An Analysis of Power Relations in the Redevelopment of Urban Villages – Three Case Studies in Guangzhou, China

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by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis studies the power relations among the government, the village collective economic organization (VCEO), and the villagers in the redevelopment of urban villages in China by analyzing three cases - Liede Village, Yangji Village, and Wenchong Village in Guangzhou municipality. The case studies show that government involvement is the major force that drives the redevelopment and the degree of government involvement is based on the government’s agenda rather than the needs of villages. Although the urban village only has limited negotiation power, villagers’ active participation and continuous engagement can assist the redevelopment of urban villages and help to achieve a desirable redevelopment plan and compensation scheme. It also indicates that strong support from government and a collaborative partnership among the local government, the village collective economic organization (VCEO), and urban villagers are the keys to successful urban village redevelopments.
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1. Introduction

China’s rapid urbanization has made great strides in the past three decades. Urbanization has been considered as one of the driving forces behind China’s dramatic socio-economic changes beginning with the opening-up reform in 1998. Over this period, cities have developed at an unprecedented speed, which resulted in the rise of many mega-cities, such as Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, and Shenzhen. Cities are becoming more modern and urbanized. However, along with these great achievements, rapid urbanization has created unexpected side effects. One of the side effects that have drawn wide attention from society is social conflict that happened during the redevelopment process in many inner-city neighborhoods.

![Figure 1-1: CBD of Guangzhou, China (Source: Baidu Image)](image1)

![Figure 1-2: Social conflict during the redevelopment of urban village (Source: Baidu Image)](image2)

The redevelopment of urban villages is one of the most typical redevelopment projects in China’s big cities. Urban village is a specific and new urban form in many Chinese cities. Urban villages were once traditional villages and well organized by clan authorities (Lin & Wang, 2012). But as a result of cities’ rapid urbanization, they were swallowed up by urban construction to become urban villages, which are characterized by dense informal settlements. Nowadays, urban villages usually appear on the outskirts or the downtown areas of major Chinese cities (Tong, 2009). They are
administrated by the village collective, which includes the Communist Party branch and the village committee. In Guangzhou, almost all urban villages have set up village collective economic organization (VCEO) to represent the village and take charge of the political, social, and economic affairs. The cadres of the VCEO are usually the cadres of the party branch and the village committee, although sometimes they are not. Although the VCEO is the representative of all the villagers to negotiate with other stakeholders during the redevelopment and also has the responsibility to ensure that villagers’ voices be heard by the government, collective concerns and interests are not always in line with individual concerns. It is not unusual to have dissent between a VCEO and the villagers.

In recent decades, there has been an increasing need to redevelop urban villages for several reasons. First, many urban villages have poor living conditions, such as an undesirable environment, high crime rate, and high security risks. It is necessary for cities to redevelop these decaying neighborhoods. Second, construction land in urban centers is becoming increasingly limited, which creates a conflict since land resources are essential for the development of many cities. Therefore, city governments have the impetus to redevelop urban villages, particularly in prime locations. Third, the vast amount of potential profits behind the redevelopment of urban villages has attracted both local governments and real estate developers. In many cases, governments and developers have formed coalitions to achieve their redevelopment goals.

However, the complexity of property rights has made the redevelopment of urban villages increasingly complicated. In China, urban land is owned by the state and managed by the municipality, while rural land is collectively owned. In the 1980s,
property rights were further divided into two parts: ownership and use right (Lin & Wang, 2012). For the rural land, the village collective/the village collective economic organization (VCEO) retains the ownership of rural land and organizes political, social, and economic activities on behalf of villagers. Generally speaking, each village household can get the use right of farmland for cultivation and certain area of land for residential use from the village collective. However, the village collective does not have the right to change the collective ownership of rural land. The government is the only authority that can change the nature of rural land ownership from collective-owned to state-owned via expropriation upon compensation to the villagers. After this process, the use right of the expropriated land can be traded in the market. The revenues from the land trading are critical fiscal incomes for local governments.

![Venn Diagram](image)

**Figure 1-3:** The plural characteristics of urban villages (Liu, et al. 2010, p137)

Although there are successful redevelopment projects in which all the stakeholders worked together and achieved a “win-win” outcome, in many cases disagreement between the government and the urban village has created serious social conflicts. The power relation among stakeholders is one of the critical factors that may affect the
outcome of the redevelopment of urban villages. This relationship is vividly illustrated by the redevelopment case of Yunong Village and Gangxia Village in Futian district of Shenzhen, China. In this case, the same local government (Futian District government) and the same private developer (Gemdale Corporation) worked on the redevelopment projects in Yunong Village and Gangxia Village in the same local district. However, the power relations among stakeholders in these two cases were different, which led to two different outcomes (Yunong Village is more satisfactory than Gangxia Village). Studying the power relations in redevelopment projects is of great importance, as it can cause a significant impact on the process and affect the outcome of redevelopment. This is especially true in China where the local authority can play a much more influential and active role than their counterparts in the West (Li, 2011).

Because of its great underlying economic value and controversial essence, the redevelopment of urban villages has attracted wide attention from scholars, government and the society. Beginning with the 1990s, the research on the urban village can be classified into three categories: the concept and features, the forming mechanism, and the redevelopment of urban villages. Although there are many studies on the redevelopment of urban villages, few scholars addressed the power relation among different stakeholders as part of the process. Studying these power relations will help us to understand the underlying reasons for related social conflicts while allowing policy makers to formulate relevant resolutions. To fill this research gap, this thesis examines the power relations among stakeholders, and the mechanisms and processes of redevelopment projects of urban villages using three cases in Guangzhou, China. More importantly, this study aims to answer the following inter-related research questions:
1) What factors influence local authorities to react differently to different urban villages?

2) How do the relations between the village collective economic organization (VCEO) and villagers affect the village’s role in the redevelopment process?

3) How do the power relations of key stakeholders eventually affect the outcome of the project?
2. Literature review

The redevelopment of urban villages is typically a case of property-led redevelopment, and the interrelationship between the varying parties is an important aspect of the growth coalition. Thus, the literature review section will focus on three fields: property-led redevelopment, growth coalition in redevelopment projects, and the redevelopment of urban villages.

