**Urbanism with Chinese Characteristics and the Right to the City
The Regeneration of Urban-Villages in Guangzhou, China**

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The Regeneration of Urban-Villages in Guangzhou, China

By
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Declaration

I confirm that this thesis is the result of my own investigation. All other sources

are acknowledged giving explicit references and a full bibliography is appended.

Signature:………………………………………………..………………………

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Acronyms

CCP	Chinese Communist Party
EDL	economic development land
HBL	housing base land
HRS	household responsibility system
IRP	institutional reform policy
JSS	joint-stock system
LUR	land use right
PRD	Pearl River Delta
PRNT	Pearl River New Town
SOE	State Owned Enterprise
TVE	Township and Village Enterprise

Abstract

The aim of the thesis is to describe and evaluate the transformation of urban form in the Pearl River Delta (PRD), China, with a particular focus on the relations between social processes and spatial forms in the context of the regeneration of urban-villages in Guangzhou. Referring to in-depth interviews with key practitioners and actors in the regeneration process, this thesis explores three specific relationships and/or processes.

First, it examines the discursive and structural conditions surrounding the "production" of governmental regeneration programmes relating to the urban-villages, within a restructured and increasingly neoliberalized system. I develop the argument that it is through this production that the concept of urban-village is defined and deployed by government to label and problematise places which may not be problematic in the ways defined. Second, this thesis discusses the development and implementation of institutional reform policies that are at the heart of government-led regeneration projects in Guangzhou. As I argue, in seeking to develop a more coordinated approach to urban-village regeneration, local government officials, and other power-brokers, have created new subjects/objects of intervention that are structurally, discursively and deliberately

excluded from the dominate discourse of what urban regeneration is or ought to be. Third, I examine local people's reactions to urban-village regeneration, and I develop the argument that they are not as powerless as has often been suggested by the dominant society. Instead, in exerting control over their lives and actively shaping their relationship to the so-called "dominant society", they are engaging in a variety of strategies and deploying various tactics to resist and/or alter a range of policy decisions. It is their "present oriented" strategies, to safeguard their own individual self-interests, that are reshaping the outcome of the institutional reform policy.

This thesis seeks to make a number of contributions to debates about urbanism and urban change. Drawing on empirical evidence about the urban-villages in Guangzhou, this thesis (re)considers the contested nature of urbanization within the context of China's economic reform, and, in particular, how far one can understand processes of change through the filter of western, received, models, such as growth coalition and regime theory. In particular, this thesis explores the interrelationship between urban change and urban planning strategies and discusses how far the instruments and rationale of the latter are implicated in contributing to unequal distributive effects in relation to the

transformations of the urban-villages. Such discussions contribute to broader debates about the social impacts of urban policy programmes, and the thesis concludes by suggesting additional and/or alternative mechanisms or instruments for social intervention and engagement, and outlining some practical possibilities for emancipatory forms of urban renewal and change.

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behaviour is increasingly reconceptualised along economic lines, they are a distinct cohort, insisting on their rather somewhat quixotic practices. When such long-term negative public opinion about the urban-villages appears nearly dominant, they provide an insight to how the prevailing social constructions can be unmasked and deconstructed.

6th August 2011

Chapter One

Neoliberalizing Chinese Urbanism.

"The right to the city, complemented by the right to difference and the right to information, should modify, concretize and make more practical the rights of the citizen as an urban dweller (*citadin*) and user of multiple services. It would affirm, on the one hand, the right of users to make known their ideas on the space and time of their activities in the urban area; it would also cover the right to the use of the centre, a privileged place, instead of being dispersed and stuck into ghettos (for workers, immigrants, the 'marginal' and even for the 'privileged') (Lefebvre, 1991a; in Kofman and Lebas, 1996: 34)."

1.1 Introduction.

The commencement of China's open door policy in 1978 began the process of a market economy replacing the centralized planning system that had been in place since 1949. This has precipitated rapid urbanization in which China is being transformed from a predominantly rural-based society to one that is increasingly urban. Under the slogan of *xiaokang* (a slogan proposed by Deng Xiaoping, the State Chairman of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), in 1978 to convey the concept of an ideal society that provides well for all its citizens), certain levels of inequality were well understood as a reasonable corollary of the open door policy and something that would inevitably arise and need to be tolerated (Harvey, 2005a). Thus, low production and wages, high state welfare provision and state

expenditure, scarcity of urban services, lower inner-city urban density, and less

social/spatial segregation – the characteristics of "less urbanism" associated with

an egalitarian socialist society under Mao – has been replaced by mass production,

high wages, lower state welfare provision and state expenditure, and the growing

diversity, heterogeneity, inequality, and marginality that characterize modern

urbanism and a marketized society (Fan, 1999; Lee and Zhu, 2006; Lin, 2007; He

and Wu, 2009).

In the process of transformation, two contradictory categories of new urban

spaces can be seen. On the one hand, based on the politically legitimized

growth-first strategy (as Deng Xiaoping, the State Chairman of the CCP, said

"development is the hard truth"), cities in China increasingly take on a stance

referred to by Harvey (1989) as "entrepreneurialism" and market themselves by

adopting a series of place-making strategies to compete with other localities, with

their aim to attract capital to promote economic development and position

themselves in the national and global economic landscape. New forms and spaces

of wealth such as offices, retail spaces, malls, luxury hotels, gated communities,

up-market residential development, and large-scale development zones – the

outcomes of privatization and commodification of public services, drastic inter-

and intra-urban competition and radical urban social-spatial transformation – have

brought about a frenzied spate of physical changes and have had a major impact

on the visual dimension of urban life.

On the other hand, while the rapid growth of China's cities, especially under

the market-driven economic restructuring, has brought about the belief that China

is racing to be globalized and to "catch up" with the West, the uneven land reform

and urban sprawl of cities accompanied by rapid population growth have led to a

major set of urban problems with which China is arguably ill-prepared to cope

(Kojima, 1987; Chang, 2002). These urban problems, such as rural to urban

migration, the polarization of social strata, crisis of public security, deterioration

of human settlements, shortage of public funds, and the imbalance of public

policies, have underpinned the emergence of large numbers of village enclaves.

These village enclaves, especially those in the economically advanced provinces,

are labelled as "urban-villages", and can be seen in every large and middle-sized

city, even in the political capital Beijing and the economic capital Shanghai.

While the terms "socialist transition" and "socialist market economy" have

become popular notions to describe the coexistence of the state apparatus with the

market mechanisms of China's economic transformation since the late 1970s, the

emergence of new urban spaces in China again raises the important theoretical question of Chinese studies in the Cold War field, "whether the post-socialist Chinese city has become or is becoming capitalist in form" (Cheung, 1982; Ho, 2005:41; Sigley, 2006: 488). These new urban spaces – the physical consequences of the process of accumulation in capitalist societies – also provoke the pondering over "how to best understand the nature of cities in one socioeconomic system undergoing structural transformations from socialism to post-socialism (Ma and Wu, 2005: 11)."

For decades, urban growth in China has been understood as demonstrating unique Chinese characteristics, with its incomparable political, social, and economic contexts, distinct from the cities of the Western world (Xu and Li 1990; Chan 1994; Fan 1999; Zhang, 2004). In recent years, it has been seen as a process strongly influenced by global capital. From the point of view of "global cities" and other such hierarchies, the city unbound is a phenomenon of the recent period when China became increasingly part of the "global space of flows" (Sassen 1991; Castells 1996; Logan, 2002; Friedmann 1986, 1998b, 2005; Lin and Wei, 2002; Yeung and Lin, 2003; Ma and Wu, 2005; Hart-Landsberg and Burkett, 2006; Wu and Ma, 2006; Lin, 2007). It is seen as one that is driven by broader

socio-economic and governance processes seeking to modernize Chinese cities in ways commensurate with interlocking into global flows of finance, employment, and wealth. The opening up to foreign trade and investment ends China's isolation from the world market. Resonating with its western counterparts, the political-economic restructuring in China has also increasingly engaged with the impact of neoliberalism on contemporary cities by economic globalization, the parallel shift of institutional arrangements, and fast policy transfer (Peck, 2002).

The concept of neoliberalism has been employed to refer to the macro political and economic restructuring that mobilizes a range of policies intended to extend market discipline, competition, and commodification throughout all sectors of society (Brenner and Theodore, 2002; Comaroff and Comaroff, 2001; Harvey, 2005a). Based on this, while scholars in the 1980s and 1990s mobilized a variety of concepts such as globalization, marketization, and entrepreneurialism to characterize the ongoing attempt to reconstitute the urban spaces in China, a growing body of literature has emerged in the mid 2000s in which these concepts have been complemented by the employment of the concept of neoliberalism to (re)scope and (re)interpret market-based institutional shifts and policy realignment. In this literature, urban redevelopment in China has been characterized as

neoliberal for its increasing market operations and private investment, as well as constant state intervention that rationalizes and promotes a "growth-first" approach.

Neoliberal urbanism has been adopted by the academics as a generic category to describe the post-reform policy programmes characterized by the adherence to market-based policy options in China. For instance, the accompanied shifts of the practice and objects of government in China's post-1978 transition from "socialist plan" to "market socialism", especially the devolution in which vertical decentralization towards sub-national forms of governance and decision-making shifting downward to local state authorities (municipal level and below) (He and Wu, 2009), have been subsumed by adopting the term "neoliberal policy paradigm" (Pow, 2009). Urban spaces such as malls, private "middle-class" gated communities, and suburbs, resulting from land reform (in the form of the urban land use right leasing system) and housing reform (such as the housing monetarization policy of 1998 which replaces the longstanding in-kind welfare housing system) (Lee and Zhu, 2006), are thought to resemble those to be found in the neoliberal "heartlands" (Brenner and Theodore 2002; Swyngedouw et al., 2002).

The rapid growth of Chinese cities creates many contrasting subjects that draw the attention of urban scholars. Yet, following the dominant pattern in contemporary urban studies, the emerging literature on the neoliberalization of Chinese urbanism focuses more on new forms and spaces of wealth (cf. Candan and Kolluoğlu, 2008). While mentioning new forms and spaces of poverty, they are seen as epiphenomenal (Jie and Taubmann, 2002; Taubmann, 2002; Jiang and Anthony, 2005; Lin, 2007; Zhang, 2008). However, if the phenomenon of village enclaves in China, with the term "urban-village" as their label, is not epiphenomenal to the neoliberalization of Chinese cities, but one of the very context-specific forms that neoliberal urbanism has taken place in post-1980s China (especially in the late 1990s as a period during which neoliberalization in China not only became more visible at the macro and meso scales, but also deepened and became more entrenched into local economic, political, and social processes), then, in what ways can we understand this particular "Chinese urban formation", to the extent that it can be seen as a timely test case for emerging modes of governance and/or governmentality within which state form, political strategies, and governmental programmes are "enmeshed, blended, and imbricated (Brenner and Theodore, 2002a: 14; Peck and Tickell, 2007: 31)" in a way to canonize the so-called "socialism with Chinese characteristics"?

In order to address this theorem, this thesis explores the phenomenon of the urban-villages in China and the ways in which they have been conceived of as "a problem". In trying to unfold both the phenomenon of the urban-villages, and the theoretical issues at stake, the thesis is also seeking to pose normative questions concerning the (re)distribution of power in society and the policy making processes involved in the regeneration of the urban-villages – the subject matter of this thesis.

Chapter One justifies the use of the concept of neoliberalism in seeking to understand the phenomenon of the urban-villages in China. The remainder of this chapter is divided into four sections. The first section outlines the emergence of the urban-villages in China in relation to the contemporary restructuring of urban form. It evaluates how different scholars have sought to understand, and explain, the phenomenon of the urban-villages, and extends to the question of how the right to the city is interrelated with hierarchical forms of citizenship in the context of the urban-villages regeneration controversy. This leads the second section to review the broader socio-cultural shifts of local and national configurations relating to the phenomenon of the urban-villages. It outlines how the rural-urban

dichotomy, a spatial order that has dominated and shaped urban change since the 1950s, has been blurred by various processes of neoliberal restructuring in the general context since 1978. This has led to the emergence of a new set of "lifestyle" groups based on identity politics which are at the heart of the urban-villages regeneration controversy. The third section outlines changes to Chinese urbanism with reference to the emergence of neoliberalization and new forms of governance based on facilitating the market expansion of property markets. The fourth section concludes by outlining the research questions and the structure of the thesis.

1.2 The Emergence of the Urban-Villages in China.

As outlined in the introduction, this section will provide readers with a sketch of the phenomenon of the urban-villages in China. How, then, should the emergence of the urban-villages in China be described? This question involves the theoretical and methodological debates of the "new" regional geography and the problems in abstracting from time and space in social science (Sayer, 1989). In other words, it brings into question the relationship between analysis and narrative, and between law-seeking or nomological approaches and contextualising approaches, while the problem of writing texts which construct geohistorical

syntheses has raised the issue of the composition of narratives (ibid. 254). The simplest way of doing this is to compare the phenomenon of the urban-villages in China with the contemporary restructuring of urban form more generally. In the territorial expansion of Chinese cities, in order to reduce the amount of compensation and avoid the costly relocation of residents which may bring about disputes and protests, the municipal governments have taken a piecemeal approach to acquiring land for development from local villages, i.e. requisitioning cultivated land, rather than residential land, which are both collectively owned by rural communities.

In the process, on the one hand, rural villages which are seen as old and drab are spatially encompassed or annexed by urban territory and surrounded by skyscrapers and modern transport facilities. On the other hand, villagers, who pursue individual self-interest, are motivated to make use of the relative locational advantage of the land assigned to them for housing. By rebuilding and expanding their houses from low, red brick houses with adjacent pigsties to concrete blocks, they lease out a portion of their house as working and/or living spaces to the massive number of migrants who have drifted from relatively poor provinces into cities to find jobs but are ineligible for urban housing, which in any case, they

cannot afford. As all villagers pursue this strategy, the land of the villages

becomes overexploited, and overcrowded with migrants.

The increasing density and congestion costs, in turn, lead to difficulties in

maintaining the club-like provision of commonly used and owned goods and

services, such as sewage disposal, security devices and so on. In this sense, the

emergence of the urban-villages in China has many parallels with the

contemporary restructuring of urban form, in that it fits Hardin's (1968) "tragedy

of the commons" in which rational action by individuals (that is, self-interested

utility maximizing behaviour in dealing with common pool resources) produces

collectively irrational results. At first glance, these villages are similar to the

overcrowded industrial towns with poorly built housing (e.g. back-to-back houses)

which emerged in response to migration from rural to urban areas in Europe in the

late nineteenth century, as described by Henry Mayhew and his contemporaries.

They are also similar to the informal settlements (often internationally referred to

as squatter settlements, shanty towns, or slums) in contemporary developments in

Europe, Africa, South Asia, and North and South America, which are common

features of developing countries and are typically the product of an urgent need

for shelter by the urban poor. Much like Majengos in Kenya (Majale, 1998),

fevelas in Brazil (De Sampaio, 1994), and gecekondus in Turkey (Malusardi and Occchipinti, 2003), they are typically dense settlements comprising communities housed in self constructed shelters under conditions of informal or traditional land tenure, known for their deterioration of the urban environment and intensified social disorder such as violence, sexually immoral activities, burglary and robbery (Lewis, 1955; Kuznets, 1966; Chenery and Syrquin, 1975; Smith and Scarpaci, 2000; Todaro, 2000; Dixon-Gough and Molobeng, 2006).

These villages in China are seen by the municipal governments not only as eyesores and areas of criminality and backwardness that must be urgently eliminated, but also hindrances to municipal governments who wish to create "resources" to make cities more attractive to investors. When capital accumulation through property-development booms made the land that these village enclaves occupy increasingly valuable, governments launched clearance programs to "eliminate" the village enclaves. In the 1980s and the early 1990s, the municipal governments used powers to displace low-income populations who might have lived for many years on what had later become premium land. Their neighbourhoods were invaded by high-rise towers, condominiums, or box stores, which showed no trace of the brutality that permitted their construction. Peasants

who were assigned cultivated land and residential land in accordance with their family size were deprived of their land and properties without being able to address their unfair treatment in a social system which "allows little else in the way of opposition (Scott, 1989: 15; in Tang and Chung, 2002: 57)." Migrants were evicted brutally by police or armed forces organized by the authorities. In the initial programs, governments further took advantage of political events to undertake sudden clearances of unsightly constructions in the village enclaves which had long been tacitly approved.

One of the most egregious examples is Shenzhen municipal government's sudden undertaking to clear up such constructions and exclude a large number of illegal immigrants in celebration of the return of Hong Kong to China in July 1997 (see Tang and Chung, 2002). These clearances of village enclaves are similar to the slum clearances in the contemporary urban processes in Seoul, Delhi, Mumbai, even New York, which are described by Harvey (2003; 2005a; 2005b; 2008) as "'accumulation by dispossession". It was common in many Chinese cities to write-off these village enclaves. The social cost of displacement of residents and the wholesale demolition was not seen as an issue by the governments (see figure 1.1).

Figure 1.1 Migrants from Jiangxi Province in the Pearl River New Town, Guangzhou.

(Photo courtesy Xu Peiwu)

Note: These two photos were taken by Photographer Xu Peiwu in 1998. As Davis (2004: 104; quoted from Candan and Kolluoğlu, 2008: 21) suggests in his discussion of various "beautification" projects in the Third World: "In the urban Third World, poor people dread high-profile international events – conferences, dignitary visits, sporting events, beauty contests, and international festivals – that prompt authorities to launch crusades to clean up the city: slum-dwellers know that they are the "dirt" or "blight" that their governments prefer the world not to see." This has also exactly been the case in these village enclaves in China.

However, governmental clearance programs found themselves under increasing pressure to act. In some cases, especially those at the level of local municipalities, they were seen by the central government as masking the land grab for environmental and social reasons in the manipulation of the ambivalent rural land ownership (see Ho, 2005). In some other cases, notably the "urbanized reconstruction campaign" in the early 2000s, they triggered institutional crises and unpredictable political consequences[1]. Furthermore, the cost of social conflicts and polarization on the national scale, such as the issues of uneven distribution of wealth and the large number of landless peasants, were seen by the central government as contradicting the national urban policy which was more concerned with societal stability and harmony (later in 2005 further concretized by Hu Jintao,

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[1] The "urbanized reconstruction campaign" launched by the Shenzhen Municipal Government in October 2003 can be an example par excellence. By bypassing and redirecting the *Clause 5 Article 2 of the Regulation of Land Management*, Shenzhen Municipal Government redrew the municipal boundaries by upgrading Baoan County and Longgang County, the two rural areas outside the Shenzhen Special Economic Zone, as two districts in the urban ambit (*Some Suggestions about the Speeding on the urbanization of Baoan County and Longgang County*, *Shenzhen Municipal Committee and People's Municipal Government, 2003*). By the end of 2004, approximately 956 km^2 rural lands were transformed into urban lands, with 270 thousand villagers in 261 villages and 21 towns being transformed from peasant status into urban resident status. The episode of "urbanized reconstruction campaign" in Shenzhen was not only an exceptional case. Since 2002, there were 70,000 more or less the same "campaigns" in China which "stole" peasants' collectively owned land by transforming peasants into residents (*Report of Ministry of Land and Resources*, 2004).

the General Secretary of the CCP, as "building a harmonious society", and heavily promoted by the Sixteen Central Committee of the Communist Party in 2006 as a normative political guideline aiming for "basically well-off" middle-class oriented society). Especially after some violent riots and the death of an unknown number of villagers and migrants in "eliminations" of village enclaves by local governments, central government started to take the issue of village enclave clearance into consideration and ordered local governments to set aside as much as possible of the city's financial budget in order to "regenerate" village enclaves smoothly" (cf. Zhang, 2002: 489).

It is in this context that the term "urban-village" and "regeneration" rapidly became used all over China. The English term "urban-village" is a translation of the compound Chinese word "*cheng-zhong-cun*" (城中村). Created by combining existing words, i.e. "*cheng*" (city), "*zhong*" (in), and "*cun*" (village), literally, it means "village in city". The term "*cheng-zhong-cun*" was first used in southern China, or the Pearl River Delta, especially Guangdong province close to Hong Kong, where the open door policy began and whose population is the most mobile of all the provinces in China. Sometime between 1997 and 1999, it entered common usage through word of mouth and the mass media, e.g.

newspapers, magazines, internet, and TV. It is of unknown origin and is difficult

to trace back to a single source.

Different from the connotation of the "urban village" in the UK, which is

seen more or less as a marketing concept promoted with slogans such as

"villagizing city" and "Tooting village", or the rather political meaning in Prince

Charles' flagship Poundbury Village scheme in 1988 and various new town

experiments such as those at Highgrove which promoted a village-like quality of

urban life as a direct response to the problems of alienation, social isolation, and

placelessness of suburban sprawl and modernist architecture [2], the term

"urban-village" in China is more similar to the term "inner-cities" in the USA,

UK, Ireland, and Canada, or the French working class *banlieue* (Dikec, 2007b;

Wacquant, 2007; 2010). These terms are used in a pejorative sense in the

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[2] Chung (2010) uses the term "village-in-the-city" (*chengahongcun*) to describe the subject matter of this thesis, as a way to highlight the contrast between "village-in-the-city" in China and the "urban villages" in the European cities, especially those in the UK. He criticizes that the casual use of the term "urban village" to describe village-in-the-city in China leads to what Sayer (1984: 126-127) regarded as "chaotic conception". On this issue, I felt constrained to keep balance between simplifying the complexity and ambivalence of this subject matter and embracing the whole field by inventing a new spatial metaphor. In order to draw out the complexity and ambivalence in the course of analysis, I suture the term "urban village" as a single term "urban-village", to describe the subject matter of this thesis.

dominant society as a euphemism for an area, perhaps a ghetto or slum, where residents are less educated and more impoverished and where there are problems including disinvestment, urban blight, the image of an unsafe and unhealthy environment. As a social construct, it is a way to give meaning to an ambiguous social circumstance, i.e. the existence of those old and shabby villages geographically located in the newly developed modern urban territories and undergoing condensed processes of urbanization (rural-urban transition). It is especially used with its Chinese sense of sarcasm to label those old shabby villages in modern cities which should have been eliminated by government.

The urban-villages as an urban problem have gained increasing recognition from both society and government in China. Since the 1990s, almost every major city in China started to claim that they had an "urban-villages problem" in their cities. For instance, it is claimed that there are 138 urban-villages in Guangzhou, 241 in Shenzhen, 231 in Beijing, 187 in Sian, 71 in Nanjing, 83 in Taiyuan, 52 in Hanchan, 227 in Shanghai, 147 in Wuhang, and 55 in Chunching. Similar to the negative symbolic connotations of the inner city (Pickvance, 1990; also see Atkinson, 2000), the term "urban-village" not only refers to particular locations but also connotes chaotic, poverty, disorder, backwards, and crime. These

perceptions are presented in the public mind to the extent that city governments cannot afford not to have an urban-village policy of some kind. Whilst the exact extent and magnitude of the problem of these villages was often unclear, city governments quickly immersed themselves in "改造" (*gai-zhao*) the "urban-villages" in their own cities. "*Gai*" means "to change" or "to correct", "*zhao*" means "to build" or "to make". Literally, the term means "to change something by building something" or "to correct something by making something", and should be translated as "revamp" or "modification" [3]. Except for the term "regeneration", the term "transformation" and a series of counterparts with a common prefix – "renewal", "reformation", "reconstruction", and "redevelopment" – are also adopted loosely by scholars as the translation of "*gai-zhao*". These terms have their own different contexts, introduced at different times to mean different things (Cochrane, 2007). In the Chinese context, especially in governmental actions devoting to "城中村改造" ("*cheng-zhong-cun gai-zhao*" or its literal translation adopted in this thesis: the regeneration of the urban-villages), however, relatively little attention has been given to the meaning of the term "*gai-zhao*" and its implication for urban development. While the meaning is ambiguous and vague, left undefined, it is used as a normative concept

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[3] In academics, the term "modification" is used more in the discussion of issues concerning natural science (without human will) such as freezing-rain events.

to imply that the urban-villages are a problem and the regeneration of them ought to occur.

"Urban regeneration" is commonly accepted to refer to the physical, economic and social renewal of areas which have been subject to the problems of urban decline, including a movement of people out of the city, resulting in the physical, social and economic decay of the inner areas (Pacione, 1985; Parkinson, 1989). While "regeneration" metaphors offer an almost infinitely inclusive canopy under which highly varied social and political values are sheltered (Furbey, 1999), this "elastic term" (Healey, 1997: 106) is often used loosely and uncritically by neoliberal advocates to refer to a desired re-emergence of cities as centres of general social well-being, creativity, vitality and wealth (Shaw and Porter, 2009: 3). However, from time to time, the critique is that the response seldom matches the diagnosis, resulting in poor, negative impacts or unintended consequences (Lawless, 1989; Kleinman and Whitehead, 1999; Atkinson and Kintrea, 2001; Stone, 2002; Atkinson, 2004; Hughes, 2004; Parry et al., 2004; Diamond and Liddle, 2005; Raco, 2005; Robert and Sykes, 2005; Thomson et al., 2006; Fuller and Geddes, 2008; Lees and Ley, 2008; Thomson, 2008; Rae 2009). It is in light of these debates that this thesis adopts the term "regeneration" as the English

translation of the term "*gai-zhao*".

Because the redistribution of population means not only change in spatial locations of people but also differentiation among different social groups in urban space, urban-village regeneration is not only an issue of managing physical urban space, but a political, economic, and social issue. It is a disputed process which raises questions of "whose place?" and "what kind of place?" These questions relate to who should be identified to be empowered and who should participate and to what degree in decision making. At the level of elite groups, such as experts and politicians, it is unclear how to deal with the arduous problems of the urban-villages in the Pearl River Delta. Owing to the ambivalent causality of the problem and the lack of identified priorities and defined issues needed to be solved, the causes and consequences of problems are also hard to access/foresee. In particular the scoping of the problems of illegal land use and construction, collective ownership of land, the census registration system, shabby landscapes, informal economy, floating migrants, and crimes are still conflicting and contradictory. In debates involving multiple social actors, such as the state, capital, and grassroots, one is confronted with contesting definitions about "public interests", so one is far from a consensus regarding the mechanisms involved in

regeneration. It is in this context that the term "*gai-zhao*" was initially popularized

through government propagandas. It is used as a euphemism which rhetorically

makes government's intentions sound bland and inoffensive to local residents. It

implies that it is possible to solve the problem without radical changes. It suggests

minor changes or the absence of radical changes.

There has been a broad spectrum of researches both in Anglophone Chinese

studies and Chinese-language literature, about the phenomenon of the

urban-villages in China[4]. These studies can be classified in two categories in terms

of whether or not they use the term "urban-village". On the one hand, those

researchers who explore this phenomenon without employing the term

"urban-village" draw heavily in their analyses upon spatial metaphors such as

"rural-urban transition", "urban fringe", "spontaneous urbanization",

"peri-urbanization", "informal urbanization", "irregular urbanization[5]", "in-situ

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[4] For a review of the array of the literature concerning the urban-villages in China,
    see Chung, 2010.

[5] Although it is well-established that "irregular urbanization" in the city is hardly
    a matter concerning the urban poor and the spaces they occupy, and that many
    middle- and upper-class residences and production and consumption spaces
    have been part of that process, it is very common to represent the urban spaces
    occupied by the poor as examples of "irregular urbanization" (cf. Buğra, 1998;
    Candan and Kolluoğlu, 2008).

urbanization[6]", and "desakota[7]" (e.g. Liu and Wei, 1997; Tian, 1998; Zheng, 2000; Gransow, 2002; Leaf, 2002; Tang and Chung, 2002; Liu and Yang, 2004; Zhu, 2004). While deploying the theories and methodologies rooted in the experience of market-based capitalist economies, they imply an allometric growth model, or a proportionate growth model based on a biological analogy – a mode of thought which has been carried over into urban sociology, economics and geography, which are the three fields possessing a common basis in the theoretical dependency (see Osborne and Rose, 1999).

On the other hand, those researches who employ the term "urban-village" (*chengzhongcun*) or sociospatial synonyms, such as "peasant enclaves", "ethnic enclaves", "migrant villages", "migrant enclaves", "semi-urbanized villages", "suburban villages", and "inside-city villages", take the term "urban-village" as a normative concept, simply to describe the subject matter they study (e.g. Ma and Xiang, 1998; Jie and Taubmann, 2002; Deng and Huang, 2004; Guo and Zhang,

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[6] The term "in-situ urbanization" refers to the phenomenon that rural settlements and their populations transform themselves into urban or quasi-urban ones without much geographical relocation of the residents (Zhu, 2004: 207).

[7] The term "desakota" is coined by McGee (1989: 96) from the Indonesian word "desa" (village) and "kota" (town) to denote integrated zones which have "no clear cut division between rural and urban relations".

2006; Siu, 2007; Li, 2008; Lin et al., 2011; Zhao and Webster, 2011)[8]. In their functionalist or etiological perspective, they simply assimilate social problems into functional analysis to emphasize the impact of objective conditions and social arrangement of dysfunctions and disorganization. However, the effect is that such research underplays, even neglects the subjective processes that lead people to hold that a condition is problematic and is in need of alleviation (Spector and Kitsuse, 1977).

While the reliance on the spatial metaphors in the former category is problematic, the settlement definitions in the latter category are equally inadequate. Furthermore, the adequacy of their normative stance is arguable. In their analyses offering pathology and solutions to the "urban-villages problem",

[8] Within Chinese-language literature, the term "城中村" (*chengzhongcun*) has been translated into English in several ways, e.g., "metropolitan village (Zeng, 2000)", "rural residential island", "village within urban", "city village" (Lee, 2002), "urban village" (Lan, 2005), "village amidst the city" (URBANUS, 2006). While each term shades with subtle difference of meaning, they are nothing more than a result of trying to translate the term "*chengzhungcun*" (城中村) in a proper academic way, rather than "borrowing" or linking to the debates or concepts of the terms in their original context (such as borrowing the term "urban village" in the context of European cities, particularly in the UK context). Since the Berlage Institute in 2005 published a book, *VIC: Unknown Urbanity in China*, the English term "village-in-the-city", with its acronym "VIC", has been adopted by some researchers in Anglophone Chinese Studies (Uehara, 2005; Chung, 2010; Lin et al., 2011).

what prevails is a problem-solving oriented conceptualization of the urban-village

and a linear model of development and modernization dominated by approaches

based on positivist and deterministic assumption. According to this model, the

village enclaves are rural remnants of a past era; their backwardness will be

eliminated with the passage of time and urbanization. Villagers will change their

ways and be absorbed into modern city living (Siu, 2005). While treating the

urban-villages as a *sui generis* phenomenon "emerging" in the process of urban

development in China, these two categories draw more on the non-discursive

(material) realm (the Real), ignoring or downplaying the importance of metaphors

in informing understanding about space, as well as conditioning what Lefebvre

(1976) calls "the politics of space".

Some accounts recognize the economic contribution of low-wage migrant

workers, and argue that without whose cheap labour, service-based development

could not proceed or only take place at greater cost. Following this, they argue

that the urban-villages, in providing low-income rental housing and jobs for the

low-income population during rapid urbanization, do function as a buffer for those

experiencing difficulties adjusting to urban life and promote a city's profile as an

affordable and competitive city (e.g. Chan et al., 2003; Zhang et al., 2003; Bach,

2010; Wang et al., 2010). In local newspapers, magazines, and formal and/or informal conferences and meetings, some polemists also echo this viewpoint. However, such alternative or counter-discourses have been relatively muted in governmental policymaking processes and are easily offset by ever-present discourses. This points my attention to the idea of "the right to the city" and derivative issues, such as why are alternative or counter-discourses relatively muted and easily offset by ever-present discourses, why these discourses are treated in the mainstream discursive space as a noise rather than a voice, and why these discourses are not related to a broader context and some critical issues such as social safety net and affordable housing for migrants.

While political and economic restructuring in cities is not producing, as it often promises, better social integration but ironically reinforcing already existing geographies of exclusion, violence, and conflict, one popular trend responding to the irony of neoliberal urbanism has been appealing to the idea of the "right to the city" as a way to bring out the outcry over the affecting enfranchisement of urban residents and seek for better empowerment of the hitherto excluded or marginalized social groups (Harvey, 1992; Peck, 1998; Tickell and Peck, 1996: Ward, 2000; Appadurai, 2001; Dikec, 2001; Mann, 2001; Chatterjee, 2009). Back

to the intellectual roots of the idea of the "right to the city" – the writings of Lefebvre, the right to the city is "a transformed and renewed *right to urban life* (Lefebvre, 1996: 158)." In Lefebvre's conception, enfranchisement is for those who *inhabit* the city. Because the right to the city revolves around the production of urban space, it is those who live in the city – who contribute to the body of urban lived experience and lived space – who can legitimately claim the right to the city. The right to the city is designed to further the interests "of the whole society and firstly of all those who *inhabit* (Lefebvre, 1996: 158)."

For Lefebvre (1991a), the right to the city involves two principal rights for urban inhabitants: the right to participation and the right to appropriation. The right to participation maintains that not only those with certain membership or identity, normally those with national citizenship, but those who inhabit the city, are eligible to participate in various decision-making processes that contribute to the production of space in a city. The right to appropriation includes not only the right to occupy already-produced urban place, but also the right to produce urban space so that it meets the needs of inhabitants. In line with this view, if land is the most valuable asset of cities, and if land policies should be firmly anchored with ethical concepts and be beneficial to all inhabitants, should it not only be villagers

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but also those who could be affected by the outcomes of policy that have the right

to participate and appropriate? On this question, I feel that the abovementioned

alternative or counter-discourse can easily lead to passionate yet somewhat

over-romanticised accounts of the regeneration of the urban-villages.

To advocate Lefebvre's call for a radical restructuring of social, political, and

economic relation, both in the city and beyond, is also somewhat

over-romanticised and may only lead to an ending of do-gooderism. Nevertheless,

the questions addressed here remain. And there is a theoretical reason to suppose

that probing the discrepancy between the actual scalar structure and that imagined

by Lefebvre's right to the city offers an approach to brush the strong discourse of

neoliberal urbanism against the grain. Scale is not an objective reality; rather it is

socially produced and negotiated through a process of political struggle. The

degree of empowerment and its character are contingent on the agendas of the

political actors who prevail. The question of whose right to the city, in the

political sense of the term, is deprived (and whose is not) is determined on the

question of how the right to the city articulates with hierarchical form of

citizenship (Smith, 1993; Agnew, 1997; Marston, 2000; Brenner, 2001; Purcell,

2002). Given this, what is the current scalar structure of the right to the city in the

case of the urban-village regeneration?

1.3 Rural or Urban? Identity, Place-Making, and Urbanism with Chinese Characteristics

The discussion of Chinese urbanism revolves predominantly around the socio-geographical and political concept of a rural-urban dichotomy which is embodied institutionally in three closely interrelated control systems: *hukou* (census registration), *danwei* (work unit), and land. In the socialist era, the social and spatial mobility of the population was rigidly confined (Chan, 1994). One either had an urban registration (non-agricultual *hukou*) or a rural registration (agricultural *hukou*); one was either an urban dweller or a rural peasant. Everyone belonged to a *danwei*, be it in an urban area as state owned enterprise (SOE), or in a rural area as commune. Land was categorized as either urban land owned by the state, managed by the *danwei,* or rural land owned by the collective, managed by the commune. Agencies, e.g. governments, universities, military, SOEs, and factories, could be granted land use rights for workplaces, worker housing, and social infrastructure. Under an administrative allocation system, land could be transferred between state agencies in what has come to be called the "primary land market".

Land ownership in China by the state and collective was an ideological given. It belonged to all people, had no price mechanism and could not, as a commodity, be transferred (Ho, 2001: 394-421; Ho and Lin, 2003: 681-707; Lin and Ho, 2005: 411-436; Walker and Buck, 2007: 46). In other words, individuals in an urban area were urban dwellers with urban *hukou*. They were assigned jobs in a *danwei* and provided with apartments. Individuals in a rural area were peasants with rural *hukou*. They were allocated communal lands to cultivate and live on (according to the Constitution, each household a piece of arable land for production and a piece of housing base land (HBL) with a size of 80 to 120 m^2). The separate rural and urban systems demarcate the population clearly. Though evolving and changing over time, depending on the political atmosphere, as particular forms in which capital organizes and expands through production, circulation, consumption, and distribution for a period of time, with some degree of stability, these two different time-space systems functioned separately and kept a social safety net under a significant sector of the population for many years. Each one had its own bundle of institutions and regulations of governing, in which individuals were bound up tightly in a family-centred system that helped allocate housing, foodstuffs, and employment through collective organizations.

"Agricultural" and "non-agricultural" *hukou* are not only geographical labels, they also connote one's identity, citizenship, opportunities and socioeconomic status, and hence are essential for every aspect of daily life (Yang, 1988; Christiansen, 1990; Cheng and Selden 1994; Fan, 1999; Guldin, 2001; Ho, 2005). As Friedmann (2003: 750-751) says: "The 'rural' in China is generally perceived as a category diametrically opposed to the 'urban'. It is one of China's famous yin/yang binaries. […] Urban and rural are thought to be distinctive ways of being Chinese." The rural-urban dichotomy plays an important role in the sociological and geographical imagination in China. Urban residents were entitled to more social benefits in the form of housing subsides, medical care, and pensions than their rural counterparts. Rural areas are seen as containers for the poor, the less privileged and political incorrect members of society. Thus, an ideology was formulated that urban populations are more privileged than rural populations, the former educated and sophisticated, the later uneducated and boorish.

In the socialist era, the three state-created systems not only weaved an all-pervasive web of social control, but also comprised the regime of accumulation. Nevertheless, in the reform era, *hukou*, *danwei*, and land, these three control systems, which worked together as pillars to bind people and things

in a totally administered society, have been eroded by the implementation of various reform policies. Firstly, the state owned enterprises (SOEs) which were long maintained as the stable centrepieces of state control of the economy, became less profitable, to the extent that the security and benefits they conferred on the urban dwellers were whittled away over time. The exploding town and village enterprises (TVEs), which were transformed from the reintroduction of the household responsibility system (HRS) in 1978 and the dissolved communes in 1980, became centres of entrepreneurialism, flexible labour practices, and open market competition. Secondly, the introduction of the market and the relaxing of employment restrictions in the reform era lead to a dramatic surge of internal migration. Especially when rural migrants in 1984 were allowed to stay in urban areas by obtaining "temporary residence permits" (Shen, 1995; Liu 2001), this dramatic surge of internal migrants led to a strong polarization between indigenous populations and outsiders, coining the terms "peasant floods", "blind flows", "tidal waves", and "human avalanche" (Liu, 1991; Gong, 1994; Solinger, 1995; Wan, 1995; Tyson and Tyson, 1996; Robert, 1997; Fan, 1999). The emergence of, and the fast increase in, the floating population makes *hukou* no longer a useful criterion for defining the rural-urban populations.

Thirdly, this was furthered by the land use right (LUR) reform in the 1990s, e.g. revising of laws such as the revision of the Constitution and the amendment of the Land Management Law in 1998. By separating the right to use land from ownership of the land, i.e. the right to use land is commercialized, but the ownership of the land still ideologically belongs to all the people (Li, 1999: 56), the price mechanism of urban LUR was created under a "valued use system" (*youchang shiyong zhidu*). Housing monetarization policy and the creation of the "secondary land market" abolished the old in-kind welfare housing system and changed governments of different levels into enthusiastic protagonists in gaining economic benefits from the commodification of land and accelerated the commercialization of real estate. In these circumstances, not only has the boundary of these two separate systems (rural and urban) started to become blurred and traversed, but also the taken-for-granted boundaries of state-market, illegal-legal, private-public, etc., have become obfuscatory, to the extent that, to quote from Harvey (2005: 126), "the whole economy moved towards a neoliberal structure."

In heterogeneous alignments of people and things, the rural-urban dichotomy is nonetheless a crucial ordering device in the social life in China. It continues to

provide grammars and vocabularies to shape much of the debates surrounding

urban change, and constitutes the taken-for-granted context for policy

development. Its ideology is inculcated and perpetuated in the built-up-area-based

dichotomous approaches to public policy and is firmly lodged in the public mind

(Guldin, 2001: 126). It functions like litmus paper to verify Chinese urbanization

and its derivative constituents, e.g. the *houko*, land system, household

responsibility system, house reformation movement, and rural to urban migration.

As some Chinese studies literature has already pointed out, this ambiguity has led

to an unprecedented range of problems and a great deal of confusion. In these

circumstances, how are we to assess the floating/transient/temporary population

and the ratio between the registered and those without any registration in cities,

since, as Harvey (2005) points out, the *hukou* system of residence permits is on

the verge of becoming ineffective as an instrument of migrant control, to the

extent that the gradual reform of the system seems inevitable? How are we to

measure the level of urbanization by the congregation of population in urban areas

and the concentration of non-agricultural development, since, as Friedmann (2003:

745-758) observes, rural areas may be heavily industrialized, with local

populations living in multi-storey apartments, while urban areas may contain

significant numbers of people who, even though they work in urban occupations,

are counted as peasants, because their residence permits (*hukou*) locate them in rural areas? How are we to demonstrate from official statistics the transformation of agricultural land into urban and industrial uses which has forced many suburban peasants to lose their traditional livelihoods and change to other economic activities, since, as Taubmann (2002: 81-82) writes, in his research about urbanization in Guangzhou, the actual figure varies considerably, depending on the source? Most important of all, how are we to deal with the confusion of the unaddressed and mystifying basic definitional questions of the Chinese terminology, though these terms have been rendered into English and steeped in literature, in the classifying of Chinese cities, since, as Guldin (2001: 129) claims, rural and urban in China are administrative rather than sociological categories, depending on different administrative levels, and hence frequently shift on the ground and may not necessarily reflect social facts in statistical records?

These are the very questions that amount to the urban-villages controversy. The rural-urban disparity in policies regulate the land market, shaping the urban-villages' built environment, and furthermore actively shape the social structures through exclusionary redefinitions of whose space the urban-village is. Firstly, under the ideological rubric of a "socialist market economy with Chinese

characteristics", the central government subscribes to an alternative model of development that ensures long-term economic growth without abandoning the Marx-Leninist tenet of state and collective land ownership. For this reason, the "socialist market economy" was realized by separating the right to use land from ownership of the land, i.e. the right to use land is commercialized, but the ownership of the land still ideologically belongs to all the people. While the rights to land use and lease were commercialized under the 1988 Land Management Law, the scope of the valued land use system was restricted to state-owned (in fact urban) land[9]. As for rural, collective, land, it was, and still is, excluded, outside the scope of the valued land use system. The pricing of rural land is still an ideological taboo which inhibits an economically efficient exchange of land use rights (Li, 1999: 56; Ho, 2005: 38-39).

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[9] The Constitution of People Republic of China was amended four times since 1949 (1954, 1966, 1975, and 1982). Each amendment has its own specific purpose. For example, the amendment in 1975 was with an aim to legitimize the People's Commune movement and the Cultural Revolution. Not until the Constitution enacted in 1982 was the dichotomy of nationally owned land and collectively owned land being set up. It is defined in the Article 10 of the Constitution (before the amendments of Agrarian Law in 1988): "Urban land belongs to the state. Land in the countryside and in suburb area is under collective ownership unless the law stipulates that the land is state-owned. Moreover, housing base land and family plots, reserving the mountain for one's own use, belong to collective. No organization or individual is allowed to occupy, sell, lease or illegally transfer land in any way."

Secondly, in the economic reform process, a great deal of ambiguity in the land-related institution is intentionally sustained by Chinese central leadership. As Ho (2001, 2005) argues, by formulating unclear policies and laws, the institutional ambiguity is assumed by the central government to give spaces for political manoeuvre to control the potential property conflicts in the reform process, especially those conflicting claims to land by various collectives (the natural village/villagers' group, administrative village, and township/town) which would rise disproportionally in the course of socio-economic and legal development. It also provides grounds for trial and error grassroots experiments by local initiatives, especially local grassroots cadres who can avoid the confrontation with power centres in Beijing (also see Harvey, 2005a). This institution ambiguity leads to the vague definition of the collective ownership in law. In the Revised Land Administration Law, the "collective economic organization", "villagers' committee", and "villager's group" are three keywords for the entitlement of the right of management and administration of land, with "Farmers collective" as a keyword for the entitlement of land ownership. However, "farmers collective" is *de facto* a vague term. It is unclear which organization actually represents the "collectives". There is no law that makes clear whether the institutions that manage and administer land also hold ownership either.

Thirdly, citizenship in China has been concentrated more on substantive issues of welfare entitlements than on formal citizenship which emphasizes formal rights of freedom of expression (Twohey, 1999; Keane, 2001; Tuner, 2001; Smart and Smart, 2001). Citizenship requirements obviously obstruct people's movement in China. There are institutional constraints on mobility. Because of the peculiarities imposed by the *hukou* system, rights to citizenship are provided in part by provinces or even cities rather than by the national government. Access to certain forms of welfare benefits, including medical care, low-cost college tuition, public housing and unemployment compensation are often contingent on satisfying residence rules. Rapid development has enhanced social welfare, but only those able to claim indigenous status possess the full citizenship rights that allow access to these enhanced entitlements. Welfare benefits are elaborated for the locally born while excluding migrants. This makes citizenship a concept with multiple levels and limitations, rather than an all-or-none situation (Faist, 2000; Isin, 1992; Ong, 1999). Welfare and economic policies discriminate between citizens according to their geographical and workplace affiliations, resulting in intense inequalities in entitlement between urban and rural residents (Solinger, 1999a; Zhang, 2001).

Whereas the inferior status of rural residents during the reform era has labelled them as "secondary citizens" in Chinese society (Zheng, 2005), the pattern of inclusion, exclusion, and redistribution is labelled by some researchers as "local citizenship" (Smart and Smart, 2001; Smart and Lin, 2007). The idea of "local citizenship" combines recognition of the way in which China's distinctive system of household registration, with the collectivist/exclusivist elements of the key social institutions of the *danwei* (enterprise) and the village, and produces a system in which entitlements of citizenship are determined locally (Smart and Lin, 2007: 286). It sees processes of belonging, entitlement, and exclusion as accomplished locally rather than through a national-level framework, with one result being exacerbation of local differences and inequalities (Smart and Lin, 2007: 281). Entitlement and exclusion from citizenship rights have clearly been determined by local institutions and practices (Smart and Lin, 2007: 294). From this point of view, permitting spatial mobility for peasant migrants without the full rights of urban citizenship results in them becoming second-class citizens (Smart and Smart, 2001:1867).

