Power relationships and coalitions in urban renewal and heritage conservation: The Nga Tsin Wai Village in Hong Kong

Abstract

Urban renewal has been predominantly driven by themes of property-led and economic profit-driven redevelopment. The immense redevelopment pressures in dense urban cities have often posed unresolved conflicts in the conservation of historic quarters, particularly vernacular buildings with local significance instead of designated monuments with outstanding heritage value. This study examines the 20-year debate over the conservation and redevelopment of Nga Tsin Wai Old Village, one of the very few remaining villages in the urban area in Hong Kong. This case vividly demonstrates the contestations between the urban redevelopment and heritage conservation regimes and the multiple power relations that exist within each coalition. By combining the urban regime theory with the growth machine thesis, this study illustrates the complex interplay of power relations and struggles amongst different actors to determine their roles and interests, exercise of power and formation of coalitions. As such, the findings of this work improve our understanding of the sequential interrelationships amongst the power struggles of different actors, the redistribution of power, the formed coalitions and the supportive institutional arrangements in the redevelopment–conservation debate, thereby minimising the imbalanced power relations between these two discourses. This study also provides insights that can aid in the formulation of land use planning policies that can also be applied to other cities that are undergoing urban renewal.

Keywords: urban renewal, heritage conservation, progrowth, power relations, coalitions, land use planning, Hong Kong

1. Introduction

The urban regeneration and urban renewal literature has grown tremendously over the past two decades. However, to date, no comprehensive definition of 'urban regeneration' has been provided, especially considering the apparent paradigm shift in the fundamental purpose of this concept from improving urban deprivation to stimulating economic growth (Leary and McCarthy, 2013). The regeneration of urban cities embodies the negotiation of power between the dominant and the subordinated in the society and reveals asymmetrical power relations. Specifically, when a city favours the progrowth ideology, heritage conservation inevitably becomes the subordinate of the redevelopment regime.

Previous studies have praised the contribution of heritage conservation to sustainable urban regeneration (Tweed and Sutherland, 2007). However, whether urban redevelopment and heritage conservation are mutually exclusive remains debated (While 2006; Yuen, 2006). Although top-down regeneration plans have been implemented to promote economic growth and exchange value, they introduce some challenges in what can be done in the urban regeneration process to safeguard historic

villages whilst engendering the historical and cultural value of heritage places, particularly in urban cities that are undergoing rapid dynamic changes.

From the perspective of growth machines ideology, the power relationship between the government and the private sector has been assumed to be a type of coalition to achieve mutual benefits that aims to seek exchange value rather than use value (Stone, 1999; Elkin, 1987). Such relationship poses the question as to whose needs are being served and whose objectives are being manifested by a regeneration plan (Ashworth and Turnbridge, 2016). Although historic properties are regarded as social and cultural capital and, as such, the people have rights pertaining to these properties (Throsby, 2006), urban redevelopment often outweighs heritage conservation due to bias towards achieving economic growth.

Conservation has increasingly emphasised the preservation of local culture and buildings with local significance instead of merely focusing on World Heritage sites. Although old villages in urban cities sometimes do not have an 'outstanding universal value' to be designated as monuments by UNESCO, they usually have a long history and contain rich cultural values and traditional customs. However, redevelopment in old districts or towns has taken place inevitably (Shin, 2010; Ryberg–Webster, 2014; Li et al., 2014). The study of Nga Tsin Wai, the last walled village in the urban area of Kowloon Peninsula in Hong Kong, presents a case in point that portrays the conflicts that have emerged from the clashing interests in the society striving for economic growth, access to housing supply and conservation of the village. This case also highlights the confrontations amongst different actors relating to the approach and extent of conservation. Transforming a village with a small number of preserved historic buildings into a heritage park has remained a controversial issue along with the uncertainties on whether the resulting park will become a private garden for luxury residential development under the urban renewal plan.

This study aims to answer two research questions. They are: how the power relations amongst different actors operate and affect the controversial redevelopment and conservation project in the organisation and management process? and what are the dimensions of power that operate in the redevelopment and conservation processes and their outcomes?

Previous studies have adopted the growth machine thesis and urban regime theory as their key conceptual tools to analyse power and inequality in urban development politics (Logan, Whaley, and Crowder, 1997). This study adopts both of these lenses in analysing the debate amongst actors who influence urban decision making processes regarding the redevelopment and conservation of an urban old village. The case of Nga Tsin Wai Village was analysed by examining the power relations and struggles amongst the government, private developers, the Urban Renewal Authority (URA), landowners, occupants and rest of the civic society. A focus group meeting with the old and very few remaining inhabitants of the village and in-depth interviews with the representatives of different stakeholder groups were conducted to understand their roles in the conservation–redevelopment debate that has lasted for more than two decades. This study illustrates the imbalanced power relations amongst many actors and the influence of the growth machines ideology in the redevelopment versus conservation

regime. This study also offers land use planning policy implications to ensure a harmonious relationship between heritage conservation and urban renewal regime.

2. Theoretical framework

2.1 Urban redevelopment and heritage conservation

Opportunities and challenges in pursuing heritage conservation in urban renewal

The definition of 'urban redevelopment' has evolved from urban reconstruction before the 1960s, to urban renewal from the 1960s to 1970s and to urban regeneration from the 1980s to 1990s in the UK (Roberts, 2000). Meanwhile, the related strategies have evolved from the bulldozer approach, which aims to clear the slums and address the physical deterioration of specific sites, to the renewal approach, which emphasises neighbourhood improvement and social welfare (Carmon, 1999; White, 2016). According to Fainstein, planning serves the interests of finance and real estate development. In particular, urban regeneration has been predominantly driven by property-led, economic-profit-driven themes and goals of improving living conditions and meeting housing needs (Gratz, 2010; 2012; Florida, 2011; Sun et al., 2017).

Cultural heritage and urban regeneration are parallel and complementary goals in the development of cities (UNESCO, 2010). The UNESCO 1972 World Heritage Convention broadly defines 'cultural heritage' as monuments and groups of buildings of '…outstanding universal value from the point of view of history, art, science.' Since then, such definition has been extended to broader groups of buildings, stressing 'not only our most important monuments: it also includes the groups of lesser buildings in our old towns and characteristic villages in their natural and manmade [*sic*.] settings' (The European Charter of the Architectural Heritage, Council of Europe, 1975: Article 1). The integration of heritage and regeneration has shown much economic potential since the late 1980s. The emerging large-scale urban regeneration approach considers heritage preservation whilst enhancing community development (Roberts, 2000; Ryberg, 2012) yet raises both opportunities and challenges. On the one hand, heritage conservation can promote a sense of place, cultural identity, diversity and social networks, which are inevitably affected or even destroyed by an urban renewal process (Yung and Chan, 2017). On the other hand, historic urban areas face tremendous redevelopment pressure. Most of these areas suffer from deterioration and decay, which widen the mismatch amongst the contemporary needs and functions, locations, images and legal aspects of these historic areas (Doratli et al., 2004).

The urban regeneration and integration of heritage have been used as tools for achieving economic growth. Under this context, redevelopment–heritage conservation debates have been accumulated by a coalition of actors into a 'regime' and unequal power relations.

2.2 Growth machines thesis and urban regime theory: Power relations in urban redevelopment

In a generalised sense, power refers to a "'transformative capacity", that is, the capability to intervene in a given set of events so as in some ways to alter them' (Gidden, 1987, 7) and the ability to influence behaviour and drive people to do things that they would not do otherwise (Pfeffer, 1992). These classic definitions point towards the one-way direction and influence of power, which is merely coercive. By contrast, the seminal work of Foucault (1979) asserts that 'Power is conceived as a network of relations, between individuals, and between individual and institutions, which are constantly in tension'. Foucault's 'pluralist' nature of power is supported by Dahl (1996), who defines power as the ability to make decisions based on the mobilisation of resources by many actors. However, these elitist and pluralist arguments have been criticised for their failure to consider the external influence through institutional structure (Harding and Blokland, 2014).

