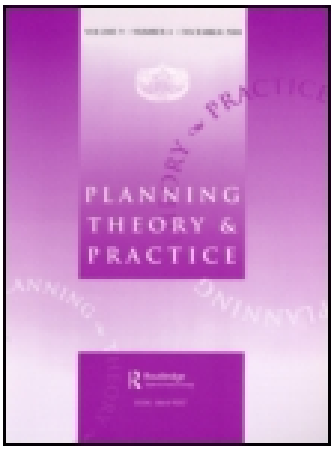

Planning Theory & Practice
Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:
http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rptp20

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Published online: 30 Jan 2014.

To cite this article: Mee-Kam Ng (2014) Intellectuals and the production of space in the urban renewal process in Hong Kong and Taipei, Planning Theory & Practice, 15:1, 77-92, DOI: 10.1080/14649357.2013.870224

To link to this article: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14649357.2013.870224

Planning Theory & Practice, 2014
Vol. 15, No. 1, 77–92, http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14649357.2013.870224

Intellectuals and the production of space in the urban renewal process in Hong Kong and Taipei

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(*Received 15 October 2012; accepted 26 November 2013*)

Through two concrete urban renewal cases in Asia, this paper develops a schema of "social engineers-smugglers-experts-critical experts" to differentiate the roles of system-maintaining and system-transforming intellectuals in the production of space. While pro-establishment "social engineers" and "experts" use their "epistemic authority" to produce top-down renewal plans to promote exchange values, "critical experts" outside the government and "smugglers" within the bureaucracy play significant roles in "de-coding" the use values of people's lived spaces. The cases highlight the important roles of system-transforming intellectuals in re-problematizing urban renewal issues and experimenting with alternative policies and plans to restructure space that sustains community building.

Keywords: Intellectuals; social engineers; experts; smugglers; critical experts; production of space

Introduction

Intellectuals have played key roles in the surging social and political movements in Hong Kong and Taipei, especially those concerned with saving communities, the environment and heritage (Broadbent & Brockman, 2011; Chiu & Lui, 2000; Lam, 2004; Tsang, 2012). The two case studies to be discussed in this paper highlight the roles of "intellectuals" in the course of spatial restructuring in the two cities. In Taipei, if it were not for the advocacy of students and professors from the National Taiwan University (NTU), the Organization of Urban Res (OURs) (a civil society organization), and the "progressive bureaucrats" in the newly established Cultural Affairs Bureau (CAB), the squatter settlements in Treasure Hill would have been demolished to make way for a park. Similarly in Hong Kong, were it not for the educated social activists and "artivists" in the community and "enlightened" individuals within the Urban Renewal Authority (URA), the 150-year old market streets in Graham and Peel Street would have disappeared with the redevelopment of the surrounding buildings. This paper aims to examine the roles of these "intellectuals" in the production of space in these two cases.

The following first discusses a preliminary schema of differentiating system-maintaining and system-transforming "intellectuals" and their possible roles in the understanding and production of space. Then the contextual background of urban renewal in Hong Kong and Taipei are discussed, followed by a detailed discussion of the two case studies. While both Hong Kong and Taipei are predominantly "Chinese" cities, their political contexts are fundamentally different. Hong Kong is basically an undemocratic executive government-led city with an institutional set-up that generally privileges the business sectors at the expense of the communities. In Taipei, the city government is fully elected and local communities, including professionals and professors, seem to be much more active in governing the city. These contextual differences produce two dramatically different urban

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planning systems, as can be illustrated in the two urban renewal cases studies. The last section attempts to distil from both cases the possible roles and limitations of intellectuals in transforming spatial development in Asian cities and beyond.

"Intellectuals" and the production of space in the Asian context

System-maintaining and system-transforming intellectuals

Any discussion about "intellectuals" easily invokes "politicized conceptual disputes" (Fink, Leonard, & Reid, 1996, p. 10). Time magazine argued in 1965 that "there are so many different kinds of intellectual … that the common label threatens to become meaningless" (cited in Fink et al., 1996, p. 17). Is it really so? A review of the literature shows that there are indeed at least two types of "intellectual": those who use their knowledge and analytical faculty to serve power, and those who contest it (Forsyth, 2012; Friedmann, 1987; Kramer, 1996, p. 35). The former group can be seen as system-maintaining and is often called "intelligentsia", "experts" (Kramer, 1996, p. 30), "social engineers", "policy analysts" or "social reformers" (Friedmann, 1987) who play a proactive role in the formation of society and the maintenance of institutions (Ido, 1996, p. 53). The latter group tends to be system-transforming, and hence they earn the labels of "true intellectuals" (Fink et al., 1996, p. 17), "critics" (Fink et al., 1996, p. 19), "critical intellectuals" (Kramer, 1996, p. 30) and "public intellectuals" (Jacoby, 1987). Members in this latter group often consider themselves as "special custodians of abstract ideas like reason and justice and truth, jealous guardians of moral standards that are too often ignored in the market place and the house of power" (Coser, 1965, p. viii cited in Fink et al., 1996, pp. 14–15). In other words, they are not satisfied with simply analyzing the world – they ask questions about "synthesis", "about how the world ought to be" (Campbell, 2012a, 2012b). A preliminary schema is developed below to differentiate between these two types of "intellectuals" who may operate within or outside the government (Table 1).

