

## Emerging participative approaches for urban regeneration in Chinese megacities

Chen, Yawei; Qu, Lei

**DOI**

[10.1061/\(ASCE\)UP.1943-5444.0000550](https://doi.org/10.1061/(ASCE)UP.1943-5444.0000550)

**Publication date**

2020

**Document Version**

Accepted author manuscript

**Published in**

Journal of Urban Planning and Development

**Citation (APA)**

Chen, Y., & Qu, L. (2020). Emerging participative approaches for urban regeneration in Chinese megacities. *Journal of Urban Planning and Development*, 146(1), Article 04019029. [https://doi.org/10.1061/\(ASCE\)UP.1943-5444.0000550](https://doi.org/10.1061/(ASCE)UP.1943-5444.0000550)

**Important note**

To cite this publication, please use the final published version (if applicable). Please check the document version above.

**Copyright**

Other than for strictly personal use, it is not permitted to download, forward or distribute the text or part of it, without the consent of the author(s) and/or copyright holder(s), unless the work is under an open content license such as Creative Commons.

**Takedown policy**

Please contact us and provide details if you believe this document breaches copyrights. We will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

1 Journal of Urban Planning and Development, special issue on “Inclusive Urbanization and  
2 Participatory Urban Development”.

3  
4 Title:

## 5 **Emerging Participative Approaches for Urban Regeneration in** 6 **Chinese Megacities**

7  
8 Yawei Chen<sup>1</sup> and Lei Qu<sup>2</sup>

9  
10 Author 1 (corresponding author): Yawei Chen, Ph.D., Assistant professor, Department of Management in the Built  
11 Environment, Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment, Delft University of Technology, Postbus 5043, 2600 GA  
12 Delft, the Netherlands, Email: Y.Chen@tudelft.nl

13 Author 2: Lei Qu, Ph.D., Assistant professor, Department of Urbanism, Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment,  
14 Delft University of Technology, Postbus 5043, 2600 GA Delft, the Netherlands, Email: L.Qu@tudelft.nl

15  
16 **Keywords:** Participative urban regeneration, Chinese mega city, Social inclusion, Place-  
17 making

### 18 19 20 **Abstract**

21  
22 The rapid development of Chinese megacities in the past decades have been mainly  
23 characterized by top-down planning and large-scale urban (re-)development, and by using  
24 “place-making” as a tool for city branding. This approach has also been used in other  
25 countries and has been constantly criticized for replacing old neighbourhoods. In recent  
26 years, alternative development modes and participative approaches in urban regeneration  
27 practices have emerged in cities such as Shanghai and Shenzhen. This paper investigates  
28 participative urban regeneration cases in Yangpu district, located in Shanghai and the Dalang  
29 sub-district in Shenzhen. Both case studies are located in the urban-rural interface, where past  
30 industrialization processes have resulted in complex socio-spatial conditions. The primary  
31 focus was to analyse the governance aspects in the cases, such as the enabling factors that  
32 allow the participative approach to emerge in these projects and their governance model. This  
33 paper concludes on the importance of civil society organizations and the incorporation of  
34 social objectives in emerging participative regeneration practices.

35

## 36 **Introduction**

37

38 Public participation has become an increasingly used approach to spear urban change with  
39 social inclusion and facilitate place-making in countries where the planning system provides  
40 space for it (Strydom *et al* 2018; Karacor 2014; Main and Sandoval 2015). A more  
41 sustainable urbanization strategy relies on the joint effort of the public, private sectors and the  
42 civil society, with the exchanges of resources, shared goals and common interests (Healey  
43 1997; Koppenjan and Klijn 2004; Head and Alford 2015).

44

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

61  
62  
63  
64  
65  
66  
67  
68  
69  
70  
71  
72  
73  
74  
75  
76  
77  
78  
79  
80  
81  
82  
83  
84  
85

The necessity of adopting participative approaches in urban regeneration in Chinese megacities lies in the context of rapid urbanisation, particularly the associated processes of migration and socio-economic restructuring. Due to the influx of rural-urban migrants, the megacities in China face the challenges of accommodating a large proportion of floating populations (Liang *et al.* 2014). These migrants are comprised of mostly young people trying to find their own ways to settle down in mega cities and are more vulnerable to changes in the built environment compared to local residents. However, this large social group is usually neglected in the planning and (re-)development process because they are not property owners (Huang and Li 2014). The issue of socio-spatial inequality has become increasingly prominent in Chinese megacities, leading to some concern about the risk of social instability, which may have the counter effect on China's rapid economic growth (Knight 2014). Enhancing social inclusion and capacity building in the urban (re-)development process is therefore essential from the perspective of social resilience (Berkes and Ross 2013).

Despite the constraints and limited space in both the planning system and institutional setting, public participation started late in China but has gradually gained attention in urban development (Enserink and Koppenjan 2007). Inspired by the lessons from European cities and international best practices, public participation is considered essential for a better decision-making process towards social inclusion. For example, in the case of the low-carbon community project in Yangzhou, local participants were informed of the benefits that public participation brings. These include opportunities to incorporate professional and public interests, to create an informal public space inside the neighbourhood and to find transdisciplinary solutions by incorporating the needs and interests of diverse stakeholders, as well as the possibility to raise funds for various activities (Tian and Zhu 2015: 19). Verdini

86 (2015) compared the different forms of public participation in several urban regeneration  
87 cases in Nanjing, Suzhou and Shanghai. In the South Nanjing case, local elite (academic  
88 scholars and local experts) and residents used different ways, such as petitioning, protesting  
89 and campaigning through local media to preserve a few portions of the local historical area.  
90 In Shanghai, the Tianzifang project was initiated by a community of artists. Through a  
91 community-initiated organization, both the artists and local residents established a  
92 partnership and self-financed the rehabilitation of buildings and public facilities. With a self-  
93 organized approach, local communities achieved the conservation of the Shikumen  
94 neighbourhoods. Both the Nanjing and Shanghai cases have shown the leading role of local  
95 elites, in historical preservation or urban rehabilitation, such as academics and artists, who  
96 advocated the concerns of local issues and their professional skills or opinions were  
97 instrumental.

98  
99 In these examples, residents from the local community participated in practices of urban  
100 regeneration. Theoretically speaking, the root of resident participation comes from the  
101 assertion that without the active engagement of local people, neither the state nor the market  
102 could solve the issues of disadvantaged communities in urban renewal projects (Wood 2002).  
103 However, a participative approach in urban regeneration is context related. Each context has  
104 its enabling factors and constraints. This paper analyses such participative urban regeneration  
105 practices in two Chinese megacities - Shanghai and Shenzhen. It investigates how these  
106 urban regeneration projects were carried out by incorporating different goals, interests,  
107 resources and involvement of various stakeholders. Furthermore, it examines and compares  
108 these emerging practices using governance parameters. By doing so, the authors try to  
109 understand: 1) What enabling factors allowed participative approaches to emerge in these  
110 urban regeneration projects? 2) What participative methods have been adopted? 3) To what

111 extent did these participative urban regeneration projects contribute to inclusive places? The  
112 conclusions highlight new roles of planning, design and governance in urban regeneration. It  
113 suggests that there is a necessity of shifting urban regeneration approaches from product-  
114 oriented redevelopment to process-oriented place-making and re-imaging.

115  
116 **Theoretical perspectives of participative urban regeneration and their relevance to**  
117 **Chinese practices**

118  
119 *Perspectives of participative approach in urban regeneration*

120

121 The debate on participative approach in urban regeneration has been driven from different  
122 perspectives. Based on intensive literature studies, the authors summarised three main  
123 perspectives.

124 The first is a governance perspective on the creation of places. Place is meant for people,  
125 encouraging them “to linger and return” (Adams and Tiesdell 2013: 15). To make vital  
126 places, the governance of place involves not only plural stakeholders but also the attempt to  
127 turn such extensive stakeholder engagements into advantages. The network mode of  
128 governance recognises that the stakeholders “not only have the right to comment” but also  
129 may “bring valuable insight or information to the planning process that may well improve  
130 intended outcome” (Adams and Tiesdell 2013: 126-127). David Blunkett (2001) used the  
131 term democratic renewal to suggest a transformation of the government to get citizens and  
132 associations engaged in the process of governance.