2.1 Property-led redevelopment in China

In China, intensive urban redevelopment began after a series of institutional reforms in the 1990s. These reforms led to the decentralization of administrative powers from the central government to city government, which provided city governments the opportunity to formulate their urban (re)development plans (Heikkila, 2007). At the same time, local governments were allowed to use their financial resources to achieve their development goals (Deng, 2005). As a result, local governments devised many mechanisms to increase their extra-budgetary revenues. One way to generate financial income and meet the high demand for land was for local governments to promote redevelopment projects in the urban center (Cao, 2009). Since then, property-led redevelopment has become a contentious issue in China because of its unprecedented scale and speed. Although some have argued that the property-led redevelopment process in China is similar to urban renewal projects in the United States, China’s solution involves much more than revitalizing degraded local economies and beautifying the built environment (Cheng, 2012). The redevelopment of urban villages is a complex process involving different parties and interest groups and contains ingredients inherited from the planned economy.
2.2 Growth coalition in redevelopment project

During the urban redevelopment process, China’s local government and developers formed growth coalitions to create intensive and large-scale urban (re)development with the goal of achieving rapid growth. Zhang and Fang (2004) compared the urban renewal in the U.S. (1950s-1960s) with urban redevelopment in China (after the 1980s), and concluded that both countries have utilized the administrative power and a variety of subsidies to attract private investments. Zhang and Fang also argued that the Chinese situation is different from that of the U.S.. While the primary goal of urban renewal in the U.S. was to boost the declining inner cities and compete with the burgeoning suburbs, China’s redevelopment purpose was to spur the rapid growth of real estate markets.

When analyzing the power structure of redevelopment projects in Shenzhen, Li (2011) found that China’s local governments are more powerful and active than their counterparts in western countries, which allows them to play a more dominant role in the power coalition. In the Chinese context, the interrelationship between different stakeholders is different from those found in America, but in both cases, the power relation between the various stakeholders can have major implications for the outcome of the redevelopment project.

2.3 The redevelopment of urban villages

During the 1980s and 1990s, scholars mainly focused on studying the concept, features and forming mechanism of urban villages. However, as land in urban areas became increasingly scarce, governments began to exploit existing land resources by
redeveloping inner-city neighborhoods, which resulted in the large-scale redevelopment of urban villages. The literature on the redevelopment of urban villages is categorized into three groups.

2.3.1 Redevelopment mode of urban village

The first group of scholars that studied the redevelopment mode of urban villages argued that the redevelopment modes of urban villages include complete reconstruction, partial reconstruction and environmental improvement (Li, 2004). Yu and Hu (2006) used Wuhan (capital city of Hubei province) as a case study and noted that the physical redevelopment of the urban village should be implemented only after the transfer of land ownership. Other scholars shared a similar opinion; for example, Yan and Wei (2004) argued that government should complete the institutional reform first and then begin the physical redevelopment. They also pointed out that the livelihood of villagers after the redevelopment needed to be taken into consideration.

2.3.2 Policy and urban governance on urban village

The second group of scholars puts their focus on policy and urban governance level. Guo (2006) stated that a management system and policy framework should be established to deal with the problem of urban villages, and Li (2004) said that the management of urban village should be incorporated into the urban governance system.

2.3.3 Stakeholder's interest in urban villages redevelopment

The third group of scholars studied the redevelopment of urban villages from the
perspective of the stakeholder’s interest. During the redevelopment of urban villages, objections from the villager stakeholders are one of the major obstacles that local government face. The feasibility of the redevelopment of urban villages depends on the allocation of interest between the government, villagers, and developers. Only when all parties are satisfied with their share of the benefits will the redevelopment be accomplished (Zhuang, 2014). Jia (2011) also claimed that “the effectiveness of redevelopment is determined by whether or not it can meet the multiple needs of various groups in a dynamic environment.” In many cases, the needs and interests of migrant workers who lived in urban villages were totally overlooked in the redevelopment process (Chung & Zhou, 2011).

Although there have been numerous research studies on the redevelopment of urban villages, few scholars have analyzed the power relations among the government, the village collective economic organization (VCEO) and the villagers in the process. Studying the power relations will lead to a better understanding of the growth coalition in the Chinese context and allow policymakers to make informed decisions regarding urban village redevelopment.
3. Research design and data collection

To study the power relations during the redevelopment of urban villages, I have adopted case study as the primary method in this study. Also, three urban village redevelopment cases have been chosen to make comparative analysis.

3.1 Case selection

To identify the best cases to study the power relations in the redevelopment of urban villages, this research focused on Guangzhou, China, where the “urban villages” phenomenon is both critical and typical. Guangzhou is the capital city of Guangdong Province, with a fast economic growth and high population density. It ranked the 3rd and 6th in terms of GDP and population respectively among the 36 provincial and municipality cities in China in 2014 (National Bureau of Statistics, 2014). As the pioneer of China’s reform and opening up, Guangzhou began to redevelop urban villages in the 1990s. After a series of institutional reforms and experimental redevelopment projects, Guangzhou has made steady progress in redeveloping urban villages that are worth studying.

There are 138 urban villages in Guangzhou and they are mainly distributed in 6 districts (See Figure 2). These urban villages can be divided into three general categories (See the Table 1). The first category is “mature urban villages”. This type of urban villages is fully surrounded by urban land so that they cannot expand externally. The incomes of the indigenous villagers in these villages are mainly from rent revenue, as the cheap rental apartments in their villages have attracted many migrants who work nearby but cannot afford the high living expense in the city. Mature urban villages
have great impacts on the city because they are located in the urban center. In Guangzhou, most of the mature urban villages are located in Tianhe and Yuexiu Districts, which is the newly planned central business district and existing urban center respectively. The second category is “expanding urban villages”. This type of urban villages is invaded by urban land but not fully surrounded. Their influence to the city is not so strong as mature urban villages, but their conflict with the city’s development is expanding. This type of urban villages is mainly located in Huangpu, Haizhu, and Liwan Districts, while a few of them are located near the outskirt of Tianhe and Yuexiu Districts. The third category is “forming urban villages”, which is located outside the urban built-up area but within the city planning area. Because of their remote location, their influence on the city is not so obvious.

