the confines of their premises so that *Kai Fongs* can take rest and enjoy chatting under the shadows of their stall canopies. Unlike the managed public spaces, the open-air bazaar is a street market with a high degree of social interaction. Traditionally, the hawker stalls in the open-air bazaar are located directly next to one another. According to Whyte (1988), this compact and engaging urban environment is an important element of public space, because the people in such places can randomly interact with other shoppers in ‘real time’. People (including *Kai Fongs*, hawkers and passers-by) are likely to get into conversation with each other. Some might bring their chairs and move from one sitting space to another, start new conversations, or join in conversations that have already started with different people.

Feelings of belongingness or membership to a group of people arise out of a need for social bonding, based on personal or shared history, interests, concerns or activities, to distinguish that group from others (Perkins and Long, 2002).

Instead of social ties being limited to market streets, social activities frequently occur as a result of the sharing of space on the street front by different types of street-level elements (such as retail and commercial services, shops, restaurants). Instead of basic motivation as mentioned above about the making use of objects and places in the daily cycle, this

opened up opportunities for people to stop, linger and engage in passive and active interactions and the permeability of the street fronts is overwhelmingly affected by the opening hours of these elements. For instance when a horse race is scheduled over the course of a particular day, the street fronts near the Hong Kong Jockey Club in Jaffe Road actively reveal their interiors to the exterior to create a sense of communion with cultural life (see #3 in Figure 7.7a). As a result of the shelter provided, the most natural place to linger is the sidewalk, in which it is possible to smoke around the rubbish bin or to lean on the railing for a social contact, or even to further redefine the function of public facility (i.e., railing) when the demand for seating is particularly great.

This structure of social discourse, however, not only fuses into ‘loose spaces’ to create a social connection to places but also local social networks that pervade semi-private spaces over time to meet higher-level demands (see #5, #6, #7 in Figure 7.7a). For example, in Wan Chai North, organisation of the open spaces is subject to monopolistic practices in the realm of ownership. In fact, this situation arises from the government policy of allowing a plot ratio that benefits to the developers for donating public space at ground or podium level, and allowing them to manage donated the space, such as the Central Plaza. Hence, private sectors have the complete right to keep out ‘undesirable people’ and ‘informal activities’ by posting extensive sets of rules, or by hiring security guards to provide ‘eyes on the street’ to keep surveillance on the public and encourage civility (Jacobs, 1961), so that such spaces feature little engagement with most people simply passing through. However, most old residents (including those who have moved to other districts) still prefer to go to the Central Plaza every morning (5:30 to 10:30 AM), afternoon (3:30 to 6:30 PM), or even summer evening when the climatic conditions are suitable, where they may wait for old friends or participate in physical training and shared experiences (see Figure 7.7c).

These social discourses do not put a high expectation on having city space as ‘a maniacal scrapbook [in which the elements] have no relations to each other, no determining, rational or economic scheme’ in which they can fill in ‘an ideal survival community which is disordered, unstable and without any control’ in which the local can only experience a sense of dislocation in their lives (Raban, 1974; Sennett, 1970).

#### 7.3.2.2. Streets as connections to homes

(a)



Filipino domestic workers prepare packing cartons for shipment back to the Philippines. (Segment 1: Cross Street)



On Sundays, foreign domestic workers gather on the street to pack cartons and a truck supplied by door-to-door cargo service comes over several times in a day to collect them. (Segment 1: Sam Pan Street)



Underneath the footbridge, foreign domestic workers get together to celebrate a birthday party, entertaining themselves with music and dancing. (Segment 3: Lockhart Road)



A large group of foreign domestic workers have a Sunday picnic underneath the footbridge, spreading plastic sheets, chairs, and tables. (Segment 3: Lockhart Road)



Foreign domestic workers transform the corporate space of the Central Plaza into a site of weekend gatherings. (Segment 6: Gloucester Road)



A group of domestic workers pose and walk at the Central Plaza. (Segment 6: Gloucester Road)



While conducting a weekend enclave for social gatherings, most of domestic workers also enjoy practicing singing, dance movies, and so forth. (Segment 6: Gloucester Road)



Some societies run by foreign domestic workers usually organise gathering activities in the seating area of the Central Plaza. (Segment 6: Gloucester Road)

(b)

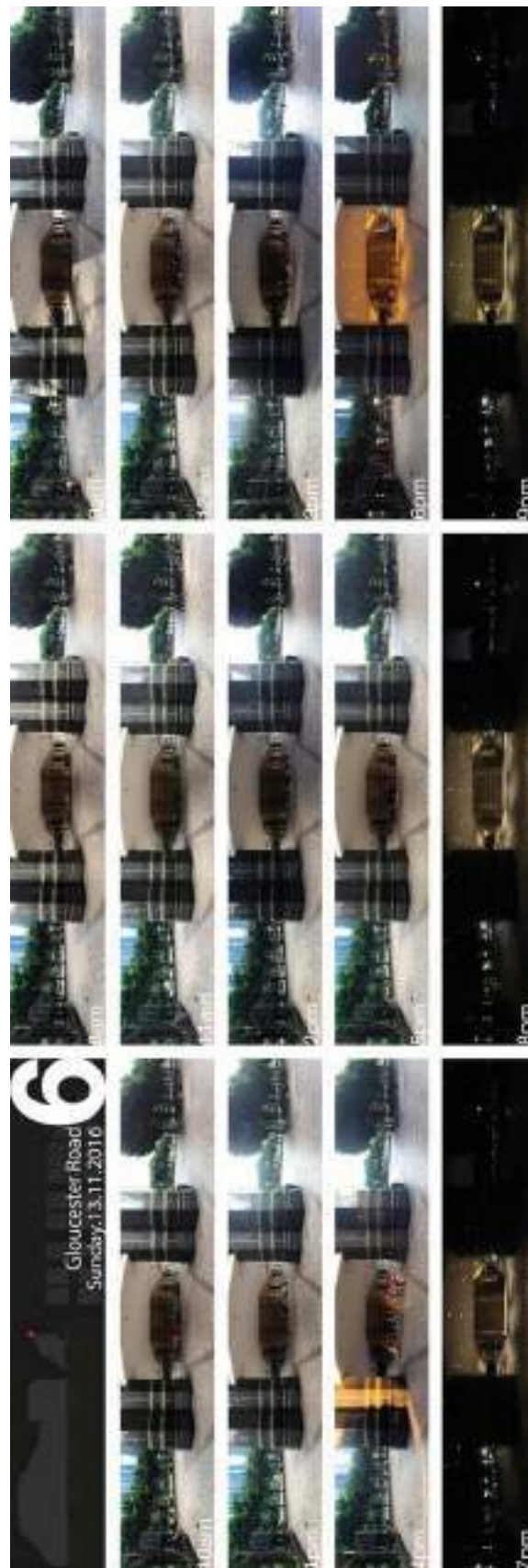




(c)



(d)



Figures 7.8a-d. Foreign workers navigate street spaces in their efforts to create meaningful social lives beyond the sites of work and residence.

The focus here is on the ways in which foreign domestic workers navigate the urban spaces in their efforts to create meaningful social lives beyond the sites of work and residence. For Filipinos in particular, having a specific place and day—typically Sunday—for social encounters has been well researched in the ‘other’ cities of Asia (Tam, 2016; Yeoh & Huang, 1998). These urban spaces of associational life can be collectively called civic spaces—‘actual sites where people can gather and build relations with each other...that are free from the overt control or interference of both the state and the private sector (or the market) and are inclusive and open to everyone’ (Douglass & Daniere, 2009).

Hong Kong, with its increasing demand for live-in domestic help, has continued to attract large numbers of foreign workers. Foreign domestic workers are subject to the power of their employers who extend working hours and severely diminish time available outside of the workplace. Building a life in the city is exceptionally restricted in both time and access to urban space, yet the resilience of these people in making efforts for social and community life is remarkable. Since the mid 1980s, the emerging ‘transnational space’, which is highly visible in Central on weekends has been a spectacle of modern life in Hong Kong. The continuous efforts of foreign workers to overcome many restrictions underscores a very basic human desire for camaraderie among people from similar cultural origins and social identities. In Statue Square and its environs, thousands of Filipino domestic workers occupy the ground floor every Sunday, and transform its status from the heart of finance and commerce to a second home in which they often dress up for their outing to participate with festive glee in meeting friends and eating home cooking. All of these activities, including sending money and goods back home, are necessary for migrant workers to maintain their self-esteem and identity.

As the case of foreign domestic workers from the Philippines in Wan Chai amply reveals, having a known location to enjoy everyday forms of communal life under extreme limitations of time and the right to the city is crucial for both single encounters and long-term continuity of community life as migrants come and go. Instead of being deserted at weekends, the Central Plaza is filled by a majority of Filipino domestic workers usually gathered together to chat, gossip, relax, play, and so on (see Figure 7.8d). This form of gathering or occupancy is common along the building façade. This is because the placement at the edge close to a façade provides optimal possibilities for enjoying their day off, and helps them to keep its distance from others. Because many employers forbid foreign workers from using the telephone during working hours, which for domestic

workers can mean all the time, calling home to the Philippines or to friends in Hong Kong via cell becomes another common activity in the Central Plaza. In this sense, the appropriation of Central Plaza on Sundays engenders a positive sense of community in a city, and produces a new kind of public space in terms of its use as a site of democratic politics. In addition, meeting others, forming groups, and spontaneous chatting also take place underneath the footbridge (see Figure 7.8c). Along its covered sidewalks, Filipinos stand or sit on the ground using (disposable) plastic sheets, or on portable chairs they bring themselves. Greeting and engaging in conversation with old and new friends is common here. Many identifiable groups give an exuberant social existence to such leftover space on Sundays. Most of them even make a Sunday picnic through a day, and entertain themselves with music and dancing (see #3, #4 in Figure 7.8a). The space is also a popular site for other foreign workers. When the darkness falls, many male workers flock to the place to watch programmes from the home country on small TVs they bring themselves.

Moreover, while weekend activities of Filipino domestic workers is a respite from a long working week, the collective feeling of right to the city does help to create a home place for ethnoscapes. Because many foreign workers are given no personal storage spaces where they live, they often use the streets to prepare their goods in the form of packing carton for shipment back to the Philippines. This often creates a trash-dumping problem that brings complaints from local residents and administrators about foreign workers who are assumed to be the culprits. Near the market street (Cross Road) is a street that Filipinos often visit on Sundays: Sam Pan Street, which is known as skid row with some refuse collection points. Because a truck supplied by door-to-door cargo service comes over several times in a day to pick up the packaged goods, it tends to be a destination for those who would like to deliver goods back home (see Figure 7.8b). The street can be a place that functions to bring Filipina workers closer to home.

Under the current visa and labour regulations, no foreign worker in Hong Kong has a chance for permanent residence or citizenship in Hong Kong. In such circumstances as these, the hopefulness contained in the characterisation of Sunday enclaves as a liminal space can only be partially realised without basic reform that would grant rights to live, have families, and participate on a more equal footing in producing urban spaces with Hong Kong citizens.