The system-maintaining intellectuals can be classified as "social engineers" (Ido, 1996) who work within the government or "experts" who serve the institutions (Kramer, 1996). The underlying reasons for these role choices could vary. Oslender (2007, p. 103) describes French intellectuals today as "indifferent to social injustice", often "arguing in the interests of domination and showing respect for the established powers, market and money." Such intellectuals can be seen to use their knowledge to provide rationalization to policies and actions by those in power in order to further their own interests. However, there are system-maintaining intellectuals who truly believe in their "epistemic authority" – their "knowledge of the transcendent, the universal, the true and just for all" – to intervene in the political process through influencing the minds and actions of power holders (Bauman, 1986, pp. 1, 3). The more enlightened members in this group may appeal less to their very own "epistemic authority" but rather their ability in "legislating procedural rules" in order to build bridges of understanding of different discourses (Bauman, 1986, p. 5). Yet to Foucault (1977, p. 192), these social engineers or experts are "remarkably deficient in criticizing the cultural beliefs that shaped their conceptions of scientific truth." Rousseau even argued that "it is reason that breeds pride and reflection that fortifies it" (1984, p. 67).

Table 1. Social Engineers-Smugglers-Experts-Critical Experts (S-S-E-C) schema to differentiate two types of intellectuals.

	System-maintaining	System-transforming
Within government	Social engineers	Smugglers
Outside government	Experts	Critical experts

Source: Author.

The "system-transforming" intellectuals help re-problematize or re-conceptualize existing situations to provide directions for changing cultural and habitual practices in the public realm (Crick, 2006, p. 138). This group of intellectuals does not adhere only to universal expert knowledge. They also acknowledge the importance of "historical and contextual specificity" and the inherently political nature of the intellectual deliberations (Fink et al., 1996, p. 25). Habermas (1987 cited in Kramer, 1996, pp. 40–41) believes in the possibility of arriving at a rationally motivated agreement through a consensus-building process based on communicative reason. He (1984, p. 3) argues that "it is the duty of intellectuals to react with partiality and objectivity, with sensitivity and incorruptibility, to movements, developmental tendencies, dangers, and critical movement" (cited in Kramer, 1996, pp. 38–9). The principle is to "challenge authoritarianism in all its guises and to defend reason against all its enemies" (Kramer, 1996, p. 40). Those who operate within the government are called "inside activists" (Olsson & Hysing, 2012) or "smugglers" (Smith & Blanc, 1997) and those working outside the government are called (in this paper) "critical experts".

Unlike system-maintaining "social engineers" and "experts", "smugglers" and "critical experts" may or may not work in tandem, especially when the institutional set-up is not transparent and there is little mutual trust between the government and the civil society. Nevertheless, they perform two interrelated functions in "transforming" realities. The first one is to continuously "lay bare the mechanisms of power and control" through "speaking truth to power, exposing lies, and making normative claims" (McCutcheon, 1997, pp. 461, 453). To Foucault, the expanding knowledge claims of experts needs to be checked by the critics' challenge and scrutiny to "reigning truths" (Kramer, 1996, p. 50). He calls the latter "a permanent critique of our historical era" (Foucault, 1984, p. 42), "to question over and over again what is postulated as self-evident, to disturb people's mental habits … to reexamine rules and institutions" (Foucault, 1988, p. 265). Pinar (2001, p. 697) deems it necessary "to raise moral issues at the heart of even the most technical and professional activity" in order to "speak forcefully and critically of abuse of political power in whatever form" (Swartz, 2003, p. 808) and "to challenge and defeat both an imposed silence and the normalized quiet of unseen power" (Said, 2001, p. 5) so that "realities" can be re-problematized and seen in different light. The second key function of critical intellectuals is, therefore, to contribute to "a collectively perceived political re-invention and political and economic alternatives" (Oslender, 2007, p. 108) through the "transformative power of ideas … to influence [change] cultural habits and institutional practices" (Crick, 2006, p. 131; Siemiatycki, 2012), transforming the seemingly inevitable reality.

The concepts of "smugglers" and "critical experts" interestingly are not foreign to the traditional Chinese culture that still exists in both cities. Chinese intellectuals who possessed knowledge, the "way" to reach an ideal world, saw it as their natural calling to "remonstrate those in power" and to intervene within the secular world through critiquing and judging the right and wrong of society (Yu, 2010a, pp. 74, 77). They tended to see their moral responsibility as finding the most logical answers to the social problems identified – "to know in order to save the world" (Yu, 2010b, p. 49), even when it means to antagonize those in power. In other words, in traditional Chinese culture, intellectuals are expected to play the roles of "critical experts" and "smugglers", to speak truth to power inside or outside government. As argued by the time-honoured teaching of Menzi (Undated), intellectuals "cannot be tempted by money and ranks, shaken by poverty and hardship, nor succumbed to power and force."

The search for alternative or ideal "realities" through active practices (Siemiatycki, 2012) will generate knowledge that is "conscious of its own approximativeness … it announces its own relativity at each step, undertaking self-criticism" (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 65; Kramer, 1996, p. 43). It demands that those who engage in collective actions embrace such "uncertain" learning, and harness the experimentation with continuous "criticisms", a strong sense of responsibility to be ethical (Abascal-Hildebrand, 2010) and the goal of achieving institutional justice so that

"everything shall be transformed into the humanly-conceivable, the humanly-evident, the humanly-palpable!" (Nietzsche, 1961, p. 110 cited in Lefebvre, 1991, p. 399).

