

Visual Metaphors and the Construction of Political Identities:

An Analysis of the 2012 Hong Kong Legislative Council Election



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Visual metaphors in political discourse



Acknowledgments



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Overview



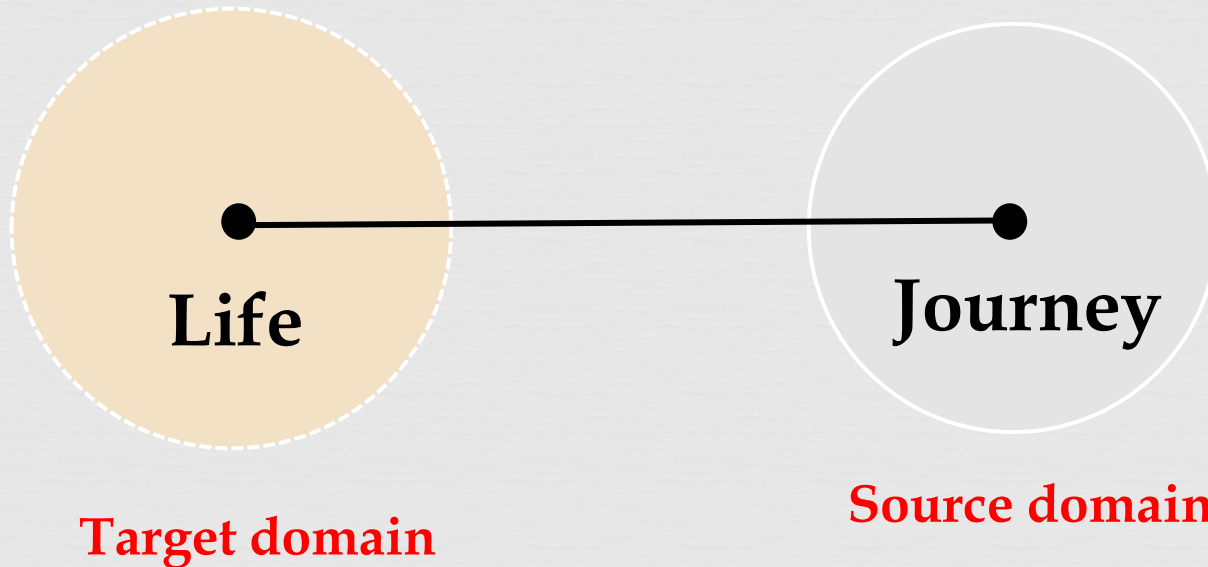
1. What is (visual) metaphor?
2. Types of visual metaphor
3. Why look at metaphor in political – in particular, electoral – discourse?
4. Data and methodology
5. Analysis of a visual metaphor in HK electoral discourse
 - œ The cushion metaphor
6. Summary

What is a metaphor?



Metaphor Mapping
(Lakoff & Johnson 1980)

Life is a journey.



Conceptual blends

(Turner & Fauconnier 1995; Fauconnier & Turner 2002)



November 2001, *The Arizona Republic*

Types of Visual Metaphors



Forceville (1996, 2010) identifies 3 different types of visual metaphors:

- ∞ Simile
- ∞ Hybrid metaphor
- ∞ Contextual metaphor



Simile

mapping based on resemblances
(Forceville 1996)



The Adidas swimsuit is a second skin as smooth as the skin of a dolphin.

Simile

mapping based on resemblances
(Forceville 1996)



The Adidas swimsuit is a second skin as smooth as the skin of a dolphin.

The Adidas-clad swimmer has the sleekness (and speed) of a dolphin.

This visual metaphor is a simile because the source domain and the target domain are visually presented SEPARATELY.





‘Ready to bake at home.’



Hybrid metaphor

convergent mapping of different domains into one
(Yeung, Yuen & Fan 2013)



Which is
primary? Which
is secondary

‘Ready to bake at home.’



BAGUETTE

SLIPPERS

Hybrid metaphor

convergent mapping of different domains into one
(Yeung, Yuen & Fan 2013)



‘Ready to bake at home.’



This visual metaphor is a hybrid metaphor because both the source and target domains are MERGED TOGETHER into a single entity.



‘Ready to bake at home.’





La chaussure en beauté

Contextual metaphor

contextualized mapping
(Forceville 1996)



*A Clerget shoe,
like the tie,
is a most beautiful
accessory.*

Contextual metaphor

contextualized mapping
(Forceville 1996)



*Clerget shoes
are not just
for the feet.*

*Wear them
with pride.*

Matching black suit

This visual metaphor is a contextualized metaphor because the intended meaning of the target domain is understood within the context of the source of the source domain.



La chaussure en beauté

Why use visual metaphors?



- œ Visual metaphors are “innovative and creative; they do not stem from pre-existing similarities, but induce similarities between different objects”.
- œ In this way, they help trigger a sense of awe, wonder and delight in us and “contribute to our new understanding and perception of the world”.

(Yeung, Yung & Fan 2013: 7; citing Hausman 1989)

Why look at visual metaphors in political discourse?



- ⌘ Metaphors abound in political discourse, often with no shortage of them in electoral speeches.
- ⌘ Political leaders often use metaphors to establish common ground with the public.
- ⌘ At the same time, they also often use metaphors to criticize their rivals, and thus indirectly promote themselves.
- ⌘ **Research Question:**
How and why do politicians use metaphors – in particular, visual metaphors – in electoral discourse?

Metaphors in Political Discourse



☞ Metaphors are highly valued because:

- ☞ they add a touch of **novelty** and wit to what is said, and thus greatly enhance the speaker's positive self-image;
- ☞ at the same time, they can also be used as **verbal indirectness strategies** to mitigate potential face-threats to both speaker and addressee.

(Kuo 2003; Obeng 1997; Wilson 1990)

Political Metaphors and Humor



- œ Political metaphors are often accompanied by humor (sometimes with a heavy dose of sarcasm as well).
- œ This combination is frequently used to criticize rivals without excessive violations to politeness maxims.

(Kiley & Shuttleworth 1971; Inge 1990; Lewis 2006; Taskona 2009)

Objectives



❧ To examine how and why politicians use visual metaphors in electoral discourse.

❧ HOW:

❧ Using visual similes, as well as hybridized and contextualized visual metaphors to convey their otherwise abstract messages.

❧ WHY:

❧ To construct favorable political identities for self, and unfavorable ones for rivals.

Methodology



- œ Discourse analysis of visual metaphors
 - œ Some visual metaphors used in the 2012 Hong Kong Legislative Council Election Debates
 - œ **The cushion metaphor**
 - œ **The ladder metaphor**
 - œ **The 'Oscar Award' metaphor**

Data source



- ❧ Database: 5 televised debates hosted by RTHK
- ❧ Period: 18th August – 1st September 2012
- ❧ 50-60 minutes each
Total minutes of data: 290 minutes
- ❧ Total no. of metaphors: 48 (visual and non-visual ones)
- ❧ **Gift-giving session (送大禮環節) inside the debate:** Candidates can present gifts, either to the public or to particular rivals. Most of the candidates would make use of this chance to attack the opponents.

