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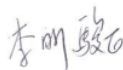
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON
FACULTY OF THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT
BARTLETT SCHOOL OF PLANNING

**Some understandings of privately owned public spaces
(POPS) in the non-Western contexts: A case study of
political uses in New Town Plaza, Hong Kong**

Yan Chun Derek Li
MSc Urban Regeneration

Being a dissertation submitted to the faculty of The Built Environment as part of the requirements for the award of the MSc Urban Regeneration at University College London: I declare that this dissertation is entirely my own work and that ideas, data and images, as well as direct quotations, drawn from elsewhere are identified and referenced.

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Abstract

Privately owned public spaces (POPS) are hybridised forms of places controlled and managed by private owners which allow the occurrence of activities associated with the public domain. These spaces receive sufficient attention in the West, however there is still potential for further conceptualisation in the non-West. This dissertation aims to explore alternative understandings of POPS in the non-West, through looking at incidents of political appropriation in the POPS of New Town Plaza, Hong Kong using a qualitative approach. It is discovered that, although the presence of a powerful regulatory regime demonstrates Western-dominated understandings of POPS such as exclusion and behavioural control, the ways in which users creatively appropriate the spaces reflect instances of publicness, inclusivity and active engagement with space. These challenge the mainstream Western conceptions of POPS. It suggests that alternative understandings of POPS in the non-West are developed more from the interactions between space and users than the physical and managerial aspects of space. With a careful adoption of analytical approach, it further suggests that meaning creation, qualities of the users and social relations are aspects that potentially facilitate the development of more knowledge regarding POPS. Recommendations for future research include expanding the dimension of spatiality, such as how physical and virtual spaces are used to activate POPS.

Keywords: Privately owned public spaces, non-West, political appropriation of space

1. Introduction

Despite the different definitions and forms across contexts, privately owned public spaces (POPS) are commonly known as spaces of which private owners are granted rights to control, that are required to allow the occurrence of activities associated with the public domain (Xing and Siu, 2013). Originated in New York in the 1960s in relation to the rising role of private sector in managing public space, POPS have then proliferated around the globe, contributing to diverse typologies including corporate plazas, parks, footbridges and internal corridors of shopping malls (Bortoli, 2018).

As hybridised forms of space along public/private lines, POPS exhibit a level of complexity; hence they attract academic interests from the fields of geography, urban planning and design (Devereux and Littlefield, 2017). On the one hand, the concept intertwines with multiple perspectives such as space management, modes of governance and politics. On the other, scholars hold diverse, often contradicting, views on the issue. In Anglo-American literature, the well-known comments of POPS are generally critical, where the profit-making mentality of the free market is strongly blamed for the destruction of public space ideals (Weaver, 2014). Recently, a shift towards more nuanced explanations of POPS has been developing. This still-emerging viewpoint has particularly received recognition from theorists outside the West. They tend to argue against the dominant conceptions made and the analytical approaches Western theorists used (Qian, 2013). As such, this research sees the need for developing more alternative understandings of POPS in non-Western contexts.

Having this research gap identified, this study aims to contribute to a greater understanding of POPS in the non-West. In here, the term 'non-West' is not merely seen as a fixed geographical boundary. It also implies the less-explored social and analytical perspectives that deserve more discussion in comparison with the well-documented Western conceptions.

In doing so, this research selects the case study of New Town Plaza (N.T.P.) in Hong Kong, and explores how its POPS are understood during several political protest incidents. It is chosen not only because academic discussions in relation to the political uses in POPS within malls

are seldom documented, but also the researcher is highly aware of these incidents as part of the Hong Kong's 2019 Anti-Extradition Law Amendment Bill (Anti-ELAB) Protest in fight for a more democratic governance. Interestingly, participants have been tactical in using spaces in addition to the conventional protests on public streets, such as appropriating POPS of large malls for political expressions (Hou, 2019). This suggests a great potential for discovering new understandings.

The following research question is addressed: **'What alternative understandings of POPS do the non-Western contexts suggest?'** To answer it, the following research objectives are pursued:

- Identify stakeholders' perceptions of the political uses of POPS from the narratives they construct and practices they employ
- Analyse how these perceptions challenge or fit into the dominant conceptions of POPS in the West
- Suggest and reflect on factors that potentially contribute to alternative understandings of POPS

Chapter 2 shows a review of conceptions of different contexts relevant to the topic. Chapter 3 outlines the methodology adopted to conduct the research. Chapter 4 explains the context of study. Chapter 5 presents the main research findings and analysis, responding to research objectives and question. Chapter 6 draws a conclusion suggesting alternative understandings of POPS in the non-Western contexts.

2. Literature review

Focusing on POPS, this chapter first introduces the global proliferation of POPS, followed by a detailed account of how POPS are framed in literature of the West and non-West. It concludes with a comparison of conceptions between contexts.

2.1 The emergence of POPS

The nature of public space has been changing since the mid-20th century. Literature points to the increasing involvement of the private sector in delivering and managing public spaces, which has traditionally been the responsibility of the public sector. Local authorities are less willing to provide public good, in consideration of their shrinking financial capacity (De Magalhães, 2010), and the efficiency of the market in creating well-maintained spaces (Needham, 2006). As a result, POPS emerge as a form of 'hybridised' public and private space (Kohn, 2004).

New York was referred as the origin of POPS. According to Kayden et al. (2000), a revision of the city's planning legislation in 1961 has successfully incentivised developers to provide, design and maintain POPS in exchange for the permission to construct larger buildings (Schindler, 2018). POPS are commonly found in densely occupied areas, appearing in the forms of corporate plazas, subway access and parks (Bortoli, 2018).

This type of spaces has then flourished globally, including cities in Europe, Asia and South America. While the typology and driving forces of POPS in New York are often followed, POPS in other cities are found with a greater variety of aims and results (Bortoli, 2018). In Hong Kong, the typology of POPS covers internal area of shopping centres (Xing and Siu, 2013). In Taiwan, environmental regeneration serves as a driving factor for the provision of POPS with green design (Lien and Shih, 2013).

2.2 Conceptions of POPS in the West

POPS has attracted substantial comments and critiques from Anglo-American scholars. The following pattern can be observed:

- The dominant comments on POPS remain critical, exhibiting a sense of anxiety around the privatisation of public spaces
- Recent responses begin to challenge the mainstream conception of POPS, suggesting the need to look into the nuanced reality

2.2.1 Dominant conceptions

Traditionally, scholars consider the boundary between public and private spaces as distinctive. Private spaces are associated with concepts of exclusivity, intimacy and individual control, and they symbolise an overall separation from society (Madanipour, 2003). In contrast, truly public spaces are envisaged as highly idealised images for the actualisation of social and political functions (Madden, 2010), where meaningful encounters occur (Sennett, 1992), full accessibility is guaranteed to all citizens (Habermas, 1974) and political expression is respected (Staeheli, 2010).

As POPS are associated with the increasing nature of privatisation, it is not surprising that the widely held narratives on POPS are negative, if not polemic (Devereux and Littlefield, 2017). Theorists such as Kohn (2004) are skeptical of the private motives, arguing that the progressive blurring of public/private boundaries by corporatism has intruded the public space ideal. Others suggest the reduction in the indicator-led measurement of publicness (Varna and Damiano, 2013), and the deprivation of the rich possibilities of meaning-making (Sennett, 1977).

Sorkin (1992:xii) holds an even more pessimistic opinion towards the future of public spaces, that the emergence of POPS causes the 'end of public space' which 'do(es) away with the vital, formal and social mix that gives cities life'. Having become widely accepted among scholars, such rhetoric can further be manifested in three major strands of arguments.

POPS largely influence and dictate users behaviour

From structural and managerial perspectives, theorists concern about the impacts of strong global capitalist and consumerist logics in determining the behaviours and codes of conduct of POPS users. Situated in a broader context of neoliberal urban policy and management

regimes, Qian (2013) argues that POPS tend to fit with the privileged initiatives of capital accumulation and commodity consumption, following the logic of volume and efficiency maximisation (Kalyukin et al., 2015). The outcome is, as Miles (2009:137) argues, that 'the unplanned and appropriated is replaced by the designed and prescribed'. Social interactions become carefully planned, scripted and mediated by commercial interests (Poposki, 2011). Levels of comfort and order are dictated through the creation of spaces of social practice that strategically restrict undesirable activities and behaviours (Mitchell, 1995).

For example, many privately owned outdoor plazas in the West, including Zuccotti Park, are more functional than political or ideological (Mitchell, 1995). These spaces are designed in central business districts to mainly accommodate short-term activities like waiting, resting and eating lunch; and they try to minimise public appropriation and conflict, as suggested by a set of rules clearly outlining what appropriate uses are seen as (Bortoli, 2018). Another example is the POPS within shopping malls, where, on one hand, the logic of consumption has turned active participants into passive viewers in a world of commodity; and on the other, the physical structure and organisation of it control the flow, emotions and artefacts of users (Crawford, 1992).

POPS are exclusionary with heavy control and harsh design

For theorists who are interested in social and power relations, their criticism is about how the excessive use of security and control within POPS could create physical and social exclusion. Scholars such as Crang (1996) and Graham (2010) highlight the issue of over-surveillance through the use of cutting-edge technologies like CCTV cameras and security patrols. They point out that the intention of using these technologies is to better manage disorder and deviancy within POPS, however it creates social sorting, in which the owners of the space can subjectively exclude certain sub-populations based on principles they set (Fussy and Coaffee, 2012). For instance, some Business Improvement Districts that legitimise the use of private security and surveillance are criticised for excluding the homeless and street panhandlers in favour of the middle class (Marquardt and Füller, 2012).

Other writers criticise the harsh physical features within POPS that facilitate social control and separation. Carmona (2010) refers POPS as a type of over-managed space, pointing out that

fences, gates and covers are their predominant features. Crawford (1992) and Davis (1995) term them as 'fortressed environments', because they not only increase private-ness with reduced openness and accessibility, but also reinforce the sense of territory (Shi and Zhou, 2016) and produce geographies of insecurity and fear (Van Melik et al., 2007). This echoes with Weaver's (2014) description of the 'new enclosure' as he sees the use of these features as evidences of poor management and exclusionary design. He further fears that such physical enclosure could produce 'enclosure of the mind', where the public regards exclusionary design and controlled representation as natural and desirable (Mitchell, 1995).

POPS restrict the political appropriation by users

From a political point of view, theorists are particularly concerned with the undermining of the democratic expression freedom within POPS. Mitchell (1995) and Nemeth (2009) raise a strong critique on the planned prioritisation of security over politics and interaction in POPS that inevitably leads to a ban in interactive and discursive politics. Mitchell (2003) uses the expression 'managed speech' to highlight that free speech is increasingly regulated. Similarly, Sorkin (1992) argues that POPS have a certain level of resemblance with theme parks, where opposing voices are not encouraged and political demonstrations are excluded. Bortoli (2018) further expresses fear over the blurry and changeable restrictions of the rules of conduct.

In fact, real world examples have supported their claims. In the case of Horton Plaza shopping centre in San Diego, political protest is silenced with the support from the legal regime (Mitchell, 2003). Protesters are banned from expressing their demands inside the mall, despite the mall's intention to be a major public space in downtown. In the example of the POPS of Zuccotti Park, its private owners have decided to tighten up the park's regulations in the middle of a political movement, in order to facilitate forced removal of protesters and ban their right to appropriate the space (Kohn, 2013; Bortoli, 2018).

