

Tactical Interiority; Hong Kong's 'Lived' Interiors as Praxis for Daily Living in High-Density Landscapes.

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Within Hong Kong's neoliberal landscape, what insights can an interrogation of its domestic interior deliver in terms of spatial and tactical adaptability in the context of volumetrically compressed living?

As an urban necessity, dwelling has globally become a malleable urban resource, part and parcel of speculative development far beyond the control of the individual (Levin Wright 1997). Demonstrative of planning and social policy, housing standards have become socio-spatial registers (Marshall 1950), that at the larger scale essentially expose misread criteria that affect social mobility and the 'well-being' of all citizens (Morris 1961).

However, beyond the structural issues lies a 'lived' reality. The need for equal housing (Yung & Lee 2014), and the rising criticism of public housing's punitive point system (Yau 2012), has forced the 'practice' of dwelling to become a 'tactical' environment.

In view of Hong Kong's spatial recoil, this paper commences from a position that sees compressed interiors as a mirror for social needs. First, the investigation of interiors questions how space is tactically mechanized – how and by what means – against compressed living that maximizes moments of 'micro-resistance.' Second, in an ethnographic sense, it posits the square-foot-society concept, that triangulates the conditions of quotidian everydayness with the spatial technical affordances that become specific to groups, peoples, and cultures with their customs and habits. As a conclusion the paper harnesses the 'tactical' to formulate alternatives to challenge planning attitudes that view compression as a natural consequence of sustainability and at the larger scale of Hong Kong's approach to Urbanization.

Keywords: lived; tactical; interior; dwelling; quotidian; Hong Kong

Interiority as micro tactics and as an urban mechanism

Within Hong Kong's neoliberal landscape, what insights can an interrogation of domestic interiors deliver in terms of spatial *adaptability* and *tactical* thinking in the context of compressed living?

The argument presented here builds on a long line of critical architecture and housing policy. To date the interior has received attention as a tactical mechanism in several conceptualizations. Yet, in comparison to the economic and social forces shaping cities, or at the larger scale, models that have shaped urban planning, its priority remains substandard. In the wake of a worldwide reaction against those forms of development, that see the city as a growth machine (Molotch 1976), several publications and debates are re-examining the conditions of domesticity as a focus for human betterment and sustainability. First, studies of social structures of 'city-ness,' in which the question of domesticity and dwelling stand as a central construct, are particularly relevant. Louis Wirth's original concept, or what he terms 'Urbanism' (1938), views settlements and its housing questions as the by-product of a collective social process underlined by three interrelated components: (1) the physical nature of the city comprised of population and forms of technologies, (2) a social system of organization involving social structures, institutions and social relationships, and (3) the formulation of a set of attitudes and registers, collectively produced norms, standards, and regulations to guide behavior processes. Harvey's *Rebel City* (2013), Castells' *Aftermath Project* (2011), and Weizman's *Civil Occupation* (2003) intersect into the current urbanization problem, reclaiming domesticity within contestation strategies as a response to financial deregulation, commodification, and housing crises (Carcia Peralt 2011).

Originally viewed as a human right (Geneva Charter), housing has become a resilient mean within twenty-first-century urbanity. Harvey (ibid.) summarizes key socio-spatial characteristics cities face globally as counter moments to neoliberalism. The consequences of socio-spatial polarization affect landscapes through spatial realities as territories have become fortified, fragmentary, and gated. Moreover, all nuances of the public domain are being ‘militarized’ through access and control, with private property used as an additional hegemonic instrument. Marcello (1993) takes this critique to its logical conclusion, seeing the city as a multiplicity of subdivided microstates. Against these tendencies, Harvey (ibid) argues for the reconceptualization of social movements and their inherent ‘claim’ by building on Lefebvre’s notions on ‘right to the city’ (1967).

