DISARCHITECTURED [1] [2]

MİMARLIKSIZLAR

Bora Yasin ÖZKUŞ *

ABSTRACT

Is an 'other' architecture possible? This article seeks for different architectures in the context of the 'other'. The term of the 'other' is a concept frequently discussed in social sciences, especially in post-colonial cultural and critical studies. Due to the disciplinary conditions of architecture, the relationship of the architect with the 'other' always seems problematic. Other architectures to be mentioned here will be examined on two main axes. The first is that the students, who have not yet taken the authorization as an architect, design and produce a building in-situ for/ with the 'other'. The second is about the change of the built environment with the final (or variable) product of a spatial performance acted by the other, independent of the architect. In this article, it is aimed to discuss the possibility of an architectural practice without architecture beyond the professional boundaries [3].

Keywords: Other, Foucault, The Rural Studio, Informal Rooftop Housing in Hong Kong

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İç Mimarlık ve Çevre Tasarımı Bölümü,
Fenerbahçe Üniversitesi, İstanbul / Türkiye

Department of Interior Architecture and
Environmental Design,
Fenerbahçe University, Istanbul / Turkey

ORCID: 0000-0001-6649-5112

ÖZET

'Öteki' bir mimarlık mümkün mü? Bu metin 'öteki' bağlamında farklı mimarlıkları aramaktadır. 'Öteki' sosyal bilimlerde özellikle kolonyalizm sonrası kültürel ve eleştirel çalışmalar kapsamında sıklıkla ele alınan bir kavramdır. Mimarlığın disipliner koşullarından ötürü mimarın 'öteki' ile ilişkisi hep sorunlu gözükmektedir. Burada bahsedilecek öteki mimarlıklar ise, iki ana eksen üzerinde incelenecektir. Bunlardan ilki, mimarlık öğrencilerinin yani henüz mimar iktidarını eline almayanın, 'öteki' için/ ile beraber mimari bir etkinlikte bulunmasıdır. Diğeri ise, 'öteki'nin mimardan bağımsız gerçekleştirdiği mekânsal bir performansın nihai (ya da değişken) ürününün yapılı çevreye yansımasıdır. Makalede tartışılması amaçlanan mimarlığın profesyonel sınırlarının ötesinde mimarlıksız mimari bir pratiğin mümkünatıdır [3].

Anahtar Kelimeler: Öteki, Foucault, Rural Studio, Hong Kong Enformel Çatı Yerleşimleri

[1] This article is a shortened version of the final paper prepared for the course "Relations of Theory, Discourse and Practice in Architecture" in Istanbul Technical University in Fall, 2010-11.

[2] The title is shown, inspired by the title of Ursula Le Guin's book "The Dispossessed: An Ambiguous Utopia" (1974), for other architectures deprived of the discipline of architecture itself.

[3] Although not discussed in this text, an architectural history that mentions the other or the excluded should be considered. In her article on vocational education, Bozdoğan brings the situation as follows: "… the challenge is first, to make the modern survey more cross-cultural without either neutralizing or reifying the difference of other cultures, and second, to make it more political without reducing architecture to politics. There is no way of knowing how this new challenge will work itself out in the curricula of different schools of architecture. There is, however, no question that after postcolonial criticism, the survey course, like the western canon on which it is predicated, can no longer remain what it once was" (Bozdoğan, 1999).

[4] The list can be enlarged, such as French philosophers Michel Foucault, Emanuel Levinas, Jacques Derrida and feminism theorists Drucilla Cornell, Judith Butler, Nancy Fraser, Seyla Benhabib.

