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“Village in the City” in Guangzhou, China: Explorative Research of a New Planning Approach

PROEFSCHRIFT

ter verkrijging van de graad van doctor aan de Technische Universiteit Eindhoven, op gezag van de rector magnificus, prof.dr.ir. C.J. van Duijn, voor een commissie aangewezen door het College voor Promoties in het openbaar te verdedigen op donderdag 8 december 2011 om 16.00 uur

door

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Preface

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INTRODUCTION

1. Background

1.1 The “Village in the City” as a Specific Urban Form in Chinese cities

The urban transformation of China is the result of general and global forces as well as national and locality-specific factors converging in a particular way (Ma and Wu, 2005). During the socialist period, urban space was structured around large, independent and walled work-unit compounds and the living space of urban residents was seldom beyond their work-units (Zhang, 2005). Since China’s reform and opening-up in 1978, China has experienced a rapid urbanization triggered by the booming economy and increasing population. Consequently, there is a series of institutional shifts: shift from a state redistributive economy to a ‘coordinated’ market economy, shift from virtually free provision of largely work-unit housing to commodities housing production, shift from centralized decision-making and top-down allocation of development resources to fiscal decentralization and greater local economic autonomy (Ma and Wu, 2005). The local authorities become “developers”. They participate in development projects as partners with domestic or foreign investors, with land provided by the local stakeholders and financed by the investors. A large proportion of local government revenue now is drawn from urban renewal and real estate projects. As a result, old neighborhoods have been reconstructed into luxury residential and commercial districts. Many dilapidated and overcrowded neighborhoods in the city have been scheduled for demolition and rebuilding (Zhang, 2005). A large amount of village farmlands have been requisitioned by urban government for new development. As a result, villages have been swallowed by urban lands and become “villages in the city” (Chengzhongcun or ViCs). A new type of space has been created, which Smart and Tang called “space of illegality and irregularity” where illegal building has taken place and where migrants are concentrated (Ma and Wu, 2005). Today, many Chinese have a large number of ViCs. For example, there are 138 ViCs in Guangzhou, 320 ViCs in Shenzhen, and more than 300 ViCs in Beijing.

The emergence of ViCs is a consequence of complex social, political and spatial issues that are specific to the Chinese context, such as the rapid urban expansion, the dual land system, the conflicts between stakeholders, the massive demand for inexpensive housing by migrants, and the path-dependent transformation mode of ViCs. It is also affected by the structural morphology and the development mode of cities. Although many ViCs in China have common characteristics, they nevertheless have different typologies in different cities due to their specific geographic, political, cultural and socio-economic contexts. Even ViCs in a same city are distinct due to different development modes, locations, original patterns,
etc. However, Ma and Wu (2005) called our attention to the difference between Chinese “illegal” settlements and those in other developing countries. They claimed that such places could not be mistaken for ghettos of despair where the disadvantaged are hopelessly trapped without hope, as the landlords earned a great deal of rent income and the positive intentioned tenants were willing to work hard to get ahead economically and free to return to their villages if things did not work out in cities.

In this research, we study “villages in the city” in Guangzhou, where the ViC emerged earlier than many other Chinese cities. Due to its unique position as the provincial capital and its designation as one of the 14 coastal open cities back in 1984, Guangzhou has attracted a considerable share of foreign investment and generated mass migration for newly established labor-dense industries. The urban area has expanded markedly in the past 30 years, and consequently a great number of villages at the fringes of the city have been swallowed up by urban developments. The city government often requisitions farmland, while leaving existing residential areas of villages, as the latter demands much higher levels of compensation. In this way, many villages do not become fully fledged urban areas, but are nevertheless swallowed up by the urban sprawl. It is at this point they become recognizable as ViCs, characterized by their dual urban-rural structure. Deprived of their traditional agricultural resources, the villagers, out of necessity, become “builders”. The “illegal” constructions they erect then serve as housing for mass migrants, who are institutionally and economically excluded by the urban system. Consequently, ViCs become migrant enclaves, characterized by high density and overcrowding. They actually function as twilight zones: the entrance to the city, the toehold for opportunities in development.

1.2 Urban Development in Guangzhou and the Evolution of “Villages in the City”

Guangzhou has a long history of more than 2100 years. Because of its location at the northern tip of the PRD, which is fed by more than a thousand miles of waterways, Guangzhou possesses exceptional advantages as a port, and has been nicknamed the “Silk Road on Water”. As a traditional commercial city, there were few industrial areas in the city before 1949. Villages were far away from the city center and surrounded by a large number of farmlands. They usually had dense and compact spatial structures, which were developed for several hundred years and organized by clan-authorities (Lu and Yuan, 2004).

During 1949-1978, the city emphasized on the development of secondary industries (particularly the light industry) and consequently some industrial areas emerged at the urban fringe (Zhou, 2005). Some farmland of villages
Figure 0.1 Urban development in Guangzhou and ViCs
located at the urban fringe was requisitioned by the city government for the industrial development. In close proximity to urban industrial areas and with the improvement of accessibility, some villages started to develop the industrial sector. For example, due to the construction of industrial areas, workers’ dormitories, and an urban road in the surrounding urban areas, several collective industrial enterprises were established in Lijiao village in the 1970s (Li, 2004). However, a majority of villages were left untouched by urban development and had little change during this time.

In 1984, Guangzhou was designated as one of the 14 coastal open cities. The new status offered an exceptional opportunity for the city to revitalize its former role as a commercial center and trading port, which in turn stimulated the expansion of tertiary activities (Xu and Yeh, 2003). Consequently, the city has markedly expanded in the past 30 years. It increased its urbanized territory from 136 km² in 1980 to 276 km² in 1998 (Huang and Li, 2007). This rapid urbanization was mainly promoted by the 14th and 15th master plans of Guangzhou. In the 1980s, the 14th master plan of Guangzhou was initiated to control the growth of the historical city centre and to encourage eastward development along the northern bank of the Pearl River. A new Tianhe district, which administrated a number of villages and towns, was established in the east side of Guangzhou in 1985. Using the opportunity of the 6th National Games held in Guangzhou in 1987, the city started to construct the Tianhe Sports Centre in 1984 and the Guangzhou East Railway Station. About 5.2 km² of agricultural and storage lands surrounding the Tianhe Sports Center and the railway station was designated to the new CBD development in the late 1980s (Zhao, 2004). Simultaneously, several big resident projects were initiated in this area to decentralize residents in the old city center.

In order to compete for international investment with other metropolises in the Pearl River Delta, the 15th master plan of Guangzhou (1991–2010) was formulated. Unlike previous plans, this new blueprint abandoned the compact city idea and proposed an enlargement of the built up area to 225 km² and 555 km² in 2010. The city was divided into three large clusters: center cluster for political, economic, cultural and external communication uses, eastern cluster for industrial, port and warehouse development, and northern cluster for residence and non-polluting industry. This plan also emphasized on the development of Tianhe district as a new city center, with specific emphasis on science, technology, research and development functions (Xu and Ng, 1998; Gaubatz, 2005; Huang and Li, 2007). Consequently, the city structure has gradually changed from a compact model to leapfrogged urban sprawl. A large number of villages at the urban fringe were swallowed by urban development (Figure 1). However, the city government usually requisitioned the farmlands of villages for new development, while leaving the existing residential areas of villages, as the latter demand high level of compensations. In this way, many villages do not become fully fledged urban areas. They become recognizable as ViCs, characterized by informal settlements.
To deal with the problem of unemployed peasants and facilitate land requisition, a special policy was developed in Guangzhou called the ‘Reserved Land Policy’ (liuyongdi zhengce) (Huang and Li, 2007). According to this policy, 8-12 per cent of requisitioned farmland has to be reserved for collective industrial and commercial developments. ViCs have the ownership and the usage rights of this land, but they are not allowed to sell it. Many collective industrial and commercial projects have developed on this land and other collective lands. However, the developments of collective projects are largely influenced by the dynamics of the surrounding urban areas. As the city goes through economic restructuring and social transition, resulting in diverse development themes and social restructuring at the city scale, ViCs evolve differently in response to the specific housing demands of the local and migrant population (Hao, Siluzas, and Geertman, 2011). The land use patterns of ViCs are diversity due to different geographic location and development in the surrounding urban areas (Hao, et al. 2011).

Although the farmlands of ViCs in Guangzhou sharply declined, the total built-up land of them increased by 18.4 km² during 1990-2000 (Li, 2004). A considerable amount of the increased built-up land was used for industrial and commercial purposes. The secondary industry was largely developed during 1990-1995. The industrial land only amounted to 2.39 per cent of ViCs’ land in 1990, while it almost doubled and reached to 4.59 per cent of ViCs’ land in 1995 (Li, 2004). At the end of 1990s, there was a booming real estate market. Consequently, new commercial and residential buildings were built to replace the aged industrial sites and dilapidated neighborhoods in urban areas. This was often accompanied by the relocation of industries to the periphery and residents to new housing estates at the edge of the city (Xu and Yeh, 2003). As a result, the tertiary industry was greatly developed during this time. In 2000, tertiary activities constituted 52.6 per cent, surpassing the secondary sector to become the main driving force of the urban economy. This economic and spatial restructuring in urban areas greatly affected the dynamics of land use patterns in ViCs. One of the results was that the commercial land of ViCs increased rapidly, while the industrial land increased slowly (Li, 2004). Nevertheless, labor-intensive industries were still the main economic activities of many ViCs, particularly those located at the urban fringe. In 2000, 4.92 per cent of ViCs’ land was industrial land, while only 2.27 per cent of ViCs’ land was used for tertiary activities (Li, 2004).

With the developments of urban areas and ViCs, migrants have massively floated to work in labor-intensive industries and service sectors in both urban areas and ViCs. But a majority of them can’t acquire citizenship that links to formal urban housing, education, employment and social welfare. The city government recognizes them only as “temporary” workers in the city and assumes (theoretically) that they will return to their original place in the future. Unable to access public and commercial housing in state redistribution and formal market spheres, migrants turn to informal market and reciprocity spheres to look for
housing (see chapter 2). Consequently, villagers who lose their farmland during the process of urbanization and find it difficult to participate in the formal urban labor market, “illegally” construct their houses to meet the housing demands of migrants and their new incomes. ViCs provide housing and services at a relatively low standard but at rents which are affordable to low-income households. Thus, the low cost of living makes it possible to keep the wages of the employees of industrial and service sectors low (Hao, Sliuzas, and Geertman, 2011). The survival strategies of migrants developed in ViCs are a necessary condition for the supply of cheap labor for jobs in the urban areas and contribute to the urban economy.

The above analysis shows that the dynamics of ViCs in Guangzhou was greatly influenced by urban development. In turn, ViCs responded quickly for the new demand and socioeconomic dynamics of the surrounding urban areas. They play a positive role in urban development. The developments of labor-intensive industries and service sectors in ViCs have complex relationships with the development of the surrounding urban areas, such as the construction of infrastructure and industrial areas. With the rapid development of urban areas and the increasing number of migrants, the demand for residential and service space has significantly exceeded the formal supply in the city. Therefore, ViCs provide alternatives for the rigid urban system. They act as low-income neighborhoods for the city which is incapable to provide a large amount of cheap accommodations for mass migrants during the rapid urbanization process.

1.3 Redevelopment Approaches

However, city governments have negative attitudes towards ViCs, claiming that the environment of ViCs is chaos, that lands are not productively used, that they are obstructing the urbanization process. They are planning to renew ViCs in the near future. Conventional master plans or project approaches foresee the replacement of them by high-rise buildings. Although those “demolition-redevelopment” strategies have been criticized by many scholars that without considering the resettlement of mass migrants the projects would put the pressure on other parts of the city, many professional projects have been made for the redevelopment of ViCs in Guangzhou. However, these conventional planning approaches have failed in most cases, due to the unresolved conflicts between three key stakeholders: the state, the market and society (in Western literature, this would be labeled “civil society”). A cooperation platform for stakeholders that allows a constructive co-production seems to be missing. In opposition with these top-down projects, in recent years some bottom-up processes have emerged and seem to be more successful. Some new stakeholders like informal property management companies play important roles in reshaping the space in ViCs. Nevertheless, the lack of planning guidance and cooperation with other stakeholders seems to limit the scope of these approaches. The top-down approach and bottom-up approaches also ignore the interactions between urban
development and self-development of ViCs. Urban areas are primary areas which are rigid inflexible and regular, while ViCs are secondary areas which are loose, flexible, easily adapted and not well organized. Both of them together function as a whole. ViCs are unplanned areas, but necessary development in the city.

Therefore, this research will specifically address the specific way in which the market, the state and society act in the spatial configuration of ViCs. It will do so by elaborating on representative case studies of ViCs in Guangzhou. By focusing on the key stakeholders of urban development, it becomes possible to envision an approach of urban projects in which these three key stakeholders (the state, the market and society, which at the same time are agencies of three modes of economic integration - redistribution, market exchange, reciprocity (Polanyi, 1944)) coproduce in a more productive way in ViCs. It is also able to come out integrated approaches for the sustainable redevelopment of ViCs and the city.

1.4 Conclusion

Given the above sketched problematic nature of ViCs and the urgent need to come to more fruitful approaches for the (re)development of ViCs, it is evident that the aim of this research is to contribute to the development of more appropriate approaches to urban planning. The research aims therefore to test how the current international mode of urban development through the form of strategic and coproduced urban projects (Masboungie, 2002; Healey, 2006; De Meulder, Loeckx and Shannon, 2004; Carter, 2006; Salet, 2006) can be adapted to the specific Chinese context and more precisely to the problematic of ViCs. Scientifically this is a two directional research: adapting the urban project paradigm to the ViC context and vice versa testing the validity of the general theory on urban projects within the specific context of ViCs.

Although the problematic of ViCs is very specific, it has evidently a lot in common with the problematic of slum areas, dilapidated urban areas, and ghettos in developed and developing contexts, which since the 1970s have been the usual subjects of upgrading or urban renewal operations. Also in this specific context of urban renewal, the urban project approach (instead of the larger post-war programs based on outdated master planning, inflexible land use planning or the unproductive attempts through participation) is being advocated in the last decennia in the West as well as in developing contexts. This application of the urban project approach into the context of urban renewal or upgrading did lead to the inclusion (beside public authorities and market parties) of civil society into the coproduction of urban redevelopment projects. As such successful urban projects conventionally advocate the integration of economic, cultural, social and spatial aspects, this target of inclusion is amongst others attempted by including civil society actively as a co-producer of urban development, besides the conventional stakeholders.
It is precisely this aspect that makes this research challenging, given the different nature of these three key stakeholders of urban development in the Chinese context (the state, the market and civil society) and the extremely ambivalent intertwining of these stakeholders in the ViC context. Consequently, the challenge of the research is to test whether the urban project approach could be adapted to the specificity of the Chinese context and the ViC in particular. This approach has, given the above sketched situation, to take into account three key elements:

-the complex role of the different specific stakeholders in urban (re)development of ViCs (the state, the market and civil society (that in the specific Chinese context is more appropriately labeled as ‘society’))

-the rethinking of the planning processes, with an emphasis on the way in which the interplay between the different mentioned stakeholders is and can be organized in the processes, and the way in which urban development interacts with self-development of ViCs

-the specific spatial development conditions

These three key elements are also key concerns in the contemporary international theory on strategic urban project approaches (Masboungie, 2002; Healey, 2006; De Meulder, Loeckx and Shannon, 2004; Carter, 2006; Salet, 2006). The problem statement can consequently be synthesized as the development of a new planning approach that adapts and eventually amends the general methodology of urban project approaches to the specific Chinese context and more specifically to the (re)development of ViCs. As such this research has a double goal: adapting the urban project approach to ViCs and vice versa validating the contemporary general urban project paradigm by testing its capacity to deal with the extreme (re)development conditions of ViCs.

2. State of the Arts

2.1 The “Village in the City”

Villages and cities in China were geographically and institutionally separated before the 1980s. There has been a long period of lack of research interest within Chinese academics on the architecture and planning discourse of villages. A few researches have been conducted for the survey of villages in China. The famous book “Earthbound China” (Fei, 1985) provides the basic platform to any academic study on sociological and anthropological aspects of traditional villages in China. Fei systematically studied social networks and organizations in traditional villages. Surveys of traditional architecture and spatial order in Chinese villages were also undertaken under the direction of Lu and Yuan (2004). Zhao (2007) made a special contribution to the study of villages in Mao’s China. Gu et al.
(2008) presented a historical analysis of the evolution of rural and urban residential building types in the Guangzhou area from 1840 to 1949.

Since the 1990s, urban areas have quickly invaded rural areas in Guangzhou. The conflicts between cities and villages have become obvious. Geographers Gu and Xiong (1989) firstly introduced the concept “urban fringe” from abroad. Although ViCs were formed in some big cities at the beginning of the 1990s, geographers still classified them as specific forms in urban fringes. At the same time, some scholars noted that urbanization in Asia was different from that in the West. Based on empirical works in Asian countries, Geographer McGee (1989, 1991) suggested that economic development creates a juxtaposition of agricultural, industrial, residential and leisure activities in the urban periphery. McGee used the term “desakota”, the Indonesian word for village (desa) and town (kota), to denote these integrated zones. Desakota is a region which has “no clear cut division between rural and urban relations” (McGee, 1989, p.96). However, Tang and Chung (2002) argued that this model is inadequate for comprehending rural-urban transition in China, based on the research of ViCs in Guangzhou.

Since the end of 1990s, a great number of villages in Guangzhou have been swallowed by urban areas. Geographers and urban planners have begun to pay more attention to this specific urban form. In 1998, a geography PhD thesis on ViCs was presented for defense. Soon several papers about ViCs were transcribed in a notorious Chinese magazine called “chengshi guihua (City Planning)”. This symbolized that ViCs got into the research field (Li, 2004). Consequently, Chinese scholars of city planning, geography, sociology, and economy have done research on characteristics, transformation mechanisms, migrant enclaves, renewal strategies, etc. Recently, the issues of ViCs have also received great attention by international scholars.

2.1.1 Types, Characteristics and Transformation Mechanisms

Researchers categorize types of ViCs in different perspectives. On the basis of the intersecting conditions, architects Chen and Pan (1999) categorized ViCs into six types, including villages encircled by urban areas, villages semi-encircled by urban areas, villages on urban fringes, villages far away from urban areas, etc. In terms of spatial locations and growth conditions, planner Li (2001) categorized them into three types, including villages in the city center (without farmlands), villages on the urban fringe (with some farmlands), and villages in the suburb (with a considerable amount of farmlands).

With problems of high densities and overcrowding, many scholars have negative opinions of the landscapes in ViCs, which are characterized by narrow and tortuous alleyways, inadequate facilities, and overcrowding. Some of them argued that the land development mode was lowly productive. Tian (2008) found that the specific property rights in ViCs are largely insecure, which lead to many negative
externalities including environmental and social problems. Emphasis was also given to the problems caused by the massive migration to ViCs and the low education level of indigenous villagers (Li, 2004). Moreover, Zhou (2005) argued that the ViC’s economy depending on foreign investors and peasant-workers results in “the lazy new generation of villagers”.

The factors that influence the transformation of ViCs have been widely discussed. First, the plural characteristics of ViCs are caused by the dichotomy of the urban-rural land system and the excessive urban sprawl (Li 2004; Xie, 2004; Liu, et al. 2011). Second, there is a demand for cheap housing by migrants, who exclude from the formal urban system (Xie, 2004; Zhang, 2005). Third, villagers who lost their farmlands and acquired little compensation during the urbanization process have no alternative but “illegally” construct their houses for new incomes (Tang and Chung, 2002).

2.1.2 Communities of Local Villagers and Migrant Enclaves

Recent researches have shed light on the positive effect of ViCs on suspending and calming social conflicts under rapid urbanization by providing a survival strategy for local landless farmers and inexpensive shelter for migrant workers. First, the ViC is considered as the community of interest for local villagers (Liu, et al., 2011). Landless farmers become one of the most vulnerable groups in the city (Lan, 2005). They experience little benefits during the urbanization and develop a bottom-up anti-poverty strategy by building and renting houses to migrant workers in ViCs (Tang and Chung, 2002). Although indigenous villagers have become better off through room renting, on average about 95% of them still live in urban villages despite the fact that standard residences outside their villages provide considerably better living environment and service (Hao, Sliuzas and Geertman, 2011).

Excluded by the formal urban system, ViCs in China become rural migrant enclaves, supplying affordable housing for them (Jie and Taubmann, 2002; Zhang, Zhao and Tian, 2003; Zhang, 2005). Study on a migrant community in Beijing, Zhang (2001) explored the networks of relations between migrants, their places of origin, and the city. She argued that it is primarily through the spatial and social production of a migrant community that a new form of migrant power and leadership emerge and develop. However, she suggested that social space created by migrants is far from becoming civic grounds that will nourish democratic politics, as the migrant world is built on pervasive hierarchical patron-client networks that enabled new kinds of social domination and exploitation.

2.1.3 Key Stakeholders and Renewal Strategies

Some scholars pay attention to three key stakeholders in the (re)development of ViCs: the city government, the developer and villagers (Uehara, 2005; Hao,
Sliuzas and Geertman, 2011). The balance of power between them determines the course of change. The government has multiple concerns on environmental, social, fiscal and political aspects, while the developers are driven primarily by economic interests and the landlords are concerned about the security of their long-term livelihood. However, the lack of transparent information and efficient communication between the three actors creates a complex and difficult environment for reaching an agreement on redevelopment (Hao, Sliuzas and Geertman, 2011). The existing planning approaches for ViC’s redevelopment also show that there is little room for professionals, such as urban planners, in the negotiation process (Uehara, 2005).

Renewal strategies have been also discussed by some researchers. Geographer Li (2004) presented an important discussion on renewal models of ViCs in Guangzhou. He suggested that the collectively-owned land that can’t be sold in the market should become the state-owned land that has higher value and can be exchanged in the market. With an emphasis on institutional and political systems, Xie (2005) indicated that land reforms, housing policies and good governments are powerful tools to deal with ViC’s issues. Recognizing that the demolition-redevelopment approach adopted by the government would be devastating not only for the rural migrants but also for the city’s economy which is largely based on labor-intensive sectors, Hao, Siliuzas and Geertman (2011) suggested that opportunities to explore alternative responses (such as upgrading or the provision of village level development guidance) should be surveyed.

2.2 The Urban Project Mode of Development as Contemporary Paradigm of Urbanism

From the above, it is clear that ViCs form a tremendous challenge for urban planning. At the same time, it becomes clear that the current planning approaches (master planning and other professional approaches from above, self-organization from below) are dramatically failing. From the above, it also becomes clear that the knowledge base for urban planning in ViCs is insufficient. The dramatic failure of urban planning in ViCs has probably to do with the used approaches that are indeed out of date and surely not suitable for the specific problematic of ViCs.

On the other hand, urban planning in general is making an important shift away from the post-war all encompassing master planning and inflexible land use planning towards a project-based approach that can give concrete form of the required coproduction between different partners (the state, the market, and civil society) (De Meulder, Loeckx, and Shannon 2004; Salet, 2006; Healy, 2006) and address in a concrete way development issues. In strategic urban projects, space (in other words urban design) is not only used as a medium of vision building (prospection and exploration of development potential, concept development), but also as a medium of mediation (between conflicting interests) and negotiation.
(between different stakeholders). As a generally recognized approach and used method in practice, the urban project approach is expanding in recent years its type of applications from flagship projects (Swyngedow, 2005) on key locations in cities to vulnerable residential environments (urban renewal areas, slum areas, etc.) on the one side and from Western Europe and North America to developing context (such as the notorious Favela Barrio program in Brazil). This expanding application of the urban project approach at the same time earmarks an evolution of the approach towards a greater inclusion of civil society in the coproduction of urban projects (Healy, 2006).

2.3 Conclusion

In sum, scholars both inside China and abroad made considerable achievements on the research of ViCs in different aspects. There are many researches on the definition, characteristics, transformation mechanisms and renewal strategies. Recent researches have also recognized that ViCs are communities of local villagers and migrant enclaves and play a positive role during the rapid urbanization.

However, this critical mass of acquired knowledge has not resulted yet in a convincing planning approach for the enormous (re)development challenge of ViCs. This research thus aims to test the suitability of the currently generally recognized urban project-oriented approach in urban planning and eventually amend this approach. This approach does lend itself perfectly to complex multi-stakeholder environments, with an emphasis on the roles and interrelations of stakeholders.

The existing literature shows that there is precisely a lack of in-depth analysis and interpretation concerning the roles and interrelation between three key stakeholders (the state, the market, and (civil) society) in the Chinese context and in particular in the context of ViCs. The interplay between the three stakeholders has not yet been adequately addressed. There is little research on morphological transformation, planning practices and processes in specific cases. At the same time, it is evident that a theory on urban projects implies (at least partially) a casuistic approach. Therefore, this research will have a major contribution in discussing the specific roles and interrelationships of three key stakeholders (the state, the market and (civil) society) in specific cases of ViCs. These components should allow elaborate a context responsive adaptation of the urban project approach for ViCs in China.