2.2.2 Emerging responses

Despite the overwhelming voices of critique over POPS, there is recently a steady shift towards a more careful and pragmatic approach in determining the quality of these spaces in the West (Devereux and Littlefield, 2017). Langstraat and Van Melik (2013) question the way in which the mainstream literature assumes a 'public space ideal' that, in their opinion, does

not exist in practice, as they believe that no public space can fulfil the needs of everybody. To Carmona (2015), the publicness and qualities of POPS are more determined by how people use them than the ownership and management aspects. Nevertheless, these emerging viewpoints have yet to replace the traditional narratives.

2.3 Conceptions of POPS in the non-West

While the conceptions of POPS in the West are well developed, there has been a growing interest of POPS among scholars who work on urban settings outside the Western contexts over the last two decades. There are two reasons for this research scope expansion.

First, scholars have heightened their sensitivities towards the particularities of contexts. Madden (2010) notes that conceptions like 'publicness' are context and scale specific, as they are constantly being remade and 'built into the landscape' (p.187). Adding to the argument, Qian (2013) points out that contexts may not bear similar sets of normative values, highlighting the need for theorists to 'expand the scope of analyses beyond the spaces which they had focused on' (p.32). Second, an under-theorisation of POPS is observed. Qian (2013) and Bortoli (2018) reveal that these contexts have shown a greater richness and flexibility in analytical perspectives that have not been captured in the Anglo-American literature. In view of these, a review of literature on POPS in the non-Western contexts is presented.

The following pattern can be observed:

- Some commentators recognise that POPS in the non-West demonstrate converging trends with their Western counterparts
- The rest hold onto the view that Western conceptions of POPS do not fit the non-Western contexts due to social, cultural and contextual differences

2.3.1 Converging trends with the West

There is a handful of literature demonstrating the validity of the notion 'end of public space' (Sorkin, 1992) in POPS of many non-Western cities. As Tran (2015) explains, the logics of neoliberal governance and global capitalism are not unfamiliar in many Asian countries including Vietnam. The profit-driven nature exerts strong influence on the production of POPS

in Hanoi, including corporate plazas and shopping galleries. These processes 'gear them towards exclusionary spaces that are oriented towards specific use and users (and) produce spaces of order and control' (p.82). For Panjaitan et al. (2020), conceptions of POPS are somehow globally homogenised. He gives examples of South Asian 'total lifestyle megamalls' to demonstrate that these spaces are over-managed, that see features in common with the West such as strong behavioural control and the creation of apolitical environment.

2.3.2 Specificities of the non-West

While acknowledging the similarities of concept between contexts, other theorists emphasise on the 'local interventions and histories' (Robinson, 2006:77) that are pertinent to the production of POPS in the non-West. Some further take a critical stance and challenge the critiques from the West. In the following, two main lines of argument are identified:

Cultural and structural specificity should be taken into account

Echoing with the more recent Western responses, theorists from the non-West stress that cultural and historical factors deserve greater scrutiny. For instance, the Western approach of assuming an 'ideal' public space is often questioned. Drummond (2000) suggests that the boundaries of public/private have never been clear cut in some non-Western contexts, thus such 'ideal' has never been imagined and cannot exist in practice.

More remarkably, commentators from the West are less cautious in recognising the contextual variances of the public/private sectoral relationship. Writing on the Filipino experience, Hogan et al. (2012) demonstrate that private-led initiatives, including POPS provisions, have strategically responded to the reluctance and failure of the public sector in the provision of quality community facilities in Manila since World War II. They argue that well-designed POPS re-create a more vibrant public life by providing new possibilities of social participation and inclusivity. He concludes that the 'dystopianism of much Anglophone academic treatment' (Hogan et al., 2012:62) has undermined the progressive potential of POPS in sites of emergent urbanisms.

Also, levels of flexibilities in managing and regulating POPS vary across contexts. In Taiwan, the capitalist regime governing POPS is more flexible in the governance structure. According

to Hsu (2013), many POPS in Taipei are collaboratively planned and managed with local communities and NGOs to adopt a reflexive and user-oriented approach to urban realities. Rules of conduct are co-determined by groups of actors. This 'transforms the capitalist public space into an integrative social productive one' (p.29), and allows the expression of inclusiveness and future possibilities.

The uniqueness of social relations are often neglected

Scholars in the non-West point out that the research of social and power relations remain scarce despite their determining roles for assessing POPS. In some places, they act as arenas for personal liberalisation and realisation rather than exclusion of the undesirables. In Turkey, the relatively lenient regulations of POPS within shopping malls facilitate more public and democratic appearances than on public streets. Women generally feel safer to participate in social life, given a strong gendered cultural tension in the country (Erkip, 2003). Similarly, POPS in Egypt offer new forms of 'mixity' among the non-adult groups, where they find social interaction safer (Abaza, 2001).

In contrast to the Western discourse of marginalisation, some POPS in the non-West are spaces for lending visibility to marginalised groups. In Hong Kong, a norm is developed where Filipino domestic helpers congregate on Sundays in the POPS of HSBC Headquarters for massive gatherings. Hou (2012) argues that these spaces allow an active engaged citizenry in keeping its public-ness and openness. They serve as a 'focal point of collective action and make such expressions and struggles visible to others' (Hou, 2012:97).

2.3.3 Differences between the West and non-West

Overall speaking, the abundance of literature suggests a noticeable difference between the understandings of POPS in the West and the non-West. Whilst POPS are characterised by generalised critiques of privatisation, exclusion and heavy spatial control over users behaviours, non-Western literature emphasizes on spatial variances and cultural complexity (De Magalhães, 2010). Despite some opposing views, they tend to interpret the quality of these spaces not only along management and ownership lines (Nemeth and Schmidt, 2011), but also from the users' perspective, believing that 'the making of space involves a much broader set of actors' (Hou, 2012:92).

In analytical approach terms, non-Western literature is more likely to reject binary thinking and avoid the presumption of fixed meanings. Spaces are understood as relational rather than stable and fixed (Massey, 2005). For example, Western literature tends to presume distinctive binary oppositions like 'inclusion versus exclusion' into their analysis, seeing them as an 'either-or' relationship; however it 'neglects the ways in which the two penetrate into the construction of each other under particular spatial and temporal dimensions (Qian, 2013). As a result, a greater diversity of understandings of POPS is observed in the non-Western literature.

Therefore, in comparison with the mainstream Western conceptions of POPS, more exploration of their alternative understandings in non-Western contexts is essential. In particular, the analytical tendency of creating rigid conceptions should be reflected upon. The remaining chapters endeavour to fill this gap by exploring new understandings of POPS and reflecting on several binary oppositions.

3. Methodology

This chapter outlines the research design and data gathering processes in response to the research question and objectives.

3.1 Research philosophy

Having reviewed the analytical approach of non-Western literature (see Chapter 2.3.3), this research takes the epistemological perspective of ‘social constructionism’ (Turnbull, 2002) for the understanding of knowledge. As such, space is understood as situating in a complex system of discourses and norms, where meanings constructed are fluid, subjective, diverse and dependent on time-spaces (Cresswell, 1996).

3.2 Research design and method

To explore understandings of POPS, an inductive approach is adopted (see Figure 1), whereby the researcher explores different viewpoints from data collected in a particular setting, discovers patterns and relationships through data analysis, and finally reflects upon the social phenomena identified (Blaikie, 2000).

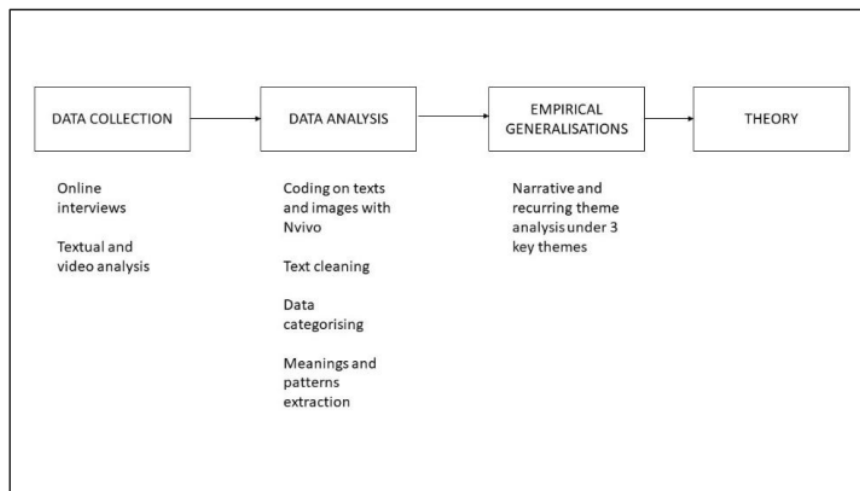


Figure 1: Flowchart of logic under an inductive approach

3.2.1 The social setting

The selection of a social setting is important. It enables the study of stakeholders' perceptions in relation to the contextual conditions (Tornberg, 2011). Through scrutinising a limited number of cases, the richness of data can be maximised (Turnbull, 2002).

It comprises of spatial and temporal dimensions. Spatially, the POPS of N.T.P. in Hong Kong are chosen in this research (see Figure 2). They have the potential to develop new non-Western understandings and verify academic conceptions due to their high spatial representativeness. Temporally, various events of political uses within N.T.P. during the Anti-ELAB Protest in 2019 are explored (see Table 1), as the narratives and actions of various stakeholders could offer interesting insights to the conceptions of POPS. Desktop research is carried out to provide a clear overview of both dimensions.



Figure 2: The spatial dimension – POPS in N.T.P.

Event	Activities	Some Dates of Events
'Sing With You' Political demonstration	Singing anthem, political expression, information gathering on Lennon Wall	15-05-2020 01-05-2020 22-09-2019 14-09-2019 11-09-2019 07-09-2019

Table 1: The temporal dimension – Events of political uses in N.T.P.

3.2.2 The stakeholders and themes

A robust inquiry of different viewpoints requires a clear categorisation of stakeholders and key themes. For stakeholders, this research focuses on 3 key groups (see Figure 3), including (a) political users; (b) non-political users; and (c) regulators of N.T.P.



Figure 3: Groups of stakeholders

For key themes used in this research, they are determined from a reflection of Western literature. Figure 4 derives the thought process. It starts from identifying 3 dominant conceptions from Western literature in Chapter 2.2, about how POPS reduce publicness, dictate users behaviour and cause exclusion. Through challenging these narratives, it arrives at 3 directions to look for potential alternative conceptions. They suggest that we look for instances where POPS demonstrate publicness, allow an active users' engagement with space, and reflect inclusivity.

They are further deemed appropriate to be translated into 3 key themes, which guide through data gathering and discussion processes in the remaining parts. The three themes are 'public/private imagination', 'active/passive users engagement' and 'inclusive/exclusive relation' (see Table 2).