Positive vs. Negative Metaphors



| Intended referent | Metaphors with positive connotations | Metaphors with negative connotations |
|-------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Self | 5 | 0 |
| Opponents | 0 | 43 |

Types of metaphors



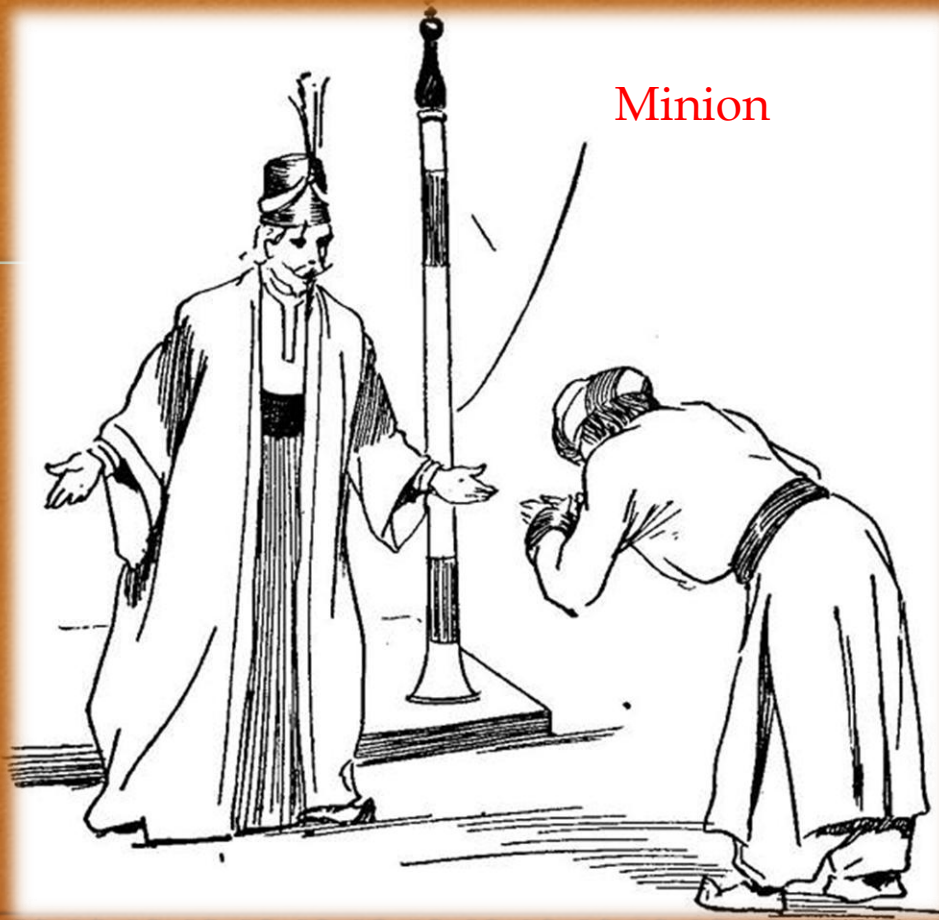
| Types of metaphors | Number of tokens |
|-------------------------|------------------|
| Characterization | 32 |
| Event | 3 |
| Illness | 2 |
| Ball | 2 |
| Plant | 2 |
| Stone | 2 |
| Bag | 1 |
| Paper | 1 |
| Plate | 1 |
| Seat | 1 |
| Rubbish | 1 |





Powerful ruler
= Beijing

**Cushion =
Minion
metaphor**



Liberal Party vs. DAB

DAB

Liberal Party



- ∞ LAU Kin Yee, Miriam 劉健儀
- ∞ Conservative
- ∞ pro-Business
- ∞ **pro-Government**
- ∞ **Sometimes pro-Beijing**

Attacks DAB for being pro-Beijing
using a cushion (=minion) metaphor



Liberal Party vs. DAB

(Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong)



DAB

Liberal Party



- TSANG Yok Sing, Jasper 曾鈺成
- Conservative
- pro-Government
- Very pro-Beijing**

- LAU Kin Yee, Miriam 劉健儀
- Conservative
- pro-Business
- pro-Government**
- Sometimes pro-Beijing**



Minion Metaphor



HKIsland_57:00-57:23_LauKinYee

- 01 我 想 將 呢 個 禮物， 呢 個 **cushion** 呢，
ngo5 soeng2 zoeng1 lei1 go3 lai5mat6 lei1 go3 le1
1SG want BA DEM CL gift DEM CL PRT
- 02 就 送畀 阿曾鈺成 嘅。
zau6 sung3bei2 aa3Zang1Juk6Sing4 ge3
INT give Tsang.Yok.Sing SFP

'I want to present this gift ... **this cushion** to Tsang Yok Sing.'

Visual humor

03 因為 好 多 人 話 呢 就係
jan1wai6 hou2 do1 jan4 waa6 ne1 zau6hai6
 because very many person say PRT that.is

04 民建聯 呢 就係 ,
Man4Gin3Lyun4 ne1 zau6hai6
 DAB PRT that.is

05 一 聽 到 吹 雞 呢 就 跪 低 ,
jat1 teng1 dou2 ceoi1 gai1 ne1 zau6 gwai6 dai1
 once hear ASP blow whistle PRT then kneel down

06 咁 個 cushion 呢 就 非常 係 受用 嘅 。
gam2 go3 ne1 zau6 feilsoeng4 hai6 sau6jung6 ge3
 so CL PRT then very COP useful SFP

Explains the
 metaphor - to
 guide the
 audience to
 get the
 implied
 meaning

‘Because many people say... That is DAB... that is, they **kneel down** once they hear (the Chinese central government) blowing whistles (implied: Whenever the Chinese government requests, they comply with her wishes). So **this cushion** would be very useful (for them).’

- 07 咁 但係 我 都 呼籲 呢 ,
gam2 daan6hai6 ngo5 dou1 fu1jyu6 le1
 so but 1SG also appeal PRT
- 08 就係 民建聯 呢 ,
zau6hai6 Man4Gin3Lyun4 le1
 that.is DAB PRT
- 09 响 涉及 港人 核心 價值 嘅 問題 上高 呢 ,
hoeng2 sit3kap6 Gong2jan4 hat6sam1 gaa3zik6 ge3 man6tai4 soeng6gou1 le1
 at involve HK.person core value ATTR problem above PRT
- 10 係 作為 建制 派 呢 ,
hai6 zok3wai4 gin3zai3 paai3 le1
 COP as conservative party PRT
- 11 仍然 係 敢 於 say no
jing4jin4 hai6 gam2 jyu1 sei1 nou1
 still COP dare to say no

**Dissociates itself
(Liberal Party) from
the DAB**

‘But I still appeal to... that is, to DAB, as for the issues involving the (violation of) the core values of Hong Kong people, as a conservative party, you should still dare say no.’

Ridicules the opponent's
party (DAB) → makes the
denigration more potent

| | | | | | |
|----|-----------------|-------------|-------------|----------------|------------|
| 12 | 如果 | 係 | 咁 | 嘅話 | 呢， |
| | <i>jyu4gwo2</i> | <i>hai6</i> | <i>gam2</i> | <i>ge2waa2</i> | <i>le1</i> |
| | if | COP | such | ATTR | PRT |

| | | | | | | | | |
|----|-------------|------------|-----------------|---------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|---|
| 13 | 呢 | 個 | 咕啞 | 可以 | 用 | 好 | 耐 | 。 |
| | <i>lei1</i> | <i>go3</i> | <i>ku1seon2</i> | <i>ho2ji3</i> | <i>jung6</i> | <i>hou2</i> | <i>noi6</i> | |
| | DEM | CL | cushion | can | use | very | long.time | |

'If (they act) in such a way, **this cushion** can be used for a long time.'

