Bartering Place: (Re)defining Hong Kong Public Market Spaces

Heidy Zunn, Department of Geography,
McGill University, Montréal

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ABSTRACT

The formation of global cities through the process of urban redevelopment is transforming the day-to-day manner in which people are interacting with the space around them. Notions of how public spaces are used and what they represent are shifting as cities re-imagine the urban landscape to fit globalized ideals. Public market spaces in Hong Kong are changing in part as a result of concerted efforts by the State to promote the city as 'Asia's World City'. Street markets and public wet market buildings are closing down as the spaces they occupy are repurposed. In Wan Chai District, Hong Kong, the closure of the existing Wan Chai Market building and a portion of the fixed-pitch stalls on Cross and Tai Yuen Streets illustrates the conflict between globalizing interests and local uses of space. Urban redevelopment projects are changing the quality of public spaces in Wan Chai and the ways in which people can interact with that space. This study demonstrates how the re-imagining of the public urban landscape is causing the loss of livelihood for those who depend on public spaces to make a living.

SOMMAIRE

La création de villes mondiales à travers le processus de redéveloppement urbain est en train de transformer l'interaction des gens avec les espaces qui leurs entourent. La vision des villes quant à l'utilisation des espaces publics et ce que ces espaces représentent force ceux-ci à ré-imaginer le paysage urbain afin d'assurer qu'il soit conforme aux idéals mondiaux. Les marchés publics à Hong Kong changent en partie en raison des efforts de l'État qui cherche à promouvoir la ville comme la « Ville mondiale de l'Asie ». Les marchés publics et les immeubles occupés par les marchés traditionnels ferment et cèdent leurs places pour être réutiliser pour d'autres fins. Dans le district de Wan Chai, Hong Kong, la fermeture des immeubles existant du Marché Wan Chai ainsi qu'une partie des kiosques sur les rues Cross et Tai Yuen démontrent le conflit existant entre les intérêts de la mondialisation et l'utilisation locale de ces espaces. Le redéveloppement des projets urbains est en train de changer la qualité des espaces publics à Wan Chai ainsi que la manière dont les gens interagissent avec cet espace. Cette étude démontre comment la nouvelle conception du paysage urbain public est en train de perturber la jouissance de ceux qui compte sur ces espaces publics pour gagner leur vie.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The image of the busy street market with hawkers crowding the narrow sidewalks plying their trade is an indelible symbol of Hong Kong and Chinese culture in general. The other image that oft comes to mind is the famous Hong Kong skyline – ever expanding upwards, morphing into a modern world city. This study examines the coming together of these two distinct images and the effects changes in the State's perceptions of what the city's own identity should be, have on the physical and social conditions of public spaces on a micro (local) scale. Focusing on public wet markets and street markets, the aim of this research is to understand how policy agendas are changing the definition and quality of public spaces in Hong Kong and how that in turn affects the livelihoods of market vendors and hawkers. In the following pages, I argue that the State's plans for increasing Hong Kong's competitiveness in the global economy is changing the definition and usage of public spaces to the detriment of public and street markets by eliminating the availability of these public market spaces.

Street and wet markets[1] have proliferated in Hong Kong, now called the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR), since the beginning of the formal colonization of Hong Kong in 1842 by the British, which had led to waves of immigrants arriving from China. The markets, then and now, serve as more than just retail and service distributors, but also as a social commodity – a place for people to congregate to share news, resources, or just to pass the time. Economically, street markets provide a source of income for low-skilled workers and a source of cheap food and goods for the low-income population of Hong Kong. This thesis examines the conflicts taking place in Hong Kong's public spaces between opposing interests in the city's global aspirations.

1.1. AIM AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

It is not a new argument that market forces, especially in today's globalizing world, have the power to transform space and place. The question here is, how are these transformations changing the lives of people on a local scale? Hawkers rely on the use of

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[1] Wet markets refer to fresh food markets that sell unpackaged meats, fish, poultry (often live), and/or fruits and vegetables.

public spaces to make a livelihood – so what happens when the quality of that space is being altered by forces outside their sphere of influence? This study sheds light on how the imagineering of a national identity to better compete in the global economy on a macro-scale is changing the capability of small-scale entrepreneurs to make their livelihood on a micro-scale.

The aim of this research is to **examine the relationship between the global city aspirations of the State and the 'traditional' uses of public spaces for small-scale trade in Hong Kong**. The existing literature focusing on hawkers and market vendors in Hong Kong is sparse and needs to be updated due to the current climate of socio-economic change, which is, in part, leading to a decline of a traditional means of making a livelihood. This study will contribute to the literature on hawkers and street markets in public spaces in Hong Kong. Drawing upon a case study of the Wan Chai Market, this research highlights the detrimental effect of large-scale policy changes related to the State's aspirations for global competitiveness, on the day-to-day lives of people in Hong Kong. By tracing these steps in urban development, we can then begin to formulate ideas and policies to minimize the exclusion of the general public from public spaces due to changes in the urban landscape that have resulted directly or indirectly from globalization.

Three research questions stem from the aim of this study. **First, how are public spaces currently changing in Hong Kong?** This question focuses on how State policies and actions are affecting the issues *of what* and *for whom* public spaces serve. I will examine how public spaces are changing in terms of their physical environment, usage, and access due to the processes of privatization that are in part, spurred by the State's re-imagining of Hong Kong's identity.

Second, what are the current socio-economic conditions for hawkers and wet market vendors in Hong Kong? The aim of this question is to provide a more current synopsis of markets and hawkers in a similar vein as previous works by Terry McGee (1973) and Josephine Smart (1989). I will focus on the current policies and regulatory bodies governing public market spaces as well as provide a descriptive narrative of the physical and social conditions of public markets and street markets.

And third, using Wan Chai as a case study, how are changes to the State's perceptions of public space in Hong Kong affecting hawkers and wet market vendors? The current conflict in Hong Kong over the new Wan Chai Market provides a useful glimpse of the clashing of different ideas and interests in urban land use. I will examine how the repurposing of two small parcels of public spaces in Wan Chai is changing the physical and social landscape of the area as well as causing detrimental results to the livelihoods of hawkers and market vendors in the area.

1.2. CONTEXT

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) is located at the mouth of the Pearl River Delta, south of Guangdong Province, China. This small, Asian economic center, covering 1,104 square kilometers, has a population of over 6.9 million people at the latest 2006 census figures, with a population density of 6,350 people per square kilometer[2] (Census and Statistics Department, 2008). The per capita Gross Domestic Product for 2006 was HKD$214,710 (USD$27,700 at 2006 exchange rate). Hong Kong's development began as a British trading port during the Opium Wars between China and Britain. With the ceding of Hong Kong Island to the British in the Treaty of Nanking in 1841, Hong Kong became an official colony of the British Empire in 1842, gaining the additional territory of Kowloon in 1860. The New Territories and Lantau Island, as shown in Figure 1.1, was leased to Britain for 99 years in 1898 (Carroll, 2007).

The agreement to transfer Hong Kong's sovereignty to China was reached during the 1980s as the lease for the New Territories was drawing to a close. On July 1, 1997, the crown colony of Hong Kong became the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region under what is known as the 'one country, two systems' policy. As part of the agreement to transfer sovereignty of Hong Kong to China, the laws of Hong Kong as set out by the colonial government were to remain in operation for a minimum of 50 years. The current Hong Kong government is headed by a Chief Executive, who holds the power to enact new laws with the approval of the Legislative Council. Hong Kong is not a full

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[2] On Hong Kong Island, the population density is 15,920 persons per square kilometer and 43,030 persons per square kilometer in Kowloon (Census and Statistics Department, 2008: online). In comparison, the population density of Canada in 2006 is 3.5 persons per square kilometer and 853.6 persons per square kilometer for the Census Metropolitan Area of Montreal (Statistics Canada, 2007a; 2007b).

democracy, as the Chief Executive is elected through a Chief Executive Election Committee, which is an 800-member caucus composed of representatives from major industries, financial corporations and representatives for the Chinese government, although half of the Legislative Council is voted in through a democratic voting process (Chan, 2004).

Figure 1.1: Map of Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (Adapted from: Survey and Mapping Office, 2006: online)

1.2.1. Hong Kong Markets

Hawking and petty-trade, especially street markets, have always been a feature of Chinese cities. In some ways, these are seen as cultural features. In Hong Kong, hawkers have always been a part of the urban landscape. Over time, the relative permissiveness of state policy toward hawkers waxed and waned in response to population and employment pressures. The state generally tolerated hawkers during periods of growing population and labor surplus, but became more repressive when vendors were seen as illegitimate competition to the industrializing labor force (Choi, 1986).

Regulation of street vendors in China began even back in the dynastic periods when the governing powers designated areas specifically for these petty traders (Mao, 1996). In Hong Kong, the first regulations under British rule on hawkers were instituted by the Hong Kong Sanitary Board in 1845, after Hong Kong became a crown colony of the United Kingdom in 1842 (Mao, 1996).

As the population of Hong Kong increased with the continued economic growth of the expanding British trading port after 1842, so did the number of hawkers, which increased government concerns over hawkers and their use of public space. Even as early as the late 1800s, the mostly mobile (itinerant) hawkers were required to hold licenses and their presence was restricted in certain neighborhoods such as Central (see Appendix II for map of neighborhoods referenced), where most of the Europeans lived at the time (Hong Kong Institute of Architects, 2005).

As the characteristics of hawkers shifted from mobile to static, the colonial government instituted the requirement of stall licenses in 1921, which came under the responsibilities of the police force. Jurisdiction over hawkers was transferred to the Urban Council in 1936 as the number of hawkers in Hong Kong continued to increase, raising concerns for the government.

The position taken by the Urban Council was that hawking should be abolished but since it was an impossibility at the time, the Urban Council needed to control the situation by limiting the approval of licenses. A terrific quote from the Chairman of the Urban Council in 1936 notes that, "the primary objective of licensing hawkers is not to raise revenue but to obtain the power to control them, not only as regards numbers but as to what goods they sell and how, and when and where they shall sell their goods" (Todd, 1936 in McGee, 1973: 37). Hawkers were seen as a nuisance to public space because they blocked street traffic, were unsightly, and caused problems for street cleaning and refuse disposal.

During the Sino-Japanese war, (1936-1940), the influx of migrants from China swelled the population of Hong Kong, creating a dramatic increase in the number of hawkers due in large part to the lack of economic capital available to these new migrants. Government policies on hawking in Hong Kong continued with the perspective that

hawking should be abolished and were designed to temporarily maintain control over the hawkers; however, they were unsuccessful due to the prevalence of hawking in the city.

This perspective continued until a 1952 review of hawker policies that stated the need to acknowledge and accept hawkers as part of the urban cultural landscape. Furthermore the review suggested that policies needed to shift away from planning the outright elimination of hawkers to focusing on maintaining control over the situation. This change in the Colonial government's policies and attitudes in dealing with hawkers came as a result of an economic downturn in Hong Kong during the 1950s. Petty trade became a convenient occupation to provide the increasing unemployed population with a source of income (McGee, 1973; Choi, 1986). However, as the rise in the manufacturing industry took hold during the 1960s and began to suffer from a labor shortage, hawkers were once again decried as being 'lazy' because they did not want to enter into the formal wage labor force. They were also considered disruptive to street life with their stalls and carts. The continued rise in the manufacturing industry along with a decline in the commercial sector and a slowing of population growth then influenced the direction of hawker policies again in Hong Kong, during the 1960s (McGee, 1973).

In the 1960s, there was a concerted effort to put into effect the policy recommendations from the 1952 report, which translated to increased activity from the Hawker Control Force (explained below) and the police forces to fine and arrest illegal hawkers. There was also an increased drive to relocate hawkers to designated hawker bazaars to clean up the streets for the increased vehicular traffic on the roads. However, the city was unsuccessful on both counts due to a shortage of funds available for effective enforcement and the lack of suitable land in commercially viable locations for new hawker bazaars (McGee, 1973).

The failures to control the hawking situation in Hong Kong led to the "New Hawker Policy of 1969", which finally recognized that hawkers provided a legitimate form of occupation to a significant portion of the population and was a useful service to the public (McGee, 1973). As a result, stricter by-laws were put into effect in 1972 to better organize and control this occupational sector. The new by-laws reduced the number of license types from thirteen to the three current classifications, increased the cost of a license, gave the Urban Council the authority to restrict the location, size, and

appearance of fixed-pitch stalls, and increased the power of the authority to fine, seize and suspend hawking activity (McGee, 1973).

The Hawker Control Force was one of the most long-lasting results of the policy changes of the 1950s. Beginning in 1961, the first Hawker Control Team came into operation in North Point. Assisted by the police, the Hawker Control Teams were mandated to keep order in the markets, which involved checking for the presence of unlicensed hawkers and reducing clutter on the streets.

The riots of 1967 due to the protests of pro-communist groups against the British colonial forces served to increase the government's wariness of hawkers and confirmed for the government the need to establish greater control and order on public streets, which was reflected in the policy changes in 1971 (Choi, 1986). The 1970s became a period of stabilization that encouraged itinerant hawkers to move into existing fixed-pitches, while at the same time placing a moratorium on the issuing of fixed-pitch hawking licenses to new applicants (ibid..). The positive economic growth during the 1980s and early 1990s once again encouraged stricter control over hawkers in Hong Kong (Choi, 1986; Mao, 1996).

As the unemployment rate increased during the mid-1990s, the number of illegal hawkers operating in Hong Kong increased as well (Mao, 1996; Kinoshita, 2001). As with the period of mass immigration from China after WWII, the government adopted a liberal control policy, with magistrates being lenient with the penalties levied against illegal hawkers despite legislation involving fixed penalties and the computerization of illegal hawking records, which made it easier to track repeat offenders (Choi, 1986; Mao, 1996). As well, fines given to legal hawkers for obstruction offences averaged between $100-200[3] whilst the maximum penalty was either $5,000 or three months in prison, a rather high cost for obstructing a sidewalk for these hawkers given their economic means.

The historical patterns of change in policies and the State's general attitude to the presence of wet markets and street markets in Hong Kong reflect temporal economic and demographic changes in the city. This study argues that this pattern continues into the present context of globalization pressures and the push by the post-1997 Hong Kong

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[3] In January 2008, the exchange rate for Hong Kong Dollars to Canadian Dollars is HKD$1=CAD$0.13. The exchange rate for Hong Kong Dollars to US Dollars is HKD$1=USD$0.12 (XE, 2008).

government to situate Hong Kong as a globally competitive city. Once again, public markets are seen as a hindrance to the economic development and modernization processes to the city, just as they were during the economic boom in the 1980s and early 1990s.

1.3. THESIS OUTLINE

This thesis is divided into seven chapters. Following this introductory chapter, Chapter 2 outlines the main concepts and debates that frame this study, which come together to form a conceptual framework. The first key concept discussed is **public space**. I examine the on-going debates over defining public space, the purposes of public space, and public space debates focusing on control. That is, who has the right to make decisions about public spaces? I then argue in Chapter 4 that public spaces in Hong Kong are structured and designed in relation to a changing national identity, one geared towards increasing the city's competitiveness in the global economy.

The second key concept discussed in Chapter 2 relates to the existing literature on **marketplaces in Asia**, focusing especially on the role of the marketplace as a landscape for social interaction. Following from this, I turn to examine, more specifically, as a third key concept, the previous work on **marketplaces in HK** and what this literature contributes to our understandings of current day events. The chapter ends by bringing together these concepts to form the conceptual framework that structures the remainder of this study.

Chapter 3 outlines the methods used in this study. The chapter discusses the field work process (selecting the field sites, the interview process and other methods of date gathering) and the write-up process (coding and analysis). The end of the chapter situates the researcher within this study and in the larger context of doing research on hawkers in Hong Kong. This last section reflects on the issues of subjectivity and bias in scientific research.

Chapters 4, 5 and 6 address the three research questions introduced above. Chapter 4 focuses on public space in Hong Kong, specifically with regards to how policies and perceptions of these spaces have changed over time. A key point in this

discussion is the role of changing identities in Hong Kong towards a more 'globalized' image on how public space is being regulated.

Chapter 5 examines the current conditions for hawkers and market vendors in Hong Kong through data gathered from field observations and interviews as well as state policies on markets and hawkers over time. The chapter discusses both the physical spaces of markets in Hong Kong as well as social aspects in terms of the hawkers and market vendors.

Chapter 6, the case study of Wan Chai Market, brings together the issues of the previous two chapters and looks at how changing policies on public space are affecting the lives and livelihoods of hawkers working in the old Wan Chai Market and the nearby Cross/Tai Yuen Street Market. This chapter begins with a brief introduction of the Wan Chai Market and the changes it has gone through over the years to set the context for examining the current conflict over the opening of the new Wan Chai Market. The remainder of the chapter is an analysis of this conflict based on interviews with key informants working in the area as well as from field observations conducted over the summer of 2006.

Chapter 7 concludes this study by bringing together the discussions of the previous chapters to form a succinct overview of the changing conditions of informal marketplaces in Hong Kong within the context of the public space debate. The chapter summarizes the current conditions of Hong Kong's public market spaces in light of the State's global city aspirations.

CHAPTER 2: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

To answer the three central research questions of this study regarding the state of public spaces in Hong Kong, the operations of current day marketplaces in Hong Kong and how marketplaces act as one specific form of public space, it is necessary to situate this study within a conceptual framework. This chapter therefore introduces the conceptual foundation for this study as a means to better understand how public spaces and markets intersect in Hong Kong.

This conceptual framework, as shown in Figure 2.1 below, pulls together three bodies of literature to interpret the changes occurring in Hong Kong's public marketplaces. The first relates to public space debates (Section 2.1), the second is literature on marketplaces (Section 2.2), especially regarding informal traders, and the third is a review of previous studies on Hong Kong marketplaces (Section 2.3).
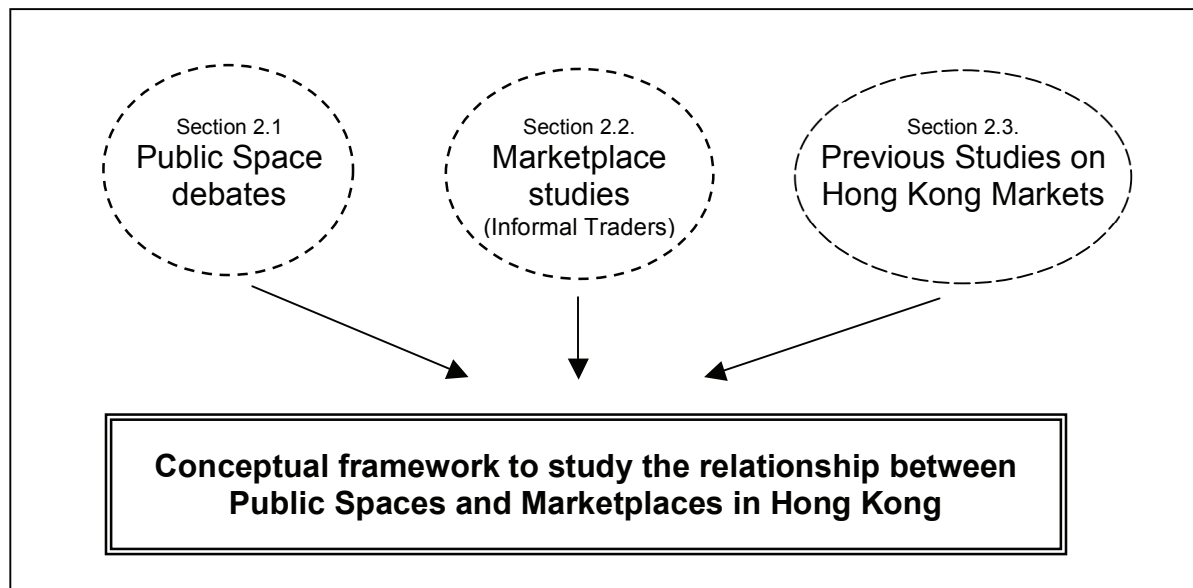
Figure 2.1: The conceptual framework for this thesis

Turning to focus on public space in Section 2.1, three key elements within this larger body of literature are highlighted in this chapter due to their direct relevance to this study. The section begins by examining how public space has been defined by academic scholars, and how it will be defined for the purposes of this study (Section 2.1.1). I continue to discuss the role of politics and social justice in public space in Section 2.1.2.

Section 2.1.3 then provides a context of how the tensions discussed in the previous two sections come together in the streets of Hong Kong.

The second body of literature, examined here in Section 2.2, refers to the role of marketplaces, specifically as they influence and incorporate informal traders. This study focuses on the economic (Section 2.2.1) and social (Section 2.2.2) functions of marketplaces and the contributions marketplaces make to both individual trader livelihoods and the local community. Section 2.2.3 discusses the role of public policies in managing the presence and function of public markets.

The third body of literature that informs the framework for this study draws on the work of previous scholars who have contributed to the knowledge of contemporary marketplace conditions and the lives of street hawkers in Hong Kong (Section 2.3). Studies beginning in the early 1970s onwards provide a context to which current conditions can be compared. These prior studies also provide a glimpse of some recent trends in terms of State perceptions of traditional market spaces, which will be analyzed further in this study.

These three bodies of literature come together to form the conceptual framework that informs and supports this study. The remainder of this chapter explores each of these ideas in greater detail beginning with the public space literature.

2.1. PUBLIC SPACES

Public spaces are generally defined as areas that are openly accessible to the public, though not necessarily free of regulations (Smith and Low, 2006). For this study, public spaces refer simply to **land that is owned and regulated by the State to which the public is given access**. This definition follows how Zukin (1995: 45) describes physical space as "…geographical and symbolic centers, as points of assembly where strangers mingle". At first glance, this is a simple concept with a simple definition. However, upon closer inspection, such a definition prompts more questions. For example, what is meant by 'public space'? What are the differences between public and private spaces? What does access mean and how is it regulated, and by whom?

The following sections elaborate upon these questions to form a clearer understanding of how different forces can come together to impact how public spaces are used and perceived, which will provide better insight into how public spaces in Hong Kong are changing. In Section 2.1.1, the definition of public space is expanded upon to include how public space relates to private space, and how people negotiate meaning within these spaces.   These interactions between public and private interests in the negotiation of meaning and rights of access are elaborated on in Section 2.1.2. This section concludes with a discussion of the politics of public street spaces in Hong Kong (Section 2.1.3).

2.1.1. Defining Public Space

Although this study takes a pragmatic approach to defining public space as stated above, it is important to note how other researchers have approached public spaces from a more theoretical perspective. Within the body of literature on public spaces, the definitions of what a public space is often focus on the coming together of groups of people to negotiate and renegotiate the meanings and boundaries of a physical space. Such negotiations determine rights of access to these spaces as well as what the function of these spaces may be. The characteristics of these spaces, as a result of these negotiations, are symbolic of the power differentials within the social dynamics of the groups involved.

A definition of public space is difficult to make without (briefly) entering into a dialogue concerning the differences between public and private space. Private spaces are those that are owned by private companies or individuals. Even though public spaces are not free of regulations, they are "traditionally differentiated from private space in terms of rules of access, the source and nature of control over entry to a space, individual and collective behavior sanctioned in specific spaces, and rules of use" (Smith and Low, 2006: 3-4).

Doreen Massey (2005: 152-3) defines public space as spaces that are negotiated through "unequal social relations" to produce spaces that are "a product of, and internally dislocated by, heterogeneous and sometimes conflicting social identities/relations". In her definition, Massey (2005) cautions against using romanticized notions of open-ended equality. She argues that while the decline of public spaces through privatization, which

leads to the possibility of exclusion as meted out by non-elected stakeholders is an important issue to address, it should also be noted that public spaces are not spaces free of exclusion themselves. They are however, spaces that allow for the constant negotiation and renegotiation between unequal social relations. Massey (2005: 153) calls this "negotiated exclusion", the means to make a space truly public, since negotiated exclusion can provide an open forum for discussion unlike private spaces where issues of exclusion are just imposed[4].

Public space has also been defined as a controlled spectacle that utilizes symbols and representations to convey meaning. It is a space created for theatre and consumption, which acts indirectly to exclude unwanted portions of the public such as the homeless (Mitchell, 1995, 2003). This exclusion extends to how 'public' is defined through the blurring of public and private interests in regulating these spaces thereby promoting a specific homogenous demographic (Zukin, 1995; Mitchell, 2003; Massey, 2005).

Expanding upon these debates, Don Mitchell (2003) suggests that public space can be defined as a space that is created by the coming together of groups and individuals to demand representation. It is therefore perceived both as an uncontrolled space that can inspire fear as well as a space that can represent the positive aspects of society: public-ness, commerce, politics and democracy (Mitchell, 2003).

Therefore, generally, while there is a perception that public spaces are those that everyone has a right to access and use, in practice, there are subtle ways by which certain groups have been excluded from such spaces such as homeless people, and those with disabilities. Such subtle actions can include the removal of benches, discourage loitering (or sleeping) through designs that are uncomfortable for long periods of time, or restrictions over time of use – the latter being a method commonly employed in city parks in global cities such as Paris. Access is also a clear means by which a number of disabled people can be excluded. Differences in rules of use have often evolved out of the perceived fear of public spaces as dangerous and chaotic and the belief that it is necessary to actively create boundaries and borders to increase perceptions of safety (Sibley, 2005).

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[4] Of course, such processes of negotiated exclusion do not apply where State systems do not allow for open negotiations pertaining to issues of right of access such as with socialist or dictatorial governments.

A dramatic example of how public space can become private is the growth of gated communities in a number of cities around the world, especially those in developing countries, including many in China and especially Hong Kong (Dick and Rimmer, 1998; Webster et al., 2002; Forrest et al., 2004; Wu, 2005). In such cases, land which was often used by the public becomes a 'no go zone', unless one has the specific requirements to enter via a security checkpoint. Maximum surveillance is the norm in such locales.

This section showed how a definition of public space can appear quite simple, but hidden within this definition are multiple layers relating to the negotiation of meaning, particularly regarding issues of inclusion and exclusion. The next section explores how these negotiations pertain to ideas of power relations within the social structure and the ways in which notions of rights and social justice are addressed within the politics of public space.

2.1.2. Public Space and Social Justice

In the context of this study, the loss of public space refers to the ways in which traditional uses of public space in Hong Kong are being over-ridden by new interests that better fit the State's goal of being globally competitive. Here, we find that the social functions of public spaces and the traditional usage of many of these by members of the informal economy are being superceded by the interests of the State and the formal economy. This loss of traditional uses of public space relates to the unequal distribution of power within the social structure.

By incorporating David Harvey's (1973) concepts of social justice and space, public spaces can be shown to reflect the structure of social relations, especially in terms of the injustices within the social structure of a city. Unequal power relations within this social structure are evident in how the interests of marginalized groups such as hawkers in the informal economy are over-ruled by the interests of more powerful groups such as stakeholders in the formal economy and the State (Davis, 1990; Zukin, 1995).

Additionally, if as Goheen (1998: 486) states, "politics is the language of the public sphere", then public space can be seen as a political arena. Public space, when understood as a relational concept that encompasses notions of spatial-temporality, becomes a space for political action and organization. Harvey (2006: 148) writes: "It is

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only when relationality connects to the absolute spaces and times of social and material life that politics comes alive. To neglect that connectivity is to court political irrelevance". By including a temporal element to understanding the politics of public space, we can better understand the concept of rights to public spaces (Harvey, 1973, 2006; Mitchell, 2003).

The focus of this study rests on interpreting private commercial interests in Hong Kong's public spaces and the changes in the power relations amongst various stakeholders. As the discussion above shows, issues of power and politics are integral to the analysis of public spaces. Loss of public space then, refers to the loss of rights of access by marginalized groups that have traditionally been the primary users of certain segments of Hong Kong's public spaces. The following section introduces how the politics of public spaces in Hong Kong, specifically with regards to streets, are changing as a reflection of shifting interests and balances of power amongst different stakeholders.

2.1.3. Public Street Life in Hong Kong

'Streets', as a concept, have been argued to be a state of mind, reflecting both people's romanticization of streets as a spectacle of 'everyday life' and as a space of fear (Hamilton, 2002). Streets act as a window to observe how people behave in public and the social structures that govern their actions (Berman, 1988; Duneier, 1999; Hamilton, 2002). In the context of this study, the importance of streets and the manner in which they are conceived and perceived is particularly significant in terms of the effects that urban redevelopment plans have on the presence and operations of street markets in Hong Kong.

Urban redevelopment projects in Hong Kong are reshaping the urban landscape into spaces for individual consumption rather than community building (Cuthbert, 1995; Law 2002). Through redevelopment projects, streets are becoming spaces for people to move through rather than being considered a destination, becoming removed from people's social experiences of the city. Such developments and the policies that support them (as discussed later in Chapter 4), serve to alienate those who have traditionally used the streets as the locale of their community building efforts.

In Manuel and Xue's (2002) study of Hong Kong streets, the changing quality and general decline in the comfort and friendliness of streets was attributed to an increased diversity of residents and users in the space. The over-saturation of residents and visitors from the steady increase in population density, which increased economic activity and traffic in the area, was seen as the cause of this decline in the quality of Hong Kong's street spaces (Manuel and Xue, 2002). Redevelopment plans and policies are often based on the premise that busy, crowded streets such as the ones described by Manuel and Xue (2002) are a sign of unruliness and mayhem, where theft can easily occur and public disturbances arise (Sennett, 1990). Yet, others have argued that the presence of people and social interactions on streets are not a sign of chaos and disorder, but rather a sign of safety, sociability and friendliness (Jacobs, 1961; Duneier, 1999; Hamilton, 2002). The constant presence of people in streets acts as a form of security or neighborhood watch, providing the constant surveillance streets are perceived to require. Interactions at the street level can therefore contribute to strengthening social bonds within the community (Jacobs, 1961; Duneier, 1999). As such, this study further explores how urban redevelopment plans and policies in Hong Kong are affecting the ways in which people use streets as a venue for building a sense of community.

This section, in conclusion, provides a working definition of what public spaces are for the remainder of this study, namely physical spaces owned and regulated by the State for public use, but also sites of negotiation between actors with unequal power relations within certain sociopolitical structures (Section 2.1.1). These negotiations can determine which actors have the right of access to particular public spaces, which necessitates the inclusion of considerations of social justice in our discussion of public spaces (Section 2.1.2). The role of streets as public spaces described in Section 2.1.3 highlights the different approaches that authors have taken to understanding and stressing the importance of streets as part of Hong Kong's public spaces. These key ideas and debates will be taken up further in this thesis regarding the conditions of street markets in Hong Kong in Chapter 5.

2.2. FUNCTIONS OF URBAN MARKETPLACES

The second component of the conceptual framework focuses on the functions of marketplaces within an urban setting. These marketplaces are an example of one form public spaces can take and of how they are used. Markets comprise the central focus of this study, specifically in the ways they are integrated into the urban landscape and consumed by the communities in which they are located.

Marketplaces refer to informal and semi-formal spaces where a market operates, or more specifically, where goods are bought and sold. They fulfill a number of economic, political and social functions. Marketplaces can exist under various forms of legality but the common thread amongst these commercial spaces is that they tend towards requiring lower capital investments, smaller inventories, and higher labor input for the traders selling there, compared to more fixed shops and trading activities.

Marketplace economies are at times referred to as being part of the bazaar economy or the informal economy (Geertz, 1963; Cross, 1998). However, the term informal economy tends to evoke perceptions of illegality, while, for the purpose of this study, it is more appropriate to refer to marketplaces as residing within a state of semi-formality. Semi-formal marketplaces are legitimized by the state through a set of extralegal norms often as a means to regulate existing illegal practices. In the case of this study, as introduced in Section 1.2 in the Introduction Chapter, this study focuses on two forms of public marketplaces in Hong Kong, public (wet) markets and street markets, both forms that are regulated and controlled by the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department.

