

Public participation in China's urban planning

A communicative turn in policies and practices?

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Public participation in China's urban planning A communicative turn in policies and practices?

**Burgerparticipatie in China's stedelijke planning
Een communicatieve wending in beleid en praktijk?**
(met een samenvatting in het Nederlands)

Proefschrift

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Chapter 1

Introduction



1 Introduction

1.1 Public participation in China's urban planning

Public participation is growing in importance in China's planning policies and practices in recent years. As a milestone in related policies, the 2008 Urban and Rural Planning Law formalized¹ public participation in urban planning. The Law requires that the public has to be engaged in urban planning to ensure the legitimacy of planning practices. Parallel with the policies on public participation in planning directed by the government, the practices of public participation in planning led by citizens develop as well, some even emerged earlier than the government-directed one. The citizen-led practices are most pertinent in urban redevelopment and focus on three issues. The first issue concerns local residents protesting against unfair housing compensation and violent relocation (He & Wu, 2009). The rights of low-income residents to inhabit the central city are often threatened by urban redevelopment projects (He, 2012). In many cities in China, conflicts over demolition and relocation, apparent in protests and suicides in response to unfair compensation or violent relocation, have become the most frequent and severe social problems in urban redevelopment (He & Wu, 2009). The second issue concerns local residents protesting against not-in-my-backyard projects (Lang & Xu, 2013). The third issue concerns preservationists protesting against built-heritage demolition (Verdini, 2015). The urban redevelopment boom is ongoing, and the long neglected inner city has become a hotspot of urban (re)development because of institutional changes, land and housing reform, and property development (He & Wu, 2005). The prevalent urban redevelopment often results in the demolition of many historical buildings and neighborhoods (Shin, 2010), even if a limited number of historical-cultural sites have been preserved, they are isolated by modern buildings which collectively made Chinese cities lose significant cultural meaning or Chinese character (Ma, 2007). Consequently, Chinese built-heritage movement in urban redevelopment is gaining momentum (Verdini, 2015).

However, the international debate on public participation in planning theory is much older and can be dated back to the 1960s. Davidoff's milestone article "Advocacy and Pluralism in Planning" was published in 1965, a time of change and turbulence in American society, and stimulated serious debate about public participation in planning practice (Checkoway, 1994). Rather than focusing on urging the public to participate in the planning projects that will eventually affect them, Davidoff (1965) argued that planners should become value-conscious and act as advocates articulating the interests of the public. Later, Godschalk and Mills (1966) introduced collaborative planning, which they defined as a planning process "in which there is genuine interchange between planners and citizens from all walks of life throughout the course of the process. The working relationship with the community is *with* rather than *for*". Responding to the heated controversy over "public participation", Arnstein (1969) developed "A Ladder of Citizen Participation" to "encourage a more enlightened dialogue". According to Arnstein, citizen participation is citizen power. From this perspective, participation can be divided into eight rungs: manipulation, therapy, informing, consultation, placation, partnership, delegated power and citizen control. In the first two rungs (manipulation and

¹ In China, laws are enacted by the National People's Congress which is the highest state power. Administrative regulations are promulgated by the State Council which is the highest administrative organ of the central government. Administrative regulations are lower in position than laws.

therapy) of Arnstein's ladder, power-holders want to "educate" or "cure" people rather than enable them to participate in planning or conducting programs. In the rungs of informing and consultation, the participants may speak their minds, but their opinions are not necessarily taken into account by the decision makers. The participants will have more chances to be heard in the rung of placation, but they still do not have rights to make a decision. In the next three rungs, the participants can negotiate with traditional decision makers (partnership), and even can make decisions (delegated power and citizen control). Like Godschalk and Mills (1966), Friedmann (1973) put forward "transactive planning", which stressed that the expert knowledge of planners and the experiential knowledge of the public who will be affected by potential solutions must be brought together, to adequately address unprecedented planning problems.

From a planning theory perspective, "public participation in urban planning" is associated with communicative rationality. Communicative rationality was gradually developed by Jürgen Habermas to reformulate modernity's concept of reason—instrumental rationality (Healey, 1992). Planning guided by instrumental rationality refers to harnessing social scientific knowledge and techniques to manage the collective affairs of urban planning, and has been critiqued as "having achieved hegemonic power over other ways of being and knowing, crowding out moral and aesthetic discourses" (Healey, 1992). Technical experts are the best-qualified decision-makers if there is only one value dimension that needs to be considered, but the decisions become value choices if the issue involves more than one value dimension (Creighton, 2005). Public participation informs decision-makers about the value choices of the public on a particular issue (Creighton, 2005). Communicative rationality centers on "the role of language and the search for undistorted communication as a basis for consensus and action" (Tewdwr-Jones & Allmendinger, 1998). By applying Habermas' "communications theory of society", Forester (1980) clarified how planning practice works as communicative action. Planning guided by communicative rationality stresses the involvement of various stakeholders directly affected by the plan, whose positions are more or less equally and mutually dependent, in the negotiation process to build a consensus on planning issues (Hu et al., 2013). Habermas' evaluative criteria for communication process are "the speakers and hearers routinely judge each other's sincerity", and "people listen to each other differently depending on their standing in relation to an issue, and whether it seems to 'make sense', to 'ring true'" (Healey, 1997, 266). These evaluative criteria encourage a practice of respectful speaking and listening, and can be used to identify and challenge "the one-sided conversation and the power embodied in 'thought' systems" (Healey, 1997, 266).

More generally, Healey (1996) claimed that one wave of ideas that swept across the planning field in the second half of 20th century concentrates on shifting representative democracy to participatory democracy based on inclusionary argumentation. In the inclusionary argumentation process, the power of the "better argument" confronts and transforms the power of the state and the market (Healey, 1996). Recently, instead of only focusing on the power of citizens in urban planning, Driessen et al. (2012) provided a more comprehensive work which explored the roles of and relations between the state, the market and civil society in (urban) governance. Driessen et al. (2012) developed five modes of governance based on

the roles of and relations between the state, the market and civil society. These governance modes include centralized governance, decentralized governance, public-private governance, interactive governance, and self-governance.

Along with the change from “planning for” to “planning with” the public, urban planners have begun to seek new planning support tools to combine their expertise with the local knowledge of the public. The most efficient way to acquire useful experiential knowledge would be through a map-based application enabling an effective communication between planners and the public since urban planning practice is mostly map-based (Kahila-Tani et al., 2016). Planning support systems (PSS) can exhibit information in forms which are easy to understand by non-specialist users, facilitate interpersonal communication by displaying relevant scenarios, and help the public to express their interests. So, PSS might be appropriate tools for engaging the public in planning. In summary, three aspects have been highlighted by Western scholars when introducing the philosophy of communicative rationality into planning theory, namely, the power relations between the government, the market, and civil society, especially the power of the public; the role of urban planners; and related professional participatory tools.

Public participation has been automatically connected to democratic context by many scholars. Arnstein (1969) claimed that participation of the governed in their government is the cornerstone of democracy. Research on public participation under an authoritarian regime is limited. In the case of China, several scholars question the existence of a civil society, for example, Friedmann (2005) argued that China has no civil society in the sense of social organizations that actively participate in the debates of public issues. In contrast, He and Warren (2011) argue that democracy and deliberation are two distinct phenomena. Democracy refers to the distribution of power through instruments like votes and rights, while deliberation refers to a mode of communication involving persuasion-based influence. They theorize that it is precisely the absence of democratic empowerment that requires deliberation to stabilize the governance in complex, multi-actor, high-information and high-resistance societies and provide many examples that the government in contemporary China is authoritarian, but it is permeated with various participatory and deliberative practices (He & Warren, 2011). Yet they also state that it is hard to measure when mere consultation develops into true deliberation. It seems evident that some power-base is needed to have influence. Urban planning might be an excellent arena to tease out the power and influence that citizens have on decision making. Although technical-rational planning remains the prevailing urban planning paradigm, an increasing number of Chinese citizens begin to protest against unwanted planning projects in recent years (Sun, 2015), which makes several scholars argue that there is a communicative turn in China’s planning, if only to avoid social unrest. For example, Hu et al. (2013) conclude that there is a shift from the technical-rationale towards the communicative-rationale in China’s planning, considering the changing power relations between the government, the market, and civil society. Therefore, this research aims to further understand how and why the power and influence of the public changes in China’s urban planning. In this chapter, the theoretical argument, the research objective and questions, data and methodologies, and the thesis outline are presented.

1.2 Research objective and questions

The overall objective of this dissertation is to further understand how and why the power and influence of the public changes in China's urban planning based on related planning policies and practices. This dissertation attempts to achieve this objective by finding the answers to five research questions. In detail: how do power relations change in urban planning in general (research question 1), to what extent does the local context influence the change of power relations (research question 2), how do citizens empower themselves in urban planning (research question 3), what is the usefulness of professional participatory tools in engaging the public in planning practice (research question 4), and why do urban planners engage the public in planning practice (research question 5). Here are the five detailed research questions (chapters 2 to 6 respectively):

RQ1, How do power relations in China's urban planning evolve and what drives their change?

Public participation in urban planning has increasingly become an important topic in China. Some scholars advocate engaging the public in planning, since in their opinion it is a way to improve rational planning practices based on Western experience. Others, however, question the possibilities and the need for public participation in planning in China, because the context of China is quite different from that of the West. Previous studies have failed to ground planning that engages the public in a wider understanding of the nature of Chinese urban governance. In order to better understand planning that engages the public in China, Chapter 2 investigates its evolutionary process from the perspective of the changing power relations in urban planning between the central government, local governments, the market, and civil society. Chapter 2 argues that two indispensable factors, national directives and standards to engage the public in planning and the active participation of the public to defend its opinions in planning practices, have combined to contribute to the power increase of the public in urban planning in current China. This chapter indicates that the extent of power increase of the public in urban planning might vary in different Chinese cities since local governments are in charge of implementing national directives, so, the research question in chapter 3 reads:

RQ2, how do local contexts influence the power of the public in China's urban planning?

In China, public participation in urban planning has been stipulated in national policies and the responsibility to implement these policies has been delegated to local governments. Therefore, the level and quality of public participation depends on the local context in Chinese cities. Yet, a systematic analysis of this heterogeneity is lacking. Chapter 3 adopts 11 features of urban governance as a framework to compare public participation in urban redevelopment in Beijing and Guangzhou. After analyzing citizens' power in urban planning at the national level and the municipal level in Chapter 3, an empirical case-study is adopted in Chapter 4 to explore the specific knowledge of how the built heritage movement empower citizens in China's urban redevelopment. Taken the built-heritage movement as an example, the third research question reads:

RQ3, how does the built heritage movement empower citizens in China's urban redevelopment in the Internet age?

The built-heritage movement is increasingly involved in China's urban redevelopment, and has become a crucial part of public participation in this process. Understanding the strategies of China's built-heritage movement contributes to insight in the rising power of civil society in China's urban planning. In order to systematically understand these strategies in the Internet age, chapter 4 builds a framework from the framing perspective to analyze the discourse within the political, cultural, and media context using the case of the Bell-Drum towers controversy in Beijing. The results of chapter 4 imply that the development of the Internet is an enabler for citizens' participation to preserve built-heritage in urban redevelopment, but also urban planners might adopt Web-based tools to engage the public in China's urban planning. Hence, the following question is formulated as:

RQ4, what is the usefulness of Web-based professional participatory tools in engaging the public in China's urban planning?

The practices of government-directed public participation in urban planning are still in a stage of experimentation in China. Drawing on Western experience various participatory tools have been explored, including Web-based planning support systems (PSS). The current literature has identified several potentials and shortcomings in the performance of PSS that define their usefulness. However, these have been identified in the context of democratic societies and communicative planning paradigms. To what extent do these potentials and shortcomings also pertain to the emerging practice in China? Chapter 5 aims to widen the understanding of the usefulness of Web-based PSS when these are applied in the Chinese context. The empirical work shows that the Web-based PSS was developed by the local planning institution to facilitate the participation of "professional citizens" rather than the general public who might be affected by the project. In fact, the detailed work of engaging the public in China's planning practice is always done by urban planners, and not all planners really hear the voice of the public. This leads to the last research question:

RQ5, what are the driving forces of planning professionals who actively engage the public in planning practices?

Public participation is increasingly popular in China's planning policies and practices in recent years. Whether this will lead to a paradigm shift from the rational-comprehensive model to the communicative model will also depend on the planning professionals, because professionals play a critical role in the creation, maintenance, and transformation of institutions, as an endogenous mechanism of institutional change. To understand the role of planning professionals chapter 6 analyzes the motivations of planning professionals that volunteer in planning that involves the public.

By answering these research questions, the communicative turn in China's urban planning can be understood from the perspectives of the power of the public in planning (RQ1, RQ2, RQ3), the usefulness of web-based participatory tools (RQ4), and the contributions of planning professionals (RQ5). This research will not only contribute to communicative-rational

planning theories, but also contribute to planning policies and practices that aim to solve planning problems in China.

1.3 Data and methodologies

In order to gain an overview about what happened and why in terms of public participation in China's urban planning, chapter 2 examines the change of power relations between the government, the market, and civil society in planning through conceptual analysis. As a complement to this research method, empirical studies are conducted in chapters 3 to 6. Each case is selected according to whether it is appropriate to illustrate corresponding frameworks. Table 1.1 shows that the "Bell-Drum Towers Square restoration project" has been adopted in three chapters, but it has been examined from different perspectives based on different theoretical frameworks.

Chapter 3 aims to understand the heterogeneity of public participation in urban redevelopment in Chinese cities. It adopts 11 features of governance as a framework to compare public participation in urban redevelopment in Beijing and Guangzhou. Data on policy documents and urban redevelopment practices in the two cities were collected. Content analysis and critical discourse analysis were adopted to analyze the data collected. The content analysis was done in NVivo 11.4. The critical discourse analysis was done according to the governance framework.

Chapter 4 aims to explore the strategies of China's built-heritage movement in urban redevelopment in the Internet age. It employs the framing perspective to analyze the discourse within the political, cultural, and media context using the case of the Bell-Drum towers controversy in Beijing. The data include relevant official documents and the discourses and practices of actors in the Bell-Drum Towers controversy. The data were divided into four groups, namely, preservationists, the governments, local residents, and bystanders. The data mainly came from Weibo posts and digital news archives. The textual and visual (pictures) data collected were chronologically ordered and then were analyzed according to the framework.

Chapter 5 aims to widen the understanding of the usefulness of Web-based PSS when these are applied in the Chinese context. It first presents a conceptual framework that divides usefulness into utility and usability, and thereafter, it analyzes the "East Lake greenway planning project" in Wuhan. To measure the utility of the Web-based PSS, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the project manager and the software developer. To measure the usability of the Web-based PSS, an online questionnaire survey of users was conducted. The questionnaire concerned questions about users' evaluation of the 21 performance criteria, which were selected from the literature and thereafter were modified to fit the context of Web-based PSS in public participation in planning.

Chapter 6 aims to contribute to the understanding of the role of planning professionals in the paradigm shift from instrumental-rationality model towards the communicative-rationality one. The framework developed teases out rational, normative and affective motivations. The data were collected through semi-structured interviews with planning professionals in the

Qianguaibang 4 Courtyard Renewal Project and the Bell and Drum Towers Square Controversy in Beijing. We introduced the three kinds of motivations at the beginning of the interview, then asked interviewees to mark their motives in the questionnaires. We also asked about the most important reason for their participation.

Table 1.1 The cases adopted in this dissertation

	Government-directed	Citizen-led
RQ 1 (Chapter 2)	No specific cases	
RQ 2 (Chapter 3)	The Dongsì Eighth Alley redevelopment project (Beijing)	The preservation of the former residence of Liang & Lin (Beijing)
	The Nanluogu alley micro-redevelopment project (Beijing)	The Bell-Drum Towers Square restoration project (Beijing)
	The Guangzhou bridge widen project (Guangzhou)	The Enning road neighborhood redevelopment project (Guangzhou)
	The Yongqingfang micro-redevelopment (Guangzhou)	The Jinglingtai & Miaogaotai demolition event (Guangzhou)
RQ 3 (Chapter 4)		The Bell-Drum Towers Square restoration project
RQ 4 (Chapter 5)	The East Lake greenway planning project	
RQ 5 (Chapter 6)	the Qianguaibang 4 Courtyard Renewal Project	The Bell-Drum Towers Square restoration project

1.4 Thesis outline

This thesis consists of seven chapters. Chapters 2 to 6 are based on papers that have been published or submitted to peer-reviewed journals. The structure of the following chapters is as follows:

Chapter 2 “The Evolution of Public Participation in Urban Planning in China: From the Perspective of Changing Power Relations in Urban Planning” addresses the first research question. In order to better understand public participation in urban planning in China, chapter 2 investigates its evolutionary process from the perspective of the changing power relations in urban planning between the central government, local governments, the market, and civil society.

Chapter 3 “Heterogeneity of public participation in urban redevelopment in Chinese cities: Beijing versus Guangzhou” answers the second research question. It compares public participation in urban redevelopment in Beijing and Guangzhou.

Chapter 4 “Strategies of Chinese built-heritage movement in urban redevelopment in the Internet age: the case of Bell-Drum towers controversy in Beijing” answers the third research question. In order to systematically understand these strategies in the Internet age, it employs the framing perspective to analyze the discourse within the political, cultural, and media context using the case of the Bell-Drum towers controversy in Beijing.

Chapter 5 “The Usefulness of a Web-based Public participation in urban planning Support System in Wuhan, China” addresses the fourth research question. It aims to widen the understanding of the usefulness of Web-based PSS when these are applied in a Chinese context.

Chapter 6 “The communicative turn in China’s urban planning: what motivates the planning professional to engage the public?” addresses the last research question. To understand the role of planning professionals chapter 6 analyzes the motivations of planning professionals, in particular of those that volunteer in public participation in urban planning.

Chapter 7 returns to the research questions and summarizes the main findings of the analysis of public participation in China’s urban planning, based upon which the implications of this study and a series of policy recommendations are provided. Finally, the limitations of this research are discussed and future research topics suggested.

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Chapter 2

The Evolution of Public Participation in China's Urban Planning



2 The Evolution of Public Participation in China's Urban Planning

Abstract

Public participation in urban planning has increasingly become an important topic in China. Some scholars advocate participatory planning, since in their opinion it is a way to improve rational planning practices based on western experience. Others, however, question the possibilities and the need for public participation in planning in China, because the context of China is quite different from that of the West. Previous studies have failed to ground participatory planning in a wider understanding of the nature of Chinese urban governance. In order to better understand participatory planning in China, this paper investigates its evolutionary process from the perspective of the changing power relations in urban planning between the central government, local governments, the market, and civil society. Results show that the evolutionary process can be divided into four stages. Formal and top-down participatory planning practices started in the second stage. Informal and bottom-up initiatives surfaced alongside the formal approach in the third stage. Both formal and informal participatory planning practices gain momentum in the fourth stage. It concludes that two factors, the national directives and standards to engage the public in urban planning and the active participation of the public to defend its opinions in urban planning practices, have combined to contribute to the rising power of the public in urban planning in China.

Keywords: public participation; urban planning; power relations; civil society; China

2.1 Introduction

Technical-rational planning is the prevailing urban planning paradigm in today's China. This planning model, however, not only is inadequate to describe what planners do, but also produces inequity and social unrest (Bond & Thompson-Fawcett, 2007). In China, the technical-rational planning model is confronting unprecedented challenges (Zhang et al., 2012), as the implementation of urban plans is delayed and even stopped by the public (e.g., Cheng, 2013). Western theories show that public participation in planning is a potential way to improve rational planning practices (Bond & Thompson-Fawcett, 2007). Therefore, based on western experiences some scholars claim that the public should be engaged early in the Chinese planning process (e.g., Ng & Wu, 1995). But others question the need for public participation in urban planning in China, because in their opinion the context in China is quite different from that of the West (Hu et al., 2013). For example, China's feudal Confucian-based traditional culture which emphasizes unquestioning obedience to political power (Shan & Yai, 2011) and the existing top-down political structure run counter to public participation (Zhang et al., 2012). In short, China's urban planning is influenced by some traditional planning principles under a path-dependent mechanism on the one hand, and is influenced by changing power relations on the other hand (Zhao, 2015). To inform this debate research should ground participatory planning in a wider understanding of the nature of Chinese urban governance.

To better understand public participation in urban planning in China, this paper investigates its evolutionary process from the perspective of the changing power relations in planning

between the central government, local governments, the market, and civil society. It first gives a literature review to reveal the origin of public participation in urban planning in the western world and its research progress in China. It then offers a historical description of its evolution, and identifies the key factors contributing to this evolution. The evolutionary process can be divided into four stages based on when the major national regulations that promoted public participation in urban planning became effective. The participatory planning practices include both top-down and bottom-up approaches. The former is often initiated by local governments, while the latter is led by local residents, citizens, professionals, or civil society organizations. The first stage (1949-the late 1970s) is characterized by non-participation. In the second stage (the late 1970s-1989) top-down participatory planning practices emerged in the context of relevant national reforms; this stage also created a setting for the emergence of bottom-up participatory planning practices in the third stage (1990-2007). In the fourth stage (after 2008), both formal and informal approaches to participatory planning gain momentum. It is argued that two indispensable factors, national directives and standards to engage the public in planning and the active participation of the public to defend its opinions in planning practices, have combined to contribute to the power rise of the public in urban planning in current China.

2.2 Literature Review

Since the 1960s, there has been an enormous and continuing accumulation of literature on public participation in planning (Huxley, 2013). Davidoff's milestone article "Advocacy and Pluralism in Planning" was published in 1965, a time of change and turbulence in American society, and stimulated serious debate about public participation in planning practice (Checkoway, 1994). Rather than focusing on urging the public to participate in the planning projects that will eventually affect them, Davidoff (1965) argued that planners should act as advocates articulating the interests of the public. Influenced by Davidoff's advocacy model of intervention and participating consciousness of the public, community design centers aiming to offer design and planning services to enable the poor to define and implement their own planning goals, were established in the US and the UK in the 1960s (Sanoff, 2006). Similarly, Godschalk and Mills (1966) introduced collaborative planning theory, which defined a collaborative planning process as one in which there is genuine interchange between planners and citizen's from all walks of life throughout the course of the planning process.

Responding to the heated controversy over "public participation", Arnstein (1969) developed "A Ladder of Citizen Participation" to "encourage a more enlightened dialogue". This theory is based on examples from three American federal social programs concerned with urban renewal, anti-poverty and model cities. According to Arnstein, citizen participation is citizen power. From this perspective, participation can be divided into eight rungs: manipulation, therapy, informing, consultation, placation, partnership, delegated power and citizen control (Arnstein, 1969). In the first two rungs (manipulation and therapy) of Arnstein's ladder, powerholders want to "educate" or "cure" people rather than enable them to participate in planning or conducting programs. In the rungs of informing and consultation, the participants may speak their minds, but their opinions are not necessarily taken into account by the decision makers. The participants will have more chances to be heard in the rung of placation,

but they still do not have rights to make a decision. In the next three rungs, the participants can negotiate with traditional decision makers (partnership), and even can make decisions (delegated power and citizen control).

Yet this does not mean that planning theorists have advocated citizen's control ever since Arnstein's publication. Forester (1980), inspired by Habermas' communicative theory of society, argued that planning practice works as communicative action. Starting with Forester, communicative planning theorists have placed the idea of undistorted communication at the center of their philosophy (Fischler, 2000). Therefore, questions such as "when and how much information should be given to whom?" are crucial to communicative planning practice. The significance of participatory planning was reestablished in 1993 as Friedmann introduced "transactive planning" which is a participatory style with its own characteristics (Khirfan, 2014). According to Friedmann (1993), the expert knowledge of planners and the experiential knowledge of the public who will be affected by potential solutions must be brought together, to adequately address unprecedented planning problems. From then on, participatory planning is an active topic in urban planning practice and academic studies in western countries, especially in the US (e.g., Judith Innes) and UK (e.g., Patsy Healey).

In China, the first literature about public participation in urban planning is "From Garden City to community development — the tendency of modern urban planning". In this article, Guo (1981) mentioned that public participation in planning would be increasingly important, and that public participation was helpful to the implementation of urban planning in socialist China. According to CNKI, which is the most popular academic database in China, research papers on "urban planning and public participation" have increased rapidly in the last decade. These studies can be generally classified into two lines of research.

The first line is focused on introducing Western theories, legislation, experiences and techniques. For instance, Sun and Yin (2004) summarized the evolution of theories of public participation in planning in Western countries, including: A Ladder of Citizen Participation, the Pluralism and Justice Theory, Advocacy planning, Communicative planning, and Post Euclidian planning. Liang (1999) stated experiences and lessons about public participation in planning in North America. Niu (2006) gave a general review of origins, definitions, contents and practices of Planning Support Systems (PSS) and provided some prospects and suggestions about PSS application in planning practices in China. Few studies question the validity and transportability of Western theories in the Chinese context.

The second line is more practical and focuses on the importance, problems, and legislation of public participation in China. To illustrate, Zhang (2001) argued the importance of public participation in planning in China and relevant legislation; Qi and Zhou (2005) investigated two cases to analyze problems in planning systems, planning ideologies and power restrictions that hinder public participation in planning in China; Zheng (2013) used the planning of a waste-to-energy plant in Beijing to discuss plights of public participation in the planning of NIMBY facilities.

Both lines of research fail to fully reveal the major contributing factors to the practices of public participation in urban planning, especially to the growing influence of the public in urban planning. The discussion and interpretation of urban planning must be grounded in an understanding of the nature of Chinese urban governance, which is itself a contentious and politicized arena (Leaf & Hou, 2006). Urban governance can be defined as a set of relations and the formation and implementation of public policy involving both formal and informal organizations (Wu, 2002). Urban planning practices are not only within the formal government but also interrelated with the market and civil society (Healey, 1997). Only a few studies analyze the relations of the government, the market, and civil society in urban planning in China. There is an example. Hu et al. (2013) used the changing power relations among the government, the market and civil society in urban planning since China's economic reform to analyze the possibilities of communicative planning in China. Based on a government-led participatory planning practice, Hu et al. (2013) argued that the government is still decisive and drives the development of the market and civil society, and that China's civil society neither critiques authorities nor desires to become self-regulatory in the past 10 years. However, this ignores the existence of planning controversies that are now common in some Chinese cities.

In order to better understand the major contributing factors to the practices of public participation in urban planning, especially to the growing influence of the public in planning in current China, the following part will analyze the evolution of public participation in urban planning from the perspective of the changing power relations between the central government, local governments, the market, and civil society.

2.3 The Evolution of Public Participation in Urban Planning in China

In authoritarian China, the evolution of participatory planning can be divided into several successive stages by major shifts in legislations. These shifts are: the economic reforms in the late 1970s, the 1990 City Planning Law, and the 2008 Urban and Rural Planning Law. We will use these shifts to broadly divide the evolutionary process since the founding of New China in 1949 into four stages, that is, 1949-the late 1970s, the late 1970s -1989, 1990-2008, and after 2008.

2.3.1 The Absence of Public Participation in Urban Planning (1949-the late 1970s)

While a stage of non-participation in urban planning can be observed in almost every country, the unique characteristic of this stage in China depends on the fact that urban planning was a state secret and was kept strictly confidential in the planned economy of socialist China. Urban planning agencies were government departments, and official planners only considered opinions from the government and government approved public development authorities rather than the public. Specific agencies were set up by the central government, provincial governments and municipal governments to manage urban planning and urban construction during this period (Huang, Xie, Jing, & Kuang, 2009). Urban planning was mainly dominated by the central government in this period.

2.3.2 The Emergence of Public Participation in Urban Planning (the late 1970s-1989)

With the change from centrally planned economy to market economy in the late 1970s, national regulations of urban planning began to include the public. To be specific, the 1980 Provisional Measures on the Approval of Urban Plan Formulation and the 1984 Ordinance of Urban Planning stipulated that the public should be consulted when formulating urban plans. Under this kind of national policies, the public could comment on urban planning, but it did not have decision-making power and could not put effective pressure on the government to substantially alter urban plans. Seeing these policies from the perspective of Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation, public participation in urban planning was at the rungs of informing and consultation at this stage. Despite this, some progress was made in the arena of public participation in planning, i.e., the practices of participatory planning began to appear at this stage. For instance, Wang (1990) distributed 800 questionnaires to local residents with the help of local government for the construction of Changshu new downtown in the 1980s. Opinions of the public were collected by retrieving 538 effective questionnaires, which were regarded as a basis for the construction plan. This is an example of the expert-led, top-down approach to public participation in planning in China.

Nevertheless, one should look beyond the formal regulations in the urban planning arena. Other national policies established in this stage unintentionally created a setting for the emergence of a bottom-up approach to participatory planning in the next stage. Economic and administrative reforms in the 1980s offered opportunities for coalition formation between local governments and entrepreneurs. For local governments, the fiscal decentralization and the performance-based promotion scheme motivated them to take economic growth as the top priority to achieve their economic and political goals. The fiscal crisis of the central government in the late 1970s paved the way for the fiscal decentralization in the 1980s (Lin, 2007). Administrative decentralization came in the wake of fiscal decentralization, and China shifted the focus of government officials evaluation standards from political loyalty to economic performance in the early 1980s (Chen et al., 2005). For entrepreneurs, the opportunity to develop labor-intensive export industries was given by both the open door policy and the 1984 hukou reform which allowed rural workers to migrate to cities. Coalition formation between local governments and entrepreneurs was boosted with the implementation of the 1988 Constitution and the 1988 Land Administration Law. These regulations have permitted land to be leased for a specific period of time and permitted the use rights over leased land to be transferred.

In summary, national regulations of urban planning began to include the public, yet mainly in the informing and consultation rungs of Arnstein's ladder. But in the meanwhile, national regulations in other fields, such as economic and administrative decentralization and the land use reform, unintentionally created a setting for the power rising of local governments and the market in urban planning, which correspondingly reduced the power of civil society in practice. Due to the delay between the implementation of policies and their negative consequences, the conflicts of interest between the public and the local governments were not expressed until the next stage, which led to bottom-up participatory planning initiatives.

2.3.3 The Development of Public Participation in Urban Planning (1990-2007)

The highest-level urban planning regulation was changed from the 1984 Ordinance of Urban Planning promulgated by the State Council to the 1990 City Planning Act enacted by the National People's Congress; it reflected that urban planning was more important in urban governance. This act, however, was criticized for the lack of formal provisions to engage the public throughout the plan formulation and decision-making stages (Ng & Wu, 1995).

The development of top-down participatory planning

The development of the top-down approach to public participation in urban planning during this stage was reflected in legislation. Both central and local governments achieved legislative progress in public participation in urban planning in this stage, compared with the planning legislations that just stipulated soliciting comments of the public at the previous stage. The new planning legislations stipulated that the administrative department of urban planning should not only solicit comments of the public, but also collect and study comments of the public, and fully demonstrate major objections of the public through forums, seminars, hearings, etc. Similarly, the 2003 Environmental Impact Assessment Law stipulated that if a special plan may cause unfavorable environmental impacts and directly affect the environmental interests of the public, the institution that formulates the plan should solicit comments of the public before submitting the plan for examination and approval. Moreover, the functions of urban planning stipulated by planning regulations began to pay more attention to the public, although local governments still took economic efficiency as the top priority in planning practices. According to the 1984 Regulation of Urban Planning, the functions of urban planning were to define “the size and developmental orientation of a city, to realize the goal of economic and social development of the city, and to rationally prepare urban plans and implement urban constructions to meet the needs of development for socialist modernization”. On top, the 2006 Urban Planning Standards emphasized that urban planning was “one of the important policies in maintaining social justice, protecting public safety and public interests”. Nonetheless, it was hard for the public to really affect or effectively supervise urban plans, since there was no feedback to the public and the approved plans were not presented to the public. The top-down participatory planning was still in the consultation rung of Arnstein’s ladder.