3. Research Proposal

3.1 Research Objective
The research is case based. The “village in the city” in Guangzhou city is the research object. The subject is the formulation of an adapted urban project approach. To develop this approach, the research will focus on:

- dominant development conditions (including spatial conditions) and development issues in ViCs;
- different stakeholders and their actual and potential roles in planning and redevelopment processes;
- critical evaluation of the planning processes, with an emphasis on the way in which the interplay between key stakeholders is and can be organized in the processes, and the way in which urban development interacts with self-development of ViCs

With these elements on the one hand and a framework on strategic urban projects which are elaborated on the basis of international literature study on the other side, it becomes possible to test how the ‘generic’ methodology of urban projects, can be adapted and amended to suit the purpose of organizing the (re)development of ViCs. The crux of this research is therefore the development of a precise insight in the nature of the different stakeholders (the state, the market, (civil) society). This insight is evidently crucial within the methodology of the urban project that by definition is a co-production between different stakeholders. In the specific case of China and in particular of ViCs, where the concepts of the state, the market and (civil) society are, from a Western point of view, blurred and intertwined, it is evidently of great importance to come to clear terms with this concepts. Consequently, one of the research objectives and steps is exactly built up a frame of interpretation on the concepts in the Chinese context. This will form a building stone in the development of a ‘Chinese’ version of the ‘urban project’. In other words, the main research objective of this research project is double.

(1) A critical diagnosis of the actual development conditions of ViCs. This includes:

- spatial, economical, social, cultural, and political aspects;
- an in-depth research on the different already mentioned stakeholders and their interplay. As stated above the identification of the special way in which the market, the state and (civil) society operate currently in ViCs is a crucial factor;
- a profound understanding of the existing spatial form which are influenced by the previous spatial form and new stakeholders;
- a study of the interplay between urban development and self-development of ViCs
- a critical evaluation of the current organization of the largely failing planning process;
- a discourse analysis of the development issues.

In summary, the research objective is the building up of a critical knowledge base relevant for urban planning on ViCs.
(2) The adaptation and amendment of the urban project approach to the specific context of China and in particular to the context of ViCs. This includes:
- the development of a theoretical frame on urban projects based on international literature study;
- the adaptation of the urban project approach to the specific Chinese context and in particular ViCs based on the results of research objective 1.

3.2. Research Hypothesis and Questions

3.2.1. Hypothesis

The research hypothesis follows directly from the research objectives.

(1) It is assumed that the current urban project approach holds the potential to structurally contribute to the sustainable (re)development of ViCs in the major Chinese cities.

(2) This assumption goes nevertheless hand in hand with the recognition that the current international urban project approach can not directly be transposed to the Chinese context and in particular to the complex and specific context of ViCs. This transposition requires an adaptation in order to make the context responsive.

(3) Given on the one hand the predominant role of the interplay between the state, the market, and (civil) society (which are agencies of three modes of integration - redistribution, market exchange, reciprocity) in the inclusive urban project approach that indeed by definition is co-productive, and on the other hand the deviant (from Western tradition) meaning of these concepts (the state, the market, (civil) society) in the Chinese tradition, one of the keys to come to a transposition of the urban project approach to the Chinese context, evidently lies within the precise understanding of the mentioned concepts in the Chinese context.

3.2.2. Research Questions

The research questions are directly derived from the research hypothesis:

(1) Actual development condition of ViCs.
   What are the development conditions of ViCs? What factors influence the production of space? These questions imply:
   - determination of critical spatial, economical, social, cultural, and political aspects.
   - determination of the existing spatial form. How does the dynamic roles of and the interplay between key stakeholders impact on the spatial transformation? How do historical urban and rural features influence on new urban forms? How does urban development interact with self-development of ViCs?
• determination of the critical aspects of the current planning context (legislation, planning procedures, formats, etc.). In other words, what are the conventional planning practices and what is their factual impact on the (re)development of ViCs? Does it solve social, economic and spatial issues? How are they (un)successful?
• determination of the critical development issues. What is their impact on the (re)development of ViCs?

(2) Developing a suitable conceptual framework for the governance triangle (the state, the market, and (civil) society) adapted to the Chinese context, in particular for ViCs.
• determining the specific nature of stakeholders (the state, the market and (civil) society) in the Chinese context and in particular in ViCs. What are the factors that influence the roles of these three stakeholders in ViCs today under the rapid urbanization and general globalization?
• determining and critically evaluating the current and potential role of these stakeholders in the (re)development of ViCs. Sub-questions are then: What are the interests and actions of the different stakeholders and what does this imply for the (re)development process? What are the complex relationships between stakeholders and how can these eventually be restructured? What is the current involvement of these stakeholders in the planning processes and how could this eventually be rethought?
• determining and critically evaluating the current and potential interplay between this different stakeholders in the (re)development of ViCs.

In other words: what is the complex and dynamic relationships between the market, the state and (civil) society specifically in the Chinese context?

(3) Developing a suitable conceptual framework on the urban project approach of the sustainable redevelopment of ViCs
• determining the internationally recognized critical elements of the urban project approach
• determining the interrelations between these elements
• determining the critical factors that determine the possible transposition of the international urban project approach to the particular context of ViCs. This implies questions as: how to create a new cooperation platform for stakeholders and how to amend the current planning process.

(4) Selection of case studies

Since this research is largely case-based as argued above, a methodological question on selection criteria has to be addressed. The majority of ViCs in Guangzhou are different in specific geographic setting, spatial structures, development issues, socio-economic contexts, development modes, and planning
practices. The conventional professional planning has failed in most redevelopment cases, while the emergence of some bottom-up processes properly enlightens new perspectives. Therefore, different categories of ViCs in terms of geographic settings, development processes, dynamic roles of stakeholders, planning practices and the production of space should be identified and discussed in order to understand the relationships between different stakeholders, between stakeholders and planning, between social elements and spatial structures, etc. Consequently case studies have to be selected accordingly.

3.3. Research Methodology

3.3.1 General Research Methodology

This research methodology is tailored according to the hypothesis and research questions.

(1) A critical interpretation and evaluation of the specific development conditions and issues of ViCs in Guangzhou.

This critical interpretation and evaluation is realized through on the one hand general literature study and on the other hand through case-studies, which allow the amendment of general theoretical insights derived from literature with concrete and tangible data of the studied cases. Case studies on typical ViCs not only inform on the development conditions and issues of ViCs, but also on the complex roles of three dominant stakeholders (the state, the market, (civil) society) in concrete processes of urban (re)development. This give input to 2.

Case studies are performed through a combination of:

- literature study (containing information on the relationships between labor-dense industries and mass migration, conflicting interest levels, economic and social issues, etc.) informs on the specific development conditions of particular ViCs.
- fieldworks performed from February to April 2007, from February to April 2008, from August to September 2009, from December 2010 to February 2011 in Guangzhou (collection of plans and documentations, observation and interviews).

Case studies structure in three types of analysis:

- a spatial analysis (following the established historical morphologic analysis (Conzen, 1969)) forms the basis to get an insight into the spatial structures and conditions of the studied ViCs, and to be the platform on which can be anchored an analysis of social, cultural and economic aspects that determine the development conditions of the concerned ViCs.
This was based mainly on documentation, mapping, photographs, observations, and interviews.

- an analysis of the different practices taking place in the concerned ViCs (planning operations, activities of different stakeholders) through the study of project documents and site visits.
- a discursive analysis of discourses, based on a number of semi-structured interviews with various stakeholders, including experts, public authorities, chief planners, developers, village leaders, villagers and migrants.

This layering of case studies in these three components (spatial analysis, analysis of practices and discourse analysis) allows a structured answer to the research questions mentioned above.

(2) Development of a suitable conceptual framework for the governance triangle (the state, the market, and civil society) adapted to the Chinese context and in particular the context of ViCs.

This framework is built up by literature study in which the current general (Western) governance literature is confronted with literature on the specific Chinese context. Given the complex and dynamic characters of the different roles of three main stakeholders (the state, the market, and (civil) society), this analysis necessarily implies a historical dimension. As mentioned in (1), the case studies complement the theoretical literature study by providing reality checks of the concrete cases. In other words, the case studies allow amend and refine the mentioned framework.

(3) Development of a suitable conceptual framework on the urban project approach in the context of ViCs. This framework is developed on the basis of:
- a state of the art on the international urban project approach. This is done through literature study.
- a confrontation of this generic state of the art with the specificities of the Chinese context and in particular the specific context of ViCs in Guangzhou as developed in (2) (a framework for the governance triangle in Chinese context) and in (1) (case studies that critically evaluate the development conditions of ViCs in Guangzhou).

(4) Proposals for the sustainable (re)development of ViCs.

The finalization of methodological steps (1), (2) and (3) deliver the necessary elements to develop a sustainable planning approach for the (re)development of ViCs.

3.3.2 Selection of Cases
The widely recognized method of case studies in spatial-related research is used in this research. The criteria of cases are crucial questions. As the appearance and evolution of ViCs is affected by multiple types of forces combined in different proportions in different geographic and socio-economic transformation, the selected cases should reflect the reasons that lead to such transformation and difference. Thus, the first criteria is that they not only should present the special roles of the market, the state and (civil) society during the development and planning processes, but also illustrate the development issues and conditions in specific socio-spatial settings. Secondly, cases should be representative and well-known. Thirdly, they should be comparable in terms of socio-geographical characteristics, transformation modes and planning practices. Fourthly, a considerable amount of existing literatures and documents should be available and fieldwork has to be feasible. In addition, they should still be alive with continuous transformation instead of being completely wiped away. According to those criteria, Shipai village and Tangxia village would be two appropriate cases for this research.

Without farmlands, Shipai Village is a fairly typical ViC in Guangzhou. Located near the new central business district (CBD), it was one of the oldest ViCs in Guangzhou that were formed in the 1980s (Lan and Guo, 2006). It also has the highest building density and population density. The development of Shipai Village has been promoted by various key stakeholders, often having complex roles and relationships. The current morphological structure is extraordinarily complicated, produced and overlapped by different planning processes in different morphological periods which reflect socio-economic and political changes. It should be noted that a top-down project for redeveloping the whole ViC made several year ago has not been worked due to the conflict interests among different social groups. By studying the dynamic roles of stakeholders, development issues and planning practices, the forces and factors that cause those transformations can be indicated.

Unlike Shipai village, a majority of other ViCs seem to have received less attention among scholars and there is less literature record. However, some researchers have paid attention to bottom-up processes in Tangxia village in recent years. This practice is called “New Alley Movement” (xinlinong yundong), invested by some informal private property management companies. Compared with the failure of conventional projects in many ViCs, these projects have significantly functioned in reconstructing relationships among villagers, small investors, and tenants as well as reshaping space. It would be very interesting to investigate the roles of stakeholders, the planning processes and the production of space in this new practice. Actually, Tangxia village is another famous ViC in Guangzhou due to its rich historical legacies and remarkable development. A Chinese President Mao once visited it and designated it as a model case during the commune period. Due to its location at the edge of CBD, it has greatly transformed in the past thirty years and confronted several development issues in
specific setting. Although it has many characteristics similar to that of Shipai village, they are different in geographic settings, spatial structures, development phases, and planning practices. The difference and sameness between them can be discussed, leading to understand hidden reasons and factors. Thus, what’s available and missing during the planning processes can be indicated.

Among the 139 ViCs in Guangzhou, Shipai village is the most extensively studies and discussed within existing literature from different perspectives in both Chinese and foreign scholars. Lan (2005) provided detailed and valuable references of the social-cultural transformation of Shipai village. Zheng (2006) reviewed general economic, political, social and cultural changes in the reform era. Furthermore, a publication in 2003 called shipai cunzhi (Annals of Shipai Village) recorded the history events. Huang and Li (2007) investigated the spatial aspect of Shipai village. Although Tangxia village has a modest literature record, a recent book published in 2003 titled Annuls of tangxia cunzhi (Tangxia village) provides detailed historical records and researchers working on Tangxia village are approachable.

In addition, Chinese scholars would recognize the feasible fieldwork as a major determinant in any detailed case study. Several periods of fieldwork were conducted during 2007-2011. This includes fieldtrips to Shipai village and Tangxia village with: 1. in-situ observation and recording of their existing conditions; 2. interviews with most wide ranges of the stakeholders in development: informal chatting with villagers, migrants, and developers, as well as formal interviews with chief planners, officers in collective organizations and city governments; 3. local archival search for historical documents; 4. collection of relevant project documents.

3.4 Research Structure

The dissertation is divided into three parts. Part I uses economic integration as a tool to understand the “village in the city”, and is composed of two chapters (Chapter One, and Two); Part II focuses on two typical case studies, comprising two chapters (Chapter Three and Four); and Part III consists of two chapters (Chapter Five and Six), which develop a new urban project approach for the sustainable redevelopment of ViCs.

Introductory chapter is in the beginning, highlighting problem statements, literary review, objectives, hypothesis, methodologies and structures.

The introduction of Part I is a state of the art on three modes of economic integration (market exchange, redistribution, and reciprocity) and illustrates how they can be adapted to the Chinese context and in particular the context of ViCs.
Chapter one examines the interplay between the state, the market and society, as well as how villagers gain access to resources via the three modes of economic integration in the socio-spatial transformation of ViCs in Guangzhou. It suggests that membership is the main condition that leads villagers to access resources through redistribution, reciprocity and market exchange in three historical periods.

Chapter two uses three modes of economic integration (redistribution, market exchange and reciprocity) as a framework to examine the interrelationship of various development issues and conditions of ViCs. It shows that the poor integration in state redistribution and formal market exchange spheres pushes migrants to focus on survival strategies that relate to the self-organization of housing, employment and education. It also makes a critical review of several (re)development projects, each relating to one or more of the different modes of economic integration. It concludes that new project approaches that organize a productive interplay between market exchange, redistribution and reciprocity are needed.

The introduction of Part II explains some morphological ideas and the selection of two case studies.

Chapter three examines Shipai village, the oldest and densest ViC in Guangzhou, which is located near the CBD center. A historical analysis is undertaken of the morphological transformation and current spatial form of Shipai village. Consideration is given to the dynamic roles of stakeholders and the interplay between urban development and self-development. A critical evaluation of current planning practices is also presented, highlighting the conflicts of interest between different stakeholders. It is concluded that the integration of various key stakeholders is probably necessary in order to achieve more sustainable redevelopment.

Chapter four addresses the interplay between three key stakeholders (the state, the market, and society) in the bottom-up planning processes and spatial transformation of Tangxia Village, a typical “village in the city” in Guangzhou, China. The mosaic spatial structure of Tangxia Village has been produced and overlapped by different planning processes, each created by various key stakeholders. Emphasis is also given to the informal sector and households in reshaping and restructuring space in ViCs. It concludes that the integration of bottom-up processes and micro-strategies would strengthen the performance and efficiency of redevelopment strategies for Tangxia Village.

The introduction of III elaborates the demand of a new planning approach for the sustainable redevelopment of ViCs.

Chapter five is an attempt to discuss the applications of strategic urban project approaches in informal settlement upgrading in developing contexts. It illustrates
why the strategic urban project approach becomes a new urban paradigm. It also analyzes the common themes of the approaches. Furthermore, two case studies are studied. This chapter concludes that further research on the approaches should emphasize the integration of three key stakeholders (the state, the market and civil society) as well as a balance between three modes of economic integration (redistribution, market exchange and reciprocity), which could lead to a more sustainable (re)development of low-income neighborhood in economic, political, social, cultural and spatial terms.

Chapter six is the conclusion chapter. It develops a conceptual framework on the urban project approach for the sustainable redevelopment of “villages in the city” in Guangzhou. Consideration is given to partnerships of three key stakeholders (the state, the market and society), the creation of visions at different levels, the mediating role of space and specific actions at the ViC scale. It concludes that partnerships between three key stakeholders (the state, the market and society) could lead to a new balance between three modes of economic integration (redistribution, market exchange and reciprocity), resulting in a more sustainable (re)development of ViCs in economic, political, social, cultural, and spatial terms.
PART I: ECONOMIC INTEGRATION AS A TOOL TO UNDERSTAND THE “VILLAGE IN THE CITY”

Introduction

In order to counter the complex relationships among key stakeholders, various development conditions and issues, this research uses a specific frame of analysis involving three modes of economic integration—market exchange, redistribution and reciprocity—through which households and communities may or may not gain access to resources for a decent standard of living and for the reproduction of households. Redistribution, market exchange and reciprocity are respectively based on clientship, citizenship, and membership. The state, the market and civil society are their conventional agencies.

Access to resources by modes of economic integration was first theorized by Polanyi (1944) in his economic–anthropological work “The Great Transformation”. Regarding urbanism as a particular form of the social process, Harvey (1973) examined the relationships between the modes of economic integration, the creation of social surplus and the various forms of urbanism. By discussing the weakness of the methodological foundations of Polanyi’s work, the sociologist Mingione (1991) adapted the micro-analytical concepts of reciprocity and redistribution to a macro-analytical style of research. In a social and economic geography setting, Kesteloot and Meert (1999, 2000) used three modes to unravel the survival strategies and potential of immigration neighborhoods in Belgium. The existing literature, therefore, shows there to be three modes possessing interrelationships with urban (re)development and survival strategies of households. The present work attempts to use these three modes as analytical tools to understand the survival strategies of migrants and the redevelopment issues in the specific context of ViCs.

Market exchange is the dominant mode in contemporary society. Both in China and the West, individuals and households must develop a social utility for market exchange. In other words, they must produce goods or services which are required by others and are therefore marketable. This provides an income, which allows the purchase of the goods and services the household needs but cannot produce for itself. However, the ‘free’ market does not by itself generate equal access to resources. Households whose labor is not needed do not have access to resources and those whose skills command a low price receive low wages. These inequalities are inherent to market exchange and can be socially destructive. Therefore, redistribution and reciprocity play a role as countervailing forces to market exchange in the contemporary metropolis (Harvey, 1973, p274).
From a household’s point of view, redistribution means that everyone contributes to a common stock of resources that are then redistributed according to agreed rules. Thus, redistribution implies a collection system and a hierarchic organization. In most western countries, the slow but steady development of the welfare state from the end of 19th century resulted in a massive redistribution system. City governments provide public goods and services as well as alleviate to some degree the worst impacts of the wage system on the poorest groups in society through the regulation of work conditions, housing conditions, and so on. Public and quasi-public projects, such as urban renewal schemes, have also served to transform the chaotic individualism of the early industrial city into a welfare city, in which a number of services are collectively or publicly organized, with the equal distribution of public transport, education, health services, and sometimes housing. Redistribution is in essence a public affair. The state or one of its subsidiaries organizes it. Access to redistribution is consequently regulated through citizenship (the modality ruling belonging to the state). However, redistribution in China is modulated by the dual hukou system, which registers people by their birthplace with an urban or a rural hukou status. Citizenship/villagership is the condition for accessing public/collective facilities in cities/villages. In other words, urban facilities are for citizens, not for ‘villagers’. It almost goes without saying that the massive labor migration of ‘villagers’ to the ‘urban’ centres is distorting the rationale of the hukou system and in reality leading to the exclusion of a very substantial, fragile, and unskilled part of the population (rural migrants) from public services that in theory are conceived as compensation for the ‘inequalities’ generated by the ‘free’ market.

The mechanism of reciprocity helps people to obtain resources through mutual exchange. It implies a capacity for each of the participants to produce resources and a social network with symmetric links between members. Goods and services brought into the system by one participant are reciprocated by the other members, usually in the form of different goods and services. This type of relations to network is referred to the term “affiliation”. Marked by reciprocity of behaviors, the self-organization of migrants and villagers has reshaped and restructured the space in ViCs.

Each mode of integration also has its own intrinsic spatial logic (Kesteloot and Meert, 2000). The spatial dimension of market relations is determined by the spatial range of the goods and services offered. Centrality and access (distance and transportation costs) are the key concepts. Redistribution is usually organized spatially within a delimited territory in which both the collection of resources and the distribution are carried out. The change of redistribution relates to the change of proximity and accessibility of public services, housing and employment (Harvey, 1973). The planning and building permit practices, which are very generous in dealing with what limited space is available, also have a redistributing effect (Loeckx, 2009). In addition, spatial proximity is an asset of
reciprocity, as it facilitates the dialectical relation between exchange and maintaining the network, thus generating the necessary trust.

As an agency of reciprocity and redistribution, civil society is “the formal and informal institutions that mediate between the individual and the state” (White, Howell and Shang, 1996). It includes organizations, but also the activities of any individuals and social groups acting independently or contrary to state directives and policies, including organizations based on kinship, culture and region, formal and informal social networks. Many studies have reflected the fact that civil society functions as a collective stakeholder in the construction of cities, in search of the good life (UN-Habitat, 2003; De Meulder, Loeckx and Shannon, 2004; Friedmann, 1998).

Altogether, the three modes of economic integration described above provide us with a powerful tool to understand the roles of key stakeholders and various development issues in ViCs. The case studies also allow the amendment of general theoretical frameworks. Chapter 2 examines the interplay between the state, the market and society, as well as how villagers gain access to resources via the three modes of economic integration in the socio-spatial transformation of ViCs in Guangzhou. It shows that membership is the main condition that leads villagers to access to resources through redistribution, reciprocity and market exchange in three historical periods. Chapter 3 uses three modes of economic integration as a framework to examine the interrelationship of various development issues and conditions of ViCs. It shows that the poor integration in state redistribution and formal market exchange spheres pushes migrants to focus on survival strategies that relate to the self-organization of housing, employment and education in ViCs.
Chapter 1

The Interplay of State, Market and Society in the Sociospatial Transformation Process

Abstract

This chapter examines the changes in the ways in which villagers have gained access to resources and services over time in what are now “villages in the city” within the city of Guangzhou. This compares and contrasts three periods: the clan-based traditional villages, the commune period, and from the 1980s (which includes great economic success in many villages). This chapter concludes that membership or “villagership” is the main condition that leads villagers to access resources through redistribution, market exchange and reciprocity in ViCs.

1. Clan-based Collectivism and the Traditional Village

ViCs in Guangzhou were once traditional villages. Due to the autarkic and small peasant farming economy, the rural society was immobile and comprised a few clans. Fei (1985) illustrated that the traditional village in China was self-organized by clan organizations, which used kinships to organize economic, political and religious activities. Fei also highlighted that, rather than market and trade, which usually developed between different kinship groups, reciprocity based on kinships were essential for the daily lives of villagers. Similarly, Guo (2006) pointed out that the traditional Chinese clan had always engaged in collective actions, which he called “the clan-based collectivism”. Clansmen were mainly organized by the clan elder-authority committee (zulaohui), which provided collective goods and services. This means that the redistribution of a clan based on kinship was another important mode for villagers to access resources. In fact, the state did not intervene directly in the affairs of villages, but instead extended its power to villages via its agencies. According to the surveys of Shun (2001) and Lan (2005), there were three power groups in the traditional villages of Guangzhou: the kinship group, the agencies of the state, and the common hobby group (Figure 1.1).

Firstly, the kinship group was organized by the clan elder-authority committee (zulaohui), which was responsible for social, economic and political affairs of the clan (Shun, 2001; Lan, 2005). The committee was involved in local planning and supervised the construction of clansmen’s houses and alleyways. It was also in charge of a considerable amount of collective land (taigongtian), which was exploited by the clan’s fathers and rented to villagers for cultivation and commercial uses. The income of the land was spent in sacrificing ancestors, constructing schools and clan temples, employing self-defense teams etc.
Therefore, with a lack of redistribution by the state, the clan organization provided collective goods and services to its members.

Secondly, the gentry group (xiangshentuan), which comprised retired officials, officer candidates, and people with official titles, acted as mediators between the state and rural society. It collected taxes, implemented state policies, and was involved in public service activities (such as water control and local defense). From the Qing Dynasty to the emancipation of P. R. China, a new quasi-government office, called Neutral Hall (zhonglitang), became the new mediator between the state and villages in Guangzhou. The Neutral Hall was co-financed by the main clans of the village. It comprised secretaries, authorities from different clans, and bellman teams (gengfutuan). It took charge of public activities, infrastructure and security at the village level. Authorized by public authorities, it held conversations between the state and the village.

Figure 1.1 The three power groups and the substitution of state power
In addition, the common hobby group played an important role in organizing traditional activities during festivals, such as dancing lions and contesting dragon boats. It promoted cooperation between clans and villages in establishing schools. However, as the clan committee was the main power entity in the village, the common hobby group was inevitably “colonized” by the clan, while the substitution of state power often used the clan’s power to implement government policies (Lan, 2005).

Therefore, the traditional village in Guangzhou was well maintained by itself. Rather than imposing direct intervention, the state extended its power to the rural society via its agencies. The clan organizations provided collective goods and the redistribution of resources for villagers. The membership of a clan or a village was the condition for access to resources via redistribution and reciprocity.

2. The Integration of Economic, Political and Social Spheres during the Commune Period

Since the clan collective land was confiscated by the state and redistributed to poor peasants in the 1950s, the clan regime has declined in the villages of Guangzhou. The People’s Commune (renmingongshe), launched by Mao from 1958 to 1983, for the first time, radically broke up the super-steady rural society in China (Zhang, 1998). Means of production including land, enterprises, shops and schools, were owned at three levels: by the commune (the township) at the first level, by the brigade (the village) at the second level, and by the production team (a group of villagers) at the most basic level. The commune drew up the production plans for the brigade according to the state plan. It assisted the brigade with distribution, infrastructure construction, and property management. It also took charge of enterprises and schools. According to the plan of the commune, the brigade then drew up the plans for the production team. The production team was the basic unit of production: “self-organized”, “independent”, and responsible for its profits and losses. It held and managed collective land and enterprises, but it could not sell or rent them out. It also organized the working and living arrangements of their members (peasants), as well as provided their collective goods. In other words, the new collective entities, which replaced the clan organizations, provided the redistribution of resources for villagers. However, they were seen as neither part of the state, nor of civil society.

