




RESEARCH ARTICLE

Markets made modular: constructing the modern ‘wet’ market in Hong Kong’s public housing estates, 1969–1975

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Abstract

This article traces how the ‘wet’ market was integrated into the infrastructure of public housing estates in Hong Kong through modularization from 1969 to 1975. This includes how spatial modularization concepts extended into administration and management, incorporating responsibilities and categories of goods that ultimately reflected colonial ideas of health, food hygiene and social and spatial order. In doing so, this article theorizes how the modular market embodied the ways colonial government departments, architects and managers navigated notions of the materiality of ‘wetness’ in the market through its design in response to management and customer needs, but nevertheless how consumers found ways to re-narrate such spaces through maintaining ‘wet’ cultural exchanges and practices. Using government documents and photographs, this article combines a design historical approach to materiality with empirical evidence to expand on histories and practices of the ‘wet market’, bringing the everyday discourses of modernity in Hong Kong to the fore.

Introduction

This article focuses on the modular market structures that were introduced into public housing estates in Hong Kong in the 1960s and 1970s – the first ‘wet markets’ in the region. My aim is to examine how the market space, as an integral part of public housing, was constructed and managed to convey and adhere to government concepts of modernity in Hong Kong through modularity. As I will demonstrate, modular markets brought everyday negotiations of modernity to the fore, as both markets and homes (in the context of public housing estates) became more formalized in their design. In considering how the spaces of markets in Hong Kong housing estates underwent ‘containment’ in accordance with colonial ideas about hygiene, consumption and social order, this article not only seeks to write the market back into the social history of post-war Hong Kong, but also responds to wider calls in urban history literature for ‘empirical studies...of

how urban markets function in and for the modern city – especially in ‘non-western’ settings.¹

The period of development between the late 1950s and 1970s in Hong Kong introduced what is now commonly known in English as ‘wet markets’ into the urban landscape. As this term becomes increasingly debated in mainstream and academic discourses of non-western (particularly East and Southeast Asian) markets, there is an urgency for in-depth contextualization and theorization of these spaces. Although the etymology of ‘wet market’ is unclear, the OED traces its origin to post-colonial Singapore in reference to Housing Development Board (Singapore’s public housing estates) market spaces in the 1970s.² This is also the case in Hong Kong, where the term ‘wet market’ seems to have been popularized by English-speaking ‘bi-cultural’ communities before being used in reference to public markets.³

I will first draw on the existing literature concerning markets and public housing in Hong Kong, before calling attention to markets that were designed and built specifically for public housing estate communities from 1969 to 1975, using colonial government documents and photographs to explore the nature of the modular markets and their use in public housing estates. I will then expand on the language of ‘wet’ and ‘dry’ before finally referring to the broader history of Hong Kong’s markets to theorize ‘wetness’ in relation to negotiating colonial notions of ‘modern’ space, hygiene and bodily control in the post-war period. The article borrows from Tani Barlow’s seminal work on ‘colonial modernity’ as ‘a speculative frame for...posing a historical question about how our mutual present came to take its apparent shape’ and the suggestion that historical context is ‘a complex field of relationships or threads of material that connect multiply in space-time and can be surveyed from specific sites’ as opposed to ‘defined, elemental or discrete units’.⁴ In this study, modernity is thus understood not merely in the top-down adoption and execution of ‘defined units’ of construction and organization, but also in cross-examining everyday ‘material relationships or threads’ in the colonial urban landscape, by speculating on the history of ‘wetness’ in the specific site of the wet market.

Hong Kong markets in modernity

Jon Stobart and Ilja Van Damme relate the gap in the historical scholarship of ‘the market’ to the abstraction of the market space as the institutionalized economy of

¹J. Stobart and I. Van Damme, ‘Introduction: markets in modernization: transformations in urban market space and practice, c. 1800 – c. 1970’, *Urban History*, special issue 43, 3 (2016), 368.

²The term first appears in newspapers in 1978, in the *Strait Times*, ‘Market fish is not really fresh’, 16 Jul. 1978, available at <https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/straittimes19780716-1.2.43?ST=1&AT=search&k=%22wet%20market%22&SortBy=Oldest&filterS=0&Display=0&QT=%22wetmarket%22&oref=article>, accessed 14 Sep. 2020.

³‘The Discovery Bay lifestyle’, *South China Morning Post (SCMP)*, 11 May 1983, 23; M. Sheridan, ‘Making the most of the wet market: table talks’, *SCMP*, 9 Apr. 1992, 20; ‘Culinary delights a la wet market: FOOD’, *SCMP*, 2 Apr. 1992, 20; ‘Home cooking? But we don’t employ an amah’, *SCMP*, 18 Jun. 1992, 25; ‘Why shoppers raise a storm over typhoons’, *SCMP*, 8 Jul. 1993, 24; ‘Convenience heads the shopper’s list’, *SCMP*, Jul. 1994, 22.

⁴T. Barlow, ‘On “colonial modernity”’, in *Colonial Modernity* (Durham, NC, 1997), 6.

the metropolis.⁵ Nevertheless, urban markets in their physical form have received renewed attention in other disciplines in the last two decades, particularly in non-western contexts. Several themes dominate the resulting discourse. First, informality continues to be a persistent theme, for instance, with many recent works asserting the co-existence and co-operation of structures of formality and informality of markets, found in policies, buildings and the actions of individual actors, rather than simply top-down forces.⁶ Related to this is gentrification and urban conflict surrounding urban markets, particularly tied into heritage, tourism and place-making, regarding them as central to the negotiation of identity, memory, hybridity and diversity.⁷ Secondly, other studies point to the broader conflicts between market stalls, organizers and consumers, against urban gentrification tactics by local governments and urban planners.⁸ Thirdly, markets have also been sites of urban histories of public health, hygiene and epidemics, designed to separate communities along race and class lines spurred by the racialization of epidemic outbreaks and disease, but where human activity and infection nevertheless spill out and cross over these boundaries.⁹ In many cases, this intersects with histories of housing, particularly where residential and commercial housing co-exist. On a more local level, contemporary studies have explored the change in perception of 'hygiene' by consumers in relation to the grocery shop.¹⁰ Indeed in the aftermath of global epidemics such as SARS, avian flu and the continuing effects of COVID-19, all have brought the market back into mainstream and academic discourses of food management, hygiene, public health and the racialized tensions therein.¹¹

⁵Stobart and Van Damme, 'Introduction', 361–3. Arguably, there is also a gap in the research on western markets in the twentieth century that may need updating; see V. Kelley, 'The streets for the people: London's street markets 1850–1939', *Urban History*, special issue 43, 3 (2016), 391–411; V. Kelley, *Cheap Street: London's Street Markets and the Cultures of Informality, c. 1850–1939* (Manchester, 2019).