The production of space

How to relate the Social Engineers-Smugglers-Experts-Critical Experts (S-S-E-C) schema of classifying system-maintaining and system-transformation intellectuals to the production of space? Globalization and "neo-liberalism" thinking, Lefebvre argues, have privileged the production of space for consumption (2003, pp. 2, 100). As Gottdiener (1985, p. 272) elaborates, "the new areas of communion are encapsulated within social worlds engineered by the logic of consumption" and these include shopping malls, bars and theme parks, for example. The absolute space of political and economic domination, he contends, reign hegemonically over the social space of everyday life (1985, p. 272). Lefebvre captures this domination of spaces for exchange value over use value through a triadic spatial framework.

At the strategic level, the state or those who wield power ("social engineers") employ ideological and scientific instruments related to formal knowledge (savoir knowledge) possessed by "experts" to generate plans that are "capable of modifying the distribution of resources, income, and the 'value' created by productive labour" (Lefebvre, 2003, pp. 78, 88, 89). Lefebvre highlights two key strategies used in capitalist countries: neo-liberalism which encourages private entrepreneurship, and neo-dirigisme which emphasizes urban planning (Lefebvre, 2003, p. 78). These strategies dominate not only the production of the "built environment", but also the institutional space (spatial practices), strengthening the central decision-making power of "social engineers" in orchestrating a certain form of urban development (Lefebvre, 2003, p. 79) that turns space into commodities, for exchange value.

Lefebvre advocates the conservation of "the diversity of ways of living, urban types, patterns, cultural models, and values associated with modalities and modulations of everyday life" that have taken place over time (2003, p. 81). Yet, these colourful differences in people's lived spaces face imminent threats of colonization by strategic homogenizing plans and institutions (Lefebvre, 2003, p. 100) produced by "social engineers" and "experts". "The ruling class seeks to maintain its hegemony by all available means, and knowledge is one such means" (Lefebvre, 2003, p. 10). Domination is achieved through socially and culturally accepted and undisputed institutional practices (Giddens, 1979, p. 90), blinding space users from discovering the sectional interests that are actually embedded in seemingly universal spatial practices and strategic plans that are often presented as visions for the public interest.

As evidenced by the case studies that follow, "hegemony" can indeed be counteracted if the habiting users begin to realize that they are being "manipulated", and this can be done through an "enlightened" process led by "critical experts" or even "smugglers" discussed above (Siemiatycki, 2012). So instead of privileging rationally derived "conceived" plans over the "lived" experience, the "critical experts" help trace the "genesis of these spaces … their interconnections, distortions, displacements, mutual interactions, and their links with the spatial practice of the particular society" (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 42). They can help counteract the commodification of all spaces for exchange value by recognizing and reclaiming the meanings and stories (use value) of the "appropriated" diversified spaces by the habiting users (Siemiatycki, 2012, p. 154), producing spaces for both lives and livelihood (Friedmann, 2002). Their civic actions exert pressure on the government, often allowing the "smugglers" or "inside activists" within the government the "critical conditions" to propose alternative courses of action (Olsson & Hysing, 2012). Such a move acknowledges the plurality of human beings and a belief in their actions to establish relationships and "an inherent tendency to force open all limitations and cut across all boundaries" to create new realities (Arendt, 1958, pp. 190, 200). Table 2 tries to capture

Table 2. Intellectuals and the production of triadic space.

	Top-down government plans	Spatial practices: planning system and mechanisms	Lived spaces: used places with meanings
System-maintaining	• Produced by "social engineers" and "experts" to facilitate the creation of spaces for exchange value	• Formulated by "social engineers" and maintained by "experts" which often privileges spaces for exchange value	• "Experts" who believe that their "epistemic authority" qualifies their intervention in the production of space
System-transforming	• "Smugglers" or "inside activists" change the contents of the plan to achieve social justice • "Critical experts" criticize the plan and to put forward alternatives that perpetuate the use values of a place	• "Smugglers" or "inside activists" seek institutional justice • "Critical experts" continuously criticize and scrutinize practices that balance exchange and use values	• "Critical experts" and "smugglers" highlight the use values, the stories and meaning of the lived spaces, to re-problematize and to inspire alternative ways of organizing them to sustain people's "lives and livelihood" • A learning culture of continuous self-criticism in the experimentation of producing alternative space • "Critical experts" and "smugglers" may work as allies or separately, if not antagonistically.

Source: Author.

the possible roles system-maintaining and system-transforming intellectuals can play in the production of Lefebvre's triadic space.

