Emerging participative approaches for urban regeneration in Chinese megacities

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4 Title:

5 # Emerging Participative Approaches for Urban Regeneration in
6 # Chinese Megacities
7
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15
20 **Abstract**
21
22 The rapid development of Chinese megacities in the past decades have been mainly

23 characterized by top-down planning and large-scale urban (re-)development, and by using

24 "place-making" as a tool for city branding. This approach has also been used in other

25 countries and has been constantly criticized for replacing old neighbourhoods. In recent

26 years, alternative development modes and participative approaches in urban regeneration

27 practices have emerged in cities such as Shanghai and Shenzhen. This paper investigates

28 participative urban regeneration cases in Yangpu district, located in Shanghai and the Dalang

29 sub-district in Shenzhen. Both case studies are located in the urban-rural interface, where past

30 industrialization processes have resulted in complex socio-spatial conditions. The primary

31 focus was to analyse the governance aspects in the cases, such as the enabling factors that

32 allow the participative approach to emerge in these projects and their governance model. This

33 paper concludes on the importance of civil society organizations and the incorporation of

34 social objectives in emerging participative regeneration practices.

35

Introduction

Public participation has become an increasingly used approach to spear urban change with social inclusion and facilitate place-making in countries where the planning system provides space for it (Strydom *et al* 2018; Karacor 2014; Main and Sandoval 2015). A more sustainable urbanization strategy relies on the joint effort of the public, private sectors and the civil society, with the exchanges of resources, shared goals and common interests (Healey 1997; Koppenjan and Klijn 2004; Head and Alford 2015).

The current Chinese planning system has been characterised as a top-down system due to a strong government- dominated ideology that has limited room for the public to participate in the decision-making process of urban (re-)development. This is considered a result of socialist legacy and economic-led development under state entrepreneurialism. Chinese megacities have experienced rapid development in the past three decades, manifested in the construction of new urban areas with top-down planning approaches. Nevertheless, there is a paradigm shift in these cities that urban development is paying more attention to the regeneration of existing urban areas and the urban–rural interface, where the urban composition, land and property ownership are complex (Liu 2017). Regenerating such areas means dealing with wicked problems, such as those rooted in urban decay and due to complex and intertwined ownership, demographic and socio-economic issues. The top-down hierarchical governance approach might encounter deadlock situations in practice when the consensus among stakeholders cannot be reached (Zhai and Ng 2013). In this context, there are emerging participative approaches in urban regeneration practices experimenting with small-scale interventions in the existing built environment, focusing more on the cultivation of social capital and a new economy (Qu *et al.* 2017).

61

62 The necessity of adopting participative approaches in urban regeneration in Chinese

63 megacities lies in the context of rapid urbanisation, particularly the associated processes of

64 migration and socio-economic restructuring. Due to the influx of rural-urban migrants, the

65 megacities in China face the challenges of accommodating a large proportion of floating

66 populations (Liang *et al.* 2014). These migrants are comprised of mostly young people trying

67 to find their own ways to settle down in mega cities and are more vulnerable to changes in

68 the built environment compared to local residents. However, this large social group is usually

69 neglected in the planning and (re-)development process because they are not property owners

70 (Huang and Li 2014). The issue of socio-spatial inequality has become increasingly

71 prominent in Chinese megacities, leading to some concern about the risk of social instability,

72 which may have the counter effect on China's rapid economic growth (Knight 2014).

73 Enhancing social inclusion and capacity building in the urban (re-)development process is

74 therefore essential from the perspective of social resilience (Berkes and Ross 2013).

75

76 Despite the constraints and limited space in both the planning system and institutional setting,

77 public participation started late in China but has gradually gained attention in urban

78 development (Enserink and Koppenjan 2007). Inspired by the lessons from European cities

79 and international best practices, public participation is considered essential for a better

80 decision-making process towards social inclusion. For example, in the case of the low-carbon

81 community project in Yangzhou, local participants were informed of the benefits that public

82 participation brings. These include opportunities to incorporate professional and public

83 interests, to create an informal public space inside the neighbourhood and to find

84 transdisciplinary solutions by incorporating the needs and interests of diverse stakeholders, as

85 well as the possibility to raise funds for various activities (Tian and Zhu 2015: 19). Verdini

86   (2015) compared the different forms of public participation in several urban regeneration

87   cases in Nanjing, Suzhou and Shanghai. In the South Nanjing case, local elite (academic

88   scholars and local experts) and residents used different ways, such as petitioning, protesting

89   and campaigning through local media to preserve a few portions of the local historical area.

90   In Shanghai, the Tianzifang project was initiated by a community of artists. Through a

91   community-initiated organization, both the artists and local residents established a

92   partnership and self-financed the rehabilitation of buildings and public facilities. With a self-

93   organized approach, local communities achieved the conservation of the Shikumen

94   neighbourhoods. Both the Nanjing and Shanghai cases have shown the leading role of local

95   elites, in historical preservation or urban rehabilitation, such as academics and artists, who

96   advocated the concerns of local issues and their professional skills or opinions were

97   instrumental.

98

99   In these examples, residents from the local community participated in practices of urban

100 regeneration. Theoretically speaking, the root of resident participation comes from the

101 assertion that without the active engagement of local people, neither the state nor the market

102 could solve the issues of disadvantaged communities in urban renewal projects (Wood 2002).

103 However, a participative approach in urban regeneration is context related. Each context has

104 its enabling factors and constraints. This paper analyses such participative urban regeneration

105 practices in two Chinese megacities - Shanghai and Shenzhen. It investigates how these

106 urban regeneration projects were carried out by incorporating different goals, interests,

107 resources and involvement of various stakeholders. Furthermore, it examines and compares

108 these emerging practices using governance parameters. By doing so, the authors try to

109 understand: 1) What enabling factors allowed participative approaches to emerge in these

110 urban regeneration projects? 2) What participative methods have been adopted? 3) To what

111   extent did these participative urban regeneration projects contribute to inclusive places? The

112   conclusions highlight new roles of planning, design and governance in urban regeneration. It

113   suggests that there is a necessity of shifting urban regeneration approaches from product-

114   oriented redevelopment to process-oriented place-making and re-imaging.

115
116   **Theoretical perspectives of participative urban regeneration and their relevance to**
117   **Chinese practices**
118
119   *Perspectives of participative approach in urban regeneration*

120

121   The debate on participative approach in urban regeneration has been driven from different

122   perspectives. Based on intensive literature studies, the authors summarised three main

123   perspectives.

124   The first is a governance perspective on the creation of places. Place is meant for people,

125   encouraging them "to linger and return" (Adams and Tiesdell 2013: 15). To make vital

126   places, the governance of place involves not only plural stakeholders but also the attempt to

127   turn such extensive stakeholder engagements into advantages. The network mode of

128   governance recognises that the stakeholders "not only have the right to comment" but also

129   may "bring valuable insight or information to the planning process that may well improve

130   intended outcome" (Adams and Tiesdell 2013: 126-127). David Blunkett (2001) used the

131   term democratic renewal to suggest a transformation of the government to get citizens and

132   associations engaged in the process of governance.

