

HONG KONG
Culture and Society

At home with **DENSITY**

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INTRODUCTION

'THIS IS HONG KONG'



Figure 2 Streetlife, Hong Kong.

Just about every travel writer who has ever visited Hong Kong writes about the frenetic energy, buzz, unremitting pace and sheer density of city life. In Hong Kong, urban planning is ingrained in the verticality of the society and in the way of life. Density is experienced every day: in crowded street markets, looking across to rooms in other buildings, looking down at rooftops, inside windowless offices, in lifts, and elevated walkways. Here, virtually any space is viewed as usable space, no matter how crowded or how ugly, or how small. This is a city where a publicly designated 'Recreational Sitting-out Area' may be little more than a sad and lonely bench situated in a gap between two buildings. Where there are people who still live or work in tin huts built on rooftops. Where garden nurseries occupy alleyways, shops are built under staircases and metal structures cling parasitically to the side of buildings. Lack of space brings people closer together visually, aurally, mentally and physically; which makes it essentially part of the place, the space and the experience of Hong Kong, and a vibrant, exciting and dynamic aspect of city life. High-density space translates into human activity; the constant movement and noise a stimulus to the senses, the social fabric and vibrancy of the city. But this experience of density exposes its paradoxes and full range of interpretation: it can be both positive and negative; exhilarating and overwhelming; an exciting or everyday experience. For all that, it has statistically some of the highest densities in the world, the people who live here simply shrug and say, 'this is Hong Kong'.

While high density is certainly a phenomenon increasingly associated with most major cities around the world, in Hong Kong, where only a third of the total geographic land mass can be used for building,¹ affordable spaces tend to be small throughout the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR). It is hardly surprising therefore, that in developing the capacity to cope, Hong Kong people have learned to seize their opportunities to make the most of space and, by breaking widely accepted rules of spatial convention, they can transform almost any kind of space into a useful space.

Despite its lack of space Hong Kong is a centre of prosperity and wealth with a higher concentration of Rolls Royce's, mobile telephones and millionaires per square kilometre than anywhere else in the world. In the street, lean-to's sit happily alongside monumental buildings and pushcarts might be parked alongside luxury cars. It is a

city of contradictions and peculiar juxtapositions of old and new, wealth and poverty. This appears to contradict any hypothesis that density and poverty are somehow mutual, or that a high-density population restricts economic growth. There are certainly some advantages to density. The Hong Kong Tourism Board, which is more inclined to describe urban Hong Kong as 'compact' rather than 'dense', chooses to reinforce the positive spatial qualities of density where shopping, dining, and sightseeing are all highly accessible, in a 'City of Life'. This is something which Hong Kong people undoubtedly value: the convenience of shorter travel distances and greater consumer choice within a concentrated area.

Density, however, is normally assumed to have negative connotations as an extreme form of urban pathology, congestion and crowding. In the West, overcrowding and design, or rather bad design, has been made culpable, or at least is seen to have a major effect on the health and behaviour of residents. But, in Hong Kong where most of the population lives in, what is by Western standards low-quality, high-density housing, the crime rate is among the lowest in the world and social studies have so far found no consistent findings to support the pathology of density argument.³ It cannot be assumed that the experience of space and density will be the same for every one, but until this specific knowledge of Hong Kong density is unpacked it is likely it will continue to be viewed merely as an exception to the rule against the prevailing dominance of Western spatial theory and norms.

Defining Density

Research into crowding and density has in the most part been based on studies of Western habitats and the behaviour of Western people. It is interesting to note just how often Mitchell's³ study on Hong Kong housing is used to counteract set theories to show how even in the most densely populated cities, density does not necessarily lead to social, mental or physical pathologies. Significantly, in the summer of 1967, when Mitchell's study was conducted, much of the Hong Kong population was comprised of new immigrants, housing was in short supply and the territory was experiencing social instability, riots and water shortages. The fact that people did not articulate psychō-

pathological stress related to density is likely to have been balanced by other, more pressing concerns. Density has a political and social context but above all it is an experience and a way of life. It is clearly not a straightforward problem of spatial occupancy and the allocation of X square feet per person.⁴ Living in a crowded home with members of your own family is very different from sharing a home with others — even though, technically, they may occupy the same amount of space. Mitchell observed that the level of emotional strain increased whenever two families were forced to share a combined space, as was often the case in tenements or in the earliest government housing. Hong Kong people may be tolerant of living in small spaces but they are not immune to the effects of crowding. Evidently, there are different types of crowding and different forms and experiences of density to take into account.

Hong Kong people appear to be aroused by noise and crowds in a way that many Westerners cannot comprehend and often shun places with low-lighting levels or which are considered to be too quiet. Chinese restaurants, for example, are typically designed to reflect a pre-disposition to a particular environmental quality where large groups of people can meet in a busy, casual and lively atmosphere and where high levels of lighting further add to the visual and aural stimulus of activity and noise.⁵ There are spatial qualities, identifiable even to an outsider, that are characteristic of Hong Kong and the Hong Kong lifestyle. But with the emphasis on past research firmly concentrated on density as lack of space, rather than a space that is of a particular quality, these environmental issues have been largely ignored. Likewise, despite the problems of high-density housing, Hong Kong people have shown that they have the capacity to cope with what is a very difficult spatial design problem. The level of density certainly reduces the design scope but it does not totally negate the potential for design in small spaces. More importantly, residents own method of organizing, appropriating and thinking about space cannot be dismissed simply because the spaces are not recognizable as having been designed — in a way that is intelligible to designers. High-density space, generally viewed (and written off) as a problem space, needs to be re-examined and redefined in order to give a more accurate and holistic interpretation of the way density is experienced.

The fact that studies of contemporary domestic space have not

been well developed within local research may be due in part to the dominance of Western spatial norms based on lower density, and the sensitivity of somehow being seen to glorify poverty, thus demeaning the respect of low-income families. Rapoport⁶ talks about finding a more useful knowledge of density which looks specifically at particular socio-cultural groups their activities and relationship with high density space. If we are to redefine our knowledge of space, and density, it makes sense to consider in detail both the compact between the space and knowledge of those who live with density. Instead of focusing only on the perception of the obvious 'problems' of density it would be more useful to explore the context and experience of high density living as a way of life within a social space. That is not to suggest that lack of space is not problematic, but, rather as Lee⁷ has observed, many of these mechanisms for coping with density are unconsciously part of Hong Kong everyday life. Space saving techniques in domestic practices relate to an overall consciousness of density within the Hong Kong lifestyle with, for example, the double school system,⁸ illegal extensions, dining out and the idea of leisure as a 'stroll' in a crowded shopping mall.

There are social-cultural mechanisms . . . such as the time-scheduling of activities, the cultural habit of using the same space for multiple purposes . . . the popular use of compact furniture in the households . . . the first-come-first-served principle in public service, the cultural acceptance of a relatively close spatial distance between individuals, the custom of entertaining friends in restaurants rather than homes, the establishment of hourly-rate hotels for couples or lovers to make love, and the popularization of 'space intensive' games (e.g. mahjong in Hong Kong and pachinko in Japan).⁹

Lee's examples reflect just how much the physical and mental processes of density are embodied within the social world. The methods and mechanisms of coping with density are clearly not based on physical space-saving devices alone, but are everyday experiences reflected in the dwelling process. Before we can begin to look at interior design in terms of its visual, aesthetic qualities we have to acknowledge the underlying and contributing factors affecting the way Hong Kong people think about high density space and the home.

The Hong Kong Home

Public Housing in Hong Kong is truly a phenomenon of density; the statistics are staggering, the visual landscape of public housing estates impressive. At its peak, when public rental housing grew to the extent where it housed almost half the population, these homes were almost too ubiquitous, too ordinary and too typical to be remarked upon by local people. And, once they were occupied, for outsiders, knowledge of these spaces was pretty much limited to the building exterior and the basic plan. One notable study, however, conducted by Jim Tong, a University of Hong Kong architectural student in 1970,¹⁰ looked at the way new residents of So Uk Estate appropriated their home-space. He noted on plan, not just the arrangement of the furniture but also the presence of clutter as an integral part of the space. He recognized that everyday consumption was not just a threat to the order and design of the space but was actually a characteristic of the space and, significantly, a reflection of the residents' way of living in that space.

A typical Hong Kong Housing Authority home may be small but as the centre of family dwelling it still needs to be ordered in some way to facilitate so many people living together. It is also likely to reflect aesthetic choices indicating different levels of decision-making. Although residents have no illusions about the quality of their homes their dwelling experience makes them an authority on density. They have a specific and detailed knowledge of space derived from high density living that is a legitimate spatial knowledge.

But is spatial knowledge the same as design knowledge? According to Lefebvre,¹¹ if we continue to use the pathology of density argument as an assumption about space, we are simply reinforcing the idea, the 'mystifying notion', that it is only the so-called 'doctors of space' — architects, planners and interior designers — who have the knowledge to somehow solve the problems of a society which cannot cope on its own. While the actual practice of design is usually more practical than it is mysterious, there is an aura of an exclusive artistic creative knowledge projected within the profession.¹² There is the perception that a designer's professional knowledge sets them apart, as an expert in the field. Through their experience, training and above all, their innate creative talent, a designer would know instantly how to transform bad design into good design — much

evidenced by the 'before' and 'after' images in the media. Designers are expected to be clear-thinking, articulate, positive and decisive. There is also a general assumption they would be judgemental and critical of ordinary people's homes, and their attempts at interior design. If designers really are 'experts' on spatial organization then, theoretically, they should always get it right. However, for a designer the difficulty in designing any residential space lies in predicting exactly how people might respond and behave when they are at home. The fact is, designers are on unfamiliar territory when dealing with domestic space. They attempt to make sense of the problem that is presented to them, and which, characteristically, they will try to make fit within the framework of their professional knowledge, which in turn, is largely based on Western spatial norms. Even with the most detailed research and co-operation, there are no guarantees that residents will be able to live with the vision that the designer has created for them on a day-to-day basis. Designers know that long after they have left, the occupied space will change and evolve. And, as the residents adjust and adapt the space to suit their own way of living, they will make decisions based on criteria that designers may never have considered, or indeed, understood.