⁶K. Zakariya, 'Mapping Kuala Lumpur's urban night market at shifting scales', in C. Evers and K. Seale (eds.), *Informal Urban Street Markets: International Perspectives* (London, 2014), 124–35.

⁷M. Beattie, 'Hybrid bazaar space: colonialization, globalization, and traditional space in Barabazaar, Calcutta, India', *Journal of Architectural Education*, 61 (2008), 45–55; Q.F. Zhang and Z. Pan, 'The transformation of urban vegetable retail in China: wet markets, supermarkets and informal markets in Shanghai', *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, 43 (2015), 497–518; C. Mele et al., 'Urban markets as a "corrective" to advance urbanism: the social space of wet markets in contemporary Singapore', *Urban Studies*, 52 (2015), 103–20.

⁸S. González (ed.), *Contested Markets, Contested Cities: Gentrification and Urban Justice in Retail Spaces* (London, 2018).

⁹L. Beeckmans and L. Bigon, 'The making of the central markets of Dakar and Kinshasa: from colonial origins to the post-colonial period', *Urban History*, 43 (2016), 422.

¹⁰A.A. Gindi et al., 'Shopping drivers of generational cohorts: a comparison between night market and wet market formats for fresh fruit and vegetable purchase in Malaysia', *Australasian Marketing Journal*, 24 (2016), 165–70.

¹¹In mainstream media: V. Yu, 'What is a wet market?', *Guardian*, 16 Apr. 2020, available at www.theguardian.com/global-development/2020/apr/16/what-is-a-wet-market-coronavirus, accessed 11 Jun. 2020; P. Beech, 'What we've got wrong about wet markets' and their link to COVID-19', *World Economic Forum*, 18 Apr. 2020, available at www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/04/china-wet-markets-covid19-coronavirus-explained/, accessed 10 Jun. 2020. In anthropology: M. Zhan, 'Civit cats, fried grasshoppers and David Beckham's pajamas: unruly bodies after SARS', *American Anthropologist*, 107 (2005), 31–42; C. Lynteris and L. Fearnley, 'Why shutting down Chinese "wet markets" could be a terrible mistake', *The Conversation*, 31 Jan. 2020, available at <https://theconversation.com/why-shutting-down-chinese-wet-markets-could-be-a-terrible-mistake-130625>, accessed 10 Jun. 2020. In scientific journals: K. Mizumoto,

The patterns in the historiography of Hong Kong's markets follow the trends in the discourse of markets overall. Largely conducted by anthropologists and economists, the literature of Hong Kong markets focus on familiar themes of informality, precarity, competition and perception rather than on spatiality.¹² Aside from these works, the spatial and social aspects of markets have often been subsumed into the rich literature on hawkers. T.G. McGee's seminal study on hawkers in Hong Kong (1973), followed by the influential work of Josephine Smart (1989, 2005, 2017) has made Hong Kong hawkers, and their affiliated markets, a consistent reference in studies of informal economies and urban activity in cities across the world.¹³ However, due to markets being intertwined with hawkers in the literature, the imagination of markets in Hong Kong rarely goes beyond the street market. The Cantonese term of *gaai si* 街市 literally translates to 'street market', but in contemporary use, *gaai si* can nevertheless be used to refer to markets on or off the street, and is much more related to the products sold and the manner in which these goods are consumed rather than the physical space in which the activity is conducted. The literature largely bypasses this, and markets are mostly presented as a 'plural' for hawkers, as the end form in which hawkers collect, or as the tool used for colonial control, rather than a subject for spatial historical analysis in their own right.

There are, however, several recent examples that focus on the spatial-material culture of markets in Hong Kong in relation to the history of the city.¹⁴ These

K. Kagaya and G. Chowell, 'Effect of the wet market on the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) transmission dynamics in China, 2019–2020', *International Journal of Infectious Diseases*, 2 Jun. 2020; P.T. Sekoai *et al.*, 'Insights into the microbiological safety of wooden cutting boards used for meat processing in Hong Kong's wet markets: a focus on food-contact surfaces, cross-contamination and the efficacy of traditional hygiene practices', *Microorganisms*, 8 (2020), 579; R.G. Webster, 'Wet markets – a continuing source of severe acute respiratory syndrome and influenza?', *The Lancet*, 363 (17 Jan. 2004), 234–6, [www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(03\)15329-9/fulltext](http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(03)15329-9/fulltext), accessed 11 Jun. 2020.

¹²This is with the exception of J.J. Lou's paper, which uses a linguistic and ethnographic spatial approach to the market: 'Spaces of consumption and senses of place: a geosemiotic analysis of three markets in Hong Kong', *Social Semiotics*, 27 (2017), 513–31; A. Smart and J. Smart, 'Formalization as confinement in colonial Hong Kong', *International Sociology*, 32 (2017), 437–53; N.K. Chan, 'Place-making and communication practice: everyday precarity in a night market in Hong Kong', *Space and Culture*, 21 (2018), 439–54; A. Goldman *et al.*, 'The persistent competitive advantage of traditional food retailers in Asia: wet markets' continued dominance in Hong Kong', *Journal of Macromarketing*, 19 (1999), 136–9; U. Bougoure and B. Lee, 'Service quality in Hong Kong: wet markets vs. supermarkets', *British Food Journal*, 111 (2008), 70–9.

¹³T.G. McGee, *Hawkers of Hong Kong* (Hong Kong, 1973); J. Smart, 'The impacts of government policy on hawkers: a study of the effects of establishing a hawker permitted place', *Asian Journal of Public Administration*, 8 (1986), 260–79; J. Smart, 'Time-space punctuation: Hong Kong's border regime and limits on mobility', *Pacific Affairs*, 81 (2008), 175–93; Smart and Smart, 'Formalization as confinement in colonial Hong Kong'.