Humorous
parting shot

Input Space₁

(Target domain)

Central government

DAB

Requests (from the
Central government)

Compliance with
Central government
directives

Input Space₂

(Source domain)

Master

Minion/servant

Order from the Master

Cushion
=Kneeling down to
the Master =>
Compliance

Generic Space

Superior & subordinate relationship

Request/order from superior

Compliance of subordinate

Input Space₁

(Target domain)

Input Space₂

(Source domain)

Central government

DAB

Requests (from the
Central government)

Compliance with
Central government
directives

Master

Minion/servant

Order from the Master

Cushion

=Kneeling down to
the Master =>

Compliance

Generic Space

Superior & subordinate

Request/order from superior

Compliance of subordinate

Input Space₂

(Source domain)

Master

Minion/servant

Order from the Master

Cushion

=Kneeling down to
the Master =>

Compliance

DAB

Request (from the Central government)

Cushion

=Kneeling down to the Master =>
Compliance = Compliance with
Central government directives

Blended Space

Input Space₁

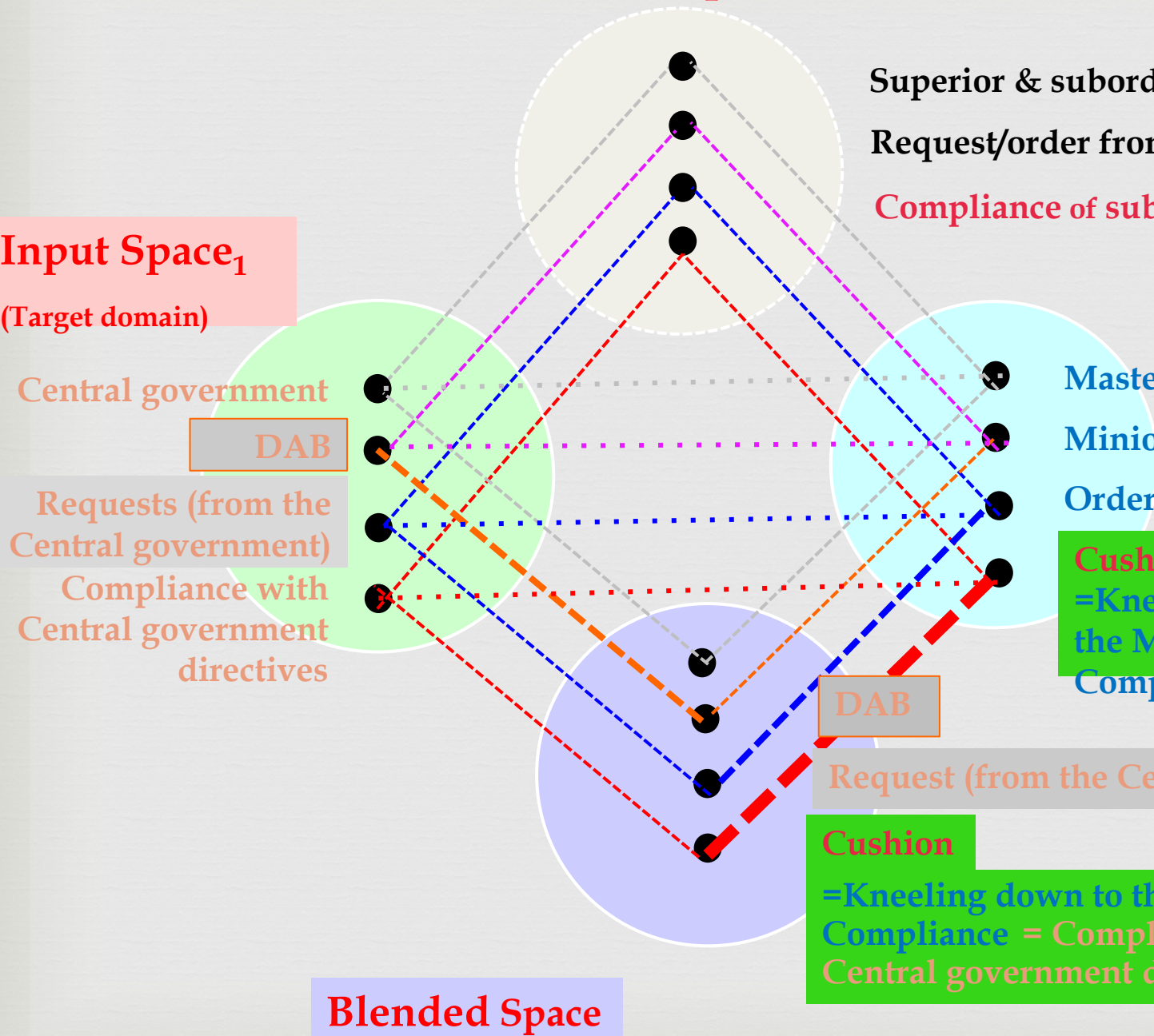
(Target domain)

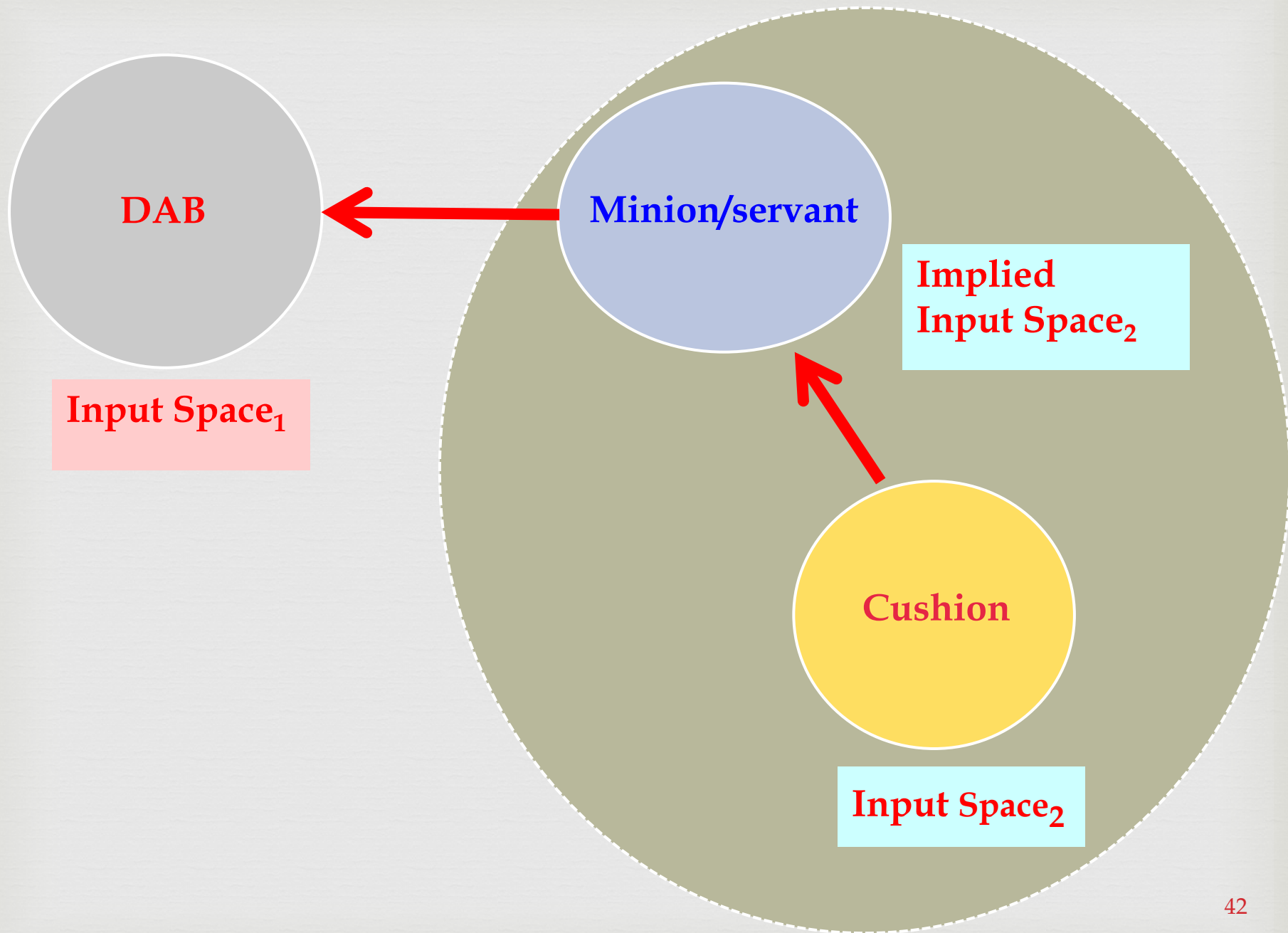
Central government

DAB

Requests (from the
Central government)