“The operative relationship between state and community was never the simple push-button one of the totalitarianism model, nor the simple state-versus-village one of the ‘moral economy’ model (Scott 1976). It is better understood as a process that entailed the co-involvement of state and community within the new institutions of the post-revolutionary third realm.” (Huang, 1993, p. 234-235)

Politically, the collective regime extended the power of the state to the countryside and fostered the new elites: the communists. Administered by a
combination of state and community cadres, the commune looked like a new form of “the third realm”, participated in by both state and society (Huang, 1993, p233). Furthermore, the cadres of administrative organizations were often the managers of collective enterprises. This meant the political, social and economic spheres were overlapped and interpenetrated.

Economically, as the system was centrally planned and controlled by the state, there was no free market. The state and the market were actually merged together and there was no clean division between them. The production team did not actually function as an “independent” organization during the production process. Firstly, primary production took place according to the plan of the brigade, and then it “sold” the surplus produce to the “uniform purchase office” at a fixed price set by the state. During this exchange process, the production team gained “records” rather than money, and then the state would allocate food and industrial production according to the number of records attained. However, in order to support heavy industrial development in cities, the state actually reduced the price of agricultural production while enhancing the price of industrial products, an approach known as “jiandaocha”. Therefore, it was impossible for peasants to bargain with the state, the trade object, which controlled the market.

Instead of the state, the collective entities provided the redistribution of resources for villagers. After state taxes and compulsory production, the commune, the brigade and the production team respectively kept a definite proportion of their total incomes for the development of their collective properties. For instance, the brigade could keep 60% of its total income for financing its collective enterprises, public affairs and social welfares. However, the property rights of collective land were fuzzy. According to national regulations, the commune and brigade only owned a part of the mountains, forests and enterprises, while the production team held the majority of collective properties. However, as all three levels possessed production materials, the state did not actually deny that the commune and brigade partly owned the properties of the production team (Liu, 2006). For example, the city and the commune could requisition the land of the production team, with or without little compensation. These fuzzy property rights caused conflict regarding land between villages and cities during the post-commune period.

Socially, the commune organized the everyday lives of the peasants. It seems that there was a compromise between villager households and the collective to make the People’s Commune last 20 years. In fact, the collective regime deferred to the rural society, which had a long history of autonomy, for the production team, as the basic production unit, self-organized the working and living arrangements of the peasants, as well as provided their collective goods.

Therefore, the commune-based collectivism of this period actually replaced the clan-based collectivism and provided collective goods for villagers. The
membership of the collective entities was the precondition for access to redistribution and market resources. As the commune opened up the possibility of establishing new personal connections beyond the kinship network, reciprocity was also developed among the members of the collective entities, especially the production team.

3. Sociospatial Restructuring during the Post-Commune Period

3.1 Villages as Collective Units

As even distribution without consideration of working quality and quantities reduced the productivity of peasants, the People’s Commune was disaggregated at the beginning of 1980s (Zhang, 1998). A new system, called the “household responsibility system”, has since been introduced in rural areas. This system transfers the responsibility for control over agricultural production from the production team to the villager household. The villager household can acquire a

![Figure 1.2  Villages as new collective units.](image)

As even distribution without consideration of working quality and quantities reduced the productivity of peasants, the People’s Commune was disaggregated at the beginning of 1980s (Zhang, 1998). A new system, called the “household responsibility system”, has since been introduced in rural areas. This system transfers the responsibility for control over agricultural production from the production team to the villager household. The villager household can acquire a
definite amount of collective land for cultivation from their collective entities. After paying state taxes and a fixed amount of money to the collective entities, they can deal freely in the market with any surplus produce they have. This suggests that market exchange has become an important sphere for peasants to access resources. The villager household can also acquire an area of housing land (zhaijidi) from the collective entities for residential use, but cannot sell or rent it out.

The village becomes the new collective unit that provides collective goods for villagers, such as upgraded infrastructure, water supply, sewage, security and education. It is administrated by both the Communist Party Branch and the village’s committee (Figure 1.2). The village’s committee is not only responsible for social and political affairs, but also manages collective land and other collective properties. It looks like a “civic organization”, as its members are elected by villagers. As an agency of the state, the party branch has a strong connection with upper-level party branches and plays a leading role in supporting the autonomic activities of villagers. However, the cadres of the village’s committee are usually the cadres of the party branch. The state and “society” are institutionally integrated and their relationships become more complex with the impetus of the market.

3.2 Formation of the ViC

With the rapid urbanization of Guangzhou since the 1980s, the city has requisitioned a large proportion of farmland from its surrounding villages, while leaving existing residential areas which demand much higher levels of compensation. In this way, many villages do not become fully-fledged urban areas, but are nevertheless swallowed up by the urban sprawl. It is at this point they become recognizable as ViCs, characterized by their dual urban–rural structure.

Villager households that have lost their farmland due to urbanization then tend to “illegally” construct their houses to meet the housing demands of migrant households that are economically and institutionally excluded from the urban system. Consequently, the number of migrants has greatly increased in many ViCs of Guangzhou. For example, there were only 8000 migrants in 1993 in Tangxia village, while the number of migrants reached 30,000 in 2000, five times more than the number of villagers (Guangzhou Tianhe District Tangxia Committee 2003). Continuous migration brings with it a pressure for ViCs to become denser, with villagers extending their small houses of 1–3 storeys into 4–5, sometimes even 7-storey properties, often adding cantilevered floors in order to maximize floor area. These market-oriented activities are supported by multi-social networks and reciprocity of villagers, as they borrow money from each other for construction. As a result, many ViCs (particular those located in the city center) have very high physical density (Figure 1.3). The ‘handshake and kissing
buildings’ street profile (a tiny distance of about 50 cm between two facing balconies) becomes the typical new form.

In order to provide new job opportunities and income for villagers who lost their agricultural resources, a special land policy was introduced in Guangzhou called the “reserved land policy”. A proportion of land was returned to the villages for collective industrial and commercial developments. The reserved land, together with a considerable amount of land compensation, became the initial capital for the rapid development of ViCs in Guangzhou (Lan, 2005).

Due to the limited capital and capacity to operate projects on reserved land, the collective organizations often partner foreign and domestic private enterprises in the investments they make, and there are three models used for this. Firstly, the collective organizations rent land to these enterprises, while in return the enterprises invest in constructing factories and warehouses. In this case, the collective organizations carry less risk but receive less income. It is the most common model for ViCs at the periphery of the city, where the collective organizations have little investment capacity and thus development depends largely on external investment. A side-effect of this is that such projects usually result in sub-standard and temporary buildings at the periphery of ViCs. The second model involves the collective organizations transforming the ownership of

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Figure 1.3 The high physical density of Yangji village (author’s photograph, 2007).

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land into shares and becoming the shareholders of enterprises. In this way, they earn annual dividends according to the amount of shares and their involvement in the management. Finally, the third model, which is common for ViCs located in the center of the CBD where there are higher levels of capital and a greater capacity for management, involves the collective organizations self-constructing high-quality supermarkets, shops, commercial and office complexes, and then renting them out. All in all, these projects, which are based on partnerships between the collective organizations and the private sector, have resulted in modern constructions and new functions at the periphery of ViCs.

With the development of industrial and commercial projects, the number of collective properties has been greatly increased. In order to redistribute the large amount of collective properties to individual villagers, the so-called “shareholding cooperation system” has been in operation since the 1980s. What was the production team, which managed the collective properties (including returned land, small plots of farmland, and constructions on those lands) of a group of peasants, became the “economic union” (jinjishe). In addition, the “economic joint-union” (jingji lianshe) was also established to operate the collective properties at the village level. This body held the majority of returned land, land compensations, and collective enterprises. Both of them converted their assets into stocks, held by their members (villagers). As a result, villagers could acquire a considerable amount of cash dividends from their collective properties each year, and in this way, collective property rights were measured and redistributed to individual peasants.

3.3 “The Enterprise Manages Society”

On behalf of the cooperation of various collective organizations, shareholding cooperative companies were established. To illustrate this, we take the most typical ViC in Guangzhou – Shipai village – as an example. Shipai village is the densest ViC in Guangzhou, with a population density of over 100,000 people per km². Although the total area of the village is only 0.7 km², 3384 houses with a total floor area of 1,019,719 km², provide dormitories for some 75,000 migrants and about 10,000 villagers. In 1997, Sanjun Enterprise Group (SEG) (Figure 1.4) was initiated and funded by twenty-seven economic unions and the economic joint-union in Shipai village. At the same time, the village’s committee was abolished and its members became the cadres of SEG, although the stamp of the village’s committee has been retained for some special affairs. The former leader of the party branch became the board chairman of SEG, who was also a member of one of the main clans in the ViC. This suggests that SEG is a new form of “the third realm”, which represents the interests of the villager household and has strong connections with the state and the market.

SEG not only works as a company, but also manages and finances social and political affairs. Its administrative department is in charge of land requisition, the
Figure 1.4 The shareholding cooperative company in Shipai village.
upgrading of infrastructure, public security, education, sanitation etc. Although it was expected to be a temporary department during the institutional transformation, it still functions to provide collective goods and deal with social affairs. In fact, five resident committees (the basic mass autonomous organization of the city) were established to undertake the social and political functions of the village’s committee. They are also responsible for the registration of migrants. However, they are indirectly financed by SEG, instead of the upper-level urban government. Their tasks also often need the support of SEG.

So why does a corporation undertake social and political affairs? On the one hand, it seems that it is difficult for city governments to provide public goods for ViCs in the short term, due to the separation of administration, social welfare, civil construction and finance between cities and villages historically (Xie, 2005; Zheng, 2006). While on the other hand, SEG also inherits the function of the traditional collective stakeholders in the village (Lan, 2005), meaning it acts as the new collective organization, providing collective goods for villagers. Membership or “villagership” is the precondition for access to redistributed resources in ViCs (such as the cash dividends of collective properties and social welfare).

3.4 The Challenge of State Power and the Reappearance of the “Ancestral Idea”

After economic and political restructuring, the role of the Communist Party Branch in the ViC is challenged. If the manager of the shareholding cooperative company is not a member of the party branch, the party branch can no longer play a leading role in the ViC (Xie, 2005). It seems that the status of the party branch is greatly influenced by its economic status.

Accompanying the retreat of state power, the “ancestral idea” has reappeared in ViCs. Guo (2006) argues that the socialistic collective function has been reduced in the post-commune period, while cities have not yet opened their doors to peasants. As a result, peasants have not satisfied their collective needs, e.g. social welfare, safety and moral support, so they turn back to the clan-based collectivism. However, the clan-based collectivism has not simply reappeared in ViCs, but is instead interwoven with the formal institution; the board chairmen of the shareholding cooperative company and leaders of the party branch are often from the main clans in the ViC. Many traditional activities are also subsidized by the shareholding cooperation, and, furthermore, clan authorities still play key roles in dealing with clan affairs, as well as mediation between villagers and governments. Although the majority of buildings in ViCs have been constructed “illegally” by villagers, the clan temples are protected by villagers for clan activities and meetings (Figure 1.5).
4. Conclusion

In this chapter, we have reviewed the ways in which the state, the market and society interplay and how households gain access to resources via three modes of economic integration (redistribution, reciprocity and market exchange) in the sociospatial transformation process of ViCs in Guangzhou (Figure 1.6). The findings show the limits of three modes of economic integration as a conceptual to understand the sociospatial transformation of ViCs in China. According to the theory, access to redistribution, market exchange and reciprocity is respectively regulated through “social utility”, “citizenship” and “affiliation”. However, the findings suggest that “membership” is the main condition that has lead villagers to access resources via three modes of economic integration in the villages and ViCs of Guangzhou. Historically, in the clan-based society, the state did not intervene directly in the affairs of its surrounding villages, but instead extended its power to these settlements through clan-based organizations. Villagers, as members of a clan and a village, could acquire resources via reciprocity from other members and via redistribution from the clan-based organizations. During the commune period, the commune combined political, social and economic functions and replaced the clan-based organizations to provide collective goods.
for villagers. Membership of a commune was a significant precondition for access to resources via the three modes of economic integration. In the post-commune period, the shareholder cooperation not only represents the interest of villagers, but also has connections with the state and the market. Only members of a ViC can acquire resources via redistribution from the cooperation. Villagers also participate in the market sphere by renting their houses to migrants. Reciprocity is still an important sphere for villagers to access to resource. Therefore, membership or “villagership” is the main condition that leads villagers to access resources through redistribution, market exchange and reciprocity in ViCs.

Figure 1.6 Membership is the main condition that leads villagers to access to resources via the three modes of economic integration in three historical periods.
Chapter 2

Development Issues and their Implications for the Urban Migrant

Abstract

This chapter uses three modes of economic integration - redistribution, market exchange and reciprocity - as a framework to examine the interrelationship of various development issues and conditions of ViCs. It shows that the poor integration in state redistribution and formal market exchange spheres pushes migrants to focus on survival strategies that relate to the self-organization of housing, employment and education. It also makes a critical review of several (re)development projects, each relating to one or more of the different modes of economic integration. This chapter concludes that new project approaches that organize a productive interplay between market exchange, redistribution and reciprocity are needed.

1. Barriers to Housing, Employment and Education for Migrants

In the conclusion of “Urban Poverty and the Underclass”, Mingione (1996, p380) states that social exclusion and its spatial concentration are related to the absence of stable integration of the labor market and problematic participation to the benefits of state redistribution (social security and welfare, housing, education, and health). In China, rural migrants are economically, socially and spatially segregated from permanent residents in cities. The background to this dividing line is the hukou system, which plays a main role in the redistribution system and the market sphere. The hukou system was established in 1958 to control rural-urban migration and was considered a good strategy for the rapid industrialization of cities. It registers people by their birthplace with urban and rural hukou status, distinct from housing, employment opportunities and social welfare. However, the transfer of hukou status for the rural migrant is strictly restricted. Only a minority of highly educated and skilled migrants can easily acquire Guangzhou hukou by working in an ‘urban enterprise’ or through marriage with a citizen. The prevailing categorization of mass migrants as ‘floating population’ still persists in city administrations. Theoretically, members of the “floating population” are expected to return to their hometown after completing temporary jobs in the cities. However, a recent report showed that 70 per cent of the current peasant-migrants are aged from 15-30, having grown up in a booming economy and having received better education than their parents (48 per cent received high school level education) (Yu, 2008). Those migrants, especially the second generation, will very likely become permanent migrants.
Nevertheless, without citizenship, the majority of them cannot access formal housing, medical care, pensions, insurance, and education. They also remain excluded from more qualified and stable job opportunities, as well as social welfare (Jie and Taubmann, 2002). With the stable and more qualified jobs in the formal urban labor market reserved for permanent urban residents, rural migrants find themselves restricted to certain sectors, in particular what one might refer to as the more ‘hard’ and ‘dirty’ jobs in the informal urban labor market (Jie and Taubmann, 2002; Gu and Liu, 2002; Zhang, 2005; Liu et al., 2008). Subsequently, without a permanent job and urban household registration, rural migrants are excluded from urban low-cost public housing. The commercialization of urban housing has also not helped, resulting in no provision of homes for the vast majority of rural migrants who are employed in urban low-paid positions (Zhang, 2005). In addition, most children of rural migrants face various forms of discrimination. In China, the local government is responsible for expenditure on compulsory education for all children aged 6–15, but only for whose with local hukou status. Without local registration, migrant children therefore find it difficult to access education in public schools in the city.

Excluded by the formal urban system, ViCs in China thus become rural migrant enclaves, supplying affordable housing, job opportunities, and education for rural migrants (Jie and Taubmann, 2002; Zhang, 2005; Yu, 2008). The poor access to formal market exchange and redistribution spheres pushes rural migrants into the third sphere of economic integration: reciprocity. Informal economic activities based on social networks are a major source of income and survival. Amongst the survival strategies in ViCs, the self-organization of housing, education and employment are most notable.

2. Housing and Spatial Issues

2.1 High Population and Physical Density

The issue of housing is a good example of the survival strategies of migrants and villagers, and tends to manifest itself in one of two ways. Firstly, there is the case of existing migrants who are unable to access public and commercial housing in state redistribution and formal market spheres, which forces them to turn to informal market and reciprocity spheres to look for housing. And secondly, there are the villagers who lose their farmland during the process of urbanization, who find it difficult to participate in the formal urban labor market, leading them to “illegally” construct their houses to meet the housing demands of migrants and their new incomes. The continuous migration brings with it a pressure for ViCs to become ever more dense, with villagers extending their small houses of 1–3 storeys into 4–5-, sometimes even 7-storey properties, often adding cantilevered floors in order to maximize floor area. These market-oriented activities are supported by multi-social networks and reciprocity of villagers, as they borrow money from each other for construction. As a result, the traditional spatial layout
Figure 2.1 “Handshake and kissing buildings” street profile in Yangji village (author’s photograph, 2007)

Figure 2.2 The high physical density of Yangji Village (author’s photograph, 2008)
(small floor plan and narrow lanes) is distorted by the new cantilevered construction in the horizontal direction and new floors in the vertical direction. The resulting ‘handshake and kissing buildings’ street profile (a tiny distance of about 50 cm between two facing balconies) becomes the typical new form (Figure 2.1).

Figure 2.3 138 ViCs in the original eight districts of Guangzhou. Based on an unpublished map of Guangzhou in 2008 prepared by Guangzhou Urban Planning Bureau.

It is not surprising, therefore, that many ViCs are overcrowded and congested, with very high physical and population densities (Figure 2.2). Many ViCs in the new CBD centre have very high building density of 70 per cent and an astonishing Floor Area Ratio of 5 or more. Although the total area of the 138
ViCs in Guangzhou is amounts approximately to only 20 per cent of the total urban area (Figure 2.3), they house around 70 per cent of migrants, which is approximately 40 per cent of the total urban population (Li, 2002). The official record of the densest ViC (Shipai village) is 500 persons per hectare in 2000 (Guangzhou Tianhe District Shipai Committee, 2003). However, our survey revealed that a house with 6 floors measuring a mere 8 by 10 metres, which is often divided into four small units, could sometimes houses as many as 50 people. One block, with an area of 1.57 hectare, was found to contain 80 such tiny houses, with around 1,900 small units, housing approximate 3,800 people. The population-density can sometimes reach 2,400 persons per hectares.

2.2 Property Rights and Proximity

The concentration of migrants in ViCs has a strong connection with unique land property rights and changes in the location of employment and public services, where accessibility (distance and transportation costs) and proximity (externality effects) are the key concerns. Changes in the value of property rights and the proximity and accessibility of employment and public facilities bring the redistribution of real income (Harvey, 1973). The accessibility of employment and customers also integrates households in the market exchange sphere (Kestloot and Meert, 2000). Thus, increasing land value and the proximity and accessibility of public services and employment contribute to the integration of villagers and migrants in redistribution and market exchange spheres.

Rural land in China was once private property, inherited from ancestors throughout generations. However, after a series of land reforms from the 1950s to the 1980s, rural land is now collectively-owned, while urban land is owned by the state and managed by the municipality. The collective (the village) can possess, use, and benefit from the ownership of land, but does not have the right to dispose of the land. Each village household can acquire a piece of residential land (zhaijidi) from the collective unit for self-housing, but the household cannot sell or rent it out. However, the state can requisition the collective land for new developments. In Guangzhou, there was a special “reserved land policy” (liuyongdi zhengce) that prescribed the reservation of 812 per cent of the total requisitioned land for the self-development of secondary and tertiary industries.

Since the decentralization of economic and financial administration and decision-making in the 1980s, the conflict of interest relating to land between cities and villages has intensified. Luo and Shen (2006) argued that local governments in coalition with enterprises form the “urban growth machine” (Molotch, 1976) in China, while villagers who lose their farmland and have little compensation become the counter-coalition. On the one hand, the local authorities have been driven to stimulate economic development and increase revenue (Shen, 2005), thus they are keen to requisition rural land for foreign investors and the construction of urban infrastructure, which will not only attract new investment.
but also increase GDP and revenue. On the other hand, city governments are facing increasing resistance from villagers who sometimes, out of despair, even resort to violence when their land is requisitioned by city governments for the purpose of leasing it out on the land market. The villagers are demanding higher compensation because it is known that city governments can obtain a higher price in the land market through land leasing (Yeb, 2005).

Nevertheless, with investment from the public and private sectors, the geographies of ViCs changes, from remote position to central position in the functioning of the city. Many ViCs in Guangzhou are now largely mixed with urban roads, commercial office complexes, industrial areas and public constructions (Figure 2.4). The development of ViCs is tight linked to their surrounding urban environment. Firstly, some ViCs in the new city center (such as Shipai village and Xian village) are largely mixed with commercial office complexes, expansive apartment buildings, universities, and other urban constructions. They are well connected to urban road systems and have access to public transportsations (such as bus stations, subway stations). As a result, the ViCs focus on developing the tertiary industry which provides service for the surrounding urban areas. Secondly, most ViCs in Guangzhou are dispersed at the urban fringe, in close proximity to external transportation lines, urban industrial areas and warehouses. On the one hand, the external transportation line that occupies a great deal of land is usually located at the urban fringe, where little demolition is required and cheap farmland is available (Li, 2004). On the other hand, many industrial areas in the inner city were relocated to the urban fringe, in close proximity to urban roads and railways (Zhou, 2005). Consequently, ViCs at the urban fringe are largely mixed with external traffic lines, urban industrial areas and warehouses. They also well developed the secondary industry and contain a considerable amount of industrial areas.

In close proximity to urban areas, some ViCs function as service centers for larger areas far beyond their boundaries. For example, Sanyuanli village which is close to the central railway station has developed the wholesale trade of leather and fur; Yangji village which is close to the new CBD has developed the fabrication plant of wood processing and a grand market of furniture; and Shipai village which is close to universities and several science research institutions has developed several computer towns and numerous IT product shops with a national reputation for the scales of their services. These suggest that the development of ViCs contributes to urban development. Rather than “islands”, ViCs are parts of urban systems and have complex relationships with the surrounding urban areas.

As a result, the land value of ViCs has enhanced greatly, meaning it could therefore be argued that villagers actually obtain indirectly benefits through “externalities” (Harvey, 1973) (such as state-financed investment in public facilities, which increases the land value and has an effect on the indirect
Figure 2.4 ViCs and urban areas (based on an unpublished map of Guangzhou in 2008 prepared by Guangzhou Urban Planning Bureau.
redistribution of income). In this sense, the “coalition” and “counter-coalition” mechanism, which often means that the interest of villagers suffers as a result of urban development, is not enough to explain the relationship between cities and ViCs. Actually, in the long term, the economic development of ViCs in Guangzhou has greatly benefited from the urbanization process. With the increasing value of land, villagers cooperate with the private sector in self-development projects, which provide a large amount of redistributive income to villagers.

ViCs not only profit from the increasing land value, but also benefit from the change of proximity and accessibility of urban service and employment opportunities. ViCs are able to mix with different types of urban land uses, and the proximity and accessibility of amenities, public services and economic activities provide job opportunities and living convenience for inhabitants of ViCs. On the one hand, villagers become ‘landlords’, supplying cheap housing for migrants, while on the other hand the majority of migrants work in the manufacturing and service sectors in the surrounding areas, generally within half
an hour’s walking distance. Both villagers and migrants also use public transport at the periphery of ViCs (Figure 2.5). As they have not paid taxes for the use of public services in urban area, it could be argued that the proximity of jobs and public facilities actually cross-subsidizes both of them. Therefore, the proximity and accessibility of public facilities and employment opportunities serve to integrate both migrants and villagers in market exchange and redistribution spheres.

3. Chain Migration and Employment

Without citizenship, the majority of rural migrants become institutionally excluded from the formal urban labor market. The employment of rural migrants is typically informal and unstable, as employers often use short-term contracts to limit their responsibility for welfare provision (Liu et al., 2008). This poor level of integration in the formal labor market pushes migrant households to focus on economic survival strategies that rely on a supporting strategy within the sphere of reciprocity. Economic activities are embedded in social relationships (Palanyi, 1944; Portes and Sensenbrenner, 1993; Light, 2004) and of specific importance for migration in China seems to be the so-called ‘chain effect’ (Jie and Taubmann, 2002), which refers to the trend that the majority of migrants (currently around 75 per cent) find their first jobs through relatives and friends.

Our fieldwork in several typical cases of ViCs shows that there is an interesting relationship between occupation, social network and space. For example, many taxi drivers are from Hunan or Henan Province. With higher salaries, they often concentrate in the new parts of ViCs that are in close proximity to auto parts centers (e.g. Tangxia Village, ViCs in Baiyun District). Their wives usually work in handwork shops or factories in ViCs (Figure 2.6). Shoe-shining ladies tend mostly to be from Hubei Province. Usually expelled by the police, they work and live together so that they can take care of one other. The majority of migrants who work in manufacturing or service sectors inside or outside ViCs are from Hunan, Henan, Hubei, or Jiangxi Province. Finally, new skilled migrants who find employment in IT sectors concentrate in the ViCs of the CBD (especially in Shangshe Village, close to a high-tech science park), building their own websites to exchange housing information and for making friends. This indicates that migrants use social networks, to help each other through sharing information, jobs opportunities and accommodation. Spatial proximity of migrant groups facilitates the dialectical relation between exchange and maintaining the social network. The living place of migrant groups is also in close proximity to job opportunities and their work place.
The following is a typical case of chain migration and embeddedness. In Tangxia Village, a group of migrants from Hubei Province, who are relatives and friends, have established a number of property management companies. They rent a cluster of houses from villagers with "informal" contracts, as the peasant houses are not allowed to be rented or sold. After upgrading, they lease the houses to migrants at a higher price. According to Yan (the manager of a property management company, interview, 2 March 2008):

"After I resigned from the government, I have stayed in Guangzhou for 7 years. In the beginning I helped my friend to manage his lets in Baiyun district of Guangzhou. However, the house prices fell a lot at that time. My friend failed in renting the apartment out, as it was too big and too expensive. Then, I went to Tangxia Village and established the property management company. Due to the low profit of the project, it is impossible for us to pay taxes to the state and employ staff in the formal labor market. Therefore, we only pay administrative fees to the 'street office' and offer 'employment opportunities' for our relatives and friends. As we are kin, we often assist each other in many ways. This does

Figure 2.6 Taxi drivers’ wives are working around a table in front of a small handwork shop in Tangxia Village (author’s photograph, 2008).
not always involve payment of monthly salaries. Most of my relatives also co-
finance the up-grading project and share the income and risk of the project.”

