

MASTER'S THESIS

The productions of Tong Fang in Hong Kong: a supply side analysis with class monopoly rent

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ABSTRACT

This thesis readdresses the notion ‘Tong Fang’ (劏房) through the lens of supply-side perspective. As a conceptually ‘new’ object which has raised widespread concerns since the early 2010s, Tong Fang has only been narrowly examined as the mainstream discussions predominantly confine their very concerns to simply the relationship between the material housing structure and the relevant dwellers. The wider socio-political implications are ignored as the social relations, forces and processes that are indispensable in comprehending the existence of Tong Fang are utterly unaddressed. In particular, the underlying reasons of why such housing structure, represented by its tininess, excessive rental charge and other inferior environment qualities, could be rampantly produced in Hong Kong is still unsatisfactorily addressed. To explore these overlooked aspects, this study alternatively analyses the production of Tong Fang in Hong Kong and essentially articulates the spatial form to the corresponding processes. Harvey’s theory ‘Class Monopoly Rent’ is employed as the major conceptual tool to analyze the contemporary production of Tong Fang in which the lucrative profitability, resulted from the circumstance which Tong Fang has been constituted as almost the only private affordable dwelling in the housing market structure in recent decades, appears to be the fundamental drive. Through viewing how the potential of CMR has been generated and how it has been appropriated through Tong Fang construction, the necessitated processes and relations are able to be disclosed. Moreover, Harvey’s another contribution ‘Relational Space’ is also invoked to substantiate the exploration of the concrete social processes and relations lying behind Tong Fang as spatial products. All in all, by scrutinizing the production of Tong Fang in Hong Kong, this thesis is expected to enrich our understanding to this contemporary urban blight.

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