The growth machines thesis offers a broader perspective that emphasises the individuals and interest groups who are involved in urban development rather than merely focusing on those factors that influence the decisions of the local government (Logan and Molotch, 1987). Meanwhile, studies on 'progrowth coalitions' (Mollenkopf, 1975, p. 264) and 'growth machine' (Molotch, 1976, p. 309) have emphasised the dominance of growth coalitions that comprise business elites that influence development policies. One common conflict arises when 'coalitions of land-based elites' seek to maximise exchange values (by using planning as a vehicle), increase land values and expand their power to achieve economic growth (Jonas and Wilson, 1999, p. 3; Molotch, 1976; Logan and Molotch, 1998; Purcell, 2001).

Meanwhile, residents perceive land in terms of its use value or its contributions to their quality of life (Logan and Molotch, 2007). In this case, power struggles are always present amongst different actors. Coalitions of actors typically emerge when redevelopment provides shared benefits to participants. The resources that each allied actor brings to redevelopment can influence how power is exercised in the urban development regime and its institutional arrangements.

Stone's urban regime theory is a comprehensive and useful framework for studying the power relations in the urban development context. Both the growth machines thesis and regime theory recognise business interests, particularly those that prioritise increasing the exchange value of land, as strong partners for coalitions. However, unlike the growth machines thesis, which contends that business interests dominate urban policies, regime theory perceives that government officials are willing to form coalitional partnerships.

Urban regime theory conceptualises the coalition of actors as a 'regime' (Stone, 1989; 1998), which refers to an informal yet relatively stable long-term coalition with access to institutional resources that sustain its role in making governing decisions (Stone, 1989, 4). Although government institutions hold the formal responsibility for governing, they lack the resources and scope of power to govern without the active support and cooperation of key actors with private interests (Stone, 1989, 6). Urban regime theory addresses the power structures and types of power exercised by different actors, how these actors coordinate to achieve mutual benefits and how they shape project

development by reviewing long-term partnership mechanisms (Stone, 1989, 1993, 1998; Stoker, 1995; Ward, 1996).

Stone (1989, 229) describes the political power sought by regimes as the 'power to' or the capacity to act rather than to 'power over' others or achieve social control. He defines regime theory as a social production model or a notion of empowerment in which power is expressed through a collaborative exploitation of knowledge, information and other resources instead of narrowly focusing on power as social control (Stone, 1998).

The concept of power in the production of urban policies can be divided into four types. Firstly, systemic power refers to the superior power of actors who can access certain resources in the socioeconomic system due to their positions (Levend and Erdem, 2017; Stone, 1980). In a market economy, the government inevitably favours the interests of business leaders. For example, property developers tend to exercise a privileged influence on the urban policy production process due to their control over land resources (Stone, 1980). Secondly, command power or social control refers to the active mobilisation of resources (e.g. information, finance, reputation and knowledge) in order for power to dominate over other interests. This type of power emphasises the capacity of an actor to attain power and the resistance capacities of others (Stoker, 1998a, 1998b, 1995). Thirdly, coalition or bargaining power involves actors who seek to bargain with others who share compatible goals and complementary resources in order to reach their targets (Stoker, 1998a, 1998b; Harding, 2012). As a result, coalitions tend to be relatively unstable (Stoker, 1995). Fourthly, community power is created by forming regimes in the community, assuming leadership and maintaining coalitions to maintain one's leadership role (Stone, 1993; Stoker, 1998). This type of power is formed by finding common interests in order to perform common actions or solve problems (Stoker, 1998a, 1998b; Harding, 2012; Davies, 2012).

To further understand the politics of power relations and coalitions in planning and development, one must recognise that participation is always linked with power, strategies and tactics (Bedford et al., 2002), thereby creating imbalanced relationships amongst actors (Short and Winter, 1999; Fainstein, 2005). According to Arnstein (1969), participation is 'the redistribution of power that enables the have-not citizens, presently excluded from the political and economic process, to be deliberately included in the future' (Arnstein, 1969, 216) and 'Participation without redistribution of power is an empty and frustrating process for the powerless'.

2.3 Effects of power relationships in heritage conservation

The notion of power relationships has several relevant implications in the managerial and organisational process of heritage conservation. Tunbridge and Ashworth (1996) and Larkham (1996) emphasise that power relations are clearly embedded in the selection and interpretation of heritage. Therefore, the production of heritage and the diverse articulations of interests and meanings represent the attempts of different forces to advance their concerns and interests. Logan (2016) argues that heritage comprises 'processes that are essentially political in that they involve decision-making about

scarce resources, are based on unequal power relations and distribute benefits unequally'
(Logan, 2016, p. 256).

Power has been highlighted as a central topic in the realm of heritage (Graham et al., 2000; Prats, 2004; Smith, 2004, 2006; Adams, 2005; Peralta and Anico, 2009; Macleod, 2010; Silva, 2011) and generative heritage (Silva and Santos, 2012). As a socially constructed concept, heritage always belongs to somebody when it is 'being created'. Even a UNESCO's heritage belongs more clearly to some than to others. Larkham asks whether heritage is simply 'all things to all people' (Larkham, 1995, p. 85). The questions of 'whose heritage' or 'who decides' and the contested nature of heritage are most apparent in cities facing a high (re)development pressure and involvement of numerous actors. Heritage is always produced from power, which involves the ability to create and assign heritage to specific people or groups (Silva and Santos, 2012).

The organisation and creation of heritage always involve some form of legal enunciation, including laws, regulations and declarations by international professional bodies. The creation of heritage also involves different agencies and social groups that are already in positions of relative power. In fact, the latter plays the role of evaluating and designating heritage property.

According to the growth machine thesis, the growing use of heritage as a commodity for consumption is often seen in urban regeneration projects as a result of the demands of the market economy. However, a commodity also has use value. For example, visiting a heritage building can enhance one's quality of life, social inclusion, sense of place and identity (Pendlebury, Townshend, and Gilroy, 2004). Whether a heritage site will be used as a 'place marketing' element in redevelopment projects and in entertainment, consumption, leisure, and tourism destinations (Leitner, 1990; Strom, 2008) and as a product of commodification that contributes to growth politics remains debated. Therefore, the power structure and coalitions formed in a heritage conservation regime affect the management of heritage property and the articulation, presentation and maintenance of the effectiveness and authenticity of the tangible and intangible values of heritage.

In sum, heritage is influenced and constructed through time, politics and power and is brought about by the 'discourse of power' (Peng, 2008, p. 89). Therefore, the complex interplay amongst power relations, coalitions and growth machines ideology in the heritage conservation regime in the urban renewal process requires a detailed and synergistic analysis.

3. Study context

3.1 Land use planning and property market in Hong Kong

Most property developments in Hong Kong are concentrated in less than 15% of its territory. The shortage of developable land has provided an incentive for creating a high-rise and high density built environment, thereby increasing land prices in Hong

Kong. The government controls the supply of land for development and redevelopment, and as a result, a substantial amount of its annual fiscal income comes from land sale and land premiums paid by landowners. With escalating property prices, property owners have no incentive to sacrifice their profits for heritage conservation. As such, the immense redevelopment pressure has resulted in the redevelopment of many pre-war buildings in urban areas to their maximum intensity under the government provisions.