Compliance with
Central government
directives





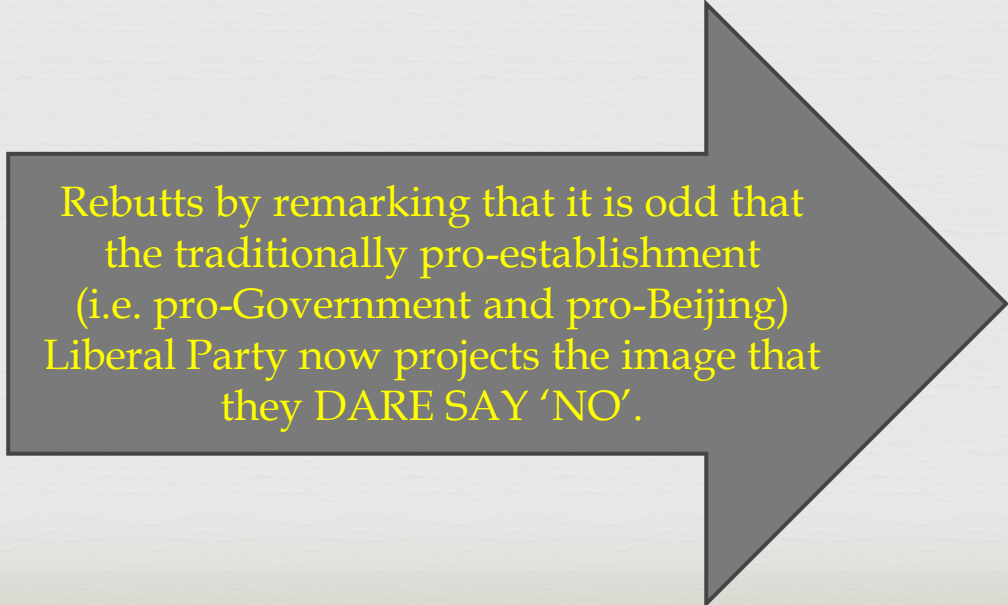
Liberal Party vs. DAB

(Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong)

DAB

Liberal Party

- 
-
- 
- TSANG Yok Sing, Jasper 曾鈺成
 - Conservative
 - pro-Government
 - Very pro-Beijing**



Rebutts by remarking that it is odd that the traditionally pro-establishment (i.e. pro-Government and pro-Beijing) Liberal Party now projects the image that they DARE SAY 'NO'.

01 今 次 好 有趣 啊 ,
gam1 ci3 hou2 jau5ceoi3 aa3
 DEM time very funny PRT

02 反對 派 呢 就 標榜 理性 務實 ,
faan2deoi3 paai1 le1 zau6 biu1bong2 lei5sing3 mou6sat6
 opposition party PRT INT advertise rational pragmatic

03 然後 呢 以前 話 叫 建制 派 嘅 呢 ,
jin4hau6 le1 ji5cin4 waa6 giu3 gin3zai3 paai3 ge3 le1
 then PRT past say call conservative party NOM PRT

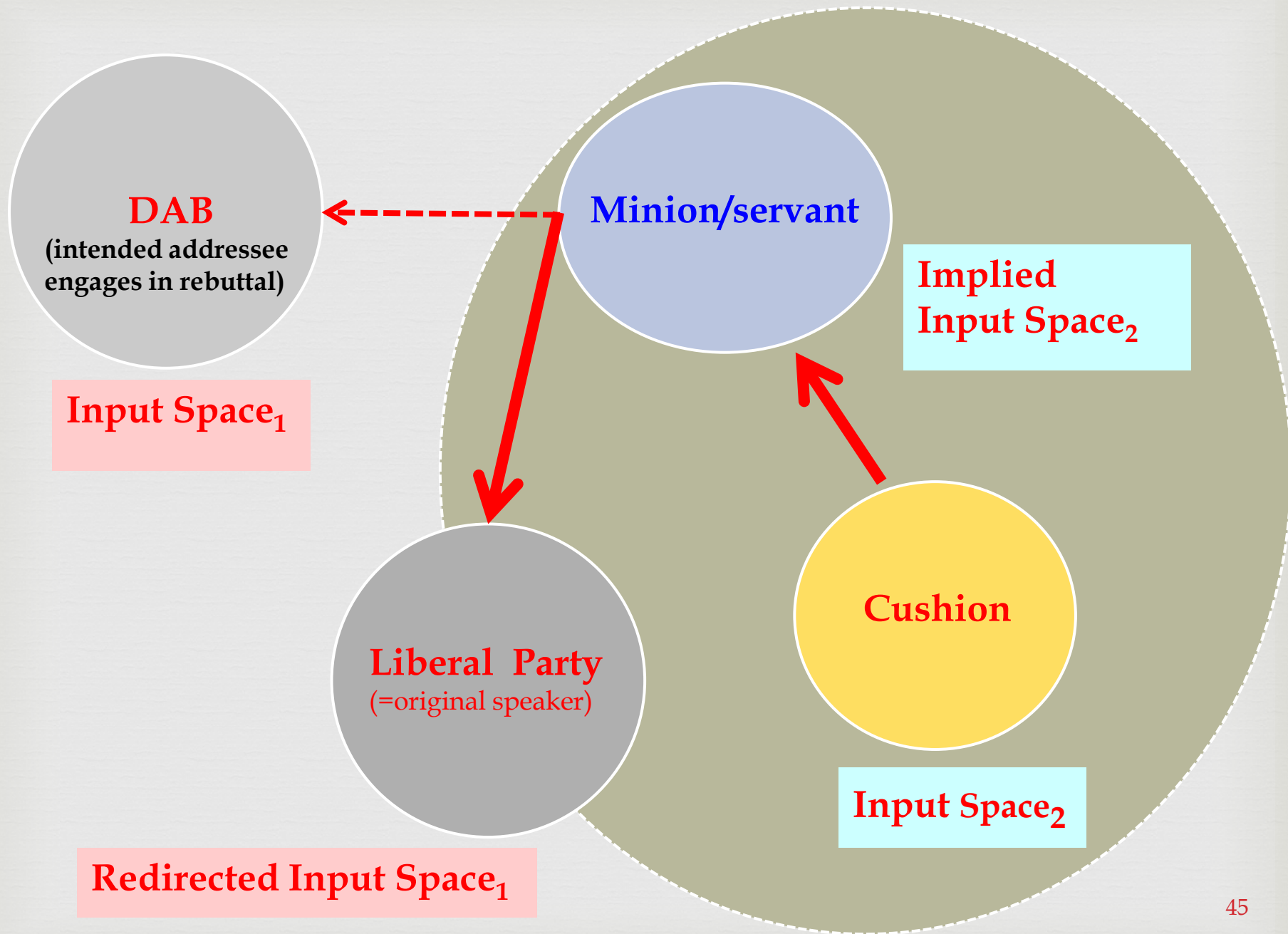
04 就 標榜 敢 say no 。
zau6 biu1bong2 gam2 sei1 nou1
 INT advertise dare say no

Explicit reference to
 ironic situation →
 humorous effect →
 mitigates face-threat

Counter-attacks by pointing out that the Liberal
 Party itself has generally been regarded as being
 pro-establishment and pro-Beijing

‘This time, (the situation) is very funny: The opposition parties advertise themselves as rational and pragmatic. Then, **the one that is usually called “the conservative party”** advertises itself as **“the one that dares to say no”**.’

