

**Written submission on**

**“Issues relating to markets and wider issues relating to policies on bazaars”**

To: Subcommittee on Issues Relating to Bazaars, Legislative Council

Once upon a time our surging economy and open-air bazaars, food and necessity stalls and itinerant hawking carts coexisted well. It is no more. There were around 39,033 licensed hawkers in 1971, reported the South China Morning Post, shortly before the government started to ban new hawker licences whilst severely restricted its transfer with the last licence issued in 1973. The legal hawker population came down to just over 6,000 today from around 50,000 in 1974 amidst the tide of further pushing this trade to extinction by buying back licences since 2013.

The ugly truth is that this red tape practice is the Satan behind our prevailing black market bazaars and effectively created a second class citizen. Since itinerate licences are non-transferrable whilst fixed-pitch ones are only transferrable to a close relative once, many current licence owners are either too old to work or out of this business for long. Those whose livelihood indeed depends on hawking have to look for either a licensed “boss” or “landlord” in order to either work for someone who has a decade-old licence issued long ago in a completely different environment or pay to lease a licensed stall or cart, hence subjectively surrendering their rights to abuse and exploitation to make a humble living. Many more are simply operating illegally.

This has created a dangerous reality. Illegal and long-time unlicensed hawkers who have been in this business or even at one particular location for long invariably regard their presence, possession and very way of making a living legitimate fait accompli. If law-enforcement officers (in regard to public spaces) and private estate management office staffs (in regard to private areas) forcefully make open-air bazaars, wet markets and street hawkers in compliance with much distorted laws and regulations, an if-we-burn-you-burn-with-us mentality will unavoidably root until such time that every enforcement action will end up in clash and violent struggle.

Banning wet market and portable cart vendors in the vicinity to shopping malls by citing reasons of preventing competition with indoor commercial activities is no proper ways to help. Quite to the opposite it will add fuel to the already tensed social fabrics as impoverishing the poor to enrich the rich is wrong every time, everywhere. Property price to the monopolistic developers is nothing compared to the livelihood of the ordinary and decent people. Property developers and landlords, commercial or residential, must keep clear from government’s wet market and bazaar policies.

I came to believe that a string of property developers, especially the super conglomerates, are the demons behind not only our much distorted home prices, but poor governance that entangles our present circumstance. These are profit-making and exploitation machines for the tiny few and colluders with established and vested political and economic interests. They are not too big to fall. They never were. Plainly, they are too big to exist.


We must think big in this fatalistic era of great struggle. Democratic socialism is our way out. It best combines individual freedom with social justice. We must break up the property companies and break them up now. Legislating certain anti-trust

ordinances to identify enough property developers for breaking up is what this Council should endeavour to do. No matter how hard it is and how many risks are involved you will have to strive toward this destiny to do justice to the people who sent you here to represent them.

I am a centrist and a democratic socialist. I shall give it my all and see it realised before too long.

Our streets belong to the people since time immemorial. Whether walking by or selling delicacies is entirely the choice of each and every free individual. Public authority is out of place in private life.

Hongyu Wang



See appendix for published articles of mine on breaking up property companies

Appendix 1: *Hong Kong 2030 Plus an illusion unless property developers and the Kuk go*

Published on 14 November 2016 on online media In Media:

<http://www.inmediahk.net/node/1045832>

Appendix 2 (in Chinese): 《香港 2030+》癡人說夢 除非地產發展商與鄉議局為其讓路

于 2016 年 11 月 14 日刊登在網絡媒體獨立媒體: <http://www.inmediahk.net/node/1045832>

Appendix 3 (in Chinese): 《香港 2030+》癡人說夢 除非地產發展商與鄉議局為其讓路

于 2016 年 12 月 15 日刊登在網絡媒體評台: <http://wp.me/p2VwFC-kMF>