Hong Kong has several institutional land use features that invariably affect the development potential of land and the land value of a site. Firstly, the leasehold system is a contractual planning control that enables the government to auction rights to land lots to private individuals (Lai, 1998, 2010). Land purchasers are allowed to develop their purchased land in accordance to the development conditions that define the uses, building heights, development intensities, designs, dispositions and other conditions on individual lots. Secondly, super-imposed on this contractual planning system is a statutory zoning control that can remove some, if not all, redevelopment rights based on the land lease or require the permission of the Town Planning Board (TPB) to exercise the existing rights. This statutory zoning tends to reduce the valuation of land. Thirdly, the government usually does not resume the private ownership of properties without cash compensation or if it does not serve public interest. In other words, conserving privately owned built heritage by way of government land resumption requires a large amount of government expenditure to compensate the affected owners for their loss of development potential.

3.2 Governance in urban renewal in Hong Kong

Urban renewal in Hong Kong began in the 1960s and 1970s when the government initiated various 'slum clearance initiatives'. In the mid-1980s, the urban redevelopment of dilapidated old areas has become one of the major concerns of the Hong Kong government. A prominent mode of redevelopment is through government-led urban renewal by the former Land Development Corporation (LDC) and the Urban Renewal Authority (URA) of Hong Kong. The LDC was established in 1988 under the British administration as a statutory body and was empowered to carry out and facilitate redevelopment projects within the older urban areas either on its own or through joint-venture partnerships with developers or owners (Ng, 2002).

In the first phase of urban renewal, the LCD adopted a partnership approach by working closely with key private property developers; however, such approach has been criticised by various sectors (Adams and Hastings, 2001). In the early 1990s, the LDC developed a different operational model for redevelopment that could be pursued on its own or in partnership with existing owners. The case study, the Nga Tsin Wai Village, was amongst the 25 sites identified at this stage. However, this model proved to be unsuccessful because the residents/landowners preferred to sell their property or land to private developers to be receive their compensation earlier instead of waiting for about 20 or 30 years to receive an uncertain profit. In the later and current phase of urban renewal, the URA, as a statutory quasi-government body, was established in 2001 to replace the LDC and to accelerate the renewal of old areas.

Contrary to the piecemeal approach of the LDC, the URA acknowledged the need for a wide district-based approach to urban regeneration. A major challenge that prevented the URA from undertaking redevelopment was the resumption of land. The Urban Renewal Authority Ordinance (URAO) enacted in 2003 empowered the URA to request for the Secretary for Planning and Lands (SPL) to recommend to the Chief Executive in the Council the resumption of land required for urban renewal. Such resumption was deemed to be for 'public purpose'. Private interests in land can be resumed under the Land Resumption Ordinance (LRO). Under the compensation policy, eligible owners of domestic properties will be offered statutory compensation and ex-gratia home purchase or supplementary allowance as deemed appropriate (Development Bureau, 2011). Although the URA may request a resumption of land for redevelopment under the LRO, the authority should consider acquiring land through an agreement before filing such request to the SPL (Development Bureau, 2011). A compulsory resumption mechanism (compulsory sale for redevelopment) under the LRO was enacted in 1999 to address the issue of fragmented ownership, and such ordinance stipulates that developers must have acquired at least 80% of the land interest for redevelopment.

However, the resumption of land for public purposes to facilitate urban renewal projects tends to serve only special interest groups instead of the public at large given that the related projects mainly cater to offices, commercial enterprises and private housing instead of communities or other 'public uses' (Cormack, 1931; Jones, 2000; Sheinson, 2001; Thompson, 1990). The discussions with existing owners were also complex and lengthy (Adams and Hastings, 2001), particularly when involving matters related to preservation. Although the URA can acquire or hold land for preservation purposes and dispose new property to business tenants in order to serve their traditional business interests, the affected residents have complained about unfair compensation and rehousing.

Previous urban renewal projects have also demonstrated that public participation was insufficient and ineffective not only in the process of negotiation in the acquisition, compensation, re-housing and re-provisioning of lost business premises but also in the designation of their land for urban renewal. Not until recently, the URA published a draft development scheme plan that involves urban renewal in order for the public to share their comments under the Town Planning Ordinance.

3.3 Governance in heritage conservation in urban renewal projects

The identification and grading of heritage buildings and sites in Hong Kong is a top-down approach supported by elites to identify and designate a heritage item. The Antiquities and Monuments Ordinance (Cap. 53) empowers the Antiquities Authorities who may, after consultation with the Antiquities Advisory Board (AAB) and with the approval of the Chief Executive, declare places, buildings, sites or structures as monuments for protection. However, the AAB only provides professional advice to the government and has no decision-making power. Although the AMO (Cap. 53) grants landowners the right to compensation when the government designates their property as heritage (i.e. protection of their property rights), the conservation of privately owned

buildings has been extremely difficult, and disputes between owners and the government often had to be settled in court (Lung, 2012).

The Commissioner for Heritage's Office was established in 2008 under the Development Bureau to support the implementation of the policy on heritage conservation, which aims 'to protect, conserve and revitalize, as appropriate, historical and heritage sites and buildings through relevant and sustainable approaches for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations' (Development Bureau, 2008). The bureau also mentioned that 'due regard should be given to development needs in the public interest, respect for private property rights, budgetary considerations, cross-sector collaboration and active engagement of stakeholders and the general public' (Development Bureau, 2008). However, the tension between heritage conservation and redevelopment is yet to be addressed.

Although the role of URA covers the preservation of buildings, sites and structures of historical, cultural or architectural interest (S.5 (e) of URAO), the discourses on heritage conservation and urban renewal did not clearly intersect until the URA adopted the 4R business strategy of 'Redevelopment', 'Rehabilitation', 'Preservation' and 'Revitalisation', which aims to rejuvenate old urban areas (URA, 2001). However, the revised Urban Renewal Strategy (2011) identified rehabilitation and redevelopment as its core businesses and stated that the URA preservation works fall within the scope of redevelopment projects. Preservation only becomes part of urban renewal, and the URA should preserve heritage buildings if such preservation forms part of its urban renewal projects or upon request from the administration.

As of June 2017, the URA has initiated 65 redevelopment projects (7 with preservation elements) and 3 preservation-cum-revitalisation projects (URA, 2017). However, many sectors criticised the projects completed by the URA, such as the Lee Tung Street in Wanchai, which used to accommodate small businesses that print traditional Chinese wedding invitation cards, given its lack of old atmosphere and local character after its redevelopment into luxury shopping streets and residential towers.

In general, the extent of public participation in heritage conservation has evolved, especially after the Star Ferry and Queen's Pier campaign in the 2000s. Since the sovereignty of the British colonial government in 1841, Hong Kong people had little interest in heritage before 1997 given that rapid economic growth, property development and profit making have been the dominating ideologies in the country. After the change of sovereignty in 1997, local communities became more willing to participate in heritage conservation. Despite the growing concern on heritage conservation, the Hong Kong government provided insufficient channels for the public to participate in conservation efforts. Specifically, the public participation mechanism in urban renewal projects that involve preservation and adaptive reuse was deemed ineffective if not insufficient.

4. Methodology

A mixed qualitative design was adopted in this work to investigate a unique and information-rich case selected for the in-depth study. The related issues were identified

through intensive analyses of various sources, including government records, newspapers and Legislative Council Hansards. Detailed case studies are deemed robust and reliable research methods (Flyvbyerg, 2004; Jensen and Rogers, 2001; Patton, 2015). Although not vigorously generalisable compared to statistical representation (Patton, 2015), a single case study can assess the complex political, economic and social context within which the case provides grounded in lived reality (Yin, 2014) and which portrays complex real world interventions. Case study research is an empirical inquiry that offers analytical generalisation and extrapolation (Yin, 2014 and Patton, 2015) and can facilitate rich conceptual/theoretical development (Hodkinson and Hokinson, 2001).