05 你 話 係 幾 有趣 呢 !
nei5 waa6 hai6 gei2 jau5ceoi3 le1
 2SG say COP quite interesting EXCL
 ‘You say how funny it is!’



Generic Space

Superior & subordinate

Request/order from superior

Compliance of subordinate

Input Space₂

(Source domain)

Master

Minion/servant

Order from the Master

Cushion

=Kneeling down to the Master =>

Compliance

Input Space₁

(Target domain)

Central government

DAB Liberal Party

Requests (from the Central government)

Compliance with Central government directives

DAB Liberal Party

Request (from the Central government)

Cushion

=Kneeling down to the Master => Compliance = Compliance with Central government directives

Blended Space

Generic Space

Superior & subordinate

Request/order from superior

Compliance of subordinate

Input Space₁

Input Space₂

(Source domain)

(Target domain)

Central government

DAB Liberal Party

Requests (from the Central government)

Compliance with Central government directives

Master

Minion/servant

Order from the Master

Cushion

=Kneeling down to the Master =>

Compliance

A case of 'the pot calling the kettle black'

DAB Liberal Party

Request (from the Central government)

Cushion

=Kneeling down to the Master => Compliance = Compliance with Central government directives

Blended Space

Generic Space

Superior & subordinate

Request/order from superior

Compliance of subordinate

Input Space₂

(Source domain)

Master

Minion/servant

Order from the Master

Cushion

=Kneeling down to the Master =>

Compliance

Input Space₁

(Target domain)

Central government

DAB Liberal Party

Requests (from the Central government)

Compliance with Central government directives

A case of 'the pot calling the kettle black'

Implication:
Why don't you keep the cushion for yourself!

Blended Space

DAB Liberal Party

Request (from the Central government)

Cushion

=Kneeling down to the Master => Compliance = Compliance with Central government directives

Effect of the cushion metaphor



- œ The cushion metaphor triggered a **negative image** of the speaker's political rival.
- œ This visual metaphor allows a political candidate **to criticize her rival** yet at the same time **mitigate potential face-threat to herself as well as others**. (Lau Kin-Yee)
- œ Humor can be used to deflect and mitigate criticisms induced by visual metaphors in critical political discourse. (Tsang Yok-Sing)

What the visual 'cushion' metaphor does



- ❧ Through the use of the 'cushion' metaphor, the speaker cleverly paints a negative picture of a rival party by depicting them as 'political knee-benders' who are more inclined to listen to the Central government than to represent the voice of the people.
- ❧ The speaker also narrows the distance between herself and the audience by dis-aligning herself from those subservient to the Central government, and in this way portray herself and her political party as 'a voice for the people'.

What the visual 'cushion' metaphor does



- ⌘ Heighten the curiosity of the audience.
- ⌘ Engage the audience in deeper thinking through a rich network of mental maps.
- ⌘ Provide a visual cue to make a more lasting impact in the memory of the audience.
- ⌘ Create negative images of rivals through verbal indirectness.
- ⌘ Protect the speaker's positive self-image – Lau Kin-yee is applauded for her creativity and excused for criticizing others because she does it in an entertaining way



令劏房居民可以盡快入住公屋

D 民建聯
DAE

真誠在香港



社民連線

The Ladder Metaphor

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OFe0KiYSQGc> (00:47:52– 00:48:36)



DAB vs. LSD

Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong vs. League of Social Democrats

DAB 民建聯



- ☞ Chan Han Pan (CHP) 陳恒鏞
- ☞ The largest party in LegCo
- ☞ Centre-right
- ☞ Conservative
- ☞ Pro-Government
- ☞ Very pro-Beijing

3 ladder metaphors



Presents a ladder to the Hong Kong people, wishing them good prospects under the government's housing and youth development policies.

The 'ladder gift' is also used to ridicule the Democratic Party.

NTWest_47:52-48:24_ChanHanPan

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---------|-----------------|------------|-----------------|-------------|---------------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|-------------|
| 01 CHP: | 我哋 | 呢 | 今日 | 喺 | 呢一度 | 送 | 張 | 梯 | 畀 |
| | <i>ngo5dei6</i> | <i>le1</i> | <i>gam1jat6</i> | <i>hei2</i> | <i>lei1jat1dou6</i> | <i>sung3</i> | <i>zoeng1</i> | <i>tai1</i> | <i>bei2</i> |
| | 1PL | PRT | today | at | here | give | CL | ladder | DAT |

| | | | |
|----|-------------------|------------|----------------|
| 02 | 全港 | 嘅 | 市民。 |
| | <i>cyun4gong2</i> | <i>ge3</i> | <i>si5man4</i> |
| | all.Hong.Kong | ATTR | citizen |

Visual humor

‘We are here today to present a ladder for all Hong Kong citizens,’

03 希望 呢 我哋 房屋 政策 呢 係
hei1mong6 le1 ngo5dei6 fong4uk1 zing3caak3 le1 hai6
 hope PRT 1PL housing policy PRT COP

04 有 房屋 嘅 階梯，
jau5 fong4uk1 ge3 gaai1tai1
 EXIST house ATTR ladder

05 令到 劏房 嘅 市民 呢 可以 快啲 上到 公屋，
ling6dou3 tong1fong2 ge3 si5 man4 le1 ho2 ji5 faai3di1 soeng5-dou2 gung1uk1
 make sub-divided.units ATTR citizen PRT can quickly enter-POT public.housing

‘hoping that our housing policy is **the ladder** for (solving) our housing (problems), so that those who live in sub-divided units **can move into public housing estates** more quickly.’

- 06 小朋友， 即係 後生 嘅 朋友 呢 可以 買得起 樓，
siu2pang4 zik1hai6 hau6saang1 ge3 pang4jau5 le1 ho2ji3 maai5-dak1hei2 lau2
 children that.is young ATTR friends PRT can buy-POT house
- 07 中產 呢 亦 都 唔 需要 做 房奴。
zung1caan2 le1 jik6 dou1 m4 seoi1jiu3 zou6 fong2lou4
 middle.class PRT also EMP NEG necessary do housing.slave