Design Knowledge

The hypothesis of this study is that the home, as a physically represented space, reflects the residents' spatial knowledge. This is clearly evidenced by the articulate response of new residents, indicating both a conscious awareness of space and their process of decision-making in relation to the decoration and organization of that space. It is, however, more difficult to access this knowledge in long-term residents. Living every day with density, and living as part of the culture of density, must contribute to the individual's everyday spatial knowledge. But because this knowledge is something they take for granted it may be difficult to articulate. Is it possible to articulate knowledge that most people might not be aware they have?

To begin to answer these questions this research must start with an open mind that this knowledge, which must be articulated through language, is only the surface of something deeper. To extract this

deeper rooted spatial knowledge of physical space there is only the skin of language, through which subjects describe their surroundings. According to Lefebvre, it is not that language has priority over space but that language articulates communicable aspects of space that have remained hidden.

Closely bound up with Western 'culture', this ideology stresses speech and overemphasizes the written word, to the detriment of the social practice which it is indeed designed to conceal . . . In any event, the spoken and written word are taken for (social) practice; it is assumed that absurdity and obscurity, which are treated as aspects of the same thing, may be dissipated without any corresponding disappearance of the 'object'. Thus communication brings the non-communicated into the realm of the communicated — the incommunicable having no existence beyond that of an ever-pursued residue. Such are the assumptions of an ideology which, in positing the transparency of space, identifies knowledge, information and communication.¹³

It seems that the diffidence many Hong Kong people appear to have towards their homes can be attributed, in part, to a knowledge that everyone shares a similar experience. To a cultural insider articulating this knowledge may appear to be stating the obvious, whereas a cultural outsider recognizes this as a knowledge that is only common to those who share the experience of the culture. As Geertz¹⁴ explains, it is 'normalness' which enriches the lived experience and which transforms a representation of space into a representational space. In order to understand a culture, we must look to everyday life to see what it is that people take for granted. But, getting at 'normalness' is difficult for several reasons. Though it might seem prosaic, a detailed study of everyday spatial knowledge might result in a host of banalities, instead of bringing to light some grand theory. First, long-term residents view their homes as 'taken for granted space'; they are not used to viewing it from an objective position. Secondly, although they will be able to articulate what seems to them to be the most obvious response to a question, they do not exactly know what it is the researcher wants to know. Thirdly, for the researcher, much of what the residents can articulate about their everyday experience of design must be expected to be steeped in banalities, making it more difficult to decipher potentially salient points.

It is unlikely long-term residents would have a clear idea of the sequence of events, or be able to clarify their methods of spatial reasoning within a space that is simultaneously affected by past and present. Bearing in mind the point that even if we come right up against this knowledge in its various forms we might not recognize it. We must depend, therefore, on unreliable memories and past experience to be a gateway to the gap in our knowledge of design in density. By taking away the safety net of quantitative statistics and proven facts we might only be left with a knowledge embodied within social myths, gossip, old wives tales and localized narratives.

How then is this a useful knowledge? As Lefebvre explains, knowledge is better than ignorance, since to know more about what is, will help us to understand more about what is likely to be.

The real knowledge that we hope to attain would have a retrospective as well as a prospective import. Its implications for history, for example, and for our understanding of time, will become apparent if our hypothesis turns out to be correct. It will help us to grasp how societies generate their (social) space and time — their representational space and their representations of space. This would allow us, not to foresee the future, but to bring relevant factors to bear on the future in prospect — on the project, in other words, of another space and another time in another (possible or impossible) society.¹⁵

It has been the Hong Kong government's aim to continue to improve housing standards to encourage homeownership and upgrade or demolish older style housing blocks. In this transitional period, while the older housing blocks continue to house public housing tenants, there is clearly a need to legitimise how this knowledge is represented and to address the real knowledge behind high-density spatial representation in contemporary homes. In doing so, the focus here will be to shift design knowledge from the forms of density and what a designer knows about space, to what non-designers know about high-density space.

CONCLUSION

I doubt if any of these families have ever taken as many photographs of their home in one day, in such detail, as I did in 1992. Just as I am sure they have never consciously spent so much time scrutinizing the layout of their homes or reflecting on the significance of clutter, art and housework in their lives, or in relation to interior design. It is very likely that these homes (those that still exist) have changed since these photographs were taken. It is perhaps even more likely that these same residents would today give different responses to the very same questions. Interior design is not something normally associated with HKHA homes. But with this small sample of public housing tenants, I set out to record what *they* thought about their homes to discover something about their knowledge of designing in high density. The fact was that most families had a lot to say, because their practical experience of high-density living had clearly informed their knowledge of space and design.

Several factors have contributed to the transformation of the Hong Kong public rental home. First, the move from one-room space to the new style HKHA rental blocks built to a higher design and spatial allocation has significantly shifted the baseline of what tenants expect from public rental housing. As these became more common,¹ it is natural that the older flats would increasingly be perceived by tenants to be sub-standard, rather than typical public housing. Secondly, at the time of these interviews about 40% of the Hong Kong population lived in public rental housing; by 2001 with drives towards home-

ownership and tightening up of income levels per household, the percentage figure has been reduced to about 31.9% of the population.² For many long-term residents of government housing, once their children have grown up and moved out, they find they have more space and often more disposable income. Should they decide to remain in public rental housing, rather than opting for homeownership, clearly they have more opportunity either to reorganize or remodel their home. Thirdly, Hong Kong consumers today have much more choice of furniture, fittings, and lighting than ever before. A glut of interior design magazines on the market also means that public housing residents have much more exposure to the design and to consider it as part of their lives.

To date there has been little consideration of how residents have managed to cope so well with this form of high-density living from the perspective of interior design. Historically, issues concerning density have been limited by the basic assumption that density creates crowding, which is considered to be a negative subjective experience. While it is evident that laboratory tests of animals, which claim knowledge of the effects of density on humans, loses sight of the complexity of human spatial experience, most studies of Hong Kong density have indicated that there is little evidence to support the pathology of density argument in Hong Kong. According to Freedman, crowding is a psychological state, a subjective experience that refers to a feeling of having little space, rather than something that is actually physical or measurable. With his 'density-intensity' theory, Freedman claims that crowding 'serves to intensify the individual's reactions to the situation' and that the sensation of being crowded is largely dependent on what the individual considers to be normal space. He concludes thus:

First, high density (crowding) does not have generally negative effects on humans; it does not produce any kind of physical, mental or social pathology . . . Second, high density does have effects on people, but these effects depend on other factors in the situation . . . density does have important predictable consequences which are neither always negative nor always positive.³

A major factor contributing to Hong Kong people's tolerance of density clearly lies with a deep-rooted conception that, topographically

land is difficult to develop, that developable land is expensive and that high-density, high-rise living is the norm. Rapoport⁴ notes that a homogeneous population will have a greater tolerance of density than a heterogeneous population in an equivalent density because they take for granted certain cues of interaction and behaviour and can therefore disregard others more easily. The fundamental spatial concern for a designer must be the question how high-density space functions, not just in terms of spatial occupation but how it is perceived as a lived-in space. Rapoport advocates that density should be 'read' through the specificity of physical and social relationships before it can be judged. In other words, in this context, if we are to better understand how, as a virtually homogeneous population, Hong Kong people cope with density, we must learn to identify and appreciate how these cues of interaction affect the way they think of space, and how these are implicit in the experience of that space.⁵

The problem with most post-occupancy studies, as Gutman and Westergaard⁶ point out, is that they tend to be carried out either by architects or for architects. The main concern of the architect is to determine how the building 'fulfils the functions it was intended to serve', that is to test the performance of the building, and the design of the space in order to evaluate where the user was satisfied with the design. In such studies, the architect is evaluating the design with the purpose of learning more about design, and the ultimate aim of improving design capabilities and passing on this knowledge to other designers. But what the architect is actually testing in these studies is, fundamentally, the architect's belief in architectural determinism. While it might be thinly veiled as an investigation into user behaviour, the major concern starts with the building form and the influence of the building on the residents, rather than what the residents themselves bring to the building.

It is taken for granted that post-occupancy studies should be reviews of architecture, not interior design. But there is also a problem with the way in which designers conceive of the user. Gutman and Westergaard propose that if architects are genuinely concerned with user satisfaction in developing standards, they must somehow be able to take into account 'the terms in which the users think about the environment'. They point out that the design field needs to develop more sophisticated theory and information about the context of the

user's thinking. Clearly, this would require a shift within design research to consider the user as someone who does not merely respond to space, but as someone who thinks about space. To take this further, the fact that the user has a knowledge of space, which is also a legitimate design knowledge, should be a prime consideration within the design process.

As reluctant researchers, interior designers have been professionally disadvantaged by a lack of literature in the field. This has led to a dependence on architectural models, the assumption being that the process, and therefore the methods, must be similar. Interior designers are normally concerned with the appropriation of a contained space. It is in the nature of dealing with small spaces, especially residential design, that designers normally develop a close understanding of client/space relationship. But if interior design knowledge is to be made useful, the difference between the way an architect and an interior designer are 'programmed' to design needs to be articulated. Then we might have a better understanding of unrefined data that is implicit in the process of designing, and reconsider how this could be more clearly articulated within post-occupancy research.

One of the problems highlighted in this research is how a designer might interpret the way users think about where they live. As Schön observes, design thinking is often spontaneous, based on intuitive performance rather than conscious thought. Since it is ordinarily tacit and implicit in our actions, it is difficult to make verbally explicit. It is consequently much more difficult to identify or interpret as design knowledge.

Within this study it has been argued that design knowledge in high-density housing is physically evidenced through the residents' ability to organize space, and their articulation of that ordering process. As we have seen, the ability and method of spatial organization varies considerably from household to household. It does not seem to be restricted by the building form or physical density alone. Indeed, there are much more significant factors affecting the appropriation of the domestic space: the number and age of the inhabitants, adherence to cultural conventions, education, interest in design or Do-It-Yourself, exposure to different types of designed environments, consumer trends and influences by friends, family, neighbours, the media and the shops.