Different forms of qualitative data have been used to explore the selected case. A focus group meeting and in-depth interviews were carried out with an aim to discover and understand multiple views towards the case study (Stake, 1995). Eleven former inhabitants of Nga Tsin Wai Village were invited to participate in the focus group discussion to share their experiences and feelings related to the place and its ongoing physical changes over the last two to three decades. The focus group meeting lasted for approximately one and a half hour and was held at the village office in January 2015. Meanwhile, 12 representatives of different stakeholder groups participated in in-depth interviews in 2015 and 2016; these groups included Legislative Council members, scholars, concerned groups, former and current senior staff of the URA, members of the AAB, members of professional bodies who were personally involved in the redevelopment–conservation debate, Ng's clan residents and shop owners. These interviews aimed to further understand the different roles and interests of these stakeholders and their views on the conservation–redevelopment debate surrounding the Nga Tsin Wai Village over the past two decades.

5. Case of Nga Tsin Wai Village

5.1 Historical background

Nga Tsin Wai Village is located in Kowloon City, East Kowloon, Hong Kong and started out as an 'unwalled' village in the Yuen dynasty (1206–1370). This village was established by the Ng, Chan and Lee clans in the mid-14th century. From 1644 to 1661, the Qing government ordered those who lived along the coastal province to move 50 kilometres inwards from the boundaries to defend them from pirates. The village was subsequently cleared because of this order. In 1668, this policy ended, and the inhabitants returned to the village. However, the pirates who came from Taiwan continued to plunder the village, affecting the daily lives of its residents. To defend their village from pirates and bandits, the Ng clan worked together with the Chan and Lee clans from the nearby villages to build a walled village in 1724 (Cheung, 2013; Hase, 1999). During the Japanese Occupation (1941–1945*)*, the villages near Nga Tsin Wai were demolished by the Japanese government to give way to the construction of the Kai Tak Airport runway. Immigrants from China also occupied the villages in Kowloon by 1949 after World War II.

The government considered the village houses as squatters that could not be rebuilt or altered by their inhabitants. The government then tried to construct public housing in the nearby areas and attempted to clear the village in 1965 (Public Record Office, 1965). By then, about 110 households and 1000 people were living in the village (Focus group meeting, 2016). The village covers an area of approximately 0.4 hectares, and the houses are separated by three streets and six narrow alleys in a rectangular grid layout (Figure 1).
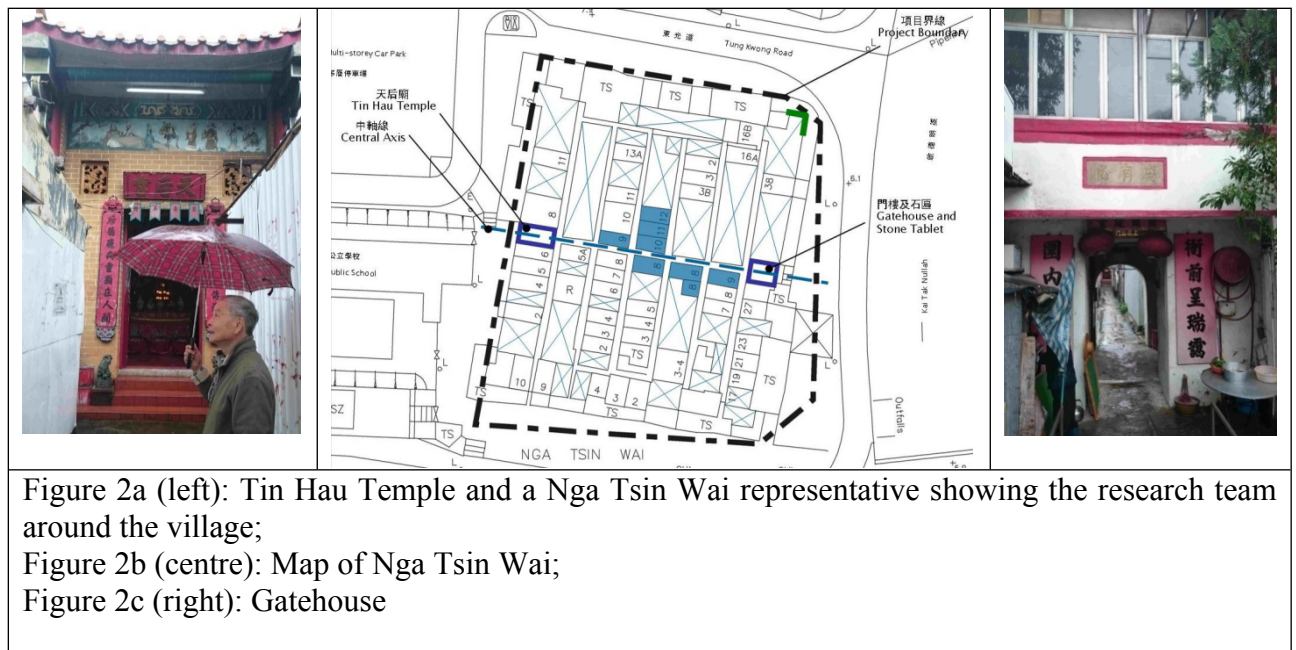
Although many additional structures have been built alongside the original village houses, the location, setting, pattern and spatial layout of the walled village are also worth preserving. One can enter the village through its central axis and notice unique parallel rows of houses. Nga Tsin Wai is located in front of the Kowloon Walled City and has its own river (now called Kai Tak nullah) beside the Kowloon Bay for protection. The houses are all significantly different from those in other walled villages in Hong Kong. The village also has rich intangible values that need to be preserved, including a strong social network and a sense of place and belongingness within the village.

5.2 Redevelopment from 1970–2018

The redevelopment and conservation of Nga Tsin Wai has been debated for more than four decades. Since the late 1970s, the village developer, Cheung Kong Properties Limited, already acquired and demolished two-thirds of houses in the village. The redevelopment of the village, which covers approximately 6000 square metres, was amongst the 25 urban renewal projects announced by the former LDC in 1998. The AAB discussed this project in December 1994 and raised no objection to its redevelopment. They subsequently reconfirmed their decisions in 1999 and 2000. During their negotiations with the LDC, the residents expressed their dissatisfaction with the compensation offered to them, thereby preventing the developer from acquiring other pieces of land. The residents started to negotiate with the private developer to sell their houses. However, they were not satisfied with the offer, which was not enough for them to purchase another flat elsewhere.

Remaining shops before Clarence in Nov. 2015

Fruit shops

Chinese medicine shop

Barber shops along this side

Figure 1 Nga Tsin Wai Village (Source: URA website, 2017)

Figure 2a (left): Tin Hau Temple and a Nga Tsin Wai representative showing the research team around the village;
Figure 2b (centre): Map of Nga Tsin Wai;
Figure 2c (right): Gatehouse

In fact, the inhabitants were eager to start the redevelopment programme to improve their living conditions since 2005. In 2006, the developer already acquired approximately 70% of the land in the village. However, the developer had to return all acquired land to the government and let the government and URA acquire all the remaining land as stated under the URAO and LRO. According to the villagers' representative, the developer offered about HK$1.8 million to buy their houses before the URA took over the project. However, the URA only offered HK$4 million as compensation, which they will only provide after several years. Therefore, a large number of residents, especially the indigenous ones, were willing to leave. After an

incomplete acquisition of the village, the URA and the private developer formed a partnership to develop the site. The negotiation between the developer and the government might have involved many under-the-table deals and business considerations.

