

Reflection:

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Design as Politics

Relationship Between the theme of Graduation lab and subject/case chosen by students in framework:

When Approaching the theme, “City of Coming and Going”, I have the approach on critiquing about the problem brought by “City of Coming and Going”, which resulted in a loss of identity and loss of autonomy towards local collective culture. Hong Kong, my own city, is chosen to be the site of investigation to analyze how the Local Surrender the sovereignty to the globalisation. In order to find the solution to reinforce the identity, a dialectic research was done extensively to find a system which could be situated in the context of Globalisation while maintaining collective identity. Several steps are made with different city theory - including “Discourse of City States”, “Network City”, it pointed towards a restoration of Territorial Sovereignty and establishing relationship with other state by “Real Politik”. By gaining enough economical power / special status or resources, it helps city situated much better in terms of the Global network while maintaining its own identity.



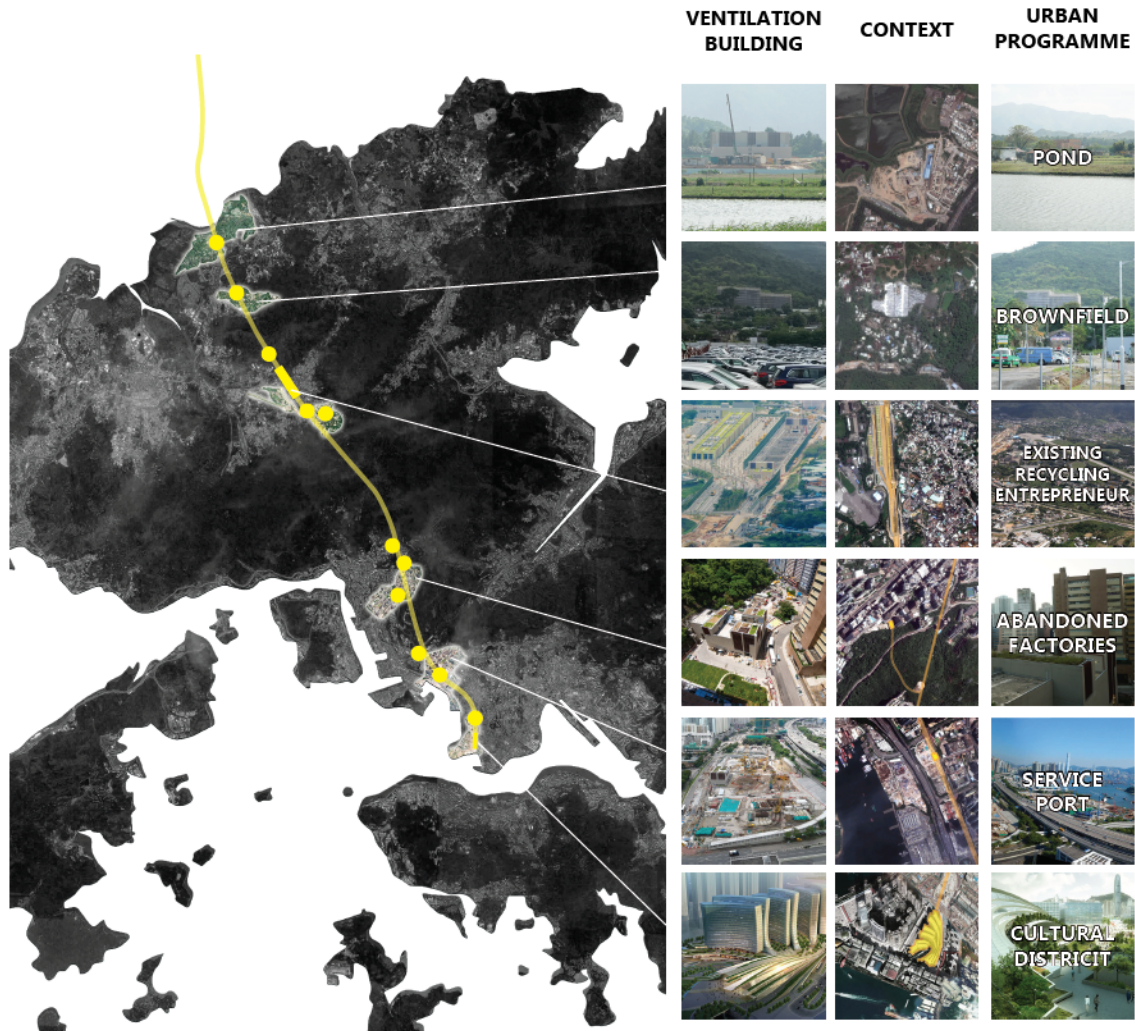
Conflicts arose between global and local

