

**The role of stakeholders and their participation network in urban regeneration
decision-making in China:
A Case study of Yongqing Area, Guangzhou**

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Abstract

Since the late 1970s, urban regeneration projects have sprung up in China in response to the country's rapid economic growth and urbanization. For a long time, the decision-making process of these renewal projects has been criticized for following an underlying elitism and overlooking the needs of the wide range of stakeholders. A rational stakeholder participation mechanism is required in the decision-making process to solve complex urban problems. Guangzhou, at the forefront of reform and opening up, demonstrated a high intensity of urban reconstruction. This research takes the Yongqing Area Regeneration Project in Guangzhou as a typical case to study the stakeholders and their participation in urban regeneration decision-making in China. Based on the data collected through in-depth interviews, this paper performs stakeholder analysis to identify and characterize the stakeholders, investigate their interdependencies, and provide policy recommendations. The results show that the urban regeneration decision-making mechanism in China has shifted from interventionism to polyarchy. But both the complexity of China's government sectors and the informal participation of developers impede effective cooperation among stakeholders. And the current public participation remains insufficient due to a lack of intervention channels. Finally, policy implications were drawn in terms of legislation and decision-making mechanisms.

Keywords: urban regeneration, stakeholder analysis, decision-making, Guangzhou

Table of Contents

List of Tables	V
List of Figures	VI
Chapter 1 Introduction	1
1.1 Research Questions	2
1.2 Statement of Significance	3
1.3 Research Design	4
1.4 Structure of the Thesis	5
Chapter 2 Literature Review	6
2.1 Urban Regeneration Decision-making Mechanism	6
2.2 Stakeholder Analysis	11
2.3 Summary	14
Chapter 3 Development of Urban Regeneration in Guangzhou	15
3.1 Guangzhou's Three Stages of Urban Regeneration and Representative Practices	15
3.2 Summary: Evolution of Public Participation	25
Chapter 4 Case Overview: Urban Regeneration in Yongqing Area	26
4.1 Background of Yongqing Area	27
4.2 Phases of Yongqing Area Regeneration	29
4.3 Summary: Interaction among the Diverse Subjects	41
Chapter 5 Stakeholder participation utility analysis	43
5.1 Identifying Stakeholders	43
5.2 Characterizing Stakeholders	48
5.3 Stakeholder Relationships	54
Chapter 6 Conclusion	56
6.1 Summary of stakeholder Participation Analysis	57
6.2 Policy Recommendations	59
6.3 Limitations	61
References	62
Appendices	64
Appendix A: Basic Information of the Interviewees	64
Appendix B: Interview Questions	65

List of Tables

Table 5-1 Categories of stakeholders	44
Table 5-2 Stakeholders' level of discourse power	46
Table 5-3 Stakeholders' extent to which he was affected by the results	47

List of Figures

Fig 2-1 Ladder of citizen participation	8
Fig 2-2 Five levels of participation	9
Fig 2-3 Mitchell’s stakeholder salience model	12
Fig 3-1 Renming Road Viaduct: the first urban viaduct in the country	17
Fig 3-2 Aerial photography of completed Liwan Square.....	17
Fig 3-3 Redevelopment of Liede Village.....	21
Fig 3-4 The reconstruction plan of Liede Village	22
Fig 3-5 Road textures comparison of Yongqing Area.....	24
Fig 4-1 Location of Yongqing Area	27
Fig 4-2 Some Historical Architecture in Enning Road	28
Fig 4-3 Chaotic conditions at Phase 2	33
Fig 4-4 Major events and interaction among different interest groups	40
Fig 5-1 Power-interest matrix of stakeholders in Yongqing Area Regeneration.....	49
Fig 5-2 Stakeholder relationships of the Yongqing Area Regeneration Project	54

Chapter 1

Introduction

Over the past decades, the rapid development of cities in China is mainly based on a top-down process, which is a result of the socialist legacy and economic-led development strategy under the state entrepreneurialism. This approach has long been criticized by the public for following an underlying elitism and overlooking the needs of the wide range stakeholders. Not only has the government issued relative policies to encourage a broader participation of stakeholders, but the diverse groups of stakeholders have also become increasingly active in the planning process for their own interests.

After the aggressive urban expansion period. Chinese cities are facing with a secondary transition from economic growth to better life quality development. Urban regeneration becomes a hot issue in China, especially the mega-cities like Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou and Shenzhen. Guided by the traditional top-down strategy, demolition and reconstruction of all the buildings used to the prevailing way of urban regeneration. However, drawbacks such as destroying the historical texture of the city,

generating a great financial burden due to the huge compensation to residents all make the government reflect on this approach and look for a more sustainable way. Furthermore, problems like the lack of communication between government and the locals, conflicts between different stakeholders all make the urban renewal projects less effective. Thus, a rational stakeholder participation mechanism may serve as a crucial strategy to renew the urban areas more sustainably and effectively.

1.1 Research Questions

The study of inclusive participatory governance for urban regeneration in China has remained limited. Only a little research has systematically studied the roles of the stakeholders and their interactions in decision-making process of the urban renewal projects. By looking into some related theories and overseas experience, the paper will answer how the shift paradigm, a broader stakeholder engagement in urban regeneration, evolves in the Chinese context. In the second part, this paper takes Enning Road Regeneration Project in Guangzhou as a typical case of regeneration project in mega cities. By investigating how this project was carried out by incorporating different goals and involving diverse interests' groups, the article tries to dive deeper into its cooperative governance mechanism and figure out the following questions:

- Who are the stakeholders? And what are their characteristics?
- What are the interactive mechanisms of the different stakeholders?
- How does public participation evolve during the regeneration process?

1.2 Statement of Significance

Urban regeneration is one of the main topics of Chinese urban development. With the increasing public awareness of participation, the benefit distribution in the planning process becomes much more complex. Although there already exists research about the subfields of urban regeneration and stakeholder analysis, the combination of them has yet to be explored adequately. By reviewing the history of Chinese urban regeneration and some western experience, this paper explores the renewal mode under the background of governance transformation and interactive mechanisms within the governance network, which may serve as a supplement for theoretical research on urban regeneration in China.

This research also provides guide for the future practice of urban regeneration projects in China. The chosen case incorporates several controversial issues in the field of urban planning, including preservation of the historical district, implementation of the experimental BOT regeneration strategy, and projects with strong political significance. Through examining the stakeholders' dynamics and interactions, this case study reveals how the power distributes in different interest groups and how public engagement affects the policy-making. The dilemma of public participation in this case is representative and the corresponding policy recommendations also apply to other projects. In this sense, this research will contribute to deal with social problems, therefore improving the urban regeneration planning system in China.

1.3 Research Design

This research follows a macro-to-micro framework of analysis. Guangzhou, as the forefront of reform and opening up, demonstrated a high intensity of urban reconstruction. Among the regeneration projects in Guangzhou, the Enning Road Regeneration Project stands out aiming at revitalizing the deteriorating old town in the city center. By looking into how the regeneration process of this area unfolds, this article examines the specific context, initiatives, planning objectives, attitudes of various stakeholders, major public debates, and changes within or between phases of this project. With a solid knowledge of the evolution of stakeholders' participation in Guangzhou's regeneration project, this research zooms in on the last stage of the Enning Road project: Yongqing Area Regeneration. The application of the Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) mode in the Yongqing Area involves additional interest groups, further complicating the interrelationships of different stakeholders.

To better understand how the stakeholders interact with each other in the decision-making process, I conducted semi-structured interviews with an official of the Liwan district government, a leading planner of the Enning Road Regeneration project, 3 members from Vanke LTD., 3 local residents, a journalist who kept tracing the updates of the project, a member of the Enning Road Academic Concern Group (NGO), and a Professor at Sun Yat-sen University. Each of them would be invited to self-clarify the roles they represent, summarize their interests, discuss their conflicts and cooperation with other stakeholders in the urban renewal decision-making process, and their vision and suggestions on the community. Appendix A shows the profiles of these interviewees,

and detailed interview questions can be found in appendix B. With their responses, I perform the stakeholder analysis following 4 major steps: (1) identify groups of stakeholders through literature review and interviews; (2) characterize the identified stakeholders; (3) investigate the interdependencies among different stakeholders; (4) present key findings and provide policy recommendations.

1.4 Structure of the thesis

This research consists of 6 chapters. Following this introduction section is a literature review on 2 topics: policy-making mechanisms for urban regeneration and stakeholder analysis. Chapter 3 introduces the three stages of urban regeneration in Guangzhou and the evolution of stakeholders' participation over the last several decades. With these theoretical frameworks and city contexts in place, Chapter 4 gives an overview of the selected case by introducing the history of the area and the process of its regeneration. Then, in Chapter 5, a stakeholder analysis is developed to expose the stakeholders' relationships and their power hierarchy. The last chapter summarizes the previous analysis's findings, discusses present deficiencies in public engagement in Chinese urban regeneration projects, and makes policy recommendations for future development.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

This chapter reviews previous research related to the urban regeneration decision-making mechanism and stakeholder analysis. The first part reflects on diverse decision policy-making mechanism for urban regeneration under different government management patterns, indicating that differences in discourse power are always the leading drivers of conflict among stakeholders. Therefore, a better understanding of each of the stakeholders would contribute to more sustainable urban regeneration policies. The second part then covers theories and methods on stakeholder analysis, which inform the tools and framework employed in the analytical section of this paper.

2.1 Urban Regeneration Decision-making Mechanism

2.1.1 Review on Related Research

Globally, urban regeneration programs have become associated with broader policy changes aimed at improving local community governance and social well-being (Bull, 2006). In many cases, urban renewal projects contribute to economic growth and equality of the neighborhood by providing the local residents a better living condition (Lelévrier, 2013). However, in many other instances, urban renewal projects create

intractable urban problems, such as conflicts between different interest groups and the destruction of urban fabric (Yau, 2008).

Numerous scholars' study urban regeneration from an administrative management perspective and explain how contextualized factors such as decision-making subjects, political background, and so on shape urban regeneration policies (Couch, 2011). And they make extensive use of governance theory in their research. In 1995, *The Global Neighborhood* published by the Commission on Global Governance defined that governance as the sum of the many ways individuals and institutions, public and private, manage their common affairs. It is a continuing process through which conflicting or diverse interests may be accommodated and co-operative action may be taken. Britain is a typical case for examining how government management patterns influence the policy-making mechanism for urban regeneration. Its governance of urban regeneration can be divided into four distinct stages: postwar direct government management; 1980s public-private partnerships; 1990s inclusion of non-profit third-party organizations; and the mid-1990s emergence of network governance (Booth, 2005). The evolution of governance modes reflects the trend toward multi-participation decision-making in urban regeneration.