### 7.3.3. Cultural Life

In general, the term ‘culture’ means a way of life based on shared beliefs, traditions, folklore and behaviour. We often associate culture with recreation, leisure, art, sport, and other social activities (Harris, 1999). According to the literature and interviews, there were great numbers of street activities back in the 1950s and 1960s, including hawking, street performances, temple fairs and recreation, which could be found everywhere in the urban area of Wan Chai. Such activities were intimately connected with ordinary people’s everyday lives, and were important aspects of their culture. For example, Southorn Playground was one of the best examples of a ‘working class night club’ in the evenings. Many hawkers and performers gathered there, and ordinary people could enjoy different types of food, performances and trading. These activities were inexpensive, or even free of charge. Ng (2001) describes this phenomenon as the ‘*dai daat dei*’ (flea market) culture in Hong Kong, in which ordinary people seek low-priced products, cooked food and entertainment in the streets or other related open spaces. Unfortunately, the modern approach of rational and functional urban planning and the trend toward gentrification and stringent managerial control have led to the gradual contraction of the space available for such cultural activities.

The cultural life not only includes the notion of everyday places in a personal and interactive context but also lead to temporally creative, self-actualising and harmonious experiences in spaces where people may be segregated or alienated. Even if the access to and use of spaces in the North is only a privilege not a right, the process of negotiation of officially sanctioned urbanisms represents the hope for a meaningful life and living environment and autonomy for society rather than a simple connection to everyday places.

#### 7.3.3.1. Streets as performative places

In addition to street hawkers, street performers are now considered as practicing an ‘informal activity’. Their performances are often associated with begging for money, and therefore treated as problems causing obstruction, annoyance, nuisance and danger to other road users (see #1, #3 in Figure 7.9a). At present, street performances are not subject to specific government regulation. However, law enforcement officers are often unable to distinguish between their performances and begging activities, and therefore commonly intervene to persecute street performers simply out of concern to enforce an

‘ideal spatial order’. As street performances often attract crowds of onlookers along the streets, and such crowds can affect the customer flow around shops, many shop owners bring complaints that street performers are a nuisance, and cause noise and obstruction. Therefore, street performers in Wan Chai tend to conduct their business far from the entrances of private shops. Instead, they have appropriated a small area near the MTR entrance at Wan Chai South as a street performance zone (see Figure 7.9b). As observed, one of the street performers put up a paper sign on the wall that stated that he was doing a “nearly extinct” form of traditional street performance, rather than begging. This disclaimer acknowledged that a street performer cannot actively solicit any donation from pedestrians, as this is defined as begging behaviour under the law. This performer’s sign indicated that he was just providing entertainment to pedestrians. The performers explain that people give them money voluntarily, in appreciation of their performances. To further accommodate the limits on their activities, the street performers appropriate their performance spaces only during non-peak hours of traffic. They try to conduct their activities without disrupting normal routines, and seek to avoid conflict.

For the authorities, cultural activities should take place in demarcated spaces only. According to our interview with the Street Market Concern spokesman, the cultural authorities responsible for the management of street performances are the Cultural and Leisure Services Committee of Wan Chai District Council, and the Leisure and Cultural Services Department. These official bodies regulate public displays of art and help to develop ‘official’ large-scale cultural events in Wan Chai. The officials plan to provide street performers with appropriate facilities to conduct their cultural activities. However, the times, spaces, and content of the non-sponsored street performances are limited and controlled by the authorities. In other words, the authorities want to recruit local performers to take part in their well-organised cultural events, and make the district more vibrant and attractive. However, cultural life should not be limited to official events with high-quality resources. Everyday cultural activity conducted by community members on their own initiative is also very important for building cultural life.

(a)



In the traditional street market, the general public show a prejudice against buskers as people begging for money, or engaged in a disreputable activity. (Segment 1: Tai Yuen Street)



Most street performers treat the MTR entrances as a 'pitch' in which they are able to express themselves and also make some financial gain. (Segment 2: Johnston Road)



Busking sometimes takes place for solitary personal enjoyment in the evening. (Segment 2: Johnston Road)



On Christmas Eve, a group of people transforms the space into a theatre for singing Christmas carols. (Segment 2: O'Brien Road)

(b)



Figures 7.9a-b. Due to its high level of pedestrian traffic, the street becomes a popular place for street entertainers and buskers alike.

### 7.3.3.2. Streets as places of dissent

The idea of a public realm for dissent illustrates the negotiations between the government and social activists to stimulate demands in face of the imposition of repressive demands in the 'life and death battle' of everyday places and social and cultural life. In this intermediate realm, these struggles are part of creative or public acts of dissent associated with visible and disruptive purposes.

To the local community, the traditional living area is not just a place to dwell, but also an inhabitation for dissensual aspects of democracy. As a result, there were a number of protest slogans overhanging the streets, which were understood as an ethos of contestation. For instance, when the government issued a series of ordinances to control stall owners' business areas after 2011, Fa Yuen Street fire, many stall owners hung protest slogans over their stalls in a display of civil disobedience in Cross Street's open-air bazaar.

Nevertheless, public protests are not merely limited in a guerrilla manner. A clear example is the social movements in Hennessy Road. The street mainly comprises multi-story commercial and office buildings, shopping arcades, and a variety of retail shops; it is one of the most popular shopping streets for locals. Due to its width (six traffic lanes) and flat character, public processions from Victoria Park would frequently use the road for access to the Central Government Complex. An annual protest, the Hong Kong 1 July Marches, which passes through Hennessy Road, has served as a conduit for developing a sense of civil society and to socialise citizens to democratic styles in response to the spatial characteristics of this protest (see #4 in Figure 7.10a; see also Figure 7.10b for details). What is of particular interest is the extent to which the spatial settings make public acts of dissent more visible and disruptive. As noted earlier, the idea of having 'loose space' facilitates open-endedness to cater to democratic aspirations. The footbridge provides the roof for outside activities in the rain or under harsh sunlight. The MTR entrance provided further opportunities for gathering. The modifications made to sidewalk, such as the addition of banners and placement of installations, is embellished with personal touches in order to enhance social interaction.



(a)



Local citizens camped out in the Central Plaza to protest against the 'small circle' election in which only an elite layer can vote. (Segment 6: Harbour Road)



Public rallies surrounded main entrance of the HKCEC to fight for democracy and universal suffrage on the election day for the Chief Executive, 25 March 2012. (Segment 6: Harbour Road)



Citizens frustrated with many social problems staged a sit-in to protest the government inaction on the night before the 10th anniversary of the handover of Hong Kong, 30 June 2012. (Segment 6: Harbour Road)



Beginning with protests against the election, many activists considered sidewalk acoustics to be an effective way to raise their profile and to appeal for democracy. (Segment 6: Harbour Road)



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Beginning with protests against the election, many activists considered sidewalk acoustics to be an effective way to raise their profile and to appeal for democracy. (Segment 6: Harbour Road)



(b)



(c)



Figures 7.10a-c. People take to the streets and demand their rights or protest against some actions of their government, employers, or other groups with opposing viewpoints.

Even though the stringent control involves political implication with respect to public order and social stability in the modern urban area, during the special events such as elections and anniversaries, public protesters view open spaces as political spaces where ‘subversive forces, forces of rapture, ludic forces act and meet’ (Barthes, 1986, p. 96) and where ‘marginalized groups make themselves visible enough to be counted as legitimate members of the polity’ (Lee, 1998, p. 115). For example when celebrating the 15th anniversary of the handover of Hong Kong to China, the police used large water-safety barriers to force a rally into a restricted zone to carry out their ‘silent demonstration’. Ultimately, instead of being seen as creating confrontation, the protesters built a ‘performance stage’ with the aim of increasing visibility to appeal for democracy by public acts of dissent that the *strong* did not want to see (see #8 in Figure 7.10a; see also Figure 7.10c for details).

In an era when the city devotes to attract international investors and tourists, that continues to draw attention to the ‘absolute power’, of which the space is dominated by use values. Such social movements now have a presence to claim the right to the city.

#### 7.3.3.3. Street as accesses to nature

Ethnic identity is important in the physical storage of both culture and history. Representations of public space are remarkably dependent on repositories of history and culture, and are meanwhile expected to intermingle with spectacle of contemporary urban life. Whereas visitors are given distinct experiences in the spaces, crucial connection with the material culture is offered in daily life. This can be considered as the stage where daily practices of ethnic life are reconstructed continuously. The ethnic community has the notion of constant self-renovation. Historically, communities mean individuals who live in the field and have the same ethnic resources and roots. However, nowadays, people in community who share the ethnic spaces in the public might be from geographically dispersive networks, seeking for a common identity in the symbolic ethnic spaces of the general public. It stands for the spaces of the community.

Cultural ritual, decorum and practice might be implemented in the public space in order to create the common identity again. The notions of ‘outsiders’ and ‘insiders’ can be defined in the relationship between each other. However, such definitions can be fluid: no matter individuals or groups might have verities of positions of subject and based on the situation, can be outsiders or insiders. The area of spaces in the ethnic public spaces can



be defined as the 'front' and 'back'. The front spaces are the definitive spatial and cultural practices of the ethnic group whereas the back spaces are the spaces in which practices might be against cultural standards on the edge of acceptability or against the behavioural regulation in public spaces. In this regard, ethnic public spaces are not only considered as physical storage of cultural and mentality but also regarded as a complex space in which various groups with various and probably contradictory interests are in proximity. Therefore, ethnic spaces might not be homogenous space, yet include complex zones and fields of particularity.

According to Bruno Latour (1993), Western knowledge—based on the separation of objective, scientifically knowable nature on the one hand, and subjective, constructivist culture on the other—still problematically assumes that the separation itself is the key distinction between 'the modern us' and 'the pre-modern other'. He further challenges the inconsistency between a universalised nature and many diverse and relativistic forms of culture. Instead, a more appropriate approach should be comparing nature-nature as a whole. As Latour (1993) argues,

We construct both out human collectives and the nonhumans that surround them. In constituting their collectives, some mobilize ancestors, lions, fixed stars, and the coagulated blood of sacrifice; in constructing ours, we mobilize genetics, zoology, cosmology and hematology (p. 106).

Escobar (1999) further elaborates upon the fact that other societies represent the relation between their human and biological worlds differently from the Western world, since the living, nonliving and supernatural beings do not constitute distinct and separate domains, further challenges the dichotomy (p. 8). The theoretical approaches the author discussed above are significant for a profound understanding of the struggles over cultural practices in Wan Chai.



Figure 7.11. Indigenous people act against modern society that bases itself on a nature-culture dichotomy, using the street as a means of challenge.

Debates over the issue of burning paper money for the dead, especially in urban settings, have gradually entered into contemporary Chinese public discourse. According to the authorities, many regulations have been implemented in order to promote a more 'civilised' funeral and interment procedure instead of 'old-fashioned', 'feudal', and 'superstitious' rituals. Supporters of such regulations contend that paper money burning is 'backward', 'unscientific', 'unenlightened', and environmentally detrimental. Therefore it is supposed to be incompatible with 'modern', 'civilised', and 'clean' urban space. While objections to paper money burning represent the re-assertion of modernist dreams based on the presumed 'necessary' gaps between past and present, dead and living, traditional and modern, superstition and science, the continuation of such traditional practice in urban Hong Kong challenges the modernist dichotomies and reveals entanglements among different actors presumed to be separate. Concerning the practice of religious customs and rituals, the author observed that the authorities have adopted a flexible enforcement approach. Under this flexible approach, enforcement officers are more tolerant of 'informal' activities if these do not cause substantial obstruction or nuisance. For example, burning joss paper and incense on the street is a common traditional custom in Wan Chai South for people worshiping deities or ancestors (see #1, #2 in Figure 7.11). As this action involves burning things, concerns for safety and cleanliness make this practice a sensitive issue for the government and the public. Officials are determined to manage these practices carefully. To reduce the environmental nuisance of smoke and flying ash and the potential hazards caused by burning joss paper and incense, the government or private management officers have provided joss paper furnaces at designated locations for such purposes. However, local residents and shopkeepers still prefer to burn joss paper and incense in front of their homes, shops, and underneath footbridges because that that will bring good luck into their living and working spaces. Therefore, the government has required that people must bring metal containers for burning joss paper and incense, and must clean up the areas after the ritual, or else face prosecution and a fine of HK\$1,500. With the increase in civic awareness, on-street ritual activities have now become more subject to regulation for the sake of making the streets cleaner and tidier.