This case illustrates that informal economic activities that rely on reciprocal
actions are important survival strategies for migrants, as they reduce the
transaction cost and supply opportunities for migrant entrepreneurs. Although
some migrants involve themselves in the economic activities that service ViCs,
the majority of them provide services for urban sectors. In this sense, it can be
argued that the survival strategies of migrants developed in ViCs are a necessary
condition for the supply of cheap labor for jobs in the urban area and contribute to
the urban economy.

4. Private Schools for Migrant Children

Without urban registration status, migrant children are largely rejected from
access to public schools, which are mainly subsidized by city governments.
Although some public schools have recently started to accept some migrant
children, the high fees are beyond the affordability of the majority of migrant
parents who work in low-paid jobs (Sa, 2004). With a lack of educational
resources in the redistribution sphere, they turn to formal or informal private
migrant schools that rely on reciprocity and market mechanism. In 2008, 70 per
cent of migrant children (around 300,000 in number) were studying in 150
licensed private migrant schools or unlicensed schools (Guangzhou Education
Office, interview, 5 April 2008).

Private migrant schools first emerged in Guangzhou at the beginning of the 1990s
to meet the large demand of education among migrant families, especially those
with low incomes. These schools are run by migrants themselves, with few or no
subsidies from the state. Some might have started the schools for profit, but many
are committed to the collective good to educate migrant children. In order to
reduce costs, migrants rent peasant houses or collective buildings in ViCs for
teaching. Some of them even self-construct school buildings on collective land,
making ‘informal’ contracts with villagers concerning the use of land. As a result,
migrant schools tend to be scattered throughout ViCs, but usually in close
proximity to the living and working places of the migrant residents.

However, poor access to state redistribution causes many private migrant schools
to fall into disrepair. Xue (2004) reported many ‘shack schools’ cannot obtain
official certification because of unsafe conditions, a lack of space for activities,
inadequate facilities, inadequately skilled teachers, and so on. As a result, many
of them are shut down by local governments for violating health, fire and other
regulations, with many experts and migrants themselves arguing that this will
force more migrant children discontinuing their schooling Although our research
shows that there are still some good quality migrant schools in ViCs (with enough
space for activities for the children and skilled teachers), many migrants claim
that these schools are too expensive for them. Therefore, some of them send their children to ‘shack schools’ or sub-standard migrant schools, with more than half of them sending their children to their hometowns for education. However, those children left behind are worse off in terms of educational outcomes as a result of their parents’ absence (Du and Bai, 1997; Tan, et al. 2000).

It is clear, therefore, that further access to resources in the redistribution sphere for migrants is essential. Many experts suggest that central, provincial and municipal governments should cooperate with each other and become responsible for the education of migrant children. Instead of closing private migrant schools, subsidizing and encouraging their improvement could be an alternative solution to deal with the education problem of migrant children (Song, 2008).

5. Redevelopment Issues

The above analysis shows that ViCs represent an inexpensive and practical solution to the problem of migrant demand, providing affordable housing, employment and education for migrants. However, current (re)development project approaches pay little attention to the demands of migrants. There are three types of project approaches, each of which relates to one or more of the three modes of economic integration. Firstly, large-scale redevelopment projects are dominated by market mechanisms and provide no home for migrants. The existing spatial layout providing survival strategies for migrants in terms of housing, employment and education is demolished and replaced entirely by modern flats, offices and commercial buildings. The proximity of urban services, jobs and amenities are also destroyed. Secondly, collective projects have a major effect on the redistribution of income among indigenous villagers, although they do provide some informal job opportunities, housing and schools to migrants. Thirdly, small-scale projects, which restructure and reshape the space of ViCs, relate to the survival strategies of migrants in market exchange and reciprocity spheres. However, the majority of low-income migrants cannot access the upgraded housing due to the increased rent.

5.1 Large-scale Redevelopment Projects

Urban redevelopment projects (such as those that restructure dilapidated neighborhoods into luxury offices and commercial districts) are marketing tools at the local level for the purpose of attracting investment and raising local revenue. With problems of overcrowding, deficient spatial structures, and high crimes rates, ViCs are criticized as having a negative impact on the image of the modern city (Zhao, 2008). As a result, many ViCs in the CBD centre have been scheduled for demolition and rebuilding.

Although many ViC’s redevelopment projects have been conceived in recent years, the majority of them have not gone beyond the initial study stage, with the
lack of realization caused by conflicts of interest among the key stakeholders. Until 2009, the redevelopment project of Liede Village (Figure 2.7 and 2.8), which relies on market force, is the only project to have reached implementation. The demolition and rebuilding process began in 2007 and will finish in 2010. Located in the heart of the new CBD, the project was initiated by city governments with strong political will to complete the road network and promote the land value of the CBD. Without any subsidy from city governments, how to balance the cost and the earning is the key issue for the redevelopment project. The breakthrough comes with a change to land property rights dealing with the surplus value of land (the gap between the value of collective land and the value of urban land). It is now permitted for a part of the collective land to become state land, which can be exchanged on the market for a much higher value. This land can then be leased to private real estate companies for commercial development, the profit from which compensates the cost of replacing villagers and reconstructing collective assets. It is also permitted that a part of the collective land can be used for the self-development of secondary and tertiary industries, while the remaining land is for the resettling of villagers. It seems that all key stakeholders benefit from this project. The city government can acquire more revenue, while each village household has one or more apartment with an area of 200 square metres in the CBD and acquire more dividends from the collective properties in the future.

However, Prof. Yuan claims that public investment might temporarily not be required, but the next term of office should invest a great deal of money in providing public infrastructure due to the high Floor Area Ratio of 5.2 (Fu, 2007). Furthermore, the sociologist Lan, who has carried out a lot of work on ViCs, has argued that the commercial redevelopment of ViCs may lead to the appearance of qunzhufang, a type of overcrowded apartment (sometimes as many as 30 people living in a small apartment with a floor area of 60 square metres) (Ru, 2008). The demolition and redevelopment of ViCs not only generates a wide range of conflicts among stakeholders, but also causes city governments to run into problems as they pay little attention to the basic housing needs of migrants (Zhang, 2005).

The type of market-led redevelopment project relies on profit-making rather than social equity. Such projects demolish existing spatial layouts, which contain the survival strategies of migrants in terms of housing, employment and education (Figure 2.9 and 2.10). It also destroys the proximity of urban services, jobs and amenities, which has a redistributive income for migrants and is crucial for the urban system. Consequently, the role of public authorities is criticized. They do not compensate the inequalities generated through market exchange by redistribution. Instead, this type of project approach can further exasperate social inequity.
Figure 2.7 The spatial layout of Liede Village. Based on an unpublished map of Guangzhou in 2006 prepared by Guangzhou Urban Planning Bureau.

Figure 2.8 Detailed plan of Liede Village. Based on the detailed plan of Liede Village prepared by Architectural Design & Research Institute of Guangdong Province.
5.2 Collective Projects

As already mentioned, ViCs acquired a considerable amount of reserved land for the self-development of secondary and tertiary industries during the land requisition process. This land has been managed by collective companies. However, ViCs have failed dramatically in many cases to develop these secondary and tertiary industries due to a lack of finance and management experience. Thus, they have shifted to cooperate with domestic and foreign investors and participate in development projects as partners. On the one hand, ViCs lease land for enterprises, which invest in constructing factories, warehouses and shopping malls, generating less risk but less income. This is a common model for ViCs at the urban fringe, which lack capital and depend on external investment (Li, 2004). On the other hand, ViCs with a strong collective economy in good locations such as in the CBD centre self-construct various buildings on the reserved land, and then rent them out. Many of the constructions are used for commercial purposes, and to some extent these self-development projects also provide informal job opportunities for migrants, as well as cheap land and constructions for private migrant schools.

Supported by the income from self-development projects, collective companies also invest in constructing and renewing collective facilities such as libraries, hospitals, primary schools, sports centres, gardens, and activity centres for the elderly. In addition, with the villagers they co-finance villager apartment projects on some of the fragmented collective land. These projects are successful in providing high-quality modern dwellings for villagers at very low cost, as to construct on collective land does not require the payment of many of the construction fees imposed by city governments. Therefore, collective projects (including self-development projects, collective facility projects, and villager apartment projects) have an effect on redistributing income to indigenous
villagers. However, migrants cannot be a part of this picture; although they contribute to the income of the villagers, they are excluded by the majority of collective facilities and spaces.

5.3 The ‘New Alley Movement’

Marked by informal economic activities and reciprocal behaviors, some small-scale actions help restructure and reshape the space in some ViCs. Some informal private property management companies, already mentioned above, firstly rent a cluster of houses from the villagers, and then improve the physical environment (laying tiles on the inside of alleys, planting flowerbeds on both sides of alleys and roofs, improving and redesigning the interior, and fencing the community) and the ‘soft’ environment (adding closed circuit television, gate guarders, services, and internet access). As a result, the rental value can double in the new community, although still remaining lower than that of urban areas. Nevertheless, the new communities meet the demands of white-collar migrants, who favor these places due to their nice environment, their levels of safety, and their proximity to the workplace. These small communities tend to be scattered on the outskirt of ViCs, where the houses are newer and bigger, with better infrastructure. Due to limited market demand, the amount of houses improved in these projects is about 10-20 per cent of the total houses in ViCs. The companies involved call this action xinlinong yundong (the ‘new alley movement’), in which they want to add a positive aspect to the ViC, to help counter the bad name often portrayed by media, politicians, and professionals, including accusations of one-skyline housing, dense population, and dirty and unsafe environments. However, in order to command high levels of interest, the companies involved are not always innocent in their methods. They “illegally” construct some houses by adding an attic floor without considering whether the quality of the existing house is good enough to support the added floor. Furthermore, the new communities are tightly knit within, but largely segmented and isolated from others.

On the whole, this approach is mainly centred on the upgrading of housing in ViCs. The contracts between villagers and the companies involved, between employees and employers, are informal and based on trust and social networks. It provides some flexible methods for renewing ViCs, such as financially, through co-production, and via improvements to the physical environment. This approach, therefore, can be better understood as the collective action of certain groups of villagers and migrants beyond the state sphere, rooted in the reciprocity sphere, although one cannot deny the speculative purpose of such projects. However, it must be noted that these projects do not address agendas such as social equity. The improved communities request increased prices. Consequently, they exclude the vast majority of low-income migrants.
6. Conclusion

The main object of this study has been to use three modes of economic integration (redistribution, market exchange and reciprocity) to examine the complex relationship between various development issues and conditions of ViCs, including spatial issues and housing, chain migration and employment, private migrant children schools, and (re)development issues. The research has showed that ViCs are rural migrant enclaves, supplying affordable housing, education and job opportunities for migrants. This links to unique institutional factors, particularly the existing household registration system. Without citizenship, the majority of migrants are excluded from urban housing, formal employment and education. Poor integration in redistribution and formal market exchange leads migrants to focus on survival strategies relating to the self-organization of housing, education and employment.

Without a permanent job and urban household registration, migrants find it difficult to access public housing in the city. The commercialization of urban housing has also not helped, resulting in no provision of homes for the vast majority of rural migrants who are employed in low-paid sectors. Consequently, they become relegated to ViCs, where the indigenous villagers “illegally” construct their houses to meet their demand. This results in high densities and overcrowding in ViCs. However, the proximity and accessibility of employment, public services, amenities and facilities actually compensates partially the exaggerated exploitation of indigenous villagers (who lose their farmlands during rapid urbanization under market transition) and the marginalization of migrants. The villagers are also compensated by the increasing land value, generated by public and private investments. In this sense, the proximity and accessibility of public services and employment, as well as the increasing value of land, serves to integrate migrants and villagers in redistribution and market exchange spheres.

Excluded from the regular urban labor market, informal economic activities embedded in reciprocity become important spheres for migrants to access resources. These are important survival strategies for migrants, as they can reduce the transaction cost and supply opportunities for migrant entrepreneurs. Migrants commonly use kinship and native-place ties to look for jobs and develop their businesses inside and outside ViCs. The survival strategies developed by migrants in ViCs are the necessary conditions of supplying cheap labor for urban sectors and contribute to the urban economy.

Without local registration, the migrants’ children cannot access to education in public schools in the city. Migrants are pushed into self-service, running licensed or unlicensed private migrant schools with little or no public funding, with ViCs providing cheap and affordable land for them. However, due to limited resources, many of these schools are in a state of disrepair and are forced to close by city governments. There are also a large number of migrant children left in their
hometowns for education, taken care of by their relatives, as private migrant schools still remain unaffordable for them. The closing of private migrant schools only results in further deprivation for migrants with already limited resources. The further accessibility of resources in the redistribution sphere by migrants is essential.

The reality of ViCs, therefore, should be viewed in a more positive light. It represents an inexpensive and practical solution to the problem of migrant demand, affording available housing, education and employment for migrants. However, ViC (re)development projects have offered little in terms of meeting the demand of migrants. Large-scale commercial redevelopment projects not only demolish the existing spatial layout containing the survival strategies of migrants in terms of housing, employment and education, but they also destroy the proximity to job opportunities, facilities and other general opportunities offered by the city. This proximity – in other words, the chance to exploit the opportunities of the city – is probably one of the most important qualities that compensate partially for the unquestionable unacceptable conditions of overcrowding and overexploitation. Although collective projects provide some informal job opportunities, housing and schools for migrants, they mainly have an effect on redistributing income to indigenous villagers. Large amount of low-income migrants are also benefit very little from housing upgrading projects, which relate to market exchange and reciprocity spheres. This is unfair for mass migrants, who provide cheap labors for the city, but receive few public services and facilities in turn. Thus, the role of the state is criticized, as it does not compensate for the inequalities generated through market exchange by redistribution. New approaches, embracing market exchange, redistribution and reciprocity at the same time, in order to come to a more sustainable (re)development of ViCs in economic, political, social, cultural, and spatial terms are needed.
PART II: CASE STUDIES

Introduction

The influence of historical urban and rural features on new urban forms has been studied widely, but largely in the Western world. The existing physical and socio-economic characteristics of an area within which urban development and change takes place provides a framework that influences the form of what is added or changed (Ward, 1962; Whitehand, 2009). Urban morphological ideas such as morphological periods and morphological frames are of general value, and could advance understanding of the morphological transformation of the ‘village in the city’ (ViC) in Guangzhou, China. A morphological frame relates to the fact that the way in which forms are created on the ground, particularly during the process in which rural land is converted to urban use, acts as a long-term constraint on subsequent change (Whitehand, 2001, p.106). The fact that the forms created in one period are different from those created in another, and that similar types are grouped over time, thereby giving rise to distinct morphological periods (Conzen, 1969, p.127), is also fundamental for understanding how spatial patterns change over time in ViCs.

Furthermore, the roles and interrelations between three key stakeholders (the state, the market and civil society) in the production of space are a major concern of strategic urban project approaches (Masboungie, 2002; De Meulder, Loeckx and Shannon, 2004; Healy, 2006) (see chapter 5 and 6). Besides the conventional focus on the role of the state and the market in theories of urban development and planning, civil society has arisen more and more as an important realm of stakeholders in shaping urban space. However, the mode of three separated realms (the state, the market and civil society) in western literature does not fit well in the Chinese context. “The third realm” (Huang, 1993), in which the state and society collide, also plays a key role in the transformation of traditional villages and ViCs. Rather than civil society, the research use a more comprehensive concept of “society” to indicate formal and informal associations, institutions of “the third realm”, and households.

The findings discussed in this part, which concern the historical morphological transformation of two typical ViCs – Shipai Village and Tangxia Village- in Guangzhou and the role of key stakeholders, are considered in relation to the above ideas. Shipai Village is a fairly typical ViC in Guangzhou. Located near the new central business district (CBD), it was one of the oldest ViCs in Guangzhou that were formed in the 1980s (Lan and Guo, 2006). It also has the highest building density and population density. The development of Shipai Village has
been promoted by various key stakeholders, often having complex roles and relationships. The current morphological structure is extraordinarily complicated, produced and overlapped by different planning processes in different morphological periods which reflect socio-economic and political changes. It also should be noted that a top-down project for redeveloping the whole ViC made several year ago has not been worked due to the conflict interests among different social groups. By studying the dynamic roles of stakeholders, development issues and planning practices, the forces and factors that cause those transformations can be indicated.

Tangxia village is another famous ViC in Guangzhou due to its rich historical legacies and remarkable development. Located at the edge of the new central business district (CBD), Tangxia Village has transformed greatly in the past thirty years and confronted several planning processes. The mosaic spatial structure has been greatly produced by both city development and self-development. Recently, a bottom-up process, co-produced by a variety of new stakeholders and known as the “new alley movement”, has generated a wide range of attention (Hao, Tao and Guo 2008). Compared with the failure of many other conventional projects applied in ViCs, this project has functioned very well in reshaping the space in Tangxia Village. It would be very interesting to investigate the roles of stakeholders, the planning processes and the production of space in this new practice.

These two cases are different in terms of location, industrial development, spatial structures and redevelopment opportunities. Generally speaking, Shipai village is a typical case of the mature ViC, while Tangxia village is a representative of the growing ViC. Located at the new city center, Shipai village is intensively involved in the development of the tertiary industry that mainly services urban territory. In close proximity to urban industrial areas and traffic lines, Tangxia village well develops labor-intensive industries. There are few new constructions in the residential areas of Shipai village, while houses are gradually “growing up” in the residential areas of Tangxia village. There are more opportunities for spatial and economic restructuring in Tangxia village, which contains a larger amount of collective projects at the periphery and has better infrastructure, newer houses and more open space in the residential areas.
Chapter 3

The Morphological Transformation and Planning Practices of Shipai Village

Abstract

A historical analysis is undertaken of the morphological transformation and current spatial form of Shipai Village. Consideration is given to the dynamic roles of stakeholders. The traditional layout was produced mostly by the clan authorities and provided a basic socio-spatial framework for subsequent development. Then, the intertwining of two distinct waves of urbanization is analysed: the overwhelming wave of city development and the development of the village itself, both of which emerged from the interactions between key stakeholders during the economic reforms of the 1980s. The analysis shows how the new spatial form added to and changed the existing rural form of the village during the process of rapid urbanization. Formal and informal alliances between many new key stakeholders were established during this process, greatly influencing the spatial restructuring of the village. A critical evaluation of current planning practices is presented, highlighting the conflicts of interest between different stakeholders. This chapter is concluded that the integration of various key stakeholders is probably necessary in order to achieve more sustainable redevelopment.

1. The Traditional Spatial Layout

Located in the suburbs of Guangzhou, 7 km from the old city centre, Shipai Village occupied an area of 14 km$^2$, including 3.2 km$^2$ of farmland and other land uses (hills, ponds, and residential areas), at the beginning of the century. With a history of more than 700 years, it was a clan-based traditional village largely consisting of four clans concentrated in four different areas of the village before the Communist Revolution in 1949. The clans established a self-organizational system for coexistence and development. An organization called the Neutral Hall (zhonglitan), comprising secretaries, authorities from the four clans and night watchmen (gengfutuan), was set up to deal with the most important public affairs in the village (Guangzhou Tianhe District Shipai Committee, 2003; Lan, 2005). It was authorized by public authorities and functioned as the intermediate realm between the state and the village. Taxes were collected from different clans and spent on public activities, infrastructure, schools and the security of the village. Both the Neutral Hall and the clan elder-authority organization (zulaohui), which was responsible for the spatial, social and political affairs of a clan, played key roles in the spatial organization of the village. The clan elder-authority organization owned and managed a considerable amount of collective farmland...
Figure 3.1 The spatial structure of Shipai Village in 1985 (Based on an unpublished map of Guangzhou, prepared by Guangzhou Urban Planning & Design Survey Research Institute)
Figure 3.2 The spatial analysis of Shipai Village in 1985 (author’s drawing)
(taigongtian) and other collective property (clan temples, shops, schools etc.). It was also involved in local planning and supervised the construction of clansmen’s houses and alleyways.

The Annals of Shipai Village (Guangzhou Tianhe District Shipai Committee, 2003) showed that there was little physical change in the village settlement from 1949 to 1985, allowing us to use the map of Shipai Village in 1985 to analyze the traditional spatial layout (Figure 3.1 and 3.2). The village settlement was surrounded by farmland and ponds. A square at the top of a small hill formed the village centre. Several clan temples together with squares and ponds comprised several sub-centres at the entrances to village main roads. They were the most important collective places for clan sacrifices, festivals, lawsuits, and education. The great majority of buildings were of a small size (around 40-80 m²) and housed several generations of the same family. The children regularly didn’t live with their parents and constructed their own houses when they were married. Grey brick walls and tiled roofs were common, with some of the houses displaying the classic house pattern called sanjianlianglang (Guangzhou Tianhe District Shipai Committee, 2003). Three adjacent rooms at the rear comprised the main part of the house. Access to the house was most frequently through one of two small rooms (kitchen and storage) on either side of a central courtyard. To prevent the spread of fire, there was a narrow space of about 30-50 cm between two houses. Houses were in rows, separated by small alleyways (1-2 metres in width), which were usually northwest- to southeast-oriented, paralleling the direction of the prevailing wind in the hot summer. As a result, the wind, which blew through the field, alleyways and courtyards, could cool houses. This dense and compact structure also generated pleasant shade for people in alleyways (Lu and Yang, 2004, p. 518).

2. Interaction between Urbanization and Self-Development

At the beginning of the 20th century, the farmland in the northern part of Shipai Village was expropriated by the Republic Government to create the Shipai Campus of Sun Yat-sen University. As a result, Shipai Village was connected with the city area by urban roads (zhongshangonglu and huangpudadao) in the north and the south (Figure 3.3). The land of Shipai Village has become collectively-owned and managed by the collective organizations since 1958. Shipai villagers can possess, use and benefit from the ownership of the collective land, but does not have the right to dispose of it. Each villager household is able to acquire a piece of collective land (zhaijidi) for self-housing, but the household cannot sell or let it. However, the city can requisition the collective land for new development (for example, the construction of urban infrastructure). In the 1950s, a considerable amount of farmland was requisitioned by the state for the establishment of several universities and institutions. In the village settlement, public facilities and services were provided by the collective organizations (the brigade (dadui) and several production teams (shengchangdui)), for example,
Figure 3.3 The urbanization and land use of Shipai Village. Based on two unpublished maps of Guangzhou (prepared by Guangzhou Urban & Design Survey Research Institute) and the 14th Master Plan of Guangzhou (People’s Government of Guangdong Province, 1984).
hygiene station, sports centre, and primary school. Due to the low economic status of villager households, few new houses were constructed (Guangzhou Tianhe District Shipai Committee, 2003). During the 1970s, many lanes in the field were widened and extended, some of which became farm machinery roads accessed by vehicles. As a result, the field consisted of numerous small and regular plots, divided by farm machinery roads and lanes (Figure 3.1). Thereafter, and up until 1985, when the new district was established, Shipai Village began to experience great socio-spatial transformation, created by two distinct urbanization processes (city development and self-development of the village). The traditional spatial layout and the field pattern (Figure 3.2) have constituted a ‘morphological frame’ influencing the new development. The fact that distinct forms have been created, allows the years since 1985 to be distinguished as a new morphological period.

2.1 The Establishment of the New District

With the rapid urbanization in the 1980s, the 14th master plan of Guangzhou was initiated to control the growth of the historical city centre and to encourage eastward development along the northern bank of the Pearl River (Figure 3.4). A new Tianhe district, which administrated a number of villages and towns including Shipai Village, was established in the east side of Guangzhou in 1985. Using the opportunity of the 6th National Games held in Guangzhou in 1987, the city started to construct the Tianhe Sports Centre in 1984 and the Guangzhou East Railway Station. In order to compete for international investment with other metropolises in the Pearl River Delta, the 15th master plan of Guangzhou (1991–2010) focused on the development of Tianhe district as a new CBD, with specific emphasis on science, technology, research and development functions (Xu and Ng, 1998; Gaubatz, 2005; Huang and Li, 2007). Consequently, the farmland of many villages was expropriated by the city government for urban expansion and the villages became ViCs. The creation of urban main roads, which were usually on the lines of previous farm machinery roads, in these former rural areas facilitated massive urban development. They improved the accessibility of remote areas and formed a new urban ground level as the new boundaries of the ViCs.

From 1985 to 1994, an area of 254 ha, 79.2 per cent of the total land of Shipai, was requisitioned by the city for new developments, including urban roads, new high-tech zones, software parks, scientific research centres, universities, real estate projects, hospitals, banks, hotels, shopping malls, and so on (Guangzhou Tianhe District Shipai Committee, 2003) (Figure 3.2). The new built-up areas in the previous field, generally with broad streets, large plots, and high-rise buildings, are distinct from the village settlement. Since 1994, Shipai Village has been devoid of farmland and enclosed by four urban roads, two of which were adapted from previous farm machinery roads. The location of Shipai Village has dramatically changed from a remote area to a central place in the city. It is
located 1.5 km away from the east of the new city axis and about 7 km from the east of the old city centre.