1. INTRODUCTION

Judith Butler (1997), with a Foucauldian point of view, emphasizes that power constantly changes hands and its psychic position through subjection/ subordination: By examining the importance of practices, performance, and variable identification relations in the establishment of the subject, Butler points out that these areas of identification are slippery. In this context, the 'other' is created by dichotomies like male/ female, adult/ child, poor/ rich, human/ animal etc. The 'other' has been discussed and conceptualized in different aspects by social scientists and philosophers, especially post-colonial theoreticians such as Frantz Fanon, Edward Said, Gayatri Spivak and Homi Bhabha [4]. In this text, it is aimed to make the 'other' visible, in Foucault's words, through an understanding and awareness (Butler, 1997, p.83).

2. NORMALIZATION AND EXCLUSION RITUALS

> […] instead of looking for what is accepted, owned and valued by that society in order to grasp a period or to know a society; it is necessary to investigate what is denied, excluded, ignored and oppressed in a society, or in a system of thought. —Michel Foucault, Madness and Society (2007, p.213).

The issue of what the other for architecture can be, or what the other means to architecture is, a controversial topic. However, to seek these ideas, behaviors, actions, legal or moral principles that are not accepted, that will never be accepted, or that are excluded from the system, as Foucault says, turns into an instrument for the maintaining of the struggle that will open up new possibilities (Foucault, 1990, p.197; 2007, p.213).

In this context, what is the 'other' of architecture? What lies outside the limits of its normality as a discipline? Foucault asserts that the structure of society that is thought to have reached is more of a norm society, a normalization society. Those who are out of this line of normality are subjected to various disciplinary regulation forms and certain behavioral standards. If they do not meet norms, they are excluded from society, or marginalized, and qualified as the 'others' (Falzon, 1998, p.43). It is aimed to ensure that all individuals in the developing capitalist society are observed according to their integration levels against the working norms and to systematize their subjection to certain practices as a result of this surveillance (Foucault, 2007, p.231).

According to Foucault, the social sphere is a network of "dispositions, manoeuvres, tactics, techniques, functionings, constant confrontation and [power] relations in tension" (Falzon, 1998, p.39). Thus, through variable and dynamic power relations in the society, it is ensured that the individual is shaped to a certain form in the normalization process. In line with a demand for uniformity/ sameness that suppresses the encounter and resistance by eliminating the dialogue, the 'other' or the 'different' is excluded and the potential for differentiation is precluded. The first example to be given in the continuation of this text is precisely beyond this attitude; Instead of excluding the difference, it offers us an architectural practice that communicates with it.

3. DISSOLVE: RURAL STUDIO

Butler argues that defining the victimization of the 'other' offers a claim to higher consciousness. It seems possible to say something similar about the externalizing relationship that architectural practice has entered with the 'other'. According to Bülent Tanju, what is generally tried to be emphasized in the architectural community when it comes to social and ethical responsibility is "why the existence of the architectural profession as a business field is inevitable" rather than the responsibility of architecture towards 'others' (Tanju, 2003). The practice of architecture, which has almost never been in a dialogic relationship with the subaltern [5] that Tanju defines as those on the other side of the threshold, will establish the notion of social responsibility it has developed in the form of "speaking on behalf of and for the subordinates" (2003, p.54). According to him, this relationship will eventually become standardized with a technocratic approach and turn into a "professional ethics".

[5] Bülent Tanju emphasizes that he borrowed the concepts of subaltern/ subalternity and hegomony/ hegonomic position from Gramsci and Spivak. See: Tanju, ibid, p. 55.

Figure 1. Smokehouse, The Rural Studio's first project, 1999. In the construction of the house, the walls of the main living part were built by hay bales, and stone with colored glass were used for the smokehouse (Dean, 2005).

In this context, Rural Studio, which consists of students and lecturers at the Department of Architecture of Auburn University, sees the main success of Rural Studio in the attitude it takes against these standards: "When the details are carefully reviewed, it is surprising how all binary conceptual structures that sustain the hegemonic position of architectural knowledge are dissolved in a well-designed practice emerges in the form" (Tanju, 2003, p.54). In the early nineties, at a time when the upper-middle and wealthy part of America was expanding economically, Samuel Mockbee established a student workshop called "Rural Studio" in Hale, the second poorest city in the state of Alabama in the south of America (Dean, 2005).