133

134   The second perspective emphasizes on community involvement in an area-based urban

135   regeneration. Deakin and Allwinkle (2007) states that sufficiently place-based knowledge

136   can be incorporated into strategic solutions that top-down interventions may be lacking.

137   Community involvement brings resident knowledge that can help find solutions to local

138   issues, which would otherwise be difficult to resolve from the outside. Residents are more

139   likely to connect and protect their local areas if they are involved in the locality and thus,

140   make the solution more integrated and sustainable. This may in turn encourage communities

141   to develop skills and social capital, which may contribute to the people's own welfare (Tallon

142   2010: 146-147). In the past decades, the regeneration of disadvantaged neighbourhoods or so-

143   called 'distressed urban areas', has become the focus in urban public policy agendas in

144   European countries (Conway and Konvitz 2000). These urban policies are mainly area-based,

145   with the aim to adapt to the local socio-spatial conditions. By involving local residents to find

146   solutions, these policies have shown a certain degree of comprehensiveness and acknowledge

147   the multidimensional nature of urban regeneration (Parés et al 2012: 241).

148

149   The third perspective is the intent of social inclusion through a participative approach to

150   achieve more balanced power relations and to deal with conflicts among interests of

151   stakeholders, especially between the marginalised and the dominant (Bull and Jonges 2006).

152   Narayanan et al (2013) stated that people with different levels of power behave differently.

153   Individuals with low power are more likely to socially withdraw when they are excluded and

154   take less initiatives to connect with potential networks. This indicates an unequal access to

155   resources and rights (United Nations 2016), and the importance of raising the voice of

156   people. In European Union (EU) countries, social inclusion has steadily gained recognition in

157   public policies (Marlier et al. 2009). Furthermore, beyond the perspective of social inclusion,

158   there are studies examining participative approaches through the lens of local direct

159   democracy (Fischer 2006; Fung and Wright 2001; Healey et al. 2008). The importance of

160   participation in planning exercises represents a shift from pure participation to participatory

161   democracy. More space for self-help activities is provided, contributing to citizen

162   empowerment and community development (Stratigea et al. 2018). However, critics suggest

163   that citizen participation schemes are rarely implemented smoothly due to difficulties in

164   designing and managing participatory processes. People may be "highly sceptical about the

165   worth of investing their time and energy in participatory activities" (Fischer 2006: 22).

166

167   ***The relevance of participative approach in Chinese urban regeneration practices***
168

169   In China, participative urban regeneration is seen as an approach that originated from

170   Western (in particular EU) countries. The transferability of such participative approaches in

171   the Chinese context still has a knowledge gap. One of the debates is on the role of civil

172   society, which falls into two camps: one that emphasizes on the incipient civil society that

173   can be cultivated in the Chinese context and the other thinks that the concept of civil society

174   is Western and not relevant to China (Verdini 2015). Such debates triggered an increase in

175   studies on the role of civil society, including the local communities, Non-Governmental

176   Organisations (NGOs), local organizations, and leading professionals in the urban

177   regeneration process in the Chinese context (Ming 2011; Wu 2015). One of the most

178   extensively studied term is the so-called community in the Chinese context (Bray 2006; Shieh

179   and Friedmann 2008; Nguyen 2013). The Chinese term for 'community'(shequ) is designated

180   as "the basic unit of urban social, political and administrative organisation" (Bray 2006:531).

181   As a result of government-led community building projects, the Chinese community

182   represents a hybrid combination of strategies for community governance. On the one hand, it

183   is given a clear institutional identity defined with territory and population; its staffs are

184   professional cadres and can access a range of financial materials and cultural resources to

185   appeal governmental interventions (Bray 2006: 546). On the other hand, much of the day-to-

186   day work of the community depends on "the active participation of numerous unpaid

187   volunteers mobilized among the local population" (Bray 2006: 546).

188

189 Another well studied term is NGOs in the Chinese context (Chan 2012). It is worth to note

190 that: Chinese NGOs have grown largely in numbers in the last three decades, mirroring the

191 emerging social challenges caused by political, economic and social changes. Local NGOs

192 have been recognised for their positive social contributions. Although with the desire to

193 encourage participation of social organisations, the state is cautious with the independence of

194 social organisations and the possibility of losing control. As a result, the strict NGO

195 regulation and NGO registration system has left most NGOs unregistered in the system (Hsu

196 and Hasmath 2014). Second, besides NGOs, the role of active citizenship has also been

197 acknowledged in the debate of community involvement (Marinetto 2003). Civic associations,

198 professionals, artists and citizens seem to be a group encountered less political suspicion.

199

200 Regarding public participation in Chinese planning and governance, Wu (2015: 72-73)

201 indicated two common misconceptions. The first one refers to the statement that no

202 consultation exists under the 'authoritarian state'. However, China's Urban and Rural

203 Planning law (Government of China 2007) does encourage the consultation of public

204 opinions in the planning process (article 26 and 46). The statement above underplays the

205 consultation that happens between work-units and local governments within a more sector-

206 based administrative hierarchy. The second misconception claims that great participation is

207 driven by the marketization process that may eventually lead to democratic politics.

208 According to Wu (2015, pp 72-73), this is only partially true, as competition may turn

209 resource mobility and redistribution towards the advantage of the business interest, making

210 participation more procedural rather than substantial. With the debate of public participation

211 in mind, Wu has seen an increase of using design competitions, which have led to a greater

212 scope of planning participation. Public participation has been treated as a method of place

213 promotion in this case. However, the emphasis is still on growth-dependent planning and

214 social justice is "not explicitly raised in the planning process of China" (Wu 2015: 205).

215 These observations bring forth the relevance of the term 'place-making'- in relation to 'place

216 branding'-in the discussion of participatory planning in China.

217

218 ***'Place-making' and 'place branding' embedded in participative regeneration in China***
219

220 'Place-making' and 'place branding' have "a wide range of rationales and effects" and may

221 interact but more often operate at different scales (Evans, 2015: 135). The interest on place

222 surged in the field of urban planning since the 1990s when the planners' principle

223 preoccupation was with city branding in response to world-wide inter-city competitions

224 (Friedmann 2010). Place-making in that context mainly referred to area-based development

225 in line with place branding and with investment from different levels of authorities

226 (Ashworth et al 2015). In these cases, the emphasis is on the distinctiveness and qualities of

227 the physical environment for city re-imaging (Evans 2015). The rapid urban

228 (re-)development in Chinese cities in the past decades can be seen as part of this

229 phenomenon. Such a place-making model has been controversial, since it can lead to the

230 displacement of old neighbourhoods due to the values of social infrastructure and

231 communities in the local scale being considered as less (Friedmann 2010).