Design knowledge and decision making is clearly articulated where there has been a conscious reflection of problem-solving or of a spatial problem that has been, at some time considered. Residents, however, might not articulate this directly as design knowledge but rather as an everyday method of coping with high-density space, expressed simply as common sense. According to Geertz,⁷ a taken for granted knowledge is a knowledge specific to a culture. Residents may not see what they have done as something original, or any different from others' homes. Instead of a 'design method' they might describe their ideas in terms of 'naturalness' of common sense, 'of course-ness' as 'the way things go'. They assumed their ideas as common knowledge of the way things are, because that it is what 'everyone' knows. This may be expressed as a practical knowledge of high-density living, making the most of the physical space through floor-to-ceiling cupboards, or as an adoption of a spatial convention, stated as a preference, such as the use of bright fluorescent lighting. But there was also the common strategy of maximizing the space potential through the use of flexible or folding furniture that was built into the everyday family routine.

One of the complexities within design knowledge is that it is constantly changing. Before there is any design intervention there are different limits set by residents in terms of time, effort, expense and disruption to the household. These limits are often dependent on how closely residents relate to the home as a reflection and representation of the family or the self. In Hong Kong the rapidly changing social pattern has created very different spatial, psychological and cultural experiences. Younger people, for example, raised in very different social and economic circumstances from their parents, do not appear to share the same fatalistic attitude to housing, design, and space. Family members might live in the same high-density space, but inhabit quite different spatial worlds.

It is evident that there is a transformation from traditional spatial values of order in the home towards new social and spatial values. One of the keys to identifying design knowledge is to acknowledge how an individual's thinking is affected by traditional spatial values in the face of shifting ideas of domestic space, design and consumption. For example, it appears that long-term, older residents are more likely to appropriate space and articulate their knowledge of space, in

accordance with traditional values affecting the placement of cultural artefacts, selection of furniture, materials and lighting. In such homes there is likely to be evidence of specific cultural practices — a shrine, ancestor worship and lucky mottoes. But it appears that younger people tend to perceive the appropriation of domestic space more in terms of design than tradition. They identify more closely with Western concepts of domestic space articulated in terms of privacy, style, aesthetics and comfort. They appear to have more confidence in representing their design choices through custom-made furniture and a more decorative use of lighting rather than on purely functional or utilitarian grounds.

Miller⁸ contends that a theory of housing has to be largely a 'theory of consumption'. But it is more than that. In this context residents' ability to appropriate the space is not just about their consumption status, but their ability to think about space, their motivation to solve design problems, their knowledge of design in other domestic contexts and above all, what they see as being important within a home. As public housing residents consciously move away from a utilitarian styled environment we can see how, as practitioners of space, they are more able to articulate their knowledge in terms of design. Since they are unlikely to have any direct contact with professional designers, their main contact with someone working in design is more likely to come from contractors and furniture manufacturers/sales assistants. Contractors offer more than just practical advice; they are an immediate design interface between residents their home-space and homes from the interior design magazines. As there is little sign yet of an emerging Do-It-Yourself culture in Hong Kong, the role of the contractor is likely to assume greater importance in domestic design, as a promoter and facilitator of popular taste and style within high-density spaces.

This study attempts to recontextualize post-occupancy studies within interior design by focusing attention on the user's knowledge of space and the way in which this is articulated and interpreted as design knowledge. By promoting interior design as an intellectual inquiry it provides an insight into design thinking as a way of looking at the world. Within design pedagogy there still remains the issue of how to bridge the gap between amateur and professional design knowledge. It has not been generally recognized, even by designers,

that the outcome of a reflective practice does not necessarily have to result in a design product. Design knowledge is a transferable knowledge that can be used to provide insight into a changing habitus. It can facilitate an appreciation of interior design as a way of thinking about lifestyle and culture for amateur and professional alike.

Interior design has suffered from a lack of an appropriate theoretical and academic position from which to view professional design knowledge. Consequently, this knowledge has either been taken for granted, or ignored. By focusing on the particular spatial context of Hong Kong, the study has shown that if spatial theory is to develop it must broaden its approach to design and accept the legitimacy and diversity of spatial thinking and interpretation. This issue needs to be addressed first of all within design pedagogy to enable designers to question assumptions within their professional design knowledge. It is only by cultivating an appreciation of everyday design knowledge that the spatial context of the dwelling process can be better understood, so that ultimately, post-occupancy studies can become more meaningful across all forms of domestic space.

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

- 1 C.K. Lau, 'Overdrawn at the Land Bank', *South China Morning Post*, 20 July 1996.

The Territorial Development Strategy Review (TDSR) revealed the government's fears that there will not be sufficient land to sustain Hong Kong's growth. 86% of the existing land has been developed or else deemed unsuitable for development: country parks (43.2%), hilly country (18%), existing and planned urban areas (24%) and conservation zones like Mai Po (0.8%). The remaining 14% of rural lowland areas may not be suitable to be developed: village settlements, unplanned container storage sites, flood-prone lowland areas, abandoned land, pig and chicken farms, golf courses, fish ponds, 'fung shui' areas, burial grounds, wrecked car dumps, sites of special scientific interest etc. This leaves a maximum of 3,111 hectares of land which could be developed. The Government maintains there is no alternative but to continue with harbour reclamation. Green groups have labelled the report as 'Government Propaganda' and independent studies are examining alternatives.

- 2 See Rance P.L. Lee, 'High-Density Effects in Urban Areas: What Do We Know and What Should We Do?' in Ambrose Y.C. Lee and Rance P.L. Lee (eds) *Social Life and Development in Hong Kong*, Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1981.
- 3 Robert E. Mitchell, *Housing, Urban Growth and Economic Development*, Taipei: The Orient Cultural Service, 1972.
- 4 Density refers to an occupied space, usually expressed in terms of numbers of people per acre or square kilometre. It is a quantitative measure of occupied space devoid of psychological meaning. Crowding is a psychological state, it is a subjective experience and refers to a

- 'feeling' of having very little space, often relating to a feeling of being crowded by other people.
- 5 A typical brightly lit Chinese restaurant might have, for example, chandeliers, a fluorescent-lit coffered ceiling, spotlights, downlights and wall lights.
 - 6 Amos Rapoport, 'Toward a Redefinition of Density', *Environment and Behavior*, vol. 7, No. 2, June 1975, pp. 133–158, p. 153.
 - 7 Rance P.L. Lee. *op. cit.*
 - 8 Many primary schools operate on a double school system where the a.m. and p.m. schools share the same premises but are quite separate in administration, staffing and pupils.
 - 9 Rance P.L. Lee. *op. cit.*, p.14.
 - 10 Jim K.P. Tong 'Space Utilization in Estate Flats and Their Immediate Surrounding', Department of Architecture, University of Hong Kong, 1969–70, MSc Thesis.
 - 11 Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith, Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd, 1991 (1974).
 - 12 Richard Coyne and Adrian Snodgrass, 'Is Designing Mysterious? Challenging the Dual Knowledge Thesis', in *Design Studies*, vol.12. no. 3. pp.124–31, 1991
 - 13 Henri Lefebvre, *op. cit.*, pp. 28–9.
 - 14 Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, London: Fontana Press, 1973
 - 15 Henri Lefebvre, *op. cit.*, pp. 91–2.

CHAPTER 1

- 1 G.B. Endacott, *A History of Hong Kong*, Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, revised edition 1973, (1958) p. 65, Endacott cites the Hong Kong Government Gazette of May 1841 which fixed the population as 7,450: 4,350 in the villages, 2,000 were boat people and the others visiting labourers and vendors. Other figures estimate the population at cession to be 4,000, of which 1,500 were engaged in agriculture and 2,000 in fishing. see also: E.J. Eitel, *Europe in China: The History From the Beginning to the Year 1882*, Taipei: Ch'eng Wen publishing Co., 1968, (1895) p. 134. Eitel claims the population comprised Puntis and Hakkas as the main land population, with Hoklos boat people, but never exceeded more than 2000 at any one time, ashore or afloat.
- 2 *Ibid.*, p. 65. Endacott claims the local press estimated the population in October 1841 to be 15,000. Eitel *op. cit.*, p. 183. By 1844, with rumours of a permanent settlement the Chinese population reached 19,000 including 1000 women and children.
- 3 *Ibid.*, p. 38. In dispatches from Lord Stanley to Sir Henry Pottinger 3 June 1843, it was stated that the island was occupied 'not with a view of colonisation, but for diplomatic, military and commercial purposes'.
- 4 Frank Welsh, *A History of Hong Kong*, London: Harper Collins, 1993,

p. 169. Extract from a letter from Lieutenant Bernard Collinson of the sappers, to his parents, 26 January 1845.

- 5 Barbara-Sue White (ed.) 'Letter From Hong-Kong, Descriptive of That Colony' from 'A Resident', *Hong Kong: Somewhere Between Heaven and Earth*, Hong Kong: Oxford University Press 1996, p. 34.

If you have not already heard of the prices of land, you will be surprised at the sums drawn by the Government. A lease for seventy-five years only is granted, and for that £400 sterling per annum is a common rent for an imperial acre, many even higher. This too is given for lots that require an expenditure of from one to three thousand dollars to prepare a site for building on. Houses are scarce and let high, which is probably the cause of this high price; from twenty to thirty per cent is often got upon money so expended; but as a very great number are now building, rents may be expected to fall, and then the Governement [*sic*] rent will be felt more burdensome. (Victoria, 16 November 1844)

- 6 Letter from Captain Arthur Cunyngheme arriving in the colony in June 1842, cited in Anthony Walker and Stephen M. Rowlinson, *The Building of Hong Kong: Constructing Hong Kong Through the Ages*, Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1990. p. 16–17.

- 7 Steen Anderson Bille, 'Early Days in the Colony' in Barbara-Sue White (ed.) *op. cit.*, p. 41.

And what houses: the English vanity showed itself again in the fullest measure. Those who came from England and sacrificed home and family for the hoped for profit would at least bring English comfort to the Chinese soil, those who came here from Calcutta did not wish their new city to take second place to the one they had left. The result was that already one palace raises its head by the side of the next and many more are being built, everyone one [*sic*] of them threatening to eclipse the magnificence of the other and older neighbours. Rich shops, great hotels, splendid dining rooms, balconies turned towards the sea and pillars to support them from airy vestibules, short all the luxury and magnificence produced by architecture.