In response to the growing concerns regarding heritage conservation in Hong Kong, the URA formed a conservation consultant team in 2006. In the following year, the URA announced its plans to redevelop Nga Tsin Wai in collaboration with a developer and proposed the 'Nga Tsin Wai Village Project' (Hong Kong Legislative Council, 2007). As illustrated in Figure 3, this proposal aimed to construct a conservation park and develop 2 40-metre high residential blocks of 750 residential flats on both sides of the village to balance the old settings with the new (Anonymous, 2015). The project also aimed to reconstruct eight village houses into retail stores and conserve three historic relics designated as Grade 3 historic buildings by the AAB on 4 March 2014 (Antiquities and Monument Advisory Broad, 2016). However, unlike the declared monuments, the graded historic buildings lacked statutory protection.
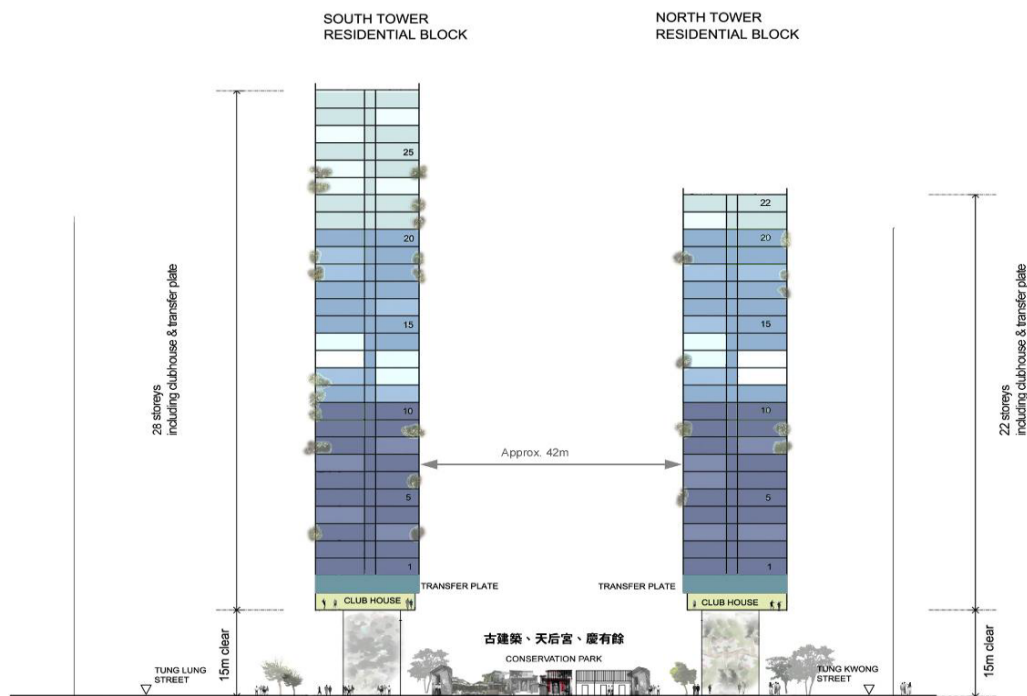

Figure 3. Redevelopment scheme proposed by the URA (Source: Legislative Council Panel on Home Affairs Subcommittee on Heritage Conservation, 2007)

In July 2009, the URA requested for the resumption of land for the implementation of the redevelopment project under the URAO. Twenty private land ownerships were resumed under the LRO in October 2011. The URA then offered compensation to the tenants, but some of them were dissatisfied with the offer. The tenants, residents and shop owners then formed a concern group to submit a petition to the government.

The URA then proposed to relocate the affected shop tenants to the eight conserved village houses after the redevelopment and offered them a monthly rent of HK$600 for the first 3 years, $3000 for the fourth year and $6000 for the fifth year. However, this proposal was rejected by the shop owners and tenants. On 24 January 2016, the URA finished clearing Nga Tsin Wai (Anonymous, 2016), but by August 2018, the project was halted because 300-year-old relics were unearthed during an archaeological assessment carried out by the URA. Table 1 summarises the key events in the redevelopment and conservation of Nga Tsin Wai.

Table 1. Major events and stakeholders involved in the redevelopment and conservation of Nga Tsin Wai Village.

1970s	Chun Kong Property Development started to buy the village houses and has since obtained and demolished almost 70% of the properties in the area.
1994	The AAB raised no objection to the redevelopment of Nga Tsin Wai and subsequently reconfirmed the redevelopment in 1999 and 2000.
1998	The LDC announced Nga Tsin Wai as one of its 25 redevelopment projects.
2001	The URA was established and authorised to take over the 25 redevelopment projects from the LDC.
2005	The Wong Tai Sin District Council requested the URA to expedite the redevelopment and to preserve the gatehouse, the embedded stone tablet and the Tin Hau Temple.
2006	The URA recruited an internationally renowned conservation expert to carry out a conservation study and proposed the 'conservation by design' concept. An architect came up with a scheme to preserve three historical buildings and structures.
2007	The URA initiated the project through a partnership with Chun Kong Property Ltd., a private developer.
2009	The URA submitted an application for the resumption of land and for the implementation of the redevelopment project under the URAO.
July 2011	The Lands Department announced the resumption of land for the implementation of the Nga Tsin Wai Village redevelopment project.
October 2011	The affected private land and property interests were reverted to the government under the LRO.
2011	A concern group was set up to lodge a petition to the government expressing their dissatisfaction towards the compensation and relocation arrangements.
2014	The Ancestral Hall, Tin Hau Temple and Entrance Gate were designated as Grade 3 historical buildings by the AAB. The URA redevelopment project included the conservation of eight houses along the central axis of the village.
December 2015	The Lands Department issued an official notice in accordance to the LRO ordering the remaining illegal occupants to leave by 25 January 2016.
25 January 2016	After the clearance, the last two occupants accepted the offered compensation and left the village.
May 2016	The project was halted when 300-year-old relics were unearthed during an archaeological impact assessment.

	Government	Developer	URA	Landlord (habitants)/tenants	District councillors	Concerned group/ representatives of residents/tenants/shop owners
Redevelopment						
Role	Provide public housing Improve the condition of dilapidated areas Enact the legal framework for the resumption of land	Provide financial support Purchase village houses from their inhabitants	Acquire land for urban renewal Provide rehousing or compensation	**Landlord** Negotiate with the former LDC and URA for the acquisition of their land	Convey the needs and aspirations of the habitants/landlord to the LDC and developer	Oppose the forced relocation Arrange protests to raise public awareness regarding the unfair arrangement
Interest				Obtain fair and reasonable rehousing/compensation	Gain public support for the political party	Protect the rights of the landlord
Extent of growth ideology	**Growth/economic interest** Form growth coalitions to increase the power to achieve economic growth and increase exchange value			See the land in terms of its use value and contributions to quality of life		
Forms of power	Command power	Systemic power Command power	Command power	Community power (with other landlords and concern groups)	Community power	Coalition power (with community groups and representatives)
		Coalition power (form partnership)				
Outcome	**Landlord removed from the village with compensation** **The site provides private housing for middle-class people**					

Table 2. Summary of the roles, interests and forms of power exerted by different actors in the redevelopment of the Nga Tsin Wai Village.

	Government	Developer	URA	Landlord (habitants)/tenants	District councillors	Professionals advocating for conservation	Concerned group/ representatives of residents/tenants/ shop owners
Heritage conservation							
Role	Assess the grading of the village and its historic structures Monitor heritage conservation in the city	Cooperate with the URA in the redevelopment-cum-conservation residential project	Propose the redevelopment-cum-conservation residential scheme	**(Indigenous inhabitants)** Provide information on the historical significance of the village and determine what should be conserved	Ally with professionals that advocate the conservation of the village Lobby with government officials, the former LDC and the developer for the conservation of the village	Suggest alternative mechanisms and design schemes for conservation	Negotiate with the URA for a better conservation of the village Organise protests and petitions that support conservation
Interests	Incorporate the needs of both conservation and redevelopment			Preserve the valuable history and physical remains of the village for future generations	Serve the people in the district Build reputation and gain support from the public in the elections	Advocate for the preservation of the village	Preserve the history and significance of the village
Extent of growth ideology		See the heritage as a commodity/place-marketing for economic value		Informal coalition to advocate for heritage conservation See the village and houses in terms of their use value and contributions to sense of identity and quality of life			
Forms of power	Command power	Systemic power	Command power	Community power	Community power	Community power	Community power
Outcome	Conservation of three historic structures and eight village houses A conservation park with two high-rise residential blocks						

Table 3. Summary of the roles, interests and forms of power exerted by different actors in the conservation of Nga Tsin Wai Village.