This critique has led to several conceptualizations that aim to capture some of the urban activisms. For example, ‘Radical Cities’ (McGuirk 2014), ‘Occupancy Urbanism’ (Benjamin 2008), and ‘Pirate Modernity’ (Sundaram 2010), discuss how activists, pragmatists, and social idealists are performing bold social-spatial experiments harnessing design to shape territories. Benjamin’s ‘Occupancy Urbanism’ is valuable because of its link to domestic interiors. In his analysis, the ‘urbanization of the local’ becomes an incentive for the territorializing and politicization of all forms of space, including land tenure processes that aim to facilitate social progress and individual mobilization. Leveraging gradations of micro-resistance, ‘occupancy urbanism’ views the city as a product of contesting territories and forms of encroachment. Secondly, in this framework the relationship between micro and compact living is linked to the aspects of contestation and encroachment. For Hernandez (2016) and Post (2014), small living is indivertibly coupled to transience and not dwelling permanence. Conchar (2016) relates micro living to millennials, the homeless, and temporary residents in

cities. Brenner's (2015) questioning of 'Tactical Urbanism' continues the critique of the ineffectiveness of design professionals (architects and planners alike) to establish 'alternative urban futures' whilst looking at the repositioning of 'design' as cooperative praxis for the production, use, and governing of all forms of urban life, including that of dwellings. Meant to critique forms and nuances of urbanization, design sets its focus on the development of jointly shared capacities to reformulate what Watson terms 'co-produced' agendas (Watson 2003) and other possible forms of socioeconomic inclusion. More specifically, the work of Rawes and Lord, entitled 'Equal by Design' (2016), highlights both the misnomer of twenty-first-century affordable housing and the impact of housing design on societal wellbeing. In their view, 'human design' questions programmable conditions that allow users to uplift themselves from specific socio-economic conditions, promoting social mobility. In this light, both cultural and social lives are collectively impacted by the quality of housing, reemphasizing the importance of the position of the interior to formulate cities from the inside out.

This paper uses 'interiority' as grounding for the practices of daily life, against the preconditions of predefined dwelling types ('model') to elaborate on the tactical approach within fifty Hong Kong interiors.

In the larger framework, the approach explores the square-foot-society concept. In the Hong Kong context, the square-foot-society concept theoretically articulates domestic usage, similar to what George Perec (2008) terms the 'quotidian' conditions of social settings, in terms of the everyday or the mundane, against the standardization of all forms of 'lived' space. First, based on the understanding of how people tactically shape their dwelling spaces, the square-foot-society concept questions domestic lifestyles, through the decoding of both the mundane and specific conditions that impact

spatial engagement, human endeavor, religious practices, forms of public redress, and cultural beliefs that are all compressed into a ‘square foot’ metric and, eventually, are set against financial value. Secondly, as concept it seeks to expose how the domestic interior, as a product of an ethnographic context (individual, group, and family), reacts against square feet norms to script new habitual types in a collective praxis. It seeks to frame the material culture of the domestic interior as a critique against speculative ‘models’, and in doing so questions normative spatial usage, dwelling policies, housing models, and legal aspects as facilitators (rather than counter agents) of extreme social compression.

Hong Kong’s ‘models’ versus the ‘lived’ – the contextual and geographic nexus

The Special Administrative Region of Hong Kong has always been an ‘island of entrepreneurship’ (Clinton 2014). Historically known as a ‘market city’ (Ohno 1992) with a prominent skyline and high-rise tradition, its physical and formal characteristics pertain to (1) a landscape of severe density, (2) three-dimensional hybridity in a public-private spatial landscape, and (3) structural and social conditions of adjacency.

Furthermore, Hong Kong has embraced amplifying levels of excessiveness and accepted neoliberal directives, allowing ‘manic’ density and hyper consumerism – all unified through the vertical stacking of urban infrastructure.

In contrast, Yeh (2006) and Lin (2011) question Hong Kong’s future under the ‘one-country-two-systems’ policy, the ‘emptying out’ of manufacturing services and the operation of an urbanization strategy that is (1) dependent on land-centered processes, (2) highly speculative in nature, and (3) mechanized for the pursuit of revenue.

