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Urban Redevelopment under the ‘three old’ policy in Guangzhou, China from 2008

**An Emerging Selective Regime in Fragmented Authoritarianism:**

**Urban Redevelopment under the ‘three old’ policy in Guangzhou, China from 2009 to 2013**

Abstract

This paper employs an urban regime approach, with the understanding of urban politics as a fragmented authoritarianism model, to investigate the urban redevelopment process under the ‘three old’ policy in Guangzhou, China from 2008. Its analysis claims that the selective regime has emerged as a mechanism to reorganize the relationship between state, market and community. Members and processes of the regime are selected by the state to benefit the prosperity of the urban economy. Small opportunities and selective incentives are crucial elements to develop such a regime. Characteristics of this regime might reveal the core logic of China’s model of development in terms of the relationship between the state and the society.

Keywords: urban regime approach, fragmented authoritarianism, urban redevelopment，three old policy

# Introduction: ‘three old redevelopment’ as a new mode in Guangzhou, China

Chinese cities are involved in significant transformations, such as changing production and distribution models from planning to marketing, shifting from an industrial-oriented and inefficient state economy to a consumption-oriented and efficient manufacturing in a global market economy, transitioning forward to a more decentralized system in areas such as decision-making and resources-allocation (Wu, 2005). Urban redevelopment in Chinese cities is a typical field to be analysed in such complex and dynamic changes, because its transformation contains changes in institutions, spatial forms, functions and ownership, under macro political, economic and social transformations. Urban redevelopment has been explored as a state-sponsored gentrification in neo-liberal reform (He, 2009; He and Wu, 2012)，changed property ownership from land use right to land development right (Zhu, 2004) and a place promotion strategy for local authority to compete with other cities (Wu, 2003). These studies build up a frame to understand urban redeveloping process in last several decades. More recently, ‘three old’ redevelopment emerging in Guangdong Province might be considered as a different mode of redevelopment. This mode is based on ‘three old redevelopment’ policy announced by both provincial and municipal government at 2009. This policy is the first systematic policy specific for redevelopment; it brings about released regulation from land management agency, less governmental control in transaction between land owners and developers, and reduced taxes and fees in redeveloping process. This paper will argue that some elements in ‘three old’ redevelopment in Guangzhou results in informal coalitions crossing boundaries between state，market and community; Such coalitions have some characteristics to be described as urban regime according to its definition. However, urban regime approach has some difficulties to analyse Guangzhou case in terms of its transferability and lacked origin of regime. Therefore, fragmented authoritarianism as the context of Guangzhou regime, and strategical selectivity approach from Jessop (2008) to analyse origin of regime, might be helpful to build a more systematic frame to understand Guangzhou case, as an emerging selective regime in the field of redevelopment.

Following this introduction, this paper progresses in five parts. The second and third parts provide a theoretical basis coming from an urban regime approach, combined with fragmented authoritarianism and SRA approach. The fourth part gives an institutional background of redevelopment as fragmented authoritarianism. The fifth one is the empirical section covering the regime concerns in Guangzhou ‘three old’ redevelopment. The sixth one is the analyse from SRA to investigate the origin and purpose of regime. The last is the conclusion and discussion.

Based on such literature, this paper aims to develop an urban regime analysis of Chinese cities addressing some new aspects:

1. This research brings about a new case of urban regime in Guangzhou when others are more focused on Shanghai and Shenzhen; this case is also a new phenomenon in the light of a global comparative regime approach;
2. This study employs specific concepts such as small opportunities and selective incentives, originating from Stone’s (1989, 1993) classic works, to analyse when others have paid less attention to original methods, but have focused their worked on local context and their own terms to develop a profound understanding;
3. This case of emerging urban regime in Guangzhou can be characterised as a selective regime: those who can enter this regime are institutionally and purposefully decided by the state;
4. This paper attempts to explore the influence of Chinese characteristics, in an urban regime to contribute to the global understanding of the essence of a regime approach. The Chinese style division of labour between state and market is used to illustrate the characteristics of a Chinese regime (Imbroscio, 1998). Furthermore, this idea might be involved in discussions about China’s model of development, in terms of the role and function of the party-state authority in China’s economic prosperity;
5. This description of the Guangzhou case displays some new tendencies of urban political transformation in Chinese cities.