- 8 Chinese contracting firms emerged to cash in on the building boom. However, many were not used to building in a Western style and underestimated the costs. When they could not finish the job the government had to complete the works. One contractor who was to become one of the Chinese elite, Tam Achoy, was responsible for building and developing much of Hong Kong. See Anthony Walker and Stephen M. Rowlinson *op. cit.*, pp. 22–24.

- 9 Frank Welsh, *op. cit.*, p. 152. Welsh claims that the influx of Chinese into the territory was not confined to coolie class alone but also attracted Chinese merchants who already had experience working with foreigners. One such individual, Loo Aqui, invested heavily in Hong Kong property including brothels, gambling dens and Aqui's Theatre, which staged the

- first amateur production in December 1845. As Welsh comments, compared to the newcomers, the indigenous people of the island were at a disadvantage when it came to reaping profits from the colony.
- 10 W.K.Chan, *The Making of Hong Kong Society: Three Studies in Class Formation in Early Hong Kong*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1991, p. 118.
 - 11 John Warner, *Fragrant Harbour; Early Photographs of Hong Kong*, London: John Warner Publications, 1976.
 - 12 E.J. Eitel, *op. cit.*, p. 168.
 - 13 See: Osmand Tiffany jr. 'An American in Hong Kong' in Barbara-Sue White (ed.) *op. cit.*, p. 39.
 - 14 A. B. Freeman-Mitford, 'How the Rich Live' in Barbara-Sue White (ed.) *op. cit.*, pp. 65–66.

They are generally built with one story [sic]: on the ground floor is the shop with its various goods and quaint perpendicular inscriptions and advertisements; on the first floor, which is thrown out over the footway and supported by wooded posts, so as to form a covered walk, the family live... Towards evening, when the paper lanterns are lighted and the shops are shut up, not by doors and shutters as with us, but by sort of cage and bamboo poles, through which the interior is visible, the Chinese house looks very fantastic and strange.
 - 15 W.H. Owen, *Report of the Housing Commission 1935*, Hong Kong: Local Printing Press Ltd, pp.10–11.
 - 16 E.G. Pryor, *Housing in Hong Kong*, Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1983, p.4. The Summary Offences Ordinance of 1845 made it an offence for an owner or occupier not to maintain their property and to prevent it from becoming dangerous or ruined. The Building Ordinance of 1856 required dwellings to have an adequate place for a fire for the cooking of food and the provision of a privy and ashpit. There was no provision for adequate means of lighting, ventilation, height of building, or width of streets, and it did not prohibit back-to-back building.
 - 17 Philip Hart Clark, *Hong Kong: A Survey of Residential Development from its Inception to the Present*, Unpublished Masters Thesis, Cornell University, 1968, p. 133.
 - 18 To rural people the pig represented an investment of family capital, long before the days of banking for all. A pig was considered a safe place to keep one's money — a walking piggy bank, so to speak. The Chinese character for family ideographically is a pig under a tiled roof, symbolizing that you can start a family when you have your pig (wealth) and your roof (home). G.B. Endacott, *op. cit.*, p. 185. In his report for 1875 Ayres reported that pigs were no longer kept in dwelling rooms. The 1866 Order and Cleanliness Ordinance of 1866 prohibited the keeping of pigs, or similar animals, in dwellings without a licence.
 - 19 Governor Hennessey was swayed by his regard for Chinese customs. It was presented to him (by landlords) that this system worked well in

China and should work in Hong Kong. Of course this did not take into consideration that overcrowded urban situation made a traditional rural system impossible.

- 20 Cited in E. G. Pryor, *op. cit.*, p. 7 'Chinese Houses' the Hong Kong Government Gazette, 27 July 1878, pp. 370–371. A petition submitted by landlords to Governor Hennessey after the Surveyor General had rejected plans for what he considered to be unhealthy Chinese tenement housing.
- 21 *Ibid.*, p. 13. The Chadwick Report recommended: provision of open spaces at the rear of buildings, the prohibition of cocklofts and earthen floors, the provision of a window in every habitable room, and the limitation of overcrowding so that each adult would have 11.3 cubic metres of unobstructed space in undivided rooms and 17 cubic metres in rooms divided into cabins. Further recommendations included the reconstruction of the drainage system; the improvement of the water supply; the requisition and reconstruction by the Government of existing public latrines and the provision of additional facilities; the provision of public bath-houses and a laundry; the construction of new markets; and the improvement of the scavenging system. Those buildings that could not be improved should be purchased by the government, rebuilt and re-sold.
- 22 *Ibid.*, p. 14.
- 23 W.K. Chan, *op. cit.*, p. 141. Chan points out that in opposing this bill Dr. Ho Kai, as a financier himself, was protecting the interests of the landlords, not the Chinese public.
- 24 E.G. Pryor, *op. cit.*, p. 18 Public Health and Buildings Ordinance 1903. Minimum standards were set at 4.65 square metres of habitable floor area and 15.56 cubic metres of unobstructed internal air space per adult — 3.25 square metre and 9.34 cubic metre per person. Windows had to be provided in every inhabitable room. No more than two cubicles per room with a minimum of floor area of 5.95 square metres. Building height was limited to a dimension not greater than the width of the street. For land leased before 1903 the maximum height was set at one-and-a-half times street width to a maximum of 23.2 m and maximum of four storeys.
- 25 *Ibid.*, p. 19. The Hong Kong population reached 457,000 by 1911, of whom 314,000 lived in congested urban areas.
- 26 W.K. Chan, *op. cit.*, p. 153.
- 27 W.H. Owen, *op. cit.*, p. 11.
- 28 *Ibid.*, p. 11.
Sooner or later the claim for better housing conditions for the masses is sure to be pressed. The longer the action is delayed the more costly it will become.
- 29 *Ibid.*, p. 17.
- 30 *Ibid.*, p. 17.
- 31 *Ibid.*, p. 16.
- 32 Philip Hart Clark *op. cit.*, The New Territories was largely unaffected

- by the population influx as people preferred to live in the urban areas, close to their work. Village houses were normally handed down from father to son rather than rented out. The homes themselves were simple spaces open to the rafters with a cockloft above the main room.
- 33 *Annual Report on Hong Kong for the Year 1946*, Hong Kong: Local Printing Press, 1947, p. 54.
- 34 *Ibid.* It was reported that the Health Inspector cleansed the urban district with kerosene emulsion solution three times between May and December.
- 35 There appears to be conflicting official estimates of squatters. *The Annual Report by the Commissioner for Resettlement 1955–6*, estimates the number at 300,000, p. 1.
Peter K. W. Fong, puts the number at 250,000 in 1950, see: Peter K. W. Fong, *Housing Problems and Public Housing in Hong Kong. A Case Study of the Housing Provision in a Densely Populated Metropolitan Area*, Ph.D. thesis, New York University, 1980 p. 90. However, Smart cites a figure of 330,000 in 1950 up from 30,000 in 1948, see: Alan Smart. *Making Room: Squatter Clearance in Hong Kong*, Centre of Asian Studies occasional paper no. 102, Hong Kong: The University of Hong Kong, 1992, p. 44.
- 36 P. Bishop. 'Some Aspects of the HK Resettlement Programme' in D.J. Dwyer (ed.) *The City as a Centre of Change in Asia*, Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1972, p. 115.
For the whole colony, 48% were Hong Kong born as against 46% in squatter areas, 14% arrived before 1946 compared with 15% in squatter areas and 38% arrived after 1946 as against 39% in squatter areas. In resettlement estates the percentages were respectively 47, 11 and 42. ...This tends to substantiate...that in the years after the war considerable numbers of local-born or long-term residents themselves became squatters; and also that the later building boom dispossessed a sizeable number of old residents.
- 37 *Hong Kong Housing Authority Annual Report, 1962–63*, p. 2.
- 38 *Annual Report for the Commissioner for Resettlement, 1955–6*, p. 9.
Most families however had a monthly income of between \$159 and \$300: in a typical case the father would be an artisan in a construction company or an assistant in a shop or restaurant: his elder daughter would work in a weaving factory, while his wife added to the family earnings by doing embroidery or sewing at home.
- 39 *Annual Report on Hong Kong 1949*, Hong Kong: Local Printing Press, p. 82.
- 40 Alan Smart, *op. cit.*, p. 114. Triads would 'offer' to build or rebuild structures for families, rather than let them do it themselves, so they could have a monopoly on the site.
- 41 Governor Grantham, Hong Kong Hansard, 2 March 1955: 40 cited in Alan Smart *op. cit.*, p. 41.

- 42 Otto Golger, *Squatters and Resettlement: Symptoms of an Urban Crisis*, Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1972, pp. 27-28.
- 43 *Ibid.*, pp. 30-31.
- 44 Peter K.W. Fong, *op. cit.*, p. 102.
- 45 Chan Ping-chiu *Social Implications of Public Housing Policies: The Lesson of Hong Kong*. MSc Thesis, Asian Institute of Technology, Bangkok, 1975, p. 14.

The floor is well levelled with cement. The lower parts of the walls are constructed with concrete or other rock materials. However, as regulations prescribed, the upper parts of walls and the roof are made of wood covered with zinc plates. There is a layer of water-proof and heating insulator placed in between the wood and the zinc plate on the roof. Windows are made either of wood or of glass.

