

## ABSTRACT

Title of Thesis: PARTICIPATORY PLANNING PILOT CASE STUDY IN CHINA: REALITY, CHALLENGES & LESSONS LEARNED FROM US

Yijing He, Master of Community Planning, 2016

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Urban planning in China is in a period of change, where participatory planning may supplement the traditional planning system. Since the beginning of the 21st century, several pilot participatory planning projects have responded to the new challenge. The author collected eight cases from the Chinese planning institution to explore the possible modes of and barriers to participatory planning. On the other hand public participation has been a concrete component of planning and implementation process in the United States. The author will also elaborate on one practical case of the planning process in United States in order to compare the two countries with respect to planning methods and barriers.

PARTICIPATORY PLANNING PILOT CASE STUDY IN CHINA: REALITY,  
CHALLENGES & LESSONS LEARNED FROM US

by

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## Introduction

Participatory planning is a planning paradigm that emphasizes involving the entire community in the strategic and management processes of planning, be it urban-community, or rural-level planning processes. It is often considered an integral component of community development.

Urban planning in China is in a period of change, where participatory planning may supplement the traditional planning system. Since the beginning of the 21st century, several pilot participatory planning projects have responded to the new challenge. The author collected eight cases from the Chinese planning institution to explore the possible modes of and barriers to participatory planning. On the other hand, participation is often more easily executed in a developed society because of their higher capacity, better education, and more general awareness of public rights. Public participation has been a concrete component of planning and implementation process. The author will also elaborate on one practical case of the planning process in United States in order to compare the two countries with respect to planning methods and barriers.

In summary, the thesis will use eight examples from China and one practical experience from US to address these questions:

- What is the role of the Public Participation in China? What is the reality and what are the challenges?
- In both China and US, how did these participatory planning projects happen?
- What are the barriers and how were they overcome?
- What lessons can we learn from these examples?
- How can we make participatory planning more common in China?

# Chapter 1: The Chinese planning system and the role of the public

## 1.1 The Chinese Planning System

### 1.1.1 Planning System

The Chinese planning system is still primarily top-down, centralized and government-dominated. Recently, even though much power has been decentralized to the local level, including some of the legislative rights, the rights of legislating planning law are still subject to the central government and the power of local regulatory bodies remains weak.

### 1.1.2 Land Lease System

In urban area, by the end of the Cultural Revolution in 1976, nearly all land was owned by collectives or by the state. In the rural area, nearly all land in rural areas remains owned by farmer collectives. A land user obtains only the land use right, not the land or any resources in or below the land<sup>1</sup>. A land grant contract shall be entered into between the land user and the land administration department of the people's government at municipal or county level.

Table 1 Land Use Right <sup>2</sup>	
Purpose	Years of Grant
Land for residential purposes	70 years
Land for industrial purposes	50 years
Land for purposes of educational, scientific and technological, cultural, health care or sports	50 years
Land for commercial, tourism or recreational purposes	40 years
Land for combined usage or other purposes	50 years

Article 12 of the Provisional Regulations on Grant and Assignment of Urban State-owned Land Use Right states the different duration of rights provided for different purposes. (Table

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1 Chapter II Article 8 Land Administrative Law of the People's Republic of China

2 Article 12 of the Provisional Regulations on Grant and Assignment of Urban State-owned Land Use Right

1). Land-leasing development has long been a powerful approach for development, creating growth formerly concerned with big-scale, greenfield construction.

### 1.1.3 Democracy in China

Democracy in China, rooted in traditional Chinese philosophy and culture, is often realized as a combination of electoral democracy and deliberative democracy. The vertical structure of this iteration of democracy - Vertical Democracy- is a combination of top-down governmental directives and bottom-up grassroots participation. Different from direct democracy, the representative democracy of China is characterized by the dominant power of elites, making grassroots participation in policy decision-making challenging. Also, China's vast geographically imbalanced development and variation in local context make the establishment of a precise one-for-all institutional or legal system at the national level quite difficult.

The organization of the Chinese planning system, as well as Chinese democracy, discourages direct application of western methods of participation in China. Therefore, we must find our way. A functional path for public participation in urban planning, tailored to China's bureaucratic and institutional context needs to be explored while the advantage of native grassroots democratic systems begs further application.

## 1. 2 The Legal Position and Instruments of Planning Participation in China

Initially, the public right to participation in urban planning is given by the constitution. The constitution stipulates that all power in the P.R.C belongs to the people. It is the primary principle of China's socialist constitutional theory that governmental power is derived from the people, serves the people and is held accountable to the people. Since urban planning is one of the government's public administrative functions, public participation throughout the

processes of urban planning is not only the expression of public will and the representation of public interest, but also is the exercise of the civil right granted by the constitution.

Moreover, it is also the civil right given by administrative law that the public has the right to participate in urban planning. Administrative law, of strength second only to the constitution, encompasses laws and regulations that adjust social relations through the process of national regulatory authorities exercising their right of administration. Currently, the Urban and Rural Planning Act, and the associated Environmental Impact Assessment Act and Administrative Permission law provide the basic institutional framework for the procedures of public participation in urban planning. These administrative laws lay down the institutional foundation to support and guarantee planning participation.

The Urban and Rural Planning Act enacted in 2007 stipulates for the first time the legal procedures of public participation in planning. The agents of participation include government departments, experts, direct stakeholders and the general public. The Act clearly requires public notice of draft plans for a minimum of 30 days and also stipulates that the stakeholders must be consulted when deciding whether a detailed regulatory plan need be revised. (Table 2)

To be more precise, the Act requires certain participation procedures at the compilation, decision, implementation and revision stages of planning, such as public notice, verification meetings, and public hearings. Clauses such as “the plan compilation authority should make public notice and organize verification meetings, public hearings, etc. for consulting experts and the public” and “the approval authority should arrange expert review before approval ” give the public the right of participation by regulating the procedural obligation of administrative bodies at each planning stage.

## 1.3 Reality & Challenges of Public Participation in China Planning

### 1.3.1 Regulation is Mandatory but Not Effective

According to Table 2, several features of participatory planning in China can be observed.

Though certain public participation procedures are required at each planning stage, most are revisionary in nature. In most cases, the public is informed and consulted only after a plan has been drafted or a decision has almost been made. Among the primary participation instruments of public notice, verification meetings and public hearings, only public notice is mandatory. For instance, online public notice is given using low-resolution figures not easily accessed on the website, while onsite public notices are often rarely visited due to lack of publicity. What is more, the schematic diagram only contains very limited information and not understandable to the general public.



Figure 1 Public Notification of Aging Community Facility Plan, Tongzhou District, Beijing<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Source: *Beijing Municipal Commission of Urban Planning* Website



Figure 2 Public Notification of Aging Community Facility Plan (schematic diagram), Tongzhou District, Beijing<sup>4</sup>

### 1.3.2 Lacking of the Structure of Public Participatory Planning

There is no detailed procedural requirement for each participation instrument, nor are there specifications to guarantee the quality of participation. How the planners should respond to

<sup>4</sup> Source: *Beijing Municipal Commission of Urban Planning Website*

and adopt the results of participation are unknown, and the whole process is not open and transparent, meaning that the impact of participation in the final decision (in other words, the efficacy of participation) is uncertain.

Moreover, the planning authority responsible for organizing the verification meetings and the public hearings ultimately decides the attendees. Therefore, these meetings are not open to the general public. The lack of regulation on detailed procedures and the lack of supervisory mechanisms allows the planning authority much manipulate the extent of participation with the result often being nothing more than performance.

### 1.3.3 Lacking of the Participatory Culture

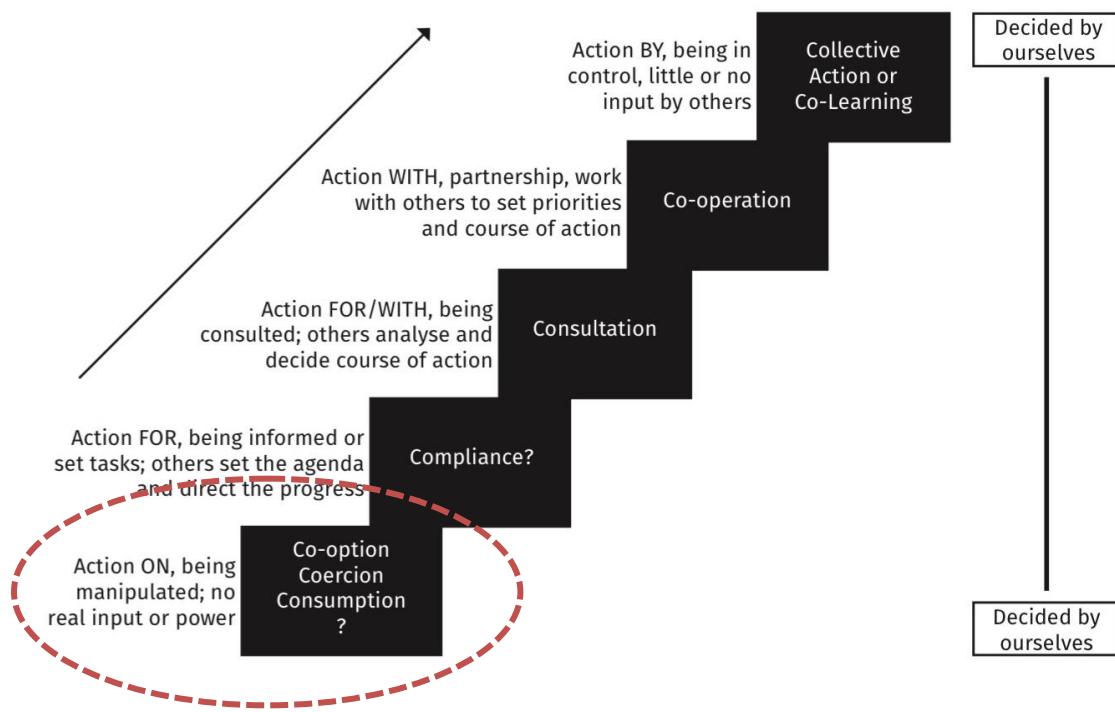


Figure 3 A Ladder of Citizen Participation (Source: Arnstein, 1969)