Figure 3-1: Distribution of urban villages in Guangzhou, China (Created by the Author)
To compare the power relations in different urban village redevelopment projects, cases that share similar characteristics and belong to the same category will be chosen in order to keep the other variables constant. Based on the data availability and connections to interviewees, I have chosen Liede Village (Tianhe District) and Yangji Village (Yuexiu District) as study cases, which are mature urban villages located in the urban center of Guangzhou. I also chose Wenchong Village (Huangpu District), which is an expanding urban village located in the outskirt of urban center, as one of my study cases to analyze whether its different characteristics would affect the power relations in the redevelopment or not. I did not choose any forming urban villages as my study case because these urban villages have limited influence to the city recently.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Spatial Characteristics</th>
<th>Economic Characteristics</th>
<th>Population Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mature Urban Village</td>
<td>1. Within the urban build-up area 2. Near urban center</td>
<td>1. Surrounded by urban land 2. No external expansion, but still has internal structure change 3. Has a great impact on city</td>
<td>1. No agriculture activities 2. Profits from secondary and tertiary industry and land revenue are the major income resources 3. A lot of informal economic activities</td>
<td>1. Non-native population is growing very fast and exceeding local population, 2. Original residents are moving out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expanding Urban Village</td>
<td>1. Within the urban build-up area 2. Near the outskirt of urban center</td>
<td>1. Invaded by urban land 2. Has external expansion as well as internal structure change 3. Its conflict with city is expanding</td>
<td>1. The percentage of agriculture activities is decreasing 2. Profits from secondary and tertiary are the major income resources</td>
<td>1. Non-native population is growing fast 2. Part of the original residents are moving out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forming Urban Village</td>
<td>1. Outside the urban build-up area but within the planning area</td>
<td>1. Begin to be invaded by urban land 2. External expansion is getting faster 3. Its conflict with city is not obvious</td>
<td>1. Leading industry is changing from primary industry to secondary industry</td>
<td>1. Non-native population is growing 2. Total population is growing as well 3. Original residents start moving out</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Xin, 2012, p56.
Adapted by the Author
3.2 Data collection

For this study, I collected first hand data from in-depth interview and secondary data from news, government reports, and articles. To collect first hand data, I conducted 5 interviews in Liede Village, 3 interviews in Wenchong Village, and 8 interviews in Yangji Village. All of the interviewees are urban villagers because I do not have connections to government officials and cadres of the VCEO. During the interviews, I mainly asked them about their experience in the redevelopment process. More specifically, I asked them how they got involved in the redevelopment, how they dealt with conflicts and disagreements, how they viewed the government and developers, and their opinions toward the redevelopment. To know more about their opinions of the dynamics among the government, the VCEO, and themselves, I also asked other relevant questions based on interviewees’ answers.

In Yangji Village and Wenchong Village, most of the interviewees were very guarded and did not want to disclose their thoughts. But they became talkative when they believed that I was just doing academic research. The day when I visited Yangji Village, it happened to be the first day that sample resettlement apartments were allowed to visit. I observed villagers’ reactions and how they negotiated or argued with the staff of the VCEO. These observations provide more insights on the relations between the villagers and the VCEO, which are very helpful to deepen the understanding of my analysis.
4. Research background

To study the power relations in the redevelopment of urban villages in Guangzhou, it is necessary to study how these urban villages were formed and developed and how the redevelopment policy evolved through time.

4.1 Formation and development of urban villages in Guangzhou

After the reform and opening-up policy was formulated by the central government, Guangzhou, as a representative of the Pearl Delta Cities, absorbed a lot of labor-intensive industries (See Figure 4-1), which were moved from developed countries.

![Labor-intensive industries in Guangzhou](source: Baidu Image)

Those labor-intensive industries created a large amount of jobs, and attracted a lot of migrants. On the one hand, when those migrants arrived in Guangzhou, they needed to settle down, but they could not afford the high rent. Meanwhile, peasants who lived in the villages near the urban areas also wanted to maximize their housing rental income and were willing to rent their houses to those migrants. As a result, massive
high-density constructions were built within the villages. On the other hand, in order to avoid paying huge compensation and the cost of relocation, city government decided to bypass those villages during the rapid expansion of city. As the urban built-up areas intersected with those villages, the economic activities and spatial demand in those villages were further intensified. And finally those villages became high-density and disorganized urban villages (See Figure 4-2).

![Image](image_url)

Figure 4-2: Disorganized urban village in Guangzhou (Source: Baidu Image)

As early as 2000, Guangzhou government made some redevelopment plans for urban villages, but almost no actual action was taken until 2006. In the early 2000s, the emphasis of the government was put on outward expansion, so the government neither invested directly on the reconstruction of urban villages, nor encouraged private developers to invest on them. The redevelopment of urban villages was lacking external reform impetus. Although there was no external action on urban villages, the villages themselves never stopped evolving during that period. The rent revenues were so rich compared to agricultural income that no peasants would have the motivation to redevelop their villages.

However, as the construction land in urban center is becoming increasingly limited,
land resources are extremely important for the development of Guangzhou. On the one hand, as there were many decayed neighborhoods in the urban center, the mayor of Guangzhou put forward the “Zhong Tiao (Control of Downtown)” strategy to achieve the revival of old town of Guangzhou. One of the important tasks of “Zhong Tiao” strategy was to redevelop urban villages. On the other hand, Guangzhou would hold the 19th Asian Games, which is a great opportunity to show the city’s achievement and good image to the world. Since urban villages often have poor sanitation, high crime rate, and illegal constructions, the redevelopment of urban villages became urgent to the city government.

4.2 The redevelopment policies of urban villages in Guangzhou

To redevelop urban villages, Guangzhou government has formulated several policies. The redevelopment policies of urban villages in Guangzhou can be divided into two groups: the redevelopment policies before “Zhong Tiao” strategy (2000-2006) and the redevelopment policies after “Zhong Tiao” strategy (2006-until now).

4.2.1 Redevelopment policies before “Zhong Tiao” strategy (2000-2006)

The key contents of policies in this period can be concluded by two sides: management side and implementation side. On the management side, the policies indicate that in order to unify urban and rural areas, urban villages’ institutional reforms would be implemented, including the reform of administrative and economic functions of the villages, and the reform of land use and urban construction system. On the implementation side, the policies indicate that government or village collective would be the principal actors to implement the reconstruction of urban villages and no private developer would be allowed to get involved into the reconstruction process. However,
the urban village redevelopment process was totally deadlocked because private developers were excluded (Tian, 2008). The major policies in this period are summarized in the table below (See Table 2).