133

134 The second perspective emphasizes on community involvement in an area-based urban  
135 regeneration. Deakin and Allwinkle (2007) states that sufficiently place-based knowledge  
136 can be incorporated into strategic solutions that top-down interventions may be lacking.

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

138 issues, which would otherwise be difficult to resolve from the outside. Residents are more  
139 likely to connect and protect their local areas if they are involved in the locality and thus,  
140 make the solution more integrated and sustainable. This may in turn encourage communities  
141 to develop skills and social capital, which may contribute to the people's own welfare (Tallon  
142 2010: 146-147). In the past decades, the regeneration of disadvantaged neighbourhoods or so-  
143 called 'distressed urban areas', has become the focus in urban public policy agendas in  
144 European countries (Conway and Konvitz 2000). These urban policies are mainly area-based,  
145 with the aim to adapt to the local socio-spatial conditions. By involving local residents to find  
146 solutions, these policies have shown a certain degree of comprehensiveness and acknowledge  
147 the multidimensional nature of urban regeneration (Parés et al 2012: 241).

148

149 The third perspective is the intent of social inclusion through a participative approach to  
150 achieve more balanced power relations and to deal with conflicts among interests of  
151 stakeholders, especially between the marginalised and the dominant (Bull and Jonges 2006).  
152 Narayanan et al (2013) stated that people with different levels of power behave differently.  
153 Individuals with low power are more likely to socially withdraw when they are excluded and  
154 take less initiatives to connect with potential networks. This indicates an unequal access to  
155 resources and rights (United Nations 2016), and the importance of raising the voice of  
156 people. In European Union (EU) countries, social inclusion has steadily gained recognition in  
157 public policies (Marlier et al. 2009). Furthermore, beyond the perspective of social inclusion,  
158 there are studies examining participative approaches through the lens of local direct  
159 democracy (Fischer 2006; Fung and Wright 2001; Healey et al. 2008). The importance of  
160 participation in planning exercises represents a shift from pure participation to participatory  
161 democracy. More space for self-help activities is provided, contributing to citizen  
162 empowerment and community development (Stratigea et al. 2018). However, critics suggest

163 that citizen participation schemes are rarely implemented smoothly due to difficulties in  
164 designing and managing participatory processes. People may be “highly sceptical about the  
165 worth of investing their time and energy in participatory activities” (Fischer 2006: 22).

166

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

168

169 In China, participative urban regeneration is seen as an approach that originated from  
170 Western (in particular EU) countries. The transferability of such participative approaches in  
171 the Chinese context still has a knowledge gap. One of the debates is on the role of civil  
172 society, which falls into two camps: one that emphasizes on the incipient civil society that  
173 can be cultivated in the Chinese context and the other thinks that the concept of civil society  
174 is Western and not relevant to China (Verdini 2015). Such debates triggered an increase in  
175 studies on the role of civil society, including the local communities, Non-Governmental  
176 Organisations (NGOs), local organizations, and leading professionals in the urban  
177 regeneration process in the Chinese context (Ming 2011; Wu 2015). One of the most  
178 extensively studied term is the so-called community in the Chinese context (Bray 2006; Shieh  
179 and Friedmann 2008; Nguyen 2013). The Chinese term for ‘community’(shequ) is designated  
180 as “the basic unit of urban social, political and administrative organisation” (Bray 2006:531).  
181 As a result of government-led community building projects, the Chinese community  
182 represents a hybrid combination of strategies for community governance. On the one hand, it  
183 is given a clear institutional identity defined with territory and population; its staffs are  
184 professional cadres and can access a range of financial materials and cultural resources to  
185 appeal governmental interventions (Bray 2006: 546). On the other hand, much of the day-to-  
186 day work of the community depends on “the active participation of numerous unpaid  
187 volunteers mobilized among the local population” (Bray 2006: 546).

188

189 Another well studied term is NGOs in the Chinese context (Chan 2012). It is worth to note  
190 that: Chinese NGOs have grown largely in numbers in the last three decades, mirroring the  
191 emerging social challenges caused by political, economic and social changes. Local NGOs  
192 have been recognised for their positive social contributions. Although with the desire to  
193 encourage participation of social organisations, the state is cautious with the independence of  
194 social organisations and the possibility of losing control. As a result, the strict NGO  
195 regulation and NGO registration system has left most NGOs unregistered in the system (Hsu  
196 and Hasmath 2014). Second, besides NGOs, the role of active citizenship has also been  
197 acknowledged in the debate of community involvement (Marinetti 2003). Civic associations,  
198 professionals, artists and citizens seem to be a group encountered less political suspicion.  
199

200 Regarding public participation in Chinese planning and governance, Wu (2015: 72-73)  
201 indicated two common misconceptions. The first one refers to the statement that no  
202 consultation exists under the ‘authoritarian state’. However, China’s Urban and Rural  
203 Planning law (Government of China 2007) does encourage the consultation of public  
204 opinions in the planning process (article 26 and 46). The statement above underplays the  
205 consultation that happens between work-units and local governments within a more sector-  
206 based administrative hierarchy. The second misconception claims that great participation is  
207 driven by the marketization process that may eventually lead to democratic politics.  
208 According to Wu (2015, pp 72-73), this is only partially true, as competition may turn  
209 resource mobility and redistribution towards the advantage of the business interest, making  
210 participation more procedural rather than substantial. With the debate of public participation  
211 in mind, Wu has seen an increase of using design competitions, which have led to a greater  
212 scope of planning participation. Public participation has been treated as a method of place  
213 promotion in this case. However, the emphasis is still on growth-dependent planning and

214 social justice is “not explicitly raised in the planning process of China” (Wu 2015: 205).  
215 These observations bring forth the relevance of the term ‘place-making’- in relation to ‘place  
216 branding’-in the discussion of participatory planning in China.

217

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

220 ‘Place-making’ and ‘place branding’ have “a wide range of rationales and effects” and may  
221 interact but more often operate at different scales (Evans, 2015: 135). The interest on place  
222 surged in the field of urban planning since the 1990s when the planners’ principle  
223 preoccupation was with city branding in response to world-wide inter-city competitions  
224 (Friedmann 2010). Place-making in that context mainly referred to area-based development  
225 in line with place branding and with investment from different levels of authorities  
226 (Ashworth et al 2015). In these cases, the emphasis is on the distinctiveness and qualities of  
227 the physical environment for city re-imaging (Evans 2015). The rapid urban  
228 (re-)development in Chinese cities in the past decades can be seen as part of this  
229 phenomenon. Such a place-making model has been controversial, since it can lead to the  
230 displacement of old neighbourhoods due to the values of social infrastructure and  
231 communities in the local scale being considered as less (Friedmann 2010).

232

233 The concept of place-making has developed in the past decades from a term concerned  
234 mainly about places as physical end-products towards a participatory process as an  
235 empowering tool (Strydom et al. 2018). It is becoming a more suitable route to stimulate  
236 active participation and enhance social capital, although affordable applications in practice is  
237 still scarce (Alvarez et al. 2017). For example, in Western European countries, raising the  
238 voice of people has been institutionalised in renovation projects and has continued as a strong  
239 movement in urban restructuring activities (Qu and Hasselaar 2011). In Chinese cities, small-

240 scale urban regeneration projects focusing on social infrastructure and community spaces are  
241 also emerging. In these cases, planning and design are also playing different roles, as the  
242 designers mainly facilitating the making of places together with local people throughout the  
243 process. This is in line with the argument that place-making is “everyone’s job” as pointed by  
244 John Friedmann (2010: 149), which requires more open and collaborative processes among  
245 various stakeholders and celebrates everyday life (Schneekloth and Shibley 2000). An  
246 important nature of place experienced by people, individually or collectively, is that it is part  
247 of the everyday environment (Evans 2015). Urban regeneration in emerging incremental way  
248 has also shown interactions of place-making and place branding. As is shown in the two  
249 study cases of this paper, urban regeneration helped re-imagining underdeveloped areas during  
250 the process of deindustrialization and industrial upgrading.