The development of bottom-up participatory planning

The interests of the public were often required to be sacrificed in the name of growth in the urbanization process (Wu, 2001). As a result, the public spontaneously participated in urban planning to protect its interests. In this stage both the central government and local governments took economic growth as the top priority. The coalition of local governments and entrepreneurs was very common, and can penetrate various modes of land transaction (Wu et al., 2006). From the perspective of entrepreneurs, the coalition can meet their industrial, commercial and residential land demand. From the perspective of local governments, the coalition generates economic and political interests in the form of land revenue, industrial and commercial tax. The 1994 tax-sharing system motivated local governments to rely on “land finance” to achieve economic interests, since it allowed local governments to keep land-leasing revenue rather than remitting them to the central

government. Land-leasing revenue in many cities, has contributed between 30% and 70% of municipal revenue (Lin, 2007). In fact, inaccurate official statistics were hiding the extent of the problem of “land finance”, for example, land-leasing revenue of Hunan province was up to 117.7 billion yuan in 2004, though it was just 18.5 billion yuan in official statistics (Zhu, 2009). In the meantime, career advancement of local officials still mainly depended on local economic performance (Chen et al., 2005).

The bottom-up initiatives mainly occurred in three fields. The first and most popular one was controversy over compensation for urban and rural land acquisition. Most affected citizens fought for land acquisition compensation for it could gain more compensation by bargaining, and the compensation was inappropriate compared with the rising housing prices and the high profit extracted by land developers (He & Wu, 2005). Second, NIMBY (Not In My BackYard). Nimbyism is localized opposition to a specific development that is often opposed in the name of environmental protection (Michaud et al., 2008), but can also reflect true concern about environmental damage. Many local governments allowed the land use of polluting industries as long as they can generate high revenues for local governments (Headey, 2009). With environmental awareness among the public in China rising, it has increasingly expressed concerns about the potential health and safety risks of these projects (e.g., Cheng, 2013). Third, architectural heritage conservation. Along with the rapid urbanization, a number of traditional buildings, including architectural heritage, were replaced by high-rise buildings. For instance, At least one third of the Siheyuans in the Old City of Beijing was razed in the period 1990 to 2002 (Goldman, 2003), although they were built between the 13th and 19th centuries and are part of the Beijing’s architectural heritage. The demolitions of architectural heritage generated sharp reaction from the public (e.g., Deng et al., 2015).

In summary

The power of civil society was stronger than that of the previous stage since national legislations paid more attention to public participation in urban planning. It was still hard for the public to effectively influence urban plans (Hao, 2007), but decision-makers took its opinions more seriously since related planning regulations stipulated that the administrative department of urban planning should not only consult the public, but also study opinions from the public, and fully demonstrate major objections. In the top-down participatory planning practices, public participation was mainly in the consultation rung of Arnstein’s ladder.

The power of civil society in urban planning, however, was much weaker than that of local governments and the market, since relevant national regulations made local governments took economic growth as the top priority in urban governance and pushed them to cooperate with entrepreneurs. Urban planning was mainly dominated by local governments (and the market sometimes), although the power of the central government was still stronger than that of any other power groups since they had to comply with national regulations. In the bottom-up participatory planning practices, the public began to struggle with local governments and/or the market to protect its interests and/or values. In a few cases, the public could effectively influence urban plans (Cheng, 2013), but it first had to struggle for the negotiation opportunities with decision-makers. In the partnership rung, actual power is redistributed

through negotiation between citizens and powerholders (Arnstein, 1969). Therefore, civil society was moving up to the partnership rung of Arnstein's ladder, but had not reached it.

2.3.4 The Growth of Public Participation in Urban Planning after 2008

As a milestone in the evolution of public participation in planning in China, the 2008 Urban and Rural Planning Law formalized² the practice of public participation in urban planning. This is expressed in article 26, which reads:

Before an urban and rural plan is reported for examination and approval, the office that formulates it should announce the draft of the plan, and solicit opinions of experts and the public through demonstrations, hearings or other methods.....How and why to deal with these opinions should be attached to the materials that are reported for examination and approval.

The growth of top-down participatory planning

The top-down participatory planning practices have been heavily promoted by three national policies in this stage. First, the public has to be engaged in urban planning to ensure the legitimacy of planning because of the 2008 Urban and Rural Planning Law.

Second, the performance evaluation mechanism for Chinese government officials has shifted its focus from economic growth to "social and public service functions.....and administration by law" (Burns & Zhou, 2010). Public satisfaction also has begun to be surveyed when evaluating officials' performance, although the general public has little voice in the evaluation process (Burns & Zhou, 2010). These policy changes might impel government officials to better engage the public in planning, rather than only taking economic growth as the priority. Meanwhile, we should realize that economic growth is still the priority in China since millions remaining in poverty (Brubaker, 2012). Therefore, the market still strongly affects local governments and thus plays an important role in urban planning.

Third, the informatization development is regarded as a modernization strategy by the Chinese government, the development of information and communication technologies (ICT) in China facilitates the work of urban planners in collecting the views of the public. For instance, the Wuhan Municipal Bureau of Land Resources and Planning used online questionnaires and a Web-based Planning Support System application to engage citizens in a planning project for the first time in 2015 (Xiong, 2015). Both participating approaches attracted hundreds of users, citizens outside Wuhan city also participated in this project (Xiong, 2015).

The practices of the top-down approach to public participation in planning become more open to the public. Take the Shanghai Urban Master Plan (2016-2040) (Draft) as an example. The draft plan was publicized for one month, during which 1810 comments were collected from the general public. Among the 1810 comments, 707 were adopted, 818 were explained or

² In China, laws are enacted by the National People's Congress which is the highest state power. Administrative regulations are promulgated by the State Council which is the highest administrative organ of the central government. Administrative regulations are lower in position than laws.

implemented in the lower-level plans (Zhang & Qi, 2016). How to deal with citizens' comments was rarely open in the past. This plan is the fourth urban master plan of Shanghai, and has the greatest degree of public participation in the preparation of urban master plans.

The growth of bottom-up participatory planning

The conflicts between civil society and traditional decision-makers (local governments and/or the market) in urban planning continue in this stage. Therefore, the bottom-up participatory planning practices continue. There are two national regulations that might escalate conflicts over land use. The first one is the 2008 Chinese economic stimulus plan. China's export industries and economic growth were in trouble as affected by the global financial crisis of 2008. For instance, 67 thousands of small and medium enterprises above designated size collapsed in the first half of 2008 (NDRC, 2008), and economic growth rate declined continuously from 14.8% in the second quarter of 2007 to 6.6% in the first quarter of 2009 (Xie, 2012). To minimize the impact of the global financial crisis, a 4 trillion yuan (\$586 billion) economic stimulus plan was announced in 2008. Although this plan has effectively mitigated the effects of the global financial crisis, it caused a great deal of land demand for construction projects, such as, transport and power infrastructure, and affordable housing. The second one is the 2014 Guidelines for Advancing the Economical and Intensive Land Use issued by the Ministry of Land and Resources, which required to strictly control the total amount of construction land, optimizing land structure and layout, and making full use of land inventory. It is easier for local governments to redevelop urban land than acquiring farmland to meet the needs of land development, so urban neighborhood revitalization projects might increase. The affected public would protest against these planning projects.

Civil society is increasingly powerful in bottom-up participatory planning practices with the help of the Internet (Cheng, 2013; Deng et al., 2015). The Internet penetration rate reached 48.8% in China in June 2015 (CNNIC, 2015), the development of ICT changes the ways of information dissemination and interpersonal communication, which help the public make strategies together to struggle with the decision-makers. Moreover, voices of the public could be silenced by local governments in the past, but now ICT enables the public to openly and consistently express its objections, which forces local governments to negotiate with the public to sustain social stability.

The practices of bottom-up approach to public participation in planning still focus on the same three fields. For the first field (controversy over compensation in urban and rural land acquisition), the number of demolition and relocation cases was in the top three of administrative litigation cases in China in the past three years, and the main contradiction of these cases was about compensation, said by the then vice president of the administrative affairs department of the Supreme People's Court in August 2014 (Luo, 2014). For the second field (NIMBY), we will provide a detailed case to illustrate a NIMBY controversy in the next section. For the third field (architectural heritage conservation), the controversy continues.

In summary

The power of civil society in planning is stronger than that of the previous stage due to relevant national policies, such as the 2008 Urban and Rural Planning Law, the new performance evaluation mechanism for government officials, and the informatization development strategy. The top-down participatory planning practices become more open to the public, but they are not in the partnership rung of Arnstein's ladder since local governments still play a dominating role in how to deal with citizens' comments.

The power relations of local governments, the market, and civil society are less unequal in this stage than that of the previous stage. Civil society is increasingly powerful in bottom-up participatory planning practices with the help of the Internet (Cheng, 2013; Deng et al., 2015). Local governments are still the primary decision-makers in urban planning, but for one thing, new national directives and standards impel them to better engage the public and to give less priority to the market. For another, civil society is increasingly powerful in defending its opinions in planning. In the bottom-up participatory planning practices, the public still has to struggle for the negotiation opportunities with local governments, but some local governments begin to provide formal and offline platforms to communicate with the public face-to-face (e.g., the case in the following section). All in all, two indispensable factors, national directives and standards to engage the public in planning and the active participation of the public to defend its opinions in planning practices, have combined to drive the power rise of the public in urban planning in current China.

2.4 Conclusions and discussion

In order to ground the phenomenon of public participation in urban planning in China in a wider understanding of the nature of Chinese urban governance, this paper investigates its evolution from the perspective of the changing power relations between the central government, local governments, the market, and civil society. It concludes that two factors: national directives and standards to engage the public in planning and the active participation of the public to defend its opinions in planning practices, have combined to drive the power rise of the public in urban planning in current China.

Hu et al. (2013) argued that the government is still decisive and drives the development of the market and civil society in urban planning in China. We partially agree with them and argue that this development much depends on the central government. National directives and standards could change the power relations of the groups. The case shows that a new national standard helped local residents to successfully struggle with the local governments. The current practice reflects the policy orientation of the central government in balancing the relation between efficiency and fairness to some extent.

Civil society is actively shifting the power balance. The claim that China's civil society neither critiques authorities nor desires to become self-regulatory in the past 10 years (Hu et al., 2013) is problematic for the case study shows that China's civil society critiques local governments radically. We argue that civil society may not plan to be self-regulatory, but it does critique local governments. In fact, the active participation of the public to defend its

opinions in planning practices is crucial to the power rise of the public in urban planning in current China. There might be a long way for public participation in urban planning in China to arrive the partnership rung of Arnstein's ladder, but the evolution of public engagement clearly points in that direction.

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Chapter 3

Heterogeneity of public participation in urban redevelopment in Chinese cities: Beijing versus Guangzhou



3 Heterogeneity of public participation in urban redevelopment in Chinese cities: Beijing versus Guangzhou

Abstract

Chinese cities, especially large cities, are in urgent need of urban redevelopment, but social conflicts in urban redevelopment have threatened social stability. Public participation has been stipulated in national policies to alleviate these conflicts and the responsibility to implement these policies has been delegated to local governments. Therefore, the level and quality of public participation might differ between Chinese cities. Yet, a systematic analysis of this possible heterogeneity is lacking. This chapter adapts 11 features of governance to build a framework to compare public participation in urban redevelopment in Beijing and Guangzhou. Results show that the two cities are similar in five features (policy instruments, policy integration, initiators, position of stakeholders, policy level at which citizens operate) but differ in six (policy goals, policy-science interface, power base of citizens, model of representation, rules of interaction, and mechanisms of social interaction), making citizens in urban redevelopment in Guangzhou more powerful than their counterparts in Beijing. The observed shift towards urban micro-redevelopment might further strengthen the power of citizens in urban redevelopment in Beijing, but might weaken their power base in Guangzhou. The results highlight the importance of local contexts and policy dynamics in the study of public participation in urban governance in China.

Keywords: heterogeneity; public participation; urban redevelopment; urban governance; China

3.1 Introduction

Urban redevelopment has become a necessity to make precious land available for urban growth (He, 2012; Ye, 2014), because urbanization continues while central government³ has issued a policy of strict control over urban expansion to protect the stock of arable land. Issues in the redevelopment of urban China have captured public and academic attention since the 1990s (Zhang & Li, 2016). These issues can be divided into two kinds. First, redevelopment projects are opposed by local residents. The rights of low-income residents to inhabit the central city are often threatened by urban redevelopment projects (He, 2012). In many cities in China, conflicts over demolition and relocation, apparent in protests and suicides in response to unfair compensation or violent relocation, have become the most frequent and severe social problems in urban redevelopment (He & Wu, 2009). Second, redevelopment projects are opposed by (historic) preservationists. The large-scale redevelopment projects in urban China have destroyed cultural heritages and the old urban fabric, and thus have caused strong criticism from preservationists (e.g., Graezer Bideau & Yan, 2018). Engaging the public is an important means proposed by central government to resolve the above-mentioned issues.

³ Local governments in urban China usually contain five levels (from high to low): the provincial government, the municipal government, the district government, the street office (the sub-district government), and the residential committee.

From a theory perspective, public participation in public affairs is deeply related to urban governance. Governance refers to “the processes through which collective affairs are managed”, it is traditionally equated with what governments do, and now involves the complex interactions between formal governments, the market, and civil society (Healey, 1997). Urban planning is a policy-driven style of governance (Healey, 1997). Considering land use decision, rights have been devolved to municipal governments after administrative and fiscal decentralization in China (He & Wu, 2009), the interest group of formal governments in China’s urban planning can be further divided into the central government and local governments. As a result, public participation in China’s planning involved the interactions between the central government, local governments, the market, and civil society. There is a debate about citizens’ participation in urban governance in authoritarian China. Friedmann (2005) argued that China has no civil society in the sense of social organizations that actively participate in the debates of public issues. However, He and Warren (2011) believe that democracy and deliberation are distinct concepts and provide examples to show that the authoritarian China is permeated with various participatory and deliberative practices. Furthermore, several scholars have raised the assumption that public participation in the redevelopment of urban China⁴ varies across cities (e.g., Liu, 2015; Morrison & Xian, 2016), but have not provided systematic analyses of this heterogeneity. Public participation in China’s planning, particularly at the city-level, remains relatively under-researched (Morrison & Xian, 2016).

this chapter aims to explore the heterogeneity of public participation in urban redevelopment in Chinese cities. It could contribute to the debate on citizens’ participation in urban governance in authoritarian regimes in general and to citizens’ participation in urban redevelopment in particular. This chapter is structured into five sections. Section two presents a framework to analyze the heterogeneity using the governance taxonomy identified by Driessen et al. (2012). Section three introduces data collection and research methods. Section four analyzes the policies and practices of public participation in urban redevelopment in Beijing and Guangzhou. Section five compares the results in Beijing and Guangzhou, and discusses the underlying reasons for the heterogeneity.

3.2 Conceptual framework

There has been an increasing interest in public participation and the roles of and relations between various actors in planning and development processes (e.g., Healey, 1997; Innes and Booher, 2004; Morrison and Xian, 2016). As an interactive governance process, collaborative or communicative planning has defined an important role of citizens as actors contributing to argumentations and civil society as vehicle for placing pressure on the state to act more responsively (Bäcklund and Mäntysalo, 2010; Watson, 2011). Public participation is thus considered as a part of governance and planning processes. However, until now, there has been a lack of theoretical and empirical research on the heterogeneity of public participation in urban redevelopment. The complexity of urban redevelopment processes and the diversity of local institutions require an in-depth understanding of the forms of public participation, the

⁴ This chapter does not consider urban villages for the lands are collective-owned.

roles of citizens, and their relations with other key actors in the governance process. Therefore, this chapter adapts a widely advocated governance framework developed by Driessen et al. (2012) to understand key factors of governance that cause the differences and similarities of public participation in urban redevelopment in Chinese cities. Driessen et al. (2012) propose an elaborate framework to differentiate between modes of governance from three dimensions: features of policy content, actor features, and institutional features. They argue that “*policy* is formulated and implemented in dynamic contexts where multiple *actors* interact at multiple levels while interaction among actors respond to specific *institutional features*”. The three dimensions of governance are refined by deriving 11 features from the extensive literature on governance, to create a detailed measuring tool for appraising and comparing shifts in governance over time (Driessen et al., 2012), but these features can also be used to analyze the differences in governance over space. We adopt this framework (Figure 3.1) to understand the heterogeneity of public participation in urban redevelopment between different cities.

Nevertheless, this framework is developed in a democratic context and originally for environmental governance. There is also a lack of attention to different relations and policies of central and local governments, the complex and dominant roles of some specific actors, and the diversity of local institutional contexts. Contrary to common perceptions of China as a highly centralized state, urban redevelopment is a highly decentralized policy field and the various levels of local government are responsive not only to laws and executive orders from the national level, but also to the specific local conditions. New policies often take the form of pilots at the local level, elements of which at a later stage may be codified in laws and regulations at the national level. To tailor the framework developed by Driessen et al. (2012) to fit to the Chinese context, we have adapted the contents of three dimensions. First, the dimension of features of policy content need to encompass policies made by the central government and local governments. Due to the process of decentralization in China, local governments have become autonomous in decision-making and potentially challenged the central government (Zhao, 2015). Second, the dimension of actor features emphasizes the complex roles of civil society organizations and other actors (Lin et al., 2015). Third, the dimension of institutional features needs to capture the variety of local institutional contexts (Xu, 2011). Although China is considered as an authoritarian state, the institutions are various in different geographical, cultural and economic settings. These differences can significantly affect the power of citizens and civil society as well as media freedom.

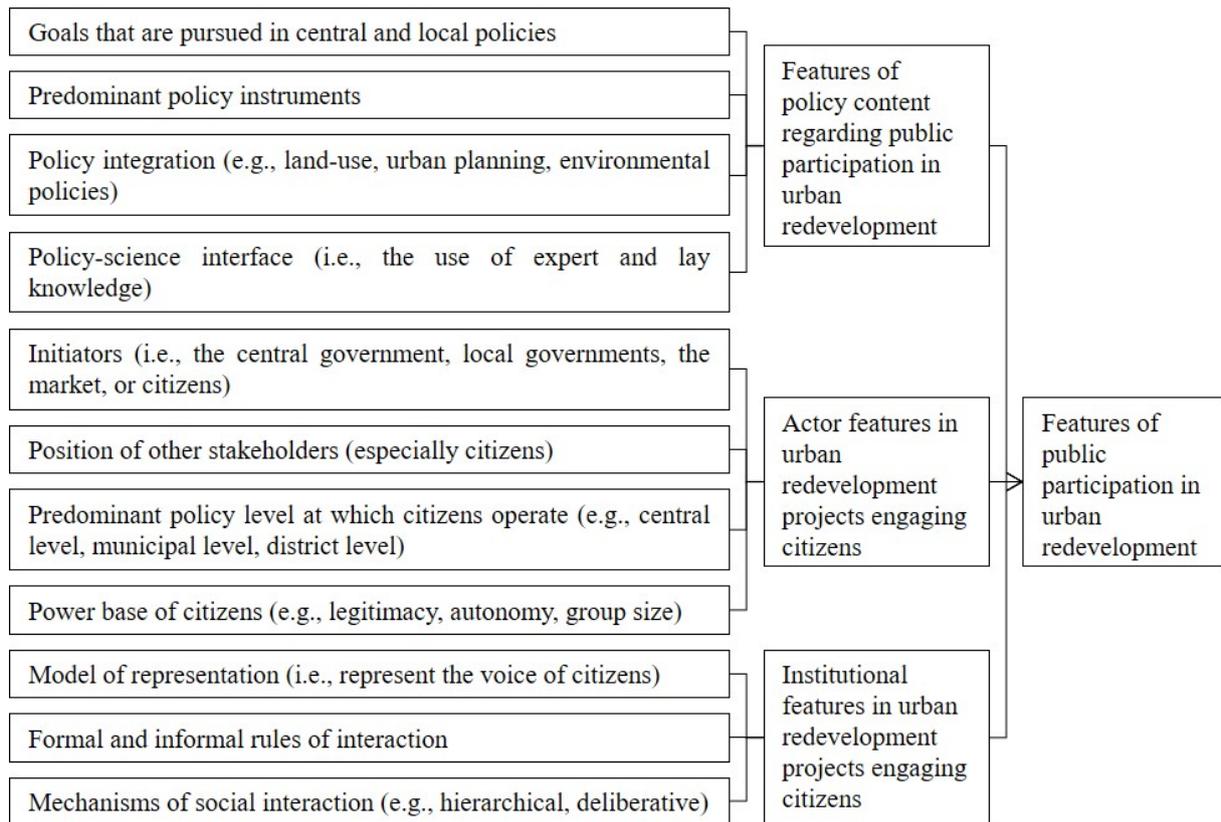


Figure 3.1 Conceptual framework (adapted from Driessen et al. (2012))

3.2.1 Features of policy content

In their study of the legal requirements and implementation of public participation in infrastructure planning processes at the national and local levels in China, Shan and Yai (2011) claim that legal and administrative support is imperative for the effective implementation of public participation in urban planning. The features of policy content includes *goals that are pursued in policies, predominant policy instruments, policy integration, and policy-science interface* (Driessen et al., 2012). *Goals that are pursued in related policies* can be uniform or tailor-made. Policy goals are made by multiple levels of governments in China. The central and local states have different positions toward urban redevelopment, resulting in tensions between the central and local governments (He and Wu, 2009). When local economic benefits are the primary concern of local governments, local decision-making is strengthened by political decentralization and market powers, thus potentially challenging the central government and macro levels of policies (Zhao, 2015). Urban redevelopment in China is usually a means to foster economic growth, but the way in which this contributes to economic performance might differ. Local governments could adopt different *policy instruments* to ensure policy implementation, including legislation, permits, and incentives such as compensations and fines, etc. Revenue from land leases is a major source of income for municipal governments and value capturing a major instrument to secure this source. Compensation of existing real-estate owners is obviously part of the costs to get those benefits. *Policies integration* can be sectorial (policy sectors and levels separated) or integrated. Urban planning necessarily requires some form of integration, including transportation, and

environmental standards. *Policy–science interfaces* refer to the type of expert and lay knowledge used for policy preparation, decision-making, implementation and evaluation.

3.2.2 Actor features

In the research of reframing public participation, Innes and Booher (2004) suggest that participation should be understood as a multi-way set of interactions among citizens and other actors who together produce outcomes. The dimension of actor features includes *initiators*, *position of other stakeholders*, *predominant policy level at which key actors operate*, and *formal and/or informal power base of the key actors* (Driessen et al., 2012). In the arena of urban redevelopment in China, *initiators* can be the government, the market, and citizens, according to the national Guiding Opinions on Further Promoting the Redevelopment of Urban Land with Low Use Efficiency (Trial) (Ministry of Land Resources, 2016). Urban redevelopment in China have been involved three dimensions of actors, namely of the state, the market and society, which include civil society organizations and other actors with complex roles (Lin et al., 2015). Civil society organizations in China have fewer forms of grassroots NGOs, but more corporatist forms that are embedded within government agencies, such as government-organized NGOs (Spires, 2011). Besides, quasi non-governmental developers are in alliance with government in urban redevelopment. Quasi non-governmental developers dominate in this role in close alliance with government. *Position of other stakeholders* determined by the state that grants some level of autonomy within predetermined boundaries. In China, local governments play a dominant role in urban (re)development (Wu, 2016). Urban redevelopment will always depend on local government as a facilitator. *Predominant policy level at which citizens operate* starts at the local level, but might also include the provincial and even national level. *Power base of the citizens* could be authority, legitimacy, autonomy, group size, leadership, etc.

3.2.3 Institutional features

Based on analyzing practices of collaborative public participation from around the world, Innes and Booher (2004) find that institutional capacity is a key element for collaborative participation to solve complex and contentious problems. The dimension of institutional features includes *model of representation*, *formal and/or informal rules of interaction*, and *mechanisms of social interaction* (Driessen et al., 2012). *Model of representation* reflects whether representatives represent the voice of citizens. *Rules of interaction* include formal rules (rule of law and self-crafted rules) and informal rules (norms, political and social culture). Differences and diversity in institutional features exist across Chinese cities. “A local history determines what interests stakeholders have nested into the existing institution there and how those affect institutional reforms in the locality” (Xu, 2011; 65). Different institutional contexts can affect the power of citizens and civil society and media freedom. Media reflect local political and social culture, or informal rules. Traditional media reflect local political culture, or informal rules. Nearly all traditional media in China are state-owned and are managed by the Communist Party’s propaganda system (Lu et al., 2016), so the contents of traditional media reports largely reflect the openness and willingness of local governments toward public participation. The development of new media has provided new platforms for citizens’ participation in urban affairs (Deng et al., 2015). *Mechanisms of social*

interaction refer to the way decision making is working in practice and can include local governments' decisions about collaborations within top-down determined boundaries, but also private actors' decisions to engage in collaborations, and even bottom-up deliberations and negotiations. The mechanisms can be more hierarchical or more open to negotiation and deliberation.

Contrary to common perceptions of China as a highly centralized state, urban redevelopment is a highly decentralized policy field and the various levels of local government are responsive not only to laws and executive orders from the national level, but also to the specific local conditions. New policies often take the form of pilots at the local level, elements of which at a later stage may be codified in laws and regulations at the national level. The eleven features defined by Driessen et al. provide the analytical categories to compare the governance between cities.

3.3 Data collection and methodology

3.3.1 Target cities

We select Beijing and Guangzhou as target cities for three reasons: first, Guangzhou is of research value concerning *features of policy content*, since it is the first pilot for the experimental “three olds” redevelopment policy. “Three olds” refer to old urban areas, old factories, and old villages. This policy was proposed by the Guangdong provincial⁵ government in 2008 and was applied to other areas with the approval of the state council in 2013. Beijing does not have this kind of extensive municipal-level redevelopment policies. Second, the two cities are different concerning *actor features*. Unlike Guangzhou, Beijing is directly controlled by and is accommodating the central government. The central government stipulates national policies to guide public participation in urban redevelopment in both cities, but is directly involved in urban redevelopment conflicts in Beijing. Third, the two cities are different concerning *institutional features*. For example, the content of traditional mass media regarding urban redevelopment projects in Beijing verges on propaganda, but that in Guangzhou is much more independent from the government (Liu, 2015).

3.3.2 Data collection

The data collected in this chapter is from 2003 to 2018. Conflicts over demolition and relocation were extremely acute in 2003, and the central government started to make policies to protect the interests of affected residents in urban redevelopment (He & Wu, 2009). Two kinds of data were collected. The first are policy documents, which are mainly used to analyze *policy-related features*. These data were collected in three steps. First, searching keywords (e.g., urban plan, urban redevelopment, demolition and relocation, cultural heritage preservation, Guangzhou/Beijing) in the Baidu search engine⁶ to gather some related policies. Second, finding out all potentially related policies through the method of snowball sampling. Local policies usually list higher-level policies and we also identified and collected these policies. Third, checking their contents to select related policies at the national and/or

⁵ Guangzhou city is the capital of Guangdong province.

⁶ A main search engine in China.

municipal levels.

The second kind of data are urban redevelopment practices, which are mainly used to compare *actor features* and *institutional features*. These data were collected in three steps. First, practices were identified through searching keywords (e.g., participation, demolition and relocation, conflicts, Guangzhou/Beijing) in the Baidu search engine, China Academic Journals full-text database (CNKI), and local government portals; and then checking the results to gather the needed data. Digital news archives, academic literature and social media blogs were collected online. Second, references in academic literature were checked, and urban planners and preservationists in Beijing and Guangzhou were interviewed to identify more practices. Third, information on the identified practices was collected through field work and searching published materials online. Field work includes site visits, observations, photographs and semi-structured interviews with citizens in 2016 and 2017.

3.3.3 Methodology

Content analysis and critical discourse analysis were adopted to analyze the data collected, content analysis aims to identify the 11 *features*, and critical discourse analysis aims to discover the heterogeneity of these features and its significance to urban governance. One simple form of content analysis is identifying units of analysis within semantic contexts (Petrina, 1998). The process of “identifying units of analysis” is coding. The codes (units of analysis) of the content analysis are empirical evidence of the latent meaning found in discourse analysis (Petrina, 1998). The content analysis was done in NVivo 11.4. NVivo, a data analysis software, is considered the best in simplifying the difficult “coding” task (Hilal & Alabri, 2013), and can code both textual and visual data (Edlund & McDougall, 2017). The textual and visual (pictures and videos) data collected were chronologically ordered before analysis. Most data were in Chinese, we did not translate them into English to keep their original meanings in the coding process. The data were coded, categorized, and checked by the two Chinese authors. One Chinese author did a line-by-line coding work to identify the 11 features (i.e., coding the 11 child nodes), and categorized them into 3 dimensions (i.e., categorizing them into 3 parent nodes) according to the framework. Then, the codes created were double checked by the other Chinese author. After coding, the nodes were translated into English to do the discourse analysis by all authors.

Critical discourse analysis aims to understand “how discourse is implicated in relations of power” (Janks, 1997), it can demonstrate “the political and powerful nature of seemingly mundane statements and symbols” (Petrina, 1998). Urban redevelopment in China is about the interplay (power struggle) between multi-level governments, the market, and civil society. We first identified four representative practices in each city through analyzing the nodes. The case selection criteria were: 1) achieving a priori thematic saturation. A priori thematic saturation means that all of the 11 *features* are exemplified in the cases (Saunders et al., 2017) ; 2) as few cases as possible; 3) the application of a newly-developed national/local policy. These policies and practices were analyzed according to the governance framework, and major conclusions were synthesized from the perspective of urban governance.

3.4 Public participation in urban redevelopment

3.4.1 The national context

In China, urban redevelopment programs were launched in the 1990s, market mechanisms were introduced from the beginning but began to play a key role from 1998 onwards (Wu, 2016). Citizen participation has been introduced in recent years particularly in three fields: urban and land use planning, cultural heritage preservation, and expropriation and compensation of housing. There are four relevant national policies: first, the 2007 Property Rights Law. It defines the legal status of private property rights for the first time to prevent forced demolition of private housing. Second, the 2008 Urban & Rural Planning Law. It formalizes public participation in the preparation, revision, and supervision of urban planning, and stipulates accountability to promote its practice. Third, the 2008 Regulation on the Preservation of Famous Historic-cultural Cities, Towns, and Villages. It is the first national policy that encourages the participation of the market and civil society in the preservation of historic-cultural cities. Fourth, the 2011 regulation on Expropriation & Compensation of Housing on State-owned Land. It stipulates that municipal and county-level governments have sole responsibility for housing expropriation and compensation in their administrative districts. This item aims to limit the power of property developers in housing expropriation and compensation. This policy also stipulates that “social stability assessment” has to be conducted before making a housing expropriation decision, and devolved the power in making detailed regulations to guide the selection of real estate price assessment agencies to local governments. Although these national policies have stipulated public participation in urban redevelopment, detailed and standard regulations to guide its implementation are lacking, which provides room for municipal governments to exercise their discretionary power. The following section is about related municipal policies and representative practices in Beijing and Guangzhou.

3.4.2 Empirical work in Beijing

Municipal policies in Beijing

The nodes of collected policy documents show that related Beijing municipal policies focus on the same fields as their national counterparts, and provide relatively minor supplements. For example, Beijing's City Master Plan (2016-2035) was prepared based on the speeches of the chairman of China when he inspected the old Beijing in 2014 and in 2017. It primarily aims to create space for so-called Capital functions⁷. It stipulates the integration of several urban plans into one, the engagement of the public to improve the “scientificity” of the plan, and the adoption of a planning participation approach. It also stipulates the improvement of the micro-space of hutongs, the preservation of courtyards in the old city, and the encouragement of residents to self-redevelop their housings according to preservation plans. Municipal policies of public participation in housing expropriation and compensation are: first, the expropriation and compensation plan has to be published in the project area and on the website of the municipal urban and rural construction committee. Second, in an old city

⁷ Beijing has four Capital functions: the political center, cultural center, international communication center, and science & technology innovation center of China.

redevelopment project, if the majority of homeowners questions the compliance of the housing expropriation plan a public hearing should be organized and the plan should be modified based on the hearing. Third, a certified real estate price assessment agency will be selected by the homeowners (the agency will be selected through open lottery if the majority homeowners cannot make a decision). These policies stipulate that incentive fees and compulsory expropriation through judicial procedures can be adopted to ensure housing expropriation.