Except in rare cases, houses consist of two bedrooms and a living/dining room which in some cases is used as a sleeping place at night. There is generally a cockloft, used either for sleeping or for storage. The kitchen is quite spacious, although it is not used for dining and although most of the food preparation is done outside the house. A portion of the kitchen is always set aside as a bathing place, which is not separated except perhaps by a plastic curtain

- 46 Janet Salaff, *Working Daughters of Hong Kong: Filial Piety or Power in the Family?* (2nd ed.), New York: Columbia University Press, 1995 (1981), p.158.
- 47 Chan, Ping-chiu, *op. cit.*, p.16. Chan points out the residents of South End did not find it inconvenient that they did not to have an indoor toilet since the latrines were nearby. He states that '... except for newly constructed modern houses, no houses, be they squatter or not, have toilets.' Clearly, he is referring here to older tenements and rural housing as a comparison rather than to the homes of Westerners and wealthy Chinese who would have had private toilets.
- 48 *Ibid.*, p. 30.
- 49 Lau Siu-kai and Kuan Hsin-Chi, *The Ethos of the Hong Kong Chinese*, Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1988, pp. 20-23.
- 50 *Hong Kong Annual Reports for Hong Kong 1955 and 1957*. The Urban Council appointed an emergency sub-committee which led to the setting up of the Resettlement Department in April 1954. It was clear that the temporary two-storey cement and brick structure 'Bowring bungalows' (named after the Director of Public works) which housed 35,000 to 40,000 fire victims did not make good use of the available land to house all the needy squatters. The recommendation was made to build six or seven storey buildings so that 35% more people could be resettled in the Tai Hung Tung area than before the fire. See *Annual Report Commissioner for Resettlement 1955-56*.

- 51 *Ibid.*, p. 2.
- 52 *Hong Kong Annual Report, 1957* chapter 1 'A Problem of People', p. 9.
 . . . even where the Marxist doctrines had no appeal and the initial pogroms were roundly condemned, there were many overseas Chinese who saw in the solidarity, determination and incorruptibility of the new regime, spiritual qualities from which a new and better China might eventually emerge when the first excesses had run their course, and when the exotic doctrines had been tempered by the Chinese genius for compromise.
- 53 *Annual Report, Commissioner for Resettlement 1967–8*. The design was 'simple and austere' to keep rents to a minimum and speed construction.
- 54 Keith Hopkins, 'Housing the Poor', in Keith Hopkins (ed.) *Hong Kong: the Industrial Colony: A Political, Social and Economic Survey*, Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1973, pp. 309–310.
- 55 Keith Hopkins, 'Public and Private Housing in Hong Kong' in D.J. Dwyer (ed.) *The City as a Centre of Change in Asia*, Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1972.
- 56 *Hong Kong Annual Report 1957*. p. 25.
 Commissioner for Resettlement p. 12, five adults sharing one room could mean two separate families or five bachelors.
- 57 Keith Hopkins, *op. cit.*, 1972 p. 202.
- 58 *Annual Report, Commissioner for Resettlement 1955–56*, p. 5.
 Squatter clearance and resettlement operations are not therefore undertaken primarily for the benefit of the squatter. They are simply the only practical means of removing, in the interests of the whole community, the fire risk, the health hazard, the threat to law and order, and the obstruction to the Colony's future development, which is presented by the squatter areas.
- 59 D.J. Dwyer, 'Housing Provision in Hong Kong' in D.J. Dwyer (ed.) *Asian Urbanisation: A Hong Kong Casebook*, Hong Kong University Press, Hong Kong, 1971 cites a study of private-sector carried out in 1963 (Maunder W.F, *Hong Kong Urban Rents and Housing*, Hong Kong, 1969) which found:
 . . . the average area occupied per adult equivalent in cubicles and bed-spaces ranged from 12.9 to 25.9 square feet.' (1.13 to 2.4 square metres) . . . As regards space standards, therefore it seems that large sections of the urban population housed by the private sector fall well below the 35 square feet standard and a substantial proportion is also below the former resettlement standards of 24 square feet . . . the mean monthly inclusive rent (that is, rent, rates electricity, water and housing charges) for bed-spaces in post-war buildings was HK\$1.45 per square foot in 1963 and that for cubicles HK\$1.04. the rent of a standard room of 120 square feet in a resettlement estate was HK\$14 in that year. This gives a figure of HK\$0.12 per square foot, though in this case electricity charges are not included.

60 E.G. Pryor, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

61 Philip Hart Clark, *op. cit.*

The 1961 census analysed a total of 687,200 households. It can be summarised as follows: 138,000 people living in boats; 12,000 people living on the streets; 50,000 people living in shops, often sleeping under the counter; 260,000 people with only a bed space (often in tiers, or under the bed, or sleeping in shifts with other tenants occupying the same bed); 1,400,000 people living in cubicles, 45% of the entire population in 1961.

62 *Hong Kong Housing Authority Annual Report 1962–63*, p. 4.

Public housing management is still a comparatively new profession in Hong Kong and there are no facilities except those provided by the Authority and the Housing Society for the training of housing managers. It has, therefore, been necessary to recruit from Britain trained and experienced Housing Managers in order to take charge of the investigation, letting and management of new estates, and to train the local staff in their duties. The Authority has recruited five such housing managers during the year, but the main difficulty has been in the recruitment of suitable local staff with the right qualities in order to be trained in the profession of housing management.

63 Jose Lei | ex-Chief Architect, Public Works Department | 'Public Housing in the 1970's An Appraisal' *Building Journal Hong Kong China*, March 1989, pp. 24–25.

64 *Public Health and Buildings Ordinance 1903*.

65 *Hong Kong Annual Report 1957*, p. 26.

66 *Annual Report. Commissioner for Resettlement 1955–6*, p. 15.

For the Estate staff intake days, and the following two or three weeks, are the most important of all; for it is during this initial period that the new settler must be weaned away from many of the deeply ingrained habits and concepts that pervade squatter areas. He is taught to make the best of the simple accommodation provided and to forget his defeatist attitude towards dirt and disease.

67 *Ibid.*

68 A colloquial term given to the resettlement estate by squatter villagers.

69 E.N. Anderson jr., 'Some Chinese Methods of Dealing with Crowding' *Urban Anthropology*, vol.1, (2) 1972, pp. 141–150. Anderson cites the example of a wealthy man who took over a large house and instead of allocating more space to individuals he allocated more individuals to the space.

70 Barbara E. Ward, 'Temper Tantrums in Kau Sai: Some Speculations upon Their Effects' *Through Other Eyes: An Anthropologists View of Hong Kong*, Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1985

71 Marjorie Topley, 'The Role of Savings and Wealth Among Hong Kong Chinese' in I.C. Jarvie (ed) *Hong Kong: A Society in Transition*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969.

- 72 Janet Salaff. *op. cit.*, p. 57.
- 73 *Annual Report, Commissioner for Resettlement, 1967–68*.
- 74 Sally Blyth and Ian Wotherspoon, *Hong Kong Remembers*, Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1996, p. 128.
- 75 *Ibid.*, p. 129.
- 76 *Ibid.*, p. 129–130.
- 77 *Ibid.*, p. 71.
- 78 Government Low-Cost Housing was introduced in 1962 and were managed by the HKHA to house families within the \$400–\$900 bracket. That is, those families who were in need of housing but did not fall into the HKHA bracket. At 35 square feet per person and built to 'an extremely simple design', the accommodation consisted of a room with private balcony with tap and sink. Toilet facilities were communal.
- 79 For a full account see: John Cooper, *Colony in Conflict: The Hong Kong Disturbances May 1967–January 1968*, Hong Kong: Swindon Book Company, 1970.
- 80 *Ibid.* p. 297.
- 81 E.G. Pryor, *op. cit.*, p. 68.
Under the forceful direction of the newly appointed Governor, Sir Murray Mac Lehosé, the Government formulated in October 1972 a ten-year housing programme with the aims of eliminating all squatter areas; facilitating the redevelopment of cottage areas; providing self-contained dwellings for households sharing accommodation in the private sector; relieving overcrowding in existing public housing estates; modernizing the early resettlement estates; and providing new housing for those people who have to be re-housed as a consequence of the Government's schemes and policies.
- 82 The HKHA was re-organized in 1988.
- 83 The old Housing Authority blocks and Low Cost Housing blocks were officially referred to as group 'A' estates while the Resettlement estates are known as group 'B' estates.
- 84 The government's policy was to sell these flats on a non-profit basis. Purchasers were required to make a down payment of 10% of the purchase price, which ranged from \$93,000 to \$166,000. Special mortgage arrangements were made with banks with fixed interest rates over a maximum period of 15 years. Since this scheme was designed to bring in new buyers to an inflated housing market there was a stipulation to prevent speculation that purchasers were not allowed to re-sell the flat until at least five years after ownership.
- 85 Applications were restricted to households earning up to \$3,500 a month and to public housing tenants who were willing to give up their subsidized flat. 35,822 applications were received for the first phase of 8,300 flats. Although only 8,008 of these were from public housing tenants it was decided that 50% of overall applicants for the scheme should be drawn from this sector to free up housing for the needy.

- 86 *Hong Kong Housing Authority Report 1976–77*, p. 7.
- 87 *Hong Kong Housing Authority Report 1963–64*, p. 2.
- 88 Sally Blyth and Ian Wotherspoon, *op. cit.*, p.132.
- 89 see *Hong Kong Housing Authority Report*, 1980–81, p. 8.
- 90 Hong Kong: The Facts, Housing published by the Information Services Department, 2001/02. <http://www.info.gov.hk/hb>.
- 91 M. Castells *et al.* *The Shek Kip Mei Syndrome: Economic Development and Public Housing in Hong Kong and Singapore*, London: Pion Ltd p. 38. The demands were: (1) to accept eligibility of small households (1–2 persons) as permanent tenants, (2) to include squatters from outside development zones in the re-housing programmes, (3) to authorize the spouse of one married child to stay as an additional tenant in the parents' flat.
- 92 Raymond Bates, 'Hong Kong Housing Authority' The Evolution of Maintenance Management' in *Housing For Millions, The Challenge Ahead*, conference proceedings 20–23 May 1996, Hong Kong, p. 75. In 1980 with the collapse of part of a floor slab in Kwai Fong Estate, which was only seven years old, the Housing Department discovered that concrete in certain estates had been mixed with salt water. This led to a massive re-examination of all HKHA property. In 1986 it was decided that 26 blocks had to be demolished, 374 required repairs and 86 needed strengthening.
- 93 As at June 2002 there were 85,200 applicants on the Waiting List. The average waiting time was 2.9 years, a year ahead of the original target of 3 years by 2003.
- 94 See: As Statement on Housing Policy by the Hon Michael M.Y. Suen, Secretary for Housing, Planning and Land, 13 November 2002.
- 95 CARE — Conditions, Appraisal, Repair, Evaluate. See Fung Tung, 'The Housing Challenge Ahead: Hong Kong' paper delivered at the *Housing for Millions, The Challenge Ahead*, *op. cit.*, pp. 122–127.
- 96 Despite the HKHA's efforts to maintain quality control in 2000 defective piling in HOS estate in Shatin resulted in the demolition of two blocks.
- 97 Public Housing — A Programme Transcending Time and Lifestyle' interview with Stephen Poon, Assistant Director Housing Architect, HKHA, *Building Journal Hong Kong China*, August 1988, pp. 44–46 and continued in September 1988, pp. 80–85.
- Before now, in the days of the Oi Man estate, we built housing blocks based on a predetermined set of design criteria. In other words, we dictated the type of units that we supplied and the people on the waiting list had to adjust to suit themselves to the accommodations. At that time, we did not have precise information about what the people on the waiting list wanted. The only yardstick we had was the Hong Kong Outline Planning Standards.
- 98 This was as a result of creating multi-faceted facades allowing more external wall per flat hence improving ventilation and light.
- 99 Electricity supply in the Mark blocks was 2 amperes per flat for lighting