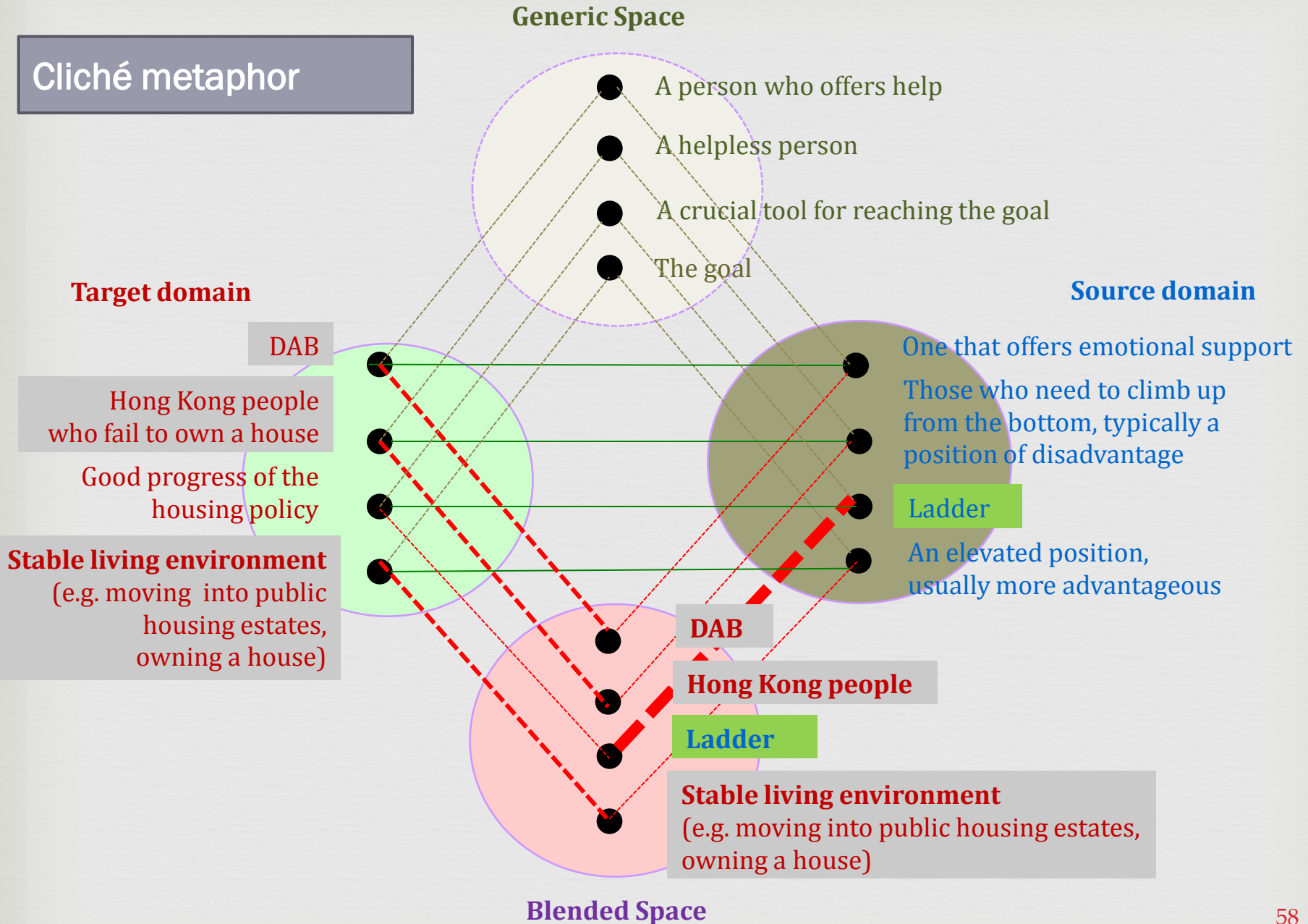
‘(We also hope that) the next generation **can afford to own a house**,
 (while) the middle class do not need to be the slaves of housing.’

Generic Space

Cliché metaphor

Target domain

Source domain



08 亦都 係 要 送 畀 全港 嘅 青年人，
jik6dou1 hai6 jiu3 sung3 bei2 cyun4 gong2 ge3 cing1lin4jan4
 also COP need give DAT all.Hong.Kong ATTR youngsters

09 希望 呢 大家 喺 置業、 學業、
hei1mong6 le1 daai6gaa1 hai2 zi3jip6 hok6jip6
 hope PRT everyone at home.ownership studies

10 就業 同埋 創業 方面 呢，
zau6jip6 tung4maai4 cong3jip6 fong1min6 le1
 career and start.up.business aspect PRT

11 有 一 個 向 上 流動 嘅 階梯。
jau5 jat1 go3 hoeng3 soeng6 lau4dung6 ge3 gaai1tai1
 EXIST one CL towards up mobility ATTR ladder

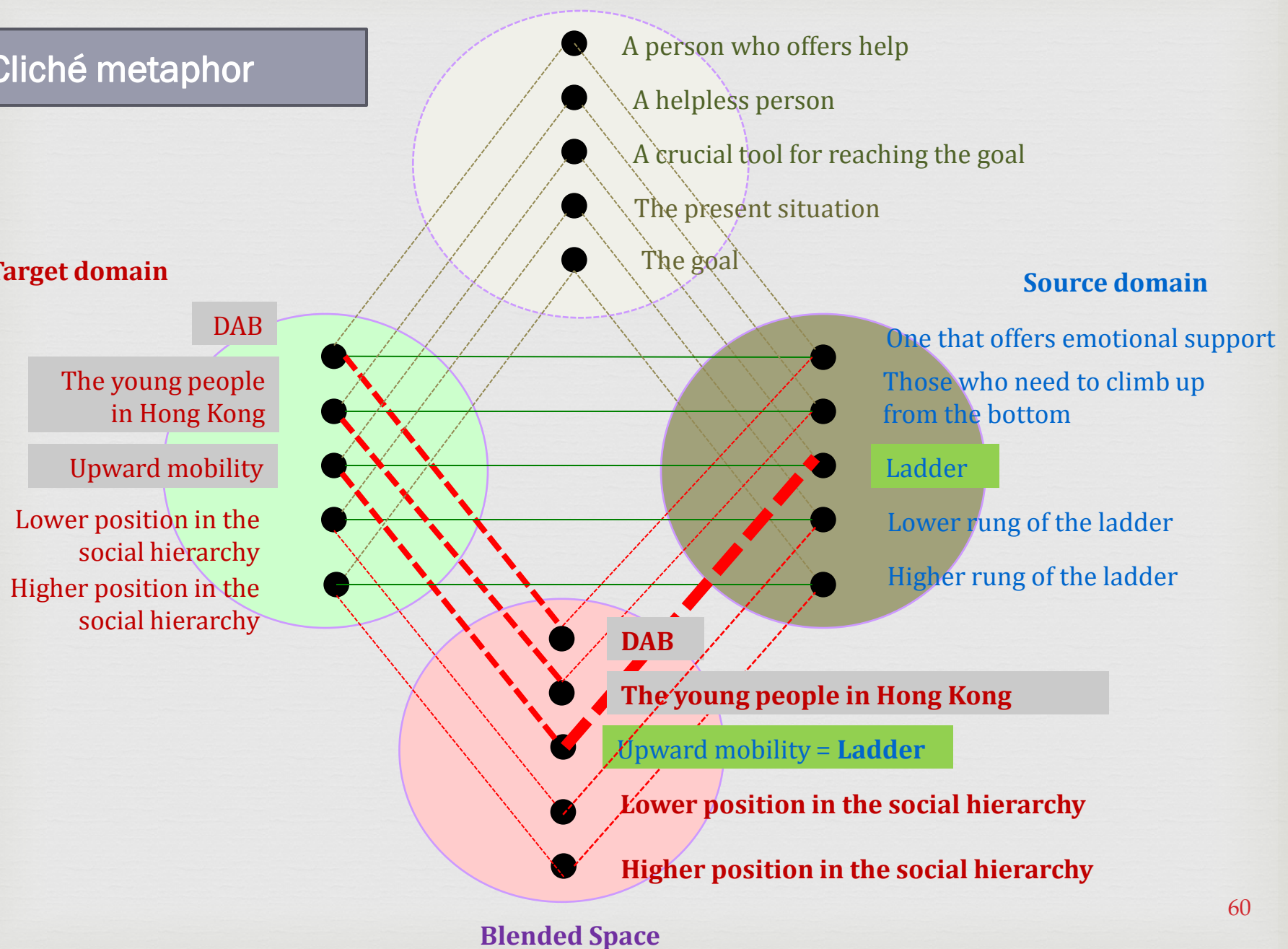
‘(I would) also give it to all youngsters in Hong Kong, hoping that **there will be a way (lit. ladder) for upward mobility** in terms of home ownership, studies, career opportunities and business entrepreneurships.’