¹⁴G.C.H. Luk, 'Occupied space, occupied time: food hawking and the Central Market in Hong Kong's Victoria during the Opium War', *Frontiers of History in China*, 11 (2016), 400–30; I. Tam, 'When *gaai si* became markets', presented at Architecture Department Symposium, University of Hong Kong, unpublished paper (2019); M. Marinelli, 'From street hawkers to public markets: modernity and sanitization made in Hong Kong', in Y. Cabannes *et al.* (eds.), *Cities in Asia by and for the People* (Amsterdam, 2018), 229–58; R. Peckham, 'Bad meat: food and the medicine of modern hygiene in colonial Hong Kong', in A. Leung and M. Caldwell (eds.), *Moral Foods: The Construction of Nutrition and Health in Modern Asia* (Hawaii, 2019), 173–98.

works successfully contextualize the market as a material or spatial entity intertwined in urban histories of hawkers, public health and urban planning. However, it is telling that all largely focus on some of the most architecturally distinctive models of markets in Hong Kong, anomalies of the type that are continuously visible under the tourist gaze as relics of the early colonial era. It is perhaps this dichotomous divide of Hong Kong's hawkers and markets, 'from' one to replace 'the other', from 'dirty' to 'sanitary', as several titles suggest, or the continuous focus on Central Market in particular, that means the literature has rarely coalesced in a broader understanding of markets in Hong Kong as numerous, messy and deeply integrated local sites of spatiality and materiality. This article thus begins to fill the gap between the polarized nineteenth-century and contemporary readings of the market, shifting the focus of the history of markets in Hong Kong beyond its urban core towards the New Towns.

Towards public housing and modular space in Hong Kong

Modular architecture, construction and concepts were increasingly prevalent globally as a post-war rebuilding strategy. While standardization as a design theoretical framework has a much longer history through industrialization, particular cases of modernist modular architecture and city planning from the late nineteenth century onwards have been celebrated for spatial, technological or conceptual standardization.¹⁵ Oft-cited is Le Corbusier's concept of *The Modulor* (1948), which aimed to create a visual system for design based on the human body, against the clash of imperial and metric systems of measure.¹⁶ This was an explicitly modern endeavour, lamenting that 'modern society lacks a common measure capable of ordering the dimensions that which contain and that which is contained'.¹⁷ In short, spatial modularization also involved a 'modularization of society'. This measured link between humans and buildings, in which the ideal modern architecture fulfils the role of 'containing' man 'harmoniously' through appropriate measurements and ratios, was a particularly useful

¹⁵Although a full historiography of modularity in modernism is beyond the scope of this article, several well-known cases are notable; the Garden City Movement and the construction of company towns in the nineteenth century (R.K. Home, 'Town planning and garden cities in the British colonial empire, 1910–1940', *Planning Perspectives*, 5 (1990), 23–37; M.J. Borges and S.B. Torres (eds.), *Company Towns: Labor, Space and Power Relations across Time and Continents* (London, 2012)); experiments for commercial modular housing in the early twentieth century, and Buckminster Fuller's Dymaxion House (T.T. Fettes, *The Lustron Home: The History of a Postwar Prefabricated Housing Experiment* (London, 2006); I. Rupnik, 'Mapping the modular industry', in *Offsite Architecture: Constructing the Future* (London, 2017), 55–76); Khrushchyovka and other socialist public housing experiments (S. Harris, *Communism on Tomorrow Street: Mass Housing and Everyday Life after Stalin* (Baltimore, 2013); D. Alfirevic and S. Simonovic-Alfirevic, 'Urban housing experiments in Yugoslavia, 1948–1970', *Institute of Architecture, Urban & Spatial Planning of Serbia special issue, Spatium*, 34 (2015), 1–9; G. Shin and I. Jung, 'Appropriating the socialist way of life: the emergence of mass housing in post-war North Korea', *Journal of Architecture*, 21 (2016), 159–80); and, finally, Japanese traditional and modern architecture, including *danchi* public housing and Metabolism (I. Kuroishi, 'Mathematics for/from society: the role of the module in modernizing Japanese architectural production', *Nexus Network Journal*, 11 (2009), 201–16; T. Tamari, 'Metabolism: utopian urbanism and the Japanese modern architecture movement', *Theory, Culture & Society*, 31 (2014), 201–25).

¹⁶Le Corbusier, *The Modulor and Modulor 2* (Paris, 2000), 19.

¹⁷Emphasis added. *Ibid.*, 20–1.

concept in colonial rebuilding efforts and production of social housing in the post-war period.¹⁸

Lack of space and overcrowded housing was a persistent issue from the outset in colonial Hong Kong.¹⁹ During the 1950s, Hong Kong's population rose dramatically, largely due to people returning to or fleeing to Hong Kong from China to escape the newly established People's Republic of China, with the population reaching around 2.5 million by 1955.²⁰ Many poorer refugees were living in squalid conditions in squatter settlements on the peripheries of the urban centres, where fires were frequent occurrences.²¹ Following the infamous Shek Kip Mei fire in 1953, two new government departments were formed under the 1954 Housing Ordinance specifically to deal with housing this population, the Resettlement Department (RD) to house victims of fire and resettling refugees, and the Housing Authority (former HA) for higher income households.²² In 1961, the Government Low Cost Housing scheme (GLCH) was established for households with an income below HKD\$600 but were *not* part of resettlement programmes.²³ After the introduction of the 10 Year Housing Programme in 1973, all three housing types were merged under the new Housing Department and the new Hong Kong Housing Authority.²⁴

A significant motivation for government public housing was to redistribute the population outwards and into the New Territories in order to regain the use of valuable land. As a result, a majority of public housing estates were built on the peripheries of the urban centres to become central nodes of nominated 'satellite towns', eventually formalized as New Towns. In the first phase, these were Kwun Tong, Tsuen Wan, followed by Tuen Mun and Sha Tin. While some of these towns were well established, all these districts were significantly urbanized after public housing schemes were initiated, employing design and engineering innovations to reclaim land, and build higher, more efficient structures at low costs and high speeds.²⁵ Between 1960 and 1970, 10 resettlement and GLCH estates were built in Kwun Tong and Tsuen Wan with an estimated total population of 267,470 people by 1967.²⁶ In spite of the drastic changes in the population in these New Towns,

¹⁸*Ibid.*, cxxxi–cliv and 33–7.

¹⁹This was exacerbated by land policy, designed to maintain the high value of land. See C. Chu, 'Speculative modern: urban forms and the politics of property in colonial Hong Kong', University of California Berkeley, Ph.D. thesis, 2012, 29.

²⁰J.M. Carroll, *A Concise History of Hong Kong* (Hong Kong, 2007), 140.

²¹*Ibid.*, 145. See also A. Smart, *The Shek Kip Mei Myth: Squatters, Fires and Colonial Rule in Hong Kong, 1950 to 1963* (Hong Kong, 2006).

²²The RD was formed from sections of the Public Works Department (PWD), Social Welfare Department and the Urban Services Department (USD), and was responsible for the design and execution of resettlement estates for victims directly affected. The former HA was established to develop other types of public housing that were in contrast more experimental in their approach, focused on architectural and engineering innovation, catering to household income between HKD\$900 and \$1600.