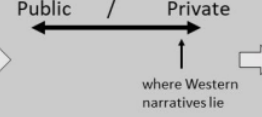
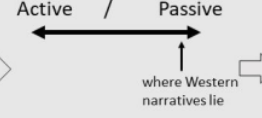

Dominant conceptions from Western literature	Corresponding binary opposites	Directions to look for alternative conceptions
1. POPS reduce publicness, increase privateness and hence lead to the 'end of public space'	Public / Private 	Are there instances that demonstrate publicness in POPS? If yes, what are they?
2. POPS influence and dictate users' behaviour, leading to passive use of space	Active / Passive 	Are there instances that show users can actively determine the way how they use POPS? If yes, what are they?
3. POPS are exclusionary and restrictive	Inclusive / Exclusive 	Are there instances that reflect inclusivity in POPS? If yes, what are they?

Figure 4: The thought process in looking for alternative conceptions

Theme	Aspects of inquiry
Public/private imagination	Stakeholders' perceptions in treating N.T.P. more as a public or private space
Active/passive users engagement	Stakeholders' perceptions in seeing the extent to which N.T.P. allows an active users' engagement of spaces
Inclusive/exclusive relation	Stakeholders' perceptions in treating N.T.P. more as an inclusive or exclusive space

Table 2: Three key themes

3.2.3 Data gathering

In line with most social constructionist research, a qualitative approach to research strategy is adopted. It is because the research aim is to dip into the complexity and dynamicity of phenomenon instead of looking for casual relationships (Minichiello, 1990).

A combination of primary and secondary data is collected using two data gathering methods. The primary data gathering method is 'online interviews with stakeholders'. It collects their first-hand narratives regarding the roles of N.T.P. and their experiences, meanings and comments associated with the case. The secondary data gathering method is 'textual and video analysis'. It gathers comments stakeholders made in written sources, and practices they employed as seen in image and video sources. Involving both discursive and non-discursive data, they respond to the first research objective.

Primary data collection – ‘Online interview’

Purposive sampling is used to find interviewees due to the relatively limited number of available members. A total of 35 interview invitations are sent out through email, among which 29 have agreed to participate, comprising of 6 verbal interviews (using video communication tools like Skype), and 23 textual interviews (through email communication). Each verbal interview lasts for at least 45 minutes.

Interviewees come from various backgrounds, ranging from political participants, shoppers, research activists to scholars who first-handedly observed the case. A key limitation, however, is the lack of direct accounts from the group of regulators of N.T.P., given the difficulty of contacting them during the coronavirus crisis. This may lead to a reduction in research validity, as the interpretation of their narratives is largely dependent on secondary sources (Yin, 2003).

To overcome this, primary data is used to triangulate and illustrate the analysis of secondary data. For example, the researcher shows the interviewees particular quotes from the regulators of N.T.P. during the interview, and invites them to give comments so as to verify the researcher’s own interpretation. Also, past interviews conducted by other researchers and online video interviews are reviewed to further extract narratives from this group.

For interview design, interviews conducted are semi-structured (appendix 1). Following Dunn (2005), interviewees are asked about their viewpoints of general issues such as the 3 key themes, following by more personal and specific experiences based on their positions. Once the interview finishes, the content of conversation is immediately transferred into a word-processing software.

Secondary data collection – ‘Textual and video analysis’

As outlined in Table 3, this dissertation collects an abundance of secondary sources relevant to the case, using web search engines like Google. For written sources, a close reading of the excerpts of text in both Chinese and English languages is conducted, and the relevant quotes are selected. For image and video sources, the researcher takes notes of the interpretation

he makes at the moment of reviewing, as well as listing out in textual form the practices different stakeholders employ. These texts are recorded in a word-tabling software.

Written sources	Image and video sources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online commentaries/blogs • Local online forums e.g. LiHKG • Posts or tweets on social media • Policy documents • Administrative documents of Shatin District Council • Official statements of N.T.P.'s management services provider • Articles from local media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clips of past interviews found on local media websites • Saved videos that were on live streaming • Video documentaries • Signs and images in N.T.P.

Table 3: Secondary data – content for analysis

3.2.4 Data analysis

Following Turnbull (2002), a social constructionist-led data analysis includes three key steps – the coding of data, the extraction of meanings and the presentation of findings.

Data coding and categorising

With a rich base of raw qualitative data, data coding is essential in breaking down chunks of text, selecting relevant information and facilitating consistent categorisation of meanings (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). This research first classifies data based on stakeholders, then categorises them according to key themes.

All data in the forms of narratives and interpreted text are classified according to the corresponding stakeholder group (see Figure 5). This is to keep a full sheet of record of stakeholders' perceptions.

Stakeholder A Political users	Stakeholder B Non-political users	Stakeholder C Regulators
...
...
...
...
(Narratives)	(Narratives)	(Narratives)
...
...
...
...

Figure 5: Template sheet of narratives categorised by stakeholders

Then, key narratives and ideas from the sheet are selected and coded, with assistance of NVivo software. A close reading of it facilitates the search of the repeatedly appeared actions, opinions, descriptions, or feelings of stakeholders (Lewins et al., 2005). These ideas are then fit into another sheet where categorisation is based on key themes (see Figure 6). This paints a clearer picture for the next step, as it enables the researcher in understanding what concepts or issues stakeholders concern the most about.

Theme A Public/private imaginations	Theme B Active/passive users' engagement	Theme C Inclusive/exclusive relations
...
(Narratives by Stakeholder A)	(Narratives by Stakeholder A)	(Narratives by Stakeholder A)
...
(Narratives by Stakeholder B)	(Narratives by Stakeholder B)	(Narratives by Stakeholder B)
...
(Narratives by Stakeholder C)	(Narratives by Stakeholder C)	(Narratives by Stakeholder C)
...
...
...

Figure 6: Template sheet of narratives categorised by key themes

Meanings and patterns extraction

Moving on, it is necessary that we ‘extract the narratives and conceptual categories used by stakeholders to make sense of the manifold processes that they are experiencing’ (Anzoise et al., 2020:659). With the data coding sheets (appendix 3), patterns of how stakeholders frame their understandings of the case could be distilled, thus analysis can be made in the following ways (see Figure 7):

- Discuss the recurring narratives and ideas under each theme
- Explore how the perceptions of stakeholders share commonalities and differences
- Discover the connections between key themes

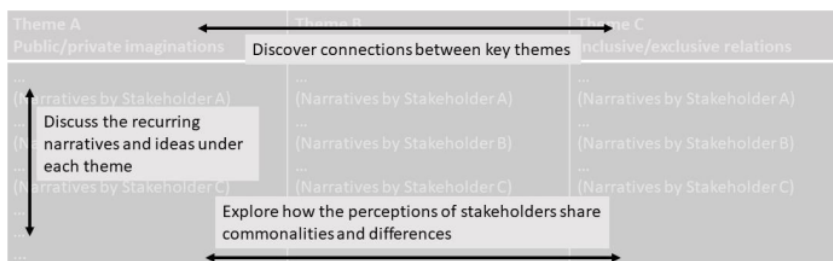


Figure 7: Ways of analysis prior to data coding

These ways of analysis help to answer the second and third research objectives. They provide insights of how diverse understandings of the case emerge together, unpack possible alternative understandings of POPS, and urge us to reflect on factors that generate different conceptions, such as contextual conditions.

Presentation of findings

The findings are presented in the forms of stakeholders' narratives and textual interpretation. Structured in relation to 3 key themes, patterns of stakeholders' perceptions are discussed. Although the research aim is not to build rigid and generalising theory about POPS given the relatively narrow scope of stakeholders perspectives, it hopes to shed light on the less discovered perspectives of POPS in under-researched contexts, and act as a reference for future researchers to explore other settings (Lynham, 2002).

3.3 Research ethics

The UCL risk assessment form (appendix 4) is filled to demonstrate that ethical issues and their corresponding mitigation measures are considered. This research involves interviewing human participants, so consents are sought prior to the process of interviews (appendix 3). They are told that their involvements are fully voluntary, and their identities are strictly kept confidential. Recordings of the conversation of interviews are not made upon request.

4. The Context of Study

This chapter explains the characteristics of POPS in Hong Kong, and justifies the selection of the case study.

4.1 Background of POPS in Hong Kong

Hong Kong is an interesting non-Western example that 'reflects a range of diverse borrowings as well as local interventions and histories' (Robinson, 2006:77). Resembling the development logics in New York (Bortoli, 2018), POPS were first introduced to Hong Kong in the 1980s as a type of space that is publicly useable yet located within private property (Luk, 2009). Seeing their emergence, the territory formulated the policy of Public Open Space in Private Development in 2008 to better define POPS and ensure that community needs are met (Development Bureau, 2008). Comprising malls, office plazas and residential podiums, POPS have now become widely distributed, occupying over 270,221 square metres of land (Ho, 2010).

As an 'island of entrepreneurialism' (Bruyins and Nel, 2020:3), Hong Kong demonstrates a well-established capitalist logic in the production of spaces. The rise of real estate industry over the past decades has facilitated the production of POPS in replacement of public communal facilities. Some scholars share similar views with Western theorists about the 'end of public space' (Sorkin, 1992). Cuthbert (1995) highlights POPS' close-to-ubiquitous surveillance. Ho (2010) laments the harsh architectural design in excluding the undesirables who do not conform to the role of profitable consumer. In an interview, a professor in HKU's Department of Architecture further argues that POPS within shopping malls offer no political potential (Vjmedia, 2015).

Nevertheless, local POPS have their cultural and structural specificities. Due to the exceptionally dense conditions, they have a greater embeddedness in the community, forming an inseparable part of urban life (Xing and Siu, 2013). For instance, many serve as major connectors between neighbourhoods and transportation hubs which over 90% of the population uses (Transport Department, 2017). Because of this, some are required to be fully open to facilitate late night pedestrian movements (DeWolf, 2020).

Lam and Tacecchia (2014) also argue, the once apolitical, functional and programmatic POPS are showing signs of politicisation. Using examples such as the dock workers union protest happened on POPS outside a commercial high-rise in 2013, they explain from a user's perspective that the potential for the political appropriation of POPS may be underestimated.

4.2 Case study – New Town Plaza

As introduced in Chapter 3.2.1, a series of political incidents within N.T.P. are the subject of investigation. The choice is justified with 2 main reasons.

Firstly, N.T.P. has great spatial values for investigating the nature of POPS. Owned by developer SHK Properties, N.T.P. is a 9-storey consumer-oriented shopping mall strategically located at Shatin new town with one of the highest pedestrian flows (see Figure 8 & 9). Many private spaces within N.T.P. are required legally to serve as 'public facilities', including a 24-hour accessible public corridor located between 1st-3rd storey that is overseen by an atrium, and 4 footbridges on 3rd-4th storey connecting Shatin railway station with major residential buildings (Chu, 2016) (see Figure 10). However, there are often criticisms pointing towards the developer's attempts to 'dilute' or hide the publicness of these spaces (HKPSI, 2016). This makes the public/private boundary blurrier and more controversial (Bruyns and Del, 2020).