Chinese culture is rarely focused on individual freedom. Civil rights are an unfamiliar concept for most Chinese citizens. Overall, the procedures of participation in planning required by law exist more in principle than in practice in China. By and large, public participation in China remains a superficial endeavor and is executed with the aim of

fulfilling requirements under the Urban Planning Law. Neither the government nor developers want public participation to slow down development. Also, the level of planning participation remains low, basically hovering around the Tokenism level of Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation<sup>5</sup>. However, at the grassroots level, voluntary implementation of participatory methods has seen much progress and many lessons can be learned. Limitations on the impact of these grassroots efforts do exist.

#### 1.4 Urbanization in the New Era

##### 1.4.1 The Slowing Down of Urban Development

In 2014, urbanization rates in China approached 54.77%. The National New-Type Urbanization Plan was released in early 2014. The policy highlighted “people oriented” philosophy as the core ideology. The key characteristic of the new concept lay in the quality of urbanization, which emphasizes people and livelihoods, rather than the quantity of land and property value growth. Hence, it is supposed that more people’s voices should be heard and more people’s opinions/ideas are utilized.

The fact that cities are running out of vacant land is another reality widely recognized in China. For instance, Land resources are being exhausted in metropolises. For example, the urbanized land in Shanghai municipality is close to 50% of the total land, which is threatening the city’s ecological system. The land capacity to accommodate traditional large-scale greenfield development is increasingly limited. Under this condition, starting from 2004, the major cities in China have been focusing on urban redevelopment rather than greenfield development. It is also called “stock land,” which will be discussed later.

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<sup>5</sup> Arnstein, Sherry R. (1969): “A Ladder Of Citizen Participation”. Journal of the American Institute of Planners 35 (4): 216

Thus, the new direction must be how to deal with the complicated problems of property rights, existing space, existing land use and the role of communities and different interest groups, which do not exist in the traditional greenfield development. More stakeholders are expected be involved. In the built area, the questions of how to host the increasing population moving to the city as well as upgrading the living quality of the existed urban population will be key.

#### 1.4.2 Planning in Transition: from ‘Growth-oriented’ Planning to ‘Stock- oriented’ Planning

China has achieved impressive successes of urbanization in past 30 years, which has benefitted from the power of concentrated government capacity and capital resources. However, these large-scale, centralized, government initiated processes have ignored quality life, particularly in a smaller scale. The main reason behind it is the fact that “fast” and “significant” growth naturally leaves little space for thorough meditation on thousands of communities, and residents.

The transition of Chinese urban development (see Figure 4 as an example) is posing intractable challenges to China’s traditional as ‘growth-oriented’ planning system. No longer suitable for the massive modern Chinese city, the method of planning must be retrofitted. First, ‘stock land’ (urbanized land) is different from greenfield land in the sense that capital has already been invested in the land, i.e. there are investors, residents, managers, all of whom can be termed stakeholders, bound to the land. They may be public organizations, private developers, property owners, tenants, or the general local residents/public. If generally speaking, the goal of urban planning is to seek the optimal way of resource arrangement, stock-oriented urban planning then is talking about capital rearrangement and profit redistribution. In this sense, the public and all stakeholders should be involved to achieve an acceptable solution for everyone.

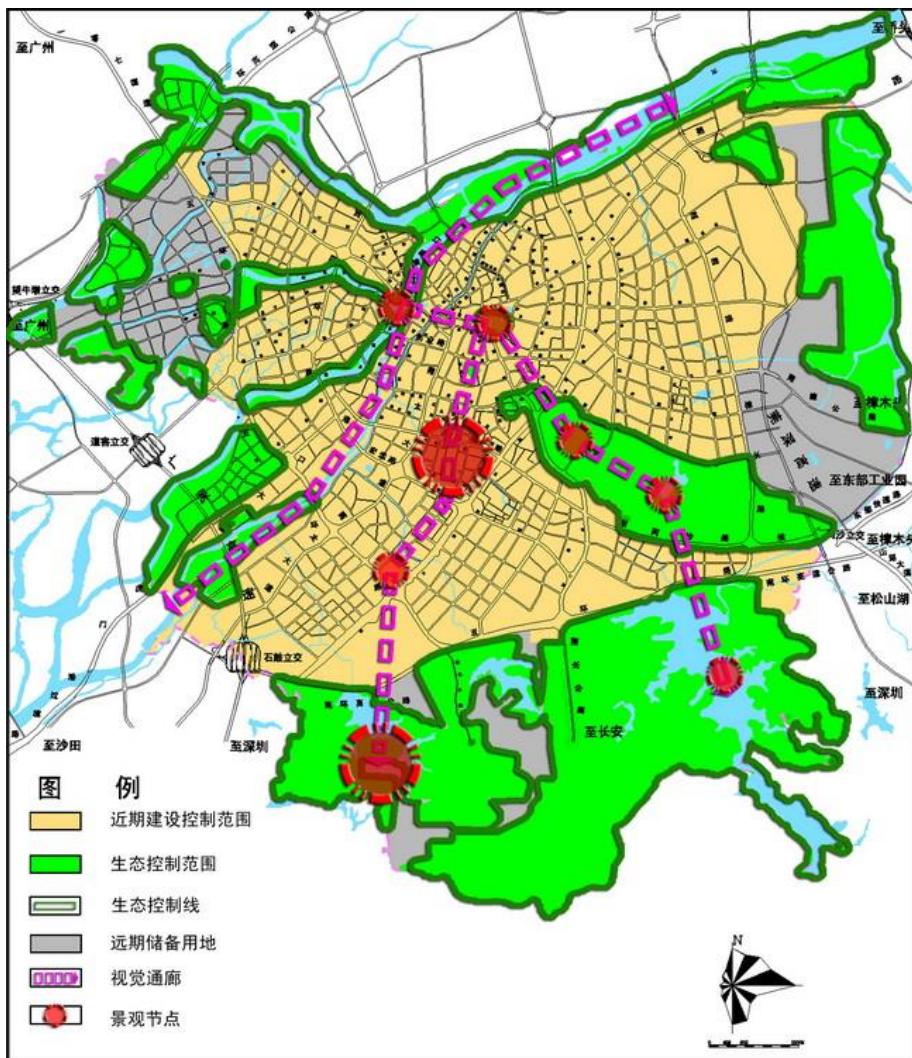


Figure 4 Recent Development Plan: Land use Structure, Dongguan (2003-2005)<sup>6</sup>

Second, the traditional method of planning has helped to perpetuate the so-called last mile problem, the crucial but often overlooked issue of ensuring networks of transportation, open spaces, urban services etc. are available and accessible to every citizen and household. This problem has become a barrier to the amelioration of quality of life in cities. This is due to several reasons: (1) traditional greenfield planning usually has no existing factors and residents to consider; (2) the large scale and fast pace of planning and urban management has

<sup>6</sup>Source: 中国城乡规划网 <http://www.china-up.com>

made it difficult to look into the details of every stakeholder; (3) feedback process to report and fix problems after construction is finished are very limited and inefficient. Now that people, as well as the quality of life, is in the spotlight of new urban development agenda, more attention needs to be paid to closing the last mile gap. Since it is people who are the users of municipal services, and they often know where the gaps are, it is they who need to be given a say in such endeavor. Urban planners are faced with unprecedented challenges to transform not only their methodology but also their way of thinking. The word of people must have its place in the new framework of urban planning.

#### 1.4.3 Political Recognition

Sheer political recognition is another indispensable factor in the development of public participation in China. The report of the 16th National Congress of CPC recommends that democratic mechanisms need to be implemented, more democratic channels need to be provided and the role of public participation in politics needs to be enlarged. The report of the 17th National Congress further points out that the right of public participation should be guaranteed, and the level to which the public participation is engaged needs to be advanced. Such clear political affirmation lays down the political foundation and provides more space for the grassroots growth of public participation.