# 2. Theoretical Frame: Urban Regime Approach plus fragmented authoritarianism and strategical selectivity

The urban regime approach[[1]](#footnote-1) emerged from the late 1980s （Fainstein and Fainstein, 1983；Elkin, 1987; Stone，1989）and is deeply rooted in the institutional context of cities from the U.S. This context means that success of the local government is evaluated by economic development, and this development greatly depends on local business in terms of economic growth and tax base (Painter, 1997). Governmental authority is greatly limited by Constitution, national political ideology and traditional autonomy of private business in terms of possessing and mobilizing resources（Stone，1989）. Therefore, informal but stable arrangements between public and private departments become crucial because formal ones are weak; and long-term trust，flexibility and accessibility to institutional resources in informal coordination have empowered involved actors (Stone, 1989). Selective incentives, such as contracts, employment and infrastructure, are distributed among different actors in a regime; this is the core strategy for participants to benefit and overcome the free rider problem (Painter, 1997; Mossberger and Stoker, 2001). Through this strategy, a regime distributes resources and structures models of interaction, to realise ‘small opportunities’ which cannot be grasped without cross-boundaries cooperation in a regime (Stone, 1993; Mossberger and Stoker, 2001). Consequently，an urban regime approach changes the research focus from ‘social control’ to ‘social production’ based on a turn in the understanding of power from ‘power over’ to ‘power to’. In other words, the achievement of common goals becomes more important than who can be dominant in the field of urban politics (Stoker, 1995). This approach surpasses either pluralist method by its response to the achievement of goals rather than requirements from electoral groups, or an elite model by its situation in which non-group can possesses comprehensive dominance (Stoker and Mossberger, 1994).

The urban regime approach might be one of the most important concepts in urban politics for over two decades (Mossberger, 2009). This happens because a regime approach is concerned more about production rather than consumption, and economic growth rather than social services (Harding, 1999). These characteristics may reflect urban transformation at this stage to promote a market-orient or neo-liberal society. After Stone’s (1989) case in Atlanta, U.S, DiGaetano (1989) and Orr (1992) develop analysis in Baltimore, Boston and Detroit; DiGaetano and Klemanski (1993) and Davies (2003) go further in British cities; Blanco (2013) recently brings back regime approach to European cities, when Stoker and Mossberger (1994) Kantor, Savitch and Haddock (1997) have already formed a global comparative framework.

Chinese cities are also analysed by regime approach in several cases. Zhu (1999) analyses coalitions between local authority, SOEs (State Owned Enterprises) and developers to realise both economic growth and social stability in Shenzhen. Zhang (2002) displays socialist regime characteristics in Shanghai: ‘a strong local government followed by cooperative nongovernmental sectors with excluded community organization’ (Zhang, 2002, p475). Yang and Chang (2007) also focus on Shanghai to reveal a public-private partnership as a pro-growth regime seeks to grasp potential rents of land in redeveloped sites. Li and Li (2011) argue that an urban coalition has emerged between public and private actors in the redevelopment of urban villages in Shenzhen, through the biased distribution of resources and urban planning policy. This analysis develops application of regime approach in Chinese cities, in terms of purpose, members and methods to pursuit own interests of regimes.

However, such application of regime in the worldwide scale has brought about strong critics, especially for its transferability. Painter (1997) observes that an urban regime explains economic growth but not the reasons for the existence of a regime; its necessity might be built by higher level institutions, such as fiscal structure and intergovernmental power structure (Mossberger and Stoker, 2001; Stone, 2014). For its transferability, Fierre (2005) simply states that urban regime approach as ‘an abstraction of U.S. urban political economy’ and cannot be applied in ‘other aspects of urban politics in other parts of the world’ (Fierre, 2005, p447). Harding (1994) also supports this challenge to urban regime approach because of the centralized political system in European cities. Davies (2003) argues that British cities establish coalitions between public and private sectors because of the requirement from central government as opposed to their own demands; therefore, business departments in such coalitions are marginal. Mossberger and Stoker (2001) summarize the conditions of the existence of a regime in the U.S. They state that: a city in the USA is dependent on capital rather than funding from the central state; less planning power can influence economic activities; political culture places more emphasis on economic growth than social services; and public sectors are less dominant. Such conditions cannot be satisfied in European cities; therefore an urban regime approach might have limited ability for analysing European cities.

In this paper, urban regime approach is still convenient to analyse urban politics in a fragmented, economic growth–oriented and changeable social product model, because these conditions are crucial to format a regime to pursue ‘small opportunities’ through a cross-boundaries coalition. Besides，contrary to the urban growth machine model, urban regimes have different sub-categories, which can adopt different situations in a global context (Blanco, 2013). Even if there are crucial differences between the original conditions of regime and cases in this paper, the key concepts, such as small opportunities and selective incentives can still benefit to figure out the essence of political process in redevelopment. However, differences between Guangzhou case and other regime cases, especially with Western ones, may brings about some challenge to apply regime approach in Guangzhou. In this perspective, fragmented authoritarianism provides some insights into local context. Besides, the weak explanation about the existence of a regime is problematic for regime approach (Painter, 1997); the perspective from strategical selectivity might improve this problem in terms of understanding logic of goal-building, partner choosing, and information openness (Jessop, 2008). Theoretical details about fragmented authoritarianism and strategical selectivity will be discussed in the following chapters.