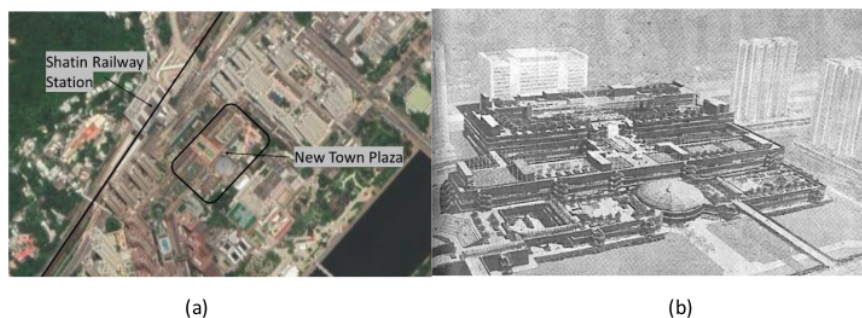


Figure 8: N.T.P.'s (a) spatial location and (b) structure. Source: Chu (2016) Edited by author



Figure 9: N.T.P.'s (a) design and (b) interior of POPS. Source: Chu (2016)

沙田區議會 (Shatin District Council)	新城市廣場(第一期) 沙田正街 18 號 (New Town Plaza)	(a) 通道範圍 (Corridor)	(a) (Located on first to third floor, can be accessed from Shatin railway station ...)		
		(b) 行人天橋 (Footbridge)	(b) (Four footbridges on third and fourth floor, can be accessed from Shatin railway station ...)	位於政府土地。	
		(c) 行人天橋接駁點 (Footbridge joints)	(c) (Three footbridge joints, can be accessed from New Town Plaza...)		
		(d) 公眾停車場 (Public car park)	(d) 位(On the basement floor)正街前往。	(d) 使用此停車場需繳付由營運商釐定的停車費。	
		(e) 綠化天台 (Green rooftop)	(e) (On third, fifth, seventh, and ninth floor)	(e) 每天上午 7 時至晚上 10 時開放。	
		(f) 康樂設施 (Recreational facilities)	(f) (On basement L/U floor, third and fifth floor)	(f) 部分康樂設施現已向公眾開放，餘下部分將於修復工程完成後重新向公眾開放。使用此等康樂設施可能需繳付由營運商釐定的費用。 (截至上標日期為止，此發展項目仍是單一業權。)	沙田地政處 2158 4700

Figure 10: POPS provision requirement in N.T.P. (Translated) Source: LandsD (2018)

Secondly, N.T.P. has great potential for developing alternative understandings of POPS. In 2019, N.T.P. has become one of the most politicised spaces locally due to the occurrence of Anti-ELAB Protest. On several occasions, political activists appropriated the public corridor and atrium of N.T.P. for mass political demonstrations called 'Sing With You' (DeWolf, 2020) (see Figure 11). As suggested in Hou (2019) that the case overturns many accepted features and meanings of POPS, it is worth exploring, from multiple perspectives, the extent to which the narratives and practices of these public events challenge the traditional functions and the 'politically restrictive' narrative early writers suggested.



Figure 11: A 'Sing With You' political demonstration Source: SCMP (2019)

5. Data analysis and Discussion

In the first three sections of this chapter, each led by a key theme proposed in Chapter 3.2.2, it presents the case study findings of the patterns of stakeholders' perceptions, and analyses them against literature and theory from the West and the non-West. In the fourth section, factors enabling the development of alternative understandings of POPS in the non-West are reflected on, which achieves the overall research aim.

5.1 Stakeholders' Perceptions and the Relation with Theory

Aiming to answer the first two research objectives, this section presents patterns of stakeholders' views and recurring themes of the case study based on three main inquiries:

- The question of whether this case demonstrates more 'public' or 'private' qualities of space – in response to Theme 1 Public/Private Imagination (Chapter 5.1.1)
- The extent to which this case allows an 'active' users' engagement with space – in response to Theme 2 Active/Passive Users' Engagement (Chapter 5.1.2)
- The question of whether this case demonstrates more 'inclusive' or 'exclusive' features – in response to Theme 3 Inclusive/Exclusive Relation (Chapter 5.1.3)

In each sub-chapter, an analysis of how these perceptions and themes fit in or challenge the academic theory from the West is followed. Towards the end, understandings emerged from the three themes are discussed.

5.1.1 Theme 1 – Public/Private Imagination

This research argues that the understandings of this theme among stakeholders are diverse, in which very little consensus could be reached. However, members of stakeholders tend to share two key sets of narratives when making justifications of their viewpoints.

First, the idea of '**social interaction**' stands out as the supporting arguments stakeholders used. A majority of political users see them as criteria in demonstrating a high level of N.T.P.'s publicness, due to the realisation of unplanned interactions in mass gatherings that happened in N.T.P.:

'I feel public, somehow more public than outside ... we as protesters gathered at the glass curved panels on upper floors overseeing the atrium. In the middle of protest a toddler at the atrium who was learning to walk caught our attention. He walked a few steps then suddenly tripped over, we shouted 'ai-yah' (means sympathy in Cantonese) in unison. After that he went back to his mother for comfort, we cheered for him and also laughed at our silly interactions.'" (Interviewee #18)

Demonstrated as a platform for mutual interactions between strangers (Watson, 2006), N.T.P. also receives praise from other political users who suggest ideas like the existence of third space with 'networked interaction' (Soja, 1996), and the occurrence of meaningful contacts (Valentine, 2008) through 'conversations between strangers that build mutual understanding'. However, using the same set of narratives, some non-political users demonstrate opposing views. One interviewee argues for the 'private' quality of space due to the political users' attempts to appropriate it:

"In this already quite private space, protesters claim and occupy it with personal interest, socially interacting among themselves, this means they makes more private, doubling the private.'" (Interviewee #3)

Second, it brings to my attention another recurring yet contested narrative – the level of '**discursive environment**' that N.T.P. offers. Some political and non-political users consider N.T.P. as spaces where different forms of political expression freedom occur, justifying N.T.P.'s 'public' qualities:

"An additional role of N.T.P. is that it has become a point of political gathering and information exchange, if you like you can express your political views on Lennon Walls, the whole setting is like the modern version of the ancient public forums.'" (Interviewee #4)

"People gathered in groups, very informally, and I overheard them discussing a lot of ideas, like methods to make the government apologise, possibilities to make this place

more belonged to us, the qualities of good citizens in the future, and how to involve people with different political stances.” (Interviewee #5)

Secondary sources further verify these discourses. A series of figures display the various possible forms of political expression participants initiated (see Figure 12). It is also reported that district councilor discusses with groups of citizens about civic and political issues (Inmedia, 2020b), demonstrating the validity of Interviewee #19’s claims. These findings show not only the possibilities of diverse political expressions in POPS but also the ability for citizens to exercise imaginations and reflections of how spaces should be used, through a bottom-up initiated public participation, which the city has been accused of lacking (Xue and Manuel, 2001).

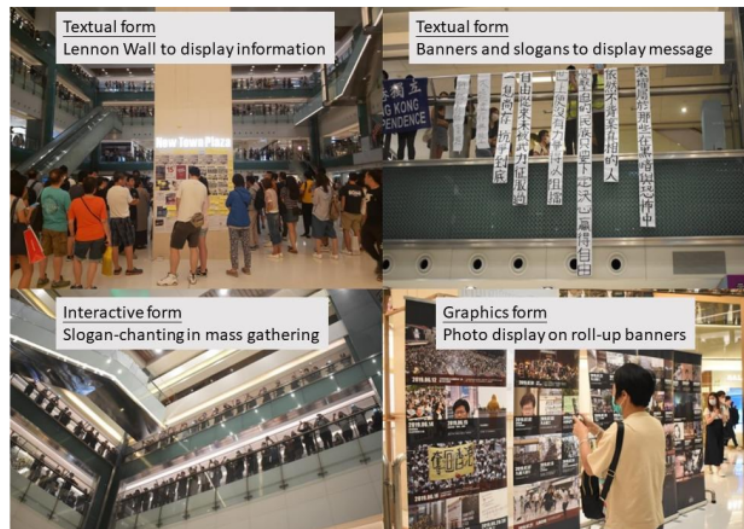


Figure 12: Different forms of political expression initiated Source: Inmedia (2020a)

Compiled by author

However, some political users are not as optimistic, pointing out that such publicness has diminished under the strict follow-up measures the regulators of N.T.P. imposed. In fact, these regulators hold a completely different view. They see a minimal need for N.T.P. to enable political discursiveness, which also explains why they emphasize the ‘private’ element of the mall, despite its legal status of POPS in some parts. On a formal notice issued right after

incidents of protests, Kai Shing Limited, the management service provider of N.T.P., clearly states that:

“New Town Plaza is private property...Members of the public are not permitted to conduct any unauthorised activities...including the use of any instruments or audio/visual equipment, (and) the distribution of any pamphlets and the posting of any posters or stickers” (Quoted from Figure 13)

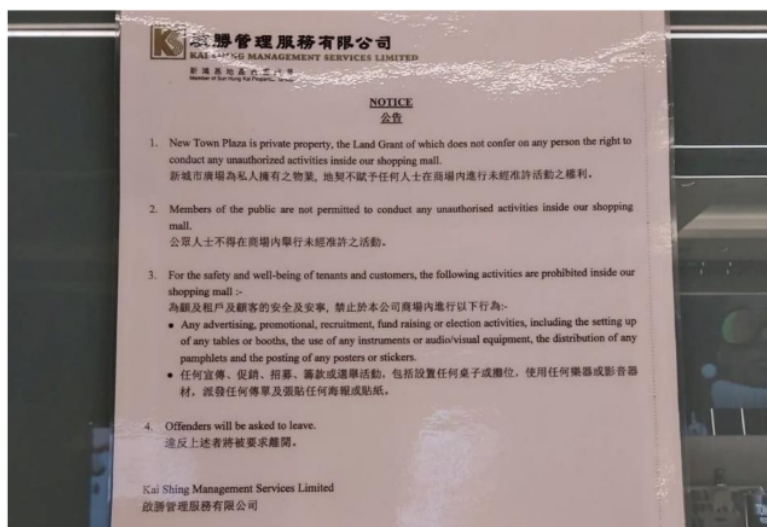


Figure 13: Formal notice issued by Kai Shing Limited

Given that the ‘unauthorised activities’ mentioned are all directly referred to the forms of practices political users have employed, it can be interpreted as that the regulator purposefully dilutes the publicness of POPS of N.T.P. through clarifying or even changing rules of conduct, in order to keep political demonstrations out and manage political speech (Mitchell, 1995). It seems to have confirmed Bortoli’s (2018) fear of how democratic expressions could be silenced through a change in regulations by the private owner of POPS.

Despite the fact that some case study findings echo with the mainstream traditional Western conceptions of POPS, three lines of argument below demonstrate the possibilities of challenging them. First, although N.T.P. verifies Kohn’s (2004) understanding that most POPS

are subjected to progressive blurring of its public/private nature, this research argues that such blurring is not always as bad or destructive as how it is commonly portrayed. Users in N.T.P. have demonstrated that this blurriness can actually be an opportunity to facilitate an unexpected increase in publicness, which lasts until the moment when regulators impose the ban of public political gatherings, or the filling of loophole as Bortoli (2018) argues.