During the Graduation studio, there is always the critique about the link between the graduation lab theme and my project. The relationship is always a bit dis-linked. In my perspective, the studio theme is a central driving force for me to persuade the project, but it is not as a direct contribution to the theme of migration but rather critiquing the bad sides of City of coming and Going. But when one tries to look at a boarder perspective, The rise of localism or protectionism in US/UK nowadays reacted to the government or institution actions to bias the side to international trade, resulted in loss of jobs, unsafe neighbourhood because of migrants. Although these claims are not always directly linked to government acts, the bad image of crony capitalism of giant international firm to local government has made. This research project tries to reverse this bad image, as a transitional justice, to assist on the global-local relationship.

Relationship between Research and Design

The Research started with a very personal perspective. Being a resident in Hong Kong since I was born, facing the sovereignty changes and shift of local culture/industry to international market in China. The Discontented feeling towards the lose of culture, identity, and community neighbourhood in Hong Kong drives me to go into the topic. Instead of saying it as a scientific research exercise towards a solution, it is rather a self positioning project towards the confused political environment. In this year, Localism and Protectionism rises internationally. Ethical discussion about nationalism and populism, globalisation and neoliberalism were discussed and reacted repeatedly with one and other elections. The Research become a self fulfilment project to find a narrow way out towards nationalism and globalisation.

The Research uses a dialectic approach to find the rational design option for practicing the City-States with reinforcing sovereignty. The Research started with an imaginative event of the independent Hong Kong and the potential abandoning train tunnel. In terms of urban planning, this seems to be a reverse approach of reusing a large investment infrastructure to be erected on possible function. This approach was very limited in the beginning as the tunnel and the terminal is not really related to the city context and its limited location and connection. Luckily, by several site visits and research, existing recycling industry along the line seems to be an intriguing topic to develop. The coincidence of the e-waste flows and the Tunnel location became one of the developing point of the whole project.



Study of different districts

The Design of the urban scenario starts from extensive design test on bottom up programme from different districts and connected as a continuous urban flux system. This became an effective tool to be used in the later design phases. As a Culture Nationalist approach, the discovery of the existing site condition and details are the driving force for design.

The relationship between global and local is an important tools for making design decisions. Having the Global Scale Factory situated in a local living neighbourhood, these questions come very often. The relationship between the global and local should neither be a glocalisation (when global tries to indigenous to local culture) nor integration (where the global absorbs the locals as screws of the machine.) They should be in the same level, and they work dependently to each other. To explain in design, the factory facilities do not only provide jobs for Hong Kong, it also provide components for repairing to develop craftsmanship and market for trading activities. In returns, the Global business benefited from the the skilled local entrepreneurs

gathered in the Auction Hall to provide the most effective recycling flow for electronic waste. Moreover, The facilities helped to deal with global electronic waste flush after the internet era, at the same time, the locals are forming different communities with this trading activities. It is a symbiosis.



Auction Hall

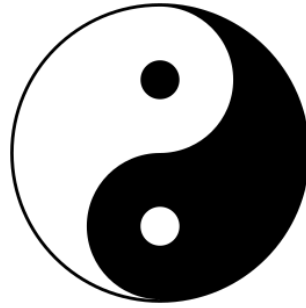


Public Passage (Covered Walkway)

The design process helped me to tackle the abstract research topic in a spatial term. Whenever there is a spatial decision need to be made, I would think from a local perspective (as I am a local) to argue with the spaces quality. Like the principle of locating trading and auctioning as the major part of the building comes from my personal understanding of Hong Kong people. Global Scale Size Factory is huge and complex in terms of logistic flow and factory spaces, it also could be an metaphor/ apparatus to symbolize the complexity of the global network with multilateral involvement. How this complex structure situates in the local, highly-densified residential neighbourhood could also relates to the spatial principal of global and local.