While a certain degree of experimentation by local cadres is allowed, the retained institution of communal property as the foundation for land use leads to

a great deal of ambiguities about the officially condoned land-tenure

arrangements. In the participation structure of the urban-villages regeneration,

migrants are explicitly excluded from the enhanced redistribution; those who are

villagers are eligible to participate in decision-making, since land-tenure

arrangements are linked tightly to local citizenship. However, this is these very

ambiguities of land-tenure arrangements resulting in a great deal of confusion

about who should benefit, who should take responsibility, who has power, who

should be identified to be empowered, and to what degree.

1.4 Neoliberal Spaces and the Spaces of Neoliberalization.

Scholars are fascinated, if not entranced, by the phenomenon of the

urban-villages partly because its scale is completely out of proportion to anything

remotely considered "human" scale. Its issues cut across different disciplines. It

concerns hundreds of thousands of urban-village dwellers and migrants directly –

and it indirectly concerns all the local and national economies and societies in

which the urban-villages exist. This issue has prompted discussions of quite

diverse questions. Some address, for example, the question of the land-use

patterns and living conditions of these settlements by the physical settings (Wei,

2000; Zhu and Gao, 2001), the conflicts with current planning procedures (Li,

2008), or the changes in social structure (Lan, 2005; Li, 2004). These differences are simply permutations on a more general theme – stressing, for example, the comparison between the urban-villages in China and physically similar phenomena (such as slums) in other countries – an approach grounded in the literatures explored herein would stress the specificity and "uniqueness" of the subject matter.

The analytical treatment of differentiation and its depictions of the urban-villages and their spatial patterns have continued to prove immensely appealing, in part because they seem so readily to make sense of social reality. Yet their common flaw is that "they have tended to naturalize and exogenize their object of study – be this in the form of an all-powerful globalization process or the all encompassing politics of neoliberalism (Peck and Tickell, 2002: 383)." In their analyses, these approaches use "language to perpetuate and expand the existing inequality, without challenging the underlying social structures and institutions that construct them and reproduce them (Gounari, 2006: 90)." They distance themselves from discursive issues of social transformation and ignore that the problematic is a mix of the analysis of language texts, discourse practices, and discursive events, or, as Fairclough (2005b: 76) said, "to give accounts of the

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ways in which the extent to which social changes are changed in discourses, and the relation between changes in discourse and changes in other, non-discursive, elements or 'moments' of social life (including therefore the question of the senses and ways in which discourse '(re)constructs' social life in processes of social change)."

Though the social sense of the term "urban-village" has been developed in academia, the tendency to see the issue in literary rather than political terms is still pronouncing. While empirical analysis was offered as the sole way of doing so, the urban-villages and their conditions (or problems) were adopted as objective facts to be discovered rather than pathological causalities to be constructed. Most researchers and analysts generally give too little thought to the possibility that the urban-villages and their larger city-region might be negotiated understandings; that the real issue and the most perplexing problem might be contingent on how we represent "the data" (cf. Beauregard, 1993). If so far in the established academics the emphasis is on the spatial metaphor to represent the phenomenon rather than on the "urban-village" as a social construct, then this is as it should be. If not, moving the researchers to the centre of the stage, and pushing the assumptions that underpin their empirical endeavour to the forefront of analysis

pose an implication of a "discursive turn" which shifts the emphasis of the study

of the phenomenon of the urban-villages *per se* to the highlight of this study

recognized as a social phenomenon in its own right and turns attention to matters

of epistemology and ontology. In terms of this, can it be argued that the

emergence of the urban-villages in China is integral to these emerging discourses

of urban change in the PRD that are *de facto* a set of constructive activities of

whose who declare the urban villages to be a problem and seek to propagate, first

and foremost, large-scale property-led regeneration?

Harrison and Livingstone (1980: 25) have constructed a comprehensive

conceptual framework for viewing "the pervasive influence of presuppositions in

all scientific and philosophical thought" with special reference to geography.

From their framework, the academic research and discourses of the urban-village

is a "problem cycle". Having stated their commitment to "changing the world"

through an interdisciplinary approach to social problems, the urban-village is

perceived to be a problem only in the light of the investigator's presuppositions

and subsequent orientations. The problem is formulated and then evaluated as to

its significance. For the investigator to conclude eventually that a solution to the

problem has been found involves an evaluation just as much as does the decision

that the problem exists. And, as Harrison and Livingstone point out: "recognizing

that the perception, formulation, evaluation and solution of problems are stages in

an attempted reorientation of social patterns to some desired suture state, any

proposed solution is more a reflection of the way of looking at reality than of

reality itself (Ibid. 29).

Associating with the neo-Foucauldian literature on governmentality, the

literature of post-structuralist theorization of neoliberalism makes a useful

distinction between government and governance, and it is this distinction itself

that becomes an object of study. It argues that while neoliberalism may mean less

government, it does not follow that there is less governance. Rather, it is

characterized by developing indirect techniques for leading and controlling

individuals without at the same time being responsible for them. While

neoliberalism problematizes the state and is concerned to specify its limits

through the invocation of individual choice, it involves forms of governance that

encourage both institutions and individuals to conform to the norms of the market

(Barry et al., 1996; Burchell et al., 1991; Rose, 1999; Larner, 2000; Lemke, 2001).

The theoretical strength of the concept of governmentality consists of the fact that

it construes neo-liberalism not just as ideological rhetoric, as a set of free-market

economic policies or a political-economic reality that dismantle the institutions of welfare states, but above all as a specific form of "political rationality", a specific kind of "normative political reason that organizes the political sphere, government practices, and citizenship (Brown, 2006: 693)." It not only aims to govern society in the name of the economy, but also actively creates institutions that work to naturalize the extension of market rationality to all registers of political and social life. It is in this social-spatial account of neoliberalism that the material transformations are not understood as the Neoliberal Real, but rather as spatially embedded strategies by which neoliberalism – as a constructivist political project – endeavours to create the a social reality it claims already exists.

It is in this post-structuralist theorization of neoliberalism that the concealed double link between neoliberal spaces and the spaces of neoliberalization has been identified as the internal logic at the heart of the neoliberalism and neoliberalization of cities (e.g., Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2001; Brenner and Theodore, 2002; Peck and Tickell, 2002; Dikec, 2007b; Leitner et al., 2007; Addie, 2008; Candan and Kolluoğlu, 2008; see especially Clarke, 2008). Neoliberal space is based on the premise that neoliberalism has a spatial dimension to it, and that one can observe and analyze various forms of neoliberalism manifested in

space. Spaces of neoliberalization shift focus from the spatial manifestations of neoliberalism to structural dynamics that produce and reproduce the ideology of neoliberalism through space. Different from neoliberal space, which refers to the spatial effects or consequences of neoliberalism, spaces of neoliberalization refer to the more active neoliberal (de- and re-)articulation/appropriation of a pre-existing site, process, or practice – the "neoliberalization of things" (Clarke, 2008: 139) which involves with the "internal" (re)composition (innovative ways of thinking and doing, with new ways of ordering, legitimating, and exercising power) and their "external" (re)configuration with other institutions, policies, and politics, in particular neoliberal conceptions of urban space which renders individual subjects and collectives "responsible" (Bennett, 1998; Peck, 2001), the "neoliberal understandings and representations of the urban deprived, e.g. the form and function of the inner city, which do much to discursively naturalise this class project, as well as the mechanisms and outcomes of social exclusion (Addie, 2008: 2689)", and the "transformation in local governance which have been enabled and legitimized through a set of legal changes wrapped in neoliberal languages (Candan et al., 2008: 12)".

In light of Foucauldian social theory, which has attempted to go beyond

studying policy merely in terms of an unproblematic 'tool' to be employed to address 'given' problems (see, among others, Rose and Miller 1992; Hajer, 1995; Osborne and Rose, 1999; Atkinson, 2000; Cochrane, 2000; Raco and Imrie, 2000; Lemke, 2001; Griggs and Howarth, 2002; Huxley, 2006; Dikec, 2007b), the urban-village problem is not self-evidently defined. Rather, it is constructed as a policy problem that is *ipso facto* part of the policymaking process. It is constructed in a particular way that is congruent with the activities of a dominant discourse coalition in which a story is told about its genesis that entails a "solution" which complements the existing thought and actions of the discourse coalition. In other words, what presents within the narrational genesis of a particular problem is an immanent solution which complements the story of how a problem was created and specifies answers to questions such as "Who is responsible? What can be done? What should be done?" (Hajer, 1993: 45) Following this, what is significant is how, and in what particular ways, the urban-village problem is constructed. This question involves asking why, how, and in what ways, the urban-village comes to be defined as a problem. As Stone (1989: 282) argues: "Problem definition is a process of image making, where the images have to do fundamentally with attributing cause, blame, and responsibility. Conditions, difficulties, or issues thus do not have inherent properties that make

them more or less likely to be seen as problems or to be expanded."

As a consequence, what is embedded to the derivative operational definitions of academic research, media rhetoric, and policy tools is in fact a process of what Rose and Miller (1992: 181-183) refer to as a "problematizing activity" of government which first makes the "problem" of the urban-villages "visible", then "controllable". It is engaged in an on-going process of "framing" to determine what goals are just, what means are legitimate, what counts as evidence, how contradictory information is interpreted, and how problems are defined; they therefore "guide actors down certain paths rather than others (Griggs and Howarth, 2002: 106)." In this process, institutions, procedures, analyses and reflections, the calculations and tactics amount to what Foucault (1991b) defines as "governmentality" – the production and management of the conduct of the others and of the self. For Foucault, governmentality refers to the rationalities and tactics of governing and how they become expressed in particular technologies and procedures for directing human behaviour (Foucault, 1997: 82).

According to Rose and Miller (1992: 175-176), the problematics of government can be analyzed in terms of their intricate inter-dependencies between

political rationalities and governmental technologies. Political rationalities are "the changing discursive fields within which the exercise of power is conceptualized (ibid.: 175)". They are characteristically moral, epistemological and idiomatic in form. As Rose and Miller (ibid.: 178-179) say:

> "[Political rationalities] elaborate upon the fitting powers and duties for authorities. They address the proper distribution of tasks and actions between authorities of different types. […] [and] consider the ideals or principles to which government should be directed - freedom, justice, equality, mutual responsibility, citizenship, common sense, economic efficiency, prosperity, growth, fairness, rationality and the like. […] [T]hey are articulated in relation to some conception of the nature of the objects governed – society, the nation, the population, the economy. In particular, they embody some account of the persons over whom government is to be exercised, such as flock to be led, legal subjects with rights, resources to be exploited, and elements of a population to be managed. […] [They] are articulated in a distinctive idiom […] a kind of intellectual machinery or apparatus for rendering reality thinkable in such a way that it is amenable to political deliberations. […] Political rationalities […] are morally coloured, grounded upon knowledge, and made thinkable through language."

Governmental technologies mean the complex of mundane programmes, with modes of perception, practices of calculations, vocabularies, inscription techniques, apparatuses, documents and procedures, forms of judgment, architectural forms, human capacities, non-human objects and devices. "It is through technologies that political rationalities and the programmes of

government that articulate them become capable of deployment (ibid.: 183)."

The "urban-villages problem", therefore, appears in Foucauldian analysis as "tactics of government, as a dynamic form and historical stabilisation of societal power relations" (Lemke, 2002: 58). It is characterised by particular ways "of thinking about the kinds of problems that can and should be addressed by various authorities (Miller and Rose, 1990: 2; Raco and Imrie, 2000: 2190; Lemke, 2001: 191)," and particular ways "in which one conducts people's conduct" (Foucault, 1979: 192; in Senellart, 2007: 388). In this process, shared interests are constructed, common modes of perception are formed, in which certain events, issues, social groups, and entities come to be visualized/invisualized and included/excluded, deliberately or non-intentionally, according to particular rhetorics of image or speech; relations are established, in which problems of one and those of another seem intrinsically linked in their basis and their solution (Rose and Miller, 1992: 184; Agger and Larsen, 2009: 1087). It is through this kind of intellectual machinery or apparatus that renders "reality thinkable in such a way that it is amenable to political deliberations (ibid. 179; also see Osborne and Rose 2004: 212)".

While not denying that the reality of such phenomenon is socially constructed an urban problem, therefore, this thesis seeks to problematize this spatial conceptualization of the urban-village. By exploring the relation between the urban-villages which are problematized and the process of problematization, it questions what appears to be well-ordered, rational responsible, self-evident, and natural in order to show the selective format of these practices and the power effects inscribed in the regeneration of the urban-villages. Drawing upon the insights of governmentality studies in ways that not only "describe" the scale and form of the phenomenon of the urban-villages in China, but also highlight what Wacquant (2007) refers to as the creation of the "new stigmatizing topographic lexicon" that renders these neighbourhoods vulnerable to all interventions, this thesis highlights how the combination of ideological rhetoric, political economic restructuring, and integral, neoliberalized policy implementation not only has negative consequences for the material living conditions of the most marginalised, vulnerable areas and/or groups, but also fundamentally redefines their potential terrains of adaptation, resistance, and the ways of searching for alternatives (Addie, 2008: 2689; Sun, 2009: 157). By recovering excluded subjects and silenced voices, it reveals the hidden agendas behind the assumptions underlying this urban action. In doing so, it exposes the ways in which it reproduces and

exacerbates the phenomena it condemns.

1.5 Research Questions and Chapter Outlines.

It is in light of the above debates that this research is situated. There are three main research questions: First, in the context of the urban-villages regeneration controversy, what would the right to the city entail? How might it address the specific disenfranchisement problems of urban residents associated with this controversy? What benefits and dis-benefits it may have for the social and spatial structure of the city? Second, from a Foucauldian perspective, governmentality more properly refers to the process of governing itself, the "mentalities" of rule by which governing authorities seek to shape the conduct of diverse actors and agencies (Foucault, 1979, 1991; Raco and Imrie, 2000; Rose and Miller, 1992). While governmentality is argued to take a particular form under neoliberalism (Larner, 2000; Lemke, 2001; Rose, 1999), how is governmentality played out under a hybrid socialist-neoliberal form of political rationality, and specifically in the context of the urban-villages regeneration? For Foucault, governmentality also refers to the rationality that is immanent to the micro-powers, and the analysis of the types of governmentality is inseparable from the analysis of corresponding forms of resistance, or "counter-conducts" (Senellart, 2007: 389). This brings out

the third question: How, and in what ways, is the combination of ideological

rhetoric, political economic restructuring, and integral, incrementally

neoliberalized policy implementation redefining those who are rendered

vulnerable and marginalized their potential terrains of adaptation, resistance, and

the ways of searching for alternatives?

This thesis is composed of seven chapters. Whereas Chapter One has outlined

the phenomenon of the urban-villages in China, in relation to the contemporary

restructuring of urban form, Chapter Two turns to a review of the specificity of

urban development and the urban-village regeneration projects in Guangzhou. I

describe the scale and form of the urban-villages, and the broader context within

which urban policy programmes have emerged in relation to the "emergence" and

development of the urban-villages in Guangzhou. It concludes by identifying and

discussing the three specific relationships and/or processes that this thesis

explores.

Chapter Three sets out the research objectives and methods developed to

examine the discourse and practices of the urban-villages regeneration in

Guangzhou. By discussing the epistemological and methodological issues raised

in the research design, and the methodological choices and strategies that were involved in the research process as well as its philosophical underpinnings, this chapter justifies Foucauldian discourse analysis, and an ethnographic approach, for detailed analyses of this field-based research. A reflexive account of field experience and positioned subject is deployed to capture actively the contingent methods and research act.

Chapter Four turns to my empirical investigation of the urban-villages in Guangzhou. It examines the discursive and structural conditions surrounding the "production" of governmental programmes of the urban-villages within a restructured and increasingly neoliberalized system. In seeking to understand the motivations, rationales, and mechanisms of the authorities underpinning the articulation of the urban-villages regeneration, it explores the shaping of this discourse, and considers the ways in which it has led to a specific planning and policy approach towards the urban-villages. This focus leads to an inverted question concerning the system of categorization or "rationality" that has been pursued and mobilized to make sense of the phenomenon of the urban-villages and frame the urban-villages problem.

Chapter Five seeks to understand the form of the governance of the urban-villages regeneration in Guangzhou. This chapter has three objectives. First, it outlines and evaluates the process of the implementation of the institutional reform policy of the urban-villages and its associated rationale and policy formation problems. Second, it discusses the form of the village governance shaped by this policy and the dynamics that have accompanied the implementation of this policy. Third, it examines the characteristic/nature of the governing coalition shaped by the institutional reform policy in the landscape of Guangzhou's urban-villages regeneration. The forms of conduct and body techniques are analyzed in this chapter for the ways they are shaped and give shape to the outcome of the implementation of the institutional reform policy of the urban-villages.

Chapter Six shifts the focus away from the transformation of formal institutions based on the construction of marginality identities by a dominant interest group, to local residents' self-narratives in relation to neoliberal discourses. Evidenced by the presence of Yan Wendou and his fellow brothers, this chapter examines a range of practices that I characterize as "present-oriented strategies", and considers the ways these practices, in the form of marginal resistance, work as

counter-conducts to the governmental regeneration of the urban-villages. In dialogue with theoretical perspectives derived from public choice, this chapter concludes by arguing that local residents' marginal resistances are not as powerless as has often been suggested by the dominant society. Rather, it enacts a process of subjectification that moulds people into certain sorts of economic subjects. It is this neoliberal subjectification that flattens a deeper more difficult question of who should be identified to be empowered, who should participate, and to what degree, in decision making.

Chapter Seven concludes this thesis by re-visiting the three research questions laid out in Chapter One, about the right to the city, governance, and citizenship, relating to the urbanism with Chinese characteristics, and addressing how the empirical findings add to our conceptual understandings of the diverse and contingent nature of urban neoliberalization and neoliberal governmentality. In doing so, it suggests additional and/or alternative mechanisms or instruments for social intervention and engagement, and outlining some practical possibilities for emancipatory forms of urban renewal and change.

Chapter Two

Narrating the Development of the Urban-Villages in Guangzhou.

"While we inhibit a world of programmes, that world is not itself programmed (Miller and Rose, 1992: 191)."

2.1 Introduction.

In Chapter One, I outlined the phenomenon of the urban-villages in China, in relation to the contemporary restructuring of urban form. On a closer inspection it turns out that what is at issue is the larger city-region and not simply the urban-villages *per se*. In other word, the question of interest is "a form of spatialization that renders certain areas and their inhabitants socio-economically and politically vulnerable (Dikeç, 2002: 92)." In short, the phenomenon of the urban-villages in China needs to be understood within the broader social, economic and political processes of change within which these villages are situated. More specifically, it needs to be understood within the context of China's economic reform and urban restructuring in which the nascent and/or changing urban development and planning are tending towards market-oriented operations and an increasingly neoliberalized system. In Chapter Two, I will contextualize this by focusing on the specificity of the urban development and the urban-village regeneration projects in Guangzhou, the provincial capital of Guangdong

Province.

This chapter describes the broader context within which urban policy programmes have emerged in relation to the development of the urban-villages in Guangzhou. With a special focus on Tianhe District – the new city centre of Guangzhou since 1984 – I provide a "narrative" to the specific contingency of the development of the urban-villages in Guangzhou, from 1976 up to the regeneration of Leide Village in 2007 – the first governmental project that, under the banner of "urban-village regeneration", has successfully moved from proposal to construction. Tianhe District is a high profile example of a location that has grown rapidly since the 1990s. The policies towards the urban-villages in Guangzhou are based on the pathological understanding of the urban-villages in Tianhe District. The policies of the urban-villages in other cities in China also "emulate" the policies in Guangzhou (see Po, 2011). Therefore, it can be said that Tianhe District stands as a valuable case for the study of the development of the urban-villages in China, pushing trends found elsewhere to their limits.

The remainder of this chapter has four sections. The first section opens with a historical context of development of Yangji Village, from a poverty-stricken

village at the fringe of Tianhe District to a "billionaire village" in the CBD, as a way to bring out a narrative to describe how the fragmented urban landscape of Guangzhou, pulled between development-led planning and planning-led development, sparked off the development of the urban-villages. The second section outlines the more general public discourses and practices that have underpinned the articulation of the urban-villages regeneration, and examines the local agendas and imaginations and wider socio-economic processes of change within which such articulation was situated. The third section discusses the crises, contradictions, and tensions both external to the project itself and internal in this project. The fourth section concludes by identifying the specific relationships and/or processes that this thesis explores.

2.2 "Villages in the City, the City in Villages": the Dilemma of Development-Led Planning and Planning-Led Development.

Guangdong Province has experienced intense migration and rapid economic development (Johnston, 1998; Fan, 1999; Li, 2000; Siu, 2007). According to an official estimate in 2002, the mobile population reached 120 million, of which 42.42 million crossed provincial boundaries. The provinces with the largest population outflows were Sichuan, Anhui, Hunan, Jiangxi, Henan, and Hubei (see

figure 2.1). The provinces with the most inflows were Guangdong (35.5 percent),

Beijing (5.8 percent), and Fujian (5.1 percent). Guangdong's net interprovincial

migration in the 1990 Census was "fifty times the average of all provinces, and

its intra-provincial migration accounted for almost 12 percent of the total in

China (Fan, 1999: 973)." City-regions in the Pearl River Delta are characterized

by an extraordinarily large volume of migrant population who often outnumber

the local population by several times. Unlike Shenzhen Special Economic Zone,

which requires special permits to enter (Smart and Smart, 2001), Guangzhou,

referred to as "the Fifth Dragon" and "Red Capitalism" (Sung et al., 1995; Lin,

1997), has drawn more migrants, especially non-document migrants from poorer

provinces and poorer parts of Guangdong (see figure 2.2).

The prediction of the Guangzhou Urban Planning Bureau for the total amount

of urban land use in 2010 is based on an estimated 4.08 million permanent urban

residents and 1.5 million floating population[10]. The assumed per capita urban

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[10] The other aspect, linked to the fast urban development, is the increase in the permanent and floating population. The number of permanent residents grew by nearly one million between 1988 and 1998 (1988: 5.77 million; 1998: 6.74 million) – almost exclusively limited to the population with an urban *hukou*, that increased from 3.26 million to 4.17 million (*Guangzhou Statistical Yearbook*, 1989 to 1999). While the number stood at around 0.5 million in 1984, it was 1.17 million in 1988 and 1.3 million in 1989 (Chan, 1996; Chan and Gu, 1996). […] According to the Public Security Bureau, 1.268 million temporary

land use is 90 m^2 for permanent residents and 70 m^2 for transient inhabitants (Xu, 1999: 133). In 1998, Guangzhou had eight districts and four county-level municipalities. In 2000, Guangzhou annexed Panyu County and Huadu County as two of its districts. The total area of Guangzhou increased from 1443.6 km^2 to 3718.5 km^2. In 2005, after Rogan and Nanxia, the two national-level economic and technological development zones, were integrated as two districts in Guangzhou, the total area of Guangzhou became 7434.4 km^2 (see figure 2.3).

Figure 2.1 Context map of Guangdong Province.

residents were registered in Guangzhou at the end of 1999, while the total floating population was estimated at 2 million (Guo et al., 1999). Another source calculates the *weilai renkou* (population in the future) in Guangzhou's urban districts at 1.8 million. The ratio between registered temporary residents and those without any registration is very difficult to assess. A sample survey carried out in 8 urban districts revealed that only 45.5 percent of the transient population had a proper registration. If we use the data given by the Public Security Bureau, we take rather conservative figures. See Taubmann, 2002: 81-82.

Figure 2.2 Context map of Guangzhou Municipality.
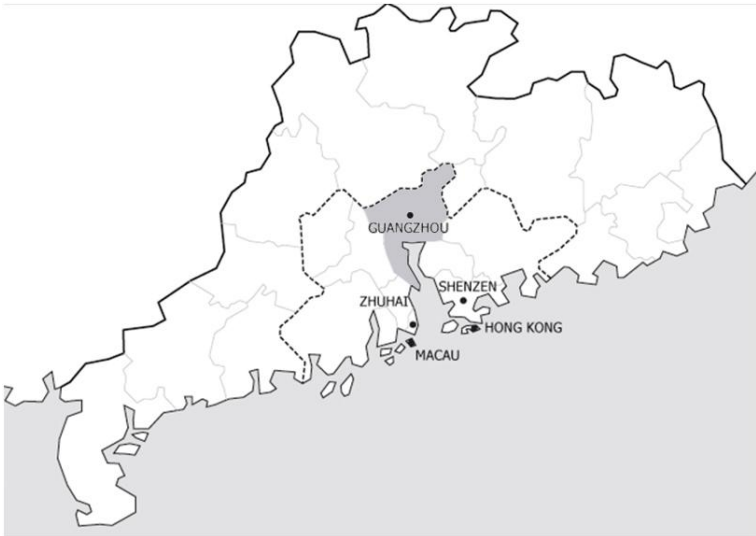
Figure 2.3 Administrative districts of Guangzhou Municipality.

In managing to find its own way to strengthen competitiveness and meet the challenges of its rivals domestically and internationally, the development of Guangzhou, and its reconstruction of space, has been constructed in a piecemeal fashion, with its mushrooming of large-scale image projects dotting the landscape of Guangzhou. The planning of the land adjacent or surrounding to the large-scale urban development projects was vacant. This resulted in a fragmented urban fabric posing a stark contrast between the urban and the rural, the old and the new. This fragmented urban landscape of Guangzhou, characterized by Taubmann (2002: 80) as a "development-led planning rather than a planning-led development", can be illustrated by "villages in the city, the city in villages", the motif of the development of the Pearl River New Town (PRNT) – the CBD of Guangzhou in Tianhe District. This section provides a narrative to describe how the fragmented urban landscape of Guangzhou is pulled between development-led planning and planning-led development. Before doing this, however, a brief explanation about the historically and geographically specific institutions of the villages in Guangzhou might be helpful to provide some background.

In January 2008, in her living room at the top floor of a 33-storey residential

tower in the Pearl River New Town, the CBD of Guangzhou, which is about 5 to 10 minutes away from the 960-year-old Yangji Village, Mrs. Chang Jianghao, the leader of Yangji Village, recalled in interview:

'I burst into tears when I got the village's bank statement from the old village leader. There was only 105 RMB (about 7 pounds) in the savings account. It was 1976, the year when I became the new village leader. It was also the year though the Cultural Revolution had ended, people were still wary of not being criticized as politically incorrect and denounced in public for their wrong political ideology. […] The People's Commune reduced people's work incentives. The only way to invoke people's willingness to work was to implement the household responsibility system, which we had once implemented in 1965. However, it was ideologically seen as capitalist and hence not politically correct. It was criticized and banned. After that, no one dared think about the household responsibility system. […] I had to do something if I didn't want my villagers to starve to death. I had to do something to improve my villagers' lives. In early 1978, I went to the party secretary of the district government. With his support, I started to implement the household responsibility system secretly in our village. […] After five months, it came to the notice of an officer in the higher level government. He said: "How dare you follow Liu Shaoqi's capitalist route?" I was criticized. Nevertheless, six months later, the central government in Beijing admitted that the household responsibility system was politically correct. All the villages in China were encouraged to employ it. And I was hailed as a role model for other village leaders to follow[11].'

Owing to the major institutional and policy changes which accompanied the Great Leap Forward and the People's Commune launched by Mao Zhedong

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[11] Interview with Chang Jianghao on 22nd April 2007.

(State Chairman of the CCP), the Great Chinese Famine (officially referred to as the Three Years of Natural Disasters) occurred in 1958 and continued to 1961[12].

Due to this catastrophe, Mao Zhedong stepped down from his position, and was replaced by the First Vice Chairman of the CCP, Liu Shaoqi. Together with Deng Xiaoping, Liu Shaoqi was put in charge of economic recovery. One of the main policies for them to deal with the famine was the household responsibility system (HRS). Literally, the "responsibility" means that an individual household, or a set of households, assumes the task of production for, and payment to, the state. Under the HRS, village collectives function like a contractor who sub-contracts the land to individual households for a period of time (it may be any number of years or, in principle, it may be in perpetuity). After fulfilling the procurement, quota obligations, or submitting the taxes, peasants are entitled to sell their surplus on the markets or retain it for their own use. Peasants become residual claimants (Lin, 1990; Chen, 1997).

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[12] Whereas the Chinese government in the early 1980s stated that the 15 million excess deaths in the famine was largely a result of a series of natural disasters with some policy mistakes, unofficial documents, especially those outside china, recognized a considerably much higher number of death (36 million) was caused by mismanagement, especially the massive institutional and policy changes which accompanied the Great Leap Forward. See Lyman et al., 1997; Demeny and McNicoll, (eds.), 2003.

While Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping implemented the HRS policy, Mao Zhedong rejected the proposed reforms, accusing these leaders of encouraging capitalist initiatives and widening the gap between the rich and the poor among Chinese farmers. Mao Zhedong rebuilt his position in the Party by the mid 1960s and launched the Cultural Revolution in 1966 as a means of destroying his enemies in the Party. Despite the fact that Deng and Liu advocated more pragmatic policies, they were seen as a challenge to Mao's power and radical ideas, and for that reason, Liu fell from political favour, and was purged during the Cultural Revolution. He and Deng, along with many others, were denounced as "capitalist roaders", and Liu was further labelled as a "traitor," and the "biggest capitalist roader in the Party." The HRS was seen as a capitalist initiative and banned in 1965 because it was, though scrupulously avoiding the word "private", *de facto* equivalent to the granting of private property rights through a state lease of land and was contradictory to the ideology of the Communist Party. The HRS re-emerged when Deng Xiaoping regained power in 1978 and Liu Shaoqi was politically rehabilitated (in February 1980). At this time, the HRS was still politically seen as a taboo. However, at the Third Plenum of the 11th Central Committee of the CPC, in December 1978, which marked the commencement of China's reform, the HRS was normalized by the State Council as "a great

invention of Chinese peasants and still insisting on the socialist modernization with Chinese characteristic (Deng Xiaoping, 1980)." It was soon implemented in villages all over China (see figure 2.4).

The brief history of the HRS described above and the process of the re-employment of this system in the villages in Guangzhou, which will be described below, are very germane to the understanding of the urban development and the development of the urban-villages in Guangzhou. In the early 1980s, Yangji village was 30 minutes away from the "city centre" by tricycle – the main transportation for villagers. Except for the housing base land for villagers to build their own houses, Yangji Village had 2260 mu of arable land. Almost every villager was a farmer. The implementation of the HRS gradually changed villagers from farmers to shoemakers or workers in construction sites and other factories. The HRS improved villagers' living standards and facilitated Yangji villagers' committee with the ability to improve social welfare and public infrastructure which were not funded from the government. It also triggered physical changes in which the arable land of Yangji Village was replaced by agribusinesses and light industries, e.g. shoe factories, textile factories, and warehouses.

Figure 2.4 The development of the HRS.

Chronology of Land Collectivization

1949 The founding of the People's Republic of China

1950 Agrarian revolution: those who farmed were given their own private land.

1954 "The right of private land is protected by law" was written in the Constitution.

1958 People's commune movement: the lands of villages were collectivized in this radically collective period.

1962 The collectivization of land was institutionalized.

1978 The emergence of the HRS: it was a secret/informal/illegal contract signed by 18 peasants in secrecy.

1980 The HRS was admitted with socialist characteristic and promoted politically everywhere in China.

1982 The publicization of land: In the Constitution in 1982, all the lands in China were classified into two categories: nationally owned land and collectively owned land.

1983 The sentence of "HRS is, under the leading of the C.C.P., a great invention of Chinese peasants" was written in "Some issues about the contemporary economic policy of villages."

1984 The term "township and village enterprise (TVE)" emerged. In this year, the villages in Guangzhou adopted the HRS.

1992 Township enterprise was exalted by Lee Pong, leader of the C.C.P., as "a great invention by Chinese peasants."
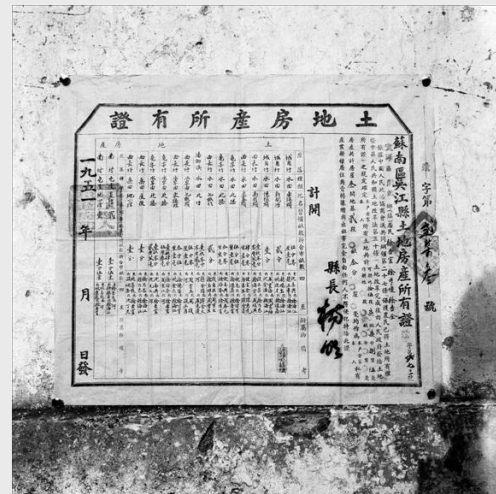
This photo was taken in 1954. The paper on the wall is a certificate of a privately owned land. The certification was enacted in 1951, the year of agrarian revolution. Only three years after, everything was collectivized, including lands.

Photo courtesy Chang Zhudo

This photo, taken in 1980, is an abandoned office of the people's commune in Guangzhou. It was the moment shortly after the collapse of the People's Commune.

Photo courtesy Bozhi Liu

The physical change was further reinforced when the Guangzhou Municipal Government in 1984 made a comprehensive plan to gradually shift the city centre toward the east. Following the comprehensive plan, in 1985, Shahe Town was abolished at the east of the original city centre and the 147.8 km^2 Tianhe District was founded, and several subprojects were made to accelerate the development of the new city centre. Except for the infrastructure, e.g. the 45 metres wide Guangzhou Avenue and Zhongshan Avenue, the Guangzhou Municipal Government postponed all the building permission approvals in other administrative districts and attracted private investments by public building projects such as Guangzhou East Train Station and Tianhe Sport Centre, the main venue of the Sixth China National Games.

The arable land plots of Yangji Village were soon expropriated by the authorities, e.g. military, government, school, and state owned enterprises (SOEs) because of its privileged geographic location in-between the old city centre and the newly founded city centre. The compensation was paid in different ways, with different prices. Except for the small amount of crop fee compensation, those villagers, whose arable land plots were expropriated, were allowed to enjoy better social welfare by converting their *hukou* from agricultural to non-agricultural and

find a better job by changing the place of regular *hukou* registration from villagers' committee to SOEs. As for the land subsidy compensation, it was ideologically seen as collectively owned and hence paid to the villagers' committee and village economic entities.

While Yangji Village was still poor in the early 1980s, the expropriation made more than 3000 out of 4800 Yangji villagers convert their *hukou* from agricultural to non-agricultural and change the place of regular *hukou* registration from the villagers' committee to the SOEs. Nevertheless, when Yangji Village's 2860 mu arable land was expropriated with a total compensation fee of 40 million RMB, those ex-villagers who converted their *hukou* thought it was their entitlement to share the compensation since the money was in exchange for the arable land and was ideologically seen as inherited property collectively owned by the entire village. This substantial compensation fee not only whipped up demands by ex-villagers to change their non-agricultural *hukou* back to agricultural, in order to be eligible to share the compensation, but also caused disputes over the ownership of collectively owned land, which since 1954 has been kept intentionally ambiguous and vague by the state.

In 1987 a group of pre-agricultural *hukou* villagers squabbled in front of the villagers' committee over what they considered to be "their fair share": 'We created this large fortune. But who owns it? It doesn't belong to the State, because we are not a state owned enterprise, we are a collective owned cooperative. Does it belong to the street office, the government, or villagers[13]?' Likewise, another villager said: 'One always says that it belongs to all people. In fact, this means it belongs to no one! We always say that it belongs to the collective. But what do you mean by the collective? How many people, and who are these people[14]?' Instead of accepting villagers' suggestions to distribute the compensation to them directly (each villager could get around 8000 RMB), Chang Jianghao took a different tack by pioneering the employment of the joint-stock system (JSS). Such a system was established in the same year based on the six disbanded production brigades and production teams of Yangji Village, which were formerly the basic accounting and farm production units in the People's Commune system before 1980. These cooperatives were aiming to manage the collective assets and the villagers became shareholders.

The employment of the JSS drew attention to a group of investigators from

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[13] Interview with the previous head of Tianhe district on 3rd May 2007.

[14] Ibid.

central government in Beijing who a couple of months later in 1987 came to probe the employment of the JSS in Yangji Village, for they presumed that the JSS touched on the politically forbidden issue of privatization. The purpose of the investigation was to find out whether or not this practice was privatizing collective property and transgressed the Communist Party's political ideology. Chang Jianghao explained to the Policy Research Institute of the Secretariat of the Central Committee in 1987: "Why do we have to employ the JSS? First, it is still not clear that who owns the collective properties, and the JSS is a way to solve this problem. Second, it can solve the disputes of the villagers with the non-agricultural *hukou*[15]." Six months later, the JSS, together with the HRS, was normalized by the State Council as "township and village enterprises (TVEs) policy" and began to be implemented in other villages.

With the successful implementation of the HRS and the JSS, Chang Jianghao became the representative of the People's Congress of Guangdong Province in 1989. In 1991, Yangji Village became the first village in Tianhe District which made a profit of one hundred million RMB per year. "Billionaire village" was the nickname of Yangji Village in the 1990s. The village's joint-stock system

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[15] Interview with Chang Jianghao on 22nd April 2007.

cooperatives, under the umbrella of the central government's TVEs policy[16], running the business of hotels, factories, warehouses, parking lots, gas stations, restaurants, and commercial housings, had made the village's fixed assets increase from 600 million RMB to 700 million RMB, and was further increased to 900 million RMB in 2007. Each villager, i.e. shareholder, can draw a dividend from the collective-owned property to the sum of a hundred thousand RMB per year. Yangji Cooperative not only ran businesses in Tianhe District, but also expanded their business to other districts in Guangzhou such as Zhengcheng District and Panyu District . However, the land expropriation in 1978, 1980, and 1984, made Yangji Village's arable land shrink dramatically from 2860 mu (1.9 km^2) to 600 mu (0.4 km^2). In 1992, the rest of the land was further expropriated for the site of the Pearl River New Town (PRNT). Since then, Yangji Village has become a village without arable land, with only 0.29 km^2 housing based land (HBL) left for dwelling and collective use (see figure 2.5, table 2.1).

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[16] TVEs policy was to promote the development of agribusinesses. However, with the state's intention to connive, most of the developments have nothing to do with the primary sectors, but the more lucrative secondary and tertiary sectors.

Table 2.1 List of land expropriation of Tangdong Village, Tianhe District, Guangzhou.

Year	Authority	area (m^2)	Purpose
1958	Guangzhou Municipal Government	49950	Site for Guangzhou Monofilament Fabric Plant
1958	Guangzhou Municipal Government	106560	Site for Chemical Fertilizer Plant
1960	Guangzhou Municipal Government	16650	Site for Guangdong Robber Plant
1960	Guangzhou Power Supply Bureau	799.2	Site for Tianxia Electric Substation
1960	Guangzhou Chemical Fertilizer Plant	25308	Site for Railways
1961	Pearl River Paper Mill	43290	Site for Pearl River Paper Mill
1974	Guangzhou Power Supply Bureau	13320	Site for Guangzhou Power Supply Company
1975	Guangzhou Monofilament Fabric Plant	17316	Extension of the plant
1975	Guangzhou Chemical Fertilizer Plant	47952	Extension of plant
1978	Guangzhou Power Supply Bureau	999	Site for power transmission facilities
1985	Chinese People's Armed Police Corps	46620	Site for Barrack
1986	Office of Road Construction, Guangzhou	16650	Widening of Zhongshan Road
1987	Guangzhou Ink Factory	9990	Site for factory
1991	Guangzhou Freeway Co. Ltd.	76590	Site for North Ring Expressway
1992	Guangzhou Freeway Co. Ltd.	23310	Site for North Ring Expressway Toll Gate
1993	Guangzhou Urban Development Co.	156510	Site for real estate development
1993	Office of Anti-Poverty, Guangzhou	176490	Site for "Tangde Garden" Community
1993	Tianhe Development Zone for New and High Technology Industries Co. Ltd.	277722	Site for "Jungjing Garden" Community
1994	Guangshen Railway Co., Ltd.	97236	Site for Residentials
1994	Guangdong People's Procuratorate	18648	Site for domitory
1994	Guangzhou People's Procuratorate	10656	Site for domitory
1994	Office of Road Construction, Guangzhou	89910	Site for resettlement
1995	Bureau of Civil Affairs, Tianhe District Government	16650	Site for welfare enterprise
1995	Dongshan Department Store	7992	Site for warehouses
1997	State Land Bureau, Tianhe District Government	43290	Site for Guangyuan East Road
1997	State Land Bureau, Tianhe District Government	7992	Widening of Zhongshan Road
2002	Pearl River Invest Enterprise	73260	Site for real estate development

(Source: History of Tangdong Village, 2006, pp. 18-19)

Figure 2.5 The changing territories of Shipai Village and Tangdong Village, Tianhe District.

Shipai Village   Tangdong Village

Territory before the 1980s

Territory after the 1980s
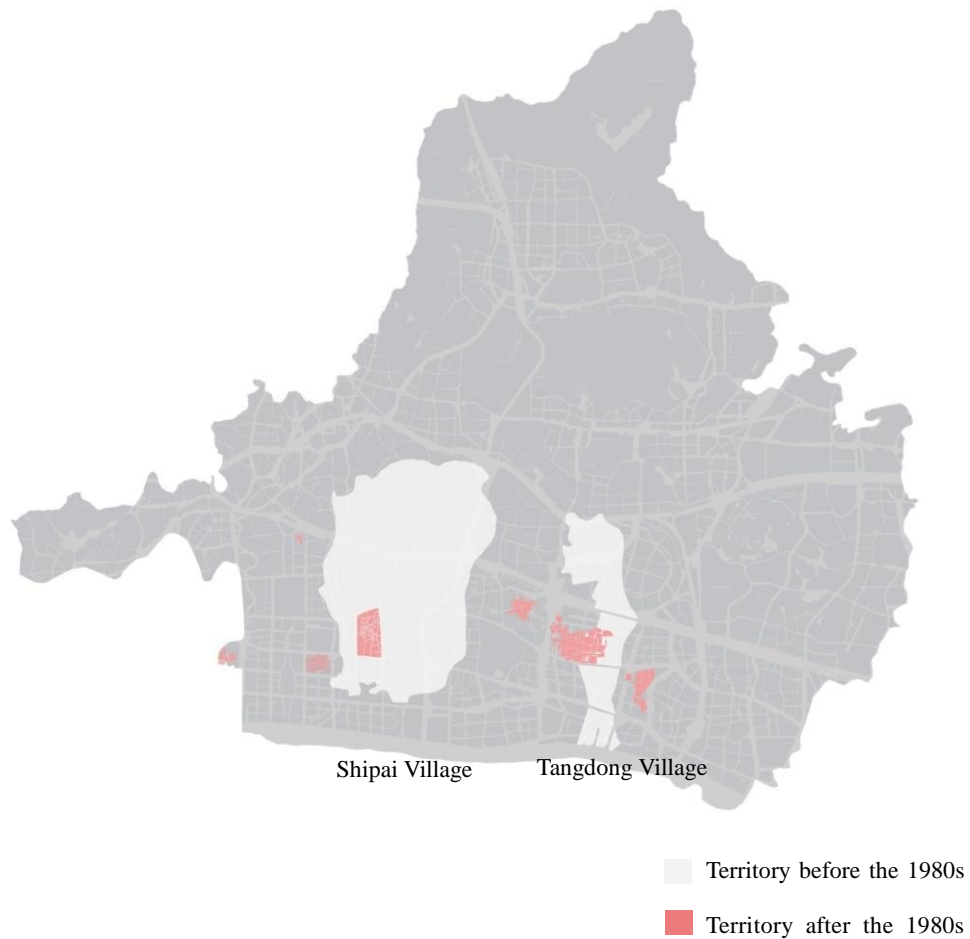
Not only Yangji Village but also another 27 villages in Tianhe District have gone through such an expropriation process. In particular, the 6.19 km^2 site of the PRNT was mainly expropriated from the lands of seven villages (Leide Village, Tang Village, Xian Village, Yangji Village, Pearl River Village, Xinching Village, and Jiaziyuan Village) in 1992 with the average price of 180000 RMB per mu (2700 RMB per m^2, 1 mu equals 667 m^2). Inter alia, three villages (Pearl River Village, Xinching Village, and Jiaziyuan Village) were requisitioned entirely,

including arable land and housing base land, whereas the 0.522 km^2 HBL of

Leide Village, Tang Village, and Xian Village, were retained in the 1992 PRNT

plan (see figure 2.6).

Figure 2.6 The demolition of Pearl River Village at the core area of the PRNT.

(Photo courtesy Xu Peiwu)

The PRNT was a plan following the central government's policy in the mid

1980s which, after the development of the five special economic zones (SEAs) in

the coastal cities in 1978/80, i.e. Shenzhen, Zhuhai, Shantou, Xiamen, and Hainan

Island, expanded the SEA program to attract more foreign direct investment and

foster economic development. Together with Beijing and Shanghai, the

Guangzhou Municipal government in 1992 proposed the concept of "international

metropolitan Guangzhou" and promulgated "Guangzhou New City Centre:

Planning of the Pearl River New Town" in June, 1993. The PRNT was seen by the

government as the central business district (CBD) of Guangzhou in the 21st

century able to attract headquarters of multinational corporations. With the

government's investment (4.5 billion RMB from 1992 to 2000) in its

infrastructure facilities and land servicing, this plan, which followed the

"place-making" or "place-promotion" strategy[17], played a practical and symbolic

role to attract a population of 170,000 to 180,000 and add 300,000 to 400,000 job

opportunities. Its overall floor space was 13 million m^2 (30% for residential; 70%

for commercial, financial, and recreational).

The plan of the PRNT was made by Carol Thomas Planning Consultancy in

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[17] About "place-making" or "place-promotion" strategy, see Lin, 2007.

Boston, Liang Bo-Sho Architectural Office in Hong Kong, and Guangzhou Urban Planning Institute [18]. Excepting the commercial, administrative, financial, residential, and recreational functions, a key feature of the plan was to retain the three villages (Leide Village, Tian Village, Xian Village). With the concept of "villages in the city, a city in villages," its motif was to pursue a pastoral and idyllic urbanity by preserving the different histories of the site and build, as was said in the propaganda, "a CBD with the landscape of southern China."