Second, in contrast with the Western narratives of how social interactions are planned and scripted in POPS (Poposki, 2011), this case study portrays a different picture, in which the various forms of social interactions that take place in N.T.P. are not entirely initiated by consumer-oriented activities under strong capitalist logics. This is particularly valid for the group of political users, as their intentions of using N.T.P. and their types of interaction are politically-led. Also given that this protest is a leaderless movement (HKFP, 2019), interactions are far from being planned.

Third, it invites us to rethink Weaver's (2014) notion of the 'enclosure of mind', where he suggests that the proliferation of POPS increasingly naturalises and necessitates the 'evilness' of privatisation and the construction of an uncritical public in the UK. Resembling the UK, Hong Kong has huge quantities of POPS, however to a small extent does this case reflect the notion of 'uncritical public'. Many instances can be seen where discursive space is formed and diverse political expressions are made. In fact, by experiencing the 'evilness' of the regulatory regime of N.T.P. such as their attempts to dilute the publicness of space, some political users have further developed reflexivity and started to realise how POPS are limiting their imaginations over more 'public' uses of spaces.

5.1.2 Theme 2 – Active/Passive Users' Engagement

Having analysed two commonly shared narratives, it argues that stakeholders reach a general agreement on how N.T.P. only allows a passive users' engagement with space, but some political users hold a different viewpoint.

All groups of stakeholders use the narrative of 'control' at some point of their justifications for N.T.P.'s strong role in exerting restrictions over users. Many political users highlight their disappointment over heavy behavioural and spatial control:

“Unlike on public streets, we have to exercise self-restraint in terms of the aggressiveness of actions we can take in N.T.P., as regulators will collaborate with public authorities and use the widely distributed CCTV to control us and target at us if our actions are seen destructive or even just undesirable. They have installed some more CCTVs recently” (Interviewee #13)

“We want to take back control of space, but in reality we are confined by it, it is too small for gathering, and we don’t even get to control the access.” (Interviewee #9)

This viewpoint is highly recognised by some non-political users as behavioural control is also strongly felt by them:

“Especially after first few protests, I feel a great sense of control in N.T.P. even in normal days – from the eyes of private securities. You could spot them in the main walkways, standing in front of the enclosed areas and judging on how people behave, probably they are preventing any spontaneous protest actions from happening.” (Interviewee #10)

A research activist, whom I interviewed, explains that this sense of being controlled is partly attributed to the strong level of ‘social conformity’ (McLeod, 2016). He contends that, Hong Kong citizens are particularly aware of the socially constructed set of expected behaviours once they are in semi-public spaces, where they get used to having behavioural management and culturally accepted courtesy. This echoes with another interviewee who expresses that ‘it is awkward that we shout in POPS or malls, but we feel less pressurized to do so on public streets’.

Regulators of N.T.P. further make use of this mentality to pursue the line of argument that, users, as ‘passive consumers’ (Crawford, 1992), can only enjoy the space under the permission of the regulators (Weaver, 2014). As a result, they consider themselves acquiring a full right to take control over movement and activities of the users. This viewpoint is reflected in Apple Daily (2019) from an interview with a private developer CEO:

“I am certain that the owners (of N.T.P.) see themselves having the right to decide the closing times of mall ... they have the right to control the use of ‘lighting, water, gas and electricity’, or adjust them in their preferred way. Tenants (and users) do not have the bargaining power.”

However, there are always two sides of a coin. Some users view the issue in a more positive light, suggesting the narrative of ‘**visibility creation**’ as successful tactics political users employed for a more active engagement with space:

“Space is constrained, not just for the mall but Hong Kong as a whole, but protesters smartly make use of the design of space to gain visibility. They realise that standing around the atrium at different level allows them to see each other and are very noticeable to passers-by. Their actions successfully attract passers-by to join them.” (Interviewee #2)

“Some protesters act unexpectedly which makes them stand out, others intentionally ignore regulations. We want to gain visibility from people, or catch attention from the media so as to pressurise the capitalists (private developers of N.T.P.) in listening to our demands.” (Interviewee #18)

It shows that despite heavy behavioural control and spatial restrictions, an ‘active engaged citizenry’ (Hou, 2012) is developed where users are able to break through the limitations and determine how they want to use POPS in creative and unintended ways (Hou, 2019).

The theme-related findings suggest both resemblances and differences with the mainstream traditional Western narratives of POPS. For resemblances, the widely narrated idea of ‘control’ in this case hugely responds to the Anglo-American critique about how corporatism dictates user’s preferences and behaviours in POPS. For example, the justification N.T.P.’s owner uses for its right to take direct control over users is a flawless illustration of Mitchell’s (1995) claim about regulator’s powerful influences over users’ comfort and order, as well as Weaver’s (2014) notion of the ‘enclosure of behaviour’. An increase use of CCTV cameras in N.T.P. in creating a deterrent effect on protesters also demonstrates Fussly and Coaffee’s (2012)

argument about the exclusion of an undesired social group for managing the subjectively defined 'disorder' and 'deviancy'.

Nevertheless, the observation about how POPS turn active participants into passive viewers (Crawford, 1992) is insignificant. Even though N.T.P. purposefully creates a flourishing commercial culture and incorporates 'architectural design in the attempt to draw in more shoppers' (Chu, 2016:86), the logics of consumption and the physical organisations are not evident in controlling users' flow and emotions. For political protesters, they demonstrate their abilities to challenge this logic of commodification by causing alterations to the everyday consumption activities, as well as appropriating spaces that can seek attention and promote their ideologies. In fact, this further stops the non-political users from being passive consumers, because under these circumstances, even those who are enjoying the romanticised theme park settings of N.T.P. (Sorkin, 1992) are inevitably put in a politicised and discursive environment.

5.1.3 Theme 3 – Inclusive/Exclusive Relation

The findings show that stakeholders' understandings of this theme remain varied, however some groups are able to make a compromise on certain viewpoints, sharing two key sets of narratives for their justifications.

A recurring idea which stakeholders commonly rely upon to justify their viewpoints is the degree of '**insecurity and fear**'. A handful of political users discuss their strong senses of insecurity and exclusion induced by the regulator's hostile attitudes towards them:

"It is lacking inclusivity, or even could be getting more insecure ... the landlord is a factor constraining, they do not want us to stay ... I think it occurs an issue of unequal right to using these spaces among users, we are particularly targeted, and they create more limitations for us in using spaces." (Interviewee #14)

"Inside (POPS of N.T.P.) there should be no fearful enforcement, no limitations of accessing and no judgement and questioning based on what I wear and bring. I don't think it is the case anymore." (Interviewee #20)

Many non-political users share similar feelings of insecurity and exclusion, however the causes of their feelings vary. While one interviewee directs the blame towards the regulators of N.T.P.:

“I could be put in a more insecure situation when enforcement officers and police intervene, because they are violent. Staying in the same venue and having similar outfit as protesters, anyone could be targeted.” (Interviewee #11)

The other interviewee associates his feelings with broader groups of stakeholders. Not only is the interviewee worried about the potential confrontations between regulators and protesters but also how aggressive protesters intentionally stop him from shopping or block pedestrian movements.

Although this research first-hand discursive data from regulators of N.T.P. regarding this theme is not obtained, non-discursive data suggest that this group of stakeholder attempts to reinforce the notion of fear with exclusionary physical design in N.T.P.'s POPS. As shown in Figure 14, multiple images from social media channels, such as Facebook, display that barricades and wooden frames are used to surround and cordon off areas that could repeatedly be appropriated politically. Balustrades are installed at glass curved panels that directly face the atrium, so as to prevent users from staying close for mass gatherings. New CCTV cameras are set up to strengthen the effect of surveillance. These attempts of ‘target hardening’ (Cozens and Love, 2015) and ‘technologisation of space’ (Koskela, 2000) produce an affective atmosphere of fear and anxiety, further establishing a stricter code of conduct for users (Keighren, 2015).



Figure 14: Landscapes of fear. Compiled by author

Another recurring idea stakeholders use is the notion of **'welcoming and respect'**. For many users, in spite of the harsh design and unfriendly management regime they have experienced, they base their justifications on the more subtle relations between social groups, where they experience a high level of mutual respect and inclusivity. This is reflected by a quote from an interviewee:

"I feel that these events are quite welcoming, under safe circumstances I can see elderly and children joining, also many families find it more comfortable, accessible and flexible."
 (Interviewee #5)

This largely echoes with the viewpoint of a research activist interviewee. Although he admits that a certain level of exclusivity is created, he argues that this case demonstrates outstanding abilities of 'co-presence' (Valentine, 2008), in which political and non-political users increasingly learn to co-exist and manage conflicts:

“Comparing with 2014 (The Umbrella Movement of Hong Kong) I think that there is much more respect and understanding developed in the 2019 Protest, that came out from the process of time and learning ... people learn to accept others and organise protests the least disruptive as possible ... while a broad social consensus is increasingly seen where people respect more aggressive actions.” (Interviewee #2)

However, some non-political users are skeptical of the qualities Interviewee #2 mentioned. N.T.P. in this case offers unwelcoming experiences for them. While they also acknowledge that N.T.P. could be spaces where inclusivity develops, such inclusion is not in favour to them. Holding this view, a scholar whom I interviewed is disappointed for the lack of respect between different identities:

“Not to mention those who rely on N.T.P. to make a living like salespersons and shopkeepers, I, as a person who comes from China and speaks *Putonghua* (Mandarin), feel excluded too. Although I am sympathetic of the movements going on, and I understand that it encourages more participation among people, I do not reckon that the protesters would admit my existence. I do not feel a good civic spirit that respects differences and otherness.” (Interviewee #1)

Among the findings in relation to this theme, the recurring theme of ‘fear’ and the visible harsh designs of N.T.P. directly respond to the notion of ‘geographies of fear’ (Van Melik et al., 2007) and show a strong resemblance with the Western portrayal of ‘fortressed environments’ (Davis, 1995). In fact, the architectural infrastructure regulators of N.T.P. use to prohibit the political appropriation of spaces are introduced in Carmona’s (2010) article as some of the common features of over-managed POPS. It matches with Nemeth’s (2009) description of ‘purposely exclusionary spaces’. Moreover, the regulator’s move to exclude political users reflects the notion of ‘social sorting’ (Fussy and Coaffee, 2012), where these users are seen as ‘undesirables’, hence the removal of them is in favour of the more desirable and obedient consumers.

Despite such exclusive physical setting, some understandings from stakeholders still suggest challenges towards the traditional Western narratives of POPS. As reflected in this case, the

social relations leading to the formation of different perceptions can be very subtle and case-specific. In addition to those widely documented in Anglo-American literature that are based on social class and marginality (see Marquardt and Füller, 2012), this case reveals that different cultural acceptances and understandings based on identities, languages and geopolitics can act as key factors in determining the inclusivity and exclusivity of spaces.

5.1.4 Discussion

In terms of the overall stakeholders' perceptions (first research objective), it is argued that the viewpoints between regulators and different groups of users remain diverse, however the following observations are made.

Stakeholders reach a compromise on certain conceptions, such as the idea of 'control' under the theme of 'active/passive users' engagement' and the idea of 'insecurity and fear' under the theme of 'inclusive/exclusive relation'. However, there is still a huge disparity of perceptions between political users (or non-political users) and regulators of N.T.P. As demonstrated, opposing viewpoints can be observed between groups of stakeholders in all the themes. It is particularly significant for the narrative of 'discursive environment' under 'public/private imagination', which is used by both sides to justify an opposing view.