The concept of governance started to gain attention and be identified as a national political philosophy. “Governance is a method/mechanism for dealing with a broad range of problems/conflicts in which actors regularly arrive at mutually satisfactory and binding decisions by negotiating with each other and cooperating in the implementation of these decisions” (Jessop, 2004). In the context of urban development, the fundamental concept of Governance, distinguished from Government, lay in its emphasis on the equal importance of multiple stakeholders and that a city is governed by the negotiation and the balance of competing powers. Moreover, a balanced power structure inevitably calls for the

empowerment of the public in Chinese cities. The voicing of public opinion, the adoption of suggestions and respect for the public's absolute right to urban development would largely help form a society of governance.

The Third Plenum of the 18th CPC Central Committee has defined that "the overall goal of deepening the reform comprehensively is to improve and develop socialism with Chinese characteristics, and to promote the modernization of the national governance system and capacity"<sup>7</sup>. Accordingly, policy-making processes are likely to be more open and accountable in Chinese urban development. It is a sign that the central government is willing to change. Public participation may take a critical role.

#### 1.4.4 The Emerging of Public Participation in China

The rise of public participation in China dates back to mid-1990s. However, not until several years after the beginning of the new century did public participation see a relatively extensive social application. The logic behind the relatively quick development of public participation in China is tangled up in the transition of social structure resulting from the economic reforms. With the gradual establishment and maturation of the market economic system, the webs of social relations in urban planning and urban development are turning out to be more complex; cities are becoming thicker systems of layered interests, and more actors with diverse values and different and often conflicting interests are involved in urban development. Conflicts concerning demolition and "not in my backyard" mentality has mushroomed in the major cities. Thus, platforms and rules inevitably need to be established for communication and coordination. The Chapter 2 will introduce the brief context and accomplishment of eight pilot participatory planning applications in China, and the particle experience of

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<sup>7</sup> Jihong, B. E. I., and W. A. N. G. Zuojun. "Government Information Publicity in the Internet Plus Background: The Perspective of the National Governance Modernization." *Canadian Social Science* 11, no. 12 (2015).

Patterson Park Master Plan planning process. Case studies will aid in unveiling the updated status of China's participation in urban planning.

## Chapter 2: Case Study

### 2.1 Pilot Examples of Participatory Planning in China

#### 2.1.1 In Urban Center

##### **Mixed Process: Shisha Hutong Museum, Beijing**



Figure 5 Location of Beijing



Figure 6 Shijia Hutong (Source: www.enorth.com.cn)

#### Context

Shijia Hutong is one of the oldest and most well-preserved Hutong neighborhoods in Beijing. It used to be the home of many famous artists and writers. The residents here have a strong self-identification. For this reason, the sub-district government office has been working closely with the residents to improve the quality of life for a long time.

In 2010, the Prince's Charities Foundation chose Shijia Hutong as one of its funded programs for the protection of Hutong and traditional Chinese architecture. Shijia Hutong No.24 courtyard was proposed to be converted into a community center and museum. Before the Beijing Institute of Planning handed in the project, the community had a self-organized process of historic preservation and environmental improvement. Thus, Prince's Charities Foundation established a broad board to work on community projects for the long term. The board member is including planners, experts, architects, volunteers (residents) and grassroots artists.

## Achievements



Figure 7: A group meeting for courtyard renovation at Shijia Hutong Museum (Source: Liqun Chen)

After two years planning and implementation process, Shijia Hutong Museum came to the first of its kind of museums that its collection comes mostly from local residents. The museum not only represents the traditional Hutong life but also acts as “the living room” of the community. The leading members of the board establish Shijia Hutong Preservation Association. Since its foundation, most of the projects (including the one mentioned above) in Shijia Hutong have been under the supervision of the Association. It has initiated/helped on projects such as setting up the museum, recording oral histories, design, and renovation. It has also been a resource pool of professionals and skills for improving the living quality of the neighborhood.

## **Government-driven & NGO-led Urban Regeneration: Wenhuali Neighborhood, Yangzhou**

### Context

The historic area of central Yangzhou City remains a fabric of the Ming and Qing dynasties. In 2006, Yangzhou Municipal Government selected the Webhuali neighborhood to initiate a city regeneration program and started working a “process-oriented approach” for comprehensive preservation.



Figure 8 Location of Yangzhou



Figure 9 Wenhuali Restoration Project (Source: ISC)

Wenhuali neighborhood, which is home to 148 households in 2006, covers an area of 1.5 hm<sup>2</sup>. The architectural style of the late Qing Dynasty is well preserved. However, the unfavorable sanitation conditions and the lack of infrastructure and public spaces were big concerns for the locals.

### Achievements



Figure 10 Workshop of Wenhuali project (Source: ISC)

International experts from MIT applied Community Action Plan (CAP) approach to the project. The project prioritized the residents' benefit and emphasized the preservation of the community's historical value, and had been fully implemented by the end of 2007. Most houses were renovated, and the community's infrastructure and public spaces were much improved. Many of the residents chose to stay and did not leave, and the detailed regulatory plan of the plot was revised according to the will and suggestions of the residents.

### **Urban Planning Institute- initiated Participatory Planning: Urban Village Shangbu Urban Renewal, Futian District, Shenzhen**

#### Context



Figure 11 Location of Shenzhen (Source: ISC)

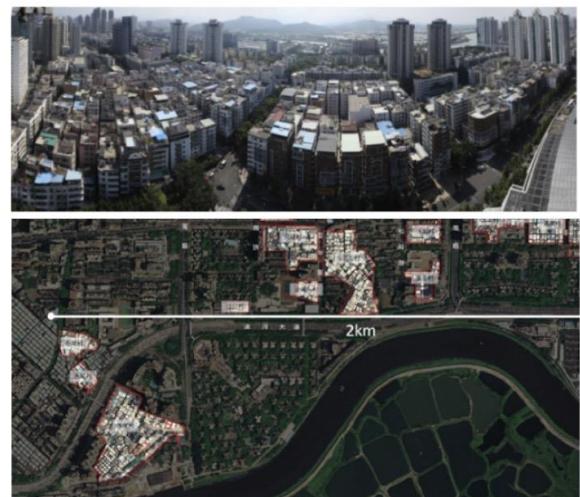


Figure 12 Location and current situation of Shangbu village (Source: UPDIS)

Urban Village is a unique phenomenon that formed part of China's urbanization efforts. It appears on both the outskirts and the downtown segments of major Chinese cities. Urban villages are originally villages in rural areas that were swallowed whole by construction due to rapid urban development. They are surrounded by skyscrapers, transportation infrastructures, and other modern urban constructions. Urban villages are commonly

inhabited by the poor and transient. They are also among the liveliest areas in some cities.<sup>8</sup> Shangbu village is an urban village located in Shenzhen's old city center. The five residential clusters in Shangbu village altogether occupied 23.4 hectares with an average FAR<sup>9</sup> of 4, which is quite dense. Among all the residents, only about 2000 are original villagers, while the other 100,000 are urban migrants. Because of the ever-increasing urban population and rental demand, villagers began building taller and denser buildings to boost rental revenue. Moreover, as the village committee collectively owns the land<sup>10</sup>, it founded a corporate enterprise in 1992 to better invest and operate. Shangbu village is facing severe problems such as a lack of public facilities, poor sanitation, congestion, etc. Under these circumstances, urban renewal issues were brought up. The Urban Planning and Design Institute of Shenzhen (UPDIS) coordinated with the villagers to collect ideas and help them figure out an urban renewal and development approach.

### Achievements



Figure 13 Public consultation using physical models (Source: UPDIS)



Figure 14 Vote on physical models (Source: UPDIS)

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<sup>8</sup> Wikipedia contributors, "Urban village (China)," Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, [https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Urban\\_village\\_\(China\)&oldid=712695349](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Urban_village_(China)&oldid=712695349) (accessed April 24, 2016).

<sup>9</sup> floor area ratio, a measure of total built floor area compared to the land on which the building

<sup>10</sup> The village used to be country in the rural area. In the countryside, the land is collectively owned.

The participation process took four months. The result of latest public poll showed that the village had a consensus on some issues: 1) 95% agreed that the village should be rebuilt; 2) 69% agreed with “separate urban renewal”; 3) as for function, about 52% of the villagers agreed that Shangbu should be apartment/ residential, 17% SOHO, 9% office, and 17% commercial. It was a good practice that increased public awareness and fully motivated villagers to engage in public affairs. The whole process offered the villagers an opportunity to learn more about urban renewal and established a common ground for future cooperation. This is crucial for long-term negotiation and to eliminate misunderstandings.