There are several ways to explain the rationale of this motif. The year of 1993 was the year when the average price of real estate reached 7568 RMB per m^2, which led the Guangzhou Municipal Government to be optimistic about future economic development[19]. It was also the year that the Guangzhou Municipal Government needed to generate a large amount of profit from the sale of land use rights to improve physical infrastructure to make Guangzhou a better place to live and work. The Guangzhou Municipal Government assumed it would

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[18] It was a competition. The winner was Carol Thomas Planning Consultancy in America. Nevertheless, after the competition, the leader of Guangzhou City asked the planning bureau to synthesize the winning project with other two projects made by Liang Bosho Architectural Office in Hong Kong, and Guangzhou Urban Planning Institute.

[19] The same optimism could be seen in most of the cities in China during that period of time. A notable example is the development of LuJiaizui in Shanghai.

generate 8 to 10 billion RMB revenues from the land transfer fee of the PRNT to finance the subway construction in Guangzhou. In order to reduce the compensation and time cost, on the one hand, the planning bureau demanded the planners to design the blocks of the PRNT to be as small and dense as possible, to the extent that the government could sell the land, piece by piece, as soon as possible, and at high a price as possible. On the other hand, in 1995 the Guangzhou Municipal Government issued a 'Regulation on Land Management in Guangzhou' to expropriate arable land without paying compensation for the relocation of the villages in the PRNT. In order to provide incentive for villagers to give up their arable land for urban use, the mechanism was that villagers can maintain their peasant *hukou*, their HBL for residential, and 8% to 12 % of their arable land as the so-called economic development land (EDL) for profitable purposes operated by the villagers' committees without being transferred or traded. In the final plan, the site of the PRNT was partitioned into 402 blocks, each with a size of 5000 to 6000 m^2. Among the 402 plots, there were 123 plots for EDL, 99 plots for public facilities and open space, and 180 plots for profitable uses. As an official of the Guangzhou Municipal Government said: "the more the high-rises, the higher the level of modernization, and hence internationalization", in the PRNT plan it was assumed that each block would be disposed to a

real-estate developer, for construction into a high-rise building.

The term "CBD" was a keyword for the government, media, and real-estate developers, to promote urban development and the PRNT. Symbolically, it created new imaginations of place. "Guangzhou's Manhattan", as it was nicknamed, had been narrated on newspapers, televisions, and radios, as an image of an international city. However, the development was not dominated by national or multi-national but local investors. Furthermore, in terms of private developers, the PRNT was ill-planned because the size of the blocks was too small to develop profitable high-end communities. Together with the depreciation of the average price of real estate (from 7568 RMB per m^2 in 1993 to 4787 RMB per m^2 in 1999), which was the consequence of the worldwide structural economic slowdown after the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis, the ill-planned PRNT weakened private investments. According to the State Land Resource and Urban Housing Property Management Bureau of the Guangzhou Municipal Government, 99 out of the 402 blocks were sold to private developers from 1992 to 2001. Until 2002, 69 out of the 99 sold blocks remained undeveloped. As to those 30 sold blocks, 57.8% of them were for residential. 18% of the land was for commercial. However, none of the 19 buildings built in the 30 blocks were office towers or

commercial buildings. Contrary to expectations, the majority of the built

buildings were residential, rather than office towers which should have been the

main body of the CBD. There was still a big discrepancy between the planning

and the reality of the PRNT (see figure 2.7).

Figure 2.7 The master plan (2001), and the reality (2003) of the PRNT.

(Source: Guangzhou Urban Planning Bureau, 2003)

Contrary to the PRNT where there was only a trickle of investment and

development, a flood of commerce, service occupations, and petty commodity

production centred in Tianhe District's other areas were flourishing (one of the

reasons was that the land transfer fee was much lesser than that in the PRNT).

Tianhe Software Park, Guangzhou Computer Town, shopping malls, gated

communities, and office towers, etc., were either developed by villages'

joint-stock system cooperatives (TVEs) or based on the expropriation of arable

land from villages, e.g. Shipai Village, Tangxia Village, Tangdong Village, Yuan

Village, Linhe Village, etc. Just as in Yangji Village and the villages in the PRNT,

in a short period of time, the arable land of these villages went through a physical

change from rural to urban, annexed by urban territory, and the houses on their

housing base lands which remained old and drab were gradually spatially

encompassed by and physically separated from modern skyscrapers and facilities.

Table 2.2 Population of Tianhe District, 1953-2000.

Year	1953	1964	1982	1990	2000
Population	71729	159149	229276	430153	1109320

(Source: *Fifth Survey of Population, Tianhe District, Guangzhou, 2003*)

The physical separation of the housing base lands of villages was

exacerbated by the large number of migrants from other provinces drawn by the

large scale and rapid urban expansion. A fleeting glance at the *Fifth Survey of

Population, Tianhe District, Guangzhou*, can give us a sense of this expansion. In

2000, Guangzhou had a population of over ten million, of which seven million

held a Guangzhou household registration. This meant more than three million

were migrants. The population of Tianhe District in 2000 was on average one

million, 800,000 above its 1985 figure (see table 2.2). Most of its people were rural to urban migrants who moved to cities to feed the labour needs of national developmentalism[20] but were faced with a lack of affordability and eligibility in urban housing. An increase in population of more than 50 percent by 2000 fostered the renewing of buildings in villages in the 1990s. Based on the 100 to 120 m^2 HBL, villagers rebuilt, expanded their houses and leased out floor space. Given that the rental price of land and houses was soaring, many houses were rebuilt as big and high as possible. For example, according to Chang Jianghao, the leader of Yangji Village, in 1996, while the infrastructure of the PRNT was under construction, there were more than 30,000 migrant workers living in Yangji Village. In 2007, the total population of Yangji Village was approximately 15,000, with 9000 to 10,000 migrants and 5253 villagers. Most of the 1496 buildings on Yangji Village's 0.29 km^2 housing base land were rebuilt from bungalows into houses with four storeys. Rather than villagers, they were occupied by low-wage workers migrating from Sichuan and Hunan Province who worked in the service industry, especially in the nearby restaurants, massage parlours, clubs, and hotels[21].

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20 As Deng Xiaoping said "development is the hard truth". About developmentalism in China, see Ness, 1999; Tang and Ngan, 2002.

21 Interview with Chang Jianghao on 22nd April 2007.

The same situation occurred in the villages in and near the PRNT. In some villages, many of the rebuilt buildings were even at high as six to ten storeys without the 50cm reserved distance between houses, and only a 1m wide alley reserved in front of each house, with oversized balconies covering it, creating places that were dark and without sunlight. In order to maximize the amount of space for leasing, most of the buildings have poorly maintained facilities, narrow stairways and pathways between rows of terraces, and a high residential density beyond the capacity of the infrastructure services.

The physical separation of villages from urban area was seen as contradictory to the image of an international city and drew people's attention. In March 1999, the moment that the Two Meetings[22] were held, an article, headlined "Don't let the villages in the big city become big shits," in the *Southern Metropolis Daily*, a local newspaper in Guangzhou, argued that the shabby landscape of the villages in the PRNT was a problem:

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[22] The Two Meetings refer to the People's Congress Conference and Committee of Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, the former the Party-member (party secretaries) assembly, the latter people's representative (political consultative committee members) assembly. These two meetings convene every year in March during which important decisions are discussed and approved.

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"The planning of a 140 storey high skyscraper, which will be the highest tower in the world, is in reality next to Xian Village, which is suffused with garbage and sewage. The PRNT plan, the so-called "Guangzhou's Manhattan", has been implemented for six years. However, problems are everywhere, especially in the retained villages in the PRNT. […] Peasants in these villages make a living by leasing out their houses which they built illegally, without integral planning. Most of the people in villages are migrants or the so-called "three non people[23]". Because people living in these villages are difficult to control, these villages become problematic places of drugs, prostitutes, gambles, and transgression of the one child policy. […] The government should take control of these villages, both people and land. Otherwise, these villages in this big city would become big shits [*sic*][24]."

Rather than the pastoral and idyllic scenery described in the planning proposal, the retained three villages were criticized in newspaper reports, as the "agglomeration of illegal buildings" and the "tumours of Guangzhou". With hindsight, Wang Yuan, the chief planner of the Planning Bureau, Guangzhou Municipal Government, said:

'The existence of Leide Village and other villages was the mistake of the government. It was all because of Mrs. Thomas, the wife of the American planner. When she was there at that moment and saw the small old bridge and the river, she was so excited. […] Come on! We have this sort of old bridges and rivers everywhere in China. What is the big deal? But then our leader said to preserve these villages. So we could only follow the leader's instruction[25].'

[23] In Chinese context, the term "three non people" is synonymous to "loiterers". It refers to those people without a job, ID card and proof of temporary residence.

[24] *Southern Metropolitan Daily*, 24 March 1999.

[25] Interview with Wang Yuan on 5th December 2007.

Whether the true reason to retain the three villages in the PRNT is because of the concept of "villages in the city, a city in villages", which was allegedly derived from the idea of Mrs. Thomas, or because the Guangzhou Municipal Government was unwilling and/or unable to compensate villagers for relocation in the process of "crazy land liquidation", one is unlikely to find a linear causality. Nevertheless, what can be seen is that in the planning of the PRNT these three villages were left vacant, without any further planning.

In fact, in the mid to late 1980s, because of the critical demand for HBL, the villagers' committees not only followed villagers' wishes to ask the higher hierarchical government to levy arable land, not HBL, but also proposed a need for integral planning for the villages. In a villagers' committee's official document, it is said:

> "We earnestly ask the government to take our situation into consideration, to solve our practical problems. […] The lands on which we villagers rely for generations will be completely levied. The whole village is anxious and worried, even angry. Our village is a big village, with about 10,000 villagers. For reasons of social stability, the social/economical development of our village, and our future generations, we earnestly request the government and related departments help us to set up an integral plan for our village (Field notes, May 2006)."

The Guangzhou Municipal Government adopted a rather passive stance by intentionally ignoring this demand. The manager of the SanJun Cooperative (erstwhile party secretary of Shipai Villagers' Committee), complained:

'The same as other villages, we also asked the government to give us a piece of land to build houses. But the government never replied. The government had planned those CBD areas, but ignored the villages. This is why the consequence of the physical form of village is like this now. In sum, the government doesn't give a shit to peasants, the government gets pissed off every time when peasants are mentioned, the government doesn't like to offer anything to peasants, what the government does is to condemn and disdain peasants, the government will not offer help to peasants. The government always condemns the peasants' building "shaking-hands buildings" as illegal, without offering peasants a piece of land for living (Field notes, May 2006).'

Not until 1997 did the Guangzhou Planning Institute enact the regulation of rural building control, *A Letter about the Planning and Design Principles of Shipai Village, Tianhe District*. However, it was already at the end of "building movement" in Shipai Village. All the buildings in the village had been rebuilt without planning approval. They were done. And the planning of a modern urban community became paper architecture, a beautiful Arabian Nights.

What can be observed is a sharp inequality compared to their surrounding city-regions. However, in consideration of the actual situation that has taken place

in the dual-structure of the rural and urban system in China, this can be explained

as a consequence of an intentional and unintentional ambiguity of the statutory

planning system and building control. *The Urban Planning Act* and *Planning and*

Construction Regulations on Village and Township, introduced in 1989, and the

Land Administration Law, introduced in 1986, and its *Amendments* enacted in

1988, 1998, and 2004, have not moved beyond the urban-rural dualistic structure.

Local government, especially municipal governments, which were endowed by

the state with a legitimate right to retain most income generated within their

jurisdiction by pursuing land development (Zhao, 2002a: 5), only had

development control authority over "urban" land and only had a duty to be in

charge of the infrastructure of the "urban" area. Within the limitations of the

existing rural-urban dual institutional structure, villages had to finance by

themselves infrastructure such as water, electricity, roads, communications,

drainage, sewage, and gas pipelines.

While urban planning was seen as a tool for the Guangzhou Municipal

Government to generate wealth, the Guangzhou Municipal Government had a

laissez-faire attitude to the development of the villages and a rather passive

attitude towards the fragmentation of rural land policy. Only when the

development of the villages which may not accord with the urban planning of the

Guangzhou Municipal Government resulted in more and more conflicts did the

urban government considered the necessity to plan and develop urban and rural

areas as a whole (later in 2008 was concretized as *Rural and Urban Planning*

Law). During the interview, an official stressed the willingness of the Guangzhou

Municipal Government to set up plans for these villages. Nevertheless, revealing

a passive attitude, he said,

'At that moment, we had not envisaged that the problems of these villages would get critical. We lacked personnel to monitor illegal constructions in these villages. Who could know that those peasants built so fast? Besides, we already had the so-called "planning for central villages".'

To be fair, this unintentional inaction was neither innocent nor politically

neutral, and can be explained, in a post hoc discursive rationalization, as being

more by default than by intent. Though the PRNT was labelled as "CBD", the

administrative institution and the trajectory for the future development of the

CBD was still unclear. Especially when the international convention and

exhibition centre, originally designated to be built in the PRNT, was built at

Pazhou Island, "whether or not the CBD equals to the PRNT?" became an issue

in the municipal government and among academics in Guangzhou[26]. The problematic development of the PRNT and the ambiguity of the urban planning system resulted in the ensuing vacuum. As a result, though on 4th February 1999 the Guangzhou Municipal Government granted permission for the economic development land (EDL) owned by the villages in the PRNT to be developed in partnership with real estate developers (Guangzhou Urban Planning and Survey Institute, 2003), the planning bureau of the Guangzhou Municipal Government stopped issuing land use permits and building permission approvals to the HBL of seven villages for the reason that the planning of the PRNT was still under discussion (see figure 2.8). As shown in Figure 2-7, the blocks which villages occupied were labelled as "*chengzhongcun* land" (the land of the urban-villages). During this period of uncertainty, the plans of these three villages were left in blank, without any further detailed planning or clear objectives; the villagers were not allowed to build any new building either.

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[26] Between 1992 and 2003, the Guangzhou Municipal Government held many conferences and meetings to discuss the development strategy of the PRNT. Not until in the *Review of the Planning of Pearl River New Town* in 2003, was the concept of CBD adopted in the official document. Nevertheless, rather than defining officially the PRNT as a CBD, the aim of the review was to detach the connection of these two, which means, "the PRNT is not a CBD, but only part of the CBD. See *Review of the Planning of Pearl River New Town*, 2003, Guangzhou Municipal Government.

Figure 2.8 The Development of the PRNT, 1999-2010.

Chronology of the Pearl River New Town	
1992	Guangzhou Municipal Government decided to build the Pearl River New Town.
1993-06	"Guangzhou New City Centre: Planning of Pearl River New Town" was enacted.
1997	Asian Financial Crisis.
2000-08	Guangzhou Municipal Government re-evaluated the planning of the Pearl River New Town.
2002-06	After two years examination, the modification of the planning was proved.
2003-01	"The Re-evaluation of the Planning of the Pearl River New Town" was enacted and implemented by the municipal government.
2007-05	Guangzhou municipal government re-evaluated again the development of the Pearl River New Town.
2007-10	Leide Village was demolished.
2009	Worldwide economic slowdown.
2010	The villagers of Leide Village were resettled. Xian Village and Yangji Village were demolished.

Note: Since 1995, Xu Peiwu, a Guangzhou based photojournalist of People's Daily, has spent more than ten years documenting the development of the PRNT by his camera. The photos on the right are the changing landscape of the axis of the PRNT from 1999 to 2006 he shot from his office in the building of the People's Daily Guangdong Office at 19th floor, located on one block from axis. He described to me in the office of the People's Daily: 'almost every month, I took a photo at where I am standing now. For most of the people in Guangzhou, ten years after the Guangzhou Municipal Government launched the development of the PRNT, the PRNT remains an area delineated on maps (Field notes, May 2007).'

1999

2003

2005-12

2006-03

2006-05

2006-06

2006-09

2006-12

Photo courtesy Peiwu

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In sum, over a period of less than ten years, the 28 villages in Tianhe District, together with villages in other nine districts in Guangzhou, have gone through changes in the demographic and geo-social landscape. These villages, especially those in the economically developed areas, all implemented the HRS and the JSS while their arable lands were expropriated by local authorities to facilitate various land planning and urban constructions. The compensations were paid in different prices and in different ways. In the early 1980s, the land expropriations of some villages were even only with the compensation of a "second hand jalopy"[27]. Most of them became villages without arable land circa 1993. Their village collectives ran the business of hotels, factories, warehouses, parking lots, gas stations, restaurants, and commercial housing. Migrants outnumbered the villagers tenfold. While the existing social safety net only covered cities and towns and did not include rural areas, all their villagers who were officially "agricultural" were actually involved in a variety of non-agricultural activities. They changed their occupations from peasants to shareholders of village collectives and landlords who took full advantage of the housing base land they occupied by making use of the village's unique location in the city, the intentional and unintentional ambiguity of urban planning and building control, and the legal right to free land

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[27] See Tangdong Village Cooperative, 2006 *The History of Tangxia Village* (Guangzhou: Tangdong Village Cooperative)

for housing which is unavailable to urban residents and the huge number of rural

to urban migrants. Buildings in villages sprouted up apace in this period of

municipal groping for a clear development direction and strategies. The 50 cm to

100 cm alleys, which were reserved distance between houses, became the main

thoroughfares. These villages, though they are located in the urban area, are the

same as countryside, still largely left to their own devices in financing welfare

and social services, if any at all are provided (see figure 2.9).

Figure 2.9 Context map of the urban-villages in Tianhe District, Guangzhou.

2.3 Urban-Villages Regeneration: An Articulation with the Desire for Rapid Development.

The abovementioned article of the *Southern Metropolitan Daily* in March 1999 launched the public debate of the problems of the urban-villages. The title, "Don't let the villages in the big city become big shits," quoted what Chen Keichi, chairman of the Guangzhou Commission of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, said in the Two Meetings. Ever since Chen raised the "problem of these villages" to the public agenda, there were growing concerns amongst the planning profession, politicians and the general public over the problems of "these villages in this big city". The Guangzhou Municipal Government in July 1999 quickly stopped issuing building permission for HBL and launched a document announcing that after January 2000, those buildings built in the villages in Guangzhou would be identified as illegal. Villagers felt that they had no choice but to comply and accept the implications of having past building activities and relating practices declared illegal. However, the effective date set by the Guangzhou Municipal Government was seen by the villagers as the deadline for issuing building permission for the HBL, and, in turn, prompted villagers to become hell-bent on rebuilding their houses. Villagers attempted to maintain their pre-existing practices in the form of non-compliance, continuing

the same activities in the past, in disregard of the opposing and incompatible demands of the new rules. This unplanned conjunction of techniques and conditions exacerbated negative criticism in the dominant and pervasive discourse such as "eliminate the urban-villages" which are "at odds with mainstream society" and "inharmonious with the city".

For lack of a better phrase, at that time the discussion was formulated around some keywords such as "*dushi li de cunzhuang*" (villages in the city) and "*cheng-xiang bianyuan*" (rural-urban fringe). The emergence of the term "*chengzhongcun*" (urban-village) in the early 2000s brought the potent connotative kick to conscious level. The use of this term in the discussion not only sensitized the public to the existence of the problem but also marked the difference that defines these problematic areas not in relational terms but in terms of substantive characteristics; that is, it is not a question of situational causes but personality-based causes. In general, the way the major local media frame coverage of the city reinforces an overwhelmingly negative view of the urban-villages. The images from the nightly news, newsweeklies, and daily newspapers are an unrelenting story of social pathology of the urban-villages: mounting crime, gangs, drug, homelessness, uncontrolled family planning, and

slum housing. The public discourses not only pointed the finger of accusation at

villagers who make a comfortable living from the rents those poor migrants have

to pay, but also villagers' abuse of building and sanitation regulations. The local

press especially emphasized the inequality of the villagers and urban residents,

which is not the superiority of urban residents to villagers, but rather the

opposite:

> "Those villagers are land speculators who became rich almost only in
> one night. However, what they have done is playing *Mahjong* and
> drinking tea. Compared with them, the normal residents who work hard
> every day are shabbier. The residents who live in the city are jealous
> and envy those villagers. […] We can see very often a kind of scenery:
> 'those young villagers in the urban-villages are not engaged in
> employment, education or training. They marry beautiful and
> well-educated girls in the city, and those girls in the urban-villages
> marry handsome boys who are willing to become son-in-laws and live
> in their wives' home[28].'"

Another news article continues:

> "The villagers in the urban-villages are seeking maximum interests
> from land use and house renting. They are rentiers, reaping without
> sowing and become a very dangerous model for society. They
> jeopardize the spiritual lives of residents in the city; it is especially
> counterproductive to those teenagers who are still on their way to
> formulate their own world views and values[29]."

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[28] *Southern Metropolitan Daily*, 17 May 2003.

[29] *Southern Metropolitan Daily*, 28 July 2003.

The massive number of migrants not only triggered the physical change of the villages but also brought about issues of public security such as "hacking hand gang" robberies[30], motor gang robberies, and backpack gang robberies. Most of these gangs were peasants from the poor countryside in other provinces. As concluded in the government's document, around 75% of criminal cases and 80% of unauthorized buildings were found in the urban-villages in Guangzhou in the late 1990s and the early 2000s. This has received considerable attention in the form of debates about how government is going to solve the "urban-village problems" in order to solve the problems of public security.

Journalists frequently fed the fears and fantasies of their public by sensationalized or stylized versions of stories from everyday life in the urban-villages. These mass media, especially anonymous editorials, which coincided with the government's need to enhance the regeneration and management of the urban-villages, stressed the negative side of the urban-village

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[30] This kind of robbery started in Shenzhen in 2004 and then occurred in many of the main cities in the PRD such as Guangzhou, Zhuhai, and Dongguan. They robbed people and even cut off their hands or killed them. The members of the gangs were almost from the same poor countryside. Some young people did not want to join them, but the old members would just force them to do so. So the organization was getting bigger. A woman fought with a robber just for 50 RMB. The result was horrible: the palm of her hand was cut off by the robber.

by those stories of everyday life and criticized the "evil" of the urban-villages from the economic, social, environmental, and moral aspects. In their narratives, the urban-villages are "lawless zones" or "outlaw areas" where the socially pathological and undeserving group live; filth, mire, and garbage are everywhere, creating dirty corners; illegal factories and clinics, counterfeiting, drugs, prostitution, robbery, theft, and murder, happen all the time; open space and public services are extremely scarce; hairdressing salons, massage parlours and corners, bath houses, and hostels are code words for "pornographic places" in these villages; drug abuse and crime are not unusual. Villagers are short-sighted "petit peasantry", namely, those who pay more attention to "small tradition" and lack the modern economic reason and entangle in unreasonable "deep games". They are jobless, unskilled, uneducated, and indolent mammonists. They are parasites in society squandering away their money like dirt.

With different policy conferences in different cities organized to point to the difficulties as well as the government's resolve, the conclusion that *"the emergence of the urban-villages is involved peculiarly with the revealing of historical legacies of inequalities that existed prior to the socialist city and the sedimented residue forged under socialism"* was quickly perceived by

government at different levels[31]. And the objective of "accomplishing the regeneration of the urban-villages which are 'inharmonious with the city' as soon as possible in order to achieve the socialist modernization and the rural-urban integration, accelerate process of urbanization, and achieve international city" was proposed in the government's urban development planning documents in the early 2000s. These anchored government's direction in framing the problems of the urban-villages, the angle of possible political and social interventions, and the forms of problem solving.

Ever since this objective was adopted in official documents and propaganda, the term urban-village became not only a loosely folk term, but needed to be defined and translated into workable policies. In order to programmically elaborate this term in relation to a range of specific problematizations, colloquia, meetings, and conferences have been held to bring together academics, policymakers, officials, planners, and political actors to exchange experiences, expertise, and opinions of the issues on illegal land use and construction,

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[31] For example, the conference entitled "the research of the planning, development, and management strategies of the urban-village" from 1999 to 2000 in Guangzhou, and *"the development and planning proposal for the regeneration of the urban-villages in Guangzhou"* proposed in the conference of "the workshop of village and town development and management in Guangzhou" in 2000.

collective ownership of land, census register system, shabby landscape, informal

economy, floating migrants, and crimes. Policies, regulations, plans, and countless

reports have been made to tackle the problem of the urban-villages. The

proclamation of the regeneration of the urban-villages is mounting daily. The

urban-village misery is imagined or, in other words, socially constructed, in which

ensembles of ideas, concepts, and categorization are produced, reproduced and

transformed in a particular set of practices that comprise the discourse of the

urban-village. However, in the policymaking process, how to turn this euphemism

into a formal designation, applying the term "urban-village" to certain areas was

still an issue for policymakers.

The Guangzhou Municipal Government in the late 1990s launched an

institutional reform towards designated villages in Guangzhou. It consisted of four

policies regrouped as an institutional ensemble later in 2002 under the generic

term "institutional reform policy" (IRP) as a municipal urban policy with the

urban-villages as its main object. In conjunction with the IRP, a set of laws, such

as regulation for rural land management, has been introduced, the constellation of

which has enabled and legitimized the ongoing urban restructuring in the city.

However, though the issue of the regeneration of the urban-villages started to gain

agenda status, it was not a top priority for the Guangzhou Municipal Government at that moment. Instead, the Guangzhou Municipal Government paid more attention and had a more active attitude to the large-scale urban development projects and infrastructures. In 1998 the Guangzhou Municipal Government initiated a three-phase urban redevelopment strategy, "a minor change every year, a medium-scale change every three years, and a major change in 2010".

Following this strategy, in 2000, the government proposed the "Guangzhou Overall Urban Strategic Plan". The new spatial strategy was summarized as "expanding to the south and east, optimizing the north, and coordinating with the cities at the west of Guangzhou". Based on this spatial strategy, the Guangzhou Municipal Government launched a number of large-scale urban development projects and infrastructures such as Guangzhou Baiyun International Convention Centre, Guangzhou Baiyuan International Airport, Pazhou International Exhibition Centre, Guangzhou University Town, and Olympic Sport Centre (see figure 2.10). The urban-villages were perceived as a problem and the issue of the regeneration of the urban-villages appeared on the public media or governmental agenda only when a social event happened (e.g. an accidental fire in Xian Village in 2003 and crimes at Guangzhou Train Station), or when large-scale

infrastructures, key development projects, international landmark events, and

important government policies were discussed (e.g. the governmental project of

"Constructing a National Sanitary City" in 2007 and the Guangzhou Asian Games

in 2010).

Figure 2.10 The large-scale urban development projects and the new spatial strategy of "Guangzhou Overall Urban Strategic Plan".

(Source: Guangzhou Urban Planning Bureau).

The agenda setting was contingent on piecemeal reactive response or "heroic

efforts"[32]. The media echoed the government narrative that these urban-villages

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[32] The fire accident in Xian Village in 2003 is a good example. When it happened, the government stated its intention to "solve the fire proof problem in every village, especially those typical urban-villages." After a month, the government stated their achievement and listed those villages that built fire engine accesses. Nevertheless, those so-call typical urban-villages, e.g. Xian Village, Shipai village, etc., were not in the list.

were barriers to the governmental development strategy, especially the goal of "a medium-scale change every three years, and a major change in 2010". The mass-media reiterated feverishly the problems of the urban-villages in their cultural-revolutionary idiom with news headlines resonant with the Great Leap Forward, such as "the regeneration of urban-villages will soon be implemented", "all the urban-villages in Guangzhou will be regenerated in five years", "Accomplishing the regeneration of the urban-villages before 2010", "SanYuanLi Village becomes the first village to experiment regeneration", "the government chose five villages to implement urban-village regeneration experimentation", "the regeneration of Yangji Village will be accomplished in three years", and "five villages in Baiyun District will be regenerated"[33]. Nevertheless, none of the 138 urban-villages was to be regenerated successfully.

In 2006, except the spatial strategy, i.e. "expanding to the south and east, optimizing the north, and coordinating with the cities at the west of Guangzhou", the new Mayor, Chang Kuangning, added "adjusting the centre" as the strategy to the "Guangzhou Overall Strategic Plan". Since then, urban-villages regeneration,

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[33] *Southern Metropolitan Daily*, 04 June 1999; *People's Daily*, 12 July 2000; *Southern Metropolitan Daily*, 04 June 2002; *Yangcheng Evening Daily*, 15 November 2003; *Guangzhou Daily*, 22 September 2005; *New Express Daily*, 20 March 2007.

together with some areas in the old city centre, was considered actively by the government as one of the main redevelopment activities. In order to prepare for the Guangzhou Asian Games in 2010, the municipal government "sped up" the regeneration of the urban-villages. When all the original buildings were demolished in a month, in October 2007, the regeneration of Leide Village began[34]. The regeneration was, in short, a "demolition-redevelopment scheme" (see figure 2.11). Similar to the year of 1993, the average price of real estate in 2007 reached 7550 RMB per square metre. What became critically important to the effectiveness of the agenda was the rising land value, mainly through governmental investment on public buildings, to meet the commercial criteria to lever private sector investment. In order to raise the price of land, the government restarted the investment on a number of "flagship" schemes in the PRNT. Signature architectures such as Guangzhou Opera House, Guangzhou Library, Guangdong Province Museum, the West Tower, TV Tower, and publicly-funded infrastructural improvements such as Entrance Plaza, Plaza of Culture and Art, Citizen's Plaza, and Haising Civil Plaza altered the local landscape and contributed to the image of the PRNT as a CBD.

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[34] There are three profit-making developers joining the regeneration of Leide Village, i.e., Guangzhou R&F Properties Co. Ltd., KWG Property Holding Ltd., and Sun Hung Kai Properties Ltd., the largest property developer in Hong Kong.

Figure 2.11 The regeneration plan of Leide Village.

(Source: Southern Metropolitan Daily, 22 October 2007)

Note: This project was divided into three parts. The west part (114176 square meters, building density is 6.) was sold through government's land auction to private developer as commercial development. The east part was the resettlement of villagers. The south part was a five star hotel, the investment of village collective economy. The redevelopment would cost 3.5 billion RMB. All the funding was from the auction of land of the west part. 2.5 billion RMB was used as the fee of demolition and new construction. 1 billion was used as the fee for hotel investment.

Urban policy in China has been driven primarily by the historical social institution/conception based on a rural-urban dichotomy. The blaming of the urban-villages problem on the alleged social pathology of the marginal brought the rural-urban integration to the fore. This mirrors the wider disciplinary frameworks established at the third Plenum of the 16th Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party held in Beijing on 14th October 2003, in which it was decided that the Chinese Communist Party should take actions to effectively accommodate the rural surplus labour force and speed up the process of urbanization. Within the context of China's economic reform and urban

restructuring, more specifically the nascent and/or changing urban planning strategy, the articulation of the urban-village regeneration is a response to the desire for rapid development which oscillates between development-led planning and plan-led development, and shaped by multiple crises in an urban process that reconfigures from rural-urban disparity to rural-urban integration. It is this "grand narrative" emerged in the mid 2000s intending to foster social integration and promotes integrated urban-rural development that shapes the broader discourse of the regeneration of the urban-villages in Guangzhou.

2.4 The Absent Meta-Narrative of the Urban-Villages Regeneration in Guangzhou.

Yet the narrative provided above is not the only story to be told about the development of the urban-villages in Guangzhou. Instead, it has potential to draw out "little stories" about a story to make visible the hegemonic meta-narrative of the urban-villages regeneration in Guangzhou. By the late 1990s, journalists frequently fed the fears and fantasies of their public by sensationalized or stylized versions of everyday life stories in the urban-villages. Academics placed the facts of the urban-villages in different theoretical frameworks, e.g. pathology, sociology, anthropology, to find out the genesis of the urban-villages in order to

solve the urban-villages problem. Policymakers turned this euphemism into a formal designation, applying the term "urban-village" to certain areas. Political actors, together with planners, with responsibility to implement visible and tangible solutions to the problems of the urban-villages, drew on such stances to depict certain villages as shabby places possessing a poor urban image. This was characterised by the problems of devaluation of the surrounding lands, uneconomic urban land using, passive and blind mix land use in villages, lack of safety, complex migrant populations and incomplete migrant management and villager's social insurance which have ill effects to public security and the social instability. In the narratives which describe the shabby villages in cities as ugly, dirty, chaotic, and backward, these villages are seen as an 'improper' part of urban life which should be eradicated and replaced by 'proper' middle-class physical constructions and social structures.

The journalists in Guangzhou thought they fitted to what Robert Park urged Nels Anderson to write down only what they "see, hear, and know (Anderson, 1967: xii)". Nevertheless, different from the fiction writers in the nineteenth century, such as Charles Dickens, Edgar Allen Poe, Emile Zola, Fyodor Dostoevsky, Victor Hugo, George Gissing, or Herman Melville, who used their

pens to tilt against injustice, the journalists in Guangzhou did not devote

themselves to using the powers of words and images to produce a new moral and

ethical susceptibility among the affluent or advantaged classes that would

persuade them to meet their social obligations towards the less fortunate or the

disadvantaged, like the London-based *Morning Chronicle* newspaper or

photo-journalist Jacob Riis's study of the slums in Manhattan in the 1850s which

made known the urban poor by social investigation (Parker, 2004).

What was written by local media was not that which "let the facts speak for

themselves" or "let those who are actually living in these conditions to tell their

own stories". While apportioning the blame, structural factors received relatively

little attention. Even when they were mentioned, they were treated as normalized,

inscribed, and embedded structural features of individuals' being, since, as I will

describe in Chapter Three (section 3.4), it is almost impossible for media to

criticize government's policy in the given political context. Instead, attributing

them individual-level explanations was widely adopted within both academic and

popular circles. While the public discourses varied in degree and tone, they all

ignored aspect of daily life, and impute deviance to groups who may simply

maintain their ordinary patterns of talk and action. Let alone the thought that even

the criminality may be, as Vold says (1958: 201), "the normal, natural response of normal, natural human beings struggling in understandably normal and natural situations for the maintenance of the way of life to which they stand committed."

Popular depictions, which derive largely from local media, are not only transmitted into academic literature, but also infused many areas of governmental policy. By depicting the most extreme forms of behaviour found in the urban-villages as typical, the popular media constantly reinforce the stereotypical image of the lawless urban-villages dominated by deviance. Such images helped to stigmatize and demonize these villages as problematic urban spaces that breed "crime and marginal" activities and other socially unacceptable behaviours. Media discourse was extremely influential in shaping attitudes and perspectives amongst policymakers and played a significant part in conducting official documents. Policymakers and researchers have uncritically taken media discourses as a "proof" of social pathology and condensed logics of spatial-environmental causality similarly expressed by many of the researches on the 19th-century cities in the Europe (e.g. Driver, 1988; Rabinow, 1989; Osborne and Rose, 2004). In ignoring the difference between talking about their objects (in this case, the urban-villages) and talking about lay narratives on these objects, these lay

narratives underpinning academic and governmental discourses form a certain self-referential circularity (Falk and Pinhey, 1978; Thrift, 1986; Sayer, 1989; Halfacree, 1993), a discourse coalition that leads to simplistic spatial solutions to what are complex social and spatial problems. By delineating certain areas on maps and measuring the extent and kinds of "abnormalities" to be found within these spatial boundaries, specific locations or milieux are identified with various problematic qualities.

While it is commonly accepted that cities and towns represent more urban areas and townships and counties more rural areas, those who live in the urban-villages can no longer be contained by existing administrative (and analytical) categories. In the context of the urban-villages regeneration controversy, they are categorized as a distinctive "lifestyle" group which is socially and spatially isolated from the rest of society. This group does not have a homogeneous construction, but is comprised of different subgroups, each of whom may carry a different social construction and be treated differently by public policy. They carry a generally negative construction in the urban-village regeneration controversy. The discursive conflation of villagers with peasant migrants and non-peasant migrants is an additional evidence of this stigmatization,

criminalization, and marginalization. This conflation proliferates throughout the discourse coalition, ranging from social policy and urban planning, and creates a misleading impression that almost all migrants are "rural-to-urban" peasant migrants. In fact, a proportion of migrants are "urban to urban" migrants. Many of the "rural-to-urban" migrants are also involved with a wide range of activities associated more with an urban society such as industry, commerce, transport and telecommunication and construction. They are still considered as "rural" because they are from rural settlements and have a rural *hukou*. Labelled as "migrants" and "villagers" with few entitlements, residents in the urban-villages were lumped together as an ideological category of society, a social group based on identity politics and a subjectivity made to bear the burden of the country's perceived backwardness at different policy turns, and, structured by entrenched state institutions, they experience traumatic rounds of dislocation, especially when the all-encompassing regime in China redefines national priorities yet again in the post reform era (Siu, 2007). These labels conjure political, administrative, and cultural meanings, in which inequality and discrimination are deeply ingrained (see table 2.3).

Table 2.3 Institutionally created segments of residence in relation to the urban-village regeneration controversy.

Segments of residence	Component indicators
Undocumented migrants	Those whose non-agricultural/agricultural *hukou* is birth-based in other city/county and without temporary residence permits.
Documented migrants	Those whose non-agricultural/ agricultural *hukou* is birth-based in other city/county and supplemented with temporary residence permits.
Hukou migrants	Those whose agricultural/non-agricultural *hukou* is destination-based in city.
Rural villagers	Those whose agricultural *hukou* is birth-based in city.
Urban residents	Those whose non-agricultural *hukou* is birth-based in city.

Smart and Lin (2007: 286) argue that the gap between migrants to the cities and urban residents has diminished in recent years through the rapid erosion of urban privileges rather than through the extension of services and right to migrants. Nevertheless, the migrants in China are socially, politically, economically (as well as legally) constructed as "illegal entrants," and "new-comers". They are seen as "outsiders". Not only the local states were reluctant to institutionally recognize rural migrants as part of the legitimate urban population with the same entitlements and obligation as those with permanent right of abode in their jurisdiction, but also villagers with rural *hukou* were neglected in government's measurement of the level of urbanization. This attitude can be indicated in *The Analysis of the Fifth Survey of Population, Tianhe District, Guangzhou*:

"The level of urbanization means the population in cities and town as a percentage of the total population. Normally, it means the percentage of people with urban census in the total population. However, as many experts state, because of the peculiar census policy in China, lots of peasants, who already move to cities and change their occupations from primitive industry into second and third industry, are still peasant census. The level of urbanization would be under-estimated if it is measured by the percentage of people with the urban census. Therefore, the measurement of the level of urbanization of Guangzhou needs to use the modification of demographic method. The method of modification is: the percentage of people with urban census in the total population, plus (1) part of the rural population who live in suburban area, use urban infrastructure, join urban economic activities; and (2) part of the rural population who live in city and town, in different level, do non-rural economic activities for a certain period of time. […] According to the criteria, the level of urbanization of Tianhe District has reached 100 percent. […] The aim of this report is to scope the task and solution of the development of Tianhe District in the process of urbanization and modernization in terms of demography. As we all know, though occupations of those people with rural *hukou* are non-agricultural, most of their ways of living, proclivity, and habits are still rural. The governing policies of these people are also different from those of the people with urban *hukou*. Therefore, in the process of toward an international metropolitan of an area like Tianhe District, those people with rural *hukou* living in Tianhe District become a critical issue we have to confront with (Liu, 2003: 48)."

I excerpt this document at some length because it poses a set of problems that are at the heart of, not only the regeneration of the urban-villages in Guangzhou, but also the urbanization in China. The narrative here is filled with contradictions about what kind of subjecthood is and ought to be counted in the measurement of

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the level of urbanization. The level of urbanization is measured more by *hukou* than national citizenship. The institutional factor of the peculiar *hukou* regulation not only distinguishes migration in China from population movements in most other countries, where internal migration is generally "free". The *hukou* system, which has functioned as an "internal passport system" (Chan, 1996), is as much an institution as a metaphor to differentiate and discriminate among classes of people and keep the floating population marginalized. The coexistence of *hukou* migrants and *nonhukou* migrant also forms its particular spatial and social mobility. Different from the "plan" permanent migrants who are eligible for obtaining a local *hukou* and subsidized welfare benefits (e.g. housing, medical care, education, and other necessities) and have access to array of jobs (especially those in the state sectors or enterprises) closed to *nonhukou* migrants, *nonhukou* migrants are seen as "temporary"[35]. They are "in" the city, but only in a sense.

When being discussed, migrants tend to be treated in official documents or dominating discourses not so much as actors but as more or less anonymous contributors on the level of urbanization. In other words, the amounts of the rural

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[35] Different terminologies have been used to describe the various meanings associated with this peculiar system, e.g. permanent/temporary migration, *hukou*/*nonhukou* migration, "plan"/nonplan or self-initiated migration, and formal/informal migration (Goldstein and Goldstein, 1991; Goldstein and Guo, 1992; Chan, 1994; Yang, 1994; Yang and Guo, 1996; Fan, 1999).

to urban migrants are recognized as urban, but the persons of the rural to urban migrants are not. The notion of urban population here does not include migrants, and only fairly ambiguously includes residents with rural *hukou*. This form of allocating people to different citizenship statuses, differentiating populations, and subjecting them to different types of rule − Maoist era norms and values of organizing, conceptualizing, and managing the population − can be linked to Foucault's (1991b) notion of neoliberal governmentality as the "conduct of conducts", that is, the efforts of the calculative choice aiming at structuring the field of action of other actors. The spatial calculation and qualitative issues of group management are a political arithmetic, in which dividing, categorizing, calculating, ranking, ordering, organizing, and measuring population and space rely less on the obviously mathematical and more on the model of "rationality" which is both connected to mathematical models and is part of a wider process through which population and space are made "amenable to thought" (Osborne and Rose, 2004: 212; Elden, 2005: 14). Rationales send messages to target populations and others about the values of society and how much (or little) various social groups are valued in relation to such values, and, in turn, convey the implicit messages about what government does, whose problems are "public" problems, and what status the citizen has (Schneider and Ingram, 1997). All these

return to a double question concerning what is, and what is not, outside of, or beyond, the reach of the governmental. It is this authoritative regulation to conduct towards particular objectives (Rose, 1999) that I link back to the research questions outlined in Chapter One.

2.5 Conclusions.

Thus, the research questions laid out in Chapter One arrive at the three specific relationships and/or processes of the urban-villages regeneration in Guangzhou. The first focuses on the process in which governmental regeneration programmes of the urban-villages were produced, and considers the ways in which they have led to a specific planning approach towards the urban-villages. It concerns the kind of spatial calculation and qualitative issue of group management which are mobilized. How is population and space divided, categorized, and calculated? What issues and subjects are included and/or excluded in the discourse of the urban-villages regeneration, and in what ways does the discourse on the urban-villages prescribe actions and legitimatize conditions. How, and in what way, are the public perceptions of the urban-village deployed and used in the government's regeneration policymaking process to legitimize and mould the concrete policies? With what actual planning, and in

what ways, with what values and agendas, does the government implement its regeneration policies? This focus leads to an inverted question concerning the system of categorization or "rationality" that has been pursued and mobilized to make sense of the phenomenon of the urban-villages and frame the urban-villages problem.

The second seeks to explore is the form of governance shaped by the regeneration reform policy and the dynamics that have accompanied the implementation of this policy. What was the impact of the new governing coalition on the debate on the urban-villages regeneration? Technologies of government are those technologies imbued with aspirations for the shaping of conduct in the hope of producing certain desired effects and averting certain undesired events (Rose, 1999: 52). What subject effect or subject formation is aspired to bring about to be congruent with the objectives of the urban-village regeneration – a kind of capital accumulation under a hybrid socialist-neoliberal form of political rationality?

Third, extending from transnational and migration researches, which highlight the incessant dialectical interplay of desires, identities, and subjectives on the one

hand, and the process of belonging, exclusion, and affiliation that are produced through migration on the other, Lawson (2000) argues that migrants' social positionings allow them to question the dominant narratives of development. Their stories provide a rich account of the social and cultural costs of neoliberal development, revealing how peoples' experiences are framed by systematic processes of privilege and discrimination. In the urban-villages regeneration controversy, migrants are an important but understudied component. They are well known for their vulnerable and marginalized second-class status in China's cities (Zheng, 2005). They are seen as unproductive bodies and hobo subjects whose conduct should be criticized and problematized. Given this, how does individuals response, in the form of marginal resistance, to governmental regeneration programmes, in a way to give shape to conduct – a process of subjcetification that moulds people into certain sorts of economic subjects?

Chapter Three

"Urban-Village? Regeneration? You Mean?" – A Methodological Context.

"People know what they do; they frequently know why they do what they do; but what they don't know is what what they do does (Foucault, 1982: 187)."

3.1 Introduction.

As stated earlier, the research explores how the urban-village as a social construct becomes the "new stigmatizing topographic lexicon" by exploring three specific relationships and/or processes. The research therefore tends to study both the "up" and the "down", the powerful and the powerless, and the hegemonic groups as well as those of oppositional groups. The focus is the processes through which "values and meaning become attached to events, people, or patterns of action (Schneider and Ingram, 1997: 106)", to the extent that specific institutions and practices in the kind of social constructions are legitimate. The focus of this thesis is neither people nor the urban-villages *qua* artefact, but the actors as they are in conjunction with the urban-villages, and the urban-villages as they are in conjunction with actors. The intent hence is not only to "get inside" the physical site of the urban-villages, but to "enter" the battlefields upon which the urban-villages regeneration controversy is seated. In other words, the intent is to

enter into a social setting and get to know the people involved in it.

In this chapter, I detail how the research was conducted and how the methods were developed to examine the discourses and practices of the urban-villages regeneration in Guangzhou. Written in the form of reflection, it discusses the methods used in developing relationships and trust for continued participation, the issues of personal relationships in the field and their influence on data, and how the ethical, methodological and political concerns and limitations encountered simultaneously provide a potential to unfold the dynamics, patterning of living, and urban practices of the urban-villages in general. By discussing the epistemological and methodological issues raised in the research design, and how these issues relate to the fieldwork situations in the urban-villages, it justifies Foucauldian discourse analysis, and an ethnographical approach, for detailed analyses of this field-based research.

The remainder of this chapter is divided into four sections. The first section provides a biographical sketch to describe the processes involving in gaining and managing access to different actors, the methodological choices, and strategies that were involved in the research process. The second section the way that

empirical data were collected as well as its philosophical underpinnings. The third

section describes the propositions and some epistemological concerns. The fourth

section concludes by reviewing the methodological issues raised in the research

design, and how these issues relate to the research situations in the urban-villages.

3.2 Shaping the Research Design: An Ethnographical Approach with Foucauldian Discourse Analysis.

The first section provides a biographical sketch to describe the processes

involving in gaining and managing access to different actors, and the

methodological choices and strategies that were involved in the research process.