As stated above, the conceptual framework for this study focuses on the social aspects of marketplaces, within their broader economic functions and relationships. The following sections turn to discuss the functions of marketplaces briefly in terms of their economic functions (Section 2.2.1) and then more specifically, in terms of their social contributions to individual market vendors (Section 2.2.2). This section ends with a discussion of public policies and the premise behind these policies that regulate the presence, form and function of informal marketplaces (Section 2.2.3).

2.2.1. Economic function of marketplaces

Examining market places in developing countries during the 1960s and 1970s, academics primarily working as classic economic theorists tended to analyze marketplaces at the macro-scale (Arce, 2003; Brocklesby and Fisher, 2003). From this perspective, marketplaces were argued to have both a positive and a negative effect for developing economies. These interpretations often analyzed marketplaces as relics of pre-modern economies (Tse, 1974; Cross, 1998), and from a development perspective, such relics indicated the presence of a marginal economy that was serving to stall modernization.

In the 1970s, a more positive interpretation of marketplaces emerged, especially from those operating within a more neo-liberal approach. These authors argued that marketplaces could be beneficial to the national economy by absorbing surplus labor because of the low capital investment required (Moser, 1978; Beavon, 1981). The presence of these marketplaces were seen to contribute to the reduction in unemployment rates as well as provide less economically viable segments of the population with cheaper goods and arguably greater variety for people without the mobility to access commercial centers (Tse, 1974). Marketplaces were also considered to serve to increase the circulation of goods because of their low inventory levels and low cost (Cross, 1998).

As approaches to marketplaces studies have broadened, authors have argued that one must not assume that marketplaces are temporary commercial spaces and that market vendors hold a temporary occupation. Informal marketplaces offer an alternative to low-entry, wage-labor employment for people without the skills or education to thrive in the formal economy (Tinker, 1997; Lund et. al, 2000). In addition to providing a source of employment and cheaper goods for the more economically vulnerable segment of the population, marketplaces can provide a sense of permanency such that children often enter into and continue within the field of informal trade because their parents are informal traders (McGee, 1973; Tse, 1974; Smart, 1989; Cross, 1998; Lund et. al, 2000; Zhang, 2001; Seligmann, 2004).

Informal economies are complex systems that need to be taken into consideration when analyzing the economies of developing nations (International Labor Organization, 1972; Hart, 1973; de Soto, 1989). The perspective of informal markets as simple and temporary economies denies the capacity for agency, as well as ignoring the possibility of

permanency in informal economies such as evidenced by marketplace vending which is often inter-generational. Therefore, as more micro-level studies have appeared, many have begun to address such concerns, some focusing more specifically on the social roles of marketplaces, as noted next.

2.2.2. Social functions of marketplaces

Marketplaces are not only economic spaces but social spaces as well. Aside from economic exchange, marketplaces provide spaces for building and maintaining social relationships and networks within the community and kinship systems (Rankin, 2003; Turner, 2003; Amin, 2007). As stated by Belshaw (1965: 8) "market places are sites, with social, economic, cultural, political, and other referents, where buyers and sellers (or perhaps exchangers of other types) meet for the purpose of exchange". Scholars are therefore increasingly integrating into their approach to studies of small-scale entrepreneurs and traders a focus on the role of social capital and networks in helping people maximize their income potential (Zhang, 2001; Jie and Taubmann, 2002; Tsai, 2002; Turner and Nguyen, 2005).

In addition to maintaining social networks for survival, and social capital that might help them to 'get ahead', the tight knit social atmosphere of informal markets can at times allow vendors to come together to organize for political action, for example forming organizations - mainly as a means to safeguard their economic interests. In places with less formalized systems of street vendor licensing, these organizations can provide access to market space or offer a reprieve from enforcement officials especially when marketplace vendors are trying to move into new spaces (Cross, 1998).

These organizations however, are at risk of potentially becoming authoritarian in nature, especially on the part of the leaders, thereby removing much of the independence that is so often considered to be the main attraction of working in street markets (Cross, 1998). Since many of these political groupings exist within a quasi-legal context, there are also perceptions of and opportunities for corruption. For example, the perception of street vendor organization leaders in Mexico City as part of a 'mafia' with ties to corrupt government officials, or the history of triad activity in Hong Kong street markets (Cross, 1998; Chu, 2000).

2.2.3. Market Spaces and Public Policies

Public policies pertaining to the presence and functions of public market spaces in urban centers have tended to be those of forced tolerance wherein these public spaces are seen as a nuisance that needs to be cleaned up (Bromley, 2000; Cross, 2000; Brown, 2006a; Pratt, 2006). Macro-scale policies and economic interventions have largely been unsuccessful in addressing the issue of the presence of informal economies in urban public spaces however, as such activities still persist (Tinker, 1997; Milgram, 2003).

Economic policies and interventions, based on neoclassical economic theories addressed informal marketplaces in terms of persistence. This approach considered informal marketplaces as a symptom of poverty that contributed little to economic development (Tinker, 1997). It has been argued that the subsequent failure of top-down interventions to improve the conditions of urban informal marketplaces stemmed from these false assumptions of the role of informal economies (ibid.). As a solution, Tinker (1997) advocates the use of multiple micro-scale interventions that take into account the opinions of informal traders as well as considering the formalization of the urban street food trade in order to improve health and safety conditions and improve the livelihoods of street traders (in a similar vein as de Soto,1989).

Milgram (2003), in her study of the informal trade economy in the Philippines draws our attention to the need for studying the issue at multiple scales, particularly in how macro-scale policies are impacting on local realities. She argues that macro-economic policies such as trade liberalization and increasing a country's or city's global economic competitiveness results in increased inequality in part due to the lack of consideration for the individual within these policies (ibid.).

Public policies directed towards urban informal marketplaces then, can be seen to address two 'problems'. First, policies are aimed at improving social and economic conditions, and second, to improve the aesthetic appeal of urban centers through the eradication of informal markets in public spaces. Brown (2006a: 10) states, "concepts of aesthetics and public order led to a desire to 'tidy' and 'control' public space". She continues, "…few modern-day urban management policies recognize the economic importance of urban public space to the poor" (ibid.: 11). Cross (2000) describes this

need for the State to regain control over public order as part of a continuing modernistic approach to dealing with the informal sector.

Street vendors, aside from being viewed as a nuisance to public order, are also typically seen by the State to contribute to chaos, congestion, and crime in urban public spaces as well as being a threat to formal commerce, since their presence lowers property values (Bromley, 2000). They are a highly visible group within the urban landscape and are often the prime targets for crackdowns and removal from public spaces in the State's push to reduce crime and chaos in the cities (ibid.).

Urban design and planning, "through its emphasis on producing order and eradicating disorder" (Pratt, 2006: 47) excludes the interests of the poor in urban centers. With their focus on the aesthetic appeal of the urban landscape and lack of acknowledgement of the importance of public spaces for informal traders, "the most obvious government policy on street vending, mixing regulation with promotion, is to move it to off-street locations" (Bromley, 2000: 18). These relocation programs are seen as a viable and successful solution to the presence of informal markets in public spaces, but in fact, often fail (Tinker, 1997; Bromley, 2000).

Marketplaces then, for the context of this study, are public spaces (Section 2.1) used for the purpose of economic (section 2.2.1) and social (section 2.2.2) exchange. It is important to note the complexities involved for small-scale traders who rely on these public spaces to make their livelihood. Socially, marketplaces are sites of complex networks between traders and the community as well as providing a place for empowerment through organizing for political action, a key factor in the Wan Chai case study detailed in Chapter 6. Public policies aimed at regulating the presence and function of marketplaces within urban public spaces however, focus on the negative aspects of these informal markets (Section 2.2.3). Policies tend to ignore the economic and social contributions informal marketplaces provide for the urban poor. Rather, these policies approach informal marketplaces as a hindrance to economic development and as a nuisance to public order. These ideas concerning the functions of informal marketplaces and how they are regulated can be seen in the example of Hong Kong's public markets, as discussed in greater detail below.

2.3. PREVIOUS MARKETPLACE STUDIES IN HONG KONG

The third body of literature included in my conceptual framework draws from the work of previous scholars on marketplaces in Hong Kong. The progression of these studies from the early 1970s onwards reflects changes that have occurred not only within marketplace studies as noted above, but also to the economic and political conditions of Hong Kong. Early studies from the 1970s such as McGee (1973) and Tse (1974) focused on understanding the persistence of street markets in Hong Kong despite modernization efforts, while studies during the 1980s began to critique the binary models of informal/formal economies which had tended to be used to explain the persistence of marketplaces and shifted the focus to the effects of policy changes and the inter-relationship between micro and macro processes to explain the continued presence of street and wet markets (Choi, 1986; Smart, 1989). More recent studies, reflecting the cultural turn in economic geography,[5] have shifted away from examining the political economy of Hong Kong marketplaces, and instead have incorporated ideas of how people used space and how modernization of the urban landscape is changing the form and meaning of marketplaces (Mao, 1996; Abbas, 1997; Cook and Ng, 2001; Kinoshita, 2001; Xue et al., 2001; Moir, 2002; Xue and Manuel, 2002; Chung, 2004; Breitung and Günter, 2006).

2.3.1. Persistence of Markets in Hong Kong

Studies about hawkers in Hong Kong during the 1960s and early 1970s were concerned with how street markets and informal trade persisted despite the rapid economic growth and processes of modernization that were occurring in Hong Kong since the 1950s. Tse's (1974) large-scale study on markets and street traders in Hong Kong used a model for the progression of market trade that linked economic growth and modernization to spatial elements. The progression of markets under this model follows a rural-urban divide

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[5] The cultural turn in economic geography, refers to the move away from using a strict political economy perspective in the analysis and interpretation of geographic research to include ideas of how identity and culture are tied into social functions and activities (Crang, 1997). This allows for using more interpretive modes of study of economic processes and structures, with open ended and reflexive approaches (Barnes, 2001).

wherein itinerant and periodic trade in the rural areas begin to stabilize and formalize as they reach the city center (ibid.).

If street trading and markets are on the low order end of the retail continuum, as proposed by Tse's conceptual framework, then how can the persistence of street markets in Hong Kong be explained? Tse (1974) explains the persistence of hawking in Hong Kong's economically developing urban center as the result of three factors. First, the permanency of trading in a specific area anchors hawkers to a specific place and occupation. Second, the structure of the market areas (such as bazaars and fixed-pitch stalls) provides spatial stability, and third, the institutionalization and organization of hawkers lends legitimacy to the profession. The seemingly makeshift appearance of street market stalls is not a function of their temporariness but rather a result of their density within the urban core of Hong Kong. The presence of hawkers in alleyways and streets is seen as a way to maximize limited space in an increasingly tough competition for economically viable locations

Similarly, Terry McGee's (1973) study on hawkers in Hong Kong was concerned with how hawkers contribute to the commodity distribution chain and whether their presence was justifiable in the face of criticisms against hawkers and the informal economy for hindering modernization and development. Evaluating Hong Kong as a third world city, McGee uses a economic model based on Milton Santos' idea that systems of production can be separated into upper (moderns, capital intensive activities) and lower (non-capital intensive activities) circuits.

McGee (1973) argued from a broad neo-Marxist perspective that the persistence of hawking in Hong Kong at the beginning of the 1970s was the result of several factors, including: the formal economy using hawkers as a means to distribute goods and services cheaply; people continuing in their previous line of work after they had become age and skill inappropriate for the manufacturing industry; and filling social and economic gaps in resettlement areas, which were seen as prime hawking locations; and hawker job satisfaction.

 McGee (1973: 181) also pointed to governmental policies as a contributing factor of the persistence of hawkers in Hong Kong, in what he termed a policy of "locational prodding". The government's policies proved to be inappropriate for the conditions in

Hong Kong, inadequate in terms of handling the scale of the problem, and ineffective in its implementation. McGee argued that the practices in the 1960s of banishing hawkers from urban areas, stabilizing hawkers through the assignation of fixed-pitch stalls, and the relocation of hawkers into bazaars and public markets were all unsatisfactory in dealing with the issues of obstruction and untidiness in Hong Kong's urban planning schemes. As shown above in Section 2.2.3, such relocation programs were often unsuccessful because they are based on faulty assumptions of why informal economies persist (Tinker, 1997).

Josephine Smart's (1989) more recent study used a structural approach to provide yet another perspective to explain the persistence of hawking in Hong Kong, especially with the increase of a younger, more able-bodied demographic participating in hawking activities. From an economic standpoint, hawking was seen, among participants, to be an attractive source of income and a viable alternative to wage labor with its low start-up investment and relatively high returns. Self-employment also provided a form of personal autonomy for people without the necessary skills for other forms of employment or without abundant capital for other forms of self-employment (Smart, 1989).

The persistence of hawking in Hong Kong, according to previous studies, draws upon the issues discussed in section 2.2. The social and economic functions of informal markets, coupled with a sense of permanency and stability contribute to the continued presence of informal markets even as the economy of Hong Kong booms. Other reasons for the persistence of hawking in Hong Kong relate to issues of individual choice by the hawkers such as reaping the benefits of self-employment and perceptions of job satisfaction, reasons that will be elaborated on in the current context of Hong Kong marketplaces in Chapters 5 and 6.

2.3.2. Political Economy of Hong Kong Hawkers and Markets

Smart's study in the 1980s closely linked hawking in the city to the wider economic, social and political conditions of Hong Kong. Her micro-level study tried to explain the persistence of hawking as well as the dynamics within and between hawkers (for example, the social networks and relationships they cultivated and influencing factors in their decision-making processes) using a street level analysis of the activities of hawkers

and a structural analysis of government policies, political changes and economic development (Smart, 1989).

Smart (1989) noted that as the processes of industrialization and urbanization continued in Hong Kong throughout the 1980s, the government responded to the increasing conflict over the use of public space by hawkers by increasing government authority to gain greater control. In turn, hawkers responded to the spatial interventions by the government in various ways. Illegal hawkers decreased the chances of being raided and fined by voluntarily relocating to less profitable areas, changing their work hours, increasing their mobility, or making use of social networks as a source of information or hiding in nearby stores to avoid raids (Smart, 1989). Fixed-pitch stall hawkers resisted the government's imposition of spatial restrictions by increasing their assigned space with mobile displays that could be brought back in, renting another pitch (albeit illegally) in the area, or moving to a new location altogether to avoid the space regulations (Smart, 1989). The findings by Smart during the 1980s can still be seen today in terms of how hawkers and market vendors work around the government's regulations on spatial restrictions, as will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5.

2.3.3. Hong Kong Market Spaces: Changes and Meanings

The priorities for urban redevelopment shifted during the 1980s from building up new areas of Hong Kong to redeveloping the city as an international destination through the processes of redevelopment and re-use, reclamation of the harbor, and through new land development. As part of this new mode of urban planning, the government pushed through legislation allowing for increased private development, which was seen as a means to speed up the modernization process. The resulting changes to the urban landscape also radically modified the cultural landscape of the city by replacing traditional elements such as street level social interactions with more modernized elements such as air-conditioned shopping malls that often moved places for social interaction indoors. These changes, that also included losing the social cohesion and sense of community facilitated by the presence of street markets (Siu, 1998), are discussed more in-depth in Chapter 4.

In Sui's (1998) study of the Chun Yeung Street market in North Point, it was found that despite the government's best efforts to 'clean up' the ragtag agglomeration of hawkers after the early 1970's period of stabilization, the hawkers in the area continued to blur the *de jure* boundaries between public and private. Storefronts and fixed-pitch stalls routinely extended their shop space upwards and outwards towards the street, often converting the sidewalks into an indoor market (ibid.). Likewise, pitches and stores were often treated as an extension of the hawkers' private home, furnished with amenities such as phones, chairs, and kitchen supplies, all with an informal atmosphere. Sui (1998: 139) writes: "The street users still like to follow their own rules and lifestyles to define and use their space, such as they like to privatize public areas; and the reverse is also true as people turn some of the private areas…into public social gathering places".

Sui (1998: 125), continued to note that: "Recent redevelopment projects have seldom aimed at being sensitive to the specificity and diversity (vernacular traditions, local histories, particular wants, needs, fancies) of inhabitants in different districts or communities". As such, the relationships built between the users and the physical environment were torn down with the deteriorating pre-war buildings. Communities that arose organically out of the need for and use of the urban environment did not have a place in the new economic development schema as high rise apartments replaced older three to four-storey residential and commercial buildings.

Similarly, in the Yau Ma Tei district, where the Temple Street, Reclamation Street and the Yau Ma Tei Public Markets are located, Kinoshita (2001) noted that people often blurred the lines between public and private space by extending their homes out onto the streets because of the dense housing conditions. The public and street markets therefore acted as a catchment for the overflow of residents by providing food, entertainment and social interaction. This overflow and the resulting social interactions points to the importance of the availability of public spaces, which will be focused upon in my analysis in Chapter 4.

2.4. CHAPTER CONCLUSION

This chapter draws key ideas together from different bodies of literature to provide a conceptual framework that informs the remainder of this study analyzing the changing

relationships between public spaces and informal marketplaces in Hong Kong. The three main components of this framework, namely debates about public space, the functions of informal marketplaces, and the conditions of Hong Kong's market spaces as related by previous scholars, come together to inform how public market spaces are changing as Hong Kong's global city aspirations influence the re-production of public spaces.

Section 2.1 defined public space for the context of this study as physical spaces owned by the State to which the public is given access. The section then explored the ways in which power relations are reflected in the process of negotiating rights of access to public spaces, the notions of inclusion and exclusion, as well as conflicts of interest between public and private spaces. It was seen that the boundaries of what constitutes public space are open to constant negotiation and renegotiation, an important element to be considered in the discussion of the current changes in the characteristics of Hong Kong's public spaces.

Section 2.2 discussed the functions of informal marketplaces. These markets are a crucial component of urban landscapes because they provide a space for economic and social exchange, especially for the economically marginalized, providing a local base for the circulation of low-priced goods. In addition, these markets provide a source of employment (often for those with low levels of formal skills and education), and a forum for empowerment by providing a space for self-employment and the building of social networks to organize for political action. The economic and social aspects introduced in this section are prominent themes that reappeared during interviews conducted in the field and are discussed at greater length in Chapters 5 and 6.

The third section of this chapter examined previous research on Hong Kong marketplaces. These studies followed a general trend in theoretical approaches to marketplace research discussed in section 2.2.1, starting with macro-level approaches and moving to more micro-level approaches that incorporate the role of social networks within the economic and political context of marketplaces in Hong Kong. This study examines the issues addressed in these previous studies from a more contemporary position and seeks to explore how marketplaces and more generally, public spaces in Hong Kong, have changed in the face of new mandates by the State to develop Hong Kong into a globally competitive city.

In sum, the key points outlined throughout this conceptual framework were drawn upon to inform the main points of focus for the field research portion of this study and the manner in which the resulting data were analyzed. Before turning to this analysis, the following chapter describes the research methodology used in this study to understand how public market spaces are changing in Hong Kong.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Field work for this study was conducted over the course of nine weeks in the summer of 2006 in Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR). The field work consisted of a mixed-method approach that incorporated multiple avenues of data gathering. This was used in order to gain a better understanding of the current conditions of hawkers and markets in Hong Kong as well as to be able to approach the issue through the eyes of different actors.

The main sources of information were interviews with hawkers and market vendors, and non-participatory observations of marketplaces. Such qualitative methods were used to capitalize on the 'stories behind the numbers' and to be able to treat each participant as an individual and each observation as a significant part of the whole.

The remainder of this chapter first outlines the various data-gathering methods used including interviews (Section 3.1.2), observations (Section 3.1.3), and governmental sources (Section 3.1.4). The following Section (3.1.5) describes the process of coding and analyzing the data. Section 3.2 describes other sources of information gathered away from the field. The chapter concludes in Section 3.3 with an attempt to situate the researcher within the context of the study, highlighting some of the difficulties encountered over the course of the field work period.

3.1. IN THE FIELD

In total, 22 markets were visited in Hong Kong SAR (16 on the island of Hong Kong, 4 in Kowloon, and 2 in the New Territories) as shown in Figure 3.1 below. The sample markets were selected as a representation of the different types of markets in Hong Kong (fixed-pitch stalls, indoor public markets, indoor private markets, and storefront private markets) as well as of different neighborhoods. Hence a purposeful sampling procedure was used, explained below.

The majority of the field work concentrated on two case study markets, namely Wan Chai Market, and the Cross Street/Tai Yuen Street Market. Outside of the market areas, interviews and on occasion, observational data were also gathered from an auction

for public market stalls, during Wan Chai District Council meetings, from the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD), and over the phone with a representative for the hawkers in the Cross Street/Tai Yuen Street Market.

3.1.1. Field Sites and Market Sampling Strategies

The markets included in the sample for this study were selected upon arrival in Hong Kong. An initial 2-week period of field work was spent assessing the different neighborhoods and locations of markets with the aid of a list of public markets in Hong Kong provided by the FEHD (see Appendix III for list of current FEHD markets). In addition, private markets and fixed-pitch stall markets (not listed by the FEHD) were recommended by relatives and acquaintances living in Hong Kong.
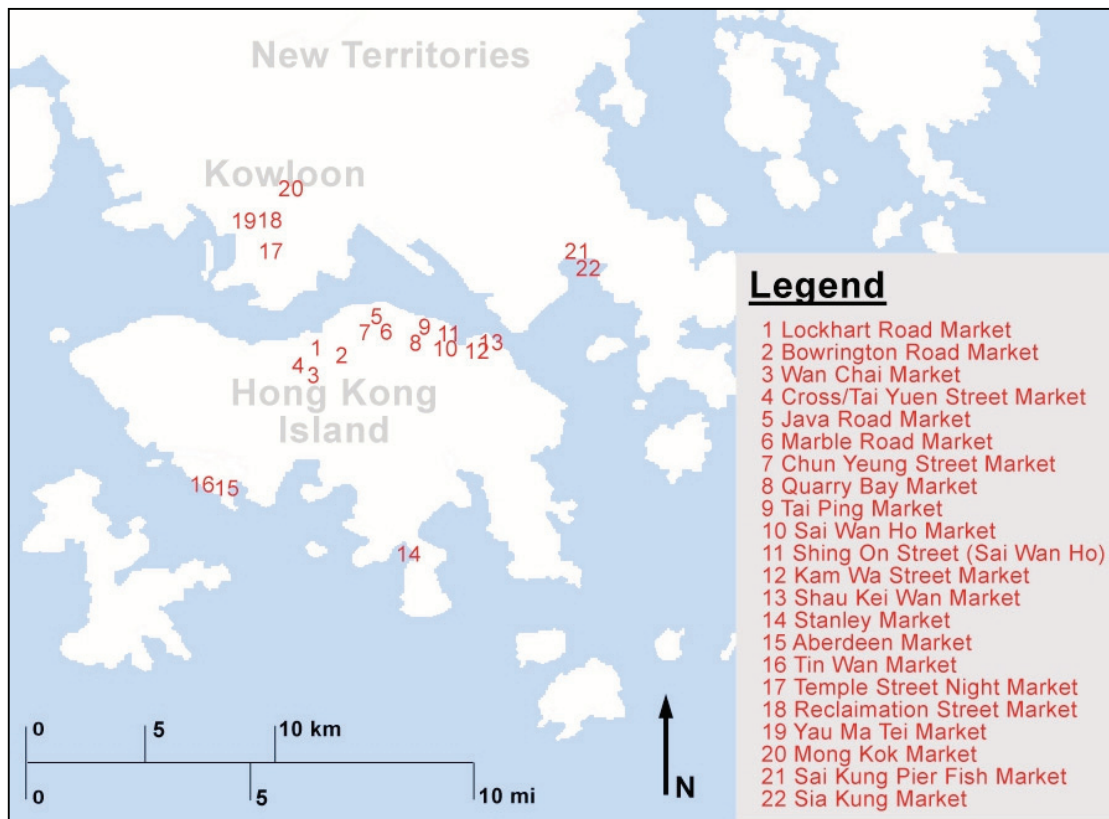
Figure 3.1: Map of field study sites (Adapted from: Survey and Mapping Office, 2006: online)

On the island of Hong Kong, 16 markets were initially chosen for study in eight neighborhoods (Shau Kei Wan, Sai Wan Ho, Quarry Bay, North Point, Wan Chai, Stanley, Tin Wan, and Aberdeen) that spanned three different districts (Eastern, Wan

Chai, and Southern). In Kowloon, from the Yau Tsim Mong District, four markets were chosen from two neighborhoods (Yau Ma Tei, and Mong Kok). In the Sai Kung District in the New Territories, two markets were selected as part of the sample for a total of 22 markets, shown in Table 3.1 below.

Each of the markets was selected based on a range of factors. Three private markets were selected (one indoor, one outdoor, and one indoor market that encompassed the qualities of an outdoor market as well) for comparison with public markets. Of the remaining 19 markets, twelve were indoor public markets and seven were outdoor markets. These figures are proportional to the broad percentage of indoor market stall spaces available and the number of hawker licenses still in circulation[6]. A range of indoor public markets were selected along a continuum from those that were located close to an outdoor (public or private) market to those that were isolated. The neighborhoods in which these markets were located was yet another factor. The selected markets were located in residential and commercial neighborhoods that differed in perceived wealth of the area (which I based on observations of the age and quality of the physical structures such as residential buildings and the types of commercial activity present such as upscale retail stores or stores selling inexpensive goods).

Neighborhood	Residential		Commercial	
Relative Wealth	Higher	Lower	Higher	Lower
Indoor Market	4	4	3	3
Outdoor Market	3	3	1	1

Table 3.1: Breakdown of market sample by neighborhood characteristics

Accessibility via public transport was also a key determining factor due to limited monetary funds. Most of the markets, with the exception of the two in Sai Kung were accessible by MTR (the Hong Kong subway system). The time factor was also a determinant in limiting the number of markets sampled. Since the duration of the field work period was relatively short, the list of markets was reduced to 22 so that there was enough time for multiple days of observation at each of the markets. Of the 22 markets selected for this study, 20 of the markets were used for broad, general observations of

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[6] Based on 2006 figures, there were 14,951 public market stall spaces available and 7,484 hawker licenses in circulation (Food and Environmental Hygiene Department, 2007: online).

how marketplaces function in Hong Kong. Two markets (Wan Chai Market and Cross/Tai Yuen Street Market) were selected for my case study, which required more in-depth research.

3.1.2. Interviews

One of the main sources of field data were interviews with hawkers and other 'actors' related to hawking and public markets in Hong Kong. The majority of the interviews were informal and unstructured in style. Most of the interviews stemmed from casual conversations that developed into in-depth interviews after explaining my status as a student researching markets in Hong Kong. All the interviews were conducted in Cantonese without the aide of a translator. Interviews were conducted in both indoor and outdoor markets, outside of markets such as an interview with a District Councilor for Wan Chai, and one interview with an organizer for the Concerned Group for Hawkers' Rights was conducted over the phone (see Appendix IV for a breakdown of the interviews).

Unstructured interviews were chosen as the key interview method because it allows for more flexibility in the interaction with the research participants and focuses on the participants' narratives (Dunn, 2000). Unstructured interviews resemble informal conversations where the flow of information depends much on the type of rapport that develops between the interviewer and interviewee and the type of narrative the interviewee is willing to divulge. The informality and unstructured nature of this form of interviewing allows the researcher to ask for clarification and more importantly, allows the interviewee to discuss issues that he/she believes to be important since there are no predetermined lists of issues and questions to be covered (Dunn, 2000; Cloke et al., 2004). Follow-up questions during the preliminary interviews were derived from the interviewees' narratives and subsequent interviews were often a continuation of previous interviews.

A lack of a standardized interview schedule has been a critique that has often been levelled against unstructured interviews because it is seen to allow for the possibility of highly divergent responses that may cause difficulty in presenting a coherent argument (Miller and Glassner, 2004). Another critique of using unstructured interviews involves

issues of rigor and validity. The structureless interviewing format and the resulting varied and complex narratives can be argued to create difficulty in terms of objectivity in the analysis of the results (Baxter and Eyles, 1997; Silverman, 2001). While establishing rigor in qualitative research is important, Rose (1997) believes that bias is unavoidable. Instead, she maintains that reflexivity, along with the researcher's continual recognition of the inequalities in the interviewer/interviewee relationship, will help validate the research data and its interpretation.

In terms of the sampling of interviewees and informants, the initial plan was to select people from varying age brackets, of different genders, and selling a variety of goods. However, due to a limited response to requests for interviews, informants were mainly chosen for their willingness to participate. In the end, the sample presented a good mix of men and women in different age groups and selling different goods (as shown in Appendix IV).

Since there were no contacts made with informants prior to arriving in Hong Kong, interviews were initiated 'cold', usually after a brief walk-through of the market to familiarize myself with the area and then by approaching people to ask if they were willing to be interviewed for this study. However this cold interviewing approach was not particularly effective especially in the indoor public markets and in the private markets.

Another strategy used to initiate interviews was to begin conversations with the informants and then seek consent to use the information for my research after the conversation was initiated or completed. No participant's information was ever used without their direct consent at some stage in the interview. However, this method was only effective in the Wan Chai market areas because questions outside the range of dealing with the price or quality of the goods sold were treated with suspicion and would go unanswered. For the Wan Chai Market and the Cross Street/Tai Yuen Street market, the protest banners served as a convenient and effective conversation starter.

Some of the interviews were initiated by the hawkers themselves, out of curiosity. By wandering around the markets and watching the social interactions around me or sketching the layout of the markets, it was apparent to the hawkers that I was not visiting as a customer. Several hawkers used my sketches as a way to initiate conversations with me and later agreed to participate in the study. Another method of obtaining interviews

was through the snowballing method wherein my informants introduced me to people they were acquainted with who might be interested in participating in the study (Hoggart et al., 2002). Three of my informants were introduced in this manner.

During the interviews and conversations, no audio or video recording devices were used as it would have been a possible deterrent for participation in the study and might have served as a distraction during the interviews. Notes were taken immediately after the interviews were concluded, within the marketplace but out of view of the participant for two main reasons. First, jotting down notes during an interview can be disruptive to the flow of the conversation (Wengraf, 2001). Second, the presence of a notebook seemed to be a cause of concern for the participants perhaps from fear of legal concerns or wariness of strangers, and the participants were often distracted by my notebook even though it was not open and I was not writing in it. After I would surreptitiously pocket the notebook, the participants were more open to talking. Similarly, when asking hawkers for their consent and/interest in participating in the study, the hawkers were more likely to participate if the notebook was tucked away than if it was visible.

Interviews with hawkers were conducted mostly during the late morning and early afternoon hours during the weekdays to take advantage of the non-peak business hours. Most of the market areas in Hong Kong are spatially dense, and as a result, I often found myself 'in the way' whenever there were people shopping. Approaching the hawkers during non-peak hours also meant they were more open to participating in the interviews as a way to 'kill time'.

A downside to interviewing during non-peak hours was that many of the stalls would close down during that period so that the hawkers could take a break during their long work days. Also, many of the hawkers would take advantage of the lull in business activity to take naps at their stalls, and I did not find it prudent to disturb their slumber to ask for an interview.

Interviews were not always possible over the course of the field work. Perhaps the formality of the term 'interview' in Chinese (*fong mun*) heightened people's wariness in participating in the research. Many of the participants were willing to answer one or two questions or carry out conversations but declined to be interviewed even though they

did give consent for the details of the conversations to be used in this study. Using informal conversations as a data collection method therefore helped decrease the formality of the interviews and decreased the pressure of the participants to 'say the right thing'. However, there were others such as this vegetable seller who said, "Sometimes when you speak, you end up saying the wrong thing, so it's better not to say anything at all" (CS-M2, July 11, 2006).

Other times, the interviews were unsuccessful due to external influences such as a conversation held with a Wan Chai District Councilor that was interrupted by his colleague, or a conversation with a hawker that was cut short by the presence of a Hawker Control Officer. Prior to arriving in Hong Kong, my plan was to arrange to conduct in-depth interviews with the hawkers outside of the markets where there would be less interruption and more privacy. However, upon arriving and learning that most hawkers work up to 14 hours a day, seven days a week, I realized that arranging for interviews during their 'off-hours' would not be a feasible plan.