²³GLCH estates were designed and built by the PWD but managed by the former HA on completion.

²⁴The Hong Kong Housing Society also developed public housing even prior to the Resettlement Scheme but on a smaller scale.

²⁵Y.K. Chan, *The Rise and Growth of Kwun Tong: A Study of Planned Urban Development*, Social Research Centre, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Occasional Paper No. 30 (1973).

²⁶In resettlement estates, 125,311, and 98,657 persons; in GLCH and HA estates, 23,718 and 19,784 persons lived in Kwun Tong and Tsuen Wan respectively. Numbers calculated from Census & Statistics Department (CSD) Hong Kong, *Hong Kong Statistics 1947–1967* (Hong Kong, 1969), 174–7.

it was often only the housing itself that was developed at such a rate – many aspects of public life, including markets, relied heavily on the existing social structures in place, vastly outnumbered by the newly expanded population.²⁷ Nevertheless, this intense period of urbanization simultaneously satisfied government needs for more space and dispersal of people (particularly following the 1966 and 1967 unrests), and appeasing the population through evidence of social reform.

Colin Bramwell's 1969 modular market stall

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, the lack of market buildings as part of these public housing estates resulted in a surge of illegal hawking. Tactics such as hawker bazaars constructed by the Architectural Office (AO) in the late 1950s, could not meet the demands of the growing population of the New Towns, where lack of mobility and access into the central urban districts encouraged illegal hawking to thrive.²⁸ However, in the late 1960s, further co-operation between government bodies began to manifest in more consistent solutions for markets. After the drafting and release of the Colony Outline Plan (COP) in 1969, a comprehensive review of the future population distribution and land use, the strategy for markets became more directed towards standardized concrete structures.²⁹

In resettlement and low-cost housing estates, two main policies were agreed by the Market, Hawker Management, Resettlement Policy and Resettlement Management Committees in March 1969: first, for properly designated and constructed small markets to be provided in estates under planning and future estates; and secondly, where practical, for construction of small markets in existing estates to be covered in the upcoming Public Works Programme.³⁰ However, with the dire hawker problem at hand in existing resettlement estates, immediate provisions were also necessary.

²⁷This is due to the lack of government resources and urgency for housing. Inclusive of all resettlement estates, there were only 6,616 'shops of various kinds' within estates. *Ibid.*, 175. Ambrose King and Y.K. Chan also theorized community in Kwun Tong through notions of self-sufficiency of public facilities, A. King and Y.K. Chan, *A Theoretical and Operational Definition of Community: The Case of Kwun Tong*, Social Research Centre, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Occasional Paper No. 11 (1972). Also see London, The National Archives, FCO 40/306, Policy on Housing and Resettlement in Hong Kong, D. Baird, 'Consigned to limbo', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, Dec. 1970.

²⁸In correspondence between departments, Bramwell shares that 'in resettlement estates we presently build nothing as all previous experiments along this line seem to have failed'. Bazaars were never a permanent solution to the 'hawker problem' and perhaps even assisted illegal activity. In a draft of the COP Working Committee #3, it is stated that 'it seems reasonable to assume that in some districts a concentration of hawkers may be indicative of a deficiency of other shopping facilities'. See Hong Kong, Public Records Office (HKPRO), HKRS 1039-1-10, Public Markets, Hawker Bazaars and Hawkers, 1968-70.

²⁹It could also be speculated that the 1968 'Hong Kong flu' and the 1966 and 1967 riots contributed to intensified development of the New Towns and the markets within them, but there is currently no evidence to suggest a direct link between these events and the construction of markets. However, the documentation emphasized the 'hawker problem' as a main motivation, and hawkers were often conspicuously linked with extended informal economies within the working classes, and certainly relevant to broader colonial anxieties around governance, space and social control. Further research would be necessary to solidify this hypothesis.

³⁰HKPRO, Urban Council Hong Kong, Minutes of Meetings of Select Committees Dealing with...April 1969 – March 1970, Memorandum for Members of the Markets, Hawker Management, Resettlement Policy and Resettlement Management Select Committees, Proposal for Markets in Resettlement Estates, HKRS 438-1-78, 12 Dec. 1969.

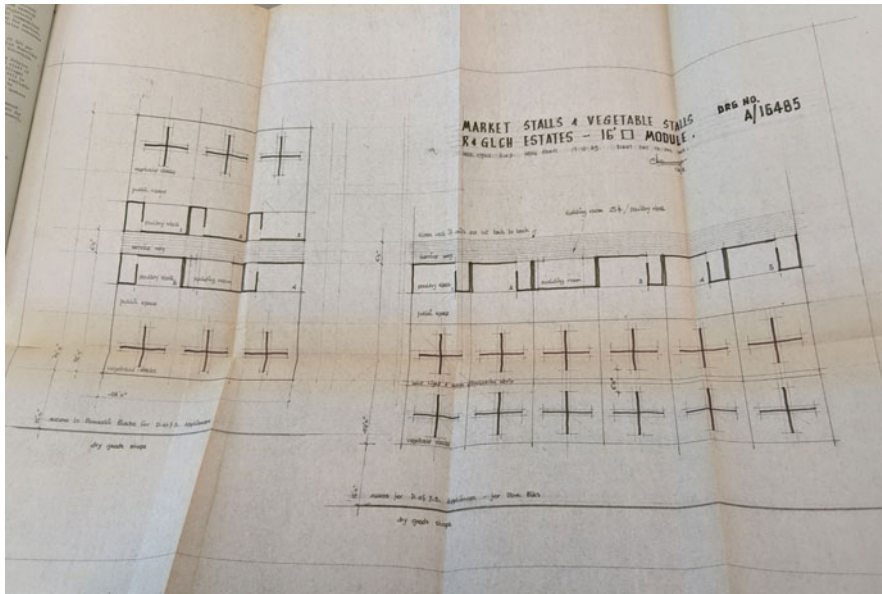


Figure 1. Hong Kong, Public Records Office, HKRS 438-1-78, Urban Council Hong Kong, Minutes of Meetings of Select Committees Dealing with...April 1969 – March 1970, market stalls and vegetable stalls R+GLCH estates, 17 October 1969.