Figure 2-3. Shiles House, The Rural Studio, 2002. Students build the Shiles House which has a wall is made of old tires filled with dirt and covered with cement (Dean, 2005).

Figure 4-5. Lucy/Carpet House, The Rural Studio, 2002 (Dean, 2005).

The aim of the workshop was to do something modest but beautiful for the "others". According to Mockbee, everyone, rich or poor, deserved a place of shelter for their souls; architects should have taken the lead as a supplier of social and environmental change. However, they had lost their moral values and became what he called "house pets to rich". There was a need for reform and he thought that it should start with education (Dean, 2005, p.7). The workshop, established for these reasons, is held every year with the participation of second and fifth year students. Within the scope of the studio, students who live and work in an area almost completely isolated from the outside world - instead of making decisions on behalf of the 'others' - both design and practice together with the users. According to Tanju, the main difference of the Rural Studio emerges here: "Instead of the 'existenz minimum' of the Early Modernists that erases all differences, in the hope of helping each different user to exist as himself, it is actually a discursive they give space "(Tanju, 2003, p.54). Here, it is accepted that all participants - students and users - have different expectations and knowledge, and it is aimed not to create an addiction on both groups (Arredamento Mimarlık, 2003). At this point, dialogue becomes more important than an absolute compromise between differences. According to Foucault (2000), whatever the intention of architecture is, it can never be a fundamental determinant:

> Nothing is fundamental. That is what is interesting in the analysis of society. That is why nothing irritates me as much as these inquiries—which are by definition metaphysical—on the foundations of power in a society or the self-institution of a society, etc. These are not fundamental phenomena. There are only reciprocal relations, and the perpetual gaps between intentions in relation to one another. (p.434).

As Tanju mentioned, Rural Studio obscures the boundaries between "architecture and non-architecture" [6] in many ways: architect / non-architect, with / without building material, local / non-local. It would not be strange to say that all these dichotomies are part of the discourse of an architectural practice that clarifies its boundaries while constructing the 'other'. To say that today there is only a knowledge of architecture; once again it is as meaningless to say that there is an absolute West and its opposite an absolute East [7].

For this reason, Rural Studio is considered as 'other architecture' in this text because it causes the dissolution of architecture –and professional knowledge-. There is still, however, a consciousness directed towards the 'other': although Rural Studio and especially Samuel Mockbee cause a dissolution of architectural practice and knowledge, the 'other' is still chosen because it is the victim, deprived, beyond being a participant. "No matter how radically different the searches limited by form, language and expressions may present, they must develop a mutual justification relationship with that context, since they can be realized within the possibilities of the context" [8]. For this reason, although we do not take the role of decision maker on behalf of him, the moment we say "you decide", we legitimize our changed power again. The freedom of the 'other' is possible as much as we offer him. Foucault's claim that freedom is a practice is striking in this respect (Foucault, 2000, p.434). According to him, no project can be assured that freedom can be achieved with it, even though it aims to change and demolish:

> If one were to find a place, and perhaps there are some, where liberty is effectively exercised, one would find that this is not owing to the order of objects, but, once again, owing to the practice of liberty. Which is not to say that, after all, one may as well leave people in slums thinking that they can simply exercise their rights there. (Foucault, 2000 , p.434).

If the power of architectural knowledge is inevitable, can architecture come into being by itself? According to Foucault, this is only possible with resistance. While resistance provides the environment of struggle necessary for the formation of positive conditions (2007, p.136), this space that opens to the 'other' enables to overcome the existing borders created by others, to create new lifestyles, to realize cultural transformation by entering into a resistance dialogue with dominant forms. In this way, Foucault aims to create a cultural self-creation style by problematizing existing lifestyles from being absolute (Falzon, 1998, p.59). How architecture can create itself will be examined under the title of resistance.