# 3. Fragmented Authoritarian city: institutional environment of urban redevelopment in Guangzhou

## 3.1 Fragmented Authoritarian city of Guangzhou

Chinese cities are developed under a strong party-state authoritarian system; this communist authority has a dominant capacity to possess and mobilise political and economic resources. It seems that methods to analyse Chinese cities are far removed from the urban regime approach, which originates from a context with a limited government and weak formal institution. However, this powerful party-state system is fragmented in terms of distributing resources and authorities. The fragmented authoritarianism model is ‘the most durable heuristic through which to study Chinese politics’ (Mertha, p996). Liberthal (1992) claims that ‘authority below the very peak of the Chinese political system is fragmented and disjointed‘(Liberthal, 1992, p8). The authorities are divided into diverse clusters of organs in the regime. The division of authorities and resources among different bureaucracies brings about a situation whereby no department has more authority over the others; bargaining, exchange and negotiations are crucial to achieve consensus about decision-making in policy formulation. The structure of governmental organs includes horizontal lines (kuai) and vertical lines (tiao). The horizontal agencies have similar functions at different levels; the vertical ones have different roles at the same level, province, city, county or town (Liberthal, 2003; Wong, 2010). The fragmented authoritarianism model has been criticised because of the further development of China’s politics. Mertha (2009) expands the scale of this model, from a perception of the inside the government to a consideration of the whole state-society relationship. The developed model includes new actors, such as marginal governmental sectors, journalists, professionals, activists and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to adopt rapidly changing political and economic circumstances. These actors are pursuing policy goals in an entrepreneurial way; which means they are creative, taking risks and coordinating with each other. This is process is described as bureaucratic entrepreneurship (Mertha, 2009; Wong, 2010).

In the case of urban redevelopment in Guangzhou, the fragmented authoritarianism model involves two dimensions. The vertical division of authorities between different level of government, especially between central and municipality government because Guangzhou is a vice-provincial city who is directly led by the central state, not the Guangdong province. On the other hand, horizontal division of power between mayor, planning bureau and national land management bureau informs the power structure inside of the local state. Inside of this structure, the mayor is the most powerful and influential role. Under his dominant authority, different department in municipality government have diverse authorities and recourses in the process of redevelopment; these crucial elements are separately located as fragments.

*Before submitting to the ‘three old redevelopment’ office, every redeveloping project need to approved by land management committee and urban planning committee. ‘Three old redevelopment’ office cannot approve projects without agreement from land management and urban planning agencies.*

*Example 23, planner, 11-2013*

land management agency controls changing status of urban and rural land in terms of ownership and function （constructed or agricultural land）.The reformed land management process produces a market track, the conveyance of land, beside a traditional planning track. Land management system is divided into a double tracks system. The planning one, free allocation process still works in state-owned department or non-profit sectors. This allocation has no time limitation of using; but it cannot be directly transferred to other entities by market process. It needs the expropriation process by the state or paying stipulated land fees to local state. Oppositely, the conveyance of land is for commercial function by private sectors, which are might coming from agricultural land with transformation. This transaction is a market process in terms of negotiation or auction (Zhu, 2002; Lin and Ho, 2005).

Urban planning agency controls constructing status of urban and rural land in terms of density，design and function (residential, office, retail and public service). Xu and Ng (1998) introduces a more detail planning system in Guangzhou. Detail development control plan has similar function with zoning in the U.S.; therefore, sometimes it has been translated into zoning. This planning involves some index about development control, such as floor ratio, building density and height; which are crucial to commercial development. The urban planning bureau is less independent with the mayor and city government, comparing with the land administrative and house management bureau. Planning Commission has been built up as an institutional innovation since 2006 in Guangzhou. The mayor becomes more and more dominant over other members, in spite of the composition of this commission is diverse and multiple.

*The urban planning committee has been changed into a ‘suitable’ organisation; which means choosing ‘suitable’ experts to approve ‘suitable’ projects, technologically and politically. Political consideration is more important; this often means these projects can be relatively easier to be approved.*

*Example 1, scholar, 01-2014*

## 3.2 Categories of redevelopment and its Fragmented Authoritarian Status

There are three basic categories about urban redevelopment with different administrative process，fragmented authorities have different power to approve these redevelopment project.

### 3.2.1 Redevelopment in State-owned land with work-unit (danwei)

Work-unit is a socialist style working and living place, some of them are factories. Their land is coming from free allocation process; therefore, theoretically these units cannot develop their land into commercial function, even into real estate market. However, this control is not very strict. Because the socialist tradition of use right of workers in state-owned land need to be respected even in a informal channel; and welfare functions of work-unit, such as education, healthy and insurance, are provided by work-units. These work-units might be bankrupt because they are less effective comparing with market entities; their bankrupts may threaten social stability because their impacts to worker in these units. Therefore, many work-units invite investors from outside to build up development coalition to develop their free allocated lands. Relatively low amount of fees have been paid to the local state because the local state need to pay these workers for their long-term working for the state with relatively low salaries (Zhu, 2002, 2004, 2005; Lin and Ho, 2005). This development process has described from Zhu (2004) as a transformation from use right to development right. Some cities, such as Guangzhou and Shenzhen, build up state-owned urban development companies to grasp revenues from the redevelopment process in work-unit used land.