The informants were not compensated for their participation in this study. Purchasing goods from their stalls was not interpreted as a small token of thanks and often would elicit strange reactions (in my mind) from the hawkers such as one hawker saying, "why are you buying that? You don't need it" (CS-7, July 11, 2006). Similarly, attempts to purchase goods as a means to initiate conversations was unsuccessful because the termination of the sale often meant the termination of any social interaction with the hawker. My offer to purchase pastries from a bakery nearby as a way to thank my informants was also declined - perhaps out of politeness.

3.1.3. Observations

Observation was another key method during the field work period. Observational data ranged from sketching out detailed maps of street markets to observing the day-to-day activities of hawkers and their clientele, and taking photos of the market scenes. These non-participatory observations provided useful information as to how hawkers spent their days in the markets. As well, observations of people's behavior in the markets help in finding "the meanings behind and attached to actions...[while assuming] that people's behavior is purposeful and expressive of deeper values and beliefs" (Kitchin and Tate,

2000: 220). Observations in field research can be used to identify trends, compliment other forms of data gathering such as interviews, and contextualize the data within a particular time and place (Kearns, 2000).

Non-participatory observations were conducted during various times of the day to capture variances over time. This helped track the peak and non-peak hours, which was necessary in order to conduct interviews during periods that would be least obtrusive for the participants. Observations were made variously whilst walking through the markets, sitting at one end of the market if such spaces were available, and during interviews.

Aside from noting the routines of the marketplaces, observations were also useful for deciphering how hawkers interacted with the space and the people around them. Observations during non-peak periods were useful in providing information on the social connections individual hawkers formed with each other (that is, who was friends with whom, the type of conversations they shared and which hawkers looked out for each other's stalls).

Drawing market layouts for seven street markets and one private indoor market provided not only a spatial representation of the market spaces (as seen in Chapter 5 below) but also opportunities to interact with the hawkers and market vendors. Attempts to sketch the layouts for indoor public markets were unsuccessful. Market vendors often looked at me with suspicion whenever I brought out my notepad to begin drawing, so to put the vendors at ease, I refrained from creating sketches. However, in the street markets, hawkers on occasion initiated conversations with me out of curiosity as to what I was drawing. Explaining my diagrams became a good way to introduce my study to the hawkers. Similarly, taking photographs to document the markets served as an unobtrusive way to begin conversations with hawkers.

3.1.4. Governmental Information

On the surface, gaining access to governmental information was a simple procedure, which required filling out a form with the pertinent details and faxing it to the Access to Information department of the Food and Hygiene Department. The process was quite transparent and the officials I liaised with at the central office of the FEHD were friendly

and helpful. The only questions directed to me regarding my intent were to satisfy their personal curiosities rather than used to meet official qualification requirements.

Nevertheless, the entire process from the initial application to receiving the documents took more than six weeks to accomplish with many phone calls and emails exchanged in-between. From what I can gather, it seems that few people make use of this service to access information from the FEHD and the people in charge of handling these processes are unfamiliar with the types of documents they have. The exchanges between the FEHD official and myself were centered around the types of documents; basically, the FEHD required very specific details so that they could search if such documents or information were available and I required more information about what they had before I could specify the information I needed.

However, obtaining information from the other FEHD offices and departments proved less than fruitful and more than a bit frustrating. The district FEHD offices had seemingly unmanned reception desks, and questions were often directed to other departments, colleagues, or the FEHD website.

Another source of governmental information was to attend Wan Chai's district council meetings. These meetings were open to the public but I was the only member of the 'public' that attended each of the three meetings I went to. As well, there was no forum for public input at these meetings. However, from these meetings, I was able to ascertain the importance of markets and public spaces in Wan Chai for the officials of the district council. The availability and quality of public spaces in the district was indeed a concern for some council members but these issues were not considered to be as important as ensuring the district's economic development and the desire to improve the general appearance of the area.

3.1.5. Coding and Analysis

To initiate the coding and analysis stages, interviews and observation notes were separated by market (including a section for non-market interviews). The interviews and observations were then coded into five categories that emerged over the course of the field work period and during coding. These in part also linked to the themes that had emerged from my conceptual framework, as discussed in Chapter 2.

The first category, '**social networks**', refers to the various social interactions of hawkers and market vendors. The social interactions that emerged were coded into three subsections: interactions within the markets stall; interactions between hawkers; and interactions between hawkers and the people within the neighborhood.

'Interactions within the market stall' describes how the hawkers started their businesses, who they work(ed) with and the various social networks they rely on to conduct their business such as who they rent stalls from, who looks after the children when the parents are working and whether the business will be passed on to the next generation. 'Interactions between hawkers' refer to the relationships formed at the marketplaces and sentiments regarding how hawkers need to stick together. The third subcategory, 'interactions between hawkers and the neighborhood' include both positive and negative aspects of how hawkers are perceived as a commodity or as a nuisance.

The second category, '**governmental relationship**' refers to both perceptions between hawkers and the State as well as the interactions between these two groups. Four themes that emerged and were coded within this category deal with issues of: trust, transparency, and perceptions of concern and fairness; the effects of policy changes (including the effects of the handover in 1997); skepticism of governmental interests and perceptions of corruption; interactions between hawkers and hawker control officers; and interactions between hawkers and government administrators.

'**Coping and resiliency**' is the third category. Two main codes emerged here. First, future plans of hawkers and vendors in terms of what they plan to do for the future of their business, what they perceive as their opportunity for mobility, their perceptions of changes to their livelihoods, and issue of inter-generational continuity were noted and categorized. The second theme included in this category is the formalization of the informal economy and the issue of control over their own livelihoods.

The fourth category deals with the **marketplace as an economic space**. This refers to sentiments regarding working on the street as a choice and also as a necessity to support their families. Similarly, the fifth category refers to the role of **marketplaces as a social space**. Unlike the 'social network' category, this describes how hawkers and users of markets perceive the space as a place for social interaction and a place to build

community. These five categories form the structure of Chapters 4, 5, and 6, and especially Section 6.3.

3.2. OTHER DATA SOURCES

Other data sources include library data and information through local media sources. Library data, especially those collected at the University of Hong Kong and the Hong Kong Public Library system provided literature not available in Canada, particularly material published in Chinese and studies pertaining to pervious hawker and market policy changes. Local newspapers and news broadcasts analyzed over the course of the field work period provided a different perspective of the marketplaces including local, popular discourses regarding markets.

Various internet sources were also useful in providing basic background information on the mandates of various governmental departments. As well, rules and regulation concerning public and fixed-pitch stall markets are posted on the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department's website. Governmental proceedings as well as Hong Kong laws are also posted online and used as a source of information.

3.3. SITUATING THE RESEARCHER

Thoughts of Ien Ang's (2001) discussion of Chinese identity and in-betweenness were a frequent occurrence during and after the field work period. 'In-betweeness' refers to the simultaneous connections, real and imagined, to multiple identities. Ang's use of the term in-betweeness describes her experiences of being caught between notions of cultural belonging, but this idea can also be extended towards understanding our positionality as researchers out in the field. Chako (2004: 54) describes this position of being an "insider, outsider, and insider/outsider" as the result of having multiple identities in the field - for her, undertaking research in India - as an insider who spoke the same language and also as an outsider because of her socio-economic privileges.   Nast (1994: 60) refers to the field as a *place* of in-between that is both familiar and foreign, thus, "providing a place wherein one is neither an insider nor an outsider in any absolute sense, but rather an

interlocutor". The results of this study must be placed within this context of in-betweeness as my identity shaped my interactions with my informants and my interpretation of the data.

Born in Hong Kong, I do consider myself a Hong Konger but having been removed from mainstream Hong Kong culture for well over a decade, this Hong Konger identity is mostly conceptual. Some of the participants of this study and the people involved in my observational studies identified me in this space of in-between as well.

For other participants, many elements both set me apart and drew me in as an insider - my speech, for example. I speak Cantonese fluently but I am not familiar with many of the euphemisms and slang used in Hong Kong marketplaces. Speaking Cantonese provided a point of relation with my interview participants but my speech patterns very obviously set me apart from the local population. As one woman trader pointed out, "your accent is strange, you must be from out of town" (CS-1, July 3, 2006). Some of the participants would purposely repeat what they said or check to see if I understood what they were saying as well, another indication that I sounded 'different' to them.

My appearance is another example of being categorized in a place of in-between. I am quite obviously of Chinese descent but compared to the local population, I appeared foreign – from the way I dressed, to my stature and down to the way I could not handle the heat and humidity of Hong Kong summers. This categorization was often apparent in the way people approached me and hesitated in terms of what language to use to speak to me. There were many instances of people looking relieved when I respond in Cantonese and saying some variation of "ah, I wasn't sure if you spoke Chinese".

Being in this space of in-between allowed for a unique perspective of hawkers in Hong Kong. I straddled the identities of a local shopper and the gawking tourist. I was observing from both the inside and the outside but also, from neither viewpoint. I believe my unique position allowed me to gain information from my interview participants that was both explanatory of local politics and concerns (as in how the system works) as though I were a foreigner, and also to hear critiques of the local system, of which foreigners are not always necessarily privy to.

However, there were other elements of my identity during the field work period that did not result in positive impacts on the study. My role as a researcher was often misunderstood and the expectations regarding my findings are a good indicator of this problem. Perhaps due to the informal nature of my research methods, my participants were expecting me to publish my results in the popular media to help publicize their concerns. For example, at the end on one particular in-depth interview, the participant suggested that I "submit my findings to the *South China Morning Post* [the local English newspaper] because that's the newspaper government officials read, not the Chinese newspapers" (CS-1, August 7, 2006). In fact, many of the participants likened my role to that of a reporter and I was repeatedly asked if I was a news reporter before and during many of the interviews.

My Canadian identity also served as a distraction because it often prompted my participants to reminisce about their vacations in Canada or of where in Canada their sons and daughters went to university. One of the hawkers would often tell me about her experiences in North America instead of answering my questions about Hong Kong because it was more interesting for her, and less 'everyday'.

As with many interview-based studies, there was a certain sense that the participants were searching for the 'right' answers to my questions (Corbin and Morse, 2003). Many started off the interviews with statements such as, "I don't think I know enough about what you are looking for" even though at the beginning of my interviews, I would only state my interest in learning more about hawkers in Hong Kong. Similarly, often in the middle of the interview, participants would ask if what they had just said was the answer I was looking for. My Canadian identity often resulted in interview participants looking for ways to impress me, such as with their familiarity with North America.

In my case study area of Wan Chai, where the majority of the interviews were conducted, the problem of participants adjusting their answers to their perception of my expectations was overcome through repeated visits and slowly gaining the trust of the hawkers. Seeing that I would be at the market even on the rainy or extremely hot days helped lend legitimacy to my presence and genuine interest in their activities and concerns. Also, when I passed by and said hello or made small talk with my informants

without referencing my study or asking probing questions, the hawkers began to drop their guard around me and their attitudes toward me became much more friendly and more open to conversing with me.

I would argue that this issue of trust stems in part from power differentials between the hawkers' perception of themselves and of me. Many of the hawkers referred to themselves as 'the little people' and would refer to their work or their status in terms of someone who is often looked down upon because they are unskilled in a society that values economic success in the white-collar work-force. As such, my status as a graduate student returning from overseas, was viewed as higher up on the social ladder. To overcome this perception of inequality in the power-balance, it was necessary to show that I was not there to judge them from a position of power, but that I too, was one of the 'little people'. I believe that some of my actions helped shed an image of me as the judgmental outsider such as suffering quite humbly in the excruciating heat, or sitting on the curb conversing with them from behind their stalls (it should be noted that in Hong Kong, sitting on curbs is seen as an uncouth behavior and not appropriate for 'proper ladies'). One incident in particular comes to mind with regards to the changing perceptions of power differences when one time, several days after our initial interview, one of my informants asked if I received any forms of payment for conducting these interviews. When I replied that I did not draw a salary as such, she became much more friendly with me, often asking if I had completed my work yet and was willing to introduce me to another hawker in the market she thought I would be interested in speaking with.

Another strategy I used to overcome any perceptions of unbalanced power differentials was the process of the interviews themselves. Rather than being uni-directional information gathering sessions, the interviews were more like reciprocal exchanges and I found myself often being interviewed by informants whilst I was interviewing them. This two-way flow of ideas and information provided a sort of transparency to my motives and my interest, which helped in creating an atmosphere of mutual trust.

Whilst I am certain that this study will have little direct impact on the livelihoods of my informants, I do believe that there are more indirect impacts on their lives. One of

the key themes that arose from the interviews and from spending time in the markets is that this study was able to 'give voice' to a marginalized population of the community. As one of my informants said, "no one has ever come and sat down with us on the streets to discuss the issues that are important to us. No one asks" (TY-2, August 7, 2006). Rose (1997) states that by giving voice to the marginalized and giving people the power to choose to participate in interviews and have control over the information they provide, this helps to reduce their vulnerability. I hope that this study was able to even out the balance of power in some way, by being able to give my informants such a voice.

As with all qualitative studies, complete objectivity is difficult to achieve. However, by recognizing the inherent flaws within my methodology, I believe I was able to capture the spirit of markets in Hong Kong and the essence of the stories of my participants. In this light, the following three chapters reveal the findings from my field work.

CHAPTER 4: THE CHANGING FACE OF PUBLIC SPACE IN HONG KONG

In this chapter I contextualize the conditions of market spaces in Hong Kong, while situating this discussion within broader debates concerning the management of public spaces in Hong Kong today. As the management of public spaces becomes an important means to help establish Hong Kong's global identity, public markets, especially street markets, become problematic within the city's grand vision. To explore this issue, three main questions will be addressed in this chapter that act as the context for this thesis. First, what is the nature of public spaces in Hong Kong? Second, how are public spaces in Hong Kong changing? And third, what role does cultural identity play in the production of public spaces in Hong Kong?

The first section of this chapter, Section 4.1, building upon my broader discussion in Chapter 2, provides a working definition of public spaces and their uses, the quality of these spaces, and the growing trend towards privatizing public spaces in the specific context of Hong Kong. Section 4.2. then addresses some of the possible causes for why the quality of public spaces is changing in Hong Kong. The last section of this chapter, Section 4.3, focuses on one particular cause for the changes in the definition and management of public spaces in Hong Kong, the role of 'Brand Hong Kong'.

4.1. PUBLIC SPACE IN HONG KONG

Ackbar Abbas (1997) refers to public spaces in Hong Kong as being both 'ambiguous' and 'ambivalent'. His characterization highlights two main points regarding the quality of public spaces in the city, namely the lack of available open, public spaces, and the question of whether Hong Kong's public spaces are truly public, as they are increasingly placed under private control. To understand these changes, we first need to explore how public spaces are defined and how they are used in this specific context.

4.1.1. Defining Public Space and its Uses in Hong Kong

As briefly summarized in Chapter 2, Section 2.1.1, public spaces in Hong Kong are defined as any space accessible to the public. In Hong Kong legislation, a 'public place' refers to:

> (a) any public street or pier, or any public garden; and
>
> (b) any theatre, places of public entertainment of any kind, or other places of general resort, admission to which is obtained by payment or to which the public have or are permitted to have access (Department of Justice, 2007: online)
>
> As such, this legal definition of a public place in Hong Kong clearly provides

room for open interpretation of what this constitutes, the activities that can take place in public spaces, the manner in which they are regulated, and most importantly, who constitutes 'the public'. If one follows this loose definition then, indoor wet markets and street markets are classified as public spaces because of the open access for both patrons and vendors. What is also of interest in this definition of public space, as will be seen in my case study to follow, is that it does not include the concept of public space as a space for social gatherings. That is, there is no stipulation as to whether public spaces serve as a destination or as a means to move between private spaces.

Despite the ambiguous nature of this legal definition, the importance of public spaces in Hong Kong has been addressed by a number of scholars who all point to the necessity of accessible public spaces due to the incredibly high population density in the city (and the apparent lack of space within homes) (see Cuthbert, 1995; Abbas, 1997; Cuthbert and McKinnell, 1997; Kinoshita, 2001; Xue et al., 2001; Law, 2002; Manuel and Xue, 2002; Rooney, 2003; Herzog, 2006). The result of the high population density has been a blurring of public/private boundaries wherein private space activities are often conducted in public spaces. Activities such as napping, socializing, doing physical exercise, and eating are now commonly undertaken in various public spaces such as sitting-out areas, parks, outdoor stairwells (such as MTR entrances and pedestrian overpasses) and street markets.

Kinoshita's (2001) study of streets in Yau Ma Tei, Kowloon, Hong Kong found a blurring of public and private spaces as people extended their homes out onto the streets

due to the high-density housing conditions in the area. Due to the minimized domestic space available, the home acts as a sleeping space while other 'private space activities' such as eating, recreation, and socializing are often moved to street markets, especially cooked-food stalls.

Similarly, Siu (1998) noted that hawkers in the Chun Yeung Street Market treat their stalls as an extension of their homes. The market space serves more than just an economic function but also acts as a social space for community interaction. Also, since most of the hawkers live within a short walk from the market, "they have extended their home living patterns to their stalls and their dwelling space extends out into the street" (Siu, 1998: 139). Amenities from home such as television sets and kitchen supplies are brought into the 'work space' and the casual comforts of 'home behavior' such as informal attire and sitting on the floor of the stall contribute to the fuzziness of the boundary between public and private spaces in these Hong Kong streets.

Another such occurrence of the blurring between public and private is the use of open spaces, particularly in Central, a downtown location on Hong Kong Island, by foreign domestic workers on Sundays. Without private homes to return to on their day off, foreign domestic workers, mainly women from the Philippines, gather in public squares, parks and passageways such as the tunnel to the Central Star Ferry Dock to pass the time with friends and colleagues - often sharing meals, playing cards or napping (Law, 2002). Law (2002) refers to this use of Hong Kong's public spaces as a space of contestation as public spaces of commerce are transformed into private spaces used by the temporarily homeless foreign domestic workers. These individuals, by undertaking such actions, introduce transnational, cosmopolitan elements to the cultural landscape, thereby possibly redefining the meaning of public spaces.

The street specifically, plays an important role in the urban landscape of Hong Kong. As introduced in Section 2.1.2 of Chapter 2, streets can be argued to have an identity of their own and contribute to the formation of urban landscapes and cultural identity, providing a space for social and economic activities and reflecting cultural experiences (Siu, 1998; Xue and Manuel, 2002). As Siu (1998: 136-7) notes in the context of Hong Kong, "the street concealed the potential for unplanned, rule-breaking,

non-goal-directed activities. As a result, a great opportunity was provided to the users, particularly the inhabitants, to make something of their own – and the open street developed its own characteristics and identity". Clearly, streets in Hong Kong serve a greater function than just as transportation thoroughfares.

4.1.2. Quality of Public Spaces in Hong Kong

Despite the importance of public spaces in Hong Kong for providing additional living spaces in a space-poor setting, the quality of available public spaces has almost universally been described as poor, or deteriorating (Cuthbert, 1995; Cuthbert and McKinnell, 1997; Siu, 1998; Xue et al., 2001; Xue and Manuel, 2002). A study by Xue and Manuel (2002) showed that the quality of street life in Hong Kong is not seen by the general population as an important issue. They note that despite the declining quality of streets, "the historical, aesthetic and culture [sic] value of street life are generally ignored by the general public in the post-modern age" (ibid.: 8). They continue to argue that the quality of streets as public spaces in Hong Kong is on the decline due to increased pressures from economic activities and traffic demands (Xue and Manuel, 2002).

More specifically, a survey conducted in Mong Kok district, Kowloon, identified six key issues concerning public spaces in the district that one could argue are indicative of the problems concerning public space found throughout Hong Kong (Xue et al., 2001). First, the quality of much of the public spaces are seen as poor due to urban planning decisions wherein 'open spaces' are tucked into 'leftover' spaces or are inaccessible by the general public despite being classified as public open spaces. Second, users of available public spaces are perceived to be abusers who take advantage of the space to perform illicit activities such as gambling and drug-use. Third, the locations of public spaces are deemed to be unsuitable for attracting users because of the high land value in areas with greater population densities. Fourth, the types of public spaces available in Mong Kok district are deemed unsuitable to the needs of the users, for example, active recreational spaces such as basketball courts and soccer fields are redundant when the primary users of public spaces in this area are elderly people. Fifth, the lack of 'identity' and/or importance of the public spaces means people do not have a sense of connection to

the space. Finally, there is a general lack of concern over the presence and quality of public spaces, a concern that is reflected throughout Hong Kong (ibid.).

The issues discussed above, pointed out by various scholars, were confirmed through my own field observations made during the Summer of 2006. For example, in the North Point neighborhood on Hong Kong Island (see Appendix II) people can be seen gathering on the street near the markets or resting under an overpass while a nearby sitting-out area[7] and a nearby park stood empty. The park consisted of a fenced in basketball court with no seating available, while the sitting-out area was tucked behind a commercial building, away from the nearby bustle. From observations, it was clear that the public spaces which had been built specifically with recreation and gathering in mind did not meet the demands of their potential users. Rather, people congregated in other public areas such as streets and sidewalks, which were more active social settings than the parks and sitting out areas.

Similarly, at Tin Wan Market on the Southern coast of Hong Kong Island (see Appendix II), elderly women gathered on the front steps of the market building to socialize rather than in the sitting-out area tucked in the back of the building complex. This particular sitting-out area provided significant shade as it was bounded on one side by the side of a hill and contained more greenery than many of the observed sitting-out areas. However, the space opened out into the covered Tin Wan Market Cooked-Food Stalls[8], which gave the space the feel of sitting in a restaurant kitchen. Likewise, in the busy market area near Reclamation Street in Mong Kok, the streets and sidewalks were packed with people shopping, just passing through, or socializing. One block away, a sitting-out area is tucked between two high-rise buildings. The space is clean and provided users with seating under shade but was frequently empty during the time I spent in the area.

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[7] Sitting-out areas are small parcels of land made available to the public by the State. These spaces, often located on 'left-over' land from development projects, include seating and shade for users.
[8] Market cooked-food areas are spaces usually housed with public market complexes and contain various stalls that provide low-cost meals. The kitchen area for each stall is typically located directly adjacent to the dining area with little or no separation.

During a District Council meeting with the Planning Department, two options were raised and discussed regarding how to treat the continued decline in the availability of public spaces in Wan Chai. The first option, which is the Planning Department's active policy, is to get private developers to 'give back' a portion of the space in their new development for the public. This usually occurs in the form of indoor atriums and lobbies or as retail spaces. The second option that was brought up was to try and repeat what the government did in the 1970s-1980s by rezoning small areas for conversion to public spaces such as the sitting-out areas that currently dot the urban landscape. This second option was not met favorably by several councilors who decried the uselessness of such spaces currently, and referred to these spaces as 'after-thoughts' in urban planning that made use of small plots of 'left-over' land. However, redevelopment plans are controlled by the Planning Department and do not require the Wan Chai District Council's approval (WCDC Meeting Notes - July 25, 2007).

Despite the positive fact that concerns over the loss public space were included during the meeting, it is interesting to note that the issue of accessibility was not mentioned. The conversion of public spaces from outdoor, park areas to indoor, privately controlled 'public' spaces did not seem to concern the attendants of the meeting. Another noticeable exclusion in the public space discussion was the role of streets and sidewalks, and likewise, the loss of streets and sidewalks as a space for social interaction did not appear to be an important concern.

One could argue, that given the inappropriateness of many so-called purpose-built public spaces in Hong Kong, many people have appropriated other, less conventional spaces to become their public activity spheres. Yet as the public becomes increasingly privatized, as discussed next, these less conventional public spaces become even more contested and less viable.

4.1.3. Privatizing the Public

Since Abbas' (1997) observations in the late 1990s, there has been a continued trend in both the disappearance of available open spaces and the privatization of public spaces in

Hong Kong. Here, privatization refers to two ideas; first, the privatization through action, and second, the privatization through financial ownership.

From the definition of public spaces in the Hong Kong context stated above in Section 4.1.1, it should be noted that the emphasis regarding what constitutes a public space is on *access* rather than *ownership* of the space. As such, many large-scale, business-orientated privately owned spaces especially, fall under the definition of public space in Hong Kong, despite privatized control and regulation of the space.

Law (2002: 1629), similarly discusses the ideas of access regarding public spaces, noting that in Hong Kong, "public spaces are not incorporated into development projects for democratic ideals; they increase the flow of commodities in the city. The result is an urban space that reflects the views of the powerful, with local residents merely traipsing over these spaces as passive subjects". Law's statement, though perhaps overly cynical, and tending to ignore people's ability to be more than just 'passive subjects', does turn our attention to the effects of a *laissez-faire* approach to governance concerning the formation and regulation of public space. Similarly, Cuthbert (1995: 294) labels these publicly commissioned, privately funded and controlled spaces as 'ambiguous spaces', spaces that, "masquerade as social space, [but] they are totally commodified, along with the experiences they contain".

It has been mentioned above that there is a blurring of public and private regarding activities in public spaces. Another form of public-private blurring occurs regarding the terms of investment surrounding the creation of public spaces and the partnerships formed between State interests and private developers. Two major factors contributing to the loss of public spaces in the central core of Hong Kong Island and the increasing commodification and privatization of space are the plot-ratio benefits gained by private developers in exchange for them apportioning part of their development for public use, as well as the Government's treatment of land as a market commodity (in a city where land is considered to be a rare commodity) (Cuthbert, 1995; Cuthbert and McKinnell, 1997). This confluence of factors has created a specific environment in Hong Kong that forces a constant negotiation and renegotiation over rights of use and access between the users and producers of public spaces.

This practice of privatization has led to differential gaps in accessibility to public spaces with open park spaces and squares being rapidly replaced with atriums and malls. The latter are heavily regulated to suit private interests and are geared towards consumption rather than socializing and community building. My field observations confirm these shifts, with spaces that might have been deemed 'public' such as the atriums of shopping malls in locations such as Central, Wan Chai and Causeway Bay generally heavily patrolled by private security forces (as well as Hawker Control Officers). These malls lack the amenities that would permit or invite people to spend time in these spaces, such as seating. Indoor spaces that would allow for the passing of time and provide the space to do so, sheltered from heat or rain, now require the consumption of goods. This was observed during an afternoon spent observing people in a fast food restaurant in Kwun Tong, a relatively poorer neighborhood. People there were spending their entire afternoon napping, reading, or socializing with friends – after they had purchased something – yet these are all activities that can be performed without this forced consumption of goods if public spaces are available. As stated in Chapter 2, these changes bring to the forefront issues of social justice as unequal power relations within Hong Kong's social structure are emphasized by the unequal access to public spaces (Harvey, 1973; Davis, 1990; Zukin, 1995).

What these literatures and field observations highlight is that since Abbas' observations in the late 1990s, there has been a continued trend in the disappearance of available open spaces and the privatization of formerly public spaces. This privatization has occurred through two channels, via the privatization through regulations, and through the privatization through financial ownership.

4.2. CAUSES OF THE CHANGING QUALITY OF PUBLIC SPACE IN HONG KONG

I would argue that the quality of public spaces in Hong Kong is clearly changing. Though whether these changes should be evaluated as positive or negative is another question. So, why are these changes taking place, and more importantly, why are they allowed to take place?

Some scholars argue that the changing demographics in Hong Kong are creating new profiles of people's sense of place and hence their interactions with the social and physical landscape of their neighborhood. One of the key shifts is the change from renters to property owners, a shift that is enhanced by rapid urban redevelopment projects occurring in the central core of Hong Kong Island. As some informants from the Wan Chai market area stated, there is now more interest to protect property values and this interest extends to regulating the surrounding spaces of the property (such as sidewalks and streets) and not just the property itself (CS-5, August 7, 2006; TY-2, August 7, 2006).

Another aspect of the shifting demographics is the increasing dichotomy between 'local' and 'cosmopolitan'. Return migrants, a group often argued to be the cause of the rising popularity of supermarkets - to the detriment of wet markets - are said to be contributing to the changing social and physical landscape in Hong Kong bringing with them more 'cosmopolitan' notions of urban landscapes that are clashing with more traditional, 'local' notions (Forrest et al., 2002).

Yet another argument of how shifting demographics are changing people's attitudes towards public spaces, especially streets, was suggested to me by a Wan Chai District Councilor. Referring to the problem of vendors extending their retail spaces out onto the sidewalks, the councilor noted that it is not that there are more people putting things out onto the sidewalks, but that there are more complaints. He believes this may be because of the growth of the financial and business sectors in the area and that growing numbers of white-collar workers "do not want to walk out into such a dirty environment" (NM-2, July 27, 2006).

As well as demographic change and related shifting opinions, urban redevelopment projects are also playing a key role in the changing quality of and opinions regarding public space. An additional concern coming from the Wan Chai District Council addresses the role of urban redevelopment projects in the continued decrease in public spaces in the district. Their concern stems from the lack of regulation over the development of high-rise residential units as a replacement for the older ten-storey buildings from the post-WWII period and the lack of re-zoning plans that include

proposals to increase and/or protect the presence of public spaces (WCDC Meeting Notes, July 25, 2007).

4.2.1. Market Trader Responses to Changes in Public Space

As the processes of industrialization and urbanization have continued in Hong Kong since the 1980s, the government has continued to respond to increasing conflicts over the use of public space – such as hawkers operating in public street markets - by increasing State authority, as noted in Chapter 1. In return, hawkers have responded to these spatial interventions by the government in various ways. Illegal hawkers have decreased their chances of being raided and fined by voluntarily relocating to less profitable areas, changing their work hours, increasing their mobility, making use of social networks as a source of information or hiding in nearby stores to avoid raids (Smart, 1989; see also Higgs, 2003). Fixed-pitch stall hawkers have resisted the government's imposition of spatial restrictions by increasing their assigned space with mobile displays that can be brought back in when the authorities are nearby, renting another pitch (albeit illegally) in the area, or moving to a new location altogether to avoid space regulations (Smart, 1989).

As discussed above in Section 4.1.1, a study of the Chun Yeung Street market in North Point, found that despite the government's best efforts to 'clean up' the ragtag agglomeration of hawkers since the early 1970's period of stabilization, the hawkers in the area have continued to blur the *de jure* boundaries between public and private (Siu, 1998). Storefronts and fixed-pitch stalls routinely extend their shop space upwards and outwards towards the street and often converting the sidewalks into an indoor market. Likewise, the pitches and stores are often treated as an extension of the hawkers' private home, furnished with amenities such as phones, chairs, and kitchen supplies, all within an informal atmosphere. Sui (1998: 139) described how "the street users still like to follow their own rules and lifestyles to define and use their space, such as they like to privatize public areas; and the reverse is also true as people turn some of the private areas…into public social gathering places".

Similarly, in the Yau Ma Tei district, where the Temple Street, Reclamation Street and the Yau Ma Tei Public Markets are located, Kinoshita (2001) noted that people

often blurred the lines between public and private space by extending their homes out onto the streets because of the dense housing conditions. The public and street markets then, act as a catchment for the overflow of residents by providing food, entertainment and social interaction. As such, it is clear that as Hong Kong continues to develop, public spaces are being rapidly and often dramatically redefined. At the same time, local users of these spaces, including market vendors, are reworking their own strategies to use these spaces as they see fit.

4.3. BRANDING A NEW IDENTITY

The continuously changing quality and availability of public spaces in Hong Kong, as noted above, reflects the progression and shape of the city's development. Reflecting upon this more broadly, I argue here that the current changes in Hong Kong, and hence the changing availability of public space for individuals such as market traders, can be traced to the growing aspirations of the post-1997 Hong Kong government for Hong Kong to remain competitive as a global city. These aspirations are rooted in the State's creation of a specific identity for Hong Kong.