The following paragraphs employ these theoretical lenses to review two urban renewal-related cases in Hong Kong and Taipei. Urban renewal practices in both cities have been central to their world city building processes, transforming habiting places with diversified use values into spaces with (potential) exchange values (Gottdiener, 1985; Lefebvre, 1991). The case of Taipei involves a squatter area called "Treasure Hill", a settlement that has witnessed the various phases of post-World War II (WWII) urban development. If not for the advocacy of "critical experts and smugglers", the current "co-living artist village" would not exist and the place would be occupied by a waterfront park (Kang, 2006). The conservation of the squatter settlement in Taipei contrasted dramatically with the possible demise of the 150-year-old Graham and Peel Street Market in Hong Kong as a result of a redevelopment project launched by the URA in 2007. Again, were it not for the persistent efforts of the activists and the "smugglers" in the URA, the street markets would have disappeared. Both cases show that the once straightforward "trajectories" of the top-down strategic planning in both cities have been challenged as the "critical experts" and to a certain extent, the "smugglers" have tried to emphasize people's lived spaces in the plan-making process.

This study has spanned a number of years. The author's first encounter of the cases went back as early as 2005. The unfolding of events in Treasure Hill, especially the salvaging of the squatter settlement together with the campaign led by local and foreign activists (artivists) to save the century-old street markets in Hong Kong prompted the research question on the roles of intellectuals in spatial development. The investigative approach of learning and understanding the cases was eventually consolidated by systematic in-depth archival research on published materials and the carrying out of 30 semi-structured interviews in both cities with government officials or renewal agents responsible for the respective projects; social activists who have played critical roles in the (re-formulation and implementation of the plans, and affected local stakeholders from 2009–2013.[1] The key objectives of the interviews were to understand the perspectives and roles of different stakeholders in the politics of space production in the two case studies.

Contexts of urban regeneration in Hong Kong and Taipei: regeneration for exchange values versus conservation of use values

Urban growth in post-WWII Hong Kong and Taipei has been phenomenal. In a span of 60 years, Taipei has grown from a city of 0.5 million in 1951 to 2.6 million in 2011. Over the same years, Hong Kong's population has increased from about 2 million to 7 million. In Hong Kong, to accommodate the growing population and the subsequent development pressure, the government not only cleared all the squatter settlements and constructed public housing, but also set up the Land Development Corporation (LDC) in 1988 (which was replaced by the URA in 2000) to renew the old urban fabric. Both the LDC and URA have been criticized as "land robbers" that "slash and burn" old neighbourhoods. The momentum of redevelopment and the removal of local shops and affordable housing to make way for up-market "luxurious" buildings have led to growing community-based resistance movements, especially by the younger generations who have been frustrated by the slow democratization process and accelerated social polarization in the city.

Similar to Hong Kong, Taipei has also experienced successive waves of post-WWII population growth, giving rise to widespread informal squatter settlements that have housed three waves of migrants: the arrival of the Nationalist Party and its followers after its defeat in the China mainland in 1949; migrants from rural Taiwan in the 1960s; and accelerated urban expansion as a result of the new international division of labour in the 1970s. Since the 1980s, the dramatic democratization of Taiwan has seen the "golden era" of social movements in Taipei (Rose & Shin, 2001). For instance, there was strong resistance to the government's turning of a huge closely-knit squatter area in the

city centre into parks in the late 1990s (OURS, 1998). However, the removal of illegal squatters and the subsequent park construction are seen as essential to Taipei's aspiration to be the "Asian-Pacific Operations Centre", an urgent mission given the ousting of Taiwan from the United Nations and the rapid growth of competitive cities in China.

While the urban landscapes in both cities have steadily become "endowed with exchange values" (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 337), this mode of development has increasingly been challenged by the respective emerging civil society led by system-transforming intellectuals.

Hong Kong: the death and life of a century-old street market

In the early colonial days when Hong Kong was a racially segregated society (Chinese then were not allowed to reside in the Central Business District (CBD)), the then "China Town" west of the CBD was filled with street markets. While there is not much historical documentation on the street markets, it is reported that they have been in operation since the 1850s (Shek & Goa, 2010, p. 11). The Graham and Peel Street area became one of the first settlement sites for the Chinese community and it was also the trading centre for Parsee and Indian merchants (Hong Kong Government, 1886; Smith, 1971). There had been competing land use issues amongst the stationary shop-operators and mobile hawkers (South China Morning Post, 1980). The colonial authority, however, pursued a hands-off approach lest it aggravated the severity of unemployment conditions amongst the lower class (Central and Western District Board, 1984). This situation continued after the resumption of sovereign rule by China in 1997.

"Death sentence" by "social engineers"

In 1999, under the Land Development Corporation (LDC) Ordinance, the government-formed LDC filed a Development Scheme Plan on the three street blocks covering the Graham and Peel Street Market with a view to achieving "environmental improvement through comprehensive redevelopment by *eliminating environmental nuisance* such as on-street hawkers and by re-provisioning of the existing… facilities, and the provisioning of a public space, as necessary" (LDC, 1998, paragraph 3, my emphasis). Similar to many other redevelopment projects undertaken by the LDC, the objective was to produce more spaces for exchange value. The Scheme was approved by the Town Planning Board in February 1999. However, after the Asian financial crisis, the LDC was replaced by the government-funded URA and it was not until 2007 that the URA submitted a revised Redevelopment Master Plan to the Town Planning Board (2007). The Plan included four huge towers in the 5320m^2 site: two residential towers (140 to 160 m high with about 300 units), a 33-storey office block and a 26-storey hotel, with a four-storey podium development covering the whole site (Town Planning Board, 2007). It was then estimated that the HK$38 billion project would affect 37 buildings with 470 households (1120 people) (Urban Renewal Authority, 2007).