Its improved location has greatly enhanced its land value and increased job opportunities for the villagers (Figure 3.5). As a result, the collective stakeholders have created partnerships with private and public investors in collective projects, while villager households have co-operated with speculators or self-constructed their houses for rental purposes.

Figure 3.4 The changing territories of Shipai Village. Based on Annals of Shipai Village (Guangzhou Tianhe District Shipai Committee, 2003) and author’s field survey.
Figure 3.5 Distribution of major urban land uses. Based on author’s field survey.
2.2 The Development of Two Commercial Streets

In order to deal with the unemployment problem of peasants and facilitate land requisition smoothly, a special policy was developed in Guangzhou called the ‘Reserved Land Policy’ (liuyongdi zhengce) (Huang and Li, 2007). According to this policy, 8–12 per cent of requisitioned farmland has to be reserved for collective industrial and commercial developments. The collective has the ownership and the usage rights of this land, but it is not allowed to sell it. Many self-development projects, which were required to be developed by the villagers themselves but actually have been based on collective–private partnerships, have developed on the reserved land and some other areas of collective land. In order to deal with the considerable amount of collective property, the role of the collective organization was regulated during the 1990s. The shareholding co-operation company (which manages collective property at the village level) and several economic unions (which manage the collective property of a group of villagers) became the new stakeholders. They function as intermediaries between the city and Shipai village during the land requisition process and manage the collective projects.

As the farmland of Shipai village was taken by the city government piece by piece, the reserved land became fragmented and mixed with urban land uses (Figure 3.3). The majority of it is concentrated around the geographical periphery of the village settlement, especially along two existing commercial streets (Shipai West Street and Shipai East Street), which have good connections with urban facilities and services. With this new level of accessibility, Tianhe Technology Street (Figure 3.5) near to a specialist technological university and several science research institutions, began to flourish. Such development also spread into Shipai West Street during the 1990s. However, due to limited capital and capacity to operate the self-development projects, in 1993 the collective organizations adopted the strategy of negotiating 20-year contracts with developers. According to these contracts, developers can invest in construction on collective land, but they must pay land rent to the collective organizations each year. This informal co-operation has major advantages. On the one hand, for the investors, construction is much cheaper on collective land than on urban land, where there is a requirement to pay urban service and facility fees. They can also use the cheap housing of the villagers as warehouses and dormitories. On the other hand, the collective’s income increases significantly without taking a large investment risk.

As a result, many computer towns and numerous IT product shops have been constructed on both sides of Shipai Western Street, the north borderline of the village, and the surrounding urban areas. Today, Shipai village become the biggest computer distribution center in Guangzhou and South China. The service is apparently beyond the boundary of Shipai village, covering a large area of the city and even a region.
The forms and characteristics of these types of collective projects are often comparable to those of urban areas, as they obey similar criteria and instruments. Adjacent to urban roads and often limited by plot boundaries, the ‘tower-podium’ building, which combines commercial, residential and office functions, is common in these projects. A typical case is the Pacific Computer Town Complex (taipingyang diannaocheng). Located at the north entrance of Shipai West Street, this consists of two buildings occupying both sides of the street and connected by a high-level corridor. The third floor of the podium is commonly used as an IT market, while the floors above are for office use. With the success of IT shops

Figure 3.6 (A) Self-development projects on both sides of Shipai East Street; (B) multi-storey commercial complexes on the east side of the street; (C) buildings on the west side of the street. Based on author’s field survey.
and ‘computer towns’ the old infrastructure became inadequate to service the increasing volume of traffic. Shipai West Street was widened from a previous farm machinery road about 6 metres across to a four-lane urban road of around 16 metres in width in 1995. The project was co-financed by the collective organizations of Shipai Village, and the city government. However, even today the street remains overcrowded, as it functions not only as a parking place for the IT markets, but also as a main urban road.

Shipai East Street was also widened from a previous farm machinery road to a four-lane urban road to meet development demands. Today, there are more than 100 shops (including clothes shops, restaurants, and shopping malls) along the street. The majority of the structures are owned by the collective organizations. Influenced by the pre-existing farm machinery roads, lanes, and plot and pond boundaries (Figure 3.2), narrow buildings, of different lengths, have been produced on the west side of the street (Figure 3.6). The buildings usually have mixed functions, the ground floor being used for commercial activity and the upper floors for residential use. The building facades and materials are similar to those of the village settlement. However, this small and secondary development hasn’t extended to the other side of the street, where multi-storey commercial complexes have been created. These evidences suggest that the west side of the street might be seen as a fixation line made by a plan seam (Conzen, 1969), composed of either the tails or sides of various plots within the edge of the village settlement, and the east side of the street with distinct ground plan and architecture types would appear to be outside the village settlement.

Supported by the increasing income from the self-development projects, the collective organizations financed the construction of public buildings and the upgrading of infrastructure in the village settlement. The dirt roads were replaced by cement concrete roads, with drainage alongside them. Several small alleyways were also widened and became village main roads. Some modern public buildings and spaces (including the elder activity centre, the village primary school and kindergarten, gardens, sports centres, the culture activity centre, etc.) were constructed on empty collective land or former ponds, dispersed within the village settlement (Figure 3.7B). Clan temples were renovated and protected by both the clans and the collective organizations.
Figure 3.7 (A) Informal economic activity along village main roads; (B) public spaces and facilities; (C) road networks. Based on authors’ field surveys and Annals of Shipai village (Guangzhou Tianhe District Shipai Committee, 2003).
3. Migrants and Building Reconstructions in the Village Settlement

With the city development of Guangzhou and the self-development of Shipai village since the 1990s, a massive influx of migrants to work in the computer towns and surrounding service sectors took place. However, the majority of them have been unable to acquire urban household registration (urban hukou) and have thus not had access to formal housing, education, employment, and social welfare (Jie and Taubmann, 2002; Zhang, 2005; Wu, 2005). The city government recognizes them only as ‘temporary’ workers and assumes that they will eventually return to their places of origin. Villager households, who lost their farmlands during the urbanization process, have used this as an opportunity to offer cheap housing to the migrants. Given the huge demand for housing and the relatively low supply, the quality of what is on offer has inevitably not been high. As the level of immigration continues to rise, the pressure to find space in the village settlement has become extreme.

Building reconstructions, depending on the traditional spatial layout as its “morphological frame”, have been occurred over the village settlement. New forms and additions have been adapted to new functions. Three-storey brick and concrete buildings have been replaced by five- to eight-storey beam-framed buildings with cantilevered constructions and new floors. The traditional courtyard has disappeared, while the new architectural façade is a mixture of indigenous and Western characteristics. For example, some buildings have Chinese curve roofs and western ornaments on walls. Many village main roads and alleyways have been blocked and narrowed by the newly added constructions (Figure 3.7C). The ‘handshake and kissing buildings’ street profile (a tiny distance of about 50 cm between two facing balconies) has become the typical new form (Figure 3.8). There are no detailed regulations for development control in the ViC. The densification of the village settlement reflects not only speculative development, driven by maximum profitability, but also the demand for migrant housing. A house, with six floors each measuring a mere 8 by 10 metres and often divided into four small units, frequently houses about 50 people. One block with an area of 1.57 ha has 80 such tiny houses crammed into it, amounting to 1,900 small units and housing approximately 3,800 people. Consequently, a considerable number of rooms are without sunlight and have very poor ventilation.

As a result of these processes, Shipai village has become the densest ViC in Guangzhou, with a population density of more than 100,000 people per km² and a building density of above 70 percent. Although the total area of Shipai village is only 0.7 km², 3,384 houses with a total floor area of 1,019,719 m², provide dormitories for 70-80,000 migrants and about 10,000 villagers. Migrants have become the main inhabitants of Shipai village. In 2008, 45 per cent of them were engaged in IT industry; 35 per cent serviced in restaurants and shops in the surrounding urban areas; 15 per cent serviced in the village (mainly self-
employed in small shops (see below)); and 5 per cent were unemployment (Ling and Xing, 2008). There are more than 1,000 small shops (including restaurants, drugstores, supermarkets, electric appliance stores and shambles) and booths concentrated in four open markets and several village main roads (Figure 3.7A and 3.9). These shops are often run informally, frequently based more on social networks. However, they provide cheap daily services for migrants and villagers. Buildings have been changed to accommodate these new functions. The ground floors of villagers’ houses, which were once utilized as living rooms with a small entrance and windows, have since been adapted for commercial use and transformed into shop-front buildings. In the past few years, we also observed that many new shops were established along the village main roads, attracting a large number of customers who worked in computer towns and other service sectors at the periphery of Shipai village (Figure 3.10). Consequently, these roads which were usually narrow tended to be overcrowded. It seems that they are strategic places, where specific actions that strengthen the connections between the ViC and the surrounding urban areas and deal with economic opportunities and problems (poor infrastructure, overcrowding, and so on) take place.

With the growing numbers of migrants in Shipai village, the existing public facilities become inadequate. As a result, most of migrants are excluded by the majority of public facilities (such as sport centers, culture activity centers and activity centers of the elderly), which are already overcrowded by villagers (Figure 3.11). Only a few public spaces (such as parks) are open to them (Figure 3.12). Although these spaces are rare, they are very lively, full of children, the elderly and women. Open spaces are spaces of social exchange, platforms for the communication of migrants and villagers. In order to achieve social and spatial inclusion in the village, it seems that more public facilities and spaces should be provided for migrants.
Figure 3.8 “Kissing” housing profile (authors’ photograph, 2008).
Figure 3.9 Booths along a village main road (author’s photograph, 2008)

Figure 3.10 New shops were established along a village main road (author’s photograph, 2008)
Figure 3.11 Sports center excluding migrants (author’s photograph, 2008)

Figure 3.12 A park is open to both migrants and villagers (author’s photograph, 2008)
4. The Relocation of Villagers

As high density and overcrowding has led to deterioration of the residential environment, many villager households have moved out and ‘purchased’ apartments from the collective company. These new forms of housing are provided by the anju (decent living) projects on the reserved land, small plots which intersect with urban land uses. Outside the village settlement, they are the examples of new forms created in the new morphological period. The projects have been encouraged by the governing bodies of the city, as they are planning to requisition the village settlement for new development, following the relocation of the villagers. Co-financed by the collective company and villager households, the first of these projects was finished in 2000, occupies a total area of 7,508 m², and provides housing for 520 villager households. It is a podium-tower building, with the ground and first floors for commercial use, the second floor for office use, and six residential towers above for the villagers’ apartments. Since 2001, a second project comprising three smaller sub-projects, has been developed on the reserved land in Pearl River New Town (Zhujiang Xincheng). Two 30-storey high-rise buildings with underground parking have been constructed in each of the sub-projects.

Adjacent to urban areas and well connected to urban roads, the villagers’ apartments are physically indistinguishable from other apartments. Nevertheless, the land is still owned by the collective and the apartments cannot, theoretically, be sold. These projects are more functionally-orientated in their nature and based on Western rationality and logic, allowing the integration of different purposes (dwelling, commerce, and open space) in both vertical and horizontal directions. The resulting street patterns and building types are clearly different from those of the village settlement.

5. A Large-Scale Redevelopment Project

Alongside the relocation of villagers, a large-scale redevelopment project has been taking place since 2004. On the one hand, large-scale urban projects are used as a marketing tool at the local level for the purpose of attracting investment and increasing GDP. On the other hand, due to the problem of overcrowding, informal and deficient spatial structure and high crimes rates, ViCs are criticized by public authorities and professionals for their negative impact on the modern image of a city (Zhao, 2008). City governments are planning to requisition the collective land of ViCs for new development (Li, et al. 2004).

To reduce the problem of overcrowding in Shipai West Street and promote further development of the village, the Tianhe Economic and Trade Bureau drew up a working project for the renewal and promotion of the IT wholesale market place of Shipai in 2003. This working project was ambitious in aiming to improve the IT wholesale market of Shipai into an international wholesale market for IT
products. Based on this project, the redevelopment project of Shipai (2004) aims to convert the village settlement into a mixture of modern residential areas, integrated commercial areas for IT products, other commercial-use areas, and public spaces (Li et al., 2004) (Figure 3.13). Firstly, the small buildings will be placed by skyscrapers for resettling villagers and for rental purposes. Secondly, Shipai East Street will be enhanced as a district-level commercial street, along with the construction of podium-tower buildings and large modern squares. Thirdly, a new street next to Shipai West Street will be upgraded for parking, distribution, exhibition, restaurants, and so on. In addition, four clan temples also will be preserved and expanded as centres for the villagers. Around 35 per cent of the total area has been allocated as green or public space. The proposals are indicative of the fact that the city intends to ‘normalize’ the informal space of Shipai village, integrating it into the general urban fabric.

However, this project has yet to be approved by the municipal government, due mainly to the conflicts of interest among various stakeholders. According to the detailed plan of Tianhe district, three urban roads will pass through Shipai village. However, the city government will not invest in their construction and propose that the profits of the project can cover this expenditure. Furthermore, Shipai village has not agreed to self-finance the project. To fund it, more commercial areas and office space (around 40 per cent of the total architectural floor area) with a very high FAR (the ratio of total building floor area of buildings on a certain location to the size of the land of that location) of 5.4 are planned.

According to the chief planner (source: interview, 5 March 2008), this project does actually represent the best interests of Shipai village. The collective company plays a key role in the decision-making, negotiations with planners, and communication with the villagers. Many meetings, attended by villagers’ representatives, have been organized by both the planners and the collective company. Villagers’ representatives are satisfied with the project, as rental income and collective property could be enhanced following the redevelopment. The district government, which consigned the project to the planner, approved of the project; however, the municipal planning bureau has not yet authorized it. One of the reasons for this is said to be that the municipal government does not trust the ViC and has a negative opinion of it (again, according to the chief planner). As a 6.8 FAR of the initial land seems very high, the municipal bureau is concerned that the ViC may reclaim this land and leave other land undeveloped, thus allowing the villagers to again bargain with the city government.
Figure 3.13 (A) The spatial layout of Shipai village (B) Regulatory Planning of Guangzhou in 2006 (prepared by Guangzhou Urban Planning Bureau); (C) Redevelopment Project of Shipai village (Li et al., 2004).
This market-led redevelopment project would fundamentally destroy the existing spatial layout, which contains social networks, small-scale shopping streets, intimate public places, and opportunities for small businesses. The cheap and informal services (for example, warehouses, dormitories, and restaurants for the computer towns) would be replaced by expensive and formal urban services. The proximity of employment, entitlement and amenities, which is crucial for low-income migrants and urban newcomers, as well as the mixed land use pattern, would also be destroyed. Without the cheap services and labour, it is not clear that the project would promote development of the area as a commercial centre for IT products.

6. Conclusion

Until today, morphological analysis has been mainly applied in Western contexts and surely the more precise morphological instruments and tools, such as morphological frames and morphological periods, are not yet systematically tested in the context of China. In this paper they have been explored in a study on the morphological transformation of Shipai village in Guangzhou, China. The mosaic structure of what used to be the village (including the spatial forms of village settlement, requisitioned land and reserved land) has been produced overtime through the superimposition of different planning processes in different morphological periods. The layout of the traditional rural settlement, the field pattern and collective property boundaries served as a ‘morphological framework’ for subsequent rapid development. Building reconstructions in the village settlement were plugged into the existing traditional spatial layout. The new building type indeed accommodates more habitants by adding cantilevered constructions and new floors. Shipai East Street and Shipai West Street were widened. The previous farm machinery roads were converted into urban roads. Also in the development of the area adjacent to the village settlement (such as on the west side of Shipai East Street), the traditional spatial layout and the previous field pattern determined the new spatial pattern. The villager’s apartment projects, outside the village settlement, are the examples of new forms created in the new morphological period.

The morphological transformation of Shipai village over time was greatly influenced by the changing management structures in the village. These structures range from local grassroots organizations to the quasi-government – the brigade – and then to the collective company that combines economic, social and political functions. Also the emergence of new stakeholders have their impact as well as the changing relationships between the village and the city – from one of separation to one in which the village is encompassed by urban expansion. The interactions between key stakeholders in multiple networks, who invest in material projects and who give meaning to the qualities of places, have played substantial roles in this morphological transformation process. Migrant households have contributed greatly to both the city development and the self-
development of the village. However, the market-led redevelopment project does not provide homes for them. The existing spatial pattern can be seen as a container of social networks and economic opportunities. It also must be noted that Shipai village is now characterized by a proximity to urban services. There are multi-relationships between urban areas and the village. All these qualities and advantages will be destroyed in the proposed formal and rational redevelopment project. The state is in a certain way renounces to its role, as it does not compensate for the inequalities generated through market exchange. It does not sufficiently take up its role in redistribution (for example, by providing public services for low income migrants). Therefore, intensive cooperation between and coproduction by various stakeholders (multi-level government, private sectors, institutions of ‘the third realm’, villager and migrant households) will probably be necessary in order to achieve a more sustainable redevelopment of Shipai in economic, political, social, cultural and spatial terms.

The morphological transformation of Shipai village demonstrates the importance of the roles and interrelations of key stakeholders. For this reason, it could be of interest to synthesize the evolutionary approach that traces existing forms back to the underlying formative processes and interpreting them accordingly (Cozen, 1969) with the urban project approach, where the roles of and interrelations between various stakeholders in the production of space are a major concern. They seem to be complementary approaches, the former relating it to historical reading of physical forms, the latter relating it to spatial interventions that come at ‘a crucial juncture between past work on the existing city and the more down to earth future tasks of urban regeneration, infrastructure improvement and managing entire urban areas’ (Masboungi, 2002). A profound understanding of the existing spatial form, which is generated out of the original frame and subsequent interventions and contributions of key stakeholders, is very instructive and could consequently be very helpful to come to an integrated intervention that marries spatial cohesion and social equity.
Chapter 4

The Role of Key Stakeholders in the Bottom-up Planning Processes of Tangxia Village

Abstract

This chapter explores the interplay between the state, the market, and society in the morphological transformation and bottom-up planning processes of Tangxia Village. It firstly discusses the socio-spatial structure of the traditional rural settlement, which formed the original layer of Tangxia Village. Then, an analysis demonstrates how urban development and self-development of Tangxia intertwine with each other, and how they superimpose on and change the traditional spatial layer. Various new stakeholders during the period of reform have played key roles in this complex process. Furthermore, it highlights “the new alley movement”, which has originated from the acute needs of this ViC and emerged from the actions of a multitude of stakeholders. In addition, it discusses redevelopment strategies of ViCs and lessons from the case study. The chapter concludes that the morphological transformation of Tangxia Village has been greatly influenced by the interplay of three key stakeholders: the state, the market, and society. It is also the by-product of ad hoc answers to emergencies and the historical morphologic structure. Finally, it substantiates the argument that an integration of bottom-up processes and micro-strategies would strengthen the performance and efficiency of redevelopment strategies for Tangxia Village.

1. A Clan-Based Society and its Spatial Reality

With a history of eight hundred years, Tangxia Village was once a traditional village. It was far away from Guangzhou and connected with it by a city road. It comprised three adjacent villages (Dashan, Shangshe, and Xinxu) (Figure 4.1). Each village had a cluster of residential quarters, surrounded by farmland. In the middle of the 20th century, Tangxia Village covered an area of 6 km². Due to the civil war, and poor medical treatment, the population increased very slowly, and there were only about 700 villager households, with an average number of 4–5 people per household.

The spatial structure of the traditional village in China was not only influenced by social regime, family organization, culture, and mode of production, but also by nature and available materials (Lu and Yang 2004). Taking Dashan (Figures 4.1), the biggest village of Tangxia Village, for example, it comprised three clan-families that were spatially dominant in three main areas of the village. Each clan-family was organized by its clan elder-authority organization (Zulaotuan) (Guangzhou Tianhe District Tangxia Committee 2003). This organization owned
Figure 4.1 Tangxia Village comprised three adjacent villages and the ground plan of Dashan ((based on an unpublished map of Guangzhou in 1978 prepared by Guangzhou Urban Planning & Design Survey Research Institute)
Figure 4.2 The spatial analysis of Dashan in 1978 (author’s drawing)
and managed a considerable amount of the clan collective farmland, the income of which was used for the construction of collective facilities (ancestral halls, schools etc.) and the financing of clan activities. It also participated in the village’s plan and supervised the construction of housing for villagers. As the ancestral halls were regarded as the most important collective places for clan sacrifices, festivals, and lawsuits (Lu and Yang 2004), most of them concentrated along village main roads, and together with ponds and squares, formed several sub-centers of the village (Figure 4.2). On the periphery of the village settlement, there were also several ponds and rivers, which were for secure and irrigative purposes.

In the rural areas of Guangzhou, a big family was often divided into several small households when the children married. Consequently, a great majority of buildings in Tangxia Village were small in size, with the household lot limited to 50–60 m². Many houses were in poor condition and housed several generations of one family. Grey brick walls and tiled roofs were common, with some houses displaying the classic house pattern called sanjianlianglang, which had two small rooms on either side of a central courtyard and three adjacent rooms at the rear of the house (Guangzhou Tianhe District Tangxia Committee 2003). Fire prevention often led to a narrow space of about 30–50 cm between buildings, and, due to the spatial concentration of the extended family, compounds were sometimes formed by the aggregation of these small houses. The houses were often in rows, separated by alleyways (1–2 m in width). The dense and compact structure was well adapted to local weather and the environment, generating welcome shadow for people in the alleyways, while the strong connection between alleyways and courtyards facilitated ventilation (Lu and Yang 2004).

2. Eight New Village Projects

After a series of land reforms from the 1950s to the 1980s, both clan and private land became collectively-owned land, managed by the collective organizations (both the village’s committee and several economic unions). They were the institutions of “the third realm” (Huang 1993), participated by both the state and society. They could possess, use, and benefit from the ownership of land, but did not have the right to dispose of it. Each household could acquire a piece of residential land (Zhaijidi) for self-help housing from the collective organizations, but could not sell or rent it out. Only the city government had the right to requisition the collective lands for urban expansion. In such cases, compensation for the price of the collective land, the crops, and any constructions on the land, had to be paid.

From 1965 to 1990, the population of villagers in Tangxia Village had almost doubled, from 3881 to 6012 (Guangzhou Tianhe District Tangxia Committee 2003). On the one hand, the productivity of villager households increased greatly,
Figure 4.3 (A) Meiyuan new village; (B) eight new villages were developed around the three original villages at the end of the 1970s and in the 1980s. Based on Annals of Tangxia Village and an unpublished map of Guangzhou prepared by Guangzhou Urban Planning & Design Survey Research Institute.
a fact largely attributable to the new household responsibility system, in which villager households were responsible for the profits and losses of their agricultural production. On the other hand, a considerable amount of farmland was requisitioned by the city government for urban expansion. Villagers who lost their farmland received some compensation, many of them then engaging in the secondary and tertiary industries, which in fact raised their earnings to a level above what they were receiving when working in agriculture.

Given the demographic pressure, and in order to meet the demand by peasants in the 1970s and 1980s for high quality dwellings and a good local environment, eight new village projects were developed on several collective plots that were adjacent to the old villages (Figure 4.3). Compared Figure 4.2 with Figure 4.9, we recognized that the new and old villages of Dashan were separated by the previous pond boundaries and river banks, which might be seen as “fixation lines” (Conzen 1960) that limited the expansion of old villages. With a total area of 20 ha, the projects provided 1,711 houses for the new villager households. Each rectangular plot of residential land was about 80 m² in size and arranged in a grid structure. The alleyways between two rows of houses ran parallel and were widened to 3–4 m to allow for easy access of motor vehicles. As in the traditional settlements, the narrow space between two houses was again adopted, providing a space of 30–50 cm between buildings for fire prevention purposes. Both brick walls and reinforced concrete structures were used in the load bearing system, with two- and three-storey houses being commonplace. All told, this unified plan provided better dwellings and a better environment for the villagers.

The projects were outlined by the urban construction office (chengjianban) of the village committee. Houses were often designed and constructed by both peasants and native builders. Through interviews with authorities in the urban construction office on 2 April 2008 and reading maps of Tangxia Village (Figure 4.3), we suggested that there were two basic ideas in the planning and design of the new villages. On the one hand, the plan was guided by the residential land policy and influenced by the new role of collective stakeholders, which attempted to distribute equal residential plots to each household and maximize the use of collective land. On the other hand, it was probably influenced by the adjacent traditional spatial layouts that had dense and compact structures.

3. Urban Expansion and Self-Development

In 1985, the new district of Tianhe (once a rural area with several villages, including Tangxia Village etc.), was issued as an additional city district in the east of Guangzhou. Taking advantage of the coming 6th National Games in 1986, many large-scale urban projects were developed. According to the 15th master plan, Tianhe District would be developed into a new CBD, with specific emphasis
Figure 4.4 The 14th master plan of Guangzhou City (1981-2000).
on science, technology, research, and development (Xu and Ng 1998; Gaubatz 2005) (Figure 4.4). Six kilometers away from the new CBD center, a lot of farmland of Tangxia Village was requisitioned for the construction of urban infrastructure, a low-income housing neighborhood, a high-technology industrial park, and several real estate projects. Urban roads were usually on the lines of the pre-existing farm machinery roads (Figure 4.5) or on the (previous) river banks (Figure 4.2); while the new built-up area, with broad streets and modern towers, was distinct from the village settlement. Until 2000, the remaining total area of Tangxia Village shrank to less than 2 km², while farmland reduced to less than 33 ha (Guangzhou Tianhe District Tangxia Committee 2003). Surrounded by urban areas and with very little farmland, Tangxia Village became one of the typical ViCs in Guangzhou.

