

GENTRIFICATION in TAI HANG

大坑的仕紳化

gen•tri•fi•ca•tion the rebuilding and renovation of a lower-classed neighbourhood by the upper or middle class. This can result in the rise in building order or function, but also in property prices. A classic example of gentrification would be Dubai, previously a small port that evolved in recent years into a bustling mega-city.

仕紳化 指一個舊社區從原本聚集低收入人士，到重建後地價及租金上升，引致較高收入人士遷入，並取代原有低收入者。

Do the benefits of gentrification outweigh the costs?

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仕紳化的收益是否大於成本？

IS LAND USE CHANGE EVIDENT IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD?

土地使用的變化在鄰近明顯嗎？

Land-use change has definitely become predominant in Tai Hang over the past few years. Fig. 3 shows that 56.8% of the total 146 studied buildings in Tai Hang Village had gone through form change between 2015 and 2011. In the interviews conducted with 84 local and non-local individuals in Tai Hang, 91.7% (77 people) agreed that Tai Hang is going through large amounts of change. The degree in which this change is happening can be seen clearly from fig. 1, which showcases the levels and locations of change in Tai Hang Village.

Having affirmed that Tai Hang is going through land-use change, to what extent is this change gentrification? In our interviews with the people in Tai Hang, common points that were mentioned repeatedly were the “increase in number of foreigners”, “closing of car repair stores”, “establishment of new restaurants and shops”, “rising rent prices” and the “modernisation” of

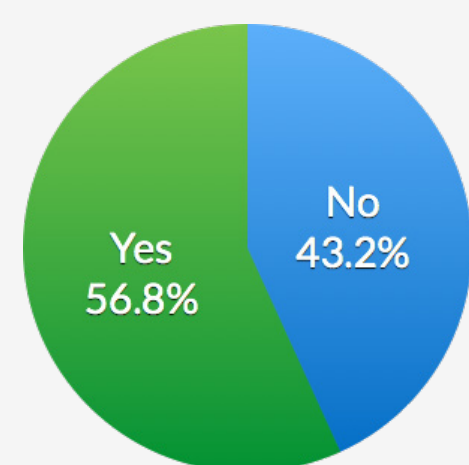


FIG. 3: Percentage of form change since 2011

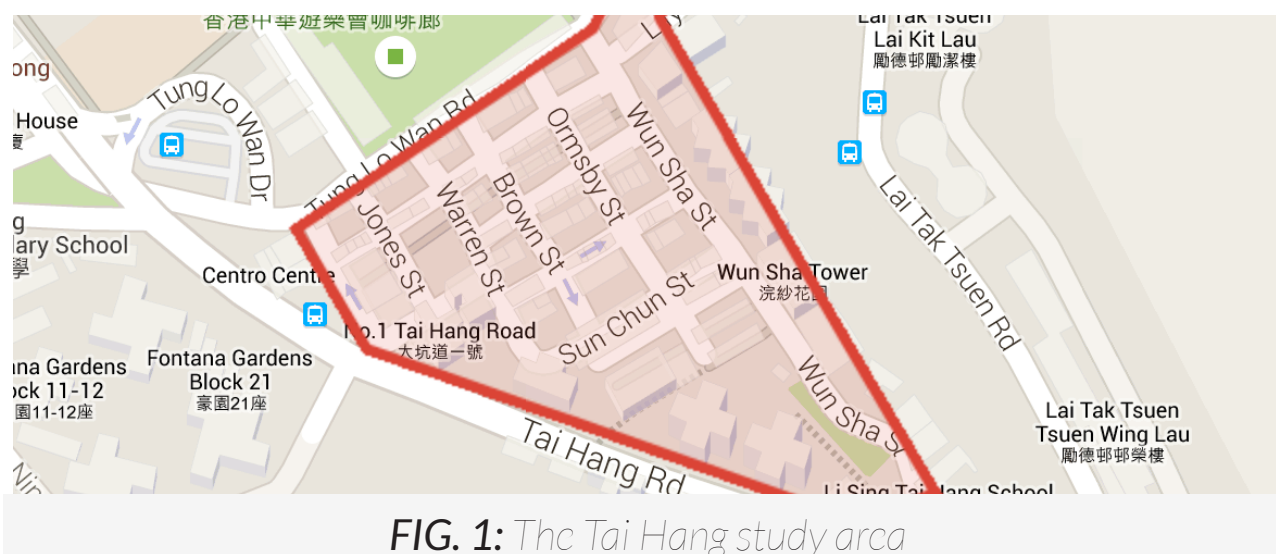


FIG. 1: The Tai Hang study area

the area. All of these statements hint towards the **refurbishment**, **population influx**, and **eradication of old structures** in Tai Hang, all in compliance with the definition of gentrification. Of the 83 buildings that have gone through change, 11% of them have been paintovers, 33.8% went through renovation, with another 11.7% being complete reconstructed. Referring to fig 4, we see that 24.4% of the buildings have had an increase in building order. While these are all signs of gentrification, the limited scale suggests that it is still in its early stages.