This revised plan no longer focused on eliminating the hawkers and the environmental nuisance. Instead the URA was advocating the "conservation" of the old street market by rebuilding within its redevelopment project a "century-old market street" to accommodate the "old brand names". Strictly speaking, the existing genuine century-old street market was outside the URA's project area. While the URA had promised to maintain an operational environment for the market throughout the redevelopment process, its 2007 plan offered merely 10 hawker stalls after redevelopment.

Making the invisible visible by "critical experts": colourful lived spaces

Given the high land value in Hong Kong and the rather "secretive" operation of the URA, affected stakeholders in the street market have developed a rather passive and helpless attitude towards the

mode of redevelopment. This can be sensed in our face-to-face interviews with hawkers and shop owners in the affected street market. Very often, "renewal" is identified as "progress" and in the course of it, "people have to give way." For instance, a hawker selling flowers opined that "It is simply natural for us to go … as society progresses." Similarly, a noodle shop operator agreed that the redevelopment project was necessary, "Those buildings have to go because they were built in the 1960s with salt water and we have seen fallen concrete."[2] All interviewees seemed to take the course of redevelopment for granted and had focused on the more practical issues such as the amount of compensation, the schedule of the project and how their business could be sustained in the face of redevelopment.

However, the intellectuals living in the area think otherwise. According to the convener of the Central and Western District Group:

> In 2007, we were told that URA would develop a "Century-old Market Street" in their redevelopment project … After gathering more information, I discovered that they were building hotels and residential tower blocks … The street hawkers can never survive … Then some foreigners who regard the district as home, conservationists who live in the area and the Social-Economic-Environment (SEE) Network (a magazine on sustainable development) joined together to organize market festivals … We do not want to be antagonistic. We just wanted to appeal to public attention … University teachers and students had [an] art display and others organized workshops, photo exhibitions, for example.

Many art and cultural activities such as the Graham Street market festivals were organized to accentuate the significance of the "lived spaces" of the street market. Research work conducted by local civil society organizations such as the Central and Western Concern Group led by a graduate of the University of Hong Kong and the SEE Network directed by a professional urban planner, revealed that Graham and Peel Streets had housed many "urban jewels" such as Wing Wo Grocery Store (1928–2009), old Chinese noodle shops, home-made snacks, fresh ingredients for everyday cooking and so on. One of the key reasons for the survival of these old shops was the existence of residential buildings with cheap street level shop spaces. According to on-site observations and conversations with the affected hawkers and shop owners, many of the shops had developed long-term relationships with their landlords who were renting out their premises at preferential rates even though the street market was in a prime location. Due to its strategic position, the street market has served customers from all walks of life. Before the implementation of the URA's redevelopment project in the vicinity in 2007, the street market was bustling with life, colour, sound and aroma. The backdrop of low-rise buildings gave it a sense of human scale to the streetscape. The goods sold were fresh and full of variety, reflecting the East meets West culture, characteristic of the neighbourhood since the early colonial days.

Two major types of operators can be identified in the street market: shop owners and hawkers. Instead of direct competition, they have evolved complementary functions and together they constitute a comprehensive one-stop fresh food market for their customers from near and far. The market has been frequented by tourists with cameras and an appetite for fresh food and exotic stuffs. As the shops and stalls evolved over the years, no two stalls looked the same and each exhibited its own character, bestowing variety, differences and character to the place. According to Kwok (2011), shop and stall operators formed a very closely-knit community over the years. Many of the shop and stall owners have worked in the street market for decades and developed close ties. Kwok (2011) surveyed all the shops and hawker stalls along Graham Street, and their rating for the "togetherness" and "trustfulness" among themselves was 4.8 out of 5.0.

As the URA's proposal would destroy the historic, dynamic and culturally significant street market, besides the Central and Western Concern Group, other "critical experts" from the local civil society organizations grouped themselves into a "World City Committee", a sarcastic name to "ridicule" the government's "Asia's World City" branding. These "critical experts" performed the two key functions identified in the theoretical discussions: besides laying bare the nature of the

redevelopment project as land grab for more marketable space, they tried to put forward two different options in early 2008: to conserve the street market in the middle part of the site while allowing redevelopment on the two sides; or to re-zone the whole area as a Special Design Area to restrict building height to 12 storeys, focusing mainly on rehabilitation (World City Committee, 2008). Both groups stressed the importance of conserving the street market and argued that although the street market was outside the boundary of the redevelopment project, the survival of the stalls hinged on the redeveloped site because the 32 hawker stalls had close relationships with 30 shops selling different kinds of food and they were using seven storage sites in the surrounding buildings. The URA's original proposal had offered only 10 hawker stalls after redevelopment. To them, the URA's proposal would "kill" the street market as "a one-stop fresh food supply station" (World City Committee, 2008, p. 2).

"Smugglers": salvaging a dying market?

While the critical experts' actions had not changed the pessimistic views of the affected communities, they seemed to have forced the URA to reflect on their Master Layout Plan. In March 2008, less than two months after the "critical experts'" applications to the Town Planning Board application, the URA announced a number of new measures in the project: arrangement of a phased development of the project; a new two-storey market to be built to accommodate the shops affected by the project; electricity supplies to be connected to existing hawker stalls; and the provision of storage space for the hawkers in the future (Hong Kong Economic Times, 2008).