### **Urban Incremental Redevelopment: Qianmen Dashilar Area, Beijing**



Figure 15 Location of Beijing



Figure 16 Dashilar, Beijing

Dashilar is one of the oldest commercial areas in Beijing<sup>11</sup>. This area had its most prosperous period in the Ming and Qing dynasties and then gradually declined in later years. However, the local culture that traditional commercial culture and lifestyle were preserved. Beijing Dashilar Investment Limited (BDIL) was established in 2003 as a platform for the district and

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<sup>11</sup> Theatre of Situation: Dashila(b), australian design review, <http://www.australiandesignreview.com/features/31058-theatre-of-situation-dashilab> (accessed April 24, 2016)

municipal government to collaborate on infrastructure and non-profit driven investments towards the long-term preservation of Dashilar historical area. The organization is invested and owned fully by the government of Xicheng district. BDIL formed Dashilar Platform (Dashilar.org) as a project platform. Its has several goals: 1) research and provide advice and management of the area; 2) programming and building social capital; 3) Provide a communication platform for the stakeholders to encourage diverse modes of redevelopment and preservation; 4) manage properties. It is a long-term process. Currently, the project is focusing on Pop-ups Events and Dashilar Pilot.<sup>12</sup>

### Achievements

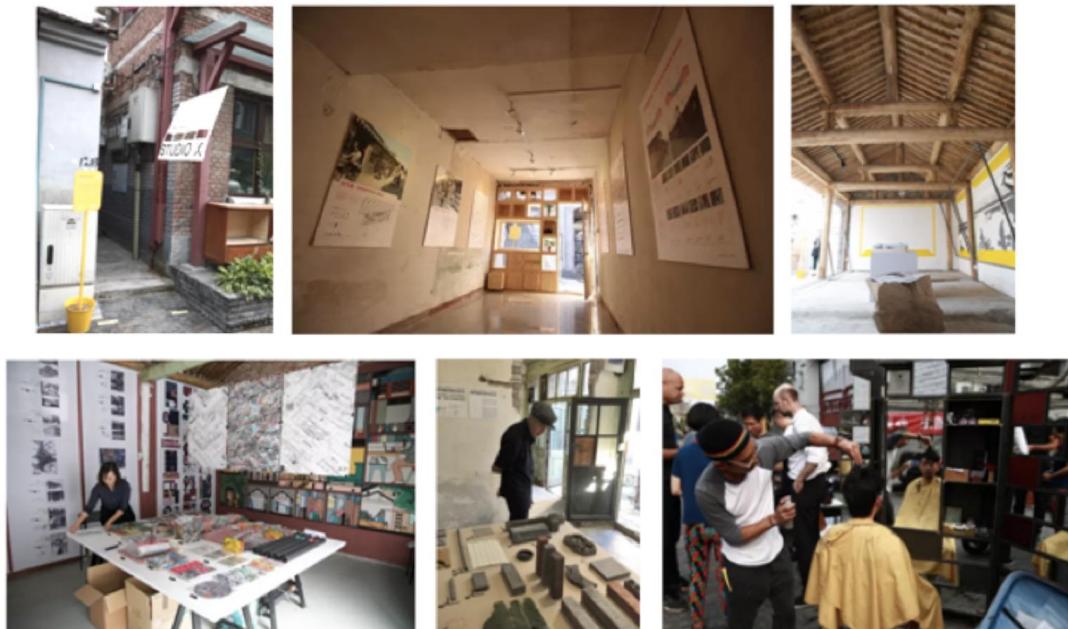


Figure 17 The activities and spaces by artists, social groups and small businesses (Source: Darshilar.org)

From the beginning of the redevelopment, Dashilar area has never witnessed big scale relocation. The government and stakeholders recognized the value of long-term programming and involving multiple groups into the process. Currently, Dashilar has been an incubator of creativity and laboratory of revitalizing the local culture. Dashilar Platform implements a

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<sup>12</sup> Dashilar Pilot ( is a new process that the Dashilar Platform team initiated by during Beijing Design Week. It aims to solve the challenges related to Dashilar's built environment and cultural heritage.

novel mode of the government-initiated process and has resulted in a long-term program of place making.

### **Government-led Placemaking: Civic Center Plaza, Shenzhen**



Figure 18 Location of Shenzhen



Figure 19 Street Artists at Civic Center Plaza  
(Source: Qianqian Zhang)



Figure 20 Civic Center Plaza

#### Context

The plaza of Shenzhen Civic Center received criticism for its inhuman scale since it opened in 2004. It appeared to be a massive waste and proved quite ironic as the plaza in the civic center attracted no citizens. In 2015, the Futian Performing Art Association (FPAS) recruited 60 artistes and gave them permission to set up booths in the plaza on certain days. Today the entire plaza is brimming with people – crowds stand listening to bands, violinists, look at artists painting, etc. All these artistic experiences are free except for a small materials fee sometimes.

## Achievements

It was the first time Shenzhen has issued permission for street artists to perform in a public space. This place-making initiative is also a successful urban experiment.

### 2.2.1 In Urban Rural Fringe

#### **Urban Renewal in a Minority community: Nanshi District, Yining, Xinjiang Autonomous Region**



Figure 21 Location of Yining



Figure 22 The street network of the area (Source: CAUPD)

## Context

Nanshi district is located in the city of Yining, the capital of Ili Kazakh Autonomous Prefecture, Xinjiang province. In the 1950s, the main street was a bazaar brimming with people and goods from other provinces of China. Over time, Nanshi developed as a mixed area of local culture and mid-Asian culture, which helped to shape its unique style of architecture and environment. Nanshi is composed of a complex assortment of different ethnic and religious groups, a microcosm of Xinjiang and the reason underlying some of the area's more sensitive political issues. In 2006, before the start of redevelopment planning, about 50% of the households were low-income families (monthly income of less than 155 RMB); the infrastructure was also poor: most alleys were not paved and without drainage.

In recent years, Yining's growth has gradually migrated to the newly developed area, leaving Nanshi to be marginalized as urban-rural fringe. In 2006, the master development plan of Yining did not recognize the unique value of Nanshi district, simply wanting to apply a grid road network to this area. Later that year, the former minister of Housing and Urban-Rural Construction visited Nanshi district and decided to renovate Nanshi District rather than redevelop it. Based on discussions between residents, local governments, and the planners, the Nanshi urban renewal project would not relocate residents nor change the living habits of the community. The project's objective is to improve the living quality by paving alleys, making public spaces and protecting the architecture style. The planning process was designed to emphasize the participation of the local residents.

### Achievements



Figure 21 The residents painting the wall



Figure 22 Renovated street of Nanshi  
(Source: Mr. Shen, Project Director)

This is a successful project after 15 months of planning and implementation. The environment of Nanshi district was significantly improved. The traditional style of residential housing was maintained. There was little demolition of houses or relocation of the residents. In 2008, the city of Yining designated Nanshi part of the Kazanqi tourism zone. More tourists came to the authentic architecture and lifestyle of the neighborhood. In March of 2009, the Nanshi urban renewal project was awarded to be a Chinese Exemplar of Living Environment.

## **Government/NGO Initiated: Community Garden Building Xiaoweijie Neighborhood, Nanjing**



Figure 23 Location of Yining



Figure 24 Xiaoweijie Neighborhood

### Context

Xiaoweijie neighborhood was built around 1995 when the rural land was experiencing urbanization. A large proportion of the residents are senior who do not have a retirement pension, and their only income is subsistence allowance from the government. The fact that they were all relocated farmers created a strong bond of community: the elderly residents are generally quite close with their neighbors.

The living environment of the neighborhood has been poorly maintained. In 2014, Xuanwu District took the Xiaoweijie Neighborhood as a pilot community. The local government commissioned a third party NGO, NGO-Jiangsu Huayi Social Organization Assessment Centre to help the neighborhood improving the living environment. Though the discussion, HYSOAC decided to build a community garden.

### Achievements

Because of ineffective communication, design and management were not able to achieve the original goal of a community garden. A garden in the vacant land was completed. Besides the community garden project, HYSOAC has helped the residents building an organization, named the Resident Committee.

## **Government Affiliated Organization Initiated Process:-- Exploring a New Model Jiaochangwei Village, Shenzhen**



Figure 25 Location of Jiaochangwei Village



Figure 26 Jiaochangwei Village (Source: Guangzhou Evening Paper)



Figure 27 View from Jiaochangwei Village (Source: Guangzhou Evening Paper)

Village located on the far east side of Shenzhen, on the coast. The neighborhood is facing an enormous pressure from the government and developers due to several reasons: 1) most of the construction in the village is illegal (not registered with land property rights), so according to law, it

must be removed; 2) the increasing number of tourists visiting Dapeng beach has brought in money as well as huge potential profits for developers and the local government. Because of the growing tourist demand, most villagers have leased their houses to weekend hotel managers who have turned the houses into weekend hotels, co-managing the hotel with the homeowners.