251  
252 ‘Place-making’ may not comprehensively interpret the emerging participative regeneration  
253 practices in China, since the concept itself is broad and has evolved in the past, as mentioned  
254 above. Different perceptions on place-making from social, political and physical point of  
255 views make this framework controversial. Nevertheless, such wide range of rationales, on the  
256 other hand, makes ‘place’ at the centre when addressing conflicts of interests of the  
257 stakeholders involved. Through this lens, the projects introduced in this paper offer a fresh  
258 look at the participative approaches applied in Chinese urban regeneration practices. As  
259 Verdini (2015) states that several elements are essential, such as: the level of achievements in  
260 participative practices, the role of leading organisations at the local level, and the relation  
261 between the government and non-governmental organizations. This paper will try to interpret  
262 the cases from a governance perspective on place-making, instead of a top-down versus  
263 bottom-up narrative.

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

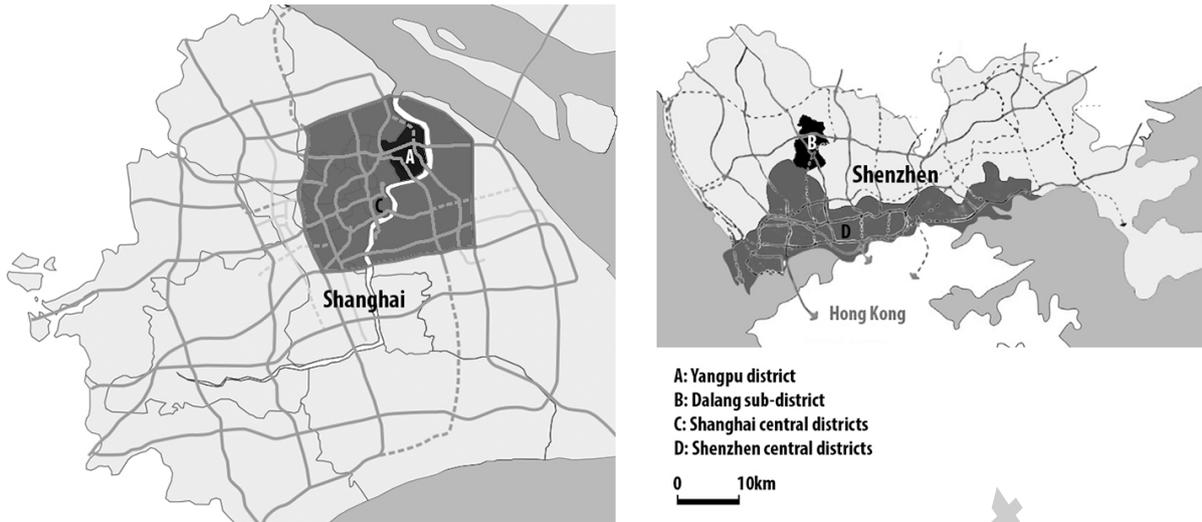
266  
267 *The choice of study cases*  
268

269 Following the theoretical discussion, two in-depth case studies are carried out: the Yangpu  
270 district in Shanghai, and the Dalang sub-district in Shenzhen. Chinese cities have undergone  
271 a tremendous speed of urbanisation since the economic reform and open-door policy in the  
272 late 1970s. As China's economic growth poles, Shanghai and Shenzhen both experienced  
273 astonishing urbanisation process in the last 40 years. Their economic growth and drastic  
274 urban transformation have largely been driven by various strategic large-scale urban  
275 interventions to develop financial centres, retail centres, high-tech enclaves and massive  
276 residential districts. Since the 1990s, land reforms and housing reforms resulted in the  
277 commodification process of housing, manifested by dramatically increased land prices and  
278 commodity prices (A-level office, retail and high-end house estate), which attracted massive  
279 investments to these megacities. These dramatic spatial transformations have raised concerns  
280 from critics, such as the massive scale of demolishing old neighbourhoods and forced  
281 relocation conflicts with the expense of local values. According to Wu et al (2007), a large  
282 number of residential relocations in Shanghai in the 1990s was the result of a spatial process  
283 driven by urban redevelopment. Similarly, in Shenzhen, urban villages at central locations  
284 have been gradually replaced due to large-scale redevelopment projects. Such concern has  
285 drawn attention to smaller-scale and community-oriented approaches in urban regeneration  
286 practices.

287  
288 This paper focuses on Shanghai and Shenzhen because both are China's mega cities at the  
289 frontline of experimenting participative approaches in urban regeneration, in which various  
290 stakeholders are involved and encouraged to co-create small-scale urban projects. For  
291 example, Shanghai incorporated concrete guidelines on public participation in the Regulation

292 of Shanghai Municipality of Urban and Rural Planning (2010). In recent years, the city has  
293 been extensively examined for its development in community/*shequ* building (Liu 2006;  
294 Nguyen 2013), which was considered important to achieve self-governance for local  
295 residents and migrants (both well-educated graduates and migrant workers). Shenzhen is one  
296 of the pilot cities in China to experiment with social organisation reform and has encouraged  
297 the NGOs to play an important role in stimulating public participation in public affairs. Both  
298 in Shanghai and Shenzhen, local communities are particularly encouraged to work with other  
299 social and economic organisations in dealing with urban issues. It is especially worth  
300 mentioning that in Shanghai, the so-called university-science park-local community  
301 collaboration model was first initiated by the former industrially-concentrated Yangpu  
302 District to achieve synergy by combining its own resource, finance and creative ideas, which  
303 was later introduced to the whole City.

304  
305 Recently in Shanghai and Shenzhen, the urban (re-)development process has expanded  
306 gradually to peripheral districts and have paid attention to places with complex socio-spatial  
307 conditions. In such areas, to implement the large-scale urban redevelopment approach, the  
308 amount of compensation for relocation can exceed 80-85% of the total cost for urban  
309 renewal, which makes it hardly possible for developers. Furthermore, the complex land and  
310 property ownership in peripheral districts makes massive urban interventions difficult to  
311 implement. Therefore, this paper chose to focus on these two districts located in the urban-  
312 rural interface, which used to be peripheral areas but are experiencing socio-economic and  
313 spatial transformation towards new sub-centres of the city (fig. 1). The empirical analysis of  
314 the two cases will be focusing on the three research questions mentioned in the introduction  
315 chapter. It examines emerging participative urban regeneration projects from the governance  
316 perspective on place-making, in line with the theoretical analysis.



317

318 **Fig. 1.** Locations of Yangpu district and Dalang sub-district

319

320

321 ***Participative approach in regenerating Yangpu District towards an Urban Innovation***  
 322 ***District***

323

324 The Yangpu district is one of the urban districts at the northeast edge of the city, where more  
 325 than a century ago Shanghai's earliest industries used to cluster there. Until the 1980s,  
 326 Yangpu was still home to around 2000 local factories. Worker villages started to be  
 327 constructed nearby since the 1960s to accommodate factory workers. In the 1990s, the  
 328 Yangpu District had undergone a painful process of industrial restructuring to become a  
 329 cluster of Sciences, Technology, Research and Development (R&D) and headquarter offices.  
 330 Around four-fifth of its factories disappeared, leaving many vacant industrial estates behind.  
 331 The factory managers, while losing manufacturing revenue, attempted to use their property to  
 332 generate income to pay off the pensions of retired workers (a typical Chinese arrangement for  
 333 state-owned enterprises before the pension reform). This temporary attempt offered  
 334 opportunities for small-scale regeneration projects. On the other hand, there is a largest  
 335 concentration of universities (more than 60% of universities in Shanghai, such as Fudan  
 336 University and Tongji University), research institutions as well as half of Shanghai's  
 337 university-based national science parks, which play an increasingly significant role in the