Apart from the government management perspective, experts have also conducted extensive research on topics such as how different subjects intervene in the process of urban regeneration? How do related parties form collaborative relationships (public-private partnerships, public participation, etc.) in urban regeneration (Hastings, A., 1996; Jenny Muir, 2004)? There is political consensus in the western world that urban

regeneration requires a multi-sectoral partnership approach. Research on public participation focuses on enhancing the quality and quantity of citizens' involvement, which is significantly affected by the institutional settings. In 1969, Sherry Arnstein put forward the ladder of citizen participation and the 5-level framework of public participation. The "ladder of citizen participation" shows participation ranging from high to low (Fig 2-1). The Spectrum of Public Participation helps clarify the role of the public in decision-making (Fig 2-2). The further to the right on the Spectrum, the more influence the community has over decisions. He noted that for a long period of time, community participation in urban regeneration remained in its infancy and exerted little practical influence on decision-making (Arnstein, 1969). Another related theoretical framework, New Institutionalism, emphasizes the role of institutional frameworks in decision-making about urban regeneration. According to New Institutionalism, institutional settings have "inertia" and are incapable of adapting quickly to social changes (March J G,1984).

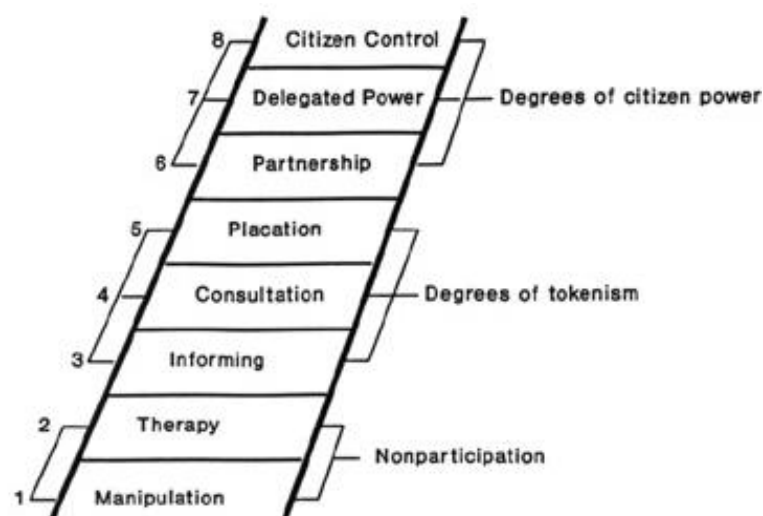


Fig 2-1 Ladder of citizen participation (Arnstein, 1969)

		INCREASING IMPACT ON THE DECISION				
		INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL		To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision making in the hands of the public.
PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC		We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision. We will seek your feedback on drafts and proposals.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work together with you to formulate solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.

Fig 2-2 Five levels of participation

Research on Urban Regeneration policy-making mechanisms in China has emerged in recent years as the renovation of old towns become more and more urgent. Scholars criticize the government's unilateral decision-making process and advocate for government behavior to be supervised and corrected through increased public participation, the establishment of an accountability system, and the improvement of laws and regulations (Xie Guoquan, 2008). Additionally, experts focus on repositioning the Chinese government's role, as it has occupied a dominant position for such a long period of time that it cannot be changed overnight (Chen Yingfang, 2008). While previous western studies provide us with valuable theoretical and practical experience, the unique institutions and social backgrounds of China make the optimization of stakeholder participation remains a great challenge. And the key to resolving this perplexing situation is to coordinate the government's relationship with stakeholders.

2.1.2 The Legislations for Public Participation

There are four major relevant national policies that contribute to public participation promotion: (1) The *2007 Property Rights Law* for the first time defines the legal status of private property ownership in order to prevent forced demolition of private housing. This new property law produces legitimacy for the citizens to question the regeneration plan, resist expropriation, and argue for better compensation, which set a solid foundation for the development of public engagement. (2) The *2008 Urban & Rural Planning Law* institutionalizes public participation in the preparation, revision and supervision of urban planning, as well as accountability for its implementation. (3) The *2008 Regulation on the Preservation of Famous Historic-Cultural Cities, Towns, and Villages* promotes private sector and civil society involvement in the preservation of historic-cultural cities. (4) The *2011 Regulation on Expropriation & Compensation of Housing on State-owned Land* clarifies that municipal and county-level governments have sole responsibility for housing expropriation and compensation within their jurisdictions. Additionally, this policy requires that a 'social stability assessment' be conducted prior to making a housing expropriation decision. However, these national policies establish a broad framework for public participation in Chinese urban redevelopment, leaving considerable discretionary authority to municipal governments.

2.2 Stakeholder Analysis

2.2.1 Theoretical Framework of Stakeholder Analysis

Stakeholder theory is derived from a variety of disciplines, including corporate planning, systems theory, corporate social responsibility, and organizational theory. Three stages of the stakeholder theory evolution are distinguished by Elias: classical stakeholder literature; strategic management; and stakeholder dynamics (2002).

The Stanford Research Institute established the notion of stakeholders in its classical form for the first time in 1963. It defined "stakeholders" as "those who support an organization's existence." Organizations referred to social institutions, whose responsibilities extended beyond shareholders, directors, and employees. And the managers of the organization were responsible to protect the rights of the stakeholders (2014). This classical form has been criticized because its static and isolated value-maximization approach to corporate management cannot adapt to a changing environment. In 1984, Freeman defined a stakeholder as any individual or group who can affect, or is affected by, the achievement of the organization's objectives in his book *Strategic Management: A Stakeholder Approach* (1984). The strategic approach relates to three-level stakeholder analysis: rational, process, and transactional. The rational level is the process of stakeholder identification and their stake perception. After listing the stakeholders, they are classified at the process level based on criteria of interest and power. Finally, the transactional level focuses on the relationships and integration of stakeholders. The dynamic form assumes that the mix of stakeholders and their stake keeps changing over time. Scholars applied a different mix of attributes to illustrate the

dynamics. Mitchell evaluated stakeholders based on the attributes of power, legitimacy, and urgency (the degree of their interest) (1997). Figure 2-3 displays the seven groups (types) of stakeholders identified in his research.

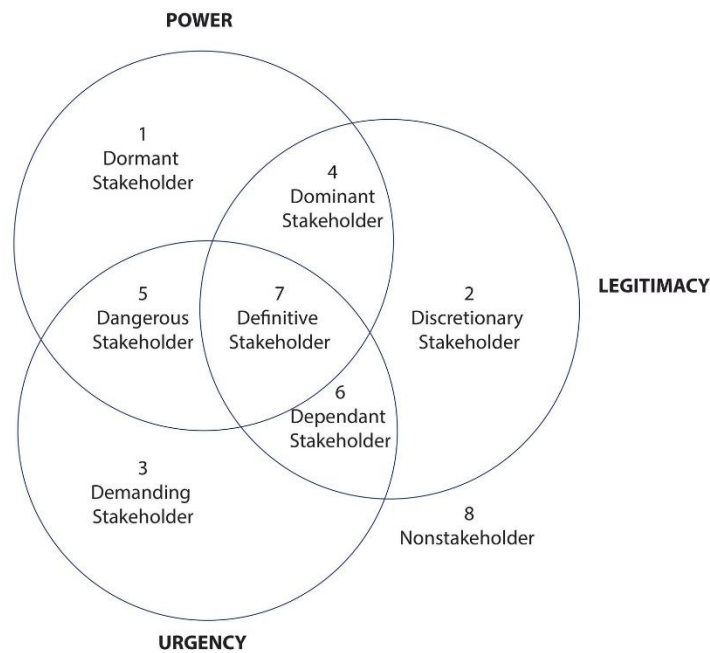


Fig 2-3 Mitchell's stakeholder salience model (1997)

Apart from listing the stakeholders and identifying their interests, an investigation into stakeholder relationships is an important part of completing a stakeholder analysis. Reed et al. asserted that only by understanding who has a stake in an initiative, as well as the nature of their claims and interdependence, can appropriate stakeholders be effectively involved in environmental decision-making (2009).

2.2.2 Stakeholder Analysis in Urban Planning

Despite the fact that theoretical research provides various frameworks for defining stakeholders, identifying key stakeholders in practice remains a challenge. Scholars identified stakeholders in their research using empiricism until McQueen et al. (2008) proposed a novel method. When envisioning shared future strategies for urban development, he considers stakeholders from the private sector, public sector, community, and independent organizations. This approach, however, has been criticized as a "top-down approach," ignoring stakeholders who are less active during the process. To address this limitation, Prell et al. (2008) proposed an iterative process that included scoping interviews, focus groups, and follow-up interviews to broaden the range of stakeholders.

In terms of characterizing different stakeholders, Mitchell's framework, which takes into account a stakeholder claims to legitimacy, power, and urgency, laid a solid foundation for future study. Researchers expand the dimensions and build more complex metrics under different specific contexts. One of the most widely used research frameworks in the realm of urban studies is the power-interest matrix (De Lopez, 2001). Stakeholders were evaluated in 2 dimensions: (1) influence or power over the project, (2) the effect of attention or related interests over the project.

The final step, analyzing stakeholder relationships, is also important in understanding the structure and organization of urban projects. Actor-linkage matrices are the most visible of the various tools used to investigate interactions among stakeholders. Stakeholders are tabulated in a two-dimensional matrix, and their

relationships are coded (Hermans, 2005). However, the metrics would become confusing and difficult to interpret if the linkages exceed a certain quantity. Social Network Analysis (SNA) was applied in many urban studies, which makes the relationships and interactions more intuitive (Kasper, 2021). To illuminate structural features of networks, social network analysis employs graph theory, mathematics, and statistics. Nodes and edges are the building blocks for SNA: The nodes represent the stakeholders, while the direction and width of the ties represent the direction and strength of the interdependence.

2.3 Summary

Reviews on the decision-making mechanisms for urban regeneration and stakeholder analysis provide the theoretical and methodological framework of this thesis. With this understanding in mind, the following content examines the evolution of stakeholder participation in urban regeneration decision-making in China using the Yongqing Area in Guangzhou as a case study.

Chapter 3

Development of Urban Regeneration in Guangzhou

In Chinese cities, urban regeneration is a kind of urban politics and state–society interaction within a particular context. This context is exemplified by the transition from a government-oriented system to a market-oriented system against the backdrop of capital mobility, globalization, and city competition (Wu, 2002). Since the reform and opening up in 1978, Guangzhou's urban regeneration strategy has progressed through three distinct stages, as the economic and political environments changed over time. This chapter introduces Guangzhou's three stages of urban regeneration and the evolution of public participation over the last several decades.

3.1 Guangzhou's Three Stages of Urban regeneration & Representative Practices

3.1.1 1980s - 1990s: Market-driven Disorderly Renewal

Reform and opening up marked the transition of China's national economic system from a planned to a market economy. During this time period, the primary objective of urban development was to achieve rapid economic growth. As a result, in order to realize more efficient urban space operation, major cities such as Guangzhou, Shanghai, and Beijing had gradually begun the process of urban renewal.