Together the Urban Services Department (USD) and RD consulted Public Works Department (PWD) architect, Mr Colin Bramwell, ‘regarding the feasibility of providing a relatively quick and economical design for a market stall which would meet hygiene requirements’.³¹ The result was a modular market stall, originally intended for selling fruit and vegetables in low-cost housing estates that could be easily modified for the ‘restricted’ foods of meat, fish, and poultry. Figure 1 shows how the modules could fit together: modules could sit side by side, or back to back, containing the scalding areas of ‘restricted’ goods away from public view, and smaller open stalls could form around cross panels facing out toward the dry goods shops on the ground floors of estates. The design was lauded for ‘its standard 16-foot square modules, suited to easy and flexible planning, and speedy and economic construction’, flexible enough to adjust to the spatial limitations of existing estates, and also meant to meet the demands of the severely underserved market needs in estates.³² This modular structure would mark the first standardized design strategy to attempt to remove all restricted food types from street hawking practices to be implemented on a widespread scale.³³

³¹HKPRO, HKRS 438-1-78, 12 Dec. 1969. Aside from his role as a PWD architect, I have been unable to find out more about Mr Colin Bramwell at this time due to limited access to archives. Bramwell was known to have worked under Michael Wright, PWD chief architect and founding member and president of the Hong Kong Institute of Architects in 1958, becoming Hong Kong Commissioner in London in 1969.

³²*Ibid.*

³³This includes the sale of fish, which was previously permitted through the 1858 Market Ordinance, but made illegal in 1969. While other types of markets were designed and built in the post-war period, these



Figure 2. Hong Kong, Government Information Services, 352-6555/12, new kinds of hawker stalls (modular stalls) at Chai Wan, photograph by K.T. Leung, 27 May 1970.

Ahead of its implementation at Sau Mau Ping Estate, a model of the market was set up at Chai Wan for Urban Council members and the public to inspect.³⁴ Photographs of the model stall at Chai Wan Resettlement Estate give a clearer picture of each complete module (Figure 2). Retaining the cuboid forms of the housing estates themselves, the flat roof and slim perpendicular wall structures give a visual and material consistency of solid clean lines and block shapes coated in pale paint, in stark contrast to the haphazard and precarious structures spilling out of the Chai Wan hawker bazaar (Figure 3). Shelves line the sections around the panels for hawkers, and at the other end, a built surface for use by those selling meat and fish

were to serve whole area populations rather than relieve the hawker problem or serve one estate. Of the 44 existing markets in Hong Kong surveyed in 1965, 21 were built after 1950. These were a mixture of individual buildings, unroofed structures and allocated land where markets were tolerated. See HKPRO, Public Markets – Construction Data, HKRS, 1039-1-10, 29 Jul. 1965.

³⁴HKPRO, Proposal for Markets in Resettlement Estates, HKRS 438-1-78, 12 Dec. 1969.



Figure 3. Hong Kong, Government Information Services, 352-6555/1, new kinds of hawker stalls (modular stalls) at Chai Wan, photograph by K.T. Leung, 27 May 1970.

consisting of simply a long concrete block, contained within three walls with access to the service way behind. The built-in table runs almost to meet the opposite wall, demarcating a clear boundary between buyer and seller. Indeed, the distinct visual boundaries and structures of the two types of stalls reflected the separated administrative procedure that arose with the modular market. Where fruit and vegetable hawkers would continue to pay for hawker licences and rent, initially HKD\$20 per month, meat, fish and poultry stalls were put up for auction to bid for the rental price by the fresh provision hawkers already operating in the estates.³⁵

While Bramwell's modular market design seemed like a simple exercise in problem-solving, the design also reflected a decade of discussions around industrialized, prefabricated and modular construction in Hong Kong and other British

³⁵*Ibid.* It is unclear whether the auction was only open to temporarily legal fresh provision hawkers operating in the estates, or those who were operating illegally as well.

colonies.³⁶ Although the UK Ministry of Works was keen to promote the new British industry of prefabricated buildings to the colonies as an ideal solution to housing problems and post-war re-urbanization in the early 1950s, Hong Kong was *not* among the territories to import the product.³⁷ By this time, Hong Kong was already overwhelmed with squatter fires and a dire housing crisis.³⁸ Single-storey buildings with prefabricated units were considered but, according to local architects, the major ‘drawback was that the ground coverage would have been far too high and less than one third of the homeless could be accommodated on the site cleared by the fire’.³⁹ Likewise, experts were dubious that prefabrication was even possible in Hong Kong due to the lack of heavy industry and the logistics of transporting the units through the narrow and crowded streets.⁴⁰ With these two constraints, standardization was limited to using simple construction methods and minimal equipment with precasting of concrete slabs on site, until the mid-1960s when the former HA development of Fuk Loi Estate in Tsuen Wan first tested the Japanese ‘Tilt-Up’ method in the Hong Kong context.⁴¹

At the same time, the concept of the module was increasingly part of the international discourse of planning and architecture, including Hong Kong.⁴² Indeed, the standard ‘unit’ already dictated Hong Kong public housing design and production, where the Hong Kong government resettlement space allowance was strictly set to 24 square feet per adult resulting in a 120 square foot unit for a total of five adults (where children counted as half an adult) in order to significantly house the population.⁴³ In other types of public housing, the legal minimum standard was 35 square feet per adult. Again, the lack of local heavy industry meant concrete was cast in slabs on site rather than precast into set modules.⁴⁴ But the ‘modularization of society’ was still present through the organization of people in these spaces. By strictly assigning square footage to individuals, government bodies could theoretically calculate and ‘predict’ estate populations and ‘optimize’

³⁶See The National Archives, Kew, London, Export Houses, Prefabrication and Building in the Tropics, CO 859 310.

³⁷*Ibid.*, G.A. Atkinson, Draft Circular Saving Telegram to All Colonies, 1953; CO 859 310, Exports of Prefabricated Buildings from the UK 1950–52.

³⁸See Smart, *The Shek Kip Mei Myth*.

³⁹B.F. Will, ‘Housing design and construction methods’, in L.S.K. Wong (ed.), *Housing in Hong Kong: A Multidisciplinary Study* (Hong Kong, 1978), 96.

⁴⁰Hongkong Times, ‘Hong Kong housing problem: discussion and suggestions’, *Ekistics*, 5 (1958), 126.

⁴¹J.R. Firth and D. Liao, ‘An exercise in industrialised construction’, *Far East Architect and Builder* (1968), 31–6. Also see C.C.W. Lai ‘Cement and “Shanghai plaster” in British Hong Kong and Penang (1920–1950)’, *6th International Congress on Construction History* (Brussels, 2018), 9–13 Jul. 2018, for pre-World War II discourse of construction.