232

233 The concept of place-making has developed in the past decades from a term concerned

234 mainly about places as physical end-products towards a participatory process as an

235 empowering tool (Strydom et al. 2018). It is becoming a more suitable route to stimulate

236 active participation and enhance social capital, although affordable applications in practice is

237 still scarce (Alvarez et al. 2017). For example, in Western European countries, raising the

238 voice of people has been institutionalised in renovation projects and has continued as a strong

239 movement in urban restructuring activities (Qu and Hasselaar 2011). In Chinese cities, small-

240   scale urban regeneration projects focusing on social infrastructure and community spaces are

241   also emerging. In these cases, planning and design are also playing different roles, as the

242   designers mainly facilitating the making of places together with local people throughout the

243   process. This is in line with the argument that place-making is "everyone's job" as pointed by

244   John Friedmann (2010: 149), which requires more open and collaborative processes among

245   various stakeholders and celebrates everyday life (Schneekloth and Shibley 2000). An

246   important nature of place experienced by people, individually or collectively, is that it is part

247   of the everyday environment (Evans 2015). Urban regeneration in emerging incremental way

248   has also shown interactions of place-making and place branding. As is shown in the two

249   study cases of this paper, urban regeneration helped re-imaging underdeveloped areas during

250   the process of deindustrialization and industrial upgrading.

251

252   'Place-making' may not comprehensively interpret the emerging participative regeneration

253   practices in China, since the concept itself is broad and has evolved in the past, as mentioned

254   above. Different perceptions on place-making from social, political and physical point of

255   views make this framework controversial. Nevertheless, such wide range of rationales, on the

256   other hand, makes 'place' at the centre when addressing conflicts of interests of the

257   stakeholders involved. Through this lens, the projects introduced in this paper offer a fresh

258   look at the participative approaches applied in Chinese urban regeneration practices. As

259   Verdini (2015) states that several elements are essential, such as: the level of achievements in

260   participative practices, the role of leading organisations at the local level, and the relation

261   between the government and non-governmental organizations. This paper will try to interpret

262   the cases from a governance perspective on place-making, instead of a top-down versus

263   bottom-up narrative.

264
265   **Case studies: Shanghai and Shenzhen**

266
267 *The choice of study cases*
268

269 Following the theoretical discussion, two in-depth case studies are carried out: the Yangpu

270 district in Shanghai, and the Dalang sub-district in Shenzhen. Chinese cities have undergone

271 a tremendous speed of urbanisation since the economic reform and open-door policy in the

272 late 1970s. As China's economic growth poles, Shanghai and Shenzhen both experienced

273 astonishing urbanisation process in the last 40 years. Their economic growth and drastic

274 urban transformation have largely been driven by various strategic large-scale urban

275 interventions to develop financial centres, retail centres, high-tech enclaves and massive

276 residential districts. Since the 1990s, land reforms and housing reforms resulted in the

277 commodification process of housing, manifested by dramatically increased land prices and

278 commodity prices (A-level office, retail and high-end house estate), which attracted massive

279 investments to these megacities. These dramatic spatial transformations have raised concerns

280 from critics, such as the massive scale of demolishing old neighbourhoods and forced

281 relocation conflicts with the expense of local values. According to Wu et al (2007), a large

282 number of residential relocations in Shanghai in the 1990s was the result of a spatial process

283 driven by urban redevelopment. Similarly, in Shenzhen, urban villages at central locations

284 have been gradually replaced due to large-scale redevelopment projects. Such concern has

285 drawn attention to smaller-scale and community-oriented approaches in urban regeneration

286 practices.

287

288 This paper focuses on Shanghai and Shenzhen because both are China's mega cities at the

289 frontline of experimenting participative approaches in urban regeneration, in which various

290 stakeholders are involved and encouraged to co-create small-scale urban projects. For

291 example, Shanghai incorporated concrete guidelines on public participation in the Regulation

292 of Shanghai Municipality of Urban and Rural Planning (2010). In recent years, the city has

293 been extensively examined for its development in community/*shequ* building (Liu 2006;

294 Nguyen 2013), which was considered important to achieve self-governance for local

295 residents and migrants (both well-educated graduates and migrant workers). Shenzhen is one

296 of the pilot cities in China to experiment with social organisation reform and has encouraged

297 the NGOs to play an important role in stimulating public participation in public affairs. Both

298 in Shanghai and Shenzhen, local communities are particularly encouraged to work with other

299 social and economic organisations in dealing with urban issues. It is especially worth

300 mentioning that in Shanghai, the so-called university-science park-local community

301 collaboration model was first initiated by the former industrially-concentrated Yangpu

302 District to achieve synergy by combining its own resource, finance and creative ideas, which

303 was later introduced to the whole City.

304

305 Recently in Shanghai and Shenzhen, the urban (re-)development process has expanded

306 gradually to peripheral districts and have paid attention to places with complex socio-spatial

307 conditions. In such areas, to implement the large-scale urban redevelopment approach, the

308 amount of compensation for relocation can exceed 80-85% of the total cost for urban

309 renewal, which makes it hardly possible for developers. Furthermore, the complex land and

310 property ownership in peripheral districts makes massive urban interventions difficult to

311 implement. Therefore, this paper chose to focus on these two districts located in the urban-

312 rural interface, which used to be peripheral areas but are experiencing socio-economic and

313 spatial transformation towards new sub-centres of the city (fig. 1). The empirical analysis of

314 the two cases will be focusing on the three research questions mentioned in the introduction

315 chapter. It examines emerging participative urban regeneration projects from the governance

316 perspective on place-making, in line with the theoretical analysis.
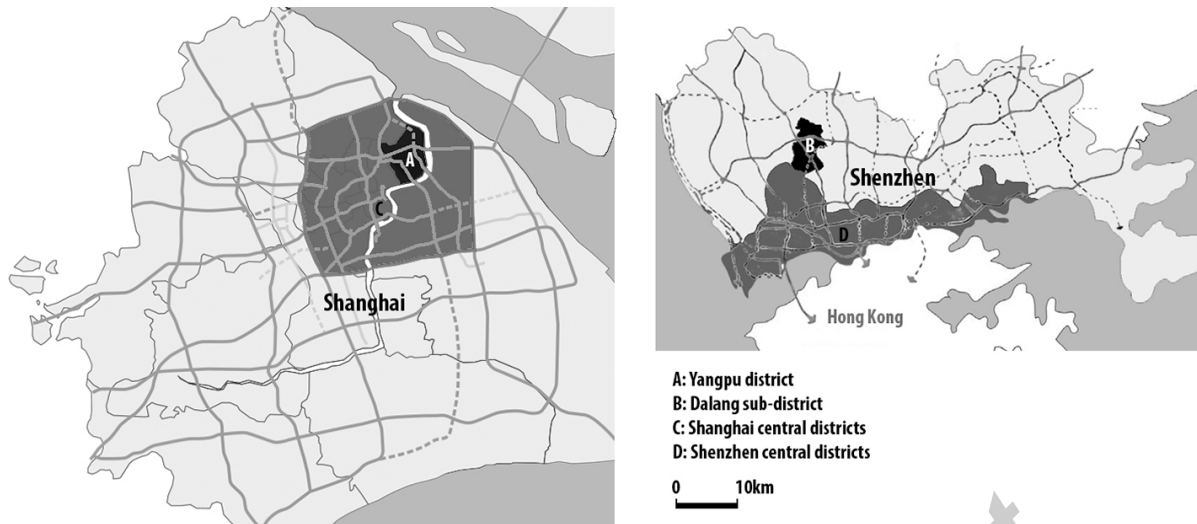
317

318 **Fig. 1.** Locations of Yangpu district and Dalang sub-district
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320
321 *Participative approach in regenerating Yangpu District towards an Urban Innovation*
322 *District*
323

324 The Yangpu district is one of the urban districts at the northeast edge of the city, where more

325 than a century ago Shanghai's earliest industries used to cluster there. Until the 1980s,

326 Yangpu was still home to around 2000 local factories. Worker villages started to be

327 constructed nearby since the 1960s to accommodate factory workers. In the 1990s, the

328 Yangpu District had undergone a painful process of industrial restructuring to become a

329 cluster of Sciences, Technology, Research and Development (R&D) and headquarter offices.