Table 2: Major policies before the “Zhong Tiao” strategy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Titles of polices</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>“Plan of Urban Village Improvement and Construction of Guangzhou”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>“Regulations of Guangzhou on the Construction and Administration of Township”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>“Regulations of Guangzhou on the Registration of Rural Property Rights”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>“Regulations of Guangzhou on the Planning and Management of Villages”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>“Regulations of Guangzhou on the Management of Rural Residential Construction Land Use”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>“Management Plan of the Environment and Health of Urban Villages of Guangzhou”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>“Suggestions for Institutional Reform of Urban Villages”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Interim Measures of Guangzhou on the Transformation and Redevelopment of Urban Villages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Measures of Guangzhou on the Old-age Insurance for Farmer-to-citizen (for trial implementation)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data Source: Zhuang, Zhiqiang, 2014, p225. Adapted by the Author
4.2.2 Redevelopment policies after “Zhong Tiao” strategy (2006-until now)

After the “Zhong Tiao” strategy, Guangzhou government began redevelopment projects in some experimental urban villages. During the process, Guangzhou government identified several important principles for the redevelopment of urban villages. The principles include: (a) each village will have its specific redevelopment plan (one village one policy); (b) the redevelopment must be led by the state (state-led); (c) private developers are allowed to participate in the redevelopment; and (4) an urban village redevelopment plan (including its compensation arrangements) must be endorsed by at least 80% of the indigenous villagers (Chung & Zhou, 2011).

Among these principles, “One village one policy” is the most important principle that proposed to increase the flexibility of the redevelopment of urban villages. As the characteristics of different urban villages vary from one to the other, this could be a feasible way to deal with the various needs of different villagers. However, no detailed explanation is added to this principle and that has left the government a lot of space to define its meaning. Also, this flexibility provides the urban villagers the “space of negotiation” and enables them to negotiate on the details of the redevelopment plan.

In 2010, the Guangzhou government set a goal that the redevelopment projects of 138 urban villages in Guangzhou would be finished before 2020, and 52 of them would be redeveloped comprehensively before 2015. The major policies in this period are generalized in the table below (See Table 3).
Table 3: Major policies after the “Zhong Tiao” strategy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Titles of policies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>“Opinions on Accelerating the Pace of Redevelopment of the ‘Three Olds’”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>“Letter of Transferring the Policies concerning the Counting and Collecting of Land Transferring Fees of Land Transfers by Making Agreements”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>“Opinions on Strengthening the Supervision on Money for Reconstruction and Resettlement of the Comprehensive Old Village Redevelopment Project”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>“Opinions on the Administrative Decentralization of Three olds Redevelopment in Guangzhou”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Application on the Issuance of “Guidelines for Recounting the Redevelopment Cost of Urban Villages of Guangzhou”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>“Standards of Guangzhou on Keeping Records for Compiling and Guiding the Redevelopment Plan of Urban Villages”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>“Working Procedures of Guangzhou for Comprehensive Redevelopment of Urban Villages (the version to solicit suggestions)”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data Source: Zhuang, Zhiqiang, 2014, p225. Adapted by the Author
5. Empirical analysis of three urban villages

Liede Village, Yangji Village, and Wenchong Village have received wide attention in discussions on Guangzhou’s urban village redevelopment. Although these three urban villages are all located in the urban built-up area and share similar spatial, economic, and population characteristics, their redevelopment processes varied from one to the others. To study the power relations during the redevelopment process, these cases are analyzed in three aspects: 1) The degree of government involvement; 2) The role of the urban village in making the redevelopment plan; and 3) The process of reaching agreements on compensation schemes.

5.1 Three case studies

Case I: Liede Village, Guangzhou

Liede village sits along the central axis of Guangzhou’s newly planned central business district (CBD) - Zhujiang New Town - in Tianhe District. Before redevelopment, the village had a total area of 83.0 acres with a gross built-up floor area of 7,386,195.3 square feet. It had a population of 18,000, among which nearly 7,800 were indigenous villagers (3167 households) and nearly 10,200 migrants (Chung & Zhou, 2011).
Since the 1990s, the Guangzhou government had tried to redevelop Liede Village several times but failed for many reasons. Firstly, before the “Zhong Tiao” strategy,
the Guangzhou government mainly focused on outward expansion, while little attention was paid to the revival of the old town. Secondly, as no private developers were allowed to get involved in the redevelopment of urban villages, such a high capital requirement had made the redevelopment nearly impossible for the government and the village. Last but not least, the development of Zhujiang New Town was not so successful before 2001 as the initial planning was not feasible. So there was no urgent need for the Guangzhou government to start the project.

However, as the “Zhong Tiao” strategy was proposed, the development of Zhujiang New Town was speeded up, and Guangzhou successfully got the opportunity to host the Asian Game, which were held in 2010, the redevelopment of Liede Village, which is located on the new CBD and sits close to the inauguration site of the Game, had became a must for the Guangzhou government. By June 2013, Liede was the first and the only urban village in Guangzhou that had been redeveloped completely.

Figure 5-3: Liede Village after redevelopment (Source: Baidu Image)
The redevelopment plan divided the village into three parts (See figure 4). The land ownership of part A was changed from collective to state. After the transformation, the land was bid in the open market for commercial use at the price of 4.6 billion yuan. None of the money from this land sale was classified as government’s fiscal incomes; instead, it was used for the redevelopment of the village. The land in part B was leased to private developers for 20 years. The developers would construct and operate a high-end complex consisting of hotels, office buildings, and a large shopping mall. As the VCEO still had the ownership of the complex and the land, villagers could get annual dividends from its successful operation in the future. The land in part C was used for the villagers' new residential areas with 37 buildings ranged from 24 to 42 stories (Zhou, 2014).

Figure 5-4: The master plan of Liede Village redevelopment, Guangzhou
(Source: Architectural Design and Research Institute of Guangdong Province)

**Case II: Yangji Village, Guangzhou**

Yangji Village is the first redeveloped urban village in Yuexiu District. Before the redevelopment, the village had a total area of 28.4 acres with a gross built-up floor area
of 6,975,014 square feet and a population of 40,000 (including 4,000 indigenous villagers). It had been designated as one of the nine urban villages to be redeveloped before the Asian Games in 2010. And its redevelopment plan was initially approved by the government in April 2010 (Yuexiu District Government, 2010).

Figure 5-5: Location of Yangji Village, Guangzhou
Created by the Author

Figure 5-6: Yangji Village before redevelopment (Source: Baidu Image)
Based on the redevelopment plan, the village would be completely demolished and divided into two parts: the southern part and the northern part. Inspired by the experience of Liede Village, the land ownership of the southern part was changed from collective to state and bid in the open market. The new constructions in the southern part included 4 commercial residential buildings ranged from 45 to 49 stories and 2 office buildings with 40 and 50 stories respectively. The northern part would be used for the villagers' new residential areas with 16 buildings ranged from 26 to 33 stories (Yangcheng Evening News, 2010). The FAR after redevelopment was 5.6, and a total area of 6,975,014 square feet floor space was provided.