In terms of the second research objective, this research reflects various angles in which stakeholders' perceptions fit in or challenge existing academic theory (see Table 4), which further hints the possibility of developing alternative understandings. Several understandings stakeholders reach an agreement on are widely rehearsed in Anglo-American literature, for example the passiveness of space engagement due to heavy social control (see Chapter 5.1.2), and the ideas of insecurity and fear induced by exclusionary environment (see Chapter 5.1.3). On the one hand, regulators of N.T.P. are particular in favour of these understandings, which demonstrates converging trends of how neoliberal-led regulatory regimes restrict political uses in POPS between the non-West and the West (Mitchell, 2003; Miles, 2009).

Key perceptions that fit in mainstream Western narratives	Key perceptions that challenge mainstream Western narratives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Blurring of public/private boundary ● Behavioural control ● Exclusion of undesirable groups ● Exclusionary design 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Unscripted social interactions ● ‘Publics’ that are able to create unintended meanings and active engagement ● Social and cultural specificities

Table 4 Key perceptions of stakeholders against existing theory

On the other hand, the users’ perspectives generally tend to generate more critical and case-specific thoughts, which are less explored in both the Western and non-Western literature. Although disappointment or powerlessness over the harsh regulatory regime are still exhibited, they believe in the need to take a more nuanced consideration in understanding POPS. Findings revealed that they often pose challenges on the Western tendency of making ‘overly pessimistic interpretations’ (Langstraat and Van Melik, 2013:432), and on how the West stresses more on management aspect of POPS over other perspectives. They suggest the scrutiny of the qualities of ‘human agency’, social relations and cultural normative values (Qian, 2013).

To sum up, two arguments can be made. First, both managerial and users perspectives agree that qualities of POPS are still strongly determined by a powerful regulatory regime and by their ways of management and control, but some users consider that the structural factors are not restricting the possibilities of how they engage with the use of POPS. Second, this further hints the possibility that, from the users’ perspectives, alternative understandings of POPS could be developed in the non-West.

5.2 Some alternative understandings of POPS in the non-West

Based on the research findings, this section suggests and reflects upon several factors that could possibly construct alternative understandings of POPS in the non-West. It depends on stakeholder’s meaning-creating, contextual conditions and analytical approaches.

A key factor that possibly facilitates the development of alternative understandings is the diversity of **meanings** stakeholders created or prescribed to the role of POPS. In the mainstream Western literature, the imagination of POPS' role is usually fixed and simple, as they tend to associate POPS with functions of retail and consumption (Langstraat and Van Melik, 2013). In this case study, although the regulator sees the POPS of N.T.P. as spaces for consumption, the roles and meanings users prescribe to N.T.P. are much diverse. For example, they relate POPS to political forums which enable political expression and democratic freedom (see Chapter 5.1.1); or they associate them with spaces for visibility (Hou, 2012) where personal liberalisation and awareness-raising are facilitated (see Chapter 5.1.2). Some of these roles and meanings are rarely imagined or documented in POPS-related literature. It suggests that POPS in the non-West have hardly suffered from deprivation of the 'rich possibilities of meaning-making' (Sennett, 1977:22), because new meanings are constantly created and suggested under different time-spaces (Qian, 2013). The new roles and meanings that this case opened up could further contribute to the richness of meanings of POPS discovered among the non-Western literature, which embraces the possibility of meaning-making.

Another key factor in developing alternative understandings of POPS is the findings of **local specificities** of the investigated context, as generally non-Western contexts and cultures are less explored (Qian, 2013). This case demonstrates two cultural and social specificities. First, this research hints that many alternative narratives of POPS are developed in relation to the qualities of the public (i.e. users of N.T.P.) who actively make use of space, rather than the physical spaces themselves. As shown in Chapter 5.1.2, the physical aspect of POPS largely echoes with the mainstream Western understanding of POPS. However, it is through how users exercise their reflexivity and creativity in receiving and adapting these spaces that instances of publicness and inclusivity are created. As a result, it verifies Hou's (2012) understanding that POPS have to be understood in consideration of how 'active or engaged' the 'public' is. It further suggests that a high reflexivity of human agency, like the active political users in N.T.P., could possibly produce more alternative understandings through creating instances of publicness and inclusivity.

Second, the case-specific social and power relations generate new understandings of POPS. This study demonstrates some unique relations among stakeholders. As shown in Chapter 5.1.3, there is a hostile regulator-user relationship, and a handful of complicated politics-led identity conflicts between different groups of users. In this case, the polarisation of political stances under a politicised Hong Kong may be a cause (Ng, 2019). As such, these very social and cultural specific issues may open up unexplored narratives, as these subtle relationships to a large extent impact on how stakeholders narrate their feelings or understandings of POPS. Therefore, it not only verifies the non-Western argument that social relation is a key factor in assessing POPS (Erkip, 2003) but also highlights that the analysis of POPS in the context of social relations is highly complex, therefore requiring a thoughtful selection of relevant stakeholders for investigation. Also, it hints that non-West has greater social and political dynamicity.

Furthermore, this research argues that the **analytical approach** non-Western literature suggested (see Chapter 2.3.3) plays a key role in exploring alternative understandings of POPS. On the one hand, the emphasis on the dimension of temporality is necessary. Stakeholders' perceptions are largely based on a specific timescale and are dynamic. For example, some users suggest that qualities of publicness could change drastically depending on the change in strictness of regulations or the spontaneity of incidents (see Chapter 5.1.1). As such, a lack of sensitivity of the temporal scale is impossible to capture the multiple 'time-spaces' (Qian, 2013) that create instances of publicness or inclusivity. On the other hand, it is useful to understand qualities of POPS in a relational way (Massey, 2005). As demonstrated in Chapter 5.1.1, stakeholders tend to make justifications of their responses based on comparison, such as comparing the publicness of POPS with public spaces. It is impossible to reveal the complexity of how people understand POPS if spaces are reduced as fixed and stable entities.

Summing up this section, this research expands the understandings of POPS in the non-West in two main ways. It discovers new roles or meanings stakeholders prescribe to POPS, and highlights local specificities that are specific to the case. It contributes to the expansion of unexplored meanings of POPS in the non-Western literature, and demonstrates that (a) incorporating the users perspective, such as looking into how spaces are received and adopted by active users; and (b) dipping into the complexity of social and power relations,

are useful directions in highlighting further narratives. The main observation is therefore that, alternative understandings of POPS are more likely to be developed from the interactions between space and users than the physical and managerial aspects of space. Finally, the analytical approach of how we should understand POPS is reflected. It recommends that the relational understanding of space and the sensitivity on temporality are two key ways to look for new ideas.

6. Conclusion

6.1 Concluding remarks

Through looking at incidents of political appropriation in New Town Plaza, a mall that consists of POPS in the non-Western context of Hong Kong, this dissertation seeks to explore the alternative understandings of POPS non-Western contexts suggest. With a case study approach, it gathers a combination of discursive and non-discursive forms of qualitative data in order to identify patterns of stakeholders' perceptions. It then analyses these perceptions against existing literature to discover the ways or factors in which alternative understandings of POPS are potentially developed in the non-West.

From the findings, it is revealed that regulators, political and non-political users generally reach a compromise in terms of the managerial and space design aspects. With a dominant and harsh neoliberal-led regulatory regime, POPS do not favour an active users' engagement with space, while the notion of exclusion is strongly felt and presented. These perceptions fit well into the mainstream Western conceptions of POPS, including their portrayal of POPS as spaces of heavy social control, exclusionary and strict rules of conduct.

However, regulators and users (mainly political users) come into a disagreement over the possibilities of developing unintended uses of space, and alternative social and political qualities. While the regulators reiterate their power of direct control over space, some users suggest that how spaces are appropriated from bottom-up could demonstrate instances of publicness, inclusivity and active engagement, further pointing out that a shortcoming of the Western conception is how they underestimate the power of an 'active citizenry' (Hou, 2012). It demonstrates that more understandings can be developed from these ideas.

Having analysed these conceptions, this research suggests and reflects on the possible aspects of developing alternative understandings of POPS in the non-West. First, it is the aspect of meaning creation. In contrast with the Western conception of how the meaning-making abilities of POPS have deprived (Senett, 1977), this case study shows that stakeholders prescribe multiple social and political related roles and meanings to POPS. Thus, it suggests the possibility that non-Western POPS are associated with a more diverse set of meanings.

Second, it is the aspect of local specificities. In the case study, new understandings of POPS are mostly generated through the ways in which spaces are tactically and creatively appropriated by users under spatial limits, as well as the case-specific social and power relations. It therefore highlights the possibilities that, the high levels of reflexivity and creativity of users in the non-West could open up alternative understandings. Also, it is possible that more forms of social and power relations can be discovered in non-Western POPS.

The main finding is that alternative understandings of POPS are developed from the interactions between space and stakeholders, such as the ways in which POPS are used and the local social specificities; more than the physical spaces themselves or the ways how they are managed and regulated.

Finally, it is learnt that, in addition to exploring alternative understandings of the nature and qualities of POPS (i.e. what are POPS), it is important to reflect on the analytical approaches in research (i.e. how do we research on POPS). This research suggests that understanding POPS with a relational and temporal approach could allow us to explore the concept in more fluid and flexible perspectives.

6.2 Limitations and recommendations

This research can be further developed due to several limitations identified. First, as discussed in Chapter 3, the lack of direct accounts from the group of regulators of N.T.P. may hinder the research validity. Although the analysis of this group has been triangulated by primary data, this may be showing from the final outcome that there are limited alternative understandings of POPS developed from this group in the case study. For future research, it is recommended that primary data from this group be gathered, in order to obtain their subjective narratives and meanings. Other relevant groups of actors should be brought in, where possible.

Second, despite its usefulness in demonstrating comparisons and depicting case-specific ideas, the limitation of using the binary opposition of West/non-West is that it may limit the imaginations of space and restrict generalisation. Also, the non-West is both spatially and culturally dynamic. This research realises that the findings are more for the purpose of

enriching contextual understandings than generalising convincing patterns for the non-West as a whole. As such, future research should demonstrate greater sensitivity on its use, and should bear in mind its complexity.

Finally, this research pays much attention on the dimension of temporality. However, the spatial dimension could be as fluid and diverse. To further research on similar topic, it is recommended that the 'multiple spaces' be considered. In the era of digitalised world, as suggested by an interviewee, the investigation into the correlation between virtual space and physical space in constructing POPS may allow us to expand our knowledge on the subject.

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Appendix 1: Interview questions

1. Do you think POPS in Hong Kong has been given a new role after incidents of protest?
2. If yes, does it challenge the traditional role of POPS?
3. As you are familiar with New Town Plaza. In the events of spontaneous assemblies, given that New Town Plaza is also a POPS, I am interested in how you see the shopping mall as a more public or private space?
4. In what aspect do you think this case has mostly challenged the ways you are thinking about a protest, especially in comparison with the dominant thoughts of the West? (this question only applies to scholars)
5. Do spaces control behaviours of protesters or even bystanders?
6. Is the POPS an inclusive or exclusive space for protesters and people who pass by?