### Achievements

The process used an innovative way, called “Crowdsourcing<sup>13</sup>” to renovate and practice the bottom-up approach. (Will be discussed in the later chapter) The official coordinator, in this case SCD, recruited 40 architect teams matched with 25 house-owners. Each team worked together on a detailed redevelopment plan. In the end, local residents of the Jiaochangwei neighborhood successfully changed demolition into onsite renovation.

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<sup>13</sup> Crowdsourcing is the process of getting work or funding, usually online, from a crowd of people. The word is a combination of the words 'crowd' and 'outsourcing'. The idea is to take work and outsource it to a crowd of workers. Famous Example: Wikipedia.

## 2.2 Practical Experience in US: Patterson Park Master Plan

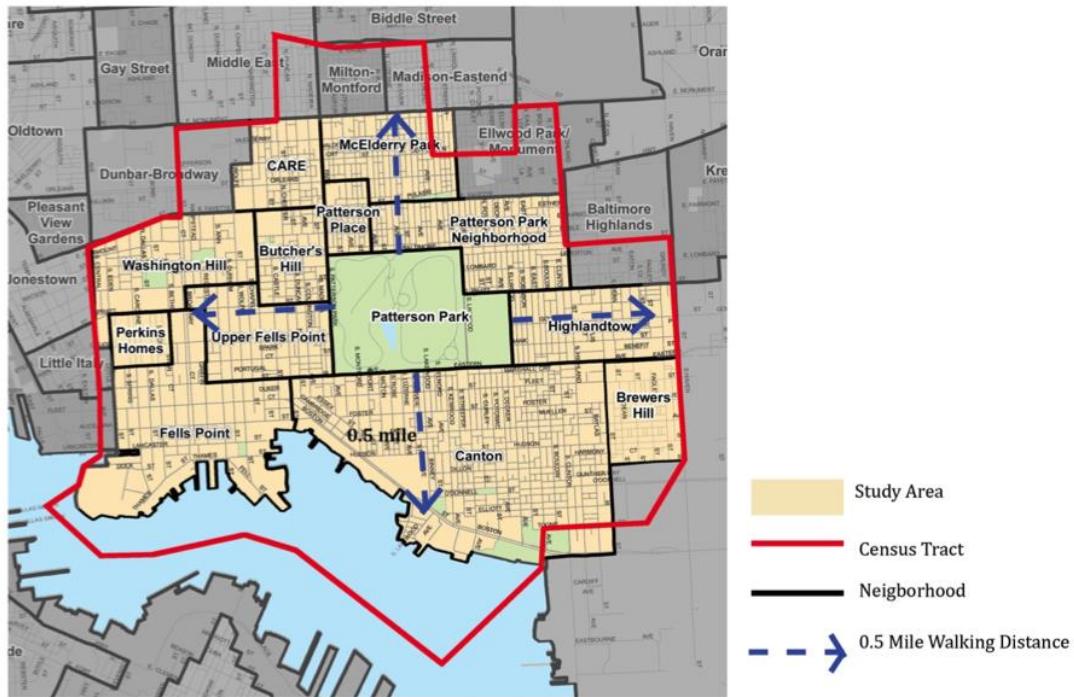


Figure 28 Patterson Park

### Context

Patterson Park is Baltimore's oldest public park and is today the city's most intensively used large park. The park, situated in the heart of East Baltimore, is surrounded by residential neighborhoods. At 137 acres (0.55 km<sup>2</sup>), Patterson Park is not the city's largest park. However, it is nicknamed "Best Backyard in Baltimore."<sup>14</sup> It is a very well used park by the surrounding neighborhoods, school, and various organizations. In early 2014, the city plans to renovate the recreation center and reassigned more programs in the senior center, which are two facilities in the park. Each facilities have an individual proposal that requires a lot of parking space that can take the place of grass, trees and routes. This idea from two proposals

<sup>14</sup> Wikipedia contributors, "Patterson Park," *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*, [https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Patterson\\_Park&oldid=714850711](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Patterson_Park&oldid=714850711) (accessed April 24, 2016).

was protested by the neighbors. After eight months debate about how much parking space the parked is needed. The city decided to update the master plan. Trying to address the issues, including parking issue, through the whole picture. The year-long master planning process has made a concerted effort to integrate ongoing community engagement, which has aimed to be inclusive, ambitious, and focused.

### Achievement

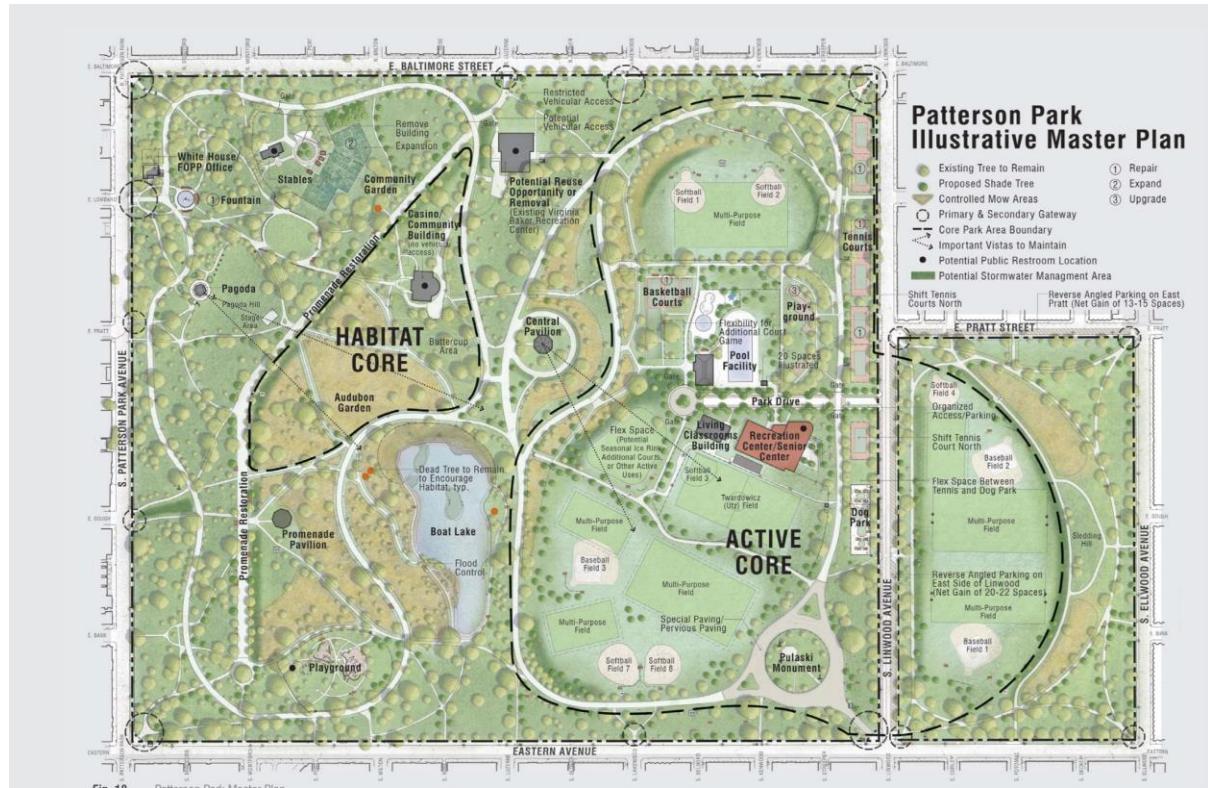


Figure 29 Patterson Park illustrative Mater Plan (Source: Patterson Park Master Plan 2015)

The plan won the Maryland ASLA Merit Award in 2016 March. It is one of the most sophisticated projects in Baltimore City. The effort was fueled by a deep commitment to collaboration and engagement, which grew along with the project to include a coalition of partners that contributed to the planning process. The steering committee consistent with the representatives from neighborhoods, Friends of Patterson Park, a nearby school, etc. The steering committee met on the monthly basis to discussion the progress. Year-long seasonal

survey and about 20 focus group interviews were applied during the process. The master plan addresses the topic Capital improvements; ecology and natural resources; history and culture; programming and events; finances; and governance and maintenance. The master plan was approved by the planning commission in early April 2016 and is moving on the implementation stage.

# Chapter 3: Features of Participatory Planning in China & Shared Experience with Case of US

The eight Chinese cases are based on the news article, report and interview notes with planners of China Center for Urban Development, Shanghai Urban Planning, and Design Research Institute, etc. It is worth to notice that the compared practical experience, Patterson Park, is public property. The land of this recreation space belongs to the city. The private project of United States has another requirement about participatory planning.

As discussed in Chapter 1, neither government nor developers are willing to delay the planning process caused by public participation. Thus, it is worth to explore why these pilot participatory planning projects happen and what lessons learned.

## 3.1 Current Participatory Planning in China

### 3.1.1 Improve the Living Environment

This is a general internal cause to apply the participatory planning. Either in urban center or urban-rural fringe, either in historic neighborhoods, or urban village, the neighborhoods like this usually facing the challenges like aging housing, unfavorable sanitation condition and lack of infrastructure and public spaces. The residents of historic neighborhood usually have a strong self-identification, and started to work with local government on daily issue before the project.