- and small hand electrics. In the Mark IV it was raised to 3 amperes. Slab, H-Block, I Block and Twin Tower 4–8 amperes with surface wiring. New Slab, Trident block and Linear 9–12 amperes. HOS Harmony and Concorde 18–20 amperes allowing for full air-conditioning.
- 100 The Harmony Blocks use pre-fabricated panels and standardized internal fixtures to increase productivity and reduce cost.
- 101 Y.K. Chan 'Life Satisfaction in Crowded Urban Environment' *Proceedings of the Fourth Asia Pacific Social Development Seminar*, ASPAC, Korea, Seoul, 1978, pp. 187–196, p. 191. See also David, Chuenyan Lai, 'Human Crowding in Hong Kong: A Study of its Earliest Type of Public Housing' in M.C.R. Edgell and B.H. Farrell (eds.) *Themes on Pacific Lands*, Western Geographical Series, Vol. 10, Dept. Geography, Victoria, B.C.: University of Victoria, 1974.
- Over ninety percent of the ninety-two families responding to the interview indicated that they did not mind living in high density resettlement buildings and accepted it as the inevitable in Hong Kong because of its large population and lack of space.
- 102 M. Castells *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 114
- 103 See: http://www.info.gov.hk/hk2000/eng/12/c12-07_content.htm. Up to date figures vary slightly see: Hong Kong: The facts, Housing. <http://www.gov.hk/hb> September 2001 claims about 2.09 million people living in public rental housing estates, a stock of 686,000 flats. Also 2001 population census: <http://www.info.gov.hk/censtatd/eng/hkstat/fas/01c/cd0142001e.htm> which puts the figure mid-march 2001 at 2,135,624 which was 31.9% of the population.
- 104 C. K. Lau, 'How the Poor May Inherit the Estates' *South China Morning Post*, 2 November 1994.
- Eviction would not only be socially very disruptive, but could also be economically counter-productive because of its unpredictable impact on the private housing market. Moreover, we want our public housing estates to be thriving communities, not slums, and the surest way of achieving this objective is not to confine them only (*sic*) the poor.

CHAPTER 2

- 1 Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: a Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, translated by Richard Nice, London: Routledge, 1992 (1979) p. 170.
The habitus is both the generative principle of objectively classifiable judgements and the system of classification (principium divisionis) of these practices. It is in the relationship between the two capacities which define the habitus, the capacity to produce classifiable practices and works, and the capacity to differentiate and appreciate these practices and products (taste), that the represented social world, i.e., the space of life-styles, is constituted.
- 2 Lau Siu-Kai and Kuan Hsin-Chi, *The Ethos of the Hong Kong Chinese*. Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1988, p. 66.

- 44.2 percent of respondents classified their parents as belonging to the lower class, 25.6 percent the lower-middle class, 20.2% the middle-middle class, 3.3 percent the upper-middle class and 1.3 percent the upper class.
- 3 *Ibid.*, 26.3% respondents saw themselves as lower class, 31.9 percent in the lower-middle class, 36.7 percent the middle-middle class and 2.4 percent the upper-middle class and 2.4% saw themselves in the upper class. See also Tai-lok Lui, *Hong Kong's New Middle Class: Its Formation and Politics* in Hsin-Huan Michael Hsiao (ed.) 'Discovery of The Middle Classes in East Asia', Taipei, Taiwan: Institute of Ethnology Academia Sinica, 1993, p. 249. Here Lui classifies the new middle class as professional, administrative and managerial employees who might have specific expertise and be involved in some capacity with management in their place of employment.
 - 4 Marjorie Topley, 'The Role of Savings and Wealth Among Hong Kong Chinese', in I.C. Jarvie (ed.) *Hong Kong: A Society in Transition*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969.
 - 5 *Ibid.*, Only the more 'financially productive' and status professions were considered to be appropriate. If the parents were prepared to invest in their children's education they preferred to see them in a profession with a high rate of return, ie. doctor, lawyer, accountant.
 - 6 Janet W. Salaff, *Working Daughters of Hong Kong: Filial Piety or Power in the Family* (2nd ed.), New York: Columbia University Press, 1995, p. x–xi.
 Although their families are large...and are cooped up in unbelievably crowded quarters, the young women do not rent a place for themselves, as they could do, but rather all live with their families. Although legally entitled to spend their money as they wish, they all contribute three-fourths or more of their wages to the family — not only to help with general household expenses but to meet the personal wants of other family members, such as the educational expenses of younger siblings. . . . The daughters, who often start work at ages 13 to 15, must therefore contribute to the education of the sons, and in crowded Hong Kong, where education is financed mainly by families, this investment can be substantial.
 - 7 Lui Tai-Lok, *op. cit.*, p. 256.
 - 8 Janet Salaff, *op. cit.*, p. 194.
 - 9 Thomas, W.P. Wong, 'The New Middle-Class in Hong Kong: Class in Formation?' in Michael, Hsiao, Hsin-Huang, (ed.) *op. cit.*
 - 10 Lau Siu-kai and Kuan Hsin-chi, *op. cit.*
 - 11 Pierre Bourdieu, *op. cit.*, p. 387.
 - 12 Daniel, Miller, *Material Culture and Mass Consumption*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1987. p. 104.
 - 13 Pierre Bourdieu, *op. cit.*, p. 379.
 Festive meals and 'Sunday best' clothes are opposed to everyday meals and clothes by the arbitrariness of a conventional division

— 'doing things properly' — just as the rooms socially designated for 'decoration', the sitting room, the dining room or living room, are opposed to everyday places, that is, by the antithesis which is more or less that of the 'decorative' and the 'practical', and they are decorated in accordance with established conventions, with knick-knacks on the mantelpiece, a forest scene over the sideboard, flowers on the table, without any of these obligatory choices implying decisions or a search for effect.

- 14 *Annual Report, Commissioner for Resettlement, 1967-68*, pp. 28-29.
- 15 *Annual Report, Commissioner for Resettlement, 1970-71*. See also RD 2/271/69 28 February 1972 a note from I. M. Lightbody, Commissioner for resettlement to the Commissioner for Housing Donald Liao, urging him to consider up-grading the standard of finishes in the Resettlement estates to provide: metal balcony grilles, folding metal door, tiling in the toilet and plastering of walls.
- 16 *Annual Report, Commissioner for Resettlement, 1969-70*.
It was thought that not all tenants could afford an electricity supply and it was therefore left to each tenant that did want it to provide his own external wiring from the meter board, as well as internal wiring. This wiring has not been properly maintained and it has now become worn and potentially dangerous. It has been decided that rather than require tenants themselves to remedy this position the wiring should be replaced by the Government, the cost being recovered from the tenants in the form of an increase in rent.
- 17 Otto Golger, *Squatters and Their Resettlement; Symptoms of an Urban Crisis*, Weisbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1972, p. 39.
- 18 *Annual Report, Commissioner for Resettlement, 1969-70*.
- 19 Deborah Davis, 'My Mother's House', in Perry Link, Richard Madsen and Paul G. Pickowicz (eds) *Unofficial China: Popular Culture and Thought in The People's Republic*. Colorado: Westview Press, 1989.
- 20 Ellen Johnston Laing, 'The Persistence of Propriety in the 1980's', *Ibid.*
- 21 Janet W. Salaff, *op. cit.*, p. 92.
- 22 *Ibid.*, p. 215.
- 23 Ng Chun Hung, 'Cultural Studies', Elizabeth Sinn (ed.) *Culture and Society in Hong Kong*. Centre of Asian Studies Occasional paper no. 116 Hong Kong: The University of Hong Kong, 1995, p. 16.
- 24 Daniel Miller, *op. cit.*, p. 174.
- 25 Wong Siu-lun and Shirley Yue, 'Satisfaction in Various Life Domains' in Lau Siu-kai, Lee Ming-kwan, Wan Po-san and Wong Siu-lun (eds.) *Indicators of Social Development, Hong Kong 1988*, Hong Kong: The Chinese University of Hong Kong, 1991. Wong and Yue expressed these findings as a 'thirst for education'. Just over a third of respondents had only primary education but had major aspirations that their sons and daughters would achieve tertiary level education. The writers do not have any definite answers for these findings but suggest that this mass concern for education could either be linked to strong Confucian

traditions, or a view that education and credentials would bring economic returns.