4.3.1. Defining Hong Kong's Imagined Identity

While a question such as 'what is Hong Kong's identity' is beyond the scope of this study, there are a few important elements, which are useful to reflect upon here in regards to how marketplaces are portrayed within this identity and how they fit (or not) into the State's future aspirations for the city. Seemingly, with each political shift such as the rise of the communist regime in 1949 and the closing of the doors between Hong Kong and the mainland, or the exit of British colonial rule in 1997, the city has sought to redefine itself.

It is argued that ethnic Chinese living in colonial Hong Kong shared more commonalities with their colonial compatriots than with people in their native homeland (Abbas, 1997; Tsang, 2004). Abbas described Hong Kong at that time as a temporary stop, a portal between destinations and as such Hong Kong's identity has always uniquely

been one on being 'in-between'. As such, the concept of a 'local' identity becomes defined in relation to *extra-local* identities. Abbas (1997: 69) notes that in Hong Kong "there is a desperate attempt to clutch as images of identity however alien or clichéd these images are. There is a need to define a sense of place through buildings and other means". Architectural structures such as the Golden Bauhinia described below in Section 4.3.3 then, are used to form a sense of place in response to globalizing forces.

More specifically, one can consider that Hong Kong's 'imagined community' (see Anderson, 1983) nowadays centers on a form of popular culture that borrows overseas influences as a means to manipulate traditional Chinese cultural aspects. The current Hong Kong identity is mired in both traditional and modern concepts as Tsang (2004: 195) writes:

> This shared outlook incorporated elements of the étraditional [sic] Confucian moral code and emphasis on the importance of family, as well as modern concepts like the rule of law…a limited government, a free economy, a go-getting attitude and pride in the local community's collective rejection of corruption.

How are traditional aspects of Hong Kong's culture interacting with the cultivation of a new image for Hong Kong as an 'international city' at the beginning of the 21st century? I argue that at a community level, Hong Kong's identity is still closely tied to the city's streetscapes. Indeed, surveys referring to cultural identity often cite the loss of public space for informal social interactions[9] as one of their key themes. Cook and Ng (2001: 3-6) commented on this point by noting that, "the lack of centrally located public squares or community-friendly open spaces may be counted as a 'local characteristic'" with regards to Hong Kong. Likewise, Law (2002: 1627) writes: "Hong Kong is a city where what emerges as new – including a unique local identity – is always intertwined with the conditions of its disappearance".

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[9] A 1998 Chinese University survey cited, "rickshaws, open street markets, old Western district, traditional handmade lanterns, the old Bird Street, [and] old men fishing on piers, etc" (Cody, 2002: 193) as common responses to what people considered were 'lost' in Hong Kong's 'life'.

One explanation for the poor quality of public spaces in Hong Kong that has been raised is the role of Chinese culture's valuation of public life (Xue et al., 2001). Part of this explanation rests on historical aspects such as the discouragement of people's activities outside of walled residential compounds through curfews and the government's prohibition of public gatherings as a means of controlling the people in dynastic China. A more contemporary interpretation is that Hong Kong's density of built structures and the lack of public space is "evidence of Hong Kong's modernization" (Xue et al., 2001: 24).

As a city created by a migrant, expatriate community, the issue of a nationalistic identity has always been an issue of contention in Hong Kong. The role of identity must be clearly defined at both a State and community level, as identity is a primary determinant in what needs to be preserved in the cultural landscape of an ever-changing urban center such as Hong Kong (Cody, 2002).

The process of decolonization and the establishment of the new HKSAR government after 1997 has led to an active changing of Hong Kong's cultural memory by abolishing old (and establishing new) symbolic and heritage sites, an interesting approach to creating a new identity as there is said to be a Chinese perception that culture and heritage is tied to family and ethnic rituals rather than to physical space (Cody, 2002). Yet w*ho* gets to define what is important and *how* do people define what is important? The following section attempts to answer this question in terms of how state aspirations for economic development through increasing the city's competitiveness in a globalizing economy are reshaping the city's imagined identity and in turn, the definition of the city's public spaces.

4.3.2. Hong Kong: The Brand

Following in the footsteps of such cities as New York, Sydney, and London, after the handover from British colonial rule in 1997, Hong Kong sought to determine the perception of its identity in the global scene (Brand Hong Kong, 2004). The branding of Hong Kong with the tagline of 'Asia's World City' (as shown in Figure 4.1) comes from a State desire to promote the city as a global city to encourage economic development as

well as to distance itself from international perceptions of Mainland China. Hong Kong's Commission of Strategic Development states that:

> Hong Kong needs to promote its unique position as one of the most cosmopolitan and vibrant cities in Asia to a wide range of international audiences. A successful external promotion programme can have a significant positive impact on Hong Kong's ability to achieve a number of key economic, social and cultural objectives (Brand Hong Kong, 2004: online).

This vision, or aspiration to be known as a global city influences the production of Hong Kong's public spaces directly through the mandates and visions of governmental departments that are responsible for regulating these spaces. For example, the Leisure and Cultural Services Department, which is responsible for public parks, states their vision as: "We aim to provide quality leisure and cultural services commensurate with Hong Kong's development as a world-class city and events capital" (LCSD, 2003: online). The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department, responsible for public and street markets, states their vision as: "To work hand in hand with our community in building Hong Kong into a world-class metropolis renowned for its food safety and public hygiene" (FEHD, 2007: online). These visions and mandates translate into particular goals and ideals for what the form of the urban landscape should be, often to the detriment of more traditional uses of public spaces.

Figure 4.1: Brand Hong Kong (Source: Brand Hong Kong, 2004: online)

The concern of the post-1997 Hong Kong government that Hong Kong's reputation would decline after the handover alongside its increased association with Mainland China can also be witnessed in State interactions on a more local scale (Brand Hong Kong, 2004). For example, during a meeting of the Wan Chai District Council, the issue of

buskers and panhandlers working within the district arose. Both activities are considered illegal in Hong Kong and are therefore highly regulated. The 'problem' under discussion was for the councilors to find a way to allow for select street art performances the way they do in Europe and North America. Solutions that were introduced centered on researching how regulations on busking are handled internationally (with emphasis on the United Kingdom and other locations in the Western world) (WCDC meeting notes, July 18, 2006). The philosophy behind the Brand Hong Kong and this aspiration to become a city that fits into the global economy therefore translates into the building of a new imagined identity that appears to be drawing inspiration from a number of western cities, and that wishes for public spaces to be used in very select ways.

4.3.3. Imagineering a New Global City

Imagineering refers to the coming-together of creativity and technology to produce thematic approaches to the production and promotion of goods, services and places (Teo, 2003). It is a mythical and symbolic construction of social spaces (Yeoh, 2005). Originally a Disney term that has been co-opted into the public space lexicon, Imagineering is best illustrated through the various exhibitions found in Disneyland where cultures are evoked through the strategic use of specific images seen to represent particular places and/or cultures. Such symbolic construction of space draws on an oversimplified version of local cultural identities.

In Hong Kong, such imagineering occurs variously in public and private spaces using specific coded landscapes to promote particular ideals. The process of decolonization provided the opportunity to reimagine Hong Kong's culturally symbolic spaces through the re-assignation of meanings and importance of symbolic space. For example, the Golden Bauhinia Statue outside the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre, as shown in Figure 4.2, replaces the former colonial buildings as a symbol of State presence as the bauhinia flower is State's symbol.

Managers and owners of private spaces utilize the process of Imagineering spaces as a means to sell particular lifestyles. The Palm Springs gated community in The New Territories is a good example of this. Designed to evoke a sense of living in the west, the

Palm Springs gated community utilizes symbolic imagery of Californian residential spaces such as palm tree lined streets and low bungalow style housing. Such use of imagineering in Hong Kong allows people to purchase their own portion of the globalized ideal.

More specifically, in terms of public spaces, the transformation of the Western Market (as shown in Figure 4.3) is a good illustration of how State aspirations of being a global city are resulting in the redesigning of public market spaces. The Western Market, located in Central, was built in 1906 and used as an indoor public wet market until 1988. Considered to be a Heritage Building, the Western Market was saved from demolition and later renovated by the Urban Renewal Authority of Hong Kong. The market re-opened in 1991 as a shopping mall selling tourist oriented goods and decorated to evince a Chinese atmosphere with intricate wood lattices, silk banners and red lanterns (Urban Renewal Authority, 2005). This example demonstrates how the State is attempting to 'clean up' the city by removing elements deemed to be eyesores for an international audience and replacing them with idealized forms. This echos Mitchell's (1995, 2003) argument (introduced in Chapter 2) that public spaces are often created for theatre and consumption to convey particular meanings and values. The building of the new Wan Chai Market as illustrated later in Chapter 6 is a more current example of how State

Figure 4.2: The Golden Bauhinia Statue (Source: Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre, 2004: online)

Figure 4.3: Western Market (Source: Urban Renewal Authority, 2005: online)

aspirations to remain competitive in the global economy are changing the quality and use of public spaces, especially market spaces, in Hong Kong.

4.4. CHAPTER CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have illustrated the changes to Hong Kong's public spaces as they relate to the State's vision for the city to be increasingly and evermore competitive in the global economy. As defined in the conceptual framework presented in Chapter 2, public spaces can be considered as symbolic spaces and indeed, in the case of Hong Kong, public spaces are increasingly used as a symbol of Hong Kong's modernization process.

The chapter began with defining what public spaces are in Hong Kong according to the legal code as well as what that translates to 'on the ground'. Through a review of other scholars' studies on Hong Kong's public spaces and through field observations, Sections 4.1.1 and 4.1.2 discussed the changing quality of these spaces towards what is discussed in Section 4.1.3 as the privatization of the public. Private development of high rise residential buildings, office space, and up-scale shopping centers are replacing public spaces such as sitting-out areas and market spaces with privately-controlled spaces that are not open to processes of negotiation in terms of rights of access and exclusion.

Section 4.2 outlined some of the causes of the changes to Hong Kong's public spaces, particularly as these apply to public market spaces. Section 4.2.2 introduced the ways in which hawkers and market vendors have responded to the loss of and decline in quality of public spaces available to them for their livelihoods. One such response is the way these informal traders, especially street hawkers, extend their stall spaces outwards to reclaim public space, a response that comes up in Chapters 5 and 6 as well.

The last section of this chapter, 4.3, explored one of the driving forces behind why public spaces in Hong Kong are changing. 'Brand Hong Kong' is the State's response to pressures of the global economy to remain competitive, a response that aims to promote the city as a world-class city to draw in foreign investment. Part of the mandate of Brand Hong Kong is the imagineering of the city's urban landscape to fit into a vision of modernization while trying to remain culturally unique. The following chapters examine how this vision intersects with public and street market spaces and the conflicts that have arisen as a result. The next chapter provides a snapshot of the current conditions of Hong Kong's marketplaces and how they are changing as the city redefines its identity.

CHAPTER 5: CURRENT CONDITIONS OF PUBLIC MARKET SPACES IN HONG KONG

Current studies of public markets and street markets in Hong Kong are fragmented and dispersed. This chapter pulls together the various sources of information available regarding market spaces in Hong Kong while also including analyses from my own field observations and interviews to form a more complete picture of the legal, economic and social conditions of public market spaces today.

This chapter begins in Section 5.1 with an introduction of the legal definitions of markets and hawkers in Hong Kong and the different classifications that will inform the remainder of this study. The following Section 5.2 describes the regulatory body of public markets and hawkers, their mandate, structure, practice, and examples of how hawkers and market vendors interact with the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD). The remaining two sections of the chapter detail the physical (Section 5.3) and social (Section 5.4) environment of public market spaces and street markets. The physical characteristics of public markets and the ways in which they are integrated into urban neighborhoods reflect the ways in which these spaces are a key component to the physical and social landscapes of Hong Kong's urban areas. From an economic perspective, these public market spaces are also crucial to the livelihoods of small-scale entrepreneurs in Hong Kong.

5.1. CLASSIFYING STREET AND MARKET TRADE

The definition of marketplaces introduced in Chapter 2 highlights the informality of such spaces for the exchange of goods as well as conditions that usually include low inventories, low investment needs, and high labor inputs. Market vendors and street hawkers then, refer to the people who work in these spaces. However, within the context of Hong Kong and for the purpose of this study, public markets, market vendors, and street hawkers refer specifically to the classifications stipulated under Hong Kong legislation as detailed below.

5.1.1. Market Classifications

Under current Hong Kong legislation, what are typically defined as street markets and/or wet markets can be divided into three separate classifications. Public markets and street (and itinerant) hawkers are under the jurisdiction of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) while markets located in private shopping centers, private storefronts and within public housing areas are regulated by the Housing Authority (HA) (FEHD, 2006b; FEHD, 2006d; HKHA, 2006). The main focus of this study however is on Public Markets and Fixed-Pitch Stall Street Markets - those regulated by the FEHD and located in public spaces.

The definitions of markets, hawkers and public spaces in Hong Kong are murky at best. Under current legislation, hawkers and markets are covered under Chapter 132 of Hong Kong's Legal Ordinance. This was enacted on January 1, 2000, when jurisdiction over hawkers and markets was transferred from the now-defunct Urban Council to the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department. Definitions regarding what a market is or indeed, what constitutes public and private, are difficult to pin down and much of the interpretive power is given to the Director of the FEHD. For example, under Chapter 132 Section 2 of the Hong Kong legislation, a 'public market' is defined as "a market designated as a public market under section 79(3)"[10] (Department of Justice, 2004: online). Perhaps even more frustratingly, a 'private market' is defined under Chapter 132 Section 2 as "any market other than a public market", whilst a 'market' "means any market to which, by virtue of a declaration by the Authority under section 79(1)[11], this Ordinance applies" (ibid.).

5.1.1.1. Housing Authority Markets

The first classification of markets in Hong Kong are those that fall under the jurisdiction of the Housing Authority. These markets are either located within public or private housing complexes or occupy storefront retail spaces, as shown in Figure 5.1 and 5.2. Stall space in Housing Authority Markets is typically larger than those found in FEHD

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[10] Cap132 s 79(3) states, "The Authority may, by order published in the Gazette, designate as a public market any market to which the Ordinance applies".

[11] Cap132 s 79(1) states, "This Ordinance shall apply to every market, being a market in which food is sold, which is declared by the Authority to be a market to which the Ordinance applies".

markets and the monthly rental costs are much higher, upwards of HKD$30,000 per month compared to FEHD's public markets where rent is around HKD$3,000 per month (Lee, 2006; FEHD, 2007a). This study however, focuses on the two types of markets described below, public markets and fixed-pitch stall (street) markets.

Figure 5.1: Tai Ping Market, a private indoor market located in a residential complex (Source: Zunn, 2006)

Figure 5.2: Storefront market stalls in Wan Chai (Source: Zunn, 2006)

5.1.1.2. Public Markets

Commissioned and maintained by the FEHD, public marketplaces exist either as a stand-alone building or as part of a municipal complex, which often also houses a local public library, recreational spaces and other municipal services. These public markets are typically multi-storied with a cooked-food center on the top floor and various wet and dry goods occupying the lower floors of the building, organized by the type of goods sold, as shown in Figure 5.3.

Stall sizes can range from around 2m^2 to around 12m^2 depending on the market and the types of

Figure 5.3: Market directory for Tin Wan Market (Source: Zunn, 2006)

goods the stall is reserved for. Dry and wet goods such as soy products typically occupy the smaller stalls while the larger stalls are reserved for fishmongers and for cooked food sellers (FEHD, 2007a). Stalls are rented through monthly auctions held by the FEHD (see Section 5.2.1.3 below) while market management teams conduct the maintenance of individual markets. To date, there are 104 public market facilities of which 25 are purely cooked food markets run by the FEHD on Hong Kong Island, Kowloon, and the New Territories (see Appendix IV for list of markets).

5.1.1.3. Fixed-Pitch Stall Markets

'Fixed pitch' refers to "any pitch delineated on the ground in any place or street for the use of fixed-pitch hawker licensees" (FEHD, 2006a: no pagination). Fixed-pitch stall markets typically line both sides of a street that is often closed to vehicular traffic permanently or for a specified period of time. Stall spaces are demarcated by yellow lines painted on the street and numbered. Stall sizes vary by market but typically do not exceed $1m^2$, as shown in Figure 5.4.

Figure 5.4: Yellow boxes demarcating street market stall spaces on Temple Street (Zunn, 2006)

Figure 5.5: Electrical outlets behind Temple Street Market stalls (Source: Zunn, 2006)

Certain fixed-pitch stalls have semi-permanent fixtures including access to electrical outlets, as shown in Figure 5.5. These fixtures, often green, wooden shed-like structures are used for storage space to store inventory and can be locked up when the

stalls are closed. Hawkers are expected to operate within the yellow lines and may be cited (fined) for obstruction if their stalls encroach past the line.

5.1.2. Hawker Classifications and Licensing

Under the Hong Kong legislation, a 'hawker' is defined as:

(a) any person who trades in any public place –
(i) by selling or exposing for sale any goods, wares or merchandise; or
(ii) by exposing samples or patterns of goods, wares or merchandise to be afterwards delivered; or
(iii)by hiring or offering for hire his skill in handicraft or his personal services; and
(b) any person who itinerates for the purpose –
(i) of selling or exposing for sale any goods, wares or merchandise; or
(ii) of hiring or offering for hire his skill in handicraft or his personal services:
Provided that nothing in this definition shall be taken to include –
(i) any person who sells to or seeks orders from any person who is a dealer in any such goods, wares or merchandise and who buys to sell again; or
(ii) any person who on request visits in any place the person making such request for the purpose of selling or offering for sale or delivering to him or taking from him orders for any goods, wares or merchandise or of hiring to the person making such request his skill in handicraft or his personal services; or
(iii)any representative of the press or any photographer;
(Department of Justice, 2004: online)

It should be noted that the law states that a hawker is someone who trades in 'any public place', with no stipulation on limits on 'any'.

Hawkers are classified according to their licenses, namely, fixed-pitch stall, itinerant, and temporary. To these, I would add a fourth classification of unlicensed or illegal hawkers. Fixed-pitch hawkers are licensed to work in assigned fixed-pitch stalls whilst itinerant hawker licenses are appointed to mobile hawkers that are not assigned a pitch (FEHD, 2006c). Temporary hawker licenses are short-term licenses that are assigned at the discretion of the Director of the FEHD with special restrictions including

a maximum duration of one month, and are not valid for commercial use or profit (FEHD, 2006b). These temporary licenses are mainly used for fundraising activities.

Fixed-pitch and itinerant hawkers are further classified by their category of trade. Fixed-pitch hawkers are divided into seven categories: bootblack; cooked food or light refreshment; newspaper; tradesman; barber; wall stall; and other classes (FEHD, 2006a). Itinerant hawkers are divided into five categories: tradesman; newspaper; frozen confectionery; mobile van; and other classes (FEHD, 2006c).

5.2. REGULATING MARKETS AND HAWKERS

5.2.1. The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

5.2.1.1. Mandate

The FEHD's authority over hawkers and public markets began on January 1, 2000 when it was given responsibility over people hawking in public places (including public markets) through a licensing system and enforcement. Working under the continued perception of hawkers being a public nuisance causing obstruction in urban spaces, the FEHD's active mandate is to: cease issuing new hawker licenses; enforce policies on illegal hawking through the confiscation of goods and issuing fines; enforce policies on obstruction of public space; and move street hawkers indoors (FEHD, 2006b). This perspective of forced tolerance of markets in public spaces, as discussed in Chapter 2, is common in policies pertaining to urban public spaces (Bromely, 2000; Cross, 2000; Brown 2006a; Pratt, 2006).

The vision of the FEHD is much broader than the mandate stated above however, and seeks "to work hand in hand with our community in building Hong Kong into a world-class metropolis renowned for its food safety and public hygiene" (FEHD, 2007c: online).   This vision of a world-class metropolis, a sentiment in line with the aspirations of Brand Hong Kong as described in the previous chapter (Section 4.3.2), drives much of the policies and actions of the FEHD.

5.2.1.2. Forfeiture and Transfer of Licenses

Whilst the FEHD recognizes that "street trading has been a *feature of life* in Hong Kong for over 100 years" (emphasis added) they operate under the premise of "gradually reducing on-street hawking activities" (FEHD, 2006b: online). As well, there has been a moratorium on the issuing of hawker licenses since 1970 in an effort to reorganize city streets, in part by reducing the presence of street hawkers.

Beginning on December 1, 2002, the FEHD instituted a plan to encourage the forfeiture of fixed-pitch hawker licenses by offering an ex-gratia payment of $60,000 if hawkers turned in their fixed-pitch hawking license. The offer was given a five-year limit and expired on November 30, 2007 (FEHD, 2006a). For itinerant hawker licenses, the validity dates of the offer spanned from January 1, 2003 to December 31, 2007. Itinerant hawkers were provided with three options: to receive an ex-gratia payment of $60,000 for the forfeiture of the license; to exchange the itinerant hawker license for a fixed-pitch stall license or a public market stall; or (for mobile van itinerant hawker licensees) to exchange the license for a cooked food stall in a public market (FEHD, 2006c).

For fixed-pitch stall licenses, succession or transfer of the license is possible should the original holder of the license be incapacitated or voluntarily surrender the license. Succession and transfer cases are typically limited to spouses. Succession to immediate family members is allowed only in urban areas and only for non-cooked food licenses, while transfers to anyone other than a spouse or an immediate family member requires approval from the FEHD in terms of grounds for the voluntary surrendering of the license by the original holder (FEHD, 2006a).

5.2.1.3. Public Market Stall Auctions

Vendors in public markets do not operate on a licensing system; rather, individual vendors hold a lease to a specific stall, which regulates who can work in the stall, what they can sell, and how they can use the space. Monthly rental rates are stipulated in the lease along with electricity fees if the market building is equipped with an air

conditioning unit for a fixed-term of three years after which, lease renewals may be subject to rental increases[12]. Rent is paid quarterly in January, April, July and October.

Assignment of stall space is based on auctions held monthly by the FEHD in each of the three district offices of Hong Kong Island, Kowloon, and the New Territories. Inventories of available stalls for rent are posted on the FEHD website as well as on message boards in all public market buildings.

Base prices are set for individual stalls based on varying factors such as size, location of stall, and location of market. The final auction sale price translates to the monthly rental fee. Winning bids require immediate registration by the tenant and payment of one month's deposit and electricity fees (if applicable). The deposit and stall may be revoked if the new tenant does not return to the FEHD district office within two weeks to sign the lease.

The following narrative based on interviews with an informant and field observations describes the experiences of one market vendor trying to obtain a lease for a market stall at an auction. In the weeks prior to the auction, Mrs. Ho traveled to various markets on Hong Kong Island to find a market that was busy and successful, through her own observations and through speaking with vendors in the market. After deciding upon Aberdeen Market, with which she was most familiar as she shopped there almost daily, she set about to ascertain which available stall had the ideal location to take advantage of the foot traffic in the market. Although she was not prepared to bid on a stall that day, Mrs. Ho remarked that the auction procedures were surprisingly simple and will return the following month (NM-4, July 24, 2006).

In terms of her experience of the auction process, Jane recounts some of her frustrations, noting that the officers present were generally unhelpful, mostly referring all queries to available pamphlets and the FEHD website. Even when she was asking for clarification regarding the regulations that were posted, the auctioneer appeared impatient, did not listen to her question, and pointed to the rules posted on the bulletin board behind him. Jane also remembers an elderly gentleman at the auction who did not appear to speak Cantonese fluently being chastised by the auctioneer when he was unable to recite the stall number he wished to bid on (NM-4, July 24, 2006).

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[12] Rental increases have been held on moratorium since June 2005.

Such frustration towards the attitude of FEHD officers and market regulations can also be seen in Mr. Chui's story. Stalls are assigned to only one person, and are regulated much like the fixed-pitch stall licenses described above, which can cause problems for vendors operating as family units but not recognized by the State as such. Mr. Chui, one of the informants for this study, has been working with his common-law partner in the Java Road Market for 8 years. The stall license had originally been issued to his common-law wife, but they are equal partners in terms of working at the stall. He recently rented a new stall in Java Road Market when the FEHD charged him with illegal hawking in the public market because under the law, he is not considered to be part of his common-law wife's legal household. Mr. Chui also tried to transfer the lease to his name so that he could continue working in the same space but this was refused by the FEHD. He feels that the FEHD is purposely picking on him saying, "how many of us like this [working with common-law partners] are out there? Of course they are just purposely picking on us" (NM-3, July 24, 2006).

5.2.2. Hawker Control

Hawker Control is the enforcement branch of the FEHD with the stated objectives of reducing illegal hawking activities, relocating street hawkers into indoor market spaces, and reducing nuisance and obstruction caused by hawkers, market vendors and shops (FEHD, 2006b). Hawker Control Teams, composed of Hawker Control Officers (as shown in Figure 5.6) enforce FEHD policies by regularly patrolling public and street markets as well as areas commonly used by illegal hawkers.

Figure 5.6: Hawker Control Officers on patrol (Source: Zunn, 2006)

Hawker Control Officers are allowed to issue fines and/or confiscate goods for violation of FEHD policies on hawking and public market use. This typically takes the form of issuing citations for obstruction when hawkers, market vendors and street-level shops extend their retail area past their allotted space (for example onto sidewalks and streets). The majority of the Hawker Control Officers' efforts aim at 'cracking down' on illegal hawking activities (hawking without a license).

State regulations, through policies, legislation, and policing as described above, influence the physical and social conditions of public market spaces in Hong Kong by controlling the physical appearance of the market stalls and indirectly influencing the social landscape through the availability and quality of these public spaces. The following section describes the current physical characteristics of public market spaces in Hong Kong further and the ways in which these spaces interact with Hong Kong's urban landscape.

5.3. PHYSICAL SPACES

The variations in the physical spaces of these public markets are wide, encompassing indoor, outdoor and even marine spaces. Although controlled and administered by the same governmental department, each market space has a unique quality. These spaces draw on neighborhood characteristics while at the same time, incorporating themselves into the community in what can be considered to be a two-way dialectic between public market spaces and other public spaces such as streets and sidewalks and private spaces in the community. The following sections analyze the physical spaces of public markets (Section 5.3.1.), street markets (Section 5.3.2.) and the maintenance of these spaces (Section 5.3.3.).

5.3.1. Public Market Spaces
The buildings that house FEHD-run public markets vary in size, age and quality. For example, newer markets tend to be equipped with air conditioning and escalators or elevators while older markets do not. The quality of the physical spaces of these markets is also determined partly by the bustle of the neighborhood around them. A third, related

factor that shapes how well the physical spaces of these indoor public markets are maintained depends on the market's proximity to other market spaces.

Based on field observations of markets across Hong Kong Island, Kowloon and the New Territories, several similar and some divergent characteristics were found that help define the uniqueness of each market but also tie them together under the rubric of a 'public market' beyond their shared affiliation with the FEHD. Stalls are generally tiled along with the floors, which are covered in terra cotta tiles. The tiles facilitate the daily cleaning of the markets, which usually involves a process of flooding or spraying the floors and stalls with soap and water, hence the term 'wet market'. The cleaning of the market spaces are outsourced by the FEHD to private firms. The stalls are typically not self-contained units that can be closed up and secured - rather, goods are either secured under tarpaulin and ropes at the end of the work day or cleared and stored in communal storage rooms. Figures 5.7 and 5.8 show the two different storage methods described above.

Figure 5.7: Storage facility in Java Road Market (Source: Zunn, 2006)

Figure 5.8: Closed stalls covered with tarpaulins in Tin Wan Market (Source: Zunn, 2006)

The community interacts with the public markets as well. The popularity of the different markets shapes the ways in which these public market buildings are utilized and also influences the bustle and flow of people in the area. For example, in the heavily commercial area of Causeway Bay and Wan Chai, there is a noticeable difference between the Bowrington Road Market and Lockhart Road Market. Both markets were relatively quiet during periods of field observation in terms of the amount of business transactions taking place, but the amount of foot traffic outside the market building

influenced the atmosphere inside the markets. Bowrington Road Market is located in a pedestrian-heavy area, with a street-level store-front market nearby. Even though it is tucked behind buildings away from the main roads of Bowrington Road and Wan Chai Road, the bustle on the sidewalk is apparent inside the market building as well in terms of foot traffic and the amount of people socializing inside and around the entrances to the market. Conversely, Lockhart Road Market is situated in an area that does not have a busy sidewalk atmosphere and the interior of the market is very quiet and feels lifeless.

The presence of other markets nearby, while an attraction for social interaction, may be a deterrent for commercial activity within the public markets as these other markets increase the level of competition, often with better quality and/or lower priced goods. For example, Quarry Bay Market, located in a residential district, is very quiet despite its cleanliness, relatively new infrastructure, and open atmosphere. The neighboring private indoor market, Tai Ping Market, on the other hand is small, crowded, and the floors often littered with detritus but it is always busy. When interviewing one informant, a domestic helper from the Philippines about why she rarely goes to Quarry Bay Market and why she chooses to frequent Tai Ping Market instead, she replied, "I compared the two markets and I prefer Tai Ping because they have better prices and in Quarry Bay, unless you go very early they often run out of good vegetables" (NM-6, June 22, 2006). Quarry Bay Market also has to compete with another market area within walking distance of Tai Koo (a large residential complex), the Sai Wan Ho Market and the Shing On Street store-front market - both of which also benefit from being very close to a subway station. One informant who has been observing different markets in Hong Kong because she is planning on becoming a market vendor noted that, "people would rather pay a little bit more to purchase their food on the street [from a store-front market] than have to walk upstairs to the public markets" (NM-4, July 24, 2006). On the other hand, Aberdeen Market, also located in a residential area, is an old building, crowded, dirty, and still undergoing renovations for the installation of an air conditioning system. However, with the lack of nearby competition, Aberdeen Market has been successful and is often crowded with people.

Therefore, even though public markets are all built and run by the FEHD, the quality of the physical space of these markets differ from one another as a result of their

location and the ways in which the community interacts with these spaces. As shown in the examples above, the economic success of particular markets in part depends on the amount of competition in the area. The use of market spaces as social spaces also depends on the surrounding neighborhood and the ways in which people interact outside of the market.

5.3.2. Street Market Spaces

Street market spaces are influenced by the community in which they are situated, but the presence of a market also changes the construct of the community. Hawkers adapt to their physical environments in different ways, changing the quality and appearance of the market stalls and the neighborhood. Hawkers in these outdoor market spaces also take advantage of the elements of their surrounding spaces, which gives these markets a sense of uniqueness. This 'quality' is also something non-street market traders try to capture as well, to create a sense for the shopper of being in a street market by altering the physical space of their stalls and stores.

Figure 5.9: Temple Street Market (Source: Zunn, 2006)

Figure 5.10: Sidewalk behind Marble Road Market (Source: Zunn, 2006)

The Temple Street Market, a popular tourist destination for cheap gadgets and souvenirs is located on a narrow residential/retail street in the Yau/Tsim/Mong District in Kowloon. Stall spaces are tightly packed, measuring about one meter wide and three meters in depth. Vendors maximize their stall spaces by building upwards, with many of their goods displayed overhead, as shown in Figure 5.9. Extra stock is kept in storage

units, apartments or stores nearby to maximize display space. As well, stalls are all brightly lit (since it is a night market), adding to a unique street market atmosphere.

In North Point on Hong Kong Island, traders at the Marble Road Street Market and the neighboring Chun Yeung Street Market have also altered the quality of the neighborhood and provide a unique feel by creating covered spaces for shoppers. Market stalls typically open up to face the street; in these two street markets, many of the stalls open up on two sides, one facing the street, the other facing the sidewalk. Awnings put up by either the operators of the store-fronts behind the street market stalls or by the street hawkers create a make-shift ceiling above the sidewalk, forming a pseudo-indoor wet market, as seen below in Figure 5.10.