Generic Space

Cliché metaphor

Target domain

Source domain





Democratic Party 民主黨



- ☞ Third largest party in Legislative Council
- ☞ Centrist
- ☞ Pro-democracy
- ☞ **Constant internal strife** since handover in 1997
 - ☞ Discord between Young Turks (People advocating reform) and members from Meeting Point, who are considered as founding members of the Party
 - ☞ Members from Young Turks camp left the party one after another owing to their dissatisfaction of the party

| | | | | | | | | |
|----|------------------|-------------|---------------|-------------|------------|-----------------|--------------|-------------|
| 12 | 更加 | 要 | 將 | 呢 | 個 | 禮物 | 送 | 畀 |
| | <i>gang3gaa1</i> | <i>jiu1</i> | <i>zoeng1</i> | <i>lei1</i> | <i>go3</i> | <i>lai5mat6</i> | <i>sung3</i> | <i>bei2</i> |
| | moreover | need | BA | this | CL | present | give | DAT |

| | | | | | |
|----|----------------------|------------|------------------|------------------|---|
| 13 | 民主黨 | 嘅 | 第三 | 梯隊 | ， |
| | <i>Man4Zyu2Dong2</i> | <i>ge3</i> | <i>dai6saam1</i> | <i>tai1deoi2</i> | |
| | Democratic.Party | ATTR | third | tier | |

'Fake goodwill'
 (sarcasm)

| | | | | | | | | | |
|----|------------------|-----------------|-------------|-----------------|---------------|-------------|---------------|-------------|----|
| 14 | 希望 | 你哋 | 有 | 機會 | (.) | 可以 | 爬 | 上 | 嚟。 |
| | <i>hei1mong6</i> | <i>lei5dei6</i> | <i>jau5</i> | <i>gei1wui6</i> | <i>ho2ji5</i> | <i>paa4</i> | <i>soeng5</i> | <i>lai4</i> | |
| | hope | 2PL | have | chance | can | climb | up | RSV | |

'(I) should also present this gift to (the members) of the third tier of the Democratic Party, hoping that you have a chance to climb up (i.e. enter the Legislative Council).'

Cliché metaphor

Generic Space

- A person who offers help
- A helpless person
- Means of improving the current situation
- The current problem
- The desired goal

Target domain

DAB offering emotional support

Junior members of the rival Democratic Party

Chances of improving their political standing

Currently with little political clout

Opportunity to win

Legislative Council seats will be seen as a promotion

Source domain

One that offers support

Those who need to climb up from the bottom

Ladder

Lower rung of the ladder

Higher rung of the ladder

DAB offering emotional support

Junior members of the Democratic Party

Opportunity to win LegCo seats = Ladder

Little political clout

Greater political clout

Blended Space

There is internal strife within the Democratic Party - Senior members in the party do not give chances to the junior members



DAB vs. LSD

Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong vs. League of Social Democrats



LSD 社會民主連線

1 ladder
metaphor

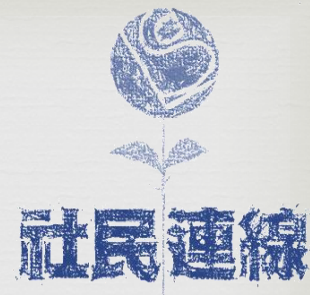
- ☞ Tsang Kin Shing(TKS)曾健成
- ☞ Left-wing
- ☞ Pro-democracy
- ☞ Pro-labour

Mocking DAB by using the ladder metaphor
but invoking a different source domain –
the ladder as the jumping-site for
suicides

Meaning:

DAB is not helping HK people but sending them to death.





01 TKS: 民建聯 送 呢 張 梯 呢
man4gin3lyun4 sung3 lei1 zoeng1 tai1 le1
 DAB give this CL ladder PRT

02 係 逼 港人 呢 喺 天棚 擒 高一啲 跳樓
hai6 bik1 gong2jan4 le1 hai2 tin1paang2 kam4 gou1jat1di1 tiu3lau2
 COP force Hong.Kong.people PRT at roof climb higher jump.off.building

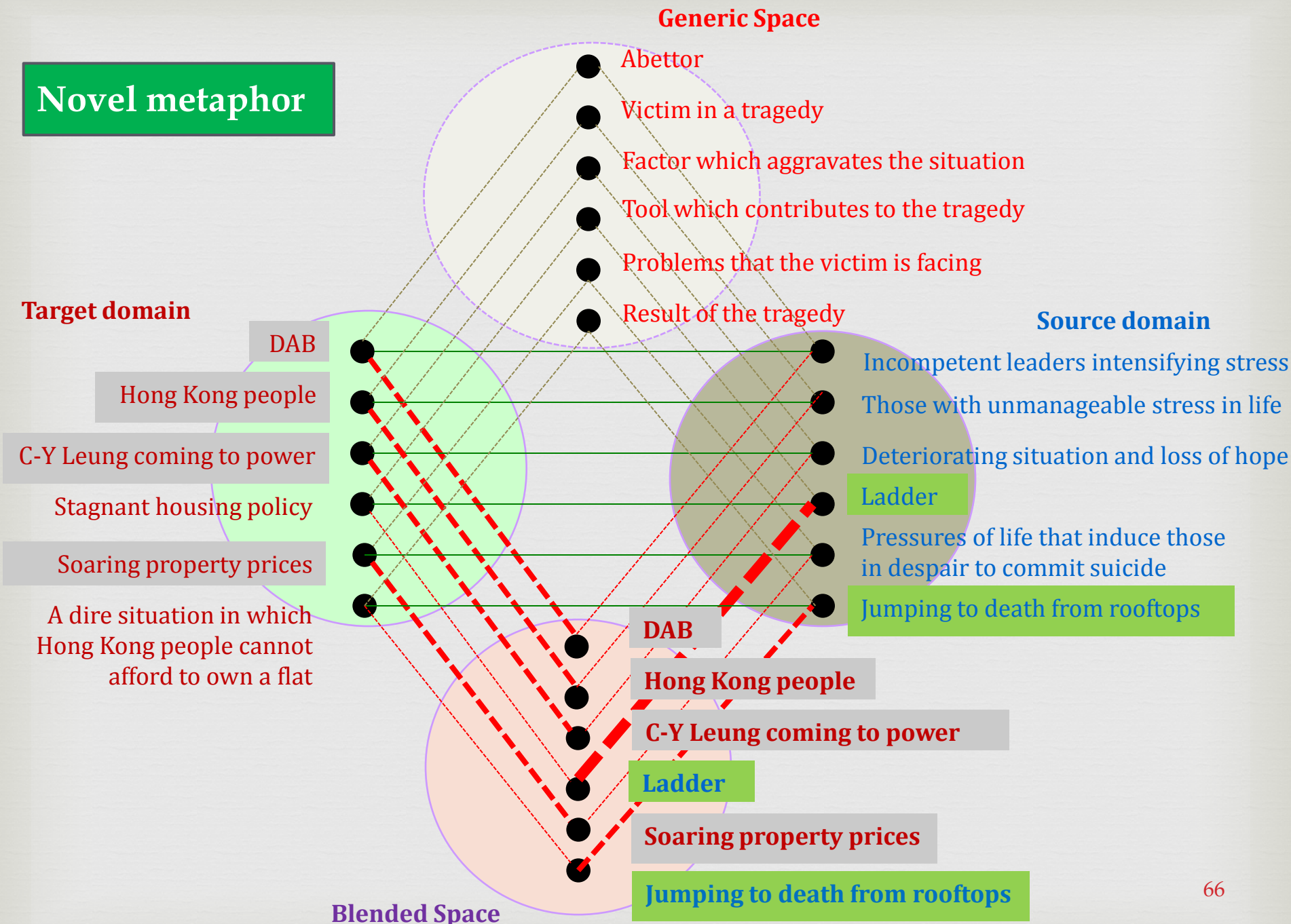
03 因為 梁振英 上場 之後 呢，
jan1wai6 Loeng4Zan3Jing1 soeng5coeng4 zi1hau6 le1
 because Leung.Chun.Ying come.to.power after PRT

04 樓價 再 升 多 一 成。
lau4gaa3 zoi3 sing1 do1 jat1 sing4
 housing.price again go.up more one tenth

Caustic sarcasm

‘DAB presented **this ladder** so as to force Hong Kong people to **climb up higher and jump to death from the roof**. It is because **the housing price has gone up by ten percent** since Leung Chun Ying came to power.’