An interview with the URA revealed the existence of "smugglers" or "insiders" who appeared to also care about people's "lived spaces". The URA claimed that they had started their research on the operation of the street market back in 2006 and, similar to the findings of the Central and Western Concern Group, they discovered that there were 14 "anchored" wet market shops selling fish and meat, for example, and these shops have strong symbiotic relationships with the hawker stalls selling vegetables, fruit, groceries, flowers and so on. In order to sustain the street market, the URA had engaged the shop operators and hawkers and come up with a phased redevelopment plan so that the shops could continue their operations. The URA had also agreed to give a 50% rebate on the rateable value of the rent to the shop operators. The design of the new market, according to the URA, would allow pedestrians to enter at two levels. URA staff members also shared their frustration in their efforts to convince other units within the establishment such as the Town Planning Board the merit of conserving the street market.

Although the URA's revised Master Layout Plan did not come out until March 2008, one should appreciate that the URA should have started its engagement and negotiation work much earlier. In this case, the layout changes were the results of two sets of separate yet related actions: external pressure from the "critical experts", and internal "activism" by "smugglers" within the URA. Indeed, pressure from the outside probably provided a critical condition (Olsson & Hysing, 2012, p. 266) for these "smugglers" within the URA to launch a project that would allow the partial survival of the street market as a continuation of the history and cultural characteristics of Hong Kong.

Taipei: the living legacy of an old squatter settlement

Treasure Hill lies at the edge of the city of Taipei. With the migration of Chinese mainlanders to Taiwan after 1949, illegal constructions were tolerated to accommodate the surging population (Zhang, 2005). However, as Treasure Hill was located in a strategic location and served as a military base, residents then had to show their identity cards and entry permits (Lui, 1988, p. 6). During that period, there were few illegal structures in Treasure Hill. With the growing population

and urban expansion, the military base was eventually removed in the 1970s. As a result, early "retired" military men started to develop illegal buildings at Treasure Hill. Given the tremendous population and development pressure in post-WWII, illegal construction was "tolerated" and it was not uncommon for these areas to be serviced with various utilities (Lui, 1998, p. 7).

Social engineers' eye-sore

According to Chen (1999, p. 52), the Treasure Hill area was zoned as Park Number 297 on 17 July 1980, by the then mayor Lee Teng-hui who "discovered" the site during a local visit and considered it an "eye-sore". Because of Taipei's aspiration to become the "Asian-Pacific Operations Centre" to counteract Taiwan's increasing isolation in the international arena, successive mayors had tried to eradicate the ugly squatter settlements in the city centre. In 1993, the government publicly announced its intention to demolish the squatter settlements in Treasure Hill (GIBP, 2001, pp. 1–3; Shi, 2000). In the mid 1990s there were a lot of protest movements across Taipei and the government put a temporary halt to the project (Huang & Hsu, 2011). In 1998, the mayoral candidate Ma Ying-jeou promised at the Marginal Communities Expo organized by the Organization of Urban Res (OURS),[3] that if he were elected he would rebuild before demolishing Treasure Hill. When he became mayor, an inter-departmental committee was set up within the government to follow up on the implementation of Park Number 297. The Graduate Institute of Building and Planning (GIBP) at the National Taiwan University (NTU) was commissioned to examine the feasibility of retaining the squatters in a "settlement park".

Self-taught architects and designers in a marginalized community

According to the dissertations done by some research students in Taipei (Chen, 1999; Kuo, 2007; Zhang, 2005), the squatter settlements were simple organically constructed structures, full of individual characteristics, reflecting the clever use of make-shift or recycled materials in fulfilling unique requirements of individual households to fit the topographical context. Because of cost concerns and practical needs, these structures were often built and rebuilt or readjusted over time in response to natural disasters and household changes (Chen, 1999; Lui, 1988). Hence, no two structures were the same and the arrangements of internal spaces in the houses were "designed" according to the needs of the respective families (Chen, 1999, p. 83). The horizontally and vertically mixed and hierarchized spaces built in tandem with the hill slopes produced a series of public and semi-public places, enhancing interactions among the residents and strengthening their social networks and sense of identity (Chen, 1999, p. 63). And to economize on the cost of construction, recycled materials were used. During a site visit to one of the houses in 2005, the owner proudly explained to this author his clever use of a recycled small-sized elongated sliding window in his kitchen on a wall near the stove for ventilation purposes.

A series of "open spaces", decorated by surplus furniture from local residents, connected the whole community and served important public realm functions. Because of the organic knitting together of various public, semi-public and private spaces in the community, the collective use of the spaces had fostered a very strong community network among the residents, offering one another reciprocal assistance and support to get by each day (Chen, 1999; OURS, 2005). The squatter residents in Treasure Hill put a lot of effort into improving their dwellings, giving them much use value and meaning, but they were also fully aware that they did not own the land as private property.

The Treasure Hill residents would not have been aware of their architectural and design talents, nor the merits of their "colourful lived spaces", were it not for the discerning eyes of the "critical experts". As shown below, the efforts of the "critical experts" had forced the government to set up

the CAB which was led by a like-minded scholar in the field. These "smugglers" or "inside activists" within the government have been instrumental in legitimizing and liberating a different renewal plan altogether.