Excepting the preliminary fieldwork conducted in May to July 2006, this research

draws on fieldwork in Guangzhou that was – carried out between February 2007

and January 2008. The first six months in the field, I set up the goal to change my

Taiwanese accent and learn to use the everyday vocabularies in China (which are,

in many ways, somewhat different from those of the Mandarin I speak in Taiwan),

local people's dialects (mainly Hubei dialect and Cantonese), and the argot of

residents in the urban-villages. During this period of time, I engaged in

participant observation with journalists from two newspapers, profit-making

agents involved in housing leasing, village cadres, and migrants in the

urban-villages who are persons within the target group itself (see table 3.1). I also

conducted in-depth interviews with individuals including policymakers and

officials of different sectors in three district governments (Panyu District, Tianhe

District, and Haizhu District), representatives of the Guangzhou Municipal

Government such as those based in the Planning Bureau and the State Land and

Housing Bureau, and individuals from other local authorities such as villagers'

committees and street offices (see table 3.2).

Table 3.2 List of key informants (I).

Name	Position	Institute
Cheng Mong	Journalist	Southern Metropolitan Daily
Pan Xianlin	villager	Tangxia Village
Su Xianwei	villager	Tangdong Village
Xu Jing	Journalist	New Express Daily
Xu Peiwu	Photo-journalist	People's Daily
Yan Changjiang	Chief	Yangcheng Evening Daily
Yan Wendou	Boss	Dajia Management Corporation
Yao Xiaoming	agent	Tonghe Village

Table 3.2 List of key informants (II).

Name	Position	Institute
Chan Chengming	Vice Chief	Bureau of Urban Utilities and Landscaping of Guangzhou Municipality
Chang Jianghao	Leader	Yangji Village
Dong Chijung	Manager	SanJun Economic Cooperative (erstwhile party secretary of the Shipai Villagers' Committee
Lei Whuaso	Chief Planner	Guangzhou Urban Planning & Design Survey Research Institute
Li Guogiang	Chief Manager	SanYuanLi LTD
Li Lixuan	Professor	Department of Urban Planning, Zhongshan University
Li Xuan	Professor	Department of Urban Planning, Zhongshan University
Pan An	Chief	Urban Planning Bureau, Guangzhou Municipal Government
Song Wenxian	Party Commissioner	Maihua Street Office
Su Zhen	Official	Office of Family Planning, Tangdong Economic Cooperative
Wang Ming	Party Secretary	Tangxia Street Office
Wang Songmio	Deputy Chief	Planning Bureau, Tianhe District Government
Wang Yuan	Chief	Planning Bureau, Guangzhou Municipal Government
Xion Jingjung	Official	State Land Resources & Urban Housing Property Management Bureau
Xu Chigong	Chief Architect	Jian Ke Architectural Design Institute of Guangdong Province
Xu Hetian	Leader	Tianhe District Government
	previous head	Tianhe district government

The interviews were supplemented by the analysis of policy documents, correspondence, minutes, accounts, policy briefings, records, and other sources such as unpublished histories of different urban-villages, to provide a detailed

picture of the production of governmental regeneration programmes and how and why they have been produced. I also reviewed articles from local newspapers about the urban development in the period between 1990 and 2007 (notably from local newspapers, including the *Southern Metropolitan Daily*, *Guangzhou Daily*, *People's Daily*, *Yangcheng Evening Daily*, and *New Express Daily*), in order to evaluate the changing tone and terminology of the "urban-village misery", the quality, and the quantity of local media coverage relating to the regeneration of the urban-villages. These methods enabled close empirical analysis of the dynamics, patterning of living, and urban practices of the urban-villages in general.

Generally, I relied on snowball sampling but not meticulously pre-arranged meetings with my key informants. These informants were interviewed formally and/or informally multiple times, using information from previous informants to elicit clarification and deeper responses upon re-interview. As I will describe, these informants also acted as facilitators and referees in accessing to their fellow-colleagues and contacting other informants, using chain sampling to obtain a saturation of informants in all empirical areas of investigation.

My task in the field was to get access to, and establish credibility with, a number of different groups relating to the urban-villages regeneration controversy. I sought to develop a certain degree of trust and rapport with informants so that they were willing to impart to me the kind of information and group-based truth or knowledge to which insiders to that social world would be privy. Johnson (1975) argues that access should not be thought of as an initial phrase of entry to the research setting around which a bargain can be struck. Rather than a one-time activity, it is best seen as involving an ongoing, if often implicit, process, in which the researcher's right to be present is continually renegotiated, with eligibility for inclusion being in terms of not only who you are, what your position is, but also what you are (in the sense of status being contingent on role performance). In reality, the ascribed and acquired statuses are hybrid, and, as Merton (1972: 22) says, "individuals have not a single status but a status set". This status set led to a diversity of interactions with my interviewees, in which the method I deployed in the fieldwork is not necessarily formal interviews. As I will describe, it also involved other interview methods such as what Zimmerman and Wieder (1977) refer to as the "diary, diary-interview method". This experience is supported by the contention that, in the field, the peculiarities of the individual researcher become magnified. The characteristics of the individual

fieldworker have an impact on the process of developing interactions with strangers and of course vice versa. This interactional dynamics can drastically affect the process of fieldwork and the changing landscape the research sits within (Wax, 1979; Agar, 1980; Stanley and Wise, 1993; Ladson-Billings, 2003). Thinking about this, Lee (1993) provides a helpful guide to write about the difficulty and different strategies in gaining and managing access to actors in the fieldwork.

While not exaggerating, methodologically, the setting of this research is preoccupied with the problematics of access to stigmatized groups, ways of managing field relations, and the dilemma which arise from possessing what (Lee, 1993: 15) refers to as "guilty knowledge" of deviant activities. The urban-villages are seen as conflict-ridden urban areas. The settings have often deterred researchers from engaging in a research based on the actual living experience in them. My hybrid statuses served to make me aware that I had certain empirical and methodological advantages in conducting field research, but also faced unique problems in simultaneously addressing ethical, methodological and political concerns. The contentious relationship between Taiwan and Mainland China since 1949 enabled me, as a Taiwanese person, to have shared certain ideas, knowledge,

and ways of being (be they language or other) with people in China – a country
with a political statement that Taiwan is part of China. However, having been born
in Taiwan, I had no insight into the long history of the rural-urban dichotomy in
the socialist era. Nor did I have the experience enabling me to understand what
this rural-urban dichotomy means to those who experience the derivative
constituents of this historical social institution in the Chinese urbanization in the
reform era, such as the *houko*, land system, household responsibility system,
house reformation movement, and rural to urban migration. Although my mother
tone is Mandarin, my Taiwanese accent and everyday vocabularies sometimes
compounded such issues, keeping me at a distance from their shared experience,
which either led the interaction to the opposite of tolerating my intrusions into
their lives and accepting me as a person worth talking to, or led the potential
informants to speak to me in rather harsh tones. Illustrative of these is my
face-to-face interaction with Wang Yuan, the chief planner of the Guangzhou
Urban Planning Bureau:

> 'You said you are a Taiwanese doing a PhD in King's College London
> and you want to do research [about the urban-villages in China]. For a
> guy like you, you don't have the background knowledge to handle this
> topic. It involves too many things, such as the long history of
> rural-urban dichotomy, governmental policy, planning methods. […]
> There are too many things to handle, even for Chinese scholars! So far,
> I haven't seen any research [on this topic] that can really describe not

only villagers' but also government's difficulties. […] For a guy like you, this topic is too sensitive. You are touching government's sore. For a guy like you, most of the [official] documents are confidential. You have no chance to access to them, nor would anyone tell you anything. Even if you get access to these documents, you cannot bring them abroad. […] You shouldn't let foreigners know the negative side of China (Field notes, December 2007).'

When the chief planner said this to me, it was in December 2007, the moment that my fieldwork was almost coming to an end. Our face-to-face interaction signals many things. Amongst a variety of topics the planner addressed to me, one message she conveyed is that this research topic is "sensitive" in relation to the topic of the insider-outsider debate. This message is of most important and able to have implications for sociological understanding of this research.

In academic circles, one general issue is that of who should do it or who is better qualified for certain research (Bridges, 1973). This issue is part of a long-standing but somewhat disturbing problem in the sociology of knowledge in the form of the "insider-outsider" debate (Merton, 1972). One, the insider doctrine, holds that insiders, as the members of specified groups and collectivities or occupants of specified social statues, have monopolistic or privileged access to the knowledge of a group: the insider, as insighter, is "endowed with special

insight into matter necessarily obscure to others, thus possessed of a penetrating

discernment (ibid. 15)". The other, the outsider doctrine, holds that unprejudiced

knowledge about groups is accessible only to nonmembers of those groups (ibid.

31): it is the outsider "who finds what is familiar to the group significantly

unfamiliar and so is prompted to raise questions for inquiry less apt to be raised at

all by insiders (ibid. 33)."

The idea of a simple binary rendition of the inside or outside relationship is

arguably a fallacy, especially for reflexive research (such as that conducted by

feminist researchers and critical race theorists) which overtly and explicitly

engages in debates on positionality and acknowledges the connection of

researcher identity with the changing landscape that the research sits within (e.g.

Pile, 1991; Reinharz, 1997; De Andrade, 2000; Young, 2004). This static and

unmoveable concept of insider status compared to outsider status ignores that a

researcher's positioned subject is dynamic and constantly re-created throughout

the fieldwork – a subject that is fluidly negotiated through what Reinharz (1997)

refers to as the existence of multiple-selves. After all, as Merton (1972: 22) says,

"in structural terms, we are both insiders and outsiders." Between complete

acceptance and complete rejection lie many (re)positions. It is a back and forth

everyday social action along what Kelman (1980) refers to as a continuum.

The complexities of sharing elements of identity with people in the field made me think that there is room to develop a kind of dialectical insider-outsider tension in the process of fieldwork. On reflection, it was this very existence of such back and forth movement with many positions in between the two extremes that gives shape to the differential accessibility to some settings rather than others and shaped my research design, to the extent that my journey diverged from the planned path and stretched the initial theoretical and methodological orientations from the discourses and practices of the urban-villages regeneration to the everyday forms of resistance to governance.

I lived in Yangji Village for three months, volunteering as a journalist in the *New Express Daily* covering the news relating to the regeneration of the urban-villages in Guangzhou. I also volunteered as a lecturer of the fourth year design studio in the Department of Architecture, Southern China University of Technology. While these two jobs continued, I moved to Tangdong Village for six months and Huang Village (the village where Sun Zhigang died) for another four months, volunteering as a property manager. As a resident in Yangji Village,

Tangdong Village, and Huang Village, my everyday activities in these villages enabled me to develop ongoing relations with residents by participating in local events. This also enabled me to experience the ordinary routines and conditions under which local residents conduct their lives, and constraints and pressures to which such living is subject. During the early stages of the fieldwork, I engaged in participant observation through volunteering as a journalist in the *New Express Daily*. I followed three journalists around as they worked. This participant observation took in the form of shadowing, enabled me to observe the way in which media messages are produced and shaped (see this chapter, section 3.4). This also enabled me to get to know some people who hold positions of power, and, in turn, helped me to get access to some policymakers, officials, and representatives of local authorities.

For example, my request to arrange a formal interview with the chief planner of Guangzhou Urban Planning & Design Survey Research Institute was in the first place denied without explanation. Then I mentioned the names of some of the other key people that I had spoken to, such as the ex-leader of Guangzhou Urban Planning Bureau and the Deputy Mayor of Shenzhen, and said that it is these key persons who said that I could make contact with him. In this way, I

positioned myself as someone who knew important persons, and was granted access to audit an official meeting held by Panyu District Planning Bureau. I used the same strategy to get access to different authorities for the regeneration projects of the urban-villages in Guangzhou, e.g. Cuolong Village in Baiyun District, Xiaozhou Village and Nanjiao Village in Panyu District (see table 3.3). Auditing these meetings provided information on who, and what issues, were included in the meetings, and, of equal importance, who, and what issue, were not. Observing who, and in what ways, said what to whom in the meetings also provided information-rich conversations for discourse analysis.

Table 3.3 List of the official meetings held by different authorities for the regeneration projects of the urban-villages in Guangzhou.

Date	Authority
2007, 05, 16	Baiyun District Planning Bureau
2007, 08, 07	Tianhe District Government
2007, 08, 08	Leide Economic Cooperative
2007, 08, 22	Dengfon Street Office
2007, 09, 17	Baiyun District Planning Bureau
2007, 10, 13	Tangxia Street Office
2007, 11, 20	Panyu District Planning Bureau
2008, 01, 12	Guangzhou Urban Planning Bureau, Guangzhou Municipal Government
2008, 01, 13	Guangzhou Urban Planning Bureau, Guangzhou Municipal Government

Amongst the official meetings I audited, a meeting held by Panyu District Planning Bureau on 20th November 2007 and a meeting held by Guangzhou

Urban Planning Bureau of Guangzhou Municipal Government on 12th January

2008 were of most value. In the former meeting, a professor from South China

University of Technology (who was commissioned to make a regeneration project

for Nanjiao Village in Panyu District) and a professor from National Sun Yat-sen

University (who was commissioned to produce a regeneration project for a

village in Baiyun District) were invited to share their research and experiences of

the urban-villages regeneration. While discussing the regeneration project of

Nanjiao Village, which was the main aim of the meeting, they reviewed the

problems of the urban-villages and the failed regeneration projects of some

villages. In the second meeting, the planner of Guangzhou Urban Planning &

Design Survey Research Institute, together with the party secretary of Huadi

street office, presented for the first time their regeneration project of Huadi

Village to the chief planner of the Guangzhou Urban Planning Bureau, and

officials of different sectors of the Guangzhou Municipal Government.

Through my participation as a journalist in local newspaper, I was able to

find suitable local residents for research. Inter alia, Yan Wendou and his fellow

brothers, who are profit-making agents involved in housing leasing in the

urban-villages, are an information-rich case. Yan Wendou started this career in

2002, with three fellows in Ke Village. In 2007, at the moment that the fieldwork

was conducted, he has been doing this business, with more than 100 fellow

brothers, in more than 5500 flats in 14 villages in Guangzhou, e.g. Tangxia

Village, Tangdong Village, Shanxe Village, Dongpu Village, Yuan Village,

Tonghe Village, Ke Village, Huangpu Village, and Zhu Village. Observing their

practices in these villages provided a vantage point to get access to, and examine

in detail the decision making of, different social actors, i.e. villagers, migrants,

village cadres, party secretaries of street offices, etc., and their reactions to the

discourses of the urban-villages regeneration which has framed the lives of those

who live in these villages since the 1990s.

Whereas some residents in the urban-villages, such as Yan Wendou and his

fellow brothers, can be quite open about their everyday lives in the urban-villages,

in these already stigmatized places, some of them are at-risk populations such as

mafia, prostitutes, and drug dealers (figure 3.1). These "special" populations were

difficult to contact by the usual means (see figure 3.2). They were cautious about

outsiders, especially in interacting with researchers, surveyors, or journalists of

local media. Residents have experienced a form of inequality at best and

exploitation at worst. Interviews may have desirable or undesirable outcomes for

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them. The product of the survey may be of an (in)direct derogation to them in some way. In terms of this, their vague and general expression becomes a verbal strategy to prevent the possibility that would threaten the alignments or interests of their dealings. When I conducted interviews as a not-so-trusted outsider, they either often expressed in vague and general terms, or there were just blank, cautious stares.

Figure 3.1 The catchphrases on walls.

(Source: author's photo)

Note: The tube in Guangzhou is fantastic, much better than that in London. Just outside the entrance of the tube, which is also the entrance to SanYuanLi, there is a caution written scratchily on the wall: "In order not to be robbed during the night, please make a detour."

Figure 3.2 Typical alley scenes in the urban-villages in Guangzhou.

(Source: author's photo)

The cautious and insecure lives of the inhabitants in the urban-villages posed

difficulties in terms of accessing this group for formal interviews, rendering it a

difficult group for ethnographic research. Deviant activities are revealed, or

manifest a "fear of scrutiny", "explicitly seeking discreditable information (Payne

et al., 1980; Lee, 1993: 6)". An intrusive threat may result risking sanction,

political threat, or negative consequences for them if their identities and stories

were revealed. Obviously, it encompasses all of the three aspects of sensitivity.

Yan Wendou, for example, showed his unwillingness to compromise his

invisibility or that of his co-workers which may have had an adverse effect on

any potential conflict between him and the state authority, and between him and

the villagers. The initial encounter with Yan Wendou captures this well:

> 'I know you are a journalist. So you are not interviewing me but exchanging ideas with me informally. Many journalists, students, and researchers came to me, asking me to provide them with something to write, but they never live in the urban-villages and always write something nonsense. Besides, I am only a businessman. I don't like to say anything in public. Even the government says something good about me in the media, be it newspaper or TV, it sometimes causes me trouble. For their positive sayings can lead to negative consequences. Last time the government put my career in the newspaper and said that it is a model for other villages to follow. The next day, some villagers came to me and said that now the street office asked them to improve their houses with the same facilities as mine. They said that this raises their prime cost. And it is my fault. They then said that they wanted me to pay more to them (Field notes, April 2007).'

To show him that I was a *bona fide* researcher, I rented a single room in one of the properties he ran his business in Tangdong Village, with the price of 350 RMB per month. As I intended to take an active part in the practices of Yan Wendou and his fellow brothers, I also participated in routine activities and processes that constitute local settings, helping to resolve disputes amongst his fellow brothers, providing assistance when it was asked for, disseminating leaflets, negotiating with landlords and renters, talking to their children, etc. I also wrote articles for news coverage and op-ed columns on newspapers for his two biological brothers, who are journalists in the *Yangcheng Evening Daily* and *Guangzhou Daily*, as a *quid pro quo* for gaining access to Yan Wendou's business. By volunteering in Yan Wendou's business as a consultant and property manager, I had acquired a place in their business, and developed relationship with villagers and migrants, the former Yan Wendou's landlords, the later his fellow brothers and tenants. When I did "enter" Yan Wendou's business, the process of negotiation with villagers and other actors such as personnel in police stations, street offices, villagers' committees, and district governments started to take place.

Excepting 31 stand-alone interviews, of more than 100 Yan Wendou's fellow brothers, I asked 23 of them who are property managers in different villages to

write working diaries for six months (between August 2010 and January 2011),

with details of what they did, where they went, whom they had met, who moved

in, who moved out, and who was complaining to whom and about what. I gave

them three cameras to take photographs of anything that interested them. I also

asked six of these 23 informants, when they are off their work, to visit those

villages that Yan Wendou and his fellow brothers did not run their housing leasing

business (e.g. Leide Village, Shipai Village, Yangji Village, Xian Village, Linhe

Village, Sanyuanli Village), and write down in their working diaries as much

detail as possible what they had encountered in these villages, be it a scenario, an

event, or a verbal exchange. Their diaries and photographs provided a way to

collect materials of 20 villages, and prompted 16 follow-up interviews to collect

specific details about their everyday lives, the network of Yan Wendou's fellow

brothers, and the ways that things get said in their own terms (see table 3.4).

3.4 List of follow-up interviewees.

Name	Villages mentioned in their working diaries
Ai Shefu	Tangdong Village, Shanze Village
Chen Zuahong	Tangdong Village, Zhu Village, Leide Village
Deng Yang	Tangdong Village, Shanze Village
Hu Shenhua	Tangxia Village
Li Hwua	Tangdong Village, Leide Village
Liu Jiang	Shanxe Village, Dongpu Village
Wei Shuai	Huang Village, Yuan Village

Yao Lin	Ke Village, Xian Village
Yao Xiaoming	Tonghe Village, Tangdong Village, Huangpu Village
Yen Jiangshian	Tangxia Village, Ke Village
Yen Jiangsong	Zhu Village, Chepeo Village
Yen Lin	Gingshazhou Village
Su Chan	Dongpu Village
Zhao Dain	Yuan Village
Zhen Pong	Huangpu Village, Chepeo Village
Zhen Tao	Chenjing Village

As one of Yan Wendou's property managers, I was able to develop information-rich conversations with personnel of local authorities and cadres of villages, such as the party secretaries of the Dengfon Street Office and Tangxia Street Office, officials in the Floating Population and Rental Housing Management Office in Tangdong Village and Chenjing Village, personnel of police stations in Tonghe Village and Zhu Village. In negotiating with them, about the business of housing leasing, I observed actors in different settings and asked them further details associated with governmental regeneration programmes and events, and supplementary questions about specific behaviours in these events. These behaviours, referred to as "backstage behaviour" (Goffman, 1959) or "non-verbal signals" (Heron, 1989), are an important part, but it is often difficult for systematic study, and is, in a way, dependent on the note taker's or informant's sense of what is important (Maynard, 1989).

In sum, in order to study the practices of these actors in more depth, and carry out what ethnographers call "theoretical sampling" (Charmaz and Mitchell, 2001) that elaborates the analysis of these categories, fills gaps within the existing data with additional contextual data, and discover variation within and between them, I developed "peripheral membership" (Adler and Adler, 1994) which involved entering the world of the group being studied. Although I built close interactions with different actors, my role mainly remained that of a peripheral observer rather than "a full member" (Adler and Adler, 1987). Consequently, I limited my involvement with the group on various occasions in order to "sustain the presence of […] a marginal member in their midst (Lee, 1993: 142)", and detached myself from some situations. I sought "to develop empathy […] but makes a conscious effort to limit [my] involvement and commitment (Alder and Alder, 1987: 39)."

My involvement with informants did not always further the goals of the research. Nevertheless, it is "essential to alter the exploitative relationships which research imposes (Blauner and Wellman, 1973: 323)". I learned in the field that exchange and reciprocity are more than ideal notions. Informants quickly found that they could call on me for a variety of services. Often I experienced

discrepancies between the needs of informants and the demands of the research. At times, my ongoing participant was all consuming, leaving me with little time for analysis of the evidence I was gathering.

Part of the rationale of selecting the villages was due to the people I encountered in the fieldwork. I had intended, in an ethnographic style, to develop my research strategy once in the field. As a Taiwanese, a PhD student from UK, a temporal resident living in the urban-villages, a volunteered journalist of local newspapers and lecturer in a university, and also a property manager for renting business in the urban-villages, my multiple roles in Guangzhou provided me with a way of ethnographic immersion. Some perceived me, as a researcher who was working towards the completion of a degree. Others perceived me, as a journalist who was greedy to cover news and provided an example for the popular local saying in Guangzhou: 'beware of fire, thieves, and, above all, journalists.' Still some others identified me, as a property manager who was busy seeking tenants, negotiating contracts, and monitoring the upkeep of the properties. Such immersion inevitably entails some degree of resocialization to meet local expectation. For instance, outsiders in the settings saw me as a person with a record of involvement with insiders and appropriate live experience. Insiders in

the settings saw me as a person with a record of involvement with outsiders and the appropriate academic language to translate the argot of residents in the urban-villages. The "stigma contagion" (Kirby and Corzine, 1981) I have experienced also has influences on my relationship with those being studied and significant others. (For instance, ever since I came back from the fieldwork, I have never used a wallet, and sometimes look back nervously when I walk on the street.)

3.3 Contesting Storylines, Discourse Coalitions, and Regimes.

During the fieldwork, I became more intrigued to look at "what people actually do" so as to "focus on practices rather than discourse", as Flyvbjerg (1998: 8) stresses in his opening chapter of *Rationality and Power*. I turned my attention to the activities of the "discourse coalitions" of the urban-villages regeneration in Guangzhou, and aligned myself with a discourse analysis that includes the notion of human agency (Latour and Woolgar, 1979). Recent studies have advanced concepts such as "discourse coalitions" and "knowledge broker" to highlight how agents are embedded in discourses (Hajer, 1995; Litfin, 1994). A discourse-coalition refers to a group of actors that, in the context of an identifiable set of practices, shares the usage of a particular set of story lines over a particular

period of time. The actors that "utters these story lines and the practices that conform to these story lines are all organized around a discourse (Hajer, 1993: 47)." From this perspective discourses are inconceivable without discoursing subjects or agents that interpret, articulate and reproduce storylines congruent with certain discourses.

At the moment that the fieldwork was conducted, the urban-villages were spaces of indeterminacy, whose space of analysis was on the way to be defined (see Chapter One, section 1.2). It was a time that the terms "urban-village" and "regeneration" have become words and concepts understood and used in popular and scholarly conversation in China (see Chapter Two, section 2.3). Given this, I asked two questions in the field: "what is the phenomenon of the urban-villages in China? What do you mean by regeneration?" The two open-ended questions are somewhat naïve for respondents. However, these less intelligible questions, as Fielding (2008) recommends, are useful in making people explain things to the researcher that are obvious to them, allowing respondents who have privileged access to, not the truth, but their opinions and meaning, to tell their own stories, in their own ways, and in their own terms, with room to pursue an unexpected or interesting aspect as it arose.

While giving readers some sense of the feelings of respondents towards their own experiences, these questions also become a strategic way to "defocus" my study, allowing those within the setting to define the research according to their own concerns rather than those of mine. Therefore, this research strategy can be described as "shallow cover" in which "the ethnographer announces the research intent but is vague about the goals. The researcher is announced but the research foci are not compromised (Fine, 1993: 276)."

While asking different actors in the field, these two questions seemingly seeking for positive explanations immediately intertwined with a number of sub-questions concerning the (re)distribution of power in society and the policy making processes involved in the regeneration of the urban-villages, including: the discussions about "facts" (e.g., where, how many urban-villages in Guangzhou? Where are these urban-villages? How many populations, and how many buildings are in these urban-villages? Who benefits and who loses from the urban-villages regeneration? Who takes responsibility? Who has power? Who is empowered?), the interpretation of those facts (e.g., are urban-villages good or bad?), normative and philosophical arguments (Is the distribution of status quo just?), and casual questions (e.g., why are there so many urban-villages in Guangzhou? Who should

be responsible for this?). And the question "what are the aims, mechanisms, directions of the regeneration?" is engaged with inverted questions such as "what is rural?" and "what is urban?" While asking these questions, a set of contrasting words such as "socialist"/"capitalist", "state"/"market", "urban"/"rural", "formal"/"informal", "public"/"private", "good"/"bad", and "legal"/"illegal" appeared repeatedly across the assemblage of official documents, interviews, field notes, public discourses. While these words and terms seemed to be used and interpreted differently by different actors, they encapsulate particular knowledge bases and technical "procedures, instruments, tactics […] and vocabularies" to achieve certain ends (Dean, 1999: 31), and alternative imaginaries of normative understanding of "justice", "equality", or "efficiency". These alternative imaginaries are performative. It is in their performative understanding that they interpret ideas like "justice", "legal/illegal", and what counts as "good" quite differently.

These sub-questions contain a great deal of information about the issue context and the designing dynamics which constitute the elements of policy debates and therefore can be linked to discourse and narrative analysis and recent developments in policy analysis. The definition and construction of a "problem"

contains within the "solution" to that problem. A pre-existing policy solution may be taken and an issue may be constructed by policy entrepreneurs so that the solution appears to be the most logical one (Kingdon, 1984). The construction of a "problem" (and its immanent "solution") involves the development of a particular discursive narrative (a "story") defining certain categories as group phenomena, and depicting/portraying the evolution and causes of the problem (Kuhn, 1970; Lakatos, 1971; Brown, 1977; Lord, Ross, and Lepper, 1979; Sayer, 1989; Hawkesworth, 1992; Sabatier, 1999: 4; Atkinson, 2000). While presenting problems, an extensive battery of causal verbs is chosen in their narratives to "describe harms and difficulties, attribute them to actions of other individuals or organizations, and thereby claim the right to invoke government power to stop the harm […] as though they are simply describing facts (Stone, 1989: 282; also see White, 1987)." Thus particular narratives attempt to portray 'problems' as if they have their origin in 'natural forces' and must be accepted and responded to in the particular manner specified by the policy narrative. By presenting a 'problem' in this manner, a narrative serves as the overture to policymaking, and an integral part of the process of policymaking and as a policy outcome, attempting to foreclose debate (or creating boundaries) and prevent a 'problem' from being thought of in ways that are not congruent with the dominant discourse from which

the narrative is derived (Gamson and Modigliani, 1987; Hajer, 1993: 46; Atkinson

1999: 59-60; 2000: 215).

In the actually discussion of specific problems, different discursive elements

are presented as a narrative, or storyline, in which elements of the various

discourses are combined into a more or less coherent whole and the discursive

complexity is concealed. Nevertheless only a few actors fully grasp complex

problems. Although many of the actors involved are experts of some sort, they

still depend on other experts for a full understanding. Story lines thus have an

important organizational potential. These discourse clusters are held together by

discursive affinity: arguments may vary in origin but still have a similar way of

conceptualizing the world (Hajer, 1995: 47).

In their activity of narrativing, scattered events was chronologically

constructed, or in Ricoeur's (1982) term, "manipulated", into a meaningful totality.

An event is something that happens after which nothing will ever be the same

again. The event cannot be understood at the time that it happens because its

distinctiveness is alien to the structure of the language and thought in which it is

expressed. How the individual or group recounts the experience is a separate

event from the initial encounter. A further retelling of the group's experience by an observer forms another event (Lyotard, 1988: 79). Each discourse coalition has its own storyline on the urban-village and post hoc discursive rationalization, projecting a particular version of reality.

Lee (1993: 5) argues that the relationship between the researcher and the researched is likely to become hedged about with mistrust, concealment and dissimulation. From an ethnographic perspective, developing and maintaining a level of trust and rapport with informants was valuable and vital for the research. However, from a discourse perspective, trust and rapport is only one kind of interactive frame that can surround the ethnographic interview as a discourse event (Goffman, 1974). In the face-to-face interaction, other aspects of interactive setting such as posture can provide important information regarding the how they respond to the governmental regeneration policies. From this angle, the negative responses (gauged by length of responses, rapport, tone of voice and general cooperation). I received were nonetheless useful ethnographic resources in that they brought to the surface underlying attitudes and ideologies about the urban-villages and interpretations. Of course, the negative is not necessary hostile. For example, many of those who hold positions of power have a stake in

maintaining quiescence. Nevertheless, even the anomie and atrocity in the fieldwork provides a different and comparative interactive frame to understand why some interviewees may be hesitant, or openly hostile, to what may potentially constitute a threat.

I utilized three categories of field notes. The first category comes from the transcription of interviews conducted with actors when I volunteered as a journalist in the *New Express Daily*. The second category involves a log record after the observations or interviews, which contains my feelings and reactions to matters, together with the fusions of thinking and feeling in research. Third, there are jotting notes I took when tape recording was precluded in research settings. Here I would like to give some examples. While observing official meetings, many times I was informed formally that tape recording was not allowed. In some research settings, the physical attributes (e.g. acoustics in a car, whispers in the public toilet of Planning Bureau, and physical movements in the urban-villages) did not allow the use of recording devices. Actors told me what was "behind the story" only after I turned off my record. There were also conditions in which the use of tape-recording was simply not proper. Many of them are when they saw my record, those observed just stopped talking.

Of course, some of the more disreputable secrets or "etiquettes" of different actors that I was allowed to learn in the field, such as the involvement of local officials and village cadres in Yan Wendou's business, have been left out of this thesis due to the sensitive and possibly disputed nature of their substance. Being an insider and outsider simultaneously helped me to gain access to many areas, but inevitably, I was excluded from some forms of participant perception. Writing about access is also subject to a peculiar limitation. Of course this writing on the problems associated with access is based, as it inevitably must be, on my own account. While the description of the difficulties I encountered in the fieldwork is only ever written from one side. What are lost thereby in the process I describe here are the understandings of those who are being researched have of being studied. This nonetheless leads me to vivify what I found to be different engagements with neoliberal signifying practices, such as how village leaders feigned interest in governmental regeneration project and the "surface cooperation" of different actors. Given that my participant-observer status allows me to catch fleeting encounters that would hardly be captured by the formal interviews and surveys of traditional sociological research, a sense of presence in my writing can be considered as a privilege, in a way that, I hope, the stolid prose

drenched in theory can be supplemented with not only concrete and vivid images

but the insight into the nuances of the fine-grained meanings of behaviour.

3.4 "Urban-Village" as Le Mot Juste de L'espace? Some Epistemological Concerns.

The contention of this thesis is that in the regeneration of the urban-villages

in Guangzhou, the discourses of the urban villages, in Foucault's terms, not only

construct objects such as particular stylistic groupings of buildings or urban space;

they also construct events and sequences of events into narratives which are

recognized by particular social groups as "real" or serious. Such groups of

discourse, as Crysler (2003), who followed Sara Mills's *Discourse*, argues, make

up the structure of an episteme, or the grounds of thought in which, at a particular

time, some statements and not others, count as socially legitimate "knowledge".

As a consequence, part of the context is the preposition that the discursive is

dialectically involved with the non-discursive such that one cannot exist (or be

thought about) without the other. It assumes the discourses in the regeneration

process to be less the objective, self evident, transparent, and neutral mirror

reflections of an uncontestable reality than the embodied and performative

representations in an intensely political project in that the aim is to find the right

word for space, or more properly, as Merrifield (1997: 417) and Massey (1992: 66)

prefer, "le mot juste de l'espace". These discourses, which are proposed by

different social actors with different agendas and differently positioned audiences,

contest against each other in the sense that they involve ongoing social practices

through which space is continually reshaped and reproduced.

The French word "l'espace", rather than English word "space", is preferred in

their discussions for the reason that there is no neat correspondence of Lefebvre's

"l'espace" in English. As Shield (1991: 154-155; also see Merrifield, 1997: 417;

Massey, 1992: 66) argues, l'espace for Lefebvre refers to not only the empirical

disposition of things in the landscape as "space" (the physical aspect) but also

attitudes and habitual practices. For, Shield, "l'espace" as a metaphor can be

understood as the spatialisation of social order. He thus uses the term social

spatialisation to "designate the ongoing social construction of the spatial at the

level of the social imaginary (collective mythologies, presuppositions) as well as

interventions in the landscape (for example, the built environment). This term

allows us to name an object of study which encompasses both the cultural logic of

the spatial and its expression and elaboration in language and more concrete

actions, constructions and institutional arrangements (Shields, 1991: 31)."

Following this, then, it is important to consider the "urban-village" in terms of the

social (re)construction of the spatial in time (the inverted commas around the

word "urban-village" are used to imply the sense of two spatialisations – both a

physical space and a more complex symbolic one), in which it represents

"particular imagined spaces consisting of everyday actions, institutions, policies

and political arrangements linked by discursive and non-discursive elements,

practices and process (ibid. 18)."

This thesis is broadly informed by ideas of the social constructionist

approaches. Rather than a strict constructionist approach which contends that

there is no objective reality but only the construction itself (Spector and Kitsuse

1987; Schneider 1985; also see Schneider and Ingram, 1993), the social

constructionist approach that this thesis draws on is more of a contextual

constructionism. The focus of this thesis is not only on the social construction of

the urban-village but also on the reasons this social construction has arisen and

how it may differ from objective reality. It pursues how the discourse functions

ideologically to shape attention and provide reasons to act in response. With

reference to Fairclough (2005), it explores how social practices are discursively

shaped, as well as the subsequent discursive effects of social practices. Or, to quote Harvey (2006: 213), "to think this through as an iterative process in which social processes produce spatial forms which affect social processes".

Operating in a society that transformed from socialist to capitalist, the discourse draws upon the material conditions that govern the realities and prospects of the cities, and thereby mediates among espoused values, future possibilities, and current dilemmas. The news coverage of the urban-villages emerged in the late 1990s, as mentioned in Chapter Two, can be an example. In the late 1990s, media discourse was seen by the government as an instrument for the legitimization of government's intervention. It was at this time that semi-independent newspapers, such as the *Southern Metropolitan Daily*, were founded. Though media in China was still under the control of the government, the market-driven mechanisms had led to innovations and created some relative autonomy, but also pressure that profit primarily from increasing their circulation (Chu, 1994). While operating on the private ownership model to attract a large audience by any means possible, the media had an intention to get popular by producing aggressive investigative stories on social issues and wrongdoing by local officials that will sell. Despite prescriptive official standard contents

propagating certain policy initiatives (i.e., welfare, community policing, subsidized housing) and proclaiming that, despite government's best efforts, urban-village problem, such as migrants and crime persist, the media constructed images of the urban-villages entails the power both to select and promote certain events as more important than others and also to imbue those events with an editorial flavour that emerges from the media's own value system.

Gradually, the urban-village problems became government's pressure. To dilute the degree of the success in solving urban-village problems became an indicator for evaluating job performances of mayor and party secretary. The People's Congress and Committee of Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, the so-called "Two Sessions" in March 2007, is a critical moment. Governmental officials were restricted to say anything before Chang Kuangning, who was assigned as Guangzhou City Mayor since 2003, stated his attitude towards the regeneration. At the moment, the regeneration of the urban-villages became a very sensitive issue. In order to have a better social and economic performance, all the news about the urban-villages was prohibited. The chief editor of the *New Express Daily* commented to me in interview:

'You know, the People's Congress and Committee of Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, the so-called "Two Sessions", in March and April, is always a critical moment. At the moment, the regeneration of the urban-villages becomes a very sensitive issue. No officials dare to give comments before the mayor clarifies his intentions on this issue. Not only is it impossible to interview any officials, but also we are prohibited by, not only the City Publicity Department, but the Provincial Publicity Department, to write anything about the urban-villages on newspapers.'

Media in China is not an autonomous organizational system but a social institution that both responds to and shapes public opinion. A more open government for freedom of information and of the press, and the media's supervision of Party and the government remain the "Achilles' heel" of the regime's commitment to the Marxist doctrine (Chu, 1994; Hao et al., 1996). Newspapers and journals of the Party, radio and television broadcasting stations of the state as well as other relevant publications are seen as the mouthpiece of the Party and people. They must unconditionally propagate the guideline, policies and regulations of the Party and government under the leadership of the Party, telling their audience what to think and how to act (Silverblatt and Zlobin, 2004). Publicity departments, or propaganda departments, are "gatekeepers" that examine the flow of news materials and prevent media from publishing unwanted information on certain particular topics through the stages of the selection and editing process. In the provided political context, it is almost impossible to

criticize government's policy. Especially after the consolidation of control of

government authorities over media in 2004, avoiding crossing the line that may

have upset the delicate political balance between the media institutions and the

political institutions became the main concern in the making[36]. At this point, what

has to be taken into consideration is the way in which media messages are

produced and shaped, especially the political, organizational, and professional

factors which impinge on the process of message production. This leads me to

consider not only the role of the media as a set of institutions that both respond to

and shape public opinion, but also techniques of gathering, organization,

classification, and publication of information. While the discourses of media, as

representations of space, play a role in urban politics and in expertise making, the

spaces of representation, e.g. the politics of media in China, is brought to the fore,

especially the relationship of their work practices, production processes, and

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[36] In January 2004, the director of the *Southern Metropolitan Daily*, together with the chief editor and publisher, were arrested by the public security officials and charged with embezzlement. Journalists at the newspaper suspected that the chief editor's detention was linked to the newspaper's aggressive reporting on political or social sensitive issues and wrongdoing by local officials, such as the death of a college student, Sun Zhigang, in March 2003 and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) in December 2003. These two reports led to the arrest of several local government and police officials. Therefore, the investigation into the finances of the *Southern Metropolitan Daily* launched by local officials was seen as the consolidation of control of government authorities over media.

socio-political environment. However, rather than seeing them as pawns in the regeneration game where they are required to perform particular practices, persons involved are agents and participants in the everyday practice of power relations, and are not passive recipients of governmental policies and directives. An exemplarily ethnographic vignette throws this point into sharp relief:

It was in August 2007, two months before the regeneration of Leide Village was launched. I was assigned, as a journalist, by the *New Express Daily* to cover the development of the PRNT. I went with journalists from other local newspapers to interview the newly commissioned deputy district head of Tianhe District, about the municipal government's re-evaluation of the development of the Pearl River New Town. Right from the beginning of the interview, however, he shifted the focus from the government re-evaluation to the problem of Leide Village, Xian Village, and Tang Village – the three urban-villages retained in the PRNT, and eagerly explained in detail the regeneration plan of Leide Village, such as the resettlement compensation of the villagers and migrants, and the building capacity of the new plan. These details were sensitive and should be announced by someone who held higher position. The moment I went back to the chief editor of the *New Express Daily*, a gag order was imposed by the Municipal Propaganda

Department against local media reporting on the regeneration of Leide Village. The chief editor asked me: 'Who else were there when you interviewed him?' When I replied that almost all the journalists from local newspapers in Guangzhou were there, the chief editor contemplated and said: 'If we don't put this news as headline, other newspapers will do it. Besides, the Municipal Propaganda Department cannot punish all the newspaper companies. […] Let's do it!' The next day, as the chief editor envisioned, what the deputy district head said became the front-page headline of all the newspapers in Guangzhou.

This example is useful as I think that it is these submerged spaces of representation that this thesis draws on. In terms of Lefebvre's (1991) spatial triad which explores how different types of space interact, overlap and/or align in the productive process of space, the discourses of the urban-village are representations of space, socially constructed out of symbols, codifications and abstract representations (Lefebvre, 1991: 38-9). These representations are based on the spatial practices of physical transformation of the environment which are the concrete or experiential spaces that are "lived directly before it is conceptualized" (ibid.: 34). They are the "logic and forms of knowledge, and the ideological content of codes, theories, and the conceptual depictions of space

(Shields, 1999: 163)." They are in conjunction with, while not being completely constrained by, the submerged spaces of representation, appropriated or dominated by particular social groups, related to power, the body, ideas, and ideologies. "[As] directly *lived* through its associated images and symbols, and hence the space of 'inhabitants' and 'users' (Lefebvre, 1991: 39, *original emphasis*)." These spaces of representation not only embrace the partiality of representation and knowledge systems, but also, in implying a certain level of spatial "competence" and a distinct type of "spatial performance" by individuals (Shields, 1999: 162), form, inform, and facilitate the deviations, diversity and individuality, continually and dialectically interact with and refer to the representations of space and spatial practices of the regeneration of the urban-villages.

3.5 Conclusions.

Though I drew upon a mixed method approach, including archival research and in-depth interviews, the method/process here relies heavily on the mix of ethnography with participant observation, and therefore is more or less in the condition of the downside of participant observation, such as increased threat to the objectivity of the data-gathering technique, unsystematic gathering of data,

reliance on subjective measurement, and possible observer effects. The approach

here may also be criticized as using selective empirical evidence to represent the

whole picture, over-generalizing from a few examples, or overemphasizing

particular spaces, senses of time and partial representations, hence committing the

conceptual error of synecdoche. Nevertheless, this process has the vantage point

to reveal common understandings related to the phenomena under study, which is

at stake here.

Wolcott (1999: 253) asserts that the intellectual challenge to an ethnographer

is to discern pervasive patterns in how individuals interact in terms of "*what*

people say, what they do, and for the most part inferred, *expectations they hold for*

the behaviour of others vis-à-vis actions they initiate themselves" (italics in

original). An ethnographer is to conduct empirically grounded studies to unpack

the actions and discourses through which various interpretations of reality are

constructed in day-to-day practice. In this way I could be described as an

ethnographer, going out into the field and returning to tell of the uniqueness of the

experiences I had observed (Schratz and Walker, 1995). However, I do not mean

to say that I know the ropes only by the saying that I have been there. Neither is

my intention to stress the difficulties of fieldwork in a way that what results is

only a set of "heroic tales" in which "the reluctance of those being studied is overcome as a result of the researcher's diligence, cleverness or artifice (Lee, 1991: 121)." While seeking to grasp the meanings that different persons bring to the policy process, the arguments used to legitimatize policies, and the hidden assumptions or underlying normative implications and problems, my normative value position is, of course, in no way a "value-free" stance. Therefore, this confessional style of writing on the field experience can best describe the social dynamics of access and non-access processes is *de facto* the description of the phenomenon of the urban-villages.

The physical, legal, social, political, economic, and demographic characteristics of the urban-villages in China are widely variegated and contingent upon location, history, and scale. The contingency was obscured by dominant discursive articulations of the "urban-village", which involves what Rancière (2000) calls the "reconfiguration of a perceptive field" through which the urban-village – in its negatively connoted form – is provided with its universal reference. This calls for a reconfiguration of a perceptive field through carefully putting in place sensible evidences, considering their collisions and convergences, which have real effects on ways of being, saying, and doing. This means walking

a line of sorts between producing, on the one hand, overgeneralized accounts of the urban-villages, which tend to be insufficiently sensitive to local variability and complex site configurations, and, on the other hand, being excessively concrete and developing contingent analyses of isolated instances of this or that particular village. The latter may be inadequately attentive to the substantial connections and necessary characteristics of ensembles of practices and rationales that are assembled at various levels.

The data generated from these research methods demonstrated that in order to look in some detail at the micro-practices of power, the context-bound local struggles and the achievement of local solutions, a more ethnographic approach incorporating Foucauldian discourse analysis was needed. In light of empirical data collected in Guangzhou in 2007/2008, I will, in the subsequent three empirical chapters, consider in turn the formation of the discourse coalition around the storylines of the urban-villages and the institutional practices in which discourses are produced. Drawing upon work in discourse and narrative analysis and recent developments in policy analysis, this thesis investigates the process by which the social construction comes to recognize the urban-villages as a particular problem.

Therefore, before moving forward with the analysis, it should be noted that, whereas this research takes place in Guangzhou, with its materials mainly about the villages in/next to Tianhe District, the aim is not to document any specific village, nor are its implications limited to Guangzhou. At stake here is a better understanding of the subjective but collective understandings on my subject matter, i.e. the regeneration of the urban-villages. Drawing on an ethnographic approach incorporating Foucauldian discourse analysis, this field-based research provides not only different lenses through which to view the world in general to answer questions such as "what is going on there?" and "what do people in this setting have to know in order to do what they are doing?" (Wolcott, 1999: 69), but also "what this people or that take to be the point of what they are doing (Geertz, 2000: 4)". This engagement – the very stuff of cultural anthropology – pays attention to "examining the ways in which the world is talked about – depicted, charted, represented, rather than the way it intrinsically is (ibid.)", and provides a better understanding to "what, what they do, does" (Foucault, 1982: 187).

Chapter Four

The Discourse Coalitions of the Urban-Villages Regeneration.

"Solutions for one programme tend to be the problems for another (Rose & Miller, 1992: 190)."

