P4 Reflection Paper

MSc Urbanism, Delft University of Technology

Project:
Mutual dialogue & Digital technology
Re-establishing a mutual dialogue between people & space: The case of hong kong

Student:
Ziyi Guo   4501411
Z.Guo-1@student.tudelft.nl

Mentors:
First mentor: Luisa Calabrese
Second mentor: Saskia de wit

Aspect 2 • the relationship between the theme of the graduation lab and the subject/case study chosen by the student within this framework (location/object)

As the graduation lab 'Urban Fabrics' mainly emphasises on the exploration of how new technologies change both the physical environment and intangible structures through design. It aims to understand how we as urbanists can make sustainable, attractive and vital urban design that could contribute to our society.

The project uses Hong Kong as an testing example to figure out the possibilities of combine digital space with physical public spaces, thus further reinforcing the social interaction. As the society of Hong Kong now is tending to be digitalized, the existing physical public space, which was designed in the past can not reflect changing and digitalizing society anymore. This makes the physical public spaces, as the stage and physical carrier of public life seems to be obsoleting. Therefore, what is necessary is to re-consider the new role of our physical living environment with the participation of new technologies in the new era.

Within the studio 'Urban Fabrics', it could helps me to establish a design perspective, that is, understanding a sequence of design decisions taken by designers at various scales and aspects of our urban context. For instance, in order to figure out a proper way to implement digital technology into physical space, it is important to focus not only the digital technology, but also the different spacial character while researching; Similarly, designers' efforts should not only be put on developing strategy, but also on testing design proposal in a smaller scale. Since the situation of Hong Kong, including the tangible and intangible structures, are unique and different from European or even other Asian cities. Apart from the design approach, zooming out and give evaluation and suggestions of the applicability on different urban context and time scale is also necessary, as it is the way to transfer the information and conclusion of this thesis into a general design language, which could be used for other cases.

Aspect 1 • the relationship between research and design
Aspect 3 • the relationship between the methodical line of approach of the graduation lab and the method chosen by the student in this framework

With my understanding, the methodical line of approach of the graduation lab of 'Urban Fabrics' emphasizes the interconnected relationship between research and design through the act of designing. First of all, research is the foundation for every design process, that it plays an important role on influencing the concept generation process and the application of the concept on the site during the process of design. Furthermore, with the implementation of the generated concept, reflection and evaluation can produce a discussable output, which might be useful to other intended new projects. In this way, it actually forms a circle in which the input and output can be efficiently connected, and help with the generation of new knowledge and insights. As it is said, 'The contribution of design practice to academic research can be described as a spectrum with two extreme poles, with a long and variable combinations between the two.' Research into design could also be seen as one of the most straightforward and efficient way to help with understanding not only the basic knowledge, but also the aspect of history, society, technique, as well as the practical experiments and results.

In the case of my project, the study of the physical public space and social environment evaluates the spacial quality and explicits the requirement and goal. Regarding the aspect of digital technology, the analysis of a sequence of cases study relates to the implementation and practice experiment also helps me with understanding and transferring digital technology spatially in the context of urban design, which then guides the whole design process.

Aspect 4 • the relationship between the project and the wider social context

Our society is now experiencing the continuously transformation of globalisation, privatisation, digitalization and digitization. The transformations are happening not only in Hong Kong, but also in other countries with different levels. It is undoubtedly that those transformations has, on one hand, brought us many benefits regarding on the aspects of economy, technology, and culture etc., but on the other hand, it is also posing more challenges to us. The character of our new urban context is increasing emphasizes on the individuality and diversity of each single body, that might on the other hand, weaken the public sphere and social integration. Considering with that, digital technology, which allows people to be more interconnected despite anytime, anywhere could be seen as one of the most powerful support.

The design of public space could have greatly effect on the interaction of people who met in such spaces. Public space as a reflection and connection of the society, has a symbolic role on expressing the diversity and enforcing the social harmony. Consequently, regarding the transformation of our society, cities are not only in need of the physical public spaces itself, but also appealing for workable and successful public spaces that could enhance social interactions. Therefore, taking advantages of digital technology and finding possibilities for the digitalization of physical public space seems to be meaningful enough for this era (Fig.1).