⁴²Members of the Hong Kong government, architecture, engineering and planning community were frequent contributors to *Ekistics* during the 1950s to 1970s. See, for example, former HA, ‘North Point Estate, Java Road, Hong Kong’, *Ekistics*, 5 (1958), 229–32; J.M. Fraser, ‘Housing estates in Hong Kong’, *Ekistics*, 14 (1962), 39–41; D.C. Y. Lai and D.T. Dwyer, ‘A new industrial town in Hong Kong’, *Ekistics*, 18 (1964), 340–5; D.T. Dwyer, ‘Problems of urbanization: the example of Hong Kong’, *Ekistics*, 28 (1969), 334–44; O.J. Golger, ‘Hong Kong: a problem of housing the masses’, *Ekistics*, 33 (1972), 173–7.

⁴³In 1970, this increased to 35 square feet per person with the Mark VI model of resettlement, bringing the standard up to par with the Hong Kong Housing Authority and GLCH allocations. Will, ‘Housing design and construction methods’, 99.

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, 99–115.

(essentially, significantly reduce) the space used per person. While Hong Kong architects and planners were clearly aware of global modes of housing construction, prefabrication and standardization, they also actively took their own route into modernizing their development procedures to suit their own local needs.

As a PWD architect also designing public housing, these strict units used in housing design undoubtedly informed Bramwell's modular approach to the market in public housing estates as well.⁴⁵ Hawker numbers were set in the COP in 1969, recommending 153 stalls to 10,000 persons, or approximately 1 stall to 60 persons, a number derived from hawker surveys in existing urban areas in 1966 (largely Yau Ma Tei).⁴⁶ This strategy was not only practical for reducing numbers, but also for hygienic spatial order and management. Modularization and industrialization allowed for quick and efficient construction that could restrict the amount of space used by each hawker and the number of hawkers of each food type. This therefore also clearly demarcated the boundaries of legality, where previously one of the challenges of hawker management in the late 1950s and early 1960s was simply identifying and suppressing illegal activity. With this new outline, it was finally clarified which department was responsible for controlling which space:

management of the future markets in Estates will be the responsibility of the Urban Services Department, but staff of the Resettlement Department will be responsible for demolishing illegal hawker stalls found outside of the boundaries of the markets...The Police will also be requested to take action against illegal cooked or restricted food hawkers in the vicinity of these markets.⁴⁷

Through the modular market, the public housing estate market could be visually and spatially standardized across public housing estates for the first time, creating clear boundaries between legal and illegal hawker practices. Within the market, the spatial order was maintained through the modular structure as well; this can be clearly seen in Figures 4 and 5, where the structures of the ceiling, partition walls and the cast iron drain covers in the centre demarcated the boundaries for each hawker's stall. Hawkers' legal status was bound to material and administrative infrastructures, requiring them to take part in orders of hygiene, licensing and space in order to continue practising.

Managing markets, containing wetness

Management became increasingly significant in the success of estate markets as informants for containment methods and structures. This also inevitably influenced improvements in the market's design. A small-scale internal survey was carried out in 1972 by housing managers on the design of market stalls in three estates designed by different groups, Wah Fu Estate (former HA), Kwai Hing Estate

⁴⁵Bramwell notably designed Kwai Shing Estate, regarded as one of the largest and most technologically impressive public housing estates at the time. See *docomomo hk*, Kwai Shing West Estate, public housing, 2020, available at www.docomomo.hk/project/kwai-shing-west-estate/, accessed 12 Aug. 2020.

⁴⁶HKPRO, Retail Markets, Hawker Bazaars and Hawkers, Standard of Provisions of Market/Hawker Stalls, Informal Meeting between USD, AO, Housing Dept and Town Planning Office, HKRS 1039-1-12, 28 Aug. 1973, 1–2.

⁴⁷HKPRO, HKRS 438-1-78, Proposal for Markets in Resettlement Estates, 12 Dec. 1969.



Figure 4. Hong Kong, Information Services Department Photo Library, GIS 123 7834/28, Kwai Hing low-cost housing estate, taken by C.W. Wan, 7 January 1972.

(PWD) and Mei Foo Sun Chuen Estate (private).⁴⁸ The findings showed that all three markets were poorly lit, had insufficient storage space and ceiling height, inefficient drainage, with further observations by housing Architect 2 on site adding more consideration of user experience and management.⁴⁹ Indeed, the survey reveals that even prior to government administrative reconstruction in 1973, architects and managers on the ground were already attempting to progress the design standards of the markets within the structure of modularization.

Most significantly, potential risks to hygiene and spatial order could be mitigated further through the design of the modular market interior in response to the environment. Containing the materiality of 'wet' goods and the hawker practices surrounding them proved to be central to design specifications. Managers specified that floor

⁴⁸HKPRO, HKRS 1588-3-2, Design of Market Stalls in Public Housing Estates, 'The design of market stalls', 22 Nov. 1972.

⁴⁹Bramwell is identified as Architect 3, therefore confirming he was not Architect 2. See *ibid.*



Figure 5. Hong Kong, Information Services Department Photo Library, GIS 123 7828/6, Kwai Hing low-cost housing estate, taken by P. Chow, 3 January 1972.

finishes for fish and poultry stalls (the main stalls dealing with slaughter and butchery on site) especially 'should be of more durable type' due to constant washing, the 'floor is unable to be kept dry because of the nature of trades'.⁵⁰ Efficient and constant drainage was therefore also paramount, so that wastewater could be quickly flushed to minimize slippage and contamination. As well as sealing against contaminated water, another manager suggested 'It would be advantageous to have mosaic tiles on dadoes on walls that attract most dirt and grease' to preserve the market's aesthetic values.⁵¹

However, not all wetness could be practically solved. Weather was severe, with nine Signal 10 typhoons in Hong Kong between 1960 and 1979 as well as two significant rainstorms, often causing major damage to estate structures through wind damage and landslides.⁵² Wetness permeated the market, both as a source

⁵⁰*Ibid.*, K.Y. Lau, housing manager, Ping Shek Estate, 11 Dec. 1972.

⁵¹*Ibid.*, Mr Fung Tung, housing manager, Pak Tin Estate, 12 Dec. 1972.