4.1 Introduction.

'Why is public security in Guangzhou so horrible? This is because these urban-villages provide bad people with places to stay. They – drug dealers, druggies, gangs, and prostitutes – come to Guangzhou and stay in the urban-villages. The spaces in the urban-villages are so cramped! Most of the buildings in the urban-villages are more than four storeys. Many of them are even with ten storeys. But many alleys in the urban-villages are less than one metre wide. Good people, if they live there, would become bad people. Besides, don't you ever read newspaper? It is said in the newspapers that the urban-villages are problematic. Those journalists who just graduated from colleges also write about their own experiences living in the urban-villages. They all state that once they have enough money, they would move out as soon as possible. […] How can Guangzhou, as an international metropolis, bear having these urban-villages?' (Interview with the chief planner, Guangzhou Urban Planning Bureau)

The chief planner's narrative illustrates how the urban-village is conceived by

central policy makers, and how such conceptions are produced in the dominant

discourses about urban-villages regeneration in Guangzhou. As described in

Chapter Two, the dominant discourse draws on concrete problems such as the

illegal use and construction of collectively owned land, shabby landscapes,

informal economy, poorly-controlled floating migrants and the census register

system, and soaring crime rates. These problems function as metaphors for a much larger structural problematic of urban restructuring – the fact that the rural-urban dichotomy, which was once a social institution and a pre-existing mode of urbanism in the socialist era, has become harmful to urban development. Perceived problems have been identified as problems resulting from a "rural-urban dichotomy", requiring rural-urban integration to solve them. The most interesting part in the narratives is the use of the word "urban-village", pointing to the roots of these settlements in the rural peasantry (Chung, 2010: 3) and suggesting two separating worlds and ways of living (urban and rural). The general public was largely determined by the particular "urban" narrative which saw the urban-villages problem as relatively isolated, not caused by wider structural factors such as the Guangzhou Municipal Government's piecemeal style of urban development and piecemeal reactive response to the development of rural areas, and the messy actualities of various institutional and policy twists and turns within a restructured and increasing neoliberalized system. And it is not social-structural factors that decide whether the problems in the villages such as "crime and marginal" activities and other socially unacceptable behaviours can be solved, but rather their attribution to individual-subjective categories.

In this chapter, I turn to my empirical investigation of the urban-villages in Guangzhou. The first of three empirical chapters examines the discursive and structural conditions surrounding the "production" of governmental regeneration programmes of the urban-villages within a restructured and increasingly neoliberalized system. It seeks to understand the motivations, rationales, and mechanisms of the authorities underpinning the articulation of the urban-village regeneration. It discusses the formation of the discourse coalition of the urban-village regeneration in which the policy elites' ideas and interests interact within an institutional setting to produce the policy design. It focuses specifically on discourses in which the structural constraints and contradictions, on the one hand, set limits to the range of solutions that are considered, and, on the other hand, are strategically portrayed and deployed by policy elites to promote their own interests and agendas and/or to hide their constraints and difficulties. By identifying the process of problem defining and agenda setting, characterised by the emergence of dominant narratives surrounding "urban development", it evaluates the policymaking processes in which the concept of urban-village is defined and deployed to label and problematize a range of unsightly urban forms. It explores the shaping of this discourse, and considers the ways in which it has led to a specific planning approach towards the urban-villages.

The remainder of this chapter is divided into four sections. The first section discusses the form of the conflict of "use value" and "exchange value" over land and buildings under an ambiguous property rights regime in the 1990s that was a key to other issues in the urban-villages regeneration. The second section identifies a set of key measurements used by central policy makers in the early 2000s in characterising areas as "urban-villages". It pays particular attention to the development of two governmental programmes (rationalities) – the institutional reform policy (IRP) and the "one village one strategy" principle – analyzing how the rationale and approach to the urban-village regeneration shifted from "villages with problems" to "urban-villages as a problem". The third section discusses the multiple and contradictory rights to the city in the urban-villages regeneration controversy. It focuses on the issues of the transfer of collectively owned land and the welfare of inner-migrants relating to access to affordable housing. In particular, the ways in which these two issues are not marginalized but both simultaneously affirmed and denied in the processes of problematization of the urban-village in 2007 are discussed to explore how interests are played out in the context of specific discourses and organizational practices. In the fourth section, I develop an argument that the framing of the term "urban-village" in policy concepts is

characterized by tensions to draw a dividing line between deserving entitlement

and undeserving welfare, and difficulties relating to defining where and what

ought to be regenerated, and who the objects/subjects of the regeneration are or

ought to be.

4.2 Local Citizenship Entitlement: Whose Welfare? Whose Right?

Premised on the recognition that previous urban policy programmes had failed,

in 1999, the Party Secretary of Guangzhou Municipality, Lin Shusen, who was

known for his defensive attitude towards profit-seeking private developers,

defined the limits of the possible direction that the policy of regeneration should

take. In his speech, which repudiated private developers' participation in the

regeneration of the urban-villages and the old city area, the regeneration of the

urban-villages was conceptualized as government's responsibility:

> "Normally, to ensure the interests of the real-estate developers, the
> real-estate developers would propose a regeneration project with 40%
> resettlement and 60% commercial housing. This means the density will
> be 2.5 times more than the original density. At glance, it is the
> real-estate developers that help the government to solve the problem of
> the urban-villages. But in fact, the expense is the increase of the density
> of the city as a whole. Therefore, the government will never allow the
> real-estate developers to increase the density of the city by tearing down
> those buildings of the urban-villages and building high rise buildings.
> This decision is for the sake of the long-term development and a

sustainable environment of Guangzhou[37]."

One clear element of Lin Shusen's narrative is that the Guangzhou Municipal Government positioned itself as having an obligation to solve the problems. However, when Lin Shusen made this speech, it was the year when governmental regeneration projects had produced continued impasse or deadlock. In some initial resettlement programmes, they were project-based initiatives of apartments for resettlement conducted through negotiating with private developers, which were unprofitable as the new properties were not allowed to be commodified and exchanged in the real-estate market. In some cases, planners, who tried to make a case for regeneration, found themselves seesawing between internal and external barriers: they were either imposed by authorities to steer their conducts and compensation arrangements in line with private developers' or government's sensibilities, rather than villagers' interest, or imposed by a variety of institutional constraints in which market-based options and operations would challenge key institutional practices of state's land-related policies.

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[37] *Southern Metropolitan Daily*, 12 May 1999.

Figure 4.1The regeneration plan of Shipai Village, 2002.

(Source: Li Lixuan)

For example, in September 2002, the Guangzhou Municipal Government announced an expenditure of 5,000,000,000 RMB on the regeneration of Shipai Village and other six designated villages. Li Lixuan, a professor of the Department of Urban Planning, Zhongshan University, was commissioned by the planning bureau of the Guangzhou Municipal Government to be responsible for the regeneration project of Shipai Village in Tianhe District (see figure 4.1). It was announced that the project would be finished by 2008. The 11,000 villagers were to be moved out, and the 3,700 lease houses in Shipai Village were to be torn down step by step. In Li's scheme, there were going to be two boulevards forming a crossroad, dividing the village into four parts. The west-south part was going to be the site for forty two 35-storey high rise towers, of 100,000 m^2 each, with another 86,000 m^2 of commercial space. This project needed at least

200,000,000 RMB. It was assumed to be financed partially out of rental income from the village housing, the exploitation of the LCD, and the 12-year rental contracts for commercial space.

The scheme stirred up a public debate: are the boulevards private or public? If they are public, will it be the government's duty to compensate those villagers whose houses will be torn down for the boulevards? Where is the funding coming from? What to do with villagers who live their life by leasing housing? Where are those 40,000 migrant workers who live in Shipai Village going to live? What to do with the "culture" of Shipai Village? In terms of historical or cultural aspects, should we not preserve old buildings in the process of development? The argument appears to be multifaceted. However, the key issues under debate are whether villagers have rights over the physical change of Shipai Village, to what extent villagers can claim their property entitlement, and in what ways their property rights will be converted. Due to the uncertainty of the subject and entitlement, the ambiguity of the arrangement and allocation of collective property rights, and, most important of all, the underdeveloped mechanism of property rights conversion, this plan was suspended. As another professor of the Department of Urban Planning, Zhongshan University, Li Xuan, who was

commissioned by the planning bureau of the Guangzhou Municipal Government

to be responsible for the regeneration project of an urban-village in Baiyun

District, put it in interview: 'We explained to the Law and Institution Office [of

the Guangzhou Municipal Government] that unless we contravene the law, the

plan would not be workable (Field notes, May 2007).'

Following Marx's original formulation of use and exchange values in

capitalist society, Logan and Molotch (1987: 1-2) describe that

> "any given piece of real estate has both a use value and an exchange
> value. […] [It] provides a 'home' for residents (use value) while at the
> same time generating rent for the owners (exchange values). Individuals
> and groups differ on which aspect (use or exchange) is most crucial to
> their own lives. For some, places represent residence or production site;
> for others, places represent a commodity for buying, selling, or renting
> to somebody else. The sharpest contrast is between residents, who use
> places to satisfy essential needs of life, and entrepreneurs, who strive
> for financial return. […] The simultaneous push for both goals is
> inherently contradictory and a continuing source of tension, conflict and
> irrational settlement."

It is this conflict between use and exchange values that shapes the

urban-villages regeneration controversy. Unlike previous welfare housing systems,

under which all housing units were assumed to be of identical location value, with

their difference only in size and layout, differential land rent in the reform era has

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increasingly become an essential component of housing costs and benefits. The land and housing systems, which used to be based entirely on use value, have been transformed into ones that are based on exchange value, whereas the development constraints within the HBL are still continuing. Such institutional involvement and regulatory intervention in the relationship of use and exchange of places is endemic to the HBL of the urban-villages. The bundle of rights that link an economic system with a political structure and a legal regime (Bazelon, 1963; Becker, 1977; Reeve, 1986; Pejovich, 1990) – the right to use, the right to capture benefits, the right to change its form and substance, and the right to transfer – is intentionally kept ambiguous or fragmentary by the state (see Chapter One, section 1.3). In particular, exclusivity and transferability, the two rights which, in terms of neo-classical economists, can generate powerful incentives to pursue economic efficiency and distributive justice, and places limits on the action of individuals and governments (Alchian, 1965; Posner, 1973; Paul et al., 1994), are not clearly delineated, left in the vacuum.

This relatively common pool resource situation creates extremely complicated bundles of rights. While outright purchase expenditures are strictly constrained, however, villagers, as landlords, can rent their property to migrants, as tenants. In

reality, it forms what Logan and Molotch (1987: 22) refer to as a "place market".

Villagers' land has been acquired for one purpose but was found to be more valuable when rented for other uses. At this point their interest shifts from the use values of the HBL to its exchange value, or, in Mills' (1969: 233) terms, "marginal productivity". Given this, most villagers either had an affinity for on-site relocation and in-kind compensation or demanded off-site relocation and monetary compensation in terms of the full market price of urban land and property. While villagers saw this benefit as their legal entitlement deriving from their local citizenship, government saw villagers as free-riders who input zero prices for using HBL and their entitlement as undeserving welfare.

Villagers' demands were unreasonable for the government in two ways. Firstly, they contradicted government's perception that though villagers were granted the use rights of HBL, and had the property right of housings, they did not have the full legal rights to their land. Ideologically, the HBL was owned by the state and the government has the authority to evict people from it; the compensation should be simply to meet villagers' dwelling demand (90 m^2 for each household, according to the assumed per capital urban land use), not according to how many square metres of the existing properties that villagers

built. Secondly, according to the Agrarian Law and the Revised Land Administration Law, the HBL, as a category of rural land, is collectively owned by collectives of villagers and not allowed to be transferred in the land market. The property on the HBL is not allowed to be transferred in the real estate market either. This means the compensation should not be in terms of the market rate of urban land and property. This debate is related, but not identical, to a much wider discussion surrounding the LUR reform during the revision of the Constitution in 1988 and the Land Administration Law in the late 1990s, in which the transferring of collectively owned land in the land market was concluded as contradicting the national legal-political framework for land rights and the existing property law systems and may be harmful to the valorization of urban land markets and expose vulnerable social groups[38].

While confining themselves to the sphere of rule-creation, the policy makers cannot foresee and/or forestall properly the responses of local people. Two categories of residents in the urban-villages – villagers and migrants – are considered, but each one separately. They ignored migrants' dwelling concerns and needs in the city. This in turn ignored the villagers' need to make a living. The

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[38] About the debate during the presentation of the draft for the Revised Land Administration Law in the late 1980s, see Ho, 2005.

underlying tone is the interlocking of migrants' needs and villages' demands.

Migrants' needs have been internalized into villagers' demand. Planners were

failing to respond to local villagers' job needs – the other aspect of urban

existence. An official noted in interview that,

> 'the intention of the regeneration was simply to meet villagers' dwelling demand, without taking into consideration how these peasants, after losing their arable land, are going to make their livings. So far, this issue remains unsolved. It is the biggest mistake of the government[39].'

The HBL controversy signifies a more fundamental conflict. Local citizenship

has concentrated on wealth redistribution, producing a characteristic pattern of the

"rentier local state" and a rent-dependent local population in areas where local

capitalism rather than enterprise organized by local government has been

predominant. While providing security, rural-based institution was seen by

urban-based institutes as reducing incentives for hard work. It also led to welfare

dependency and hence as major obstacles to modernization. The chief planner of

the municipal planning bureau, in interview, voiced some frustrations to the

urban-villages problem:

> 'In fact, the government is hoist with its own petard. […] The

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[39] Interview with Xion Jingjung on 14th December 2007.

Guangzhou Municipal Government built at the beginning of city expansion infrastructure like roads, electricity, etc. And then the price of land in villages rose. Now these peasants criticize that the government doesn't want to spend money on the regeneration of these villages. But we actually did! We spent money already at the beginning! Those peasants don't see it. Only when these peasants see buildings do they say that it is money[40].'

Rent levels are based on the location of a property vis-à-vis other places, on its "particularity" (Lösch, 1954: 508). In Marxian conceptual terms, entrepreneurs establish the rent according to the "differential" locational advantage of one site over another. Gaining "different rent" necessarily depends on the fate of other parcels and those who own the use of them (see Gaffney, 1961). In economists' language, each property use spills over to other parcels and, as part of these "externality effects," crucially determines what every other property will be. The "web of externalities" (Qadeer, 1981: 172) affects and entrepreneur's particular holding (Logan and Molotch, 1987: 24). From the perspective of the chief planner, renters pay what the villagers, who are landlords, demand, not because the housing unit is worth it, but because the property is held to have what Logan and Molotch (1987, 18) term "idiosyncratic locational benefits holding". This benefit is therefore taking advantage of the positive externalities created by the urban development such as "re-distributional rent" (Walker, 1974) – the substantial rent

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[40] Interview with Wang Yuan on 5th December 2007.

increments that come with specific government activity, or what Musgrave (1959) refers to as "merit goods" provided by the government, and relieving responsibility for negative externalities created by the actions in the urban-villages.

While land-related institutions at the national level continues to play an important role in shaping the policymaking process of the urban-village regeneration, the conflict between use and exchange values over land and buildings under an ambiguous property right regime has led to a "regime of bargaining" (Walder, 1992). The Party Secretary Lin Shusen's defensive performative utterance towards profit-seeking private developers, as a higher level discourse, has been internalized by lower lever discourses such as those of academics and policymakers, and largely restricted the viable schemes in the following years. In the initial governmental projects, the regeneration projects always have difficulties to move from proposal to construction. Li Lixuan, who also drafted a number of planning documents for the Guangzhou Municipal Government on the "regeneration of the urban-villages", recalled the sentiment in interview:

'At that moment, the government was not only keen to know what this problem is but also the way to solve it. The mayor was in a hurry to know exactly how many urban-villages are in Guangzhou. The problem of the urban-villages is urgent, could not wait. It became a political imperative for the municipality[41].'

In the conjuncture of perceived or real "failure" in its own terms, this statement of urgency was mobilized to justify the validity of the problem defining and agenda setting underpinning policies of the regeneration and management of the urban-villages. It diverted attention away from increasing more knowledge of the problem and possible solutions, more data-bases, and carrying out more research, to solving problems. The lack of data in part reinforces the need to form *ad hoc* strategy towards a structural policy. Government desire to solve the problem in a short period of time was linked to governance failures, outside the legitimate domain of governmental intervention in which such desire arose was characterised by a growing spatial polarisation. It is this confluence that leads the perception of "villages with problems" shifts to "urban-villages as a problem".

4.3 From "Villages with Problems" to "Urban-Villages as a Problem".

The definition of the urban-village in different official documents changes according to the situations of different villages. For example, in the official

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[41] Interview with Li Lixuan on 15th May 2006.

documents of some districts, the urban-village means those village collective organizations with urban residents (not villagers or peasants) in urban regions. In some other documents, the number of the urban-villages was not counted by "village" but by "street". If a street is evaluated as unsightly, it is counted as an "urban-village". In 2001, the mayor quoted Li's calculation and announced to the public that there were 45 urban-villages in Guangzhou. According to the Land and Housing Bureau, there were 69 urban-villages. Li explained retrospectively to me during an extended interview, 'It depends on which criteria the city refers to. According to the 266 km^2 built-up area in 1995, there are 109 urban-villages in Guangzhou. Nevertheless, according to the 385 km^2 planning area in 2010, there are 139 urban-villages.'

In these official documents, the term urban-village means those village settlements geographically located in the city region but still maintaining any element of the rural system, i.e. collective owned land, rural census, villagers' committee, or village administration like village economic cooperatives and township collective economic entities[42]. This definition, however, is not well

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[42] Though the definitions of the urban-village are different, the ways of regeneration of urban-villages in different districts are more or less the same. See *"The Method for Regeneration of the Urban-Villages in ChinHuanDao"*, 2003.

defined. And this leads to difficulties in the implementation of regeneration. As is

said in *The Progress Report of the regeneration of the "urban-villages"*, in 2002:

> "Every relevant department in the government, according to its own
> duty, has its own different concept and understanding of the
> urban-villages. As to the number of urban-villages in Guangzhou,
> different departments and institutes also have different answers. In order
> to implement policies and classify duties of departments in government,
> City Building Committee, City Committee Policy Research Centre,
> Municipal Government Research Centre, Urban Planning Department,
> State Land and Housing Management Department, Department of Civil
> Affairs, Department of Rural Affairs, and District Government, did
> research together and define the term "urban-village" as: "those rural
> villages geographically locate in Guangzhou's urban planning area
> approved by State Council[43]."

Therefore, later in 2006, a key document produced by the Guangzhou

Planning Bureau, *"The Instruction for the Integration of the institutional reform*

of the urban-villages in Guangzhou", refers to the "urban-village" in the

following terms: "in the city region approved by State Council, those village

settlements which still maintain the village system, collective land, and villagers'

committee. Or those village settlements in which all the villagers have been

transformed into urban residents, but their land using, environment, urban form,

etc., still maintain initial rural characters." By this definition, Guangzhou city in

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[43] *Report of the Regeneration of Urban-Village*. Guangzhou Building Committee,
26 September 2002.

the PRD, compared to other cities in China, has the largest amount of the urban-villages: There are 139 villages defined as urban-villages (see table 4.1), with a total square measure of 12.57 km². While this is only 4.7% of the total urban area of Guangzhou (270 km²), it has a population of 1,200,000 (including immigrants, i.e. the flow of a population driven by economic opportunities), which is 70% of the total migrants population and 30% of the total population of Guangzhou (4,000,000)[44].

Table 4.1 The number of Urban-villages in different districts of Guangzhou

District	Baiyuan	Tianhe	Haizhu	Fangcun	Huangpu	Liwan
urban-villages	55	28	20	17	16	3

(Source: Planning Bureau, Guangzhou Municipal Government, 2002)

In an official document conducted by Li Lixuan, the 139 urban-villages were ranked to each other in terms of their location, stage of development, and their

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[44] Although difficult to estimate in precise terms due to differences in definition, government statistics in 2001 put the number in upwards of 120 million. Among the thirty-five percent that moved across provinces, a majority of them (35%) migrated to south China and in particular Guangdong Province. See estimates in Arianne Gaetano and Tamara Jacka (2004) *On the Move*, Columbia U. Press, and Dorothy Solinger (1999) *Contesting Citizenship in Urban China*, California U. Press; also see a recent Chinese source by Bai Nansheng & Song Hongyuan et al. (2002) *Huixiang, haishi jincheng, Beijing: Zhongguo caigai jingji chubanshe*.

position vis-à-vis the process of urban expansion. Based on these criteria, the urban-villages were hierarchically classified into three categories:

• Embryonic urban-villages: those village sites located in the urban land use plan, but far from built areas and retaining a large amount of farmland.

• Immature urban-villages: those villages retained a certain amount of farmland. They are locales where urban development approaches the rural boundary, and where urban and rural land uses interface.

• Mature urban-villages: those villages whose farmland has been completely converted into urban uses, but village residential sites [the HBL] remain as rural enclaves isolated within built-up urban areas.

In interview, Li Lixuan explained that the figure of 139 urban-villages is merely a generalization and can be misleading. In his opinion, the 45 urban-villages in the category of "mature urban-villages" were those which should be the top priority for regeneration[45]. Nevertheless, after the figure was defined, the emphasis of the Guangzhou Municipal Government fell on the estimation that it needed 250 billion RMB to regenerate all the 139 urban-villages. This is 40.4%

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[45] Interview with Li Lixuan on 15th May 2006. Chung (2010: 3) also conducted a similar interview with him on 4th May 2006.

of the GPD of Guangzhou as a whole. Such a shift of emphasis justified the

Guangzhou Municipal Government's statement saying that it was not likely to

prioritise such expenditure to the regeneration of all the 139 urban-villages, nor

was it seen by the government as a cost-effective way of regeneration. Lin Shusen,

the Party Secretary of Guangzhou Municipality, avowed in October 2002 that:

> "The government has already put lots of efforts into the regeneration of the urban-villages. We have done a lot. We will follow the model of the regeneration of the old city area. Nevertheless, we will not have a time schedule of the regeneration. It may take 20 years or 30 years. We will not demolish all the urban-villages in one or two years[46]."

Together with the rhetoric which emerged within the earlier narratives (see

Chapter Two, section 2.3), the language of "impossibility" permeated official

explanations, and is combined with institutional barriers and cost-benefit

calculations to explain why the government could not solve the problem in a short

period of time. It was also strategically deployed by officials in articulating their

strategies to expand the definition of the problem of some villages to all the

villages in the urban area. Rather than containing and limiting the "problem" to

"pockets" in some urban areas where villages need special help to solve their

problems, what can be seen in the idiom of the rationality is the precautionary

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[46] *Southern Metropolitan Daily*, 18 October 2002.

principle. One of the key policymakers and planners, Li Lixuan, said in interview:

> 'Why is the urban-village defined in this way? This is because we have to prevent the emergence of new urban-villages in the future. The ultimate development of the urban-villages is the root-and-branch urbanization, i.e. the transformation from rural to urban, from villagers to citizens, and from rural management to urban management. This transformation includes physical urban form, economic structure and organization, community structure and management, ways of living, quality of people, etc. It is a process of synthetic transformation. It necessitates physical development, institutional development, and social/cultural development[47].'

Which village is or is not considered as an urban-village was thus subject to processes of attribution, which are, in turn, subject to the strategic calculation of the government. An appraisal of the process of defining urban-village and how the studies were conducted can help us to identify what the problem is. The data of the urban-villages compiled from research papers, official documents, and local newspapers are presented in Table 4.2 and 4.3. These data have their own specialized use in diverse relations with the formal political apparatus and are therefore geared towards various planning and other purposes, some towards social-economic, some towards political, some towards land-use, some towards social provision.

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[47] Interview with Li Lixuan on 15th May 2006.

Table 4.2 Data from of Street Office, Tianhe District (2003)

street	Shiahe	Denfong	Chepo	Tianhenan	Linhe	Xinhwua	Shiadong	Shipai
area (k㎡)	1.26	4.75	5.6	2.48	3.8	4.228	2.16	4.3
total Population	45809	85456	76000	68468	72671	66149	35483	250000
Inhabitants	41419	44888	24000	51394	41795	27544	18500	130000
Village cooperatives	0	2	1	1	1	1	1	1

street	Wushain	Tangxia	Yuan	Tianyuan	Liede	Xian	YuanGang
area (k㎡)	10.59	7.42	5.371	4.038	3.1	4.07	3.238
total Population	99601	88006	59124	64663	22000	33890	40000
Inhabitants	69601	38006	37219	47521	10000	8890	8000
Village cooperatives	0	2	1	0	3	1	1

street	Huang	Changxin	Fonghuang	Longdong	Chianqing	Xintang	Zhuji
area (k㎡)	6.17	13.215	22.998	11.7	4.9	14.95	10.015
total Population	48220	39138	28573	60000	20019	51289	15547
Inhabitants	19820	18698	12753	35000	5000	10289	8930
Village cooperatives	1	2	2	1	1	3	2

(Source: Planning Bureau, Tianhe District Government)

Table 4.3 Sample of the data of the urban-villages in Guangzhou

Village	Yangji	Leide	Xian	Shipai	Tangxia	Tangdong	SanYuanLi	Kangle	Linhe
area (k㎡)	0.29	0.31	0.185	0.747	1.7	3.1	6.8	0.904	
Buildings	1496		3000	3656	3580	2580			
Villagers	5253	7865	2860	130000	4000		5,000		2,300
migrants	8.000 to 30,000	8,000 to 10,000	22,000 to 40,000	40,000 to 150,000	18,000 to 25,000	15,000 to 20,000	10,000	20,000	5,000

(Source: calculated from data collected from local newspapers, academic researches, and official documents)

While loosely assembled together, they also embody what Merton (1965) refers to as the "palimpsestic syndrome[48]": the information declines in the papers, documents, and articles making use of it. The central message is that there are definitional inconsistencies and problematical enumerations permeating the data. In interview, Chan Chengming, Vice Chief of Bureau of Urban Utilities and Landscaping of Guangzhou Municipality, described how the data are characterized by a lack of consistency and comparability:

'In some cases, different official documents have different data about the same village. For example, Tangxia Village in 1996 has a population of 3189 (peasant *hukou*) according to the local police station, 6759 according to the *Rural Statistical Yearbook*, but 847 according to the *Economic Statistic Division*. In some cases, the statistical standards are different. For example, in some villages, the meaning of population is only the amount of people who are with peasant *hukou*. In some villages, it includes people with peasant *hukou* and people with non-peasant *hukou*. In some other villages, all the residents (people with peasant *hukou*, non-peasant *hukou*, and migrants whose *hukou* are not registered in Guangzhou) are counted into the demographics. In some cases, the data are merely confusing. This may be the result of administrative change. For example, a village disappears in 1986 but reappears in the data in 1996. This may be the result of the complex *hukou* transferring. For example, in the official document of a villagers' committee, the total population is 584, but there are 810 in the labour

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[48] The "palimpsestic syndrome" is Merton's term for a phenomenon common in the transmission of "information", in which "each succeeding repetition tends to erase all but one antecedent version (Merton, 1965: 218)."

force[49].'

These blurred references and deliberate mixing of the categories add much perplexity to the reading of the relevant statistics and compound misunderstanding. Despite the existence of numerical discrepancies resulting from different methods and data resources, what is worse is that the collected data might be adjusted by villagers' committees. Commenting on this, an official in the Land and Housing Bureau, who wished to remain anonymous, said in interview:

> 'It is difficult to get access to these villages and acquire the "real" data. Statistical data are adjusted by villagers' committees on purposes. The contrived adjustment of statistical data has become an open secret in China, no matter in academics or government. For example, almost every local authority has two account books. One is for itself to document the real situation. Another one, with adjusted statistical data, is used to report to the higher level authority or the public. In fact, because counterfeiting data has become a common practice, leaders of many villages even don't know what the real situations or data are. There are two ways of adjustment: raising or lowering data. In general, in some thriving villages, in order not to "crop up", or in order to develop "steadily", following the plan, or maybe for the reason to pay less tax, the data would be understated. In some other poorer villages, the data would be overstated to "gain" more official approbation. There is a saying from higher level government: in terms of a region, the data will get its balance since the data of some villages are understated while some others are overstated (Field notes, May 2007).'

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[49] Interview with Chan Chengming on 13th September 2007.

The availability of reliable socio-demographic information about migrants is always an issue. In many party-state documents and officially censored social science publications, the demography is often referred to villagers who may not necessarily be dwellers in the urban-villages. The data is less concerned with estimating the volume of all documented/undocumented migrants than villagers, and hence the number of migrants is merely a rough estimation. Besides, villagers are often hesitant to engage in governmental research or give the real information for fear of apprehension. As Li Lixuan recounted:

'Many times we have sent personnel to villages to investigate and collect information such as property conditions, social-demography of villagers and migrants, levels of income, and education. But [villagers and migrants] didn't cooperate. They didn't cooperate because of many reasons. Villagers were afraid of being asked to pay tax or penalty [of illegal buildings], or losing compensation in the future regeneration, while [undocumented] migrants were afraid of being deported, of being amerced [for having illegitimate children], or being put in jail[50].'

The confusion also partly resulted from the fact that the city referred to at least three different things. In some circumstances, it referred to built-up or urbanized areas. In other instances, it referred to planning areas or those areas that the planning bureau has made through urban planning intervention. In yet other

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[50] Interview with Li Lixuan on 15th May 2006.

circumstances, it referred to administrative areas, or those areas under the jurisdiction of the Guangzhou Municipal Government. These criteria were different ways of classifying space, whose definitions and boundaries were *de facto* changing all the time. According to the Guangzhou Comprehensive Plan in 1994, the built-up area of Guangzhou has expanded from 87 km^2 to 297.5 km^2 between 1980 and 1999 (also see Tang and Chung, 2002: 43-44; Zhang et al., 2003: 919) (see figure 4.2). In 2000, the State Council defined the planning area of Guangzhou as 385 km^2 in 2010. The administrative area has been also changing from 1443.6 km^2 to 3718.5 km^2 from 2000 to 2009 (See Chapter Five, section 5.3). Whereas most of the time, the urbanized area refers to the planning area, in reality, the three criteria were confused due to the city striving to redefine the meaning of the suburban boundary, to the extent that even the data of the built-up area of Guangzhou Municipality in the Guangzhou Comprehensive Plan in 1994 is a mix of the three criteria (see table 4.4).

Table 4.4 Built-up Area of Guangzhou Municipality

Year	1949	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1995	1998	2000	2005	2010
area (km^2)	54.4	136	139	142	148	157	163	167	176	182	266	276	335	403	446

(Source: Guangzhou Comprehensive Plan, 1994)

Figure 4.2 Built-up Area of Guangzhou Municipality.
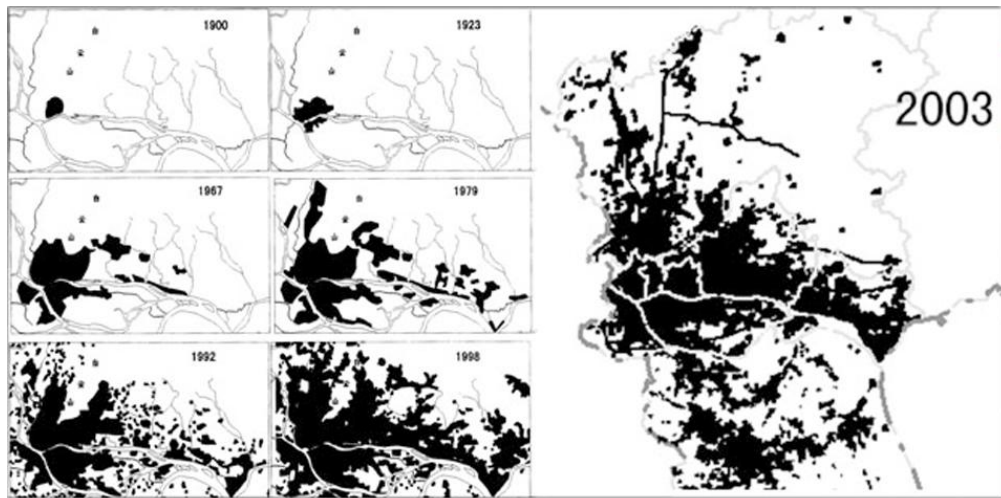
(Source: Guangzhou Comprehensive Plan, 1994)

It seems that the aim of the policy makers is seeking to create an overall and holistic strategy for the city, rather than searching for pragmatic but piecemeal solutions for this or that particular village. While not every urban-village is located in out-of-the-way geographical peripheries, all of them are seen as social peripheries which are, in terms of Shield (1991: 3), "left behind in the modern race for progress". Such a discussion takes us directly into the realm of marginality, relations of power, with particular attention to the role of language. The urban-villages as marginal places, with marginal status, come from out-of-the-way geographical locations, and are the site of illicit and disdained social activities. To be sure, the concept of marginality takes on a geographic as well as a social meaning (Bailly, 1986: 50; Shield, 1991: 3).

The hierarchical distinction which categorizes the urban-villages into three categories (embryonic, immature, and mature) combines a corporeal vocabulary with a spatial vocabulary of disease and deploys the term "urban-village" as an organic urban metaphor. It implies a way of conceptualization, in which the urban-villages, as morbid tumours, are imagined in clinical or epidemic form. This medical point of view understands the urban-villages as singular bodily diseases. Each of them is a bounded tumour, with its own incipient stage, immature stage, and mature stage. Based on this medical topography, the aim of the pathology is to kill pathogens, reduce disease, and control possible sites of inflection and proliferation. An ideological equation of the urban-villages as tumours instils particular "imaginary geographies" (Shield, 1991) into popular consciousness. These have been transformed into institutional policies, political economic arrangement, and empirically-specificable everyday actions such as local people's investment and disinvestment strategies – themes which recur later in Chapter Five and Six[51].

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[51] I am borrowing a set of terms and descriptive formats from the works of Shield (1991), Halfacree (1993), and Osborne and Rose (1999) and using them for my own ends. See also Paddison, 1993; Sennett, 2002; Raco, 2003.

This way of defining concentrates upon that which is observable and measurable and, hence, leads to either descriptive definitions or definitions based on socio-spatial characteristics. In other words, the urban-village has been already "defined" by those doing the classifying. As Shield (1991: 168) expresses it, in the context of discussing similar attempts to "define" the "Far North" of Canada:

> "The appeal to popular perception is indicative of a tautological circle in all of these studies; starting out from commonsensical intuition, statistics are gathered and then interpreted in the light of commonsense. Thus ennobled by the clothes of empiricism, commonsense is represented as scientific conclusion[52]."

Following this, the "definition" here is better seen as tools for the articulation of specific aspects of the urban-village than as a way of defining the "urban-village". The methods involve trying to fit a definition to what is intuitively considered to be "urban-village", in the absence of any other justification as to why properties built on the HBL were thought to produce to a distinctively negative rural character. It is in this method of calculation that the urban-villages in Guangzhou were presented as a binary issue: land which is collectively owned or state owned (see figure 4.3).

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[52] Halfacree (1993) drew my attention to this quote.

Figure 4.3 The mapping of the urban-villages in the built-up area of Guangzhou.
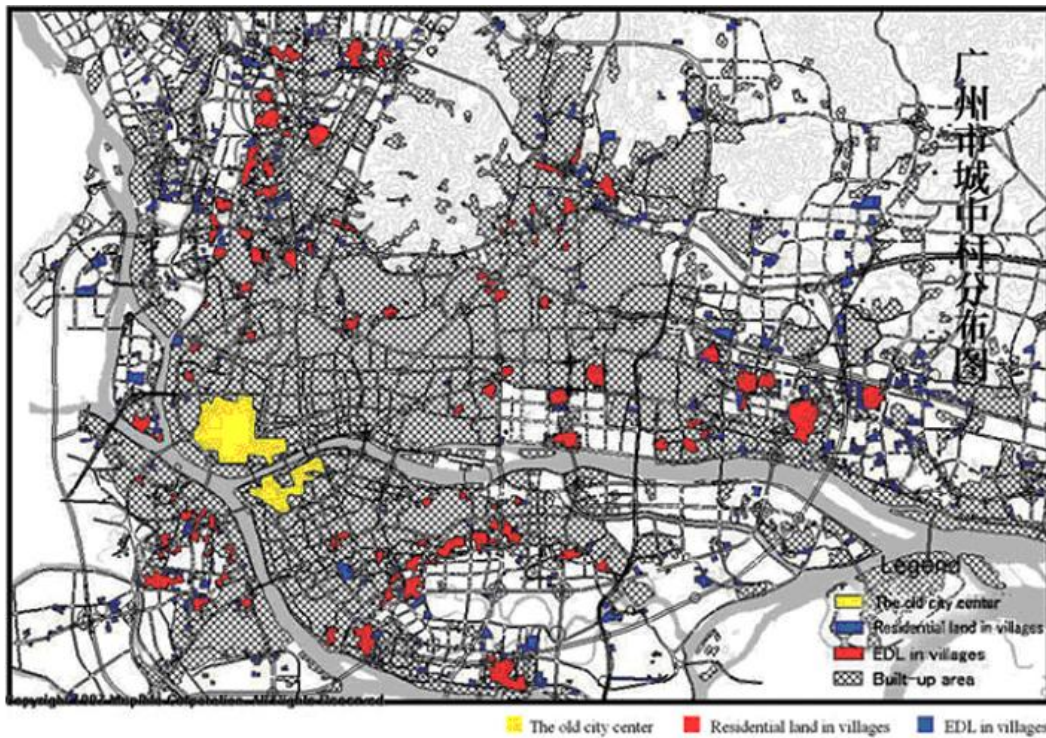
(Source: Guangzhou Urban Planning Bureau, 2000)

Note: Whereas Osborne and Rose (1999: 742) say, "mapping facilitated analysis." Here, analyses were influenced by mapping. A map of the urban-villages in Guangzhou done by the Guangzhou Urban Planning Bureau was made according to the built-up area in 2000.

The form and character of regeneration programmes that the government conducted did not fit to the institutional structures. In order to operationalize this rationality, a set of governmental programmes have been introduced. In the late 1990s to the early 2000s, the Guangzhou Municipal Government enunciated the institutional reform policy (IRP) and "one village one strategy" as two guiding principles for the regeneration of all the 139 urban-villages in Guangzhou. Central to the narrative contained in "one village one strategy" principle is the argument

that due to the conditions of villages were complicated and very different from

each other, the government might not be able to take all villages' variations into

consideration. In the IRP, it, on the one hand, defined the term urban-village. On

the other hand, it identified four steps to transfer the governance arrangements

from rural-based institutions to urban-based institutions. There were multiple

purposes and motivations in the governmental policy of the institutional reform of

the urban-villages. The most important one was the aim to transform collectively

owned land into state owned land. As Li Lixuan described in interview, the

rationale was simple and explicit:

> 'At the outset the physical form was a key concern of the leader of the
> government. The aim of our program was to improve the physical form
> of these villages. But we encountered institutional and regulatory
> impediments. We found that we tackled symptoms rather than causes,
> and relatively little could be done under the existing rural-urban
> dichotomy system, especially those land-related issues. The root
> problem of why the plans we made didn't work is that the housing base
> lands of these villages were collectively owned. The best way to solve
> this problem is to transform the collectively owned land into state
> owned land. In order to do this, we need a policy to transform the
> institutions of these villages from rural system to urban system[53].'

The policy's major proposition concerned the transferring of the HBL, which

was decisively confined by the existing institutional arrangements. In the design

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[53] Interview with Li Lixuan on 15th May 2006.

of the Agrarian Law, only the collectively owned land can be transferred into state owned land – not the other way around. Policymakers referred to Clause 5 of Article 2 of the *Regulation of Land Management* as a merit. In this stipulation, it notes: "The following lands belong to the whole people and are state owned: the land collectively owned by those people who were members of the collective economic organization of village and later transferred as urban residents." Based on the redirecting of this ordinance, the policy design appropriated the "condition" of people and things described in this stipulation into a kind of "causality". In other words, the initial design of this stipulation was interpreted as the condition that if those people who were members of the collective economic organization of a village are later transferred as urban residents, then, the land collectively owned by those people can become state owned. This appropriation is plausible and becomes a useful pathway to circumvent the institutional barriers since the language of law is not to explain the terms it uses, but to give these terms operational definitions.

Though the term "urban-village" was adopted in the official documents, it was not translated properly into policy. In the regeneration process, the validity of the pragmatist but piecemeal approach was questioned. As said in a minute of Tianhe

Politics Consultation Committee in 2004, *"The Paper for the Research of the Regeneration of the Urban-Villages in Tianhe District,"* the district government analyzed the predicament of the implementation of the regeneration:

> "The regeneration of the urban-villages is a very complex task. It is involved with economic, social, cultural, and political issues. It is concerned with the interests of the village collective entity, villagers (residents), government, and the subject of regeneration. Therefore, it is difficult if it is based merely on government's official documents, meeting records, or public statements of leaders, without registration of concrete laws. […] In the regeneration of the old city areas, in which the land is owned by the State, there has been a complete system of laws and regulations for compensation, demolishing, and rebuilding. However, to date, in the regeneration of the urban-villages, because the land is not owned by the State, but collectively owned by villagers, it is difficult to adopt the vested laws and regulation for compensation, demolishing, and rebuilding. As to the regulations for the land collectively owned by villages, most of them are absent, especially those for practices."

In fact, the IRP is a belated legitimization of the already expanding local experimentation judged by authorities to be worth promoting as formal changes. Compared to property-led regeneration, which is a visible achievement, the IRP was seen, by some, as a *post facto* policy that only had a marginal influence on the process of the regeneration. For others, it was implemented in a fragmented way and no more than an empty institution that remains a paper agreement or a hollow shell with little social effect. It seems that this policy was far from being felt on

the ground. As the leader of Shipai Village commented in interview, the IRP is 'a change that doesn't change too much[54]'. However, while government regeneration projects had difficulties to move from proposal to construction stage, the "one village one strategy" principle and the IRP, which were equally strong processes at work, gradually played a role at the heart of government-led regeneration projects. The result was a much more complex and rapidly evolving set of institutions that govern the urban-villages.

I will return to this later in Chapter Five, to the way in which the incomplete implementation of the IRP led to the invention of a set of technologies that govern the urban-villages, but, in closing this section, I would like to draw attention to the strategic role it plays. The IRP, together with "one village one strategy" principle, functioned more as a political statement to say that the problem of the urban-villages has been regulated and hence mitigated. It is a statement to convey a concept that government has a comprehensive strategy for local authorities and actors to follow. These two programmes can be read as what Peck and Tickell (2002) refer to a form of "crisis management", as the Guangzhou Municipal Government sought ways to have a better social and economic performance in a

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[54] Interview with Dong Chijung on 2nd August 2007.

period of rapid urban expansion. The discourse of these two programs, with the desire for a rapid development as the central story line, came to be the most legitimate way to speak about the urban-village problems. These two programmes provided a discursive solution to the need to form an *ad hoc* strategy towards a structural policy. However, except for the incomplete implementation of the IRP, and, as described in Chapter Two (section 2.3), media's reiteration and repetition of government's resolve to rekindle the articulation of the urban-village regeneration, from 1996 to 2006, under the leadership of Party Secretary of the Guangzhou Municipality, Lin Shusen, who repudiated private developers' participation in the regeneration of the urban-villages, the first round of the urban-villages regeneration movement witnessed a deadlock.

4.4 Multiple and Contradictory Rights to the City.

Lin Shusen left for the Deputy Party Secretary of Guezhou Province in July 2006, and Zhou Xiaodang replaced Lin Shusen and was assigned as the new Party Secretary of Guangzhou Municipality. In the "Two Sessions" in March 2007, Chang Kuangning, the mayor of Guangzhou, declared that "real-estate developers are welcomed to partake in the regeneration of the urban-villages." In the mayor's much quoted aphorism, a bundle of statements was declared: "those who benefit

from the urban-villages regeneration should pay," "government should take on a facilitating role in the regeneration of the urban-villages," "villagers are the subject rather than the object of the regeneration", and "it is a win-win outcome for villagers, government, and private developers. Only a policy that benefits government, collective cooperative, and villagers simultaneously can be likely able to be implemented successfully[55]". These statements marked a shift in policy and gave rise to the second round of the urban-villages regeneration movement.

In this rhetoric, on the one hand, the political change provided a platform that transferred regeneration initiatives, which were used to be seen as the government's liability, to market operations. On the other hand, in the mayor's much quoted aphorism, villagers were changed from the objects who the government off-load its responsibility to, to the subjects who the government works in partnership with. The leader of the Tianhe District Government, Xu Hetian, recalled in interview:

'The mayor stated clearly that "the government will not scramble interests with people". He gave two tenets to the regeneration of Leide Village. The first is that villagers are the subject of the regeneration. The Guangzhou Municipal Government and district government will

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[55] Speeches of Chang Kuangning in the Meeting of Urban Development, 2007, 01, 21 and the "Two Session" in March, 2007.

not fund the project. The expenditure will be from the land transfer fee of the HBL of the village. And the balance of revenue and expenditure should therefore be ensured. The resettlement of villagers and the development of collective economic should also be ensured. The second is about the auction of the LUR of the HBL. Except for the required fee and tax, the land transfer fee will be used in the regeneration of the urban-village. […] The subject of the regeneration of Leide Village shall be Leide Villagers' Committee. Therefore, the project should be the issue of the self-governing organization. All the decisions and implementations shall be decided by villagers and villagers' committee[56].'

What Xu said reflects the changing tone of the mayor's statement with its emphasis on "subject" and "self-governing organization". From a Foucauldian perspective, the crucial issue was the use of the word "facilitating", suggesting that the emphasis was much more on a reduction in the government's role and a greater emphasis on the positive narratives of local villagers with village cooperative and an apparently increased role for private real estate developers. Nevertheless, it did not mean that the scope for governmental intervention was reduced, but, rather, by narrating the direct role of the government as supportive, the Guangzhou Municipal Government played a pivotal role in the regeneration projects.