Past experiences in currently used places enable people to make connections in response to urban transformations. This process primarily involves a comparison between where that individual once was and where they are now. This disparity can remind people of the places that have been lost or not achieved and thus these past experiences inspire people to find creative ways of appropriating spaces to maintain continuity in their life paths.

With the shoreline moved northward, the spaces originally for everyday enjoyment were rebuilt and redeveloped into cosmopolitan space. As a result, an excess reclamation and development has stealthily been swallowing up maritime past, which has deprived everyday life of authenticity and gradually reinforced domination by alienation. Although fishing as a daily recreational activity of ordinary people tended to disappear as the coastlines have moved progressively further away, current relationships to a place are strongly influenced through this creative process of remembering past experiences. The author observed that instead of fishing alongside waterfront, old residents attempted to catch fish by baiting a storm drain located just off the sidewalk near the construction in process by feeding a hook with a little cooked flour through a small gap in a manhole cover (see #3, #4 in Figure 7.11). The author interviewed several old residents about their motivations and intentions of such kind of fishing.

Interviewee 1: It is an untapped fishing paradise. I used a cork attached to the line to fix it in place and pulled out a fish after a few minutes. I have reeled in hundreds of fish from the storm drains near the construction projects in process and the reason why I like sewer fishing is because these places can be still used to suit my fishing need and unique hobby and to be a bridge to the past through long-term experiences.

Interviewee 2: Since the huge construction (HKCEC) providing shade during the day protects me from the sunshine, I usually spend all the afternoon to stay fishing. There are many little fishes drawing in dirty water to consume passing plankton, due to the reclamation project nearby. The fish caught would be cooked to feed stray cats. I just play for the fun of it, not for eating.

Actually, most of them enjoyed the process of fishing in such simple manner. They considered the new place as a bridge to the past that offers continuity in their daily lives. The past experience made place meaningful, and reminded them of how they have grown and changed.

#### **7.4. Modes of Reconstructing Public Space**

These findings of this study are that ordinary people have used various means to appropriate everyday spaces for spatial, social and culture purposes and to claim the right to retain representative illustrations of city users and their dynamic interactions. To

investigate the sequence of urban lives and orders, this field study illustrates the rhythm of everyday places and the situation of the practices in relation to time and space taking place within them. This offers a transurban approach to understanding the urban notion of constant speeding up (see also Crang, 2001; Thrift, 2004).

With regard to the spatial practice, the form of public space shows different degrees of freedom and emerging diversity. To animate 'lived spaces' in processes of growth, public space is being reproduced or reconstructed by spatial practices over time. Instead of limited to physical form of the built environment, there are spaces in which spatial temporality or intangible boundaries remain in flux.

Here the production of space inspired by Lefebvre's *The Production of Space* is not to view space as a container of activities, but as embodying certain forms of spatial practice. As such, the sense of 'practiced space' is able to recognize the reproduction and reconstruction of physical space.

Following the questions raised in the study, the dynamics of these spatial practices will be discussed in the pursuit of an understanding of the spatio-temporal unfolding of everyday life in an ever-transforming urban area and the varying degrees of the people-place relationships that rhythmically occur within the public realm. The study focused specifically on the tactics used by ordinary people in public spaces to re-construct the meaning of that place for particular purposes. The transformation of Wan Chai has caused a progressive transfer of place-making power. As the production of public space in Hong Kong is implemented with a high degree of control, the acts of ordinary people that resist forms of control require negotiation with tensions for change in pleurability and actualization. All of these creative acts are a kind of 'art of the weak' based on the relationship between the self, others and the environment. Thus, an overview of the discourse of public space can be offered by situating the themes against the axes of control and change.

Four quadrants of spatial modal frames are presented in the diagram situating the various themes of reconstructing public realm in relation to changes in the physical environment on the axes of 'degree of control' and 'extent of change' (see Figure 7.12). The Y-axis indicates a gradation from 'free-will' to 'control', while the X-axis has a gradation from 'preserve' to 'change'. As depicted on the X-axis, both units of act draw out a rhythmic tension related to the effort of making of everyday places. The Y-axis delineates the transition of power and control over the temporalities of lived experiences. Even if

control in the physical environment constantly influences the nature of everyday lives, it is experience-in-place that creates different degrees of usefulness or meaningfulness for those purposes in change with both physical form and the nature of the experience. In this way, the definitive modes of space in *tradition*, *transference*, *translation*, and *transgression* were presented to outline the production of public space. The trajectory of these practiced spaces illustrates the variety of acts that ordinary people use to alter the affordances of an object or mediate powers in the built environment in ways that may progress from lower-level needs related to personal limits to higher-level needs related to the restrictions of the built form. In this regard, the significant spaces or practices assigned different drawing scales are represented in white (Wan Chai South) and grey (Wan Chai North), whereas some having less influence are marked in text.

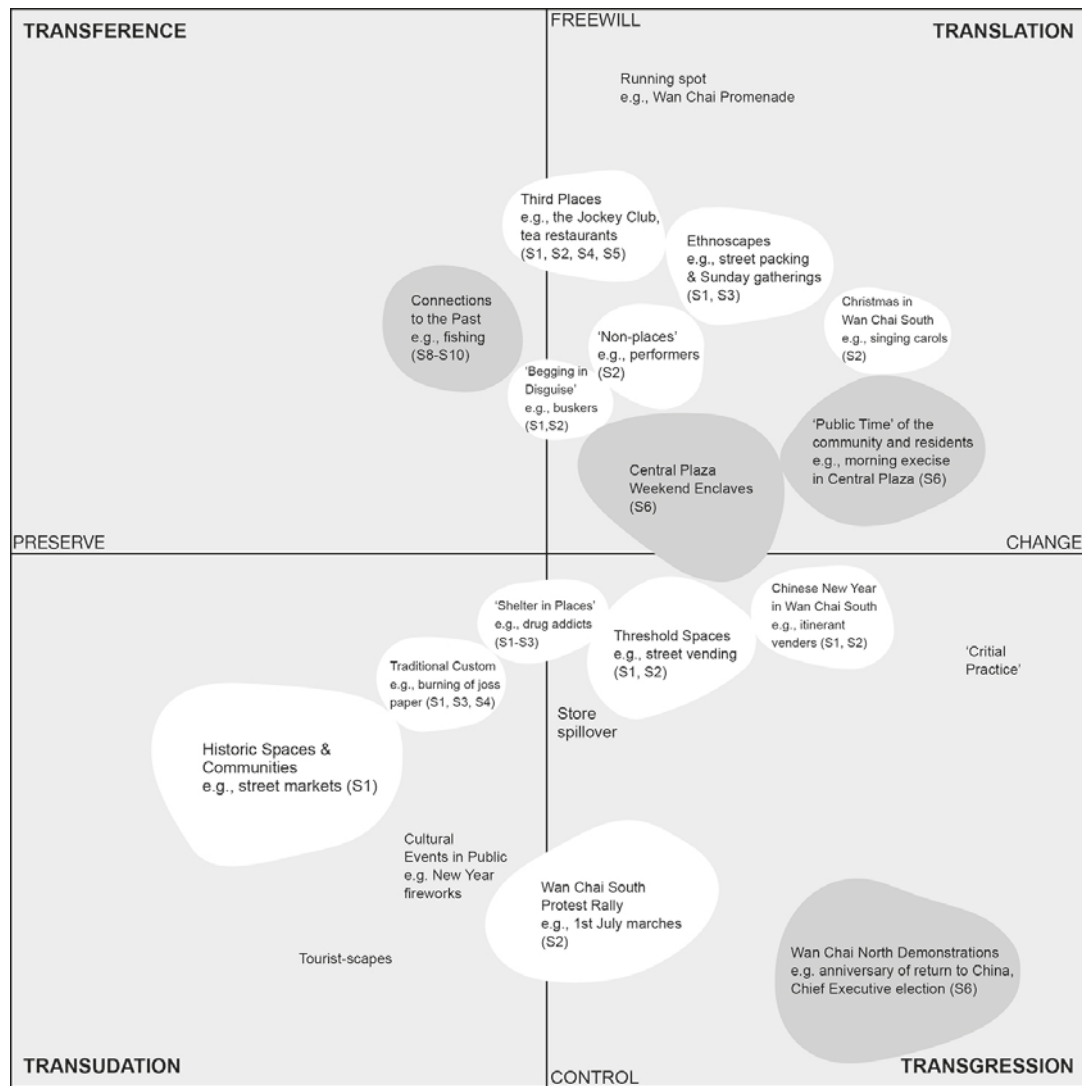


Figure 7.12. A geographic representation of spatial practices in public space

#### **7.4.1. Space of *Transudation***

All of these refer to the spaces where the form of everyday practice is mostly unchanged over time, or in an attempt to remain in the making of places, even though some form of control is normally applied in the public spaces. All of the spaces contain what the author calls 'space of transudation', which can be considered as a process of emergence of culture and a strong sense of community. Though many forces of transformation might be against such spaces, the social structure and complicated network of social relationship in the spaces permeate and retain the form of traditional spaces. Here, the possibilities of spatial appropriation might be mostly subject to historical and cultural backdrop. However, these spatial practices have their own realms of meaning, which might not be expected via the form of physical spaces.

An example of space in tradition would be the street markets that are not simply places where one can buy daily necessities, but also a favourite place for people to meet, gather, stroll, rest, and window-shop. Although efforts of providing 'healthy' city space had been made to renew traditional living environment with the indoor market complexes, the best instances of everyday places do not occur in these gentrified spaces, but in street markets that are viewed as 'urban facility' to cater for people engaging with every day. As a facilitator and designer of the space, the stall owner provides the necessities of the urban facility, such as a chair for rest, a table for the storage of goods or play, and a handcart for carrying items, in order to make people more inhabitant in the space.

Moreover, a high degree of pedestrian diversity can be found in traditional living environment. Mixed-use spaces that attract a diverse cross-section of the population (e.g., locals and tourists; women, children, and the elderly; students, workers, and businessmen) are likely to be more liveable. Due to the variety of functions possible in the space, public space are redefined sometimes as 'shelter in-place' by the poor for the informal economy. Street peddlers and beggars often utilise such milieu to preserve the urban space in its original condition.

In addition, the extension of cultural practices is not limited in historical space and communities, but also disperse in traditional living environment. The modes of worship such as burning of incense and joss paper are exteriorized with historical cultural meaning in public space. Even though the ordinance tends to tighten the living spaces, these practices also highlight the looseness with the traditional custom in the so-called communities.