Novel metaphor



Shifted metaphor

Generic Space

- A person who offers help
- A helpless person
- A crucial tool for reaching the goal
- The goal

Target domain

DAB

Hong Kong people
who fail to own a house

Good progress of the
housing policy

Stable living environment
(e.g. moving into public
housing estates;
owning a house)

Source domain

One that offers emotional support
Those who need to climb up
from the bottom, typically a
position of disadvantage
Ladder₂
An elevated position,
usually more advantageous

DAB

Hong Kong people

Ladder₂

Stable living environment
(e.g. moving into public housing estates,
owning a house)

Blended Space

Counter-metaphor

Generic Space

- A person who offers help false hope
- A helpless person
- A crucial tool for reaching the goal contributing to a tragedy
- The goal A tragic end

Source domain

One that offers emotional support induces stress
Those who need to climb up from the bottom, typically a position of disadvantage
Ladder₂
An elevated position, usually more advantageous to end one's life

Target domain

DAB

Hong Kong people who fail to own a house

Good progress of the housing policy

Stable living environment (e.g. moving into public housing estates, owning a house)
Soaring property prices

Blended Space

DAB advocating a failed housing policy

Hong Kong people under stress

Ladder = failed housing policy

Stable living environment (e.g. moving into public housing estates, owning a house)
Soaring property prices
→ people jumping off rooftops

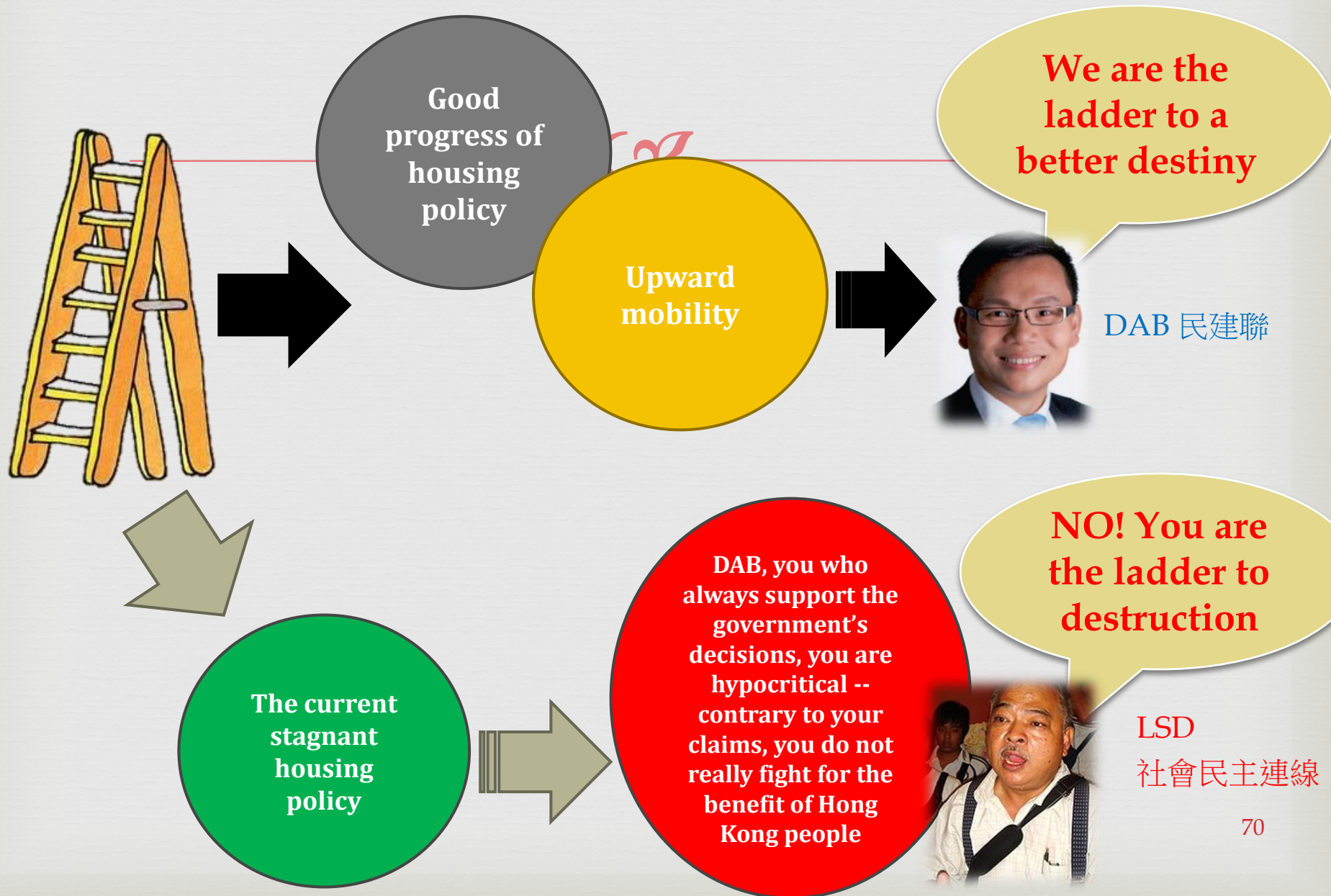
Why ladder metaphors are employed?



A ladder can be used to symbolise the following:

- (1) The progress of the housing policy (by Chan)
- (2) Upward mobility – a better life for the general public and career development opportunities for the younger generation (by Chan)
- (3) Encouragement to rival party – seen as ‘fake goodwill’ and hence a sarcastic remark (by Chan)
- (4) The current stagnant housing policy, which becomes a tragic inducement for some who despair to unfortunately end their life (by Tsang)

Competing symbolic representations behind the same metaphor



Interim summary (2)



- ✧ Using the ladder metaphor as an example, we show how **political identities are constructed and reconstructed** by rival parties.
- ✧ This is possible because symbolic representations behind a given metaphor can be interpreted differently by different political parties and these different interpretations are then used to compete for the audience's attention.

Conclusion (1)



- ❧ Politicians often engage in adversarial talk with their opponents.
- ❧ Yet at the same time, they often deploy verbal indirectness strategies to mitigate face threats through witty talk.
- ❧ This often includes the use of metaphors.
- ❧ Humor is often used as well, frequently to deflect face-threats.

Conclusion (2)



- Occasionally, sarcasm is used in counter-attacks. This heightens the face-threat, and is sometimes chosen in situations where frustration is high and the speaker feels a strong message has to be delivered regardless of violations to politeness maxims.
- Despite the rivalry, and sometimes the vitriol as well, both parties are aware that the verbal sparring is part of 'the political game'.

Conclusion (3)



- ⌘ Among the skills needed is the ability to 'attack', 'defend' or 'deflect', and 'counter-attack'.
- ⌘ The subtle and skillful use of verbal indirectness strategies including characterization metaphors is useful in creating positive political identities for selves and negative ones for others.
- ⌘ And when 'attacked', politicians also need to develop skills at deflecting and reconstructing damaged identities as well.

Conclusion (4)



✧ At the same time, it is important for the general public to understand the nature of this political game, so they can tease apart the 'performance' and 'the message', as this has important consequences for their choice of leaders and the policies that affect their welfare.

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