Transforming space through conserving "Treasure Hill"

Similar to the affected communities in Hong Kong, long-time residents – the squatters in Treasure Hill did not even dream about their right to the place even though many of them had invested almost all their lives in building their houses and families in the area. Like their counterparts in Hong Kong, veteran residents were the "silent majority". The village leader, an 85-year-old lady, told us that the residents were extremely cooperative when the government repossessed their properties for the construction of a park. In fact, were it not for the "intervention" of a group of "critical experts" from the NTU and OURS, Treasure Hill would have disappeared, replaced by a park. Students and professors from the NTU and OURS decided to salvage the lived spaces in Treasure Hill because the historical expansion of the illegal settlement was a testimony to the history of urban developments in Taipei and because the community was made up of an amalgamation of marginalized ex-military men, new immigrants and low-income families who had been there for many decades. As utopian urbanists, the concerned professors and students argued that these veteran residents should have a right to continue to live together as a closely knit community.

Together with the students and professors, professional planners and architects working in NGOs had developed various tactics to arouse society's attention to Treasure Hill. They even managed through public events such as the First Exposition on Marginalized Communities in 1998 to secure the promise of the then mayoral candidates not to demolish the squatter settlements before proper rehousing and resettlement. When Ma Ying-jeou became the mayor, he set up the promised CAB in 1999, which has become a progressive force in conserving Treasure Hill. According to a field interview with professors at NTU and professionals in other civil society organizations, the creation of the CAB provided them with an opportunity to "re-problematize" the discourse on the fate of Treasure Hill. This defying act was critical (Foucault, 1984) because the residents were, strictly speaking, squatters who had no right to occupy land earmarked for the construction of a park, generally regarded as a public good.

Hence, the support of the founding Director, also a professor, of the CAB allowed the activists to explore the other "public" dimensions of the site in their attempt to conserve the closely knit community in the squatter settlement. The founding Director, after a site visit to Treasure Hill, suggested that the tranquil settlement could become a "village for art of poverty". The activists, therefore, rode on this turn of events and further developed this concept, arguing that the unique settlement should be conserved and be transformed into a sustainable "Co-living Artist Village" with living spaces for the original residents, artists in residence and hostels (Kang, 2004). Hence, when the CAB commissioned a study on the Co-living Artist Village, the OURS debated whether they should bid for the project that would turn them from "critical experts" to "experts employed by the establishment". They eventually took up the challenge, fearing that if they did not do so, they would have no say in the implementation of the "co-living artist village". In 2003, OURS was commissioned by the CAB to plan and implement the project. In 2004, through the Cultural Heritage Conservation Law, the Taipei City Government zoned the whole area as "Treasure Hill Historic Architecture".

The "co-living artist village" is more the imagination of the "critical experts" than the residents themselves. The adoption of the project immediately turned OURS into both "social engineers" cum "smugglers". Indeed OURS faced huge difficulties in convincing the bureaucracy especially the Urban Planning Commission the necessity to undergo multiple re-zoning in order to build temporary housing on the conservation site which in turn would sustain the social network of the

squatter settlement. Furthermore, conserving the community network through a piece of legislation that aims primarily to conserve heritage and promote culture is simply not ideal. During the transitional period, some local residents preferred to leave the squatter settlement and lived with their children. Attracted by the tranquil, scenic and cheap accommodation and the prospect of the growth of an artist village, vacated properties were soon occupied by a group of artists and students from different higher education institutions. Hence when OURS completed the re-zoning procedures and was ready to implement the project, these artists and students who formed themselves into the "Treasure Hill Commune" (in a sense, a different group of "critical experts") demanded their right to the settlement and argued that they were developing a genuine and organic artist village and tried to resist the implementation of OURS' "top-down" utopian plan (OURS, 2005, pp. 2–37). While this group was eventually "evicted" to make way for the development of "Treasure Hill Co-living Artist Village" in 2007, the incident raised questions on the roles of intellectuals in the production of space: "Whose lived space" should be sustained in the course of planning and development? What are the roles of the "silent majority" and the "vocal minority"? Can the process be flexible enough to accommodate the self-invited artists? Who should possess the authority to answer these questions?

Conclusion

From the two cases discussed above, we can see the importance of the "critical experts" in utilizing, analysing and synthesizing connaissance knowledge (embodied forms of knowing) about the lived spaces in order to re-problematize issues, and the significant existence of "smugglers" or "inside activists" within the established institutional milieu – transforming top-down urban renewal plans into a different "urban ensemble". Without the challenge and intervention of the "critical experts", the affected communities would probably just take the arguments and arrangements of the "social engineers" within the government for granted. The Graham and Peel Street Market would have gone by now and a waterfront park would be found in a sanitized Treasure Hill. The activism exercised by the "critical experts" through various channels, their unfailing attempts to document and synthesize (Campbell, 2012b) the essence and meaning of the habiting places, and their continuous pressure on system-maintaining "social engineers" to modify the renewal plans have changed the eventual urban form.