This project attempts to start on discussing the role of physical public space within different urban context, and use it as the supportive to speculate the possible new role within the new urban context, as well as to explore how public space could be transformed spatially, functionally and technically in responding to the changing demanding and expectation. Since it is start with a generous consideration, although the thesis takes HK's extreme situation as an example, it could be imagined and expected that the project could further lead to the re-consideration of the relationship of our physical and digital world. And the conclusion and evaluation could be somehow seems as a starter for future researches regarding on different urban context and spatial condition (Fig.2).
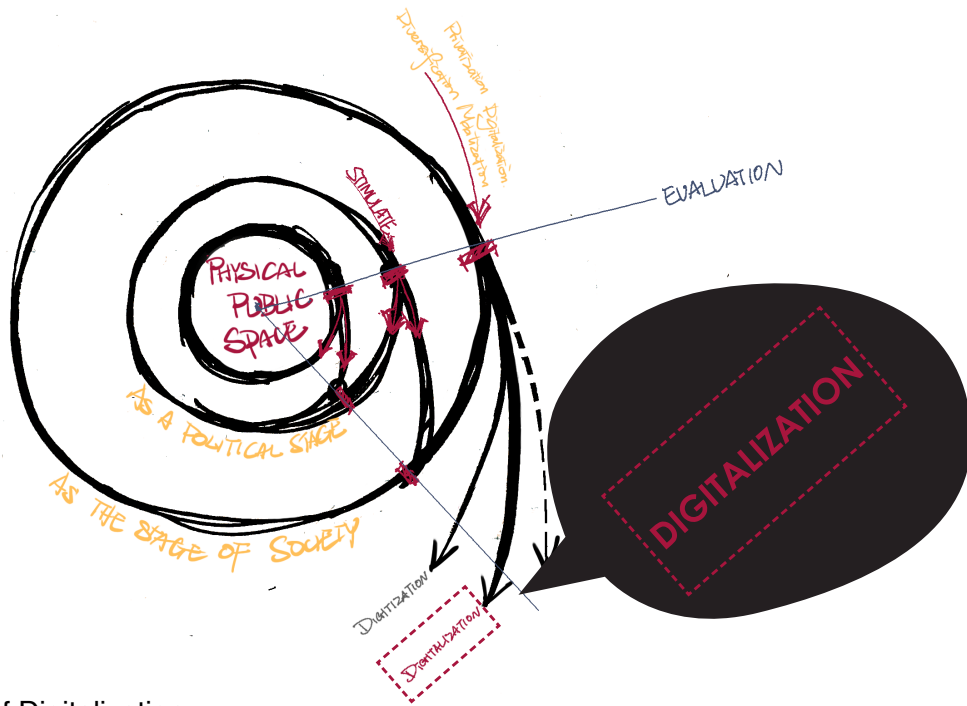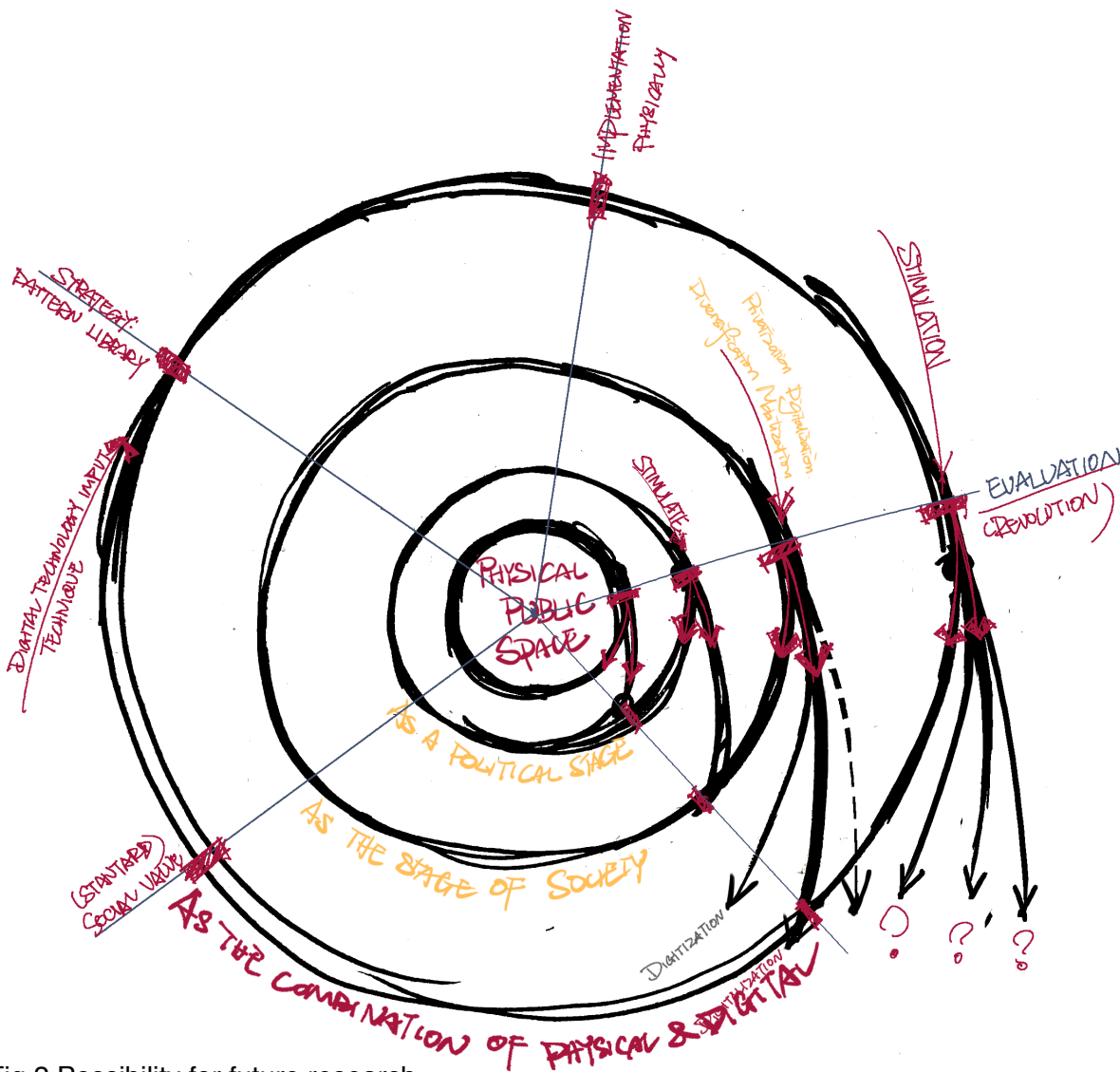
Fig.1 Possibility of Digitalization

Fig.2 Possibility for future research