Guangzhou, at the forefront of reform and opening up, demonstrated a high

intensity of urban reconstruction. The Guangzhou government had continually "squeezed" the city's space by building infrastructure such as viaducts (Fig 3-1) and widening city streets. Due to a cash shortage, the Guangzhou government formed partnerships with private developers to renovate the city's older neighborhoods. And, with the completion of the compensated land-use system, developers discovered that investing in the real estate market was profitable. Not only did the reconstruction need to meet the indigenous people's residential requirements, but it also required the addition of new functional spaces. Demand for space increased continuously, and the plot ratio gradually increased at that time. As a result, large swaths of historic city space have been converted into office buildings, commercial complexes, high-rise residences, and other public facilities, wreaking havoc on the traditional urban fabric in the absence of formal guidelines (Wang Shifu, 2017). Moreover, some evicted residents suffered from the low-quality renovated buildings, a lengthy relocation process and the unpaid compensations. The renovation of Liwan Square in 1995 served as a typical example (Fig 3-2). The local government provided land, infrastructure, and related preferential policies, while the developer contributed 1.8 billion yuan for demolition, design, and construction. Both sides agreed on the revenue split that 40% of completed houses were to be used by the government to rehouse returning residents and 60% were to be sold by the developer. The project involved more than 7,000 local residents. After the reconstruction, the total construction area of the modern commercial-residential complex is about 271,500 square meters, and the plot ratio reached 6.0.



Fig 3-1 Renming Road Viaduct: the first urban viaduct in the country

Source: <https://new.qq.com/rain/a/20210816a09whf00>

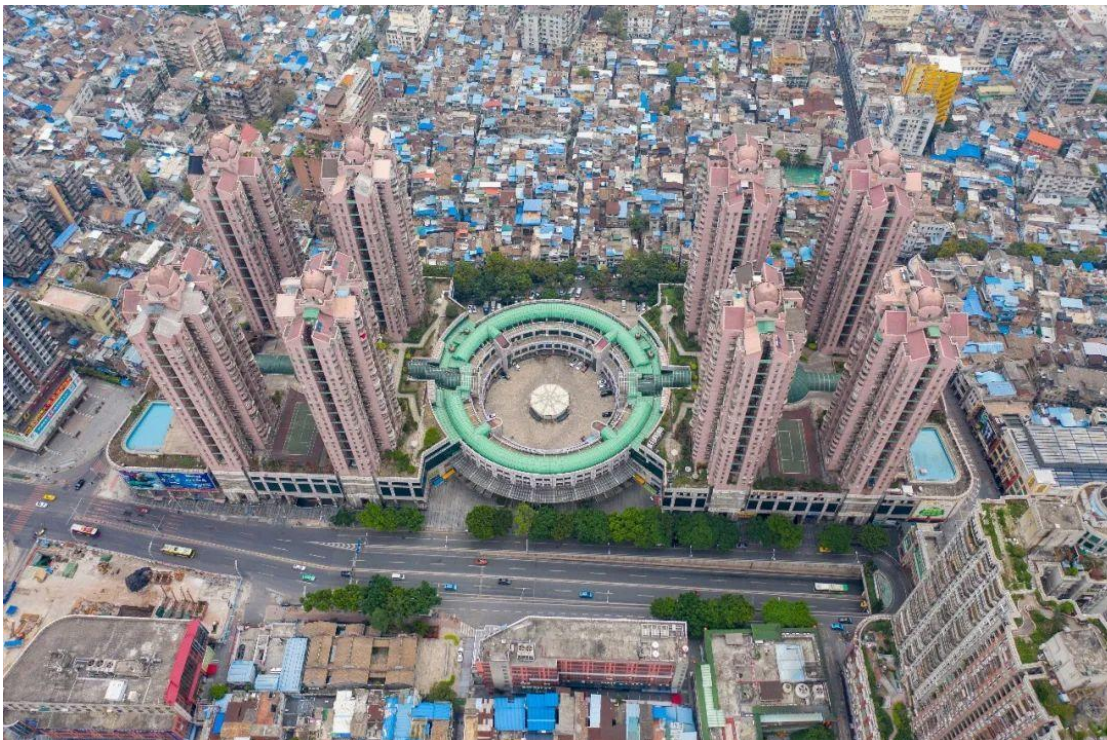


Fig 3-2 Aerial photography of completed Liwan Square

Source: https://zhuanlan.zhihu.com/p/111497309?from_voters_page=true

To avoid disorderly urban development, Mayor Shusen Lin enacted a ban to exclude developers from urban regeneration reconstruction in 1999 in a public speaking, indicating the government's recognition of the drawbacks of an economic development obsession and its determination to pursue a more sustainable path.

3.1.2 2000s - mid-2010s: Government-driven Low-intensity Renewal

Due to the prohibition on private developers participating in urban regeneration projects, the municipal government was forced to bear the entire cost of these reconstruction projects, which inevitably put a strain on the government's fiscal position. In 2000, *Guangzhou's Strategic Planning of Urban Development* proposed a spatial development strategy centered on "expanding to the south, optimizing to the north, advancing to the east, and connecting to the west." According to this strategy, the focus of Guangzhou's urban development has shifted away from renovating the old town to developing the periphery of the central district. Thus, the renewal process was stalled for almost five years.

A turning point came in 2005 when Guangzhou won the right to host the 2010 Asian Games. In order to improve the overall cityscape during the Asian Games, the government put forward the idea of revitalizing the old city by renewing those historical areas with indigenous characteristics. In 2006, the ninth Party Congress of Guangzhou amended the spatial development strategy, adding "adjusting the middle" to the original basis. "Adjusting the middle" refers to the process of optimizing and improving the historic districts. The Guangzhou government issued relevant policies the same year to

clearly define the organization, implementation subjects, construction mode, and funding channels for dilapidated house renovation. Guangzhou's urban regeneration had entered a standardized government-led period.

While the government-led mode standardized urban renewal, the high initial investment and slow rate of capital return made this mode unsuitable for large-scale expansion. Between 2009 and 2012, Guangzhou implemented several "three old" policies (old towns, old factories, and old villages), and the emphasis of renewal shifted from dilapidated structures toward "three old" reconstruction. While the "three-old" reconstruction remained economically oriented, it was attempting to integrate market forces in order to alleviate the government's fiscal burden.

Liede Village became the pilot "old village" reconstruction project in Guangzhou. According to Guangzhou's master plan at that time, Liede village was located in the core area of the future Central Business District, which implied a high ROI and significantly enhanced its attraction to the developers. Even though the village is located in the urban area, the land is still farmer collective-owned rural land, which complicates the renewal process. The original village covers an area of 337,547 m² and accommodates more than 7000 villagers as well as 8000 registered migrant workers (Fig 3-3). The detailed plan divided the construction into three parts (Fig 3-4): the western plot, the eastern plot and the south-western plot. On this project, the government, village collectives, and developers collaborated with each other: The government formally acquired the western plot and transferred it into state ownership. Then it conducted land property rights auction of the western plot and raised 4.6 billion

yuan from private developers (2 local developers: R&F Group and KWG Group Holdings Limited, 1 Hongkong developer: Sun Hung Kai Properties Limited). The maximum plot ratio set by the government reached 6-7, which was comparably high so that the developers would have profit space even considering the extravagant price of the land. The funds raised by the local government were then transferred to Liede Economic Development Co., LTD., which represented the village collective's interests. The Eastern plot and the south-Western plot remained collective-owned rural land. And the Liede Economic Development Co., Ltd. (LEDC) was in charge of organizing the demolition, reconstruction, resettlement, and construction of village property on the two plots. The South-Western plot is operated by the LEDC as a collective property. By building hotels and office buildings, the LEDC ensures long-term profits for the villagers. The eastern one was developed into a residential area, and mainly serves as a resettlement area for the villagers. Apart from housing units, the government also builds essential municipal facilities such as schools, markets and so on. It takes three years to finish the project, which is, to some extent, very efficient compared to the revitalization projects in other provinces. The whole project follows a general principle that “municipal and district governments play the leading roles, and the village serves as the executive actor.” The government took on the role of policymaker during this process, establishing the compensation standard in consultation with the villagers and strictly monitoring the implementation of the reconstruction plan. The promising expectations intensify the villagers’ will to fight for market profits, which significantly enhances their participation during the redevelopment. This top-down planning and bottom-up

implementation provide space for negotiations between different stakeholders. And the project can be viewed as the germ of public involvement in Guangzhou's urban regeneration.



Liede Village before redevelopment



Liede village after redevelopment

Fig 3-3 Redevelopment of Liede Village

Sources: https://gz.news.fang.com/2012-03-25/7332838_all.html (Up),
<https://club.kdnet.net/dispbbs.asp?id=10598040&boardid=3> (Down)



Fig 3-4: The reconstruction plan of Liede Village

Sources: Architecture Design and Research Institute of Guangdong Province (2007)

Villagers from diverse backgrounds participate in a variety of ways. Generally, they can be divided into members of the village committee and the ordinary villagers. The former group takes a more active role since most of them takes a position in the LEDC. Their views and opinions have a considerable impact on consultation and decision-making, as well as on the balance of the urbanized village's internal interests. Nonetheless, the common villagers always take a passive role. They were always just informed after the decisions were made. These ordinary villagers bare an economically oriented nature. It turned out that the more properties they owned, the more actively they participate in the reconstruction. Those who owned large amounts of unlicensed construction areas of houses are more concerned about the compensation plan, which made them always the last to compromise and sign agreements. On the contrary, villagers with fewer property areas were less likely to argue and debate.

3.1.3 Mid-2010s – Present day: Emphasis on Public interest

Guangzhou's Urban Renewal Bureau, the country's first dedicated municipal department for urban regeneration, was established in 2015, indicating that the focus of Guangzhou's urban renewal has shifted from economic benefits to public interests. The *Guangzhou Urban Renewal Guidelines* were then issued in 2016. The *Guidelines* put forward the strategy of micro-transformation and emphasized the importance of public participation. Micro-transformation refers to the process of renovating older buildings through partial demolition or maintenance, which not only maintains the former plot ratio and preserves the original street layout, but also improves the residents' living environment. Yongqing Area, the research area of this paper, serves as a pilot for this reconstruction approach (Fig 3-5). The project was carried out through a build-operate-transfer (BOT) mode: The local government owns the land, the property rights of municipal housing, as well as the property rights of some private housing units they acquired during the former regeneration phases. In this project, it granted China Vanke Co., Ltd. a 15-year management right of this area, which means the government transferred the ownership rights mentioned above to the developer. Vanke invested more than 60 million yuan in the entire project without any public funding to rebuild the area. As a return, it could run the project and profit from the rents on each individual room and building in the neighborhood. Vanke had to return the area to the government free of charge after 15 years. Local residents were not forced to leave, and they could participate in the renovation and operation if they so desired. However, a lack of experience with public participation resulted in a slew of contentious issues, including

gentrification in the Yongqing Area, a lack of transparency in the decision-making process, and interest distribution contradictions between developers and residents.



Fig 3-5 Road textures comparison of Yongqing Area

Sources: https://www.sohu.com/a/271079348_480207?qq-pf-to=pcqq.c2c

3.2 Summary: Evolution of Public Participation

Reflection on Guangzhou's municipal policies and representative practices reveals that the city's urban redevelopment efforts are focused on the same areas as their national counterparts. In the 1980s-1990s, in response to the call of China's new economic system of reform and opening up, market mechanisms played a dominant role in urban renewal projects, resulting in a chaotic construction period. In the early

2000s, the local government prohibited non-state investment in redevelopment projects, but the lack of funds led to a comparably inefficient redevelopment. In the mid-to-late 2000s, the government reintroduced market capital to carry out the "three old" reconstruction and began to prioritize the public interest. From the mid-2010s to the present, the focus of Guangzhou's urban renewal has shifted away from economic benefits and toward public interests, with the implementation of a strategy of micro-transformation. With such knowledge in mind, the following text takes Yongqing Area as an example and conducts a stakeholder participation utility analysis. The next chapter will provide an overview of the neighborhood and the proposed project.