Chun Yeung Street is not closed off to vehicular traffic and is also along a streetcar route, which makes it difficult for shoppers to shop from the street-side of the stalls (see Figure 5.11). On Marble Road, the relatively wide road disrupts the market atmosphere between the stalls on either side. The relatively close distance between the stalls and the store-fronts on the other side of the sidewalk however, provides a more close-knit atmosphere between vendors. As well, since the vendors from store-fronts sell wet and/or frozen goods, they are often not in competition with the hawkers who sell non-food or dry food items.

Figure 5.11: Chun Yeung Street Market (Source: Zunn, 2006)

Figure 5.12: Sai Kung Fish Pier Market (Source: Zunn, 2006)

Certain outdoor markets are set up to take advantage of their unique surroundings. For example, hawkers in the Sai Kung Fish Pier Market in the New Territories capitalize on the pier and boardwalk nearby, and the town's reputation as a good destination for

fresh seafood. This market consists of licensed hawkers operating out of small, motorized boats lined-up along the pier and seawall, about 5-6 meters down from the boardwalk as seen in Figure 5.12. Transactions are shouted between the hawkers and customers and carried out with the aid of a long pole/net to exchange goods and cash.

Additionally, the unique atmosphere of outdoor/street markets is also often capitalized on by store-front market vendors. Store-front vendors selling wet goods such as meat and vegetables tend to push their goods out onto the sidewalks. Transactions are made on the street rather than inside the store. Shoppers stroll along the sidewalk to make their purchases from different wet goods stores located in a row similar to how one would shop in a street market. Shing On Street in Sai Wan Ho on Hong Kong Island is a good example of this.

Non-food, non-street market hawkers also try to capitalize on this street market atmosphere through the uses and modification of public spaces. Stanley Market, another popular tourist destination, is located on the Southern side of Hong Kong Island. There, vendors create a street market-like atmosphere by placing goods at the very front of the store or where possible, just outside the store-front. Reminiscent of the Chun Yeung Street Market and the Marble Road Street Market, the vendors in Stanley Market extend awnings to reach buildings across the footpaths and alleys in front of their stores to create a form of unity with the stores on the other side, again increasing the 'market' feel of the space.

More generally, street market spaces are varied across Hong Kong with different levels of cleanliness and order depending on the neighborhoods. For example, street markets in the Yau/Tsim/Mong district in Kowloon, such as Reclamation Street Market where the average income is relatively low compared to areas of similar density across the harbor on Hong Kong Island, and where the buildings are older, with fewer urban redevelopment projects, tend to have a more cluttered appearance, are less organized and dirtier. In comparison, street markets in more affluent areas such as Wan Chai appear neater and cleaner.

The examples above show how street markets are *integrated* into specific urban landscapes and also in turn, how they can *modify* the existing landscape. These public spaces become a defining characteristic of neighborhoods – they not only have different

physical forms, they also provide spaces for numerous different social interactions that can vary in relation to the physical space, the different goods sold, and other reasons customers are attracted to specific markets (such as location, quality, cost). These markets also support a variety of different economic transactions, from bulk purchases, to daily food shopping interactions, to tourist demand.

5.3.3. MAINTAINING APPEARANCES

As described above, the physical conditions of public and street markets vary with age, use and location. The market spaces are maintained through the combined efforts of the FEHD and the market vendors and hawkers in terms of day-to-day cleanliness and long-term care for the conditions and upgrade of the physical structures.

In public markets, stall leases stipulate that tenants must keep their stalls clean and the floors clear of waste, especially for wet food stalls operated by butchers and fishmongers. This process typically involves sweeping up refuse from the floor and hosing down the walls and floors of the stalls when necessary. At the end of the day when the market is closed, a cleaning crew hired by the FEHD comes in to scrub down the communal spaces in the markets (WC-3, July 25, 2006). As a precautionary measure, to counter the spread of the Avian Flu, live poultry stalls are obligated to close their stalls once a month on days specified by the FEHD for a complete cleaning of the stall and cages.

In comparison, street markets have less stringent requirements. The FEHD's main concern with street market stalls is with the obstruction of sidewalks and streets by hawkers extending their stall spaces outwards. The streets are washed down at night once a month by street cleaning crews equipped with a large truck with a water tank and several workers with hoses and brooms walking behind. However, the effectiveness of this method of keeping street markets clean is somewhat questionable, as seen in Figure 5.13.

Figure 5.13: Street cleaning trucks roll through a market in Kowloon (left), leaving a river of debris (right) (Source: Zunn, 2006)

For long-term care and maintenance of public markets, the FEHD is responsible for maintaining the structure of the market buildings. The upgrading of market buildings however relies on a participatory process that requires consultation with, and approval from the vendors of the markets in question. Ms. Li, one of the informants for this study, is an architectural consultant who worked on a renovation proposal for the Lockhart Road Market. During out interviews, she outlined the process involves in updating the amenities of a public market.

Ms. Li works for a private architectural firm that was approached by the FEHD to draft a proposal to install air conditioning systems in several public markets around Hong Kong. The installation requires a slight re-drawing of the layout of the stalls to conform to building codes and regulations for fire safety. The proposal is presented to the FEHD for approval and then presented to the market vendors in a town-hall style meeting. At the meeting, the vendors are given the opportunity to hear about the plan, ask questions and voice their concerns and ideas. The proposal must be passed by the market vendors with a majority vote, as the proposed changes will increase their monthly rental costs in terms of an added electricity fee for the air conditioning system.

In the case of the Lockhart Road Market proposal Ms. Li worked on, the renovation plans did not pass the market vendor vote. As mentioned above in Section 5.3.1., Lockhart Road Market is a very quiet market space, making any additional costs a possible financial strain on the vendors. The renovation process would also have been costly for the vendors in terms of lost business. Stalls would have had to be closed

section by section (instead of closing the entire market) during the renovation period to minimize disturbing the vendors' livelihoods, but having to close up the stall for several weeks would be disruptive and costly for the vendors. Another reason Ms. Li provided for why the proposal was turned down at Lockhart Road Market was that the renovations would have reduced the amount of space in the aisles for vendors to extend their stall, which would cut into much needed space for the vendors (especially those in corner stalls). According to Ms. Li, even though the vendors believed that renovations, especially having air conditioning in the building would be beneficial for their business in the long-run by providing a better shopping environment for their customers, in markets that are not successful such as the Lockhart Road Market, the cost of such improvements are just too high (NM-1, July 30, 2006).

In sum, the physical spaces of markets in Hong Kong are an integral part of the city's landscape as well as a key influential factor in the economic success of the market vendors and hawkers. As Section 5.3. illustrated, street markets and public markets vary by location in terms of aesthetics, use, and quality based on their surrounding neighborhood. How successful a market becomes depends on the community's acceptance and use of these market spaces as a public space for social and economic interactions as discussed in Chapter 2, Section 2.2.3. The next section analyzes some of the experiences of hawkers and market vendors in Hong Kong and the ways in which they interact with public market spaces.

5.4. MARKET VENDORS AND HAWKERS

The importance of street markets and public markets as spaces of social and economic interactions is best expressed through the narratives of the hawkers and market vendors who rely on the presence of these public spaces to ensure their livelihoods. Over the course of the field study period, interviews were conducted with 37 individuals, 26 of whom worked in street markets, and 6 in indoor markets (see Appendix IV for a list of interviewees). In general, there are overlapping similarities between the informants, especially in matters of motivating factors (Section 5.4.1) and familial interests (Section 5.4.2).

The majority of the informants lamented their lack of choice in entering the market trade due to their lack of education and experience in Hong Kong's formal economy. Even though they mentioned the advantages of self-employment, many also described the difficulties in the informal market trade, citing such issues as long hours, low profits, and poor working conditions such as the heat in the summer and safety considerations of working on the street with construction projects taking place overhead.

Families also played a big role in the interviews. With the exception of seven of the interviewees who worked alone, all the hawkers and market vendors worked with either a spouse or other close family member such as a sibling or child. In about two-thirds of the interviews, informants mentioned the need to clothe, feed, and educate their children as a reason for working in markets. Roughly half of the informants inherited their market trade from their parents but none of the informants believe they will pass on their business to their children. For the hawkers and vendors with working-aged children, they mention how their children work in the formal economy and find the work in markets difficult and thus do not want to continue in their parents' footsteps. Informants with school-aged children mentioned that they hope their children would be able to succeed in school and obtain employment in the formal economy because it is seen as a more stable and more profitable career path. The following sections detail the day-to-day experiences and concerns of several informants for this study in greater detail. Their stories describe the difficulties they face in making a living as small-scale marketplace entrepreneurs.

5.4.1. Motivating Factors

Mrs. Ho is relatively new to hawking - she has been working in Aberdeen Market for less than a year - returning to working now that her two children are older. Her first and only job right out of high school was as a cashier in a small retail store - a job she left with the birth of her first child. In the current Hong Kong economic climate, her lack of work experience and low qualifications have made it difficult for her to find wage employment.

Her motivation to enter the market trade was manifold. She wanted and needed to go back to work to help with her children's education costs, however, due to her age (she is in her late 30s) and low qualifications, she found it difficult to find work. A market

stall would provide her with an income opportunity and the chance for self-employment. When she first started, she had no experience and said her only business tactic was to "yell louder" (NM-4, July 24, 2006). Mrs. Ho's choice to sell prepared (but uncooked) soy and vegetable products came out of an interest in cooking, which she is parlaying into an income. She had also considered operating a cooked food stall but found the restrictions and licensing procedures to be much too complicated.

Her decision regarding choice in location was more difficult to make. Her initial idea was to open a store, but she quickly found the rent to be much too high, about HK$10,000-$15,000 per month. Private markets were also out of the question because the monthly rent, which she estimates it to be around HK$4,000-7,000, was much too expensive even though she knows she can probably attract more customers in such a location.

Mrs. Ho lives near the Aberdeen Market and had shopped there regularly, so she was familiar with the location, some of the vendors and the size of the clientele the market attracts. From her conversations with other vendors in Aberdeen Market, she found that there were a few people who were paying upwards of HK$4,000 to sublet a stall, a practice she found odd, as it was much cheaper to rent directly from the government. She traveled to different markets on Hong Kong Island to see if there were other locations she should consider. Distance from home to work was not a factor in her decision but she did not want to travel out to Kowloon, where she believed it was much more difficult to start a business and outside of which she found many of the markets she visited were too quiet. Many of the markets she visited on Hong Kong Island were quiet too, for example of Lockhart Road Market in Wan Chai, Mrs. Ho said, "it is so quiet, I wouldn't take it if they gave it to me for free" (NM-4, July 24, 2006). Eventually, she settled on Aberdeen Market because of the economic potential it offers.

This narrative highlights the different factors such as the lack of formal qualifications and experience, age, and the need to support the younger generation's education that play a role in determining *why* individuals enter the market trade as well as *where* to trade. Locational decision-making factors such as the availability of stall space for rent from the government and how busy the different markets are, influence the final market stall site location.

5.4.2. Familial Influences

The role of families was also a prominent theme that arose from interviews with hawkers and market vendors. Families were often a motivating force for entering into the market trade, such as the story of Mrs. Lau. Without other options due to a lack of education, Mrs. Lau followed her parents into the family business. Now, more than 40 years later and in her 60s, she is still working in the Wan Chai market, selling *hoi mei* (dried seafood) with her sister (WC-3, July 25, 2006). She works six days a week, and most of her business takes place in the mornings when her regular customers drop by. A local distributor usually comes by late morning to drop off her orders. By the afternoon, the market is nearly empty of both customers and vendors but Mrs. Lau and her sister remain until around 5pm, taking turns in the afternoon to run errands. She wishes she could close up shop early like the fishmonger next door, but she does not make much money over the course of the day and, having spent her savings on raising her children, realizes the need to keep her stall open to take advantage of all potential customers each day (WC-3, July 25, 2006).

Out on the street, Mr. and Mrs. Chan's day starts at 6am – bringing new stock from their nearby apartment to their outdoor stall where they sell confectionary. The process of unpacking and arranging their goods is time-consuming, taking over an hour each morning. The couple's two young children are put into the care of their grandmother, who at one point was the owner of the family business. Standing out in the suffocating heat during the summer months, and the cold in winter, the husband and wife team along with Mr. Chan's sister, all in their 40s, hawk candies and snacks to the passing white-collar workers from the nearby offices. The three are kept busy during the rush hour periods between 8am-9am and 5pm-6pm and during the lunch hour as hundreds of people walk by, attracted to the dazzling array of goods displayed before them. During the mid-morning and mid-afternoon lulls, the Chans take turns going home to use the facilities, eat, run errands, and when necessary, return with more goods to replenish their stock. Around 6:30pm, as the crowds are thinning, the packing up process begins. Another hour is spent putting away all the goods into plastic bins, which

are then stacked and locked up in their tarpaulin-covered stall. As they head home, the wife states, "I still have to go home to cook dinner for the kids" (CS-1, July 25, 2006).

Like Mrs. Lau, the Chans business is centered around the family both in terms of how each hawker entered the trade and the decisions regarding how to allocate and undertake their day-to-day activities. The Chans have the added burden of providing for young children and rely on extended family members to help out with childcare during their long work days. Mrs. Chan has the additional responsibilities of the 'second shift' at home, providing unpaid reproductive labor after a twelve-hour work day (Hochschild, 2003).

5.4.3. Cultural Heritage

Aside from viewing public spaces as a means to make a livelihood, the hawkers interviewed saw their use of public space as a contribution to the greater economy of Hong Kong and to its cultural heritage. Mrs. Lee, one of the key informants for this study describes her role thus, "I am doing this for the whole of Hong Kong by providing cheap goods and giving Hong Kong tourism a boost" (TY-2, August 7, 2006). This sentiment that street markets contribute to part of the city's cultural heritage is prominent in Mrs. Lee's interview. She continues saying that, "street markets are popular with tourists" and that, "it's a shame that they [the Hong Kong government] are not doing the same thing in Hong Kong [as other cities] to try and preserve this part of the Chinese heritage" (TY-2, August 7, 2006).

Mrs. Lee, a gregarious woman in her 50s, compares the poor condition of Hong Kong's street markets with those she has seen in her travels both in Mainland China and abroad where the governments have worked to renovate street markets, thus 'cleaning up' cities without closing down the markets (TY-2, August 7, 2006). Mr. Choi, another hawker working near Mrs. Lee adds, "there are hawkers and street traders all over the world. It's not a problem" (CS-6, August 7, 2006). Comparing the impending closure of the Cross/Tai Yuen Street Market in Wan Chai (described in greater detail in Chapter 6) to 'Food Street' in Taiwan, Mr. Choi explains how street traders there were relocated into shopping malls, which caused the loss of many businesses including street-level stores due to the reduced foot traffic in the area. He continues that in the Taiwan case they have

had to re-open the street market (CS-6, August 7, 2006). Mrs. Lee and Mr. Choi's descriptions of street markets abroad highlight the belief that is prominent among street vendors whom I talked with in Hong Kong that street markets provide more than just economic opportunities for hawkers but serve as an economic and cultural necessity.

5.5. CHAPTER CONCLUSION

This chapter has provided a current contextual basis for developing a greater understanding Hong Kong's street and public market spaces in terms of the State's view, the physical conditions of the markets, and the key ideas that emerge from narratives of some of the hawkers and market vendors. The State's regulations and policing of these market spaces reflects its current position of 'tolerance'. Yet by placing a moratorium on licensing, and applying strict regulations on the uses of public market spaces, the State is working at slowly reducing the presence of these market spaces. I argue that this is largely due to the fact that such markets do not comply with the State's overall vision of Hong Kong as a global city.

However, as Sections 5.3 and 5.4 illustrated, the presence of public market spaces are still integral to Hong Kong's urban social landscape. The uniqueness of neighborhoods are often tied into the presence of street markets and public markets, as these spaces become the focal points for social interactions as described in Chapter 4. Aside from the necessity of these spaces for community building, these spaces are also essential sites that provide a means for individuals and families to gain an income, especially for those with limited formal skills and experience in Hong Kong's globalizing economy. The next chapter brings these issues into focus through the case study of Wan Chai and the conflicts occurring there due to the processes of urban renewal.

CHAPTER 6: THE WAN CHAI CASE STUDY

Within the context of current debates over the use of public space in Hong Kong, as analyzed in Chapter 4, and marketplace change and flux in Hong Kong as discussed in Chapter 5, Wan Chai Market, located in Wan Chai District shown in Figure 6.1 below, stands out as a prime example of the current conflicts between the State's visions of public space in a globalizing city, and the needs and wants of marketplace vendors, located in such locales. The processes of change and conflict currently occurring in Wan Chai highlight the problems regarding markets and the changing quality of public spaces in Hong Kong. The issue of relocating hawkers and market vendors into the new Wan Chai Market illustrates the often conflicting perceptions of development, identity, and public space. The particular socio-demographic composition of the neighborhood places the conflicts over the valuation of public space into the forefront. In Wan Chai, as urban redevelopment plans continue to edge out older, lower-income housing with new, upscale high rises, the existing communities - including public market spaces are being pushed out.
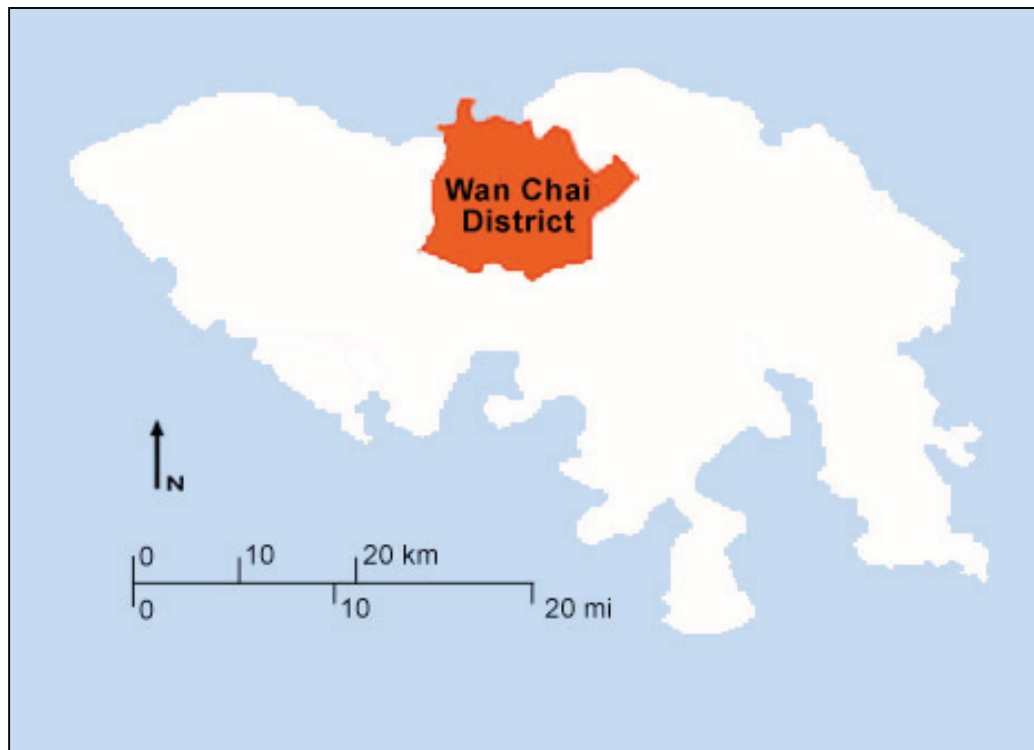
Figure 6.1: Wan Chai District (Adapted from: Survey and Mapping Office, 2006: online)

The focus of the Wan Chai case study centers on the impending closure of the Wan Chai Market and sections of the Cross/Tai Yuen Street Market as shown in Figure 6.2 below.[13] Closely paralleling the findings in Chapter 4, the closure of the market is precipitated by urban redevelopment plans being drawn up in the district in an effort to transform the urban landscape into the world city vision of the HKSAR government. Thus, this transformation requires the demolition of older buildings in favor of hi-tech, modern high rises and the removal of elements - such as chaotic street markets - that no longer fit the new image being constructed.
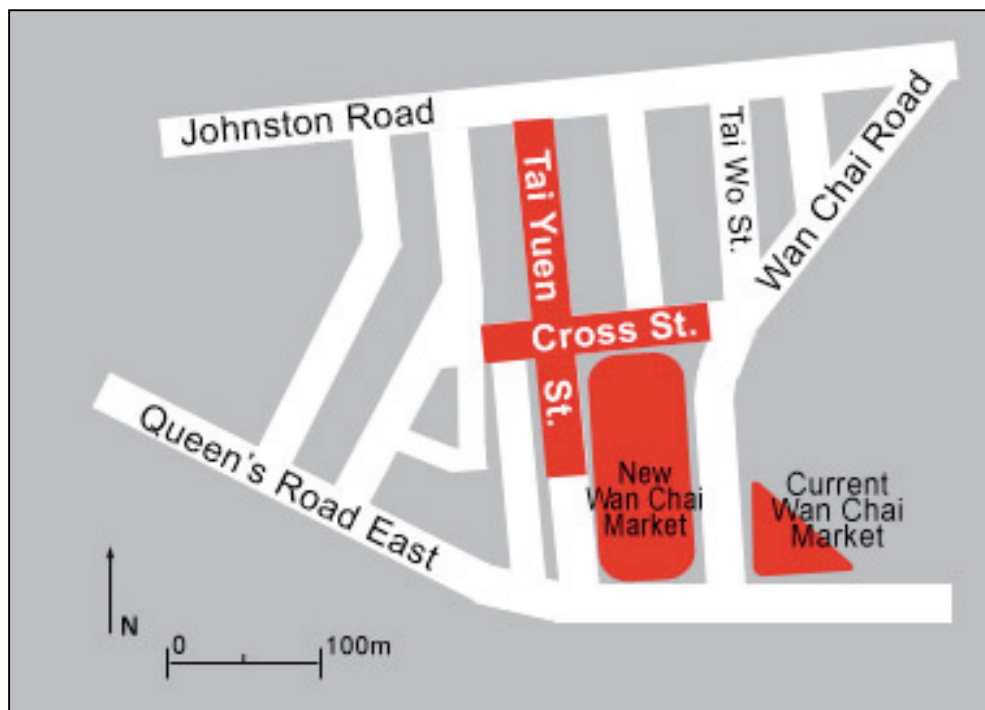
Figure 6.2: Wan Chai Market area (Adapted from: Home Affairs Department, 2006: online)

The move towards a more modern imagined community also transforms the social landscape by moving the spaces of public interaction from outdoor communal areas such as sidewalks and parks to indoor, semi-public spaces such as Mass Transit Railway (MTR) stations, cafes, shopping centers, and building atriums. In Wan Chai, this process of urban transformation can be seen to be at the root of conflicts that have arisen between

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[13] An official date for the closure of the market and the demolition of the building has yet to be set as of February 2008.

hawkers and market vendors and the FEHD and Urban Renewal Authority (along with private developers).

This chapter illustrates how policy changes based on globalizing interests are affecting the lives of hawkers and market vendors in Wan Chai. In the sections that follow, first I introduce Wan Chai District, its history, and its present day characteristics. Section 6.1 also includes a specific synopsis of the history and present day conditions of the Wan Chai Market and the Cross/Tai Yuen Street Market. Section 6.2 provides an overview of the conflict in Wan Chai with regards to the closure and relocation of market spaces. Section 6.3, based on interviews and other field data, presents the reactions of the hawkers and vendors to the impending changes to their livelihoods.

6.1. CASE STUDY SITE: WAN CHAI

Situated on the north shore of Hong Kong, Wan Chai, one of the oldest districts, began as a small fishing village and shipyard in the mid-19th century. The area developed over the years through several processes. The British military located its Army barracks and Naval dockyards in nearby Central and Admiralty districts, while trading firms and other major businesses built up the neighboring Wan Chai District. This agglomeration of commercial and military presence led to the development of the area as a residential neighborhood for wealthy Europeans (Chung, 2004).

A demographic shift occurred in the late-19th century as members of the wealthy European population moved out of Wan Chai to escape the increasing growth in population density. The Chinese population that moved in altered the landscape with higher density housing and the establishment of an outdoor market (Chung, 2004).

Population growth and increased demand for land then led to a series of land reclamation projects that have significantly changed the Wan Chai coastline during the past 150 years. The first reclamation project was completed in 1841 and stretched from Queen's Road East, where the Wan Chai Market is located, down to Johnston Road, the northern boundary of the Cross/Tai Yuen Street Market. Four more reclamation projects have taken place since then with ongoing discussions for a possible fifth extension of the coastline, as shown on Figure 6.3. Today, Wan Chai covers 976 hectares and is home to

about 170,000 residents. As a hub for business, commercial, entertainment and transport, it has been estimated that the number of people who enter the district is about 600,000 daily (Home Affairs Department, 2006).
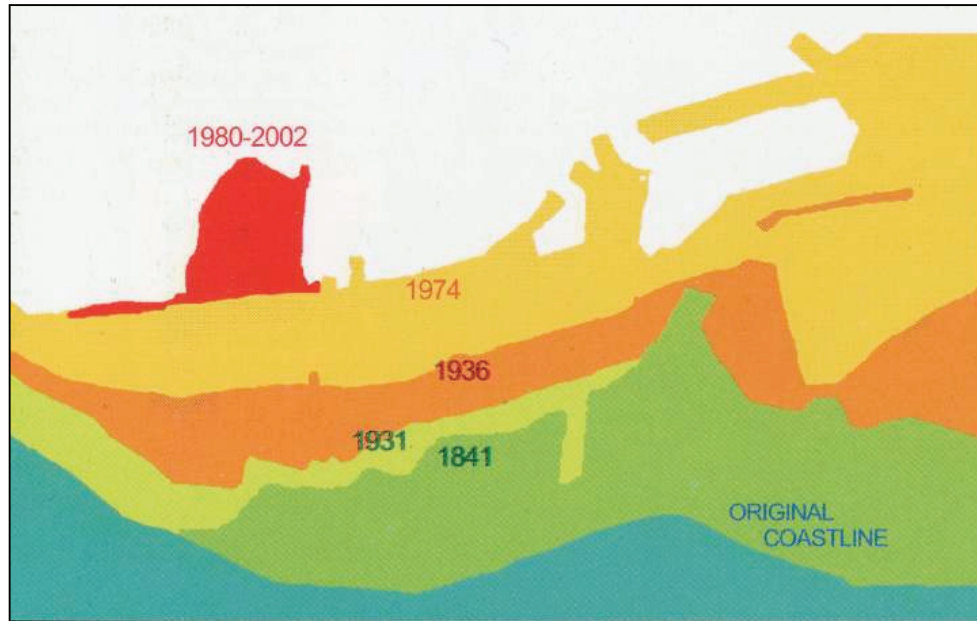
Figure 6.3: The changing coastline of Wan Chai (Wan Chai District Office, 2006: no pagination)

6.1.1. Wan Chai Market

6.1.1.1. History of Wan Chai Market

The history of the market has always been a legacy of the changing demographics of Wan Chai. The processes of development, reclamation projects and population change are reflected in the ways the market has changed over the years. The first market building opened in 1858 as a response to an increase in numbers of upper/middle-class residents in the area, requiring a more permanent structure to house existing vendors who, before then, were scattered along the streets selling raw and cooked foods, clothing, and an assortment of cheap goods. The physical building at that time was designed for its foreign, bourgeois clientele (Chung, 2004).

'Localization' of the market began to occur as the population density of Wan Chai began to increase, and with the perceived decrease in quality of living, the foreign community began to move out to be replaced with an increasing Chinese population (Chung, 2004). As such, the use and function of the market became geared towards a

more Chinese rather than British clientele. The continued land reclamation projects as shown above in Figure 6.3 did nothing to alleviate the increasing rate of population growth in the district. The increased demands on the indoor market space led to the demolition of the first Wan Chai market building and the construction of the current larger, multi-storied Wan Chai Market in 1937 (Chung, 2004).

The latest progression of redevelopment for the Wan Chai Market began in 1995 with the government's approval of urban redevelopment plans, which included the proposed demolition of the Wan Chai Market for the construction of a modern residential and commercial building. The formal approval for the demolition of the market was passed in February 2004 although an official date for the demolition of the structure has yet to be determined as of February 2008.

6.1.1.2. Current State of Wan Chai Market

Located on the corner of Wan Chai Road and Queen's Road East, the current Wan Chai Market building houses wet market goods. The market is open daily from 6am to 8pm. The three-story complex houses 132 stall spaces, the majority of which are allotted to 'wet goods' (see Appendix V for floor plans of the market and distribution of stalls). The current façade of the building prominently displays several banners protesting the impending move, as shown in Figure 6.4.

Figure 6.4: Exterior of Wan Chai Market (Source: Zunn, 2006)

The interior of the current building is showing its age and is rather worn, mostly with bare concrete walls, ceilings and floor and ventilated only through large windows and with ceiling fans. The basement level is small, covering about 180 square meters and is where the fruit stalls are located. The first floor stalls are allotted for fish, meat, and vegetables (see Appendix V for floor plans for the market). About half of the stalls on the first floor are empty and/or taped off with Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) tape. Some of the empty stalls are used as storage areas for the neighboring stalls, in direct violation of the signs posted by the FEHD, shown in Figure 6.5. Live poultry stalls are located on the second floor and occupancy here is even lower than the first floor, as depicted in Figure 6.6.

Figure 6.5: Empty Stall in Wan Chai Market (Source: Zunn, 2006)

Figure 6.6: Second floor of Wan Chai Market (Source: Zunn, 2006)

Peak business hours run from around 7am until about 12pm, after which a general air of lifelessness settles into the building. By noon, most of the fishmongers and butchers have closed up shop for the day and the remaining vegetable and fruit stall vendors clean up and restock for the evening while the rest (between 20-25 people) are napping at their stall or socializing with the other vendors – discussing politics, the news or their families. In the afternoon, vendors who had temporarily closed up shop in the late morning return to work for the afternoon crowd. From observation, most of the vendors in the market (around two-thirds) are fairly elderly (over 60 years of age) and have worked in the market for decades, as evidenced by the age of the licenses displayed (see Figure 6.7).

Figure 6.7: A market vendor license on display in Wan Chai Market (Source: Zunn, 2006)

6.1.2. Cross/Tai Yuen Street Market

Moving from the Wan Chai Market building to the nearby outside market, the fixed-pitch stalls in the area line two streets, Cross Street (between Wan Chai Road and Spring Garden Lane) and Tai Yuen Street -also referred to as Toy Street – (between Johnston Road and Queens Road East) as shown in Figure 6.2 above.   Most of the street stalls (roughly three-quarters) sell non-food goods such as clothes, towels, hair accessories, toys, flowers, and goldfish. There are also two 'service' stalls, a seamstress and a watch repair stall. Food stalls, about one-quarter, consist of dried goods such as eggs, ginger, pickled goods, as well as dried seafood (*hoi mei*). There are several vegetable stalls and two stalls selling snack foods such as nuts and candies. Certain storefronts extend their shops out onto the street, including a fruit stall, several clothing stores, and two restaurants.

The buildings in the area between Spring Garden Lane to the west, Tai Yuen Street to the east, Cross Street to the north and Queen's Road to the south have been

reclaimed by the Urban Redevelopment Authority and are slated for demolition to be replaced with new high-rise residential buildings. The reclamation process was completed in early 2005. Both the street market areas of Cross Street and Tai Yuen Street are closed to vehicular traffic, while the surrounding streets of Tai Wo Street, Stone Nullah Street and Wan Chai Road remain open to such traffic. Storefronts in this area (fixed shops located behind the street market) are home to mostly wet goods vendors selling vegetable, fish and meat.

The street market area is very tightly packed with narrow walkways both behind the stalls (sidewalk) and in front (on the closed roadway). The area is lively, with a lot of foot traffic from nearby office workers and tourists. The stalls are demarcated on the road with yellow paint and measure close to one square meter, as shown in Figure 6.8.