338 economic restructuring of the Yangpu District. The Yangpu District set its goal to be an  
339 innovation district in 2003 to best explore its own potentials in talent, technology and  
340 innovation. By 2010, the district had become the first national Urban Innovation District in a  
341 national program. The Yangpu District Government paid special attention to the talents and  
342 young graduates who stayed, lived and worked in Yangpu. To start their career, these people  
343 preferred to choose a place adjacent to the university campus and close to the nearby old  
344 neighbourhoods where cheap rental accommodations could be found. Lacking maintenance,  
345 many of these old neighbourhoods became dilapidated. Redevelopment of such  
346 neighbourhoods has been proposed since the 1990s but limited changes were made. Private  
347 developers lacked interest due to the complexity in ownership, the potentially high cost and  
348 low return after relocation. Besides old neighbourhoods, many industrial properties were left  
349 idle after bankruptcy and were in need of new functions, users and investments. The local  
350 district government had been anxious to improve the urban environment at the  
351 neighbourhood level in Yangpu District, therefore started to encourage smaller-scale urban  
352 regeneration from diverse initiators. The local district government strived for a possible  
353 synergy between the technological parks, universities and local neighbourhoods in the  
354 regeneration process. The policy *mass entrepreneurship and innovation (Da zhong chuang*  
355 *ye, wan zhong chuang xin)* was advocated by premier Keqiang Li in 2015. It served as a  
356 catalyst in Shanghai to eliminate various restrictions in the registration and permission of  
357 entrepreneurship. Professionals, university staffs and graduates as well as local communities  
358 have all been considered by Yangpu as a seedbed for innovation. This is also the reason why  
359 the so-called ‘micro regeneration’ concept was initiated in Yangpu District. It promoted  
360 participation in the regeneration process by local communities and active professionals. In the  
361 following text, three regeneration cases in the Yangpu District are introduced, which had

362 incorporated participative approaches with initiatives from artists, private developers and  
363 university-community collaboration.

364

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

366 The transformation of vacant industrial properties in Shanghai dates back to the 1990s as  
367 artists transferred these spacious but vacant warehouses and factories along the Suzhou Creek  
368 into art and design studios. These experiments have created discussions within the Shanghai  
369 Municipality on how to reuse vacant industrial property to facilitate the creative industry in  
370 Shanghai. Despite their success in transforming the urban space, a development plan for the  
371 creek developed by the Urban Planning Administration Bureau and the involvement of  
372 property developers forced the artists to move out eventually (Chen 2007). Mr. Teng Kun-  
373 yen, an architect from Taiwan, was among the first who had such an experience. He was  
374 invited by the Yangpu District Government to help with the regeneration of vacant factories  
375 and warehouses along the Huangpu River. This has led to an inspiring regeneration project of  
376 a former warehouse cluster at No. 2200, Yangshupu Road. After the regeneration to become  
377 Yangshupu Creative Park, suitable office spaces were created for design studios and  
378 companies that still represented the industrial legacy (fig. 2). However, despite the great  
379 individual efforts made in the design and investment for transforming the place, Teng was  
380 never able to reach an official contract with the estate owner - Shanghai Power Station  
381 Auxiliary Factory, even after the renters had moved in. This issue of uncertainty was a direct  
382 result in the fact that the design companies who rented the space were unable to register their  
383 companies without an official address. Many had to leave in the end. One company was so  
384 daunted by the situation that it sued Teng for fraud and asked for compensation. This artist-  
385 initiative ended with the initiator in a vulnerable situation and left the project in dismay.

386

387



388  
389 **Fig. 2.** Creative park at Yangshupu Road after regeneration effort by individual artist. (Image by Yawei Chen.)  
390

391  
392 *Private-initiative regeneration in developing innovation district*  
393

394 The 49-hectare site where the Knowledge and Innovation Community (KIC) is located is  
395 nearby an emerging sub-centre of Yangpu District, adjacent to several universities such as  
396 Fudan University and Tongji University. The original site was occupied by a number of small  
397 factories, workers' houses, a bus depot and the Jiangwan stadium from the 1930s. The real  
398 estate company, Shui On had experiences in adapting historical buildings into urban  
399 landmarks with innovative concepts. The company, saw this location as a great potential as  
400 an innovative cluster. Their initiative was well received by the Yangpu District Government,  
401 who saw the project as a critical measure to help develop the Yangpu District as the  
402 “National Urban Innovation District”. In 2002, Shui On started the project in a joint venture  
403 with a local public company under the Yangpu District Government (Urban Land Institute  
404 2015). Shui On aimed to foster an innovation cluster of knowledge and technology that  
405 included universities, incubators, trading institutes, commercial services and legal  
406 consultancies, etc. Shui On was keen in establishing a business model to offer assistance (e.g.

407 in finance and loan, etc.) to start-up companies and small businesses (Urban Land Institute  
408 2015). The local district government had also been keen on this focus. For example, the  
409 InnoSpace is a flex space providing a variety of services to small businesses (Urban Land  
410 Institute 2015). These InnoSpace tenants can later move to SOHO units (small office, home  
411 office) at University Avenue, which accommodates smaller start-up companies. To meet the  
412 diverse need of young talents settling down in the area, KIC developed four different areas  
413 that provides spaces for working, living, education, and retail functions. To engage local  
414 residents, of which most are employees working in KIC, participating in public activities,  
415 Shui On reserved small pieces of vacant land as community gardens. For a small rent, local  
416 residents can grow their own plants. A landscape architect Dr Liu Yuelai from Tongji  
417 University, who advocated the concept of Urban Forest and encouraged inhabitants' joint  
418 effort in developing and maintaining community gardens, was actively involved in  
419 developing the KIC community garden. As a result, the residents from KIC became the most  
420 active volunteers in neighbourhood activities and helped build its community identity.

421

#### 422 *University-community collaboration in micro-regeneration projects*

423

424 The 2.75 square kilometre Siping Road Neighbourhood is an ageing neighbourhood with  
425 residential buildings constructed between 1950 and the 1980s and with 70% of the residential  
426 buildings identified as privatized public houses in workers' villages. Both the buildings and  
427 public spaces have deteriorated during the years and need regeneration. Large-scale urban  
428 interventions were difficult to implement in a neighbourhood with high density and a large  
429 number of households. The university-science park-local community collaboration model  
430 advocated by the Yangpu District Government supports neighbourhood innovation and  
431 entrepreneurship, provides possible resources and finances for the local community  
432 organisation to take initiatives. The Siping Road Street Committee held the idea that smaller-

433 scale regeneration programs with the help of local communities might meet the local needs  
434 better. In this way, the use of the public space could be more effective, which will further  
435 enhance the quality of place. This view was increasingly shared by a number of planners and  
436 designers from Tongji University, which is located within the neighbourhood. One of the  
437 initiators was professor Long Yongqi, Dean of the College of Design and Innovation, who  
438 considered that engaging with communities could bring new perspectives and stimulate  
439 creativity. Therefore, Long advocated for more collaborations between the university and the  
440 local communities. Under the motto of ‘Neighbourhood of Innovation, Creativity and  
441 Entrepreneurship towards 2040’ (N-ICE), both the teaching staff and students from Tongji  
442 University started to engage in community regeneration through education tasks, design  
443 competitions or community activities. The Yangpu District Government saw the potential of  
444 the small-scale participative approach in the so-called ‘micro-regeneration’, which transforms  
445 ageing and unattractive urban environments with limited costs and joint efforts between  
446 different actors. They issued a series of policy documents to encourage collaboration and  
447 shared public facilities like libraries and lab equipment and provided financial instruments to  
448 facilitate such participative actions.