Example: Shangbu Neighborhood, Xiaoweijie Neighborhood, Shenzhen Civic Center Plaza

### 3.1.2 I Preserve Unique Urban Environment

In many cases, if the regeneration projects in many other historic areas, which are often aimed at developing the local economy by economic measures and tourism development, the contexture of local will be irrevocably damaged.

However, under the condition that the government prioritized the residents' benefit and emphasized the preservation of the community's historical value, like Dashilar commercial area and Wenhuali Neighborhood, the experiment of conservation through public participation may happen. Particularly in the mature neighborhood that people have self-identification, for instance, Xiaoweijie Neighborhood and Shisha Hutong Museum. Thus, demolition and reconstruction were avoided, and a participatory and incremental approach was adopted to ensure the residents real needs and their important role as an indispensable component of preserving the local culture. Only when the key decision maker (the municipal government in most cases) places value on the benefits to the public and their role in urban development can a project be implemented in a genuinely participatory way.

### 3.1.3 Avoid Potential Intensive Conflict

For example, in the case of Nahshi district, the neighborhood is composed of a complex assortment of different ethnic and religious groups, a microcosm of Xinjiang and the reason underlying some of the area's more sensitive political issues. Therefore, all of the actions must be very sensitive.

Another example usually happened in the urban village. For the fact that the land of the urban village is collectively owned by the village committee, residents there will have more cautious to redevelop any plan. The case of Jiaochangwei village is a great example. The residents there were upset by the idea that their village will be demolished. A hotel association was subsequently established by the managers and homeowners to lobby the government.

### 3.1.4 Lack of Model or Regulation of The Project

As discussed in Chapter 1, most planning projects are built in Greenfield on a large scale. The local government or planning institution sometimes is lacking the experience or policies about how to redevelopment or improve the living environment on a smaller scale. For example, in case 4, and case 5, the initiator had no precedent and written the rule for the similar situations, participation appeared to be the only way to gain consensus of the neighbors.

In the example of Dashilar area, the local government is dedicating to explore the new model of redeveloping the historic area with an incremental process.

### 3.1.5 Potential Implementation Strategy

As showed in the case of Nanshi district, besides the purpose of preservation, another motive for engaging the public was the small budget of the project, which laid the bulk of long-term maintenance responsibilities onto the local residents. Given this precondition, building a strong sense self-identification with and a strong capacity for the neighborhood appeared to be the best solution.

## 3.2 Initiator And Key Players

Initiator is the key player who starts off the project, have the motivation or needs to start off the project. Project coordinator means to coordinate the planning and implantation process.

### 3.2.1 Government's Initiative

Most examples in China are an initiative by the government, but the government didn't usually take the role to coordinate the project (Table 4). The government either point or form an organization to take the role of coordinator. It may for the reason that the urban planning bureau usually doesn't have a role to coordinate the project. Another major concern for local

governments is pursuing innovation and the desire to launch a “pilot project”. If the pilot project proves to be a success, the government officials might get promoted.

### 3.2.2 Organization's Initiative

#### Sponsored by a Foundation

This kind of initiative can be regarded as spontaneous, which is not a few. For example, in 2010, the Prince's Charities Foundation chose Shijia Hutong as one of its funded programs in the protection of hutong and traditional Chinese architecture. Shijia Hutong No.24 courtyard was proposed to be converted into a community center and museum. With the support of the foundation, the Beijing Institute of Planning started drafting the preservation plan for this community.(Table 6)

#### Planning Institution's Initiative

In some cases, not very often, the planning institution will include some level of public involvement in the planning process to define the problem. For example, in the case of Shangbu village renewal, like the fact that planners have to work with the local corporate enterprise formed by the residents, planners coordinate the tasks with collecting ideas to help the residents better understand urban renewal policies and better lay out the redevelopment plan.

### 3.2.3 Resident's Initiative

The case of Jiaochangwei village is a great example. Residents were not pleased with the existing condition or current development plan, so they lobby the government to consider the alternative. The intuitive resident project doesn't necessarily mean the residents would lead the process. Usually, these cases are still led by the government or the third party pointed by the government. This kind of situation has rarely happened unless the place where have strong common value. (Table 7)

### 3.3 Participatory Planning in the U.S.

Generally speaking, participatory planning is an institutional response to the project. No matter who initiate the project, it is a typical reaction to having public get involve, in particular for the local level project that closely related to the residents. In the case of Patterson Park, from the resident's view, park users are skeptical of the government to spend the public money mainly: the two previous dissatisfied proposals drive park users "supervise" government's action.

From the government's standpoint, public involvement is an essential prerequisite to ensure a successful project. The authority needs to make sure to define precisely residents' needs otherwise the public facilities won't be well used. In the worse case, people can protest through a public hearing to shut down the project. The government will pay the price eventually. Besides, a successful project that well used can save the budget for the government. First, planning department can apply more grants for a well established the project. Also, not only people are likely self-maintenance the facility, but also a successful public realm will attract private financial sources. For example, residents may make donations to the park they love; the increasing value of the adjacent property will bring more investment into this area.

### 3.4 Role of Different Interest Groups

In summary, Chinese government is still very powerful in the pilot cases and always plays as the most important role.(Table 5) Only when the key decision maker, places value on the benefits to the public and their role in urban development can a project be implemented in a truly participatory way. In the case of Patterson Park, it can learn that participatory planning initiative is a combination result.

Table 3 Key players & Roles Summary

	China	US <sup>15</sup>
Local Government	Project initiator in most cases, decision maker, financial support	Project coordinator, provide part of financial support, decision maker
Planning Institution	Coordinate project in most cases, technical support, solution design	Technical support, solution design
Third-party Organization	Including government associated organization, (BDIL in Dashilar case, HYSOAC in Xiaoweijie Neighborhood case)	Various representative of users, residents, management team etc. Friend of Patterson Park is a representative of park users. Very powerful and very vocal. Can contribute valuable solution.

### 3.4 Other Experience

#### 3.4.1 Uncertainty of Change

This is a common reaction that if local residents did not have enough information on the future direction of their neighborhood and were suspicious of the objective, plans, and measures. In the example of Wenhuali Neighborhood, many residents kept the attitude of wait-and-see. All of above constituted barriers to participation, in spite of many campaigns and visits that had been paid to local families. To overcome these obstacles, foreign expertise and methods were utilized. A well-known expert on action planning from MIT was invited to work with the group. The method of Community Action Plan (CAP) helped to arouse the residents' interest in participation and their sense of involvement in this project. The Mini-CAP practice especially contributed to present residents with a vivid picture of the participatory methods of the project and helped build resident's confidence in the project. During the planning process of Patterson Park, the city plan to remove the ice rink from the park since the facility is outdated and not accessible to users from another part of the city. The residents were hesitated to remove the ice rink since it is a very popular public realm. Unlike residents who have faith to the expert in the case of Wuhuali Neighborhood, planners

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<sup>15</sup> In the case of Patterson Park Master Plan

need another approach to address this issue. People don't intend to accept the unpredictable proposal. Planners need to provide a clear solution like "a new ice rink will be built 10 blocks away with more parking space".

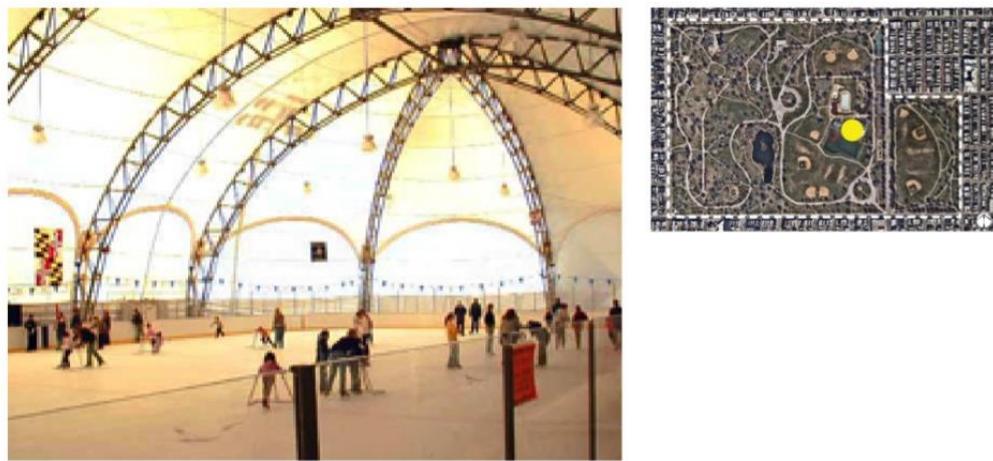


Figure 30 Ice Rink in Patterson Park

### 3.4.2 Creating and Maintaining Mutual Trust

In the Chinese case, there might be some misunderstandings between municipal urban planning bureau and district level government. When the construction began, the local government sent urban management teams to stop the construction, giving rise to the conflicts in which some people were arrested.