#### **7.4.2. Space of *Transference***

In this regard, space in transference can be defined as space where experience-in-place is transferred in location. However, with preservation in form, these practices can be adapted to new spaces while maintaining a majority of the same spatial contents. These contain spaces where persistent practices can be transferred to a new spatial environment from a spatial or cultural past. In this new environment, these practices are allowed to persist with or without some forms of accommodation to the new environment. Therefore, the transferred spaces may contain a great number of the coastal public spaces where the repetitive practices of daily life inscribe spatial practices into space considered as a neutral and functional setting to high-level living. These practices might be different amongst the races and constantly change in the more recent progress of modernization, because of in the spatial form of the precincts and in demography.

In the past, Wan Chai was an area in which a number of Chinese villagers and fishermen dwelled along the coastlines. What ensued was the process of continued expansion to play the role of the city in the external competition. Although such kind of urban transformation is able to hopefully contribute to overcoming significant challenges such as the increasingly intolerable overcrowding of the inner city, its modernised planning resulted in a widening of spatial differentiation and social distance. The case of fishing in the drain such an instance best, as cultural practice feels both past experiences and past places against current transformation and used spaces. The disparity reminded the old residents of how they have grown and changed. To some extent, the past experiences provide linkages to the 'new spaces', especially in the form of creative acts, such as the resident's act by catching fish with baiting a storm drain, to maintain a sense of continuity in contemporary urban lives. These 'cheap practices' may enable places to claim the right to the city.

#### **7.4.3. Space of *Translation***

A 'Space in Translation' may occur where there exists a change in the form of spatial practices with or without change in the social contents of the practices, though new social contents might be introduced to the space. The temporal and spatial boundaries of the practices can be changed so that they might be considered as new practices. In space,



temporary zones, sites and bodies might be supplanted in the transformed spaces. Nonetheless, there are more examples of spaces during the process of translation than transformed spaces. These spaces in translation refer to spaces in which the process of transformation might be happened.

Space in Translation can be found in both ethnic space and ethnoscape with element of transnational connections. The large-scale dedicated open space in Central Plaza retained by the developer only serving for passers-by is such a case. It is very common for public spaces to be owned by private entities and operated under state control, with the understanding that environmental issues, such as informal activities, can be fixed through a separation of one's relationship to society. However, on weekends, Filipino domestic workers disrupt the order through their modes of temporary enclave. This new form of gathering and populating at weekends has engendered a feeling of 'our place', forcing a glimmering of a solution to 'dead public space' (see also Sennett, 1992). In addition, instead of lying in these entities 'home party' through their modes of congregation in space, the appearance of ethnoscape may be dispersed across a variety of sites. There is an example of public space functioning in the street markets for the Filipino community regarding them—as spaces used for packing goods for to be shipped back to the Philippines. These emerging practices display instances of the growth of a sizeable foreign community to negotiate thresholds of publicness, which in the sense of de Certeau (1984, p. 93) 'slips into the planned city'.

Another example of space in translation occurs in new social places such as underneath footbridges, some of the frontages, and privately owned public spaces where spatial practices are reenacted on basis of the everyday. As Wan Chai has experienced continued outward expansion and inward gentrification, social and community life has been disrupted. By witnessing the daily practices of residents, the social discourse of public spaces often happens in 'public time' or 'temporal zones' which makes the space open for meetings and gatherings, because the old residents are familiar with the regular schedules of their friends and neighbours.

The festivals can be an obvious reason to account for spaces in the process of translation. For example, a public space near Johnston Road was designed originally for smoking and circulation. However, the city users produced another meaning and function of this space, which they exercised on Christmas Eve. At that time, a group of performers wearing Christmas caps converted the space into a theatre and sang Christmas carols to attract people for enjoyment.

#### **7.4.4. Space of *Transgression***

There exists a temporal interrogation of widely accepted spatial practices and established regulation in space of transgression. Its spatial practices might have the effects of a catalyst for changes as time passes by and repetitive acts of transgressions. On the one hand, these transgressions might adopt a 'polite' form, a kind of 'art of the weak', of which the only strength is that over time would have accumulating transformative impacts. As noted, some of these transgressed practices and spaces can be encountered in public. However, sometimes, they can be momentary lapses or glimpses in practice, and may or may not leave traces of transgressed existence in the surface. On the other hand, transgressed practices can be regarded as a mode of resistance to the goal of the social movement (Foust & Ebrary, 2010). The space of transgression exist with visible and disruptive purpose over public space to enable debate, dissent, and political action, because in Hong Kong, authorities may become hostile towards demonstrations and protests by marginalized groups, regarding them as street obstructions that may be filled with possible disorder and violence.

Spaces of transgression can be identified in congested spaces, such as traditional living areas. In this context, spatial practices exist in found, borrowed or stolen spaces, in which boundaries of public and private spaces become ambiguous and in which spaces are contested and claimed by various entities. These might exist in the conditions of boundary, as interstitial or threshold spaces, where the physical reconstruction of public space is claimed on private realm or vice-versa. These conditions of contestation or negotiation of space usually generate sites of friction or tension.

Another example of transgressed space is the phenomenon of the demonstrations and protests. The use of Hennessy Road is a good case of how the public acts of dissent counter central control. Originally, this street was used for vehicle traffic. In order to facilitate social democracy, the citizens are allowed to protest. The use of this space for demonstrations thus redefined the functions of the street.

#### **7.5. Summary: Control and Change**

Throughout its history, Wan Chai has developed as a metropolitan centre and has undergone rapidly changing patterns of urban land use. As a result of economic restructuring and city growth, the colonial authorities adopted a modernist approach to development, which tended to create a more rational, ordered, efficient and structured society. As the findings illustrate, the city space was divided into zones with different functions, and the boundaries between public and private space became more clearly defined. To ensure rapid and convenient transport, the street spaces were planned primarily for use by motor vehicles rather than by people. Massive footbridges and subways were constructed to replace pedestrian walkways on the streets. Last, but not least, the authorities established many restrictive policies and rules to ensure an ideal public order with proper state control.

Urban planning in Hong Kong is stuck on the level of substantial form, a fact that Jacobs criticises. It is foolish to think that creating a visually pleasing, substantial environment using rationally quantitative scientific methods will prompt a good social environment, or that a clearly ordered functional division can comprehensively dominate the favourable development of a city. According to Thackara (1988), the flow of urban life – chaos, streets, citizens, traffic, businesses, residences, poverty and wealth – these fickle mixed images have been categorised, divided and blamed for urban problems produced by planners who ‘have been pictured as arrogant, undemocratic manipulators bent on clamping a sterile uniformity over the diversity of modern life’. Moreover, professional designers and planners regard diversity, variety and uncertainty as ‘a kind of disease and the worst enemy of social harmony’ (Fishman, 1982, pp. 266-267). Thus, the city has gradually become a strategic space for the strong and an ambiguous place for the weak. Some may ask whether this is the best way to create inhabitable urban spaces. Fishman answers that ‘in attempting to create a new urban order, [one] must repress precisely that complexity, diversity, and individuality which are the city’s highest achievements’ (Fishman, 1982, p. 18).

The observations and interviews also illustrate that wherever spaces are not totally dominated by the authorities, people have developed their own ways to appropriate public space and sustain their everyday practices. The people in these areas take the initiative to maintain their personal, social and cultural ways of life. Concerning their physical environments, some residents make use of *time*, as in the evening use of entrances to closed banks as simple vending spaces for hawking activity. Some inhabitants may not totally change the function of public spaces, but introduce additional functions, such as re-constructing the spaces underneath the Lockhart Road footbridge for their business

activities. In terms of social and community life, several hawker stall and shop owners have re-territorialised the boundaries of their business spaces, creating places for social activity and interaction. Some stall operators even extend their living areas into the street and 'privatise' the public area as their outdoor living room. In terms of cultural life, local people have tried to re-define the meaning of street spaces by claiming that their performances and past experiences are enactments of traditional culture, and that street spaces should be kept available for such activities.

The author has shown many themes of ordinary people using creative acts and arts to re-construct public spaces and sustain their everyday practices. Clearly, most of these activities happen in the less-heavily redesigned areas of Wan Chai South. Everyday life in Wan Chai South did not develop based on official plans or blueprints, but was built by local people over many years. For example, the open-air bazaars in Wan Chai have evolved from the informal street trading activities practiced around Tai Yuen Street, Cross Street and Wan Chai road since the 1920s. These streets were definitely not built for commercial purposes, but people utilised them for trading, assembling and interacting with others. In this way, a community was gradually formed, consisting of nearby residents and shop owners. Where spaces like this are shared by the community, members gain a sense of belonging and close relationship, due to their 'sharing of interests and activities' and their 'shared history' (Collamer, 1999). Using simple words and actions, community members have maintained their traditional uses of street space in Wan Chai South, and gained certain advantages in the game of power relations for control of their spaces (Fokdal, 2008).

The authorities, however, still hold absolute power in urban planning, as can be seen in the decisions concerning Lee Tung Street. The authorities and planners claim to have the professional knowledge and rational decision making processes to fulfil public interest and providing a high quality of life to all of the residents. In fact, however, the study illustrates that ordinary people know their own needs best. As Sandercock (1998) argues, local communities have greater experiential, grounded, contextual and intuitive knowledge of their living environment than planning professionals. So long as the authorities neglect ordinary people's attitudes and local wisdom, power struggles between the authorities and local people will continue. Therefore, there is a need for urban planners to respect the everyday lifestyles of individual street users and to facilitate an environment that is more closely attuned to urban space users' actual needs.

In the context of Hong Kong, internal complexity and external competition urge socio-spatial structures to undergo transformation. Urban transformation can hopefully contribute to overcoming significant challenges such as social division, spatial stratification, power politics, widespread poverty, and economic depression. Its goals are to enable a bright future for the city, to transform Hong Kong into a site of invention, wherein a distinctive new way of life can be planted, and to provide more appropriate spaces for city innovation. External competition has a great influence on urban transformation, as the inventiveness of the new spaces can be used as the new identity to present to the world. Nevertheless, the intended use of these spaces tends to depart from the creativeness of everyday use; this departure puts forward a serious friction with urban governance. For the great city, the ordering of urban life should be a creative synergy between the motivations of individuals and the ambitions of government (Rose, 1992), and the government must play a seductive role to facilitate diverse creativities and powers of individuals without intruding or regulating the use. The reclamation in Hong Kong should convey positive and active forces to improve life close to the local, and create an 'accessible city' to open up the native identity and users' diversity rather than control the city's seeming unruliness.

## CHAPTER 8

### CONCLUSIONS

#### 8.1. Preamble

The previous chapters consist of a literature review, which serves as a general philosophical rethinking of the field of behaviour and environment, and a field study. Together, they provide an in-depth comprehensive understanding of street space with different backgrounds, environment settings and natures of life in Hong Kong. With the changing roles and meanings of the public sphere (Arendt, 1958; Habermas, 1989), the human connection to the public realm has been recognised with the notions of everyday urbanism (de Certeau, 1984; Lefebvre, 1991b) and micro-publics (Amin & Thrift, 2002; Sandercock, 2003). The urban design and planning issues that spring from the interactions between city users and public living environments raise concerns about the everyday needs of ordinary people.