Figure 6.8: Yellow box demarcating a fixed-pitch stall space on Tai Yuen Street (Source: Zunn, 2006)

Peak hours vary for different stalls. Foodstuff hawkers open up their stalls early, around 6am to take advantage of the morning commuter rush, similar to that at the Wan Chai Market. Most non-food hawkers work shorter hours, opening shop around 10-11am. The peak hours for non-food hawkers coincide with the lunch hour (between 11am-2pm) and the end-of-workday (between 4pm-6pm) for surrounding office workers.

Hawkers begin to close up their stalls for the night around 7pm and by 9pm all the stalls are usually closed. Goods are stored on the street overnight with a simple padlock on their wooden stall or are covered with a large tarpaulin. The neighborhood is considered a 'good area' and as one market vendor informant stated, "who wants to steal this stuff if they can go steal from banks?" (TY-1, July 11, 2006). Unlike the bustle during the daytime, at night, the area becomes extremely quiet.

Social relations between the street stall hawkers were observed to be friendly. Hawkers can be seen conversing with neighboring hawkers, sitting in for their neighbors while the latter are off for lunch, and purchasing goods from one another. Quiet hours are spent napping or socializing with other hawkers, nearby residents and friends. Unlike the Wan Chai Market, the average age observed of the hawkers is lower (approximately in their 40s) and in the month of July, when the schools break for the summer, children were seen accompanying their parents at the stalls.

6.2. CONFLICT AT THE WAN CHAI MARKET

6.2.1. The New Wan Chai Market

The new Wan Chai Market is located across the street from the current Wan Chai Market and directly behind a section of fixed-pitch stalls located on Cross Street and Tai Yuen Street (see Figure 6.2 above). Contrasting with the current market, the new market is not a stand-alone unit, rather, it is located in the basement and first two floors of a high-rise residential building. At the time field work was undertaken during summer of 2006, the exterior of the building was complete but the interior appeared to be under renovation (as shown in Figure 6.9). The entrances were blocked off and guarded, preventing further investigation.

There are three main entrances to the new market, one on Cross Street, one on Wan Chai Road, and one on Queen's Road East. The new market entrances have a very modern appearance with glass doors and escalators at each, a marked contrast from the current market building. The construction of the entranceways is such that passersby cannot see the interior of the building, which supports some of the fears of the hawkers regarding losing potential clients as discussed in greater detail below.

Figure 6.9: The south (at left) and east (at right) entrances to the new Wan Chai Market (Source: Zunn, 2006)

6.2.2. Change and the Wan Chai Market

The issue of change in Wan Chai has several distinct layers in terms of the opposition to the demolition of the current Wan Chai Market. The first is the perception that the Wan Chai Market *building* needs to be preserved as a marker of Hong Kong's architectural history. The physical structure of the building is a key point of contestation as it is seen as a marker of the District's cultural heritage, and is one of the last buildings in Hong Kong built in a Baroque style (Wan Chai Heritage Taskforce, 2004; NM-1, July 30, 2006).

Another perspective on the demolition of the Wan Chai Market comes from the vendors working inside the building. It is not the loss of the physical structure of the building that is problematic for the market vendors, rather, it is the loss of the financial advantages of remaining in the old market. The vendors foresee problems for their livelihoods because the rent of the new market is not commensurate with their current income and expenditure. There is also an underlying feeling of distrust towards the government due to the government's lack of transparency on the issue, which creates

feelings of unease among the vendors. The lack of concrete dates and costs of the new markets translates into a lack of security for the vendors and fears that the government will not continue to protect the interests of the vendors in the new, semi-private arrangement in the new marketplace.

A third dimension of the new Wan Chai Market conflict deals with the closure of part of the Cross/Tai Yuen Street Market. The construction of the new building in which the new Wan Chai Market is housed was designed without taking into account the existing location and use of Cross and Tai Yuen streets as an outdoor market. One of the entrances to the new market opens up into the back of a fixed-pitch stall with a very narrow sidewalk between the building and the stalls on the south side of Cross Street. As well, the indoor parking lot for the new building opens just south of the end of the Tai Yuen Street stalls. This design, made without the consultation of the hawkers, effectively puts the new residents and developers into conflict with the hawkers working in the area.

In addition to the complaints of the indoor market vendors, the outdoor hawkers find the indoor location – and the expectation that they will move into it - problematic because it is seen as a 'dead end' move that will greatly reduce their income potential, especially when faced with such a dramatic increase in expenditure. Earlier legislation changes that forced wet food vendors indoors has meant that the outdoor site is now composed of non-essential goods vendors. A move indoors greatly alters the point-of-sale quality for these outdoor stalls. The outdoor fixed-pitch hawkers are also required to forfeit their fixed-pitch hawker licenses for a small compensation. Once the hawkers move indoors, they will no longer be allowed to move outdoors again unless the government decides to lift the 30 year moratorium on the issuing of hawker licenses. The relocation plan for vendors in this area then, is causing significant anxiety amongst indoor and outdoor vendors in Wan Chai, as discussed in greater detail below.

6.2.3. Organized Response to Relocation Plan

Organized responses to the proposed relocation plans have been focused on raising awareness through the use of various publicity methods ranging from street banners and petitions to the media. In an interview with Mrs. Yip, one of the organizers of a grassroots effort to protest for the rights of hawkers working in the Cross/Tai Yuen Street

Market, she notes the main conflict comes from differing priorities in protecting the interests of the area (namely protecting property values versus protecting small-scale entrepreneur livelihoods). When the hawkers in the Cross/Tai Yuen Street Market first received news of the impending closure in September 2005, they came together to form the Concerned Group for Hawkers' Rights (CGHR) as a means to organize action. A few of the hawkers, including Mrs. Yip took on leadership roles in this localized process of resistance to the State's redevelopment plans for the Wan Chai District.

The CGHR's efforts have focused on publicizing the conflict/hawkers' concerns and worries to raise the profiles of the hawkers in an attempt to pressure the FEHD to find a more suitable and fair solution. Several actions have been taken with limited success, such as a petition drive, protest banners across the streets, letters to both the English and Chinese local media, and contacting the Hong Kong Tourism Board, which resulted in a short television segment in 2006.

The use of the media by the CGHR has centered on the issue of the loss of the market as a loss of part of Hong Kong's cultural heritage. This perspective however, reinforces the lack of recognition of hawking as more than just a temporary occupation, rather than highlighting this point. Such attitudes toward hawking can be detrimental to the CGHR's cause as the issue of protecting the livelihoods of the hawkers falls to the wayside.

The petitions and banners (such as the ones shown in Figure 6.10) on the other hand, have a stronger political message decrying the unfairness of the government's actions and its lack of concern for hawker livelihoods. One of the problems facing the CGHR is the lack of funds to mount larger-scale protests and actions such as bringing the government to court.

The initial burst of outrage and the ensuing media coverage of the

Figure 6.10: Protest banners in the Wan Chai Market area (Source: Zunn, 2006)

hawkers gained the support of several Wan Chai District representatives and the hawkers were able to enter into preliminary negotiations with the FEHD. The first negotiations resulted in a new scheme to allow the market stalls that are not directly adjacent to the new market building to stay. While the FEHD views this as a compromise, and the settlement was reported in the media as such, the hawkers interpreted this move as a tactic to divide and conquer (South China Morning Post, 2006; NM-5, August 7, 2006). At the end of the summer of 2006, 72 of the stall vendors were told they would be allowed to stay, while 86 would have to be relocated. According to Mrs. Yip, "even the ones who do not have to move are unhappy with the situation because the hawkers are of 'one heart' and want to stick together" (NM-5, August 7, 2006). From a more practical perspective, the closure of half of the market will likely reduce the amount of foot traffic for the remainder of the market, which in turn will increase the potential risk to the livelihoods of vendors located there.

Resigned to the idea that the hawkers will likely have to move, the CGHR's wish is to minimize the negative effects on their livelihoods. Efforts have been put into finding suitable outdoor locations for the affected hawkers to relocate to, but to date they have been ineffective. One of the proposed plans was to allow hawkers to move to other fixed-pitch stalls in Hong Kong, but the prime locations in such areas as Central were already occupied (NM-5, August 7, 2006).

A second, more promising proposal was to relocate the hawkers to Tai Wo Street, the next block over (Figure 6.2 above) a plan that was supported by the FEHD. However, both the Leisure and Cultural Services Department and the Urban Renewal Authority turned down the proposal. The presence of hawkers in front of the park on Tai Wo Street may block the entrance way to the park and create an unclean environment were stated as reasons for rejecting the proposal even though, as Figure 6.11 shows, the park entrance is already often blocked by large delivery trucks and the neighboring wet goods storefronts contribute to an unclean environment as well. As Mrs. Yip stated, "all the different government departments do not communicate with each other, and no one has taken into consideration the hawkers' livelihoods nor asked about [our] concerns" (NM-5, August 7, 2006).

Another priority for the CGHR is to bargain with the FEHD to increase the monetary compensation for hawkers who are willing to turn in their license either by moving indoors or by closing up shop altogether. The amount offered, HKD$20,000 was deemed too low and the group hopes to secure an ex-gratia payment of at least HKD$50,000 (NM-5, August 7, 2006). Mrs. Yip believes that many of the older hawkers in the area will not move into the new market, choosing instead to retire, hence the push for a larger compensation.

Figure 6.11: Park entrance on Tai Wo Street (Source: Zunn, 2006)

Speaking of her thoughts on the entire conflict and the role the government has played, Mrs. Yip expressed her disappointment at the government's actions, and her frustration over the lack of transparency in their dealings with the FEHD. At the time of our interview, the FEHD had yet to announce the cost of the monthly rental fee in the new market nor had it given any indication that the interests of the hawkers would be protected. Guesses as to what the new rental fees might be hover around HKD$3,000/month, but as Mrs. Yip points out, this is the base price for the stall and prime locations can be bid up to a much higher figure (NM-5, August 7, 2006). There is also concern that since the new market is a joint venture between public and private interests, the private developers may have the right to increase the monthly rents to

something approaching market value, which Mrs. Yip estimates to be around HKD$25,000-$30,000/month, a figure that is out of range for the hawkers and vendors currently working in the area.

In Chapter 2, public spaces were discussed as potential sites for political organization and action as these spaces can highlight inequalities inherent in the social structure, leading to the coming together of individuals to protect their interests (Harvey, 1973, 2006; Goheen, 1998; Mitchell, 2003). In this case, public space has been used as an arena for political action through the hawkers' organization in response to what they perceive as an issue of social justice. In the Wan Chai Market area conflict, the formal response to the relocation plan focused on the specific issue of the loss of affordable market space for the vendors in the Wan Chai Market area and how the loss of this public space is also a loss of a symbol of the community's cultural heritage. However, the formal response of the CGHR to the proposed changes to the market spaces in the Wan Chai area does not fully encompass all the issues at stake. The following section outline the informal responses to this proposed plan, focusing on the concerns of hawkers and market vendors on a larger scale.

6.3. THE INFORMAL RESPONSE: HAWKERS AND VENDORS

In my interviews with the hawkers and market vendors in the area, frustrations over the current conflict were readily apparent. Several themes frequently arose during interviews and conversations. The first deals with the sense of disconnect between the interests and needs of the hawkers versus those of the State. Second, the economic implication of the State's approach to public markets and its role in urban landscape planning was another prominent theme that arose. Economic concerns centered around motivations of market traders, risks and coping mechanisms. These discussions also introduced a third theme, that of the social implications of the changes and loss of public market spaces.

The importance of a range of social functions of these markets, as discussed earlier in Chapter 2, became clear from interviews with the vendors and from observations of social interactions in the markets. The relationships between the vendors, between vendors and the neighborhood, and between vendors and their clientele

contribute to the overall experience and functioning of the market. The following section provides a more detailed analysis of these three themes as they pertain to how Wan Chai market vendors and hawkers are reacting to the changes occurring in the public Wan Chai market spaces, and the possible effects that these reactions may have.

6.3.1. Government

Issues of trust and transparency, perceptions and concerns over fairness, worries about corruption, and confusion regarding government regulations were frequent topics that arose during my interviews with market vendors and hawkers in Wan Chai. The following section addresses many of the concerns raised in interviews with regards to the vendors and hawkers perceptions of what they interpret as the government's lack of concern for the interests of the poor, or "the little people" (TY-2, August 7, 2006).

6.3.1.1. Trust in the Government

The FEHD's recent actions concerning the relocation of Wan Chai Market vendors and the street hawkers as well as a continued trend in reducing the rights and opportunities of market vendors and hawkers in general have eroded the trust of the overwhelming majority of my informants in the government. The perceived lack of transparency in the entire process of the relocation plan turned out to be an expression of a wider disapproval of the government.

One of the most problematic issues in the conflicts between the FEHD on the one hand, and the hawkers and market vendors on the other, is the paucity of information available to help either side come to an effective decision. The uncertainty over rental costs in the new market and the extent of the role of the private developers is cause for concern for the hawkers. As Mrs. Lee (August 7, 2006) explained: "It's a guessing game on both sides right now because the government doesn't know what the people want to do, mostly because they haven't provided enough information for people to make a final decision of whether they want to move into the market or take the compensation". Even the date of the closure of the current market is unclear and the vendors do not trust the information given by the FEHD (WC-1, July 3, 2006; WC-2, July 3, 2006).

The motives of the government also fall under suspicion, with many vendors and traders disbelieving the stated intentions of the FEHD. Mrs. Lee questioned the explanation given for the closure of the street market for vehicular access to the new building by pointing out that the recent narrowing of Wan Chai Road indicated that vehicular traffic in the area is low enough to sustain such a change, and that it is counter-intuitive for people to turn down Tai Yuen Street to Cross Street, then Wan Chai Road to access Queen's Road East when they can just turn up and access Queen's Road East directly. As she noted bluntly: "So what do they need to close this section for? It's just to get rid of us" (TY-2, August 7, 2006).

Another informant, Mrs. Wong, a clothing vendor in her 50s, discussed a letter that was sent by the FEHD, informing the hawkers that the former is starting preliminary studies into the feasibility of relocating the street market to a different street. The letter informed the hawkers of surveys of residents and shop owners on the affected streets that will be conducted shortly. Mrs. Wong believes that the results will likely be negative, resulting in the relocation, given that few businesses, especially the larger stores will be willing to agree. She thinks the survey, regardless of the results, provides the government with the chance to "claim that they have tried to do something without having to actually fix the problem" (TY-1, July 11, 2006). There is little trust in the government to protect their livelihoods and interests by the hawkers and market vendors in the area. This lack of trust increases the difficulty in attaining a suitable compromise to resolve the conflict surrounding the relocation plan and also for any future conflicts that may arise.

6.3.1.2. 'Voice of the People'

This general lack of trust in the government may stem partially from the perceived lack of voice by the hawkers. Two grievances in this regard were brought up with some regularity during interviews. First, the hawkers feel left out of the decision-making process and ignored. In the middle of an interview with Mrs. Lee (August 7, 2006), she said, "you know, no one has ever sat down with us to discuss our concerns or ask for our opinion". Government decisions such as the closure of the street market are passed onto the hawkers by mail. There is some positive development in terms of support for the

hawkers from local district councilors, but what they can accomplish is uncertain because, Mrs. Lee continued to explain, "when it comes down to it, they are being paid by the government" (TY-2, August 7, 2006).

Second, the hawkers feel a distinct separation between themselves as 'the little people' and 'the rich', believing that the government only listens to the wishes of the wealthy. One informant, Mr. Wu's reply to the question of whether he can issue a complaint with the government tellingly illustrates their perceived lack of voice:

> Of course not!! They only listen to the rich guys. Did you see the next street [Tai Yuen Street]? That used to be full [of stalls] and now they closed off half of it. That piece of land is priceless. The rich take what they want. They bought the apartment already. Why do they need to buy the street too? … Did you hear on the radio about that guy who slashed his wife and then jumped from his flat? And what was that for? Money. Of course it's about money. And whose fault is it? Who is to blame? Not that man. It is society that is to blame (CS-5, July 25, 2006).

However, his neighbor Mr. Chan was a bit more optimistic, claiming, "they still need to listen to the people" (CS-1, July 25, 2006). He believes the government will address the complaints of the hawkers -- eventually (CS-1, July 25, 2006). Wealth then, is seen as the key to commanding attention and action from the government. The lack of trust in the government to protect the interests and livelihoods of hawkers and market vendors as analyzed above coupled with the inability to 'be heard' adds to the vulnerability of hawkers and market vendors, which is described in greater detail below in Section 6.3.2.3.

6.3.2.3. Regulation and Policing

The perception of being one of the 'little people' is in part exacerbated by the constant policing of the markets by Hawker Control Officers (HCO). The presence of HCOs in the market is seen as both pointless and an affront to the hawkers. During one monthly visit by an HCO, a hawker stated: "He's out here because he's bored. He's finished clipping his nails, plucking his beard, so now he's making things to do. He's here to check if we're dead yet" (CS-6, August 7, 2006). According to Mr. Choi, a gregarious clothing vendor on Cross Street, the HCOs were different in the past. After the initial

Hawker Control Teams disbanded, the new officers were not considered to be as qualified:

> Don't look upon me like an old man sitting here selling things as someone who knows nothing. I'm probably more educated than he is [pointing to the HCO]. These guys are uneducated, that one there probably used to be a garbage man. They are uneducated. They can't read English and probably can't even spell the word 'obstruction'. Last time they came to fine us, he couldn't even write Cross Street [in Chinese]. We had to write it out for him to copy. (CS-6, August 7, 2006)

During such interviews when a HCO was in the vicinity, there was a general feeling of displeasure due to the HCO's presence. There was a lot of ridiculing of the officer's abilities and intelligence. One nearby hawker in her 40s exclaimed: "I figured out why he would only go down one side and come back the other way. It's because he was getting confused walking in a zig-zag!" (CS-M4, August 7, 2006). However, the hawkers acted in a more deferential manner when the officer was in closer proximity. The blusterings of the hawkers quoted above ceased and all the hawkers who were speaking with me stopped, including a previous interviewee who ushered me away when the officer was checking nearby stalls. She had been sitting in for a friend and would have been fined for illegal hawking because the stall license was not in her name. Within a minute, she had closed up her friend's shop and slipped into a nearby store.

The confrontational manner with which the hawkers and the HCOs interacted appeared mutual as the HCO was quite rude and curt with the hawkers, mostly asking people to pull their goods closer in and making sure that absent hawkers did not have other people filling in for them. I also observed that the officer also seemed easily confused and did not have a good understanding or knowledge of the market layout and the hawkers. This lack of knowledge is a contributing factor to the animosity the hawkers displayed towards the HCO as well as a general frustration with the FEHD and the government as a whole.

6.3.2. Economic Implications

The hawkers in the Wan Chai case are dissatisfied with the government's seeming lack of concern for their livelihoods and perception that hawking is a temporary job. During interviews, hawkers and market vendors spoke of their motivational forces behind

entering this field of work, of their entrepreneurial skills, how they approach potential risks and vulnerabilities, as well as future plans for their business. Indeed, the economic implications of the loss and/or changes to public market spaces were popular topics of discussion with the market vendors and hawkers in the Wan Chai market area.

6.3.2.1. Motivation

'Self-reliance', 'choice', and 'necessity' were words that came up often during interviews. "Hong Kongers rely on themselves" was a popular phrase used to describe the choices people make to be self-reliant in order to meet their daily needs (WC-3, July 25, 2006). One informant, a woman in her mid-70s stated, "people need to be able to take care of themselves and rely on only themselves" (CS-3, July 25, 2006). She continued, in line with Mrs. Lee, introduced earlier, that some of the hawkers with children in the formal workforce expressed disinterest in relying on their children for economic support even though their children could afford it (CS-3, July 25, 2006; TY-2, August 7, 2006).

As mentioned in the previous chapter, self-employment is a strong motivational force in why people decide to start hawking or working in markets. However, there is a more practical reason for why people work out on the streets, namely, to provide for their children and their families (CS-1, August 7, 2006; CS-4, July 11, 2006). One informant stated simply, "we are out here in 30-something degree weather for the kids. Who doesn't like to be [working] inside in air-conditioning? But we are here because we need to make money" (CS-1, August 7, 2006).

6.3.2.2. Entrepreneurial Skills

A third of the hawkers interviewed in the Wan Chai market area spoke of their lack of experience when they first entered their line of work in the street market and how, instead, they learned their trade over the years. Mrs. Lee, a key informant started hawking about ten years prior to our interview without much knowledge or experience. She also had no social networks aside from a relative of her husband who helped her get a license to rely on. Unable to explain how she succeeded in her trade, she explains,

"once you're knee deep in something and make a commitment to something, you will know how to do it" (TY-2, August 7, 2006).

The hawkers seek to improve their business through observations and comparisons with competitors outside the market. Mrs. Lee began selling jade trinkets after traveling to Guangzhou to find wholesalers. Her later shift to selling jewelry was inspired by the growing competition in the market selling jade trinkets and the growing supply of jewelry amongst her suppliers in Guangzhou. She makes frequent trips into China to keep up with fashion trends as she estimates that her stock only has a shelf life of around 6 months before they go out of style (TY-2, August 7, 2006).

Mrs. Wong, who sells women's clothing, spends many of her days off in shopping centers and clothing stores around Hong Kong to see what the competition is like (TY-1, July 11, 2006). Comparisons to other formal and informal retail outlets are common amongst the hawkers in Wan Chai, not just in terms of the goods sold but also in terms of location, organization and clientele. Mrs. Leung who sells locally manufactured children's clothing believes that it is much easier to run a small business in Hong Kong than in China. Her clients, "want locally made goods because they trust the quality" (CS-4, July 11, 2006).

Affordability is another reason people shop in street markets according to Mrs. Lee. She says, "outdoor goods need to be cheap and indoor goods need to be expensive to cover rent" (TY-2, August 7, 2006). Her cheaper goods attract a younger crowd, which makes up the majority of her clientele (ibid.).

The location of their stalls and their client base are two elements that contribute to the hesitation and displeasure voiced among these vendors of having to relocate. Even though moving to a different market rather than into the new Wan Chai Market may be more economically prudent in terms of expenditure, as one informant stated with regards to her customer base, "it is hard to start over amongst strangers" (WC-3, August 7, 2006).

6.3.2.3. Vulnerability and Threats

The relocation into the new Wan Chai market is seen to greatly increase the risks to the livelihoods of the market vendors, especially for the street market hawkers. The move indoors is generally seen as a 'dead end' move that will be bad for business because the

foot traffic in front of their stalls will be significantly reduced (CS-1, July 3, 2006; CS-4, July 11, 2006; CS-5, July 25, 2006; TY-1, July 11, 2006; TY-2, August 7 2006). Part of the problem in this regard lies in the organization of the new market with dry goods vendors being assigned to the basement, further reducing potential foot traffic (CS-1, July 3, 2006). Indeed, Mrs. Lee contrasted the new market to the physical layout of the markets she has seen in Australia where they put the fish stalls at the rear of the market behind a glass wall. Placing necessities such as food at the back (or in the basement) made more sense to her because people will go there anyway (TY-2, August 7, 2006).

The move is argued to also exacerbate the continued decline in business hawkers have been experiencing over the years. Mr. Wu expressed concern over the impending changes, stating that he barely makes enough money working out on the street to pay his rent, food, and his children's tuition and books and that it will be worse if they move indoors (CS-5, July 25, 2006). He says, "everyone has a family to feed. How many families will be out on the street because of this? We have two kids, they have two kids [pointing to the next stall]. Each of these stalls represents one family, plus what about those who have to take care of their parents too" (CS-5, July 25, 2006). He estimates that at least 220 people will be directly affected by the closure of the street market.

Mrs. Lee brings up another source of concern regarding the relocation of the market stalls. Since she is not the original license holder but rather leases it from her relatives, she is not entitled to the compensation offered for turning in her license for a stall in the new market building. As well, because of the policies in place regarding the issuing of licenses for street hawkers, she does not feel as though she has any say in the discussions between the hawkers nor with State officials regarding the changes taking place. Even though she is one of the key organizers of the protests against the closure of the Cross/Tai Yuen Street Market, Mrs. Lee expresses frustrations over her lack of voice in the process (TY-2, August 7, 2006). The ongoing economic vulnerability of hawkers and market vendors, coupled with governmental policies that seemingly increase the vulnerability of these individuals have placed these informal entrepreneurs in a position of uncertainty, as discussed further in the following section.

6.3.2.4. Future Plans

The future for the hawkers and market vendors is not clear, even if the closures and relocation is viewed as an inevitability. Mrs. Lee highlighted the general anxiety of the hawkers in the area. As a middle-aged woman and a relative newcomer to the Cross/Tai Yuen Street Market, she acknowledges that it will be difficult for her to find another source of income, but that it is even more difficult, not to mention unfair, for people who have been hawking in the area for generations since this is all they know. Her hope, similar to Mrs. Yip's is for there to be a rise in the compensation payments and lower rent in the new market (TY-2, August 7, 2006).

For some, the move will likely signal an end to their hawking career due to the foreseen difficulties in the new market. For those who cannot retire yet, this means the possibility of (re-)entry into the wage labor workforce. Some are skeptical that they will be able to do anything other than hawk even if the conditions are not ideal. As one hawker stated, "people in Hong Kong above 40 can't find work. Others who have much more qualifications can't find work so what chance do people like me have" (CS-2, July 11, 2006). Others have yet to decide what to do. One elderly woman says she barely makes enough money selling fruits under the current condition that she doesn't know what will happen after the move (WC-2, July 3, 2006). Another undecided hawker stated, "We don't know what to do yet, we can't continue. We've always sold these snacks so what can we sell?" (CS-1, August 7, 2006).

The availability of cheap goods in mainland China, and the ease of travel to areas such as Shenzhen, China since the handover in 1997, have also increased the vulnerability of street hawkers. One hawker observes, "people just go to China to buy stuff now because it is easy and cheap" (CS-2). Mrs. Wong explains that business was better before the doors to China opened because now people can purchase the same cheap clothing in China instead. She used to have a lot of male clients purchasing women's clothing to bring back to China when they marry but no longer because it is cheaper to buy them in China than in Hong Kong (TY-1, July 11, 2006). Competition with formal retailers in Hong Kong is also reducing the amount of business available to street

hawkers as Mrs. Wong states, "now chains such as U2 and G2000[14] are selling cheaper shirts than before" (TY-1, July 11, 2006). In sum, an increasingly globalized economy is causing economic difficulties for hawkers and market vendors as the competition for cheap goods are driving these informal entrepreneurs out of business and leaving them without alternative options as they do not have the skills or qualifications to enter the formal economy.

6.3.3. Social Networks and Functions

6.3.3.1. Family

The role of family in informal market economies is an important one as described in Chapter 2. In Hong Kong, this role is facilitated by policies regarding succession and transfer of licenses as detailed in Chapter 5. Interviewees for this study often explained their entrance into a hawking career as having been precipitated by family connections. One hawker, Mrs. Wong, began her career working for her sister-in-law's clothing store. Since the authorities were constantly fining them for pushing their storefront out onto the sidewalk, they rented the fixed-pitch stall in front of the store. After the shop closed because of the redevelopment schemes, Mrs. Wong and her husband kept the street stall (TY-1, July 11, 2006).

Another informant was able to start hawking in the area well after the issuing of licenses was stopped through family relations. Mrs. Lee and her husband used to own a furniture business, which closed around the time of the handover in 1997 (TY-2, August 7, 2006). The two work in separate stalls rented from two different relatives. One of the few non-Hong Kong natives in this market area arrived from Canton after the handover and took over her uncle's business (CS-4, July 11, 2006). Other hawkers and market vendors began their careers as a continuation of previous generations (WC-3, July 25, 2006; CS-1, July 3, 2006; CS-2, July 11, 2006; CS-3, July 19, 2006).

These familial networks and histories in market vending and hawking mean that much of the current vendor's economic and human capital, as well as that of their

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[14] U2 and G2000 are large clothing chain stores found in Hong Kong and a number of countries in Southeast Asia.

relatives, has been invested in this line of work, either currently or in the past. These historical ties, and current ongoing networks increase the difficulties in changing career paths – a potential concern for many vendors in the near future because of the Wan Chai Market predicament.

6.3.3.2. The Social Environment

The social environment of Wan Chai Market and its surrounds is multi-layered and varied, with complimentary and contrasting sentiments between and within the different groups of actors in the market area. The conflict in Wan Chai over the closure and relocation of market spaces, especially in regards to the social dynamics in the street market space, highlights these opposing interests. As discussed in greater detail in Chapter 2, Milgram (2003) found similar conflicts occurring in the Philippines as macro-scale policies brought to the surface local, micro-scale social dynamics.

From field observations, relationships between hawkers in the Cross/Tai Yuen Street Market were friendly. Neighboring hawkers engage in social activities with each other such as card games or holding conversations that vary from discussing their families and events in the news, to gossiping about activities occurring in the market. As found in other markets in Hong Kong discussed in Chapter 5, here too meals, newspapers, and other goods are freely exchanged between hawkers and when someone takes a lunch break or has to leave to run errands, other hawkers nearby pitch in to cover for the absent hawker.

However, the impending closure of part of the market revealed cracks in the dynamics between the hawkers. There is an informal ranking system based on age, seniority and the type of goods sold. Mrs. Lee states, "I can't say that a vegetable seller should move indoors because they sell wet goods. I haven't been here for as long. If I were to say that they will chop me to death" (TY-2, August 7, 2006).

Relationships between hawkers and the storefront owners on Cross and Tai Yuen Streets are even more confrontational. According to Mrs. Lee, the success of the toy stores and the introduction of the name "Toy Street" for the street market section of Tai Yuen Street came about "on the backs of the previous hawkers who made [the] street popular for shopping. The toy stores only moved in a few years ago" (TY-2, August 7,

2006). Recounting an interview conducted by a group of local university students who were asking the store owners if they minded the street hawkers, Mrs. Lee answered for them saying, "of course not! That's not even a question. I'm taking business away from them and blocking their way. But we've been here longer so who do you think should have the last word" (TY-2, August 7, 2006)? Mrs. Lee also brought up the conflict between a snake store on Tai Yuen street that is complaining about the presence of the street stall even though the store owners are renting out the space in front of the store for $1000/day (TY-2, August 7, 2006).

Not all storefront owners have such a frictional dynamic with the street hawkers however. One such storefront owner prefers the presence of the hawkers stating that if the street stalls were cleared, the obstruction charges against her would probably increase as it would be more obvious that she is putting her goods out onto the sidewalk (CS-SF, July 26, 2006).

Relations with residents in the area appear friendly. One hawker was discussing travel plans with a resident of the building behind her stall while keeping an eye on trolleys for domestic workers shopping in the area. There is also a general sense of satisfaction among the residents in the area, who stated to me that hawkers in this market tend to be polite and friendly as compared to other market areas (NM-6, August 4, 2006). One local resident noted that the loss of the street market would be a shame because everyone on the street is so friendly (CS-M3, July 26, 2006). Despite the existence of conflicting interests the social dynamics between the hawkers and the residents and storefront owners/operators show how well the street market has been integrated into the community.

In conversations with tourists, shoppers, and residents of Hong Kong outside of the Wan Chai District, people noted the liveliness the markets bring to the Wan Chai neighborhood, particularly the presence of the street stalls. Further discussion about the current conflict in the area and the potential closure of the street market however drew little concern, and some shoppers and residents questioned why the hawkers could not just relocate into the new building (NM-6, August 4, 2006). It would appear that the effects of the FEHD's increasingly intolerant policies regarding the presence of street markets have largely gone unnoticed by the other users of these public market spaces,

namely the shoppers, perhaps because their livelihoods do not depend on the availability of these spaces.