330 Around four-fifth of its factories disappeared, leaving many vacant industrial estates behind.

331 The factory managers, while losing manufacturing revenue, attempted to use their property to

332 generate income to pay off the pensions of retired workers (a typical Chinese arrangement for

333 state-owned enterprises before the pension reform). This temporary attempt offered

334 opportunities for small-scale regeneration projects. On the other hand, there is a largest

335 concentration of universities (more than 60% of universities in Shanghai, such as Fudan

336 University and Tongji University), research institutions as well as half of Shanghai's

337 university-based national science parks, which play an increasingly significant role in the

338 economic restructuring of the Yangpu District. The Yangpu District set its goal to be an

339 innovation district in 2003 to best explore its own potentials in talent, technology and

340 innovation. By 2010, the district had become the first national Urban Innovation District in a

341 national program. The Yangpu District Government paid special attention to the talents and

342 young graduates who stayed, lived and worked in Yangpu. To start their career, these people

343 preferred to choose a place adjacent to the university campus and close to the nearby old

344 neighbourhoods where cheap rental accommodations could be found. Lacking maintenance,

345 many of these old neighbourhoods became dilapidated. Redevelopment of such

346 neighbourhoods has been proposed since the 1990s but limited changes were made. Private

347 developers lacked interest due to the complexity in ownership, the potentially high cost and

348 low return after relocation. Besides old neighbourhoods, many industrial properties were left

349 idle after bankruptcy and were in need of new functions, users and investments. The local

350 district government had been anxious to improve the urban environment at the

351 neighbourhood level in Yangpu District, therefore started to encourage smaller-scale urban

352 regeneration from diverse initiators. The local district government strived for a possible

353 synergy between the technological parks, universities and local neighbourhoods in the

354 regeneration process. The policy *mass entrepreneurship and innovation* (*Da zhong chuang*

355 *ye, wan zhong chuang xin*) was advocated by premier Keqiang Li in 2015. It served as a

356 catalyst in Shanghai to eliminate various restrictions in the registration and permission of

357 entrepreneurship. Professionals, university staffs and graduates as well as local communities

358 have all been considered by Yangpu as a seedbed for innovation. This is also the reason why

359 the so-called 'micro regeneration' concept was initiated in Yangpu District. It promoted

360 participation in the regeneration process by local communities and active professionals. In the

361 following text, three regeneration cases in the Yangpu District are introduced, which had

362   incorporated participative approaches with initiatives from artists, private developers and

363   university-community collaboration.

364

365   *Artist-initiated Creative Park along the Huangpu River*

366   The transformation of vacant industrial properties in Shanghai dates back to the 1990s as

367   artists transferred these spacious but vacant warehouses and factories along the Suzhou Creek

368   into art and design studios. These experiments have created discussions within the Shanghai

369   Municipality on how to reuse vacant industrial property to facilitate the creative industry in

370   Shanghai. Despite their success in transforming the urban space, a development plan for the

371   creek developed by the Urban Planning Administration Bureau and the involvement of

372   property developers forced the artists to move out eventually (Chen 2007). Mr. Teng Kun-

373   yen, an architect from Taiwan, was among the first who had such an experience. He was

374   invited by the Yangpu District Government to help with the regeneration of vacant factories

375   and warehouses along the Huangpu River. This has led to an inspiring regeneration project of

376   a former warehouse cluster at No. 2200, Yangshupu Road. After the regeneration to become

377   Yangshupu Creative Park, suitable office spaces were created for design studios and

378   companies that still represented the industrial legacy (fig. 2). However, despite the great

379   individual efforts made in the design and investment for transforming the place, Teng was

380   never able to reach an official contract with the estate owner - Shanghai Power Station

381   Auxiliary Factory, even after the renters had moved in. This issue of uncertainty was a direct

382   result in the fact that the design companies who rented the space were unable to register their

383   companies without an official address. Many had to leave in the end. One company was so

384   daunted by the situation that it sued Teng for fraud and asked for compensation. This artist-

385   initiative ended with the initiator in a vulnerable situation and left the project in dismay.

386
387

388
389 **Fig. 2.** Creative park at Yangshupu Road after regeneration effort by individual artist. (Image by Yawei Chen.)
390
391
392 *Private-initiative regeneration in developing innovation district*
393
394 The 49-hectare site where the Knowledge and Innovation Community (KIC) is located is

395 nearby an emerging sub-centre of Yangpu District, adjacent to several universities such as

396 Fudan University and Tongji University. The original site was occupied by a number of small

397 factories, workers' houses, a bus depot and the Jiangwan stadium from the 1930s. The real

398 estate company, Shui On had experiences in adapting historical buildings into urban

399 landmarks with innovative concepts. The company, saw this location as a great potential as

400 an innovative cluster. Their initiative was well received by the Yangpu District Government,

401 who saw the project as a critical measure to help develop the Yangpu District as the

402 "National Urban Innovation District". In 2002, Shui On started the project in a joint venture

403 with a local public company under the Yangpu District Government (Urban Land Institute

404 2015). Shui On aimed to foster an innovation cluster of knowledge and technology that

405 included universities, incubators, trading institutes, commercial services and legal

406 consultancies, etc. Shui On was keen in establishing a business model to offer assistance (e.g.

16

407 in finance and loan, etc.) to start-up companies and small businesses (Urban Land Institute

408 2015). The local district government had also been keen on this focus. For example, the

409 InnoSpace is a flex space providing a variety of services to small businesses (Urban Land

410 Institute 2015). These InnoSpace tenants can later move to SOHO units (small office, home

411 office) at University Avenue, which accommodates smaller start-up companies. To meet the

412 diverse need of young talents settling down in the area, KIC developed four different areas

413 that provides spaces for working, living, education, and retail functions. To engage local

414 residents, of which most are employees working in KIC, participating in public activities,

415 Shui On reserved small pieces of vacant land as community gardens. For a small rent, local

416 residents can grow their own plants. A landscape architect Dr Liu Yuelai from Tongji

417 University, who advocated the concept of Urban Forest and encouraged inhabitants' joint

418 effort in developing and maintaining community gardens, was actively involved in

419 developing the KIC community garden. As a result, the residents from KIC became the most

420 active volunteers in neighbourhood activities and helped build its community identity.