4. RESISTANCE: HONG KONG INFORMAL ROOFTOP COMMUNITIES

> The rooftop settlements are an urban legacy, telling the sory of Hong Kong itself, of political upheavals in Mainland China, of urban redevelopment, of people's hopes and their needs in the city. —Rufina Wu & Stefan Canham, Potraits from Above (2009, p.7).

> My problem is essentially the definition of the implicit systems in which we find ourselves prisoners; what I would like to grasp is the system of limits and exclusion which we practice without knowing it; I would like to make the cultural unconscious apparent. —Michel Foucault, Rituals of Exclusion (1989, p.73).

Hong Kong, located on the south coast of China, was a colonial and islands group under the Kingdom of Britain until 1997, but since that date it has been a special administrative region under the People's Republic of China. Today, Hong Kong is one of Asia's largest free markets, a center of commerce, industry and tourism (Wikipedia). Ackbar Abbas (1999), in his text titled "Hong Kong'u İnşa Etmek: Göç ve Gözden Yitiş" [Building Hong Kong: immigration and disappearance], uses two concepts metaphorically in shaping Hong Kong in the colonial period and after. According to him, immigration, the inevitable result of changing hands, does not only mean changing the place but also changing the nature of a place (Abbas, 1999, p.72). In addition, Abbas emphasizes that with the exorbitantly high prices of the real estate market on the one hand, and cheap housing projects supported by the government on the other, the images of the city do not tell us anything about this city anymore. "Capitalist history is lost in the benevolent images of cheap apartment complexes" (1999, p.75). Its colonial past, on the one hand, is a good example of the coexistence of dichotomies with Hong Kong today's large population and the aforementioned high income injustice.

[6] Tanju gives an example from Pevsner in the chapter section of his article for architecture with and without architecture in classical architectural history: "… Pevsner begins his architectural narrative by distinguishing between the bicycle porch and the cathedral, between non-architecture and what is"(Tanju, 2003, p.55).

[7] Esra Akcan states in her article "Melancholy and the Other" that a definition of a pure West and its opposite, a pure East cannot be made: "The word 'non-Western' not only refers to and defends the ideology of an exaggerated difference between 'West' and 'the other'. It also denies the differences among these others, the term entirely rejecting the centuries-old hybridizations between geographical areas of each other's cultural imaginations - as if a 'pure West' and 'pure East' could exist" (Akcan, 2005, p.48).

[8] Abdi Güzer, in his essay "Legitimation and Architecture as a Ground of Opposition," emphasizes one of the first criticisms of the social role that architects use in his essay, on young architecture, different from Tafuri, a Marxist critic. Saying that Tafuri's "this environment" cannot go beyond being a means of legitimization, Güzer says that it is impossible to assume the space ideologically and mentions the necessity of context and legitimization relation in Tafuri. See: C. Abdi Güzer, "Legitimation and Architecture as a Ground of Opposition", Arredamento Mimarlık, 100 + 56, March 2003, pp.58-59.