Representative practices in Beijing

In Beijing, large-scale urban redevelopment projects initiated by the government and/or the market have been implemented since the 1990s (He, 2012). Four representative projects are selected based on nodes of related practices and presented chronologically, they work together to help us understand the practices of public participation in urban redevelopment in Beijing.

First, the Dongsì Eighth Alley redevelopment project (2007). This project was initiated by a property developer, and the local residents were informed by the district government to move away in April 2007. Located in a Beijing's historic-cultural preservation zone, this large-scale demolition project was opposed by some local residents and preservationists. Traditional media, within and beyond Beijing, reported the controversy. The project was stopped a few months later because of opposition from civil society. There are two interesting events in this controversy. One is that there were about 90 affected households, and their oppositions to the project were reported by the newspapers, but only one local resident took legal steps to stop the project based on a related national regulation in 2007 (Zhang & Wang, 2007). Reports showed that she was encouraged by the newly-issued national Property Rights Law which emphasized the legal status of private property (Zhang & Wang, 2007). The other one is that the performance of an Expert Advisory Committee in this project made citizens distrust experts (Zhao, 2007). At the request of the central government, the Beijing municipal government founded this Committee in 2004. The municipal government appoints its members and controls its work. For instance, a group decision should be made by six experts, but only four experts were invited to attend the meeting in this project.

Second, the preservation of the former residence of Liang & Lin (2009-2012). This project was initiated by a property developer. A demolition and relocation notice was posted on the wall of the former residence of Liang & Lin in May 2009, and then a preservationist appealed to preserve this building on a blog post. The traditional media owned by the central government tended to oppose the demolition, but those owned by the Beijing municipal government tended to support the demolition (He, 2010). Due to the effort of seven Beijing citizens, the State Administration of Cultural Heritage asked the Beijing Municipal Bureau of Cultural Heritage to recognize the building as an immovable artifact according to a newly-issued national policy in 2010. Our interview with one applicant showed that this activity was organized by a NGO, the Beijing Cultural Heritage Protection Center (CHP). The local district government informed the property developer to preserve the building in 2011, but a local newspaper reported that the building still was demolished several months later. The reactions of local governments to the demolition event sparked criticism from the media,

experts, and the general public (Feng & Wang, 2014). In the end, the land developer was fined according to a national law and was forced to rebuild the building.

Third, the Bell and Drum Towers Square restoration project (2010-2013). This project was initiated by the district government and had two stages: 2010 and 2011-2013. According to reports in official media, the first stage aimed to redevelop an area of 12.5 hectares around the two towers. It was widely criticized because the project would destroy historical heritage. Several newspapers reported the controversy. Our interview with CHP shows that they announced to organize a public debate about the project, but cancelled it at the request of the police. A preservationist petitioned to the State Administration of Cultural Heritage which then put pressure on the Municipal government. The project was suspended in 2010 and restarted in 2011. Approved by the State Administration of Cultural Heritage, the new plan aimed to only demolish buildings “without historical value”, and the area was reduced to 4700 m². This information was not released until the acquisition and demolition notices were posted in the project area. Many local residents strongly opposed the project, because they were forced to move away within a short time and unsatisfied with the compensation (Graezer Bideau & Yan, 2018). A group of preservationists organized a series of activities online and onsite to stop the project, but traditional media were prohibited from reporting the controversy this time. Interviews with these preservationists show that the local government played a dominant role in the controversy:

“...we carefully accepted the invitations of several (local) journalists, but they told us that this project was prohibited from reporting in the end... local residents started avoiding opening doors for us because the government forbid them to talk with us” (interview with Ms. J, October 2016).

“We petitioned to the municipal departments and the central departments for the procedure was illegal, but we did not get any reply... The government negotiated with each household separately ... I asked residents why didn't unite to negotiate with the government, they were surprised at my question, it looked like that they considered it as a revolution” (interview with Ms. C, November 2016).

Fourth, the Nanluogu alley micro-redevelopment project (since 2005). Unlike traditional urban redevelopment strategy which characterized by completely demolishing old buildings, urban micro-redevelopment strategy refers to renovating an old building with maintaining its basic structure (Zhang et al., 2018). This project was initiated by the local sub-district office in 2005 and is a cooperation between the local governments, the market, and local residents. The municipal government partly funds the project in response to the lobby of the sub-district office. The firms and local residents self-finance their redevelopment activities. In order to improve local business culture, the sub-district government: persuades the firms to develop targeted businesses; asks the Nanluogu chamber of commerce for help; provides subsidies to targeted businesses; and persuades local residents to limit the business entries. The redevelopment has been upgraded with the inspection by the chairman of China here in 2014. In 2015, four hutongs in the Nanluogu alley were selected by the local district government as pilots of redevelopment. The redevelopment goals include landscape preservation, improving

livelihood, improving environment, etc. Residents have four choices: directional resettlement, monetary compensation, replacement, and self-redevelopment. The micro-redevelopment process is still running.

Analyses

Analyzing the municipal policies and the four representative practices in Beijing using the 11 features of governance leads to the following conclusions. The *goals* of urban redevelopment policies are mainly driven by the municipal government's political agendas, which are influenced by the central government. Public participation is included primarily to follow related national policies. The *predominant policy instruments* are legitimacy and incentives (rewards and accountability). Different kinds of urban plans are encouraged to be *integrated*. Regarding *policy-science interface*, the knowledge of experts is used in policy decision-making. *Initiators* are either developers or (sub) district governments. Regardless of the type of initiator, the municipal government dominates the *position of other stakeholders*. It plays a dominating role in the interaction with developers, residents, mass media, and preservationists. As a response to citizens' legal petitions, the central government sometimes directly participates in the conflicts by putting political pressures on municipal government, but the operation is still in the hands of local governments. Citizens refer to national polices to defend their rights in the past, but they also use lower level policies with the publication of these policies in recent years. So, *predominant policy level at which citizens operate* is multiple. *Power base* of citizens are legitimacy, legal recourse, and knowledge. Membership of the expert advisory committee for urban redevelopment in Beijing is limited to experts and members are appointed by the municipal government, lay knowledge being excluded. The *formal rules of interaction* require only minimal public participation and local governments do not always meet even these minimal requirements. The *informal rules of interaction* are about local political and social culture. The local political culture is reflected by the performance of local traditional media, which were strictly controlled by the municipal government since the "social stability assessment" was stipulated in 2011. The performance of local residents reflects the relatively conservative local social culture. The *mechanism of social interaction* is avoiding the rise of collective protest, the government deals with citizens on an individual basis and citizens are unaware of the potential of collective action. The interaction is hierarchical and leaves little room for negotiation.

3.4.3 Empirical work in Guangzhou

Municipal policies in Guangzhou

The nodes of collected policy documents show that the Guangzhou municipal policies focus in the same fields as their national counterparts, but adds considerably when it comes to public participation. For instance, the 2015 Guangzhou Municipal Urban & Rural Planning Regulation stipulates that: the municipal government should take opinions of the planning committee as an important basis in making planning decisions; planning committee members should include both experts and lay citizens; and feedback to participants should be given within seven days after their questions are solved. Municipal policies on housing expropriation and compensation require more transparency than in Beijing. First, if the number of households involved is a hundred or more, the decision on the plan should be taken

at an executive meeting of the city/district government. Second, the expropriation and compensation plan needs to be published in the project area, in publicly issued newspapers, and on the website of the municipal urban and rural construction committee. Third, a public hearing should be held and if 50% or more of the households contest the housing expropriation plan, and the plan has to be modified according to the results of this hearing. Fourth, a certified real estate price assessment agency will be selected by the homeowners (the agency will be selected through open lottery if the 50% of homeowners cannot make a decision).

A new round of urban redevelopment in Guangzhou was started in 2006 as the municipal government put forward the city center adjustment strategy (Liang, 2017), it aims to bypass centrally allocated land development quotas to make room for land-based economic development (Wu, 2016). This strategy coincided with the provincial “three olds” redevelopment policy. In 2009, the municipal government published its own “three olds” redevelopment policy, which stipulated two consulting stages in urban redevelopment. The first stage is about consulting the redevelopment willingness of local residents. The project can be launched when at least 90% homeowners agree to redevelop the area. The second stage is about consulting residents’ opinions on compensation. The demolition can be implemented when at least 2/3 homeowners have signed the housing demolition & compensation & resettlement contracts. To facilitate the implementation of urban construction projects, the public consultation committee of urban construction was formed by the Guangzhou municipal government in May 2013, its member selection and work are independent from the government (see the third project below). The urban redevelopment bureau was established and issued the Urban Redevelopment Measures in 2015. The measures stipulate that urban redevelopment methods include comprehensive redevelopment (see the first project below) and micro-redevelopment (see the fourth project below), the latter is given priority with funds and resources. Local residents are encouraged to self-redevelop their housings according to redevelopment policies. In 2017 it was decided to integrate various urban plan into one.

Representative practices in Guangzhou

In Guangzhou, the large-scale urban redevelopment was initiated by the municipal government since the 1990s (He, 2012). Municipal documents show that property developers, were permitted to be involved in urban redevelopment in 1993, were excluded in 1999, and were re-permitted in 2007. Four representative projects are selected based on nodes of related practices and presented chronologically, together they help us understand the practices of public participation in urban redevelopment in Guangzhou.

First, the Enning road neighborhood redevelopment project (2006-2013). The new round of urban redevelopment in Guangzhou starts with this project, which also is the first pilot of the re-permitting property developers to be involved in urban redevelopment policy. The pressures faced by the local governments mainly came from three groups of people: local residents, preservationists, and mass media. In 2007, the municipal planning bureau prepared the Enning road redevelopment plan, which was strongly opposed by preservationists of arcades (local traditional buildings). A local journalist invited a local professor of architecture

to visit the project area, and then reported the professor's opposition to the plan (Huang, 2013). Facing social pressure, the municipal planning bureau made a new plan which would preserve some historic buildings within the demolition area in April 2008. In May 2008, 80 residents submitted a petition letter to the National People's Congress because the project violated the newly-issued Property Rights Law, this activity was guided by local journalists who had consulted lawyers about the project (Tan & Altrock, 2016). The petition was widely reported but the national congress did not reply. The demolition started in 2008. In December 2009, the district government published the historic-cultural neighborhood preservation and development plan, and hired a company to collect citizens' opinions on it. 183 local households directly sent their objections to the district government one month later, but did not receive any substantive reply (Huang, 2013). Therefore, 220 local households handed petition letters to congress delegates during the annual Municipal People's Congress and Political Consultative Congress in April 2010 (Zhang & Li, 2016). Preservationists organized a NGO to participate in the project. In 2010, a local journalist reported the controversy to a delegate of the Municipal People's Congress, who then successfully persuaded the mayor to inspect the project area. The mayor promised to give priority to cultural preservation in the new plan. The district "three olds" redevelopment office set up an advisory group (including residents) soon after the mayor's inspection. The project was eventually suspended because it failed to attract market investment.

Second, the Jinglingtai & Miaogaotai (two adjacent buildings) demolition event (2012). On May 15, 2012, a preservationist appealed to preserve the two buildings on a microblog post for they were under urgent threat of demolition. On May 17, 2012, expert(s) suggested to preserve the two buildings in a field assessment organized by the local district government, and the demolition was stopped. On May 18, 2012, Guangzhou Municipal Planning Bureau claimed that the demolition of the two buildings had to be approved by the sector of urban planning and the sector of cultural heritage. On May 25, 2012, Guangzhou Municipal Bureau of Land and Resources informed the land developer to suspend the demolition. Guangzhou Municipal Planning Bureau and Municipal Bureau of Land and Resources negotiated with the land developer to change the plan to preserve the two buildings, but they did not reach an agreement after four rounds of negotiations in 2013 (Feng & Wang, 2014). The two buildings were demolished in 2013, a few days after the political order of suspending the demolition expired. The land developer said the demolition was legal according to the contract and local policies, but the owners of Miaogaotai sued the land developer and won the lawsuit. The municipal government fined the land developer and forced him to rebuild the buildings.

Third, the Guangzhou bridge widen project (2013), which is the first project of the public consultation committee of urban construction. This bridge is a key traffic route of Guangzhou and suffered from congestion frequently. In order to ease its congestion, a proposal to widen the bridge was put forward in 2002, but the report was not submitted to the municipal government until 2011, because many local residents did not agree with the proposal. In July 2013, the Public Consultation Committee for the Guangzhou bridge project was established with 5 stakeholders (local residents) and the 25 standing committee members, which are composed of various social groups. Members of the committee had different attitudes towards

the plan, and they made the final decision by taking the votes of the 25 standing committee members. The outcome was that they suggested to replace the original plan by a systematic redevelopment plan (Ye et al., 2016). In September 2013, the committee submitted its report to the municipal government. One version was sent to the mayor directly, which substantively improved the influence of the committee (Ye et al., 2016). The new plan was accepted by both local residents and the government.

Fourth, the Yongqingfang micro-redevelopment project (2016). Yongqingfang is a small area of the Enning road neighborhood, most buildings here were expropriated but not demolished, some buildings still accommodate residents who chose to self-redevelop their housings. This project is initiated a few months after the establishment of the Guangzhou municipal urban redevelopment bureau, and represents the restart of the Enning road redevelopment project. The Enning road redevelopment project was suspended in 2013 for failing to attract traditional market investments. The self-redevelopment and historic building preservation made the available land too fragmented to have enough market value for property developers (Tan & Altrick, 2016). In 2015, the district government used the Yongqingfang micro-redevelopment project as a pilot of introducing new business models to redevelop the Enning road. A property developer won this project through an open bid in 2015 and finished it a few months later. Interviews with local residents show that their voices were weak in this micro-redevelopment project:

“...the pavement (in front of my door) was raised by the developer, so the rain water flows into my house when it rains heavily ... that window (she pointed at a neighbor’s window) was blocked by a newly-built wall, he/she (that neighbor) visited the developer’s office but could not find the manager, the journalists reported it (the controversy a few days ago)... we visited the (local) government but no one solves the problem...”
(interview with an old lady, October 2016).

Analyses

Analyzing the municipal policies and the four representative practices using the 11 features of governance leads to the following conclusions. The *goals* of urban redevelopment policies are mainly driven by the municipal government’s economic agendas. Public participation is included in urban redevelopment policies mainly to promote the implementation of redevelopment projects. The *predominant policy instruments* are legitimacy and incentives (rewards and accountability). Different kinds of urban plans are encouraged to be *integrated*. Regarding *policy-science interface*, the knowledge of both experts and lay citizens is used in policy preparation and decision-making. Local government is clearly in the lead, both as *initiator* and in dominant *position of other stakeholders*, it can decide whether to allow property developers to participate in urban redevelopment or not, and plays a dominant role in the interaction with citizens. Yet preservationists and local residents effectively influence urban redevelopment plans with the help of traditional media. Citizens refer to national polices to defend their rights in the past, but they increasingly seize the opportunities provided by local policies. The *predominant policy level at which citizens operate* has shifted from national to local. *Power base* of citizens are group size, leadership, legitimacy, legal recourse, and knowledge. Submitting petition letters collectively can make a difference, and the public

consultation committee of urban construction has the power base in leadership by submitting reports to the mayor directly. The member selection and work of the public consultation committee of urban construction in Guangzhou are independent from the government, and its members are composed of various social groups. This committee effectively *represents* the interests or values of citizens. The *formal rules of interaction* stipulated in local policies, are more democratic than the national ones. The *informal rules of interaction* are about local political and social culture. The local political culture is reflected by the performance of local traditional media, which have certain freedom on reporting redevelopment controversies. The performance of local residents reflects the relatively open-minded local social culture. The *mechanism of social interaction* is still hierarchical, also in Guangzhou but allows more room to arrive at consensus and to mediate between citizens' interest and governments' priorities.

3.5 Discussion and Conclusions

This chapter adapts three dimensions (policy content, actor features, and institutional features) of governance to build a framework to compare public participation in urban redevelopment in Beijing and Guangzhou. Results show that the two cities are similar in five features but differ in six, making Guangzhou citizens more powerful than Beijing citizens in local urban redevelopment. In the dimension of policy content, the two cities are similar in *predominant policy instruments* and in *policy integration*, but differ in *goals that are pursued in policies*, more political in Beijing and more economic in Guangzhou, and in *policy-science interface*, with Guangzhou using the knowledge of lay citizens. The *predominant policy instruments* are legislation and incentives. Related policies (e.g., land-use, urban planning, environmental policies) are gradually *integrated* in both cities. The *Policy goals* are tailor-made. In Beijing, the municipal policies of urban redevelopment are driven by the municipal government's political agendas. Public participation is restricted to a level that complies with national policies. By contrast, the corresponding policies in Guangzhou are driven by the municipal government's economic agendas. Public participation is included mainly as a means to facilitate the implementation of urban redevelopment plans. The *policy-science interface* is also different. Unlike Guangzhou, Beijing does not use the knowledge of lay citizens in policy decision-making.

In the dimension of actor features, the two cities are similar in *initiators*, in *position of other stakeholders*, and in *predominant policy level at which citizens operate*, but differ in *power base of citizens*. Citizens in Guangzhou are allocated more rights; collective actions are more common and a clear leadership has developed with direct access to the centers of decision. *Initiators* in both cities can be the government or the market, yet the Guangzhou government is more pro-active. As regards to *position of other stakeholders*, the municipal governments dominate urban redevelopment in both cities no matter whom the initiators are. They can decide on allowing property developers to participate in urban redevelopment, and dominate the interaction with citizens. This finding supports Wu's (2016) argument that the term "neoliberal urbanism" might be misleading in China considering that it refers to a more market-centered approach in urban redevelopment, while redevelopment in China is dominated by the government. *Predominant policy level at which citizens operate* is multiple in both cities: citizens referred to national regulations to defend their rights in the past, but

also increasingly seize the opportunities provided by lower level policies and regulations. The *power base of citizens* differs: citizens in Guangzhou are allocated more rights; collective actions are more common and a clear leadership has developed with direct access to the centers of decision.

In the dimension of institutional features, the two cities differ in *model of representation*, in *rules of interaction and mechanisms of social interaction*, Beijing emphasizing the suppression of conflict, Guangzhou aiming to arrive at consensus. The difference in *the model of representation* is reflected by the consultation committees in the two cities: citizens in Guangzhou are better represented. The *formal rules of interaction* in Guangzhou are more democratic than those in Beijing. For example, the Guangzhou “three olds” redevelopment policy stipulates two consulting stages: consulting the redevelopment willingness of local residents, and then consulting residents’ opinions on compensation. The former is a response to the 2007 Property Rights Law, but it has been ignored by the Beijing municipal government. Purcell (2008) proposes two components of the right to the city: a right to appropriation and a right to participation. Therefore, in contrast to Guangzhou, Beijing residents’ property rights and their right to the city are more deprived. Similarly, the *informal rules of interaction* in Guangzhou facilitate citizens’ participation: both political and social cultures in Beijing are more conservative than these in Guangzhou. One possible reason is that Beijing is the capital of China, the suppression on traditional media to maintain social stability might be easier to be accepted by the central government for China’s international image. For example, traditional media in Beijing were inhibited from reporting the Bell and Drum towers controversy in 2011. But in Guangzhou, the Municipal Government prevented local media from reporting a controversy over a waste-to-energy plant project in 2009, then local protestors successfully invited traditional media owned by the central government in Beijing to report the controversy, which in turn put more pressure on local governments (Lang & Xu, 2013). The *mechanisms of social interactions* in Beijing emphasize the suppressing of conflict, in Guangzhou emphasis is on arriving at consensus.

In China, urban redevelopment is an arena of power struggle between levels of government, market parties, and civil society. Local governments dominate urban redevelopment, with the market as their main instrument, and citizens at the receiving end. Yet citizens are becoming more influential, but not at the same pace in every city. Looking at the future an important question is whether the trend towards micro-redevelopment, which we observed in both cities, will become the mainstream method. In Beijing this would certainly contribute to wider and more profound participation. Ironically, it might weaken the power base of citizens in Guangzhou as it may erode the current organization of collective action and the attention of local and national media.

The governance framework of Driessen et al. (2012) has proven to be a powerful tool in systematically analyzing the heterogeneity of public participation in urban redevelopment in Beijing and Guangzhou. Results highlight the importance of several dimensions of the local context and policy dynamics in the study of public participation in urban governance in China. Future research should pay more attention to the institutional variation in particular, because both the model of representation and the rules and practices of interaction vary with the local

social and political culture.

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Chapter 4

Strategies of China's built-heritage movement in urban redevelopment in the Internet age: the case of Bell-Drum towers controversy in Beijing



4 Strategies of China's built-heritage movement in urban redevelopment in the Internet age: the case of Bell-Drum towers controversy in Beijing

Abstract

The built-heritage movement is increasingly involved in China's urban redevelopment, and has become a crucial part of public participation in this process. Understanding the strategies of Chinese built-heritage movement contributes to insight in the rising power of civil society in Chinese urban planning. In order to systematically understand these strategies in the Internet age, this chapter employs the framing perspective to analyze the discourse within the political, cultural, and media context using the case of the Bell-Drum towers controversy in Beijing. Results show that the enablers include official policies and citizens' awareness regarding built-heritage preservation and public participation, and the proliferation of new media. The constraints include the judicial system that does not allow citizens to sue for public interests, police intervention in real-world assemblies, and the resistance of district governments, which rely heavily on urban (re)development to get funding for local services. Within these contexts, preservationists effectively influence decision-makers by shaping public debates through mobilizing local residents and external parties, by building political pressure through mobilizing higher-level governments, and by demobilizing local decision-makers directly. The contribution to planning theory is twofold. First the authoritarian character of the Chinese state does not preclude strategic behavior of civil society organisations that use the divergence of interest between different levels of government. Second, although inclusive collaborative planning is still a long way off in China, the built-heritage movement is becoming a clear and present participant in the process of urban redevelopment and local government is unable to silence citizens online without the support of central government.

Keywords: strategies; built-heritage movement; the Internet age; the framing perspective; urban redevelopment; China

4.1 Introduction

Several scholars question the existence of civil society in China, for example, Friedmann (2005) claims that China has no civil society in the sense of social organizations that actively participate in the debates of public issues. Recent studies in several fields, however, show that there is an incipient civil society in contemporary China (Verdini, 2015). In the field of urban planning, an increasing number of Chinese citizens begin to protest against unwanted planning projects in recent years (Sun, 2015). The movements in urban planning can be divided into three major types: first, local residents protesting against unfair housing compensation and violent relocation (He & Wu, 2009); second, local residents protesting against not-in-my-backyard projects (Lang & Xu, 2013); third, preservationists protesting against built-heritage demolition (Verdini, 2015). The third type is increasingly crucial with citizens' growing awareness of built-heritage preservation (Verdini, 2015). In developing countries, tensions between heritage preservation and urban development are critical because large-scale new construction threatens historic urban areas (Najd et al., 2015). In China, there

is an ongoing urban redevelopment boom, and the long neglected inner city has become a hotspot because of land and housing reform, and property-led development (He & Wu, 2005). The prevalent urban redevelopment often results in the demolition of historical buildings and neighborhoods (Shin, 2010). Even if a limited number of historical-cultural sites are being preserved, they are isolated by modern buildings which collectively make Chinese cities lose significant cultural meaning or Chinese character (Ma, 2007). Consequently, Chinese built-heritage movement in urban redevelopment is increasing (Verdini, 2015).

The success of public participation in urban governance depends on its power to influence decision-makers (Abbott, 2013). Civil society organizations (CSOs) in authoritarian China can exist only under a constant threat of suppression for they are a potential threat to official power-holders (Spires, 2011). Yet, current research shows that preservationists do influence decision-makers in Chinese urban (re)development through strategies, such as shaping public debates through news reports on the activities of property developers (Feng & Wang, 2014), and petitioning to the Mayor directly (Tan & Altrick, 2016). Moreover, several authors have demonstrated that the Internet platforms (e.g., blogs, microblogs, social networking sites, and content sharing sites) play a crucial role for activists to be influential. For instance, Castells (2015) emphasized the contribution of the Internet to activists based on empirical studies of social movements in the Internet age in Tunisia, Iceland, Egypt, Spain, and the USA. Likewise, Shirky (2008, 171) claimed that “to speak online is to publish, and to publish online is to connect with others... freedom of speech is now freedom of the press, and freedom of the press is freedom of assembly”. However, Gladwell (2010) argued that social media cannot help activists to be more influential because strong social ties between activists are needed to handle pressure, but social media only build weak social ties. Morozov (2009) even used the term “slacktivism” to describe the online activism that feel-good but has zero impact, and stated activism online can only be useful if the movements could really benefit from increased public attention.

Healy (1992) takes a more positive stance on communicative action when she writes; “it has the potential to change, to transform material conditions and established power relations through the continuous effort to “critique” and “demystify”; through increasing understanding among participants and hence highlighting oppressions and “dominatory” forces; and through creating well-grounded arguments for alternative analyses and perceptions-through actively constructing new understandings. Ultimately, the transformative potential of communicative action lies in the power embodied in the “better argument,” in the power of ideas, metaphors, images, and stories.” Even in Western, liberal democracies this statement might underestimate the role of existing power relations, let alone in an authoritarian context. Yet we argue that communicative action is part of the strategies of the Chinese built-heritage movement, but should be understood from the context. To further understand these strategies, section two employs the framing perspective to develop an analytical framework. In the arena of social movements, framing refers to the interpretive, signifying work engaged in by movement actors and other actors to render events and occurrences subjectively meaningful (Snow, 2007; Snow et al., 2007). Then section three analyzes the Chinese context, since the strategic choices of SMOs are both enabled and constrained by the political, cultural and media forces.

Section four introduces the case and methodology. Section five explores the strategies through the empirical work of the Bell-Drum Towers controversy. Section six summarizes the outcomes and discusses their relevance.

4.2 Theoretical framework

This section focuses on building an analytical framework to understand strategies of Chinese built-heritage movement in urban redevelopment. Among the various concepts and processes related to framing, three have been selected and adapted according to literature on social movements, especially Chinese built-heritage movements in the new media age. Table 4.1 shows the dimensions and elements of the framework. The first dimension consists of core framing tasks. The extent to which frames complete these tasks largely determines the success in performing their primary functions (Snow, 2007). The second dimension is frame alignment. Frame alignment is a necessary condition for participation (Snow et al., 1986). The third dimension is frame resonance with targeted audiences. This dimension measures the effectiveness of frames and the framing alignment processes (Snow, 2007).

Table 4.1 The framework for strategies of built-heritage movement in urban redevelopment

Dimensions	Elements
Core framing tasks	Diagnostic framing Prognostic framing Motivational framing
Frame alignment processes	Frame bridging Frame amplification (amplifying values or believes) Frame extension Frame transformation
Frame resonance with targeted audiences	With the governments, project developers, urban design firms With preservationists With local residents With bystanders

4.2.1 Core framing tasks of built-heritage movements

The core framing tasks are diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational framings (Snow, 2007). The first two tasks foster agreement and the latter fosters action. Diagnostic framing involves identifying the problem(s) and whom/what to blame (Benford & Snow, 2000). In the case of built-heritage movements in urban redevelopment, diagnostic framing involves a multitude of problems: what is worthy of preservation (Yung & Chan, 2011), how to preserve a specific heritage (Ng et al., 2010), whether the redevelopment procedure is legal (Tan & Altrock, 2016), etc. Prognostic framing tends to correspond with diagnostic framing (Gerhards & Rucht, 1992), and involves articulating solutions to identified problem(s) (Benford & Snow, 2000). Regarding built-heritage movements, prognostic framing involves criticizing the government’s plan and proposing new plans (Ng et al., 2010), petitions to higher governments to cancel or change the demolition projects (Zhai & Ng, 2013), launching online/offline campaigns to stop the demolition (Ku, 2012), etc. Motives for participation in specific

activities must be created (Gerhards & Rucht, 1992). Motivational framing involves providing a “call to arms” or rationale for engaging in corrective activities (Benford, 1993). The generic vocabularies are severity of the problem, sense of urgency, efficacy of taking action, propriety of taking action (Benford & Snow, 2000).

4.2.2 Frame alignment processes

Frame alignment processes refer to strategic efforts of individuals and/or CSOs to link their interests and interpretive frames with those of actual/potential members and resource providers (Benford & Snow, 2000). Snow et al. (1986) propose four types of frame alignment processes based on their research observations, i.e., frame bridging, frame amplification, frame extension, and frame transformation. Frame bridging occurs at the organizational level, as between two CSOs within the same movement, or at the individual level, as the linkage of an CSO with public opinion preference clusters (Snow et al., 1986). Direct mail was an important bridging mechanism (Snow et al., 1986), but online and mobile-phone messages are now widely used in the mobilization activities in contemporary China (e.g., Cheng, 2013). Frame amplification refers to the idealization, embellishment, clarification or invigoration of existing values or beliefs (Benford & Snow, 2000). The five kinds of beliefs that are especially relevant to movement mobilization are the severity of the problem, efficacy of taking action, propriety of taking action, the locus of causality or blame, and stereotypic beliefs about antagonists (Snow et al., 1986). Frame extension refers to expanding a movement’s primary frame to include interests or values “that are incidental to its primary objectives but of considerable salience to potential adherents” (Snow et al., 1986). Regarding built-heritage movements, preservationists’ interests of preserving heritage can be extended to local residents’ interests of better compensations (e.g., Tan & Altrock, 2016). Frame transformation refers to framing erroneous beliefs/values when beliefs/values that CSOs promote do not resonate with, or are even antithetical to, conventional ones (Snow et al., 1986).

4.2.3 Frame resonance with targeted audiences

Frames aim to mobilize potential adherents, to garner bystander support, and to demobilize antagonists (Snow, 2007). In the case of built-heritage movements, the potential adherents could be individual/organizational preservationists and local residents (e.g., Deng et al., 2015; Tan & Altrock, 2016); the so-called antagonists usually are the local governments, project developers (e.g., Feng & Wang, 2014), and the urban design firms; bystanders are people who participated by chance (e.g., Ku, 2012). The prospect of resonance is commonly undermined by four problems: the problem of misalignment, such as attention is focused on identifying whom to blame without firmly identifying victims; the problem of scope, such as framing claims are general or specific, inclusive or exclusive; the problem of exhaustion, such as a particular frame has been overused; and the problem of relevance, such as the frame is contradicted by the flow of events, or framing efforts are not strong enough to have resonance (Snow, 2007).

In sum, this framework not only can be used to explore movement strategies but also can be used to examine the effectiveness of these strategies. Whether the specific strategy can effectively influence the decision-makers or not is important, since it represents the power of civil society in planning. Based on this framework, strategies of built-heritage movement in the Bell-Drum Towers controversy are analyzed. But before doing the empirical analysis, the Chinese context for the movement is explored in the following section since this chapter assumes that the strategic choices of SMOs are enabled and constrained by this context.

4.3 The context of Chinese built-heritage movement in urban redevelopment

This section analyzes the Chinese context for built-heritage movement in urban redevelopment, it first introduces different levels of policies and plans that are relevant to Chinese built-heritage movement in urban redevelopment. Next, the barriers for implementing these policies and plans are analyzed. Then, the rise of civil society in built-heritage preservation and the feasible movement approaches are presented. Last, the opportunities and challenges for the movement in the Internet age are highlighted. Figure 1 shows the four levels of policies and plans that are directly relevant to the built-heritage movement in China's urban redevelopment. The national-level policies include the Law on Protection of Cultural Relics (issued in 1982 and last amended in 2017), the 2008 Law on Urban and Rural Planning, and the 2008 Regulation on the Preservation of Famous Historic-cultural Cities, Towns, and Villages. These laws have integrated built-heritage preservation into urban planning, and the regulation has provided detailed articles for built-heritage preservation in urban (re)development:

Article 3 ... protecting and prolonging the traditional layouts and historical landscape, safeguarding the authenticity and integrity of the historical-cultural heritage,... correctly managing the relationship between the economic-social development and the protection of the historical-cultural heritage.

Article 21 ... protect the traditional layout, historical landscape and spatial scales...

Article 23 Construction activities ... shall not ... damage its traditional layout and historical landscape.