449

450 The possibility to improve neighbourhood public spaces by aligning local communities and  
451 professional expertise from nearby universities is in line with the community building  
452 concept promoted by the Yangpu District government. Since 2015, one of the attempts was  
453 made by hosting the Siping Space Creation Action annually. Students from the College of  
454 Design and Innovation selected different neighbourhood spaces for improvement, including  
455 telephone booths, green spaces, street corners, and etc. Inhabitants from the neighbourhood  
456 were invited to work together with the students and the design results were exhibited in the  
457 neighbourhood. In three years, more than 50 viewpoints have been created within the Siping

458 Road Neighbourhood. This was comprised of a collection of design results like wall confetti,  
459 street statue, public couches, and children playgrounds. These actions attracted inhabitants to  
460 pay attention to the efforts from university students and to build trust during the process.  
461 Following the series of actions, in 2017, a collaboration effort between Tongji University and  
462 the Siping Road Street Committee was made to redevelop a former community centre at No.  
463 115 Tieling Road. It was transformed into a centre for research, training as well as an  
464 exhibition space that fit local needs in 'SPace' (fig. 3). Presently, there are multiple groups  
465 using Space. Tongji University conducts some teaching activities and local residents attend  
466 creative skill training programs and jewellery workshops. With the joining of the Glass  
467 Museum, the three parties decided to establish The New Centre of Contemporary Jewellery  
468 and Design Culture (NoCC), together with two labs focusing on jewellery design, as well as  
469 the integration of glass and jewellery design. In the same year, Tongji University and the  
470 Massachusetts Institute of technology (MIT), collaborated with the Siping Road Street  
471 Committee to establish an urban living lab, Shanghai-MIT Media Lab, in a community waste  
472 collection centre to observe local lifestyle changes. Another active participative project is led  
473 by a landscape architect Dr Liu Yuelai mentioned in the previous project. Liu worked  
474 together with inhabitants from Ansan No. Fourth Village to take care of a 200 square meter  
475 neighbourhood green area by training inhabitants with knowledge of plants and gardening, so  
476 that the community could self-maintain the garden in the long term. These actions had a  
477 direct impact in the improvement of the neighbourhood environment along with getting more  
478 inhabitants involved in neighbourhood issues and helped create a sense of belonging for the  
479 inhabitants.

480  
481  
482  
483  
484  
485



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

488  
 489  
 490 ***Capacity building and community development in Dalang’s participative urban regeneration***  
 491

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

509 enhance social construction. A more participative and inclusive urban regeneration approach  
510 has been adopted in practices consisting of co-creating small-scale public spaces in urban  
511 villages and industrial parks. By re-using wasted space and materials, interesting places were  
512 formed where social facilities, informal education and recreational functions could be  
513 provided by and for people. These projects offered opportunities for the empowerment of  
514 migrant workers as well as a mechanism of self-management. The following examples of  
515 place-making in Dalang could represent a variety of emerging participatory approaches for  
516 urban regeneration in Shenzhen.

517  
518 *The Youth Dream Centre cultivating young talents*

519 As mentioned above, Dalang has a large proportion of young migrant workers in its  
520 population. These young migrant workers mostly do not have a university degree, and some  
521 did not complete high school. However, the young migrant workers have a very strong  
522 motivation for learning and personal development. In response to such a high demand, some  
523 training schools for professional skills emerged, offering evening courses to migrant workers.  
524 In addition, the Youth Dream Centre is located in an industrial park in Dalang that offers  
525 various types of informal learning activities, especially to young migrant workers. It is a  
526 public space jointly launched in 2013 by the Dalang sub-district government, Yifenghua  
527 Property Co., Ltd., China Development Institute (CDI, a think tank based in Shenzhen), and a  
528 non-profit organisation (NPO) called Teach for China (TFC). The centre is on the ground  
529 floor of Buildings no. 16-18 in the Yifenghua Industrial Park. The place was designed by  
530 Professor Zhu Tao from the University of Hong Kong, using the concept of ‘civic  
531 architecture’, which includes a library, service stations, spaces for social interaction, training,  
532 and performance, and etc. It can accommodate around 1,000 people participating in a variety  
533 of activities, such as courses, forums, workshops, conferences, counselling, exhibitions,  
534 large-scale evening parties, and etc. It provides a multi-functional platform for young migrant  
535

536 workers to developing themselves, with better access to informal learning and practices of  
537 public affairs.

538

539 In order to better coordinate the operation of the Youth Dream Centre, the local government,  
540 enterprises, and the NPO (TFC) jointly launched a Public Welfare Culture Centre called  
541 KIDO (Kindly Intended Deed Organisation). This was established to run the charity alliance,  
542 integrate public affair resources, incubate local social organizations, and to conduct training  
543 and workshops at the same time. The aim is to enable young migrant workers to embark on a  
544 new path of urbanisation: getting integrated into the city, developing capacity, contributing to  
545 society, and eventually realizing their dreams. At present, the members of the Youth Dream  
546 Centre Charity Alliance include more than 60 education and academic institutions and non-  
547 profit organizations from China or abroad, including universities like Peking University and  
548 the University of Hong Kong. An interesting and meaningful exchange between migrant  
549 workers and visiting scholars or students happened during field studies of these institutes,  
550 which opened a window for the young migrant workers to the outside world.

551

552 The involvement of migrant workers in the development of the centre is not much in the  
553 design and construction of the space, but mainly in the self-management of the place. Social  
554 integration of young migrant workers has become a common governance issue in the process  
555 of urbanization in Shenzhen. Especially in Dalang, these young migrant workers are still  
556 facing problems such as long working hours, low income, and having an unstable job.  
557 Moreover, public spaces and cultural facilities in Dalang are seriously inadequate, resulting  
558 in a monotonous and boring daily lifestyle of young migrant workers that only involves ‘the  
559 production line – canteen – dormitory’, which has led to psychological depression and social  
560 problems. However, within this social group, there are many of them who have dreams, eager

561 to be recognized by and care for the society. They have a strong need to participate in society,  
562 develop and enhance their own skills. They hope to play a role as a citizen, improve their  
563 current life situation and realize their dreams through hard work and creativity. The local  
564 government is also aware that migrant workers have contributed greatly to the development  
565 of Shenzhen, and that the future of young migrant workers determine the future of the city.  
566 Therefore, this special group of young migrant workers has always been the target group in  
567 Dalang's experiments of promoting social integration, innovating grassroots governance, and  
568 building social construction. Within such a context, the Youth Dream Centre offers  
569 opportunities to migrant workers to participate in public affair activities. For example, the  
570 above-mentioned non-profit organization KIDO is dedicated to promoting the growth of  
571 young migrant workers, cultivating young talents who are self-reliant, honest, innovative,  
572 empathetic and socially responsible in practices of social innovation and public affairs.  
573 Young migrant workers are encouraged to come to the Youth Dream Centre for social  
574 interaction, exploring ideas and participate in public affairs. The leaders of KIDO themselves  
575 were talented migrant workers, acting as role models of participation and self-development.  
576 In the past three years, many public events targeting young migrant workers have been  
577 organized inside the Youth Dream Centre and in other places of Dalang, led by KIDO and  
578 volunteers of young migrant workers themselves (Fig. 4).



(a)



(b)

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

581

#### 582 *Community building in Shi'ao village*

583

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

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

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

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

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

589 development. This is implemented through infrastructure reconstruction, environmental

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

599 together public interests and resources within the community, and initiated the ‘Bu Yi Bang’  
600 project. Attracted by traditional weaving, cloth dyeing, and modern sewing techniques,  
601 community residents were motivated to participate in the workshops. A fabric culture village  
602 is taking shape, and the environmental protection concept of waste utilization is promoted.



603 **Fig. 5.** Shi’ao phenomenon of participative urban regeneration in the new trend of community development: (a) Tire  
604 Amusement Park; and (b) reusing the production waste of the enzyme workshop for gardening. (Images courtesy of  
605 Xiaoxiao Mo.)

606  
607  
608 Another example is an unfinished building enclosed by broken wooden boards, which is now  
609 turned into the first Tire Amusement Park for children. This idea was initiated from the  
610 community, since there are more and more children in the neighbourhood but has an  
611 insufficient number of playgrounds. In this tire park, community residents carry out activities  
612 like tire painting, tire climbing, and etc. It became a place for children to grow and interact  
613 with parents and other children, continued to enhance the sense of community, and  
614 strengthened social cohesion. After the park was established, the community selected the  
615 ‘rotating director’ and ‘rotation management team’ through open recruitment and election  
616 campaigns, to form a mechanism for residents to participate, jointly build, share and manage  
617 together.

618  
619 A third example is an abandoned construction site that was transformed into an enzyme  
620 production site, created by a non-profit organization and community residents. Under the

621 guidance of the NGO called Green Code Environmental Protection Organization, residents  
622 are consciously involved in the action of waste reduction. They collect organic wastes like  
623 vegetable leaves and fruit peels, hand it over to the enzyme workshop to make  
624 environmentally friendly enzymes, and eventually receive the enzymes as kitchen degreaser  
625 for free. In the past two years, experiments in Shi'ao has drawn attention from society.  
626 Scholars think that it represents a new trend of community development in Shenzhen, and  
627 even called it The Shi'ao Phenomenon.