Figure 4.5 (A) the original territory of Tangxia Village; (B) the land use distribution of Tangxia Village in 2002. Author’s drawing, based on Annals of Tangxia Village).
However, the (re)construction of four main urban roads and the establishment of Tianhe Science Park brought a lot of opportunities for Tangxia Village. On the one hand, the enlargement of Guangshen Railway, Zhongshan Road and Huangpu Road, as well as the construction of Guangyuan Highway, strengthened its connection with the new CBD; while on the other hand, more than 100 high-tech enterprises and exhibition centers were established in Tianhe Science Park. These not only generated many commercial opportunities, but also caused the individual-housing rental market in Tangxia Village to flourish. In this sense, we could argue that the proximity and accessibility of public facilities and other types of urban land use actually enhanced the land value of Tangxia Village, bringing job opportunities for the inhabitants. The developments of the village in turn contribute to urban development. For example, several large-scale specialized markets (such as steels product markets, decorating material markets, and electrical equipment markets) were established on the collective lands and serve the city. The construction of a Best Fresh Supermarket in 1997, which occupied an area of 55,000 square meters, has also greatly promoted the development of the surrounding areas (Guangzhou Tianhe District Tangxia Committee 2003).

In order to deal with the unemployment problem of peasants and to facilitate the smooth requisition of land, a special policy, named the “Reserved Land Policy” (liudongdi zhengce) (Huang and Li 2007), was introduced in Guangzhou. According to this policy, 8–12% of requisitioned farmland has to be reserved for the collective industrial and commercial development of the village. Villagers can use and benefit from the reserved land, but are not allowed to sell it. Many self-development projects have developed on the reserved land in Tangxia Village. Since the 1990s, the collective company (which manages the collective property at the village level) and several economic unions (which manage the collective property of a group of villagers) have become the new collective organizations, involving heavily in the self-development projects and providing collective goods for the villagers.

With the compensation from requisitioned land, the collective company established two industrial zones on reserved land (Guangzhou Tianhe District Tangxia Committee 2003). In the early 1990s, these industrial zones contained more than 100 enterprises, including technology companies, papermaking factories, garment manufacturers, motor repair shops etc. The economic unions also developed small projects on their reserved land. Due to the limited capital and capacity to operate the self-development projects, the collective organizations often partner foreign and domestic private enterprises in the investments they make. Through site visit in September 2009, we recognized that a considerable number of collective projects concentrated on reserved land or other collective land, which were adjacent to urban roads (Figure 4.6). These projects focused on the development of manufacturing businesses and small shops. They were based on collective-private partnerships, the collective organization leasing the land, the private sector investing in the construction of buildings. However, due to the
decline in labor-intensive industry in recent years, many buildings were vacant or in poor condition. It seems that new development strategies are needed for the redevelopment of or upgrading these areas.

4. Villager’s Apartment Projects

Due to the requisition of land for urban expansion and the self-development projects which have taken place on reserved land, very little collective land remains for residential development. Of that which does remain, most of it is fragmented and intersects with collective and urban land. This lack of land for residential development, combined with enormous population pressure, has encouraged a very concentrated approach to construction. In 1995, the first “villagers’ apartment project” (cunmin gongyu) was developed by the fourth economic union (Guangzhou Tianhe District Tangxia Committee 2003). It included two nine-storey apartment buildings and the project was co-financed by

Figure 4.6 (A) the poor condition of a factory; (B) an old garment manufacturer; (C) the ground plan of several collective projects along an urban road. Base on author’s fieldwork.
villager households and their economic union. This action was confirmed and encouraged by the collective company and the district government, and consequently twenty similar projects were developed on the collective land of Tangxia Village by fifteen economic unions. In total, these projects covered an area of 38.3 hectares.

The villagers’ apartment projects provide successful and high-quality modern dwellings for villagers at a very low price, as their construction on collective land is exempt from many different types of construction-related fees. Often near main urban roads and with convenient access, many of the buildings are residential and commercial complexes, combining commercial functions on the ground and first floors. Clusters of buildings often have an internal collective garden, and there is also open space on the roofs of commercial areas. The planning of these projects reflects a rather functional approach and seems inspired by the western concept of rationality and logic. They integrate dwellings, commercial areas and open space in one complex. The resulting street pattern and building typology are very distinct from the fabric of old and new villages (Figure 4.7).

5. Migrants and the Densification of Old and New Villages
During the 1970s and 1980s, many traditional houses with dilapidated brick walls and tile roofs were replaced by new houses with reinforced concrete structures. The new developments on both requisitioned and reserved land attracted a mass of rural migrants and urban newcomers. The majority of rural migrants took temporary work in labor-intensive factories and the service sector, often only employed for short periods and on informal contracts, while most urban newcomers were employed in Tianhe Science Park and other urban enterprises in the surrounding areas. As the city failed to supply cheap housing for these people, existing villagers took the opportunity to redevelop their houses for rental purposes. Consequently, migrants and urban newcomers became the main inhabitants of Tangxia Village. In 1993, 8,000 tenants already outnumbered the 6,000 villagers, while in 2000, the number of tenants reached 30,000, five times more than the number of villagers (Guangzhou Tianhe District Tangxia Committee 2003).

From the 1990s to the present day, the building reconstructions, depending on the previous small ground plan and narrow alleyways as its “morphological frame” (conzen, 1960), have been occurred over the old and new villages (Figure 4.8 and 4.9). New forms and additions have been created to adapt new functions. The villagers have extruded their small one- to three-storey houses into four or five storeys, sometimes even seven.

Many have also added cantilevered floors in order to maximize space. Consequently, the traditional spatial layout has been distorted by the new cantilevered construction in the horizontal direction and the new floors in the vertical direction. There is often now only a tiny distance of about 50 cm between two facing balconies, meaning the “handshake and kissing building” street profile has become the new morphological prototypical condition (Figure 4.10). As a result, the streets are narrow, the risk of fire is high, and a large number of houses lack sufficient sunlight and ventilation. The new architectural typology is said to be functionally-oriented and styled, but in truth is lacking in style and, above all, is speculative, substandard housing. The traditional courtyard has disappeared in the new houses, and their architectural façades are a mixture of indigenous and Western characteristics.

In the past few years, we observed that peasants’ houses gradually “grew up” to accommodate the growing numbers of migrants and new graduates who were attached by new developments in the surrounding urban areas (Figure 4.11). Many new shops were also established along several village main roads that connected to urban roads and were overcrowded by pedestrians, bicycle, and cars (Figure 4.12). Furthermore, about 10 private migrant children schools were dispersed through this village. Excluded by public schools in the city, migrants turn to private migrant children schools, which rely on reciprocity and market mechanisms (see chapter 2). However, poor access to state redistribution caused many schools to fall into disrepair and be shut down by local governments.
Figure 4.8 The ground plan of previous Dashan (based on an unpublished map of Guangzhou in 2008, prepared by Guangzhou Planning Bureau).
Figure 4.9 The spatial analysis of previous Dashan in 2008 (author’s drawing)
Figure 4.10 Cantilevered construction and “handshake and kissing building” street profile (author’s photograph, 2007)
Figure 4.11 New constructions in Tangxia village (author’s photograph, 2007)

Figure 4.12 A village main road in Tangxia village (author’s photograph, 2007)
Today, these types of speculative developments are severely criticized by city governments, professionals and citizens (Zhang 2005; Zhao 2008). Such constructions have been branded “illegal” and their substandard quality censured. However, the truth is that there are no detailed regulations for development in the village. Since 1987, a national land policy has been in force which stipulates that each household can only own one piece of residential land, the area of which is according to city regulations. This is the only existing directive. Moreover, it should be noted that there is also a common failure of city governments to provide sufficient cheap housing and provide service for low income groups (migrants and urban newcomers) during periods of rapid urbanization (Zhang 2005). Consequently, the villagers, who are no longer able to make a living through agriculture, take the opportunity to develop housing for these people.

6. The “New Alley Movement” and the Informal Sector

Our fieldwork shows that a new type of bottom-up approach, which upgrades housing based on the existing spatial structure of Tangxia Village, has been developed by informal property management companies. These “companies” usually start by renting down a few houses from villagers with informal contracts, although peasant houses are not allowed to be rented and sold. They improve the outside environment, paving, and plating, as well as enclose the communities using fences and gates (Figure 4.13). Each floor of the house is divided into several small apartments or rooms. On other occasions, they might rent down former factory’s dormitories and renew their interiors. Besides upgrading the physical environment, they also improve the “soft” environment, for example by adding closed-circuit television in the watchman room and installing an internet connection. As a result, the rent easily doubles in these new communities. However, urban newcomers are not put off by this expense, appreciating the safety and nice environment of these places. These upgraded communities are mainly scattered among the new villages, where the housing quality and environment are better than in the old villages. According to Mr. Yan (the manager of a property management company, interview, March 2008), 150 upgraded houses (10% of the total number of houses in Tangxia) with 5,000 small apartments in the new communities were almost the maximum number of houses to meet the market demand. However, the increasing cost of rent in Tangxia also limited the profitability of such projects, and thus the companies tended to shift their investments to other ViCs located in more remote areas of Guangzhou, with cheaper and newer houses.

The operation of these companies is informal and based on social networks. They tend to be comprised of a group of kin migrants, who co-finance the upgrading projects and share the income and risk of the companies. Instead of paying taxes to the state as formal companies do, they pay administrative fees to the street office (an agency of urban governments). Through interviews with some managers of these companies, we recognized that it is difficult for them to pay
taxes and employ staff in the formal labor market, mainly because the projects make such small profits. It seems that the approach of these projects is a collective action on the part of certain groups of migrants and villagers; it is an upgrading of the ViC. The companies have called this action the “new alley movement” (xinlinong yundong). They want to create a more positive image of ViCs, tackling the criticism they receive from the media, and from politicians and professionals, who often cite the “kissing housing”, the overcrowding, and the unsafe environment.

Figure 4.13 (A) the distribution of upgraded buildings (author’s drawing); (B) the roof garden of a former factory’s dormitory (author’s photograph, 2007); (C) the paving alleyway and gate of a upgraded community (author’s photograph, 2007).
The informal companies embody some basic characteristics of “civil society” (for example, self-organization beyond the realms of state control) (White, Howell and Shang 1996). However, the speculative purpose of the actions of these companies cannot be denied. According to an architect who involved in some of the projects (interview, April 2008), the companies “illegally” constructed some houses in order to pursue the highest interest, or balance costs and benefits. For example, they might add attic floors without considering whether they could be supported structurally, and in this sense the developments were no less speculative than the “illegal” constructions of the villagers. Through visiting several project sites, we also recognized that the upgraded community seemed to be a new type of gated community. It was well organized on the inside, but separated from other areas. Enclosing the community means that several alleyways were blocked by fences on both sides and people could no longer pass through them. Nevertheless, Mr. Wen argued that there was motivation for such segregation in the form of security issues, and that they also resulted from a lack of efficient and legal planning regulation at the ViC level for them to follow (interview, April 2008).

7. Redevelopment Strategies of ViCs and Lessons from the Case Study

Notwithstanding ViCs provide affordable accommodations for rural migrants in many Chinese cities, the majority of existing planning approaches of ViCs are based on a “demolition-redevelopment” model, which is dominant by market mechanism and provide no home for low-income rural migrants (Zhang, 2005). Our fieldwork in Guangzhou (interviews with public authorities, developers, villagers, migrants etc.) shows that many redevelopment projects of ViCs, that aim to replace the existing spatial layout with modern towers and big infrastructure, actually have not gone beyond the initial study stage, with the lack of realization caused by conflicts of interest among various stakeholders. Firstly, the municipal governments are unwilling and incapable to invest in the reconstruction of ViCs, proposing that the profits of the redevelopment projects can cover the expenditure. Secondly, villagers are worried that they could not acquire enough compensation and might conflict with city governments. Thirdly, it is difficult for formal developers to invest in the projects themselves, as they have to make large investment, paying for resettlement compensations, construction costs and various charges.

One of the important lessons from the case study is that, rather than “demolition-redevelopment” approaches which are lack of productive, “the new alley movement” might represent some flexible methods for ViCs’ upgrading. The small-scale improvement of ViCs based on social network seems more effective, while dealing with financial problems, stakeholder agreements and implementation activities. Upgrading the existing housings and infrastructures seems as a low-cost solution for creating a nice living environment in the ViCs. However, the approaches of these projects are still problematic. On the one hand,
the upgraded communities are tightly knit within but largely segmented and isolated from others, due to the lack of efficient and legal planning regulation at the ViC level for various stakeholders to follow. On the other hand, a large amount of low-income migrants still remain excluded from these communities due to the rising prices. Therefore, the involvement of the state (for example, formulating agreements with stakeholders, subsidizing public infrastructure’s upgrading) is probably necessary in order to enhance spatial cohesion and social justice.

The case study also shows that the morphological transformation of Tangxia Village has been greatly influenced by both city development and self-development. The “informal” spatial structure of the ViC is related to spatial and economic development in the surrounding urban area. Without considering the interplay between ViCs/villages and cities, the master planning of ViCs/villages could be highly ideal and lack of effect. More attentions should be paid to redevelopment strategies that integrate infrastructure construction, industrial and commercial development in urban area, and, self-development and housing upgrading in ViCs/villages.

8. Conclusion

This chapter aims to explore the morphological transformation and bottom-up planning processes of Tangxia village. It shows that the mosaic structures of what used to be Tangxia Village have been produced and overlapped by different development processes. The previous physical and socio-economic characteristics provide a framework that influences the form of what is added or changed. The regular and dense structures of eight new villages were influenced by the existing compact structures of old villages. Buildings reconstructions and upgrading have been based on the existing small ground plan and narrow alleyways. Urban roads are usually on the lines of previous farm machinery roads and river banks, while groups of new buildings (for example, villagers’ apartment buildings) have also been created in the previous field.

The bottom-up planning processes of Tangxia Village also show that the importance of the roles and interrelationships of three key stakeholders (the state, the market, and society). The transformation of Tangxia Village has been steered by the changing roles of village organizations, from one of clan-based grassroots organization, to the quasi-government, the village committee, and thence to the collective company combined with economic, social and political functions. Besides the village organizations, the state and market stakeholders have also greatly influenced the spatial reconfiguration of Tangxia Village. Public and private investments on requisitioned land have enhanced the land value of Tangxia Village and contributed to self-development. In recent years, some informal organizations have reshaped and restructured on a daily basis the space in Tangxia Village. The organizations embody some basic characteristics of “civil
society”. However, the speculative purpose of the actions of these informal organizations cannot be denied. Furthermore, both villager and migrant households play important roles in the densification process of Tangxia Village. Although the speculative development of villager households are severely censured by public authorities, they actually meet the demand of mass migrants, who are institutionally and economically excluded by the urban housing system. Therefore, the role of the state is criticized, as it has provided few public services for mass low-income migrants and has been almost absent in the speculative development of Tangxia Village.

International experience has shown that partnerships of three stakeholders (the state, the market, and civil society) play key roles in ensuring the success of informal settlement upgrading (UN-HABITAT 2003). It strongly emphasizes the role of the state in poverty alleviation and service provision that can enhance social justice and equal redistribution. Rather than “demolition-redevelopment”, improving the existing infrastructure and providing new public services are low-cost and feasible solutions for transforming high-density informal settlements into green neighbourhood and integrating them into regular urban development (Silas 1984 and 1992, Conde and Magalhaes 2004). Much could be achieved to improve the living condition in ViCs, if there is a partnership between the state, the market, and society (institutions of the third realm, formal and informal organizations, and households) in upgrading the existing spatial structures of ViCs. The integration of bottom-up processes and micro-strategies would strengthen the performance and efficiency of redevelopment strategies of ViCs.
PART III: AN ATTEMPT AT AMENDING THE STRATEGIC URBAN PROJECT APPROACH FOR THE SUSTAINABLE REDEVELOPMENT OF “VILLAGES IN THE CITY”

Introduction

At this moment, China is characterized by a strong state, which invests massively in big infrastructure projects to support and maintain the booming economy. City governments use the “master planning” approach as a main tool in the development of urban areas. Attempting to transform cities into “modern cities”, the master planning approach for urban renewal stresses the need for a new urban order. One of the results is the commercial redevelopment of inner city dilapidated areas through demolition and clearance. However, the master planning approach and other conventional approaches have usually failed in the redevelopment of “villages in the city” in Guangzhou, due to the complex stakeholder environment and intricate development issues (see chapters 1, 2, 3, and 4). There is an urgent need of a new planning approach for the sustainable redevelopment of “villages in the city”.

Actually, the problematic of ViCs has a lot in common with the problematic of slum areas, dilapidated urban areas, and ghettos in developed and developing contexts, which since the 1970s have been the usual subjects of upgrading or urban renewal operations. This approach focuses on the role of key stakeholders, visions and actions, with an emphasis on spatial cohesion and social equity. It has the potentials to deal with the complex stakeholder environment and issues in ViCs. However, an adaptation in order to make the context responsive is required. Chapter 5 is a state of the art on the international urban project approach. Emphasis is given to the common themes of the project approach and several well-known case studies. Chapter 6 is the conclusion part. It adapts the urban project approach to the specific context of ViCs and finally develops proposals for the sustainable redevelopment of ViCs.
Chapter 5

Strategic Urban Project Approaches for Informal Settlement Upgrading

Abstract

The current international mode of urban development through the form of strategic and co-produced urban project becomes an important mode of urban (re)development in developed and developing contexts. The emergence of strategic urban projects can be seen as a particular response and challenge to the complex urban development conditions and the dynamic society in the past decades. In recent years, this approach has expanded its type of applications from flagship projects on key locations in Western cities to informal settlement upgrading in developing context. This expanding application of the urban project approach at the same time earmarks an evolution of the approach towards a greater inclusion of civil society in the coproduction of urban projects. This chapter is an attempt to discuss the applications of this approach in informal settlement upgrading in developing contexts.

1. From master planning approaches to strategic approaches

Before the 1970s, the state used the “master planning” approach as a main tool in the development of urban areas in developed and developing contexts. At the time, the role and power of governments and their resources were substantial and social, technical, scientific and spatial change was slower than today, so “plans” could be prepared and even at times implemented in a rather technocratic way (Van Den Broeck, 2004). Attempting to transform cities into “modern cities”, the master planning approach for urban renewal stressed the need for a new urban order. One of the results is the redevelopment of inner city slum areas through demolition and clearance. Eradication policies were widely used where squatters and tenants occupied land required for commercial redevelopment near the CBD or where their continued presence contradicted the requirements of the modern city. However, by the early seventies, modernization strategies were clearly running into trouble. It became clear that most cities in developing countries did not have the resources to sustain the high costs of monumental city centre redevelopment, the rapid expansion of motorways and infrastructure, the construction of new capital cities and high standard and highly subsidized housing and public facilities (Carmona and Burgess, 2001, p.20). The experience of American and many western countries in the middle of nineteen centuries also showed that the commercial redevelopment of low-income neighborhoods resulted in high waves of community protest and new social problems (Jacobs, 1961; Hall, 1988).
Since 1980s, there have been new development conditions and challenges. It is impossible for cities to overlook the effects of globalization, market liberalization and decentralization. The micro-economic strategies (market liberalization and structural adjustment policies) resulted in the growth of urban poverty and environmental degradation and the detrimental effects of urban violence and social disorder on urban efficiency, the urban image and the perceived quality of life (Carmona and Burgess, 2001). The master planning approaches were approved to be rather static, land-use oriented and largely unrealistic in their assessment of limited resources and rapid change (Van Den Broeck, 2004). Together with the changing role of the public sector and the lack of public finances, more and more, the private sector, developers and investors have brought with them market-led methods and techniques to influence and steer urban development. The participation of popular and community-based groups in project design, implementation and financial recovery was also identified as vital or increasing efficiency and ensuring full cost recovery and affordability. Citywide programs coproduced by multi-governments, the private sector and NGOs were widely proposed.

In Europe and many different countries, over recent decades, another mode of urban development through the form of strategic and coproduced urban project has become an important mode for (re)developing urban territories (Healey, 2006; De Meulder, Loeckx and Shannon, 2004; Carter, 2006, Salet, 2006; Loeckx, 2009). The strategic urban projects have sparked discussions regarding the difficult tensions between notions of “efficiency” and concerns with “equity” and “inclusion” (Vescina, 2007). As a generally recognized approach and used method in practice, the strategic urban project approach is expanding in recent years its type of applications from flagship projects (Swyngedow, 2005) on key locations in cities to vulnerable residential environments (urban renewal areas, slum areas, etc.) on the one side and from Western Europe and North America to developing contexts (for example, Favela-Bairro program in Rio de Janeiro and Kampung Improvement Program in Surabaya). The expanding application of the urban project approach at the same time earmarks an evolution of the approach towards a greater inclusion of civil society in the coproduction of urban projects (Healy, 2006).

Consequently, the strategic urban project approach is widely used in informal settlement upgrading. It is recognized that informal settlements provide low-income housing for urban poorer or rural migrants in the developing world. Traditional planning and engineering approaches have largely failed in the redevelopment of these areas. After almost three decades of debate on how best to deal with these settlements, there now appears to be a broad agreement among a variety of different actors that upgrading of the settlements in situ is the most appropriate (Abbott, 2002). It was seen primarily as a low-cost alternative housing policy option, with the idea being that it would be more cost-effective to upgrade the substandard housing environment, rather than demolish such
neighborhoods and re-locate its residents (Wegelin, 2004). Initially, the emphasis was primarily on the physical aspects, focusing on public action in providing/upgrading neighborhood infrastructure and services, while it now includes integration of physical, social, economic, organizational and environmental improvements undertaken cooperatively and locally among citizens, community groups, businesses and local authorities (Wekesa, Steyn and Otieno, 2011). These suggest that “integration” and “coproduction”, which are the main focus of the urban project approach, are essential for informal settlement upgrading.

2. The strategic urban project approach

Strategic urban project approaches are strategic devices with collective missions, visions and plans, attempting to settle or stimulate certain joint courses in individual actions (Salet, 2007). The label “strategic urban project” is related to a number of criteria (structure, leverage, strategy, mediation, connection, coordination, visibility, and so on), which make it different with ordinary projects (Boudry, L., et al. 2005). The projects promote growth and investment, through dealing with opportunities and assets instead of merely with problems. They usually involve multiple plots, multiple buildings and multiple functions, all rolled into one big project (Loeckx, 2009, p.19). They help sustainable development, through the optimal utilization of space in order to guarantee the functioning of the infrastructure, the transport network and the distribution of resources (Masboungi, 2002, p.67). Although they deal with a limited and specific part of the city, they impact the whole. The urban project approach can act as a vehicle to give concrete form to coproduction processes and collective ventures (Meijsmans, 2007). They are conceived of as platforms for the meeting and negotiation of multiple stakeholders (Vescina, 2007). However, the urban projects are not always an asset to the city. They may squander unique opportunities, cause urban decline or irreparably break the social life of a neighborhood (Loeckx, 2009).

In this approach, there are three main tracks: partnerships of key stakeholders, visions for desirable future of the city, and actions for solving bottlenecks (De Meulder, Loeckx and Shannon, 2004). Firstly, the complexity of urban projects requires the combination of spatial, economic, social and cultural dimensions as well as the bringing together of agencies and stakeholders which generally operate separately. This demands a strong democratic basis and the communication and cooperation between different stakeholders. Secondly, any city that wishes to plan actively for its future develops vision of itself and aligns its policies and actions with those visions. Visions have the capacity to serve primarily internal specialist discourse and support decision-making among all participating parties. Thirdly, on the basis of the development of an open vision, an action is defined which responds to the context, helps to resolve the contextual problems, and at the same time moves in the direction of the general objectives.
The time perspective here is short and the scope is limited: a specific node, a crucial place or a problematic area.

2.1 Three Key Stakeholders: the state, the market, and civil society

The state and the market are two conventional stakeholders in the urban project approach. In urban renewal projects, governments are looking for Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) to relieve some of the pressure on their stagnating budgets, and at the same time, tackle some of the urgently needed renewal of the built environment (Loeckx, 2009). The commercial conceptualization of large-scaled projects may be purely dominated by promotion of private sector interests, but it may also be brought forward by the local and regional governments for other, substantive or political – electoral reasons, such as raising local income or raising the level of employment (Salet, 2006). The role of government has become more ambiguous. Although government can still be a producer and referee at a certain stages in a process, its proper role is expected to become that of a director, a facilitator, a creator of boundary conditions (De Rynck & Vallet, 2003).

Besides the state and the market, civil society functions as an important stakeholder in urban renewals and informal settlement upgrading (Douglass and Friedmann, 1998; UN-Habitat, 2003; Healey, 2006). Civil society is an intermediate associational realm between the state and households (White, Howell and Shang, 1996). It encompasses various associational forms based on kinship, ethnicity, culture or region, and formal and informal social networks. It is important to raising the living standards of the poor in slum communities and furthering processes of democratization in partnership with the state, rather than being seen as marginal to development, or an alternative to the state strategy for development (UN-Habitat, 2003, p.148). Therefore, the current context of urban development is a complex arena involving a large number of parties, and the idea of “coproduction” is more and more forwarded as a new developmental mode which should enable to deal with the multi-actor or multi-scale constellations that these tasks obviously involve (Meijsmans, 2007).