Article 28⁸ ... building or expanding the necessary infrastructure and public service facilities in the core protection area, the municipal department in charge of urban-rural planning shall consult the municipal department in charge of cultural heritage before issuing a licence for project planning.

The demolition of any buildings, structures or facilities other than historical buildings within the core protection area shall be approved by the municipal department in charge of urban-rural planning and the municipal department in charge of cultural heritage.

Article 29 For examination and approval of the construction activities specified in Article 28 of this Regulation, the examination and approval authority shall ... announce the matters under examination and approval, solicit opinions from the public, and inform the stakeholders of the right to demand a hearing...

⁸ Only information about cities is provided here.

Provincial policies or plans on the preservation of historic-cultural heritage have been made by most of the 31 provinces. Municipal policies and plans on the preservation of historic-cultural heritage have been made by several cities. 134 of the 675 Chinese cities have been entitled as “Famous Historical-cultural Cities” by the State Council. These cities have to compile municipal protection plans according to the 2008 national Regulation on the Preservation of Famous Historic-cultural Cities, Towns, and Villages. Policies or plans for specific historic-cultural heritage are made by municipal governments as well, such as the Beijing 2004 Statement to Delimit the Buffer Zone of the Forbidden City. The district-level policies and plans on the preservation of historic-cultural heritage have been made by some district governments, especially when there is a Historic-cultural Protection Zone within its jurisdiction.

On top of this, there are policies indirectly relevant to the built-heritage movement: first, the Constitution of China (2004 version). Participating in urban redevelopment is a constitutional right since the Constitution stipulates that “all state agencies and state employees must ... hear opinions and suggestions of the public, accept its supervision”. Second, the 2011 national Regulation on Expropriation and Compensation for Houses on State-owned Land. This policy can be used by preservationists to question local governments regarding just compensation. Third, the rules of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). These rules are used by preservationists to protect UNESCO world heritage sites in China.

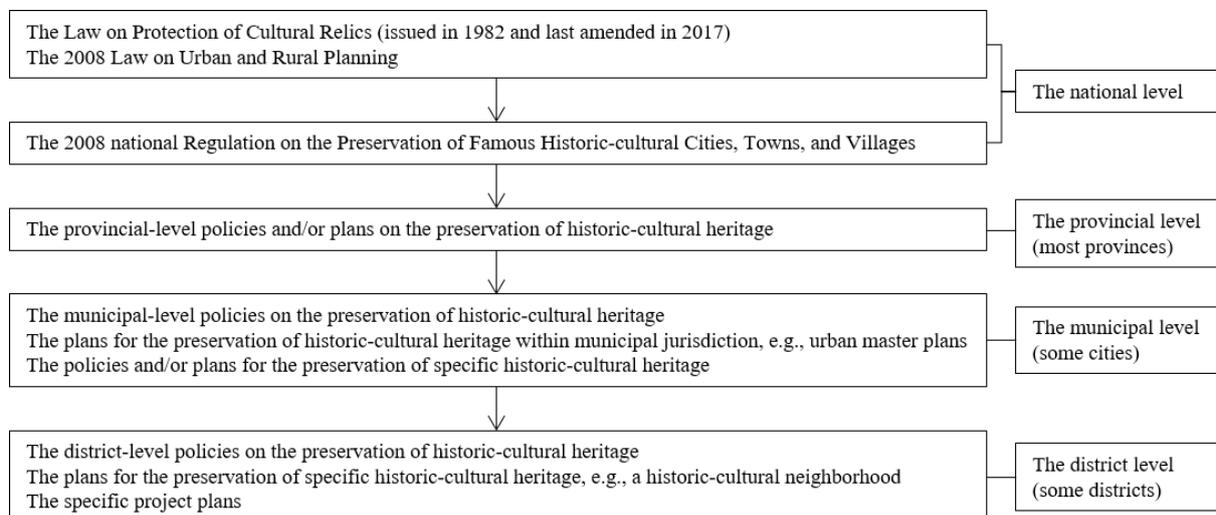


Figure 4.1 Policies and plans directly relevant to the built-heritage movement in Chinese urban redevelopment

The implementation of these policies and plans is hampered by local governments⁹, especially district governments. After the fiscal and administrative decentralization in the 1980s, district governments have emerged as the main decision-makers about urban (re)development and

⁹ Local governments in urban China usually contain five levels (from high to low): the provincial government, the municipal government, the district government, the street office, and the residential committee.

have taken the primary responsibility for raising local revenues to finance local services (Logan, 2011). Local revenues are highly dependent on land finance (i.e., revenues from land appropriation, development, and transfer) (Sun & Zhou, 2014). In addition, the two most important performance criteria for Chinese cadres are economic development and social order (Teets, 2013). Therefore, district governments have the power and sufficient incentives to give priority to economic development in urban redevelopment, and China has “a demonstrated readiness to suppress protests which challenge government projects” (Lang & Xu, 2013).

The preference of the district governments in urban redevelopment has drawn growing criticism from Chinese citizens. CSOs that focus on protecting cultural heritage have emerged recently, these organizations can be divided into two kinds according to whether they are registered with civil affairs authorities or not. According to the national Regulation for Registration and Management of Social Organizations (last amended in 2016), the registered CSOs have the right to seek funding, but also have to pass annual inspections by civil affairs authorities. Yet the real-world built-heritage movement, whether registered or not, is not supported by the judicial system. Citizens can bring a case against persons/institutions in a court of law for private interests only, not for public interests. The Administrative Procedure Law of China (last amended in 2017) requires that a plaintiff must be a stakeholder, and the judges normally do not consider preservationists as stakeholders of cultural-heritage. Real-world movements are also severely restricted by the 1989 Law on Assembly, Procession and Demonstration. Among others, this law stipulates that an assembly in China requires permission from the police and must have a principal who has to provide his/her real name, occupation, and address to the police.

Previous studies show that preservationists tend to give their voices through new media (e.g., Deng et al., 2015). The number of new media users in China is large, e.g., the number of Weibo¹⁰ users reaches 316 million in 2018 (CNNIC, 2018). The Internet is charged by the National Internet Information Office of China and thus local governments cannot silence citizens online. Yet, the online movement faces challenges as well. Chinese governments implement effective control of what information travels over the Internet by barring nearly all foreign new media from operating in China, by blocking keywords, by requiring new media providers to remove unfavorable posts timely, and by having unfavorable posts removed by Internet police (King et al., 2013). Based on comparing the content of millions of posts originating from 1,382 social media services before and after these posts were censored, King et al. (2013) found that posts that represent, reinforce, or spur social mobilization will be deleted.

To summarize, according to related official policies and plans, built-heritage preservationists could mobilize support from the central government, provincial governments, and municipal governments, and could demobilize district governments and other “antagonists”. Meanwhile, preservationists could mobilize support from local residents and external citizens based on

¹⁰ Chinese microblogs, like twitter.

common interests, values, or beliefs. The Internet could provide a platform for the built-heritage movement. It is in this context that strategies of Chinese built-heritage movement in urban redevelopment are developed. The remainder of this chapter will explore the strategies within such context through the case of the bell-drum towers controversy.

4.4 The case and methodology

4.4.1 The Bell-Drum Towers controversy

To understand the strategies of Chinese built-heritage movement in urban redevelopment, the Bell-Drum Towers controversy has been chosen for four reasons: first, this controversy involves two interesting phases. In the first phase, the movement was led by a registered, CSO, and the activities went from real world to cyberspace. In the second phase, the movement was led by an unregistered CSO and several individual preservationists, it involved both online and offline activities. Second, various audiences were involved in the efforts of preservationists through frame bridging, amplification, and extension. Third, the effectiveness of strategies can be examined since detailed information on the responses of audiences is available. Fourth, the controversy can reflect the role of the then newest and popular social media (i.e., Douban and Weibo) in Chinese social movement. The project was started in 2000, which is seen as the starting year of Weibo in China (Xu, 2013).

The Bell-Drum Towers were built for timekeeping in 1420, have been a component of the Beijing's central axis since Ming and Qing Dynasties, are located in the "core protection area" of the "25 Historic-cultural Protection Zones of Beijing's Old City", and within the buffer zone of a UNESCO world heritage site (i.e., the Forbidden City) (Liu, 2015). The movement to preserve the Bell-Drum Towers area had two phases: 2010 and 2011-2013, based on the project process. The Dongcheng district government initiated the redevelopment project in January 2010, the lead contractor was *Beijing Oriental Culture Assets Operation Corporation*, this corporation is affiliated with the Dongcheng district government and commissioned the urban design firm Boston International Design Group (BIDG) to make the "Beijing Time Cultural City" plan (Sexton & Ren, 2010). This project was widely criticized for it would explicitly destroy the built heritage of this area. The Beijing Cultural Heritage Protection Center (BJCHP), a grassroots CSO that registered with Beijing Municipal Bureau of Civil Affairs in 2003, played an important role in protesting against the project in the first phase. This project was suspended in June 2010, and was re-started by the Dongcheng district government under the name of "Bell-Drum Towers Square Restoration Project" in 2011. The Bell-Drum Towers Square refers to the open area around the two towers. The project in the second phase encountered wider and stronger resistance than that in the first phase (Graezer Bideau & Yan, 2018). An unregistered CSO called the *Bell-Drum Towers Neighborhood Team* (BDTT) was founded to oppose this project. "Unregistered" indicates that BDTT is not governed by civil affairs authorities. The expertise of BDTT members are closely related to this project, such as Urban Planning & Design, Landscape Architecture, and Sociology. In the end the demolition continued, but at a much smaller scale than originally intended.

4.4.2 Data collection and research methods

The data include relevant official documents and the discourses and practices of actors involved. The data were divided into four groups. The first group focuses on preservationists. Data on the discourses and practices of preservationists were collected from social networking websites (Douban, Weibo, and Blog), domestic and international digital news archives, and the website of BJCHP. Key members of BJCHP and BDTT were interviewed to gather information on their motivations, practices, and experience in the movement. The policy documents used by preservationists were collected online. The second group focuses on the governments. Relevant official documents and policy statements were collected online. Special attention was given to the district government, whose discourses and practices were collected from its official Weibo account, digital news archives, and interviews with preservationists and local residents. The third group focuses on local residents. The discourses and practices of local residents were collected from their comments online, interviews with them, and digital news archives. The last group focuses on bystanders. The data mainly came from Weibo posts and digital news archives. The textual and visual (pictures) data collected were chronologically ordered and then were analyzed according to the framework, as shown in the following section.\

4.5 Results

4.5.1 The first phase

During the “Two Meetings”¹¹ of the Dongcheng district in January 2010, official media reported that the district government planned to spend RMB 5 billion (about \$725 million) to redevelop the 12.5-hectares area around the Bell-Drum towers. News reports show that the “Beijing Time Cultural City” plan included enlarging the Bell-Drum Towers square by widening the streets, redeveloping the square to celebrate the past timekeeping role of the Bell-Drum towers, building a conference center and an underground complex with parking lots, shops and a timekeeping museum (Y. Jiang, 2010). The then Dongcheng district mayor explicitly told journalists that this project was initiated to attract international company headquarters and international conferences in January 2010 (Sexton & Ren, 2010). The “Beijing Time Cultural City” plan, however, was firmly opposed by preservationists, especially BJCHP.

Core framing tasks

The *diagnostic framing* of preservationists included two major issues. The first issue was that the project plan violated upper-level plans. Mr. Wang, a former journalist of a state-run press agency in China, considered the project as a real estate development project, and declared that the demolition of this area would violate the “Beijing’s Urban Master Plan” and the “Protection Plan for the Famous Historical-cultural City of Beijing”, since both plans required to preserve the Bell-Drum Towers area (Wang, 2010). The second issue was that the project plan was irrational. BJCHP (2010) asserted that building a new museum was overdone since improving the quality of the museum exhibitions inside the two towers was enough. Therefore,

¹¹ The “District People’s Congress” and the “District Committee of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference”.

the primary goal of preservationists was to stop the project. A secondary goal was to raise preservation awareness, according to our interview with a core member of BJCHP.

The corresponding *prognostic framing* was mobilizing supports from citizens and providing an alternative plan to the district government. This alternative plan stated that it aimed to maintain the authenticity and integrity of this area, to provide this cultural heritage with dignity, and to make local residents live there with dignity, and suggested the district government to use the same funds to renovate the area rather than building a pseudo-historical neighborhood, to give local residents opportunities and rights to make a choice (of where to live), and to achieve real public participation through holding international seminars or meetings on this project (BJCHP, 2010). The *motivational framing* was about providing rationales. BJCHP (2010) showed the “severity of the problem” by claiming that the National Cultural Heritage Administration began to care about the project and emphasized making a scientific decision and a strict approval process. BJCHP created “a sense of urgency” by stressing the news item that the Bell-Drum Towers area was recognized as the “Best Place to See Before It's Gone” by an American news magazine in 2010, and called the Dongcheng district government to work with others to make this “Best Place to See” never gone. BJCHP provided the “propriety of taking actions” by saying that one international design firm made a plan that undermined the landscape of old Beijing and proclaimed that “they don’t cherish their own cultural heritage, why do they require us to cherish their cultural heritage” (BJCHP, 2010).

Frame alignment processes

BJCHP posted articles and news reports on its website, including the interviews of domestic and international journalists with the founder of BJCHP, in order to mobilize adherents. BJCHP planned to have a real-world public seminar on this project in March 2010. Several famous preservationists were invited, local residents and external parties were invited through publishing the activity notice on the BJCHP website and on the Douban social network. BJCHP posted its alternative plan on its website which included giving local residents the right of deciding whether to move away or not and giving the general public the right of participating in this project. In these strategies, engaging people who are interested in cultural heritage preservation is *frame bridging*, and engaging people with other interests, such as the local residents who were interested in better compensation, is *frame extension*. *Frame amplification* was employed as well. For one thing, BJCHP (2010) amplified the value of the Bell-Drum Towers area by stating that this area was of high cultural value since it was “Beijing’s last remaining traditional neighborhoods”. In fact, there are other traditional neighborhoods in the old city of Beijing, such as the Dongsinan neighborhood. For another, BJCHP amplified “the stereotypic beliefs about antagonists”. BJCHP implicitly blamed the urban design firm by saying that “the BIDG claimed that it had seriously studied the preservation regulations and plans of old Beijing, (just as) another famous international design firm who made similar claims but designed a plan that undermined the landscape of old Beijing” (BJCHP, 2010). BJCHP (2010) also said that the area might suffer the fate of the “Qianmen street” which was replaced with a spiritless Qing-dynasty pastiche and thus lost its cultural heritage value and commercial value. The strategy of BJCHP was rather prudent, as

the founder of BJCHP said: “it is a challenge for BJCHP to pass the annual inspection each years” (personal interview, 2016).

Frame resonance with targeted audiences

The movement got *resonance with the district government*. The government suspended the project and claimed that the “Beijing Time Cultural City” plan was just a “preliminary conceptual idea”, actually, the website of BIDG showed that the commissioned work of designing the “Beijing Time Cultural City” plan was already finished. The alternative plan proposed by BJCHP got *resonance with the district government* respecting the claimed project goal. The originally claimed goal was for commercial redevelopment, as indicated by the undisguised statement of the then Dongcheng district mayor in January 2010, but in May 2010, the project goals claimed by the district government were changed to improving the residents’ quality of life and restoring the landscape of the Bell-Drum towers area (Xiao, 2010), which echoed the stated goal in the alternative plan published in April 2010. The public seminar activity posted on Douban had *resonated with other preservationists and bystanders*. For this Douban event, 647 Douban users indicated that they were interested in it, 210 users indicated that they would attend at it. The discourses of preservationists got *resonance with bystanders*. For instance, in May 2010, an American news magazine TIME recognized the Bell-Drum Towers area as the “Best Place to See Before It's Gone” because “...while the old towers will stay, local preservationists fear the neighborhood will lose its shops, bars, old courtyard homes and atmosphere...” (Ramzy, 2010).

Not all strategies succeeded. The frame extension to *the local residents* partially failed. On Douban, several users commented that they were local residents and that they were opposed to preservationists’ participation since the local conditions were too poor to live. The failure of this strategy might be caused by “the problem of misalignment”, i.e., several local residents did not see themselves as victims of the project, on the contrary, they considered the project as an opportunity for them to move to a better house. Also, the public seminar activity failed as it was cancelled by the police, perhaps on the ground that it had violated the 1989 Chinese “Law on Assembly, Procession and Demonstration”.

4.5.2 The second phase

The redevelopment project was re-started by the Dongcheng district government at the end of 2011. The early information disclosed indicates that the project in the second phase was named as “Bell-Drum Towers Square Restoration Project”, that it aimed to restore the landscape of Bell-Drum Towers Square as it appeared in Ming and Qing dynasties, and that the project would demolish 66 courtyards (covering 4,700 m²) since they were inconsistent with the buildings on the 1750 “Complete Map of Peking” (Liu, 2015). The project began to be implemented when the eviction notices suddenly pasted to the walls of the project area on December 12, 2012. The eviction notices required local residents to leave within 2.5 months, which included the Chinese New Year. The new plan was less ambitious than the previous one and was not published through official media, but several preservationists¹² re-started the

¹² CHP was not active in the second phase.

movement when the eviction notices transmitted online, such as the famous preservationist Ms. Zeng, BDTT, the architect Mr. Fang, and Mr. Jia.

Core framing tasks

The *diagnostic framing* of preservationists included three major issues in the second phase, each of these issues pertained to the legitimacy of the project. The *first issue* was that the restoration plan violated several policies and plans regarding built-heritage preservation: (1) Articles of the 2008 national “Regulation on the Preservation of Famous Historic-cultural Cities, Towns, and Villages” were violated (see section two of this chapter). As the online posts of preservationists read, Article 3 had been violated in terms of “protecting and prolonging”, “traditional layouts”, and “authenticity and integrity”. Article 21 had been violated since the district government claimed to “correct the square formed naturally” but the so-called “correct” did undermine “the traditional layout, historical landscape and spatial scales”. A blog post of Mr. Song, an architect student, revealed that all courtyards in the project area already existed in 1750 based on comparing the 1750 “Complete Map of Peking” and a contemporary map, although there were new buildings inside courtyards. Article 23 had been violated as Ms. Zeng argued that the article content of “historical landscape” should include the living historic culture composed by the inhabitants and houses. (2) The project approval letter issued by the National Cultural Heritage Administration was violated. This approval letter involved 77 courtyards, but preservationists found that there were two kinds of eviction notices: “Notice of Expropriation for Houses within the Bell-Drum Towers Square Restoration Project Area” and “Notice of Relocation for Houses in the Surrounding Area of the Bell-Drum Towers Square Restoration Project”, the former notice involved 66 courtyards and the latter involved 136 courtyards. (3) the 2004 “Statement to Delimit the Buffer Zone of the Forbidden City” had not been followed. One Weibo post of BDTT (2013) read that “this Statement specifies that: ‘it is not allowed to demolish stretches of hutongs and courtyards in principle, the main alleys will not be widened in principle, changing the reconstruction style of developer-led demolition and changes’, but in this project, stretches of courtyards were demolished, the main alleys were widened, and a real estate company was in charge of expropriating houses”. The *second issue* was that the district government violated policies and plans regarding public participation in urban planning. For instance, eight of the nine related announcements issued by the district government only published titles. The approval letter about the plan from the municipal urban planning department had not been published, which violated the national “Regulation on the Preservation of Famous Historic-cultural Cities, Towns, and Villages”. The *third issue* was that the national “Regulation on Expropriation and Compensation for Houses on State-owned Land” was violated. For instance, this national Regulation stipulates that the compensation standard for expropriating houses on State-owned Land must follow the Regulation, but the “relocation” notice did not comply. Therefore, preservationists tried to stop the project in order to protect built-heritage and related rights.

The corresponding *prognostic framing* included multiply solutions. Unlike preservationists in the first phase who proposed an alternative plan, preservationists in the second phase focused on promoting the district government to conform to related policies and plans. First, petitioning to governments above the district-level according to related policies. Second,

petitioning to the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), which is a professional association that offers advice to UNESCO on World Heritage Sites. Third, demobilizing the district government directly through the Internet platform according to related policies and plans. Fourth, mobilizing supports from local residents and citizens. The *motivational framing* included both “calls to arms” and providing rationales. BDTT provided a “call to arms” on Weibo by saying that “hope you could record the changes of the Bell-Drum towers area with us in the WebGIS”. In the petition letter to ICOMOS, BDTT wrote that they hoped ICOMOS could report this event to related Chinese departments. As for rationales, the “sense of urgency” was framed by Mr. Fang. Mr. Fang made a blog post which read that “urgent alarms from an architect: courtyards in the Bell and Drum Towers area will be demolished ... it seems that the current work of Beijing focuses on large-scale demolition ... is it the most dangerous moment for Beijingers?”. Mr. Song created the “efficacy of taking actions” as his blog post stated that “there are many things need to be done (to preserve cultural heritage), doing something is not guaranteed to succeed, but doing nothing is doomed to fail”.

Frame alignment processes

Various *frame bridging* activities were conducted by preservationists. First, Ms. Zeng, petitioned to the National Cultural Heritage Administration for disclosing information about the “restoration” project, and sent letters to Beijing Municipal Bureau of Cultural Heritage and Beijing Municipal Commission of City Planning, respectively. The letters suggested that being cautious when checking (re)development plans of old Beijing, that consulting the public through announcements and hearings according to related policies, that the plan made by BIDG should be invalidated according to law since this firm does not have the qualification for planning projects involved cultural relics. Second, Ms. Zeng suggested the district government to publish the design plan and related approval letters, to stop the demolition, and to provide reasonable expropriation compensation for residents. Third, Mr. Jia called citizens to sign an e-petition titled “the Bell and Drum Towers in Beijing are in danger! collecting 10,000 signatures to safeguard the 66 courtyards” on Weibo. Fourth, BDTT reported the demolition process frequently on its Weibo account to mobilize citizens and to force the government to give up illegal demolition. Fifth, BDTT accepted interview invitations of several journalists they trusted to shape public debates.

The movement *amplified related values and beliefs*. First, several values were idealized. The first blog post of BDTT states that they decided to do their duty based on the 2005 municipal “Protection Measures for the Famous Historical-cultural City of Beijing” which stipulates that “every agency and individual has the duty to protect Beijing’s old city”, and that they anticipated their supervision could get attention and responses according to the Constitution of China. The Weibo posts of BDTT states that “... (we) hope in this platform, historic culture could be respected, people could enjoy their deserved rights”. Second, the values of the project area were amplified. A news report indicated that three local restaurants were time-honored brands and did not want to leave, that one of them was worldwide known for having served the then vice president of the USA in 2011, and that many netizens planned to come here for a “last bowl of stewed liver” (Lei, 2012). In fact, two of the three restaurants

were just outside the project area. Third, the “stereotypic beliefs about antagonists” were amplified. An entertainment website “Sina Style” held a vote on Weibo, the question was “courtyards of the Bell-Drum Towers will be demolished, what is your opinion on it?”, the three answers were: “Oppose, ancient architecture as cultural heritage should not disappear”, “Support, can increase local residents’ income”, and “Neutral, waiting for the explicit statement (of the government)”. The first answer made use of stereotypic beliefs about local governments and project developers in urban redevelopment. Fourth, the “beliefs about the seriousness of the problem” were amplified. One Weibo post declared that if a World Heritage property was seriously threatened, the World Heritage Committee would add it to the “List of World Heritage in Danger”, or even would delete it from the World Heritage List. UNESCO (2018) states that this provision is true but it has been applied only twice to date, and that inscribing on the List of World Heritage in Danger should not be considered as a sanction.

Frame extension aims to enlarge movement’s adherent base by encompassing interests not obviously associated with the movement. In order to extend to residents’ property rights activism, Ms. Zeng worked with BDTT to visit local residents one by one, and told local residents the values of their houses and which policies can be used to protect their interests. As mentioned before, the project was located in the Buffer Zone of the Forbidden City, which involved the work of ICOMOS, so BDTT sent a letter to ICOMOS to claim that: “the project would undermine the historic landscape and the building fabric around the Forbidden City and the Beijing’s central axis; the intangible cultural heritage around the Forbidden City and the Beijing’s central axis – folk culture – would be negatively affected with many residents move out”. In all, compared to preservationists in the first phase, those in the second phase adopted more conflicting discourses. This might be because BDTT was unregistered and realized that the plan itself had violated policies based on their expert knowledge of urban planning.

Frame resonance with targeted audiences

The framings of preservationists had *resonated with the governments above the district-level*. The Beijing Municipal Commission of City Planning informed Ms. Zeng in January 2012 that they had told the Dongcheng district government to make sure urban plans follow the policies on the protection of famous historic-cultural cities, and that Beijing Oriental Culture Assets Operation Corporation cease all commissions to BIDG. In December 2012, the Beijing Municipal Commission of City Planning contacted Ms. Zeng again and invited her to participate in the house acquisition meeting for this project. The National Cultural Heritage Administration emailed Ms. Zeng with its approval letter for the project in January 2013.

The framing by the preservationists *resonated with the Dongcheng district government*. The district government proactively vindicated themselves on Weibo from December 2012 to January 2013. The Weibo posts created by the district government focused on three aspects: the first aspect was defending the rationality of the restoration plan. For instance, the Weibo posts read: “the project aims to solve the problems of the undermined local historic landscape, of the potential fire hazards, of the poor living conditions, etc.”, “the project will take maps of Qing dynasty and the early days of new China into consideration, not just simply restores the

square to its former state”, “it has seriously and properly considered the relationship between development and preservation”, “the plan avoids creating a historical pastiche street”, “houses within the eviction line have been examined one by one, they are neither cultural relics nor of historical value, the project does not affect the fabric of hutongs”, “this project has no relationship with BIDG”. The second aspect was defending the legitimacy of the project procedures. For instance, the Weibo states: “The project has been approved by administrators and experts of the National Cultural Heritage Administration, the Municipal Commission of City Planning, and the Municipal Bureau of Cultural Heritage, etc. it is a legal public service project, it is definitely not illegal”, “The project has followed all procedures”. The third aspect was defending the legitimacy of the compensation standard for house acquisition. For instance, the Weibo posts said: “the compensation standard for house acquisition is made according to related policies. Moreover, monetary incentives and housing incentives have been provided to encourage them to move away timely”. Later, the district government installed 12 closed-circuit television cameras in the project area, forbid local residents to talk with preservationists, banned local journalists’ reports on preservationists in order to weaken dissenting voices. In the end, about 60 courtyards were demolished.

Frames resonated with other preservationists through online communication using the “@” account names and “share” functions of Weibo and blog. *Frames resonated with some local residents only.* Although preservationists were criticized by local residents, it would be misleading to suggest that all residents were opposed to them. Our interview with one remained resident who ran hutong tours indicated that he was willing to stay in here and had helped preservationists. *Frames also resonated with bystanders.* First, the e-vote had 423 voters, 93.4% of them chose oppose, 3.5% of them chose support, and 3.1% of them chose neutral. Second, Weibo posts attracted citizens to comment on and repost. E.g., Fang’s post had about 5,000 readers and about 400 comments (Xu, 2013). Third, the official website of American Planning Association (APA) posted an announcement in December 2011, which hinted members of BIDG were not certified by the American Institute of Certified Planners (APA, 2011). APA (2011) posted this announcement since preservationists questioned American planning institutes because of BIDG. Fourth, a scholar developed a WebGIS for BDTT to recruit more participants. Our interview with this scholar showed that his main goal was to publicize his developing techniques. Fifth, a graffiti artist sprayed “do not care (in Chinese)” on one broken wall, he did it because the project area was in the city center and many people could notice his work (Lu, 2016). Sixth, although reports of local media (e.g., Beijing Evening News) were neutral or positive toward the project, reports of national media (e.g., China Culture) showed that local landscape might be undermined.

Not all strategies succeeded. First, preservations failed to resonated with UNESCO, as Liu (2015), one member of BDTT, stated, “UNESCO replied and said they would send somebody to investigate, but did not take any actions”. This might because “the problem of exhaustion”, i.e., UNESCO are tired of hearing about this kind of events. The main goal of China’s strategic censorship of new media seems to be permitting citizens’ supervision on certain malfeasance under the premise of not threatening social stability. Second, after Mr. Jia held

the e-vote, the police called him and asked him not publish related information online. Third, the frame extension with local residents was impeded by the district government.

In summary, this section attempts to empirically understand strategies of Chinese built-heritage movement in urban redevelopment through examining the case of the Bell-Drum Towers controversy according to the framework. In this case, various citizens were involved in the efforts of preservationists through frame bridging, amplification, and extension. The effectiveness of these strategies depends largely on the aforementioned context. The following section synthesized major conclusions from the perspective of public participation in urban planning in the Chinese context.

4.6 Discussion and conclusions

The empirical study shows that the success or failure of the strategies depends largely on the context. The official policies regarding built-heritage preservation and public participation enable built-heritage movement to operate within institutional channels, while the performance of the district government made built-heritage movement to adopt confrontational strategies as well. The movement had two phases, the primary goal of preservationists in both phases was to stop the project to protect built-heritage, but different strategies were adopted. In the first phase, preservationists tried to influence the decision-makers (the district government) through mobilizing local and external citizens to shape public debates. The specific strategies included accepting journalistic interviews, domestic and international; planning to organize a real-world public seminar; and raising objections and proposing an alternative plan on a private website. The strategy of organizing a real-world public seminar was cancelled by the police, probably because this activity would violate the 1989 Law on Assembly, Procession and Demonstration. The CSO that registered with a civil affairs authority avoided to question the governments directly, in order to successfully pass the annual inspections made by the authority. In the second phase, the unregistered CSO and other preservationists tried to influence the district government through demobilizing it directly, mobilizing governments higher than the district-level, and mobilizing local and external parties to shape public debates. The specific strategies included questioning the district government about the legitimacy of the plan formulation and implementation on social media, refuting the claims of the district government on social media, supervising the plan implementation process onsite and exposing it online, petitioning to related governments above the district-level according to law, visiting local residents to help them effectively claim for “just” compensation, organizing e-petitions and e-votes. These strategies were effective to some extent, considering that the large-scale demolition plan was replaced by a small-scale one, and that the district government gave up a commercial redevelopment and provided a public square for citizens. Yet, the onsite activities were inhibited by the district government, and the e-petitions were inhibited by the police. The secondary goal of defending the right to the city, which includes the right of inhabitants to appropriation and the right of citizens to participation (Purcell, 2008), existed in both phases, the secondary goal of raising preservation awareness was especially evident in the first phase, achieving these secondary goals needs long-term efforts and this movement had contributed to it.

There is a debate about the impact of the Internet on social movement, as mentioned in the introduction. Our study contributes to this debate by providing the underlying reasons for the impact of the Internet on built-heritage movement in the Chinese context. The empirical results demonstrate that the Internet platform helps citizens in China to be influential, this finding supports the conclusions of Castells (2015) but rejects the claims of Gladwell (2010) and Morozov (2009). This might be because the Chinese policy of maintaining social stability makes local governments value citizens' dissenting voices online, but also because the Internet is charged by the National Internet Information Office and thus local governments cannot silence citizens online. The empirical work also shows that the contributions of various new media to the movement differ, and that the emergence of Weibo greatly facilitates shaping public debates in the second phase, as the responses to Weibo posts were much higher than those to the Douban-event and to BJCHP's website. Furthermore, this research argues that new media could complement, instead of replace, traditional media in social movements. For the general public who do not use the Internet, providing their opinions to journalists is an important approach for them to give their voices. The traditional media also can help citizens notice urban redevelopment controversies if they do not search the controversies online on purpose.

The power of civil society in Chinese urban redevelopment is gradually recognized by local governments. In our empirical work, the Dongcheng district government changed from not realizing the potential of the movement towards taking measures to prevent and stop the movement. First, the project goal claimed by the district government changed from commercial redevelopment to a public service project and improving local living conditions. Second, the project was widely published in the first phase, but was silently re-started at the end of 2011. Third, the project in the second phase was hindered by preservationists through questioning the legitimacy of the demolition process online frequently. This result supports the finding of Hu et al. (2013) that local governments gave up using the traditional method – relocating residents and rebuilding the area – to redevelop a historical area in Beijing because the governments realized that the traditional method would cause serious social conflicts with preservationists, and then the governments themselves would be criticized by the media, citizens and high-level governments. Yet, we can see that local governments still are the main decision-makers in Chinese urban redevelopment.