421

422 *University-community collaboration in micro-regeneration projects*
423
424 The 2.75 square kilometre Siping Road Neighbourhood is an ageing neighbourhood with

425 residential buildings constructed between 1950 and the1980s and with 70% of the residential

426 buildings identified as privatized public houses in workers' villages. Both the buildings and

427 public spaces have deteriorated during the years and need regeneration. Large-scale urban

428 interventions were difficult to implement in a neighbourhood with high density and a large

429 number of households. The university-science park-local community collaboration model

430 advocated by the Yangpu District Government supports neighbourhood innovation and

431 entrepreneurship, provides possible resources and finances for the local community

432 organisation to take initiatives. The Siping Road Street Committee held the idea that smaller-

433   scale regeneration programs with the help of local communities might meet the local needs

434   better. In this way, the use of the public space could be more effective, which will further

435   enhance the quality of place. This view was increasingly shared by a number of planners and

436   designers from Tongji University, which is located within the neighbourhood. One of the

437   initiators was professor Long Yongqi, Dean of the College of Design and Innovation, who

438   considered that engaging with communities could bring new perspectives and stimulate

439   creativity. Therefore, Long advocated for more collaborations between the university and the

440   local communities. Under the motto of 'Neighbourhood of Innovation, Creativity and

441   Entrepreneurship towards 2040' (N-ICE), both the teaching staff and students from Tongji

442   University started to engage in community regeneration through education tasks, design

443   competitions or community activities. The Yangpu District Government saw the potential of

444   the small-scale participative approach in the so-called 'micro-regeneration', which transforms

445   ageing and unattractive urban environments with limited costs and joint efforts between

446   different actors. They issued a series of policy documents to encourage collaboration and

447   shared public facilities like libraries and lab equipment and provided financial instruments to

448   facilitate such participative actions.

449

450   The possibility to improve neighbourhood public spaces by aligning local communities and

451   professional expertise from nearby universities is in line with the community building

452   concept promoted by the Yangpu District government. Since 2015, one of the attempts was

453   made by hosting the Siping Space Creation Action annually. Students from the College of

454   Design and Innovation selected different neighbourhood spaces for improvement, including

455   telephone booths, green spaces, street corners, and etc. Inhabitants from the neighbourhood

456   were invited to work together with the students and the design results were exhibited in the

457   neighbourhood. In three years, more than 50 viewpoints have been created within the Siping

458   Road Neighbourhood. This was comprised of a collection of design results like wall confetti,

459   street statue, public couches, and children playgrounds. These actions attracted inhabitants to

460   pay attention to the efforts from university students and to build trust during the process.

461   Following the series of actions, in 2017, a collaboration effort between Tongji University and

462   the Siping Road Street Committee was made to redevelop a former community centre at No.

463   115 Tieling Road. It was transformed into a centre for research, training as well as an

464   exhibition space that fit local needs in 'SPace' (fig. 3). Presently, there are multiple groups

465   using Space. Tongji University conducts some teaching activities and local residents attend

466   creative skill training programs and jewellery workshops. With the joining of the Glass

467   Museum, the three parties decided to establish The New Centre of Contemporary Jewellery

468   and Design Culture (NoCC), together with two labs focusing on jewellery design, as well as

469   the integration of glass and jewellery design. In the same year, Tongji University and the

470   Massachusetts Institute of technology (MIT), collaborated with the Siping Road Street

471   Committee to establish an urban living lab, Shanghai-MIT Media Lab, in a community waste

472   collection centre to observe local lifestyle changes. Another active participative project is led

473   by a landscape architect Dr Liu Yuelai mentioned in the previous project. Liu worked

474   together with inhabitants from Ansan No. Fourth Village to take care of a 200 square meter

475   neighbourhood green area by training inhabitants with knowledge of plants and gardening, so

476   that the community could self-maintain the garden in the long term. These actions had a

477   direct impact in the improvement of the neighbourhood environment along with getting more

478   inhabitants involved in neighbourhood issues and helped create a sense of belonging for the

479   inhabitants.

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(a)	(b)

Fig. 3. Microregeneration projects as the result of university–community collaboration: (a) Shanghai MIT Media Lab; and (b) Siping Space. (Images by Yawei Chen.)

Capacity building and community development in Dalang's participative urban regeneration

The Dalang sub-district (a sub-division of urban area in Longhua New District) was developed along with a spontaneous rural industrialization process at the border of the special economic zone (SEZ) of Shenzhen. It has only 8,600 registered local population. However, the actual total population was 520,000 people, and more than 90% are young migrant workers working for manufacturing industries. This has been a prominent issue in regards to the mismatch between the numbers of the local and migrant population and has posed great challenges to the local governance. The past three decades of spontaneous development has resulted in a spatially fragmented built environment in Dalang, where factories and urban villages were densely built without well-planned infrastructure and public spaces. This is a common spatial pattern in most of the industrial areas of Shenzhen which lacked spatial qualities in the living environment. Currently, Shenzhen is experiencing industrial upgrading by transforming itself from the world's factory into a world city. Large-scale urban regeneration projects are being implemented mainly in former industrial areas in central districts of Shenzhen (such as the Sungang-Qingshuihe area in Luohu district), turning these areas into new places of global functions. Due to its peripheral location, Dalang has not become a place where urban redevelopment is implemented as intensively as in the central urban area. The local government is trying alternative ways to improve liveability and

509 enhance social construction. A more participative and inclusive urban regeneration approach

510 has been adopted in practices consisting of co-creating small-scale public spaces in urban

511 villages and industrial parks. By re-using wasted space and materials, interesting places were

512 formed where social facilities, informal education and recreational functions could be

513 provided by and for people. These projects offered opportunities for the empowerment of

514 migrant workers as well as a mechanism of self-management. The following examples of

515 place-making in Dalang could represent a variety of emerging participatory approaches for

516 urban regeneration in Shenzhen.

517
518 *The Youth Dream Centre cultivating young talents*
519
520 As mentioned above, Dalang has a large proportion of young migrant workers in its

521 population. These young migrant workers mostly do not have a university degree, and some

522 did not complete high school. However, the young migrant workers have a very strong

523 motivation for learning and personal development. In response to such a high demand, some

524 training schools for professional skills emerged, offering evening courses to migrant workers.

525 In addition, the Youth Dream Centre is located in an industrial park in Dalang that offers

526 various types of informal learning activities, especially to young migrant workers. It is a

527 public space jointly launched in 2013 by the Dalang sub-district government, Yifenghua

528 Property Co., Ltd., China Development Institute (CDI, a think tank based in Shenzhen), and a

529 non-profit organisation (NPO) called Teach for China (TFC). The centre is on the ground

530 floor of Buildings no. 16-18 in the Yifenghua Industrial Park. The place was designed by

531 Professor Zhu Tao from the University of Hong Kong, using the concept of 'civic

532 architecture', which includes a library, service stations, spaces for social interaction, training,

533 and performance, and etc. It can accommodate around 1,000 people participating in a variety

534 of activities, such as courses, forums, workshops, conferences, counselling, exhibitions,

535 large-scale evening parties, and etc. It provides a multi-functional platform for young migrant

536   workers to developing themselves, with better access to informal learning and practices of

537   public affairs.