628  
629 ***Findings***  
630

631 The experiences of the participative urban regeneration projects introduced above include  
632 examples of both failure and success. They contribute to a relatively comprehensive  
633 understanding of these participative approaches, especially the enabling factors behind the  
634 emergence of such practices within specific localities. Both Yangpu and Dalang are located  
635 in the urban-rural interface of a Chinese megacity. Yangpu is close to the border of the  
636 central urban area while Dalang is part of a peripheral district. The two places used to  
637 accommodate industrial development and later experienced industrial upgrading and loss of  
638 traditional manufacturing sector and jobs. The difference is that the development of Yangpu  
639 dates back to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and its industrial upgrading process started already in the  
640 1990s. The process had resulted in numerous obsolete industrial property and job loss in  
641 Yangpu; whereas Dalang only started its rural industrialization since 1980s and has just  
642 entered a new phase of industrial upgrading. Although at different stages of urban  
643 transformation, both Yangpu and Dalang faced similar issues of implementing large-scale  
644 urban regeneration. The districts also came short in investments and interests from property  
645 developers, due to the complex land and property ownership as the legacy of its past  
646 industrial development. Meanwhile, both districts are relatively less expensive urban areas

647 where young people congregate and look for opportunities. In the Yangpu District, a large  
648 number of university graduates stayed after graduation searching for jobs, due to the ageing  
649 neighbourhoods that offer them affordable accommodations. Various industrial properties in  
650 the district were difficult to attract investors for regeneration but at the same time they  
651 offered cheap spaces for start-ups from the creative industry. Dalang has a substantially large  
652 population of young migrants working for the manufacturing factories. The migrants also live  
653 in simple accommodations in urban villages without well-planned infrastructure and  
654 community facilities. Based on the description of the practices, the authors compared the  
655 above-mentioned projects in Yangpu and Dalang with the three research questions. Results of  
656 the comparison could be summarized (Table 1). Findings focus on enabling factors,  
657 participative methods and how these practices contributed to the making of inclusive places.

658  
659 *Enabling factors*

660  
661 1) Enabling institutional environments and active support from the local government.

662 It is important to highlight that there are clear signs of institutional arrangements in the two  
663 cities that provide both spaces and instruments to allow unconventional approaches to emerge  
664 in urban redevelopment processes. The Yangpu District government is one of the first public  
665 sectors that carries out the national policy *mass entrepreneurship and innovation* in practice.  
666 These policies encourage various initiatives from societal actors to develop innovative spaces  
667 and facilitate entrepreneurship, among which, in combination with the regeneration effort to  
668 redevelop spaces within industrial properties or neighbourhood spaces. Restrictive  
669 regulations that led to the failure in the Artist-initiated Creative Park has been dismantled.  
670 The university-science park-local community collaboration model advocated by the Yangpu  
671 District Government encouraged the private sector, community and individual efforts to  
672 create innovative spaces. These initiatives are further facilitated with subsidies, seed funds  
673 for start-ups, and permission in transforming certain urban functions at the neighbourhood

674 level. The process of community building allows different societal organisations to share  
675 certain responsibilities in the community, encouraging a bigger role from *Shequ*, volunteers,  
676 and urban professional activists. Whereas in the case of Dalang, the sub-district government  
677 also provided an enabling environment for participative regeneration, where social  
678 construction is the main objective. It stimulated the emergence of small-scale projects as a  
679 result of self-organization in urban villages and the leading roles played by NGOs in public  
680 affairs. In this sense, such small-scale urban regeneration practices in both cities could be  
681 seen as experiments contributing to specific urban agendas. These include skill training and  
682 creating community space in Yangpu, as well as capacity building and community  
683 development in Dalang. To support these activities, there are policies to stimulate initiatives  
684 and seed funds to attract private investors and social organizations. In both cases, the  
685 facilitative role from the local government paved the way for participative urban regeneration  
686 projects, and encouraged civil society organizations, real estate developers and professionals  
687 to take initiatives.

688

689 2) A strong involvement from civil society organizations

690 As mentioned in the theory chapter, civil society is not a concept born in China. The  
691 Shenzhen case shows that a variety of civil society organizations started to emerge and  
692 contribute actively to public affair and community development. Many of the introduced  
693 participative urban regeneration practices in Dalang were led by such organizations, such as  
694 social enterprises, charitable foundations, NPOs, NGOs and volunteer groups. Although these  
695 organizations are still in the early stages of growth, they could already play an essential role  
696 in facilitating the sustainable socio-spatial transformation of the city. In the case of Yangpu,  
697 the community/ *Shequ* in Yangpu played an intermediate role between local government and  
698 residents. *Shequ* deals with residents' complain and worries with an informal mechanism

699 (Shieh and Friedmann 2008). In the case of the micro-regeneration projects around Tongji  
700 University campus, *Shequ* went one step further to facilitate entrepreneurship within the  
701 community. They obtained certain financial means and policy advantages to attract social  
702 enterprises and active professionals to participate in neighbourhood regeneration. The lesson  
703 learned from the Creative Industry Park in Shanghai also shows that without a strong  
704 involvement of civil society organizations, individual participants like professionals have less  
705 power in the decision-making process. If there is interest from the market forces represented  
706 by property owners, the powerful market players could terminate a real participative process  
707 in order to pursue commercial interests.

708

### 709 3) Voluntary individuals

710 Many of the above-mentioned urban regeneration projects involve a target group, for whom  
711 new places are made. These target groups include artists, young talents, local residents,  
712 young migrant workers, and so on. The relatively large number of people involved in these  
713 groups made it hard for them to participate in the urban regeneration process as individuals.  
714 However, these examples showed that the voluntary individuals are of great importance to  
715 the success of a regeneration project. The eagerness to learn, to interact with others, or to start  
716 their own businesses, are all strong interests from people, which could be incorporated in  
717 place-making. What is also worth mentioning is the group of urban professionals that have  
718 played an active role in the regeneration process. They have the expertise and creativity to  
719 transform urban spaces and the ability to involve local inhabitants to work with them. Some  
720 have pushed for a social movement and have actively engaged communities in the micro-  
721 regeneration effort. The try-outs were triggers for the local government to recognise the  
722 creativity within the communities. Following up was the policy documents issued from local

723 government to incorporate community supporting mechanisms and encourage such deeds  
724 with financial support.

725

#### 726 *Participative methods*

727 The planning system in China is still known as a top-down system, in which participative  
728 urban regeneration is not yet institutionalized. The enabling factors of the emerging  
729 participative approaches explained above indicate that the participative methods being  
730 adopted differ case by case. These could be seen as experimental projects exploring various  
731 possibilities in practice: who takes initiative, who participates, and with which governance  
732 model? In comparing the examples in Yangpu and Dalang, it is clear that participative  
733 regeneration projects were initiated from diverse actors. Notably, there is always some form  
734 of participation by the local government, even in small-scale projects such as the Youth  
735 Dream Centre and the Bu Yi Bang project in Shi'ao village. In these projects, the target  
736 groups who were the end users, participated mainly in the daily operation and maintenance of  
737 the place. Nevertheless, a real collaboration among stakeholders is prominent in all projects  
738 that have achieved the original (social) objectives. The termination of the participative  
739 approach happened in the Creative Industry Park in Shanghai, has shown what could have  
740 happened otherwise.

741

#### 742 *Place-making*

743 It is seen in the case studies that social objectives such as capacity building and community  
744 development could be combined with urban regeneration projects. In this way, place-making  
745 in urban regeneration is supported by new participative governance models, in which  
746 volunteer groups, NGOs and social enterprises could contribute to achieving these social  
747 objectives while new public spaces are created and maintained. Thus, the social benefits

748 associated with certain target groups and inclusiveness of the space (whether is it open to the  
749 public) give profound meaning to the place. In this sense, a variety of practices could be  
750 justified as place-making practices, from the informally formulated temporary tire-  
751 amusement park to the professionally designed and constructed SPace, Shanghai-MIT Media  
752 Lab or community gardens.