To this end, this chapter provides the conclusions of the thesis. Answers to the research questions proposed in Chapter 1 are summarised, and the ‘sociology of everyday life’ is suggested as a new perspective to urban planning and design that will help link research contributions to design knowledge. The limitations of this study are identified and future work on planning from the perspective of everyday life is discussed. Plans are provided and future expectancy is proposed based on the results of the present study.

#### 8.2. Responses to the Research Questions

This study opens up the debate by elaborating on the case study of the ever-transforming character of Hong Kong, initially tracing the progress of urban planning and developmental strategy and then focusing on a reclaimed area that has been transformed from a traditional living area into an environment created more for aesthetic appreciation than for use. In response to socio-spatial issues related to urban planning and design in Hong Kong, the study examines everyday life (practice) to consider users' ways of operating in reference to the function, form, and meaning of Hong Kong's public space. These 'practiced spaces' are related to the ways in which the physical organisation of the city shapes the spatial configuration of everyday places and to the ways in which people contest the public realm in daily life.

This study told a story of the reconstruction of public space with the Place Model (Canter, 1977; Habraken, 1998), from which questions regarding the 'physical attributes', 'activities', and 'meanings' of the public realm were addressed. The following revisits the research questions with which this study began.

**8.2.1. Question I: *To what extent is a city's composition and material formation affected under the modernist development? How do the physical patterns and organisation of a city represent current society-space relations?***

The pursuit of individual truths to form monistic values has long dominated western ideology. Many people believe that the world is built on an ideal foundation, upon which difficulties can be managed as long as they are given sufficient analysis. The development of the modern sciences has further emphasised this objective rationalism. In establishing objective knowledge, the modern sciences attempt to make the real world align with the simple principles and general rules of each field to the extent that the complexity of real life, which is often represented as chaos, has been deemed a kind of appearance. In contrast, the order derived from scientific processes, such as simple reduction, have become essential (Solà-Morales & Whiting, 1997).

Mechanical dogmatism treats a number of urban issues that stem directly from monism. As a planning ideology, modern mechanical dogmatism can predict, control and manage urban development using the functionalism of rational thoughts and scientific analyses, simplifying complicated urban problems through logical rationalism. Some experts substituted this clear, functional ordering as a broad approach to mixed function planning methods for cities that have been completely deconstructed in this way. This focus on the

quantised results of mathematics and physics not only fails to account for the complexity, variety, and abundance of urban spaces, but also the emotion, personality, and spirit of the people who inhabit them. This high-dimensional–best-function perspective denies the diversity and unpredictability of everyday practices, which ultimately results in urban hollowness.

When reviewing the urban policy of Asian cities, governments consistently prioritise urban living environments in response to global competition, and urban planning is clearly focused on developmental strategies rather than meeting the needs of city users. In Hong Kong, a global city, many massive development projects and periodic urban renewals have been undertaken to enhance the urban environment for tourism, the economy and transnational investment, the infrastructure, and transportation,. Rational planning emphasises city development under a comprehensive master plan that integrates scientific technology and quantitative analysis. The intention behind such efforts is to create a quintessential postmodern artistic composition that follows rational planning principles; however, such an approach can ultimately neglect human factors, as this kind of urban transformation can widen the gap between city users and the spaces that surround them.

Current reclamation plans and programmes in Hong Kong principally facilitate ‘the social-economic development of the territory and the restructuring of the metro area to provide for additional reclamation around certain parts of Victoria Harbour’ (PELB, 1995a, p. 6). Governments and planners expect to construct a desirable place in which to optimise social order and provide better quality of life to residents through conformity, rationality and interventionism. On the face of it, urban reclamation is a good way to converge tourism, business, commerce, culture, international investment and higher living standards, all of which are fundamental for a city to achieve urban vitality and world-class status. In modern societies, spaces are produced and defined and their functions specified by planners and administrators. Reclamation plays an important role in urban renaissance, particularly in the creation of distinctive cityscapes with a number of functional spaces. Therefore, the metropolitan transformation process is marked by internal influences in the shaping of its spatial differences and social distance. In sharp contrast to the original orientation is the disorientation of the built environment with megastructures characterised by foreign aesthetics, alien designs and transnational businesses, private and semiprivate spaces, extensive automobile traffic and footbridge networks and long-distance travel between buildings and functions. Emerging from this is aggressive place-making and thinking about permanence, stability, linearity and control,



which often arise largely from the elimination of possibility, diversity and disorder. In addition, the subject is framed as a political situation that is integrated with the built form and institutional structures involving tourism, culture, and other services.

**8.2.2. Question II: *In what ways does an everyday life perspective offer for rethinking and reassessing the modernist urban planning system? How does modernist planning involve changes to the nature of public spaces and everyday life?***

Urban planning reflects many of the evils of modern mechanical dogmatism. At the same time, there has been an awakening of public consciousness in the social context, through which a vehement attack has been mounted against the high-dimensional planning approach. In *A City is Not a Tree* (1965), Alexander criticises strictly rationalistic functional distinctions. He introduces the concepts of ‘tree structure’, suggesting that cities embody ‘the ideas of overlap, ambiguity [and] multiplicity of aspect’, and that multifunctional organic integration within an interactively natural ‘semi-lattice’ structure can be a source of urban vitality (Alexander, 1965). In *The Death and Life of Great Cities* (1961), Jacobs criticises rationalism and mechanical dogmatism in urban planning from the city users’ perspective, arguing that they have led to a reduction in urban complexity, a loss of vitality and the advent of non-humanisation phenomena. Scientific rationalism artificially tailors an ideal perspective that shelters original pluralism in the life-world, ignoring the significance of both humans and objects. Since the onset of modernity, the rationalism of natural science and its notions of everyday life have imposed subjective thoughts on objective facts in a profoundly significant and multiplex life-world. Modernist planning approaches still allow abstract theories and statistical models to predict or depict the fictitious features of urban scientific rationalism so that the symbolic world covers up the vitally significant world. This view has provided insights into urban environments that place more attention on the interrelation between urban transformation and daily life. This perspective differs from that of Le Corbusier, who concentrates exclusively on high-dimensional spaces while neglecting the daily living spaces in urban environments (Le Corbusier, 1964).

During Hong Kong’s period of constant transformation, the government and administrators used various strategies and redevelopment plans to adapt to rapid and continuous changes. However, the developmental process (e.g., urban reclamation, gentrification) has swallowed up many traditional community facilities, such as teahouses, restaurants, bazaars and pharmacies, that provided residents with necessities, leisure and

places to congregate in their everyday lives. In short, the process of modernised transformation has destroyed many of the cultural spaces that were once frequented by ordinary people. The globalisation of capitalism has distorted daily metropolitan life in the name of economic profits, affecting people's living environments and ordinary lifestyles. The planning principles adopted by administrators and developers focus on reconstruction and renewal but seldom take into account whether a city has been divided into a 'dual city' (Borja & Castells, 1997). With the evidence collected and the findings analysed for six dimensions—buildings and facilities, management, traffic and pedestrian flow, public activities, pedestrian diversity, and social capital—it is easy to see that there is a wide gap between the everyday responses of people in their routine lives and the strategies of society and urban planning. This gap, and the everyday struggles of urban planning, display a contrast between the strong and the weak (de Certeau, 1984). To address these intricate social problems, the author has argued that urban planning and design can be inspired by the understanding of 'small practice' and 'grassroots space'.

Everyday life has become more of a highly organised object than a creative original subject or cultural source. Real science should be concerned with all beings, fashioning rational sciences that support the freedom of life (Husserl, 1970). This requires the rejection of subjectivity and hypocrisy and a return to 'the things themselves' in recognition that natural and social truths tend to show up in conscious activities long before any rethinking is undertaken.

**8.2.3. Question III: *In what ways does the ongoing discussion of rights to public space relate to the debate over the modernist production of space? What particular lessons could be learned from the dynamics of 'practiced space' that are reconstructing the socio-spatial order?***

As a world-class city, Hong Kong not only includes many cosmopolitan spaces but also many less glamorous areas that are full of all kinds of minor daily life practices. Government designers and planners seldom observe the everyday practices of ordinary people and the degree of fitness between city users' needs and their living environment. Designers and planners dealing with 'public interest' urban projects that are obviously based on economic-oriented design principles with profit in mind thus tend to conduct massive urban development strategies that may swallow up or frustrate the everyday practices of ordinary people. The strategic efforts of governments and urban planners often contradict the inherent wisdom of everyday life. Freedom, equality and democracy

are fundamentally valuable concepts for the capitalist social structure, which consists of normative institutions and organisations. As there are profound interdependent relations between freedom, democracy, and capitalism, democratic social structures that are threatened in contemporary society. The weak tactics and strong strategy of capitalist social structures essentially embody a contradiction that symbolises the temporary sense of social existence, and the notions of freedom and democracy become superficial symbols or tools of the strong. Thus, the practical needs of city users tend to deviate from governmental and expert expectations and are gradually moving away from anticipative control.

The ongoing debate offers valuable insight into how city users deal with public space and products and indicates the disparity of users' actions in the imagination and production of everyday places. In studies of the sociology of everyday life, everyday practice is a continuously changing phenomenon with social history and ethnic differences, so there are no uniform modern societies of everyday life-worlds. People do not strictly follow the orders imposed by the authorities in fulfilling the process of production in their lives. In addition, according to Lefebvre (1991a), everyday life should be 'a work of art and the joy that man gives to himself' (p. 199). Therefore, all individuals are living artists who understand 'what is willed to them and what holds them intimately from the inside' (Leuilliot, 1977). Given this, the ways in which city users operate cannot be defined merely as unchanged customs and traditions. Their behaviour represents subjective emotional responses and individual interpretations of the space; thus, they participate actively rather than passively in the text of life. The significance and content of everyday space (or life) are depicted as general, timeworn, and banal rather than regenerative, new, revitalised, and renewable (Kwok, 2011). Each individual is a living artist who enjoys self-entertainment or creates fun with others through activities. Everyday life is a collective arena in which both cultural creativity and social revolution reflect instinctive demands and artistic lives through 'a radical reorganisation of modern life' (Lefebvre, 1984; Shields, 1996). The rigid distinctions between 'public and private, work and leisure, and monotonous routine and escape' are increasingly homogenised due to the challenges to everyday practice (Siu, 2001, p. 22). These dualities are controlled by a linear timeline that has become a circulatory rhythm, a state dominated by technologic rationality and capital logic with potential ability. Thus, everyday practice is a junction of social activities, social structures and common bases of cultural phenomena. In such circumstances, as a vessel containing people's everyday lives, everyday place manifests the adventure of life and tactical living practices derived from the physical demands of life rather than the rules of a space. As a site of both alienation and resistance, everyday

place reveals the source of new forms of social solidarity (Maffesoli, 1996). In this view, the dominance of modern daily life is a kind of symbolic fetishism that is susceptible to a new poetic language revolution in which verbal language revolts against written language (bureaucratic language).