"One village one strategy" principle set out a space in which decisions can be

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[56] Interview with Xu Hetian on 2nd April 2007.

calculated. It created a language to justify the Guangzhou Municipal Government's initiatives with different degrees of government intervention from creating optimal conditions for market operation, participation of business sector and the public, to a range of microregulatory interventions. For instance, in the project of Huadi Village regeneration in Haizhu District, the degree of government intervention was no more than district level. However, in the project of Leide village regeneration in Tianhe District, the Guangzhou Municipal Government had more political and economic interest/pressure due to the location of Leide Village is in the CBD ambit. It was not the district government or street office but the Guangzhou Municipal Government that has actively facilitated this project by employing economic levers to attract private investment and encourage real estate development, and making policy interventions such as offering favourable policies for land acquisition, demolition and relocation (see figure 4.4). In order to deliver the regeneration project more quickly, the affected residents were offered compensation packages that include not only compensation for villagers' legal entitlement but also compensation for villagers' illegal construction and displaced migrants' cash compensation for rent. While a better compensation deal was offered in the Leide Village regeneration project, the chief of the planning bureau explained publicly: "The regeneration of Leide Village is

special. It cannot be seen as a model for all the urban-villages in Guangzhou[57]."

Figure 4.4 The Gate of Leide Village and Leide Bridge.

(Source: author's photo)

Note: In the urban planning, Leide Bridge was planned as the second main bridge connecting Tianhe District and Haizhou District. The bridge approach was planned directly cutting through the Leide Village. While the planning of the Leide Bridge was under discussion, the issues relating to the future of Leide Village were sensitive and left aside in any meetings. The building of Leide Bridge started in 2006. In 2007, half of Leide Bridge was constructed, from the Haizhou District. The Leide Bridge which loomed ahead to the Leide village further validated the "demolition-redevelopment". As an official in the city government said, "After all, it is meaningless to preserve the village since there will be only two small plots of land left at the two side of the bridge after the bridge is done (Field notes, January 2008)."

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[57] *Southern Metropolitan Daily*, 16 October 2007.

The new regeneration initiatives had an attention to reconstruct the regeneration coalition adhering to market-oriented operation. It seems that "one village one strategy" gained new traction to tackle the structural socio-economic problems of these villages to reflect on the unequal distribution of growth, opportunities, and place potential. It was intended to be rearticulated to suggest the encouragement of the horizontal modes of coordination between agencies and local authority-driven regimes to develop local solutions to local problems.

However, in the absence of a programmatic elaboration to translate the "one village one strategy" principle into a set of techniques to frame local development decisions, this guiding principle remains little more than a political slogan deployed to narrow government responsibility. It turns out that villagers were cautious about this "benevolent mask" and questioned the consistency of this policy agenda. A village party secretary commented during interviewing:

'Though Chang Kuang-Ning, the mayor of Guangzhou said so, it is difficult to say. As you know, the ex-mayor didn't allow real estate developers to do the regeneration (Field notes, March 2007).'

A party secretary of a street office also said,

'The government has advocated "one village one strategy" for a long

time. But there is no tangible strategy, nor does the government set out any clear set of plan for us to follow. Now the government has defined a direction of the regeneration by declaring that private developers are allowed to intervene. This direction is based on the current leader's mind, but what if the next leader changes his mind? The plan is already there and we wish to speed up, the planning bureau has to have criteria in order to discover breaches, such as FAR, or to set out a clear and complete set of plan for us to follow (Field notes, March 2007).'

An official in the Policy Research Office of the Guangzhou Municipal Government, who wished to remain anonymous, commented to me during an extended interview:

'In fact, "one village one strategy" means "no strategy"! [...] (with mischievously smile) However, it is the best principle for the regeneration of the urban-villages. Since every village has its own specific situations, needs, and priorities, each village has to seek for its "opportunity" to move their regeneration projects from proposal to construction. It is the duty of local authorities to make the case for government support (Field notes, April 2007).'

Again, in line with neoliberal rhetoric, it became the responsibility of local authorities to accelerate the regeneration of the targeted villages by supporting public-private partnerships and develop bottom-up strategies, assessed by the municipal planning bureau. In seeking for the "right" types of regeneration to take place, there was no strategy for local authorities to follow. Local authorities scrutinized their peers (those of other villages) and guessed what the Guangzhou

Municipal Government prefers, or in their words, "to discover the breaches".

As I have reiterated, while the land and housing systems, which used to be based entirely on use value, have been transformed into ones which are based on exchange value, the development constraints within the HBL are still continuing. Different from the previous welfare housing system under which all housing units were assumed to be of identical location value, with their difference only in size and layout, differential land rent has become an essential component of housing costs and benefits. The rural-urban dichotomy continues to play a fundamentally important role in shaping the policymaking process. Most villagers have an affinity for on-site relocation and in-kind compensation rather than off-site relocation and monetary compensation. The inherent issue is to what extent villagers can claim their entitlement. At its core is the transformation of use value and exchange value. These issues were again posed, albeit differently, in 2007. What has been hidden is the intention to appropriate and marketize the hitherto uncommondified realms. This influences the understanding of whom or what is in relation to the urban-village regeneration.

In part driven by the new Property Law, effective in 2007, one of the key

features in the regeneration of Leide Village at the end of 2007 was the new approach to the property rights conversion. As it said, "demolish one square metre, compensate one square metre", it is a principle for the exchange of property rights or a real estate transaction price of monetary compensation. In the new planning project of Leide Village, the design institute at the beginning provided four different types of apartment, i.e. 200 m^2, 120 m^2, 90 m^2, and 60 m^2. Only two villagers chose the 200 m^2 type. Most of the villagers preferred 60 m^2 and 90 m^2. The villagers explained in interview: 'I don't want a big apartment. I prefer smaller apartments because in the future, my sons and daughters can live separately.' Nevertheless, as the chief architect commented during interview, 'they prefer smaller apartments because they can rent their apartments to tenants.' Though the apartments for resettlement were not allowed to be commodified and exchanged, actually, the use value of villagers is acquiesced to be able to be transformed into exchange value. Villagers behave in the way they behave. That is, they continue their life by being landlords.

Now, it is interesting to note that in terms of the ethical criterion of the criticisms in the early 2000s, actually, villagers are still rentiers. However, this kind of negative discourse of the urban-village was strikingly absent from public

media. Instead of addressing this issue, the discussions about the Leide Village regeneration focused on market operations. The narratives surrounding the launching of the regeneration of Leide Village was dominated by building better housing for villagers and the upgrading of villagers' living standards, with the tone that it is through the generosity of the government. The regeneration was heavily market-driven. Nevertheless, issues relating to profit-making, profitability, government's compromise in market-led strategies and making room for high value-added investment and development, and why the use value of villagers is acquiesced to be able to be transformed into exchange value, were deliberately toned town.

Instead, social oriented agendas were emphasized or used to enhance political support and legitimacy. In the provided political context and in part given the media control of government, local newspapers were filled with articles nostalgically yearning for the fading away of ancestral shrines of clans, dragon boat race on the Lei River, and the cultural life of villagers. Ironically, this nostalgia was in the past portrayed by the same local newspapers as a backward and improper part of urban life and should be eradicated and replaced by 'proper' urban physical constructions and social structures (see Chapter Two, section 2.3).

In celebrating the new environmental amenity, what was in the past seen as backward when occupied by villagers and migrants, became a selling point when high-end real-estate was proposed.

For profit-seeking property developers, rising land value is the single most vital factor for profitability. This need is for high-value end uses, including expensive commercial developments and residential apartments. The rationality of urban-village regeneration is dominated by property-led regeneration. The overall programmes have not sought to tackle wider problems such as the undersubscription of affordable housing for lower income migrants. Such views are of relatively little concern to the policy-makers, planners, and developers, for whom the regeneration is primarily about meeting the needs of property market investors and villagers. There were different procedures for groups with and without title deeds in the relocation process. In seeking to balance between economic efficiency, developers' interests, social equality and equity, and affected residents' interests, however, what has been absent is the voice of excluded group categorized as inner-migrants. The compensation and the resettlement of migrants were not considered to be the government's obligation.

After all, temporary migrants do not "belong" to the destination and are expected to return to their place of registration eventually. They are seen by the government as a flow of people, transitory and, perhaps, only fleeting a presence in the city, or more specifically, in the urban-villages. Rather than considering all residents within the city limits, the Guangzhou Municipal Government only considers residents with Guangzhou *hukou*. For those migrants without title deeds, who constitute the majority of the residents in the urban-villages, their being excluded was naturalized through the naturalization of market rationalities and the normalization of individualized responsibility. In pursuit of the instrumental goal of the urban-villages regeneration, affordable housing for low income migrants was characterized as oversubscription and may have risks or possibly negative results. In interview, an official said: 'It is impossible for a city to deal with the issue of migrants, which should be the responsibility of the state. If we consider affordable housing for migrants, all the migrants from other provinces would come to Guangzhou.'

It is only particular "problems" and "needs" that are identified in such discourses. Affordable housing for lower income migrants has not found its way onto urban-villages regeneration agendas, neither is social exclusion challenging

marginalised urban inhabitants' right to city space considered as an issue. The dominant discourse pays at least rhetorical attention to social issues associated with the problems of the urban-villages. However, the official rhetorical attention to social issues is mobilized politically to legitimize projects, while the underlying and sometimes explicit objective is different. In fact, governmental regeneration projects are place-bound and spatially targeted regeneration schemes. While tackling threats to the quality of urban life, such as crime and poor public services, social exclusion was not considered a problem but as a good outcome and taken as granted in the planners' and policymakers' understanding of urban complex. In a meeting held by the municipal planning bureau about the regeneration of Huadi Village, for example, little attention was paid to migrants who may be priced out. Their presence was seen as undesirable, as all the participants in the meeting agreed with nods when the chief planner of Guangzhou Urban Planning & Design Survey Research Institute, a pseudo-public planning company, said, 'Now it is time for Guangzhou to replace underprivileged migrants with a more affluent and high-end skilled populace.'

Compared with migrants, villagers had a more privileged institutional position. Nevertheless, it does not mean that they fully participate in the decision making

process. Worse, they were emphasized to reinforce planners' cases. For example, in a meeting held by Panyu District Planning Bureau, in which planners, professors, architects, and party secretaries of street offices were invited to discuss the regeneration project of Nanjiao Village, the problems of the urban-villages and previous failed regeneration projects of some villages were reflected. These villages, e.g. Shipai Village, Xian Village, Yangji Village, Leide Village, and Sanyuanli Village, were, in their words, 'mature urban-villages in the city centre, ripe to be regenerated.' The impasse had stabilized into a novel question: why does the urban-village regeneration always fail? The planners said, 'The regeneration plans we made are practical and workable. But why have they failed, and cannot move from proposal to construction? This is because the implementation of the institutional reform of the urban-villages is in-complete.' The turmoil around the discourses is emblematic for the limits of the institutional powers in the urban setting to let land-related capital "flow" to where it was most effectively and efficiently utilized. The incomplete implementation of the IRP was emphasized as a way to shift the regulatory competence of the state onto 'irresponsible' and 'irrational' individuals (villagers) and hence 'irresponsible' and 'irrational' collectivity (villagers' committees).

In other meeting held by the municipal planning bureau about the regeneration of Huadi Village, at a crucial juncture about the conferral of beneficial subsidies, the planner could be heard in the conversation with the chief planner of planning bureau: 'Yes, the building capacity is higher than that designated in the comprehensive plan. But, […] this city owes peasants a lot.' Through indiscriminate use as a rhetorical device, the planner was trying to lead the negotiation by political-ethical claims for equality and justice of the historical disadvantages and unequal distribution of power, status, and economic well-being of villagers inflicted through a combination of policy and economic circumstances. Compensation for past injustice legitimized not only the planner's interpretation of regulations and building codes, but also the relegation of existing statutory norms, procedures, and regulatory constraints. In this narrative, villagers were relabelled from contenders (who have political power but are viewed negatively) or deviants to dependents (who are politically weak and evoke sympathy), and were positively constructed as a marginalized, excluded, and exploited group during the rapid urban expansion.

In many regeneration projects, such as that of Leide Village and Yangji Village, statutory planning such as building capacity defined in the comprehensive plan

was bypassed. This in turn meant that the government had no choice but to accept

the replacement of the comprehensive plan by the projects. As the Deputy Chief

of the Tianhe District Planning bureau explained, the building capacity of the new

plan is decided according to the maximum of profitability and economic

efficiency. First, they measure the resettlement compensations, construction costs,

various charges and administrative fees, such as land transfer fees, environmental

sanitation fees and construction taxes. From the perspective of developers, a

consequence of a huge investment is that the threshold price of per square metre

housing that can make the Leide Village project profitable cannot be lower than

RMB 6800. In other words, if the high density is not preferred by the municipal

government, it could lower the building capacity by loaning villagers mortgage.

This means the government shifts responsibility for risk of market uncertainty to

the real estate developers.

Figure 4.5 The regeneration project of Cuolong Village.

(Source: Jian Ke Architectural Design Institute of Guangdong Province)

Note: The same as the regeneration project of Huadi Village, the regeneration project of Cuolong Village is to replace all the villagers' houses, which are 2 to 3 storeys, with four high-rise residential towers. Each one is 16 storeys high.

Such high-rise schemes, which should be confined to central areas, were also developed on the city peripheries. Although it is certainly true that a portion of the villages in Guangzhou possess these attributes, the stereotype is often extended to individual village in which the stereotype does not hold. For example, in the case of Cuolong Village regeneration project, Xu Chigong, chief planner of Jian Ke Architectural Design Institute of Guangdong Province, convinced villagers by designing units with big balconies, each one the size of 20 m^2 (see figure 4.5). On

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the one hand, he told villagers that in the building regulation, the floor area of the

balcony is half counted. In this way, they can have more floor area. And the point

is, after the final building inspection is completed, they can have additional works

to the balconies, changing them into studios for rent. One the other hand, the

planner told the official of the planning bureau that the project is a vertical village.

Each villager has their own courtyard. As the chief planner said in interview,

'officials of the planning bureau know what we are doing, and it is an unspoken

consensus (Field notes, June 2007).'

Given the current urban enfranchisement structure, the scalar definition of

participation is on the cutting edge of what is acceptable within social and

regulatory spaces. It maintains some balance between capitalist's profit

orientation and a sense of obligation on local citizenship entitlement, which

derived from the historically and geographically socialist institutions. Not only

low-income housing for migrants but also the presence of villagers would drag

down surrounding property values. This is well illustrated in the extended

interview with the chief planner of the planning bureau, who is also quoted at the

beginning of this chapter:

'I have been the chief planner of the Planning Bureau since the Guangzhou Municipal Government launched the CBD plan in 1992. […] We commissioned a private developer to do a marketing survey. The conclusion is: the housing market of the CBD is for those people above the age of 35. Think about this: in what way can young people afford the price? As to those people above the age of 35, they have families and children. After they move to the CBD, they will think: "my child and peasants' children are attending the same school." The quality of school for peasant's children must be bad. Now we have three villages in the CBD. These villages and the CBD are in the same education area. You tell me whether or not should we regenerate these three villages? (Field notes, 5th December 2007)'

Every year during the Chinese New Year and the Labour Day in May, the two periods of time when the mobility of migrants is high, the mayor always makes more or less the same statement in public: "For migrant workers, Guangzhou is the friendliest city in China." This much-cited claim becomes an ironical quip as the exclusion of migrants in the urban-villages regeneration is naturalized. In seeking to address the needs of villagers, migrants are *de facto* the most visibly denuded victims. They got no benefit out of it. So far, they face forced hardships caused by land clearance, eviction, and steep rent increases. They are still bouncing around from village to village, struggling for living wages, job security, affordable housing, welfare provisions, migrants' rights, quality public education, alternative modes of transportation, etc. The eradication of existing migrant communities, at the expense of causing more geographically shifting slums and

shanty settlements – the long-term consequence – is not seen as an issue, since, as an official said in interview, 'there are still lots of "urban-villages" in Guangzhou (Field notes, November 2007).' The critique should by now be predictable: market-driven objectives become the leading trajectory of the urban-village regeneration projects, even in the areas where the residential and commercial demands are not so high. This is supported by the evidence that almost all the regeneration projects after 2008 target a similar form of regeneration agenda, stating that the village is going to be transformed into a CBD, with residential and commercial buildings which are more than 30 storeys high. In trying to stay a step ahead of the bulldozer, whether this market-oriented operation and large scale demolition will pave the way for gentrification is at best ignored or at worst tacitly accepted.

4.5 Conclusions.

Much of the literature surrounding urban regeneration has been, in an increasingly sophisticated way, about the matches and/or mismatches of the diagnosis and responses and which areas ought to be the focus of government policy (e.g. Lawless, 1989; Kleinman and Whitehead, 1999; Atkinson and Kintrea, 2001; Stone, 2002; Atkinson, 2004; Hughes, 2004; Parry et al., 2004; Diamond

and Liddle, 2005; Raco, 2005; Robert and Sykes, 2005; Thomson et al., 2006; Fuller and Geddes, 2008; Lees and Ley, 2008; Thomson, 2008; Rae 2009). Compared with this, whereas much has been written, both in Anglophone Chinese Studies and Chinese-language literature, about the phenomenon of the urban-villages in China and how to "solve" this "problem", less has been written about their social construction or the ways in which the urban-villages are defined and deployed as part of a labelling and problematizing of a range of unsightly urban forms. By opening up this inverted problematic, this chapter analyzed the processes of defining the urban-village and their relationship with those they seek to target by paying particular attention to the development of two governmental programmes (rationalities): institutional reform policy and "one village one strategy" principle. These two governmental programmes are crucial because they provide a microcosm to analyze the changing rationale and approach to the urban-villages regeneration in Guangzhou.

I argue that the essential thing is these two programmes attempted to rearticulate a kind of rationality, which was intrinsic to the hybrid nature of neoliberal policies and programmes. Political rationalities and techniques of government are shown to be intrinsically linked to shape the ways to define

identifiable and operable locales, entities, and persons. Nevertheless, the framing of the term "urban-village" in policy concepts is characterized by tensions to draw a dividing line between deserving entitlement and undeserving welfare, and difficulties relating to defining where and what ought to be regenerated, and who the objects and subjects of the regeneration are or ought to be. In line with neoliberal rhetoric, these two programmes highlighted individualized responsibility and incrementally drifted towards market-based options and operations, in which decisions were "driven by cost-benefit calculations rather than missions of service, equity, and social welfare (Brenner and Theodore, 2002; Leitner and Sheppard, 2002)."

The primary focus of the regeneration of the urban-villages was the environmental improvements of unsightly urban forms. Initially, it targeted individual locations rather than people. But it then extended throughout the whole city area. Within some forms of simplification and rationalisation, what we have here, then, is a policy design that targets a population (in this case, the villagers) along the line of an entrenched stereotype. What is inherent is a syllogism – that is, urban-villages are problematic and needed to be regenerated. Albeit with various levels in a spectrum ranging from very remote rural areas, through transitional

areas, to modern city, they are all deviant and hence needed to be regenerated, since all the 139 villages in Guangzhou are categorized as urban-villages. I argue that this syllogism stems from a failure to distinguish between the urban-village as a distinctive type of locality and the urban-village as a representing space – confounded by an inadequate conceptualization of the urban-village. In terms of this, the IRP is not merely an "empty institution" that remains no more than a paper agreement or a hollow shell with little social effect. It is in the production of this policy, the concept of urban-village is defined and deployed by the Guangzhou Municipal Government to label and problematize places which may not be problematic in the ways defined.

The policy makers did not aware that the state intervention scoped with the term "urban-village" is not part of the solution, but part of the problem and, in turn, creates further contradictions and crisis. The spatial confinement of "the problem of the urban-villages" conceals the structural dynamics of the city-region, the gap between the designated areas and their surrounding area, and larger societal problem. In forming the policy, administrative village was characterized as a key scale at which state policies and practices were delivered. However, the relevant scales are not defined outside of so-called "natural" components or

influences. The definition of where, what ought to be regenerated, and who the object/subject of the regeneration is or ought to be, is, as Harvey (2000: 75) says, "fundamental to the whole question of how to formulate a […] sensitive politics. It is through a dynamic interaction which what might be called 'natural process' scalars that human beings produce and instantiate their own scales for pursuing their own goals and organizing their collective behaviours." I concur with Harvey (1990: 419) who, in discussing the geographical imagination of space and time, notes that "the very act of naming geographical entities implies a power over them, most particularly over the way in which places, their inhabitants and their social functions get represented […] the identity of variegated peoples can be collapsed, shaped, and manipulated through the connotations and associations imposed upon a name by outsiders."

In writings of a generation ago, but which has influenced more recent work, Logan and Molotch (1989: 42) argue that "the politics of place is about whose interests government will serve. The growth machine dynamic is a crucial part of the process that pushes people from one residential location to another, from one city to another. Cities, regions, and states do not compete to please people; they compete to please capital – and the two activities are fundamentally different." In

advocating supposedly universal cures and one-best-way policy strategy, the market has become the invisible hand that determines where and how the urban-villages regeneration should occur. So far, in incorporating a wide range of individual self-interests, values, perspectives and arguments into policymaking, implementing and evaluation, justice-oriented rationales (such as need, care, welfare, social equality and equity) or the so-called soft values that cannot be quantified in economic terms (such as urban diversity, urban aesthetics, community cohesion and integrity of the society, and so on) get little if any attention in policy prescriptions; worse, in shifting the regeneration focus from the more problematic urban-villages to more cost-effective locations, they serve in prescribing "policy that does not address what is fundamentally at stake in these decisions (Gillroy, 1992: 218)."

The articulation of the urban-village regeneration is shaped by the limits of policy options at local level. Only the parts of existing institutional arrangements that do not contradict the policies and legal-political framework at the national level, or those that do not touch upon the fundamental essential, such as collective ownership, can be "creatively destroyed". I argue that it is in this process, the rationale shifts from "villages with problems" to "urban-villages as a problem";

the approach to the urban-village regeneration shifts from that of piecemeal to that of "one-size-fits-all". The limits of policy options function as means to legitimize the rationale of the institutional reform of the urban-villages. This is the process of the problematization through which certain issues were identified, while some other issues were kept off the agenda.

By conferring value on urban land through the definition of exchangeable land use rights, and conversely, by denigrating the unexchangeable collective land (HBL) as valueless, the urban-village regeneration gained its economic legitimization. This led to the constructing of the regeneration coalition adhering to market-oriented operations and large scale demolition. In terms of efficient use of land resources, this raises a series of questions about the understandings of both the regeneration of the urban-villages and the multiple and contradictory rights to the city. For example, the central issue of the urban-village regeneration is the relation of regeneration projects to existing planning instruments and regulations. On the one hand, relevant statutory norms, procedures, and regulatory constraints are relegated to a secondary and subordinated place. On the other hand, the government's regeneration always starts from those villages which are not located in the built area. The physical form of these villages is not the same as those in the

built areas. How are these project-based initiatives over regulatory plans and procedures achieved?

It is the responsibility of local authorities to accelerate the regeneration of the targeted villages by supporting public-private partnerships which develop and implement bottom-up strategies, assessed by the municipal planning bureau. Yet, there was much ambiguity about who these local authorities are. For example, in the official documents of the Guangzhou Municipal Government, it was never clear who these documents should give; villagers' committee was either elided or bracketed. In some meetings that I audited during the fieldwork from 2007 to 2008, it was party secretaries from street offices negotiating with the Guangzhou urban planning bureau. In other meetings, it was village leaders negotiating with higher authorities. This ambiguity brings to the fore the issue of making sense what Larner (2000) refers to as the "messy actualities" of the form of governance that characterize neoliberal projects. If the form and character of regeneration programmes are critically dependent on the institutional structures that underpin agenda formation, then, one critical issue left unaddressed in Chapter Four, on institutional reform, becomes crucial: how was institutional reform policy implemented? What is the outcome of the implementation of the IRP? Why has it

become an "empty institution" that remains no more than a paper agreement or a

hollow shell with little social effect? An examination of incomplete or on-going

schemes is relevant to debates over the direction that policy should take. This is

where I turn to in Chapter Five.

Chapter Five

The Janus-Faced Strategies of Local Authorities

and the Messy Form of Governance.

"Making people write things down and count them – register birth, report incomes, fill in censuses – is itself a kind of government of them, an incitement to individuals to construe their lives according to such norms(Rose and Miller, 1992: 187)."

5.1 Introduction.

In Chapter Four, I described that the institutional reform policy (IRP) since the late 1980s and particularly in 1992 had sought to restructure the terrain of governance by seeking to change the ways the urban-villages are governed. Among a range of competing programmes, the IRP was increasingly declared in rhetoric by the Guangzhou Municipal Government as a proactive and holistic mechanism when it found itself, in the process of regeneration, lacking both resources and authority/legitimacy to control effectively properties in the villages. Given the previous difficulties of government, of ensuring that regeneration projects moved from proposal to construction stages, it was assumed by the Guangzhou Municipal Government that the institutional reform would develop the "right" structure of governance to modify years of problems caused by wider structural forces beyond the regulatory reach of the Guangzhou Municipal

Government. This would, in turn, create an environment amenable to pave the way for appropriate patterns of intervention and foster the "right" types of physical transformation of the area to take place in the future.

Yet, as I argued, the IRP can be said to be a product of its historical context (the rural-urban dichotomy), in which the problematization of the subjects rests on the socially constructed images of issue and target groups, and therefore fits what Schneider and Ingram (1997) refer to as a "degenerative policy-making process" (see Chapter Four, section 4.2). The choice of policy elements and the underlying logic mirror the way that the "urban-villages problem" was framed. While the implementation of the IRP was seen by the Guangzhou Municipal Guangzhou as fragmentary, it results in an ambiguous governance of the regeneration of the urban-villages in Guangzhou, which is, in Larner's (2000) term, "messy" in form, and difficult to make sense of.

In this chapter, I draw out one critical issue left unaddressed in Chapter Four – the form of the governance of the regeneration of the urban-villages in Guangzhou. The second of my three empirical chapters deploys Janus metaphor to make sense of the characteristic/nature of the governing coalition that is entwined with, and

shaped by, the dynamics that have accompanied the implementation of the IRP. By paying attention to the micropolitics surrounding the IRP, it identifies the different ways in which problems and opportunities were defined by the two local authorities, i.e., street office and villagers' committee, and the ways in which members utilise resources to organize their activities and assign meanings to their own and others' actions. Based on the empirical materials collected in 2007/2008, the chapter illustrates the diverse forms of practice indicative of the tensions and disjunctures that led the IRP to its fragmentation and displacement.

The remainder of this chapter is divided into four sections. The first section outlines and evaluates the process of the implementation of the IRP, and its associated rationale and policy formation problems. The second section identifies a range of local-scale techniques of management that serve to "frame" actions at the local level. It pays particular attention to the development of two governing technologies – village cooperative's stock share and street office's informal deals on property relations and governance practices – analyzing how they cooperate as a technique of governmentality to bind economic activities, social lives, and individual conducts with property control, and turn ordinary activities and spaces into "sites of surveillance". The third section examines the covert circumvention,

complicity, and alliance of the key actors of the two organizational entities in the regime, i.e. officials of street offices and leaders/cadres of village cooperatives, in relation to the internal dynamics of coalition building and the mode of coordination across institutional boundaries. In the fourth section, I develop an argument that whereas the outcome of the implementation of the IRP was evaluated by the Guangzhou Municipal Government as fragmentary, displaced and incomplete, the actual reconfiguration of the new governance structures expresses the "natural" outcomes of an ongoing renegotiation amongst the different levels of government to maintain legitimacy, social cohesion and sufficient political support. Ironically, it is this very actual reconfiguration of local authorities that is most suited to meet governmental agendas.

5.2 The Flawed Policy Design of the Institutional Reform Policy of the Urban-Villages.

After the deployment of the household responsibility system (HRS) and the joint-stock system (JSS) in Yangji Village was proved to be economically successful and politically correct, in 1987, eleven other villages in Tianhe District, including Shipai Village, quickly followed up (see Chapter Two, section 2.2). These two grassroots experimentations, which were *ipso facto* less deliberately

designed from above than a skilfully improvised technology of governing from

below, were invented directly in response to a surge of rural lawlessness in the

changing socioeconomic conditions. In 1997, these two grassroots

experimentations were evaluated by the Guangzhou Municipal Government as

workable and could be institutionalized as a basis of the government policy to

deal with the weak governance of the villages in Guangzhou. Later in 1997,

Shipai Village was announced by the Guangzhou Municipal Government, as a

pilot, to spearhead an institutional reform experiment to convert the *hukou* of the

villagers of Shipai Village from peasant to non-peasant, and transform the

economic entity of Shipai Village from village collective into shareholding

cooperative. The entitlement of the management, administration, and ownership

of the collectively owned properties of Shipai Village were transformed from the

Shipai Villagers' Committee to the Sanjun Economic Cooperative, whose stocks

were shared by the collective stockholding cooperatives of Shipai Village and

individual stockholders who were villagers of Shipai Village. Between 1999 and

2000, the Guangzhou Municipal Government further designated eleven villages in

Tianhe District which had deployed the HRS and JSS, and seven other villages in

Tianhe District, to launch a trial and error experiment on this institutional reform

plan.

Between 2000 and 2002, with the backdrop that the problem of the urban-villages was increasingly recognized by both the society and the Guangzhou Municipal Government, this institutional reform experiment was seen by the Guangzhou Municipal Government as "mature enough" to be promoted to all the villages in Guangzhou. Written in the form of "suggestions", an official document, "Some Suggestions Pertaining to the Institutional Reform of the 'Urban-Villages' in Guangzhou", also known as Document No. 17, was enacted jointly by the Guangzhou Municipal Government and the CCP Guangzhou Committee on 24th May, 2002. The "17th Document", hereafter, refers to this particular policy. It is a key document to the institutional reform policy (IRP) of the urban-villages.

In this key document, four steps to transfer the governance arrangements of people and things, from rural-based institutions to urban-based institutions, were envisioned to be able to eradicate the rural/urban dichotomy that resulted in the structural problem of the regeneration of the urban-villages. The four steps are:

(1) Transforming the hukou of all the villagers in the urban area from peasant to non-peasant.

(2) Transforming collectively owned lands into state owned lands.

(3) Abolishing villagers' committees, with the transforming of village economic

cooperatives and township collective economic entities into shareholding

cooperatives.

(4) Setting up street offices and neighbourhood committees to take over village

governance.

Through the redefinition of the elements of village entity in legal language,

the four steps of the IRP served as a toolkit to dismantle earlier political

settlements and their form of institutionalization (welfare, forms of local

citizenship, villagers' committee), and simultaneously undermine existing

configurations of public life and local social relations and the link between the two.

Chan Chengming, Vice Chief of the Bureau of Urban Utilities and Landscaping of

the Guangzhou Municipality, explained in interview:

'Though living in the city proper and leading a modern life, a villagers'
social and economic life was supported by a special network based on
family or blood relations. The aim of this policy was to break the old
social network in villages, replacing it with modern administration and
management[58].'

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[58] Interview with Chan Chengming on 13th September 2007.

One of the aims of the 17th Document is to strip-back the social work of the villagers' committees to those of street offices and neighbourhood committees, and reduce the villagers' committees to economic entities. To underpin the rationale and legitimacy of this aim, the 17th Document pinched the principle of "separation of the administrative body from the enterprise" enacted by the central government in the Fifteenth National Congress in 1997[59]. As stated in the document, "according to the principle of separation of the administrative body from the enterprise, the villagers' committee is defined as 'not an economical entity' and hence should be transformed into an economical entity." Rather than a higher level discourse setting the boundaries and basic assumptions, to rationalize opportunistically the policy design, this principle functioned as less a rationale than a convenient rhetoric for doing whatever is politically expedient. In interview, Xion JingJung, explained:

'Why did we use this principle as the base for the institutional reform of the urban-villages? This is because we had to use words that people can understand. In other words, this principle is enacted by the central government. This provides us a good way to legitimize this policy.

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[59] Framed in a kind of contrast between state and market, the aim of the "separation of the administrative body from the enterprise" principle is to ban formal involvement of the administrative body in business for the sake of anti-corruption on the one hand, and, on the other hand, to enhance economic incentives and promote the efficient production of state owned enterprises (SOEs).

However, once you intend to delve into it seriously, you will find there is no logical connection between the two[60].'

The pattern and logics of the IRP, of course, was not underpinned by this fragile link between the "separation of the administrative body from the enterprise" principle and the 17th Document. The 17th Document, written in the form of "suggestions", was a non legislative form of regulation, rather than a normal policy approved by the People's Congress. Nevertheless, it was compulsory and gained its legitimacy because it was enacted jointly by the Guangzhou Municipal Government and the CCP Guangzhou Committee. As Xion Jingjung explained in interview:

'The 17th Document is special because it is enacted jointly by the Guangzhou Municipal Government and the CCP Guangzhou Committee. In fact, this document does not even have the status of an administrative regulation. It falls short of the status of "law". No one knows the exact legal implications either. However, it is not important. After all, who enacts this document matters[61]'

From the perspective of the Guangzhou Municipal Government, the design of the IRP established incentives for villagers, who are target population, to participate because it would distribute to local villagers some financial benefits

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[60] Interview with Xion Jingjung on 15th November 2007.
[61] Ibid.

and offer them the right to access urban social and economic services. The Guangzhou Municipal Government assumed that by transferring the governance arrangements of people and things of the urban-villages, from rural-based institutions to urban-based institutions, it could establish continuity in land administration and management in the urban area, and, in turn, bring all the HBL under its control. However, instead of meshing smoothly and with complete malleability in the ideal schemes of the programmatic logic, as the policymakers envisioned, the implementation of the IRP was not without problems. During an interview, the leader of Shipai Village showed me a document of the Shipai Villagers' Committee, written before the Shipai Village was announced by the Guangzhou Municipal Government as a pilot to the institutional reform in 1997. In this document, the Shipai Villagers' Committee made a statement to the Guangzhou Municipal Government that:

> "We think, though the villagers of Shipai Village have been leading an urban life, their aptitude, propensity, perception, and way of living, are still rural. […] Besides, the self-governing of villagers' committee has been accepted by villagers and works well." (Field notes, May 2006)

In February 2001, Chang Jiang-Hao, the leader of Yangji Village, together with the other ten village leaders (who were also representatives of the People's

Congress of Guangzhou), argued in the People's Congress Meeting that

> 'in the governmental institutional reform policy, the HBL is stipulated to be transformed from collectively owned land to state owned land. Villagers are asked to pay the land transfer fee. However, neither should the transformation of HBL be seen as a commercial transaction, nor should the government ask villagers to pay the land transfer fee, because there is no commercial transaction at all[62]!'

Villagers also had an incentive not to enrol in the urban social insurance system. In 2003, there were 138 villages that had implemented this policy, with 380,000 villagers changing their census from peasant to non-peasant. However, only a small percentage of villagers enjoyed urban social welfare. For instance, in Tianhe District, only 2409 out of 76209 villagers enjoyed urban social welfare. In Baiyun District, there were 13,000 villagers, but only villagers of Sanyuanli Village (1400 villagers) enjoyed urban social welfare. The implications of this policy made them think that they were not treated as targets deserving of service but mere objects to be manipulated for the government's purposes. In interview, a villager said without hesitation: 'the reform would not be realized if it was put to vote. We all know this. What benefit can we have from the reform? Besides, we already think we are urban (Field notes, June 2006).'

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[62] *Southern Metropolitan Daily*, 13 April 2001.

The institutional reform was neither an issue at stake in the perception of the villagers' committees nor seen as beneficial for the villagers. That they have to pay for what they already owned confused villagers because, in their perception, the use right of the HBL is a right entitled by the Constitution. Nevertheless, one village after another did comply, a process undertaken by the villagers' committees. Dong Chijung, the leader of Shipai Village, who was the party secretary of the Shipai Street Office at that moment, retrospected in interview:

> 'The annulment and reform of the institution of village were implemented partly by force, under the pressure of the Party. Those villagers all agreed with the annulment and the reform of the institution of village after the ideological undertaking[63].'

As to the land transformation, in 2004, at least 70% of the HBL in Guangzhou were announced by the Guangzhou Municipal Government to have been transformed from collectively owned land into state owned land. In the actual practices, however, these lands were transformed on paper, with a short endorsement appended at the end of the document: "land transfer fee unpaid." This means those lands already transformed into state owned lands still have

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[63] Interview with Dong Chijung on 11th June 2006.

barriers to enter into the land market. In interview, the recall of Xion Jingjung, an

officer in the State Land Resources & Urban Housing Property Management

Bureau, gave a sketch to the contour of the implementation process of the IRP.

'It is impossible to ask those villagers to pay the [land transfer] fee. For those villagers, it is neither understandable nor practical. They think that the lands are theirs in the first place. Why they have to pay an extra fee to prove their ownership again? At the end, we came to this strategy. We achieve the task assigned by our boss to change villagers' certificate of collectively owned land into certificate of state owned land. The lands have been transferred from that of collectively owned to state owned in document[64].'

While villagers' committees felt they that had no choice but to comply and

accept the compulsory rearrangement, to be repealed or transferred into "village

cooperatives", public services (such as hygiene, security, and education), social

works (such as family planning, and birth control), and welfare of elders (such as

medical care and old age pensions), which should be transferred from villagers'

committees to neighbourhood committees and street offices, were still maintained

by village cooperatives and delivered on the basis of the governing formation of

the HRS and JSS. In February 2007, Chang Jianghao, the leader of Yangji Village,

again argued in the Two Meetings:

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[64] Interview with Xion Jingjung on 14th December 2007.

"After the implementation of the IRP, we are not agricultural, not industrial, neither commercial, nor residential. We are neither fish nor fowl! The government transfers us from agricultural to non-agricultural. However, the public funding does not cover our villages. Our cooperatives have to pay tax. However, we still have to fund public services by ourselves. It is not fair![65]"

In seeking to create a new development agency for regeneration, the Guangzhou Municipal Government signalled that the agents and actors of the village communities which, as existing locally based authorities, already had the power in their hand, were not identified/defined as the "right" local authorities. However, except for the existing rural taxation – known as "*santi wutong*" (three collections and five unified management)[66] – the urban government and the services provided by it are nonetheless irrelevant for the villagers. This places an onus on the Guangzhou Municipal Government and provides a space for the villagers' committee to negotiate with the Guangzhou Municipal Government – either the government provides resources in ways that match the rhetoric contained in the 17th Document, or the government accepts that the reform works

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[65] *Southern Metropolitan Daily*, 16 February 2007.

[66] "Three collections and five unified management" refers to the three collections by the village including collective investments, welfare, and cadre compensation; the five collections by townships include levies for schools, family planning, veteran support, militia, and road construction and maintenance. See Benewick et al., 2004: 16.

upon pre-existing bounds of allegiance. This dilemma opens up spaces for

villagers' committees, as a regeneration agency, with opportunities to influence

and shape regeneration agendas and programmes in a variety of ways not

available to similar agencies operating in less buoyant regions such as those in the

old city area.

5.3 From Weak Governance to Over-Presence Governance.

Originally raised directly in response to a surge of crisis in rural authority after

decollectivization (Kelliher, 1997), a villagers' committee, which was created to

replace production brigade and production team after the denunciation of the

people's commune in the early 1980s, is an entity with an ambiguous legal status[67].

According to the Constitution, introduced in 1982, and Organic Law, introduced

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[67] It would be helpful to clarify certain terminology. Village entity has been renamed and transformed over time – from people's commune, brigade enterprise, township and village enterprises (TVEs), villagers' committee, to village cooperative. A village cooperative is not a single firm but made up of several production teams (later after the demolition of People's Commune in 1980 reformed as "she", or village administrative councils), each with clearly defined governing boundaries and its independent economic and administrative structure. Production teams are alliances of companies centring around a villagers' committee. Production teams hold each other's share and deal with each other on a preferential basis. In the context of institutional reform and discursive adjustment, because "natural village", "villagers' group", "administrative village", and "township" were assumed to vary together or are meant to refer to the same thing, these terms were often used interchangeably in colloquial speech to indicate the specific collectivity of a village.

in 1998, a villagers' committee is not defined as a limb of the government, but a self-governing collective economic organization comprising a social group with the identity of peasant (those who are with agricultural *hukou*)[68]. Leaders and officials in a villagers' committee are not lowest-level agents within the formal government structure. Village leaders are elected directly by the villagers – namely, the members of the collective entity – through village-level elections (the only election in China) and hence empowered to speak and act in the name of a territory. A villagers' committee is not merely an economic actor and a highly administrative self-governing coalition. It is also a political, cultural, and conjugal coalition. From this perspective, village leaders and officials are the lowest-level agents of the Communist Party.

While urban residents relied more on their work unit than on the neighbourhood committees and street offices for their subsistence, villagers were more dependent on the villagers' committees for their livelihood. In the village economy underpinned by the HRS and JSS, a portion of the village's revenues is redistributed to locally born residents as annual payments. Part of it is invested in

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[68] Article 111, "The neighbourhood committee or villagers' committee which the cities and countrysides set up according to resident's residence is the mass autonomy organization in the basic unit."

improving the local infrastructure such as water, electricity, and roads. Part of it is

devoted to substantial improvements in social services. The concept of "stock" of

the joined stock system was adopted not in a general sense in a market but as a

way to refer to the distribution of individual dividends. Generally, villages had

different stock distribution manners. Individual dividends were based on criteria

such as occupation, administrative rank, job performance, gender, loyalty and

political connections. Villagers who were seen as having earned a position of

respect, of doing good things for the village, or considered to be meritorious, can

have more individual dividend. Individual dividend could not be bequeathed,

granted, and transferred.

Decisions about who qualifies for a share and to what degree are clearly of

considerable importance. This influences the decision-making processes within

family life, professional life, and married life. In some villages, such as Shipai

Village and Tangxia Village, the distribution manner is based on the current

patriarchal cultural context: that is, a male can have more individual dividend than

a female. In some villages, such as Tangxia Village, if a female villager marries a

guy whose *hukou* is not registered in Tangxia Village, she has to change the place

of her *hukou* registration from Tangxia Village to where her husband registers his

hukou. And she will be dismissed from her individual dividend in Tangxia Village.

As a consequence, endogamy (where villagers marry each other inside their own villages) and uxorilocal marriage (where the husband moves to the wife's village in contrast to the traditional custom of the wife transferring to the husband's place of residence) has become the dominant preference. Villagers tend to select marriage partners that enable them to register *hukou* in the same village, as a way to preserve their own individual dividend.

In the 17th Document, villagers' committee is defined as governmental and as such should not be in charge of economic activities. Villagers' committees were urged and pressured to change from their multifunctional role as producers, redistributors, regulators and providers of social services to become more clearly focused on their economic role. Former villagers' committees, which managed the collective economy, was transformed into joint-stock cooperatives whose stocks were shared by collective corporate stockholder and individual stockholders. Distributional rules after the implementation of the IRP were further set locally and varied accordingly from one village to the next. In the case of Shipai Village, the stock distribution is fixed according to the socio-demographic condition in 1994. Those villagers who change place of *hukou* registration can still keep the

stock. Whereas those villagers, who are born after 1994, are not acquired a share

of stock, stock can be bequeathed, granted, and transferred. In Sanyuanli Village

and Tangdong Village, the stock distribution manner is rather different. For

example, a new born child has five points. The point is added when this child

grows up. When the child is 16 years old, he or she would have 30 points.

Whether a person is eligible to share the stocks depends on his or her identity.

Every year the village would have new born children. It seems the village has to

add new stocks. But in fact, the stock distribution manner in these two villages is

less a concept of stock in the common sense than a simplified saying of a numeral

in an algebraic expression; that is, the total wealth of the village, or the numerator,

is the same. It is just the social-demographic composition of villagers, or the

denominator, is different. In this latter example, the distribution manner is rather

complex.

As the approach of stockshare was adopted by the villages in Guangzhou, it

became increasingly contextualized. Managerial control over various recalcitrant

interests, excluding from access to decision making processes in the village

economy and reducing a proportion of individual dividend became the outcomes

of villagers' own conduct. What conduct should be counted as a factor to the

individual dividend calculation is through negotiation and it is different from village to village. For example, those villagers who commit crimes in some villages (such as Sanynanli Village where the drug issue is critical), or those villagers who do not participate in activities held by their villagers' committees (such as the learning program held by the villagers' committee in Shipai Village), would be punished by abating their individual dividends. This also applies to family control, to punish those villagers who have illegitimate children.

This method of calculation links individual conducts, private decisions, and public objectives in a new way. Individual dividend is bound with the controlling of conduct. The village committees became shareholder-based cooperatives, governing by calculation, dealing with social, economic, infrastructural, environmental or other matters. As self-managing organizations, villagers' committees determined for themselves the rules and norms that they would abide by in their day-to-day practice. Villagers themselves enforced these norms. Other villagers checked up on their building, and this became evidence of "good performance".

After the implementation of the IRP, a raft of techniques was developed for

managing a new relationship between street offices and villagers' committees. Street office would like to institutionalize by the technology of monitoring on the number of migrants in each leasing building. Villagers, as landlords, were asked by the street office being responsible for migrants' registration. Villagers have to document migrants' information, including birth, job, *hukou*, and, marriage. Based on this information, street office charges administrative toll of leasing from villagers. However, for street office, it is difficult to clarify those buildings leasing for migrants and those villagers themselves live. Villagers are forced to act as intermediate targets to influence other targets (migrants). This structures the actions of villagers and migrants.

While village cooperatives succeed in inventing a range of formal/informal techniques of management to bind economic activities, social lives, and individual conducts with property control, street offices also developed local solution to local problems. Street offices not only mobilized a set of formal but limited technologies of governing revolving around building permission, but also bypassed statutory regulations and institutional bodies. Inter alia, absorbing existing quasi-legal or extralegal practices becomes a lever for street offices to gain leadership. Village cadres were assigned as officials in the street offices or

neighbourhood committees to do jobs relating to the village governance, e.g., the positions in the Floating Population and Rental Housing Management Office. They were employed by the street offices, with the salaries paid jointly by the street office and village cooperative, about 1300 RMB per month in 2007. It was quite obvious that absorbing village cadres into street office and neighbourhood committees has multiple benefits in village governance. It saved street offices the trouble to hire in-house staffs to carry out the tasks, which requires local and endogenous knowledge and practice to identify mechanisms through which policy delivery and implementation can be made more effectively.