### 3.2.2 Conversion from rural land to urban land

Conversion from rural land to urban land often happens in urban [marginal](http://www.iciba.com/marginal) areas, occasionally in city centre when urban villages are redeveloped. This conversion is really an excellent business for local state, because it is monopolised by local government and can significantly produce revenue. In land management institution, construction land in rural land is limited in few function; its growth is depends on the increasing of population of villages. Therefore, it is very and under strictly control. However, the local state can transform rural land by local state with compensation. Compensation for such ownership changes are extremely low because they follow the standard of agricultural output from these lands; when they transformed into state-owned lands with a greater range of uses permitted the land value will increase significantly ( Lin and Ho, 2005; Zhu, 2005; Cheng, 2011). The central state has more and more strict regulation over this conversion through institutional change in land management department, because the consideration of food security and social stability. Conversions have significantly decreased the amount of agricultural land; and it aalso threaten social stability because the low standard of compensation leads to protests from losing land peasants (Lin and Ho, 2005).

### 3.2.3 Redevelopment in urban villages

Urban villages (chengzhongcun) are a special category of collective-owned lands; they are located in urban areas but within rural administrative system. They were used to be rural land, and are not expropriated totally in a conversion process because local government only expropriates part of villages’ land to reduce budget of redevelopment. Guangzhou government often return Economic Development Land to villages; this land usually is from 10 per cent to 20 per cent of the amount of expropriated land. These Economic Development Land can be developed into commercial functions. Beside of these lands, villages’ collective-owned residential land cannot legally develop some commercial sectors because of strict regulation of transformation from agricultural land to non-agricultural one. However, such villages develop functions of retail, entertainment, hotel, housing letting, and even manufacturing industries in urban areas, in spite of land usage regulation, because urban administrative and monitor system do not effectively cover urban villages in collective-own lands. Rents for such functions, especially for housing let to immigrants from rural areas, are important incomes for urban villagers. To maximize their income, the height and density of these buildings are often unbelievable high. These high-density development in a central location in city centre bring about huge amount of cost if any developer aims to redevelop such villages’ collective-owned land (Zhu, 2005; Tian, 2008)

## 3.3 Fragmented Authoritarian Status between Government and Society

Based on these three categories, redeveloping process has different difficulties. Transformation from agricultural land into constructed land is the most important process in land management department; the control of constructing density (FAR floor area ratio) is the most important index in urban planning agencies. At the same time, public funding for urban redevelopment cannot cover the cost of [land expropriation](http://www.iciba.com/land_expropriation) and infrastructure; investment from the society is necessary. Such situation leads to bargaining activities in every project between different stakeholders and governmental sectors. However, these fragments just have limited autonomy because the mayor has the overall power to influence. Other actors with bureaucratic entrepreneurship (with Metha’s meaning) can pursue their values and interests by influencing the power structure and policy process inside of the local state of Guangzhou (example 1, 2014; example 4, 2013; example 7, 2013; example 11, 2013).

Based on the fragmented power structure, an urban regime approach might be appropriate for analysing Chinese urban politics in several ways:

1. The Chinese government focuses its concern on social production rather than social consumption, economic growth rather than social services. This can match the essence of an urban regime approach, which is crucial to adopt the contemporary transformation of the function of state;
2. Chinese urban politics are fragmented in terms of distributing institutional resources, therefore a coalition between different government department and between the state and market in the society is important, even if the state is still dominant in the field. This can satisfy the pre-condition of the regime, namely, the fragmented distribution.
3. Bureaucratic entrepreneurship behaviours display the mechanism of selective incentives in an urban regime. Involved actors directly pursue their preferences with small opportunities in selected areas. This satisfies the core strategy of urban regime approach.
4. The new stage of urban redevelopment in Guangzhou might comprise more elements of an urban regime as compared to previous stages.

# 4．Urban Redevelopment under the ‘three old’ policy in Guangzhou, China from 2009 to 2013

## 4.1 background

This part will discuss Guangzhou case in the light of urban regime approach and fragmented authoritarianism model. This empirical study focused on Guangzhou, the third biggest city in China from 2008 to 2013. This paper is based on data collected from the field trip between October, 2013 and January 2014 in Guangzhou, through semi-structural interview (26 people in diverse positions), participant observation and secondary data. Such people are accessed through personal relationship because I have studies and worked in Guangzhou from 2004 to 2012 and built up relatively strong connection with government, university, developer and planners. These 26 interviewees are involved in two levels of discussions: the first one is the specific policy about ‘three old redevelopment’ and its related institutional changes in municipality government；the second one is about strategies of different actors in individual projects.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Example | Position of example | Time of interview | Example | Position of example | Time of interview |
| Example 1 | scholar | 01/2014 | Example 14 | developer | 01/2014 |
| Example 2 | scholar | 01/2014 | Example 15 | citizen | 01/2014 |
| Example 3 | scholar | 01/2014 | Example 16 | villager | 01/2014 |
| Example 4 | scholar | 10/2013 | Example 17 | migrant | 01/2014 |
| Example 5 | scholar | 10/2013 | Example 18 | migrant | 01/2014 |
| Example 6 | scholar | 01/2014 | Example 19 | journalist | 12/2013 |
| Example 7 | government | 11/2013 | Example 20 | NGO member | 12/2013 |
| Example 8 | government | 10/2013 | Example 21 | NGO member | 12/2013 |
| Example 9 | government | 12/2013 | Example 22 | Urban planner | 11/2013 |
| Example 10 | government | 12/2013 | Example 23 | Urban planner | 11/2013 |
| Example 11 | government | 01/2014 | Example 24 | Urban planner | 12/2013 |
| Example 12 | developer | 12/2013 | Example 25 | Urban planner | 01/2014 |
| Example 13 | developer | 12/2013 | Example 26 | Urban planner | 01/2014 |