Chapter 4

Case Overview: Urban Regeneration in Yongqing Area

Since the third stage of Guangzhou's urban regeneration began in 2015, comprehensive regeneration and micro-transformation have developed into two complementary strategies for regenerating old building environments in Guangzhou. In November 2015, the Liwan District government, inspired by the micro-transformation strategy, launched a new proposal to rescue the Enning Road Regeneration Project from a state of stagnation. The Yongqing area, which is part of the Enning Road area, was chosen for the initial stage of construction due to the fact that the majority of the area's buildings had been expropriated but not demolished. The purpose of this chapter is to give a general overview of the selected case. The history of the Yongqing Area will be covered in the first section. And then the second part will answer the question, “how does the regeneration process of this area unfold.” The procedures will be analyzed in terms of the specific context, initiatives, planning goals, attitudes of various stakeholders, major debates in public discussion and changes within one phase or among different phases.

4.1 Background of Yongqing Area

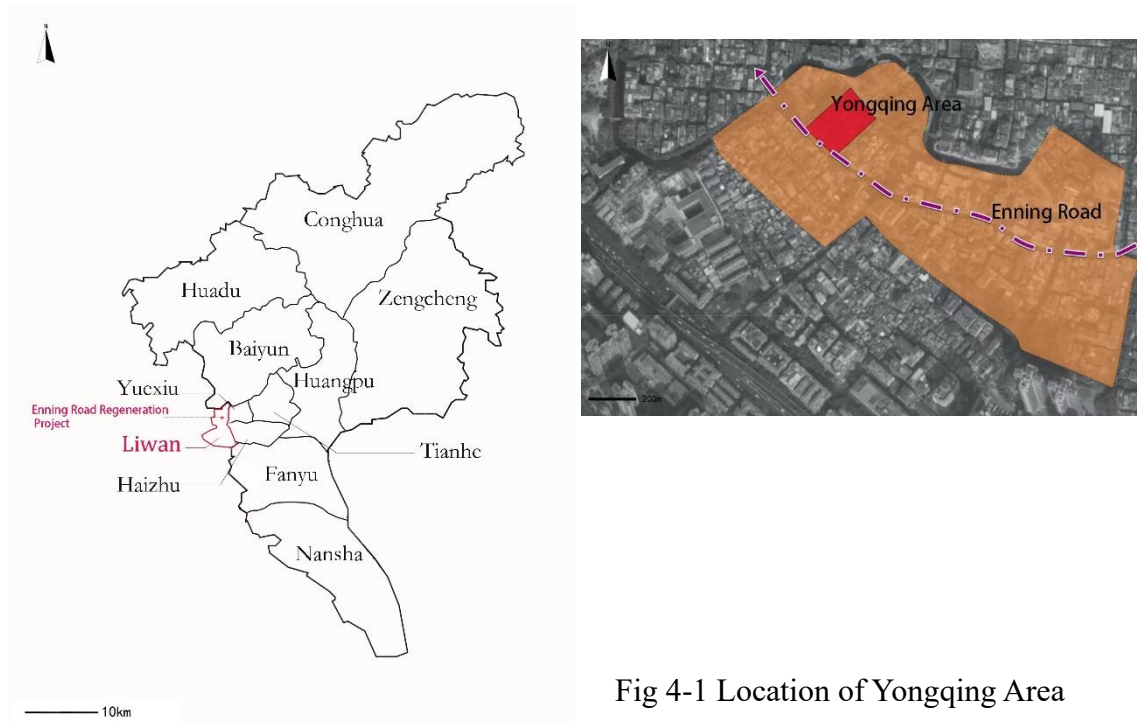


Fig 4-1 Location of Yongqing Area

Yongqing Area (also known as Yongqing Fang), located on the north side of Enning Road in Guangzhou's Liwan District (Fig 4-1). Liwan District, formerly known as Xiguan, is the district with the most concentrated historical architecture in Guangzhou. Because of the promotion of the "Canton System" in the late Ming and early Qing dynasties, Guangzhou's Xiguan area grew to become the primary location for foreign trade in the city and quickly developed into the city's economic core. And the chosen location, Enning Road, is located in the center of Liwan's historical district. Apart from several ancient residential structures with traditional elements, we can also observe the previous residences of some prominent Chinese individuals or their families, including Bruce Lee and various Guangdong Opera stars along Enning Road. Other buildings with historical significance (Fig 4-3), such as Baoqingdaya and the Jinsheng Cinema, are also located at the site (Lee, 2016; Tan & Altrock, 2016).



Former Residence of Bruce Lee



Baoqingdaya: one of the largest pawnshops in Qing Dynasty



Jingsheng Cinema

Fig 4-2 Some Historical Architecture in Enning Road

In 2006, the Guangzhou Municipal Government proposed various urban reconstruction projects in preparation for the 2010 Asian Games, including the Enninglu regeneration project. As the pilot regeneration project after the market reengaged in urban redevelopment, the Enning Road Regeneration Project became one of the most influential urban regeneration projects in Guangzhou, having captured the attention of officials, planning experts, the mass media and the general public.

4.2 Phases of Yongqing Area Regeneration

4.2.1 Phase 1: Government-led Demolition and Construction (2006-2008)

The Enning Road Regeneration Project was initiated in 2006 as the Guangzhou government added “adjusting the middle” to the original spatial strategy to revitalize a deteriorating old town in the city center through the reconstruction of “dilapidated buildings.” The *Pilot Reform Scheme of Dilapidated Housing for Enning Road*, issued in February 2006, which announced the program to demolish the dilapidated buildings on Enning Road and build new residential buildings to house former occupants, was then approved in May 2007. This proposal included 207,134.6 m² of land and 113,658.4 m² of buildings. Among these structures, 20,170.9 m², or 18% of the total, were registered with the government as dilapidated housing (Wu, 2008). Even though only 18% of the structures was designated as such, the entire project was legitimized as a public good, which reflects the autocracy of the governmental principle at that time. In the meantime, with the vision of developing a commercial center, the Liwan District government paid a visit to Hong Kong to pitch potential investors on the Enning Road

Regeneration Project in March, hoping to recoup the costs. Without putting forward a specific spatial planning and informing the local residents in advance, the *Scheme* sparked strong opposition from the public. In September 2007, the first Demolition announcement was issued, which brought about serious resistance from the local residents.

The residents' complaints on the Demolition Announcement mainly focused on the following two issues (interview, resident 1 & resident 2). Firstly, they considered the compensation unreasonable. The government only offered a compensation price of 8000 CNY per m², which was far below the 12,000 CNY per m² market price of the surrounding. Additionally, they were not satisfied with the accommodation plan. The government planned to relocate former residents off-site to Jinshazhou, which was more than 10km away from the Enning Road. The periphery location and poor infrastructure system of Jinshazhou will not only cause great inconvenient to people's live, but also result in a low market value for housing. Therefore, some local residents spontaneously took a series of actions to protect their own interests. On 14 December 2007, a letter was submitted to the *Bureau of Land Resources and Housing Management of Guangzhou* by some representatives, expressing their dissatisfaction on the Demolition Announcement and requesting that the municipal governments revise the demolition plan. Then in May 2008, several property owners submitted a citizen's proposal to the National People's Congress, pointing out that the demolition of Enning Road is in violation of the Property Law announced on 1 October 2007. They argued that their properties were not dilapidated and thus should not be expropriated without

advance notice to the owners and detailed plans. Therefore, the project should not be construed as pursuing the public good, as this would go against provisions of the 2007 Property Law. All of these efforts, however, failed to halt the November 2008 demolition along Enning Road.

During this period of transformation, the government's decision-making process is typically totalitarian. The government played a dominant role and barely took public thoughts into consideration. The demolition and reconstruction strategy implied a lack of awareness of the neighborhood's historical and cultural significance, as well as the needs of local residents. In terms of the inhabitants, who would be most affected by the Regeneration Project, they could only receive information passively. Without any effective channel to communicate with the government, they could only express their outrage in extreme ways (demonstration, public tip-offs, rejection to negotiation, ...). Ultimately, the lack of communication exacerbated the conflict between the two parties, resulting in negative consequences for the Regeneration Project.

4.2.2 Phase 2: Awakening of Public Participation (2009-2012)

The second phase of Regeneration saw an outpouring of attention from all walks of life, contributing to generating a more reasonable and sustainable plan for Enning Road. And the guiding principle of regenerating Enning Road shifted from commercial development to historical preservation.

At this point, the most contentious issue was still compensation and relocation of residents. The government revised the demolition plan in response to the strong

opposition from residents on December 2009. The payment for demolished buildings increased to 10,000 CNY per m² and a residential development only 300 meters away from the Enning Road would be built to accommodate former residents. This adjustment was welcomed by the majority of 1950 households involved, while 453 among them still refused to sign the expropriation contracts until August 2010. Since the 2010 Asian Games were to start in November, the renovation of the Enning Area became so urgent that it attracted great attention and coverage from the mass media. Reviews of news reports about the Enning Road Regeneration project revealed the project's chaotic state (Fig 4-3): The wreckage of the destroyed structures was scattered throughout the area; thieves actively stole belongings from the vacant housing; the remaining residents' living conditions were in a mess. Under the supervision of the mass media, the municipal government began to seek a more appropriate solution. Anwei Chen, a representative of the People's Congress in Guangzhou, visited the project and spoke about the difficulties of life in Enning, which contrasted with the atmosphere of preparation for the Asian Games. Then, the Mayor of Guangzhou immediately responded to her statement by paying a visit to the project in person and emphasizing that the site's history should be preserved and the living environment should be improved. In September 2010, the Liwan District Regeneration Office and Urban Planning Bureau held a press conference, admitting their lack of site investigation and improper expropriating work. In contrast to the previous passive state, residents' capacity to act significantly increased through state–society interaction.



Fig 4-3: Chaotic conditions at Phase 2

Source: <http://news.focus.cn/gz/2010-08-24/1026685.html?cfrom=mobile>

Another significant public concern was the professionalism of planning policy. From 2009 to 2011, the Architectural Design and Research Institute of South China University of Technology was entrusted by the local government to carry out the planning of the chosen site. Following all of the disagreements and compromises, the Liwan District government set up an "Expert Advisory Group for Enning Road Reconstruction Project" in October 2010. The advisory group consisted of fifteen members, including experts in planning, cultural relic protection, architecture, and other fields, as well as National People's Congress representatives. These fifteen members would act as commentators and supervisors, taking part in discussions about the new renewal plan.