Particular to Canton, the origins of the majority of existing high-rise types, find their spatial roots in the *Tong Lau* building typology (Shelton 2011). *Tong Lau* typologies

typify the most basic housing unit from which all other housing types have been derived, setting the minimum standards for subsequent housing models. As such, Tong Lau's generic prototypes, whereby the shop house becomes the defining spatial model, are influenced by the norms and standards of housing requirements and industrial endeavors in southern China (Lee 2010). Drawing from the availability of material, customs, and living standards, the Tong Lau shop house standardized the space in which urban life has played out since the nineteenth century in its 700 sq.ft. floor spaces, one kitchen, and basic bathroom facilities. Moreover, this typology is credited for regulating (a) social structures, (b) architectural criteria, and (c) industrial facilities within Asian cities, as well as (d) influencing the spatial modularization of contemporary housing. Ironically, the same model is credited for Hong Kong's extreme dwellings. Cage homes, subdivisions, and rooftop dwellings, where beds are placed along corridors (Shelton 2011), and upper floors are segmented to allocate additional rental spaces, with one family per room in some instances, have become an accepted phenomenon. The Hong Kong Housing Authority (2016) states that the current domestic landscape consists of rental, private ownership, temporary dwellings, and stock housing. Of these, some equate to 45 m² (Wilson 2016) in size. The most recent additions – Capsule houses – are 20 sq.ft., and cost HK\$5,100 in rent per month (Yuen 2016). With demand exceeding supply, the present challenge is to engage in domestic contestation to counteract financial deregulation within a general housing shortfall.

Against the condition of the aforementioned 'model,' Hong Kong's 'lived' continuously adapt limited space to suit individual needs (cf. Lam's iconic photo series 2016). Considering the city as a cultural and geographic nexus, its spatial practices remain specific to a post-colonial Eurocentric-derived urban model. With Hong Kong's

present socio-economic diversity, a new 'ontology' of interiority and definition of 'in' and 'exterior' requires reformulation in recognition of the nuances of the everyday. In the neoliberal setting, the agency afforded to customs and habits brings into question the use of interior space, consumerism, and the retail economy as a key aspect to comprehend the lived. The pressures exerted on the limits of space, usage, and spatial 'value' establishes the grounding for a social ecology, locked in by square foot norms. Although the square foot concept is linked to lifestyles of excess, in parallel it remains indicative of survival tactics. As a case in point, the destitute are forced to accept domestic possibilities such as 'cage homes,' equal to 15.06 sq.ft. (Soco 2016), or makeshift sleeping quarters the size of a chair (2.5 sq.ft.) offered by 24-hour McDonalds outlets, which are classified as 'McRefugees' (Ngo 2015). These examples link spatial limits to factors of choice, society, and consumerism. Lam's (op. cit.) photo essays capturing cramped apartments, of which the smallest is 280 sq.ft., present 'an interior vernacular' among low-income families, the elderly, and the unemployed, that conforms to a spatial-economic metric of compression. Single-room dwellings are reconstructed through additions, layering, and add-ons, transforming the use of objects. Hong Kong's punitive point system for housing estates (Yau 2012) is a tell-tale sign of domestic tremors challenging the model against the needs of families. As a mechanism of control to moderate behavior, the habitual 'code' enlists 28 'prohibited' activities, regulating spatial behaviors and attitudes. The system documents external violations all equitable to space and size, harnessing policy as a regulatory metric.

In a similar light, 'The Collateral Event, Stratagems in Architecture of Hong Kong' presented at the 2016 Venice Architecture Biennale, represents thirty-six 'stratagems' (三十六計) applied in wars in ancient China. The architect and artist participants attempt to develop strategies for Hong Kong's cramped spaces and volatile

housing market (Lee 2012) drawing inspiration from original warfare tactics. They examine daily challenges, consider solutions for an alternative urban reality, and trace the battleground drawing on their practices of intervention and adaptation. In this instance, the square foot concept operates in both architecture and artistry, unfolding the challenges and personal needs of the public, the commons, in a wider sense. Positioned as an ‘activists’ strategy,’ the concept situates ‘difference’ against the prevailing conditions, effectively describing the modes of radical domesticity and the socio-technical affordances of daily life (Simone 2014).