Table 1: Participants of interviews

Guangzhou has long term history over 2000 years, it is the first port city opening to global trade (He, 2009). Guangdong Province is a traditional pioneer in China’s transition while it is far away from the political centre, Beijing, and near the most western city, Hong Kong, so it is safer to do some political-economic experiments in Guangdong Province than in Beijing, Tianjing and Shanghai, which are more crucial for the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) to control the country. What happens in Guangdong Province often acts as an experiment and provides some experiences for other region of China to imitate. Therefore, It also is a more democratically-governed city compared to Beijing which may reduce the difficulty of investigation in Guangzhou rather than other large Chinese cities (Lu, 2001; Zhu & Zhang, 2004). For example, Guangzhou was the first city to start commodity housing development in China (He, 2009).

‘Three old’ policy has been prepared from 2008 , which includes the redevelopment of old village，old city，old factory. Old village means urban village in some convenient location inside of the territory of Guangzhou. Old city is the ordinary old urban areas with declined physical and economic functions. Old factory is the socialist work-unit (danwei) in urban area, whose land is distributed with the local authority without charge of land-lease fees; now most of them have been abandoned. The ‘three old’ policy aims to reduce transaction cost in terms of decreased taxes and fees, green channel of permission and approving, and released regulation from the planning department. This policy is coming from the Ministry of Land Management, as an benefit to Mr Yang Wang, the leader of Guangdong province and a future leader of the state; which means this policy has broke some part of existed rules and laws and will benefit economic performance in Guangdong. Foshan (a municipality near Guangzhou) is the first experimental city with ‘three old’ policy in Guangdong province; Guangzhou, as the capital of Guangdong, follows Foshan’s steps.

*The ‘three old redevelopment’ policy is a gift from central land management ministry to Guangdong Province, as an investment to leader of Guangdong Mr Yang Wang, a future national leader.**Central land management ministry gives some additional index for constructing land to Guangdong; which will benefit economic growth in Guangdong. It also brings about political interests to Mr Yang Wang***.**

*Example 1, scholar, 01-2014*

There are three major categories about urban redevelopment projects; which are based on their different land ownership and social status. These categories have diverse institutional environment to provide incentives, opportunities and constrains of redevelopment activities. In three old redevelopment, old factories and old city are belonging to the first category; old city are also State-owned land, but without work-unit on it. Redevelopment of old village includes elements from two categories, the second one and the third one. This category of ‘three old’ has strong connection with former three categories in ‘3.2 Categories of redevelopment and its Fragmented Authoritarian Status’.

‘three old’ redevelopment policy has several main benefits to redeveloping in terms of released land management regulation, simplified transformation from collective owned land to state owned land, sharing interests between stakeholders and cooperation between different governmental sectors (powerpoint document from Pearl River Investment). These characteristics can be described as emerging regime in the field of urban redevelopment because exchange of resources, coordination and long-term partnership become possible.

*‘Three old’ redevelopment policy in Guangzhou displays a new concept, which means every stakeholders can share the interests in the process of redevelopment. These interests are solely belonging to the government before. This transformation gives a innovative answer to the question: for who's interests the policy are making?*

*Example 11, government, 11-2013*

## 4.2 Small opportunities and obstacles to realise them in urban redevelopment

Stone (1989) states that ‘small opportunities’ are pursued by a regime to attract allies. Such opportunities cannot be grasped when there are institutional obstacles. ‘Small opportunities’ in Guangzhou are based on the principles of urban redevelopment. Economic growth leads to increased land rents, along with an improved physical environment. Both land and property owners, and local government will benefit from this increase in terms of real estate interests and fiscal income. Furthermore, local leaders, such as the mayor of Guangzhou city, can achieve some political advantages in terms of local revenue and building of the environment.

However, such ‘small opportunities’ in Guangzhou face many difficulties in order to be realised, especially as they are related to fragmented authoritarian environments. Firstly, institutional obstacles in both land management and urban planning departments, in terms of diverse land use regulations (see from 4.1.1 to 4.1.3). Secondly, ambiguous property rights of the old city, the old factory and the old village bring about argument and conflicts about ownership, and potential income based on this. Thirdly, developers have strong incentives to redevelop urban areas with sufficient capital; however, their negotiation with citizens and villagers in involved projects are difficult because of unstable legal environments. The ‘Three old redevelopment’ policy brings about related institutional changes to overcome some of these obstacles.