Last but not least, the preservation of historical buildings in the Enning Road area was also a controversial theme. In December 2009, "Enning Road Historical

Preservation and Development Plan” was published, demonstrating the government’s commitment to historical preservation. Nonetheless, the Plan's content, which envisioned the renewal of Enning Road as a commercial tourist destination called “Xiguan Old Town," prompted local households to jointly write several letters to argue against the plan in January, 2010. They claimed that the plan would replace real history with fake antiques and evict the locals under the guise of pursuing public interests. In June, 2011, the revised plan was approved, emphasizing increased efforts to preserve historical resources and abandoning the former cost recovery logic. The shift in planning principles can be seen as a success of the joint efforts of many forces in society. Local newspapers have followed the project’s progress closely and collectively published the revised plan’s approval on the front-page. Additionally, several non-governmental organizations (NGOs) continued to provide support to the residents. Take Enning Road Academic Concern Group (ERACG) as an example, a group established in February 2010 by university students, spontaneously shoulder the responsibility to supervise the procedures for planning and demolition, provide legal assistance to the residents, and communicate with the mass media in time about the update of the regeneration project. In September 2012, ERACG launched an online petition on Weibo (one of China’s most popular social media platforms) to prevent workers from removing granite along the Enning Road. They highlighted that the granite had been used as the foundation for roads in Enning for hundreds of years and possessed incalculable historical value. Later in December 2012, the headquarters of the Project responded by maintaining the granite roads as the public wished.

The public became increasingly involved in the Enning Road revitalization project. Local residents, experts, the news media, and non-governmental organizations collaborated spontaneously in the hope of achieving the optimal plan for the Regeneration Project. Additionally, the government gradually recognized the critical role of public participation in ensuring long-term and effective development. Therefore, the government's policy-making procedure switches away from its original autocratic approach toward a more proactive approach that incorporated the views of relevant experts and social groups.

4.2.3 Phase 3: Stagnation under the Self-renewal of Local Residents (2013-2014)

The progress of the Enning Road Regeneration Project stagnated between 2013 and 2014 due to a variety of factors. First of all, the *Property Law* and the *Regulation of Expropriation and Compensation of Properties in National Land* precluded the government from enforcing demolition. Until the end of 2012, there still existed some households who were dissatisfied with the government's compensation plan. The demolition then came to a standstill. Secondly, the complex property ownership structures in this decayed area precluded constructors from obtaining the formal certificates of land ownership required for administrative approval. And the comparably low floor area ratio (1.38) stipulated in the 2011 plan greatly reduced the profit margins for private investors. The region became less attractive to capital. The 2011 plan also put forward the "Independent update mode", which refers to the local residents' renovating their own properties following the government's guidelines. However, the

local residents gradually lost the motivation to self-renovate without the government's follow-ups.

4.2.4 Phase 4: Yongqing Area Micro-transformation under BOT Mode (2015-present day)

The last phase restarted the Enning Road Regeneration Project through a new mechanism, Micro-transformation, which might avert previous difficulties. Micro-transformation refers to regenerating works that do not change the ownership or structure of specific buildings, but rather improve their overall spatial quality through partial improvements and transforming functions. Under this mechanism, issues such as a lack of property ownership certificates and relatively low-density regulations could be circumvented. Due to its unique location, the Yongqing Area was chosen as the pilot site for testing this new regeneration approach. At the time, the selected area consisted of 75 structures totaling approximately 12,000 m², of which 50 structures totaling approximately 7200 m² had been expropriated, and the Liwan government divided it into 2 sites to renovate in stages. (Professional Committee of Urban Regeneration in Chinese Society for Urban Studies et al., 2017).

Apart from the constraints imposed by government regulations, a lack of funds also played a significant role in reducing the efficiency of transformation. Since its inception in 2006, the project had already run out of the government's 1.8-billion-yuan investment. Then, to address this pressing financial issue, the BOT (Build—Operate—Transfer) mode was implemented. BOT refers to a mode of cooperation between the government

and private sectors on public projects. The government permits enterprises to raise funds for the construction, management, and operation of public projects and then return them to the government at the end of the period.

In April 2016, Vanke, a giant real estate company, won the bid to operate the first part of the Yongqing project. Vanke would invest in the entire project without relying on public funding; in exchange, Vanke would manage it for 15 years while collecting rents from each individual room and building in the area. Then after 15 years, Vanke agreed to return the management right of the area to the government without any additional charge. However, this novel mode of operation did not imply that the private developer could construct the area arbitrarily. The Liwan District government approved the "Construction Guidelines for Micro-regeneration Yongqing Fang," serving as a guide aimed specifically at legitimizing Vanke's activities in the absence of administrative documents. Moreover, the Urban Regeneration Bureau arranged regular meetings between developers and representatives from various government sectors. These meetings could be regarded as supervision on problems pertaining in the micro-transformation of Yongqing Fang. In September 2016, the Yongqing area opened to the public after intense reconstruction.

During the first part of the renovation, the government and the developer share nearly equal power, which also reflects the resilient governance of the municipal government. However, problems like disfigurement of history and disruption of the area's residents' daily lives recurred at this point, which could be regarded as the result of institutional loophole of BOT mode. Without clear criteria for reconstruction,

developers prioritized profit and efficiency, which explains why this portion of the project could be completed in less than nine months. On one hand, due to lack of knowledge of historical preservation, micro-renovation carried out by developers posed a threat to the historical landscape. The contentious forms, colors, and materials that exist between the old and the new, inevitably deviated from the track of cultural relic protection. On the other hand, Vanke ignored the requirements of the residents. For example, the new construction caused damage to residential buildings, too much noise reduced the quality of life, and other issues. Public criticism compelled the Professional Committee for Urban Regeneration of the Chinese Society for Urban Studies, an academic organization, to establish a specialized evaluation program for the process and outcomes of the Yongqing Area's first stage regeneration in 2017. In their final report, they pointed out that existing procedures omit public participation. Additionally, Qingkan Huang, a leader in the Urban Regeneration Bureau, also admitted that the primary issue with this project was a lack of public participation.

When it comes to the second part, the district government issued a new plan for Enning's historical preservation in December 2017 in response to criticisms about the absence of an Enning protection plan as legal guidance for micro-regeneration. Vanke once again took first place in an open bid for this stage of micro-regeneration. To increase public participation, the Joint Creation Committee was established in September 2018. The committee was made up of 25 members representing urban planners, residents, area renters, experts, and mass media. And more than a half of the members were residents or renters in the targeted neighborhood. This committee was

charged with several responsibilities, including communicating the plan to the public, resolving conflicts between diverse interest groups, and compiling comments on the plans for submission to the Enning Road Micro-regeneration Project's headquarters. However, the lack of veto power in the planning process and insufficient financial resources meant the Joint Creation Committee's voice was often ignored by the powerful government and developer. The underlying institutionalization problems remain unresolved. A vital turning point came on 24 October 2018, when President Jinping Xi visited Yongqing Area, emphasizing the political significance of the project (China News and Report, 2018). The government and developer took an active role in resolving people's livelihood concerns. However, the harmonious conditions were insecure due to the fact that specific circumstances change constantly. In the Wechat Group for the Yongqing Area Regeneration, residents continued to complain about disturbing situations generated by construction activities such as noise, dust, and sewage. The completion date of the project had also been delayed from 2021 to 2022, indicating that several thorny issues remain unsolved. The transformation procedures at phase 4 can be viewed as a dynamic game of power between all parties, during which public awareness of participation has increased significantly.

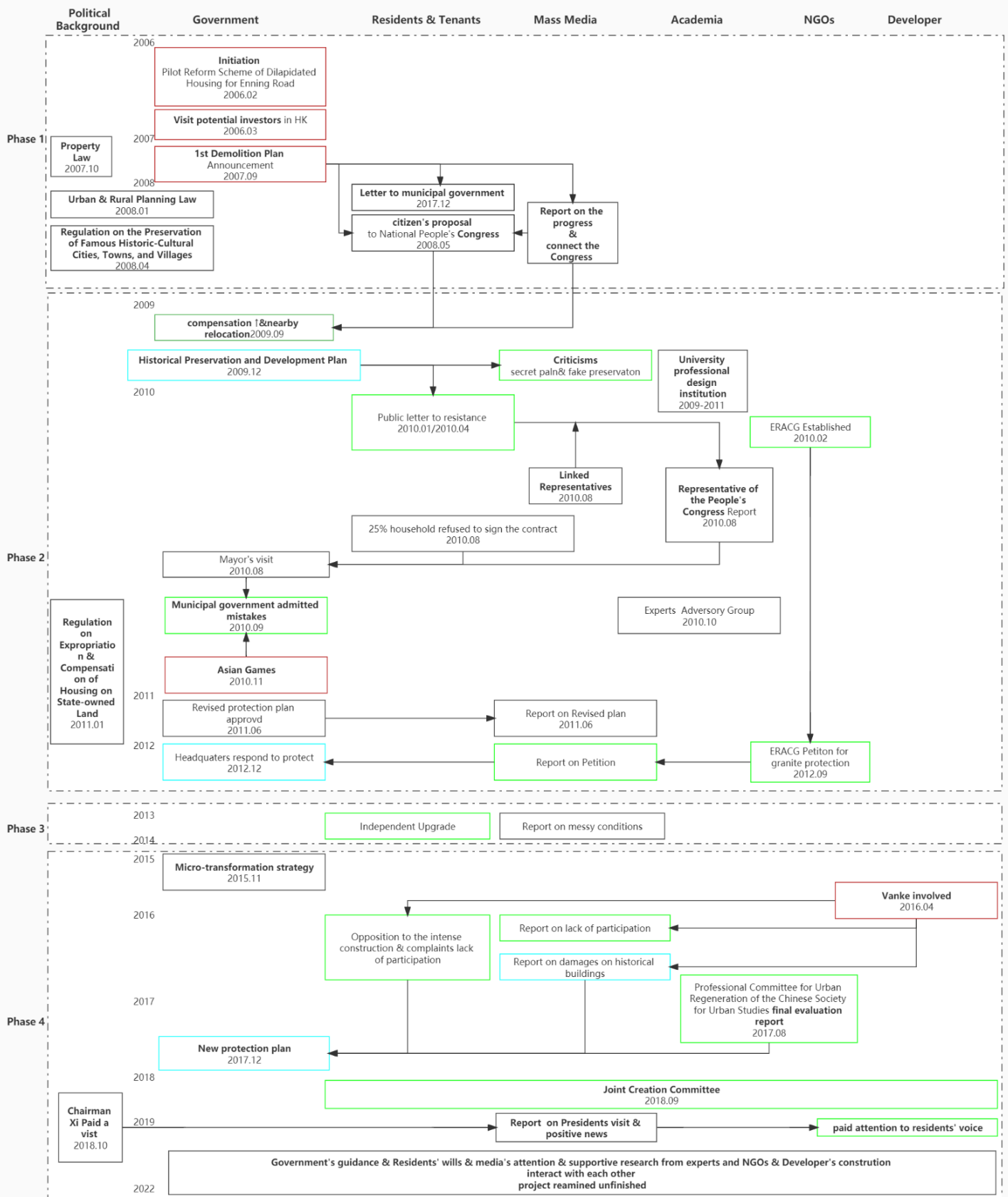


Fig 4-4: Major events and interaction among different interest groups

(Each frame represents an event; Arrows indicate the direction of the events' driving forces; Frame's colors convey the intent of the participants: black for neutral events, red for economic growth, blue for historical preservation and green for public participation)

4.3 Summary: Interaction among the Diverse Subjects

The regeneration strategy for Yongqing Area has evolved in accordance with the Enning Road Regeneration Project's phases: Government-led demolition and construction (2006-2008), awakening of public participation (2009-2012), stagnation under the Self-renewal of Local Residents (2013-2014), and Yongqing Area Micro transformation under BOT Mode (2015-present day). By summarizing the major events and social interactions that occurred during the construction phases, we can see how each stakeholder's power fluctuates dynamically (Fig 4-4). Additionally, this flow chart illustrates the public's role evolving from passive participation to active intervention and finally, generating influence over policy decisions. People have become more aware of how important it is for the public to be involved in urban renewal projects. The BOT mode in the micro-transformation phase is an important practice to balance the interests of all parties, following the guiding principle "government-leading, enterprise undertaking, and public participation.