For the single project of a community garden, the design and management team was not able to achieve the original goal. The main reason was that the communication between the community and the invited design team was not the most effective. As a result, the design team was only able to focus on the physical arrangement of the community garden, overlooking the cooperation mechanism between the residents.

In the case of Patterson Park, the community outreach of Patterson Park had missed some voice from African American and Latino community since there is an impression that Patterson Park is a "white park". In our meetings with leaders in the African-American

community, the matter of feeling unwelcome came up repeatedly. To compensate for this, we arranged a series of discussions in focus groups and with leaders in the African-American community, where planners were made aware that some feel unwelcome in the park.

Nevertheless, diverse civil society in the US makes communication much accessible and efficient. Civil society is the "aggregate of non-governmental organizations and institutions that manifest interests and will of citizens. Civil society includes the family and the private sphere, referred to as the "third sector" of society, distinct from government and business<sup>16</sup>.

During the planning process, civil society, for instance, Friends of Patterson Park, Living Classroom, various neighborhood committee and even parents group from school, helped to expand the participation.

The other following lessons learned may provide a guideline to have an effective communication:

- Multiple rounds of public participation - Two or more rounds of public input is also crucial. It reveals how people shift their ideas and why. It might help future consensus building.
- Physical model - Based on the lessons learned from the case, physical models are of great help. It makes all proposals easier to understand and increase villagers' willingness to participate.
- Multiple channels to communicate- there is no "one solution for all." Planners should realize people have their preference to communicate. Various communication channel should be applied: on field survey is a practical method to approach actual users and stakeholders; the online survey is more flexible and less human souring consuming but may neglect a group has limited access to the internet and hard to control the

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<sup>16</sup> Wikipedia contributors, "Civil society," *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*, [https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Civil\\_society&oldid=712148644](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Civil_society&oldid=712148644) (accessed April 24, 2016).

authenticity of the information. In-depth focus group interview is a good complementary way to reach the missed voice at the public meetings.

### 3.4.3 Relying on Expertise

#### China: high threshold: experts' game

It is not unusual to find that many people express their interests but do not become involved in the participation process. Sometimes, it is due to a high threshold. Many participation initiatives require participants to have a thorough understanding of the issues or even have access to some technology. This will impede some people from participating. The consequence is that much of the so-called participation eventually becomes an expert's game. Many cases illustrated above circumvented this setback by organizing events like field trips to deepen participants' understanding, using physical models to demonstrate spatial models, etc. Even with these attempts to elucidate the public on the issues, the problem of high thresholds remains.

#### Patterson Park: residents are confident about what they said

In this case, residents are regarded as the expert to define the problems. In the beginning stage, the steering committee was divided into several working groups based on different topics such as capital improving, maintenance, education program and so on. The design consultant firm provides the solution and alternative in general, though, steering committee as representatives of park users have the best knowledge about their needs and capable of giving alternative solutions.

Table 4 The Features of Chinese Examples

Where is the project	Project Type	Features	Main Object
Case 1 Urban rural fringe	Historic Preservation Living Environment Improvement	Mixed Culture and ethnic & religious groups 50% of the households are low-income families Living environmental is lacking of maintenance	Improve the living environment Protect the architecture style and unique life style
Case 2 Urban center	Public Programming Redevelopment	One of the oldest commercial areas in Beijing Have strong identity Redevelopment and residents relocation is base on case by case	A long process to cultivate the existent social capital.
Case 3: Old urban center	Urban Renewal	"Urban Village"- a village in the center of the city Five residential clusters, dense development, 83% residents are urban migrants, lack of public facilities, poor sanitations, congestions	Figure out the necessary of urban renewal and the development approach
Case 4 Urban rural fringe	Living Environment Improvement	Most residents are elderly relocated farmers with low income, poorly maintained neighborhood	Build a community garden
Case 5 G Village outside the city	Urban renovation	Popular tourist spot (Dapeng beach) Huge potential profit for developers and local government. Most of the construction in the village is illegal House owners and hotel managers establish a hotel association	To protest against demolition and to ensure villagers' own interest. To renovate and practice a bottom-up approach
Case 6 Urban Center	Public Programming	Big plaza in the front of Shenzhen Civic Center that lacking of activities	Reutilize the Public space

Table 5 Government-initiative Project & Key Players

Government-initiative Project & Key Players	
Government	Decision Making, Financial Support
Case 1 Residents	Provide Information, feedback, comments, completed most of the renovation of private housing and the greening of the streets with materials provided by the government.
Planners	Principal coordinator, project manager and technical professional
Government	Launch the project, financial support
Case 2 Beijing Dashilar Investment Limited (BDIL)	It was formed in 2003 as a policy-oriented investor for the redevelopment of Dashilar historic area. BDIL is invested and owned fully by the government of Xicheng district.
Dashilar Platform (Dashilar.org)	A project platform formed by the BDIL. It has several features: research, programming managing and marking
Organization-coordinated	<p>Small businesses, artists and social groups</p> <p>The small businesses are often self-initiated and are among those seeking short term/long term physical spaces to hold their activities.</p>
Self-created residents organization	<p>A self-created organization. Led by one of the community leaders who have been very active and fought with the management company. The committee is maintained and managed by the resident representative. Currently the residents committee is setting up its network of building liaisons, each of whom are responsible for contacting residents in their own building.</p>
Case 4 Jiangsu Huayi Social Organization Assessment Centre □(HYSOAC)	<p>Supports, fundraises, and provides services and guidance for the community. HYSOAC has helped the neighborhood committee to improve the community in the long term. Invite other professionals to help on specific projects.</p>
Neighborhood committee	<p>The local branch of the government, has been working closely with the resident committee and HYSOAC. It provides administrative support, applies finance aid from higher government authorities and organizes activities.</p>
Other professional groups	<p>Include a third party NGO, Zhengrong Foundation, the Tongji University planning department and department of sociology, etc. They have been helping on specific projects in the community.</p>
Case 8 Government	<p>Coordinator of the project</p> <p>Responsible for organizing and leading the planning and participation processes.</p>
Government-coordinate d	<p>Consulting group (domestic and international experts)</p> <p>Representatives of Wenhua neighborhood committee</p> <p>Multiple Bureaus<sup>1</sup></p> <p>Provided necessary support for related activities.</p>

<sup>1</sup> The Ancient Town Office, the Planning Bureau, Culture Bureau and the Real Estate Bureau

Table 6 Organization -initiative & Key Players

Planning institute-initiated	Case 3	Villagers	The original villagers from Shangbu.
Foundation initiated	Case 7	Planners	Coordinator tasked with collecting ideas from villagers in order to help them better understand urban renewal policies and better lay out the urban renewal plan.
		Local government <sup>1</sup>	They helped to set up the participation process since the beginning. They are also responsible for applying for funding from higher government authorities.
		Residents	They are mostly residents who have been living in Shijia Hutong for a long time. In the past, the traditional Chinese courtyards in Shijia Hutong were considered decent living units. However, most of them gradually became tenement yards. Therefore, the quality of life of most residents needs to be improved.
		Other professional groups <sup>2</sup>	They are invited to contribute their professional skills for projects such as renovating the built environment.

<sup>1</sup> namely the subdistrict government office and neighborhood committee.

<sup>2</sup> professional architects, landscape architects, and NGO experts

Table 7 Residents' initiative Project-& Key Players

	Project-& Key Players
Government	n urban renewal cases have to take cost-benefit into consideration: it might be costly to remove the whole village. Another major concern for local governments is pursuing innovation and the desire to launch a "pilot project". If the pilot project proves to be a success, the government officials might get promoted.
Villagers/house owners/hotel managers	rely on the revenue from beach tourists and their small inns run out of their houses. Profit is their top priority, and the weekend tourists are increasing. Though tenants and landlords do support revitalization, they don't want their houses to be removed. They will calculate the cost-benefit of revitalization to make sure it within the budget.
Case 5 The Hotel Association	was formed by local business men in order to work together and fight for their own interest. It is the coordinator of all village members and hotel managers. It is quite powerful in lobbying the government.
Shenzhen Center for Design (SCD)	is the government affiliated non-profit organization who acts as a coordinator. They are value-neutral and trying to reach out to as many entities as possible.
Architects	have a simpler goal: most of the architect teams see it as a great opportunity to practice their new ideas and do something for the public welfare while raising their prestige.

## Chapter 4: Future Participatory Planning in China

The eight pilot examples of China indicated that the participation techniques concept could be quickly learned. Most working group of Chinese example had no experience in participatory planning. With guiding or learning from international research and practical experience, the promising achievement can be expected.

The practical experience of Patterson Park was discussed in Chapter 3. It is revealing that US and China shared a similar experience on some topic. Regarding the future of participation planning in China, it is important to highlight the flowing take away.