### 4.2.1 Small opportunities and obstacles before the ‘three old policy’

(1) Old city

Small opportunities:

* Potential increasing of rents in the land (C-S-1);
* Promotion of physical condition for living(C-S-2);
* Increasing of taxes and fees for government(C-S-3);

Obstacles:

* Opposite ideas from citizens with less satisfied compensation (C-O-1);
* Long process to be approved in government, especially when new projects need to break some regulation from urban planning department(C-O-2);

(2) Old factory

Small opportunities:

The Small opportunities are as same as C-S-1, C-S-2 and C-S-3, but there is more significant increasing of rents (C-S-1) because the land of factory is free from municipality government.

Obstacles:

The Obstacles are as same as C-O-1 and C-O-2, but there less power from opposite opinion group because former workers have less rights to participate.

* Need to pay additional fees to the local state because their lands are distributed with the local authority freely (C-O-3).

(3) Old village

Small opportunities:

The Small opportunities are as same as C-S-1, C-S-2 and C-S-3, but there is less significant increasing of rents (C-S-1) because the land of factory is free from municipality government.

Obstacles:

The Obstacles are as same as C-O-1 and C-O-2, but there are more villagers with opposite opinion because villagers have more resources to support their requirements.

* Need to pay additional fees to the local state, because their land are used to belong to themselves, but now through conversion from rural land to urban land, these lands are owned by the state (C-O-4).
* Difficult of redevelopment plan to be approved in government, especially when new projects stand against some regulation from land management department (different form urban planning department) (C-O-5).

### 4.2.2 Institutional changes of ‘three old policy’

Some important institutional changes have been designed and implicated in the ‘three old policy’ to deal with small opportunities and institutional obstacles mentioned above. These changed elements are:

1. Decreasing of taxes and fees paid to the local state as the cost of land leasing and conversion from rural land to urban land;
2. A new institution, the three old redevelopment office has been created. The chief of this office is the deputy mayor of Guangzhou municipality; which means this office, under the deputy mayor’s leadership, has relatively strong ability to negotiate with other related departments, such as the urban planning bureau and land management bureau.
3. Some parts of regulation from both the planning bureau and management bureau can be released. There are less restraints for redevelopment projects as compared to previously;
4. Land using right can be transacted through a negotiation process rather than competition in open market of land. This might reduce the cost of redevelopment through price control, legally or illegally.

(Resources: Methods to accelerate ‘three old redevelopment’, Guangzhou government document, No. 56, 2009关于加快推进“三旧”改造工作的意见 (穗府〔2009〕56 号)  ; Methods to simplify the approving process of ‘three old redevelopment’, Guangzhou government office document, No. 17, 2011关于广州市“三旧”改造管理简政放权的意见(穗府办〔2011〕17 号）‘Additional methods to accelerate ‘three old redevelopment’, Guangzhou government document, No. 20, 2012关于加快推进“三旧”改造工作的补充意见(穗府〔2012〕20 号) )

Because of these changes, some obstacles might be overcome through co-oporation between the state, developers, owners and users of involved lands. All of these elements, small opportunities and obstacles, institutional changes and cross-boundaries collaborate to overcome difficulties, can match the definition of regime, cross-boundaries collaboration to pursue small opportunities. At the same time, the mechanism of the regime also reveals the essential purpose of the ‘three old redevelopment’ policy.

## 4.3 Urban regime in urban redevelopment under the ‘three old’ policy

### 4.3.1 Urban regime in Guangzhou and its members

Stone (1993) lists three basic elements in the urban regime approach, the members of the regime, the relationship between them and distribution of institutional resources among them. The regime is a long-term stable, informal arrangement between governmental and non-governmental sectors to adapt to changing environments. The regime is organised through selective incentives to grasp small opportunities. These elements compose the whole dynamics of the urban regime approach.

This ‘three old’ policy has a three year limitation; it can only be applied between 2010 and 2012. Therefore, to maximize the function of this policy in terms of urban economic growth, the government needs more cooperation from the capital and communities to set up more redevelopment projects. These projects will benefit economic growth both in direct investment and indirect taxes and fees. The government needs capital because the public funding is not enough to cover the huge amount of investment in hundreds of projects. From the capital’s side, they treat urban redevelopment as a good business because of the prosperity of the real estate market in Guangzhou over the last several years; the price of departments and flats has increased about three times during the last ten years. The government needs cooperation from communities because involved land owners and users have strong bargaining power in the redevelopment process. From the land owners’ and users’ side, they can share a big part of the profit in redevelopment because they own the land belonging to the village; land is most valuable element in the redevelopment process.



Figure 1. The price of flats in real estate market of Guangzhou from 2001 to 2011

Resource: Xinlangdichan, <http://dichan.sina.com.cn/gz/zt/gzfdc/>, assess at 01/01/2015

The “‘three olds’ redevelopment” create a new model of redevelopment, whose characteristics are mechanisms to share interests between government, developers and residences. In such redevelopment process, developers take change in the process from the very beginning; they act as the governmental player at the first stage to buy lands from former owners, this job is used to be monopolized by municipality government. They can occupy more interests from theoretical consideration. However, it really risky for developers to deal with former owners, because they are not authority in the field of redevelopment; the former owners can always change their ideas and increase the prices of their lands and properties. At the same time, the approval of redevelopment projects in government is as difficult as getting the agreement among residences. Almost every old village need some special permission because they have many agricultural lands, which need to be converted into urban construction land. This conversion often significantly surpasses the limitation of areas of Guangzhou city. Surpassed part of these conversion demands a specific permission from the central state; such permission is extremely difficult to get. The limited number of conversion is strictly controlled by the leaders of Guangzhou municipality, especially mayors.