Built-heritage movements existed in many places of the Western world during the post-World War II, as a result of the large-scale demolition of the historic and “inefficient” areas in the rapid urban transformations (Nyseth & Sognnæs, 2013). The strategies of built-heritage movement in countries like Norway have moved from contestation to collaborative governance that anchors the goals and norms of citizens on preservation (Nyseth & Sognnæs, 2013). By comparison, preservationists in China still need to develop various strategies based on contestation to influence the decision-makers. Besides, the frame extension with local residents is harder to implement in China than in Western countries, as local residents can be forbidden to talk with preservationists by the district government. Citizens' right to participate in decision making about urban space in China is suppressed. Using frame analyses is a useful

means to uncover the strategies of social movements, but these can only be understood with profound knowledge of the contexts in which frames are developed, aligned and resonating. Collaborative planning that includes the voice of preservationist is still a long way off in China, but the claim of Friedman (2005) that China has no civil society in the sense of social organizations that actively participate in the debates of public issues, is clearly outdated.

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Chapter 5

The Usefulness of a Web-based Participatory Planning Support System in Wuhan, China



5 The Usefulness of a Web-based Participatory Planning Support System in Wuhan, China

Abstract

Public participation in urban planning has become a legal requirement in China since the 2008 Urban and Rural Planning Law prescribed to collect the opinions of the public in preparing plans. The way in which this participation is organized is left to local governments and current practices are still in a stage of experimentation. Drawing on Western experience various participatory tools have been explored, including in some instances Web-based planning support systems (PSS). The current literature has identified several potentials and shortcomings in the performance of PSS that define their usefulness. However, these have been identified in the context of democratic societies and communicative planning paradigms. To what extent do these potentials and shortcomings also pertain to the emerging practice in China? this chapter aims to widen the understanding of the usefulness of Web-based PSS when these are applied in a Chinese context. To do so, the paper first presents a conceptual framework that divides usefulness into utility and usability, and thereafter, it analyzes the “East Lake greenway planning project” in Wuhan. The results show that the Wuhan PSS provides new functionalities in eliciting ideas from independent citizens in the early stage of the planning process. In terms of usability, the system meets many of the criteria, but requires a high level of computer experience and domain knowledge restricting its use to “professional citizens”. From the point of view of western planners this would seriously limit the usefulness as a participatory tool, but it is legitimate in China. Given the low level of computer literacy, limited access to the internet and a lacking tradition of public involvement in state affairs, it is nevertheless clear that there is a need to improve Web-based PSS and combine them with other participatory methods, both online and offline, to facilitate the participation of a diverse group of target users.

Keywords: PSS; usefulness; utility; usability; public participation; China

5.1 Introduction

In 2008 the Chinese Urban and Rural Planning Law was changed to include the requirement to collect the opinions of the public (The Central People's Government of China, 2007). As a consequence, Chinese urban planning professionals started to involve the public actively or passively in planning processes to maintain the legitimacy of the planning procedure. The law did not specify specific requirements for participation, but left those to the discretion of local governments, which often transferred the responsibility to their planning bureaus. Chinese planners are aware that traditional tools for planning participation have received criticism, such as that they are limited in same-place and same-time settings and cannot sophisticatedly display information (Al-Kodmany, 2002). And many are also aware of the potential of PSS, knowing that urban planning practice is mostly map based, and the most efficient way to acquire useful local knowledge would be through a map-based application enabling strong communication between planners and stakeholders (Narooie, 2014). The first time that computers were used in urban planning in China was to analyze the data of 76,000 questionnaires in the “Residents’ travel research in Tianjin” program of the China Academy of Urban Planning and Design in the 1980s (Chen, 1995). Thereafter, planning professionals

began to adopt more modern computer technologies to support their work, such as computer-aided design (CAD) and geographic information systems (GIS). However, these types of tools are designed explicitly for experts, rendering them difficult to be used by the general public. “Planning support systems” (PSS) are usually defined as a subset of geo-information technologies that aim to support those involved in planning to manage plan-related problems (Batty, 1995). PSS were introduced in China in 2003, when an English paper “Planning Support System as an Innovative Blend of Computer Tools” (Piracha & Kammeier, 2002) was translated into Chinese and published. In 2005, Du and Li (2005) described the working of the “WHAT IF!” PSS and presented a case to illustrate its working in supporting decision-making during the planning process. Thereafter, so-called Web-based PSS entered the scene.

Several studies have shown that Web-based PSS can be useful for planning practice by exhibiting information in forms that are easy to understand by non-specialist users, by facilitating interpersonal communication, by displaying relevant scenarios, and by helping the public to express their interests (Shifter, 1995; Kingston et al., 2000; Wong and Chua, 2001; Mansourian, Taleai and Fasihi, 2011). So, PSS are expected to enjoy a warm welcome, but their uptake in planning practice remains low (Pelzer, Geertman, & van der Heijden, 2016; Russo, Lanzilotti, Costabile, & Pettit, 2018; te Brömmelstroet, 2013). The reasons for the low level of uptake are manifold (see Vonk et al., 2005) but the overarching one is that there is a continuing mismatch between the supply of and demand for PSS (Biermann, 2011; Vonk et al., 2005; 2007). Whether a computer system can satisfy the needs of the users and other potential stakeholders, such as the users' clients and managers, is basically about the acceptability of a computer system (Nielsen, 1994). Usefulness is an important dimension of acceptability (Nielsen, 1994). Therefore, the usefulness of PSS warrants special attention in order to increase the level of uptake. When it comes to the specific purpose of PSS as participatory tools, Kahila-Tani et al. (2016) used five criteria in evaluating the performance of a PSS in Helsinki: participants should be representative of the target population, they should be selected independently, be involved at an early stage of the planning process, their contributions are taken seriously and it is clear how the process proceeds with the input. It turns out that many conditions and design criteria have to be met for a PSS to be useful to the task at hand. This raises the question whether these conditions are also met in the Chinese context and whether design criteria can be applied in the same manner. In a first attempt to answer this question, the East Lake greenway planning project in Wuhan, China was investigated. Therein, we first introduce a conceptual framework concerning the concept of usefulness in section 2. Thereafter, in section 3, the involved Web-based PSS application is described. Section 4 describes the research methods, while section 5 presents the analyses. In section 6, conclusions are drawn, and the main findings and their consequences are discussed.

5.2 Conceptual framework

Human-computer interaction (HCI) is the discipline of designing, implementing and evaluating interactive computer systems for human use (Preece et al., 1994). Web-based participatory PSS form an exemplar of these interactive computer systems. Based on Nielsen's (1994) theory on HCI, this research applied an adapted conceptual HCI framework for evaluating the usefulness and in particular the usability of participatory PSS in a specific

Chinese planning practice, the “East Lake greenway planning project” in Wuhan. The concept of usefulness refers to the issue of whether the computer system can be used to achieve desired goals (Nielsen, 1994). Nielsen (1994) broke down “usefulness” into “utility” and “usability”, where utility is the question of whether the functionality of the system in principle can do what is needed, and usability is the question of how well users can use that functionality to perform their task (Figure 5.1).

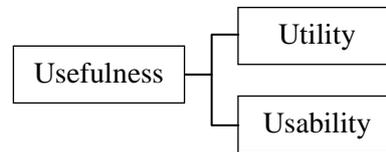


Figure 5.1 The categories of system usefulness (Nielsen, 1994)

5.2.1 Utility

As stated, utility concerns the question of whether the functionality of a computer system in principle can do what is needed (Nielsen, 1994). What is needed (the task), is defined exogenous to the system. In Nielsen’s words, “educational software has high utility if students learn from it” (Nielsen, 1994). Utility of a participatory PSS refers to whether the functionalities of a participatory PSS can meet the needs of all participants, both the planners and the public. In the European context two goals are identified with public participation. The normative goal of a more direct democracy in which multiple voices are being heard; and the more procedural goal of providing better plans by taking in experience-based knowledge and by recognizing different values of various actors (Kahila-Tani et al., 2016). The two are not necessarily at odds, as long as participation is effective. Kahila-Tani et al. (2016) use the framework developed by Rowe and Fewer (2000) to evaluate this using the criteria: (1) representativeness, (2) independence, (3) early involvement, (4) influence and (5) transparency. They criticize current participation methods in that they are often dominated by a self-selected elite that participates from a specific affiliation which might be shared with the planners. Participation at an early stage is often dissuaded by planners because it slows down the planning process, but in the later stages value-judgements have often been made already. Participation is often used to placate, rather than to provide influence on the outcome and it is not clear to the public how the input provided will be weighed in the decision making.

Planning support systems potentially contribute to improving the participation process as these can be accessed by different users at a place and time that suits them, and through their information functions (visualization of the project, gathering ideas from participants, storing and retrieving this information for processing), their communications functions (report back the results, have follow-up response, provide insight into decision making) and analytical functions (show what if effects, integration of inputs) (Vonk et al., 2006, Pelzer et al., 2015). The utility of the system is therefore also dependent on the quality of the technology to perform these tasks.

The normative framing is different in China. Urban Planning involves many levels of government: central, provincial, municipal, district, sub-district and even neighborhood level. The neighborhood committee is the lowest level and consists of appointed officials that are

responsible for the implementation of higher-level policies and to maintain social stability in their community. The municipality has the pivot role in urban land-use planning. The authority over the land resides with the municipality and cities have professional planning bureaus (at municipal and district level) that take responsibility in preparing plans and involving stakeholders. From the political angle, participation is driven mostly by the need to maintain social stability (He & Warren, 2011). From the professional angle, participation might help to come up with better plans. The task in developing and applying a PSS in China is therefore different from the European context, but the functionalities might still overlap to a large extent. The evaluation of the utility however will differ as this is defined by the task.

5.2.2 Usability

Usability refers to the question of how well users can make use of this functionality of the computer system (Nielsen, 1994). Since in planning participation the public is the end user of PSS, the usability refers to the question of how the public can make use of the functionality of the PSS. Usability is typically measured by having users test a computer system to handle pre-specified tasks or by having real users in the field to handle whatever tasks they would otherwise be doing (Nielsen, 1994). In either case, an important point is that usability is measured relative to certain users and certain tasks. The same system would be measured as having different usability characteristics if used by different users for different tasks. In other words, the degree of usability is user- and task dependent. The distinctive characteristics of the users (Figure 2) concern their specific competences, their motivations for using the system, and their degree of accessibility to the system (e.g., the availability of the means to access the system; the availability of sufficient time). In terms of competences Nielsen (1994) identifies three dimensions: Knowledge about computers in general, expertise in using the specific system and understanding of the task domain. To function as a participation tool, the intended users will have to be defined explicitly before starting the design. The motivation is important because users might self-select in using the system and use it to other than the intended ends. Accessibility also depends on the local contexts and refers to both physical and financial barriers to using the system. The fundamental question is: who can use the system for what purpose. Utility and usability are two sides of the same coin, inseparable as dimensions of usefulness.

The mentioned task-dependency relates in this case to the degree of the system's support of the participation process. As a consequence, in addition to fitting the characteristics of particular users, the usability of a system is also dependent on the design of the system. In that, for the measurement of the usability of a system, several performance criteria can be found in the literature, and for the specific field of public participation in planning, the next eight criteria stand out (Figure 5.2).

Connectivity

“Connectivity” refers to how easy it is for users to access the Web-based PSS (Sidlar & Rinner, 2007). The online participatory process becomes ineffective in case the public cannot access the Web-based PSS easily, e.g., because of failures or restrictions in Internet access. In principle, Web-based participatory approaches can maximize public involvement and can be

extremely valid in areas in which it is difficult to participate in planning at a particular time or place (Kingston et al., 2000).

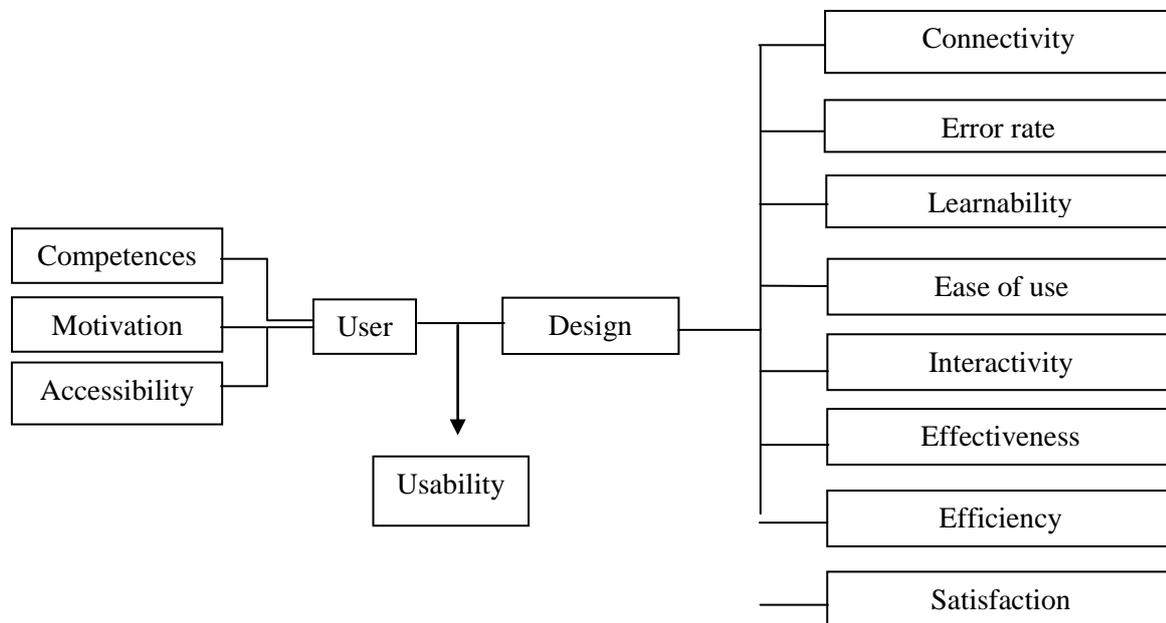


Figure 5.2 A user-design fit model for assessing the usability of the Web-based PPSS

Error rate

An error is defined as any action that does not accomplish the desired goal, and the system’s “error rate” is measured by counting the number of such actions by users while performing some specified task (Nielsen, 1994). The system should have a low error rate, indicating that users make few errors while using the system, and in case they do make errors, they can easily recover from them (Nielsen, 1994).

Learnability

“Learnability” refers to how easy it is for users to learn about how to use the application (Nielsen, 1994). Learnability is in some sense the most fundamental performance criterion: the first experience most people have with a new system is that of learning how to use it (Nielsen, 1994). Sidlar and Rinner (2007) adopted users’ self-rated learning time to evaluate learnability.

Ease of use

“Ease of use” refers to whether users find the system sufficiently easy to use (Zhao & Coleman, 2007). Web-based PSS should be designed in a manner that they are easy to use for the diverse range of computer literacy levels, world views, cultural backgrounds and knowledge levels of the public (Haklay & Tobón, 2003). Even if the application developers believe that they have created something that is easy to use, only testing will show whether the design is successful in meeting users’ needs (Haklay & Tobón, 2003).

Interactivity

“Interactivity” is at the heart of all modern interfaces and is important on many levels (Dix, 2009). In most cases, the interactivity of a system restricts itself to the interaction between a user and a system (e.g., Dix, 2009; Lewis, 1995; Sidlar & Rinner, 2007). In planning participation, the interactivity of the system also concerns the facilitation of the interaction between the people involved.

Effectiveness

“Effectiveness” refers to the accuracy and completeness with which specified users can achieve specified goals in particular environments (Dix, 2009). According to Meng and Malczewski (2010), “the system effectiveness has a strong influence on the users’ duration on the website and interactions with each other”.

Efficiency

“Efficiency” refers to the resources (time and effort) expended in relation to the accuracy and completeness of the goals achieved (Dix, 2009). The system should be efficient to use so that, once the user has learned the system, a high level of productivity is possible (Nielsen, 1994).

Satisfaction

“Satisfaction” refers to how pleasant it is to use the Web-based PSS application (Nielsen, 1994). The system should be pleasant to use so that users are subjectively satisfied when using it.

The usability of the system eventually does not only depend on whether these criteria have been met, but whether they match with the competences, motivations and resources of the users. Again, this context might be different in China than in Europe or the US. Despite the impressive rise of a middle-class in China the level of household wealth is still lagging behind the developed countries. The percentage of people having access to internet is clearly lower and a tradition that citizens actively participate in governmental decisions is only developing recently.

5.3 The East Lake greenway planning project

The East Lake greenway planning project in Wuhan was selected to analyze the usefulness of a Web-based PSS (Figure 3) that was applied in the local planning process. In general, one can state that the adoption of PSS in planning practice remains relatively limited and access to empirical investigations in practice is not very easy (Pelzer et al., 2016). The specific reasons for selecting this case were that it is one of the very few planning participation practices in China that has adopted a Web-based PSS application. Furthermore, the contact information of all of the users is potentially available (Changjiang Daily News, 2015). The East Lake was cut off from the Yangtze River in 1957 and is now a popular recreational site within the metropolitan boundaries of Wuhan (Du, 1998). The East Lake greenway planning project was initiated by the Wuhan municipal government and was undertaken by Wuhan Municipal Bureau of Land Resources and Planning (WBLRP). In 2015, WBLRP decided to involve the

public in this project. This project aimed to develop the main greenway trails, secondary greenway trails, and infrastructures (parking lots, greenway entrances, and rest areas) in the East Lake area. To facilitate public participation, WBLRP opened an online participation platform, called “Participatory planning in Wuhan”, on January 8, 2015. The platform includes an online bulletin board which issues the newest information, a 3D street view map of the East Lake, related texts (including the Wuhan urban master plan, Greenway construction plan in Wuhan, the definition of the greenway, etc.), the links to the three participatory stages of the project, experts’ comments on this project, and comments of the public on this project. To inform citizens, WBLRP opened an official Wechat account on January 10, 2015, which published the main information about the online participation platform.

The East Lake greenway planning project was initiated in January 2015 and was finalized in December 2016, there were three participatory stages before planners made the final plan in this project. To encourage citizens to participate in the project, WBLRP offered monetary incentives at the three participatory stages (Table 5.1): the online questionnaire survey stage, the online planning stage, and the online submitting nodes’ plans stage (Xiong, 2015). In the first online questionnaire survey stage, a lottery was provided to increase response. There were two questionnaire surveys on the platform for this project in this stage (January 8 to January 20, 2015 and since March 30, 2015¹³). In the second online planning stage, a Web-based PSS application was provided. In this stage, the plans made by citizens through the Web-based PSS were integrated in ArcGIS. Winners at this stage were selected according to the degree of similarity between participants’ plans and the final integrated plan. The lists of winners of the lottery in the first questionnaire survey stage and of the second online planning stage were published in 2015.

Table 5.1 the three participatory stages of the planning project

Stage	Period	Activity/activities	Participatory tools
1	Jan. 8 - Jan. 20, 2015 March 30, 2015- unavailable	Online questionnaire surveys	Online questionnaires
2	Jan. 15 - Jan. 30, 2015	Online planning	A Web-based participatory PSS
3	Jan. 25 - Feb. 5, 2015	Online submitting nodes’ plans	None

5.3.1 The application of a Web-based participatory PSS

WBLRP launched the “participatory planning in Wuhan-East Lake greenway online planning” application in the Wuhan Urban Planning Exhibition Hall in January 2015. The main goals of the launch were to introduce a Web-based PSS application (Figure 5.3) and to encourage citizens to make plans about greenway trails and infrastructure using this application. The application has five panels (from top to down and from left to right), namely, the drawing

¹³ The deadline is unavailable.

tools, the editing tools, the save button, the instruction panel, and the mapping panel. The public can draw the main greenway trails and secondary greenway trails on the map and locate infrastructure (parking lots, greenway entrances, and rest areas) on the map by using the drawing tools. The public can select its own plans, edit its own plans, zoom in/out the map, and delete its own plans by using the editing tools. The "save" button can be used to save the plans of the public.

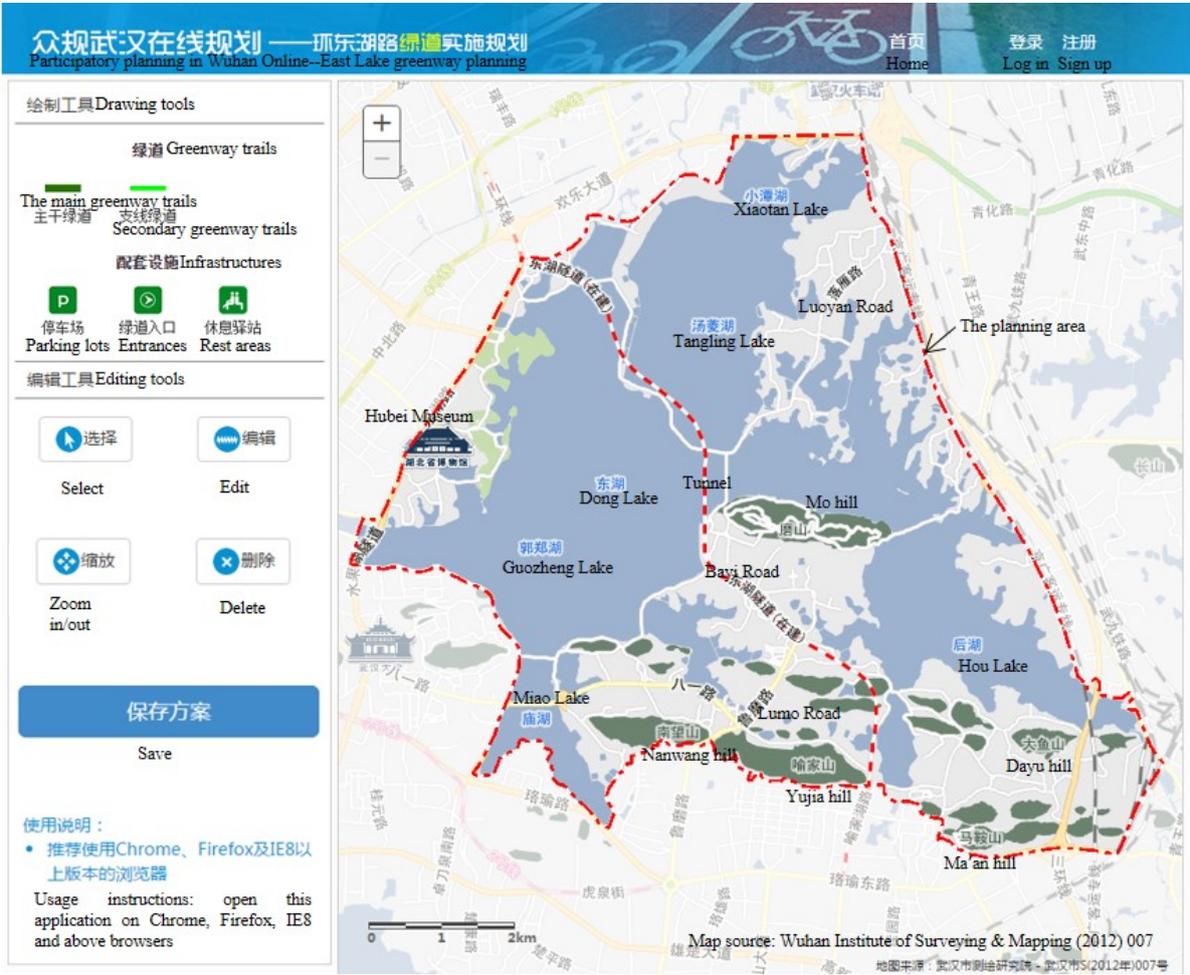


Figure 5.3 The Web-based PSS application in the East Lake greenway planning project (<http://zgl.wpdi.cn/gis/>)

This Web-based planning application only can be used on computers. The functionality of it entailed all of the earlier mentioned components. “Informing” included defining the planning area, indicating the required data, explaining what the greenway trails and infrastructure were, and providing the recommended browsers for this application. “Information visualization” was performed by representing the geographic information of the planning area on a 2D map. The “information gathering” functionality of the application collected plans for greenway trails and infrastructure. The mapping tools enabled participants to draw the main greenway trails and secondary greenway trails on the map and to locate infrastructure (parking lots, greenway entrances, and rest areas) on the map. In fact, the public can draw the main greenway trails (or secondary greenway trails) by clicking on the main greenway trails (or secondary greenway trails) button on the drawing tools panel, moving the mouse pointer over

the mapping panel, and clicking a set of points to make a line as a trail. Furthermore, the public can locate infrastructures (parking lots, greenway entrances, and rest areas) by clicking on the corresponding infrastructure button on the drawing tools panel, moving the mouse pointer over the mapping panel, and clicking the selected point on the mapping panel to locate the infrastructure. When a participant clicks on his/her own plan, a window will pop up to collect textual information. The textual information can be seen only by its creator, but plans for greenway trails and infrastructure on the map are available to everyone. The editing tools enable participants to select, edit, zoom in/out, and delete their own plans on the map. The “information storage” functionality of the application saves the participants’ plans. The “information retrieval” functionality is provided only partly in the sense that participants can retrieve their own plans and textual information after registering and logging into the platform. The “communication” functionality includes one direct information flow from participants to the planning institution as participants submit their plans. Furthermore, the participants can see each other’s plans.

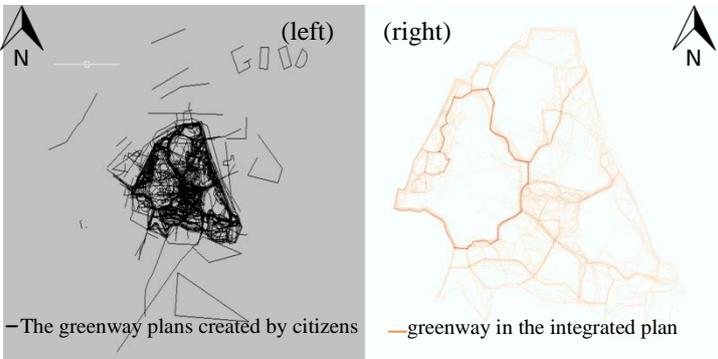


Figure 5.4 The greenway trails plans created by citizens (left) and the integrated plan (right) (Xiong, 2015)

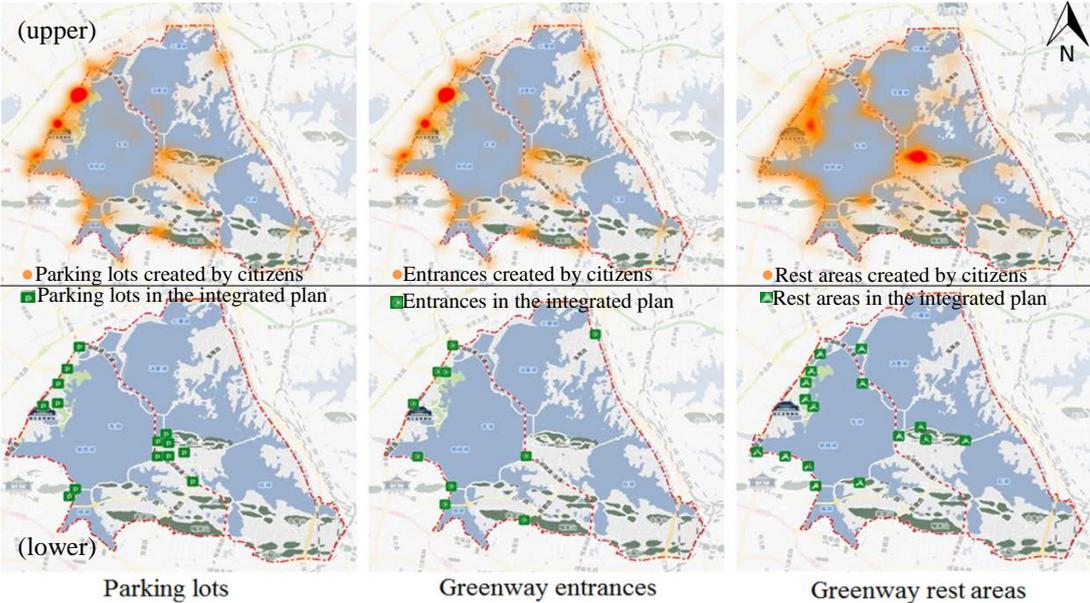


Figure 5.5 The infrastructure plans created by citizens (upper) and the integrated plan (lower) (Xiong, 2015)

The Web-based PSS application did not have an “analysis and modeling” functionality, so the original plans (Figure 5.4 left and Figure 5.5 upper) provided by the 138 participants were analyzed with the help of ArcGIS (the integrate tool). Figure 5.4 (left) shows the greenway trails plans created by citizens, and Figure 5.5 (upper) shows the parking lots, greenway entrances, and greenway rest areas created by citizens. Figure 5.4 (right) shows the integrated plan of the greenway trails, and Figure 5.5 (lower) shows the corresponding integrated plans. Subsequently, the integrated plans (Figure 4 right and Figure 5.5 lower) were provided to six professional design groups of WBLRP with distinctive specialties. Each group was asked to consider the citizens’ plans explicitly and to devise a complete plan. The resulting six plans were combined into a composite final plan, which was published on the platform in May 2015.

5.4 Research methods

The East Lake greenway planning project was initiated in January 2015 and was finalized in December 2016; the Web-based PSS was open for use from January 2015 onward. It sounds reasonable to measure usefulness immediately after usage, but this plan turned out to be impossible. To reduce recall errors in this retrospective survey, in the fieldwork, we provided as much relevant textual and visual information as possible. The evaluators’ understanding of usability items is crucial for success (Steinmann, Krek & Blaschke, 2004). Therefore, different types of citizens were consulted before our survey to resolve to some extent the ambiguity of respondents’ understanding of questionnaire items.

5.4.1 Utility

To measure the utility of the Web-based PSS, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the project manager and the software developer¹⁴ (both of them were employees of Wuhan Planning and Design Institute, a subordinate unit of WBLRP) in November 2016. The project manager was also the manager of “participatory planning in Wuhan”. We provided to the interviewees Figure 3 and a paper with the tasks and functionalities of the Web-based PSS. Contacts were made in advance by e-mail, and each interview lasted approximately one hour. The key questions concerned why they adopted the Web-based PSS in the planning process, which functionalities the application possesses, in what sense the application matched their goals, and which functionalities were considered to need improvement?

5.4.2 Usability

To measure the usability of the Web-based PSS, an online questionnaire survey of users was conducted from April 7 to May 6, 2017. Questionnaires were sent to users’ e-mail addresses. Monetary incentives were provided to stimulate the response rate. The questionnaire consisted of three parts. Part one concerned questions about users’ attitudes toward the 21 performance criteria (see Appendix), which were selected from the literature (i.e., Davis, 1989; Lewis, 1995; Perlman, n.d.) and thereafter were modified to fit the context of Web-based PSS in planning participation. The respondents used a 5-point Likert scale to rate their degree of

¹⁴ The software developer was interviewed to better understand the functionalities of the application.

agreement with each criterion, and this step was considered sufficient to perform a reasonably reliable assessment of respondents' attitudes (Bradburn. et al., 2004).

Several criteria were negatively worded to alleviate acquiescence bias (i.e., the tendency to agree/disagree with all of the criteria regardless of content) (Marsh, Barnes, Cairnes & Tidman, 1984). Cronbach's α , the most commonly used reliability index (Field, 2013), was computed in SPSS software to test the reliability of the questionnaire.

Part two of the questionnaire concerned additional usability-related information, such as "please provide any further comments about this application", "please indicate the relative importance of the eight performance criteria (from 1-most important to 8-most unimportant)", and "have you ever participated in urban planning processes before?". Part three of the questionnaire concerned questions about users' individual characteristics, such as their levels of formal education, ages, etc.