2.2 Visions and Actions

Urban projects have tended to emphasize the construction of a new image, a kind of “post-card urbanism”, aimed at positioning cities within the context of regional and global competition (Vescina, 2007). Such visions (including technical guiding-concept, political vision and advertising image) generates a general, open and flexible development strategy and frame social commitments which strive to enlarge the civic realm, to enrich the urban culture and create new, sustainable urban space; they are premised upon attractive long-term perspectives and the structuring of the city as a whole (De Meulder, Loecks, and Shannon, 2004, p.189). They have the capability of gaining support from multi-sector, multi-level, multi-actor, multi-stakeholder environment. Rather than finished images, they last
rather longer and still constantly remain the subject of amendments and enrichment.

On the basis of the development of an open vision, an action is defined, which responds to the context, helps to resolve the contextual problems, and at the same time moves in the direction of the general objectives. Strategic actions are specific interventions that deal with a real site, a concrete problematic, limited resources, and tangible interests. The time perspective here is short to medium-term and the scope is limited. Action and vision are in continuous interaction in reality instead of hierarchical and a succession of linear phases (De Meulder, Loecks, and Shannon, 2004). On the one hand, vision progresses through a series of temporary syntheses, as new actions are developed. On the other hand, concrete strategic urban project and actions unite contest urban forces and make more apparent the vision.

2.3 The mediating role of space

In strategic urban projects, the mediating role of space is recognized (Loeckx, 2009). The structure of space is seen as the expression of relationships. Built space can act as an appropriate foundation for social and economic development, which is related to its ability to synthesize contradictor elements (inside and outside, private and collective, rich and poor, traditional and renewal). Spatial scale is a crucial element of decision-making, to the extent that different organizational relationships (both within the community and between the government and the community) may be required to deal with the issues that emerge and are most directly relevant at different scales (Abbott, 2002). This capacity for mediation between diverging and even contradictory customs, functions, uses, interests, property statuses may be employed when setting up partnerships or when offering spatial support to participation.

In order to reduce the vulnerability, informal settlement has to achieve internal cohesion and to be integrated into the surrounding areas, a process described by the Recife Declaration (UNCHS, 1996) as the integration of the informal city into the formal city (Abbott, 2002). Space of exchange (including sports and cultural centers, schools, markets, parks and squares for relaxation and recreation, etc.) play an importation role in integrating and mediating different spatial elements and social forces. They help unify the heterogeneous structure of an area, linking together development areas, and acting as platforms for encounter and social exchange. Particularly, open spaces has the capacity to structure the overall existing urban fabric, connect existing fragments of open space into continuous networks, and relate separate parts of cities (Jessen, Meyer and Schneider, 2008).

2.4 Research by design
The rediscovery and newly found appreciation of space as resource and driver for urban development requires a broadening and deepening of the current role of design, which implies more than drawing up a set of functional requirements or imagining artistic inspiration (Loeckx, 2009, p.29). “Research by design” is used to formulate targeted spatial interventions. The process is initiated by a penetrating reading of the site, in which its history, characteristics, the structural grounding of the site in the urban morphology and the problems and opportunities of the given urban site. The research by design goes hand in hand with shaping the outlines of a spatial vision and outlining the initial spatial concepts and scenarios. This provides input for ‘negotiation by design’, which helps to boost the quality of and support for the design, as a result of an intensive interaction with a number of participants. Design as a medium of reflection and negotiation is not passive, but serves as an active and evolving instrument through which suggestions are absorbed, processed and incorporated, alternatives generated, and conflicts resolved (De Meulder, Loekxs and Shannon, 2004, p.194).

3. Two Case Studies

3.1 The Favela-Bairro Program

Favelas are highly consolidated residential areas of self-construction on invaded public and private land and without public services at the edge of main cities in Brazil (Figure 5.1). Most favelas are inaccessible by vehicle, due to their narrow and irregular streets and often steep inclines. These areas of irregular and poor-quality housing are often crowded onto hillsides, and as a result, these areas suffer from frequent landslides during heavy rain. However, they provide available housing for low-income population in cities, in comparison to the failed social housing projects provided by the state. Instead of previous exclusive slum clearance which entailed a very high social and economic cost, the Favela-Bairro Program (The Slum-to-N municipality of the city of Rio de Janeiro at the beginning of the 1990s to
integrate favelas into urban fabric through infrastructure upgrading and service increases. The program promoted the social and physical integration of the informal with the formal city. It was also illustrative of the new generation of housing policies for poverty alleviation (Fiori, Riley and Ramirez, 2000). Slum communities became the focus of an integrated planning effort including urban development, infrastructure, and sustainable environment.

There was a preconceived idea that slum residents live in ‘another’ city and belong to ‘another’ social sphere, both different irreconcilable with the rest of society and the city. Thus, the first step of the program was to solidify the concept that no massive practical barriers erected by ethnic or racial segregation existed, and therefore only a few interventions would be enough to promote the social integration of a large percentage of society in a reasonably short time span.

Figure 5.2 An upgrading project (Conde and Magalhaes, 2004)
Based on this vision, many upgrading projects based on the existing spatial structure were conducted. Slums were accepted as a new form of urban morphology that should not be destroyed but rather changed, improved, converted into a modest but livable neighborhood (Conde and Magalhaes, 2004, p.3) (Figure 5.2).

The upgrading work undertaken by Favela Bairro not only included sanitation systems and other basic infrastructure, but also emphasized the importance of opening up public space and improving housing (Figure 5.3). Firstly, the program provided all basic urban infrastructures, including rainwater drainage, sewer systems, water pipelines, garbage collection, lighting, and so on. Actually, the public resources that were invested in rehabilitating favelas were doubly multiplied, as the benefits extended to neighborhoods adjacent to upgraded areas as well as to the entire city. For example, the rainwater drainage systems were instrumental in reducing the occurrence of floods in the regular city streets. In this sense, the Favela-Bairro program was an integrated urban project approach in term of physical, environmental, social, economic and cultural aspects. Secondly, it strengthened community living by planning public squares and spaces inside and along the boundaries between the slums and their surroundings. The square worked as a central hub integrating the community and its neighbors and drawing residents from several different locations to this public facility (Conde and Magalhaes, 2004, p.33). Thirdly, it built a proper access road system, which involved construction of intersystem – paths, streets, and stairs – and other interconnections with the surrounding neighborhood. The slums were accessed by buses and overhead cable cars, which dealt with the rough topography of the sites on which slums were usually located. Streets and sidewalks were also well paved. Fourth, residents improved the housing units themselves, rearranging them, bolstering their structures, and providing them with utilities. In addition, the interventions proposed included legal aspects of land regularization and other social objectives, including programs that ranged from sport facilities, health posts, nursery schools, day care centers, generation centers, community centers, and so on.

Key to the success of the program was a committed and flexible city government and the use of partnerships with NGOs, private sectors, professionals and communities. The communication and co-production of various stakeholders was an indispensable part of project design and implementation. Especially instrumental was the use of grass-roots level infrastructure upgrading experts as project managers who could work easily with the government and with the community members (Conde and Magalhaes, 2004, p.3). By promoting articulation between several sectors of the municipal administration, it also managed to go forward in the required procedures for land ownership – one of the main demands of the population living in subnormal settlements (UN-HABITAT, 2003, p.226). Furthermore, the program was co-funded by different stakeholders.
Figure 5.3 The upgrading of infrastructure and housing (Conde and Magalhaes, 2004)
For example, the social projects were mainly funded by municipal department, while Favela-Bairro resources paid for the construction of the buildings in which those services were delivered. Some projects (such as the income and employment generation projects, the sports and leisure projects) also had financial backing from the federal government. Besides, all of the upgraded communities had to extend their connections with their neighborhoods. This was based on consensus among the key players – the residents of both the slum community and of the surrounding neighborhood – the resulting works successfully reflected the specificities of each situation. Moreover, the leaders of communities played key roles in the program, as the program was most successful where community organization was strongest. The residents of upgraded favelas also participated in meetings at the local community organization to hear about the program and plans, raise their concern and demands, and approve final project plans. In addition, university students were involved in accompanying and monitoring the work with the residents.

In sum, the Favela-Bairro Program worked to bring down material obstacles as well as symbolic barriers, in its attempt to offer the informal part of the city all the urban facilities (including basic infrastructures, public space and social projects) available to the formal city. Although the existing environment was greatly upgraded, the values and collective significance of the spaces and way of life of each community were preserved. The partnership of various stakeholders was also an indispensable part of project design and implementation. However, the program was criticized for the “perverse effects” regarding the dynamics of the land market and consequences of regularization (Smolka and Iracheta, 2000). In some way the program was also not able to install a sustainable process, and the lack of continuity threatened the already reached benefits (Vescina, 2007). Recently, some new projects, such as “urban cellule”, sought to continue the principles developed in the Favela-Bairro program, with the concept of inducing an endogenous planning process that could be sustained over time, creating nucleus of urban, social, political, economical and environmental development inside favelas.

### 3.2 Kampung Improvement Program

Kampungs (villages) are low-income settlement areas where initially were a rural settlement that, and through a process of densification and transformation, became urbanized. Scattering throughout the city, they provided an attractive housing location for recent arrivals looking for employment (Silas, 1984, p.68). The main problem in most kampungs was flooding. It was common that water, sewer and electrical infrastructure were absent. Roads and footpaths were often in poor condition. In the early nineteen centuries, Jakarta and Surabaya first experienced the Kampung Improvement Program (KIP), which aimed to improve sewerage, storm-drain system and roads (Silas, 1984, p70). Since 1979, the entire approach to Kampung Improvement became a large nationwide effort covering
over 200 cities across Indonesia. Rather than the conventional ‘top-down’ approach, the KIP in Surabaya developed a ‘bottom-up’ approach and provided an innovative model for community participation with tremendous local achievement. Community took the roles of planning, implementing and monitoring with support from local government and supporting institutions (Dhakal, 2002). This included a self-survey of problems and opportunities that existed in the community, the formation of community organizations, the implementation of development planning, and the construction of partnership with various stakeholders. The KIP in Surabaya was a comprehensive neighborhood program, which not only created improved living conditions for low-income families but also, by involving the local community in the process, ensured its long-term sustainability and on-going improvement (Silas, 1992). It provided a low-cost, innovative and sustainable method of transforming high-density urban informal settlements into green and clean neighborhoods.

The improvement of infrastructure services, which helped to integrate the Kampungs into regular developments in the city, was the key element of the KIP in Surabaya (Figure 5.4). The program focused on road constructions, footpath constructions, piped water supply through public taps, the construction of education and health facilities, etc. New pathways and roads were provided, with side drains which were for the disposal of waste water and for rapid run-off of rainwater alongside them (Figure 5.5). The drainage and flood control as well solid waste management have an impact on both the kampungs and citywide levels (Dhakal, 2002). The construction of pathways was considered more important than that of vehicular roads, as the improved kampungs were proposed to limit the accessibility of cars in order to prevent the invasion of middle-income families and therefore remain affordable to low-income families (Silas, 1992).

The community participation in the planning process and improvement stimulated the willingness of local people to do more by themselves, allowed the local government to save public funds normally needed for maintenance, and added another dimension to the original improvement concept. Firstly, the local people were given the opportunity to be involved in the planning process. A rough plan was proposed to the people, and they were given the opportunity to comment or make changes. This approach not only informed them of the scope of the work, but also invited them to take necessary steps to complement the program (Silas, 1984). Secondly, people were encouraged to carry out the planning and improvement of their own, on-plot, facilities and to take responsibility for the on-going maintenance of the Kampung.
Figure 5.4 The upgrading of infrastructure (Silas, 2010)
“For example, after a footpath had been constructed, individual households along it started planting trees and flowers, garbage cans were provided, and street lighting installed using electricity sources from individual houses. Other areas provided community meeting halls and security guard houses. Periodic communal cleaning activities were organized to maintain environmental quality after improvements. The willingness of both parties to interact in the implementation of the program encouraged and stimulated the local people to take over responsibilities for maintenance, utilization and further development.” (Silas, 1984, p80)

Women played an important role in the KIP. Their involvement was channeled through the Family Welfare Organization, which was concerned to encourage the role of women in the development of their communities. Typical activities carried out by the women included monitoring building materials, supervising construction activities and keeping the workers supplied with food and drink. They worked without charge but were respected by community members.

The implementation of the KIP in Surabaya was based on a partnership between the local government, NGOs, University staff, students and communities. The
local government launched the program and provided technical and other relevant supports of the implementation of the program. Secondly, the university carried out preliminary mapping survey, with the help of students for surveying problems and potentials in Kampungs. Based on the survey, the local government selected Kampungs for improvement. Although the main funding was public funding, the strength of the community’s contribution was a key factor in ensuring the continuation of the program (Silas, 1992).

The important lesson learned from the KIP in Surabaya was that the KIP improved the quality of life of Indonesian urban areas at a low cost of investment. The KIP could not be regarded simply as a project or a final product, but more as a continuous process with the voluntary involvement of the local population and a decrease of the public sector’s role from ‘doer’ to ‘supporter’ (Silas, 1984, 72). However, the survey of Word Bank (1995) showed that the KIP in the future needed to make an assessment of the dynamics of local real estate market and address up-front policy issues of compensation for displaced low income families, as many improved Kampungs might be redeveloped by the private sector in the market. This might reflect that there is a lack of vision at the city scale.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

Two case studies show that strategic urban project approaches for informal settlement upgrading successfully deal with spatial, social, environmental, political and cultural issues. In a specific context of limited resources and strong inequalities, the approaches are able to recompose parts of cities, to re-establish certain equilibriums, to articulate unconnected fragments, and to insert new social and economic dynamics in designated areas. Although the scope of upgrading is limited, the approaches greatly contribute to spatial cohesion and social equity in the city.

The success of two cases must thank to the partnerships between multi-governments, the private sector and civil society. Civil society that is based on social networks and reciprocity plays a substantial role in the project approaches. Two cases studies also show that the redistribution resource from the state is essential for low-income neighborhood upgrading (including infrastructure upgrading, social projects, etc.). However, the driving force of the market seems ignored in these two case studies. The Favela Bairro Program was criticized for the “perverse effects” regarding the dynamics of the land market and consequences of regularization. In the KIP, without an assessment of the dynamics of local real estate market, many improved Kampungs might be redeveloped by the private sector.

A clear vision and integrated strategy could promote the social and physical integration of informal settlements with the formal city. It is a platform for different stakeholders communicating and cooperating with each other. It
integrates large-scale projects which are premised upon attractive long-term perspectives and a series of small actions which have a short term effort.

The urban project approach for low-income neighborhood upgrading emphasizes on the creation of open space and the upgrading or providing of public facilities and infrastructure, which have the capacity to integrate different spatial elements and are platforms for social exchange. The improvement of infrastructure in the KIP helps to integrate the Kampungs into regular developments in the city. The upgrading work undertaken by Favela Bairro not only includes the upgrading and providing of sanitation systems and other basic infrastructure, but also emphasizes the importance of opening up and improving public space. Offering urban facilities available to the formal city help the integration of the informal and the formal city.

“Research by design” and “negotiation by design” are two key concepts. A profound and historical reading of the project site helps to come out appropriated project approaches. The involvement of local stakeholders in the design and implement process ensures the long-term sustainability and on-going improvement. In the KIP, The community participation in the planning process and improvement stimulates the willingness of local people to do more by themselves, allowed the local government to save public funds normally needed for maintenance.

In sum, the application of strategic urban projects in informal settlement upgrading earmarks an evolution of the approach towards a greater inclusion of civil society in the coproduction of urban projects. However, it seems that the approaches in informal settlement upgrading pay little attention to the market force. Further research on the approaches should emphasis the integration of three key stakeholders (the state, the market and civil society), as well as a balance between three modes of economic integration (redistribution, market exchange and reciprocity) (Polanyi, 1944), which could lead to a more sustainable (re)development of low-income neighborhood in economic, political, social, cultural and spatial terms.
Chapter 6

A Conceptual Framework on the Urban Project Approach for the Sustainable Redevelopment of “Villages in the City” in Guangzhou

Abstract

This chapter is the conclusion chapter. It develops a conceptual framework on the urban project approach for the sustainable redevelopment of ViCs located in the city center and on the periphery of Guangzhou. It firstly summarizes the strategic urban project approach and analyzes different planning approaches in ViCs. Then, it suggests that the methodologies of the urban project approach could be adapted to deal with the complex stakeholder environment and issues in ViCs. This chapter finally comes up with proposals for the sustainable redevelopment of ViCs. Consideration is given to the roles and partnerships of key stakeholders, visions at different levels, and specific actions that deal with opportunities and issues in strategic locations. This chapter concludes that new approaches that embrace three modes of economic integration (redistribution, market exchange and reciprocity) could help come to a more sustainable (re)development of ViCs in economic, political, social, cultural, and spatial terms.

1. The strategic urban project approach

Although the issues of ViCs are very specific, they have evidently a lot in common with those of slum areas and dilapidated urban areas in developed and developing contexts, which since the 1970s have been the usual subjects of upgrading or urban renewal operations. Also in this specific context of urban renewal, the strategic urban project approach which emphasizes on strategy-making and coproduction is being advocated in the last decennia (De Meulder, Loeckx and Shannon, 2004; Healy, 2006; Carter, 2006; Salet and Gualini, 2007). The label “strategic urban project” is related to a number of criteria (structure, leverage, strategy, mediation, connection, coordination, visibility, and so on), which make it different with ordinary projects (Boudry, et al. 2005). These projects usually involve multiple plots, multiple buildings and multiple functions, all rolled into one big project (Loeckx, 2009, p.19). Although they deal with a limited and specific part of the city, they impact the whole. They help sustainable development, through the optimal utilization of space in order to guarantee the functioning of the infrastructure, the transport network and the distribution of resources (Masboungi, 2002, p.67).

The strategic urban project approach promotes growth and investment, through dealing with opportunities and assets instead of merely with problems. However, the urban projects are not always an asset to the city. On the one hand, they may
squander unique opportunities, cause urban decline or irreparably break the social life of a neighborhood (Loeckx, 2009). On the other hand, the commercial conceptualization of large-scale projects may be dominated by private sector interests or brought forward by the governments for political reasons (Salet, 2006). Therefore, Loeckx (2009) argued that the urban project should reassess and redress the balance between the regimes of socio-economic integration – redistribution, market exchange and reciprocity.

As a generally recognized approach and used method in practice, the strategic urban project approach is expanding in recent years its type of applications from flagship projects (Swyngedow, 2005) on key locations in cities to vulnerable residential environments (urban renewal areas, slum areas, etc.) on the one side and from Western Europe and North America to developing contexts (for example, Favela-Bairro program in Rio de Janeiro and Kampung Improvement Program in Surabaya). The expanding application of the urban project approach at the same time earmarks an evolution of the approach towards a greater inclusion of civil society in the coproduction of urban projects (Healy, 2006).

In this approach, there are three main tracks: visions for desirable future of the city, actions for solving bottlenecks, and partnerships of stakeholders (De Meulder, Loeckx and Shannon, 2004). Firstly, any city that wishes to plan actively for its future develops visions of itself and aligns its policies and actions with those visions. A clear vision and integrated strategy could promote the social and physical integration of informal settlements with the formal city (See Chapter 5). It is a platform for stakeholder cooperation and communication. It integrates large-scale projects which are premised upon attractive long-term perspectives and a series of small actions which have a short term effort. Secondly, on the basis of the development of an open vision, an action is defined which responds to the context, helps to resolve the contextual problems, and at the same time moves in the direction of the general objectives. The time perspective here is short and the scope is limited: a specific node, a crucial place or a problematic area. Thirdly, civil society besides the conventional stakeholders (the state and the market) functions as a collective stakeholder in the construction of cities, in search of the good life (Douglass and Friedmann, 1998; UN-Habitat, 2003; De Meulder, Loeckx and Shannon, 2004; Healey, 2006). As an intermediate associational realm between the state and households, it encompasses various associational forms based on formal and informal social networks (White, Howell and Shang, 1996). Civil society is important to raising the living standards of the poor in slum communities and furthering processes of democratization in partnership with the state, rather than being seen as marginal to development, or an alternative to the state strategy for development (UN-Habitat, 2003, p.148). Rather than a “doer”, the state now becomes a “supporter”. However, the state redistribution is still essential for the provision of public facilities in low-income neighborhoods (see Chapter 5). More attention also should be paid to the driving force of the market. The coproduction of the state, the market and civil society
could lead to a balance of three modes of economic integration (redistribution, market exchange and reciprocity).

The mediating role of space is emphasized in the urban project approach (Loeckx, 2009). The structure of space is seen as the expression of relationships, and the design of space is the key medium for spatial quality and sustainable development (EsHo, 2003). In order to reduce the vulnerability, informal settlement has to achieve internal cohesion and to be integrated into the surrounding areas, a process described by the Recife Declaration (UNCHS, 1996) as the integration of the informal city into the formal city (Abbott, 2002). Space of exchange (including sports and cultural centers, schools, markets, parks and squares for relaxation and recreation, etc.) play an important role in integrating and mediating different spatial elements and social forces. They help unify the heterogeneous structure of an area, linking together development areas, and acting as platforms for encounter and social exchange. Particularly, open spaces has the capacity to structure the overall existing urban fabric, connect existing fragments of open space into continuous networks, and relate separate parts of cities (Jessen, Meyer and Schneider, 2008). The importance of opening up and improving public space was fully recognized in Favela Bairro Program (see Chapter 5).

2. Bottom-up and top-down approaches in ViCs: actions, stakeholders, and economic integration

The production of space is related to three modes of economic integration: redistribution, market exchange and reciprocity (Polanyi, 1944). In China, redistribution is mainly modulated by the dual hukou system, which registers people by their birthplace with an urban or a rural hukou status. Citizenship/villagership is the precondition for accessing public/collective facilities in cities/villages (see Chapter 1). City governments redistribute by investing in an extensive road network, in a fair spatial distribution of employment and public facilities, in public transport systems and in low-income housing for citizens. The collective companies play a key role in providing or subsidizing public facilities in ViCs, which have a redistributive effect on indigenous villagers. Without urban hukou, the majority of migrants are excluded by public housing, public education and formal jobs in urban areas. They self-organize housing, education and employment in ViCs (see Chapter 2). Marked by reciprocity and informal economic activities, households and the informal sector have “incrementally” restructured and reshaped the space in ViCs.

2.1 Incremental housing and households

Incremental housing is the most common strategy of the informal sector to overcome the problems of insufficient unit size and customization of housing units to individual needs and expectations (Afşhar, 1991). The process of
evolution (including horizontal and vertical expansion of the units) follows
economic growth and permits the poor residents to break away from
stigmatization and marginalization (Greene and Rojas, 2008). The incremental
housing strategy in ViCs relies on a supporting strategy within the sphere of
reciprocity. The poor access to public and commercial housing in state
redistribution and formal market spheres forces migrants to turn to informal
market and reciprocity spheres to look for housing (see Chapter 2). The villagers
who lose their farmland during the process of urbanization and find it difficult to
participate in the formal urban labor market catch this opportunity and “illegally”
construct their houses to meet the housing demands of migrants. Consequently,
three-storey buildings have been gradually replaced by five- to eight-storey
buildings with cantilevered structures. These market-oriented activities are
supported by multi-social networks and reciprocity of villagers, as they borrow
money from each other for construction. The new building type indeed
accommodates more inhabitants by adding cantilevered constructions and new
floors. However, the “handshake and kissing buildings” street profile (a tiny
distance of about 50 cm between two facing balconies) becomes the typical new
form. The quality of infrastructure facilities is very low in many cases. Many
village main roads and alleyways are blocked and narrowed by the newly added
constructions, inaccessible to fire engines. Due to the mixture of rainwater and
sewage, there is usually “waterlog on road”. A proper access and safety road
system is urgently needed. The densification of ViCs reflects both speculative
development, driven by maximum profitability, and the demand for migrant
housing. It illustrates the fact that there are no effective regulations for
development control in ViCs (see Chapters 3 and 4). Households actually play
important roles in the development of ViCs and should be considered as key
stakeholders in the planning processes.

Our fieldwork in several ViCs also shows that buildings along village main roads
that connect urban roads have usually gradually been adapted for commercial use
and transformed into shop-front buildings (see Chapters 3 and 4). The functioning
of these shops is often reliant on informal economic activities, which supply
opportunities for migrant entrepreneurs and cheap services for both ViCs and
urban areas. With the increasing population and activities, the existing roads
which are usually narrow tend to be overcrowded. This suggests that the village
main roads could be strategic places where specific actions that deal with
economic opportunities and problems (poor infrastructure, overcrowding, etc.)
take place.

2.2 Collective projects and institutions of “the third realm”

The collective organizations (including the collective companies and economic
unions) play key roles in the self-development of ViCs (See Chapters 1-4). They
are institutions of “the third realm” (Huang, 1993), participated by both the state
and society. They not only work as companies but also deal with social and
political affairs. They function as intermediaries between the city and ViCs during land requisition processes and manage collective projects. Theoretically, they present the interests of villagers. However, whether there really is participation depends on the level of transparency and democracy within the collective unit and the so-called collective interest could easily be appropriated by minority cadres - a common phenomenon in rural China (Chung, 2009, p.268).

To deal with the problem of unemployed peasants and facilitate land requisition, a special policy was developed in Guangzhou called the ‘Reserved Land Policy’ (liuyongdi zhengce) (Huang and Li, 2007). According to this policy, 8-12 per cent of requisitioned farmland had to be reserved for collective industrial and commercial developments. The land should be managed by the collective organizations. However, the collective organizations have dramatically failed in many cases to develop these secondary and tertiary industries themselves due to a lack of finance and management experience (Li, 2004). Thus, they have shifted to cooperate with domestic and foreign investors and participate in development projects as partners. This informal co-operation has major advantages (See Chapters 3). On the one hand, for the investors, construction is much cheaper on collective land than on urban land, where there is a requirement to pay urban service and facilities fee; on the other hand, the collective’s income increases significantly without entailing a large investment risk. The proximity of public facilities (public transportation, etc.) and employment opportunities in the surrounding urban areas has greatly enhanced the land value of the collective land and contributed to the development of the collective projects (See Chapter 2). A considerable number of these collective projects were concentrated on the periphery of ViCs and adjacent to urban roads. They usually focused on the development of manufacturing businesses and small shops. However, due to the decline in labor-intensive industry in recent years, many buildings on the collective project sites are vacant or in poor condition. New development strategies are urgently needed for their redevelopment.