Although it is a highly developed city, living conditions seem to have prompted the immigrants to search for new ones. In this context, the resistance movement imposes an 'other' architecture on the city with the anarchist building groups formed on the roofs of the buildings. Evacuated and partially destroyed in 1993 by the joint decision of the British and Chinese governments; "Kowloon Walled City" (Figure 6), which is shown as a reference to the post-gothic urban future imagination in Blade Runner, is also an example of such a construction practice [9].
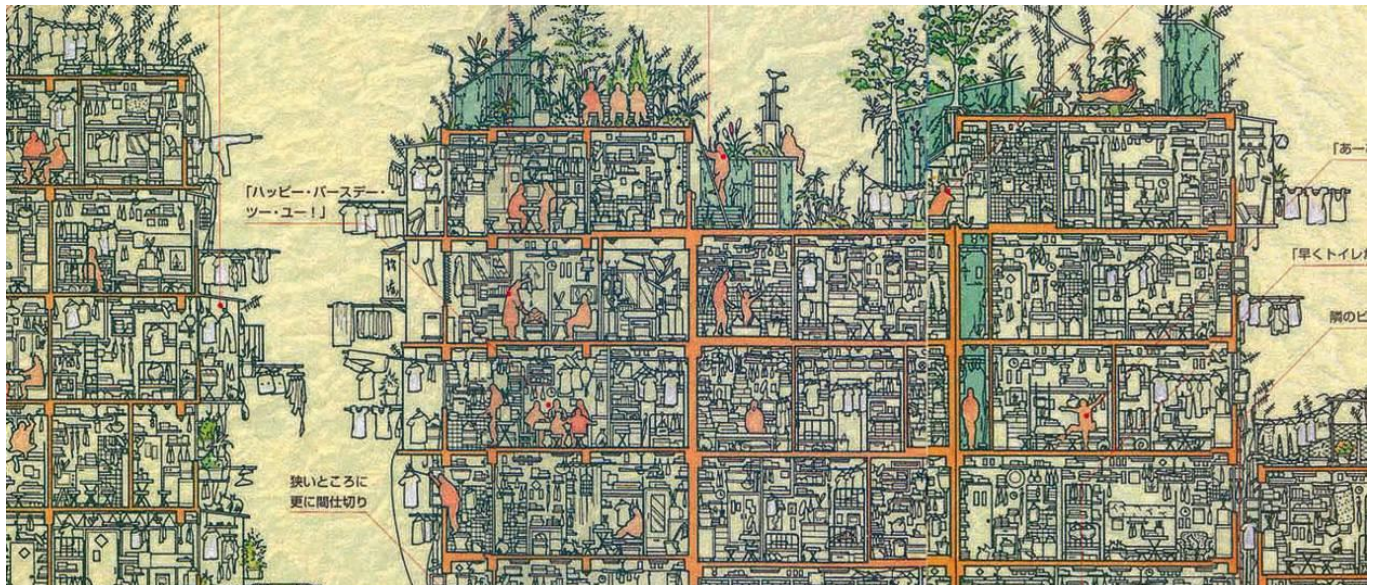

Figure 6. Enlarged partial section view of Kowloon Walled City, which is destroyed in 1993. Illustrated by Kazumi Terasawa (1997).

Describing informal rooftop communities as one of Hong Kong's curiosity - and anxiety - arousing outliers, Dr. Ernest Chui states that although these structures are regarded as illegal and not approved by the authorities, they are recognized and tolerated by the government (Chui, 2009). In a manner similar to the slums in Turkey; these illegal housing communities also pay their taxes; It can benefit from all kinds of services connected to the state, from postal service to electricity and water services. Instead of discussing this irony and its reasons, when looking at the demographic structure of the population living here in the context of the 'other', it is seen that the majority of immigrants from other parts of China; The remainder is seen to be composed of immigrants from South and Southeast Asia - Bangladeshi, Nepalese, Pakistani, Indonesian, and Filipino (Chui, 2009, p.247). These ethnic minority groups, who were assigned to military services before 1997, had to live in Hong Kong when they could not get their residence rights in colonial countries with the abolition of the British colony. These large minority groups, working as cheap workers in labor markets, have had difficulties in social integration (Chui, 2009, p.251). Especially the language problem, which is the biggest output of the concepts of 'other' and "othering", once again makes the education and participation of this minority group difficult.

Trying to cope with government policies, social injustice, and beyond that, the roof dwellers are striving to be able to use their limited space creatively within their small roof structures. With these structures, some of which are constructed of concrete and brick, most of them wooden pieces, metal plates and fabricated materials, they create a defined space for themselves in this compressed physical environment. While meeting their basic needs with these unofficial buildings they designed and even built by themselves, they also try to meet their environmental and religious needs.