⁵²List of level 10 typhoons from 1960 to 1980: Mary, 9 Jun. 1960; Alice, 19 May 1961; Wanda, 1 Sep. 1962; Ruby, 5 Sep. 1964; Dot, 13 Oct. 1964; Shirley, 21 Aug. 1968; Rose, 17 Aug. 1971; Elsie, 14 Oct. 1975; Hope, 2 Aug. 1979. In addition, there were several rainstorms in June 1966 and June 1972. See A. Malone and K. Ho, 'Learning from landslip disasters in Hong Kong', *Built Environment* (1978-), 21 (1995), 126-44; HKPRO, HKRS 70-6-810-1, Housing Estates, public - Kwai Hing, newspaper clipping, 'Fix our homes', *The Star*, 24 Aug. 1971.

of life, lustre and cleanliness, and as a constant threat to the government's vision of a clean, modern, working society and urban landscape.⁵³

This is further emphasized in the language of 'wet' in the categorization of food, which in turn designated how these goods could legally be exchanged in the urban landscape. The terms 'wet' and 'dry' were in administrative use to describe market goods since at least the early 1970s, which may be related to the vernacular Cantonese *sap fo* 濕貨 ('wet goods') and *gon fo* 乾貨 ('dry goods').⁵⁴ These have been broadly defined in government documents, generally designating perishable goods as 'wet', and non-perishable goods as 'dry', although there is no comprehensive list. Instead, a list specifying 'commodities allowed to be sold by hawkers' (1969) gives a clearer idea of what constituted 'unrestricted' goods. These were separated into three classes: vegetables or fruit (not both together); permitted food stuffs other than vegetables or fruit, which included eggs, dried meat and salt fish, vermicelli and preserved vegetables among others; and mostly non-food 'dry' goods. Finally it specified why meat, fish and poultry should not be permitted.⁵⁵ Later on, the Urban Council Policy Manual (1975) categorized 'the usual commodities sold in markets' into five categories of fresh produce: meat; fish; poultry; vegetables and fruits; and 'other' foods such as eggs and bean curd, plus non-perishable frozen, dried or packaged foods.⁵⁶ It should also be noted that, according to Gary Luk's research, these categories were already regarded as 'departments' in the design of Central Market in 1842.⁵⁷

Despite the vague definitions of wet and dry goods, post-war government policies and manuals made clear that the purpose of the market prioritized the containment and regulation of the most vulnerable foodstuffs to contamination, especially as meat, fish and poultry, including live animals, were the only goods explicitly barred from hawker sales.⁵⁸ In 1969, the Urban Council did not initially approve of hawkers selling restricted goods in any capacity, justifying market buildings in the belief that 'existing illegal hawkers of meat, fish and poultry have already shown a total disregard for the basic hygiene requirements (ample clean fresh water, clean implements and clean working conditions) and there is no reason to believe that legalizing them would alter their attitude'.⁵⁹ While the idea of

⁵³See the work of Franz Krause for further conceptualization of water and materiality: F. Krause, 'Rhythms of wet and dry: temporalities of the land-water nexus', *Geoforum* (Dec. 2017); 'Water and materiality', *Oxford Research Encyclopaedia of Anthropology* (Sep. 2021). See also Mary Douglas for her work on purity, dirt and pollution: M. Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London, 2002).

⁵⁴*Sap fo* and *gon fo* seem to predate this categorization as part of vernacular everyday language use, but it is unclear whether the administrative use of 'wet' and 'dry' is directly translated from Cantonese. These were described as 'wet' goods from at least 1971. See MMIS, UC.HAW.01.73, Lunar New Year Fairs, Distribution of 'wet' goods at last fair (1971), 1974, 11, available at: <link>.

⁵⁵HKPRO, HKRS 438-1-78, Memorandum for Members of the Hawker Policy Select Committee, Committee Paper HP/11/69 Commodities Allowed to be Sold by Hawkers, 24 Jun. 1969.

⁵⁶MMIS, UC.CW.100.74, Urban Council Policy Manual, 1 Jan. 1975, 88, available at: <link>.

⁵⁷Luk, 'Occupied space, occupied time', 418.

⁵⁸UC.CW.100.74, Urban Council Policy Manual, 60, Available at: <link>.

⁵⁹This was then temporarily allowed in permitted hawker bazaars. HKPRO, HKRS 438-1-78, Memorandum for Members of the Hawker Policy Select Committee, Committee Paper HP/11/69, 24 Jun. 1969, 3.

containing wet goods has a much longer history, the widespread containment of wet goods first trialled through the modular market, alongside the adoption of ‘wet’ and ‘dry’ categories in markets in the 1970s, arguably introduced the popular notion of the ‘wet market’ as a distinct space in colonial Hong Kong.⁶⁰ Still, in spite of the hard colonial structures setting out the physical and administrative boundaries for hawkers, such fluid, vernacular terminology allowed for potential transgressions by hawkers and consumers alike.

Market materiality: consuming fresh ‘wet’ goods

‘Wetness’ was also integral to improving the viability of the market for both hawkers and consumers, in spite of the inconveniences and risk of ‘wet’ goods.⁶¹ Surface materials, wall colours, lighting, spatial arrangements and storage were all considered in great depth to highlight the most important quality of ‘wet’ goods in the eyes of consumers – ‘freshness’.⁶² Exchanges between Architect 2 and the housing managers show how intimately aware all sides were of cultural customs and practice of the market, and so designed to navigate these needs while satisfying their own management and hygiene specifications. Although impractical for managing health and safety, live fish and poultry were integral goods offered in the market, and therefore easy access to both salt and freshwater was deemed necessary.⁶³ Refrigeration or cold storage were essential for a number of trades (fruits, butchers, fishmongers, frozen foods) and therefore power outlets to cater for these stalls were added to the design.⁶⁴ Allowing small buckets of water by hawker stalls, vegetables ‘may be watered at internals in order to maintain its freshness’ and make them ‘look fresh and luster [*sic*]’, perhaps considering angled lighting to reduce direct heat and light on the products.⁶⁵

Interestingly, such efforts to present a modern market space were often re-narrated by the behaviours of consumers themselves. A 1974 survey conducted by the Planning Division of shoppers in public housing estates found that the Chinese understanding of freshness in food differed greatly from the administration’s proclaimed ‘modern’ ideas of fresh, bemoaning that ‘in spite of modern appliances such as the refrigerator, nearly all the hawker customers still maintain the habit of shopping once or twice daily for “fresh” food’.⁶⁶ Working-class Chinese women were particularly accused of being archaic and too discriminating, thus perpetuating outdated modes of consumption, ‘even go[ing] to the extreme of “ransacking” for what they want’.⁶⁷ This tactile, sensory recognition of freshness in

⁶⁰Restrictions on selling meat were also rooted in the Hawker Ordinance from 1858. Historical Laws of Hong Kong Online, The Markets’ Ordinance, 31 May 1858, 423.

⁶¹See HKPRO, HKRS 1588-3-2, Design of Market Stalls in Public Housing Estates, Memo from Secretary of Housing to Director of Housing, 23 Dec. 1974.