538

539   In order to better coordinate the operation of the Youth Dream Centre, the local government,

540   enterprises, and the NPO (TFC) jointly launched a Public Welfare Culture Centre called

541   KIDO (Kindly Intended Deed Organisation). This was established to run the charity alliance,

542   integrate public affair resources, incubate local social organizations, and to conduct training

543   and workshops at the same time. The aim is to enable young migrant workers to embark on a

544   new path of urbanisation: getting integrated into the city, developing capacity, contributing to

545   society, and eventually realizing their dreams. At present, the members of the Youth Dream

546   Centre Charity Alliance include more than 60 education and academic institutions and non-

547   profit organizations from China or abroad, including universities like Peking University and

548   the University of Hong Kong. An interesting and meaningful exchange between migrant

549   workers and visiting scholars or students happened during field studies of these institutes,

550   which opened a window for the young migrant workers to the outside world.

551

552   The involvement of migrant workers in the development of the centre is not much in the

553   design and construction of the space, but mainly in the self-management of the place. Social

554   integration of young migrant workers has become a common governance issue in the process

555   of urbanization in Shenzhen. Especially in Dalang, these young migrant workers are still

556   facing problems such as long working hours, low income, and having an unstable job.

557   Moreover, public spaces and cultural facilities in Dalang are seriously inadequate, resulting

558   in a monotonous and boring daily lifestyle of young migrant workers that only involves 'the

559   production line – canteen – dormitory', which has led to psychological depression and social

560   problems. However, within this social group, there are many of them who have dreams, eager

561 to be recognized by and care for the society. They have a strong need to participate in society,

562 develop and enhance their own skills. They hope to play a role as a citizen, improve their

563 current life situation and realize their dreams through hard work and creativity. The local

564 government is also aware that migrant workers have contributed greatly to the development

565 of Shenzhen, and that the future of young migrant workers determine the future of the city.

566 Therefore, this special group of young migrant workers has always been the target group in

567 Dalang's experiments of promoting social integration, innovating grassroots governance, and

568 building social construction. Within such a context, the Youth Dream Centre offers

569 opportunities to migrant workers to participate in public affair activities. For example, the

570 above-mentioned non-profit organization KIDO is dedicated to promoting the growth of

571 young migrant workers, cultivating young talents who are self-reliant, honest, innovative,

572 empathetic and socially responsible in practices of social innovation and public affairs.

573 Young migrant workers are encouraged to come to the Youth Dream Centre for social

574 interaction, exploring ideas and participate in public affairs. The leaders of KIDO themselves

575 were talented migrant workers, acting as role models of participation and self-development.

576 In the past three years, many public events targeting young migrant workers have been

577 organized inside the Youth Dream Centre and in other places of Dalang, led by KIDO and

578 volunteers of young migrant workers themselves (Fig. 4).

579 **Fig. 4.** Social spaces for young migrant workers in the Youth Dream Center: (a) outdoor stage for events; and (b) outdoor
580 space for sports and lunch break activities. (Images by Lei Qu.)

581

582 *Community building in Shi'ao village*

583

584 Shi'ao is an urban village located in the north part of Dalang. It has around 500 local

585 residents and an additional 20,000 as a floating population. Managing such diverse social

586 groups with insufficient public facilities and services has been challenging. How to improve

587 community governance and change the status quo? The Dalang sub-district government has

588 been focusing on innovating the local governance model and launched a plan for community

589 development. This is implemented through infrastructure reconstruction, environmental

590 remediation and culture enhancement, exploring a new model of self-management, and

591 allowing residents to be the main force of community development. It has resulted in a few

592 interesting place-making practices, re-using leftover spaces and waste materials, and have

593 offered new public spaces for people to participate, interact and innovate (Fig. 5). For

594 example, a piece of empty land used to be a garbage dump in Shi'ao village is now turned

595 into a community cloth art workshop, thanks to the launch of a project called 'Bu Yi Bang'.

596 Considering the fact that the village is adjacent to the fashion industry park of Dalang, many

597 residents in the Shi'ao village are employees of the clothing industry. Together with the sub-

598 district government, the NPO called Shenzhen Public Welfare Development Centre brought

599 together public interests and resources within the community, and initiated the 'Bu Yi Bang'

600 project. Attracted by traditional weaving, cloth dyeing, and modern sewing techniques,

601 community residents were motivated to participate in the workshops. A fabric culture village

602 is taking shape, and the environmental protection concept of waste utilization is promoted.

(a)   (b)

603 **Fig. 5.** Shi'ao phenomenon of participative urban regeneration in the new trend of community development: (a) Tire
604 Amusement Park; and (b) reusing the production waste of the enzyme workshop for gardening. (Images courtesy of
605 Xiaoxiao Mo.)
606
607
608 Another example is an unfinished building enclosed by broken wooden boards, which is now

609 turned into the first Tire Amusement Park for children. This idea was initiated from the

610 community, since there are more and more children in the neighbourhood but has an

611 insufficient number of playgrounds. In this tire park, community residents carry out activities

612 like tire painting, tire climbing, and etc. It became a place for children to grow and interact

613 with parents and other children, continued to enhance the sense of community, and

614 strengthened social cohesion. After the park was established, the community selected the

615 'rotating director' and 'rotation management team' through open recruitment and election

616 campaigns, to form a mechanism for residents to participate, jointly build, share and manage

617 together.

618

619 A third example is an abandoned construction site that was transformed into an enzyme

620 production site, created by a non-profit organization and community residents. Under the

621 guidance of the NGO called Green Code Environmental Protection Organization, residents

622 are consciously involved in the action of waste reduction. They collect organic wastes like

623 vegetable leaves and fruit peels, hand it over to the enzyme workshop to make

624 environmentally friendly enzymes, and eventually receive the enzymes as kitchen degreaser

625 for free. In the past two years, experiments in Shi'ao has drawn attention from society.

626 Scholars think that it represents a new trend of community development in Shenzhen, and

627 even called it The Shi'ao Phenomenon.