The author observes the rationality within an extensive network of interactions among people and argues that scientific rationalism produces irrational results such as the loss of meaning. Truth, however, is not a product of transcendental beings beyond the life-world; it exists in the communicative and interactive actions of people. Habermas (1981) also states that a consensus of minds and actions can be achieved in everyday life through communication, interaction, conversation, mutual understanding and tolerance. In the life-world, speakers and listeners create inherent realms of mutual understanding and establish acceptable behavioural norms to form a collective sense of belonging and social integration through interactive behaviour and manners (Habermas, 1989). In this view, the sociology of everyday life provides a new perspective to contemplate city users' ways of operating and reveals that city users tactically fix unfit controls and designs. Obviously, urban design is completely different from product design for individual uses. When conducting urban projects, it is difficult to test the response of public space users in advance, and users cannot simply select the products that they like and dismiss the rest (Siu, 2003). Actually, those who create designs for public users are not aware of the degree to which small everyday practices can inspire design or innovation. Most of the time, users play an active role by adapting designs to their own purposes, changing the design's original function and purpose to fulfil 'individual interest'. People's everyday lives address the unknown with variety and vitality, and understanding the meanings behind even minor practices can inspire the policies, plans, management and developmental directions of governments, planners and administrators. Hence, urban design must define users' responses to their everyday space so that designs and plans can be more inclusive and fitted.

### **8.3. Implications of the Study**

'People' are silhouettes that are both imprecise and singularized...sketches of affects...But what is an affect, if not each time a sketch? (Nancy, 2000, p. 7)

In contributing to recent work opening into the examination of the rhythms of everyday life and the production of knowledge, this thesis has begun to demonstrate a way of

thinking about how to document, analysis, and present the spatio-temporal unfolding of everyday life in the city in fine-grained detail, and in relation to using critical social geographic conceptions of 'place' more specifically. Having undertaken an in-depth analysis of users' responses to the everyday (street) spaces in Wan Chai, the value of this study is its contribution to the (a) academic research field, (b) the professional field and (c) the general public.

*Academic research field.* Everyday urbanism has long argued for an urban design paradigm that prioritises functions and everyday life in cities (see Chase, Crawford & Kaliski, 2008). The examination of the multiple elements of the public realm includes historic-morphological analysis and spatial description, evaluation of conceptual constructs of planning in the perspective of everyday life, and intensive observation of people's practices in the making of everyday places. In contrast to the many recent short-term and piecemeal street studies of Hong Kong and other Asian cities, the study has taken a user-oriented approach to everyday urbanists to obtain supporting empirical data using rigorous standardised analytical techniques. Original street environments in urban areas and their forms of development (changes) are diverse and rapid, and they affect the everyday lives of city users significantly; thus, a user-oriented approach to design research is important. User-oriented design methods are typically based on longitudinal field observations as 'a method of looking at the actions between people and their environment' (Yin, 2003, p. 80). One of the deficiencies of the present urban renewal and planning in the aforementioned continuously transforming areas is that urban research lacks truly longitudinal observations of everyday practices, which makes it difficult to construct a high-quality living environment because the short-term piecemeal contributions of urban research cannot accurately determine what people truly want and need (Abbott, 1996). Hence, a major contribution of this thesis is its validation of the importance of everyday urbanism to seeing and making the city. In addition, the research methods and experiences can serve as a reference for further research into similar topics (e.g., other kinds of public space).

*The professional field.* The study is also strongly relevant to urban design and application (i.e. urban design) in Hong Kong and for other cities. Traditionally, urban design has been a discourse focusing on the design of the city as an object. The study has demonstrated that studying experience-in-place and focusing on street spaces have important practical applications to Hong Kong's urban design, and that the relationship between design and human experience is inseparable. Since people know their own needs and are more familiar with their living environment than planners and policymakers

(Coenen, Huitema, & O'Toole, 1998), the study contributes to the debate by arguing that both the importance of design and a critical understanding of the urban are required to achieve a responsive approach to urban design. Users must guide designers in terms of the details of their living environments and their needs. Designers should likewise use their specialised knowledge to work with city users in the design process, encourage extensive civic participation and respect the preferences and needs of city users (Sanoff, 1992, 2000; Schuler, 1993; Siu, 2001, 2003). The user-oriented approach is the best way to create a living environment that is full of variety and vitality that fits city users (Bradshaw, 1996). Today, a number of proposed projects and schemes are filled with trendy concepts that borrow the term 'technologic rationality' to describe the planning of substantial forms to achieve equilibrium in urban development. However, creating a living environment with a good human–environment fit requires no fantastic ideas, but the discovery of minor everyday practices through user-oriented focus. Addressing everyday life through the design process with the ideal of social harmony is vital for urban development, and only through responsive urban design will a living environment successfully incorporate the ever-changing needs of city users.

*The general public.* In light of these strategic city plans that respond to economic development needs, there are two issues of concern about the current changes: 1) How far the space, especially the street space, has been defined and organised in a hierarchical order within this metropolitan transformation process? 2) How the everyday practices—the ways of operating—of ordinary people adapt to these built forms and limited spaces? Based on the findings of this thesis, it is able to arouse a higher awareness of the spaces used by the overlooked members of the public, and dedicates to rethinking multiplicity of urban pasts and the manifold futures of Hong Kong. The findings can also be considered as the first from an in-depth user-oriented approach to comparative street research in Hong Kong, the findings of which can benefit policymakers, researchers, and professionals in the planning, design, humanities, and social disciplines.

#### **8.4. Limitations of the Study**

This study focused on everyday life in urban planning and design to bring about a more comprehensive understanding of how city users interact with other users, the public environment and products, and then discussed urban design issues and quality of life.

Analysis of the field of environment–behaviour studies is by no means a simple task. Due to limited time and resources, this study has the following limitations.

#### **8.4.1. Topic**

The topic of this study provided a new perspective how ordinary people's spatial practices in response to a rapidly changing, increasingly programmed living environment. A representative area of land reclamation was selected for a case study. Given the area's unique spatial characteristics, this study was an effective way to achieve the research objectives. Indeed, this view as a criticism of modernist planning is conceptually inspiring and potentially helpful in practice, whereas the special characteristics of land reclamation may not completely fall under the scope of the research. Thus, a comparison of land reclamation in different cities based on the well-established evaluation system can be integrated into the urban study.

The street was selected as the research focus because it is the most dynamic public space in the urban environment. However, a limitation is that the focus of the research was on the street, and there is a lack of understating about city users' daily lives in other public spaces. Future studies on everyday life in other public spaces (e.g., communities, pocket parks and playgrounds) would extend and enrich this study.

#### **8.4.2. Methodology**

To explore and examine a particular point of view and, through the understanding of it, to make suggestions for urban planning and design, this study adopted a single case to develop a solid foundation for the investigation of everyday space. The case study presents a representative example of the reclamation-based development strategy that now dominates urban transformation in Hong Kong. Even though the streets considered show human behaviour in different physical environments, these streets were investigated in the context of the same spatial and cultural transmissions. If time and research funding are increased, future studies could extend beyond a geographical district—for example, West Kowloon Cultural District and local residential areas in Hong Kong Island East. The West Kowloon Cultural District would be insightful for characterising contemporary culture-led regeneration and cultural policy in Hong Kong, and Hong Kong Island East's residential areas, which are built on reclaimed land, could shed light on the everyday life

of local residents of the waterfront. Studying additional reclamation areas will provide more information on current society–space relations.

Due to limitations of time and funding, some detailed research methods and designs could not be used to achieve the research purposes. For the present study, the author chose the most effective and appropriate methods to address concern the research questions and objectives. To identify city users' needs and preferences and their hopes for a better life and living environment, future studies should also conduct questionnaires with more users. More in-depth user-oriented research is expected for demographic categories such as race, occupation and income.

#### **8.4.3. Findings**

The term 'ever-transforming' refers to urbanisation's rapid fostering of urban growth, but a limitation lies in the context itself. Over the four years this study was carried out, physical properties and public policies changed, and the adjustment of development strategies and economic reconstructing have had significant effects on every aspect of daily life. The research methods adopted here only constructed recent or current accounts of reality or representations. The findings are thus not generalisable across time. Even if this is a general limitation of most studies, the research methods will be considered as a kind of outcome for future studies, and the findings of case study on the perspective of everyday life in planning will also provide significant insight to facilitate user-centred design principles in urban studies of Hong Kong.

Chapter 5 proposed a quantitative approach for identifying spatial properties of morphology using space syntax. Future study should include a further extension of the methodology applied and how the qualitative findings could be supported by more quantitative or morphological analysis where applicable.

In addition to the above limitations, the findings obtained from the selected streets and street segments might be impossible to generalise to a wider study since the author was short-handed during the field study. If more research funding is supplied, research assistants and university students could be recruited for field work, data collection and analysis.



## 8.5. Future Directions of This Research

Given the limitations of the study, future research can be carried out based on the following recommendations.

This research presented an initial perspective of everyday life in Hong Kong's urban planning, which urbanists and scholars consider to have great research potential. As the streets in Hong Kong's high-density living environment are full of different wants, expectations, values, rules, communications, complexities and opportunities, quality of life relies on how the diversity of cultures, needs, wants and lifestyles of city users in the public living environment are viewed. As Moudon (1991) and Jacobs (1993) emphasise, the design of city streets is regarded as a critical aspect of urban design. Thus, empirical study should examine and recognise 'user focus'. Additional field studies in other reclamation areas and types of urban spaces should be carried out to obtain an overall understanding of the nature of everyday life and facilitate quality of life via the special concern of the street environment.

Given its usefulness, the space syntax approach in physical analysis is suggested for future studies. With the improvement of the theory and technique of space syntax, the link between big data and space syntax in urban design can be examined.

With the global trends of urbanisation, comparison studies may be considered, with the following recommendations:

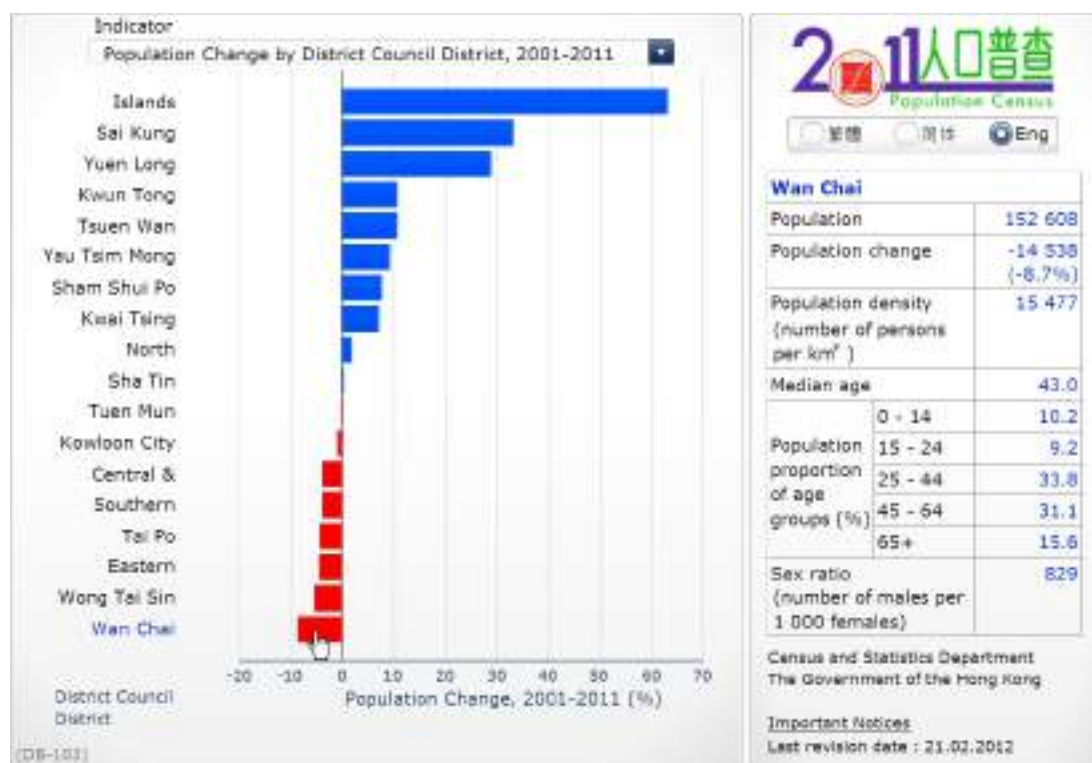
- ∞ Through empirical longitudinal studies, to identify how city users play roles in constructing an inhabitable place, by comparing the public space use system of Wan Chai in different periods.
- ∞ Through empirical cross-sectional studies to reveal how the socio-cultural environment affects the public space use system by comparing Eastern and western living environments.