⁶²See *ibid.*

⁶³S. Zhong *et al.*, ‘Constructing freshness, the vitality of wet markets in urban China’, *Agriculture and Human Values*, 37 (2020), 175–85.

⁶⁴HKPRO, HKRS 1588-3-2, Mr Fung Tung, housing manager, Pak Tin Estate, 12 Dec. 1972.

⁶⁵*Ibid.*; and *ibid.*, Mr K.C. Ma, Asst Manager, Ma Tau Wai, 6 Dec. 1972.

⁶⁶HKPRO, HKRS 1039-1-12, Hong Kong Outline Planning Division, Town Planning Office, Survey of Hawker Customers, Kowloon and New Kowloon, Dec. 1974, 4.

⁶⁷HKPRO, HKRS 1588-3-2, Design of Market Stalls in Public Housing Estates, Mr K.C. Ma, Asst Manager, Ma Tau Wai, 6 Dec. 1972.

the market continues to be a significant part of embodied knowledge in Chinese cooking practices where strategies such as checking the clarity, shine and fullness of fish eyes, and indeed overlooking the slaughter of live fish and poultry to discern 'real', fresh produce, relate to scrutinizing the quality and freshness of goods.⁶⁸ Perceived as illogical, scrutinizing, messy and slow, it was, however, precisely these continuations of relational exchanges that facilitated everyday colonial modernities for the lives of consumers. In consuming and selling across boundaries of legality and acceptability, emphasizing freshness and wetness as central to their everyday practices, hawkers and residents could in turn appropriate these colonial spaces beyond government imaginations of modern urban space and life while remaining within colonial modular structures designed to discipline. Bound by their need to create capital and persuade the public of certain behaviours and boundaries, government departments and management were forced to compromise on modes of modern consumption in order for these spaces to succeed.

In this sense, the diverging discernment of the materiality of 'fresh' market goods, the environment of the market and how these goods respond to such conditions are played out in the notion of 'wet'. Returning to colonial modernity, Barlow's more recent proposal to 'look again at colonial modernity through questions of selling and buying' can be seen in the example of the wet market as a space where objects are exchanged, but also as a space *made of* exchange of ideas of modernity.⁶⁹ While managers largely focused on functional and aesthetic value in their recommendations, the undertone throughout the discussion remained focused on designing an orderly and hygienic market space.⁷⁰ From the government categorization, 'wet' and 'dry' in administrative terms were consistently more concerned with the materiality of the goods (vulnerability to decay) than the spatial *condition* of the market (the physical wet floors and damp environment). However, the material *relationship* between wet goods, the spatial environment and consumers within modular markets directly informed the design choices by architects and managers as a means of control. This, together with the sensorial, tactile experience of *sap fo* by consumers, expanded the meaning of 'wet' to emphasize the unstable, visceral nature of the produce, and the potential threat to the body and social order that this instability might bring.⁷¹ Colonial modernity therefore can be expressed in the 'wet market' not only as a structure, but as the constant navigation and rearrangement of modernity in this space through the materiality of goods and ideas of the modern body.

⁶⁸See Zhong *et al.*, 'Constructing freshness', for a qualitative market approach to the idea of freshness in particularly southern Chinese culture. The same sensory approach might also be applied to live fish for slaughter displayed in restaurants, which suggests that while embodied practices of food shopping is largely an experience of working-class communities in this period, it does hold significance for middle and upper social classes in other arenas as well.

⁶⁹T. Barlow, 'Debates over colonial modernity in East Asian and another alternative', *Cultural Studies*, 26 (2012), 633.

⁷⁰HKPRO, HKRS 438-1-51, Urban Council Hong Kong, Minutes of Meetings of Select Committees, 1967, Statement of Aims: Markets, 25 Oct. 1966; HKPRO, HKRS 438-1-78, Urban Council Hong Kong, Papers of Select Committees Dealing with Environmental Hygiene, Food and Food Premises, Hawker Appeals, Hawker Management, Hawker Policy and Markets, Statement of Aims on Markets 1970, 7 Oct. 1969.

⁷¹See Peckham 'Bad meat', 173-98.

Conclusion

The construction of modular markets in Hong Kong's public housing estates in the late 1960s and early 1970s introduced the notion of the 'standard unit', borrowing from strategies in public housing, to everyday consumption spaces and practices. While it was logistically unfeasible for the Hong Kong government to construct prefabricated modules for public housing, the smaller scale of the modular market meant that it could fulfil the 'modernist ideals' of efficient construction, standardized space and order as attempted in Britain and other colonies. This demonstrates another mode of 'modularization of society', not only confined to housing but also extending into the public realm of estates. Modules physically laid out the spatial and legal boundaries of the market, which allowed for more manageable arrangements of policing tied to boundaries of inside and outside the market and estate area. In doing so, the Hong Kong government created a new urban space embedded in public housing that facilitated closer surveillance and control of hawker practices and consumption habits, particularly in the containment of visceral 'wet' goods and 'wet' activity, enabling a social and spatial disciplining towards their colonial vision of modernized society. The modular market set the foundation for formalized consumption space in public housing estates, only superseded by multi-storey markets and commercial complexes in larger estates in the late 1970s.⁷² Nevertheless, such structural forms were reappropriated and re-narrated through the behaviours and antagonisms of hawkers and consumers, such that the role of wet markets in contemporary Hong Kong has taken on its own life in the everyday negotiations of the city. Thus, while modularization took place on a structural and social level, the fluidity of 'wet' goods and their materialities offered avenues for transgression and appropriation of market spaces.

A design historical and material approach offers an alternative lens on Hong Kong's post-war public market structures as design entities in themselves, entangled with the global politics of markets in Asia, and containing its own history of colonialism and modernity. Hong Kong's unique historical and geographic conditions (and specifically venturing beyond the urban centre) offer a more nuanced approach to the market as a source of life and space of control. Indeed, the theorization of the term 'wet' is useful when considering this space; not simply 'because the floor is always wet', wetness, in the sense of the visceral, sensorial properties of the goods and space, allows for multiple readings of modernity in the 'wet' market to take place, bringing navigations of modern consumer practices and systems of management to the fore as distinctive forms of colonial modernity.

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⁷²While there is no comprehensive list of locations where the modular market was specifically implemented, multiple site visits to existing estates suggest the last modular market to be built was in 1975 in Lek Yuen Estate, after which commercial complexes took over as the model for estate markets. Hong Kong's urban wet markets were built in the late 1970s to early 1980s following further pushes to contain hawkers.

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