This bring to the fore an inherent necessity to fully mechanize ‘the square foot society’ as operative concept. In doing so this spatial-social concept expedites the triangulation of all quotidian practises within social settings, against certain technical affordances, expressed within the spatial dimension. As such, its material conditions are specific to how and in what manner groups, peoples, and cultures with their customs, habits, and in Madden’s terms, mutual differences (Madden 2010) develop modes of counter actions.

Three considerations for linking tactical thinking and interiority – housing models, spatial appropriation, and product design

As already discussed, both artistic and architectural critiques of restricted living in Hong Kong focus on how Hongkongers tactically navigate cramped spaces defined by speculative dwelling types. Moreover, the work shown here produces knowledge through three interrelated inquiries: the (a) domestic interior as speculative unit, (b) ‘three-dimensional’ living, and (c) objects of appropriation. The question driving these inquiries is: what are the methodological implications for examining the ‘model’ and the ‘lived’ through the conditions of the spatial discourses, and how would these link to

tactical strategies?

This first line of theoretical research probes how the methodical foundations of speculative housing dehumanized domestic interior space. From within architectural criticism, Morris (1961) outlines the complexity of questioning domestic standards in relation to living quality. His *magnum opus*, “Homes for Today and Tomorrow,” delivers a descriptive perspective that relates the spatial expression of the home, outdoor spaces, and street relationships to the needs of the individual by asking ‘what are the new platforms and ways of living?’ Covering both freestanding and apartment-type housing, the study reflects on standard space allocations influenced by living patterns. It examines heating and cooling requirements, hallways, open plan layouts, spaces for meals, living spaces, bedrooms, bathrooms, and specificity of toilets for families and singles. Working areas (kitchens, roof spaces and storage spaces) are given special attention in the discussion of design for use, appropriation, and functional layouts. Apartments that Morris criticizes rethink lift spaces, private balconies, sound insulation, and refuse disposal. Overall, the report establishes the need to formulate domestic standards based on humane and ethical principles for life in a mixed society. These standards promote social mobility and wellbeing. At the opposite end of the scale, Van Gasteren et al. (2016) show the need for affordable housing within megacities. Affected by emerging economies, housing needs and requirements appear to have shifted away from mass production and globally driven standards, giving prominence to local circumstances, minimum standards, the needs of the individual, and ‘other’ economic support structures. The investigation provides an array of planning options taken from Africa, India, and Iran set against older examples where similar challenges were faced, for instance in North America and Europe. With Indonesia and Africa, Simone (2009, 2014) assesses habitual ecologies in both the superblock as well as the slum. He states

that an investigation of household strategies for acquiring, financing, adapting, and inhabiting residential space requires a range of flexible tools tailored to users, space, and needs.

The second point that is argued for here expounds on the crossover from two- to three-dimensional explorations of dwellings as a formative typology. Bruyns and Lam (2016) have discussed residential typologies driven by floor plan sizes or façade modularity. Cubic Meter Domesticity (*ibid.*) leads an enquiry on volumetric compression of interior spaces, driven by a modernist-inspired exterior modularity of windows and balconies. Herein we argued for the mathematizing of the ‘floor plan’ concept (the so-called ‘square foot’ as measure) and its deliberate omission of volume as a livable variable. In contrast, the ‘M^{3D}’ (cubic meter dimensions) proposes spatial notions that confront planning-led forms of housing by altering a surface area approach to a volumetric understanding (m³), which recognizes the three-dimensional quality – and not quantity – of space.