*Besides the limited number of conversion land in ‘three old redevelopment’, there is almost no possibility to get index to increase constructing land in Guangzhou. The application to employ more constructing land need the permission from central government; the Guangzhou government even does not have the ability to apply for it, only provincial government can.*

 *Example 7, government, 11- 2013*

Therefore, three old, old city, village and factory have totally different fates because of their property situation and relatively Importance in the eyes of mayors. Old factory is the most possible one because there is often no need to get permission of conversion. Old village is the most difficult one because of the conversion. Old city is in the middle because there is no conversion, but less increased rents while their land often have been high valuably constructed and developed already. In redevelopment of old village, there are two models of coalition in urban redevelopment. The first one is the case of Pazhou village project. It is a successful case for developing. The developer of this project, the Poly Real Estate is a state owned enterprise, located its headquarter in Guangzhou and has strong connection with the municipality government. It is a pre-emptive capital from an urban regime approach; which means some actors in a coalition have occupied a structural powerful position before a projects has been formed. Pazhou village project is important for Guangzhou government because it is at the heart of Pazhou Exhibition Centre, a mega project of Guangzhou development. The second in is the case of Daping village project, in which the developer, Yanhai Group is a Company from Hong Kong with few connection with city and district government. At the same time, the Daping vllage is not located in any strategy site of urban planning of Guangzhou. Therefore, there are more difficulties for them to obstacle their project, until 2013 it is still pausing in progress, even they claim that villagers are well cooperating with this project. These two models display the feature of urban redevelopment; the successful developers have established a strong informal connection with the local state. This connect has been described as a strategical partnership from the mass media. This coalition has maintained for several year; trust and reliability has formed during the long-term interaction. This relationship between local state and developers can be described as an urban regime.

*We have got strong supports from every level of government, from municipality, to district, then to street level. The district government is very crucial because they are familiar with the case of Pazhou village. The municipality level is the authority to organise the negotiation process. Of cause, Poly has very strong connection with development of Guangzhou for a long time.*

*Example 14, developer, 12-2013*

*Only the majors of Guangzhou have the power and resources to organise the negotiation between government, market and community. Normal developers cannot deal with so many conflicts between them and inside of government. We do not know this before we enter the redeveloping project of Daping Village. Only the mayors can make progress in the redeveloping project with his (her) political or economic interest in is.*

*Example 13, developer, 12-2013*

The urban regime approach can be applied in the first model of redevelopment in Guangzhou, because urban politics in Guangzhou is a fragmented, economic growth–orient and changeable social product model. And urban regime approach can explain how some projects work well while other may not; because the successful ones are part of urban regime. Their long-term cooperation with local state makes regime work, and also makes project success.

### 4.3.2 Selective incentives in a regime

As a summary of characteristics of members in a regime in the field of urban redevelopment, their selective incentives can be analysed as the essential driven force of the implementation of ‘three old redevelopment’ policy.

(1) Selective incentives for local leaders

* Better economic and political performance (S-I-1);
* Better response to the requirements from the higher level of administration (S-I-2);
* Some projects are more important because of their emergency in urban spatial strategy, such as some crucial infrastructure projects (S-I-3).

 (2) Selective incentives for planning bureau

* Better response to the requirements from the higher level of administration, which is the level of mayor (S-I-2);

(3) Selective incentives for land management bureau

* There is less incentives for land management bureau to response to the mayor because their direct leaders are land management ministry in the central state (anti S-I-2);

(4) Selective incentives for developers

* Potential increasing of rents in the land (S-I-3);
1. Selective incentives for owner of old factory
* Potential income from the sale of land to the developers (S-I-4);
1. Selective incentives for user of land in old city
* Compensation from the government and developers of their land use rights (S-I-5);

(7) Selective incentives for owner of land in old village

* Compensation from the developers of their ownership of land and property (S-I-6);

(Example 1, 2014; example 3, 2014; example 14, 2013; example 22, 2014)

## 4.4 Characteristics of urban regime: Selective regime

### 4.4.1 Summary of urban regime approach in Guangzhou

This table 2 combine the information from 4.1 to 4.3 together to form a big picture of research with urban regime approach in urban redevelopment in Guangzhou from 2008:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Old factory | Old city | Old village 1:SOEs’ projects | Old village 2:non-SOEs’ projects |
| small opportunities | high  | medium | low | low |
| obstacles | low | medium | high | high |
| incentives (local leaders) | medium | medium | high | medium |
| incentives (planning bureau) | medium | medium | medium | medium |
| incentives (land management bureau) | low | low | low | low |
| incentives (developers) | high | low | medium | medium |
| incentives (land users/owners) | high | low | medium | medium |
| Urban regime  | medium | medium | high | low |

Table 2, summary of urban regime approach in urban redevelopment in Guangzhou from 2008, resource: author.