According to the schedule of redevelopment, the demolition of Yangji Village would begin on June 2010, and the new construction would start in 2011. In 2014, all villagers would be able move back to the new residential units. However, since there were two households who did not agree to move out no matter how generous the compensation scheme was, the whole redevelopment process of the village was delayed. The negotiations between the authorities and these two households had lasted for nearly three years. As a result, the construction activities could only be carried out in 2013. And until recently, the new residential buildings for villagers have been completed and the villagers are finally able to move back to their village.

Case III: Wenchong village, Guangzhou

Wenchong is located 16km to the east of Zhujiang New Town, and it sits on Huangpu district’s government seat. Before redevelopment, the village had a total area of 116.9 acres and a population of 24,000, among which nearly 5,000 were indigenous villagers (1916 households) and nearly 19,000 migrants (Guangzhou Daily, 2015). Wenchong, as the first redeveloped urban village in Huangpu District, has undergone the most
extensive demolition.

As early as in 2003, Wenchong Village was designated as one of the seven urban village redevelopment experimental sites in Guangzhou and has conducted a feasibility study for redevelopment, but it took the village six years to get its redevelopment plan approved (Guangzhou Daily, 2015).

Figure 5-7: Location of Wenchong Village, Guangzhou
.Created by the Author

Figure 5-8: Wenchong Village before redevelopment (Source: Baidu Image)
Although Wenchong Village is located in the urban built-up area of Huangpu District, its location is relatively remote from the business center of Guangzhou. Compared to other urban villages located in Tianhe District or Yuexiu District, Wenchong Village is more like a “village” than an “urban village”. As the urban economic activities around Wenchong Village were not active at all, the redevelopment plan did not intend to construct high-density office buildings or business facilities in Wenchong Village. According to the plan, part of the site would be transformed from collective-owned to states-owned and sold to a real-estate developer. The revenue generated from the land sell would be used to cover the redevelopment cost. A modern residential community, with sixty 30-stories-height residential buildings, schools, hospitals, and supermarkets and so on would be built on the redevelopment site.

5.2 Comparative analysis

5.2.1 The degree of government involvement

When comparing these three cases, we can find that although all these redevelopment projects are “state-led” in a top-down way, meaning that government is the major force for redevelopment, the degree of government involvement varies from case to case. In Liede’s case, the political pressure from preparing the 2010 Asian Games and the government’s agenda to construct the new CBD had made Liede the first urban village to implement redevelopment, even though it was not the first urban village to conduct a feasibility study of redevelopment (Chung & Zhou, 2011). In China’s context, there are two major obstacles that constrain urban village redevelopment, namely the scarce of funding and the opposition from indigenous villagers. However, the strong will of
the Guangzhou government enabled Liede Village to break through these two obstacles. As noted, in China, land revenue is a major revenue source for municipal governments and only state-owned land can be traded in China. But to raise enough redevelopment funds, Guangzhou government not only allowed Liede Village to sell part of their land but also promised to provide additional fiscal revenues to cover the remaining balance, which is an exceptional case of urban village redevelopment. In addition, the Guangzhou government had offered a very generous compensation scheme to appease indigenous villagers. With such strong support from government, it only took Liede village six months to have their planning proposal approved and reach agreement on the compensation scheme.

Unlike Liede Village, the redevelopment of Yangji Village was less important to the Guangzhou government’s agenda. Although Yangji was allowed to sell part of their land to raise funds, the long planning process increased the uncertainty of their funding scheme. Moreover, no fiscal revenues from the Guangzhou government would be provided to its redevelopment. In addition, when facing the opposition from indigenous villagers, the government adopted a passive attitude to deal with the conflicts. The negotiations between the government and a few indigenous villagers disagreeing with the compensation scheme had lasted for nearly three years. During the interviews with villagers, some of them told me that the negotiations with government were not really “negotiations”. Even though many villagers did not agree with the compensation scheme, they were eventually forced to accept it. Most of the villagers with opposing views did not have the confidence and patience to fight against the government, especially when their peers were accepting the compensation. As a result, Yangji Village has taken more than three years to have their planning proposal
approved and reach agreement on the compensation scheme, which is much longer than that of Liede Village.

The degree of government involvement in the redevelopment of Wenchong was even lower than that in Yangji. Although Wenchong Village is located in the built-up area, it is relatively far from existing urban center, which makes its redevelopment even less important to Guangzhou government’s agenda. As early as in 2003, Wenchong village has conducted a feasibility study for redevelopment, but the redevelopment plan was finally approved by the government only in 2009 after countless rounds of negotiations and revisions. As one of the interviewees described, “the negotiation process is like a “protracted war”, if you disagree with the government on something, you have to wait for a very long time to receive response”. Also, similar to Yangji Village, no government funding was provided to its redevelopment.

While Yangji village and Wenchong village had made great efforts in negotiating with the government for their favorable redevelopment plans and compensation schemes but still took a long time to reach agreements, Liede village received a satisfactory redevelopment plan and a generous compensation scheme within just 3 months. Different degrees of government involvement in these three cases suggest that all decisions the authority made are in accordance with their agendas. In the light of “one village one policy”, the Guangzhou government has discretionary power to take different reactions when dealing with conflicts. The redevelopment of Liede Village has received a lot more preferential treatments from the government than the other two villages. The reason is not because the needs of Liede’s villagers require more support from the government. Instead, it is because the redevelopment of Liede Village is more
important in city’s agenda. In other words, different degrees of government involvement suggest that the government was not trying to make a redevelopment plan that meets local needs of indigenous villagers but to pursue its particular agenda.

In Liede’s case, although land revenue is a very important income source for the Guangzhou government, the authority, who was eager to get the Liede redevelopment done before the Asian Game, did not receive any land revenues from this project. However, the Guangzhou government has less incentive to adopt the same mode for the redevelopment of other urban villages, as the Yangji and Wenchong cases show. The great importance of Liede village and unprecedented strong support from the government suggest that Liede’s case is successful, but not sustainable and applicable to other villages (Lai, 2012).