In contrast to a villagers' committee, a street offices, as a sub-district government, is defined as a limb of the government. It is responsible for the provision of a variety of public and social services for general residents which include fire and crime patrols, marriage registration, household registration, sanitation, supervision of delinquents, nurseries, recreational and cultural activities, family planning and mediation, management of park and public toilets, and so forth. The division of high position and low position coalitions is set according to the specific administration levels to which the coalescing partners belong. Under the nomenklatura system (*bian zhi*), in which the upper level

governments exercise authority over the appointments of party cadres and government officials, including promotion, dismissal, and transfer (Burns, 1987; Chan, 2004; Heilmann and Kirchberger, 2000), party secretaries of the Street offices are not elected locally by the constituency but assigned by the upper level governments on the basis of their economic performance (Burns, 1987; Heilmann and Kirchberger, 2000; Huang, 1996; 2002; Ma and Wu, 2005). Given this "party controls the cadres" system, what matters for leaders of street offices is economic performance which in turn could be their political capital to draw the attention of the upper level governments and hence obtain promotion. By becoming a development agency, the street offices are seen as a focus around which new partnerships and regimes may develop.

Later in Chapter Six, I will discuss how villagers conduct themselves differently than is intended by this "over-presence" governance. What is involved is the production of self-producing subjects – subjects whose own self-production is prone to reversals and appropriations. In closing this section, I would argue that from a governmentality perspective, the complicity and covert circumvention of local authorities (street office and villagers' committee) operate as over-present governance. It focuses upon the governmental technologies that serve to "frame"

actions at the local level. It outlines the institutional reform policy (IRP) and surrounding governmental programmes that have attempted to reconstitute socially excluded communities, the spaces within they live, and how they live their lives. It does this by restructuring how they are governed and how they govern themselves and others. All acts, including but not limited to explicit acts of direct state intervention, resulted in local inhabitants learning to police themselves accordingly by managing their mobility, visibility, and behaviour. Therefore, everyday acts (e.g. negative statements about the urban-villages by "outsiders") are equally as important as formal acts of policing mandated by law. As Hiemstra (2010) argues, in the context of discussing the "immigrant illegality" in Colorado, this operates as a technique of governmentality and turns ordinary activities and spaces into "sites of surveillance".

5.4 Who Governs the Village? Multi-Agency Governance or Multiple Regimes?

In a way, the abovementioned regime is amorphous and difficult to define, since the form and extent of the implementation of the IRP is highly variegated and context-dependent. It differs greatly from village to village and is constantly evolving in relation to its spatiotemporal context, to the extent that even the

Guangzhou Municipal Government did not know exactly which organization was the governing body. An evidence of this is the addressee in many of the official documents of the Guangzhou Municipal Government relating to the urban-villages. In some documents, street office was the addressee. In some other documents, both street office and villagers' committee were the addressees. In yet some other documents, though these two local authorities were both the addressees, villagers' committee was written with a bracket in the official documents. The bracket of the villagers' committee encapsulated the complexity and ambiguity of the implementation of the IRP.

The uneven implementation of the policy can be linked to the differing socio-spatial characteristics of villages or their specific social or economic concerns. In some villages, the institutional reform works upon pre-existing bounds of allegiance at local level, as a way to reduce the scope for local resistance. In other words, the street office and villagers' committee are *de facto* the same group of people, dealing with the same duties. In a prosperous village, such as Shipai Village, the party secretaries headed the economic management committee (or its equivalent by some other name), which oversaw all the collective cooperatives in the village. The composition of the economic

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management committee was identical to that of the villagers' committee. After the implementation of the IRP, one street office and five neighbourhood committees were set up. The five neighbourhood committee, which comprised ten residential groups, were the former five production teams which comprised former ten economic communes. What differs before and after the implementation of the IRP was only the title of the entity. Rather than transforming from one pure form to another, it is more likely an ongoing process involving the re-composition and reconstitution of inherited institutions. In practice, it is a reasonable consequence that the joint-stock cooperative is still responsible for the finance of neighbourhood committees. In reality, except for some personal who complained that the extra paper works influenced their routines, most of the villagers and officials accepted "peacefully" the institutional change. It is a change that, in the words of the leader of Shipai Village, "did not change too much".

In some other villages, such as Yangji Village, the uneven implementation of the IRP stemmed from the inconsistency of governmental administration at district level. In 1988, Yanji Village was under the jurisdiction of Dongshan District. In 1993, its jurisdiction was transferred to Shahe Town, which was later upgraded as Tianhe District (see figure 5.1). After Tianhe CBD was planned and

the Guangzhou Avenue was built in 1985, the HBL of Yangji Village located at the fringe of Tianhe District and Donshan District was geographically segregated from Tianhe District area by Guangzhou Avenue. As described in the words of an official in the Maihua Street Office: 'the policemen of Tianhe district don't want to go there. They think Yangji village belongs to Yuexu District and Maihua Street.' Given this, in August 2005, Yangji Village was administratively transferred from Tianhe District to Donshan District and then Yuexiu District when Donshan District and Yuexiu District were annexed in October 2005. The redistribution of Yangji Village was announced by the Guangzhou Municipal Government as for the good of the governance of the village itself. However, as shown in the chronology, it was part of the administrative reform project which consolidated two contiguous districts, i.e. Dongxian District and Yuexio District. It was announced by the Guangzhou Municipal Government that it was for the reason to save costs and manpower of the government, and to solve the issue that these two districts were too small for a sustainable development. This was a by-product of the Guangzhou Municipal Government's project on a broader scale to transfer the two economic and technological development zones, i.e. Luogang and Nanxia, into administrative districts.

Figure 5.1 The administrative districts redistribution of Guangzhou Municipality.

before 1985

1. Yuexiu
2. Dongshan
3. Liwan
4. Fangcun
5. Tianhe
6. Haizhu

after 1986

1. Yuexiu
2. Dongshan
3. Liwan
4. Fangcun
5. Tianhe
6. Haizhu

after 2005

1. Yuexiu
2. Liwan
3. Haizhou
4. Tianhe

Chronology of the administrative districts redistribution of Guangzhou Municipality	
2002	The Guangzhou Municipal Government proposed the preliminary concept to transfer the two economic and technological development zones, i.e. Rogang and Nanxia, into administrative districts.
2003	The Guangzhou Municipal government elaborated this concept into the redistribution of all the districts in the city. The plan was submitted to the State Council for approval.
2004, 06	The Ministry of Civil Affairs gave a comment to keep the total number of the districts and suggested the Guangzhou Municipal Government to combine some smaller districts in the old city area.
2004, 07	The Guangzhou Municipal Government proposed the plan: a.) Combining the Dongxian District and Yuexio District; b.) combining the Fangcun District and Liyuan District; c.) set up Rogang District and Nanxia District; d.) adjusting the administrative boundary of the districts of the old city area.
2004, 07	The official document "The Plea of the Adjustment of the Administrative Districts of Guangzhou City" was proposed formally to Guangdong Province Government.
2004, 09	Province Government proposed the document to the state council for approval.
2005, 04	The administrative districts redistribution plan was approved by the state council.
2005, 10	Dongxian District and Yuexio District, Liyuan District and Fangcun District were annexed.

Figure 5.2 The administrative jurisdictions of the three street offices.
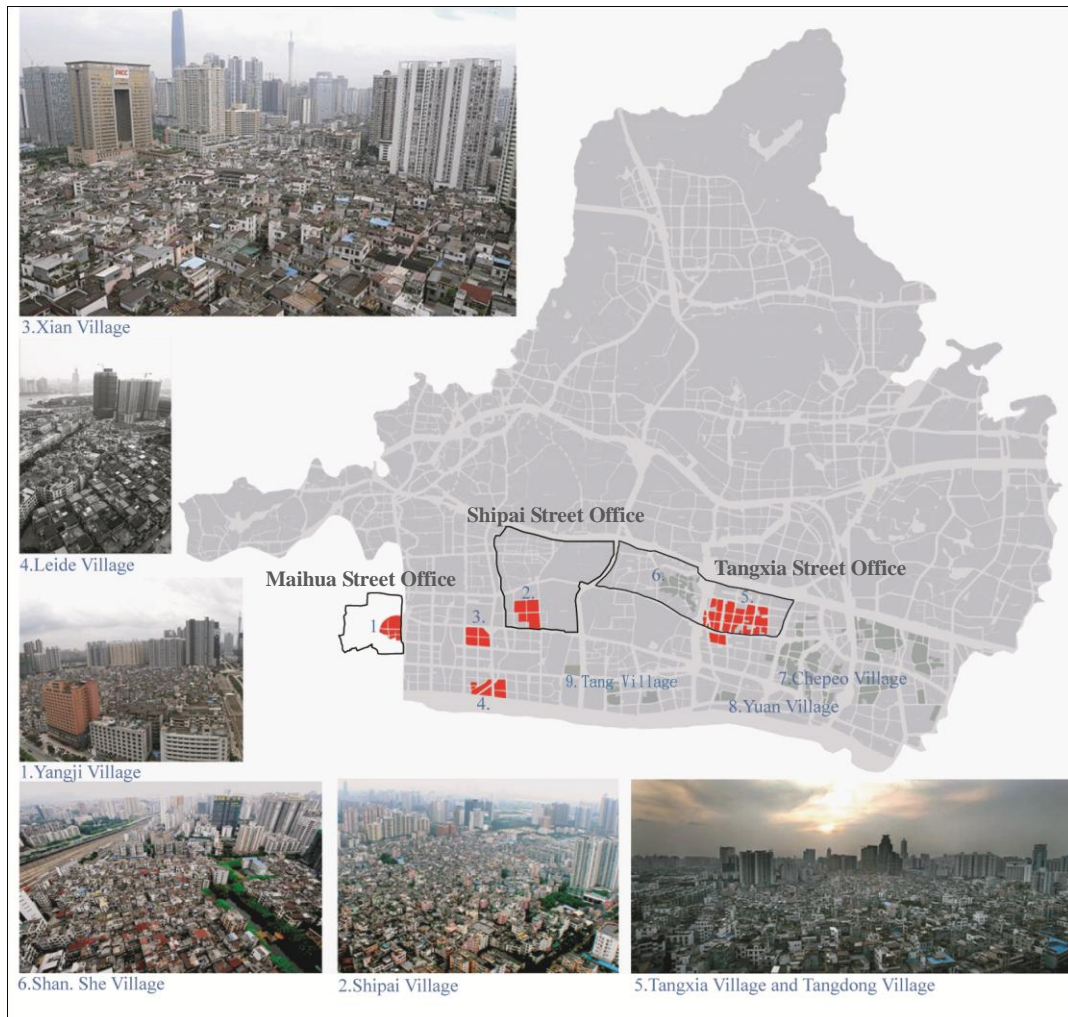
When higher level government was administratively upgraded from county-level municipality to district level municipality, administratively and politically, Yangji Village illustrates how changes in local governance involved the reshuffling of power relations among various administrative and geographical scales. When the IRP was implemented in 2002, the governance of the 0.29 km^2 Yangji Village, with its 5253 villagers and about ten thousand migrants, was taken over by Tianhenan Street Office in Tianhe District. However, in 2005, it was

transferred from Tianhenan Street Office in Tianhe District to Maihua Street

Office in Yuexiu District. Compared with street office, villagers' committee can

more effectively communicate to villagers. In interview, the party commissioner

of the Maihua Street Office described, in an oblique way, his relationship with

Chang Jianghao, the leader of Yangji Village:

'The management and governance of the urban-village are very difficult. Those villagers still think they are peasants. They don't work at all. They still live by house leasing. Besides, if they need help, they still go to their ex-village leader. She [Chang Jianghao] has a high position in the village. This is why we also give her a position in our *danwei*. […] All the cadres in the neighbourhood committee, street office, and cooperative are the same cadres in the villagers' committee. Everything can be dealt with easily[69].'

In yet some other villages, the situation was more complex than simple

categorization might suggest. For instance, after the implementation of the IRP,

the governance of Tangxia Village and Tangdong Village was taken over by

Tangxia Street Office. In Tangxia Village, together with Tangdong Village, there

were about 7000 buildings, about 40,000 flats. Most of these buildings are four to

eight storeys high. Tangxia Street had the largest migrant population in Tianhe

District, most of them living in Tangxia Village and Tangdong Village. The exact

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[69] Interview with Song Wenxian on 22nd March 2007.

population data of residents was therefore inconsistent. Proximately a population of 15,000 is the data from the Office of Family Planning in the Tangxia Village Cooperative, proximately 40,000 was the data from the party secretary of the Tangxia Street Office, and proximately 140,000 was the data in terms of the jurisdiction of the Tangxia Street office. If it is a settlement with a population of 40,000, it is a concept of town, rather than a village. If the number 40,000 is correct, all these 40,000 people live in the 1.7 km^2 Tangxia Village, and there is only one police station.

Taking over the governance of these two villages seems beyond the ability of the Tiangxia Street Office. Yet, a general solution was quickly arrived at by the negotiation of these two local authorities in this urban-village: That is, the village cooperatives were in charge of the governance and social works of their villagers. The Tangxia Street Office and neighbourhood committees were in charge of those of the migrants. All these three organizations have their own offices for family control. The one in the village cooperative was in charge of the family control of villagers. The family control of the migrants residing in Tangxia Village and Tangdong Village was managed by the Office for Family Control in the Tangxia Street Office. Carried with this seemingly blunting solution was a more subtle

realignment in the practice of governance.

The tensions between street offices and village cooperatives can be palpable by taking a look at how the governmental project of "Constructing a National Sanitary City" in 2007 was launched in Tangxia Village and Tangdong Village. In order to be entitled as a "National Sanitary City", in 2007, the Guangzhou Municipal Government launched many programmes to cleanse the backward and uncivil elements in the urban-villages. The programmes were mainly about improving the sanitary conditions of the urban-villages. However, the programmes also included leasing properties and migrants registration, enhancing public security, curbing illegal building constructions, and banning informal and illegal economic activities. As the lowest-level government governing Tangxia Village and Tangdong Village, the officials in the Tangxia Street Office found that they were in the position to execute the programmes of the higher-level governments. In executing these programmes, they were endowed with responsibility without power and resources. They would rather calculate this task assigned by the municipal government as a political risk than a political opportunity. In interview, the party secretary of the Tangxia street office interpreted the allocation of discretion from his point of view:

'According to the [Organic] Law, a street office is not a level of government but an agency of the government. Its task is to inform, report, and assist the upper level government [district government]. Nevertheless, because of the area-based governance principle, the task of the [Tangxia] street office changes from liaising with government to implementing district government's policy. Every department of the government asks the [Tangxia] street office to organize people and implement their policies. It becomes the [Tangxia] street office asking help from those departments which should implement the policy[70].'

While the Tangxia Street Office was lack of resources to execute the programmes, the Tangxia Village Cooperative and Tangdong Village Cooperative hired about 100 security personnel to maintain public security and handle petty crimes, and 40 sweepers to clean domestic rubbish, waste, and piles of litter in the narrow alleys. From the villagers' committee's point of view, the Tangxia Street Offices could manage in name only. The leader of Tangdong Village Cooperative explained to me during the interview:

'You ask me if the village cooperative has been at variance with neighbourhood committees or the street office? Actually, there is none. This is because the neighbourhood committee prefers doing nothing. Besides, we know how to deal with them. For instance, they should be in charge of some social works. Then we let the neighbourhood committee to be in charge of those works. They didn't have their own offices. We gave them places as their offices. We also proffered some small benefits for them to maintain their running, such as parking lots[71].'

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[70] Interview with Wang Ming on 15th August 2007.

[71] Interview with Li Guogiang on 13th December 2007.

In this narrative, the village cooperative's primary objective was to continue to govern the village according to its own criteria of good practice. As a mass autonomy organization, it must find ways of cooperating with the street office. The village cooperatives avoid doing anything that may upset the delicate governing balance in the villages. Villagers' committees adopted alternative strategies, rather than ignoring the new rearrangement, recklessly refusing to consider whether their actions are permitted or not, making explicit its non-co-operation, or arguing its non-compliance is lawful. In the process to forge new relationships, actors attempted to ensure challenges do not occur (Cooper, 1996: 262).

According to the Organic Law on Urban Residents' Committee, the Guangzhou Municipal Government should be responsible for providing a budget, an office and a salary to each neighbourhood committee. Nevertheless, in reality, many of the neighbourhood committees in Tangxia Village and Tangdong Villages were, at least partially, reliant on village cooperatives' funds to execute their mandates. Some of the buildings that house the offices of neighbourhood committees were also provided by the villagers' committees. Street offices were

relatively resource-poor, drawing on the relative stability and reliability of these groups. Its personnel are on the payroll of the district government, but it must raise funds for its operation. It relies on locally situated social relations to make their operations viable. From this angle, it is the street office that would like to act as a strong leader and expand its influence. The outcome is meant to minimize cost and maximize efficiency of village governance. Street office and village cooperative adapt to each other, with only limited occasions of severe conflict. They form a relative stable coalition through which village governance takes place.

While the characteristic/nature of the governing coalition in any given context remains contingent, certain broad tendencies can be identified. The task of the Guangzhou Municipal Government was to establish a continuity, in both a vertical and a horizontal direction. This means while the horizontal modes of co-ordination between agencies are encouraged, the vertical relations of power are nonetheless salient. In rearticulating the local governance regime, though street office and village cooperative form a relatively stable coalition through which village governance takes place, both street office and village cooperative have an intention to take the lead in constructing local regimes, agendas and

partnerships. On the one hand, the government tends to place street office-led development regimes in a stronger position to influence the form and character of the development that takes place. On the other hand, local agencies, be they street office or village cooperative., are "strongly suggested" by the planning authority to form development partnership and network with certain specific private developers affiliated with different levels of government and/or quasi-public development companies such as planning institutes.

In some cases, local activities run ahead of district authorities. For example, in the following quotes, the party secretary of Tangxia street office was aware of, and realistic about, villagers' situation regarding building licenses. In the local practice, he replaced the authority of the planning bureau and gave villagers a piece of paper as a document of building permission:

> 'These villagers only need to give me three drawings [current, planning, fire prove plan], then I give them a notification. I don't have any authority to approve villagers' building permission. However, the meaning of notification is that I know what they are doing. If villagers have my notification, they wouldn't be harassed by urban management officers[72].'

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[72] An official meeting held by Panyu District Planning Bureau on 20 November 2007.

While officials in the municipal planning bureau and district planning bureau were surprised by this tactic practice of land management, the party secretary of the street office legitimized this unauthorized discretion through the language of impossibility. As he explained to the officials of the Municipal Planning Bureau and District Planning Bureau in a meeting held in the Guangzhou Municipal Government:

> 'I acquiesced to them. If you can do nothing, you are not given much authority to regularize their building, nor have you authority to give them official sanction. But you need to leave them some egresses, some leeway to live. Rather than perpetuating the problems, at least I find a way to control the situation[73].'

The control of the building did not just work by policy mandates alone. It worked effectively in villages because villager cooperatives played a role in this. In interview, Chang Jianghao, the leader of Yangji Village, said:

> 'I exhorted these villagers not to rebuild their properties more than four storeys high. I told them that Yangji Village is going to be regenerated. It is not worth spending money on rebuilding. We control the rebuilding of the properties by controlling the stock share of villagers. This is why most of the buildings in Yangji Village are no more than four storeys high[74].'

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[73] Ibid.

[74] Interview with Chang Jianghao on 22nd April 2007.

While the government tended to place street office-led development regimes in a stronger position to influence the form and character of the development that takes place, village cooperatives were often characterised by the government as grasping. Different from village leaders, party secretaries of the street offices were seen as governmental and have a close relationship with policymakers and officials in the Guangzhou Municipal Government. They worked in and through the Guangzhou Municipal Government and district governments, their voice could be heard and was seen as helpful in setting the policy agenda.

However, it does not mean that the street offices were clear about what would be the right type of regeneration. In the project of Huadi Village regeneration, for example, the party secretary of the Huadi Street Office in some meetings was asked by the Planning Bureau to make a plan that is consistent with governmental flag-ship projects such as the "Pearl Riverside CBD". In some other meetings, he was asked to modify the plan to be in line with governmental wider agendas and objectives such as "building socialist new villages" introduced by the central government in the Fifth Plenum of the Sixteenth CPC Central Committee at the end of 2005. The aims of "building socialist new villages" is to mitigate the polarization of poor and rich and the discrepancy of rural and urban, and therefore

may be considered irrelevant to the regeneration of Huadi Village. While being asked to frame the regeneration project of Huadi Village in different programming languages, the scale and scope of the planning became uncertain. As the party secretary of the Huadi Street Office complained:

> 'We applied for government approval and asked for political support. However, the Development and Reform Commission commented that the regeneration plan we proposed didn't consider the planning in a larger scale, nor did we consider economic development. This confused us in many ways. I don't know whether our project is "building socialist new villages" or urban-village regeneration? (Field notes, January 2008)'

Villagers were successful in claiming their right to participate and appropriate. However, the degree was limited. In many of the official meetings I audited during the fieldwork, village leaders and villagers were excluded from the official meetings. For instance, in the meeting held by the Panyu District Planning Bureau on 20th November 2007, the compensation for villagers was discussed. Nevertheless, none of the villagers was in the meeting, nor had anyone representing them. During the break of the meeting, I asked an official, 'why is village leader not invited in the meeting?' He replied bluntly, 'village leader is neither governmental, nor on our side.' Villagers had a formal say in villagers' committee. In these meetings, which were an access to establish policy networks,

village leader was excluded outside policy community. Village entities and agents

had relatively less concrete legal and political power. Nevertheless, it does not

mean they were excluded from governmental networks. Village leaders can easily

get access to the centres of power. They can communicate with the Mayor or the

Chief Party Secretary of Guangzhou directly in different circumstances. In an

extended interview, the chief planner of the planning bureau, Wang Yuan,

complained to me:

> 'The leader of Yangji Village had presented the regeneration project of
> Yangji Village to the Mayor and the Party Secretary of Guangzhou
> many times. But she never came to communicate with us. The
> implementation of the policy of institutional reform is in-complete.
> Now the situation of these villages is that a street office and a villagers'
> committee coexist. They govern together. Those village leaders, come
> on, they are all representatives in the People's Congress of Guangzhou.
> Do you think it is possible asking them to do nothing[75]?'

Rather than allowing institutional disobedience, such as ignoring the new

rearrangement, or recklessly refusing to consider whether its actions are permitted

or not, making explicit its non-co-operation, or arguing its non-compliance, was

lawful, villagers' committees have been abolished, and the main bodies have been

reorganized into "village cooperatives". However, in the actual reconfiguration of

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[75] Interview with Wang Yuan on 5th December 2007.

village governance, villagers' committees are not simply passive objects to be excluded as supplanted local authorities. Villagers' committees adopt alternative strategies. In seeking to adapt to this new form of governance, many have deployed their double roles to exploit gaps in the programmes and technologies of governance to their own advantage. While engaging in forms of resistance/alteration at certain points beyond all recognition, they have managed to invent local-scale techniques of management and turn the course of events in favour of local participation and have developed forms of governance and action that reflect their needs.

5.5 Conclusions.

In examining different forms and characters of synchronically and diachronically variable regime formations, much of the literature of urban regeneration deploys Janus as a metaphorical evocation to explore the flip side to the process of innovative horizontal and networked arrangements of governance-beyond-the-state (e.g., Harding, 1995; Stoker, 1995; Ward, 1996; Gibbs and Jonas, 2000). In some literature, a Janus-faced approach is adopted directly as a generative device to reveal how the state-civil society relation, the meaning of citizenship, and the nature of democracy itself are rearticulated,

redefined, and repositioned (Swyngedouw, 2005; also see Latour and Woolgar, 1979; Latour, 1987). In some other literature, it is adopted as an interpretive strategy to evaluate horizontal modes of coordination between agencies and vertical relations of power and responsibility that underpin the development of a local agenda (e.g., Harding, 2000; Raco, 2003). In yet other literatures, a Janus-faced approach is adopted in more prosaic terms to frame a double dynamic[76] (Hajer, 2003) and the agencies in developing their capacity reflexively to broader government programmes in which they operate (e.g. Imrie and Raco, 1999; Atkinson and Wilks-Heeg, 2000).

In an attempt to deploy the Janus metaphor and reveal what it refers to in more prosaic terms, an additional objective of this chapter is to explore the role of metaphors in the construction of particular truth-value claims. By "Janus", I mean to capture, both rhetorically and analytically, the irony and paradox of the strategic responses of the two local authorities to the Guangzhou Municipal Government's institutional reform policy in shaping a specific and differentiated

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[76] Hajer (2003: 175-176) uses the term "double dynamic" to describe "actors not only deliberate to get to favourable solutions for particular problems but while deliberating they also negotiate new institutional rules, develop new norms of appropriate behaviour and devise new conceptions of legitimate political intervention."

form of conduct of the self and of the others.

The rationale and policy formation of the IRP are problematic in nature. As I have shown above, this policy is conducted through an inadequate institutional diagnosis and design rationality because state institutions and relating laws/policies, used to define fundamentals, such as villagers' committee, collective land, and ownership, are unclear and still intentionally kept ambiguous and vague by the state (Ho, 2005). In the rather thin and negative understanding of the HRS and JSS – the two formations of technologies for governing, derived from village's socialist-led regime of accumulation and its accompanying mode of regulation – and the fact that these two systems are nonetheless the basis to underpin village governance and regulate village economic activities, social lives, livelihood, and individual conducts, governmental assessment of the affected interest groups and the ability of government to mobilize support for reform and resist opposition are misjudged.

The institutional reform is important, although of course never complete as the policymakers imagined. After all, a project of such kind is congenitally contingent and partial, rarely completely realizing the aspirations of government (Foucault,

1979; 1991b; Huxley, 2006). Whereas a large policy literature, developed since the 1970s, has focused on the causes of implementation success or failure, in this chapter, I argue that the implementation problem, and the fragmentary nature of its outcome, should not be dismissed as temporal or peripheral, but rather a significant structuring device in its own right. It creates a subsequent context with its own form of politics from which the subsequent policy design will ensue. In seeking to develop a more coordinated approach to the urban-village regeneration, it is through the implementation of this policy that created a governing coalition or regime to reshape government-led regeneration into multi-agency regeneration.

However, rather than a governance promoted by the government agenda, the multi-agency governance is *ipso facto* an accidental consequence of the partial implementation of the IRP, since, in terms of the Guangzhou Municipal Government, the outcome of the implementation of the policy is fragmentary, displaced, and incomplete. Ironically, while the fragmentation of the mode of governance redefines the role and position of local authorities, the actual reconfiguration of the new governance structures expresses the "natural" outcomes of an ongoing renegotiation amongst the different levels of government to maintain legitimacy, social cohesion and sufficient political support. It is this

very institutional reconfiguration that most suited to meet governmental agendas.

While facing the Guangzhou Municipal Government's demand to implement the IRP, street offices found themselves in a position that is in-between the upper level government and villages. As the lowest-level government, they have to execute decisions made by high-level government and confront complaints of local residents. In dealing with regeneration and governing pressure of the urban-villages, they found that they were endowed with responsibility without power. Likewise, while facing different segments of the government, villagers' committees were caught between loyalty to their fellow villagers and the political necessity to enforce government policy. Village leaders represented their fellow villagers and their claims to their conventional rights over the land. They were also members of the Communist Party, who must unconditionally execute the policies of the Party and government under the leadership of the Party. Both street offices and villagers' committees were facing in opposite directions at once. Their strategies were performed in Janus-faced ways, particularly at the beginning of the transferring of the governance arrangements of people and things from rural-based institutions to urban-based institutions.

The Janus metaphor renders the understanding that the two sides are of equal

importance. The mixture of motivations, and need to create alliances amongst disparate forces involved, mean different narratives can be constructed from the same or overlapping cluster of events. The complicity of street offices and village cooperatives is crucial to its operation as technique of governmentality. Residents of the urban-villages are governed, not directly from above, but through technologies such as the village cooperative's stock share and street office's informal deals on property relations and governance practices. The institutional reform provides a space for actors and organizations of the government at different levels (municipal, district, street) to intervene in different forms.

Whereas these forms of conduct and body techniques are analyzed in this chapter for the ways they are shaped and give shape to the outcome of the implementation of the IRP, this policing of conduct also produces unintended outcomes and unexpected alignments of local authorities and allies of local residents than that is intended by the power itself. In seeking to develop a more coordinated approach to the urban-village regeneration, it is the actual reconfiguration of local authorities that creates new subjects/objects, and hence new problems and new techniques, which have been structurally, discursively and deliberately excluded from the dominate discourse coalition. The new

subjects/objects enter the frame of governance or reinforce their power position, while the hitherto excluded or marginalized social groups such as migrants and/or locales remained excluded. Bearing these in mind, I shall now turn to Chapter Six.

Chapter Six

"New Alley Action"! Villagers, Migrants, Yan Wendou and His Fellow Brothers.

"Policy designs signal whether politics is a game of self-interest or a process of deliberation through which broader, collective interests are served (Schneider and Ingram, 1997: 101)."

6.1 Introduction.

"The sceneries of these villages are more or less the same every day. Cooking smells waft through the air as the multi-dialectal chatter is drowned by the sound of playing *Mahjong*. Some girls, who are prostitutes, stand in the deep dark impasses. They look at every passer-by mischievously, while sewing shoe-pads. If there is an eye contact, he is the customer they are looking for. Some middle age women, who are house minders, hang in front of the village gate, stare at every passer-by. They seek tenants, negotiate contracts, and monitor the upkeep of the properties. In these urban-villages, one can see that many buildings are under construction. During the day, no one works in the construction sites. However, these buildings grow. Villagers usually build when it is still dark in the morning, from 1 am to 4 am. One of the villagers explained to me: 'A guy from the [Tangxia] Street Office told me, I can build when they are off their job.' (Field notes, August 2007)"

As I have described in the previous two empirical chapters, in both the literature and discourses in the dominant society, the problem of the urban-villages is largely seen as resulting from the spatial concentration of anomalies of "bad people". Whereas urban residents whose income falls below the official poverty level are identified by policy as disadvantaged people whose

poverty is not their fault, the social constructions of the urban-villages portray villagers negatively as indolent persons who receive benefits for which they are not eligible. As a group of people who are linked by social ties, sharing common perspectives and engaged in joint action in geographical locations or settings, villagers are considered to be politically weak but with positive constructions in other policy areas. Nevertheless, in the issue context of the urban-villages regeneration, they are losing their positive construction and moving toward what Schneider and Ingram (1997) refer to as the "emergent contending group", with images such as "undeserving" and "selfish", gaining for themselves at the expense of others. Migrants carry a construction that they are deviants. The lack of strong networks and solidaristic organizations of migrants renders them as merely a flow of people, a fleeting presence in the city, and this has exacerbated the perception that they are passive and inactive in reacting to the urban-villages regeneration.

In contrast to stereotypical depictions described in previous chapters, Yan Wendou, who is a profit-making agent involved in housing leasing in these villages, has a divergent view of the organically formed spatial boundaries and social relations in the urban-villages:

'The urban-village is a highly self-managing place. One says it is in muck, a tumour, a den of iniquity, the conglomeration of crimes. It is, however, a paradise for me. The government neither implements urban governance in, nor extends any infrastructure to, these villages. For this reason, these villages have to put self-governing into practice and deal with infrastructure in their own ways. But now, such practice has become a sin of villages. […] The urban-villages serve as the focal point of the city's collective anxieties, the scapegoat for ills not of their own making. In your eyes, the urban-villages are unsavoury areas; for me, they are capable of self-improvement (Field notes, April 2007).'

He continued:

'The urban-villages have been demonized by the mainstream. Most of the urban residents never have an actual experience living in the urban-villages, but they always say that the urban-villages are chaotic, backward, and dangerous. They always say that the urban- villages are a problem. This is what I would like to ask you: In what ways the urban-villages are a problem? In fact, these urban-villages are now located in the city centre. The so-called "villagers" have been totally urbanized. It is stigmatization if we keep on calling them "urban-villages". Instead of "urban-village", I use the term "new alley". Instead of "urban-village regeneration", I use the term "new alley action" (ibid.)'.

In Yan Wendou's narrative, villagers are not serendipitous rentiers or petit peasants, plodding through a sedentary life in an unreflexive way. Instead, they can be described as active "place entrepreneurs" referred to by Logan and Molotch (1987: 29) as those who are "directly involved in the exchange of places and collection of rents." In contrast to the dominant discourses about the regeneration of the urban-villages, the self-narratives of Yan Wendou and his

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fellow brothers, who are migrants themselves, embody the different and diverse ways that local residents speak about themselves and their activities. Their testimonies portray the complexity of urban dwellers' positionality and lives in relation to a society that is increasingly understood and governed by means of a kind of neoliberal style of thought.

Having shown how the complicity and covert circumvention of local authorities operate as a technique of governmentality and turn ordinary activities and spaces into "sites of surveillance", the third of my three empirical chapters shifts the focus away from the transformation of formal institutions based on the construction of marginality identified by the dominant society, to the forms and types of individual responses to the governmental regeneration of the urban-villages. In understanding the urban-villages as sites for subjectification, it discusses the effects of discourse on the self-narratives and lives of local residents. It evaluates how practices play out in local residents' self-narratives, and explores the different ways that local people strategically and actively engage in negotiating and producing their subjectivity into certain sorts of economic subjects.

The remainder of this chapter is divided into four sections. Through the ways in which different governmental programmes are interpreted at a local level, the first section illustrates a range of practices that I characterize as "present-oriented strategies", and considers the ways these practices, in the form of marginal resistance, work as counter-conducts to the governmental regeneration of the urban-villages. Evidenced by the presence of Yan Wendou and his fellow brothers, the second section discusses different engagements with neoliberal signifying practices. In dialogue with theoretical perspectives derived from public choice, the third section, then, turns to discuss the specific disenfranchisement problems of urban residents associated with the urban-village regeneration controversy, and raises the question of what benefits and dis-benefits it may have for the social and spatial structure of the city. The fourth section concludes by arguing that local residents' marginal resistances are not as powerless as has often been suggested by both the literature and discourse of the dominant society. Rather, they enact a process of subjectification that moulds people toward specific forms of counter-conduct. It is this neoliberal subjectification that flattens a deeper, more difficult, question of who should be identified to be empowered and participate, and to what degree, in decision making relating to the regeneration.

6.2 Present-Oriented Strategies as Counter-Conducts to the Governmental

    Regeneration Programmes.

Somewhat analogous to the harshness of Britain's Speenhamland laws (see

Walker and Buck, 2007), the Chinese *hukou* system, initiated under Mao in the

1950s, is not merely a demographical tool, designed to identify personal status

and provide population statistics to measure the level of urbanization, but a

monitoring and control mechanism of population migration and mobilization. It is

used by the Chinese government directly to regulate population distribution and

serve many other important objectives desired by the state (Shen and Tong, 1992;

Chan and Zhang, 1999; Fan, 1999). The *hukou* system provides the state with the

means and information that can be used for securing social and political order and

other related objectives, e.g. child birth control, social security, and tax. It

significantly affects personal life in many aspects[77].

Government regulations allow some legal migration from villages to small

and medium sized towns in the same county. However, in large cities, such as

Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangzhou, migrants are severely restricted from

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[77] For a more detailed study on the *hukou* system, see Ma and Hanten, 1981;
Johnson, 1988; Christiansen, 1990; Goldstein, 1990; Chan, 1996; Cook, 1999;
Guldin, 2001; Wang, 2004, to name but a few.

becoming permanent rightful members of urban society (Siu, 1990; Woon, 1993; Xu and Li, 1990). In Guangzhou, temporary residence card is a primary mechanism through which migrants are surveilled. Migrants need various documents to verify their identity, job status, marriage status, etc. If they fail to produce a job card, ID card, or proof of temporary residence, or if the local police suspect they are undocumented, local police have the authority to send them to detention and repatriation shelter, forcing them to work and holding them until relatives pay for their release. For those without relatives to pay for their release, they will be either bailed or put into jail and then sent back to their hometown.

The *hukou* system is intensified and loosened, at different levels of government, for different reasons, and in different period of times. A recent most notable example is the state's migration restriction during the Olympic Game in Beijing in 2008. It is through this very existence of government activity that social problems are articulated. From Foucauldian perspective, the *hukou* system is functioned as a "technology of power" to control population movement toward certain desired effects. Numerous in-between categories of residence are invented by local authorities to extract what resources were available from the local population, be they villagers or migrants. For example, migrant control was

loosened after the death of Sun Zhigang in 2003[78]. Some street offices in Guangzhou nonetheless reissued the temporary cards due to the shortage of finance. These acts have clearly increased the level of fear among local residents. The ramifications are even severer in places such as the urban-villages. Migrants have to suffer a lot of red tape to get a temporary residence card. In order to get a temporary residence card, a migrant is asked to bring all other certificates such as married or un-married certificate, even the tax document of where he or she works. Not surprisingly, residents of the villages in Guangzhou shared numerous stories of abuses of the urban government at different levels. During the fieldwork, sewage collectors (for manure) told me about how local officials gave them the wrong information about the duration of the governmental project for "Constructing a National Sanitary City" in 2007, surcharged temporary residence cards, and demanded extra fees for business licences and birth certificates. A migrant from Hubai Province, who rented a small place from the village leader and ran a business of a small snake bar in Tangdong Village, also gave an example:

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[78] Sun Zhigang was a university graduated young man who went to Guangzhou. In March 2003, he failed in showing his temporary resident card to local police in Huang Village. He was then sent to detention and beaten to death. His death gained national attention in 2003 and led to the loosening of migrant control. See Chapter Three (section 3.4); Siu, 2008.

'Last year, I went to the [Industrial and Commercial Administration] Bureau to apply for a [business] licence. The officer there told me that my shop was too small to apply. This year, because the government would like to compete with other cities in the national project [of Constructing a National Sanitary City], the surveillers seized my utensils, put me in a car, and forced me to the bureau to apply for the [business] licence. Ok. I was willing to apply. But then they told me that because I didn't apply for the licence last year, I had to pay the penalty. I was thinking about arguing with them, but then I said to myself, "Just pay the fee. I don't want to get into trouble."' (Field notes, September 2007)

Migrants have little recourse against such mistreatment and bureaucratic hassle because of their disadvantageous social status. From this perspective, villagers' and migrants' often hesitate to engage in governmental researches or give real or accurate information, as described in Chapter Four (section 4.2), is understandable. Villagers and migrants were sceptical for many reasons, thinking that the data collected might be used for social control purposes or as a mechanism for scrutiny of them and their activities. Villagers were afraid of being asked to pay taxes or penalty charges for illegal buildings, or losing compensation in the future regeneration, while undocumented migrants were afraid of being deported, of being penalised for having illegitimate children, or, at worst, being put in jail (see figure 6.1).

Figure 6.1 A Snatch of a migrant's everyday life in Tangdong Village, Tianhe District.

(Source: authors' photo.)

Note: Liu comes from Hubai Province, 1200 km away from Guangzhou. He and his wife rent a shop, a nameless greasy spoon, with a size of 5 m². A place for cooking, plus a refrigerator and some family belongings fill up this small space. A small TV continuously playing martial art programs hangs above. Three small tables for customers are on the street, with three small parasols. Actually, these three parasols are useless when the sun is burning or when it is raining. Next to the tables are five iron buckets for garbage. There is always someone rummaging wastes in these buckets. From the north to the south of the street, there are seven this kind of small shops. They are all nameless greasy spoons, the same as Liu's. When it is time for meal, the whole street is pervaded with the smell of cooking and sauces.

Since the 1990s, there have been different governmental programmes to deal with the problem of the urban-villages in Guangzhou. Measures have been taken to curb "illegal" building constructions. Campaigns have been repeatedly

conducted to "cleanse" the "backward, uncivil elements" of these areas. A background for these encounters was numerous media presentations. On television, in magazines and newspapers, commentators reflected on the problems of the urban-villages. There were always rumours from somewhere about when the government was going to send people to inspect whether or not there were illegal buildings in the villages. The plethora of news in local newspapers and media reinforced the message that the urban-villages were undergoing a major transformation, with significant investment and redevelopment. But governmental regeneration plans have never come to fruition. No one knew when this would happen or even if it would happen at all.

Similar to Beauregard's (1993: ix) *Voices of Decline*, in which he describes that the proclaimed decline of cities has framed the lives of those who came of age in the United States in the last half of 20th century, the proclaimed regeneration of the urban-villages has become naturalized and diffused in everyday language in Guangzhou. It has framed the lives of those who live in these places and shaped the common perceptions which are transmitted and turned into shared inclinations. The information and impressions they glean from these presentations re-appear in their discussions with friends, neighbours, colleagues, and strangers. This public

discourse influences people's decision making in deciding how to invest, where

they should live, with whom and at what costs and for what benefits.

It is this "framing" that seems to have engendered local people's "present

oriented" strategies. The "present-oriented" strategies are intertwined with local

people's particular conceptualization of the urban-villages and their multiple

social-geographical imaginaries to governmental regeneration policies, which are

intimately related to their particular everyday experiences and livelihoods in the

urban-villages. In this sense, it is significant that the wider perceptions of times of

these various groups, and their attitudes toward the governmental policies provide

an insightful understanding to the way they understand the governmental

regeneration projects (see figure 6.2). In interview, a villager's response

exemplified the present-oriented strategy:

> 'Yah, I know what you are saying. But I think in this way. The
> government claimed that these villages are soon to be torn down. Yes, I
> know. But, come on, it takes time. And which one is the first? Think
> about it. When the governmental regeneration comes to this village, it is
> already nine years later (Interview with a local villager in Yangji Village,
> field notes, March 2007).'

Figure 6.2 Kai Gong Da Ji.
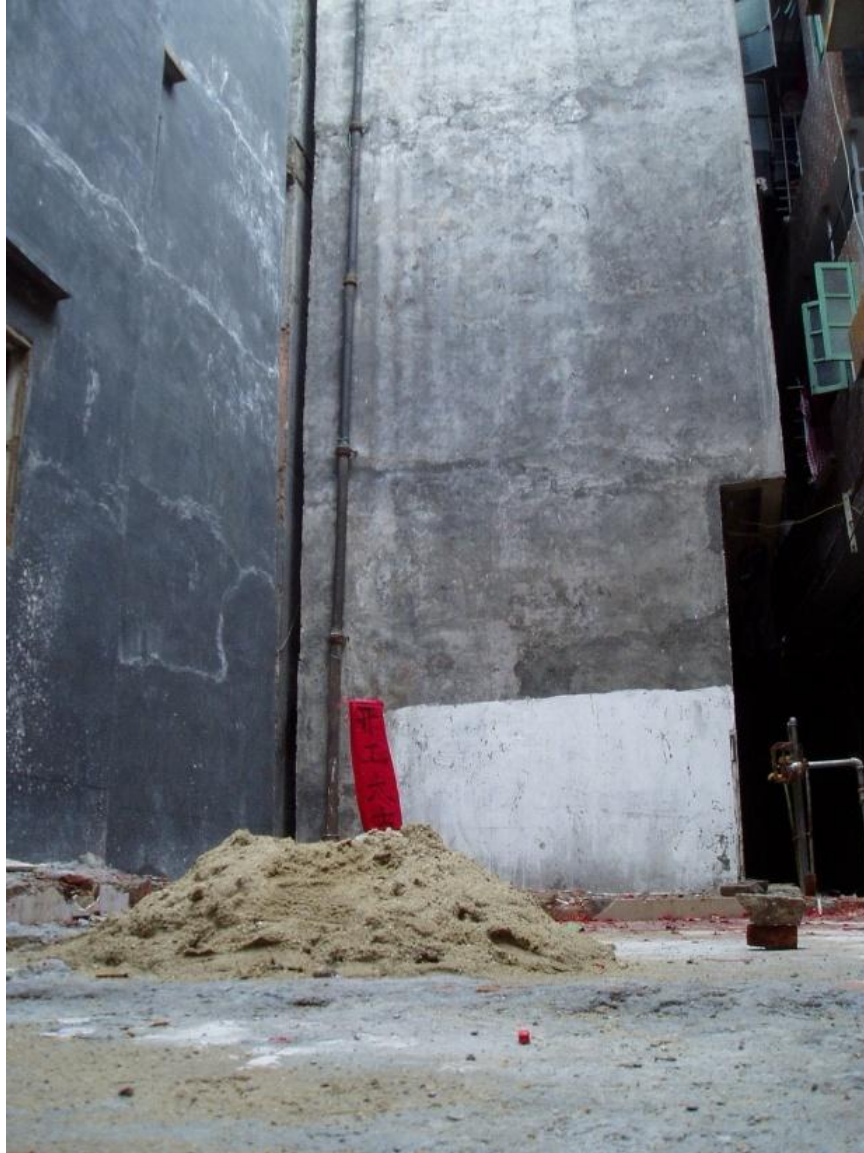
(Source: authors' photo.)

Note: The four words on the red board are "Kai Gong Da Ji", i.e. "an auspicious beginning for the new construction site". This construction site is in Shipai Village in Guangzhou. The size is 4m*5m. The widths of the two adjacent alleys are 90cm and 130cm. It was alleged that there was going to be a new eight storeys high housing on this construction site. In 2007, there were circa 50,000 people living in the 0.73 km² Shipai Village. As a village located in the Tianhe CBD, every inch of land was contesting. While the cost to build housing in the villages in Guangzhou in the 1990s was 450 RMB per square metre, it was at least 800 RMB per square metre in 2007. The construction of an eight storeys housing on a 120 square metres housing base land (HBL) needed 800*120*8=768,000 RMB.

Villagers made sense of their rebuilding activities with the storyline that the municipal government's ambitious goal to regenerate all the 138 urban-villages in Guangzhou before 2010 was unattainable, at least not in the near future. Local residents consider a number of concrete factors that could potentially alter future exchange value interests along with use value goals – and a key one is the indeterminacy of government activity. This indeterminacy causes villagers, as a group, to mixed strategies and interests. In envisaging how many years they still have to earn their money, they formed a kind of reflexive risk-calculation. They may have different degree of rebuilding. They may, as I will describe in the next section, lease out their properties to profit-making agents involved in housing leasing to minimize the risks relating to the vagaries of urban development.

Villagers have lost their status of being peasants after the implementation of the IRP (see Chapter Five). Nevertheless, under the umbrella of the HRS and JSS, they still maintain their land-related entitlements derived from their former peasant status, such as the using right of the HBL, property ownership, and the right to tenancy. In a way, they still maintain their twin status (villager and peasant). This twin status provides them with an entrée into local business and cultural life in their villages. This means the villager status becomes less of a

burden and more of a resource, enabling villagers to be shareholders of the

immense collective economy based on the villages, which separates them in terms

of economic power from ordinary city dwellers and migrants who rent houses to

live in the urban-villages (cf. Li, 2002: 3). All villagers have advantages in

gaining access to resources because villagers' committees are strong lineage

entities. Their personal connections help to secure their investment. The two are

connected and reinforced each other through the tendency for individual.