This is directly linked to housing policy outside Hong Kong, where the spatial practices of the urban commons have become instrumental in spatial sharing. Sohn, Kousulas and Bruyns (2015) have investigated habitual strategies for sharing resources and space known as ‘commoning.’ This is further explicated in an array of diverse interior settings that show how the concept of the ‘commons’ moves beyond the public into the private, particularly into inner worlds of the household interior (Bruyns 2015). These link back to what Low (*cf.* Bruyns & Low 2012) discuss as the notions of ‘cohabitation’, inclusive of Watson’s (2003) ‘coproduction’, that captures the emergence of other types of habitual ecologies amongst dwellers. Any reading of the lived interior confirms the presence of a socio-technical dimension by uncovering how collectives transform individuals and groups into resilient entities. Nuanced tactics of

plot encroachment and infrastructural modification are often barely more than informal piecemeal additions to existing dwelling structures. Yet collectively they extend the assets of resource-poor individuals and gain specific importance at the lower levels of socio-economic strata. Either as a collective strategy of smaller groups or of larger movements, the 'urban commons' can be compared with the concept of the 'tactical' (Brenner, op. cit.). Sometimes viewed as 'light' contestation, these tactical processes nevertheless create spaces of use and appropriation drawing from local agency to exert influence or adjust immediate environments. As a concept, 'commoning' could impact housing practices by changing the way in which social alliances between individuals are constituted, as well as how spatial appropriation redefines viable economic avenues through discursive forms of tenancy, temporary ownership and dwelling possibilities in a three-dimensional condition.

A final theoretical line expands the argument by looking into how products or physical objects become tactical devices in the volumetric understanding of lived interiors. Studies have shown how users change and modify products to suit their needs. Dung-Shen et al. (2016) and Vihalemm et al. (2015) have examined how design can lead to social change. Studying the lived interior, Paavilainen et al. (2016) target design and its relationship with the domestic space from the standpoint of the individual end-user. Madden (2017) and Blomberg (1993) outline the link between design, ethnography, and social life, asserting that they are better understood through the 'co-designed' process or artifact of the dwelling. Linking this socio-technical question to Blumer's (1969) symbolic interactionist theory, they have studied the ways and manners in which domestic objects are altered by means of interaction. They see a detachment of design from the designer's original intention, which allows a re-appropriation of objects in lived interiors. They have shown the importance of studying

‘appropriation’ to map social change through the objects, and how the context of use in turn distresses the meaning of the objects.

The key insight here is that the definition of the ‘home’ itself is a part of social change, and an aspect of urbanism in its own right, be it defined as an esthetic or as a necessity (cf. Han 2015; Lee 2016). Depending on the definition of the home as either ‘gallery,’ ‘hotel,’ or ‘museum,’ Paavilainen et al. (2016) show how the meaning and the importance of commodities shift, and how this shift alters the type and range of products deemed necessary. For example, a home defined as a ‘hotel’ directly alters the functions related to cooking, eating, sleeping, and personal hygiene. In comparison, a home defined as a ‘museum’ centers on gathering acquaintances who share a common interest with a goal of preserving objects for future generations. When a home is defined as a ‘gallery,’ the emphasis is on the curation of objects to make style statements. If their study has a more general bearing, it emphasizes how one ‘lives’ within the restraints of the model, and in what nuanced form such changes are made.

Fifty Interiors – tactical practices of the ‘lived’ and the quotidian of strategies

An empirical survey of fifty Hong Kong domestic spaces further explicates evidence of Hong Kong’s ‘lived.’ Each setting embodied a quotidian context, a place of residence that speaks to both the acquisition and adaptation of space. Moreover, they mirror a tactical reality as a means of discrete forms of betterment. (Figure 1 and 2).

The process of examination translated photographic images and planning documents into accurate two-dimensional annotated drawings. Within individual units, each internal wall was photographically documented. This meant a standard setup capturing vertical surfaces at right angles, to document their use, the type of objects per wall, spatial arrangement and if any adjustments were made to either walls’ structure,