26 Hong Kong population census 2001.

27 Pierre Bourdieu, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

CHAPTER 3

- 1 John T. Myers 'Residents' Images of a Hong Kong Resettlement Estate: A View from the 'Chicken Coop' in Ambrose Y.C. King and Rance P.L. Lee (eds.) *Social Life and Development in Hong Kong*, Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1981. When asked to describe the Estate as succinctly as possible the most common expression was: 'A place where ordinary families live.'
- 2 Pierre Bourdieu, translated by Richard Nice, *Distinction: A Social Critique of Taste*, London: Routledge, 1992 (1979), p. 473.
- 3 These were the floor area sizes given to us by the residents. Every family referred to Imperial measurements rather than metric.
- 4 The HKHA provided overall measurements for each flat. We were then able to create a rough plan based on the sketches made at the interview. The sketch plan is to be used as a spatial guide rather than a precise measurement of each home.
- 5 In 1993 and 1994 the Architecture Department of the Chinese University of Hong Kong carried out a major study of use of space in public housing. This involved measuring and recording the position of all the furniture in the flat. The study yielded precise quantitative data which, together with a questionnaire, was later used to develop post-occupancy information.
- 6 Daniel Miller, *Material Culture And Mass Consumption*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1987.
- 7 *Ibid.*, p. 102.
- 8 Sidney Brower, *Design in Familiar Places: What Makes Home Environments Look Good*, New York: Praeger, 1988. p. 12.
- 9 Because they were talking to another cultural insider most families used everyday Cantonese. Phoebe transcribed each interview, which was then passed on to external translators –with whom we had a close working relationship. Phoebe and I went over every transcript to ensure we had a useable translation that adequately reflected in English the quality and context of the residents' own words.
- 10 Anthony Giddens. *The Constitution of Society*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1984.
- 11 Mass Observation, *People's Homes*, London: The Curwen Press Ltd, 1943.
- 12 Sidney Brower, *op. cit.*, p 18 cites Herbert Gans' experience of the West End and how he developed a 'selective perception' as he became more used to the place.
- 13 Anne Buttimer, 'Home, Reach, And the Sense of Place' in Anne Buttimer and David Seamon (eds) *The Human Experience of Space and Place*, London: Croom Helm, 1980.

- 14 Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*, translated by Willard R. Trask, Orlando, Florida: Harcourt Brace and Company, 1987 (1957) p. 34.
- 15 Mass Observation, *op. cit.*, p. 53.
- 16 *Ibid.*, p. 63 Positive satisfaction, they claim, 'is a feeling that you really like your house' while negative satisfaction is '... the feeling that there is nothing really very bad about your home and it will serve your purpose'.
- 17 *Ibid.*, p. 68.
Older people were less critical about their homes than younger ones, women less than men, D class less than B and C class, people without children less than those with children.
- 18 Betty J. Chung and Zack-kuen Kwok, 'Methodological Problems in Data Collection and Questionnaire Construction in Hong Kong' in Ambrose Y.C King Rance P.L. Lee *op. cit.*,
- 19 Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, New York: The Overlook Press, 1973, p. 15. Goffman shows how whenever an individual appears before others they will 'have many motives for trying to control the impression they receive of the situation'. In fact this works both ways, as I was also conscious how they would receive me. The 'performance' of the interview was recursive, not just how they responded to us, but also how we responded to them, to help them to feel more relaxed with the interview.
- 20 The interview generally lasted between 45 minutes to one hour.
- 21 Janet Salaff, *Working Daughters in the Hong Kong Chinese Family: Filial Piety or a Power in the Family?* (2nd ed.), New York: Columbia University Press, 1995. Salaff found that in families headed by a mother, working daughters were not only important breadwinners but also assumed responsibility for major decisions regarding the household, since the mother may be poorly educated and reluctant to take responsibility. These daughters were also involved in selecting the new housing and its furnishings. By comparison, in one family, the father, keen to assert his position as head of the household, never consulted anyone else in the purchase of consumer goods. His daughter was therefore very amused when her father's purchase of a television turned out to be a 'lemon'.
- 22 Daniel Miller, 'appropriating the State on the Council Estate' *Man*, vol. 23, no. 2. pp. 353–372, 1988, p. 368.
- 23 Evidenced by a great deal of friendly chat with neighbours passing along the corridor.
- 24 John Collier Jr. and Malcolm Collier, *Visual Anthropology: Photography as a Research Method*, Albuquerque: University of New Mexico, 1986, p. 62.

In their research into cultural inventory of Indian families the Colliers posed the question 'How can you tell an Indian family (Native American) lives here? The answer to this question, combined with additional attention to the character of 'order', proved to be a reliable means of judging the degree to which the family was successfully handling their

life in the new setting. Disorder, in close association with a low level of expression of Indian identity, was consistently found in homes of families who were failing to cope with relocation.'

- 25 It is unlikely that families could rearrange fixed furniture especially for the visit since there would be nowhere they could put it. If they did tidy up it might involve arranging folding furniture such as camp beds, tables and chairs against the wall or stacking loose stools, items not in use at the time of the visit. The basic layout, ie. beds, sofa etc., would not be altered.

CHAPTER 4

- 1 Richard R. Wilk, 'The Built Environment and Consumer Decisions' in Susan Kent (ed.) *Domestic Architecture and the Use of Space: An Interdisciplinary Cross-Cultural Study*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990, p. 36. Wilk refers to consumer research on decision processes within the household which focus on decision-making as an ongoing process in which the outcome of one decision affects the input to the next.
- 2 Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, translated by Maria Jolas, Boston: Beacon Press, 1969 (1964), p. 5.
- 3 I have used the (square foot) measurement stated by the residents, rather than the official or exact measurement.
- 4 One family mentioned that if two small side-by-side units were not available for large families, they might be allocated two rooms opposite each other.
- 5 We did not ask any specific questions about the kitchen or bathroom as we preferred to focus our attention on the interior design of the living area. Although the kitchen does reflect certain design choices made by the residents, overall there is less scope and diversity here than in the kitchen found in Daniel Miller's study of council flats in London. See Daniel Miller, 'Appropriating the State on the Council Estate', *Man*, vol.23 2, 1988, pp.353-372.
- 6 *Tu-ti* (土地), God of the Land. It may be in the form of a plaque, a simple tin container or a small wooden shrine.
- 7 These would be more likely to be blocks with an external corridor, which might have less traffic flow than blocks with an internal corridor.
- 8 The HKHA were forced to introduce a policy whereby only authorized contractors, or family members, were allowed to carry out decorating works within the blocks. This was prompted by complaints from homeowners that they were being intimidated by Triad related decorating companies. These firms would charge occupants twice the market rate and would raise the price half way through the job.
- 9 Respondents complained that they felt hassled by the authorized contractors. If the contractors were only required to do minor work they would deliberately keep the tenant waiting before they would complete the work.

- 10 Those who keep caged birds must move them inside at night so they will not be affected by the hot air expelled from the air conditioner. One father commented that he lost several birds this way in the past.
- 11 According to one tenant, the approved style of aluminium windows should be sliding, not push/pull type and the glass should be clear, not tinted.
- 12 Amos Rapoport, *House, Form and Culture*, Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-hall, 1969.
- 13 Susan Kent, 'Activity Areas and Architecture: An Interdisciplinary View of the Relationship Between use of Space and Domestic Built Environments' in Susan Kent (ed.) *Domestic Architecture and the Use of Space: An Interdisciplinary Cross-Cultural Study*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990. p. 6.
Kent cites Saegert's observation of governmental (US) regulations for public housing: 'A single mother with a daughter gets one bedroom; with a son, she gets two.'
- 14 See also Jim, Tong, K.P. Masters Thesis: 'Space Utilization in Estate Flats and Their Immediate Surroundings', Department of Architecture, University of Hong Kong, 1969–70.
Tong found that 99% of respondents erected a partition to achieve privacy for sleeping and undressing. Wherever people expressed negative response to their flats they attributed to the fact they were unable to subdivide their flats satisfactorily.
- 15 Donald A. Schön, *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action*, New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1983, p. 49.
- 16 Marian Kempney and Wojciech J. Burszta 'On The Relevance's of Common Sense for Anthropological Knowledge' in Kirsten Hastrup and Peter Hervik, (eds.) *Social Experience and Anthropological Knowledge*, Routledge: London, 1994, p. 131.
- 17 Clifford Geertz, Common Sense as a Cultural System, *Local Knowledge: Further Essays In Interpretive Anthropology*, New York: Basic Books, 1983, p. 91.
- 18 Donald A. Schön, *op. cit.*, p. 54.

CHAPTER 5

- 1 Arthur P. Wolf, 'Gods, Ghosts, and Ancestors' in Arthur P. Wolf (ed.) *Religion and Ritual in Chinese Society*, Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1974.
T'u Ti Kung, (土地公), also *Tu-ti*, the Earth god, or god of the Land, is a tutelary deity, the governor of a place. *T'u Ti Kung's* role was to protect the living from the dead (the buried souls) and to spy on the household to report their behaviour and events to the more superior gods.
- 2 John T. Myers, 'Traditional Chinese Religious Practices in an Urban-industrial Setting: the Example of Kwun Tong' in Ambrose Y. C. King

and Rance P. L. Lee (eds.) *Social Life and Development in Hong Kong*, Hong Kong: The Chinese University of Hong Kong, 1981, p. 281.

Residents of the early estates, who had to cook on the corridor, found it was inappropriate to place the kitchen god's image outside of the home. *Tu-Ti* however, proved less of a problem since it can be represented in the form of an incense holder and tablet.

- 3 M.I. Berkowitz, *The Tenacity of Chinese Folk Tradition — Two Studies of Hong Kong Chinese*, Occasional Paper, No. 33 Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1975.

4 *Ibid.*, p. 22.

- 5 My intention here is to draw attention to the presence, placement and range of these cultural elements within the space rather than to attempt to provide a detailed account of the significance of religious elements in the Hong Kong home — which is beyond my own discipline and cultural reference.

- 6 C. Harry Hui, 'Religious and Supernatural Beliefs' in Lau Siu-kai, Lee Ming-kwan, Wan Po-san, Wong Siu-lun (eds.) *Indicators of Social Development, Hong Kong 1988*, Hong Kong: The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong, 1991. In this study 52% of people surveyed practised ancestor worship, including a small proportion of Roman Catholics and Protestants. Worshipers were usually less well educated and from the lower socio-economic class. Although people were generally well disposed towards geomancy, those from a higher socio-economic class were more enthusiastic. The group who had the highest confidence in Hong Kong's future (given that this was pre-1997) were those who believed in Chinese folk religion; they also had the most trust in the Hong Kong, Chinese and British governments, and were not 'seriously concerned with many social problems that worried other groups'.

- 7 Barbara E. Ward, *Through Other Eyes: An Anthropologist's View of Hong Kong*, Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1985, pp. 41–42.

8 *Ibid.*, p. 42

- 9 *Ibid.*, p. 80. Ward developed this theory from Levi-Strauss' version of conscious model.