The critical step in urban renewal is to strike a balance between the interests of all stakeholders. When the government and developers take the lead, the entire project becomes profit-driven, implying that residents can only accept relocation passively. If the project's focus is solely on the government's leadership role and public participation, the project's high cost and low efficiency will stymie future development. If the project places a premium on collaboration between residents and developers, the most likely outcome is the emergence of collectively owned enterprises that disregard government guidance. As a result, it is critical to establish an effective communication platform and

to reduce communication costs in order to better coordinate the efforts of all stakeholders involved in regeneration projects.

In comparison to the government and developers, the community in China is in a relatively weak position when it comes to urban regeneration. As a pioneering project implementing an innovative regeneration strategy, the Yongqing Area's public engagement conditions may serve as an inspiration for future projects. Following an overview of the selected case, the next chapter will conduct a utility analysis of stakeholder participation from the perspective of stakeholder analysis.

Chapter 5

Stakeholder Participation Utility Analysis

The overview of Guangzhou's urban regeneration Development and the progress of the Enning Road Regeneration Project's governance style demonstrates the dynamics of stakeholder interaction in urban regeneration. This chapter focuses on the Yongqing Area Regeneration Period and conducts a more detailed examination of stakeholders. The application of the BOT mode involves additional interest groups, further complicating the interrelationships of different stakeholders. This part attempts to expose the stakeholders' power hierarchy using the standard routine of stakeholder analysis: stakeholder identification, stakeholder distinction, and stakeholder interaction. (Liu, 2020)

5.1 Identifying Stakeholders

The Liwan District Government, Vanke Developer, residents in Yongqing Area, planners designated to design the plan, mass media reporting project progress, and NGOs groups involved in specific community issues are clearly stakeholders in the Yongqing Area case, according to McQueen et al., (2008) who elaborated four

categories of public sector, private sector, community, and independent groups as stakeholder categories. Since the types of subjects in this case comparably evident, there is no need to carry out the iterative process like scoping interviews, focus groups, and follow-up interviews. Among the identified stakeholders, Liwan District Government is in the public sector, Vanke Developer belongs to the private sector, residents fall into the category of community, and the media & non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are classified as independent groups. As for the planners for this project, Vanke employed them from both worldwide private design firms and state-owned enterprises such as the Guangzhou Urban Planning and Design Institute (GZPI), which is run by the local government but is financially self-sufficient. Not only are they required to realize Vanke’s requirements, but also obey the municipal government’s criteria. And during the preparation stage, planners also need to learn about the demands of the community and the attitudes of the independent groups driven by their professionalism. As a result, in this scenario, it would be more appropriate to think of them as an intermediary among diverse stakeholders.

Table 5-1 Categories of stakeholders

Category	Stakeholders
Public sector	Liwan district government
Private sector	Vanke LTD.
Intermediary	Planners drawn from both worldwide private design firms and state-owned enterprises
Community	Residents in Yongqing Area
Independent groups	Mass media, NGOs

Following the identification of stakeholders, I conduct interviews with each group. Eleven stakeholders from six categories were interviewed: a government official, a planner, three members of Vanke Guangzhou responsible for investing in, reconstructing, and operating the Yongqing Area, three residents from diverse backgrounds, a journalist, an NGO member, and an urban planning expert. In order to depict the roles of different stakeholders, the interviews questions focused on 2 directions: their ability to affect the decisions and their ability to bear the outcomes. During the semi-structured interviews, they were requested to self-clarify their positions in the regeneration, define their concerns and interests, address their collaboration and disagreements with other interest groups, and present their vision for the regeneration project. (Please review the interviewees' basic information and question-sheets in the Appendix.) Table 5-2 and Table 5-3 summarizes the key words from respondents and then classifies them as having a high, medium, or low level of discourse power or interest in the outcomes.

Table 5-2 Stakeholders' level of discourse power

Category	Key information from interview responses	Discourse power
District Government	<p>Government official: "We initiated the whole regeneration project. It is an experimental approach for us to apply BOT mode. And we set very strict criteria to choose an appropriate developer."</p> <p>Developer group:" The government set a strict timeline for our construction. The time was too limited for such a complex project."</p> <p>Resident 1:" I refuse the relocation plan. The government keeps changing its policy. Who knows if this relocation plan will change this time"?"</p> <p>Resident 2:" I selected a resettlement housing and has reached an oral agreement with the government. But one month later, they informed me there were more than 900 people waiting for resettlement and I don't have any further information since then."</p>	High
Vanke LTD.	<p>Developer Group: "We decided on all the design and layout of Yongqing Area, the government only provided limited assistance... Of course, we know more participation would reduce conflicts, but you know we cannot satisfy everyone. The contradictions will always exist."</p> <p>Resident 3:" Vanke change the district thoroughly. I hung clothes on the street to make them dry before the regeneration, and Vanke suddenly restricted us from hanging clothes outside. ...They make all the rules."</p>	High
Planners	<p>Planner: "Vanke decides on the direction of our plan. And the time is too limited for us to do more research on the neighborhood. The news criticizing our work gave us a strong pressure, but our primary goal is still to meet the requirements of our employer."</p>	Medium
Residents	<p>Resident 1:" I attended the public hearing... It is more like an announcement. The planners tried to convince us that their plan meet everyone's needs. The meetings are just formulaic burdens wasting our time."</p> <p>Journalist: "We follow up the government's responses to the opinions from the residents collected at the public hearings...Only those who have a real urgent condition may get the government's attention."</p>	Low
Mass media	<p>Journalist:" All I want is to make the communication between the powerful government/developer and the local residents clearer. And provide a platform to make the residents' voice being heard."</p>	Low
NGOs	<p>Member of the ERACG:" We know we cannot change the government's decision directly as university students... We do make an influence through our community and online activities... So many citizens signed our petition on Weibo and we finally protect the granite in Yongqing Area.</p>	Low

Table 5-3 Stakeholders' extent to which he was affected by the results

Category	Key information from interview responses	Ability to bear outcomes
District Government	<p>Government official:" The transformation of Yongqing Area receives attention from all sectors of society.... The project has some political significance.</p> <p>Developer Group:" The Yongqing Area Reformation's quality reflects the government's performance. But at this stage, our intervention greatly alleviates the government's burden on the concrete transformation work."</p>	Medium
Vanke LTD.	<p>Developer Group:" Even though we do not treat this project as a profitable one. We still need to make both ends meet under such a complicated background.... It would take at least 12.5 years to recover the costs."</p>	High
Planners	<p>Planner:" Our design is in accordance with local government rules and Vanke Ltd. specifications. Given that we do not live in the neighborhood, I must confess that our design may miss some of the people' demands.... I believe that the Joint Creation Committee, which was constituted in September 2018, has the potential to ameliorate the situation. It engaged 1 community planner and established an online discussion group on social media."</p>	Low
Residents	<p>Resident 1:" Yongqing Area transformed from a residential area to a commercial area. The average rent of housing in this area increases... And my income has increased as a result of the rent increase."</p> <p>Resident 2:" My quality of life declined significantly. ... The passing tourists make a lot of noise. ... The developer's new construction makes my room less ventilated and illuminated.</p> <p>Resident 3:" I just need a place to live. But I still miss the peaceful neighborhood in the past."</p>	High
Mass media	<p>Developer Group:" Some reports have exaggerated the conflicts between residents and our company. Their reports generated great pressure on us. But indeed, they don't need to take the consequences of their false statements."</p> <p>Journalist:" I believe that the reports should remain objective. I gathered information from many parties and attempted to make them comprehend one another's needs and dilemmas. ... However, inhabitants were in a somewhat vulnerable position, which resulted in several reports detailing their grievances and rejection to the government/developer."</p>	Low
NGOs	<p>Member of the ERACG:" We tried to cooperate with the residents and help them express their opinions. We also use our professional knowledge to supervise the actions of the government and the developer."</p>	Low

5.2 Characterizing Stakeholders

Power-interest matrix was applied in this section to determine which groups of stakeholders are more powerful and which are more affected based on the interviews. For these two dimensions, there is no established grading system. As a result, with the purpose of exploring the public involvement unity in the chosen instance in mind, I measure the two characteristics as follows: The term "powers" refers to the ability to make decisions. The more outlets for a chosen subject to express their viewpoints while being less influenced by opposing views, the more powerful the actor becomes. Stakeholder interests refer to the consequences of the regeneration process. If the chosen subject prioritizes the regeneration project and will be more affected by the regeneration's changes, it will receive a higher score in the interest dimension. By analyzing stakeholders' responses to questions related to power and interest, it is possible to determine which stakeholders have the strongest influence and which are the most impacted. Stakeholders' level of power and interest in decision-making process of Yongqing regeneration is depicted in power vs. interest matrix in Fig 5-1. As illustrated in this graphic, stakeholders are separated into four quadrants to indicate their various roles in this project.

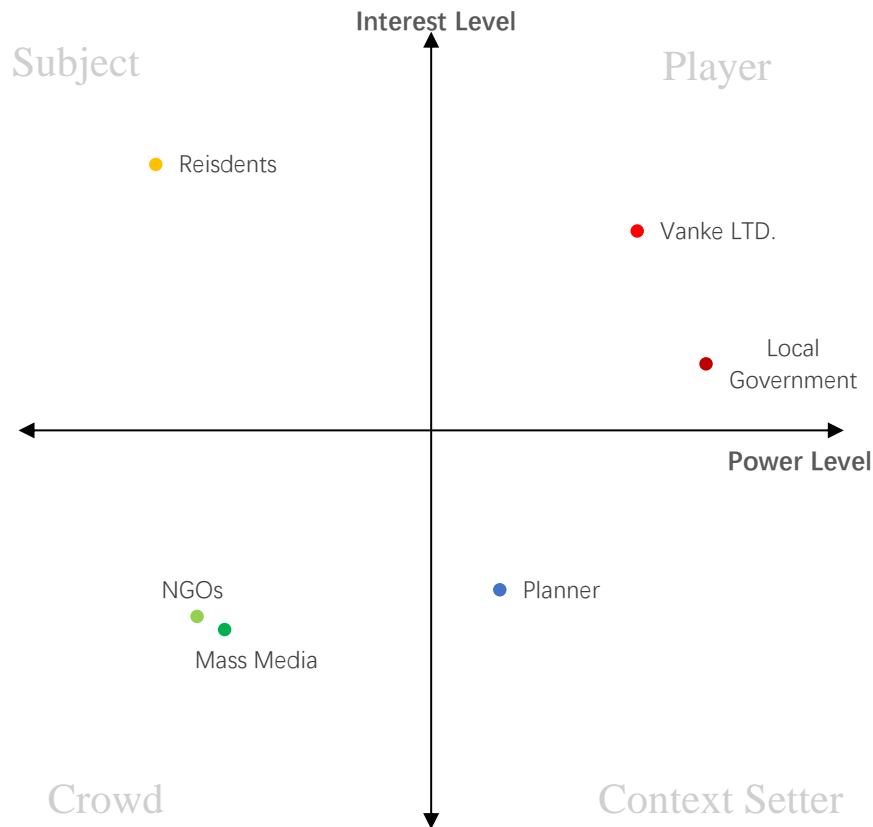


Fig 5-1 Power-interest matrix of stakeholders in Yongqing Area Regeneration

(Subjects have low power but high interest; Players have high power and high interest; Crowd have low power and low interest; Context setters have high power but low interest. Adapted from Bryson, Patton, and Bowman (2011), as well as Eden and Ackermann (1998).)