The point to be drawn attention here is; The fact that the occupied area is already built in this kind of construction practice — different from the slum-type building- is that the constraints of the area seriously shape the final product. Roof residents must approach with the meticulousness that is almost expected of an architect or designer, in order to fulfill all the functions necessary for their survival. It should plan and organize the place where it will live in the best way. In this context, although they are outside the boundaries of the discipline, it seems possible to call this building production understanding of unofficial roof communities as "other architecture".

[9] For detailed information about Kowloon Walled City, see: archidose.org/KWC/. Also see: the book "City of Darkness: Life in Kowloon Walled City" (Girard and Lambot, 1993).
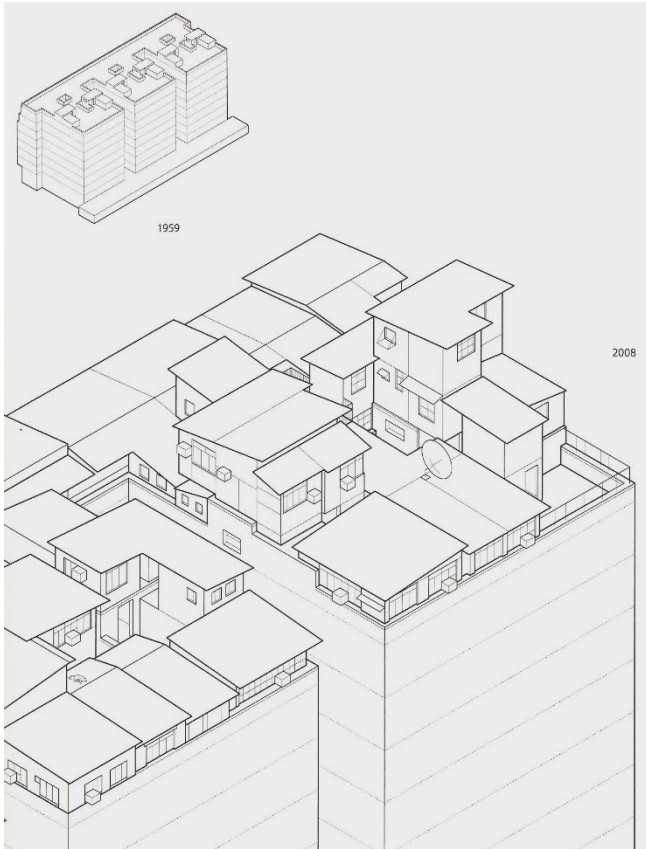
Figure 7-8. The building from Tai Kok Tsui Area in Hong Kong (Wu & Canham, 2009).

Figure 9. Interior of the informal unit on the roof of the building from Tai Kok Tsui (Wu & Canham, 2009).

Figure 10. The informal units on the roof of the building from Tai Kok Tsui (Wu & Canham, 2009).

5. CONCLUSION

The starting point of this article was the question of whether an architecture that defines itself as "the other" is possible. However, the existence of the 'other' does not seem possible without an "I / we". It can be said that it is almost impossible for it to come into existence on its own without a dominator or a subject that constructs it. Nevertheless, as

Uğur Tanyeli (2002) says, "the 'others' are by no means considered paranoid images or hallucinations":

> The other is a construction using real data, facts. As it is a new construction with social content, it defines the relations of data and "facts" with each other in line with the ideological purposes of the other. It is also a historical construction and -like all historical constructions- it is not the reality itself, but its reproduction from a certain perspective. (p.68).