753  
754 **Conclusions and discussion**  
755

756 Due to the nature of existing urban areas that involve complex networks of stakeholders,  
757 participative approaches are increasingly adopted in urban regeneration practices, which  
758 refers to the role of planning in facilitating such practices. This paper focuses on the  
759 governance aspect when analysing the emerging participative regeneration practices. It tries  
760 to understand the enabling factors behind, the participative approaches that have been  
761 adopted, and place-making as the outcome of the process. These regeneration projects  
762 introduced in this paper strategically combined the effort of cities re-imaging former  
763 industrial districts with social objectives at the neighbourhood scale, like capacity building  
764 and community development. In the view of John Friedmann (2010), such a people-centred  
765 approach can ensure that old places could be taken back by the neighbourhood by providing  
766 public spaces for all. Although this paper focuses on two Chinese megacities, it is also  
767 meaningful for other cities world widely. It emphasizes on the necessity of understanding the  
768 enabling environment for emerging good practices of participative regeneration, even in so  
769 called “top-down” planning context. Besides, putting ‘place’ at the centre of the discussion  
770 can help to understand more clearly the interests of various stakeholders and the outcome of  
771 the participatory process.

772

773 Findings from the in-depth case studies and comparing them showed the importance of active  
774 support from the local government. The results indicate the necessity of institutional  
775 innovation in urban planning and governance in China, making room for participation from  
776 diverse societal actors and informal or temporary use of spaces by various stakeholders in  
777 urban regeneration practices. Currently in Chinese megacities like Shanghai and Shenzhen,  
778 such practices are emerging in areas with fewer possibilities of large-scale urban  
779 redevelopment, or places with complex land and property ownership. However, these  
780 practices have not yet been mainstreamed or institutionalized. Therefore, the local  
781 government still needs to play a pivotal role in promoting socially oriented participative  
782 approaches in urban regeneration, as it involves new ways of planning, design and  
783 implementation. The policy instruments from the Yangpu District Government that has  
784 facilitated the micro-regeneration program has shown some signs of effect. From the  
785 emerging cases studied in this paper, there is not enough evidence to conclude what should  
786 be institutionalized in the planning system. Nevertheless, these cases offered diverse  
787 inspiration on what could be achieved socially and spatially, once small-scale participative  
788 practices are facilitated in the planning system.

789

790 Within these cases, mutual support and benefits among universities, developers, investors,  
791 NGOs, designers, users and the community as a whole show an entrepreneurial characteristic  
792 in the projects. This can also be seen as new forms of social innovation in solving wicked  
793 problems at hand. Compared to the market-led, large-scale profit-oriented urban regeneration  
794 projects that are still considered as mainstream in practice, the most prominent innovation of  
795 such small-scale participative projects lies in their approaches of incorporating social  
796 objectives within the urban regeneration process. As indicated in the theory chapter, such a  
797 people and process-oriented place-making concept can contribute to the social resilience in

798 transitional neighbourhoods in Chinese megacities. This requires a change in mindset for  
799 everyone involved in urban regeneration processes, from focusing on market-led city-  
800 branding to socio-cultural resilience with a strong involvement of civil society organizations.  
801 Lessons learned from the case studies showed that without the leading role of civil society  
802 organizations, market forces can override and terminate the participative approach, right  
803 when profit-seeking becomes possible.

804

805 Last but not least, the motivation of individual volunteers to participate and collaborate are of  
806 great importance as well, especially those who are seen as part of the target groups or end  
807 users. In Chinese megacities under the context of rapid urbanization, there are various types  
808 of social groups whose voices are hardly heard in the massive urban redevelopment process,  
809 such as the migrants, the young talents, the elderly, and etc. The case studies in this paper  
810 showed active participation of individuals in urban regeneration practices, from the  
811 professionals who intend to take a lead to the young migrant workers who are eager to  
812 contribute. In these cases, being actively involved in regeneration process reflects the  
813 interests of these social groups, which were considered by the leading parties when setting  
814 the scene for place-making in urban regeneration. Voices of these target groups and end users  
815 are heard and represented by civil society organizations and professionals in the decision-  
816 making and design process. Researchers of participatory planning may question whether this  
817 is the highest level of participation, in terms of power relations among stakeholders in the  
818 decision-making process. However, it is not the purpose of this paper to evaluate the levels of  
819 participation in these emerging practices in China. Instead, the focus is on how such practices  
820 emerged in a well-known top-down planning system and what inspirations did they bring to  
821 place-making theory and practice, which are more relevant to the current debate on urban  
822 regeneration in Chinese megacities.

823

824 This paper introduced emerging participative urban regeneration practices in two Chinese  
825 megacities, which are seen as a new phenomenon of urban planning and development. It  
826 offers a very basic description and comparison among the chosen cases, as well as a  
827 preliminary understanding of the enabling factors behind. Due to the nature of these projects  
828 as ‘experimental’, the authors find it too early to conclude them as results of structural  
829 changes in urban planning and governance, or socio-economic policies. Nevertheless,  
830 according to the contextual analysis of this paper, some ongoing shifts of focus in the policy  
831 level did provide an enabling environment for such participatory approaches. For example,  
832 the newly implemented planning policies of Chinese megacities have shown increasing  
833 emphasis on improving existing built-up areas, instead of only focusing on developing new  
834 towns/districts. Within such a policy framework, cities like Shanghai experiencing industrial  
835 upgrading are making more efforts to promote cultural and creative industries in combination  
836 with urban regeneration; while others like Shenzhen facing tremendous social challenges  
837 brought by rural-urban migrants started to facilitate social upgrading and community  
838 development in the neighbourhood level. To fully explain policy changes as enabling factors  
839 for the emergence of participative urban regeneration practices in China, more in-depth case  
840 studies and causality analysis is needed for future research.

841

#### 842 **Data Availability Statement**

843

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

845

846

#### 847 **References**

848

849 Adams, D., and Tiesdell, S. (2013). *Shaping places: Urban planning, design and development*, Routledge,  
Abingdon.

850

851 Alvarez, L., Borsi, K., and Rodrigues, L. (2017). “The role of social network analysis on participation and  
placemaking.” *Sustainable Cities and Society*, 28, 118-126.

- 852 Ashworth, G. J., Kavaratzis, M. and Warnaby G. (2015). "The need to Rethink Place branding". In Kavaratzis,  
853 M., Warnaby, G. and Ashworth, G. J. (Ed). *Rethinking Place Branding*. London: Springer, 1- 12.
- 854 Berkes, F. and Ross, H. (2013). "Community Resilience: Toward an Integrated Approach", *Society & Natural*  
855 *Resources*, 26 (1), 5-20, DOI: 10.1080/08941920.2012.736605
- 856 Blunkett, D. (2001). *Politics and progress: Renewing democracy and civil society*. Politico's Publishing,  
857 London.
- 858 Bray, D. (2006). "Building 'Community': new strategies of governance in urban China", *Economy and Society*,  
859 35 (4), 530-549
- 860  
861 Bull, A.C., and Jones, B. (2006). "Governance and social capital in urban regeneration: A comparison between  
862 Bristol and Naples." *Urban Studies*, 43, 767-786.
- 863  
864 Chan, C.K. (2012). "Community-based organizations for migrant workers' rights: the emergence of labour NGOs  
865 in China." *Community Development Journal*, 48 (1), 6-22.
- 866  
867 Chen, Y. (2007). "Regeneration and sustainable development in China's urban transformation", paper from  
868 *International Conference ENHR 2007 Sustainable Urban Area*, Rotterdam, (June 25-28, 2007)
- 869  
870 Conway, M., and Konvitz, J. (2000). "Meeting the challenge of distressed urban areas." *Urban Studies*, 37(4),  
871 749-774.
- 872  
873 Deakin, M., and Allwinkle, S. (2007). "Urban regeneration and sustainable communities. The role of networks,  
874 innovation, and creativity in building successful partnerships." *Journal of Urban Technology*, 14(1), 77-91.
- 875  
876 Enserink, B. and Koppenjan, JFM., (2007). "Public participation in China: sustainable urbanization and  
877 governance", *Management of Environmental Quality: an international journal*. 18 (4), 459-474
- 878  
879 Evans, G. (2015). "Rethinking place branding and place making through creative and cultural quarters". In:  
880 *Rethinking Place Branding: Comprehensive Brand Development for Cities and Regions*. Kavaratzis,  
881 Mihalis and Warnaby, Gary and Ashworth, Gregory J., eds. Springer, Switzerland, 135-158.
- 882  
883  
884 Fischer, F. (2006). "Participatory governance as deliberative empowerment: The cultural politics of discursive  
885 space." *American Review of Public Administration*, 36(1), 19-40.
- 886  
887 Friedmann, J. (2010). "Place and place-making in cities: A global perspective." *Planning Theory & Practice*,  
888 11(2), 149-165.
- 889 Fung, A., and Wright, E. O. (2001). "Deepening democracy: Innovations in empowered local governance."  
890 *Politics and Society*, 29 (1), 5-41.
- 891 Government of China (2007). "The urban and rural planning law of the People's Republic of China."  
892 <[http://www.npc.gov.cn/englishnpc/Law/2009-02/20/content\\_1471595.htm](http://www.npc.gov.cn/englishnpc/Law/2009-02/20/content_1471595.htm). > (Nov. 4, 2018).
- 893 Head, B.W. and Alfred, J. (2015). "Wicked problems: implications for public policy and management",  
894 *Administration and Society*, 47(6), 711-739, DOI: 10.1177/0095399713481601
- 895 Healey, P. (1997) *Collaborative Planning – Shaping Places in Fragmented Societies*. Houndmills and London,  
896 Macmillan.
- 897 Healey, P., Booher, D.E., Torfing, J., Sorensen, E., Ng, M.K., Peterson, P., and Albrechts, L. (2008). "Civic  
898 engagement, spatial planning and democracy as a way of life." *Planning Theory & Practice*, 9(3), 379-414.