A people's Folk Model is, in effect, their whole culture seen from the 'emic' point of view. Thus it includes 'values' and 'beliefs' as well as folk taxonomies, cosmologies etc. and all the native knowledge of the practice and theory of the objects and patterns of everyday living, economic, political, kinships and religious behaviour and so on and so forth.

- 10 *Ibid.*, p. 95.

(i) *Folk Model* (postulated, objectified, thought of as being 'out there') and (ii) *personal model* (total stock of a particular individual's knowledge about how things are and ought to be) of which one section, so to speak, is, (iii) the personal version of his people's Folk Model or *personal folk model* for short.

- 11 Their people means the group with which they identify, for example, version of Chineseness such as Hong Kongese, Taiwanese, or American born Chinese.
- 12 Traditionally the home should be cleaned on the twenty-eighth of the last month of the old lunar year but nowadays people will make sure that it is properly cleaned on or before the Lunar New Year's Eve. The tradition is said to derive from the crop cycle, the quiet period between the harvest and the next sowing, allowing people more time to clean up their homes, make special foods and visit relatives.
- 13 For the traditionalist this might extend to a new toothbrush, slippers and comb. Today it is normally only children who will have a completely new set of clothes.
- 14 These are: peach trees, pussy willows, chrysanthemum, peony and narcissus. Special flower markets take place over the Lunar New Year and it is traditional for people to visit these to buy some flowers for their home. Orange trees in pots are also very popular and might be kept until the following year. However, since it is difficult to get these plants to produce fruit — according to the tradition the number of fruits are important to bring good fortune — people usually throw them out after the festive period.
- 15 Deborah Davies 'My Mother's House' in Perry Link, Richard Madsen and Paul G. Pickowitz (eds.) *Unofficial China: Popular Culture and Thought in the People's Republic*, Colorado: Westview Press, 1989, p. 96. Davies remarked that in the Shanghai homes that she visited all the photographs were recent — 'usually a group photo at a wedding or birthday, or Chinese New Year's Feast' — there was one exception which she claims reveals a 'strong maternal influence over the domestic space'.
 In several apartments the only framed pictures were large black-and-white portraits of gaunt, elderly men and women. Some were photographs of the husband's parents, but just as often they were a picture of the respondent's mother taken soon before her death.
- 16 Ellen Johnston Laing, 'The Persistence of Propriety in the 1980s' in Perry Link, Richard Madsen and Paul G. Pickowicz (eds.) *op. cit.*, p. 163.
 Laing traces the echo of the formal altar setting in peasant houses in China. The place of honour is 'accentuated by means of a large scale central image or object surrounded by a symmetrical arrangement of objects'. She suggests that often it is a mirror that becomes 'the central element in the echoes of the ancestral altar'.
- 17 *Ibid.*, p. 158. Laing refers to the organisation of the traditional Chinese upper class house where the scrolls hung in the ancestral altar were organized according to centralized symmetry.
 In a formal system of this kind, the most important item is in the center, on the central axis. Secondary objects are ranged in balanced symmetry to either side. The static and stable arrangement serves to direct attention to the most important central object.

- 18 Daniel Miller, *Material Culture and Consumption*, Oxford: Blackwell Press, 1987, p. 109.
- 19 This is usually in summer when the main door is left open and the gate is exposed to the corridor.

CHAPTER 6

- 1 To extend the size of their dining table many families used a circular table top which they placed on top of their normal table for large family gatherings.
- 2 *South China Morning Post*, 5 April 1994. A poll conducted by the *South China Morning Post* discovered that 'watching television is eight times more popular than horse racing in Hong Kong..' '...watching television is the most favoured pastime, more than twice as popular as reading books and magazines which ranked third. Shopping and window shopping came second, playing sport fourth and mahjong fifth.
- 3 Joseph Man Chan and Paul S.N. Lee, 'Mass communication: Consumption and Evaluation' in Lau siu-kai et al (eds), *Indicators of Social Development Hong Kong 1990*, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong. In this study the authors found that people spent 3.25 hours a day watching television.
- 4 Lee Rainwater, *Behind Ghetto Walls: Black Families in a Federal Slum*, Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company, 1970, p. 103. Rainwater refers to the 'unsympathetic observers' of the Pruitt Igoe ghetto who were appalled by the conspicuous presence of new expensive consumer products among families living on welfare. In 1965, when television was still fairly new, 95% families had a television.

It is even more striking that 68% of households had telephones, and of these, 62% had either color telephones or princess telephones despite the fact that such telephones cost more money. But they are colorful and 'nice' and enliven what is often otherwise a rather barren decor. Other objects that serve to deny the pervasive sense of bare existence are expensive hi-fi sets.

CHAPTER 7

- 1 In 1981 a group of Industrial Design students from Ontario College of Art collaborated with students from the then Hong Kong Polytechnic to design a modular furniture system for high-density living. The scheme was built inside a HKHA unit which was subsequently allocated to a family to test the performance of the project. The family soon found they could not live with the modular system and, within three months they had virtually dismantled it. It was not that the family had come up with a more brilliant solution than the designers, but rather that the vision created by the designers created more problems than it solved, because they chose not to recognize the lifestyle of the residents. Given

that the team included local student designers it suggests that they had overruled their own experience of space and knowledge about how local people live, by following (or falling in with) a design methodology in common with their Canadian counterparts.

- 2 One family we interviewed had two refrigerators. The grandmother explained:

This fridge could not keep food frozen. It was broken for some time. Later we tried to get it fixed . . . but in the meantime we had already bought this one, both of them work. We are not willing to throw the old one out.. because it was given to us by a friend.

This family also still had the same large water containers they used in the sixties when water was restricted, which they now used for storing quilts.

- 3 Gaston Bachelard, trans. Maria Jolas, *The Poetics of Space*, Boston: Beacon Press, 1969 (1964), pp. 78–79.
- 4 The daughter commented:

I want to say these walls are thin. The family next door can hear what we're talking about. I mean if we talk loudly even people in the corridor can hear us.

CHAPTER 8

- 1 Pierre Bourdieu, trans. Richard Nice, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, London: Routledge, 1992 (1979), p. 281.
The objects endowed with the greatest distinctive power are those which most clearly attest the quality of the appropriation, and therefore the quality of their owner, because their possession requires time and capacities which, requiring a long investment of time, like pictorial or musical culture, cannot be acquired in haste or by proxy, and which therefore appear as the surest indications of the quality of the person.
- 2 See Craig Clunas, *Superfluous Things: Material Culture and Social Status in Early Modern China*, Chicago: University of Illinois, 1991, also Lin Yutang, *The Importance of Living*, London: Heinemann, 1938.
- 3 Joseph Bosco, 'The McDonald's Snoopy Craze in Hong Kong,' in Gordon Mathews and Tai-lok Lui (eds) *Consuming Hong Kong*, Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2001.
- 4 Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, translated by Maria Jolas, Boston: Beacon Press, 1969 (1964) p. 14.
- 5 *Ibid.*, p. 4.
- 6 Edward Relph, *Place And Placelessness*, London: Pion Ltd, 1976, p. 41.
- 7 Gaston Bachelard, *op. cit.*, p. 6.
- 8 *Ibid.*, p. 136.
- 9 At the time of our visit he had borrowed a Macintosh computer which was placed (temporarily) on the main table.
- 10 Daniel Miller, 'Consumption as the Vanguard of History' in Daniel Miller

(ed.) *Acknowledging Consumption: A Review of New Studies*, London: Routledge, 1995.

- 11 See also *Sunday Morning Post*, 2 August 1997. A survey carried out by the Equal Opportunities Commission found that women were still expected to do the lion's share of chores. Up to 68% said that wives were responsible for household tasks such as shopping, cooking and cleaning. Up to 70.5% said that child-related activities such as supervising homework, meeting teachers and choosing primary schools fell to the mother. About 54% said husbands were responsible for maintaining and repairing household appliances although 40% said that the father controlled the family economy. The survey also found that there was a strong sense of equality between male and female children which suggests that with the next generation the situation is likely to change.
- 12 Gaston Bachelard, *op. cit.*, p. 68.
- 13 *Ibid.*,
- 14 Donald A. Schön, *Educating The Reflective Practitioner*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1987 p. 68.

CONCLUSION

- 1 At the end of March 1999 there were already more Housing Authority rental blocks that were less than 15 years old (333,000) than those that were 15 years plus (312,000). Although this still left some 106,000 that were 25 years and over, it does appear to indicate that the new style housing had already become more prevalent than the housing style featured in this study. See: http://www.info.gov.hk/hd/eng/hd/stat_99/stock.htm.
- 2 Because the Hong Kong population has increased, the overall public rental figures have not gone down dramatically: 2,234,565 in 1991 to 2,135,624 in 2001. See 2001 Hong Kong Population Census, figures by type of housing 1991, 1996, 2001. The number of domestic households increased by 30% from 1.58 million in 1991 to 2.05 in 2001. This increased at a faster rate than the population, which meant that the average household size decreased from 3.4 to 3.1.
- 3 Jonathan L. Freedman, *Crowding and Behavior*, San Francisco: W.H. Freeman and Co., 1975, p. 7.
- 4 Amos Rapoport, 'Towards a Redefinition of Density', *Environment and Behavior*, Vol. 7, No. 2, 1975, pp. 135–158.
- 5 *Ibid.*, p. 135. Rapoport points out that a designer cannot directly affect or manipulate crowding, as a subjective experience. However...
 What they can do is to control density in its traditional meaning, and if the relation of this to perceived density is known, and the relationship between perceived density and feelings of crowding or isolation understood, then these latter may become predictable and might possibly be affected by manipulating perceived density.

- 6 Robert Gutman and Barbara Westergaard, 'Building Evaluation, User Satisfaction and Design' in Jon Lang et al. (eds.) *Designing for Human Behavior: Architecture and The Behavioral Sciences*, Stroudsburg: Dowden, Hutchinson and Ross, 1974.
- 7 Clifford Geertz, *Local Knowledge: Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology*, New York: Basic Books, 1983, p. 75.
- 8 Daniel Miller, 'Appropriating the State on the Council Estate', *Man*, vol. 23, pp. 353–372, 1988.

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