### 4.1 Building the structure of Public Participatory Planning

#### 4.1.1 Local Government

The government, specifically the city or district office is key in initiating the participatory planning process. As in most cases, it is the government which decides when, where and how to develop a neighborhood.

Coordinate with the neighborhood Committee, Sub-district/street office, and neighborhood committee are set up in every street and small alley. They are the most localized government branches at the community level. As the most localized institutional body in China's governance framework, the neighborhood committee and sub-district office are the original organizers and collaborators on site. Nowadays, where neighborhood committees are successful, they act the functions such as information and record keeping, people's mediation, basic health service and public safety and security.

The success of Shijia Hutong is based on the close collaboration of community officers and the residents. During the participation process, the local government branches provided administrative and financing support.

The key concept is the government needs to decentralize the power. Let the decision-making authority be distributed amongst the crowd, who are the ones contributing to the redevelopment planning project.

#### 4.1.2 Planners

As the pattern of urban planning is shifting to adapt to the new urban era, the role of urban planners has to be redefined as well. In the past era of growth-oriented planning, urban planners were blueprint designers and often the project dominators or even the implementers of government leaders' will. Nevertheless, stepping into this new era, more small-scale and community-based planning projects are being called for. Learning from the cases above, we can find that, in addition to their role of professional technique supporters, the planners more often serve in the role of midwife and coordinator than producer and dominator. Thanks to their professional skills, the planners help to translate stakeholders' ideas and requirements into feasible plans and translate the plans back into understandable language. From their neutral position and interdisciplinary and cross-industry knowledge, they can act as principal coordinators and communication facilitators, helping build consensus and consolidate ideas into a workable plan.

In the meantime, planners have to get a better feel for the ground. In order to better understand locals, for smoother communication and trusting relationships, planners need to hit the streets and familiarize themselves with not only the street-level environment and issues, but also the people. This takes time. And in this sense, a system of community planners can be established. The cities of Nanjing and Shenzhen have already started such initiatives. A community planner system is a responsibility system for volunteers. Qualified planners are invited to volunteer to be responsible for one community. He/she needs to build up a long-term connection with the community, get familiar with the locals, keep an eye on the community development, give public education lessons if possible, and most importantly,

be responsible for any planning projects of the community. By building up such steady and close bonds between the planners and the communities, more efficient community planning projects of participatory nature can be expected.

#### 4.1.3 Empower the Civil Society

Planning institution usually in charge of drafting all of the local plans. The planners and the community set up an informal community planner mechanism, sometimes accidentally, making the preservation plan into concrete implementation projects.

The rise of social organizations is doubtless a new phenomenon of Chinese cities. They are becoming important actors in the social development of today's China. As we have learned from the cases, civil societies have already played an indispensable role in local participatory planning practices. Their initiatives and resources need to be further valued and mobilized in the future, and their neutral position and value of public interest can be great advantages for facilitating participation.

In the other cases, the government-affiliated NPO is the key player. It is easier for an NPO as a third party to organize public participation than the government itself. NPO as a third party can represent the residents, at the same time, can in the position to provide technical support.

There are various types of civil societies with different strengths and resources that can be contributive. First, civil societies that have the expertise and wealth of experience of project management can be initiators and project leaders in participatory planning projects. They can also act as technical consultants in government-led and bottom-up projects. Their comparatively large scale and position may promise as well potential financial resources.

Local grassroots civil societies are second only to the neighborhood committee itself in understanding the communities. They are also active entities that care about residents' daily life. The past five years have witnessed a movement of community empowerment in developed Chinese cities, and community-based civil societies have been the key players in

this process. Close bonds have been established between these civil societies and local residents, which can be relied on in participatory planning projects. After all, the intrinsic philosophy of participatory planning is the same as those community empowerment projects, the core idea of which is to cope with issues and problems with collective idea and action, relying on a sustainable community self-governance mechanism. Though such mechanisms have yet to be broadly built up in Chinese communities, the experience gained by the grassroots civil societies can serve as wellsprings for participation.

Civil societies can also help advocate the significance of participation and conduct public education in communities. Capacity building on participatory methodologies for local officials and planners may be another undertaking of certain civil societies.

However, in many cases, it is unclearly defined power boundary. In the example of Xiaoweijie neighborhood, HYSOAC is fully capable of handling the task but was still not powerful enough to deal with conflicts. Power boundary here specifically refers to each institute/organization/department's administrative power realm. In many cases of the participation process, the organizing institute is leading the participation out of its realm of power, and as a result, the institute can do nothing to solve the problems brought up during the engagement. For example, the city government should not initiate a public participation regarding community issues; Participation regarding a regional master plan cannot solve community issues either. The purpose of participation should be limited to respective realms of power. One lesson can be learned from the United States is money is the key to empowering civil societies. With its financial source, civil societies can work with, rather than work for the government.

#### 4.1.4 Community

The local residents should not only participate in the planning process but also help with implementation. People learned how to self-organize and be more

aware of civic rights. For example, the Nanshi project, for the reason that the budgetary restrictions, the initiator encouraged the residents to contribute their labor in painting, planting , etc., which helped to build a stronger connection between the neighbors and the community. Another great example is Jiaochangwei neighborhood. While Shenzhen Center for Design is the official coordinator representing the government side, the hotel association is the unofficial coordinator representing the village side. These two entities work well in collaboration, although neither possesses power over the other; the hotel association has market incentives while the Shenzhen Center for Design has promotional incentives.

#### 4.1.5 Implementation Tools

##### The idea of crowdsourcing

Crowdsourcing is originally defined as an online-only method. However, planning's space-based nature requires that crowdsourcing is not only a virtual process. The key characteristic of Crowdsourcing is the outsourcing of problems to the crowd/ public and the fostering of a problem-solving process within the crowd that leads to an agreed upon solution.

Crowdsourcing can have a variety of applications in different fields. The Jiaochangwei case exemplifies one of its applications: creating a platform to match architects and house-owners, thereby disseminating the decision-making.

Given the rise of crowdsourcing in many areas, planners have also started to apply crowdsourcing in the public sector to facilitate participatory planning. It could be a powerful tool to overcome planner's limits and enable a better mode of participatory planning that realizes collective intelligence and non-expert knowledge in the process of urban planning.

Discussion on crowdsourcing's application in urban planning has yet to be fully explored, and there exist few cases of practices having taken place. The climate of public participation in Chinese urban planning is ripe for an untangling of this concept and its application. A study into crowdsourcing participatory planning in the Chinese context would be especially

lucrative for the initial stages of community-level participatory planning. As in Jiaochangwei, crowdsourcing is a tool with the high potential to embrace urban diversity and democracy.

#### Embrace the “market power”

As the emphasis of urban planning is gradually shifting to urban renewal, it is rational to think that market forces will soon wield power. Private Public Partnership (PPP) has increased in China in recent years, as such, public participation and participatory planning should also embrace the power of the market. The market usually knows better than the government what is wanted and why participation is necessary. With a mature institutional and legal system, the market could potentially lend greatly to the effectiveness of participatory planning.

Take cases of urban renewal, for example, real estate developers are in charge of public participation. According to the urban renewal regulation, the area can be redeveloped only if the developer receives more than a certain percentage of agreement from the residents. In the example of Jiaochangwei Neighborhood, one major barrier is lacking investment. As a result, two projects were terminated.

### 4.2 Recap: The Suitable Soil for Participatory Planning in China

#### 4.2.1 From Physical Expansion to Quality of life

The bigger, more developed cities are where the physical expansion of urbanization has slowed. Thus, in the planning process, the quality of space and sense of place are more and more emphasized. This reason applies to the cases of Xiaoweijie, Shenzhen Civic Center and Wenhaili.

#### 4.2.2 A Stronger Sense of Ownership

The local residents have a strong demand for participating in the decisions related to their own life and interest. This applies to the cases of Shangbu and Nanshi District.

#### 4.2.3 The Innovation of Governance

The government and local NGOs are open and exposed to new methods of governance and planning and are therefore willing to change the modes of urban management and redevelopment. This applies to the cases of Dashilar, Xiaoweijie, Shijia Hutong, and Jiaochangwei.

#### 4.2.4 Complicated Interest of Groups

For the urban regeneration projects, the ownership and interest of groups are often complicated. The decisions must be made amidst different opinions voiced from multiple groups. This applies to the cases of Shangbu and Dashilar.

#### 4.2.5 Significant Intangible Value

When the value of culture and history is fully recognized, participation is used to carefully and delicately apply changes. This applies to the Nanshi district, Jiaochangwei, Dashilar and Shijia Hutong cases.

The practical experience of US may be able to help the Chinese planning system as well as Chinese democracy explore the advantage of native grassroots democratic system begs further application. Confident, vocal citizens, on some level urge the government can't neglect their voice. Government's attitude towards to participatory planning is not remain to performance show. Not but the least, diverse civil societies play a major role not only in people's daily life, but also the central power of participatory planning.

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