- 899 Hsu, J. and Hasmath, R. (2014). "The local corporatist state and NGO relations in China." *Journal of*  
900 *Contemporary China*, 23 (87), 516-534.
- 901 Huang, Y. and Li, S.M. (2014) *Housing Inequality in Chinese Cities*. London: Routledge.
- 902 Karacor, E.K. (2014). "Placemaking approachment to accomplish social sustainability", *European Journal of*  
903 *Sustainable Development*, 3 (4), 253-262.
- 904 Knight, J. (2014) "Inequality in China: An Overview." *World Bank Research Observer*, 29 (1), 1-19.
- 905 Koppenjan, J.F.M. and Klijn E.H., (2004) *Managing Uncertainties in networks. A network approach to problem*  
906 *solving and decision making*. London: Routledge.
- 907 *Leaving no one behind: The imperative of social inclusive development*. (2016) United Nations Publications,  
908 New York.
- 909 Liang, z., Li,Z. and Ma, z. (2014). "Changing Patterns of the Floating Population in China during 2000-2010",  
910 *Population and Development Review*, 40 (4), 695-716.
- 911 Liu, C. (2006) "Social Changes and Neighbourhood Policy in Shanghai", *Policy and Society*, 25 (1), 133-155,  
912 DOI: 10.1016/S1449-4035(06)70130-8
- 913 Liu, Y. (2017). Urban redevelopment and residential displacement in Shenzhen, China: Towards inclusive and  
914 sustainable urban transformation, PhD dissertation, Department of Human Geography and Planning, Utrecht  
915 University.
- 916 Main, K. and Sandoval, G.F. (2015). "Placemaking in a translocal receiving community: the relevance of place  
917 to identity and agency", *Urban Studies*, 52 (1), 71-86.
- 918 Marinetto, M (2003). "Who wants to be an active citizen? The politics and practice of community involvement",  
919 *Sociology*, 37 (1): 103-120.
- 920 Marlier, E., Cantillon, B., Nolan, B., van den Bosch, K., and van Rie, T. (2009). "Developing and learning from  
921 measures of social inclusion in the European Union." Paper for *International Conference on Measuring Poverty,*  
922 *Income Inequality, and Social Exclusion - Lessons from Europe*, Paris, (Mar 16-17, 2009), OECD: Paris
- 923 Ming, W. (Eds) (2011). *Emerging civil society in China (1978-2008)*, Brill, Leiden-Boston.
- 924 Narayanan, J., Tai, K., and Kinias, Z. (2013). "Power motivates interpersonal connection following social  
925 exclusion". *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 122 (2), 257-265.
- 926 Nguyen, T. (2013). "Governing through Shequ/Community: the Shanghai Example", *International Journal of*  
927 *China Studies*, 4 (2), 213-231
- 928 Parés, M., Bonet, J., and Marti, M. (2012). "Does participation really matter in urban regeneration policies?  
929 Exploring governance networks in Catalonia (Spain)." *Urban Affairs Review*, 48, 238-271.
- 930 Qu, L., and Hasselaar, E. (eds.) (2011). *Making room for people: Choice, voice and liveability in residential*  
931 *places*, Techne Press, Amsterdam.
- 932 Qu, L., Huang, X. and Yang, Q. (2017). "The Declining and the Thriving Neighborhoods: Urban Regeneration  
933 in the Chinese Context of Migration and Economic Transition", in Tieben, H., Geng, Y. and Rossini, F. (eds.).  
934 *The Entrepreneurial City: proceedings of the 10<sup>th</sup> conference of the International Forum on Urbanism (IFoU)*.  
935 Hong Kong, 286-296.

- 936 Schneekloth, L. H., and Shibley, R. G. (2000). "Implacing architecture into the practice of place making."  
937 *Journal of Architectural Education*, 53(3), 130-140.
- 938 Shanghai Municipal Government (2010) *Regulations of Shanghai Municipality on Urban and Rural Planning*,  
939 Shanghai, China: Standing Committee of the People's Congress of Shanghai Municipality.
- 940
- 941 Shieh, L. and Friedmann, J. (2008). "Restructuring urban governance: community construction in contemporary  
942 China," *City*, 12 (2), 183-195.
- 943
- 944 Stratigea, A., Kikidou, M., Patelida, M., and Somarakis, G. (2018). "Engaging citizens in planning open public  
945 space regeneration: Pedio Agora Framework." *Journal of Urban Planning and Development*, 144 (1).
- 946
- 947 Strydom, W., Puren, K., and Drewes, E. (2018). "Exploring theoretical trends in placemaking: Towards new  
948 perspectives in spatial planning." *Journal of Place Management and Development*, 11(2), 165-180.
- 949 Tallon, A. (2010). *Urban regeneration in the UK*, Routledge, London and New York.
- 950 Tian, T., and Zhu, L. (2015). "Experiences of citizen participation in old city regeneration in Yangzhou, China."  
951 In: Wong, T.C., Han, S., Zhang, H. (eds) *Population Mobility, Urban Planning and Management in China*,  
952 Springer, Cham, 329-347.
- 953
- 954 Urban Land Institute (2015). "ULI case studies: Knowledge and Innovation Communities. "  
955 <<https://casestudies.uli.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/98/2015/12/KnowledgeAndInnovationCS.pdf>> (Jun. 28,  
956 2018).
- 957
- 958 United Nations (2016) *Leave no one behind: The imperative of social inclusive development*. New York: United  
959 Nations Publications.
- 960
- 961 Verdini, G. (2015). "Is the incipient Chinese civil society playing a role in regenerating historic urban areas?  
962 Evidence from Nanjing, Suzhou and Shanghai." *Habitat International*, 50, 366-372.
- 963
- 964 Wood, M. (2002). *Resident participation in urban and community renewal*, AHURI Final Report No. 23,  
965 Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute Limited, Melbourne.
- 966
- 967 Wu, F. (2015). *Planning for growth: Urban and regional planning in China*. Routledge, London and New York.
- 968
- 969 Wu, F., Xu, J., and Yeh, A.G.O. (2007). *Urban development in post-reform China: State, market, and space*.  
970 Routledge, London and New York.
- 971
- 972 Zhai, B. and Ng, M.K. (2013). "Urban regeneration and social capital in China: A case study of the Drum  
973 Tower Muslim district in Xi'an." *Cities*, 35, 14-25.

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

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