Supported by the income from collective industrial and commercial projects, the collective organizations provide collective goods for indigenous villagers. They finance the upgrading of existing infrastructure and the construction of collective buildings, including sports centers, schools, gardens, medical centers, etc. These projects have a redistribution effect on indigenous villagers. To some extent, the manufactures and service sectors on the collective lands also provide job opportunities for migrants. The collective organizations offer available lands or constructions for private migrant schools, which tend to be scattered throughout ViCs, convenient proximity to the living and working places of the migrant residents. Nevertheless, migrants are excluded from the majority of collective facilities and spaces which are already crowded by villagers.
2.3 The upgrading of ViCs and the informal sector

The informal sector plays an important role in reshaping space in ViCs (see Chapter 4). For example, informal property management companies have cooperated with indigenous villagers in upgrading the existing housing. The companies have been established by a group of kin migrants. Firstly, they rent clusters of houses from villagers under “informal” contracts (i.e. because peasant houses cannot be rented or sold). Then, they fence the new community, pave the alleyways, and plant flowerbeds on both sides of alleyways and roofs. They also divide one floor into several small apartments, with internet access. Cleaning and other service are provided in the new communities. Although the house rent easily double in the new communities, urban newcomers are not put off by this expense, appreciating the safety and better environment of these places.

According to interviews with several managers of the companies (March 2008), the contracts between villager households and the companies are usually for a 6-7 year period. Although the profit of the projects is very low, the companies have often made their first profits since 2-3 years. This mainly attributes to the low transaction cost. On the one hand, the constructions are operated by informal construction teams, which mainly comprise migrants. On the other hand, the companies don’t pay taxes to the state and employ staff in the formal market. They only pay administrative fees to ViCs and offer “jobs” for the relatives and friends of the managers. In order to reduce risk and collect money, one project is also usually co-financed by several small investors (including employees, employers, etc.).

The companies have called this action “New Alley Movement” (xilinong yundong), as they want to create a more positive image of ViCs by upgrading (rather than demolishing) the existing spatial structures. These small-scale improvements of ViCs based on social networks are collective actions of a certain groups of migrants and villagers. They seem effective, while dealing with financial problems, stakeholder agreements, and implementation activities. However, the upgraded communities are tightly knit within but largely segmented and isolated from others, due to the lack of efficient and legal planning regulation at the ViC level for various stakeholders to follow (See Chapter 4). In order to maximize the profits, the companies often “illegally” construct some houses, for example by adding an attic floor without considering whether the existing framework can support it. Mass low-income migrants also remain excluded from these upgraded communities due to the rising prices.

2.4 The “demolition-redevelopment” model and conflicts of interest among stakeholders

Although ViCs provide affordable accommodations for rural migrants in many Chinese cities, the majority of existing planning approaches of ViCs are based on
a “demolition-redevelopment” model (which is done by both administrative and market forces) and provides no home for low-income rural migrants (Zhang, 2005). Our fieldwork in Guangzhou shows that many redevelopment projects of ViCs actually have not gone beyond the initial study stage, with the lack of realization caused by conflicts of interest among various stakeholders (see Chapters 2 and 3). Firstly, the governments are unwilling and incapable to invest in the redevelopment of ViCs, proposing that the profits of the redevelopment projects can cover the expenditure. Secondly, the formal redevelopment by real estate companies requires large investments. Thirdly, the villagers are worried that they could not acquire the same income from the collective properties and their own lets after redevelopment. The lack of transparent information and efficient communication between stakeholders creates a complex and difficult environment for reaching an agreement on redevelopment (Hao, Sliuzas and Geertman, 2010).

Only a few ViCs with high land value are in the process of redevelopment. The breakthrough of the projects is the change of land property right dealing with the surplus value of land (the gap between the value of collective land and the value of urban land). A part of collective land is allowed to become state land, which then can be exchanged in the market at much higher land value. This land can then be leased to private real estate companies for commercial development, the profit from which then can compensate the cost of replacement. Expensive apartments and commercial constructions replace the existing cheap accommodations and shops. The projects not only demolish the existing spatial layout in which the survival strategies of rural migrants and urban newcomers in housing, employment and education are embedded, but also destroys the proximity of urban services, jobs and amenities, which has a redistributive income for low-income migrants and is crucial for urban system. Large-scale redevelopment also could lead to large scale intra-city migration of displaced tenants, promoting new development pressure in the outer districts and the decline of their environmental conditions (Hao, Sliuzas and Geertman, 2010). Moreover, the “demolition-redevelopment” model would fail to integrate local villagers, who retain traditional social norms and networks, into urban society based on contractual relationships (Liu, et al. 2010).

2.5 The demand for a new planning approach

The existing planning approaches reflect the lack of visions as platforms for the coproduction of stakeholders, the lack of government financial power, the impotence of traditional planning, the separations (even conflicts) of different actions, the marginalization of migrants, and the fragmentation of space. The above analyses also suggest that there is a lack of combination of three modes of economic integration (redistribution, market exchange, and reciprocity) in the coproduction of space in ViCs. It is clear that ViCs form a tremendous challenge for urban planning in China. At the same time, it becomes clear that the current
planning approaches are dramatically failing. It also becomes clear that the knowledge base for urban planning in ViCs is insufficient. The dramatic failure of urban planning in ViCs is probably due to the used approaches that are indeed out of date and surely not suitable for the specific context of ViCs.

New planning approaches are required to deal with the complex stakeholder environment and issues. The key to deal with issues in ViCs is to promote and guide the existing self-organized grassroots units and to recognize the forces of the market which can be introduced to solve the problems (Liu, et al. 2010). The involvement of the state in providing services for low-income migrants is probably necessary in order to enhance spatial cohesion and social justice; the integration of bottom-up processes and micro-strategies would strengthen the performance and efficiency of redevelopment strategies of ViCs (See Chapter 4). Village upgrading or the adoption of a more pro-active response in ViCs, by providing planning and design advice to the collective organizations that might avoid over-development could be avenues (Hao, Sliuzas and Geertman, 2010). New approaches, embracing market exchange, redistribution and reciprocity at the same time, in order to achieve a more sustainable (re)development of ViCs are needed (See Chapter 2).

In order to come to a more sustainable redevelopment of ViCs, a new planning approach is required. It should pay attention to the followed aspects:

- Partnerships of key stakeholders, emphasizing on the role of state in redistribution (poverty alleviation, service provision, etc.) and the involvement of the informal sector and households in the planning processes;

- Visions and integrated strategies as platforms for stakeholder cooperation;

- Specific actions that deal with opportunities and problems in strategic locations (the redevelopment of collective project sites, the upgrading of village main roads, etc.)

3. Proposals for ViC’s redevelopment, an attempt at amending the urban project mode

Based on the above analysis, I suggest that the strategic urban project approach that focuses on visions, actions and partnerships of key stakeholders could be applied to deal with the complexity of the stakeholder environment in ViCs. However, the approach should be adapted and amended to the particular context of ViCs. The model of three key stakeholders - the state, the market and civil society - of the approach is not suitable in the Chinese context (see Chapters 1 and 4). “The third realm” (Huang, 1993) (such as the collective companies) in which the state and society collide also play a key role in restructuring space in
ViCs (see Chapters 1-4). Instead of “civil society”, “society” is a more suitable term to indicate spheres beyond the direct intervention of the state, including institutions of “the third realm”, the informal sector, households, etc. In order to integrate different actions and developments, visions at different levels are required. The mediating role of space should be employed in specific actions that deal with complex spatial, social and economic issues.

3.1 Partnerships of three key stakeholders

The partnerships of three key stakeholders (the state, the market and society) require a combination of vertical and horizontal cooperation. Close collaboration of the central government, the provincial government, and the municipal government may well be demanded in the ViC’s redevelopment. Without redistributive resources (such as comprehensive financial support) from the state, the ViC’s redevelopment that closely combines poverty alleviation and service provision (education for migrant children, the upgrading of low income housing, etc.) seems impossible. As the development of ViCs has interplayed with the city development (see Introduction, Chapters 2, 3 and 4), partnerships between city governments and the collective companies could lead to integrated strategies. The informal sector should also be considered as an important and unavoidable stakeholder in incremental housing development (Lizarralde, 2010). Furthermore, the participation of households in the planning process can stimulate the willingness of local people to do more by themselves, allows the local government to save public funds normally needed for maintenance (Silas, 1984). Moreover, as migrants greatly contribute to the booming economy in Chinese cities, the state should give them the opportunities to develop their self-organizations (for example, the informal sector, the taxi driver association, and the native association, which are related to the survival strategies of them) and empower them in the project approaches. Finally, the involvement of local experts and students can greatly contribute to the survey and the implementation of project approaches (Conde and Magalhaes, 2004).

3.2 Visions at Different Scales

Urban areas are primary areas which are rigid, inflexible, and regular, while ViCs are secondary areas which are loose, flexible, easily adapted, and not well organized. Both of them together function as a whole. ViCs are informal settlements in the formal city, specific areas in general areas. They are unplanned areas, but necessary developments. ViCs respond quickly for the new demand and socioeconomic dynamics in the city and provide alternatives for the rigid and formal urban system. They take up what regular plans cannot do and urban areas cannot provide. They not only function as low-income neighborhoods in the city, but also provide service for the surrounding urban areas. They allow integrating flexible laborers (temporary workers, etc.) and provide resources for marginal social groups. They also facilitate substandard developments (small shops,
specialized markets, labor-intensive sectors, etc.) that serve the city. Although there are many problems, a lot of opportunities exist. Rather than “cancers” in the city, ViCs could be used as driving forces for the further development of the city. Visions at different scales are required to integrate urban development and self-development of ViCs.

Vision is premised upon attractive long-term perspectives and the structuring of the city as a whole (De Meulder, Loecks, and Shannon, 2004, p.189). Visions at different scales are platforms for stakeholder cooperation and communication. At the national level, there needs to be a clear poverty reduction strategy that recognizes the detrimental significance of urban poverty on national and regional development and the role that housing can play in reducing it (Wakely and Riley, 2010). Visions at the city and district scales can help the integration of ViCs and urban areas. Moreover, visions at the ViC scale can provide long-term perspectives for ViCs’ (re)development.

3.2.1 A Clear Vision and Integrated Strategy at the City Scale

The dynamics of ViCs in Guangzhou was greatly influenced by urban development, while ViCs responded quickly for the new demand and socioeconomic dynamics of the surrounding urban areas (see Introduction, Chapters 3 and 4). The developments of labor-intensive industries and service sectors in ViCs have complex relationships with the development of the surrounding urban areas, such as the construction of infrastructure and industrial areas. In close proximity to urban areas, some ViCs function as service centers for larger areas far beyond their boundaries. For example, Sanyuanli village which is close to the central railway station has developed the wholesale trade of leather and fur; Yangji village which is close to the new CBD has developed the fabrication plant of wood processing and a grand market of furniture; and Shipai village which is close to universities and several science research institutions has developed several computer towns and numerous IT product shops with a national reputation for the scales of their services. These suggest that the development of ViCs contributes to urban development. Rather than “islands”, ViCs are parts of urban systems and have complex relationships with the surrounding urban areas. Therefore, a vision at the city scale, which specifies the role of ViCs in the functioning of regular urban areas, is required for mixed development and coexistence.

More attentions should be given to the coproduction of various stakeholders, including the central government, the municipal government, district governments, the collective companies, the private sector, civil organizations (the taxi diver’s association, etc.). A city-wide vision and strategy should emphasize on the integration of the ViC’s redevelopment, poverty reduction strategies (such as providing education programs for migrants and upgrading low-income neighborhoods), economic development, urban infrastructure networks and
environment policies. The complementary relationships between ViCs and urban areas should be strengthened. Through consensus building by stakeholders, the vision at the city scale has the capacity to attract both foreign and domestic capitals for economic restructuring (replacing the declined labor-dense industries with modern service, advanced manufacturing and high-technology industries) in ViCs and urban areas. Consequently, ViCs become the driving forces for the city development.

3.2.2 Visions at the District Scale

A vision at the district scale is embedded in the city-wide vision. Strategies should be made to strengthen the interrelationships between ViCs and the surrounding areas. As the proximity and accessibility of public facilities and employment is the most important asset for ViCs and urban system, specific emphasis should be given to urban roads, traffic nodes, public space, industrial and commercial corridors or zones, which connect urban areas with ViCs. More attention should be paid to the spatial concentration of low-income groups and its relationship with urban economies. On basis of the vision, agreements for specific actions can be made by municipal governments, district governments, street offices, resident committees, collective companies, and the private sector (including the informal sector).

3.2.3 A Long-Term Perspective for the ViC’s Redevelopment

The existing spatial patterns of ViCs can be seen as a container of social networks and economic opportunities. It contains the survival strategies of migrants, which is related to the self-organization of housing, education, and employment. This suggests that the spatial layout of ViCs should be translated into an urban morphology, a number of inherent functional logics and interdependent ties. Consequently, these logics should not be destroyed but rather changed, improved, converted into a modest but livable neighborhood.

A vision at the ViC scale should summarize the desired future of a ViC into appealing images. Two case studies (see Chapters 3 and 4) showed that there are no detailed and effective regulations for development in the ViCs. Therefore, Emphasis should be given to effective regulations for the ViC’s plan and building construction, the upgrading of infrastructure and housing blocks, the creation of public space, the establishment of social projects, the accessibility of public transportation as well as the spatial relationships between economic activities and social groups. As private capital flow and informal loading play a key role in the incremental development of ViCs, the informal sector and households should be considered as stakeholders and involved in the formation of the vision.
3.3 Space as a Mediator of Spatial, Social and Economic Forces

The capacity of space for mediation – between diverging and even contradictory customs, functions, uses, experiences, interests, property statuses – may be employed when settling up partnerships or when offering spatial support to participation (Loeckx, 2009, p.29). For a vision at the ViC level, consideration is given to the reuse of collective project sites and the upgrading of village settlements, with an emphasis on the creation of public space, the upgrading of infrastructure and housing stocks as well as the establishments of social projects.

3.3.1 The Reuse of Collective Project Sites: Property Rights, Economic Restructuring, Space of Exchange

On the peripheries of ViCs, there are usually a considerable amount of collective lands, adjacent to village settlements and along urban roads. They are often covered by sub-standard or temporary buildings. However, due to the decline of labor-intensive industries in recent years, a lot of the project sites are vacant or in poor condition. These collective lands are the potential areas for strategic projects. They have the capacity of unifying fragmented spatial structures and mediating various stakeholders in the coproduction of social and economic programs.

One of the ViC’s opportunities is related to the unique collective property rights (see Chapter 2). The fact that the collective land cannot be sold in the market actually has greatly contributed to the development of ViCs and in turn benefited the urban economy. With the investment of private and public sectors in the surrounding urban areas, the land values of collective lands have increased. The collective companies have captured the increased values of the lands for ViC’s developments. The marginal groups (both villager and migrant households) have also benefited from the proximity and accessibility of public facilities and employment. This suggests that the ownership of the collective lands is essential for the development of ViCs. However, effective policies and regulations should be made for the (re)development of those lands, as corruption and “illegal” occupation have often occurred. The collective lands should not be sold and the major income from them should be used for the (re)development of ViCs.

The redevelopment of collective project sites is an opportunity for urban and ViC’s economic restructuring, replacing decayed labor-intensive industries with cultural and high-end industries as well as advanced services. On the one hand, some dilapidated buildings of factories could be temporarily used for cultural industrials, such as film production, clubs and fashionable meeting place or as creative offices. Temporary usage would seem to be an important factor for the successful reintegration of abandoned sites in the value–creation process – not least because the temporarily largely informal ambient offers an attractive milieu for the desired ‘creative industries’ (Jessen, Meyer and Schneider, 2008, p.109). On the other hand, there could be a partnership between the collective companies,
city governments and the private sector in the coproduction of new commercial and official complexes for high-end industries and advanced services.

Space of exchange (including sports and cultural centers, schools, markets, parks and squares for relaxation and recreation, etc.) can help unify the heterogeneous structure of an area, linking together development areas, and acting as platforms for encounter and social exchange. Urban development area used to insert open spaces that structure the overall existing urban fabric, connect existing fragments of open space into continuous networks, and relate separate parts of cities (Jessen, Meyer and Schneider, 2008). Well-design public space can create a distinctive image of a ViC and its surrounding urban areas. It provides an enduring platform for diverse activities, drawing migrants, villagers, and citizens to these public facilities. Although migrants contribute to the self-development of ViCs and the city development, they are excluded by the majority of public facilities and services. The state currently does not sufficiently take up its role in redistribution. Consideration should be given to the partnerships between multi-governments, the collective companies, and the formal and informal sectors in upgrading or providing public facilities (such as private migrant children schools, cultural and medical centers) and public space in ViCs. Space of exchange will facilitate the dialectical relations between migrants, villagers and citizens, maintaining the social networks and creating the possibility of reciprocity.

3.3.2 The Upgrading of Infrastructure: Accessing, Connecting, Integrating

The existing infrastructural networks of ViCs are threatened with fragmentation, as many village main roads and alleyways are blocked and narrowed by the newly added constructions. The majority of roads cannot be accessible by fire engines. Due to the mixture of rainwater and sewage, there is usually “waterlog on road”. Village main roads connecting with urban areas are packed by vehicles, vendors, and pedestrian. There is a need of a proper access and safety road system, involved construction of interconnections between urban roads, village main road and alleyways.

The upgrading of infrastructure can increase standards and improve the spatial quality of low-income neighborhood (Silas, 1992; Conde and Magalhaes, 2004), which is also essential for the development of high-end industries in the surrounding areas. A strategy for minimizing the initial capital cost of infrastructure and services is to apply the concept of incremental improvement to them (Wakely and Riley, 2010). The rational of this approach is that while basic services must be provided right from the beginning of the project they can then be upgraded over time in response to the development of householder’s increasing ability to pay for higher standards. This suggests that the most important infrastructure should be defined firstly and improved step by step.
Some village main roads, which connect with urban roads and are packed with shops, should be widened and extended, with rainwater drainages, sewers and streetlights alongside them. The upgrading of infrastructure can also integrate a series of small actions, which aim at improving street facades and public space. As some village main roads are block and narrowed by new constructions, demolition of some existing buildings to make the roads accessible becomes necessary. A continuity of street façade can be created by stitching and filling the unnecessary spaces between buildings and making the lower two floors continuous street shops (Urbanus, 2006). The small-scale improvements will not only improve the accessibility of ViCs, but also facilitate the existing economic activities that rely on spatial proximity and reciprocal actions. As the projects are related to the provision of collective goods, formal and informal economic activities and property rights, there is a need of partnerships between multi-governments, the collective companies, the informal sector and households.

3.3.3 Adapting Housing Blocks

The majority of houses in the old villages of ViCs (especially those located in the city center) are usually in poor condition. The “handshake and kissing buildings” street profile results in poor ventilation, a considerable of rooms in a house without sunlight, and fire danger. In order to improve spatial quality, a major concern is given to reduce the density of the existing housing block and create more open space and public facilities accessible by both migrants and villagers. A housing block is usually surrounded by village main roads, which are packed with small shops and connect with alleyways. This suggests that the improvement of a housing block could start from outside, improving the facades of village main roads. Removing some rows of houses in a housing block could allow the rest houses to maintain good spacing (Urbanus, 2006). The demolished housing sites then could be used for underground and ground level parking places or garden and activity spaces. “The New Alley Movement” (see Chapter 4) also reflects that adding roof gardens is another feasible instrument to create more open space and improve living condition in ViCs.

Key to the success of the housing improvement is the transfer of property right and agreements between stakeholders. A partnership between multi-governments, the collective companies, small developers (such as informal property management companies) and households is required. In order to deal with the land property right issue, one alternative is that villagers can be changed from “landlords” to “shareholders” (Urbanus, 2006). This suggests that some of the improved buildings could be returned to the villagers for their own homes, the rest could be controlled under a corporation for the benefit of all. Strengthening the role of state in subsidizing or providing low-income housing for marginal social groups, the ViC’s redevelopment needs the financial support from the state. In order to ensure the upgraded houses available for the majority of low-income migrants and urban newcomers, agreements between state agencies, developers
and villager households on the annual increase of house rent are probably necessary.

4. Conclusion

ViCs play a positive role in the rapid urbanization of China, supplying affordable housing, education, and job opportunities for migrants. Several top-down and bottom-up actions have been largely failed in the redevelopment of ViCs due to the conflicts of interests among various stakeholders and complex issues. The top-down approaches which are mainly based on a “demolition-redevelopment” model and dominant by commercial and political interests can’t work in many cases; while the bottom-up approaches are usually lack of formal regulation. The sustainable developments of ViCs and the city require a new planning approach that focuses on stakeholder cooperation, integrated strategies, and specific actions that deal with opportunities and problems in strategic locations.

This chapter suggests that the methodologies of the strategic urban project approach could be adapted and amended to suit the purpose of organizing the sustainable redevelopment of ViCs. It argues that the mode of three key stakeholders (the state, the market and civil society) of the approach is not suitable to the Chinese context. Rather than “civil society”, “society” could be a more suitable term to indicate spheres beyond the direct intervention of the state, including institutions of “the third realm”, the informal sector, households, etc. The role of the state in redistribution (for example, subsiding the upgrading of public facilities and housing for low-income migrants) should be emphasized. The informal sector and households that are involved in reciprocal actions should be considered as important stakeholders in specific actions of ViCs (including the redevelopment of collective project sites and the upgrading of houses and infrastructure). Policy-makers in China should “enable” them in the decision-making processes. Visions at three (city, district and ViC) scales are platforms for the coproduction of three key stakeholders and the integration of different actions. Partnerships of the state, the market and society could lead to a balance between three modes of economic integration (redistribution, market exchange and reciprocity).

This research project explores an alternative/collaborative planning approach for the sustainable redevelopment of ViCs. It is mainly based on the survey on ViCs that are located in the center and on the periphery of Guangzhou. ViCs in the suburbs are properly easier for strategic interventions, as they have lower physical and population densities and a larger amount of collective project sites. More research is needed to explore this dimension.
NOTES

1. According to Huang (1993), a third realm is an intermediate sphere between state and society, within which both participate. It is different to “civil society” which opposes the state. By reviewing Chinese history, Huang argues that the realm was more ad-hoc and semiformal during the Qing Dynasty (e.g. people with official titles in the village), but became increasingly institutionalized in the twentieth century (e.g. the commune, the collective company).

2. The reserved land was 5–8% of total requisitioned land at that time, then increased to 10–12%, and was then abolished in the 21st century by Guangzhou governments (Lan, 2005).

3. 50% of the compensation was for collective developments, while the remaining 50% was for peasants, whose land was requisitioned by the city government.

4. The resident’s committee undertakes many tasks, including public order, basic welfare provision, mediation of disputes, sanitation, education, and cultural activities.

5. SEG hands in a fixed amount of money to the street office before taxation according to the expenditure of the resident’s committee. Then, the street office allocates the money to the resident’s committee. The street office is an agency of the city government. It is responsible for local justice, community security, traffic control, fire protection, sanitation, street scoping, maintenance of open spaces, environmental protection, family planning, employment and labor force administration, daycare services, disaster protection, collective-owned businesses, community services, and farmers’ markets.

6. In order to restrict peasants moving to the cities, the dual urban–rural system has been established since the 1950s. The hukou system registers people by their birthplace with urban and rural hukou status, distinct from housing, employment opportunities and social welfare.

7. In the West, access to citizenship is not conditioned by taxes. Nevertheless, a fair tax system (in proportion to means of the societal groups concerned) is considered as a necessary condition to arrive at redistribution (in proportion to the needs of those groups).

8. ViCs are administrated by street offices, which are agents of the urban government. The street office is responsible for local justice, community security, traffic control, fire protection, sanitation, street scoping, maintenance of open spaces, environmental protection, family planning, employment and labor force
administration, day-care services, disaster protection, collective-owned businesses, community services, and farmers’ markets.
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PUBLICATION LIST

International Peer Reviewed Journal Articles


Yanliu Lin, Bruno De Meulder, and Shifu Wang, “The interplay of state, market and society in the sociospatial transformation of ‘villages in the city’ in Guangzhou” (accepted by *Environment and Urbanization* in July 2011)

Yanliu Lin and Bruno De Meulder, “A conceptual framework on the urban project approach for the sustainable redevelopment of ‘villages in the city’ in Guangzhou” (resubmitted to *Habitat International*).

Book Chapters

Yanliu Lin, Bruno De Meulder, and Shifu Wang, “The interplay between ‘villages in the city’ and urban areas in Guangzhou and its implication for redevelopment strategies” (submitted to Fulong Wu and Fang Zhu (eds.), *Rural Migrants in Urban China*)

Conference Proceedings /Presentations


Yanliu Lin, “A conceptual framework on the strategic urban project approach for the sustainable redevelopment of ‘villages in the city’ in Guangzhou”, paper presented in *2nd International Conference on China’s Urban Transition and City Planning*, 27-28 May 2011, Cardiff, Wales, United Kingdom.
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