5.5 Results

To determine the usefulness of the Web-based PSS, one should keep in mind that utility and usability are the two sides of one coin, in the final evaluation they should be weighed together. However we measured each separately. The decision on the task and related functionality was made within the planning bureau as part of the planning process and did not include the users, and the question whether the application fit the needs of the users should not be answered by the ones in charge of the development of the PSS. In the following paragraphs, the outcomes of the measurements are presented.

5.5.1 Utility

We first asked the project manager about the background of this project. According to him, the WBLRP planned to use the internet to help them solve the problems they met when developing and administering urban plans around 2015. Therefore, they created a "participatory planning in Wuhan" platform online. They selected the "East Lake greenway planning project" as their first participatory project in order to benefit the public within a short term. The East Lake area was a popular open sight in Wuhan city, and this project was expected to be completed within 1.5-2 years. Here are the dialogues:

What is the origin of the "participatory planning in Wuhan" platform?

We (WBLRP) organized 4-5 brainstorming sessions from the end of 2014 to the beginning of 2015. During the sessions, we talked about how to use the Internet when we developed and administered urban plans, and then we decided to create a "participatory planning in Wuhan" platform. The primary purpose of the platform is to collect the knowledge of planners and people with professional knowledge to solve planning problems because urban planning is still a specific disciplinary area. (However, in the Greenway project the general public was consulted.) Yes, it is our first project.

Why did "participatory planning in Wuhan" select the "East Lake greenway planning project" as its first project?

We started to develop the greenway plan in early 2015, and at the time, we decided to create the “participatory planning in Wuhan” platform. The greenway planning met the two selection criteria of the platform: “the public is happy with this project” and “it can be finished within a short timeframe”. We all love to go to the East Lake, and this project was planned to be completed within 1.5-2 years. Therefore, the East Lake greenway planning project was selected for participatory planning.

Then, we asked the project manager three questions about the utility. As the project manager stated, the task of the web-based PSS was to collect the public’s plans on the project before planning professionals made the final plan. The PSS developer provided the appropriate utility, which included “informing and information visualization”, “information gathering”, and “information storage” functionalities. Here are the dialogues:

Why did the “participatory planning in Wuhan—East Lake greenway planning project” adopt this Web-based PSS application?

We decided to collect citizens’ knowledge about the greenway planning project but did not know how to achieve this goal. This application became the tool for this goal. Normally, we went to the planning area and talked with citizens about the final plan. So the public passively participated in urban planning when plans had been finalized. Now, we decided to involve the public before the final plan had been finalized. Therefore, we launched the application to attract the public. Local mainstream media, such as Hubei daily newspapers and Hubei TV, were invited to the launch. Monetary incentives were provided as well.

What were the functionalities of this application? Did these match your goal?

The fruitful functionalities of this application included “informing and information visualization”, “information gathering”, and “information storage”. These functionalities can achieve my goal. But I also think that the additional functionalities of “communication” and “analysis and modeling” need to be improved.

We also interviewed the software developer to gain his opinion on the utility of the application. The questions were the same as we had asked to the project manager, we also asked extra questions about the application developing process. From the software developer’s perspective, this application has utility too, as he stated:

The goal of this application was to collect citizens’ plans. The functionalities of this application included “informing and information visualization”, “information gathering”, and “information storage”. ... These functionalities can achieve this goal. ... We invited some citizens to use the application in its launch, and then I improved it according to my observations during the launch. Now, I think the functionality of “information visualization” needs to be improved; for instance, the roads can be more vivid.

It is clear from the answers that the main goal of the operation was to provide a better plan and also that several of the five criteria from the Rowe and Fewer (2000) framework were considered. It was an open platform and was widely published in the local media and the motivation of the potential users was stimulated by choosing a project citizen could easily relate to and financial rewards were introduced. It was a deliberate decision to apply this PSS in

an early phase of the planning process. It was also communicated that input from the public would be used to draw-up the final plan. Yet how the decision making worked was not transparent. Perhaps the most remarkably finding is the preference to gather the knowledge of people with professional knowledge, rather than those of the general public. This is clearly at odds with the idea of setting up a participatory tool that would also provide experience-based knowledge from the actual users of the greenway. A clear strategy, other than advertising, to meet the competences of the users was lacking. Both the principal and the designer were very much aware of the required functionalities in a technical sense, but less aware of the potential users of the system. The matter of representativeness was clearly not a main issue in setting up the system.

5.5.2 Usability

The respondents

The highly selective nature of the participation is substantiated by the results of our survey. In total, there were 138 users, of whom 134 were available and provided a valid e-mail address. Of the 134 potential respondents, 33 (25%) complete the online questionnaire afterward, from which we could distill reflective information. The respondents were primarily male, young, local (Wuhan inhabitants), well educated, and middle class (Table 5.2).

Table 5.2 Characteristics of respondents (N=33)

Characteristic	n	%
Gender		
Male	23	69.7
Female	10	30.3
Age		
18-40	30	90.9
41-65	3	9.1
Address		
Wuhan	29	87.9
Other cities in China	3	9.1
Europe	1	3.0
Education		
High school (or high school equivalent)	1	3.0
Junior college degrees or bachelor's degrees	18	54.5
Master's degrees or doctoral degrees	14	42.4
Income ¹⁵		
Higher (more than \$46,000)	2	6.1
Middle (\$10,001-\$46,000)	20	60.6
Lower (less than \$10,001)	11	33.3
Major		
Urban planning, urban design, or architecture	13	39.4
Transportation planning or transportation engineering	7	21.2
GIS	1	3.0

¹⁵ This classification is made by BCG and AliResearch according to the annual disposable income of a household. <https://www.bcgperspectives.com/content/articles/globalization-growth-new-china-playbook-young-affluent-e-savvy-consumers/?chapter=3>

We are aware that this entails a double selection process, first to participate in using the application, second to also participate in our survey. However we have the idea that the burden of our survey is not greater than the requirements to participate in the first stage and that the respondents will not systematically differ from the total group. Although not explicitly stated, yet confirmed by the project manager, the participation platform was developed mainly to collect relevant input from planners and people with equivalent professional knowledge. Most respondents belong to these target users because they had relevant knowledge/skills (Table 5.2): 13 (39.4%) respondents had a major in urban planning, urban design, or architecture, the majors of 7 (21.2%) respondents were transportation planning or transportation engineering, and the major of 1 (3.0%) respondent was GIS. However, of the 33 respondents, 12 (36.3%) had never participated before in an urban planning practice. The goal of collecting relevant knowledge might not be fully achieved: only 13 (39.4%) respondents chose “the greenway planning project itself” as the prime reason to participate in this project, 14 (42.4%) respondents did so for the Web-based PSS application”, 4 (12.1%) respondents chose “the online questionnaire, the online forum”, and 2 (6.1%) respondents chose “others suggested that I participate”. The respondents who were not attracted by the project itself might have participated simply to gain experience with platform tools.

Nearly all of the respondents considered the Web-based PSS to be acceptable: of the 33 respondents, 32 (97.0%) respondents were willing to use the Web-based PSS in the future, and 30 (90.9%) respondents were willing to recommend the Web-based PSS to others. Although 27 (81.8%) respondents reported that their most favorite participatory method was the Web-based PSS because it enabled them to “express ideas clearer” or “save time and effort”, 3 (9.1%) respondents still favored offline participatory methods, and 2 (6.1%) respondents favored common online participatory methods (e.g., online questionnaires and online forums), and only 1 (3.0%) respondent believed that there was no difference.

The usability of the Web-based PSS

Before analyzing the data, the negatively worded items were reverse-scored so that a high score on a performance criterion indicated a high level of usability. The value of Cronbach’s α was 0.848, indicating sufficient reliability of the test scores. The mean score (M) and the standard deviation (SD) of each performance criterion were calculated to evaluate the usability of the Web-based PSS application (See Appendix). The M of the performance criteria ranged from 3.17 to 4.15 (on a scale of 1-5), indicating that respondents perceived the application as usable but believed that each criterion could be improved to some extent. Only three SD values exceeded 1, indicating those respondents’ attitudes toward most performance criteria varied only slightly. In addition to measuring the usability of the Web-based PSS by scoring each of the performance criteria, their relative importance was also scored on a scale of 1-8 (Table 5.3).

Table 5.3 Respondents' perceived relative importance of performance criteria

Criterion	Score (mean)	Ranking	
Error rate	3.88	1	
Satisfaction	4.27	2	
Learnability	4.30	3	
Interactivity	4.61	4	
Ease of use	4.73	5	
Connectivity	4.91	6	
Efficiency	4.91	7	Note. 1-
Effectiveness	5.30	8	extremely

important, ..., 8 - extremely unimportant

The performance criterion “error rate” is considered the most important criterion in measuring the usability of Web-based PSS applications (Table 5.3). In general, the respondents tended to agree that there were still some problems with the application, particularly with drawing infrastructure objects. Respondents considered “satisfaction” to be the second most important performance criterion. In general, its M (3.63) indicated a quite satisfactory position (See Appendix), despite there still being some errors to overcome in the Web-based PSS application to increase its usability. “Learnability” ranked third in importance, although it was very close to the second rank, and it overall showed a fair position (M=3.17). However, the SD of each of the “learnability” questions was quite high, indicating that the respondents’ attitudes toward this performance criterion varied widely. From this outcome, we can assume that respondents possess very different levels of background knowledge and experience with this type of application, with some needing much more support information and relatively longer learning times than others to use the application properly.

The importance scores for the next four performance criteria were very close: “interactivity”, “ease of use”, “connectivity”, and “efficiency”. The “interactivity” criterion was considered satisfactory (M=3.57), but one should consider that the application was not aimed to support communication with the planning institute or the interactions between users but foremost to support the development of new planning ideas. The respondents also scored quite positively the performance criterion “easy to use” (M=3.43), which is a crucial feature not least because the Web-based PSS was built for citizens’ participation and was not designed for planning professionals. However, one should consider here that the respondents of the enquiry were a group of highly educated people. The performance criterion “connectivity” received the highest M (4.15) with a relatively low SD (0.83), indicating that respondents were quite uniform in their agreement with this criterion that they all possessed the resources to be able to use the Web-based PSS application. In fact, the Web-based feature of the application facilitated online participation, not least among people for whom it was inconvenient to participate onsite. The related “efficiency” criterion received a relatively high score also (M=4.03), indicating that the respondents were quite satisfied with the efficiency of the Web-based PSS, compared to traditional participatory channels. Nevertheless, the respondents did not consider this criterion to have very much importance.

Finally, the “effectiveness” criterion was considered the least important performance criterion (Table 5.3), although the M of this criterion was relatively high (3.97), indicating that the application enabled respondents to accomplish their goals quite effectively, compared to traditional participatory channels (e.g., public hearings, questionnaires, bulletin boards, and weblogs). However, its very low position in the ranking of the importance of performance criteria emphasized that respondents did not consider this performance criterion to truly be important.

In short, the Web-based PSS was considered to be usable in general, although different users attached different values to different performance criteria, and more importantly were probably a highly selective group. Many of them were not motivated by the intrinsic planning problem at hand but were attracted by the form in which it was presented.

5.6 Discussion and conclusions

This chapter attempts to understand the usefulness of a Web-based PSS application in a Chinese planning practice. The crucial question is whether technologies originating from Western countries are also useful when applied in China, with a fully distinctive political system and where planning participation is an emerging practice and still is in an experimental phase. Can the potentials of the online systems also be realized in China and are the shortcomings shared or context specific?

Starting with the seminal framework of Nielsen (1994) we identify utility (=systems’ functionality needed) and usability (=how well users can use that functionality to perform their task) as the two closely intertwined dimensions to evaluate the performance of human-computer interaction systems. In particular when it comes to participatory tools, the two cannot be separated. If the task is to enable citizens to participate in planning processes, then this would clearly fail if the intended users could not access or operate the system. The definition of the task and its concomitant functionalities is the starting point for the evaluation of the utility and this is where the contexts differ. In Europe, Participatory PSS are either developed as a means of more direct democracy in a system of representative government (normative) or as a means to come up with better plans by integrating experience-based knowledge and recognizing values from outside the planning community (procedural) (Kahila-Tani et al., 2016). The two overlap considerably, but differ in their normative underpinnings. In the Chinese context the normative approach is radically different. The system of representation is defined as a “social contract” between the citizens and their government at all levels that the leaders will serve the best interest of their constituency. Violation of this contract can lead to vehement protests and many conflicts over urban (re)development have been recorded in recent years. The emphasis on participatory measures to maintain social stability should be understood from this context: it’s the outcome that counts, the procedures are left to local government. From a more procedural point of view one could still argue that making better plans would also serve the Chinese normative stance and that the Rowe and Fewer (2000) framework of: (1) representativeness, (2) independence, (3) early involvement, (4) influence and (5) transparency can be applied in both cases.

Our results are to some extent in line with this argument. The interview with the project manager that commissioned the Web-based PSS application for the Wuhan East Lake greenway project confirmed that he identified the potential of the application to elicit plans from independent citizens at an early stage of the planning process, over traditional methods of collecting responses by citizens to a designed plan in physical meetings. He also showed a clear intention to have his design teams use the input to come up with a final plan, and communicated the results on the website. He was aware of the appropriate functionalities like “informing and information visualization”, “information gathering”, and “information storage” to achieve the goal and thought “information retrieval” and “communication” functionalities should be improved. Yet he was not concerned with the fact that only “professional citizens” used the application. His priority was not to include the general public and assure representativeness, but to come up with a better plan that the people would like. To understand the utility of the system in a Chinese context one should be aware that participation is not a goal in itself, like in Europe, but a means to maintain social stability and is considered legitimate without the need for representativeness.

One of the criticism of participatory planning methods in Europe is that participation is often dominated by a self-selected elite that uses the process to further their interest (Kahila-Tani et al., 2016). Indeed Web-based participatory tools are seen as a possible solution as they open up the process to those that do not have the time or other resources to become involved in the inner-circle. Our results showed that this process of self-selection also occurred with the web-based tool in Wuhan, although for a different reason. Among the respondents to our survey only one (out of 33) did not have at least a college degree and the majority had majored in either urban planning, design or architecture, transportation planning and engineering or geo-information science. Half of them were not motivated by the intrinsic quality of the East Lake project, but were attracted by tool itself. In terms of usability this is at odds with the requirement that the system should enable both novice and experience users, given the task at hand. Even within this experienced group, respondents’ attitudes toward two of the three learnability items varied significantly. The system was not only selective in its use, but also failed to deal with different levels of knowledge and experience with PSS, in which some respondents needed much more support information and relatively longer learning time than others in using this specific application properly. The respondents perceived this application in general to be usable, as expressed in the overall sufficient scores on the performance criteria that varied only slightly.

Web-based PSS is a double-edged sword for planning participation. On the one hand, it can attract and help people (even outside Wuhan city) to participate in planning. In this research, four respondents participated in the urban planning process for the first time, due to the “inconvenient time or place” of onsite planning practices, which appeared to be a more general burden of participation in planning processes in China (Hu et al., 2013). On the other hand, participatory tools that fail to comply with competences, motivations and resources of their potential users are not very useful. Our research shows that technologies are easily transferable from Western countries and that the application did have most of the required functionalities and met most of the design criteria on usability. However, assuming that the

tools would perform the same task as in Western countries is clearly mistaken, as the normative planning context is very different and the system will be used for other ends.

This research confirmed the conclusions of earlier research by Narooie (2014), who argued that a Web-based PPGIS application could complement, instead of replace, traditional participatory methods (e.g., roundtables and sticker map methods) based on the contextual barriers such as the attitudes of participants. According to our empirical study, the barriers in the Chinese context have three aspects. First, those who miss the resources to access the Web-based PSS will be marginalized by just providing online tools to participate. A large proportion of people in China still cannot connect to the Internet easily, considering the Internet penetration rate of only 53.2% in 2016 (CNNIC, 2017). Second, learning how to use Web-based PSS is a challenge for the general public. This research showed that the usability and, in particular, the scores for “learnability” were quite diverse for different users of the Web-based PSS application. Half of the respondents asked for much more information to be able to handle the PSS application in a proper manner, although 21 of the 33 respondents already had relevant knowledge/skills (e.g., ArcGIS). Third, people with low levels of computer literacy might be marginalized as well. Current research on Chinese participatory/collaborative planning found that online platforms exclude some important stakeholders (e.g., affected residents in local communities) who are not familiar with the information and communications technology (Zhao, et al., 2017). Therefore, we emphasize the need for complementarity of online participatory methods (e.g., Web-based PSS, online questionnaires and online forums) and offline/traditional participatory methods (e.g., face-to-face meetings, public hearings and citizen surveys). And furthermore, we ask for more attention to the identified differences in normative planning context between China and the western world, which influences for what purpose the participatory system is applied for.

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Chapter 6

The communicative turn in China's urban planning:
what motivates the planning professional to engage the
public?



6 The communicative turn in China's urban planning: what motivates the planning professional to engage the public?

Abstract

Public participation emerges in China's planning policies and practices in recent years. Whether this will lead to a paradigm shift from the instrumental-rationality model to the communicative-rationality model will also depend on professionals, because professionals play a critical role in the creation, maintenance, and transformation of institutions, as an endogenous mechanism of institutional change. By analyzing not just the how, but also the why of professionals' active participation this chapter aims to contribute to the understanding of their role in the potential paradigm shift from instrumental-rationality model towards the communicative-rationality one. It relates urban planning in an authoritarian context to the international debate on the paradigm shift in urban planning. Drawing on the literature on both Urban Planning and Public Service Motivation, this chapter provides a framework that teases out rational, normative and affective motivations to analyze "why". Results show that the third-party planning professionals served as facilitators and negotiators in a government-led participatory process and as activists in a citizens-led case, taking up new roles just as Western planning theorists assumed. The empirical work further indicates that planning professionals have mixed motivations but the dominant motive is to conform to professional norms developed in education and experience, from a more collaborative stance in the government-led case and a more agonistic stance in the citizen-led case. Social justice and democratization did not show-up as important drivers, but as these professional norms also pertain to citizens' engagement, planning professionals might become a causal agent in the paradigm shift of China's planning practice.

Keywords: motivation; institutional change; third-party professionals; planning participation; China

6.1 Introduction

In the Western world, the philosophy of communicative rationality has been introduced into planning theory after Habermas put forward the theory of communicative action in the 1980s (Healey, 1992). This results in a paradigm shift in Western urban planning from the instrumental-rationality model to the communicative-rationality one (Tayebi, 2013). Public participation emerges in China's planning policies and practices in recent years. The top-down, government-led planning participation has been developed across the country with the implementation of the 2008 Urban and Rural Planning Law, which formalized public participation in urban planning (Zhang et al., 2018). Meanwhile, an increasing number of Chinese citizens begin to protest against unwanted planning projects (Sun, 2015). This bottom-up, citizen-led planning participation can be divided into three major types: first, local residents protesting against unfair housing compensation and violent relocation (He & Wu, 2009); second, local residents protesting against not-in-my-backyard projects (Lang & Xu, 2013); third, preservationists protesting against built-heritage demolition (Verdini, 2015). Planning professionals usually play an active and important role in the third type (e.g., Deng et al., 2015). Several authors suggest that a communicative (Hu et al., 2013) or deliberative

(He & Warren, 20..) turn is inevitable in China's planning and politics, not just to avoid social unrest but also due to the increased complexity of governance issues.

Whether related planning policies and practices will lead to a paradigm shift from the instrumental-rationality model to the communicative-rationality one, as observed in some Western countries, will also depend on professionals, because professionals play a critical role in the creation, maintenance, and transformation of institutions, as an endogenous mechanism of institutional change (Suddaby & Viale, 2011). Current research tends to suggest that it is a serious challenge for Chinese planners to promote the paradigm shift. First, the daily work of planners is to implement decisions made by the pro-growth coalition of the local political economy rather than to challenge the coalition, planners are part of the vested interests (Zhang, 2002). Second, unlike in democratic societies, deference to authority is a traditional Chinese culture, a legacy of the feudal era that lasted for thousands of years (Zhang, 2002). Urban planning in China as public affairs has long been controlled from the top (Wu, Zhang, & Shen, 2010), and planners are subordinated to the bureaucratic machine (Luo & Shen, 2008). Third, the lack of community-based non-governmental organizations makes it difficult for Chinese planners to engage the public in planning practice (Leaf & Hou, 2006). However, at the same time research shows that some planning professionals actively participate in China's planning participation practice (e.g., Deng et al, 2015; Tan & Altrock, 2016).

Various new roles for planners in the communicative-rationality model of planning have been defined by scholars. For instance, Friedmann (1987) defined the new roles of planners in the mainstream planning structure as advocates, facilitators, and mediators. Likewise, Forester (1987) claimed that planners can simultaneously play negotiation and mediation roles, in order to be effective in the face of local land use conflict. Tayebi (2013) defined the new roles of planners outside the mainstream planning structure as activists, who help the marginalized raise their voices in the decision-making process. However, many scholars suggest that in practice, also in Western land use planning, citizens are engaged only to fulfill legislative mandates (Appiah, 2014), not necessarily to empower them or give them voice. Stated differently, the question is not only whether planners take up new roles but also what motivates them to engage the public in decision making. This question is even more pertinent in an authoritarian context, where decisions on local land use policy are even more political in nature (Heberlig et al., 2014) than in democratic societies.

By analyzing not just the how, but also the why of professionals' actions in China's planning participation practice, this chapter aims to contribute to the understanding of their role in the potential paradigm shift from the instrumental-rationality model towards the communicative-rationality one. Public participation in administrative decisions has been discussed extensively in the urban affairs literature, including the motivations of public servants in the process. (Appiah, 2014). Therefore, this chapter is expected to contribute to the international debates on the management of urban affairs in general and on the paradigm shift in urban planning in particular, by exploring these in an authoritarian context.

The following section establishes a conceptual framework that divides motivations into three dimensions: rational, normative, and affective, following the Public Service Motivations (PSM) theories. It is argued that the more detailed indicators of PSM developed in the US are less applicable in the European and Asian context and that a more open research strategy is needed. The next section introduces the methodology in which two contrasting cases of participatory processes are introduced; a government-led and a citizens-led process in urban redevelopment that affects the cultural heritage in the area, one of the major issues of contestation in urban affairs. In each case, structured interviews with third party (i.e. not employed by the local government in charge) planning professionals involved were used to identify their more intrinsic motives rather than their official requirements. The result section first describes the roles the professionals play in the process after which their motivations are analyzed. The outcomes show a large variety in motives and the dominance of professional norms that drive the action of the professionals. Citizens' engagement is one of these professional norms, rather than a personal motive. The concluding section summarizes the findings and reflects on the contribution to both the planning and the PSM literature.

6.2 Conceptual framework

Around the world, many urban planners are public servants, either directly employed by governmental institutions or in an advisory capacity to these institutions. Even if their employment does not entail a direct chain of command by government, they still participate in collective action and are held responsible for the production of public goods in de (re)development of urban areas. Theories of Public Service Motivations (PSM) will therefore be helpful in identifying the correct concepts to study motivations, if combined with theories on the role of planners in the context of urban (re)development.

PSM was put forward by Rainey (1982) to describe the motivations associated with public service. Perry and Wise (1990) further developed the theory, which has become widely cited in public administration research due to its' relevance for job performance and organizational effectiveness. They built their theory on the seminal work of Knoke (1988), who asserted that the triad of rational choice, normative conformity, and affective bonding jointly affect people's behaviors in collective action. Perry and Wise (1990) further applied this to the public sector by constructing six dimensions. The rational motive was represented by being attracted to the public policy making, the normative motives by commitment to the public interest, civic duty and social justice, the affective motives by compassion and self-sacrifice. Perry (1996) even provided a scale of 24 items that could be used to measure these dimension in research using questionnaires. Follow-up research in many countries raised doubt about the transportability and generalizability to other than the American context, in particular with the dimension of compassion and self-sacrifice. The review by Kim et al. (2012) which also included applications in Europe and Asia showed that this was more than a matter of language, but that the meaning of various specific dimension is culturally specific. Yet the original three dimensions of rational, normative and affective motivation could be reproduced everywhere.

Another drawback of the theory is that in the strive for a generic model the specificity of particular sectors of public services might be overlooked. Spatial planning is a field of public

policy making, which completes collective action through aggregating formal organizations and informal relationships (Healey, 1997). Policy making is becoming “a negotiation among many interacting policy systems” in recent years (Bovaird, 2007). For spatial planners, who by definition need to integrate various policies into area based solutions at the boundary of public and private interests engaging stakeholders through negotiations, is the core business, which might alter their attitudes towards compassion and self-sacrifice. Yet, the basic dimension of Knoke (1988) and Perry and Wise (1990) are closely connected with Healey’s classification of participants’ senses in planning participation. Healey et al. (1988) presented the interactive nature of planning as a form of negotiating among conflicting interests. In the negotiating process, “we draw on all our senses - our material appreciation and technique, our moral concerns and our emotive appreciation” (Healey, 1997). The fact that all three motivations occur simultaneously, does not preclude that behavior is more centered on one than on the others. The three dimensions are evaluated by a group of items (Table 6.1), the definition of these items is presented in the following paragraphs.

Table 6.1 Motivational items of participants in planning participation

Typology	Items
Rational-centered	Benefits related to utility Costs related to utility
Normative-centered	Social norms Democratic norms Norms of a profession/organization
Affective-centered	Affective attachments to people Affective attachments to place

The underlying premise of rational motivations is that individual choice among a set of options is motivated by an assessment of the potential utility of each option (Wise, 2000). Perry (1996) claimed that motivations for public service sometimes grounded in individual utility maximization. Similarly, Knoke (1988) defined motivations of rational choice in collective action as individual’s cost-benefit calculation to maximize the expected utility. In the specific field of urban planning, Innes et al. (1994) suggested that participation in collaborative planning relies on “stakeholders making an implicit cost-benefit calculation”. The utilitarian benefits might include *material benefits, occupational rewards, and informational resources* (Knoke, 1988). Material benefits include wages and salaries (Clark & Wilson, 1961). Olson (1965) indicated that monetary incentives play an important role in collective action. Data services and research are informational rewards (Knoke, 1988). Moreover, *relational reward expectations* also can motivate individuals to participate in communicative planning and to volunteer in associations (Olsson, 2009). For example, one participant in a planning project of San Diego reported that she attended meetings to make valuable professional contacts (Innes et al., 1994). Empirical work showed that the main costs of participation are *time, money, and energy* (Innes et al., 1994; Wandersman et al., 1987).

Normative-based motivations are important for many individuals in collaborative planning practices (Healey, 1997). Take a participant of San Francisco estuary project as an example,

he said he participated because he felt it was his duty (Innes et al., 1994). Normative-based motivations for public service refer to actions generated by efforts to conform to norms (Perry, 1996). Knoke (1988) defined motivations of normative conformity in collective action as conformance with rules of conduct derived from social values. *Democratic norms* are related to participatory behaviors in planning processes (Buchy & Hoverman, 2000). Democratic norms usually include “basic concepts of fairness; the rights of individuals to be informed and consulted and to express their views on governmental decisions; the need to better represent the interests of disadvantaged and powerless groups in governmental decision making; and the contributions of participation to citizenship” (Burby, 2003). For public employees, one identified normative motivation is social justice, such as making contributions to enhance the well-being of the marginalized (Perry, 1996). Urban planners are concerned with potential social change and hope this change to be morally defensible (Friedmann, 1989). Normative motivations also include “enhancing the public status of profession/organization, educating the general public about profession/organization, stressing the general prestige of the organization” (Knoke, 1988). Be true to professional norms is necessary for urban planners to successfully help both land developers and neighborhood residents in the planning process (Forester, 1987).

Affective motivations for public service refer to triggers of behavior that are based on emotional responses to various social contexts (Perry & Wise, 1990). Knoke (1988) defined motivations of affective bonding in collective action as emotional attachments to people and groups, it can be provided by social activities whose enjoyment is limited to participants. Furthermore, affective bonds to places could motivate people to participate in local planning process (Manzo & Perkins, 2006). For instance, many individuals participated in local planning projects because they care about the places (Innes et al., 1994).

6.3 Methods

6.3.1 Case selection

There were three case selection criteria: first, planning professionals should promote the communicative-rationality model of planning rather than maintain the traditional instrumental-rationality one, in order to achieve the research goal. Second, focusing on built-heritage projects. Preserving built-heritage is an important urban affair worldwide (Najid et al., 2015; Nyseth & Sognnæs, 2013), and planning professionals usually play a key role in the preservation of built-heritage (e.g., Deng et al., 2015). Third, planning participation in China can be divided into two types: government-led, top-down approach and citizen-led, bottom-up approach. The cases should include the two approaches. Based on these criteria, the following two cases were selected, both of them from the Dongcheng District of Beijing, China (Figure 6.1 Left).

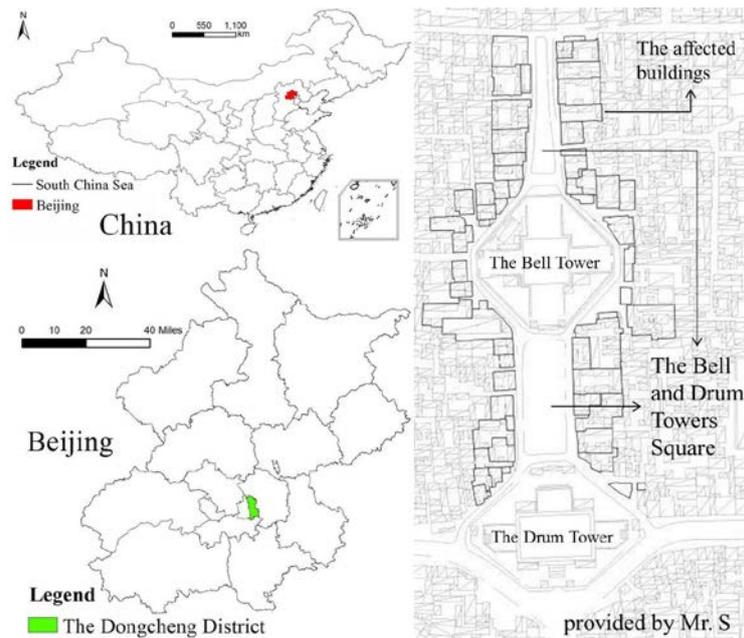


Figure. 6.1 The location of the two projects

The top-down project: the Qianguaibang 4 Courtyard Renewal Project

An official of the Chaoyangmen Subdistrict Office initiated the “Landscape Conservation Association of the Shijia Hutong” (LCASH) in 2014. In 2015, a voluntary urban planner proposed the first batch of projects for LCASH, namely, eight courtyard renewal projects in the Dongsinan historical and cultural conservation area. Siheyuans¹⁶ in the Old City of Beijing are part of the Beijing’s architectural heritage. The implementation of the eight projects was started with the Qianguaibang 4 courtyard, which was governed by the Chaoxi Residential Committee. The Qianguaibang 4 Courtyard Renewal Project was a government-led, top-down planning participation practice, since it was in charged and funded by the local government.

The bottom-up project: the Bell and Drum Towers Square Controversy

The Bell and Drum Towers Square refers to the open area around the Bell tower and the Drum tower (Fig. 6.1 right). The Bell and Drum Towers Square Restoration Project was put forward by the Dongcheng district government at the end of 2011. The local government stated that one goal of this project was restoring the landscape of this square as it appeared in Ming and Qing dynasties. 136 households were supposed to move away and their houses would be demolished to “restore” the square. With eviction notices pasted to the walls of the project area in December 2012, information about it began to be widely disseminated on the Internet, and then many people began to question the square “restoration” plan. On January 6, 2013, the Dongcheng district government held a press conference to claim that “all the houses slated for demolition were not historical heritage and were of no historical value, so this project would not destroy the ancient landscape of the square”. In this situation, the “Bell and Drum Towers Neighborhood Team” (BDTT) was formed and created an account on Weibo

¹⁶ Each siheyuan (or courtyard house) usually accommodates several households.

on January 27, 2013. The team organized a series of activities online and offline. Facing pressure from the team, the local government banned the local formal media from reporting its activities and prohibited local residents to talk with the team members. With the help of several local residents, the team members kept active onsite until nearly all of the 136 households moved away. The Bell and Drum Towers Square Controversy was a citizen-led, bottom-up planning participation practice, since it was initiated by a civil society organization—BDTT.