HOW DOES GENTRIFICATION IMPACT THE NEIGHBOURHOOD?

仕紳化如何影響鄰近？

According to the interviewees, there have been many effects caused by this change, both positive and negative. To many white-collar middle class individuals, the modernisation of the area has made everything much more **convenient**, with a wider diversity of shops. However for business owners, the increase in rent prices have been **driving out low order shops** who can't afford to sustain their business and replacing them with medium/high order

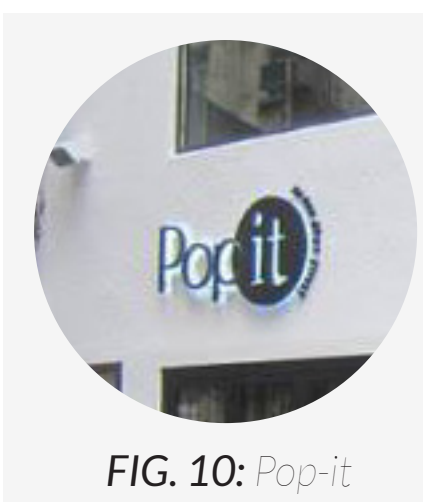


FIG. 10: Pop-it

buildings. This is evident from the reduction of garages and increase in restaurants within Tai Hang. At the same time, this change has been positive for shops, leading to more customers, hence **promoting business** and increasing income. As stated by a business owner, “Tai Hang is becoming **more international**; therefore attracting more tourists and foreigners to the area, which helps our business”.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

到底什麼意思？

Gentrification is taking place in Tai Hang. Compared with 2011, over 50% of the buildings have gone through change, with 24.4% undergoing an increase in building order. This is a clear sign of gentrification in Tai Hang.

Referring to the survey results, we can also conclude that **the benefits of gentrification outweigh the costs**.

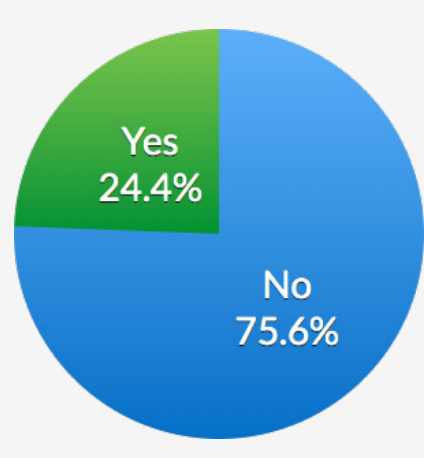


FIG. 4: Percentage of building order change since 2011

On one hand, the increase in rent has evicted many traditional or low-order shops, and driven away part of the older community. However, the refurbishment of the area has made the area cleaner and of a higher quality, and increased the variety of shops and services. This has led to an influx of people, looking for services and work opportunities, hence generating more business. All in all, gentrification in Tai Hang has **commercialised** and **modernised** the area, rejuvenating a previously deteriorating neighbourhood.

Tai Hang Village, an area southeast of Causeway Bay, in recent years has been undergoing rapid urban change, with buildings constantly being renovated and reconstructed. The main purpose of this project was to investigate the change occurring in this area, determining the extent of gentrification and its impacts, both positive and negative. This helped us ultimately determine what these changes mean for the residents and visitors to the area. Historical and present quantitative and qualitative data was collected mainly through observation, records, and interviews.

OBSERVATION

A study of 146 buildings in the area of Tai Hang was conducted, looking at various building attributes, including functions, function orders, and number of floors. Afterwards, this data was compiled onto a map and spreadsheet for further analysis. This was used to understand the situation today.

RECORDS

2011 records of the same building attributes and 2009 virtual Google Maps Street View were compared with the observational data, helping determine how Tai Hang Village had undergone change, and highlight any patterns or trends in the process.

INTERVIEWS

Interviews were conducted with a total of 90 people in the neighbourhood, ranging from age 15 to over 71. Locals, shop owners, workers, and so on were asked about their personal experiences with and feelings towards change in Tai Hang Village. This helped introduce a variety of opinions and give information only those with closer ties to the area could offer.



FIG. 2: Buildings that have gone through form change since 2011. Numbers represent degree of form change, 3 being the most severe.



FIG. 7: A mom-and-pop shop



FIG. 8: Workers fixing a building's exterior

Unique shops and restaurants allow more people to want to come here more often.

Although it affects me in a bad way, I'm glad Hong Kong is moving at such a pace that the city is modernising.

It used to be a close knit community, now it's more commercialised.

When our houses get taken, the government doesn't give us enough compensation, for us to continue living here in Tai Hang, and we have to move from HK Island to somewhere far away from our friends. Our culture has also been taken away from us.