Advantage in one can be used to develop advantage in the other.

In the urban-villages, villagers have certificates for the right to use land. They

are not restrained from build housing on it. In early periods, the municipal

government did not care to interfere with any construction in the villages, but in

the later periods, they began to seek to control the development of these villages.

Although the municipal government in 1999 had stopped issuing building

permission of the HBL, many of the buildings in the urban-villages are still

continuously rebuilt (see Chapter Two, section 2.3). All the villagers, including

village leaders and cadres who hold higher positions, continue to rebuild housing

on the HBL without permissions. Villagers in similar situations also made up

communities of fate, and they often got together to help fate along a remunerative

path. Villagers monitored their peers, using social networks to learn who was going to do what and where. This led to the difficulties of those, like government officials or village leaders, who might try to control them. The ethnographic reality shows that villagers did not consider their housings to be illegal. A villager in interview gave a storyline:

> 'I rebuilt my house in the late 1990s. I saw everyone has rebuilt his own house, including the village leader, cadres, and the party secretaries. I just followed what they did (Field notes, May 2007).'

While there is a strong intention to pursue economic benefits, it is certainly the case that villagers rebuild their properties for reasons other than economic gain and profit. This makes sense when one realizes that although the rebuilding of housing by villagers is considered, in the dominating discourse of regeneration, as an economic imperative, the economic rationales of rebuilding, and the different degree of rebuilding, also reflect social objectives. The boundary between social and economic reasons is often not clear. And the arbitrary position between the social and economic categories provides villagers with spaces to pursue their maximum benefit. An extreme example I encountered during the fieldwork is that a wife of a villager gave a birth of her daughter. Her husband was angry because a female baby would be distributed less individual dividend than a male baby. The

husband said to his wife angrily that either they were going to have a second child, which is illegitimate and would be punished by abating his individual dividends, or they were going to rebuild their house.

Villagers' narratives have been shaped, indirectly or partially, by many different relations, institutions, and contexts, such as social status, patriarchy, marriage, gender, and family. They conduct themselves with their specific logics, differently from those objectives proposed by a given mode of conduct (see Chapter Five). This different form of conduct is, for Foucault (2007), a form of counter-conduct. As he describes, counter-conducts are

> "movements whose objective is a different form of conduct, that is to say: wanting to be conducted differently, by other leaders (*conducteurs*) and other shepherds, toward other objectives and forms of salvation, and through other procedures and methods. They are movements that also seek, possibly at any rate, to escape direction by others and to define the way for each to conduct himself (ibid.: 194-195)."

Many houses in the urban-villages were rebuilt and torn down many times. Villagers halted the construction pending a dialogue with key people. After it was dealt, be it in the form of negotiation, bargain, persuasion, bribe, the construction resumed. To put it simply, if local residents, in due course, find the right guy and

talk in the right way, political higher-ups, who were often profited from the situation through corruption, would turn a blind eye. The villagers and migrants were tipped off to flee in time.

Although surveillers (*cheng-guan*) were asked to prevent from unauthorized constructions in villages, they merely went through the motion of punching few holes on the wall of unauthorized buildings to indicate that they accomplished the duty. A villager said: 'During the day, they wear their security guard uniforms, with big hammers in their hands. But during the night, they take off their uniforms and live in this village. Do they still want to live their life in this village?' Another villager said, 'While it was still under construction, some security personnel came with hammers in their left hands and stretched out their right hands to ask for money.' In the eyes of villagers and migrants, security personnel are more like goons and thugs. They are surveillers brandishing their cudgels.

Security personnel, called *cheng-guan* (城管), are based in the street office and they are in charge of everything. For example, they are in charge of checking if there is any illegal construction. They are neither officially employed, nor in a well-paid position (Their salary is 1300 RMB per month). They are temporarily

employed and hence have nothing to do with promotion. Because their personal income, apart from their salary and perks, were pegged to their fringe benefits, it is understandable for local residents that they would ask some extra money. Almost every one of them is a villager or a migrant living in this village. It also made them difficult to do their job. Another villager also said: 'the party secretary also owns houses with six floors high. Besides, the party secretary of the street office runs the small business of gambling. Last week, his gambling shops were banned by the police station. Nevertheless, he can still get back those gambling machines.'

Figure 6.3 A Sweeper in Tangxia Village.

(Source: authors' photo)

Note: A migrant said, 'I have been in Guangzhou for some years. There were lots construction sites in villages. My wife and I earned our lives as construction workers. But now there are not as many constructions as in the past. And I am getting old. Now I am a sweeper.'

Migrants vary in their attachment to the urban-villages. Their mobility in the city is rather limited, or their movements are restricted to utilitarian purposes. In other words, high labour mobility or job instability of migrants, proximity to their working place is their most important consideration to choose where to live. Evidenced by the observations during the fieldwork, random interviews also indicate that those migrants living in the urban-villages in Guangzhou can be classified into two categories. The mobility of those who have jobs in the urban area is shaped by the closeness of working places. For those whose jobs are in the urban-villages, their mobility is shaped by which village they can find a job. People of the first category choose which village to live according to where they work. People of the second category choose which village to live according to which village they can find jobs (see figure 6.3). Due to financial constraints, the migrants' household strategies are to minimize costs and bring back as much saving as possible to their hometowns (Zhu, 2001a). As my informants explained, 'I will never rent a place on the street. It will cost me 500RMB per month. I prefer save 200RMB per month to live in the deep inside of a village', or, very tellingly, 'If I have extra money, I would send it back to my family in Hubai Province,' or, most squarely, 'I wake up every day at four am and go out for work. It is already dark when I finish my work at 11 pm. What am I supposed to do with sun light?'

Their present-oriented strategies are a form of rationality. However, local residents, including villagers and migrants, constituted it as a matter of fact, just the ways things are.

While migrants appear in official documents, not so much as actors but as more or less anonymous contributors to the level of urbanization, local villagers' "resistance" is not little or no coordination or planning. Their refusals to register and pay tax to the street office provide a strategy for them less interested in confronting government policy and forcing change than in maintaining practices they can "live with". Their refusal to invest in the long term is important to their resistance strategies. They engage in verbal strategies, produce modes of adaption, and create norms of behaviour that take the form of "present-oriented strategies". It is within this context that "living for the moment" is presented as fundamental – albeit with different degrees of intensity – of the existential standpoints of groups in the urban-villages.

6.3 Not only Black and White, but also Grey.

The visibility of Yan Wendou and his fellow brothers in the urban-villages signifies the government's difficulty in regeneration and the need of street offices

or village cooperatives to manage the urban-villages. It embodies the different and

diverse ways that local residents speak about themselves and their activities. Their

testimonies portray the complexity of urban dwellers' positionality and lives in

relation to a society that is increasingly understood and governed by means of a

kind of neoliberal style of thought. In interview, Yan Wendou explained:

> 'These villagers have to find tenants by themselves. If they fail, they lose money from every single vacant room. Apart from the loss, they have to stay at their properties 24 hours a day doing cleaning, upkeep and maintenance, and writing reports to the villagers' committees, neighbourhood committees, and street offices. It is a tiresome job for them. Therefore I offer these villagers to let me rent their properties and my people would deal with all the works for them. They don't need to worry about finding tenants; they don't have to worry about losing money, they can be away to enjoy their lives with their own pastimes. All they need to do is check their bank account on the 5th of every month. Above and beyond, when the contract terminates, all the refurbishment that I have invested on the properties belongs to them. […] I explained all these advantages to the villagers, and they all accepted my proposal.' (Field notes, April 2007)

The business that Yan Wendou and his fellow brothers have been doing is

very similar to the management practice of a real estate agency. They rent

properties from villagers with the price of 20 RMB per square meter and relet

them to migrants at double the price. In each property, Yan Wendou and his

fellow brothers have invested approximately 100,000 RMB on refurbishment,

such as changing the pavements in the potholed alleys, repainting, installing internet and telephone, and storing furniture. These properties are also refurbished with a number of security measures such as walls, fences, gates, guards, and installing CCTV. If it is necessary or profitable, partitions in flats are also changed to suit the market (e.g. a two bed room flat into four single rooms, or maybe two one-bed-room-flats). By deducting the initial rental, the prime costs of management, and the loss of vacant flats, they have earned profits from each flat with the rate of 100 to 200 RMB per month. Their management practices resonate with local people's investment and disinvestment strategies expressed in their discussions of limited individual dividends from village cooperative or irregular rental income. In general, this investment approach takes approximately three years to recover the initial costs. By ensuring villagers' long-term and regular income, Yan Wendou in turn insists to sign up at least a six-year contract with the property owners. These lucrative business issues of securitising space have also been prominent in creating the conditions for successful projects. With entrances controlled by security guards and their own internal security systems guarded at their perimeters and monitored by closed circuit TV, newly renovated residential buildings have been made "safe" and to be seen to be safe to make sure that renters would not loss their belongings such as laptop, mobile phone,

and money. In engaging with building activity, Yan Wendou and his fellow brothers cater to migrants who demand "safety", villagers who demand regular income, and government which demands "good governance".

Before Yan Wendou came to Guangzhou, he has been working in the local government in Yichang County, Hubei Province, for 16 years (first as a village leader of Sandopin Village, then the chief of the United Front Office, Yichang County Government, Hubei Province). He came up with the idea of being a real estate agent in the villages when he found that he always had trouble finding a suitable place in Ke Village in Guangzhou. The first villager he talked to did not believe him, nor understood what he was going to do. Nevertheless, after he paid the villager ten months rent plus two months deposit in one time, the villager accepted his thought, though with doubt. (For instance, in my participatory observation, I often heard more or less the same sentences that villagers said to Yan Wendou: 'I must tell you bluntly that should the government tear down the village, I won't take the responsibility of the investment you are going to put in my house (Field notes, April 2007).'

Figure 6.4 The practices of Yan Wendou and his fellow brothers.

(Source: authors' photo)

To guarantee profits and eliminate risk, Yan Wendou runs his business with the method of investment in shares. In his vernacular, these shareholders are his "fellow brothers". Most of his "fellow brothers" came from Hubai Province, and the majority of them are his relatives, be he or she his niece, nephew, uncle, or aunt. The family relation in Yan Wendou's investment is not weakened or attenuated. As he always said in a more or less Italian way, "S/he is my cousin." These people normally call him 'brother Yan' or 'boss Yan'. They used to be employed by him, but later become shareholders of his investment. Yan Wendou has a special way of managing his employees; in some cases, he allows some of his fellow brothers to become shareholders, putting them to invest some more profitable houses, in order to maintain their partnership. In other cases, some employees would voluntarily join his investments in some less profitable houses to show their royalty to the fellowship. For those who refused to participate in the investment, would be posted to work in less profitable houses.

Yan Wendou has tried many ploys to fit the housing leasing market. Flats of housings built by villagers are with different partitions. However, not all of them fit to the housing leasing market. In one of the property that Yan Wendou was refurbishing, for example, the partition is a very big living room and a very small

bedroom. A common strategy for villagers is to rent it to restaurants, small factories, or supermarkets, as accommodations for their staffs with the price of 650 RMB per month (six boys in the living room, three girls in the bed room). After changing the partition into four studios, however, each studio can be leased out with the price of 400 RMB per month. Another example is his practice in applying a special program for internet cable in the urban-villages. The internet company would not invest on the cables in these villages because in their perception, migrants are transient and the investment would be in vain. Insecurities in livelihood render a character that is less easy to control. By providing a regular entity, Yan Wendou's practice maintains a physical appearance appropriate for formal business which seems to turn people and things in the urban-villages into "governable subjects" and "governable spaces" (Rose, 1999: 31-40). The local is given an ontological status as the locus in and through which the hitherto difficult to administer can be subjectified.

The institutional reform described in Chapter Five provides a space for actors and organizations of the government at different levels (municipal, district, street) to intervene in different forms. It produces unintended outcomes and unexpected alignments. An expression of Yan Wendou captures this very well:

'"During the harvest season, a farmer reaps in the field. After it is done, he sends people to the field to glean spikes of rice. He then again sends people to the field to pick up unhusked rice. He wants every granule of rice in the field to be collected in his barn. So, the issue is: what are those voles and birds going to do? What are they going to eat if nothing is left in the field? At the end of the day, it will cost you more. Those 'grey' between the black and white, are just like voles and birds. One needs to leave some rice in the field for them." After I told my brothers this story, they all understand what I mean (Field notes, August 2007).'

Though it is not a "reality talk", Yan Wendou's tale about 'not only black and white, but also grey' is a useful metaphor to illustrate some of the opportunistic behaviours of different social actors, ranging from local mafia to governmental officials, relating to the urban-villages regeneration. Normally, a village is multi-surnamed. Dominant clans maintained ancestral halls and displayed degrees of cohesion through social networks and community rituals. Clan is a collection of independent and/or interdependent actors who share a relatively high degree of trust. Clans are not marginal, trivialized communities. Rather, they function as a social network upon which villagers can rely on for assistance and support. For example, in Tangxia Village, villagers whose surname were Pan, Zhong, and Liang, were majority, comprising almost all the production teams (renamed *"she"* since the reforms) and dominated the cadre's positions in the village cooperative. They are dominant in decision makings regarding the use of collective land and fiscal reserves, the management of village cooperatives, the collection of fees and

the general development of the village, engaging and mobilizing villagers,

distribution and use of profits arising from the collective cooperatives, and

negotiation and allocation of the balance of individual dividend against collective

expenditure (such as for community hygiene, village schools, the upkeep of roads,

salaries of cadres, and public security). The access to villagers' houses depends on

village cadres or officials in the district governments.

An example is that the policemen of Dengfong Street Office in Tianhe

District went to ask Yan Wendou to run housing leasing business in Dengfong

village. However, they gave him either properties they own, which were in poor

locations and made them difficult to be profitable, or those properties with crime

or prostitute problems. As to the properties with better profits, they would rather

run the business by themselves instead of having someone else to run the business

for them.

> "A while ago, I was asked by the policemen to take over properties of
> two streets. These properties were occupied by prostitutes, and the area
> was kept in check by gangs. It was fine for me to negotiate with
> prostitutes, because they don't make fuss on the rental issue, but it was
> an issue to negotiate with gangs. It was nonsense to throw me to cope
> with the rectification order of these streets. Even if I managed to get rid
> of these prostitutes, they still carry their careers somewhere else, not to
> mention that those migrant workers in the area have their natural

'desires'. The whole request is just pointless. However, in order to make a good friend with the policemen, I still took their properties (Field notes, October 2007).'

Another example is one of the buildings that Yan Wendou runs his business, Haitangju. It comprises three six floors buildings, with 200 units, including single room, one bedroom flats, and one two-bedrooms-flat. It doesn't apply for the building permission. Besides, even if it applies for building permission, according to the regulation, it can only build four floors, not six floors as it is now. It can be said as illegal. However, since it is collectively owned by the 10th village production team, it is legal. As to the ownership, two years ago this building was contracted to a cadre, Su Shenwe (pseudonym). Three months later, Yan Wendou rented this building from Su and started to run the lease business. The concept of "contract" is different from the concept of "rent". The concept of contract is derived from the HRS (see Chapter Two, section 2.2). The difference of "contract" and "rent" is: Except that the concept of "rent" belongs to capitalism and hence is taboo, in the concept of "rent", there is a subject, a landlord for instance, and an object, a tenant. After the implementation of collectivization in 1954, everything is collective owned. Since everyone shares part of the ownership which cannot be divided, no one can be called "tenant". Mr. Su can contract the building because he is a villager in Tangxia Village. This means he is also one of the owners that

own this building. That is why Yan Wendou has to pay him 20,000RMB per year to buy the right of contract. Next to the Haitangju Building A is Haitangju Building B. Yan Wendou also rents it for his business. The difference between these two buildings is that he doesn't have to buy the right of contract. But what happened was another villager, A-Dong (pseudonym), came to him and said that he would contract that building. At the end, they came to an agreement. Yan Wendou has to pay the rent of the eight retail shops to the production team, but A Dong can get the right to rent these shops out. This means Yan Wendou has to pay A-Dong about 40,000 RMB per year.

Yan Wendou thought the term "urban-village" has been value-laden. With the intention to destigmatize the continued negative social construction, he developed an alternative spatial metaphor, "new alley action", to resist against the terms on which "urban-village" is offered. However, Yan Wendou and his fellow brothers do not want to maximise the impact and significance of their actions by using "new alley action" as a mean to address political issues. Instead, he keeps low-key in order to avoid getting involved in local politics. As he said, 'Our motive is no more than doing business.' Yan Wendou is not a do-gooder. Nevertheless, as a local activist, he is a social utopianist. In a way, Yan Wendou can be said a "city

slicker", who better understands the nature of changed property values. While being talented in the production of a good service, he is talented in the estimation of the geographical movements of others.

From the perspective of Yan Wendou, government is inefficient to deal with the issue of the regeneration of urban-villages. In contrast to the prepositions of "the tragedy of the commons" argument (Hardin, 1968) and prisoner's dilemma metaphor, a point of view developed from an institutional branch of public choice argues that common pool resource can be successfully managed by voluntary organizations rather than by a coercive state or an outright privatization scheme (e.g. Dawes, 1980; Orbell et al., 1988; Ostrom, 1990). This point of view emphasizes a concept of human agency in which individuals are able to escape apparently inevitable negative consequences resulting from self-interested behaviour, take a longer view, organize for their own collective interests, and engage in cooperative behaviour that will save the commons. Yan Wendou has a much more optimistic view of the capacity of people to create self-governing institutions that will provide for the collective good. However, if we push to the limit the assertion of Yan Wendou, then, it seems we accept as given many of the pluralist doctrines and pluralist perspective of public policy: that conflicts and

compromises among competing interests would be resolved. According to Foucault (1977, 1991a), subjects are produced in relationship to the larger structures they inhabit. It is this active shaping of the self as a subject that flattens more difficult question of who should be identified to be empowered, who should participate, and to what degree, in decision making.

6.4 The Demise of Local Citizenship and Migrants' Right to the City – a Zero-Sum Game?

Twenty years have passed by. Almost all of the "urban-villages" remain visible, and their persistence cannot be denied. Villages are overflowing with new migrants. The high density of these areas and the form of the physical environment of the sites engender a sense of difference from rest of the city. Though they are seen as derelict areas, their accessibility from the urban area makes them ideal sites for socially marginal activities. All these above have, then, created a sense of social and spatial isolation, which leads to the creation of a new form of urban marginality. The particular physical and social-spatial made-up of the urban-villages nonetheless constitute what Longan and Molotch (1987) refer to as the "idiosyncratic locational benefits". The streets where bereft gates stand alone in the absence of any walls or fences are always filled with street vendors,

shops, and restaurants, such as shops for long-distance phone calls, property management, electronics, second hand furniture, cheap clothes, everyday necessities, and food – those serving a mixed clientele of villagers and migrants. The market logics has become hegemonic and incorporated into "the common-sense understanding" that different actors interpret and act upon.

The discourse of the urban-village has, in Fairclough's (2005b) terms, come to be inculcated as a new way of being, new identities, and a new social subject that new economic and social formations depend upon. Through the inculcation of this discourse, local people have come to 'own' this discourse, to position themselves inside it, to act, think, talk, and see themselves in terms of it. As Fairclough (2005b: 81-82) states, "a stage towards inculcation is rhetorical deployment: local people learn the new discourse and use it for certain purposes while at the same time self-consciously keeping a distance from it. One of the complexities of the dialectics of discourse is the process in which what begins as self-conscious rhetorical deployment becomes 'ownership' – how people become un-self-conscious positioned within a discourse." The discourse of the urban-village is materialised in local people's bodies, postures, gestures, ways of moving, and decision making. Whether people are living and working in the

urban-villages, their lives have been touched by the spreading disparate "voices" of these commentators. This discursively constituted self is not self passive receptors of discourse but strategically and actively engaged in negotiating and producing its subjectivities.

It seems that the regeneration of the urban-village is doomed to be a redistributive rather than a generative programme, driven by strategies referred to by Harvey (2005a) as "accumulation by dispossession" which seeking to transfer publicly or commonly held assets and resources into private property. If this argument is pursued, an interesting question immediately arises: Is the regeneration of the urban-villages for public good or private benefit? This question involves issues concerning what normative standards should be used to guide or justify decisions taken in urban policy making? What role the public policy should play? Who should it serve? What roles the public policy process should be assigned? If the multiple and contradictory rights to the city is negotiated, are the demise of local citizenship and migrants' right to the city a zero-sum game?

Based on extrapolation from Pareto principle, the argument seems to be a familiar one. In the tripartite game among developers, local governments and

villagers, who have their own different and divergent interests to advance, what should be resorted to as rationales? If policy should serve justice, including distributive justice as well as the elimination of oppression, in ways that it meets a reasonable standard of fairness, then, how, based on what notions, do we justify justice? If (re)distribution justice is contingent on the values of the society and the context within which the (re)distribution occurs (Deutsch, 1985; Miller, 1989), what kind of institutional design is appropriate, according to what principles? As Schneider and Ingram (1997: 49) argue, "the primary challenge to the Pareto principle is that it assumes a just distribution of value within the society. To argue that actions must make one person better off and no one worse off, by their own interpretation, renders as "unjust" all redistributions in society no matter how unequal the initial distributions actually are. No matter how unjust the status quo happens to be."

The discussion about both means and ends inevitably involves issues concerning the proper range of values that policy should serve, the roles that policy and government should play in providing for the supply and distribution of public goods, and the policies should be delivered in solving problems. It not only explores the specific institutions and actors which the social construct is tied,

but also how the problem should be framed, what goals should be pursued, and which strategies will be most acceptable in responding to the imbalance of different values. It circles around a set of contrasting words: "cost"/"benefit", "disadvantage"/"advantage", and "negative incentive"/"positive incentive" – not only the distribution, comparison, calculation, and conversion of cost and benefit based on market prices, but also the calculations of political opportunities and risks of officials, interest groups, potential targets, and many other participants that may influence or be influenced by the regeneration.

If a regeneration policy emphasizes too much on whether the policy has the incentive needed to ensure that self-interest will lead to desired results – the concern of the public choice theory which accepts the microeconomic assumption that human beings are self-interested utility maximizers, the systematic, logical, mathematically oriented deductions from that premise – then, it assumes that villagers may well choose to boycott, rather than co-operate with the leadership of the collective, if there is no incentives for villagers to participate. Such designs not only legitimate this behaviour (Schneider and Ingram. 1997: 50), but also reinforce already existing geographies of exclusion, violence and conflict. What it signals is, at best that there are weighing and balancing of competing interests of

a diverse set of "publics" and at worst that there is no conception of a "public interest" that government could or should pursue.

6.5 Conclusions.

A significant body of literature about urban regeneration has tended to take the form of arguments over local people's feeling about urban regeneration by making visible the claims of those all too often portrayed as the "victims" or the ways the "active agents" seeking to resist their marginality (Colenutt, 2009). What is missing from the picture of many writings about urban regeneration is what Scott (1985: 36) refers to as the "everyday forms of resistance" of people which are slowly, grindingly, and quietly struggling over land, rents, and taxes in which submission and stupidity are often no more than a pose – a necessary tactic on the one hand, and their specific goals and targets, which, considering what is going on around them, are often quite rational indeed, on the other.

Rather than problematizing too neat a picture of power and powerless, in this chapter, I draw on Foucault's counter-conduct to illustrate diverse reactions to practices of dominance that are in-between power and powerless. Whereas the constructionist interpretations in previous chapters have focused primarily on the

construction of marginality identities by a dominant interest group, this chapter engages the ways in which local residents shaped their own identity in particular political-economic and cultural contexts, specifically in the context of the Guangzhou Municipal Government's response to the "urban-village problems" in 2007. This chapter is concerned more with the "villager" as a process of self-definition than with pre-ordered "*hukou*" groupings imposed from outside. Of course, the two cannot be totally separated. Situating villagers' and migrants' activities in the context of the implementation of the IRP, I develop the argument that villagers and migrants, as marginal people, are not as powerless as has often been suggested. Instead, in exerting control over their lives and actively shaping their relationship to the so-called "dominant society", they are engaging in a variety of available strategies and deploying various tactics to resist and/or alter a range of policy decisions.

Migrants, such as Yen Wendou and his fellow brothers, are not passive and inactive in reacting to the regeneration. Rather, they have been able to reflexively adapt and respond to emerging opportunities. Of course Yan Wendou and his fellow brothers are not the only group doing this kind of business. For instance, a group of migrants from Jiangxi Province also run the business in Yangji Village.

Compared with other migrants of villagers, Yan Wendou is relatively more literate, articulate, and self-conscious.

The first-hand experiences of living in the urban-villages and the practices of Yan Wendou and his fellow brothers reveal that although social life in the urban-villages may differ from that that of the outside, it is not socially disorganized. Villagers, as a target population in the context of the regeneration of the urban-villages, are also a social construction created by politics, culture, socialization, and history. Following this, the formal/informal area-based networking across and within villagers' committees is highlighted. There is a formal committee meeting that meets frequently to discuss local issues and exchange information among production teams. However, the sense of community is not just structured formally. There are tight-knit communities of villagers in the form of clan-based regimes and different forms of informal social network in-between the powerful and the powerless in which information, opinions, insights, and gossips – storylines – are exchanged; networks as well as strategies are formed. These are the undercurrents of the governmental regeneration programmes of the urban-villages that produce unintended outcomes and unexpected alignments of local authorities and allies of local residents.

Chapter Seven

Urbanization in China: Contesting in What Ways?

"Attempts to (re)frame the issue may occur at any time. Because social construction takes place at all levels, it may be possible for designers to (re)construct the current societal conditions in such a way that the issue looks quite different than it would have otherwise, and the kinds of policy that might seem appropriate may change accordingly (Schneider and Ingram, 1997: 77)."

7.1 Introduction.

This thesis examines the different socio-political and institutional forces shaping the urban-villages in Guangzhou. In particular, this thesis focuses on the emergence of a discourse of urban change and regeneration that, in the Guangzhou context, has provided a socio-political basis, and legitimation, for state authorities to pursue specific plans and policies towards the urban-villages. By exploring three specific relationships and/or processes, this thesis has examined how the urban-village, as a social and political construct, has become part of "new stigmatizing topographic lexicon". The first focuses on the shape of the discourse coalition and the "production" of governmental regeneration programmes of the urban-villages. The second examines the form of the governance that is entwined with, and shaped by, the dynamics that have accompanied the implementation of the institutional reform policy, while the third

explores the types of individual responses to the governmental regeneration of the urban-villages. These are the three themes of this thesis and its order of presentation.

The rationale for this thesis is to advance understanding of Chinese urbanism through the context of the urban-villages regeneration. In an attempt to extend the discussion of "China's engagement with neoliberalism" or "neoliberalism with Chinese characteristics" (see Harvey 2005; Liew 2005; Wu 2008, 2009), this thesis engages with recent debates over how to characterise neo-liberalism and its value as an academic construct. It is concerned with the documentation of the interactions within the broader contexts that the urban-villages exist, and considers the internal dynamics, especially the ways local actors of the urban-villagers mediate external pressures such as social-economic change into internal dynamics of coalition building.

Chapter Seven concludes the thesis by re-visiting the three issues laid out in Chapter One about the right to the city, governance, and citizenship relating to the urbanism with Chinese characteristics. The remainder of this chapter is comprised of four sections. First, it will summarize the empirical findings of the thesis by

explicitly addressing the three research questions outlined in Chapter Two. Second, it details how the empirical findings add to our conceptual understandings of the diverse and contingent nature of urban neoliberalization and neoliberal governmentality. Third, by describing the distinctiveness, contribution, and limitations of this thesis with reference to other approaches, it suggests additional and/or alternative mechanisms or instruments for social intervention and engagement, and outlining some practical possibilities for emancipatory forms of urban renewal and change. Finally, it closes by outlines some ongoing development of the regeneration of urban-villages in Guangzhou, and speculates a future research agenda for the phenomenon of the urban-villages *per se*, the contested nature of urbanization in China, and globalized urban neoliberalization.

7.2 The Construction of the Discourses of the Urban-Villages Regeneration.

In socialist China, the city is seen as the centre of capitalistic industries and commerce, which always seeks to take unfair advantage of the peasantry by means of loan operations and high taxes, bringing bankruptcy to the rural countryside. This urban-rural antagonistic was considered particularly acute in China during the Kuomintang period when political control was essentially urban based with little consideration given to rural development (Kao, 1963; in Ma,

1976). Many cities in the years before 1949, when the Kuomintang and foreign imperialists operated, were labelled as "consumer-cities" (*xiaofei chengshi*) by Mao Zedong. Their functions were viewed essentially as parasitic rather than generative, especially in terms of economic production. In socialist China, the consumer-cities are expected to be changed into centres of production, or producer-cities (*shengchan chengshi*).

In the reform era, the political base of the new republic gradually shifted from anti-urbanization to the city in the early twentieth century (see Kirkby, 1985; Chan, 1994). Though ideological fetishes had been swept away, from Deng Xiao Ping's slogan in 1962, "what does it matter if it is a ginger cat or a black cat as long as it catches mice?", "cut off the tail of capitalism" in 1971, the household responsibility system (HRS) in 1978, to Deng Xiao Ping's slogan for "Open Door" policy in 1979, "to get rich is glorious", "Groping the stones while crossing the river", striking the right balance between political ideology and capitalist socio-economic reality, or in other words, looking for politically acceptable and economically feasible "experimentation", is a tricky task for the central leadership.

Cities after socialism faced vast legal economic and social conversion. Changes have been accelerated by the explosion of the free market and flows of capital, the reintroduction of land rent, privatization, as well as the appearance of new actors on the landscape, including local governments, free media, private owners and investors, as well as inhabitants and non-government organization (NGOs). Because it cannot be understood in terms of the temporary dominance of a particular political ideology, a number of authors have introduced concepts to capture this contesting nature of urbanization after socialism. Czepczynski (2008), for example, explores the transition of the post-socialist cities of Central Europe by elaborating Gennep's (1909) idea of liminality. Following Turner (1967), he describes the transition of the post-socialist cities as permanently liminal landscape, "no longer typical of the previous regime and planning, but the same time quite different from the ones aspired to (Czepczynski, 2008: 113).

A plethora of writings about Chinese urbanism has been framed by deploying the terms "transition" and "socialism with Chinese characteristics". Although these frameworks are useful, the problem with these framings is that they collectively rely on metaphors to describe the not-yet-determined nature. This terminological debate is not simply encouraging exercises in re-labelling

phenomenon adequately described in other terms. In his locality-based definition, Shield (1991: 31) shifts attention away from a concentration on tangible space in favour of the non-tangible space of "social spatialisation" to designate the ongoing social construction of the spatial at the level of the social imaginary of cities, government, and spaces, as well as discursive and non-discursive interventions in the landscape. This alternative focus provides the subject matter for this thesis and the second section of this chapter.

7.3 To Brush the "Strong Discourse" of the Neoliberal Urbanization against the Grain.

Indeed, the Chinese leadership has never espoused neoliberalism as an official ideology. China is profoundly different from most post-Soviet and East European countries which have undergone an implosion of state, party and economy. The CCP and the autocratic state have maintained a close hold on economic policy and continued to monopolize political life (see Walker, 2007). The elements of neoliberalization or neoliberal shifts of uneven urban (re)development, which take both geographical and institutional forms, can also be identified in the landscapes of deepening inequalities and entrenched forms of social polarization in China. Premised on the argument that the outcome in China

has been a particular kind of construction of the market economy which interdigitates neoliberal elements with authoritarian centralized control, Harvey (2005: 120) argues that the reforms "just happened to coincide with the turn to neoliberal solutions in Britain and the United States, and was in part an unintended consequence of the neoliberal turn in the advanced capitalist world." Echoing Ong's (2007: 4) criticism that "Harvey has trouble fitting China into his 'neoliberal template'", Wu (2008) supports the use of neoliberaization to describe and theorize the trend of market-oriented accumulation in China. Nevertheless, along with a number of scholars, he likewise provides a parallel scrutiny, saying that "the restructuring of Chinese cities only partially reflects the activity of shared neo-liberal trends (Ma and Wu, 2005: 276)". Rather than a deliberate design, this unintended consequence of the China's neoliberal turn is not "a smooth normalizing shift (from socialism to free market capitalism), but rather one deeply rooted in the 'accumulation regime', meaning extensive accumulation, or state-organized industrialization, as opposed to post-Fordist accumulation (ibid.)". It is "a response to multiple difficulties/crises (political uncertainty and economic stagnation) and the desire for rapid development (He and Wu, 2009: 282)."

These arguments take the form of studies of how "general" processes and structures are modified in particular contexts, and fall back into the debate between contextualising and law-seeking approaches. At this point, there are reasons to question the appropriateness of their ethnocentric prepositions and sentiments. Different from the incessant debates of orthodox modernity and displacement of modernity, the theorization of neoliberalism partly benefits from the increasing recognition of the ways that "geography matters" in the 1980s, in which, as Sayer (1988: 255) argues, "what had formerly considered to be general structures were themselves geographically specific and context dependent phenomena that had mistakenly been treated as general."

Of course I don't mean to discuss the incessant debates of the "preliminary grammar" of neoliberalism (Brenner and Theodore, 2002a; 2002b; Kingfisher, 2002; Leitner et al., 2007; Peck, 2004; Peck and Tickell, 2007). After all, as Clarke (2008) and Barnett (2010) argue, the concept of neoliberalism suffers from promiscuity, omnipresence, and omnipotence. It is overused, risks becoming the next-generation "globalization" concept, and should be retired. Meandering around these incessant debates, it seems that the question of "whether neoliberalism is able to capture the features of market re-orientation in China, or it

is merely a strange Chinese case, deviating from the neoliberalism model?" is substituted with the alternative questions of "given the diverse and contingent nature of 'neoliberal governmentality, what do we mean by a different version of neoliberalism in the late socialist China (the actually existing neoliberal case)?" (Larner, 2003; Sigley, 1996; 2004; Hoffman, 2006; Hoffman et al., 2006), and "what do we mean by neoliberalism itself?"

Neoliberalism can be approached theoretically from various viewpoints. It can be understood in differing terms. While being razzle-dazzled by the changing repertoire of neoliberalism over time and conflict literature about the loose and contradiction laden neoliberalism, what draws my attention more is not how to represent exhaustive empirical "proof" of the way in which neoliberalism and neoliberalization are embodied in the Chinese context, which in one way or another is, in term of Said (1995), as a native informant, but Foucaudian accounts of neoliberal governmentality which interpret such changes in governance as embodiments of particular mentalities of rule: different ways of thinking about how to govern populations and individuals. If this is acceptable, then the question ceases to be the three questions abovementioned, and becomes "what does this neoliberal (re)articulation enable us to understand the existing sites, process, or

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practice?" – a question that, I think, at least, provides a conceptual vantage point to a potentially more productive way forward.

The banner of "building a harmonious society" promises to increase social integration and empower the hitherto excluded or marginalized social groups. Ironically, the development of Guangzhou under this banner has inclined to the value and aesthetic of the urban privileged and excluded the urban deprived. The urban-villages have been already recognized as a problem. The issue of the urban-villages is one of technique (how to solve this problem?), rather than means (how do the urban-villages come to be a problem?). This thesis studies the constructive activities of those who declare the urban-villages to be a "problem". This language-oriented approach addressing or redressing the description of practices, instead of causes and explanations, puts an emphasis on discursive practices in a way that opens up analytical and political possibilities. In contrast to the mainstream explanations for the emergence of the urban-villages in China, which put emphasis on tracing the sources of this "urban problem" to a convergence of social factors, or institutional considerations encapsulated in the rural-urban dichotomy, this thesis takes the subject matter into the realm of public policy, especially that in post modern era of governance (Richards and Smith,

2003), in which the analysis does not assume that there is scientifically discoverable truth about efficiency, effectiveness, or justice of public policies. Instead, as Schneider and Ingram (1997: 38) argue, "there are simply arguments, legitimations, and rationales."

If governmental innovation existing outside of, or beyond, the reach of the governmental is fundamentally Janus-faced (e.g., Swyngedouw, 2005) or even Faustian, then, the governmental innovation here is thought of less in terms of how to overcome crises, dislocations, and unruliness, and more in terms of how to connect spaces and geographical scales – the scale at which a particular phenomenon or question is framed geographically (Agnew, 1997) – in an alternative way, in which the phenomenon of the urban-villages might take on a different aspect and thus require a different or more complex explanation. The "emergence" of the urban-villages is itself scale specific with respect to how this phenomenon occurs and can be explained. It is socially constructed rather than ontologically given.

This is why this thesis is not limited to the denotation and connotations of the word "urban-village", but extends to the discursive field in which the

urban-villages as a phenomenon are embedded and the practices it entails. It attempts to investigate a spatiotemporally process rather than a fixed and homogenous thing. Similar to the call of Blumer (1971), what is needed is a fundamental change in conceptualization to reflect a definition and/or generalization of the urban-village as a "product of a process of collective definition" rather than "objective condition and social arrangement". Rather than using the term "urban-village" as a normative concept, or insisting on the self-evident quality of the urban-villages as given objects of intervention, I look at the ways in which they were constituted as objects of intervention with an associated discourse that carries the authority of state's statements. This process-based analysis focuses on not only the institutions and places but also *"the spaces in between"* (Peck and Tickell, 2002: 387). Such an approach has been described by Foucault (1980: 117) as genealogy. It is

> "a form of history which can account for the constitution of knowledge,
> discourses, domains of objects etc., without having to make reference to
> a subject which is either transcendental in relation to the field of events
> or runs its empty sameness throughout the course of history."

The problematic shabby landscape and various social problems of the urban-villages diagnosed as the consequence of rural remnants of a past era and villages' backwardness in the urbanization is in fact a statement that mixes the

meta-narrative with facts and reverses social and historical causation, in a way that these discourses are more like, as Bourdieu (1998) said, the structurally over-determined "strong discourses" of the neoliberalism which have behind it all the powers of a world of power relations which it helps to make as it is; which are so compelling in a way that even their mis-description of the social world can be remarked in their self-actualizing nature and their self-evident alignment with the primary contours of contemporary political-economic power.

In the discourse of the urban-village, spatial metaphors such as the "concentration of poverty" or "lawless zones" disguises the social and political processes behind the real problem and helps to provide the justification for simplistic spatial solutions to complex social, economic, and political problems. This results in them being pathologized and then subject to threats of evictions. Thus the focus of this thesis is not to ascertain whether neoliberal rationality is an adequate articulation of the phenomenon of the urban-villages or whether the phenomenon of the urban-villages is merely a coincidence of the neoliberal "heartlands" and what might be the criteria supporting or contesting such an assessment, but how it functions as a "politics of truth" (Foucault, 1997b: 67), producing new forms of knowledge, inventing different notions and concepts that

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contribute to the "government" of new domains of regulation and intervention.

This attention can move us away from grand narratives and teleologies (such as

developmentalism) toward an analysis of the different spatial-environmental

causalities and aspects of socio-spatial relations they problematize. This, I think,

can provide us with a frame to articulate a new vocabulary for defining problems

and programming solutions, and develop policy scenarios portraying alternative

futures based on certain assumptions and reflecting different values.

7.4 The Urban-Villages Regeneration: Reflections on a Metaphor.

Based on fieldwork conducted during 2006 to 2008, the period when there

was a growing recognition of the issues of the regeneration of the urban-villages

in China, I examine the social constructions of the phenomenon and the discursive

articulation of the urban-villages regeneration in Guangzhou. At the moment that

the fieldwork was conducted, "urban-village" and "regeneration" have become

words and concepts understood and used in popular and scholarly conversation in

China. It was a time when the urban-villages were spaces of indeterminacy, whose

space of analysis was not already defined by geographical entities.

At the time of writing this thesis, mega-events such as Beijing's Olympic

Game in 2008, with its motif "One World, One Dream", Shanghai's World Expo

at the mid of 2010, with its motif "Better City, Better Life", and Guangzhou's

Asian Games at the end of 2010, with its motif "Thrilling Games, Harmonious

Asia", are used to provide political as well as economical leverage to the urban

regeneration in Chinese cities. The Guangzhou Municipal Government declared

that eight urban-villages would be regenerated before 2010. The regeneration of

the all 137 urban-villages in Guangzhou will be achieved in ten years.

Following the municipal government's ambitious statement, some policy

entrepreneurs propose that the solution is to free up the market, to remove

restrictions on rural land use, and to allow developer to build where previously

they have been unable to do so. Some others start to tackle wider problems such

as *hukou* reformation and call for the need to take into consideration levels of

affordable housing for the middle to lower income groups. While the cost of

housing became increasingly unaffordable, some cities, such as Chongqing in

Sichuan Province, announced to build public rental housing each year from 2010

to 2012, for rural to urban migrant workers, new university and college graduates,

and people from other parts of the mainland. It seems that Guangzhou is able to

undertake the regeneration of the urban-villages along these lines. However, it is

not an easy option. The way that the urban-village regeneration in Guangzhou is ambivalent mirrors Guangzhou's wider position in socioeconomic network in China. It's specific social, economic, and political geographies are not like those of Beijing, Shanghai, and Shenzhen, which are endowed with relatively stronger government authority and power.

There is a criticism to the regeneration of Yangji Village in 2011 about its opaque decision-making processes. (Though this criticism was, as usual, "harmonized".) Such debate plays a role in the emergence of contested inequalities (Clarke, 2004) – while aiming at the inequality of villagers, assess how policies impact different subsections of the population, and which public services should address other kinds of inequality as well, are to the fore. Nevertheless, villages and the lives of their residents, which have been evaluated negatively and represented in homogeneous terms, are yet to be fully explored. In terms of the social construction of target population, so far, in many of the studies about the urban-villages in China, including this thesis, a number of social-discursive categories such as race, class, religion, ethnicity, region, gender, and other cleavages differences that have divided society, are hidden from view[79].

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[79] See Li et al., 2008; 2009.

These are sources of identification and group solidarity that may serve as mobilizing forces and make it possible for government to facilitate compromises and produce public policies that are acceptable to the society (Schneider and Ingram, 1997: 19).

On 15th June 2011, Wang Yang, the Chief Party Secretary of Guangdong Province, gave a statement when he visited Florence, Venice, and other cities in Italy. As he said: "The demolition-redevelopment should not be the only scheme for the regeneration of the urban-villages in Guangzhou. We can choose one typical urban-village and preserve it as a trace in the rapid urbanization of Guangzhou[80]." The rhetoric around "preserving a typical urban-village in Guangzhou" triggered again the debate of "how to solve the problem of the urban-villages". "How to solve the problem of the urban-villages" belongs to a discursive repertoire very different from "What the regeneration of the urban-villages is or ought to be". Compare with the discursive repertoire of the urban regeneration in London (see Imrie, Lees, Raco, 2009), for instance, what is absent is the "devolution, community, and empowerment" repertoire mobilised in the context of UK regeneration. Of course, the rhetoric around "the urban-villages

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[80] *Southern Metropolitan Daily*, 15 June 2011.

as a problem" seems very distant from the discourses and debates circulated at "devolution, community, and empowerment" repertoire. I do not wish to be seen to argue that it should transfer the discursive repertoire in other contexts to the context of the urban-villages regeneration in China. However, I do think that what urban-villages regeneration can imply is an integrated perspective on the problems and potentials of the Chinese cities. This may help us to think the question concerning the proper form, function and meaning of urbanity in an Asian city.

7.5 Conclusions.

As rural-urban transitional zones, the urban-villages are, in Bach's (2007) term, "space of exception". They are legal anomalies of sorts, where the informal and the formal intersect, where the public sphere and private sphere imbricate, where sovereignty, citizenship, and urban space are renegotiated, where government practices are reconfigured, and where governable spaces and bodies are delineated and institutionalized. The urban-villages regeneration is conditioned by economic and political determinations. It is also shaped by interests of classes, experts, the grassroots, and other contending forces, transformed by technology, saturated with images, mediated in the news, and constantly appropriated and reproduced in the practices of everyday life. It is in the very way that different perceptions are

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enacted, performed, and subverted by different social actors, in the ongoing and practical appropriation of the space that not only the term "urban-village" is conceptualized and acquires its very specific meanings and necessitates very specific solutions, but also the social meanings and the urban form of the "urban-villages" become sedimented.

As a flip side of the glossy pictures of gleaming images that suggest yet another global metropolis in the making, the urban-villages in China can be said to be one of the new landscapes of global neo-liberalism to decode. *De jure*, these urban-villages are rural; *de facto*, these urban-villages are urban. They serve an intermediate role in conflicts that arise between rural and urban. As an idiosyncratic place, they are to voice the anxieties of an age in which the urbanization in China produces what it itself cannot recognize. They represent an exit option (Hirschman, 1970); a physical manifestation of the rational response of people to an unreasonable institution, when the potentials for negotiation – the voice option – are impossible. It is in the context that combines political ideology with economic reality, rural/urban is not only geographical and physical, but also a political rhetoric, in which it comprises a highly dense process of institutionalization and historical sedimentation. It formulates people's

imagination of "modernization" and what the "city ought to be". It is the very

raison d'etre of the urban-villages in China.

In the rapid process of urbanization in China, economic pragmatism and political symbolism conflicted; pre-existing personal ties facilitated capitalist ventures (Smart and Smart, 1991; Leung, 1993; Hsing, 1998; Smart and Lin, 2007). Dominating collective land ownership, ill-defined property rights, and ambiguous residence status and the rights of this mixed population are profoundly on their ways of laborious negotiation (Zhu, 2002; Ho and Lin, 2003; Ho, 2001, 2005). These are sensitive topics addressing "some of society's most pressing social issues and policy questions (Sieber and Stanley, 1988: 55)". Putting these issues into the broader context of urban regeneration globally, these are hardly novel issues and have been raised in different ways in diverse body of literature subsumed under the label the "urban problem". They can be both cause and effect. When being connected together in the urban-villages regeneration controversy in China, however, they are causalized in a certain way to form a discourse coalition interacting with localized patterns of institutional practices and different scales of activity to frame local-level decision making, in which certain storylines are deployed or privileged strategically by different actors,

while others become material and structural preconditions to the regeneration of

the urban-villages in Guangzhou. It is in this complex way that the

representations of local residents are tied to recent neoliberal representations and

re-articulation of citizenship, productivity, and accountability, to the extent that

the landscape of the urban-villages regeneration in China marks one of the very

context-specific forms of neoliberal urbanism in China that has taken place since

the post-1980s.

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