Appendix 2: Consent Form

CONSENT FORM FOR _____ IN RESEARCH STUDIES

Please complete this form after you have read the Information Sheet and/or listened to an explanation about the research.

Title of Study: Narratives of privately owned public spaces (POPS) in the non-Western contexts: A case study of political uses in New Town Plaza, Hong Kong

Department: Bartlett School of Planning, University College London

Name and Contact Details of the Researcher(s): Yan Chun Derek Li (Email: ucbqycd@ucl.ac.uk)

Name of the Principal Researcher: Dr Sonia Freire Trigo

Thank you for considering taking part in this research. The person organising the research must explain the project to you before you agree to take part. If you have any questions arising from the Information Sheet or explanation already given to you, please ask the researcher before you decide whether to join in. You will be given a copy of this Consent Form to keep and refer to at any time.

I confirm that I understand that by ticking/initialling each box below I am consenting to this element of the study. I understand that it will be assumed that unticked/initialled boxes means that I DO NOT consent to that part of the study. I understand that by not giving consent for any one element that I may be deemed ineligible for the study.

		Tick Box
1.	*I confirm that I have read and understood the Information Sheet for the above study. I have had an opportunity to consider the information and what will be expected of me. I have also had the opportunity to ask questions which have been answered to my satisfaction and would like to take part in an individual interview	
2.	*I understand that I will be able to withdraw my data up to 4 weeks after interview	
3.	*I consent to participate in the study. I understand that my personal information (<i>provide information on what personal information specifically will be collected</i>) will be used for the purposes explained to me. I understand that according to data protection legislation, 'public task' will be the lawful basis for processing.	
4.	*Anonymity is optional for this research. Please select from the following 3 options: (a) I agree for my real name and role/affiliation to be used in connection with any words I have said or information I have passed on. (b) I request that my comments are presented anonymously but give permission to connect my role/affiliation with my comments (but not the title of my position). (c) I request that my comments are presented anonymously with no mention of my role/affiliation.	(a) (b) (c)
5.	*I understand that my information may be subject to review by responsible individuals from the University (to include sponsors and funders) for monitoring and audit purposes.	

6.	*I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason, without the care I receive or my legal rights being affected. I understand that if I decide to withdraw, any personal data I have provided up to that point will be deleted unless I agree otherwise.	
7.	I understand the potential risks of participating and the support that will be available to me should I become distressed during the course of the research.	
8.	I understand the direct/indirect benefits of participating.	
9.	I understand that the data will not be made available to any commercial organisations but is solely the responsibility of the researcher(s) undertaking this study.	
10.	I understand that I will not benefit financially from this study or from any possible outcome it may result in in the future.	
11.	I understand that I will be compensated for the portion of time spent in the study (if applicable) or fully compensated if I choose to withdraw.	
12.	I agree that my research data may be used by others for future research.	
13.	I understand that the information I have submitted will be published as a report and I wish to receive a copy of it. Yes / No	
14.	I consent to my interview being audio/video recorded and understand that the recordings will be destroyed immediately following transcription.	
15.	I hereby confirm that I understand the inclusion criteria as detailed in the Information Sheet and explained to me by the researcher.	
16.	I hereby confirm that: (a) I understand the exclusion criteria as detailed in the Information Sheet and explained to me by the researcher; and (b) I do not fall under the exclusion criteria.	
17.	I agree that my GP may be contacted if any unexpected results are found in relation to my health.	
18.	I have informed the researcher of any other research in which I am currently involved or have been involved in during the past 12 months.	
19.	I am aware of who I should contact if I wish to lodge a complaint.	
20.	I voluntarily agree to take part in this study.	
21.	I would be happy for the data I provide to be archived at Ho Man Tang personal computer with encryption. I understand that other authenticated researchers will have access to my data.	

If you would like your contact details to be retained so that you can be contacted in the future by UCL researchers who would like to invite you to participate in follow up studies to this project, or in future studies of a similar nature, please tick the appropriate box below.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes, I would be happy to be contacted in this way	
<input type="checkbox"/>	No, I would not like to be contacted	

Name of participant

Date

Signature

Appendix 3: Data coding sheet

<p><i>Theme A</i> <i>Public/private imagination</i></p>	<p><i>Theme B</i> <i>Active/passive users' engagement</i></p>	<p><i>Theme C</i> <i>Inclusive/exclusive relations</i></p>
<p>Sub-theme: social interaction</p> <p>'I feel public, somehow more public than outside ... we as protesters gathered at the glass curved panels on upper floors overseeing the atrium. In the middle of protest a toddler at the atrium who was learning to walk caught our attention. He walked a few steps then suddenly tripped over, we shouted 'ai-yah' (an expression of sympathy in Cantonese) in unison. After that he went back to his mother for comfort, we cheered for him and also laughed at our silly interactions.'" (Interviewee #18)</p> <p>"In this already quite private space, protesters claim and occupy it with personal interest, socially interacting among themselves, I think this makes it more private, doubling the private.'" (Interviewee #3)</p> <p>"With the political incidents going on, I can see people facing the memo stickers on the wall and start to discuss those issues together.'" (Interviewee #15)</p>	<p>Sub-theme: control</p> <p>"Unlike on public streets, we have to exercise self-restraint in terms of the aggressiveness of actions we can take in N.T.P., as regulators will collaborate with public authorities and use the widely distributed CCTV to control us and target at us if our actions are seen destructive or even just undesirable. In fact, they have installed some more CCTVs recently'" (Interviewee #13)</p> <p>"We want to take back control of the space, but in reality we are confined by it, it is too small for gathering, I mean, we don't even get to control the access.'" (Interviewee #9)</p> <p>"Especially after the first few protests, I start to feel a great sense of control in N.T.P. even on normal days – from the eyes of private securities. You could spot them in the main walkways, standing in front of the enclosed areas and judging on how people behave, probably they are preventing any spontaneous protest</p>	<p>Sub-theme: insecurity and fear</p> <p>"It is lacking inclusivity, or even could be getting more insecure ... the landlord is a factor constraining, they do not want us to stay ... I think it occurs an issue of unequal right of using these spaces among users as we are particularly targeted, and they create more limitations for us to use these spaces.'" (Interviewee #14)</p> <p>"Inside (POPS of N.T.P.) there should not be fearful enforcement, there should not be limitations of accessing and there should not be judging and questioning based on what I wear and bring. I don't think it is like that anymore.'" (Interviewee #20)</p> <p>"I could be put in a more insecure situation when enforcement officers and police intervene, because they are violent. Staying in the same venue and having similar outfit as protesters, anyone could be the target.'" (Interviewee #11)</p>

<p>Sub-theme: discursive environment</p> <p>“An additional role of N.T.P. is that it has become a point of political gathering and information exchange, if you like you can express your political views on Lennon Walls, the whole setting is like the modern version of the ancient public forums.” (Interviewee #4)</p> <p>“People gathered in groups, very informally, and I overheard them discussing a lot of ideas, like methods to make the government apologise, possibilities to make this place more belonged to us, the qualities of good citizens in the future, and how to involve people with different political stances.” (Interviewee #5)</p> <p>“New Town Plaza is private property...Members of the public are not permitted to conduct any unauthorised activities...including the use of any instruments or audio/visual equipment, (and) the distribution of any pamphlets and the posting of any posters or stickers” (Secondary data)</p> <p>“Families of old and young, they feel safer that in those places they dare</p>	<p>actions from happening.” (Interviewee #1)</p> <p>“I am certain that the owners (of N.T.P.) see themselves having the right to decide the opening and closing times of mall ... they have the right to control the use of ‘lighting, water, gas and electricity’, or adjust them in their preferred way. Tenants (and users) do not have the bargaining power.” (secondary data – past interview)</p> <p>“Don’t think it is controlled by us. In Hong Kong the private developer is so powerful, everything they consider is business and financial risk.” (Interviewee #20)</p> <p>“On a district councillor letter, N.T.P. owner is asked for whether they have the responsibility to keep the POPS open. They have not replied.” (Secondary data)</p> <p>“When the private developer stands on an opposite side with us, how can we expect that they are not going to limit our rights?” (Interviewee #4)</p> <p>Sub-theme: visibility creation</p> <p>“Space is constrained, not just for the mall but also</p>	<p>“Barricades and wooden frames are used to surround and cordon off areas; balustrades are installed at glass curved panels that directly face the atrium; new CCTV cameras are set up to strengthen the effect of surveillance” (secondary visual data)</p> <p>“Very exclusive space, you may even be a bit scared to go in, I am made to feel as an outsider, the accessibility is quite strange.” (Interviewee #3)</p> <p>“From the video it can be seen that a lot of private securities are patrolling and staring at passers-by. This creates a tension.” (Secondary data interpretation)</p> <p>“Kai Shing Limited is asking customers to stay away from the harsh design in the name of safety’ (Secondary data)</p> <p>Sub-theme: welcoming and respect</p> <p>“I feel that these events are quite welcoming, under safe circumstances I can see elderly and children joining, also a lot of families find it more comfortable, accessible and flexible.” (Interviewee #5)</p>
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<p>to voice out.” (Interviewee #15)</p> <p>“Somehow it is still a place for you to express political views, however as you can see, when enforcement officers come in, the place becomes chaotic. Now it just seems that they can get into the mall whenever they like.” (Interviewee #16)</p> <p>“From the clips it can be seen that people are very lively, chanting slogans of the protest and echoing with strangers. People come and go, and it lets more people join.” (Secondary data interpretation)</p>	<p>Hong Kong as a whole, but protesters smartly make use of the design of space to gain visibility. They realise that standing around the atrium at different level allows them to see each other and are very noticeable to passers-by. Their actions successfully attract some passers-by to join them.” (Interviewee #2)</p> <p>“Some protesters act unexpectedly which makes them stand out, others intentionally ignore regulations, we want to gain visibility from people, or catch attention from the media so as to pressurise the capitalists (private developers of N.T.P.) in listening to our demands.” (Interviewee #18)</p> <p>“It is a complete new idea. Before I don’t realise that we can protest in indoors public areas, until public spaces are increasingly difficult for protests to happen then people move into these spaces and create new opportunities to protest.” (Interviewee #19)</p> <p>“It is definitely a move to gain international attention as we create some very nice visuals for the news” (Interviewee #10)</p>	<p>“Comparing with 2014 (The Umbrella Movement of Hong Kong) I think that there is much more respect and understanding developed in the 2019 Protest, that came out from the process of time and learning ... people learn to accept others and organise protests the least disruptive as possible ... while a broad social consensus is increasingly seen where people respect more aggressive actions.” (Interviewee #2)</p> <p>“Not to mention those who rely on N.T.P. to make a living like salespersons and shopkeepers, I, as a person who comes from mainland China and speaks Putonghua (Mandarin), feel excluded too. Although I am sympathetic of the movements going on, and I understand that it encourages more participation among people in the city, I do not reckon that the protesters would admit my existence. I do not feel a good civic spirit that respects differences and otherness.” (Interviewee #1)</p> <p>“It is not too aggressive, people just say sings, shout slogans and the environment seems to be</p>
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		a respectful one.” (Interviewee #17)
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RISK ASSESSMENT FORM


FIELD / LOCATION WORK

The Approved Code of Practice - Management of Fieldwork should be referred to when completing this form
<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/estates/safetynet/guidance/fieldwork/acop.pdf>

DEPARTMENT/SECTION BARLETT SCHOOL OF PLANNING
LOCATION(S) 14 UPPER WOBURN PL, BLOOMSBURY, LONDON, WC1H 0NN, UNITED KINGDOM
PERSONS COVERED BY THE RISK ASSESSMENT YAN CHUN DEREK LI

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF FIELDWORK A combination of primary and secondary data, including online interviews, social media analysis, and text and discourse analysis

Consider, in turn, each hazard (white on black). If **NO** hazard exists select **NO** and move to next hazard section. If a hazard does exist select **YES** and assess the risks that could arise from that hazard in the risk assessment box. **Where risks are identified that are not adequately controlled they must be brought to the attention of your Departmental Management who should put temporary control measures in place or stop the work. Detail such risks in the final section.**



ENVIRONMENT

The environment always represents a safety hazard. Use space below to identify and assess any risks associated with this hazard

e.g. location, climate, terrain, neighbourhood, in outside organizations, pollution, animals. Examples of risk: adverse weather, illness, hypothermia, assault, getting lost.
 Is the risk high / medium / low ?