6. Results of the case

6.1 Roles and interests of the different actors involved

The redevelopment and conservation of Nga Tsin Wai involve several actors, including the public sector, which comprises the former LDC and URA and the relevant government departments, and the commercial sector, namely, the private developers. The immediately affected groups include the residents, which comprises indigenous inhabitants, habitants, tenants, and shop owners. Meanwhile, the general public group includes the Wong Tai Sin District council, the Nga Tsin Wai concerned group, professionals and academics. Since the redevelopment plan was announced a few decades ago, conflicts emerged amongst these actors during the negotiation and lobbying processes. Each actor plays different roles and holds different interests in the redevelopment and conservation processes (Tables 2 and 3).

The role of the government in urban renewal is to develop a strategy for addressing urban decay and increasing housing supply. The government has played an active role in encouraging different actors to participate in the urban renewal process. Apart from urban renewal, the government is also responsible for safeguarding historic buildings and structures with significant values for the benefit of the public.

After World War II, the government started to control the village houses and assigned them a squatter house/structure number. In other words, the government sees these houses as illegal structures, and after a squatter house number has been assigned, the inhabitants of these houses cannot perform any addition or alteration. The government intended to clear Nga Tsin Wai by 1965.

Meanwhile, the URA holds a command power through legislations in the planning, acquisition, resumption, preparation of land and in the implementation of the urban renewal project K1 from the former LDC. The URA has implemented the project by way of a Development Project (DP) pursuant to the provisions specified under S26 of the URAO given that the land use conforms to the land use zoning. After receiving authorisation from the Secretary for Development for DP, the URA commenced the acquisition and issued its acquisition offers to the owners. Prior to the resumption, the URA started negotiating with owners through voluntary acquisition. The URA clearly intends to profit from redeveloping the site into a residential project. An official from the URA clarified that '*the government has never stated that it is a conservation project from the very first day… the URA has been embracing its social responsibility in preserving the three historical relics and the eight houses*' (Interview, 2016).

The developer provides assistance in land assembly, funding and provision of the necessary expertise and resources. Developers are interested in those buildings that have high redevelopment value (in terms of residual plot ratio and location) and can yield high financial returns. Therefore, the redevelopment of Nga Tsin Wai has high potential to generate profits.

The majority of the inhabitants and landowners prefer to redevelop the deteriorated village houses whilst preserving only the three historic buildings that are considered

culturally significant by the AAB. The indigenous inhabitants and tenants sent letters to the Wong Tai Sin District Council and the Lands Department and Home Affairs, respectively, to highlight the urgent need for redevelopment in 2005 and to share that they do not support the conservation of the entire village as proposed by the Wong Tai Sin District Council (Wong Tai Sin District Council, 2005).

> '*We requested the URA to redevelop the village. We only wanted to improve our living conditions… and have standard facilities inside our house. If the entire village is preserved as a heritage site, the URA could not undertake redevelopment. Our living conditions cannot be improved. People who opposed the redevelopment and advocated for the conservation of the entire village are those who do not have any property rights or are not indigenous villagers. Neither the redevelopment nor preservation of the village will affect them. They do not realise the villagers' utmost urgent housing needs.*'

In the focus group interview, a former inhabitant shared that '*My grandfather kept this house for my father, and my father kept this house for me. However, my son will not be able to live in this house because it is so deteriorated.*'

A member of the AAB also doubted that anyone would consider the will of the inhabitants. He shared, '*Nobody wants to move in, the condition of the place is poor. I will move out if I have money and can live outside… This is a social status problem. I will be labelled as a "poor guy" by others if I still live there.*'

Most of the interviewees clearly prefer to sell their houses at high prices in order to afford better-quality housing elsewhere. The occupants wished to purchase flats in a public housing estate within the same district, whereas the landowners wished to receive a reasonable compensation.

The Nga Tsin Wai redevelopment concern group was established in 2012 by residents and business tenants in an effort to resist forced evictions. One of the most resonant community resistance efforts of the redevelopment project was that of the tenants. This group negotiated with the URA for a fair relocation option whilst urging the conservation of the original ways of life and traditional businesses that reflect the intangible value of the historic village, particularly its social network (Nga Tsin Wai redevelopment concern group, 2016). Through social media, the concern group distributed propaganda to the general public that pressured the URA to come up with a reasonable relocation option.

On January 2016, other concern groups, including the Old District Autonomy Advancement Group, the Chinese University Grassroot and Concerning Grassroots' Housing Rights Alliance, submitted a letter to the URA requesting to stop the demolition. Although their actions did not change the outcome of the demolition effort, they successfully raised public awareness regarding the URA's ways of redevelopment and acquisition.

The Wong Tai Sin District Council and field professionals held similar views concerning the conservation of the entire village and communicated closely with one

another. The Wong Tai Sin District Council advocated the designation of the entire village for conservation in 2000. However, the indigenous inhabitants, landowners and tenants opposed this idea as it only served the will of district councillors. Academics and professional advocates for conservation shared that they support the development and added that the remaining historic properties should be preserved entirely.

7. Discussion

Power relations and coalitions of actors favouring the growth machines thesis in the redevelopment regime

Power relations and coalitions of different actors are formed in the redevelopment process. The case of Nga Tsin Wai illustrates how the different types of power of urban regime theory have favoured the growth machines ideology to increase the exchange value of village redevelopment (Table 2). Two major power struggles are apparent in this case, namely, the government and the URA versus the inhabitants and tenants and the government and the URA versus the developers.

The government and the URA vs. the indigenous inhabitants, recent inhabitants, landowners and tenants: Power struggles under property rights issues

From the perspective of the government, Nga Tsin Wai and other villages in the New Kowloon area should be demolished to make way for public housing as affirmed by the Legislative Council during the colonial period. The government easily confiscated village houses before and during the British sovereignty because the indigenous inhabitants in Nga Tsin Wai had limited knowledge of property rights. Unlike rented land in the New Territories, the British government had the right to develop the surrendered land. Therefore, the government did not see Nga Tsin Wai as similar to the traditional villages in the New Territories and did not consider its villagers as indigenous inhabitants who had legal land ownership during the colonial period. When their ancestors were under the rule of the British government, most of their cultivated lands were confiscated by the government with little compensation because they had no legal proof of their ownership. One inhabitant shared that '*Our ancestors had little knowledge about this… even the confiscated land lots were published in the gazettes.*' Given the limited knowledge of property rights, the village houses were easily confiscated by the government in the past. Since the early stages of the Nga Tsin Wai renewal process, the government utilised command power to serve private interests and to favour the redevelopment regime rather than the conservation regime.

During the redevelopment efforts of the URA, the inhabitants developed a stronger awareness of their property rights, which hindered the acquisition of their land for both redevelopment and heritage conservation. These inhabitants had been living in the village for many generations without any deed and thus believed that they can continue living there without such document. With the implementation of the compensation mechanism, they negotiated with the URA for the amount they expected. Meanwhile, the non-residents and store owners claimed that they brought their stores from the

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village chief in the early years but did not have a reasonable relocation nor compensation for their loss of property rights (Lee, 2015). In 2016, the remaining shop owners requested for a permanent rent of HK$600 per month. However, the URA official considered this price unreasonable and stated that *'they have only occupied the land without having the legal right to do so and refused to leave'*.