6.3.3.3. Sticking together

The current conflict over the relocation of hawkers has served, as a whole, to cement the feelings of camaraderie between the hawkers and also between hawkers and market vendors. As Mrs. Yip said above, hawkers are of 'one heart,' working in a mutually beneficial arrangement. Hawkers rely on each other's presence to attract a clientele, thus 'sticking together' enhances the visibility of the market to both tourists and locals, increasing (or at least maintaining) the current traffic flow (TY-2, August 7, 2006).

There is also the sense that hawkers should 'stick together' as a show of solidarity to give them a stronger negotiating position with the FEHD. At present, the hawkers are staying outdoors and working together because it is "the right thing to do" (CS-1, July 11, 2006). The split between those who can stay and those who have to move is causing some anxiety because the hawkers who do not have to move would like to help. At the same time, if they have to move, then the sentiment expressed is that they will all move, because "you can't just defy the group" (CS-4, July 11, 2006). Vendors in the market are also showing solidarity because "it's the same fight" (WC-2, July 3, 2006). However, there is also a sentiment amongst hawkers that the wet market vendors and the street stalls should remain separate entities (CS-1, July 11, 2006). These differing ideas of how the hawkers and market vendors should approach the government in resolving this conflict highlights some of the differences in their respective interests but also their understanding that the two groups need to unify to present a more forceful front to achieve their goals.

6.4. CHAPTER CONCLUSION

The changes occurring in the Wan Chai market spaces discussed in this chapter demonstrate the need to redefine what public markets are in terms of their contribution to the urban landscape as public spaces. There has been a lack of recognition of public and street markets as an integral part of the urban landscape in the current redevelopment plans. As well, there has been a lack of acknowledgement that these spaces are an

economic necessity for a sizeable segment of the local population, especially those who do not benefit directly from the globalizing effects of Hong Kong's economic development - such as small-scale traders.

This chapter began with a brief introduction to the thesis case study site, Wan Chai, and the history of the market spaces discussed, namely Wan Chai Market and the Cross/Tai Yuen Street Market. This introduction provided a background to the conflict occurring in the area, detailed in Section 6.2. The conflict over the loss of an affordable space for displaced market vendors and hawkers has unified traders in these market spaces to organize for political action – explored in Section 6.2.2, although to little avail.

The chapter closed with a discussion of the fears and concerns of hawkers and vendors working in the area because of the conflict that is occurring and the potential loss of their livelihoods as well as issues pertaining to the difficulties of making a living as a small-scale entrepreneur. Their stories point to the importance of public spaces for these individual and their families as they rely directly on the availability of such public spaces as marketplaces to make a living. Their stories also point to the importance of maintaining public market spaces for enriching the social and cultural landscapes of Hong Kong.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION - PUBLIC MARKET SPACES (RE)DEFINED

This study set out to explore the *relationship between the global city aspirations of the State and the 'traditional' uses of public spaces for small-scale trade in Hong Kong* by examining the ways in which public spaces are changing as well as the current conditions of public market spaces. Chapter 1 introduced the aim and research questions of this thesis as well as a brief summary of the history of market spaces in Hong Kong. In turn, Chapter 2 then detailed the conceptual framework consisting of three core areas of literature, namely issues concerning public space, the socio-economic functions of marketplaces, and previous studies on markets in Hong Kong. Chapter 3 outlined the methodology used for this study including a discussion on issues of subjectivity and the positionality of the researcher. In Chapter 4, I proceeded to answer my first research question of *how are public spaces currently changing in Hong Kong?* Chapter 5 addressed my second thesis research question, namely, *what are the current socio-economic conditions for hawkers and wet market vendors in Hong Kong?* The Wan Chai case study in Chapter 6 answered the third research question of this study, which is, *how are changes to the State's perceptions of public space in Hong Kong affecting hawkers and wet market vendors?*

To outline the changes occurring in Hong Kong with regards to public spaces, I detailed how public spaces are defined and used in Hong Kong in Section 4.1. The following Section 4.2 discussed the ways in which the quality of public spaces are changing, how privatization processes are influencing these changes, and how market traders have responded to these changes. While public spaces are in part defined as spaces that can be used and accessed by the public, I questioned the appropriateness of these public spaces in relation to the people who will most likely use them. In Hong Kong, there is a discrepancy between the public spaces that are readily made available for use by the general public by the government, such as sitting-out spaces that largely remain empty, and the public spaces that are used with regularity, such as sidewalks and street markets, which the government is increasingly regulating or even attempting to eradicate. Identity, specifically the imagineering of a particular Hong Kong identity by the State to remain competitive in the global economy was found to be influential in the

way public spaces are being envisioned and managed (Section 4.3). The imagined identity of 'Brand Hong Kong' established by the State has been detrimental to the continuation of social and economic spaces such as public markets and street markets in their traditional forms. As discussed in Chapter 5, the somewhat chaotic nature of these public spaces does not fit into the vision of the State as Asia's World City.

This study contributes to the debate on public spaces by analyzing Hong Kong's streets and other public spaces as a space for economic interaction. Previous studies on Hong Kong's public spaces have shown how the form of these spaces are changing through urban redevelopment plans and how these changes influence the way public spaces are used and perceived as discussed in my conceptual framework in Chapter 2 (Jacobs, 1961; Mitchell, 1995; Duneier, 1999; Hamilton, 2002; Mitchell, 2003). My analysis of public spaces in Hong Kong focused the debate not only on issues of physical form and access, but also on the *functions* of public spaces. Changes to how public spaces should appear and negotiations to the right of access to public spaces need to include considerations for people who depend on public spaces for their livelihoods, such as hawkers and market vendors in Hong Kong who rely on the availability of public market spaces to make a living.

The discussion of the current condition of Hong Kong's public market spaces in Chapter 5 began with the legal classification of public market types and hawker licenses that are under the jurisdiction of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department. Section 5.2 outlined the regulations of the FEHD in regards to markets and hawkers and the role of Hawker Control in enforcing these regulations. Section 5.3 analyzed the physical spaces of street and public market spaces in terms of how the spaces integrate with the urban landscape as well as how the spaces are maintained. The chapter concluded with Section 5.4 with an interpretation of the social aspects of street and public markets through narratives with informants for this study. These narratives highlighted the importance of marketplaces in contributing to the social and cultural dynamics of the community.

Public market spaces in Hong Kong form a dialectic with the surrounding urban landscapes through various processes of integration and reflection. The physical characteristics of street markets merge with the characteristics of the specific

neighborhoods these markets are located in to create a unique atmosphere. As Section 5.3 in Chapter 5 illustrated, the conditions and the quality of the physical components of street markets differ from one another. While street hawkers modify their stall spaces to maximize productivity by extending their stalls outwards, the extent and 'style' of the modifications depend on the spatial limitations of the neighborhood where the market is located. For example, due to the presence of vehicular and tramcar traffic on Chun Yeung Street in North Point, street stalls open up on towards both the street and the sidewalk unlike other street markets such as the Reclamation Street Market in Mong Kok. Hawkers in the Temple Street Market on the other hand extend their stalls vertically since the layout of the neighborhood restricts them from extending in any other direction. Neighborhoods also adapt to the presence of street markets, often by capitalizing on the draw of street markets for additional economic gain. Storefront operators take advantage of the presence of street market stalls nearby by mimicking the atmosphere of the stalls. In North Point, the storefront operators put up awnings to bridge the gap between their formal store and the market stalls in front to create a sense of unity. Since street markets are known for their low prices, owners of businesses near street markets can take advantage of shoppers seeking bargains at street stalls by altering their storefront appearance.

Indoor public markets similarly adapt to and influence the urban landscape. The physical conditions of stalls in public markets are tied to particular characteristics of the neighborhoods the markets are located in. As shown in Chapter 5, markets located in commercial areas or in areas with more options available for consumers tend to appear less 'lively' and physically, more run-down than markets located in residential areas possibly due to the lack of available funds to maintain a market that has a high vacancy rate. The examples of Bowrington Road Market and Lockhart Road Market present another way in which public market spaces interact with their surrounding physical and social landscapes. Both markets, located in largely commercial and retail spaces, are relatively quiet in terms of economic activities in the market stalls. However, the pedestrian-heavy roads outside the Bowrington Road Market greatly increase the amount of people who use the market as a public space for social interaction compared to the emptiness of Lockhart Road Market, which is not located near a pedestrian-heavy area.

The presence of such social interaction affects the physical characteristics of these public market spaces such that markets that are used as places of social interaction such as Bowrington Road Market and Aberdeen Market tend to be more well-kept, cleaner and more orderly in addition to having a livelier atmosphere.

The narratives presented in Section 5.4 of hawkers and market vendors in Hong Kong underscored the importance of public market spaces to the livelihoods of an economically vulnerable segment of the population. The lack of appropriate skills for the globalizing economy of Hong Kong, the influence of family members, informal training and social networks have led many into the hawking and market trade, thus cementing their reliance on the availability of public spaces for securing their livelihoods. The narratives also presented the perspective of hawkers who see themselves as contributing to Hong Kong's economy and uniqueness in the global arena, contrary to the State's position that these street markets and public wet markets are a hindrance to Hong Kong's competitiveness.

My analysis of the socio-economic functions of marketplaces in Hong Kong showed how these spaces are an integral and integrated part of Hong Kong's social and physical urban landscape. This study drew on previous work on informal economies, discussed in Chapter 2, as spaces of permanent, complex economic systems as well as important spaces for social networking (Cross, 1998; Rankin, 2003; Turner, 2003; Seligmann, 2004; Amin, 2007). In Hong Kong, public indoor and street markets fulfill several key economic functions. First, they provide a viable source of income (and perhaps more importantly, empowerment through self-employment) for people who have been left out of the formal economy. Second, marketplaces provide a source of cheap goods for the public. And third, as several informants pointed out, marketplaces contribute to Hong Kong's economy through tourism because marketplaces are a cultural symbol. Given the role of marketplaces in Hong Kong's economy, I would argue that the State's perspective of removing markets from Hong Kong's public spaces runs counter to the State's interest of economic development.

In terms of the social functions of marketplaces in Hong Kong, this study showed how public marketplaces are crucial for community building and cohesion. As public spaces are on the decline in Hong Kong, marketplaces continue to be spaces for social

interaction, facilitating the building of social networks. My findings from this study then, contribute to the literature on informal economies by placing these socio-economic systems within the context of public spaces.

Chapter 6 explored this connection between the socio-economic functions of marketplaces and public spaces in detail through the Wan Chai case study. In Section 6.1, I first introduced the study area of Wan Chai Market and the Cross/Tai Yuen Street Market while in Section 6.2, I discussed the conflict surrounding the new Wan Chai Market building. The impending closure of a portion of the Cross/Tai Yuen Street Market and the relocation of the Wan Chai Market into its new building showed the direct impact of urban restructuring and the State's imagineering of Hong Kong's identity on public market spaces. Redevelopment plans in the area to convert existing residential and commercial structures into high-priced condominiums are changing the quality of public spaces in Wan Chai. Street spaces commonly used by hawkers and area residents as spaces for social interaction are being converted into spaces for temporary passage only. Additionally, and importantly, the loss of these spaces translates into the loss of livelihoods for the hawkers and market vendors in the area.

The changes occurring in Wan Chai illustrate how the impending shift of the Wan Chai Market from a truly public space to one that is a joint public-private venture and the partial loss of the pedestrian street market on Cross and Tai Yuen Streets is impacting upon the livelihoods of the hawkers and market vendors and their families as well as the social and economic atmosphere of the neighborhood. In interviews with hawkers in the Wan Chai area, they stressed the importance of having access to these public market spaces for economic, social, and cultural reasons. Economically, many of the hawkers stated that their age and lack of appropriate skills for Hong Kong's economy leaves them with few options for other forms of employment. Hawking then, provides them with an opportunity for making a living as well as the opportunity for self-employment. For many of the hawkers interviewed, hawking has been their family's occupation for generations, and hawkers have built upon historically-rooted family and social networks to maintain their current livelihoods. As well, the intricate social relationships and networks within the marketplace show how deeply embedded the market spaces are in the community, reflecting the numerous social values of this space. A few of the

hawkers mentioned that they believe they serve a role beyond providing affordable goods to the community by contributing to the cultural atmosphere of the city, which the State relies on for its tourism industry.

The conditions in the Wan Chai Market area reflect the concerns raised by Milgram (2003) regarding the need for multi-scalar analyses when approaching research on public market spaces. It is necessary to consider the influence of cultural identities, especially imagined identities, which shape the values and ideals that are conveyed in public spaces. These imagined identities can also contribute to the blurring of public and private realms, as is the case in Hong Kong wherein private developments are encouraged in order to convey the economic viability of the city. Through a multi-scalar analysis, the conflict in Wan Chai brings to light both the importance of the presence of public market spaces and the tensions inherent in them within Hong Kong's physical, social, economic, and cultural landscape.

Through interviews with hawkers and market vendors as well as by spending time observing and mapping the operations and conditions of public market spaces in Hong Kong, this study sheds light on the concerns of people who rely on public spaces for their economic stability and livelihoods. The current definition of public spaces in Hong Kong needs to be redefined to include recognition of the necessity of these spaces for the economic stability of a segment of the population. It is also necessary to match the appropriateness of the spaces available for market trade with the ways in which social interactions occur in these locales. As public spaces in Hong Kong continue to change through the increased privatization and the conversion of existing spaces into other functions (such as closing street markets for improved vehicular traffic access), it will be important to continue to monitor how these changes will affect existing social and economic dynamics in the community.

APPENDIX I: ETHICS APPROVAL FORM

McGill

Research Ethics Board Office
McGill University
845 Sherbrooke Street West
James Administration Bldg., rm 419
Montreal, QC H3A 2T5

Tel: (514) 398-6831
Fax: (514) 398-4644
Ethics website: www.mcgill.ca/research/compliance/human/

Research Ethics Board I
Certificate of Ethical Acceptability of Research Involving Humans

REB File #: 187-0306

Project Title: Negotiating livelihoods: vulnerability and resiliency of street hawkers in Hong Kong

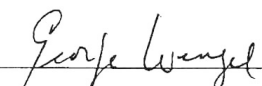**Principal Investigator:** Heidy Zunn   **Department:** Geography

Status: Master's student   **Supervisor:** Prof. S. Turner

Granting Agency and Title (if applicable): N/A

This project was reviewed on _28 March 2006_ by

Expedited Review _✓_
Full Review ____

George Wenzel

George Wenzel, Ph.D.
Chair, REB I

Approval Period: _April 4, 2006_ to _April 3, 2007_

This project was reviewed and approved in accordance with the requirements of the McGill University Policy on the Ethical Conduct of Research Involving Human Subjects and with the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct For Research Involving Humans

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*All research involving human subjects requires review on an annual basis. A Request for Renewal form should be submitted at least one month before the above expiry date.
*If a project has been completed or terminated and ethics approval is no longer required, a Final Report form must be submitted.
*Should any modification or other unanticipated development occur before the next required review, the REB must be informed and any modification can't be initiated until approval is received.

cc: Prof. S. Turner

APPENDIX II: MAP OF HONG KONG NEIGHBORHOODS
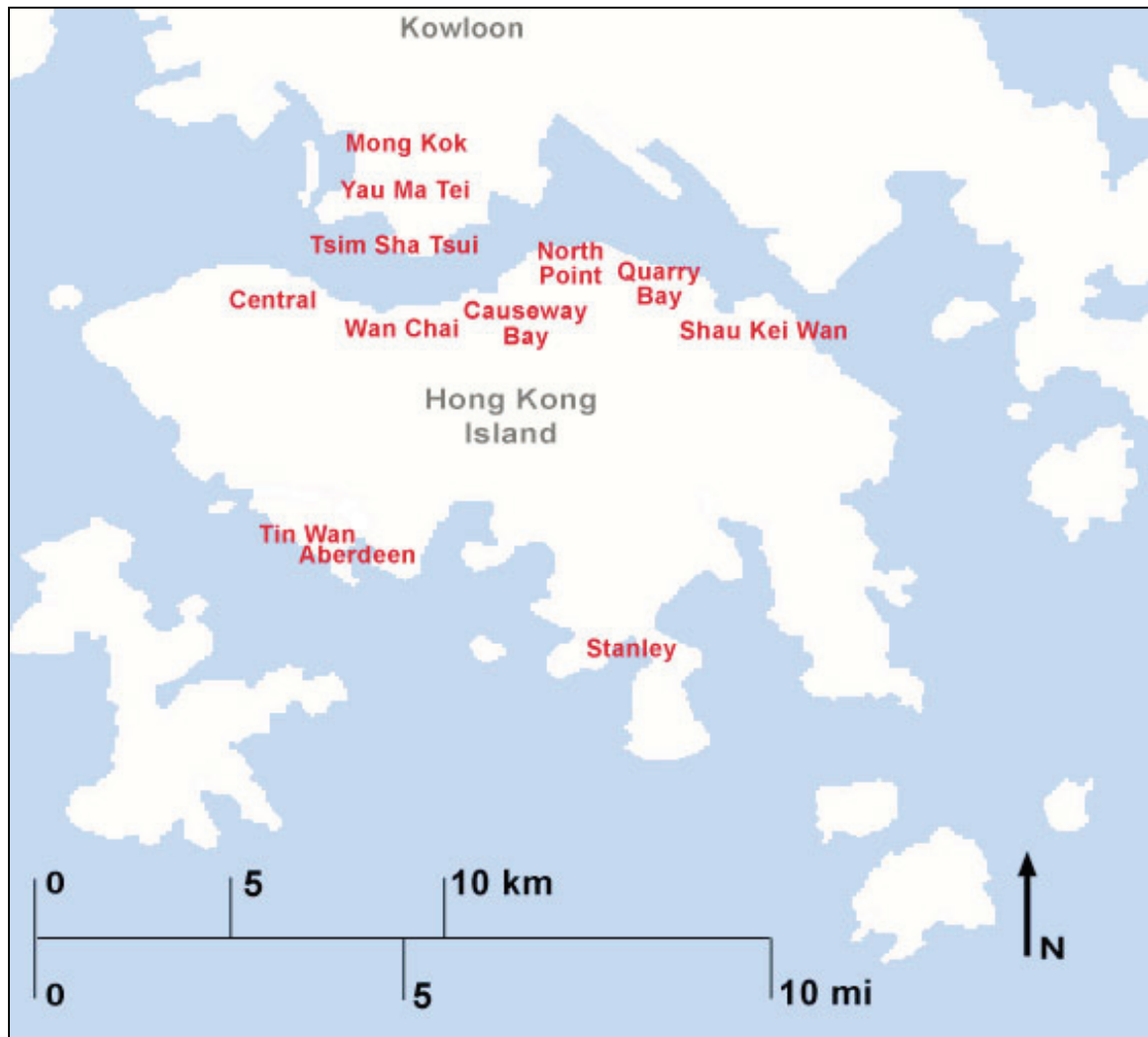
(Adapted from: Survey and Mapping Office, 2006: online)

APPENDIX III: LIST OF CURRENT FOOD AND ENVIRONMENTAL HYGIENE DEPARTMENT MARKETS

Market Name	Address
ABERDEEN MARKET	ABERDEEN MUNICIPAL SERVICES BUILDING, 203 ABERDEEN MAIN ROAD, ABERDEEN, HK
AP LEI CHAU MARKET	AP LEI CHAU MUNICIPAL SERVICES BUILDING, 8 HUNG SHING STREET, AP LEI CHAU, HK
BOWRINGTON ROAD MARKET	21 BOWRINGTON ROAD, WAN CHAI, HK
BRIDGES STREET MARKET	2 BRIDGES STREET, CENTRAL,HK
CAUSEWAY BAY MARKET	142 ELECTRIC ROAD, HK
CENTRE STREET MARKET	44 CENTRE STREET, SAI YING PUN, HK
CHAI WAN MARKET	CHAI WAN MUNICIPAL SERVICES BUILDING, 338 CHAI WAN ROAD, CHAI WAN, HK
CHEUNG CHAU COOKED FOOD MARKET	TAI HING TAI ROAD, CHEUNG CHAU
CHEUNG CHAU MARKET	2 TAI HING TAI ROAD, CHEUNG CHAU
ELECTRIC ROAD MARKET	ELECTRIC ROAD MUNICIPAL SERVICES BUILDING, 229 ELECTRIC ROAD, FORTRESS HILL, HK
JAVA ROAD MARKET	JAVA ROAD MUNICIPAL SERVICES BUILDING, 99 JAVA ROAD, NORTH POINT, HK
KUT SHING STREET COOKED FOOD MARKET	10 KUT SHING STREET, HK (AT REAR OF 17 CHEUNG LEE STREET)
LOCKHART ROAD MARKET	244 LOCKHART ROAD, WAN CHAI, HK
MUI WO COOKED FOOD MARKET	MUI WO FERRY PIER ROAD, LANTAU ISLAND
MUI WO MARKET	9 NGAN SHEK STREET, LANTAU ISLAND
NAM LONG SHAN ROAD COOKED FOOD MARKET	1 NAM LONG SHAN ROAD, WONG CHUK HANG,HK
NORTH POINT MARKET	160 TSAT TSZ MUI ROAD, NORTH POINT, HK
PENG CHAU MARKET	2 PO PENG STREET, PENG CHAU
QUARRY BAY MARKET	QUARRY BAY MUNICIPAL SERVICES BUILDING, 38 QUARRY BAY STREET, QUARRY BAY, HK
QUEEN STREET COOKED FOOD MARKET	1/F., 38 DES VOEUX ROAD WEST, SHEUNG WAN, HK

SAI WAN HO MARKET	MUNICIPAL SERVICES BUILDING, 12 TAI ON STREET, SAU KEI WAN, HK
SAI YING PUN MARKET	45 CENTRE STREET, SAI YING PUN, HK
SHAU KEI WAN MARKET	153 SHAU KEI WAN MAIN STREET EAST, HK
SHEK TONG TSUI MARKET	SHEK TONG TSUI MUNICIPAL SERVICES BUILDING, 470 QUEEN'S ROAD WEST, SHEK TONG TSUI, HK
SHEUNG WAN MARKET	SHEUNG WAN MUNICIPAL SERVICES BUILDING, 345 QUEEN'S ROAD CENTRAL,SHEUNG WAN, HK
SMITHFIELD MARKET	SMITHFIELD MUNICIPAL SERVICES BUILDING, 12K SMITHFIELD ROAD, KENNEDY TOWN, HK
STANLEY WATERFRONT MART	20 STANLEY MARKET ROAD, STANLEY, HK
TAI O MARKET	SHEK TSAI PO STREET, LANTAU ISLAND
TANG LUNG CHAU MARKET	59 JARDINE'S BAZAAR, CAUSEWAY BAY, HK
TIN WAN MARKET	11 HING WO STREET, ABERDEEN, HK
WAN CHAI MARKET	264 QUEEN'S ROAD EAST, WAN CHAI, HK
WONG NAI CHUNG MARKET	WONG NAI CHUNG MUNICIPAL SERVICES BUILDING, 2 YUK SAU STREET, HAPPY VALLEY, HK
YUE KWONG ROAD MARKET	YUE FAI COURT, 18 ABERDEEN RESERVOIR ROAD, ABERDEEN, HK
YUE WAN MARKET	33 YEE FUNG STREET, CHAI WAN, HK
HUNG HOM MARKET	HUNG HOM MUNICIPAL SERVICES BUILDING, 11 MA TAU WAI ROAD, HUNG HOM, KLN
KOWLOON CITY MARKET	KOWLOON CITY MUNICIPAL SERVICES BUILDING, 100 NGA TSIN WAI ROAD, KOWLOON CITY,KLN
TO KWA WAN MARKET	165 MA TAU WAI ROAD, TO KWA WAN, KLN
ON CHING ROAD FLOWER MARKET	BEHIND UNIVERSAL FUNERAL PARLOUR, ON CHING ROAD, HUNG HOM, KLN
CHEUNG SHA WAN COOKED FOOD MARKET	38 CHEUNG SHUN STREET, CHEUNG SHA WAN, KLN
CHOI HUNG ROAD MARKET	SHEUNG HEI STREET, SAN PO KONG, KLN
FA YUEN STREET MARKET	FA YUEN STREET MUNICIPAL SERVICES BUILDING, 123A FA YUEN STREET, MONG KOK, KLN

HAIPHONG ROAD TEMPORARY MARKET	30 HAIPHONG ROAD, TSIM SHA TSUI, KLN
KIMBERLEY STREET MARKET	24-36 KIMBERLEY STREET, TSIM SHA TSUI, KLN
KWUN CHUNG MARKET	KWUN CHUNG MUNICIPAL SERVICES BUILDING, 17 BOWRING STREET, YAU MA TEI, KLN
KWUN TONG FERRY CONCOURSE COOKED FOOD MARKET	KWUN TONG FERRY CONCOURSE, 190 HOI BUN ROAD, KWUN TONG, KLN
LAI WAN MARKET	8 LAI WAN ROAD, MEI FOO, KLN
LEI YUE MUN MARKET	G/F, LEI YUE MUN MUNICIPAL SERVICES BUILDING, 6 LEI YUE MUN PATH, YAU TONG, KLN
MONG KOK COOKED FOOD MARKET	LEVEL 2, MONG KOK COMPLEX, 557 SHANGHAI STREET,MONG KOK, KLN
MONG KOK MARKET	1047 CANTON ROAD, MONG KOK, KLN
NGAU CHI WAN MARKET	11 CLEAR WATER BAY ROAD, NGAU CHI WAN, KLN
NGAU TAU KOK MARKET	183 NGAU TAU KOK ROAD, KWUN TONG, KLN
PEI HO STREET MARKET	PEI HO STREET MUNICIPAL SERVICES BUILDING, 333 KI LUNG STREET, SHAM SHUI PO, KLN
PO ON ROAD MARKET	325-329 PO ON ROAD, CHEUNG SHA WAN, KLN
SHEUNG FUNG STREET MARKET	SHEUNG FUNG STREET JOINT USER BUILDING, J/O SHEUNG FUNG STREET & FEI FUNG STREET, DIAMOND HILL, KLN
SHUI WO STREET MARKET	9 SHUI WO STREET, KWUN TONG, KLN
SZE SHAN STREET COOKED FOOD MARKET	7 SZE SHAN STREET, YAU TONG, KLN
TAI KOK TSUI MARKET	TAI KOK TSUI MUNICIPAL SERVICES BUILDING, 63 FUK TSUN STREET, TAI KOK TSUI, KLN
TAI SHING STREET MARKET	121 CHOI HUNG ROAD,WONG TAI SIN, KLN
TSUN YIP COOKED FOOD MARKET	67 TSUN YIP STREET,KWUN TONG,KLN
TUNG CHAU STREET TEMPORARY MARKET (INCLUDING SHAM SHUI PO JADE MARKET)	269 TUNG CHAU STREET, SHAM SHUI PO, KLN
TUNG YUEN STREET COOKED FOOD MARKET	J/O TUNG YUEN STREET & SHUNG WO PATH, YAU TONG, KLN
YAU MA TEI MARKET	20 KANSU STREET, YAU MA TEI, KLN

YEE ON STREET MARKET	1A YEE ON STREET, KWUN TONG, KLN
CHAI WAN KOK COOKED FOOD MARKET	4A CHAI WAN KOK STREET, TSUEN WAN, NT
CHEUNG TAT ROAD COOKED FOOD MARKET	32 CHEUNG TAT ROAD, TSING YI, NT
FO TAN COOKED FOOD MARKET (EAST)	SHAN MEI STREET, FO TAN, NT
FO TAN COOKED FOOD MARKET (WEST)	SHAN MEI STREET, FO TAN, NT
HEUNG CHE STREET MARKET	8 TSO KUNG STREET, TSUEN WAN, NT
HUNG CHEUNG COOKED FOOD MARKET	5 SAN LIK STREET, TUEN MUN, NT
HUNG SHUI KIU TEMPORARY MARKET	HUNG SHUI KIU MAIN ROAD, HUNG SHUI KIU, NT
KA TING COOKED FOOD MARKET	2 KA TING ROAD,KWAI CHUNG,NT
KAM TIN MARKET	KAM TIN MAIN ROAD, KAM TIN, NT
KIK YEUNG ROAD COOKED FOOD MARKET	KIK YEUNG ROAD, YUEN LONG, NT
KIN WING COOKED FOOD MARKET	32 KIN WING STREET, TUEN MUN, NT
KIN YIP STREET COOKED FOOD MARKET	KIN YIP STREET, YUEN LONG, NT
KWAI SHUN STREET COOKED FOOD MARKET	2 KWAI SHUN STREET, KWAI CHUNG, NT
KWONG CHOI MARKET	2 TSING MIN PATH, TUEN MUN, NT
KWU TUNG MARKET SHOPPING CENTRE	KWU TUNG ROAD, SHEUNG SHUI, NT
LAM TEI MARKET	62 LAM TEI MAIN STREET, TUEN MUN, NT
LAU FAU SHAN MARKET	LAU FAU SHAN MAIN STREET, LAU FAU SHAN, NT
LUEN WO HUI MARKET	9 WO MUN STREET, LUEN WO HUI, FANLING, NT
NORTH KWAI CHUNG MARKET	116 SHEK YAM ROAD, KWAI CHUNG, NT
PLOVER COVE ROAD MARKET	G/F., 3 PLOVER COVE ROAD, TAI PO, NT.
SAI KUNG MARKET	67 YI CHUN STREET, SAI KUNG, NT
SAN HUI MARKET	180 HO PONG STREET, TUEN MUN, NT
SHA TAU KOK MARKET	SHUN LUNG STREET, SHA TAU KOK, NT

|	
SHA TIN MARKET	20 SHA TIN CENTRE STREET, SHA TIN, NT
SHAM TSENG TEMPORARY MARKET	UNDER THE FLYOVER OF SHAM TSENG BRIDGE, SHAM TSENG, NT
SHEK WU HUI MARKET	13 CHI CHEONG ROAD, SHEUNG SHUI, NT
TAI KIU MARKET	G/F, 2 KIU LOK SQUARE, YUEN LONG, NT
TAI PO HUI MARKET	G/F., 1/F., & 2/F., TAI PO COMPLEX,8 HEUNG SZE WUI STREET, TAI PO, NT
TAI TONG ROAD COOKED FOOD MARKET	TAI TONG ROAD, YUEN LONG, NT
TAI WAI MARKET	2-18 CHIK FAI STREET, GRANDEUR GARDEN, TAI WAI, SHA TIN, NT
TAI YUEN STREET COOKED FOOD MARKET	26 TAI YUEN STREET, KWAI CHUNG, NT
TSING YEUNG COOKED FOOD MARKET	5 TSING YEUNG CIRCUIT, TUEN MUN, NT
TSING YI MARKET	G/F, TSING YI MUNICIPAL SERVICES BUILDING, 38 TSING LUK STREET, TSING YI, NT
TSUEN KING CIRCUIT MARKET	JUNCTION OF TSUEN KING CIRCUIT AND ON YAT STREET, TSUEN WAN, NT
TSUEN WAN MARKET	25 CHUNG ON STREET, TSUEN WAN, NT
TUI MIN HOI MARKET	161 HONG KIN ROAD, SAI KUNG, NT
TUNG YICK MARKET	G/F & 1/F, 1 HOP CHOI STREET, YUEN LONG, NT
WING FONG STREET MARKET	15 WING FONG ROAD, KWAI CHUNG, NT
WO YI HOP ROAD COOKED FOOD MARKET	24 WO YI HOP ROAD, KWAI CHUNG, NT
YAN OI MARKET	1 TSING WUI STREET, TUEN MUN, NT
YEUNG UK ROAD MARKET	37-55 YEUNG UK ROAD, TSUEN WAN, NT