furnishings, surfaces, and adjacent spaces. Overall, 197 settings were redrawn and annotated (Figures 3, 4 and 5) covering bedrooms, kitchens, lounges and corridors. A documentation set comprised of a wall image and a to-scale tracing of the in-situ objects accompanied by a list of items related to the space or wall. Where possible the volumetric properties of larger furniture pieces were measured and documented. The series of images allowed for precise and detailed descriptions of 'how' and 'in what manner' the interiors remained either unaffected or showed evidence of systematic change. This helped identify permanent or temporary changes as well as the specific modes of change, either as (a) appropriations, (b) adaptation, (c) inhabitation, (d) occupation, or (e) extension. In each drawing, the list of annotations is specific to the object and whether the object was used to change the conditions of space and the living situations. If a window was altered then the annotations indicate this, with a clear description of, for example, "altered window metal grill, tied together with 3 mm steel wire"; whereas a makeshift wardrobe would be described and shown as "steel tubing placed diagonally across the room corners as a wardrobe." Overall, the itemized catalogs of 'figure-ground' interiors allowed for the visualization of spatial inventories and specific ways in which these tactical landscapes materialize or the nomenclatures required to describe each element.

In terms of size, the sampled interiors limited its scope to size orders of (a) 1076 sq.ft. or 100m² (five dwellings surveyed), (b) 538 sq.ft. or 50m² (ten dwellings), (c) 430-322 sq.ft. or 40-30m² (ten dwellings), (d) 215-107 sq.ft. or 20-10m² (ten dwellings), (e) 53 sq.ft. or 5m² (ten dwellings), and (f) 10.7 sq.ft. or 1m² (five dwelling). For categories (e) and (f), the survey recorded dwelling situations in both a formal and informal setting. This included, where possible, the surveying of coffin homes or informal housing in public spaces, on roof tops or spaces, as for example under bridges and flyovers,

protected from the weather.

Quotidian tactics relate to both interior as well as exterior spaces. Exterior spaces demonstrated consistent tactics of replicating interior needs. What interiors themselves could not provide, exterior spaces adjacent to dwellings had to compensate for. Scrutiny of planning documents, spanning fifty years (1967 – 2017), afforded a side-by-side comparison of what types of interior and exterior spaces were planned and how these spatial types have been used over a period of time, specifically looking at external amenities of dwellings, circulation spaces, accessibility to hallways, and the number of elevators and staircases. To supplement the documentation, a photographic survey of balconies, façades, communal spaces, circulation spaces, common rooms, and service spaces helped establish their characteristics.

The temporary and ad hoc additions to balconies, windows, and doorways were a clear sign of the externalization of private needs. This varied at times and per season. Seasonal use of balconies for festivities, family gatherings which could not be accommodated within a small apartment, or as a place for drying food and clothing remain a common sight. Framing of exterior windows to ‘add’ storage spaces was a key finding of incremental incentives. Over time these ‘cages’ and steel structures became a space for greening the otherwise concrete interiors or for storing household items like brooms. Temporary tactics, inserted and then immediately withdrawn, impacted the types of storage dwellers harness daily. Household items in large container bags were each day for a couple of hours, placed in external circulation spaces. Dwellers had to reach consensus on the use of these spaces, allowing each other mini-ownerships for short periods of time. This implemented other means of tactical thinking, whereby ‘social vigilance’, for a lack of a better term, safeguarded goods, notifying one another

when a 'foreign' individual was seen on the premises. With a foreign presence identified, the good were retracted back into to the safety of the dwellings.

Overall, external spatial tactics remain predominantly appropriation based, establishing an ebb and flow of occupational practices. The harnessing of dwelling externalities had an essential role in the types of manifestations that materializes and re-materializes to reach equilibrium, as a balance between the interior practices and exterior possibilities.

Interior tactics are characteristically more assertive and permanent in approach. (Figures 6, 7 and 8). With the exterior conditions orientated towards spatial appropriations that remain 'light' in character, evidence from domestic interiors showed great affinity to radical adaptations. A common characteristic among the interiors was a tendency to parcel-off portions of space, breaking down larger spaces or wall surfaces for other use. In its most radical form, this means the allotment of a living room, a religious, sleeping, and storage space in addition to a formal dining room setting. A religious shrine, the addition of a double bunk bed, with the lower section used as a bed by the domestic helper, screened off with fabric, with the upper bed used as a storage shelf, stood as one example of such interior 'insertions' (Figure 9). Units which had to accommodate extended family members were re-adapted, placing temporary walls to re-partition rooms, creating a variety of individual units. These units comfortably accommodated six individuals in separate bedrooms co-sharing kitchens and bathrooms, spilling out possibilities for gathering into the external passageways. Within the 200 and 300 sq.ft. units in size, some cases documented the reprogramming of earmarked functions, eradicating interior functions entirely. With the limited space, it is not uncommon to witness how distinct dual functions within an apartment, that is to say