It is also interesting to mention, by having this position of using a local parks in the neighbourhood and converting to global scale factory. It became an inspiration for the urban scale that the Tunnel could also be used in a dual way that it functions only at night for four

hours for fast transport facilities for electronic waste. This harmony in the middle became important were developed while designing the building. It is neither a fully top-down nor bottom up project. The two forces from institutes and local entrepreneur works together. It is like “Yin and yang” in the ancient china philosophy. The white part and black part is not divided nor integrated as grey, they work dependently with each other.



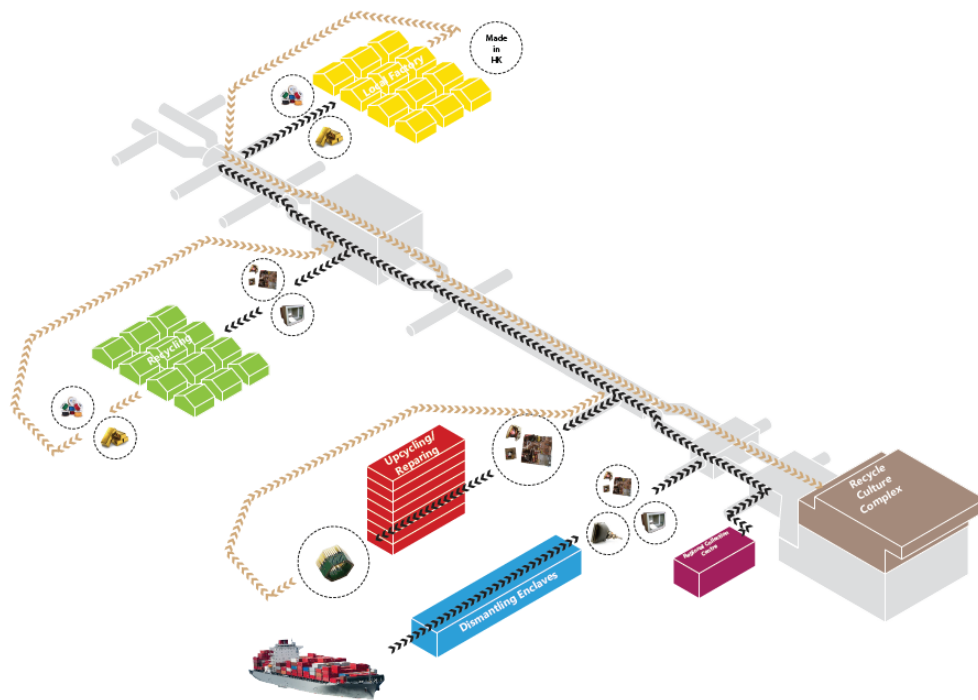
Yin and Yang

Relationship between the project and the wider social context

The project relates to the social context in two different way, Programmatically, and Spatially.

The programmes come from the analysis of the surroundings around ventilation buildings and decide how to dissect the whole recycling process fitting the local conditions. In the site of Nam Cheong, which is the highest populated area with medium living, with its geographical location next to the service sea port, i decided to put the unloading and dismantle facilities, in which although an intensive labour work is needed, the most valuable material could be saved here for further use. In Hong Kong, people attracted by programmes rather than space. We go to a building because it is on our way to shopping, transiting or entertaining. Hence, strategic programmes is put to make the building inviting other parties (other than the worker) to come as a daily life, Auction Hall, Component Shops, Canteen, Bridges across highway, workshops became the devices to activate the buildings. It helped to attract different parties in Hong Kong towards the area, synchronizing with the existing electronic market district nearby, it could develop as a neighbourhood on upcycling electronic material.

Spatially, bridges, covered walkways, parks are acting as a device to connect the nearby neighbourhood. The convenient walkway system towards the promenade helped the global facilities connected the neighbourhood. It helped to include this global facilities into the daily life of the neighbourhood, rather than alienating, creating a glocal bypass in the city, It could potentially encourage a green district around the area acting as a showcase surrounding.



Circular Economy Belt

By having similar facilities around strategic locations of the city, similar neighbourhood with heterogenous enclaves were formed, hence allowing the residents of the city a freedom of choice of communities within the same city instead of having the same homogeneous life in the office. It helped to make Hong Kong a better place to live in.

Finally, The facilities helped Hong Kong to find its own industry with its characteristic and advantages. The high civic virtue and sensitiveness to market do not only lining towards the service industry but changing to a primary industry as resources mining. Nowadays, the role of entrepots, tourism, financial centres had been gradually replacing by uprising China cities. It helps Hong Kong to find its own location in the sustainable development.