

## **Urban Renewal and Neighborhood Relationships**

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### **Abstract**

Urban renewal in Hong Kong has been undertaken by the government, quasi-government bodies and private developers. The Housing Authority has been able to provide in-situ relocation of public housing to affected households, thus retaining the neighborhood network largely intact. The quasi-government bodies – Housing Society, Land Development Corporation and Urban Renewal Authority can also collaborate with the government Housing Department in providing relocation to public housing in the affected residents' vicinity as much as possible. Those affected by renewal by private developers can hardly aspire to retain their neighborhood networks. Moreover, the conceptualization of 'neighborhood' should be further extended to include the small business establishments in the residential areas, as they constitute a viable 'community economy' in which symbiosis exists between the operators and the residents. Urban renewal has usually resulted in gentrification where poor urban neighborhoods are replaced by middle-class residential or commercial developments. The elderly, the poor families, new migrants are the usual victims of physical and social dislocation rendered by urban renewal. Recognizing the virtue of social capital embodied in good neighborhoods, efforts should be made in the direction of more private-public collaboration in preserving social networks in the arrangement of relocation. Given Hong Kong's unique feature of having a large public housing sector, this serves to provide a viable solution for such a strategy of preserving neighborhood in the process of urban renewal.