In this context, the 'other' as an ideological and historical construction can only be made visible by the action itself. As this performative existence can be an internal counter-stance, a dissolution as in Rural Studio; As in Kowloon's Roof Settlements, it can be an instinctive reaction, a resistance, for survival. However, in both cases, as soon as it is made visible, it will cease to be the 'other' and become the object of a new discourse built.
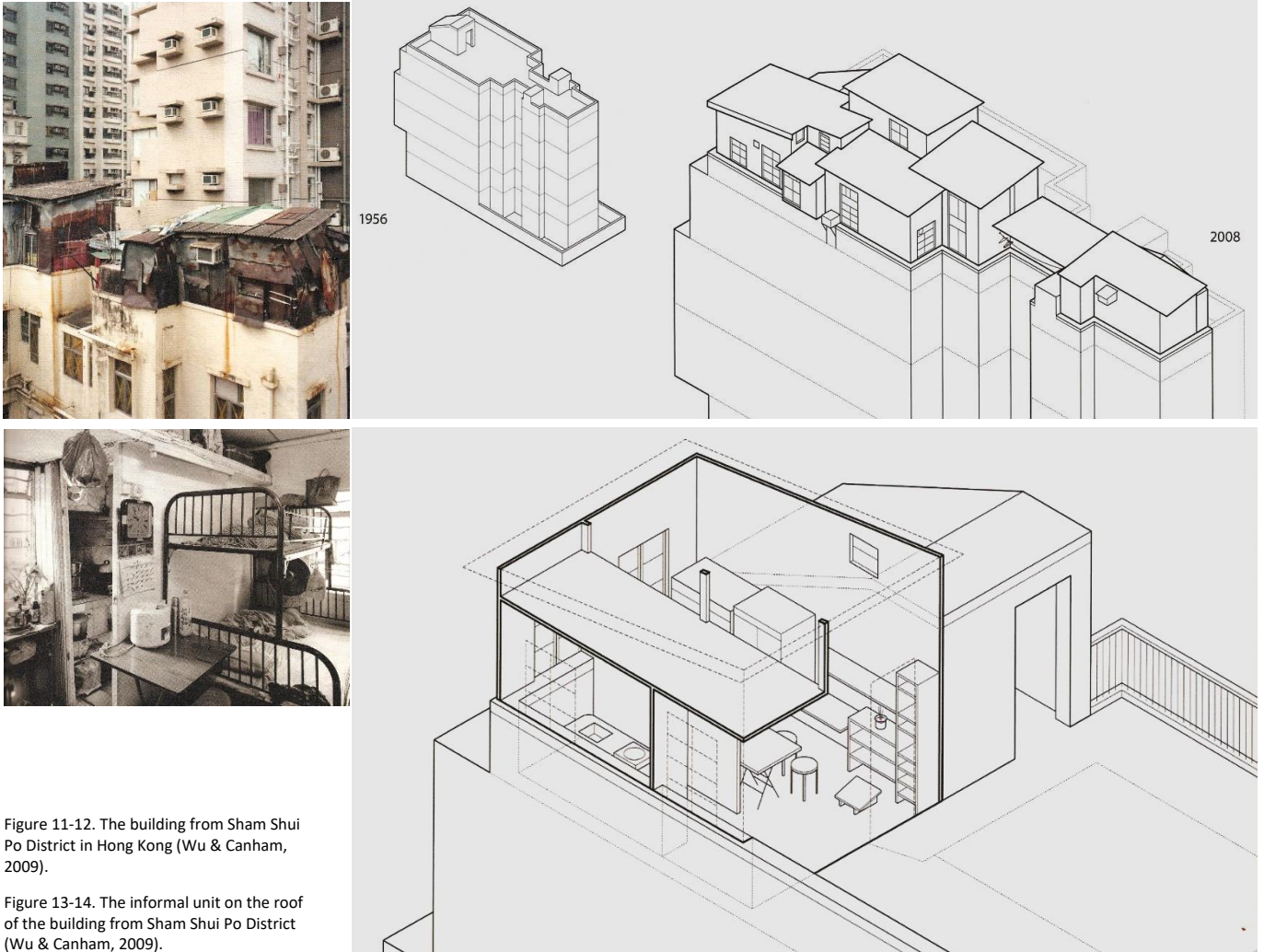

Figure 11-12. The building from Sham Shui Po District in Hong Kong (Wu & Canham, 2009).

Figure 13-14. The informal unit on the roof of the building from Sham Shui Po District (Wu & Canham, 2009).

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