6.3.2 Data collection

The method of semi-structured interviews was adopted to collect data since it allows the interviewer to “delve deeply into social and personal matters” (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). Moreover, through focusing on a set of predetermined open-ended questions, this method enables the interviewer to get what he/she wants from an interview but allows new information to emerge from the dialogue between the interviewer and the interviewee (Jamshed, 2014). The data were collected from October to December, 2016, and from secondary sources. Each interview lasted one to three hours. All third-party professionals were contacted on Wechat¹⁷ in advance. Interviewees in the top-down planning participation practice were government officials and third-party professionals (volunteers of LCASH). Ms. X, who plays a key role in LCASH, helped us to get contact with the rest volunteers and the government official Mr. Li. Mr. Li helped us to get contact with the rest government officials. Interviewees in the bottom-up planning participation practice included third-party professionals (seven of the eight members of BDTT) and some residents. Mr. W, the chief organizer of BDTT, helped us to get contact with some team members. Only one team member did not accept our interview invitation. BDTT cooperated with a famous heritage protection activist Ms. Zeng, who, for health reasons, could not accept our interview invitation.

The semi-structured interviews with interviewees included four parts. The first part was about how they got engaged in the project, and what they did in the project. This part aimed to understand the roles of planning professionals in the project. The second part was about why they participated in the activities. This part aimed to understand the motivations of planning professionals. The motivations are divided into three typologies and seven types (Table 6.1). The empirical work of Kim et al. (2012) found that the three typologies of motivations are applicable internationally, but the meaning and scaling of motivation measurement items are likely to differ across cultures and languages. In this research, the measurement items for the seven types were selected from related literature (Burby, 2003; Cheng, 2013; Healey, 1997; Innes et al., 1994; Knoke, 1988; Manzo & Perkins, 2006; Olsson, 2009; Perry, 1996; Perry & Wise, 1990; Sun, 2015; Tan & Altrock, 2016; Wandersman et al., 1987; Zhai & Ng, 2013) and thereafter were tailored to fit the context of planning participation in China. We explained to each interviewee the meanings of the three typologies of motivations in everyday language, and then showed them the detailed items (see Appendix). Meanwhile, for interviewees who did not follow the interview protocol (see Appendix), they were encouraged to provide all answers to the question “why did you participate in this project?”. Then the authors made

¹⁷ WeChat is a Chinese social media APP that provides instant text and voice messaging, commerce and payment services.

judgements of their motivations based on the analysis. After all motivations were stated, interviewees were asked “what was the most important motivation for your participation?”. The third part was about the challenges they encountered, whether they ever thought about giving up, and whether they would be willing to participate in this kind of activities in the future and why (not). This part aimed to further know their roles and motivations. The fourth part was about professionals’ individual characteristics, such as their occupations.

6.4 Results

6.4.1 The top-down project

The roles of third-party planning professionals

The top-down planning participation involved two levels of governments: the subdistrict government and the residential committee (Figure. 2). Local governments in urban China usually contain five levels (from high to low): the provincial government, the municipal government, the district government, the subdistrict government (or the street office), and the residential committee. The residential committee is in charge of the direct and daily contacts with the residents living in its jurisdiction. Mr. Li, an official of the Chaoyangmen Subdistrict Office, initiated LCASH to protect the historic urban landscape within the Chaoyangmen Subdistrict. He invited an urban planner Ms. X to organize projects when LCASH was formed. Ms. Z, the head of the Shijia Residential Committee, was appointed as the head of LCASH since LCASH was located in Shijia Hutong. Mr. Y, the head of the Chaoxi Residential Committee, helped the third-party professionals to communicate with the residents since the Qianguaibang 4 courtyard was in his jurisdiction.

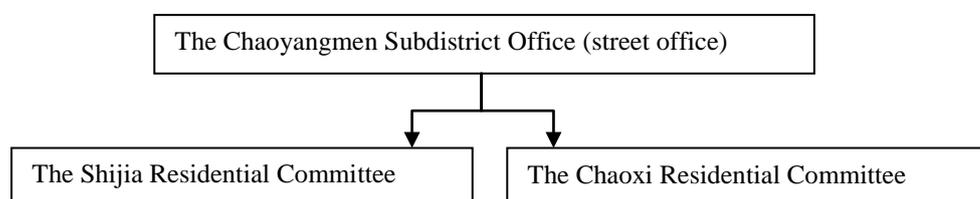


Figure. 6.2 Government authorities from high to low

Table 6.2 Data on third-party experts of the top-down planning participation project in 2015

Interviewee	Role in the project	Occupation
Ms. X	The chief organizer of the project	An urban planner of BICP
Ms. R	One key volunteer of LCASH	An urban planner of BICP
Ms. G	The head of the voluntary architects	The co-founder of an architectural design studio

Planning professionals worked as advocates. Ms. X and Ms. R (Table 6.2) were urban planners of the Beijing Municipal Institute of City Planning & Design (BICP). Ms. X was the chief organizer of the project. At Mr. Li’s invitation, Ms. X voluntarily served LCASH and was in charge of proposing the first batch of projects for LCASH. Ms. X suggested to engage

local residents in the planning process, and thus an advocator. Ms. R joined this project in the implementation stage, but was one key volunteer of LCASH. Ms. G was a co-founder of an architectural design studio, she joined this project as the head of the voluntary architects.

Planning professionals mediated between conflicting parties with the help of the residential committee. As Mr. Y said:

One day, one resident suddenly forced the construction team to stop work. At first, no one knew what happened... they (including planning professionals) could not persuade this resident. But residents trusted the residential committee, so he/she told us the real reason when my colleagues tried to talk with him/her for several times. The resident said that, as the construction team installed an awning for a house at the request of its owner, he/she should also be entitled to extra benefits...There were conflicts between these two residents in the past. In the end, he/she gave up his/her request at our persuasion.

Ms. X was aware of the need to cooperate with local government, when she said that it would be difficult for residents to trust professionals without the support of the residential committees. Furthermore, planning professionals need the knowledge of organizing meetings. In this project, at Mr. Li's invitation, the head of a nursing home company helped planning professionals held a meeting among residents, third-party professionals, and the construction manager to talk about the draft plan. Planning professionals facilitated dialogues in the meeting.

Planning professionals played the role of negotiators. For instance, LCASH told Mr. Y to recommend two to three courtyards within the Chaoxi community. One selection criterion was that local residents really needed and wanted to have the renewal project. In other words, Qianguaibang 4 was selected because all residents (at least the majority) living there wanted to renew it. However, not all residents supported the renewal project in practice. Therefore, planning professionals had to negotiate with them. As Ms. G said:

One resident disagreed with the plan because he did not want to remove his coal shed (Figure.4) which occupied public space and was standing idle. The self-built shed was illegal and couldn't be taken into consideration for compensation when this courtyard was slated, but the resident didn't think so... In the end, we kept that shed and painted it to grey to make it fit the landscape of the courtyard.

I have gained some experience from the project: there was a balance of interest among the residents, so we'd better maintain it or reach a new interest balance to avoid conflicts.

In summary, the third-party planning professionals played multiple roles in the Qianguaibang 4 Courtyard Renewal Project. Namely, advocators, mediators, facilitators, and negotiators. Planning professionals mediated between conflicting parties and negotiated with local residents. This is because that the power struggles in planning participation not only exist within each interest groups, but between different interest groups.



Figure. 6.3 The Qianguaibang 4 courtyard before (provided by Ms. G) and after the renewal project

Motivations of third-party planning professionals

Ms. X and Ms. R participated in this project mainly for the benefits to their work in BICP. Ms. X stated her motivations as follows:

I participated in this project mainly to promote the implementation of the “conservation plan for the Dongsinan historical and cultural district” which was compiled by BICP¹⁸, to mobilize residents to protect historical and cultural districts, and to explore a responsibility system of urban planners... I had new goals in the practice: I expected to explore a mode of historic neighborhoods renewal, which involved different parties and could be popularized to ordinary neighborhoods renewal... BICP was looking for pilot sites, and the Chaoyangmen subdistrict was a good choice.

I also wanted to enhance the general prestige of BICP. I thought we should involve residents in our work to let them know more about urban planners, I hoped residents could understand instead of criticizing us.

Ms. R stated a normative-centered motivation about democracy. She said that she always thought the general public had rights to be informed and consulted on urban planning.

¹⁸ Not all conservation plans can be implemented in contemporary China.

Ms. G was the co-founder of an architectural design studio, and led a group of architects to make the courtyard renewal plans for two of the eight courtyards. Her initial motivations were a mix of rational and affective aspects:

As a native of Beijing, I have an emotional knot on hutongs. I'd like to improve the living conditions of residents in hutongs, so I was interested in this project... There were lots of design projects for hutongs, I expected to develop this kind of design skills. That was why I participated in this project...

The first batch of LCASH's projects involved eight courtyards, two of them were designed by my team... I seriously thought about quitting participation when we designed for the other one, because a few residents tried to stop our work although their neighbors longed to renew the courtyard... I worked with other professionals to negotiate with local residents. Without their help, I wouldn't persist in participating... The sense of togetherness was important for me to persist.

To sum up, planning professionals participated mainly because it could further their careers. So, their primary motivations were rational. Relational rewards may reduce transaction costs in future collaborations (Olsson, 2009). The local governments and third-party professionals formed a good relationship in the Qianguaibang 4 courtyard renewal project. Therefore, the goal of BICP to get supports from the local government in the future (i.e., reduce the transaction costs of future cooperation) has been achieved. In a normative sense, the further development of preservation plans and practices was a clear driver of their cooperation and volunteering occurred due to a lack of opportunities/pilots to achieve their professional desires. One planning professional also took a normative stand on democracy: the general public having rights to be informed and consulted for urban planning. Affective motivations played a key role in continuing participation in this project. The frustrated planning professionals formed friendships (a kind of affective bonding) with other members in the planning process, which motivated them to sustain their participation. Some planning professionals were Beijingers having an affective attachment to the old city, even if they never lived in the old center. This kind of feeling made them interested in the project.

6.4.2 The bottom-up project

The roles of third-party planning professionals

The Dongcheng district government initiated this project to improve the image of this area. In February 2012, Mr. S, a master's student in urban planning, posted a report online to show that this project would demolish some siheyuans that already existed before 1750, as a result, the landscape of this square shaped in the Qing dynasty would be destroyed, which contradicted the statement of the local government. Later, BDTT was formed to protest against this project. BDTT had seven key member (Table 6.3): Mr. S who spent the most time on their Weibo account; Mr. W, the chief organizer, was an urban planner; Ms. J, the organizer who spent the most time onsite, was a landscape architect; Ms. L, the organizer who was responsible for the questionnaire design, was a master's student in sociology; Ms. T, the member who popularized the knowledge of laws on their Weibo account, was a researcher of cultural heritage protection; Mr. Z, the member who developed a planning support system,

was a teacher of urban planning; and Ms. C, the member who co-designed the questionnaire, was a PhD candidate in human geography. The governments never interactively communicated with these third-party planning professionals, in fact, “the Demolition and Relocation Office installed street cameras, forbade local residents to talk with us, and abetted local residents to rebuke us”, said Ms. J. In summary, planning professionals were activists in the Bell and Drum Towers Square Controversy.

Table 6.3 Data on third-party experts of the bottom-up planning participation project in 2013

Interviewee	Role in the activity	Occupation
Mr. W	The chief organizer	An urban planner
Ms. J	The organizer who spent the most time onsite	A landscape architect
Mr. S	The organizer who spent the most time on their Weibo account	A master’s student in urban planning
Ms. L	The organizer who was responsible for the questionnaire design	A master’s student in sociology
Ms. T	The member who popularized the knowledge of laws on their Weibo account	A researcher of cultural heritage protection
Mr. Z	The member who developed a planning support system	A teacher of urban planning
Ms. C	The member who co-designed the questionnaire	A PhD candidate in human geography

Motivations of third-party planning professionals

The primary motivation of Mr. W came from professional norms, affective bonding developing along the process as he said:

Ideally, I wanted to stop the project, but I knew it was impossible for it was too late for us to stop it. So, we tried to objectively record this event. By doing so, we wanted to protect citizens’ rights of being informed objectively. We disagreed with the local government about its claim that the siheyuans in the project area were of no historic value. I thought our work would affect governments’ decision on demolishing historical buildings in the future.

As we knew more about the neighborhood, and cooperated with Ms. Zeng, we began to care about local residents. To help them negotiate with the government, we provided information, such as the real value of their houses and relevant laws.

Ms. J together with Ms. Zeng visited all of the 136 households to popularize the knowledge of related laws and objectively tell them the values of the houses. Ms. J’s initial motivations came from professional ethics and self-interest as she said:

I joined the team for four reasons. First, as a landscape architectural designer, it was my professional ethics to conserve historic neighborhoods. Second, I tried to make a difference on the planning outcome through a non-utilitarian third-party organization. Third, I wanted to popularize the knowledge of property rights to residents because they were often misled by local governments on this knowledge. I wanted to educate the

general public about the importance of protecting historic neighborhoods. Fourth, I'd like to research underground ruins of this area, it might be destroyed by the project.

I was thought of quitting participation for I faced pressures from the local residential committee and the demolition and relocation office. I persisted in participating for two reasons: the main reason was that the team members were the best one I ever worked with. The secondary reason was that I still want to research the underground ruins of this area.

Mr. S's primary motivation was normative: the demolition of hutongs was contrary to his values. His secondary motivations were affective: his grandmother lived nearby the planning area, so he had affinity with it and wanted to do something for it. The motivations of Ms. L and Ms. T were normative. Ms. L co-designed a questionnaire for local residents. She thought her participation would contribute to citizenship and wanted to show that researchers have a sense of social responsibility. Ms. T explained pertinent laws and regulations on their Weibo account in order to promote the development of democracy in China and to provide a tool for the disadvantaged residents to protect their interests.

The motivations of Mr. Z and Ms. C were more rational. Mr. Z developed a web-based planning support system to involve more people. His main goal was to publicize his developing techniques. Ms. C, a researcher, joined the team for she wanted to know more about civic activities in Beijing, and to compare civic activities in Guangzhou and Beijing.

To sum up, in the Bell and Drum Tower project, the primary motivations of most planning professionals were more mixed. For most of them the primary motive was normative: to conserve historic neighborhoods and to affect governments' decisions on demolishing historical buildings in the future. A secondary normative motive was: to protect citizens' rights of being informed objectively, to provide tools for the disadvantaged residents to protect their interests, etcetera. But rational motives also showed up: to publicize software and to engage in research. Affective motivations played a key role in continuing participation in this project. The frustrated planning professionals formed friendships (a kind of affective bonding) with other members in the planning process, which motivated them to sustain their participation.

6.5 Discussion and conclusions

Planning participation is a contested issue in China. Despite the official rhetoric of a harmonious society and the changes in the legal framework that formalize the involvement of citizens in planning processes, many hold that the current practice is highly symbolic and aimed at placating the population rather than empowering them (e.g., Zhang et al., 2012; Zhang et al., 2013). External forcing of the current system by environmental threats, social change and technological innovation, may be more pertinent than the desire to change the system from within. Yet, this might overlook the role of the professionals. Professionals not only mediate among stakeholders in the communicative planning¹⁹ (Fainstein, 2000), but also play a critical role in the creation, maintenance, and transformation of institutions, as an

¹⁹ We have noticed the difference between communicative planning and participatory planning, but it is not the point here.

endogenous mechanism of institutional change (Suddaby & Viale, 2011). Public participation in administrative decisions has been discussed extensively in the urban affairs literature, including the motivations of public servants in the process (Appiah, 2014). This chapter is expected to contribute to the international debates on the management of urban affairs in general and on the paradigm shift in urban planning in particular, by exploring these in an authoritarian context.

Results of two empirical studies show that the third-party planning professionals served as advocates, mediators, facilitators, and negotiators in a government-led participatory process and as activists in a citizen-led participatory process, taking up new roles just as Western planning theorists assumed. Chinese urban planning education is limited to physical planning (Zhang, 2002). Planning professionals had better develop a store of new knowledge in order to be more effective in these new roles. For example, knowledge about how to mediate conflicts, how to facilitate the participatory process, how to negotiate with other interest parties, how to conduct meetings, and how to cooperate with residential committees. What we did find is that residents are more likely to cooperate with residential committees, the closest level of government to citizens, than with third-party professionals, either because residents are more familiar with the committees or because these committees can provide more benefits to them.

This chapter builds a conceptual framework by drawing on “Western” theories about the mix of rational choice, normative conformity and affective bonding in order to understand the motivations of planning professional. The two contrasting cases happened in the same district in Beijing. The first in which local government cooperated with planning professionals to set up a participatory process to preserve a historic neighborhood, the second in which third-party professionals developed a counter initiative to prevent a historic neighborhood to be demolished. The results contribute to our understanding in a number of ways.

The first is that interviewees were very open in communicating their motivations and indicated a mix of motives, from rational, normative to affective. This essentially Freudian triad was recognized as pertinent in the Chinese context as well. The openness might be an artefact of our research setup. The government approved of the outcomes in the first case and was informed about the identity of its opponents in the second. Yet Chinese planning professionals engage all their senses: material appreciation, moral concern and emotive appreciation, just as their western counterparts. Urban planners in China are subordinated to the bureaucratic machine and cannot fully play their professional role (Luo & Shen, 2008). The government-led participatory case shows that promoting the plan implementation was one motivation of planning professionals. The finding of this rational motivation supports the argument of Suddaby and Viale (2011) that professionals drive the institutional change in order to form new relationships with institutions to assist their professionalization projects.

The second is that the professional responsibility for the preservation of cultural heritage was the main driver to volunteer in the process in each case. The choice of our cases, both with heritage as the dominant planning arena, is obviously part of this, but it is striking that democratic norms were mostly mentioned. On the basis of the existing literature we expected

more emphasis on serving government in the top-down case (e.g., Cheng, 2013) and advocacy for citizens in the bottom-up case (e.g., Tayebi 2013), but that turned out to be a matter of emphasis rather than principal. Professional learning was a dominant motive in both cases, which again might not be a surprise as they all volunteered, but one might expect more altruistic behavior in the second. Affective motives of professionals were more linked to the place than to their inhabitants in both cases, although professionals in the second case seem to develop more bonds with the residents during the process.

The third is that despite the similarities in motives between the two cases, the planning professionals showed a radically different attitude to the profession. Their participation is obviously the result of self-selection and the actions taken clearly show the underlying morals. The professionals in the first case clearly opted for collaboration with both local government and local residents trying to find a balance between conflicting interests in an attempt to further develop planning practices aimed at preservation of historical heritage. The professionals in the second case used the arena to challenge the agenda of government in a more agonistic approach and the empowerment of local residents was at least partially undertaken to build up a power base against the existing practices of clearing areas. This contrast in attitudes shows that the debate between the Habermasian planning theorists like Healey (1997) who states that urban planning moves away from “competitive interest bargaining” to “collaborative consensus-building” and Foucauldian theorists like Flyvbjerg who argue that planning professionals should focus on conflict and power, is pertinent to Chinese planners as well. Whether a collaborative or an agonistic approach will be more effective in the context of an authoritarian state like China, remains to be seen.

The fourth is that the third-party professionals in each case were highly motivated to serve a public interest as defined by their profession, although not necessarily directly but probably indirectly serving the communities involved. As these professional norms also pertain to the engagement of citizens they might nevertheless become a causal agent in the shift towards participatory planning in China.

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Chapter 7

Conclusions



7 Conclusions

7.1 Introduction

Public participation is increasingly popular in China's planning policies and practices in recent years, although technical-rational planning is the prevailing urban planning paradigm in today's China. This dissertation aims to better understand the communicative turn in urban planning in the Chinese context. It analyses the policies and practices regarding public participation in China's urban planning from various perspectives. We firstly investigate how power relations change in urban planning in general (chapters two); then we analyze to what extent local context influences the change of power relations (chapters three); next, we explore how citizens empower themselves in urban planning (chapter four); after that, what is the usefulness of professional participatory tools in engaging the public in planning practice is researched (chapter five); and finally we explore why urban planners engage the public in planning practice (chapter six). This final chapter returns to the research questions and summarizes the main findings of the whole study. Then based on these findings it provides the relevance and contributions of this study for potential readers, such as scholars, preservationists, urban planners, policy-makers, decision-makers of urban planning. At the end, this chapter reflects on the limitations of the study and suggests future research topics.

7.2 Answers to the research questions

In order to better understand the communicative turn in urban planning in the Chinese context, five research questions have been raised in chapter one of this dissertation. The answers to each research question are as follows.

RQ1, How do power relations in China's urban planning evolve and what drives their change?

Chapter 2 concludes that two factors: national directives and standards to engage the public in planning and the active participation of the public to defend its opinions in planning practices, have combined to drive the power rise of the public in urban planning in current China. Hu et al. (2013) argued that the government is still decisive and drives the development of the market and civil society in urban planning in China. We partially agree with them and argue that this development much depends on the central government. National directives and standards could change the power relations of the groups. Civil society is actively shifting the power balance. Hu et al. (2013) claimed that civil society is neither critiquing authorities nor desiring to become self-regulatory. We argue that civil society may not plan to be self-regulatory, but it does critique local governments. In fact, the active participation of the public to defend its opinions in planning practices is crucial to the power rise of the public in urban planning in current China. There might be a long way for public participation in urban planning in China to arrive the partnership rung of Arnstein's ladder (1969), but the evolution of public engagement clearly points in that direction.

RQ2, how do local contexts influence the power of the public in China's urban planning?

Chapter 3 adopts three dimensions (policy content, actor features, and institutional features) of governance as a framework to compare public participation in urban redevelopment in Beijing and Guangzhou. Based on data of policy documents and urban redevelopment

practices in the two cities from 2003 to 2018, it is found that the two cities are similar in five features but differ in six, making Guangzhou citizens more powerful than Beijing citizens in local urban redevelopment. In the dimension of policy content, the two cities are similar in predominant policy instruments and in policy integration, but differ in goals that are pursued in policies, more political in Beijing and more economic in Guangzhou, and in policy-science interface, with Guangzhou using the knowledge of lay citizens. In the dimension of actor features, the two cities are similar in initiators, in position of other stakeholders, and in predominant policy level at which citizens operate, but differ in power base of citizens. Citizens in Guangzhou are allocated more rights; collective actions are more common and a clear leadership has developed with direct access to the centers of decision. In the dimension of institutional features, the two cities differ in model of representation, in rules of interaction and mechanisms of social interaction, Beijing emphasizing the suppression of conflict, Guangzhou aiming to arrive at consensus. The results highlight the importance of the local context and policy dynamics in the study of public participation in urban governance in China.

RQ3, how does the built heritage movement empower citizens in China's urban redevelopment in the Internet age?

Based on relevant official documents and the discourses and practices of actors involved in the Bell-Drum Towers controversy, it is found that the power enablers include official policies and citizens' awareness regarding built-heritage preservation and public participation, and the proliferation of new media. The constraints include the judicial system that does not allow citizens to sue for public interests, police intervention in real-world assemblies, and the resistance of district governments, which rely heavily on urban (re)development to get funding for local services. Within these contexts, preservationists effectively influence decision-makers by shaping public debates through mobilizing local residents and external parties, by building political pressure through mobilizing higher-level governments, and by demobilizing local decision-makers directly. Yet, inclusive collaborative planning is still a long way off in China.

RQ4, what is the usefulness of Web-based professional participatory tools in engaging the public in China's urban planning?

Taking the East Lake greenway planning project in Wuhan as an example, it is found that the Wuhan PSS provides new functionalities in eliciting ideas from independent citizens in the early stage of the planning process. In terms of usability, the system meets many of the criteria, but requires a high level of computer experience and domain knowledge restricting its use to "professional citizens". From the point of view of western planners this would seriously limit the usefulness as a participatory tool, but it is considered legitimate in China. Given the low level of computer literacy, limited access to the internet and a lacking tradition of public involvement in state affairs, it is nevertheless clear that there is a need to combine Web-based PSS with other participatory methods, both online and offline, to facilitate the participation of a diverse group of target users.

RQ5, what are the driving forces of planning professionals who actively engage the public in planning practices?

Based on data from semi-structured interviews with volunteer planning professionals from October to December, 2016, and from secondary sources, it is found that planning professionals have mixed motivations but mainly acted to conform to professional norms, in particular with respect to the preservation of cultural heritage, developed in education and experience, from a more collaborative stance in the government-directed public participation in urban planning case and a more agonistic stance in the citizen-led public participation in urban planning case. Social (right to the city) or democratic norms (citizen's rights) were mentioned less. Yet, as their professional norms also pertain to citizens' engagement they might nevertheless become an internal power in public participation in urban planning in China.

These findings show how and why the power and influence of the public changes in China's urban planning from different perspectives. The implications of these findings will be drawn in the subsections 7.3-7.5 for planning theories, policies, and education.

7.3 Theoretical implications

7.3.1 The communicative rationality and China's urban planning

Arnstein (1969) indicated that public participation only exists in democratic regimes, and Friedmann (2005) argued that China has no civil society in the sense of social organizations that actively participate in the debates of public issues. However, He and Warren (2011) found that public participation can exist in authoritarian regimes, Hu et al. (2013) concluded that there is a shift from the instrumental-rationality towards the communicative-rationality in China's planning, considering the changing power relations between the government, the market, and civil society. This dissertation contributes to this debate by doing theoretical analyses and empirical studies. It argues that China's urban planning is changing, and there is a trend towards a communicative approach, but there is a long way to arrive at it. Chapter 2 concludes that two factors: national directives and standards to engage the public in planning and the active participation of the public to defend its opinions in planning practices, have combined to drive the power rise of the public in urban planning in current China. However, one evaluative criterion for communication process, i.e., "the speakers and hearers routinely judge each other's sincerity" (Healey, 1997), has not been met. Chapter 4 shows that collaborative planning that includes the voice of preservationists is still a long way off in China, but the claim of Friedmann (2005) that China has no civil society in the sense of social organizations that actively participate in the debates of public Issues, is clearly outdated.

Focusing on mechanisms of political conflict management and decision-making in authoritarian China, He and Warren (2011) propose two possible avenues of China's political development: "the increasing use of deliberative practices stabilizes and strengthens authoritarian rule, or deliberative practices serve as a leading edge of democratization". This dissertation indicates that the first avenue is more probable than the second. Chapter 3 compared public participation in urban redevelopment in Beijing and Guangzhou. It concluded that public participation is restricted to a level that complies with national policies in Beijing, while public participation is included mainly as a means to facilitate the implementation of urban redevelopment plans in Guangzhou. Moreover, Chapter 5 suggests

that participation in China is not a goal in itself, like in Europe, but a means to maintain social stability and is considered legitimate without the need for representativeness.

7.3.2 Planning professionals in China's urban planning

Various new roles for planners in the communicative-rationality model of planning have been defined by scholars. For instance, Davidoff (1965) argued that planners should act as advocates articulating the interests of the public, especially the poor. Friedmann (1987) defined the new roles of planners in the mainstream planning structure as facilitators and mediators. Likewise, Forester (2006) claimed that planners can play the roles of facilitators, moderators, and mediators in planning participation. Tayebi (2013) defined the new roles of planners outside the mainstream planning structure as activists, who help the marginalized raise their voices in the decision-making process. Results of chapter 6 show that the volunteer planning professionals served as advocates, mediators, facilitators, and negotiators in a government-led participatory process and as activists in a citizen-led participatory process, taking up new roles just as Western planning theorists assumed.

There is a debate between the Habermasian planning theorists like Healey (1997) who states that urban planning moves away from “competitive interest bargaining” to “collaborative consensus-building” and Foucauldian theorists like Flyvbjerg who argue that planning professionals should focus on conflict and power. The findings in chapter 6 show that the debate is pertinent to Chinese planners as well. In detail, the professionals in the first case of Chapter 6 clearly opted for collaboration with both local government and local residents trying to find a balance between conflicting interests in an attempt to further develop planning practices aimed at preservation of historical heritage. The professionals in the second case used the arena to challenge the agenda of government in a more agonistic approach and the empowerment of local residents was at least partially undertaken to build up a power base against the existing practices of clearing areas. Whether a collaborative or an agonistic approach will be more effective in the context of an authoritarian state like China, remains to be seen.

7.3.3 The role of (de)centralized government

Wu (2016) argued that the term “neoliberal urbanism” might be misleading in China considering that it refers to a more market-centered approach in urban redevelopment, while redevelopment in China is dominated by the government. This argument has been supported by the findings in Chapter 3. This chapter compared public participation in urban redevelopment in Beijing and Guangzhou from the perspective of urban governance. It found that Guangzhou citizens are more powerful than Beijing citizens in local urban redevelopment. The municipal governments dominate urban redevelopment in both cities, they can decide on allowing property developers to participate in urban redevelopment, and dominate the interaction with citizens.

Hu et al. (2013) argued that the government is still decisive and drives the development of the market and civil society in China's urban planning. Chapter 2 partially agrees with them and argues that this development much depends on the central government. The claim that China's civil society neither critiques authorities nor desires to become self-regulatory (Hu et

al., 2013) is problematic since Chapter 2 found that civil society may not plan to be self-regulatory, but it does critique local governments. In fact, the active participation of the public to defend its opinions in planning practices is crucial to the power rise of the public in urban planning in current China.

7.3.4 The Internet and public participation in China's urban planning

There is a debate about the impact of the Internet on social movement. Castells (2015) emphasized the contribution of the Internet to activists based on empirical studies of social movements in the Internet age in Tunisia, Iceland, Egypt, Spain, and the USA. Likewise, Shirky (2008, 171) claimed that “to speak online is to publish, and to publish online is to connect with others... freedom of speech is now freedom of the press, and freedom of the press is freedom of assembly”. However, Gladwell (2010) argued that social media cannot help activists to be more influential because strong social ties between activists are needed to handle pressure, but social media only build weak social ties. Morozov (2009) even used the term “slacktivism” to describe the online activism that feel-good but has zero impact, and stated activism online can only be useful if the movements could really benefit from increased public attention. Chapter 4 contributes to this debate by providing the underlying reasons for the impact of the Internet on built-heritage movement in the Chinese context. The empirical results demonstrate that the Internet platform helps citizens in China to be influential, this finding supports the conclusions of Castells (2015) and refutes the claims of Gladwell (2010) and Morozov (2009). This might be because the Chinese policy of maintaining social stability makes local governments value citizens' dissenting voices online, or because local governments cannot silence citizens online as the Internet is charged by the National Internet Information Office of China. The empirical work also shows that the contributions of various new media to the movement differ, and that the emergence of Weibo greatly facilitates shaping public debates. Furthermore, this research argues that new media could complement, instead of replace, traditional media in social movements. For the general public who do not use the Internet, providing their opinions to journalists is an important approach for them to give their voices. The traditional media also can help citizens notice urban redevelopment controversies if they do not search the controversies online on purpose.

7.3.5 Participatory tools

Web-based PSS is a double-edged sword for public participation in planning. On the one hand, it can attract and help people to participate in planning. In this research, four respondents participated in the urban planning process for the first time, due to the “inconvenient time or place” of onsite planning practices, which appeared to be a more general burden of participation in planning processes in China (Hu et al., 2013). On the other hand, participatory tools that fail to comply with competences, motivations and resources of their potential users are not very useful. Our research shows that the participatory tools did have most of the required functionalities and met most of the design criteria on usability. However, assuming that the tools would perform the same task as in Western countries is clearly mistaken, given the fact that the normative planning context is very different.

Chapter 5 confirmed the conclusions of earlier research by Kahila-Tani et al. (2016), who argue that a Web-based PPGIS application could complement, instead of replace traditional

participatory methods (e.g., roundtables and sticker map methods) based on the contextual barriers such as the attitudes and capabilities of participants. Current research on Chinese planning participation found that online platforms exclude some important stakeholders (e.g., affected residents in local communities) who are not familiar with the information and communications technology (Deng et al., 2015). Therefore, we emphasize the need for complementarity of online participatory methods (e.g., Web-based PSS, online questionnaires and online forums) and offline/traditional participatory methods (e.g., face-to-face meetings, public hearings and citizen surveys).