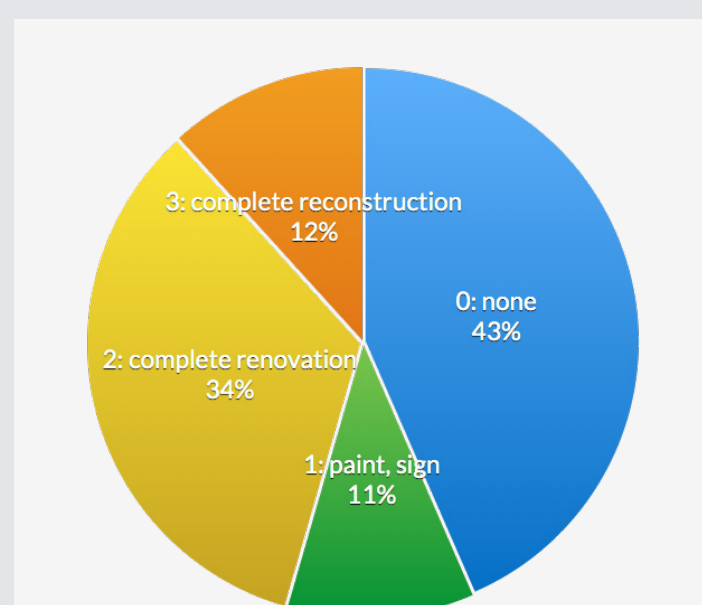


FIG. 5: Building change code

For a foreigner, it's easier for me to adapt to a place which isn't as steeped in local culture. For example, in Thailand, it was way too culture-heavy, and I felt really out of place when I went there. Here, it feels more like America, and I feel really at home here. It's also really convenient.

I prefer the Tai Hang that I grew up in.

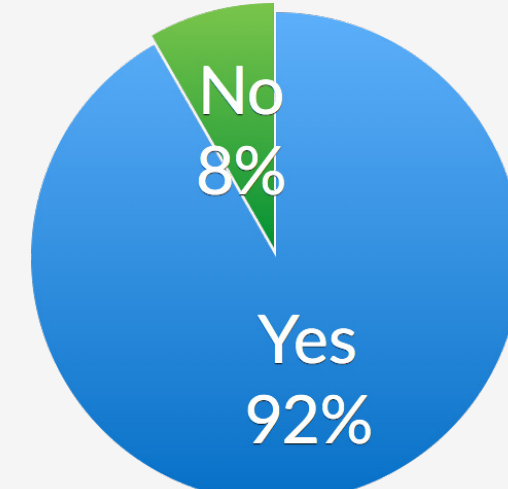


FIG. 6: Responses to the question 'Has Tai Hang changed in the time you have been here?'

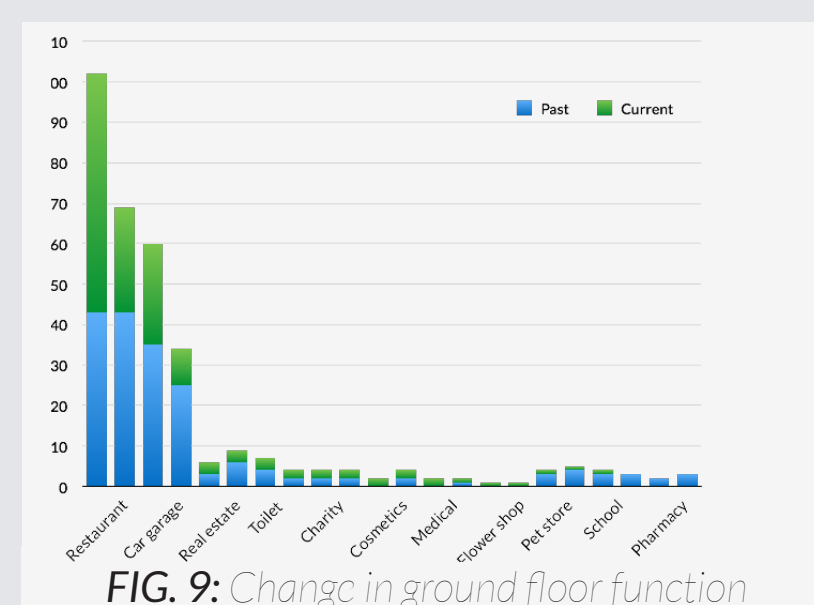
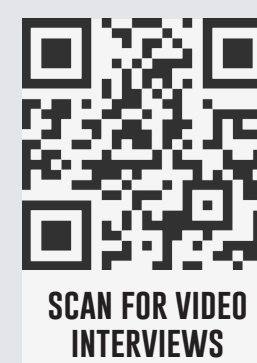


FIG. 9: Change in ground floor function



SCAN FOR VIDEO INTERVIEWS

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