(1) Player: Local government & Vanke LTD.

Liwan District Government plays a dominant role during the renovation process. First of all, it initiated the Yongqing Area Regeneration Project and stipulated the BOT mode for this project. Before signing a contract with Vanke LTD., the local government issued *Guidelines for Micro-Transformation and Construction in Yongqing Area* and *Guidelines for The Control of Community Business Forms for Micro-transformation in*

Yongqing Area to set a basic framework for future construction. For the most part, all the other stakeholders were compelled to follow these general regulations. After a sustained focus on the Enning Road Project, the local government's expectations for the Yongqing Project fell back to a relatively reasonable level. The renovation would inevitably bring political rewards for government officials, as it would garner significant attention from the central government to the most ordinary Guangzhou citizens. However, the local government won't spare equal resources on the project as before since it does not need to implement reconstruction by itself at this stage. As the Vanke employee said, the private developer's engagement significantly reduced the government's responsibility for concrete transformation work. As a result, the local government's interest in this initiative waned.

As the project's financier, builder, and operator, Vanke LTD. wields decisive influence over the layout, function, and operation of Yongqing Area. Vanke LTD. inked a 15-year lease agreement with the Liwan District Government in April 2016 to redevelop a "cultural and creative quarter with commercial functions" in Yongqing Area. By converting public housing into boutiques, studios, coffee shops, and B&B hotels that appeal to the aesthetic preferences of the "creative class," the Yongqing neighborhood has developed a reputation for young tourism and petite bourgeoisie shoppers. On 16 August 2018, the Liwan District Government officially inaugurated the second round of urban renovation projects on Yongqing Area. Vanke signed a 20-year lease agreement with the Liwan District Government to create a new Xiguan historical and cultural creative center at this stage. Because Vanke assumes a portion of

the government's responsibilities, such as infrastructure building, public housing repair, and temporary relocation services for citizens, it wins the government's trust and possesses the capital necessary to "negotiate" with the government.

As a private enterprise, Vanke tends to operate their projects in the most profitable way. In comparison to conventional real estate projects, Yongqing Area Regeneration involves a greater number of constrained variables and a lower input-output ratio. Consider the first phase of Yongqing Area Regeneration: Vanke's rebuilding cost for the entire project might reach 65 million yuan (almost 10,000 yuan per square meter on average), and the project is estimated to take at least 12 and a half years to recover its costs. As a result, the developer's interest would be much more urgent than the local government.

(2) Context Setter: Planner

Planners are the direct creators of the plan. They must not only adhere to Vanke's requirements, but also to the municipal government's criteria. As the questioned planner noted, they perform extensive study on the neighborhood throughout the planning stage to ascertain community needs. These responses indicate that these planners had a substantial role in the discourse, particularly in terms of giving expertise knowledge. And as the employee of Vanke LTD., planners at this stage tend to create schemes with the goal of maximizing market benefits. Since they are engaged in routine activities and have no emotional ties to the community, planners won't have much incentive to optimize their designs.

(3) Subject: Residents

The residents were in a relatively vulnerable position during the Enning Road renovation project. Initially, the government launched the project without notifying local inhabitants. Between 2006 and 2014, as the government took control of the reconstruction, residents kept arguing on issues like compensations and resettlement. Some of them move out from the neighborhood, while the other was passively trapped in the dilemma of lack of community management and deteriorating environment.

According to the interviewed district official, representatives of the Vanke LTD. and the planner, they performed study on the neighborhood during the planning phase to ascertain community wants and concerns. But the residents' responses indicated that although there existed some channels to express their thoughts, they tended to become a mere formality, leaving the plight of the residents remained unsolved. Residents appear to have the least authority in this endeavor without sufficient engagement and participation. However, residents have the most urgent interest in this planning project. Their daily lives were impacted by neighborhood developments. On one hand, Vanke LTD. increased the area's value, allowing property owners to rent their homes at a better price. On the other hand, residents were inevitably forced to live in a harsh built environment during the rehabilitation process. Additionally, the regeneration process harmed their neighborhood connections.

(4) Crowd: Mass media, NGOs

At this stage, the mass media and non-governmental organizations play a supporting role. According to the journalist's and ERACG member's responses, their basic working

route could be summarized as follows:(1) Residents are dissatisfied with the results and seek help from these social groups/ Social groups notify the existing problems of the regeneration project. (2) Social groups activate potential participants and form public issues by means of open letters, joint-signed letters, posters, and a "media chorus" of critical commentaries on the government's performance. (3) Journalists involve NPC deputies, mayors, and other key figures to increase the event's impact. (4) Finally, they form a social mobilization platform and make a difference in government/developer's decisions. To sum up, the Mass media and NGOs tend to form a local informal coalition with the residents.

The process of stakeholder differentiation demonstrates that there is a mismatch between the power and interest levels of stakeholders. That is to say, individuals most impacted by the regeneration project have less influence over the decision-making process, while those in a dominant position devote less attention to the project's detailed development. Vanke Ltd., with both high power and interest level, tends to focus on its on profits making instead of the demands of the local residents. The local government set the framework but fail to play the role as a responsible supervisor due to its comparably weak interest. As a result, none of the two dominating positions will have the drive or motivation to develop a communication platform for neighborhood inhabitants. As for the residents, although they bear the outcomes of regeneration directly, the lack of channels and approaches to express their concerns made them gradually lose faith in their own power and chose inaction, reinforcing the unbalanced power relations in the neighborhood.

5.3 Stakeholder Relationships

To better understand the impacts of the mismatch, Figure 5-2 summarizes the relations of each stakeholder in this project with nodes and edges:

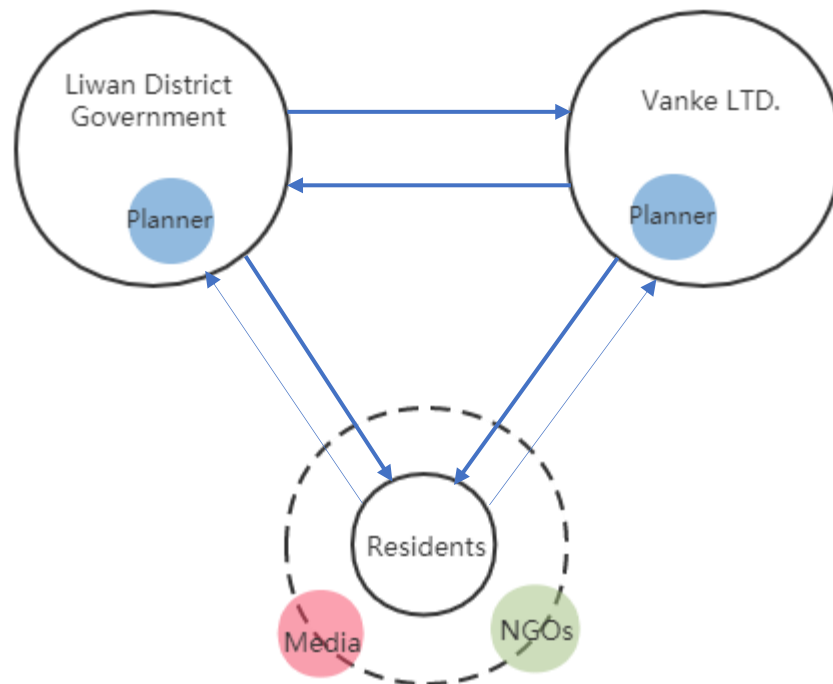


Fig 5-2 Stakeholder relationships of the Yongqing Area Regeneration Project

Under the BOT mode, Liwan district government and Vanke LTD. form an alliance. The developer transforms the Yongqing Area into a thriving commercial district and profits from its operation. Meanwhile, the developer assists the local government in resolving some of the most intractable issues in the chosen area, such as a lack of infrastructure and environmental concerns. Additionally, the local government could also benefit from operation taxes collected from Vanke LTD. By controlling the political framework and financial resources of the project, Liwan district government and Vanke

LTD. occupy the pinnacle of the stakeholders' power hierarchy. Both sides mentioned above have their own planner groups. Planners tend to interact with the residents driven by their professionalism, but they but they do so within the parameters established by their employers, and their plans are indeed reflections of their employers' objectives.

Residents play a marginalized role in this process. The redevelopment project in Yongqing Area was issued by Liwan District as a pioneer of petite redevelopment in 2015. Even though the guidelines emphasized on protecting the public interest and encouraging participation by multiple parties, the local citizens were still the last to be notified. The joint objection letter signed by 60 households of Enninglu residents In February 2017 and the Joint Creation Committee established on 7 September 2018 could be regarded as efforts of local residents to improve their engagement in the regeneration project. The mass media and NGOs tend to form the counter-discourse coalition with residents, while the local authority and developers have been the dominant actors. The two rebellion actions demonstrate a move away from individual resistance toward networked activism, implying an increase in public participation. Nonetheless, we must acknowledge that public engagement in this endeavor remains to be poor. Based on the analysis in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5, I would conclude this thesis, provide policy recommendations, and demonstrate the limitations in the last chapter.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

Urban regeneration projects have sprung up in China in response to the country's rapid urbanization trend since 1978. When the public is isolated from decision-making, conflicts continue to arise, resulting in the suspension of works and anti-social behavior. The government gradually recognized that only by increasing public engagement could they ensure the regeneration project's sustainability. Guangzhou, one of the 4 first-tier mega cities in China, becomes a pioneer in experimenting with novel participatory planning modes following decades of urban regeneration practices. This research begins by tracing the growth of Guangzhou's urban renewal and stakeholders' participation. Then it examines the interaction between various stakeholders by studying the Enning Road Regeneration Project's procedures. The preceding chapter zooms in on the project's last stage, Yongqing Area Regeneration, and conducts a stakeholder analysis to reveal the stakeholders' power hierarchy. This chapter summarizes the findings from the previous analysis, identifies the current shortcomings of stakeholder participation in urban regeneration initiatives, and makes policy recommendations for future development. At the conclusion, a brief discussion of the study's limitations and potential suggestions for future research will be included.