On the other hand, the case studies suggest that strong government involvement was a necessity for getting planning approvals, resolving disagreements, and facilitating the whole process. Different from the western experience, the redevelopment of urban village in China cannot proceed successfully without the active involvement of government. In the light of “state-led”, government is the major force to drive the redevelopment and manage the process. In the cases of Yangji and Wenchong, although the Guangzhou government has adopted a passive attitude when negotiating with opposing indigenous villagers, which results in a long redevelopment process, the redevelopment of the two villages would not even get started if there was no government involvement at all.
5.2.2 The role of the urban village in making the redevelopment plan

Although the Guangzhou government has made redevelopment schemes for the three urban villages in a top-down way, the urban village can still play an important role in making the redevelopment plan. For the village collective economic organizations (VCEO), they not only have the responsibility to negotiate with government and developers, but also have the power to formulate a redevelopment plan that meets the various needs of villagers. For the villagers, they have the opportunity to express their idea to the VCEO. As noted, an urban village redevelopment plan (including its compensation arrangements) must be endorsed by at least 80% of the indigenous villagers (Chung & Zhou, 2011). Thus, the relation between the VCEO and villagers is a critical factor that decides whether the redevelopment plan can meet various needs of the villagers or not.

Liede is a village that is not only managed by the VCEO but also well organized by clan authorities. Throughout its 800-year-history, strong clan connection and blood relation have made its villagers extremely united. This partly explains why the villagers of Liede could play an active role in making the redevelopment plan. One of the interviewees (50-year-old, indigenous villager, male) told me that all the villagers were well informed that the village would be redeveloped, so they prepared well to express their ideas and get involved into the process. He said that the VCEO was willing to adopt their advice and incorporate their ideas into the redevelopment plan. But he also mentioned that, “The VCEO has promised us a lot when seeking consent from us, but after the redevelopment plan was approved, some items of the plan have never been carried out. For example, if you visited our new houses during the rainy
day, you will find that water is leaking from the ceiling. But generally speaking, we’re quite satisfied with the redevelopment”. This shows that despite some dissatisfaction with details, the VCEO did a good job in adopting villagers’ ideas when making the redevelopment plan. Also, the VCEO of Liede Village has invited professional planners to provide input at the initial stage of its planning process. After several negotiations between government, developer and VCEO, Liede’s desire to pursue an aggressive redevelopment was approved by the authorities. According to several interviewees, during the process of making the redevelopment plan, the negotiations between the VCEO and villagers and the negotiations among the VCEO, the government, and the developers were quite smooth and successful.

The process of making the redevelopment plan was not so easy and straightforward in Wenchong’s case. As noted, Wenchong Village is more like a “traditional village” than an “urban village” in terms of its inactive urban economic activities and culture. The villagers of Wenchong were less sophisticated and relatively conservative. Although blood relation still plays an important role in organizing the village, Wenchong is not so united as Liede. In terms of the redevelopment, there were many disagreements between the VCEO and the villagers when making the plan. One major concern of the villagers was that they were not familiar with the developer who was going to take charge of the redevelopment project. They worried that the property from their ancestors might be demolished and taken place by new unexpected constructions. But this concern was relieved after the VCEO organized two visits to the developer’s previous redevelopment project sites (Yangcheng Evening News, 2010). In addition, according to the interviewees, when the villagers did not agree with the redevelopment plan, they needed to wait for a very long time before they could receive a response
form the government and the VCEO. In the initial redevelopment plan, Wenchong Village attempted to pursue a high development density (like Liede and Yangji Villages), but this request was not supported by the government. Finally they adopted a plan that has a relatively low density and less commercialization. Benefit from their continuous engagement, Wenchong finally formulated a redevelopment plan that balances the collective and individual benefits. In the redevelopment plan, residential and commercial land use is separated and villagers can engage in economic endeavors by sharing the future commercial land use. Also, the historic buildings such as ancestor halls and watchtowers will be preserved. Another reason for this favorable outcome is that the VCEO of Wenchong village has invited a group of experts from two universities to initiate the feasibility study for redevelopment, which provides them a long-term vision for the redevelopment.

The situation of Yangji Village was very different from Wenchong Village. Before the redevelopment, almost all villagers in Yangji had rented out part of their houses to migrant workers or white-collar workers and received generous rental revenues for many years. Relatively high economic status has enabled the villagers to marry citizens of Guangzhou and other outsiders. As a result, the clan connection and blood relation among the villagers of Yangji were the weakest when compared to Liede and Wenchong. During the process of making the redevelopment plan, the VCEO of Yangji did not invite any experts or planners, which means professional consultancy was completely missing. Several interviewees have expressed their concern about the transparency of the decision making process. According to one of the interviewees (50-year-old, indigenous, male) that the cadres of the VCEO had made a great amount of money by colluding with the developer. The redevelopment plan is simply the result
of negotiations between the village collective and developers, while few villagers’ opinion was adopted. Although we cannot confirm the authenticity of what the interviewees said, it is obvious that the distrust between the villagers and the VCEO is critical. As a result, the redevelopment of Yangji Village has adopted an aggressive mode, with its narrow focus on land value and maximizing revenue in a premium location. This redevelopment plan was blamed to overlook the well-being of individuals and harm the sustainability of the village (Chung & Zhou, 2011).

By comparing the three cases, we can see that the role of each urban village in making the redevelopment plan varied from one to the other. The flexibility of “one village one policy” allows villages to negotiate the planning details and arrangements with the government, but the “space of negotiation” is largely based on village’s importance to the government’s agenda. This explains why Liede and Yangji enjoyed a more extensive space of negotiation power than Wenchong. However, the comparison between Yangji and Wenchong has shown that villagers’ participation can also play an important role in the redevelopment, particularly regarding the long-term benefits of villagers and the historic and cultural preservation of the village. Although only enjoying limited negotiation power, Wenchong also reached a desirable outcome of its redevelopment. This favorable result is greatly dependent on the continuous and active engagements of villagers in the whole redevelopment process, which demonstrated the significance of villagers’ participation in the redevelopment of urban villages.

5.2.3 The process of reaching agreements on compensation schemes

Compensation is one of the most important factors that decide whether the redevelopment is feasible or not. Generally speaking, there are two steps for making
the compensation scheme. For one thing, the VCEO needs to gather villagers’ opinions to formulate a scheme that endorsed by at least 80% of all villagers. For the other, the VCEO has to negotiate with the government and developer to get the compensation scheme approved. Thus, the relations between the VCEO and the villagers and the negotiation power dynamic among the VCEO, the government and developer are two aspects that have great influence on the compensation schemes.