628
629 *Findings*
630

631 The experiences of the participative urban regeneration projects introduced above include

632 examples of both failure and success. They contribute to a relatively comprehensive

633 understanding of these participative approaches, especially the enabling factors behind the

634 emergence of such practices within specific localities. Both Yangpu and Dalang are located

635 in the urban-rural interface of a Chinese megacity. Yangpu is close to the border of the

636 central urban area while Dalang is part of a peripheral district. The two places used to

637 accommodate industrial development and later experienced industrial upgrading and loss of

638 traditional manufacturing sector and jobs. The difference is that the development of Yangpu

639 dates back to the early 20th century and its industrial upgrading process started already in the

640 1990s. The process had resulted in numerous obsolete industrial property and job loss in

641 Yangpu; whereas Dalang only started its rural industrialization since 1980s and has just

642 entered a new phase of industrial upgrading. Although at different stages of urban

643 transformation, both Yangpu and Dalang faced similar issues of implementing large-scale

644 urban regeneration. The districts also came short in investments and interests from property

645 developers, due to the complex land and property ownership as the legacy of its past

646 industrial development. Meanwhile, both districts are relatively less expensive urban areas

647 where young people congregate and look for opportunities. In the Yangpu District, a large

648 number of university graduates stayed after graduation searching for jobs, due to the ageing

649 neighbourhoods that offer them affordable accommodations. Various industrial properties in

650 the district were difficult to attract investors for regeneration but at the same time they

651 offered cheap spaces for start-ups from the creative industry. Dalang has a substantially large

652 population of young migrants working for the manufacturing factories. The migrants also live

653 in simple accommodations in urban villages without well-planned infrastructure and

654 community facilities. Based on the description of the practices, the authors compared the

655 above-mentioned projects in Yangpu and Dalang with the three research questions. Results of

656 the comparison could be summarized (Table 1). Findings focus on enabling factors,

657 participative methods and how these practices contributed to the making of inclusive places.

658
659 *Enabling factors*
660
661 1) Enabling institutional environments and active support from the local government.

662 It is important to highlight that there are clear signs of institutional arrangements in the two

663 cities that provide both spaces and instruments to allow unconventional approaches to emerge

664 in urban redevelopment processes. The Yangpu District government is one of the first public

665 sectors that carries out the national policy *mass entrepreneurship and innovation* in practice.

666 These policies encourage various initiatives from societal actors to develop innovative spaces

667 and facilitate entrepreneurship, among which, in combination with the regeneration effort to

668 redevelop spaces within industrial properties or neighbourhood spaces. Restrictive

669 regulations that led to the failure in the Artist-initiated Creative Park has been dismantled.

670 The university-science park-local community collaboration model advocated by the Yangpu

671 District Government encouraged the private sector, community and individual efforts to

672 create innovative spaces. These initiatives are further facilitated with subsidies, seed funds

673 for start-ups, and permission in transforming certain urban functions at the neighbourhood

674   level. The process of community building allows different societal organisations to share

675   certain responsibilities in the community, encouraging a bigger role from *Shequ*, volunteers,

676   and urban professional activists. Whereas in the case of Dalang, the sub-district government

677   also provided an enabling environment for participative regeneration, where social

678   construction is the main objective. It stimulated the emergence of small-scale projects as a

679   result of self-organization in urban villages and the leading roles played by NGOs in public

680   affairs. In this sense, such small-scale urban regeneration practices in both cities could be

681   seen as experiments contributing to specific urban agendas. These include skill training and

682   creating community space in Yangpu, as well as capacity building and community

683   development in Dalang. To support these activities, there are policies to stimulate initiates

684   and seed funds to attract private investors and social organizations. In both cases, the

685   facilitative role from the local government paved the way for participative urban regeneration

686   projects, and encouraged civil society organizations, real estate developers and professionals

687   to take initiatives.

688

689   2) A strong involvement from civil society organizations

690   As mentioned in the theory chapter, civil society is not a concept born in China. The

691   Shenzhen case shows that a variety of civil society organizations started to emerge and

692   contribute actively to public affair and community development. Many of the introduced

693   participative urban regeneration practices in Dalang were led by such organizations, such as

694   social enterprises, charitable foundations, NPOs, NGOs and volunteer groups. Although these

695   organizations are still in the early stages of growth, they could already play an essential role

696   in facilitating the sustainable socio-spatial transformation of the city. In the case of Yangpu,

697   the community/ *Shequ* in Yangpu played an intermediate role between local government and

698   residents. *Shequ* deals with residents' complain and worries with an informal mechanism

699   (Shieh and Friedmann 2008). In the case of the micro-regeneration projects around Tongji

700   University campus, *Shequ* went one step further to facilitate entrepreneurship within the

701   community. They obtained certain financial means and policy advantages to attract social

702   enterprises and active professionals to participate in neighbourhood regeneration. The lesson

703   learned from the Creative Industry Park in Shanghai also shows that without a strong

704   involvement of civil society organizations, individual participants like professionals have less

705   power in the decision-making process. If there is interest from the market forces represented

706   by property owners, the powerful market players could terminate a real participative process

707   in order to pursue commercial interests.

708

709   3) Voluntary individuals

710   Many of the above-mentioned urban regeneration projects involve a target group, for whom

711   new places are made. These target groups include artists, young talents, local residents,

712   young migrant workers, and so on. The relatively large number of people involved in these

713   groups made it hard for them to participate in the urban regeneration process as individuals.

714   However, these examples showed that the voluntary individuals are of great importance to

715   the success of a regeneration project. The eagerness to learn, to interact with others, or to start

716   their own businesses, are all strong interests from people, which could be incorporated in

717   place-making. What is also worth mentioning is the group of urban professionals that have

718   played an active role in the regeneration process. They have the expertise and creativity to

719   transform urban spaces and the ability to involve local inhabitants to work with them. Some

720   have pushed for a social movement and have actively engaged communities in the micro-

721   regeneration effort. The try-outs were triggers for the local government to recognise the

722   creativity within the communities. Following up was the policy documents issued from local

723   government to incorporate community supporting mechanisms and encourage such deeds

724   with financial support.

725

726   *Participative methods*

727   The planning system in China is still known as a top-down system, in which participative

728   urban regeneration is not yet institutionalized. The enabling factors of the emerging

729   participative approaches explained above indicate that the participative methods being

730   adopted differ case by case. These could be seen as experimental projects exploring various

731   possibilities in practice: who takes initiative, who participates, and with which governance

732   model? In comparing the examples in Yangpu and Dalang, it is clear that participative

733   regeneration projects were initiated from diverse actors. Notably, there is always some form

734   of participation by the local government, even in small-scale projects such as the Youth

735   Dream Centre and the Bu Yi Bang project in Shi'ao village. In these projects, the target

736   groups who were the end users, participated mainly in the daily operation and maintenance of

737   the place. Nevertheless, a real collaboration among stakeholders is prominent in all projects

738   that have achieved the original (social) objectives. The termination of the participative

739   approach happened in the Creative Industry Park in Shanghai, has shown what could have

740   happened otherwise.