Coming along with former chapters, table 1 can be expressed and explained as several points:

1. Urban regime is created to pursue small opportunities; such opportunities are based on increased rents of land in involved projects;
2. The obstacles to realize such small opportunities are three elements, regulation of land from the state, relative scarcity of capital in three years, and corporation from land users and owners;
3. These three obstacles can be overcome in the level of Guangzhou municipality, except the permission of land conversion from the central state. The central state gives some amount of permission to Guangzhou municipality; however, these amount is not enough to cover every project;
4. Urban regime is not appropriate in every urban redevelopment project; oppositely, it can only be applied in some specific cases;
5. The condition of emerging urban regime has two parts: the institutional obstacle is difficult to cover, and the project has high priority of in local state’s plan of development. Old village 1 has strong features as a regime while old factory has less characteristics as a regime; other may not be a regime.
6. Whether urban regime will become a dominant phenomenon or not in the future of Chinese cities, is still unclear from contemporary analysis; regime is just emerging in the field of redevelopment from 2008.

There are 253 redevelopment projects have been approved until October 2014. 1 project is old city, 31 of them are old villages, and 221 of them are old factories. In terms of areas of land involved, old city is 0.97 square kilometres, old village is 14.39 square kilometres, and old factory is 11.96 square kilometres. (Official website of Guangzhou three old redevelopment office, <http://www.gzuro.gov.cn/xxgk/40/1300.html>, 20-02-2015)

### 4.4.2 Unequal distribution of resources

Comparing with original concepts of urban regime, distribution of crucial recourses in Guangzhou are more unequal.

1. All of the state, market and community has crucial resources in redevelopment; none of them can be exclude;
2. Institutional obstacle in government is a crucial condition to decide the characteristics of coalition;
3. The local state is the structural powerful actors in the field of redevelopment; SOEs occupy a less powerful position; but the central state as a hidden role maybe the highest powerful role;
4. Developers’ ability to mobilise capital is less important in a capital-abundant environment;
5. Difference of mobilising ability between old city, factories and villages leads to unequal ability to negotiate with developers and government.

# Strategical Selectivities in Regime

Jessop (2008) develop the idea about Strategical Selectivities as a analytical method to investigate the essences regime by its structural bias, in term of:

*the state is the site of strategy, as a system of strategic selectivity. It is more accessible to some forces than others according to the strategies they adopt to gain state power; and it will be more suited to the pursuit of some type s of economic or political strategies than others because of the model of intervention and recourses which characterize that system.*

*Jessop (2008), state power, p36.*

Urban regime in redevelopment in Guangzhou is a selective regime with crucial selection processes both in the members of regime, and treatment of different categories of projects.

1. Selective mechanism might be the most significant feature of regime in Guangzhou;
2. Who and how to organize a regime is decided by the local state;
3. The selecting process is guide by small opportunities and selective incentives; these opportunities and incentives are controlled by the state;
4. the state makes such decision depends its own political preferences.

# Conclusion and discussion

## 6.1 Conclusion

1. Urban regime has emerged in the field of redevelopment under the ‘three old’ policy in Guangzhou, China from 2008;
2. Urban regime in Guangzhou is a selective regime; the local state selects who and how to form the regime to maximize its economic and political products;
3. The local state controls small opportunities and selective incentives to establish and maintain regime, or other forms of coalition;
4. The local state employs the method of reproducing the relationships between state, market and community to maximize its benefits.

## Discussion

1. The core logic of China’s model of development is the instrumentalist market and community. The state creates the market and community to run the economy and society with limited autonomy; however, the state controls most important resources and changes the rule of between state, market and community to maximise its preference. At this moment, the goal is economic growth. This core logic with the relation between state and society (market) is related to the argument of China’s model between scholars, such as Huang (2008), Nee (2012). These scholars are more focus on the whole picture of China, this paper as a micro-scale case study might contribute such a discussion from a different perspective.
2. Rebellion from the market and community is another side of the story. However, such rebellion can only happen in the track designed by the state in the beginning.
3. Division of labour between the state and society

Urban regime approach is based on the division of labour between the state and society (market and community). Urban regime is an approach to cross the boundary between them. However, the Chinese state and SOEs have different relationship with the other parts of the city.

* The local state cannot achieve economic prosperous by itself; it needs helps from other sectors;
* The local state aims to maximise its own interests as a player in the market, through the cooperation of the society;
* Other sectors are tools for local government-lead development; the relationships between them are reproduced through redevelopment process (even the market and community can be seem as created by the state in the reform process).

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1. Dowding et al (1999) argues that regime analysis is more a model or concept rather than a theory because its capacity to explain and foresee origin, maintenance and transform of a regime is limited. Stone (2014) also claims urban regime is rather a analysing method rather than a theory. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)