The government and the URA vs. the developer: Acquisition and compensation

The power struggles between the government and the URA point towards the systemic power of the developer, who acquired 70% of the land by the end of the 1990s and demolished them one by one, except those that were not owned by a single land owner, such as the temple, the ancestral hall and the gatehouse (Interview with an ex-AAB member, 2016). If the government wanted to acquire land for heritage conservation, then a huge amount of public funds should be spent. Therefore, the conservation of the entire village becomes an extremely difficult effort.

Although the URA, as an agent of the government, has the systematic and command power to acquire land for urban renewal under the URAO and LRO, the authority needs to go through a litigation process if the developer is dissatisfied with the compensation for the decreased value resulting from the potential development. A URA official claimed that convincing the developers to compromise with their redevelopment by adding a sub-theme of conservation creates a major hindrance because doing so would reduce the full development potential of the site. This scheme is very difficult to implement and may not even be feasible under the current town planning system. Meanwhile, a member of the concern group mentioned that the developer has a much greater dominant power than the URA over the redevelopment process, thereby underscoring the hegemonic power of the developer over the legislative power of the government.

As such, a pro-growth coalition was formed between the URA and the developer in the redevelopment process with an aim to achieve mutual benefits and maximise profits by exercising coalition power. Firstly, the developer established a formal coalition with the URA with the common goal of generating profits and accelerating the redevelopment of Nga Tsin Wai under a joint venture institutional arrangement. Although the developer had the largest proportion of property interests in the site, acquiring the remaining privately owned land becomes impossible if the owners do not agree to sell them. Therefore, the developer willingly established a coalition with the URA as joint venture partners in the redevelopment project and depended on the authority to acquire the remaining lands from the inhabitants. After the government announced the village as one of the 25 urban renewal projects undertaken by the former LDC, the URA was entitled to take over the project after its establishment. As a quasi-government body, the URA was granted the command power by the LRO to confiscate land from owners who purposely refuse to sell for the purpose of urban renewal. With this power and authority, the URA can serve public interests legitimised under the law. However, the URA is willing to partner with the developer because the developer owns a larger proportion of land than the URA itself and the government. In their discussions of the partnership arrangements, the URA faced challenges in persuading the developer

to agree on the development-cum-conservation scheme because the proposal for conserving the park substantially reduced the development potential of the site.

Secondly, by using coalition power, the URA coerced the developer to share the acquisition and development costs of the project. Such coalition attracted criticisms against the URA, which has become a profit-making land collector for private developers. According to some critics, joint venture partners can seek high market prices for the sale of flats in new developments and trigger rising property prices and gentrification in urban renewal areas. Lai et al. (2018) argued that the grounds of 'public purpose' for urban renewal projects should be justified instead of favouring special interest groups. As in the case of Nga Tsin Wai, the private housing project tends to favour the pro-growth ideology shared by the developer and the URA.

The government also exercised its systemic and command power in favour of village redevelopment. The policy adopted by the government in designating houses as 'squatter houses' in the 1960s could be viewed as a strategy for discouraging the upkeep of old village houses in the long run and starting their redevelopment. In a way, this policy helps the developer in redeveloping the village at a later stage. In general, the government's use of command power to favour private interests and to form pro-growth coalitions with private developers in urban renewal and redevelopment projects to facilitate economic growth has been criticised.

In the redevelopment regime, the coalitions of landlords, district councillor and concerned groups of residents, tenants and shop owners exercised community power. These actors all aimed to secure a fair, adequate compensation in the acquisition of village houses during their negotiations with the LDC and URA. In particular, the district councillors helped landlords understand their property rights when the URA attempted to acquire their land.

Power relations and coalitions of actors in the heritage conservation advocacy

In the redevelopment–conservation debates, the interests of actors and their coalitions that support the pro-growth ideology have induced conflicts, intensified power struggles and increased the extent of village preservation. Table 3 summarises the roles, interests and types of power held by these actors in their heritage conservation advocacy. The district councillor and professionals in the field of heritage conservation and urban planning established an informal coalition to facilitate the conservation of the village. The alliance between these actors was based on a social network that aimed towards achieving collaboration and proposing an alternative plan for the conservation versus redevelopment agenda. The community power affected the redevelopment– conservation debate and the outcome of the redevelopment scheme.

Demolition vs. conservation of the village

The identification of heritage reveals power struggles in two domains. Firstly, the debate on whether the village is worth preserving highlights the contestations arising

from government officials and advocates for heritage conservation, both of whom have their own interpretations and understanding of what constitutes 'heritage'.

The government has the command power to legitimise its decisions in designating a single historic building site as a statutorily declared monument. However, this power is not applicable to Nga Tsin Wai because the ordinance does not empower the government to designate or grade a group of buildings despite their high historical or architectural value. If a conservation policy was enforced to broaden the preservation of historic buildings of standard significance instead of monuments, then the village could have been preserved.

Laws in Hong Kong favour land ownership and leasing rights (Lu, 2009) given that the ordinance includes clauses that allow landowners to refuse the government's designation of their property as heritage sites or receive compensation for their financial losses resulting from their loss of development potential.

Although the government could provide financial support to indigenous inhabitants to renovate their old village houses and allow them to stay, doing so would attract controversy regarding the unjust distribution of public resources. One interviewee mentioned that '*the government should rather keep the Antiquities and Monuments Ordinance as narrow as it is because preservation is very costly*' (Interview, 2016).

In sum, the government has long emphasised the pro-growth ideology in property development instead of conservation, especially before the return of sovereignty to China.

Extent of the Nga Tsin Wai Village conservation

The other power struggle amongst different actors within the heritage conservation regime has to do with the extent to which the village should be preserved. On the one hand, the URA considered the redevelopment plan an adequate and appropriate proposal that balances urban renewal and conservation, whereas the advocates for heritage conservation held the opposite view.

A former URA director argued that '*it is the only redevelopment project that incorporates some conservation elements' (Interview, 2016)*. A URA official argued that adopting a conservation approach is impractical because the buildings in the village are too dilapidated and the villagers have also moved out. '*If nobody lives inside, what do we have left to preserve?*'

Another URA official claimed that '*there is no intangible value there since there is no one remaining in the village. How can there be any traditional customs? Thus, there is hardly any intangibles to be preserved*.'

In 2006, the URA recruited an internationally renowned conservationist and an academic with professional architectural background to share their opinions on what is worth preserving in the village. Gathering expert opinions to strengthen the cogency of a redevelopment plan has become a common strategy of the authority.

On the other hand, a member of a professional architects' body was asked whether the scheme could retain the authenticity of the village and the continuity of its cultural value after the completion of the residential buildings. He shared that the intangibles in the village can hardly be preserved because all residents have already left. He added that allowing the developer to manage the conservation park may restrict the type of activities allowed in this location.

> *'Would the inhabitants still be allowed to hold their own traditional cultural events in the park, particularly during the festival?'*

> *'I don't think it is a conservation project... however, turning it into a park is better than doing nothing. At least there are a few historic structures there.'*

People have also debated whether the redevelopment-cum-conservation project would only lead to the construction of a private garden for luxury residential development that utilises a 'heritage theme' to boost its economic value. The URA and the developer share common interests in profit making; as a result, their coalition is inevitably biased towards economic growth. Whether the redevelopment project with conservation elements can be considered an 'installation of new urban habitat in place of the old', which results in the displacement of original villagers, remains unknown.

In the examined case, community power is exercised by forming an informal coalition amongst the district council, professionals and concern group for the conservation regime. Professionals argue that the physical structure has heritage value and that cultural significance is embedded in the rich setting and the 600-year history of the walled urban village. A member of the professional architects' body thought that culture and traditional customs create social cohesion and maintain social networks. These include those places where former villagers gather to celebrate special festivals and traditional events. In addition, indigenous inhabitants contribute to the formation of community power by providing information regarding the historical significance of different buildings in the village. In sum, the coalitions formed under the conservation regime revealed the intention of actors to engender the use value as opposed to the goal of the developer and the URA to increase exchange value.