741

742   *Place-making*

743   It is seen in the case studies that social objectives such as capacity building and community

744   development could be combined with urban regeneration projects. In this way, place-making

745   in urban regeneration is supported by new participative governance models, in which

746   volunteer groups, NGOs and social enterprises could contribute to achieving these social

747   objectives while new public spaces are created and maintained. Thus, the social benefits

748 associated with certain target groups and inclusiveness of the space (whether is it open to the

749 public) give profound meaning to the place. In this sense, a variety of practices could be

750 justified as place-making practices, from the informally formulated temporary tire-

751 amusement park to the professionally designed and constructed SPace, Shanghai-MIT Media

752 Lab or community gardens.

753
754 **Conclusions and discussion**
755

756 Due to the nature of existing urban areas that involve complex networks of stakeholders,

757 participative approaches are increasingly adopted in urban regeneration practices, which

758 refers to the role of planning in facilitating such practices. This paper focuses on the

759 governance aspect when analysing the emerging participative regeneration practices. It tries

760 to understand the enabling factors behind, the participative approaches that have been

761 adopted, and place-making as the outcome of the process. These regeneration projects

762 introduced in this paper strategically combined the effort of cities re-imaging former

763 industrial districts with social objectives at the neighbourhood scale, like capacity building

764 and community development. In the view of John Friedmann (2010), such a people-centred

765 approach can ensure that old places could be taken back by the neighbourhood by providing

766 public spaces for all. Although this paper focuses on two Chinese megacities, it is also

767 meaningful for other cities world widely. It emphasizes on the necessity of understanding the

768 enabling environment for emerging good practices of participative regeneration, even in so

769 called "top-down" planning context. Besides, putting 'place' at the centre of the discussion

770 can help to understand more clearly the interests of various stakeholders and the outcome of

771 the participatory process.

772

773 Findings from the in-depth case studies and comparing them showed the importance of active

774 support from the local government. The results indicate the necessity of institutional

775 innovation in urban planning and governance in China, making room for participation from

776 diverse societal actors and informal or temporary use of spaces by various stakeholders in

777 urban regeneration practices. Currently in Chinese megacities like Shanghai and Shenzhen,

778 such practices are emerging in areas with fewer possibilities of large-scale urban

779 redevelopment, or places with complex land and property ownership. However, these

780 practices have not yet been mainstreamed or institutionalized. Therefore, the local

781 government still needs to play a pivotal role in promoting socially oriented participative

782 approaches in urban regeneration, as it involves new ways of planning, design and

783 implementation. The policy instruments from the Yangpu District Government that has

784 facilitated the micro-regeneration program has shown some signs of effect. From the

785 emerging cases studied in this paper, there is not enough evidence to conclude what should

786 be institutionalized in the planning system. Nevertheless, these cases offered diverse

787 inspiration on what could be achieved socially and spatially, once small-scale participative

788 practices are facilitated in the planning system.

789

790 Within these cases, mutual support and benefits among universities, developers, investors,

791 NGOs, designers, users and the community as a whole show an entrepreneurial characteristic

792 in the projects. This can also be seen as new forms of social innovation in solving wicked

793 problems at hand. Compared to the market-led, large-scale profit-oriented urban regeneration

794 projects that are still considered as mainstream in practice, the most prominent innovation of

795 such small-scale participative projects lies in their approaches of incorporating social

796 objectives within the urban regeneration process. As indicated in the theory chapter, such a

797 people and process-oriented place-making concept can contribute to the social resilience in

798   transitional neighbourhoods in Chinese megacities. This requires a change in mindset for

799   everyone involved in urban regeneration processes, from focusing on market-led city-

800   branding to socio-cultural resilience with a strong involvement of civil society organizations.

801   Lessons learned from the case studies showed that without the leading role of civil society

802   organizations, market forces can override and terminate the participative approach, right

803   when profit-seeking becomes possible.

804

805   Last but not least, the motivation of individual volunteers to participate and collaborate are of

806   great importance as well, especially those who are seen as part of the target groups or end

807   users. In Chinese megacities under the context of rapid urbanization, there are various types

808   of social groups whose voices are hardly heard in the massive urban redevelopment process,

809   such as the migrants, the young talents, the elderly, and etc. The case studies in this paper

810   showed active participation of individuals in urban regeneration practices, from the

811   professionals who intend to take a lead to the young migrant workers who are eager to

812   contribute. In these cases, being actively involved in regeneration process reflects the

813   interests of these social groups, which were considered by the leading parties when setting

814   the scene for place-making in urban regeneration. Voices of these target groups and end users

815   are heard and represented by civil society organizations and professionals in the decision-

816   making and design process. Researchers of participatory planning may question whether this

817   is the highest level of participation, in terms of power relations among stakeholders in the

818   decision-making process. However, it is not the purpose of this paper to evaluate the levels of

819   participation in these emerging practices in China. Instead, the focus is on how such practices

820   emerged in a well-known top-down planning system and what inspirations did they bring to

821   place-making theory and practice, which are more relevant to the current debate on urban

822   regeneration in Chinese megacities.

823

824   This paper introduced emerging participative urban regeneration practices in two Chinese

825   megacities, which are seen as a new phenomenon of urban planning and development. It

826   offers a very basic description and comparison among the chosen cases, as well as a

827   preliminary understanding of the enabling factors behind. Due to the nature of these projects

828   as 'experimental', the authors find it too early to conclude them as results of structural

829   changes in urban planning and governance, or socio-economic policies. Nevertheless,

830   according to the contextual analysis of this paper, some ongoing shifts of focus in the policy

831   level did provide an enabling environment for such participatory approaches. For example,

832   the newly implemented planning policies of Chinese megacities have shown increasing

833   emphasis on improving existing built-up areas, instead of only focusing on developing new

834   towns/districts. Within such a policy framework, cities like Shanghai experiencing industrial

835   upgrading are making more efforts to promote cultural and creative industries in combination

836   with urban regeneration; while others like Shenzhen facing tremendous social challenges

837   brought by rural-urban migrants started to facilitate social upgrading and community

838   development in the neighbourhood level. To fully explain policy changes as enabling factors

839   for the emergence of participative urban regeneration practices in China, more in-depth case

840   studies and causality analysis is needed for future research.

841

842   **Data Availability Statement**

843

844   All data used during the study appear in the submitted article.

845

846

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Table 1: comparison of the participative urban regeneration approaches in Yangpu and Dalang

Aspects of Comparison		Yangpu (Shanghai)			Dalang (Shenzhen)			
		Yangshupu Creative Park	Knowledge and Innovation Community (KIC)	Siping Road Neighborhood	Youth Dream Centre	Shi'ao village		
						Bu Yi Bang	*Tire Amusement Park*	*Enzyme workshop*
Actors taking lead	Active support from the local government		X	X	X	X		
	Strong involvement of civil society organizations			X	X	X	X	X
	Private developers take the lead		X					
	Professionals actively facilitate	X	X	X	X			
Participation model	Initiator	Enthusiastic individual professional	Private developer	University and community organization	Local government	Local government & NPO	Local community	NGO
	Participants	Property owner	Local district government, local community, professional activist	Community residents	NGOs, research institutes, Industrial Park	Local community	Community residents	Community residents
Place-making	Target group	Design studios and design companies	Innovative enterprises	Local residents	Young migrant workers in Dalang	House wives in Shi'ao	Children in Shi'ao	Residents in Shi'ao
	Inclusiveness of the place	Private space	Private-owned public space	Open public space, innovation centre and community workshop	Open public space for a target group	Community workshop space for a target group	Community recreational space for a target group	Community workshop space for all