6.1 Summary of Stakeholder Participation Analysis

Through a macro-to-micro analysis, this research suggests an emerging movement toward substantive participatory governance in the Chinese context. The decision-making mechanism has shifted from interventionism to polyarchy. More and more interest groups are involved in the policy-making procedures. To counter the advocacy roles of powerful actors such as the government or the developer, the relatively vulnerable subjects also establish an opposition alliance. The shift from individual resistance toward networked activism indicates the increase of the level of public participation.

The evolution of Guangzhou's urban redevelopment and the various phases of the Ening Road regeneration project demonstrate the complexity of China's government sectors. Despite the fact that governments always play a leading role in urban regeneration decision-making, the tasks and obligations of their multiple departments remain unclear, thus none of them can be held totally accountable for the success of initiatives. This institutional deficiency would lead to overlapping or inconsistent decisions among government departments, thereby making the government's cooperation with other stakeholders less effective and more costly. Thus, a clearer allocation of authorities and responsibilities within the government department for urban renewal projects could be an effective solution.

Controversies of the stakeholder participation in the selected project are representative. Firstly, the mismatch between the stakeholders' power and interest level would create a vicious cycle, in which the local residents' voices would be drowned out

and new social problems would continue to emerge. Local residents have the strongest and most urgent interest in the project, but they are disempowered in the decision-making process for the most of the time. And dominating positions such as government and developer, either by maximizing their own interests or by progressively losing interest in the project, tend to overlook people' needs. Due to a lack of channels for intervention in the decision-making process and an emergency situation in which basic living criteria are not met, residents' attitudes swing between two extremes. Some take radical measures to show their anger and resistance, while others lose interest in the restoration process. Secondly, the interaction among stakeholders remains insufficient. Planners may obtain official information at an early stage, as their work is constrained by the government or developer. Without any emotional links with the community, planners will have little incentive to revise their plans in light of information acquired through other routes. The mass media and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) pay close attention to some pressing neighborhood concerns and have substantial social data collection capabilities, but they are unable to obtain timely formal information from the government or developer. For the residents, public hearings and community meetings are still very insufficient to foster an in-depth awareness of competing needs and interests. It remains insufficient in terms of participation depth in the “participatory ladder” and rationality in the participatory mechanism. As a result, a communication platform is required via which various stakeholders can express their opinions in real time and facilitate cross-level interactions.

From the standpoint of advancing public interests, the new BOT mode's performance is unsatisfactory. The strategy was put forward as an experimental tool to realize a win-win situation among the stakeholders. The ideal process is that the developer and community discuss the direction of the neighborhood in an equal manner, and the government, representing the public interests, make decisions after a comprehensive evaluation. However, in our case, government form an alliance with the developer, and the local residents have to cooperate with other social groups to intervene in the decision-making process. This informal relationship brings about informal collaboration and information exchange. And the lack of transparency and accountability in these informal connections allows developers to impose their own interests on the decisions in in urban planning, land use planning, land expropriation, etc. Thus, the current planning system should strictly define the rights and obligations of developers and take actions to empower the marginalized stakeholders.

6.2 Policy Recommendations

Though current public participation remains a low level in urban regeneration projects, it does not mean that public participation is not necessary. Rather than that, it underlines the significance of developing more effective procedures to improve the stakeholder engagement. This section provides some policy recommendations in response to the problems identified above.

6.2.1 Legislation

Article 1 of *Guangzhou urban Renewal Guidelines*, which states the purpose of legislation, stipulates that urban renewal shall protect public interests. However, the existing laws and regulations in China do not specify the content or scope of "public interest". In our chosen project, the relevant regulations deem the Liwan district administration to be the de facto representative of the public interest. But in the real practice, the government has a closer connection with the developer claiming that their actions are motivated by a desire for social stability. Additionally, we find that while local inhabitants advocate for their own rights, they make several public requests, such as the protection of historical and cultural resources. Thus, only after a proper legislative procedure has defined "public interest," can governments make their final judgment convincingly and ensure the public interest in the real sense.

6.2.2 Decision-making mechanism

A second recommendation calls for a more collaborative decision-making mechanism. Firstly, more channels should be provided for each interest group to express their opinions and a more collaborative platform should be created to make their communication more effective. The second phase of Yongqing Area Project has already made some efforts by introducing the "collective governance group" from Sun Yet-sun University, led by Professor Li Xun who has successfully led multiple community regeneration programs. Secondly, the current system should establish a department of "grass-roots" mediation. The department is responsible for collecting

people' issues and ideas about the project, acting as an official avenue for citizens to communicate their concerns. Additionally, department employees serve as supervisors, preventing illegal conduct and ensuring quick resolution of issues. The last suggestion lies in the improvement of the current planning system, the accountability and transparency should be enhanced to strengthen the responsibility of government sectors & developers and raise their willingness to collaborate with less-empowered groups.

6.3 Limitations

There are still some restrictions on this research. Due to a lack of time and the intermittent lockout caused by COVID-19, the number of respondents is relatively low, hence limiting the quantity analysis in Chapter 5. Without a solid quantity analysis, the social network analysis in this thesis remains insufficient. Additionally, in terms of the stakeholder identification, many peripheral interest groups could be included through more in-depth interviews, such as financial institutions and land-related organizations. The categories of stakeholders identified can be further refined. For example, the government could be separated into municipal government, district government, and local administrative organizations. Residents who have previously engaged in "rebellion" activities should be interviewed. Their experience and perspectives may be beneficial for this investigation. Finally, but certainly not least, the Yongqing Area Regeneration Project remains incomplete, we must continue to track its future development.

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Appendix A

Basic Information of the interviewees

Government Official	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A member of Liwan District Urban Planning Bureau - Participated in the several Yongqing Area Regeneration community meetings; assisted planners in obtaining the information they required - Interview: phone call; 25 minutes
Planner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A leading member of the Team of Enning Road Regeneration project - Took in charge of the project; attended public hearings and several community meetings - Interview: in person; 30 minutes
Developer group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A group of Vanke Guangzhou responsible for invest, reconstruct and operate the Yongqing Area (head of design management department; head of the planning for investment attracting department; head of the operation department) - Interview: in person in their office place; 1 hour
Journalist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A member of <i>NewExpress</i> - In charge of the column following up the process the regeneration project - Interview: in person in his office; 25 minutes
NGO member	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A member of the ERACG - supervised the procedures for planning and demolishment, provided legal assistance to the residents, communicated the mass media in time about the update of the regeneration project - Interview: in person; 30 minutes
Urban Planning Professor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A Professor in Sun Yat-sen University - Dean of China Institute of Regional Coordinated Development and Rural Construction, Sun Yat-sen University; following the development of this project since its inception in 2006 - Interview: in person in his office; 50 minutes
Residents 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A resident living in Enning Road since the 1970s - Living in a public property - Interview: walking in the neighborhood, 15 minutes
Residents 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A resident living in Yongqing Area since 1995 - Own a private property - Interview: walking in the neighborhood, 15 minutes
Residents 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A tenant living in Yongqing Area since 2015 - Interview: walking in the neighborhood, 15 minutes

Appendix B

Interview questions

1. Government Official

- What are the major duties of the government in this project?
- How would you evaluate the current conditions in this neighborhood? What, in your opinion, is the most significant change brought about by the urban renewal project in the community?
- What do you think are the most important issues that need to be addressed in the community? Why?
- What were the proposals in the past like? What were their main focuses? How would you comment on their implementation?
- What are the government's requirements for selected planners?
- What are the government's requirements for the selected developer? How would you comment on Vanke's construction?
- How would you comment on the relationships among different stakeholders?
- Do you meet the stakeholders regularly? What is the frequency and how do you organize it?
- Do you think the residents have a sense of belonging living in this neighborhood?
- Please summarize the most controversial conflicts among the stakeholders. How did you deal with the conflicts?
- Do you think the current planning process should be improved? Do you think it meets the needs of the residents?

2. Planner

- When were you designated to prepare the plan? What were the reasons for launching the plan?
- Please introduce your planner team: How many members do you have? What is the academic background and working experience of your team member?
- How you conduct the research on the community? How long was your preparation period? How did you get the information?
- How would regard your relationships with different stakeholders?
- Do you involve different stakeholders during the preparation of the plan? Did their suggestions affect your final plan?
- What were the feedbacks of different stakeholders?
- How did you balance the stakeholders' interests? When their demands conflict each other, how did you resolve the problem?
- What are your thoughts on the planning process? Is it possible to make changes to the system to make it better?

3. Developer Group

- When did you intervene in this project? At the beginning, what were the main problems left over from the previous phase?
- What changes occurred in the built environment and the function of the buildings

after Vanke's intervention?

- What are the rationale of choosing industry format in Yongqing Area?
- What efforts did you make to get information from the public? Have you adopted any suggestions from the NGOs, research groups, and mass media? Have you adopted any suggestions from local residents?
- How would you respond to the critics? Is there a case that the construction was not publicized before? Do you think your construction damaged the architectural characteristics of the historical buildings?
- How long will it take to recover the project's capital?
- How would you comment on the general atmosphere of public opinion that calls for multi-party participation and decision-making?
- Did you publicize the regeneration plan in time? How did you inform the stakeholders?
- What are the main obstacles to involving the voice of the public?
- Do you think there is any possible improvement to the government's work?

4. Media & NGO

- When did you get involved in this project? What drives you to focus on this project?
- What do you think are the most important issues that need to be addressed in the community? Why?
- How would you evaluate the current conditions in this neighborhood? What, in your opinion, is the most significant change brought about by the urban renewal project in the community?
- What efforts did you make to get involved in the project? Was the final decision affected by your report/activities?
- How do you position your role and responsibility in this project? How do you regard your relationship with other stakeholders?
- How would you comment on the public participation in this project? Do you think there is any possible improvement to it?

5. Professor

- When and why did you start to research for this project?
- What do you think are the most important issues that needs to be addressed in the community? Why?
- How would you evaluate the current conditions in this neighborhood? What, in your opinion, is the most significant change brought about by the urban renewal project in the community?
- How would you comment on the specific context, planning goals, and implementation of plans in different regeneration phases?
- What do you think of the relationships among different interest groups? What are the main conflicts among them? Do you have any suggestions to resolve them?
- How would you comment on the public participation in this project? Do you think there is any possible improvement to it?

6. Residents

- How long did you stay in this neighborhood? Why do you choose to live here?
- Do you know about the regeneration situation and process in this region? How do you get the related information?
- Have you attended public hearings/community meetings related to the regeneration project?
- What do you think are the most important issues that needs to be addressed in the community? Have you attempted to communicate your thoughts to any government or non-governmental organization? If sp, how did the agency respond? If not, describe the situation that makes you less willing to make suggestions.
- Through what existing channels can you express your opinion? Do you think they are effective? What else methods of participation would you prefer to use?
- How would you evaluate the current living conditions in this neighborhood? What, in your opinion, is the most significant change brought about by the urban renewal project in the community?
- Do you own a property in the regeneration area? Was it affected by the project? Please comment on the impacts of the project on your personal life as well as your property.
- Do you know the living conditions of your neighbors? Were your neighborhood relationships affected by the project?
- Do you feel a sense of belonging of the neighborhood?
- What do you think of the intervention of a private developer (Vanke)?
-