In Liede Village, the VCEO has organized two villagers’ meetings to gather opinions on redevelopment and compensation. After several rounds of discussions and negotiations, government finally offered them a very generous compensation package. The floor area of the replaced apartments received by every household was based on the site area of previous housing plots and its legal floor area at the ratio of 1:1 (Southern Metropolis Daily, 2007). Surprisingly, the villagers were entitled to receive compensation for those illegal constructions, which is not possible in another redevelopment projects. In Yangji and Wenchong Villages, only constructions with de jure property right were entitled to be compensated. In addition, during the construction of resettlement housing, the villagers of Liede were able to receive subsidies for temporarily moving out of the village based on a standard ranging from 3 to 5 yuan per square foot per month, while the Yangji Villages and Wenchong Villagers only received 2.5 to 4.5 yuan and 1 to 2 yuan per square foot respectively (Yangcheng Evening News, 2010).

It is worthwhile to mention that the VCEO of Liede Village has fully taken the villagers’ needs into consideration. Knowing that most villagers may rely on the rental incomes after redevelopment, the VCEO requested 14 types of replacement apartments
with various sizes, 60% of which are 800 square feet or smaller, so that most villagers can receive two or more separated units and rent them to outsiders. After the resettlement, only 2000 apartments (1/3) were occupied by villagers, while the other 4000 apartments (2/3) were rented out for their household income. From the economic perspective, the indigenous villagers benefited a lot from the redevelopment. The compensated housing areas were equivalent to the full areas demolished, but the average flat value and the rental income per unit increased dramatically, roughly from 4,000 to 30,000 yuan/m² and from 800 to 4000 yuan/month respectively (Guangzhou Urban Redevelopment Office, 2012). During the interviews, all the interviewees agreed that their living conditions were improved significantly. Some of the villagers even became billionaires after the compensation as they received large area of resettlement apartments. But they also expressed their concerns that they did not get used to the new living style and they missed the life before the redevelopment.

In the case of Yangji Village, the negotiation between the VCEO and the villagers were quite tough. Before the redevelopment, the economic status of Yangji’s villagers is better than that of Liede’s villagers. Also, the location of Yangji Village is very close to the existing urban center, which has complete public facilities and convenient transportation systems. Thus, the villagers of Yangji had a high expectation for the compensation. Although the compensation package was not so generous as the villagers thought, 99% of them had accepted the compensation scheme within 3 months after several rounds of “negotiations” (Yangcheng Evening News, 2013). According to the redevelopment policy, the demolition can be started if 80% of villagers agreed to the compensation scheme. But in Yangji Village, a few of villagers (17 households), who required extremely high compensation and did not want to concede at all, had impeded the reconstruction for nearly three years. The VCEO sued
these villagers and applied for judicial eviction. Finally, the VCEO won the lawsuit and the reconstruction was continued in July 2013 (Yangcheng Evening News, 2013).

For some villagers of Yangji, although they endorsed the compensation package, they were not really satisfied with it. On February 2, 2016, when the villagers were allowed to visit the sample resettlement housing units, I observed that many villagers were very unsatisfied with the resettlement units that assigned to them. They gathered together and quarreled with the staff in the VCEO. According to the interviewees, the size of the resettlement unit was far less than what they had applied. And the housing facility was worse than the VCEO had promised.

In Wenchong Village, villager meetings were arranged by the VCEO to gather consensus on compensation. And because of the involvement of professional planners who had provided continuing assessment of residents’ needs and inspirations, they finally formulated a compensation scheme that meets the various needs of the villagers, even though it took them 6 years to go through the process. Based on the compensation package, villagers can either choose a “house-to-house” replacement based on the ratio of 2:1, or a “shop-to-shop” option based on the ratio of 3:1 if they want to start their own business after redevelopment. The interviewees said that although the process was very long and tough, the outcome was acceptable.

5.3 Summary

The empirical analysis of the redevelopment of Liede, Yangji, and Wenchong Villages has shown that the power dynamics in each case are quite different. Although all these redevelopment projects are “state-led” and in a top-down way, meaning that
government is the major force for redevelopment, the degrees of government involvement, the roles of the urban villages in making the redevelopment plan, and the process of reaching agreements on compensation schemes are quite different (See Table 4).

Table 4: Comparison among three urban villages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Liede</th>
<th>Yangji</th>
<th>Wenchong</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Degree of government involvement</td>
<td>Very high</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time needed to reach agreement on redevelopment plan and compensation scheme</td>
<td>6 months</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>6 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree of villagers’ participation in making plans</td>
<td>Active</td>
<td>Inactive</td>
<td>Very active</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Space of negotiation between the village and the government</td>
<td>Very large</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Small</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The relations between the VCEO and villagers</td>
<td>Very good</td>
<td>Bad</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long-term economic benefits of villagers after redevelopment (except rental income)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Villagers’ view toward the redevelopment</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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In terms of the length of redevelopment process, the relations between the village collective and the villagers, the villagers’ livelihood after redevelopment, and the feedbacks from villagers, etc., the redevelopment of Liede village is the most successful projects among these three cases. However, it is important to note that redevelopment of Liede Village is a unique case that is not applicable to other villages. It is successful but not sustainable because it has attracted so much political attention from the government and received so much exceptional benefits that other villages would never have. Besides, the three cases imply that strong support from government
and a collaborative partnership among the local government, the VCEO, and urban villagers are the keys to successful urban village redevelopments.
6. Policy implications

By examining the redevelopment projects of Liede, Yangji, and Wenchong Villages in Guangzhou, this paper illustrates the redevelopment processes and different power relations between the government, the village collective economic organization (VCEO), and the villagers. While the redevelopment projects are in the same area and have the same policy background, their redevelopment plans, arrangements, and compensation schemes are totally different.

Firstly, in the light of “state-led”, government formulated different redevelopment schemes for the three villages in a top-down way, and the government involvement has become the major impetus that facilitates the redevelopment process. As noted, the different degrees of government involvement are based on the government’s agenda, resulting that villages with greater importance could receive much support than those with less importance. Without enough support from government, the redevelopment process might last for a very long time, just as the Wenchong’s case shows. Long redevelopment process might have many negative influences on the village because they need to spend a lot of time and money to negotiate, to deal with conflicts, and to bear the uncertainty of the market. Thus, when the government decides to redevelop specific urban villages, they should provide enough support to the village to ensure that the whole redevelopment process can be finished in a reasonable time period.