This is of low risk, because the project does not require outdoors field work.

CONTROL MEASURES

Indicate which procedures are in place to control the identified risk

- work abroad incorporates Foreign Office advice
- participants have been trained and given all necessary information
- only accredited centres are used for rural field work
- participants will wear appropriate clothing and footwear for the specified environment
- trained leaders accompany the trip
- refuge is available
- work in outside organisations is subject to their having satisfactory H&S procedures in place
- OTHER CONTROL MEASURES: please specify any other control measures you have implemented:

EMERGENCIES

Where emergencies may arise use space below to identify and assess any risks

e.g. fire, accidents Examples of risk: loss of property, loss of life

This is of low risk, because the project mainly consists of off-site desk research.

CONTROL MEASURES

Indicate which procedures are in place to control the identified risk

- participants have registered with LOCATE at <http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travel-and-living-abroad/>
- fire fighting equipment is carried on the trip and participants know how to use it
- contact numbers for emergency services are known to all participants
- participants have means of contacting emergency services
- participants have been trained and given all necessary information
- a plan for rescue has been formulated, all parties understand the procedure
- the plan for rescue /emergency has a reciprocal element
- OTHER CONTROL MEASURES: please specify any other control measures you have implemented:

FIELDWORK
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May 2010

EQUIPMENT	Is equipment used?	No	If 'No' move to next hazard If 'Yes' use space below to identify and assess any risks
<i>e.g. clothing, outboard motors.</i>	Examples of risk: inappropriate, failure, insufficient training to use or repair, injury. Is the risk high / medium / low ?		
This is of very low risk, because the only equipment I am using is a laptop which is safe and merely for individual use.			
CONTROL MEASURES Indicate which procedures are in place to control the identified risk			
<input type="checkbox"/> the departmental written Arrangement for equipment is followed <input type="checkbox"/> participants have been provided with any necessary equipment appropriate for the work <input type="checkbox"/> all equipment has been inspected, before issue, by a competent person <input type="checkbox"/> all users have been advised of correct use <input type="checkbox"/> special equipment is only issued to persons trained in its use by a competent person <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER CONTROL MEASURES: please specify any other control measures you have implemented:			
LONE WORKING	Is lone working a possibility?	No	If 'No' move to next hazard If 'Yes' use space below to identify and assess any risks
<i>e.g. alone or in isolation lone interviews</i>	Examples of risk: difficult to summon help. Is the risk high / medium / low?		

lone interviews

This is of low risk.

CONTROL MEASURES Indicate which procedures are in place to control the identified risk

the departmental written Arrangement for lone/out of hours working for field work is followed
 lone or isolated working is not allowed
 location, route and expected time of return of lone workers is logged daily before work commences
 all workers have the means of raising an alarm in the event of an emergency, e.g. phone, flare, whistle
 all workers are fully familiar with emergency procedures
 OTHER CONTROL MEASURES: please specify any other control measures you have implemented:

Interviews will be conducted, but they will take the form of either 'online interactive' or 'written', so isolation lone interviews are not considered.

ILL HEALTH

e.g. accident, illness, personal attack, special personal considerations or vulnerabilities.

The possibility of ill health always represents a safety hazard. Use space below to identify and assess any risks associated with this Hazard.

Examples of risk: injury, asthma, allergies. Is the risk high / medium / low?

This is of low risk, because this project does not involve outdoors activities and face-to-face interactions.

CONTROL MEASURES Indicate which procedures are in place to control the identified risk

- an appropriate number of trained first-aiders and first aid kits are present on the field trip
- all participants have had the necessary inoculations/ carry appropriate prophylactics
- participants have been advised of the physical demands of the trip and are deemed to be physically suited
- participants have been adequate advice on harmful plants, animals and substances they may encounter
- participants who require medication have advised the leader of this and carry sufficient medication for their needs
- OTHER CONTROL MEASURES: please specify any other control measures you have implemented:

TRANSPORT

e.g. hired vehicles

Will transport be required

NO
YES

Move to next hazard

Use space below to identify and assess any risks

Examples of risk: accidents arising from lack of maintenance, suitability or training
Is the risk high / medium / low?

This is of low risk, because transportation is not involved in the project.

CONTROL MEASURES Indicate which procedures are in place to control the identified risk

- only public transport will be used
- the vehicle will be hired from a reputable supplier
- transport must be properly maintained in compliance with relevant national regulations
- drivers comply with UCL Policy on Drivers http://www.ucl.ac.uk/hr/docs/college_drivers.php
- drivers have been trained and hold the appropriate licence
- there will be more than one driver to prevent driver/operator fatigue, and there will be adequate rest periods
- sufficient spare parts carried to meet foreseeable emergencies
- OTHER CONTROL MEASURES: please specify any other control measures you have implemented:

DEALING WITH THE PUBLIC

e.g. interviews, observing

Will people be dealing with public

Yes

If 'No' move to next hazard

If 'Yes' use space below to identify and assess any risks

Examples of risk: personal attack, causing offence, being misinterpreted. Is the risk high / medium / low?

Online interviews will be conducted and they will be a very low risk that conversations are being misinterpreted or making interviewees feel uncomfortable

CONTROL MEASURES Indicate which procedures are in place to control the identified risk

- all participants are trained in interviewing techniques
- interviews are contracted out to a third party
- advice and support from local groups has been sought
- participants do not wear clothes that might cause offence or attract unwanted attention
- interviews are conducted at neutral locations or where neither party could be at risk
- OTHER CONTROL MEASURES: please specify any other control measures you have implemented:

Participants would be noted that the interview is entirely voluntary and consent would be obtained from them before interview starts, also they would be carefully asked if they want to have their opinions kept anonymous.

WORKING ON OR NEAR WATER

Will people work on or near water?

No

If 'No' move to next hazard
If 'Yes' use space below to identify and assess any risks*e.g. rivers, marshland, sea.*

Examples of risk: drowning, malaria, hepatitis A, parasites. Is the risk high / medium / low?

This is of low risk, because outdoors field work are not required in the project.

CONTROL MEASURES

Indicate which procedures are in place to control the identified risk

- lone working on or near water will not be allowed
- coastguard information is understood; all work takes place outside those times when tides could prove a threat
- all participants are competent swimmers
- participants always wear adequate protective equipment, e.g. buoyancy aids, wellingtons
- boat is operated by a competent person
- all boats are equipped with an alternative means of propulsion e.g. oars
- participants have received any appropriate inoculations
- OTHER CONTROL MEASURES: please specify any other control measures you have implemented:

MANUAL HANDLING (MH)

Do MH activities take place?

No

If 'No' move to next hazard
If 'Yes' use space below to identify and assess any risks*e.g. lifting, carrying, moving large or heavy equipment, physical unsuitability for the task.*

Examples of risk: strain, cuts, broken bones. Is the risk high / medium / low?

This is of low risk, because outdoors field work are not required in this project.

CONTROL MEASURES

Indicate which procedures are in place to control the identified risk

- the departmental written Arrangement for MH is followed
- the supervisor has attended a MH risk assessment course
- all tasks are within reasonable limits, persons physically unsuited to the MH task are prohibited from such activities
- all persons performing MH tasks are adequately trained
- equipment components will be assembled on site
- any MH task outside the competence of staff will be done by contractors
- OTHER CONTROL MEASURES: please specify any other control measures you have implemented:

SUBSTANCES	Will participants work with substances	<input type="checkbox"/> No	If 'No' move to next hazard If 'Yes' use space below to identify and assess any risks
<i>e.g. plants, chemical, biohazard, waste</i>	Examples of risk: ill health - poisoning, infection, illness, burns, cuts. Is the risk high / medium / low?		
This is of low risk, the nature of this project does not require the use of hazardous substances.			

CONTROL MEASURES	Indicate which procedures are in place to control the identified risk
<input type="checkbox"/>	the departmental written Arrangements for dealing with hazardous substances and waste are followed
<input type="checkbox"/>	all participants are given information, training and protective equipment for hazardous substances they may encounter
<input type="checkbox"/>	participants who have allergies have advised the leader of this and carry sufficient medication for their needs
<input type="checkbox"/>	waste is disposed of in a responsible manner
<input type="checkbox"/>	suitable containers are provided for hazardous waste
<input type="checkbox"/>	OTHER CONTROL MEASURES: please specify any other control measures you have implemented:

OTHER HAZARDS	Have you identified any other hazards?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	If 'No' move to next section If 'Yes' use space below to identify and assess any risks
<i>i.e. any other hazards must be noted and assessed here.</i>	Hazard: (1) COVID-19; (2) Ongoing social movement in Hong Kong		
	Risk: is the risk	<input type="text" value="low"/>	
There is a risk of lockdown or restrictions of face-to-face communication due to the emergence of global health crisis and the social movement.			

CONTROL MEASURES	Give details of control measures in place to control the identified risks
To alleviate the risks in relation to COVID-19, all research and data collection do not involve field work. The researcher will be staying at home for the completion of project. If there is a need to go out, the researcher will wear a mask and follow the social distancing rules according to the local government's advice.	
Also, as the researcher is conducting the project in Hong Kong, to alleviate the risks in relation to the social movement happening in Hong Kong, the researcher will be staying at home for the completion of project. If there is a need to go out, the researcher will avoid the times and places where protests potentially happen.	

Have you identified any risks that are not adequately controlled?	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES	Move to Declaration Use space below to identify the risk and what action was taken

Is this project subject to the UCL requirements on the ethics of Non-NHS Human Research?

If yes, please state your Project ID Number

For more information, please refer to: <http://ethics.grad.ucl.ac.uk/>

DECLARATION	The work will be reassessed whenever there is a significant change and at least annually. Those participating in the work have read the assessment.
Select the appropriate statement:	
<input type="checkbox"/>	I the undersigned have assessed the activity and associated risks and declare that there is no significant residual risk
<input type="checkbox"/>	I the undersigned have assessed the activity and associated risks and declare that the risk will be controlled by the method(s) listed above

NAME OF SUPERVISOR SONIA FREIRE-TRIGO

SIGNATURE OF SUPERVISOR _____ DATE _____