7.4 Policy implications

Three policy implications of this study are discussed in this section. The first policy implication concerns the performance evaluation mechanism for Chinese government officials. The current performance evaluation mechanism for Chinese government officials has shifted its focus from economic growth to “social and public service functions ... and administration by law” (Burns & Zhou, 2010). Public satisfaction also has begun to be surveyed when evaluating officials’ performance, although the general public has little voice in the evaluation process (Burns & Zhou, 2010). However, Chapter 4 shows that the district government still firmly resisted the participation of citizens in urban redevelopment. Therefore, the performance evaluation mechanism for Chinese government officials might emphasize more on the criterion of engaging citizens in urban affairs, in order to avoid social conflicts. The second policy implication concerns urban redevelopment policies. Chapter 3 implies that urban micro-redevelopment is a new urban redevelopment trend, at least in Beijing and Guangzhou. Compared with urban planning and urban redevelopment, urban micro-redevelopment is more pertinent to public participation since citizens are part of decision-making in the urban micro-redevelopment practice. Moreover, citizens can better guard their rights in the urban micro-redevelopment practice. The central government might further promote the adoption of urban micro-redevelopment. The third policy implication concerns the power of urban planners. Urban planners in the western world are handmaidens to decision-makers in the instrumental-rationality model of planning (Douglass & Friedmann, 1998). Like their western counterparts, urban planners in China are subordinated to decision-makers and cannot fully play their professional role (Luo & Shen, 2008). Chapter 6 shows that planners voluntarily participate in an urban redevelopment project to promote the implementation of their plans. Therefore, urban planners in China need more power to better realize their professional visions.

7.5 Educational implications

The traditional role of urban planners in China are technicians. Chapters 6 shows that in the practice of public participation in planning, the third-party planning professionals served as advocators, mediators, facilitators, and negotiators in a government-led participatory process and as activists in a citizen-led participatory process, taking up new roles just as Western planning theorists assumed. Chinese urban planning education is limited to physical planning (Zhang, 2002). Therefore, planning professionals had better develop a store of new knowledge in order to be more effective in new roles. For example, knowledge about how to mediate conflicts, how to facilitate the participatory process, how to negotiate with other

interest parties, and how to conduct meetings. Learning how to cooperate with residential committees is important as well, since what we did find is that residents are more likely to cooperate with residential committees, the closest level of government to citizens, than with professionals, either because residents are more familiar with the committees or because these committees can provide more benefits to them.

7.6 Reflections

This study has several limitations. First, it has focused on interest groups in China's urban (re)development, in particular civil society organizations. Yet, as mentioned above, urban micro-redevelopment is a new urban redevelopment trend, in which individual citizens play a crucial role as part of decision-making. Therefore, further research might zoom in on individual citizens. Second, future research should employ more empirical studies, given the practice of public participation in urban planning varies with the local social and political culture, as shown in chapter 3. Third, public participation in not-in-my-backyard projects is one of the three key bottom-up, citizen-led participatory practices in China's urban planning. But this study has not paid enough attention to it, research on public participation in not-in-my-backyard projects in the future could provide more views on bottom-up, citizen-led participatory practices in China's urban planning.

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Appendix

Usability of the Web-based PSS application in the Wuhan greenway planning project (N=33)

Performance criteria	M	SD
<i>Connectivity</i>		
I had resources (e.g., laptop and network) to access this online application quickly and easily	4.15	0.83
<i>Error rate*</i>		
I made errors when I drew greenways because of errors in this application	3.66	
I made errors when I located infrastructure because of the errors in this application	3.70	0.81
I made errors when I added comments to a discussion forum because of the errors in this application	3.52	0.87
I made errors when I used this application (except for the abovementioned three operations) because of the errors in this application	3.82	0.81
<i>Learnability</i>		
I did not need support information (e.g., online guidance) when using this application [#]	3.61	1.09
I felt the functions of this application were easy to understand	3.17	
I did not need exploratory learning time to become familiar with the application	2.76	1.12
	3.52	0.97
	3.24	1.06
<i>Ease of Use</i>		
I found it was easy to draw greenways in this application [#]	3.43	
I found it was easy to locate infrastructure in this application [#]	3.36	0.93
It was easy to read characters on the screen [#]	3.21	0.99
The visual information was clear enough for me to complete the task	3.52	1.06
	3.64	0.96
<i>Interactivity</i>		
I was satisfied with the function of interacting with the planning bureau	3.57	
I was satisfied with the function of interacting with other users (please select disagree if there was not this function)	3.48	0.83
I was satisfied with the interactive functions of this application in general	3.52	0.94
	3.70	0.85
<i>Effectiveness</i>		
Compared with traditional participatory channels (e.g., public hearings, questionnaires, bulletin boards, and weblogs), this application enabled me to accomplish my goals more effectively	3.97	
	3.97	0.92
<i>Efficiency</i>		
Compared with traditional participatory channels, this application enabled me to accomplish my goals in less time	4.03	
Compared with traditional participatory channels, this application enabled me to accomplish my goals with less effort	4.03	0.85
	4.03	0.73
<i>Satisfaction</i>		
I was satisfied with the look and feel of this application (e.g., design, layout)	3.63	
I was satisfied with the amount of time it took to achieve my goal in this application	3.79	0.74
The application was pleasant to use	3.58	0.83
	3.52	0.91

Note. 1-strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3-neutral, 4-agree, 5-strongly agree

*1-always, ..., 5-never

[#]The scores and items have been reversed in this table.

Nederlandse samenvatting

Hoewel de technisch-rationele benadering in China nog altijd de heersende norm is binnen de stedenbouw, wordt burgerparticipatie in beleid en praktijk van ruimtelijke planning de laatste jaren steeds populairder. In dit proefschrift trachten we een beter inzicht te verkrijgen in de communicatieve aanpak van stedenbouw in de Chinese context. We analyseren de beleidlijnen en praktijken van burgerparticipatie in stedenbouw in China vanuit verschillende invalshoeken. Eerst zullen we bekijken hoe machtsrelaties in de stedenbouw in het algemeen veranderen (hoofdstuk 2) en in hoeverre de lokale context invloed heeft op veranderingen in machtsrelaties (hoofdstuk 3). Vervolgens onderzoeken we hoe burgers zichzelf empoweren in de context van stedenbouw (hoofdstuk 4), hoe bruikbaar professionele participatie-instrumenten zijn in het betrekken van burgers bij planning (hoofdstuk 5), en ten slotte waarom stedenbouwkundigen het publiek betrekken bij de praktijk van planning (hoofdstuk 6). In dit laatste hoofdstuk komen we terug op de onderzoeksvragen en vatten we de belangrijkste bevindingen van het gehele onderzoek samen. Ook bespreken we in dit hoofdstuk de relevantie van het onderzoek en het nut dat dit kan hebben voor potentiële lezers, zoals wetenschappers, natuurbeschermers, stedenbouwkundigen, beleidsmakers en besluitvormers op het gebied van stedenbouwkunde. Ten slotte kijken we naar de beperkingen van deze studie en doen we voorstellen voor verdere onderzoeksonderwerpen.

Antwoorden op de onderzoeksvragen

Om een beter inzicht te krijgen in de communicatieve benadering van stedenbouwkunde in de Chinese context, worden in hoofdstuk 1 van dit proefschrift vijf onderzoeksvragen gesteld. De antwoorden op deze vragen luiden als volgt.

OVI: Hoe ontwikkelen machtsrelaties in de Chinese stedenbouwkunde zich, en hoe worden veranderingen hierin tot stand gebracht?

De conclusie van hoofdstuk 2 luidt dat aan de groeiende macht van het publiek in de stedenbouwkunde van het hedendaagse China een combinatie van twee factoren ten grondslag ligt, namelijk enerzijds nationale richtlijnen en normen voor het betrekken van het publiek bij planning en anderzijds de actieve participatie van het publiek om in projecten zijn meningen te verdedigen. Volgens Hu et al. (2013) is het in China nog altijd de overheid die de beslissende factor en aanjager is van ontwikkelingen in markt en maatschappij als het op stedenbouwkunde aankomt. Wij zijn het ten dele met hen eens en stellen dat deze ontwikkeling sterk afhankelijk is van de centrale overheid. Nationale richtlijnen en normen kunnen de machtsrelaties van groepen veranderen. De burgermaatschappij verlegt actief de machtsbalans. Volgens Hu et al. (2013) bekritiseert de burgermaatschappij de autoriteiten niet, en heeft deze ook niet de wens om zelfregulerend te worden. Wij betogen echter dat de burgermaatschappij, ook al is ze misschien niet van plan zelfregulerend te worden, wel degelijk kritiek levert op lokale overheden. Sterker nog, de actieve participatie van burgers om hun mening te verdedigen is een essentiële factor in de groeiende macht van het publiek in de stedenbouwkunde in het hedendaagse China. De burgerparticipatie in de stedenbouwkunde in China is weliswaar nog vele treden verwijderd van het samenwerkingsniveau op de

participatieladder van Arnstein (1969), maar de ontwikkeling van maatschappelijke betrokkenheid wijst duidelijk in deze richting.

OV2: Hoe beïnvloeden lokale contexten de macht van het publiek ten aanzien van de stedenbouwkunde in China?

In hoofdstuk 3 worden drie dimensies van bestuur (beleidsinhoud, eigenschappen van spelers en institutionele eigenschappen) gebruikt als kader voor een vergelijking van burgerparticipatie in stadsvernieuwingsprojecten in Beijing en Guangzhou. Beleidsdocumenten en de praktijk van stadsvernieuwing tussen 2003 en 2018 tonen aan dat deze twee steden op vijf kenmerken overeenkomen maar op zes andere kenmerken verschillen vertonen. De inwoners van Guangzhou hebben al met al meer invloed op de plaatselijke stadsvernieuwing dan die van Beijing. Binnen de dimensie ‘beleidsinhoud’ komen de twee steden overeen in termen van de belangrijkste beleidsinstrumenten en beleidsintegratie, maar verschillen ze op het gebied van de doelen die met beleid worden nagestreefd – deze zijn in Beijing meer politiek en in Guangzhou meer economisch van aard – en in de interactie tussen beleid en wetenschap, waarbij in Guangzhou gebruik wordt gemaakt van de lekenkennis van burgers. Binnen de dimensie ‘eigenschappen van spelers’ komen de twee steden overeen in termen van initiatiefnemers, de positie van andere stakeholders en het belangrijkste beleidsniveau waarop burgers opereren, maar verschillen ze op het gebied van de machtsbasis van burgers. De inwoners van Guangzhou krijgen meer rechten toebedeeld, collectieve acties komen hier vaker voor en er heeft zich een duidelijk leiderschap ontwikkeld met rechtstreekse toegang tot de centra van besluitvorming. Binnen de dimensie ‘institutionele eigenschappen’ verschillen de twee steden in hun vertegenwoordigingsmodel en in de regels en mechanismen van maatschappelijke interactie. In Beijing ligt de nadruk op het onderdrukken van conflicten, terwijl in Guangzhou meer wordt getracht consensus te bereiken. Deze resultaten tonen aan hoe belangrijk lokale context en beleidsdynamieken zijn in onderzoek naar burgerparticipatie in het stedelijk bestuur in China.

OV3: Hoe maakt de monumentenbeweging in het internettijdperk de Chinese burgers mondig als het gaat om stadsvernieuwing?

Relevante officiële documenten en de communicatie en praktijken van de partijen die betrokken waren bij de controverse rondom de Bell-Drum Towers laten zien dat factoren als officiële beleidslijnen, het bewustzijn onder burgers op het gebied van monumentenbehoud en burgerparticipatie, en de proliferatie van nieuwe media mensen macht geven. Beperkingen bestaan onder meer uit het rechtssysteem waarbinnen burgers niet kunnen procederen voor het openbaar belang, politieoptreden tijdens bijeenkomsten en de weerstand van regionale overheden, die voor het financieren van lokale diensten sterk afhankelijk zijn van stedenbouw en stadsvernieuwing. Binnen deze contexten beïnvloeden natuurbeschermers besluitvormers door plaatselijke bewoners en externe partijen te mobiliseren en zo het publieke debat vorm te geven, door overheden op hogere niveaus te mobiliseren en zo politieke druk te creëren, en door lokale besluitvormers rechtstreeks te demobiliseren. Inclusieve collaboratieve planning is in China echter nog toekomstmuziek.

OV4: Hoe bruikbaar zijn online professionele participatie-instrumenten in het betrekken van burgers bij de stedenbouwkunde in China?

Als we de bouw van de East Lake Greenway in Wuhan als voorbeeld nemen, zien we dat het in Wuhan gebruikte participatie-instrument (*Planning Support System, PSS*) nieuwe mogelijkheden biedt voor het stimuleren van ideeën onder onafhankelijke burgers in de beginfase van het planningsproces. In termen van bruikbaarheid voldoet het systeem aan veel van de criteria, maar het vereist een flinke dosis computerervaring en domeinkennis en is daardoor alleen geschikt voor ‘professionele burgers’. In de ogen van westerse planologen zou dit de bruikbaarheid van het systeem als participatie-instrument ernstig belemmeren, maar in China wordt het als legitiem beschouwd. Gezien het lage niveau van computervaardigheid, de beperkte toegang tot het internet en het ontbreken van een traditie van publieke inspraak in staatszaken, is het echter duidelijk dat de internet-PSS moet worden gecombineerd met andere participatie-instrumenten, zowel online als offline, om de participatie van een diverse doelgroep te faciliteren.

OV5: Wat zijn de drijfveren van planologen die het publiek actief betrekken bij planningspraktijken?

Tussen oktober en december 2016 zijn met een aantal planologen die als vrijwilliger aan stadsvernieuwingsprojecten werkten, semigestructureerde interviews afgenomen. Deze interviews laten, in combinatie met secundaire bronnen, zien dat planologen verschillende beweegredenen hebben maar voornamelijk handelden om te voldoen aan de professionele normen (met name met betrekking tot het behoud van cultureel erfgoed) die ze zich tijdens hun opleiding en door ervaring eigen hadden gemaakt. In een casestudy met door de overheid geleide burgerparticipatie in de stedenbouwkunde namen ze een meer collaboratief standpunt aan, terwijl in een geval met door burgers zelf geleide burgerparticipatie een meer agonistisch standpunt zichtbaar was. Maatschappelijke (recht op de stad) en democratische (burgerrechten) normen werden minder genoemd. Aangezien de professionele normen van planologen echter ook betrekking hebben op burgerbetrokkenheid, kunnen deze toch een interne machtsfactor worden in burgerparticipatie in de stedenbouwkunde in China.

Deze bevindingen tonen vanuit verschillende perspectieven aan hoe en waarom de macht en invloed van het publiek ten aanzien van de stedenbouwkunde in China verandert. De consequenties van deze bevindingen voor theorieën, beleid en onderwijs op het gebied van planning worden besproken in de secties 7.3-7.5.

Theoretische consequenties

Communicatieve rationaliteit en de stedenbouwkunde in China

Arnstein (1969) stelde dat burgerparticipatie alleen bestaat in democratieën, en Friedmann (2005) beweerde dat China geen burgermaatschappij heeft in de zin van maatschappelijke organisaties die actief deelnemen aan discussies over publieke kwesties. Volgens He en Warren (2011) kan burgerparticipatie echter ook in autoritaire regimes bestaan, en Hu et al. (2013) concludeerden dat er, gezien de veranderende machtsrelaties tussen de overheid, de

markt en de burgermaatschappij, in de Chinese planning een beweging gaande is van instrumentele rationaliteit in de richting van communicatieve rationaliteit. Met dit proefschrift willen we aan de hand van theoretische analyses en empirisch onderzoek een bijdrage leveren aan dit debat. We stellen dat de stedenbouwkunde in China aan het veranderen is en dat er een trend gaande is in de richting van een communicatieve benadering, hoewel deze nog een lange weg heeft te gaan. De conclusie van hoofdstuk 2 luidt dat aan de groeiende macht van het publiek in de stedenbouwkunde van het hedendaagse China een combinatie van twee factoren ten grondslag ligt, namelijk enerzijds nationale richtlijnen en normen voor het betrekken van het publiek bij planning en anderzijds de actieve participatie van het publiek om in projecten zijn meningen te verdedigen. Aan één evaluatiecriterium voor communicatieprocessen, namelijk ‘sprekers en luisteraars beoordelen stelselmatig elkaars oprechtheid’ (Healey, 1997), is echter nog niet voldaan. Hoewel hoofdstuk 4 aantoont dat collaboratieve planning waarin ook naar natuurbeschermers wordt geluisterd in China nog toekomstmuziek is, is de bewering van Friedmann (2005) dat China geen burgermaatschappij heeft in de zin van maatschappelijke organisaties die actief deelnemen aan discussies over publieke kwesties, duidelijk achterhaald.

He en Warren (2011) hebben gekeken naar mechanismen van politieke conflictbeheersing en besluitvorming in het autoritaire China, en stelden op basis hiervan twee mogelijke richtingen voor waarin de Chinese politiek zich kan ontwikkelen: “Het toenemende gebruik van onderhandelingspraktijken stabiliseert en versterkt het autoritaire bewind, of onderhandelingspraktijken leiden tot democratisering.” In dit proefschrift wordt aangetoond dat de eerste richting waarschijnlijker is dan de tweede. In hoofdstuk 3 vergelijken we burgerparticipatie in stadsvernieuwingsprojecten in Beijing en Guangzhou. De conclusie van dit hoofdstuk luidt dat burgerparticipatie in Beijing beperkt blijft tot een niveau binnen de kaders van nationaal beleid, terwijl het in Guangzhou vooral een hulpmiddel is om de implementatie van stadsvernieuwingsplannen te faciliteren. In hoofdstuk 5 wordt bovendien gesuggereerd dat participatie in China geen doel op zich is, zoals in Europa, maar een middel om de maatschappelijke stabiliteit te handhaven en dat het als legitiem wordt beschouwd zonder representatief te hoeven zijn.

Planologen in de stedenbouwkunde in China

Wetenschappers hebben diverse nieuwe rollen gedefinieerd voor planologen binnen het communicatieve rationaliteitsmodel van planning. Zo beweerde Davidoff (1965) bijvoorbeeld dat planologen moeten opkomen voor de belangen van het publiek, en vooral de armen. Friedmann (1987) definieerde de nieuwe rollen van planologen in de reguliere planningsstructuur als die van faciliteerders en bemiddelaars, en ook Forester (2006) stelde dat planologen de rol kunnen spelen van faciliteerders, moderatoren en bemiddelaars in het participatieproces. Tayebi (2013) stelde dat planologen buiten de reguliere planningsstructuur moeten optreden als activisten, die gemarginaliseerde groepen moeten helpen hun stem te laten horen in het besluitvormingsproces. De bevindingen van hoofdstuk 6 tonen aan dat de planoloog-vrijwilligers in door de overheid geleide participatieprocessen fungeerden als pleitbezorgers, bemiddelaars, faciliteerders en onderhandelaars, en in door burgers geleide

processen meer als activisten, en daarbij precies die nieuwe rollen aannamen die de westerse planologisch theoretici veronderstelden.

Er bestaat onenigheid tussen Habermasiaanse theoretici zoals Healey (1997), die stelde dat stedenbouwkunde de praktijk van ‘onderhandelen tussen concurrerende belangen’ inruilt voor ‘collaboratieve consensusvorming’ en Foucaultiaanse theoretici als Flyvbjerg, volgens wie planologen zich moeten richten op conflicten en macht. De bevindingen van hoofdstuk 6 laten zien dat deze discussie ook relevant is voor Chinese planologen. De professionals in de eerste casestudy uit hoofdstuk 6 kozen duidelijk voor samenwerking met zowel de plaatselijke overheid als de bewoners en probeerden een balans te vinden tussen de tegenstrijdige belangen om zo verder te komen in het ontwikkelen van planningspraktijken gericht op het behoud van historisch erfgoed. De professionals in de tweede casestudy gebruikten de arena om in een meer agonistische benadering de overheidsagenda aan te vechten. Hierbij had de empowerment van de plaatselijke bewoners op zijn minst deels ten doel een machtsbasis op te bouwen tegen de bestaande praktijken van het ontruimen van gebieden. Of een collaboratieve of agonistische benadering in de context van een autoritaire staat als China effectiever is, moet de toekomst uitwijzen.

De rol van een (de)centrale overheid

Wu (2016) stelde dat de term ‘neoliberale stedenbouw’ in China wellicht misleidend is, aangezien deze verwijst naar een meer marktgerichte benadering van stadsvernieuwing, terwijl herontwikkeling in China wordt bepaald door de overheid. Dit argument wordt ondersteund door de bevindingen in hoofdstuk 3. In dit hoofdstuk wordt burgerparticipatie in stadsvernieuwingprojecten in Beijing en Guangzhou vanuit het perspectief van stedelijk bestuur vergeleken, en wordt geconcludeerd dat de inwoners van Guangzhou meer inspraak hebben in stadsvernieuwingprojecten dan die van Beijing. In beide steden heeft het gemeentebestuur de macht als het gaat om stadsvernieuwing. Dit bestuur bepaalt of vastgoedontwikkelaars inspraak krijgen in projecten en domineert de interactie met burgers.

Volgens Hu et al. (2013) is het in China nog altijd de overheid die de beslissende factor en aanjager is van ontwikkelingen in markt en maatschappij als het op stedenbouwkunde aankomt. In hoofdstuk 2 krijgen zij deels gelijk en wordt betoogd dat deze ontwikkeling sterk afhankelijk is van de centrale overheid. De bewering dat de Chinese burgermaatschappij de autoriteiten niet bekritiseert en ook niet de wens heeft om zelfregulerend te worden (Hu et al., 2013) is problematisch, aangezien in hoofdstuk 2 wordt aangetoond dat de burgermaatschappij wel degelijk kritiek levert op lokale overheden, ook al is ze misschien niet van plan zelfregulerend te worden. Sterker nog, de actieve participatie van burgers om hun mening te verdedigen is een essentiële factor in de groeiende macht van het publiek in de stedenbouwkunde in het hedendaagse China.

Internet en burgerparticipatie in de stedenbouwkunde in China

Er bestaat discussie over de impact van het internet op maatschappelijke bewegingen. Castells (2015) benadrukte de bijdrage van het internet aan activisten op basis van empirisch onderzoek naar maatschappelijke bewegingen in het internettijdperk in Tunesië, IJsland,

Egypte, Spanje en de VS, en Shirky (2008, 171) stelde: “Online praten staat gelijk aan publiceren, en online publiceren staat gelijk aan contact zoeken met anderen... vrijheid van meningsuiting staat nu gelijk aan persvrijheid, en persvrijheid staat gelijk aan vrijheid van vergadering.” Gladwell (2010) beweerde echter dat sociale media activisten niet meer invloed kunnen geven. Dit omdat sterke sociale banden tussen activisten nodig zijn om met druk te kunnen omgaan, en sociale media slechts zwakke sociale banden creëren. Morozov (2009) gebruikte zelfs de term ‘*slacktivism*’ om het online activisme te beschrijven dat weliswaar goed voelt maar totaal geen impact heeft, en stelde dat online activisme alleen nuttig kan zijn als de beweging echt baat heeft bij meer publieke aandacht. Hoofdstuk 4 levert een bijdrage aan dit debat door de onderliggende redenen te geven voor de impact van het internet op de monumentenbeweging in de Chinese context. De empirische bevindingen tonen aan dat het internetplatform burgers in China invloed geeft. Hierbij worden de conclusies van Castells (2015) onderschreven en de beweringen van Gladwell (2010) en Morozov (2009) weerlegd. Redenen hiervoor liggen mogelijk in het feit dat het Chinese beleid van handhaven van maatschappelijke stabiliteit ervoor zorgt dat lokale overheden online tegengeluiden van het volk waarden, of dat ze hun niet het zwijgen kunnen opleggen, aangezien het internet wordt bewaakt door het *National Internet Information Office of China*. Het empirisch onderzoek toont ook aan dat de bijdragen van verschillende nieuwe media aan de beweging verschillen en dat de opkomst van Weibo het opzetten van publieke debatten enorm vergemakkelijkt. Ook wordt in dit onderzoek gesteld dat nieuwe media de traditionele media in maatschappelijke bewegingen zouden kunnen aanvullen in plaats van vervangen. Het algemene publiek dat geen gebruik maakt van het internet, kan zijn stem laten horen via journalisten. Daarnaast worden burgers via de traditionele media op de hoogte gesteld van controverses in stadsvernieuwing als ze hier niet zelf online naar zoeken.

Participatie-instrumenten

Als het gaat om burgerparticipatie op het gebied van ruimtelijke planning, heeft de internet-PSS zowel voor- als nadelen. Aan de ene kant kan deze mensen uitnodigen en helpen hun stem te laten horen. Vier respondenten in deze studie namen voor het eerst deel aan een planningsproces, vanwege de ‘onhandige tijd of plaats’ van planningspraktijken ter plaatse. Dit bleek een meer algemene belemmering te zijn voor participatie in planningsprocessen in China (Hu et al., 2013). Aan de andere kant zijn participatie-instrumenten die niet goed zijn afgestemd op de competenties, motivaties en hulpbronnen van hun potentiële gebruikers niet erg nuttig. Uit ons onderzoek blijkt dat de participatie-instrumenten beschikten over de meeste vereiste functionaliteiten en voldeden aan de meeste ontwerpcriteria op het gebied van bruikbaarheid. De aanname dat met deze instrumenten dezelfde taak zou worden uitgevoerd als in westerse landen is echter duidelijk onjuist, aangezien de normatieve planningscontext heel anders is.

In hoofdstuk 5 worden de conclusies bevestigd van eerder onderzoek door Kahila-Tani et al. (2016), die stelden dat een online PPGIS-toepassing zou kunnen dienen ter aanvulling, in plaats van vervanging, van traditionele participatie-instrumenten (zoals rondetafelgesprekken en landkaarten waarop burgers locaties kunnen markeren), in verband met de contextuele belemmeringen zoals de attitudes en vaardigheden van deelnemers. Een lopend onderzoek

naar participatie in Chinese planningsprocessen heeft aangetoond dat een aantal belangrijke stakeholders (zoals de getroffen bewoners in lokale gemeenschappen) die niet bekend zijn met informatie- en communicatietechnologie door het gebruik van online platformen worden uitgesloten van participatie (Deng et al., 2015). Wij benadrukken dan ook dat online participatie-instrumenten (zoals de internet-PSS, online enquêtes en online fora) en offline/traditionele participatie-instrumenten (zoals fysieke bijeenkomsten, openbare hoorzittingen en opiniepeilingen) elkaar moeten aanvullen.

Consequenties voor beleid

In dit gedeelte worden drie beleidsconsequenties van dit onderzoek besproken. De eerste consequentie betreft het systeem van prestatiebeoordeling voor Chinese overheidsfunctionarissen. In het huidige systeem is de aandacht verlegd van economische groei naar ‘maatschappelijke en openbare dienstverlening ... en bestuur volgens de wet’ (Burns & Zhou, 2010). Als onderdeel van de prestatiebeoordeling van ambtenaren wordt tegenwoordig ook de publiekstevredenheid gemeten, alhoewel het algemene publiek weinig te zeggen heeft over het beoordelingsproces (Burns & Zhou, 2010). Hoofdstuk 4 toont echter aan dat de regionale overheid nog altijd veel weerstand biedt tegen de participatie van burgers in stadsvernieuwing. In het systeem van prestatiebeoordeling voor Chinese overheidsfunctionarissen zou daarom misschien meer aandacht moeten komen voor het criterium van het betrekken van burgers bij stedelijke aangelegenheden om maatschappelijke conflicten te vermijden. De tweede beleidsconsequentie betreft beleidlijnen in stadsvernieuwing. In hoofdstuk 3 wordt gesuggereerd dat *urban micro-redevelopment* oftewel ‘micro-stadsvernieuwing’ een nieuwe trend in de stadsvernieuwing is, in elk geval in Beijing en Guangzhou. In vergelijking met stedenbouwkunde en stadsvernieuwing is micro-stadsvernieuwing een relevanter domein in de context van publieksparticipatie, aangezien burgers bij deze vorm van planning deelnemen aan de besluitvorming. Bovendien zijn burgers in een proces van micro-stadsvernieuwing beter in staat hun rechten te verdedigen. De centrale overheid zou processen van micro-stadsvernieuwing verder kunnen bevorderen. De derde beleidsconsequentie betreft de macht van stedenbouwkundigen. Binnen het instrumenteel-rationele model van planning in de westerse wereld zijn stedenbouwkundigen dienstbaar aan besluitvormers (Douglass & Friedmann, 1998). Net als hun westerse collega’s zijn stedenbouwkundigen in China ondergeschikt aan besluitvormers en kunnen zij hun professionele rol nooit volledig vervullen (Luo & Shen, 2008). Hoofdstuk 6 laat zien dat planologen zich als vrijwilliger inzetten voor stadsvernieuwingsprojecten om de implementatie van hun plannen te bevorderen. Stedenbouwkundigen in China moeten daarom meer macht krijgen om hun professionele visies beter te kunnen realiseren.

Consequenties voor onderwijs

In hun traditionele rol zijn stedenbouwkundigen in China technici. In hoofdstuk 6 zagen we dat in de praktijk van burgerparticipatie in planning externe planologen in door de overheid geleide participatieprocessen fungeerden als pleitbezorgers, bemiddelaars, faciliteerders en onderhandelaars, en in door burgers geleide processen meer als activisten, en daarbij precies die nieuwe rollen aannamen die de westerse planologisch theoretici veronderstelden.

Opleidingen voor stedenbouwkundigen in China gaan alleen over fysieke planning (Zhang, 2002). Planologen moeten daarom nieuwe kennis opdoen om effectiever te kunnen fungeren in nieuwe rollen – bijvoorbeeld kennis over conflictbemiddeling, het faciliteren van participatieprocessen, onderhandelen met andere belangengroepen, en het houden van vergaderingen. Ook moeten ze leren samenwerken met bewonerscommissies. Een van onze bevindingen was immers dat bewoners meer geneigd zijn samen te werken met bewonerscommissies, hun dichtstbijzijnde overheidslaag, dan met professionals. Dit kan ofwel komen doordat bewoners meer bekend zijn met deze commissies of doordat deze hun meer voordelen kunnen bieden.

Overwegingen

Deze studie kent een aantal beperkingen. Ten eerste hebben we ons gericht op belangengroepen in stedenbouw en stadsvernieuwing in China, met name maatschappelijke organisaties. Binnen het domein van stadsvernieuwing tekent zich echter zoals hierboven genoemd de nieuwe trend van micro-stadsvernieuwing af, waarin individuele burgers een belangrijke rol spelen in de besluitvorming. Nader onderzoek waarin individuele burgers onder de loep worden genomen zou daarom nuttig zijn. Ten tweede zou in toekomstig onderzoek meer gebruik moeten worden gemaakt van empirische studies, gezien het feit dat de praktijk van burgerparticipatie in stedenbouwkunde varieert naargelang de plaatselijke maatschappelijke en politieke cultuur, zoals we hebben gezien in hoofdstuk 3. Ten derde is burgerparticipatie in ‘niet-in-mijn-achtertuin’-projecten een van de drie belangrijkste bottom-up, door burgers geleide participatiepraktijken in de stedenbouwkunde in China. In dit onderzoek is hieraan echter onvoldoende aandacht besteed. In de toekomst zou onderzoek naar burgerparticipatie in ‘niet-in-mijn-achtertuin’-projecten meer licht kunnen werpen op bottom-up, door burgers geleide participatiepraktijken in de stedenbouwkunde in China.

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The author of this dissertation was born in November 1988, in Nanyang city, Henan province, China. After graduating as a master in 2014, she moved to the Netherlands and started as a PhD student of spatial planning in the Department of Human Geography and Spatial Planning at Utrecht University. Her supervisors were Dr. Yanliu Lin, Prof. dr. Pieter Hooimeijer, and prof. dr. Stan Geertman. She was financially supported by the China Scholarship Council (CSC) scholarships and the main academic contributions of her work have been presented in this book. Several chapters have been presented in international conferences or have been accepted by academic journals.