Secondly, some may argue that the contextual backgrounds of each urban village are considered well by the government, but the fact is that local distinctiveness is defined by the authority in accordance with their agenda. The principle of “one village one policy” provides the Guangzhou government discretionary power to take different
reactions when dealing with similar conflicts. A policy implication that could be drawn from this analysis is that more transparent framework and effective guidelines should be made to guide the redevelopment of different urban villages and to restrain the discretionary power of government.

Thirdly, the case studies have shown that urban villagers have a strong desire to gain more control over their lives and are more willing to fight for their benefits, compensations, and legal rights. And the Wenchong’s case vividly illustrates that villagers’ active participation and continuous engagement can assist the redevelopment of urban villages and help themselves to achieve a desirable outcome. However, villagers’ desire to participate has sometimes been considered as an obstacle for redevelopment rather than a positive force to be utilized. In Yangji’s case, the VCEO rarely cared about the villagers’ opinions when making the redevelopment plan. Thus, the plan of Yangji Village has over emphasized on short-term economic returns but overlooked the long-term benefits of villagers. The aggressive development mode has also harmful to the sustainability of the village. In this sense, the government should try to explore more innovative and beneficial ways to ensure the legal right of urban villagers to participate in the planning process. Finding new ways to incorporate public participation in the redevelopment process will empower those most directly involved and ensure that all stakeholders benefit in the redevelopment process.

Last but not the least, the redevelopment process has indicated that the needs of other vulnerable groups, such as migrant workers who lived in urban villages, are totally ignored. Urban redevelopment is a multi-dimensional issue and should be progressed in a balanced development of political concerns, economic growth, built environment, and social harmony to meet different stakeholders’ needs (Zhou, 2014). The
demolition-based redevelopment approach, as showed in these three cases, can improve urban image, increase economic efficiency, and benefit the key stakeholders, but cannot help those vulnerable groups. Lots of the migrant workers have made great contributions to the urbanization of China, but benefit little from it. To increase the social sustainability, there should be some representatives of those social groups that can participate in the redevelopment process to express their ideas and needs. Only by considering all stakeholders and balancing their needs and benefits in the redevelopment process, the redevelopment of urban villages can achieve sustainability and consider as a successful project.
7. Conclusions

In recent decades, China’s rapid urbanization has not only made great achievements, but also created unexpected side effects. One of the side effects that have drawn wide attention from society is social conflict that happened during the redevelopment of urban villages. In this context, I adopted case study as the primary method and collected first hand data from in-depth interview and secondary data from news, government reports, and articles to study the power relations among the government, the village collective economic organization (VCEO), and the villagers in urban village redevelopment process using three cases in Guangzhou, China.

As a city where the “urban villages” phenomenon is critical, Guangzhou has a long history in redeveloping urban villages. After a series of reforms, the Guangzhou government has proposed several policies that make the redevelopment of urban villages feasible. Two important principles in these policies are highlighted in this study, namely “state-led” and “one village one policy”. Under these principles, the government is the major force to promote the redevelopment and create the redevelopment scheme, while the village is given the power to formulate the plan and the space to negotiate with the government and developers. By analyzing the redevelopment of three urban villages, the thesis has raised three major points.

First, government involvement is the major force that drives the redevelopment, and the degree of government involvement is based on the government’s agenda rather than the needs of villages. Villages that are very important to the government’s agenda will receive strong governmental support so that it will be easier for them to overcome
the constraint of funding and eliminate the opposition from indigenous villagers. While the villages with less importance will take a very long time to go through the same planning process.

Second, villagers’ active participation and continuous engagement can assist the redevelopment of urban villages and help to achieve a desirable outcome, even though they only have limited negotiation power. In addition, the relation between the VCEO and the villagers is also an important factor that affects the outcome of redevelopment. When the collective interests are in line with individual interests, the VCEO are more responsive to the villagers’ ideas and more willing to negotiate with the government for a desirable compensation package. But when their interests conflict, it would be difficult for villagers to fight for a satisfying compensation.

Third, the comparative analysis has implied that strong support from government and a collaborative partnership among the local government, the VCEO, and the villagers are the keys to successful urban village redevelopments. But it is also noted that urban redevelopment is a multi-dimensional issue and should meet different stakeholders’ needs. In the current redevelopment practice, the needs of vulnerable groups are totally overlooked.
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Appendix

Interview Protocol

Dear Mr./Ms XX, My name is Zhipeng Zeng, a graduate student from Urban Planning Program at Columbia University, and I graduated from Sun Yat-sen University in Guangzhou. I’m doing a research about the power relations in urban redevelopment projects in Guangzhou, in order to learn more about how different stakeholders contribute to the outcome of urban redevelopment, I want to have an interview with you. The interview is anonymous and is a purely academic research. Any information that relates to your privacy will be fully and strictly confidential.

Consent:
In this interview, I will ask you questions about your working experience, information related to the redevelopment project, and your opinions about redevelopment process. If you feel uncomfortable about certain questions, you can choose not to answer them. Do you agree to participate in this interview?

Questions (To government officials and developers):
1. Could you tell me about your background?
2. Could you tell me the milestone of this redevelopment project?
3. Could you tell me your experience to work with the officials/developers/residents in this project?
4. What are the biggest challenges in this project?
5. What role does your part play in the redevelopment process, and what roles do you think the other actors play in this process?
6. Compared to other redevelopment projects in Guangzhou, are there any unique features or differences in this project?
7. Are you satisfied with the general arrangement and outcome of this project? Why?
Questions (To villagers):
1. Could you tell me about your background? (Name, where they grew up, how long did you live there, job, interests, etc.)
2. Could you tell me the timeline of this redevelopment project? (when you informed, some ddls, etc.)
3. How this redevelopment project will affect your life?
4. Do you have any disagreements with the redevelopment plan? If so, could you tell me how you express your opinion and what’s your role in this process? Or how you defend your interest?
5. Could you tell me your experience to communicate with the officials/developers in this project?
6. What role does your community play in the redevelopment process, and what roles do you think the government and developer play in this process?
7. Are you satisfied with the general arrangement and outcome of this project? Why?

Thank you so much for your time and patience. Your answers are very helpful to my study. I will let you know my research results if you’re interested in it. By the way, can I contact you later if I need to ask you some follow up questions? It would be very fast and would not spend you a lot of time. And could you please tell me your phone number or email address? My phone number is 001-347-260-2089, and email is zz2335@columbia.edu. Thank you so much!