separate kitchens, washrooms, and sleeping spaces, merged into monofunctional spaces, where for example the kitchen and washrooms fused into a single washroom-kitchen hybrid. The complete removal of kitchens, to create more leasable bedroom spaces, implicated new types of dwelling, forcing domestic functions earmarked for the home into the public sphere. The preference for private space (mostly spaces for sleeping and ablutions) over social spaces (spaces meant for cooking and gathering) reprograms the 'street-to-dwelling' and 'social-to-private' relationships. When social spaces are eradicated, the street becomes the epicenter of nutrition, where cheap sustenance is part and parcel of a de facto exterior living room – deliberately forcing quotidian thinking into wider social-spatial networks. Such tendencies bring into questions the interiorization of the street itself, challenging the domains of public and private, or that which is in- and exterior functionally bound.

While access to cage homes (equaling 15 sq.ft. in size) were limited, what was witnessed remains a case in point as they demonstrated the tactical provisions afforded by the external shell of each steel surface. With abundant hard surfaces, cage or coffin homes stand as a common 'resource,' using the external shell as a communal platform whereby inhabitants continuously have to negotiate the sharing of basic amenities with the hanging of clothes, bath towels, appliances, and personal memorabilia on the exteriors of such micro dwellings. Although this may display a less aggressive approach to spatial and tactical thinking, the process remains a continued cycle of re-adaptation and re-negotiation.

The use of full ceiling-to-floor wall surfaces in all the dwellings had no definitive bearing on the type of spatial tactics. Naturally, smaller spaces showed greater signs of 'micro-inhabitation.' Walls remain largely unused except when a lack of storage and cupboard space necessitated other solutions. Storage remained a general

concern. This triggered dwellers to seek supplementary micro tactics, not so much evident in one big swoop of altering spatial functions, but in a number of smaller acts of change where additional makeshift cupboards were placed on wheels, air-conditioning was used as hanging elements, and steel bars placed across room corners as hanging space, all variegated solutions to the same problem. The storage of containers inside containers, on top of and under household items such as beds or on top of dryers, appeared a daily practice in most interiors. This also impacted how fixed elements were harnessed as structural support for micro tactics. Windows used as shelving, doors from which to suspend objects and the use of residual soffit spaces (between concrete slabs and false ceilings) showed the tenacity of pursuing other volumetric possibilities. From the smaller to the larger 600 sq.ft. units, each micro state of dwelling stands as affirmation of Paavilainen's (op. cit.) notions of commodity shift, essentially challenging how interior livability and its functional categories stand in opposition to one another when confronted by a society having to adjust to uncertain periods of tenancy or varied dwellings that reduce in size and affordability.

Finally, contrary to an original hypothesis that claims the use of Hong Kong interiors showed signs of becoming three-dimensional in use, the evidence remains lacking. From the outset, it was believed that cramped spaces would demonstrate greater use of the space in all dimensions. Harnessing volume as part of tactical thinking would have meant an even stronger take on floor-to-ceiling-to-function relationships, within either the in and exterior conditions of the 'lived'. For this question alone, more research would be required.

Closing remarks

Following the articulate critiques of the ‘lived’ and the characteristics of *quotidian* tactic within the limits of the prescribed dwelling model, we are once more reminded of dwelling metaphors, as for example those found in ‘The Collateral Event, Stratagems in Architecture of Hong Kong.’ Although one of the most articulate art-architecture-based critiques, its basic military metaphor limits its use, while its artistic method confines it to within the realm of art, leaving its human and spatial implications unarticulated. In essence, such metaphors remain architecturally driven, disassociated with the condition of interiority as a fundamental human condition and site for personalized micro resistance.