In sum, this study's contribution lies in its bottom-up investigation of social rhythms in the transforming city. All of the identified aspects are important attributes in revealing how city spaces have been defined and organised in a hierarchical manner in terms of everyday practices. The temporal dimension of place meanings indicates that

understanding people's relationships to their everyday places leads to a better understanding of users' needs and preferences through time and space. Study of these influential everyday places can help uncover the social and political nature of space and thus facilitate the application of a user-centred perspective in urban planning and design processes.

## Appendixes

### Appendix I. Comparison of population by District Council district, 2001-2011



Source: CSD, 2011c

## Appendix II. Pedestrian schemes for Wan Chai



Source: TD, 2013

### Appendix III. A time line of the longitudinal field activities

Years	Months	Dates	Weather	Holidays	Special Occasions & Time-Intervals for Targeted Observations
2011					
	May.	9th WKD Sunny			
		20th WEND Cloudy			
	Jun.	2nd WKD Cloudy			
		12th WEND Shower			
		30th WKD Rainy			
	Jul.	5th WKD Sunny			
		10th WEND Overcast			
		22nd WKD Sunny			
	Aug.	13th WEND Sunny			
		24th WKD Shower			
	Sep.	4th WEND Cloudy			
		7th WKD Cloudy			
		13th HOLD Shower		The day after Mid-autumn festival	
		23rd WKD Cloudy			
	Oct.	1st HOLD Cloudy		National day of the PRC	
		5th HOLD Shower		Chung Yeung festival	
		11th WKD Shower			
		20th WKD Sunny			
		29th WEND Cloudy			
	Nov.	5th WEND Cloudy			
		8th WKD Rainy			
		14th WKD Cloudy			
		26th WEND Cloudy			
	Dec.	2nd WKD Sunny			
		9th WKD Overcast			
		17th WEND Cloudy			
		20th WKD Sunny			
		25th HOLD Sunny		Christmas day	
2012					
	Jan.	1st HOLD Cloudy		New year's day	
		5th WKD Rainy			
		14th WEND Overcast			
		19th WKD Cloudy			
		23rd HOLD Shower		Lunar new year's day	
	Feb.	2nd WKD Cloudy			
		11th WEND Overcast			
		14th WKD Cloudy		Valentine's day	
		25th WEND Rainy			
		27th WKD Shower			
	Mar.	3rd WEND Shower			
		8th WKD Overcast			
		17th WEND Rainy			
		21st WKD Overcast			
		25th WEND Sunny			Demonstrations for the HK chief executive election (8am-12pm)
	Apr.	1st WEND Sunny			
		4th HOLD Cloudy		Ching Ming festival	
		9th HOLD Rainy		Easter day	
		18th WKD Rainy			
		28th HOLD Shower		The birthday of the buddha	
	May.	1st HOLD Shower		Labour day	Labour day protest marches (3pm-5pm)
		12th WEND Cloudy			
		18th WKD Rainy			
		21st WKD Shower			
	Jun.	2nd WEND Cloudy			
		6th WKD Cloudy			
		11th WKD Shower			
		23rd HOLD Rainy		Tuen Ng festival	
		30th WEND Rainy			
	Jul.	1st HOLD Shower		HKSAR establishment day	Protests on the eve of HKSAR establishment day (8pm-10pm) 1st July protest marches (3pm-6pm)
		4th WKD Sunny			
		14th WEND Shower			
		20th WKD Sunny			
		29th WEND Shower			
	Aug.	3rd WKD Shower			
		11th WEND Shower			
		15th WKD Cloudy			
		25th WEND Cloudy			
		27th WKD Cloudy			
	Sep.	7th WKD Shower			Public dissent around the LegCo Complex
		9th WEND Cloudy			
		13th WKD Shower			
		22nd WEND Shower			

2013	Oct.	27th	WKD	Cloudy		
		1st	HOLD	Sunny	National day of the PRC	Pyrotechnics display over Victoria Harbour (7pm-9pm)
	Nov.	9th	WKD	Sunny		
		20th	WEND	Sunny		
		23rd	HOLD	Cloudy	Chung Yeung festival	
	Dec.	3rd	WEND	Sunny		
		9th	WKD	Cloudy		
		14th	WKD	Cloudy		
		24th	WEND	Shower		
		2nd	WEND	Rainy		
2013	Jan.	6th	WKD	Overcast		
		10th	WKD	Sunny		
		22nd	WEND	Cloudy		
		24th	WKD	Sunny	Christmas eve	Christmas symphony of lights along the shore (7pm-9pm)
		30th	WEND	Cloudy		
	Feb.	31st	WKD	Sunny	New year's eve	Pyrotechnics display over Victoria Harbour (9pm-12am)
		1st	HOLD	Cloudy	New year's day	1st January protest marches (3pm-5pm)
		5th	WEND	Overcast		
		11th	WKD	Overcast		
		19th	WEND	Sunny		
2014	Mar.	1st	WKD	Cloudy		Enhanced flag raising ceremony (8am-9am)
		3rd	WEND	Rainy		
		7th	WKD	Cloudy		
		11th	HOLD	Shower	Lunar new year's day	Pyrotechnics display over Victoria Harbour (6pm-9pm)
		16th	WEND	Shower		
	Apr.	23rd	WEND	Cloudy		
		27th	WKD	Cloudy		
		29th	HOLD	Shower	Good friday	(11am-2pm)
		11th	WKD	Rainy		Walk-by observation during rainy period (2pm-4pm)
		30th	WKD	Cloudy		Visit to Blue House <sup>1</sup> and the surrounding environment (3pm-6pm)
2014	May.	30th	WKD	Sunny		(3pm-5pm)
		1st	HOLD	Rainy	HKSAR establishment day	1st July protest marches (2pm-5pm)
		3rd	WKD	Shower		(4pm-6pm)
		20th	WKD	Overcast		Horse racing day (8pm-10pm)
		24th	WEND	Shower		Observation for public spaces (i.e. plaza, park, playground) (3pm-6pm)
	Dec.	25th	HOLD	Cloudy	Christmas day	(10am-1pm)
		31st	WKD	Sunny	New year's eve	Pyrotechnics display over Victoria Harbour (9pm-1am)
	Jan.	3rd	HOLD	Cloudy	The fourth day of Lunar new year	(2pm-6pm)
		12th	WKD	Shower		(5pm-7pm)
		1st	HOLD	Shower	HKSAR establishment day	1st July protest marches (2pm-11pm)
2014	Feb.	15th	WKD	Shower		Book Fair (10am-12pm)
		16th	WKD	Cloudy		Road control on Tim Mei Avenue footbridge towards CGO (10am-11am)
		28th	WKD	Cloudy		Umbrella revolution in Wan Chai (3pm-7pm)
		30th	WEND	Cloudy		Umbrella revolution in Central (4pm-6pm)
		7th	WEND	Cloudy		(2pm-5pm)
	Mar.	12th	WKD	Shower		(5pm-7pm)
		1st	HOLD	Shower	HKSAR establishment day	1st July protest marches (2pm-11pm)
		15th	WKD	Shower		Book Fair (10am-12pm)
		16th	WKD	Cloudy		Road control on Tim Mei Avenue footbridge towards CGO (10am-11am)
		28th	WKD	Cloudy		Umbrella revolution in Wan Chai (3pm-7pm)
2014	Apr.	30th	WEND	Cloudy		Umbrella revolution in Central (4pm-6pm)
		7th	WEND	Cloudy		(2pm-5pm)
		12th	WKD	Shower		(5pm-7pm)
		1st	HOLD	Shower	HKSAR establishment day	1st July protest marches (2pm-11pm)
		15th	WKD	Shower		Book Fair (10am-12pm)
	May.	16th	WKD	Cloudy		Road control on Tim Mei Avenue footbridge towards CGO (10am-11am)
		28th	WKD	Cloudy		Umbrella revolution in Wan Chai (3pm-7pm)
		30th	WEND	Cloudy		Umbrella revolution in Central (4pm-6pm)
		7th	WEND	Cloudy		(2pm-5pm)
		12th	WKD	Shower		(5pm-7pm)

Appendix IV. The scope selected for axial mapping around Wan Chai District





Appendix V. The shaded areas marked along the northern coast show the proposed plan for reclamation after the typhoon in 1874.