(Source: FEHD, 2007b)
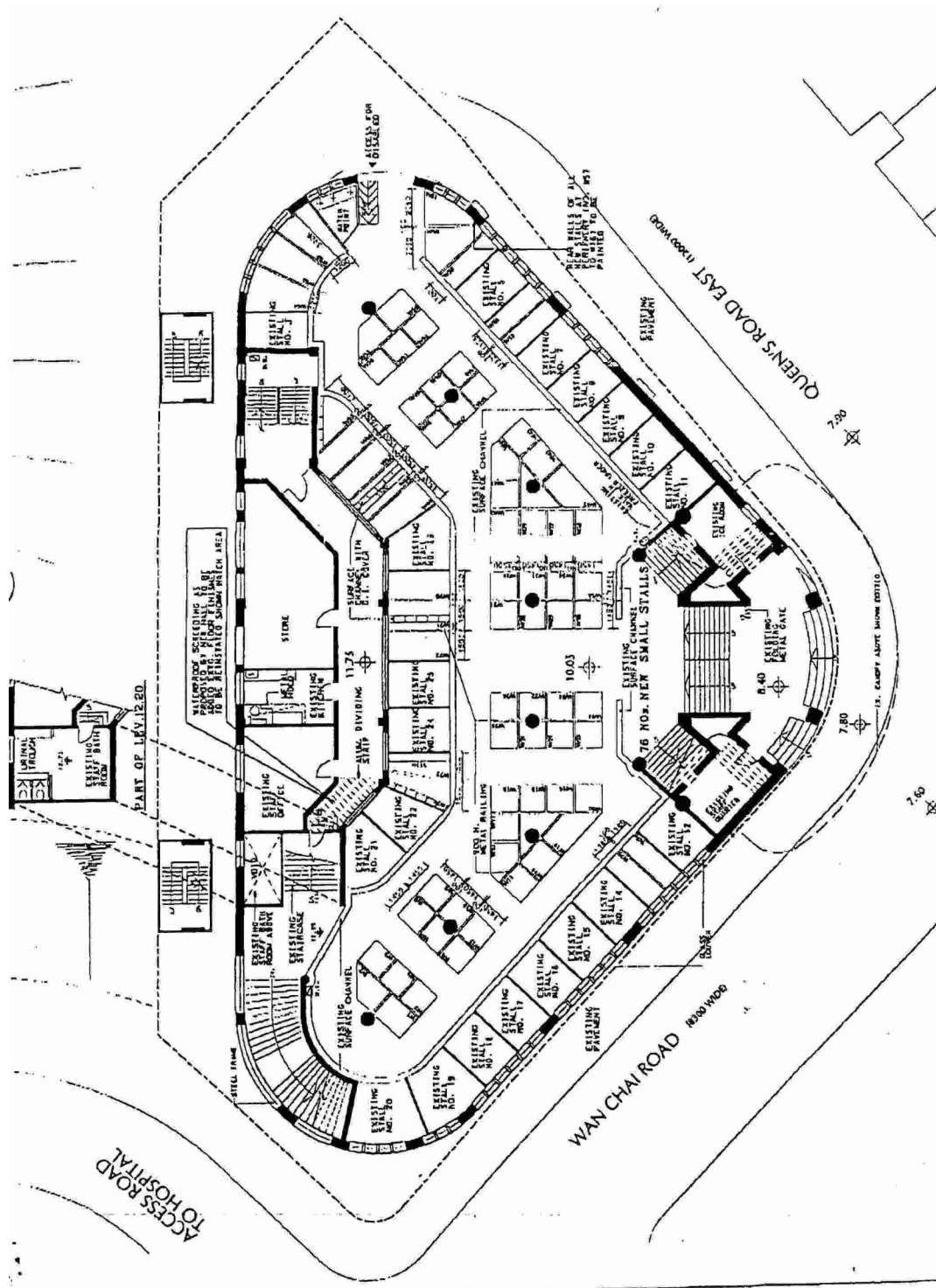
APPENDIX IV: MATRIX OF INTERVIEWEES

Code	Market	Goods Sold	Age	Gender
CS-1	Cross Street	Dry Goods	70s	F
CS-1 (Mr. Chan)	Cross Street	Dry Goods	40s	M
CS-1 (Mrs. Chan)	Cross Street	Dry Goods	40s	F
CS-2	Cross Street	Shoes	40s	F
CS-3	Cross Street	Dry Goods	70s	F
CS-3	Cross Street	Dry Goods	40s	F
CS-4 (Mrs. Leung)	Cross Street	Clothes	30s	F
CS-5 (Mr. Wu)	Cross Street	Clothes	50s	M
CS-5 (Mrs. Wu)	Cross Street	Clothes	40s	F
CS-6	Cross Street	Clothes	60s	F
CS-6 (Mr. Choi)	Cross Street	Clothes	60s	M
CS-7	Cross Street	Hair Accessories	40s	M
CS-M1	Cross Street	Clothes	30s	F
CS-M1	Cross Street	Clothes	30s	F
CS-M2	Cross Street	Vegetables	40s	F
CS-M2	Cross Street	Vegetables	40s	F
CS-M3	Cross Street	Clothes	40s	F
CS-M3	Cross Street	Clothes	40s	F
CS-M4	Cross Street	Dry Goods	50s	F
CS-SF	Non-market	Hardware Store	40s	F
EC-1	Marble Road	Clothes	40s	F
EC-1	Marble Road	Clothes	40s	F
EC-2	Marble Road (itinerant)	Fruit	60s	M
EC-2	Marble Road (itinerant)	Fruit	60s	M
EC-2	Marble Road (itinerant)	*Hoi Mei*	60s	F
NM-1 (Ms. Li)	Non-market	Architect	30s	F
NM-2	Non-market	District Councilor	40s	M
NM-3	Java Road Market	Butcher	40s	M
NM-4 (Mrs. Ho)	Non-market	Auction	40s	F
NM-5 (Mrs. Yip)	Non-market	CGHR organizer	50s	F
NM-6	Non-market	Domestic Worker	30s	F
TP-1	Tai-Ping Market	Fruit	50s	M
TY-1 (Mrs. Wong)	Tai Yuen Street	Clothes	40s	F
TY-2 (Mrs. Lee)	Tai Yuen Street	Jewelry	50s	F
WC-1	Wan Chai Market	Vegetables	70s	M
WC-2	Wan Chai Market	Fruit	70s	F
WC-3 (Mrs. Lau)	Wan Chai Market	*Hoi Mei*	50s	F

APPENDIX V: WAN CHAI MARKET FLOORPLAN AND CROSS/TAI YUEN STREET MARKET LAYOUT
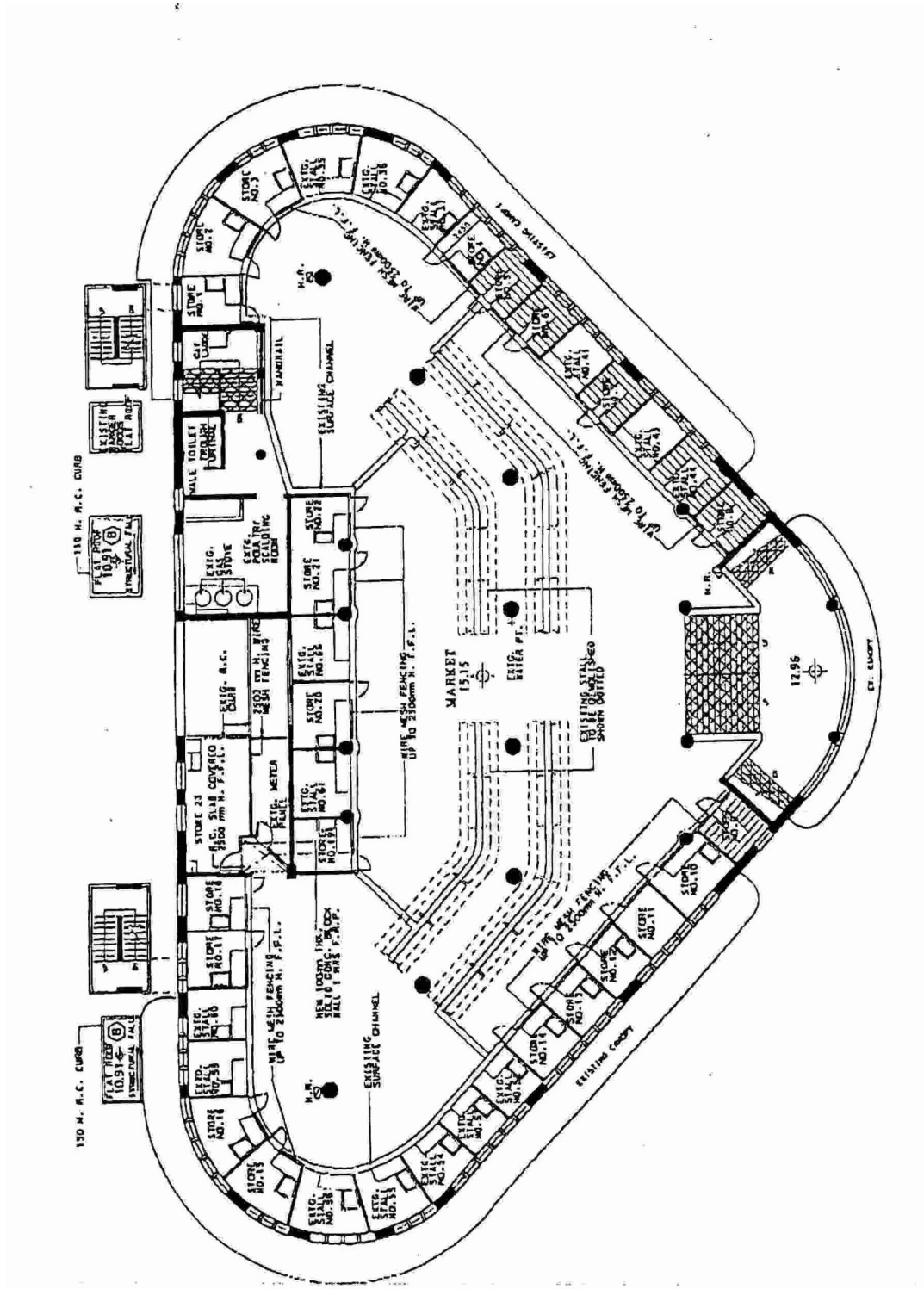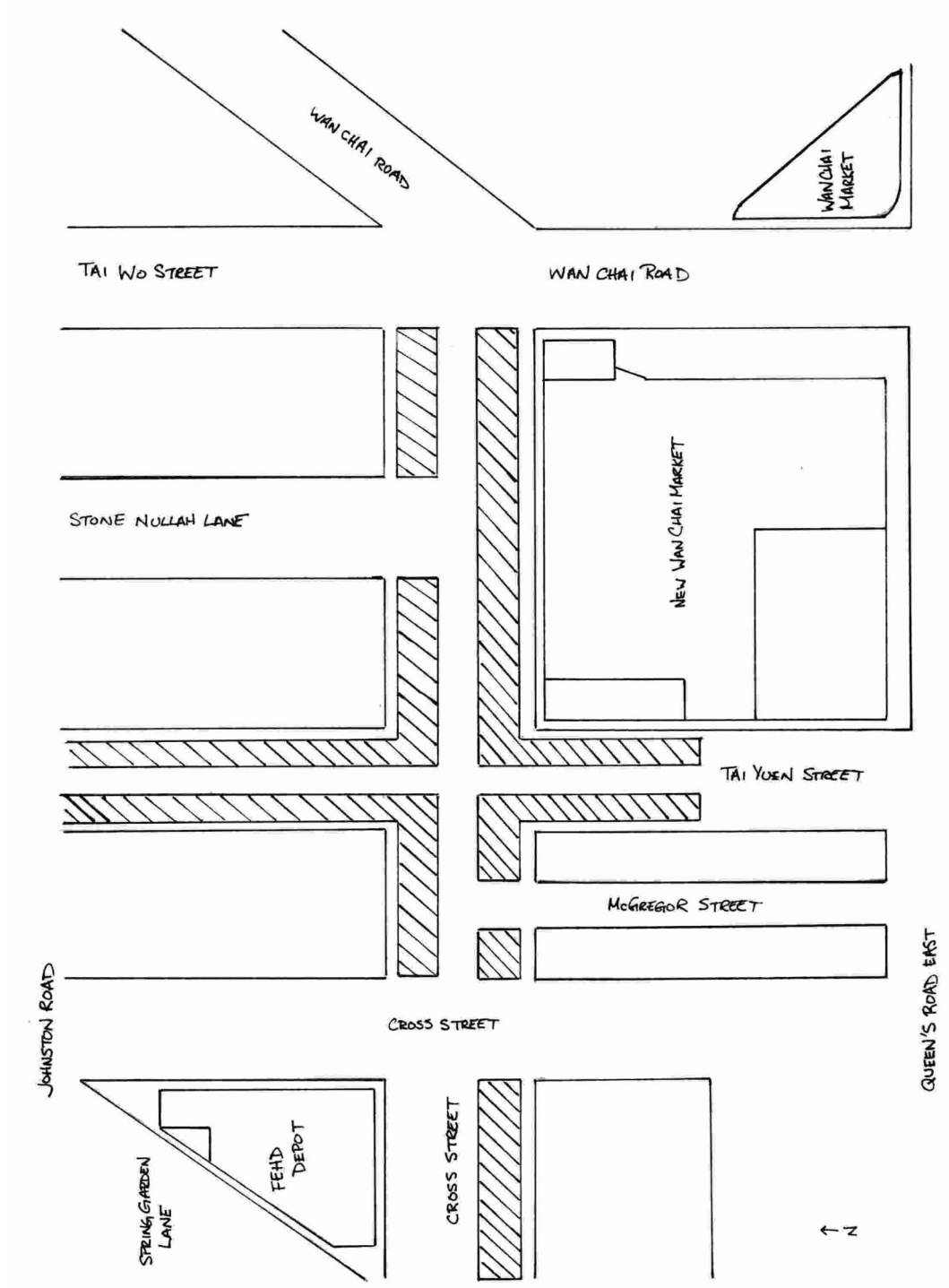
Wan Chai Market (Basement)
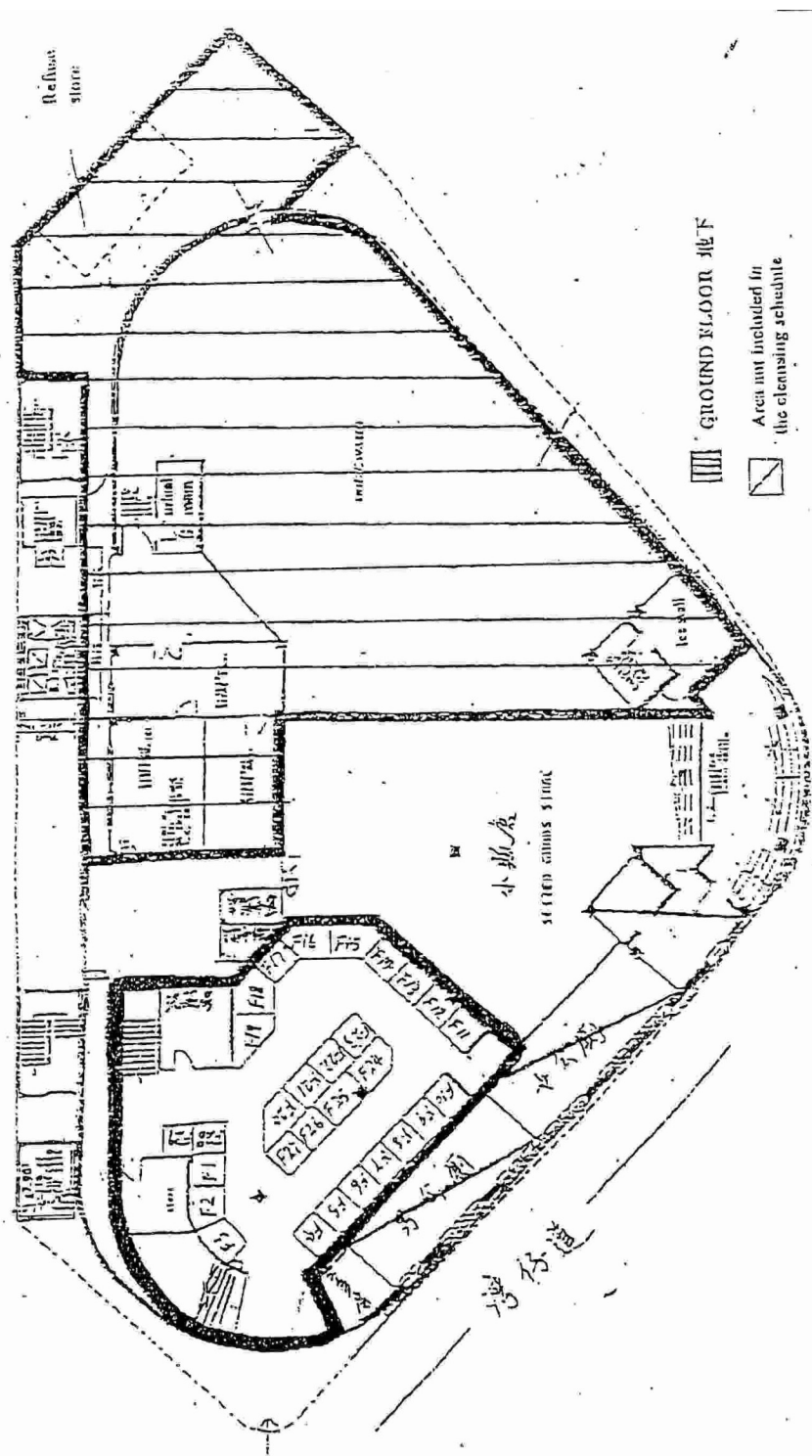
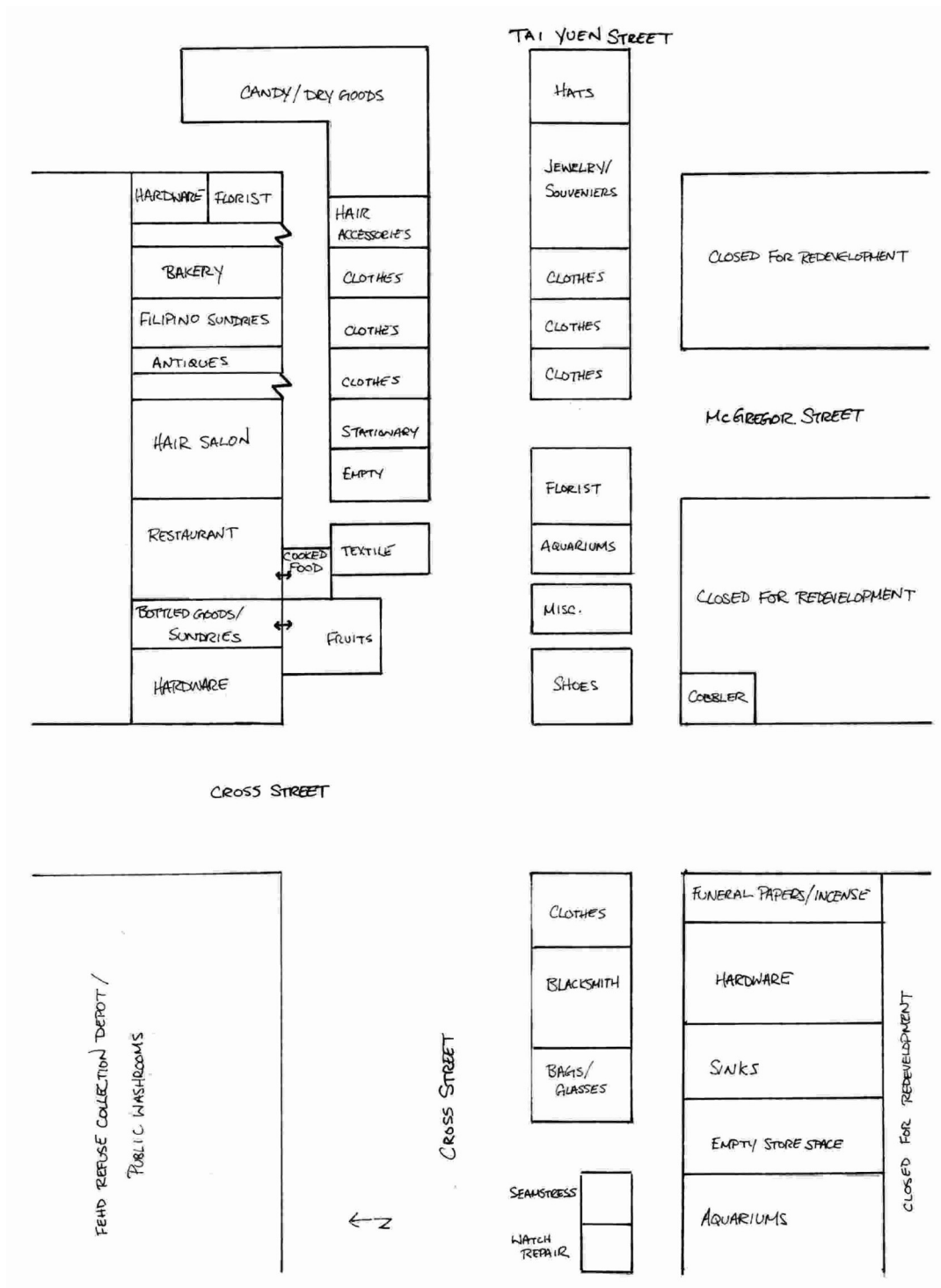Wan Chai Market (Ground Floor)

Wan Chai Market (Second Floor)

Cross/Tai Yuen Street Market

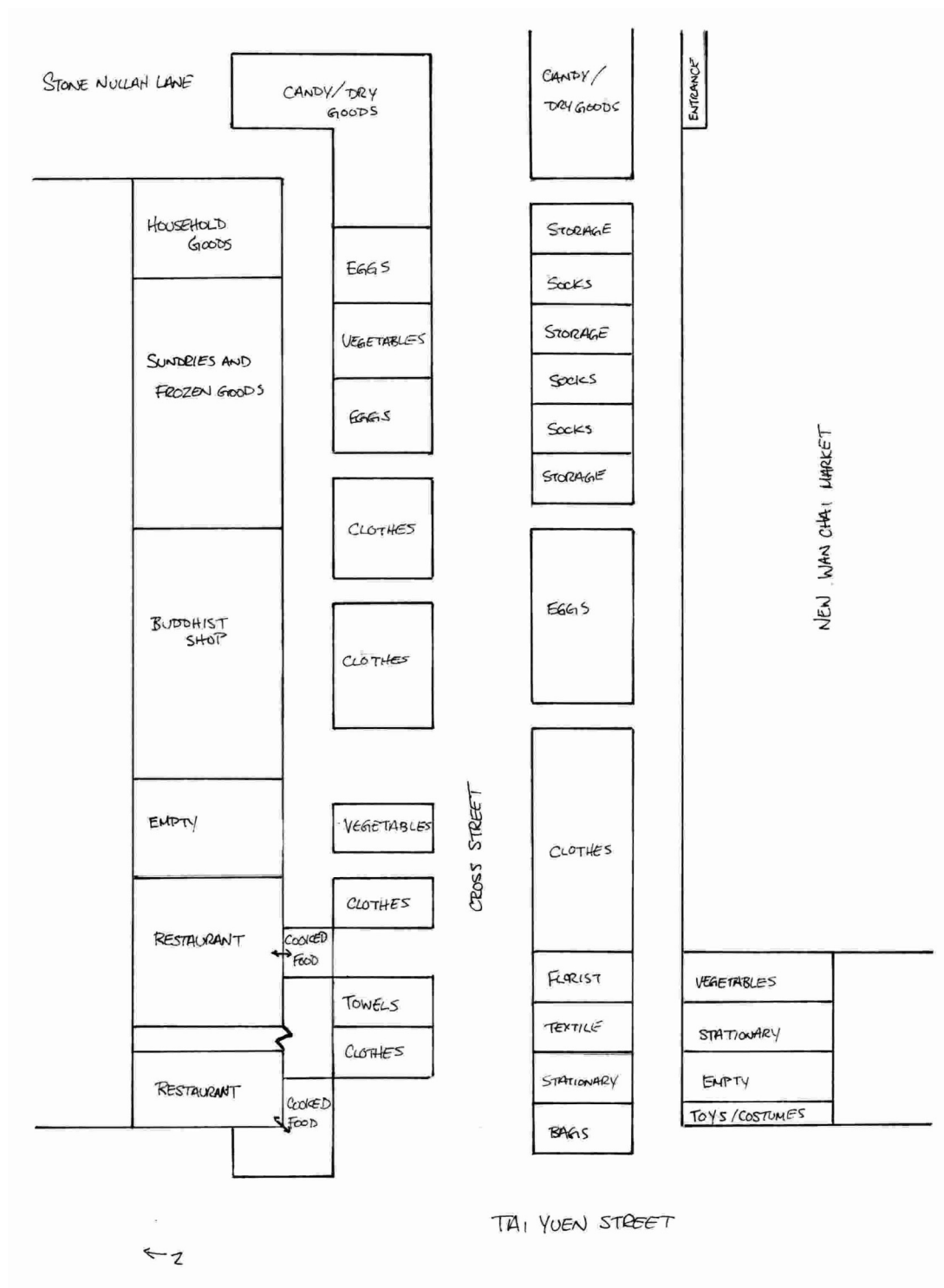Cross Street (Section 1)

TAI YUEN STREET

CANDY / DRY GOODS

HARDWARE FLORIST
BAKERY
FILIPINO SUNDRIES
ANTIQUES
HAIR SALON
RESTAURANT
BOTTLED GOODS/ SUNDRIES
HARDWARE

HAIR ACCESSORIES
CLOTHES
CLOTHES
CLOTHES
STATIONARY
EMPTY
COOKED FOOD TEXTILE
FRUITS

HATS
JEWELRY/ SOUVENIERS
CLOTHES
CLOTHES
CLOTHES

CLOSED FOR REDEVELOPMENT

McGREGOR STREET

FLORIST
AQUARIUMS
MISC.
SHOES

CLOSED FOR REDEVELOPMENT

COBBLER

CROSS STREET

FEHD REFUSE COLLECTION DEPOT / PUBLIC WASHROOMS

←Z

CROSS STREET

CLOTHES
BLACKSMITH
BAGS/ GLASSES

SEAMSTRESS
WATCH REPAIR

FUNERAL PAPERS/INCENSE
HARDWARE
SINKS
EMPTY STORE SPACE
AQUARIUMS

CLOSED FOR REDEVELOPMENT

Cross Street (Section 2)

Cross Street (Section 3)

Tai Yuen Street (Section 1)

CROSS STREET

BAGS	CLOTHES	CLOTHES
JEWELRY	CLOTHES	CLOTHES
CLOTHES	COOKED FOOD ↔	RESTAURANT
BAGS	TOYS	
UMBRELLAS	JEWELRY	CHINESE HERBS
JEWELRY		
WALLETS	CLOTHES	EMPTY
HOI MEI		
BAGS / SOCKS	JEWELRY	EMPTY
UMBRELLAS	HATS	
JEWELRY	PHONE ACCESSORIES	EMPTY
	CLOTHES	
HATS	JEWELRY	DRY GOODS
CLOTHES	JEWELRY	
CLOTHES	JEWELRY	SHOES
CLOTHES	JEWELRY	
CLOTHES	JEWELRY	TOYS
JEWELRY	TEXTILE	PARKING GARAGE ENTRANCE
	HATS	
BAGS	JEWELRY	NEW WAN CHAI MARKET
	GLASSES	
	JEWELRY	

BLOCK CLOSED FOR REDEVELOPMENT

N →

TAI YUEN STREET

133

Tai Yuen Street (Section 2)

Tai Yuen Street (Section 3)

JOHNSTON ROAD

TAI YUEN STREET

COSMETICS

RESTAURANT

SHOES

CLOTHES

CLOTHES

SHOES

SHOES

BAGS

GLASSES

CLOTHES

FLORIST

↑
N

AQUARIUMS

STATIONARY

STATIONARY

STAMPS

HAIR
ACCESSORIES

BAGS

HAIR
ACCESSORIES

CLOTHES

STATIONARY

RESIDENTIAL
BUILDING

RESTAURANT

COSMETICS

CLOTHES

PHARMACY
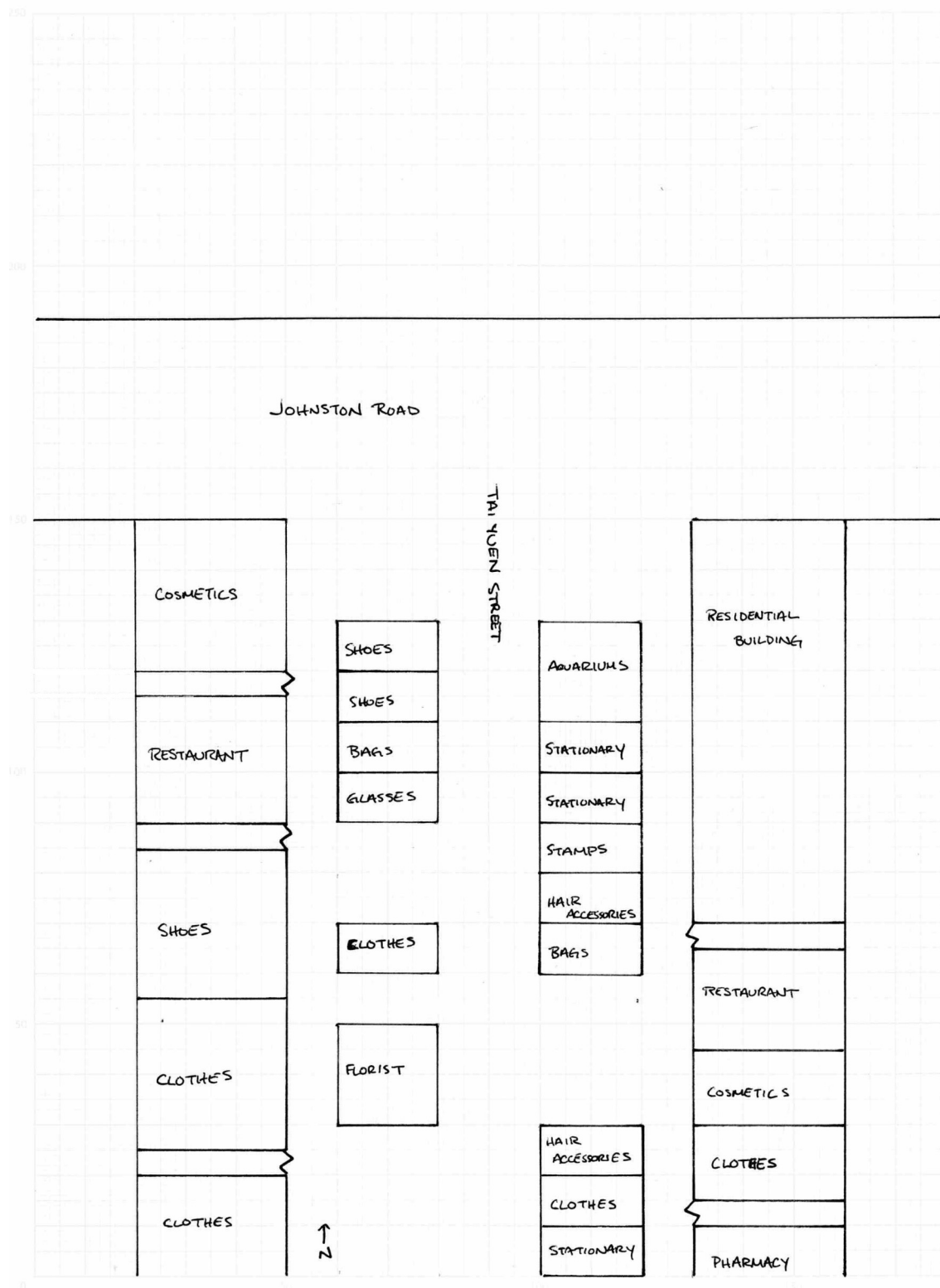
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