In conclusion to the debate here, within the context of both predefined dwelling types and the everydayness of the ‘lived,’ Hong Kong’s tactical practices demonstrates differentiation in context, scale, and applicability. With the decreasing availability of larger dwellings, housing estates, apartment blocks, and their functional spaces demonstrate greater affinity to tactical strategies through either the practice of (i) appropriations, (ii) occupation, or (iii) the extension of dwellings outwards. They stand as products that mirror human necessity, outside the interiority of the immediate dwelling. As for evidence of the dwelling interior themselves, these become tactical, through predominantly (iv) adaptation (spatial or in terms of its elements), whilst (v) altering the inhabitation of each individual space. Lived realities necessitate different actions of inhabitation, situated within the confines of the model. They mirror incentives, although similar in appearance, showing how each micro site embodies a type of resistance that attests to the personalization of the interior against the ‘model’s’ conformity and standardization.

Confirmation of Paavilainen’s (op. cit.) concept - in the shifting of the

commodity of either space, objects, and use - highlights the fluidity of Hong Kong's interiority at large. The strategizing, planning, and tactical understanding of hallways, living rooms, bedrooms, a window, or door, become instances of 'micro-lives.' It not only echoes into other forms of interiority, it concomitantly establishes new 'external' links to the urban. Interiors within interiors, dwellings within spaces underneath bridges and pedestrian flyovers, a makeshift cardboard dwelling in a staircase, collectively materialize 'micro-transformation,' or as Valliente, et al. (2018) term it; 'acts of spatial violence.' Irrespective of the dwelling size, or the elements used to adapt or claim the use of interior spaces, the importance of the socio-technical can in each instance not be ignored nor overlooked. This further brings to bear the full weight of societal pressures caught between 'square foot' ideologies and the realities implemented through planning.

If indeed Hong Kong dwellers have become conditioned into being a 'square-foot-driven' society evident from the cacophony of attempts that strategize the spaces of the interior, then perhaps alternatives to use, appropriation, extensions, and occupation are to be found in the renewed understanding of what drives humane housing at the territorial level. Although perceived as a leap from the interior to territorial strategies, the move formalizes a position against the enduring urban concepts of 'compact city' and its advocacy for the design of smaller living options as part of a sustainable paradigm. As such, dwelling standards or model typologies should be re-questioned to counteract the ever-growing tendency that favors a systemic reduction of all forms of usable space. Only when the conditions of dwelling are newly scripted would it be possible to design an interior form in full recognition of the spatial needs of a quotidian society and, more specifically, the wellbeing of Hong Kong dwellers within contemporary urbanization.

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Figures 1 and 2:

Appropriation tactics. Comparison of the variety of spatial appropriations within the housing estates' interior circulation spaces and dwellings themselves. Source: Gerhard Bruyns, Marko Lam, and Veronica Lee Ching.

Figures 3, 4 and 5:

Interior documentations. Translation of the 197 interior images into 119 interior annotations, redrawn to detail the use and amendments of interior spaces. Source: Gerhard Bruyns, Marko Lam, and Veronica Lee Ching.

Figure 6:

Incremental tactics. Additional storage spaces remain a key concern within the use of interiors. Incremental additions or functional layering for increased storage and usage is a consistent factor in the spatial adaptations. Source: Gerhard Bruyns, Marko Lam, and Veronica Lee Ching.

Figure 7 and 8:

Volumetric thinking and micro tactics. The storage of ‘containers-in-containers,’ on top of, and under household items such as beds or on top of household appliances are a common practice. Air conditioners as wardrobes, doors as cupboard spaces, and the use of ceilings as larger volumes of storage, collectively link to notions of commodity shifts. This challenges how interior livability and its functional categories stand in opposition to one another

Figure 9:

Tactical insertions. The insertion of new functions into existing interior programs, where for example additional sleeping and religious spaces are fused with existing functional layouts. A living becomes a living-sleeping-shrine space. Source: Gerhard Bruyns.