Source: HE, 2004, pp. 58-59

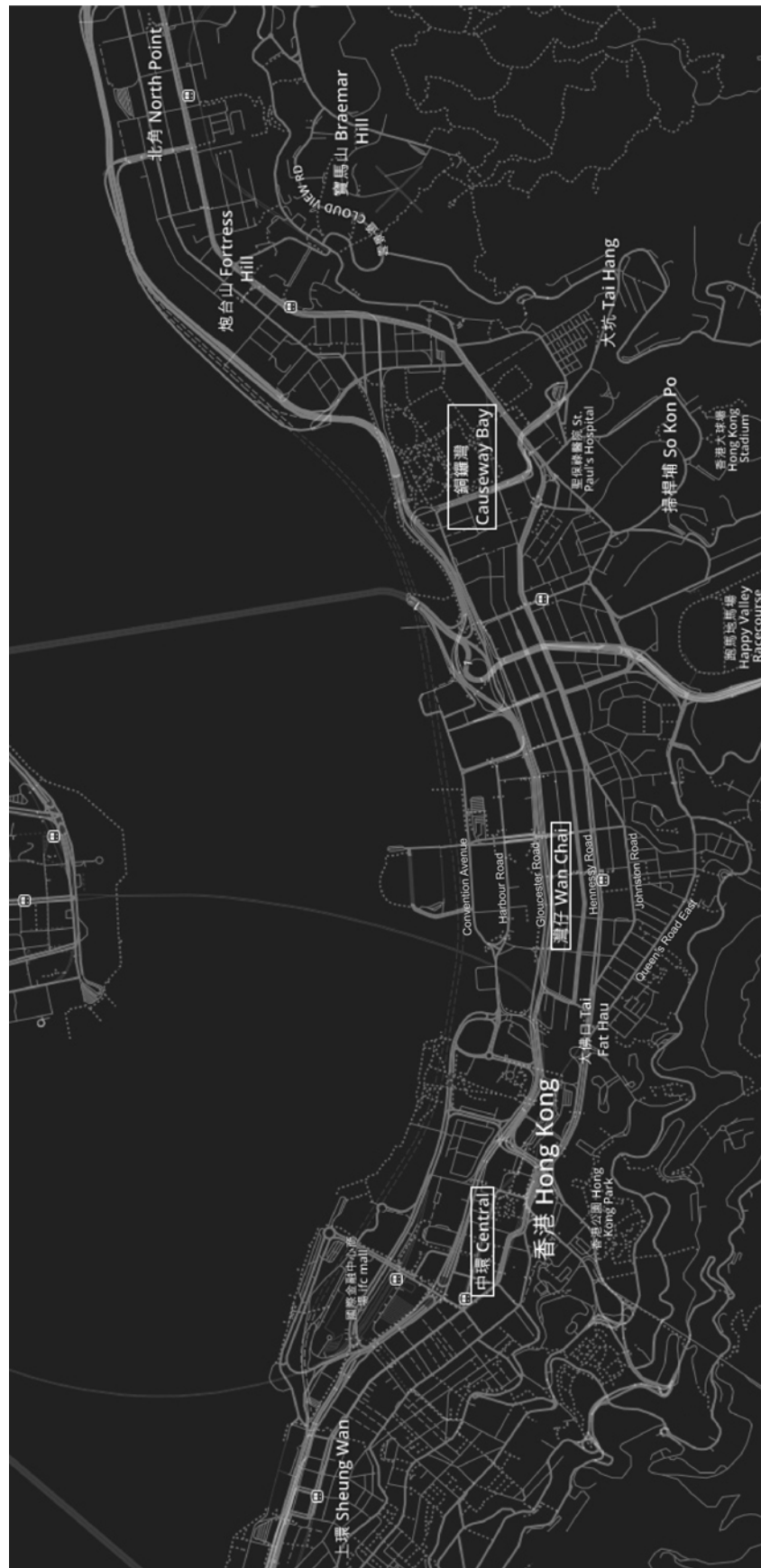


Appendix VI. Classification of land use of Wan Chai in the OZP



Source: PD, 2014

## Appendix VII. Transportation network in Wan Chai



# Appendix VIII. Hierarchy of roads in Hong Kong

Category No.	Category Name	Brief Description
EX	Expressway	Roads designated as Expressways under the Road Traffic (Expressway) Regulations.
UT	Trunk Road (Urban)	Roads connecting the main centers of population. High capacity roads with no frontage access or development, pedestrians segregated, widely spaced grade-separated junctions, and 24 hour stopping restriction.
RT	Trunk Road (Rural)	
PD	Primary Distributor	Roads forming the major network of the urban areas. Roads having high capacity junctions, though may be at-grade, segregated pedestrian facilities wherever possible and frontage access limited if not entirely restricted, and 24 hour stopping restrictions.
DD	District Distributor	Road linking Districts to the Primary Distributor Roads. High capacity at-grade junctions, with peak hour stopping restrictions and parking restrictions throughout the day.
LD	Local Distributor	Roads within Districts linking developments to the District Distributor Roads.
RR	Rural Road	Roads connecting the smaller centers of population or popular recreation areas with major road networks. Frontage access should be limited wherever possible and junction design whilst not necessarily grade separated should be of a high capacity standard.
FR	Feeder Road	Roads connecting villages or more remote settlements to Rural Roads.

Source: TD, 2004

# Appendix IX. Tertiary planning units in Hong Kong Island

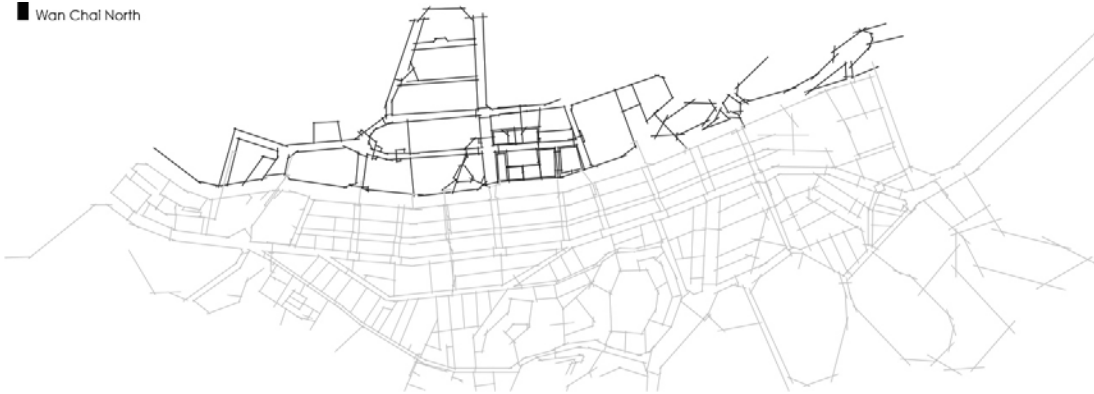


Source: CSD, 2011e



## Appendix X. Selection of urban portions for axial maps of Wan Chai North and South

■ Wan Chai North



■ Wan Chai South



## Appendix XI. Selection of photos captured in Wan Chai

2011	Sept - Wednesday 8:00 - 6:30	Sept - Wednesday 12:00 - 12:30	Sept - Wednesday 3:00 - 3:30	Sept - Wednesday 8:00 - 8:30	Sept - Wednesday 12:00 - 12:30
Temporary Framecode					
Expo Drive					
Expo Drive Control					
Convention Avenue					
Harbour Road					
Gibsonville Road					
Jaffa Road					
Lockhart Road					
Henningson Road					
Johnston Road					
Cross Road					
Queen's Road East					



	Now - weekday				Dec - holiday (Christmas)			
	8:00 - 8:30	12:00 - 12:30	3:00 - 3:30	8:00 - 8:30	12:00 - 12:30	3:00 - 3:30	8:00 - 8:30	12:00 - 12:30
Temporary Roundabout								
Elgar Drive								
Elgar Drive Control								
Conventium Avenue								
Harbour Road								
Claudeville Road								
Julia Road								
Lockhart Road								
Hennissy Road								
Johnston Road								
Cross Road								
Queen's Road East								

2012	Jan - Friday (New Year)				Feb - Wednesday			
	8:00 - 9:30	12:00 - 13:30	11:00 - 12:30	8:00 - 9:30	12:00 - 13:30	11:00 - 12:30	8:00 - 9:30	12:00 - 13:30
Temporary Promenade								
Eliza Drive								
Eliza Drive Central								
Convent Hill Avenue								
Harbour Road								
Claudeville Road								
Jaffa Road								
Lockhart Road								
Hennissy Road								
Johnston Road								
Cross Road								
Queen's Road East								



	Feb - weekday (Valentine's Eve)				Mar - weekend				Mar - weekend (Choi's Birthday Beach)			
	21:00 - 22:30	8:00 - 9:30	12:00 - 13:30	21:00 - 22:30	8:00 - 9:30	12:00 - 13:30	21:00 - 22:30	8:00 - 9:30	12:00 - 13:30	21:00 - 22:30	8:00 - 9:30	12:00 - 13:30
Temporary Promenade												
Esso Drive												
Esso Drive Central												
Cathleen Avenue												
Harbour Road												
Claudia's Road												
Jaffa Road												
Lockhart Road												
Hennsey Road												
Johnston Road												
Cross Road												
Queen's Road East												

	Apr - holiday (Eastering & Evening)				Apr - weekday				May - holiday (Easter Day)			
	21:00 - 22:30	8:00 - 9:30	12:00 - 13:30	21:00 - 22:30	8:00 - 9:30	12:00 - 13:30	21:00 - 22:30	8:00 - 9:30	12:00 - 13:30	21:00 - 22:30	8:00 - 9:30	21:00 - 22:30
Templeway Roundabout												
Elpis Drive												
Elpis Drive Central												
Colinvaillan Avenue												
Harbour Road												
Claudia's Road												
Jaffa Road												
Lockhart Road												
Hennissy Road												
Johnston Road												
Cross Road												
Queen's Road East												



	Jan - Holiday / Dragon Road Festival			Jan - Weekend			Jan - Holiday (HSEAR Entertainment Day)		
	12:00 - 13:30	13:00 - 15:30	15:00 - 17:30	12:00 - 13:30	13:00 - 15:30	15:00 - 17:30	08:00 - 15:30	15:00 - 22:30	
Temporary Roundabout									
Expo Drive									
Expo Drive Central									
Convention Avenue									
Harbour Road									
Claudeville Road									
Jaffa Road									
Lackham Road									
Hennissy Road									
Johnston Road									
Civic Road									
Queen's Road East									
	No access for unauthorised personnel								

	Aug - Weekday 12:00 - 12:30	11:00 - 12:30	Dec - Holiday (Christmas Eve) 11:00 - 12:30	Dec - Weekday (New Year's Eve) 8:00 - 12:30	11:00 - 12:30
Temporary Promenade					
Elgin Drive					
Elgin Drive Central					
Conventium Avenue					
Harbour Road					
Claudeville Road					
Jaffa Road					
Lockhart Road					
Henneloy Road					
Johnston Road					
Cross Road					
Queen's Road East					



2013	8:00 - 9:30	12:00 - 13:30	15:00 - 16:30	18:00 - 19:30	Notes
Temporary Roundabout					The roundabout is a raised, landscaped area with a central island. It is surrounded by a low wall and has a paved surface. The surrounding area is a mix of grass and pavement.
Expo Drive					Expo Drive is a multi-lane road with a median. It has a paved surface and is surrounded by a mix of grass and pavement. The surrounding area is a mix of grass and pavement.
Expo Drive Central					Expo Drive Central is a multi-lane road with a median. It has a paved surface and is surrounded by a mix of grass and pavement. The surrounding area is a mix of grass and pavement.
Convent Avenue					Convent Avenue is a multi-lane road with a median. It has a paved surface and is surrounded by a mix of grass and pavement. The surrounding area is a mix of grass and pavement.
Harbour Road					Harbour Road is a multi-lane road with a median. It has a paved surface and is surrounded by a mix of grass and pavement. The surrounding area is a mix of grass and pavement.
Glencairn Road					Glencairn Road is a multi-lane road with a median. It has a paved surface and is surrounded by a mix of grass and pavement. The surrounding area is a mix of grass and pavement.
Jaffa Road					Jaffa Road is a multi-lane road with a median. It has a paved surface and is surrounded by a mix of grass and pavement. The surrounding area is a mix of grass and pavement.
Lockhart Road					Lockhart Road is a multi-lane road with a median. It has a paved surface and is surrounded by a mix of grass and pavement. The surrounding area is a mix of grass and pavement.
Henniker Road					Henniker Road is a multi-lane road with a median. It has a paved surface and is surrounded by a mix of grass and pavement. The surrounding area is a mix of grass and pavement.
Johnston Road					Johnston Road is a multi-lane road with a median. It has a paved surface and is surrounded by a mix of grass and pavement. The surrounding area is a mix of grass and pavement.
Cross Road					Cross Road is a multi-lane road with a median. It has a paved surface and is surrounded by a mix of grass and pavement. The surrounding area is a mix of grass and pavement.
Queen's Road East					Queen's Road East is a multi-lane road with a median. It has a paved surface and is surrounded by a mix of grass and pavement. The surrounding area is a mix of grass and pavement.

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