In the story of Taipei, the "critical experts" outside and the "smugglers" within the bureaucracy, actually had a rare opportunity to network and try out, within the constraint of the portfolio of the CAB, the implementation of their utopian plan to enrich the lived spaces. In the case of Hong Kong, the two groups did not work together and have continued to relate antagonistically. Nevertheless, the two projects highlight clearly the important roles of "intellectuals" within and outside formal establishments in enlightening the silent majority as to the importance of the unique use values of their lived spaces and transforming hegemonic homogenizing top-down renewal plans, and in imagining alternative spaces in Asian cities.

When "smugglers" such as those in the CAB in Taipei and the URA in Hong Kong chose to take critical and personified knowledge (of lived space) seriously and institutionalize changes, the plans produced were qualitatively different from the ones based purely on formal knowledge and centralized power by "social engineers" and "experts". However, such experimentation is an uncertain learning process, demanding continuous (self)-criticisms by the involved intellectuals (Lefebvre, 1991). For instance, in the case of Taipei, the space for imagining the future of Treasure Hill was confined by what the CAB could do within the overall bureaucracy of the Taipei City Government. OURs, the "critical experts" turned "social engineers" cum "smugglers" had continued to "soul search" for the possibility of conserving the community through preserving the squatter settlement as a heritage site. To them, imagining a Treasure Hill with better, properly re-

planned and redeveloped buildings to house the original residents was simply out of the question because no other government unit would (or could in the case of the CAB) take this project up and there would be little societal-wide support for such an option because after all, it was an illegal squatter settlement to start with.

Although the "critical experts" and "smugglers" have not worked together in Hong Kong, URA has learned within the constraints of the existing institutional set-up how to better conserve core Street Market elements in a redevelopment project. Both cases were initiated by the system-transforming "critical experts" who were sympathetic to the affected communities. If it were not for the wider contexts in both cities, the trajectories of events might be different. In Taipei, the democratization process since the 1980s and the ideological fights between the two major political forces, the Nationalist Party and the Democratic Progressive Party, had allowed until recently various progressive agenda items to be deliberated openly. The professor-led community movements against the removal of squatters to construct city-beautiful parks in the 1980s and 1990s contributed to the establishment of the new CAB. Mayor Ma Ying-jeou, then a Harvard trained law professor and now Taiwan's President, engaged a radical scholar to develop the city's cultural policy and invited an outspoken and world-renowned cultural critic to be the founding Director of the CAB – all these provided Taipei with the right "ingredients" for the courageous experiment.

In the post-colonial city of Hong Kong, waves of community outcry at the demolition of historical heritage or the carrying out of redevelopment projects in different parts of the city (Ng, 2010, 2013; Ng, Tang, Lee, & Leung, 2010) provided the backdrop for the campaign to save the Graham-Peel Street Market. The vigilance of local elites, "critical experts", to scrutinize and criticize the top-down redevelopment plan, coupled with a University College London-trained planner in the URA, meant that the Street Market was partially salvaged. And there is no doubt that the emphasis on culture and heritage in both cities is related to the cultural turn of capitalism on the global stage.

The two stories accentuate the importance of the system-transforming intellectuals in exercising their conscience and capacity to utilize and synthesize personified knowledge. In both cases, the local communities did not really object to the government-led abstract plans. Hence, the intellectuals could easily side with those in power, rationalizing their decisions to erase the two communities. However, the system-transforming "critical experts" in both cities, following the time-honoured tradition of Chinese intellectuals, chose to speak truth to their counterparts in the established system to conserve something that they believed to be important for the future of the two cities. These "critical experts" are of crucial importance in highlighting the essence and meaning of the two settlements, allowing their lived spaces to be appreciated by the wider community and hence succeeding in "re-problematizing" and "re-writing" the storylines. Coupled with "smugglers" within the bureaucracy, different cityscapes were produced.

However, there is no place for complacency in the two cases. Whether the Graham and Peel Street Market in Hong Kong will survive the phased redevelopment is still unknown and, in the face of competition with global cities, especially those on the China mainland, neo-liberalism has overtaken idealism as one of the main policy concerns in Taipei (Huang & Hsu, 2011). Nevertheless, the two stories appeal to "intellectuals" especially those in Asia, emphasizing the importance of their continuous vigilance in counteracting renewal plans made in the thick of neoliberal rhetoric to promote economic growth and city competitiveness. This can be done through thorough understanding, analysing and documenting the use values of people's lived spaces and reviewing the inadequacies of top-down plans made by "social engineers" – so that, given the opportunities and the inside activism of "smugglers", alternative renewal plans and processes can be formulated, experimented with and revised continuously, to speak to the daily needs of local communities – creating soul-nourishing spaces and urban forms.

Acknowledgements

This project was supported by the Research Grants Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, China (project numbers CUHK749309 and CUHK750610). I would like to thank the three anonymous reviewers and the editorial board members for their penetrating, critical and yet constructive comments. All the faults that remain are, of course, mine.

Notes

1. The interviews in Hong Kong took place in the summer months of 2009, 2010 and 2013 and the interviews in Taipei took place in the summer months of 2010.
2. Because of water shortage in the 1960s, salt water was then used to mix concrete in construction works.
3. Organization of Urban Re-s represents "Re-design", "Re-plan", "Re-build", Review, Revolution, for example. It is the first NGO and NPO in Taiwan focusing on critical analysis of policy as well as urban spatial restructuring issues. For more information, please visit: http://www.ours.org.tw/about.

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