8. Land use planning issues and policy implications

Power struggles and coalitions clearly exist between the redevelopment and heritage conservation regimes in the case of Nga Tsin Wai, with the land use planning mechanism tending to favour the former, which promotes economic growth. In broad terms, the case shows the lack of an integrated policy or approach to redevelopment that embraces the heritage conservation agenda. To achieve co-existence and promote a harmonious relationship between redevelopment and heritage conservation, supportive land use planning policies should be implemented to strengthen heritage conservation regimes. Some policy implications corresponding to these issues are presented in the following section.

The legitimacy of state power is reinforced by the law (i.e. the LRO in the urban renewal policy of Hong Kong), whereas no legislative power exists explicitly to resume land for

conserving the heritage of the historic village unless it serves public interests. The legal framework also lacks a statutory mechanism for conserving historic buildings that are not officially designated as monuments. The Nga Tsin Wai case also showcases the deficiencies in institutional arrangements and their legal power, which do not support the conservation of the village over the years. For the planning mechanism, the TPB only has statutory power to control the reuse of historic buildings, thereby restricting its development potential and imposing conditions in granting rezoning or changing use planning applications. However, some issues remain in the zoning control mechanism. The village has been zoned 'R/C' (residential/commercial) since the 1970s and tends to attract developers for redevelopment than for preservation. By contrast, if the village is zoned 'V' (village) similar to the other villages located in the New Territories, then its redevelopment becomes increasingly difficult (Building and Land Department, 1959) given the large amount of restrictions imposed in the 'V' zone.

The government can promote a harmonious relationship between redevelopment regime and heritage conservation by using town planning control to restrict the rights of developers and impose reasonable planning conditions.

One professional mentioned that '*The planning control cannot force the property owners to undertake building conservation or force the residents to move back to the historic buildings after the completion of conservation or maintain their ways of life, which are regarded as important values that are worth preserving*' (Interview, 2016). The relevant departments can explore the available opportunities, test the feasibility of imposing restrictions on buying and selling historic properties and evaluating their development potential by adopting town planning control and land administration mechanisms. Property and development rights may not always be complementary, and some room is always available to explore whether landowners can retain their property rights whilst having restricted development rights.

An architect who is a member of the concern group suggested transferring the development rights to compensate the developer in exchange for the preservation of a large part of the village in 2003. He suggested maintaining the same plot ratio and exchanging the land for carparks in the adjacent public housing estate owned by the Housing Authority. However, the Housing Authority refused such proposal and claimed that they are not responsible for preservation. Legislators, scholars and concerned groups all criticised the limited cooperation amongst different government departments, thereby suggesting that a single development control mechanism lacks enough legislative and administrative power to facilitate heritage conservation.

Given these issues, other development control mechanisms could be imposed to control the development potential of the land. An ex-URA official and current AAB member shared, '*Other possible control mechanisms may be to impose some restrictions on the development and/or land use through the lease conditions or the building control mechanism*'.

With regard to institutional arrangements, the case reveals that the responsible government body for heritage conservation lacks statutory power compared with other government departments that aim to facilitate redevelopment and urban renewal.

Therefore, the AMO and AAB should be given more authority in formulating policies instead of merely serving an advisory role.

Formal public participation mechanisms were also absent in the renewal–conservation debate given that power was not redistributed to the 'have-not' group, which included residents, tenants, concern groups and professionals advocating for conservation. Therefore, the public opinion did not determine the final outcome/government decision yet played a role in raising public awareness during the debate on urban renewal–heritage conservation debate. To increase the influence of public participation in urban policy, the governance of urban renewal and heritage conservation should incorporate the community involvement mechanism and increase the capabilities of the community.

9. Conclusions and policy implications

The pro-growth ideology is commonly advocated in cities such as Hong Kong where land resources are scarce and land value is extremely high. Therefore, redevelopment regimes are necessary and inevitable. The main driving force behind urban renewal is fostering economic growth, which increases property prices via state-led gentrification (Lai et al., 2018, Yung and Chan, 2017). The case of Nga Tsin Wai highlights the many issues connected to the renewal of old urban areas, especially historical villages with deteriorated vernacular buildings that lack outstanding architectural value. The challenge is how to achieve a reasonable trade-off between redevelopment and conservation.

Following regime theory, this study analyses power in the organisation and management of urban development and highlights the dominance of pro-growth coalitions involving land-use-based elites (i.e. government, the URA and private developers) in controlling redevelopment outcomes and policies. Major development conflicts emerge between the interests of private developers and government bodies who see land in terms of its exchange value (i.e. as a commodity that can be exchanged for profit) versus the village residents and actors sharing common interests who see land in terms of its use value (i.e. its historical, cultural and social value and contributions to quality of life).

The case also identifies the power of different actors in the redevelopment and conservation processes and their effects on the project outcomes. The government, developer and the URA facilitate the pro-growth coalition ideology through systemic and command powers to alter, create and exercise power relations. Although the government can resume land for the purposes of urban renewal and heritage conservation, these two objectives are not equally observed in the current planning policies. Moreover, the developer and URA established a joint-venture partnership, exercised coalition power and benefited from the easy acquisition of capital funding for redevelopment. In their pursuit of their mutual goal to maximise land value, the growth ideology was promoted. Furthermore, community power was established through informal social networks amongst the concerned groups, district councillors and professionals forming a heritage conservation coalition with a weak influence on

decision making and its outcomes. In sum, the pro-growth coalition formed in the redevelopment regime dominated the heritage conservation regime in project decision making.

This study provides theoretical constructs that can be used to examine the confrontations arising from urban renewal and heritage conservation. The lenses of urban regime theory and growth machine thesis are adopted to explore the complex interplay amongst power relations and coalitions. A sequential interrelationship was eventually established. Firstly, the power struggles amongst different actors in the redevelopment and heritage conservation discourse need to be reduced. Secondly, the redistribution of power to the 'have-nots' of the community and achieving empowerment through governance are necessary in mitigating the imbalanced power relations and struggles amongst different actors. Thirdly, the coalitions of different actors from the redevelopment and conservation regimes to achieve mutual benefits and to make compromises if necessary. Fourthly, some supportive institutional arrangements were proposed to foster and maintain harmonious and healthy coalitions.

Employing only one theoretical concept in analysing the case would not be comprehensive or useful enough in formulating policy insights for the redevelopment–conservation debate. Favouring exchange value over use value from the lens of the growth machine thesis also needs to be addressed. By engendering community power and encouraging collaboration amongst private developers, the URA, the government and the community in urban development governance, especially in urban renewal involving heritage conservation, the power relations and coalitions could be better structured to achieve co-existence and balance between exchange and use values. The goal of achieving economic growth and conserving cultural and social values for improving quality of life can be mutually inclusive (Amit–Cohen 2005; Yuen 2006). Heritage conservation has been increasingly used to stimulate economic growth through the 'place marketing' of a redevelopment project. The economic and cultural uses of heritage buildings also help create images by which places are marketed as economic commodities and can even be seen as the reason for their existence (Graham, 2002).

In sum, a highly coherent and mutually inclusive strategy for incorporating heritage conservation into redevelopment land use policy needs to be developed. The land use planning mechanism for softening the power struggles between the redevelopment coalition and conservation advocacies amongst different actors requires further exploration. Public involvement has been previously viewed to influence the urban renewal process. In this case, some fundamental changes must be made in governance to implement a bottom-up approach. The social needs of the community must also be considered instead of making urban planning decisions that are dominated by the hegemony of private developers and the pro-growth ideology.

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