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Dilemmas of Change in Chinese Local Governance: Through the Lens of Heritage Conservation

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Abstract

The past few decades have seen significant changes and transformations in China, from the ideological, political, legal, social and economic perspectives. These changes lead to the argument that the regime in China now can be labeled as a developmental authoritarian state, which has seen a gradual opening-up of the space for associational life. In this context, in the face of rapid economic development and massive construction, local developments have witnessed a conflict between preserving the past for its intrinsic value and the need for change. In particular, there are different actors involved in heritage conservation, including the local government, the developer, specialists, the media and ordinary people. Since the notion of “a deliberative democracy” was made prominent by the Chinese government, there is a dilemma between the pursuit of economic development and the call for a democratic process in decision-making in heritage conservation. Thus, to follow this from one small clue, heritage conservation becomes a window to look into Chinese local governance.

However, little research has been done on power structures within heritage conservation and how different forces interact and negotiate in transitional economies at the local level in China. Using the grounded theory method (Charmaz, 2006), the research aims to explore the dilemmas of changes in Chinese local governance through the lens of heritage conservation and to investigate the interactions between key players in the society. Based on the theoretical framework of networked governance by Bevir and Rhodes (2012) and their interpretive analysis, this study “decentres” the local governance in heritage conservation, providing the different narratives of the local government, specialists, the media and ordinary people, as well as their interactions. A comparative study between an urban and a rural case is conducted using a combination of qualitative research methods, including text analysis, in-depth interviews and participant observation.

The study indicates that, facing the dilemmas of heritage conservation and local development, local governments employ different governing approaches, such as “public participation under government leadership”, “the rule of law” and “ideological cultivation”. I argue that local governments in China re-adapt the traditions in current local governance as a response to the dilemmas. In the city, there is an increasing importance of business enterprises and entrepreneurial elite in local policy and decision making. China’s urban governance thus features entrepreneurialism which shares both commonalities with and differences from its western counterparts. It is characterized by market regulation and official-businessperson collusion, and centred on land speculation in implementing entrepreneurialism. However, in the countryside, rural governance experiences a combination of changes and traditions: a formal institutional authority of the grassroots self-governance system and an informal form of authority generated under the influence of inclusive social and kinship ties. I suggest that local China is now experiencing the “authoritarian deliberation” put forward by He and Warren (2009), which is inherited from the governing traditions and is reinforced by continuing social and economic development.

This study opens up a new discussion on how democracy survives under rapid economic development in China. This study also contributes to the knowledge of changes in Chinese local governance and the interpretations of different actors. As an empirical study using “decentring” approach, this study explores local governance from different perspectives, which emphasizes the traditions, dilemmas and networks in governance theory.

A NOTE ON TRANSLATION, NAMES, AND CURRENCY EXCHANGE RATES

All translations are by the author unless otherwise noted. *Pinyin* is used for the transliteration of Chinese names and terms. Chinese names appear in Chinese form, with surname preceding given name. At the time of this study, one Great Britain Pound was worth about 10 Chinese yuan (RMB).

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List of abbreviations and acronyms

ACWC Ancient City Walls in Changsha

ALL Administrative Litigation Law

CCP Chinese Communist Party

CNNIC China Internet Network Information Centre

CPPCC Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference

NPC National People's Congress

NPCSC Standing Committee of the National People's Congress

TVEs Township-village Enterprises

UNESCO the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization

WSTK Wang Shan Tu Ku

List of laws, regulations and government documents

- 1930 *Law on the Preservation of Ancient Objects*
- 1931 *Statute for the Preservation of Scenic Spots, Points of Historical Importance, and Articles of Historical, Cultural, and Artistic Value*
- 1961 *Provisional Regulations on the Protection and Administration of Cultural Relics*
- 1979 *Law of Elections in the People's Republic of China*
- 1981 *Application for Protecting Historical and Cultural Cities in the Country*
- 1982 *Constitution of the People's Republic of China*
- 1982 *Law of the People's Republic of China on the Protection of Cultural Relics*
- 1983 *Notices on Improving Political Ideological Work in Rural Areas by CCP and Central Government*
- 1983 *Organic Law of the People's Courts of the People's Republic of China*
- 1983 *Some Ideas on Promoting the Protection of Historical and Cultural Cities*
- 1986 *Regulations on Protection of Cultural Relics in Hunan Province*
- 1988 *Land Management Law*
- 1989 *Administrative Litigation Law*
- 1989 *Law of the People's Republic of China in Assembly and Demonstration*
- 1989 *Organic Law of the Residents' Committee*
- 1991 *Administrative Regulation on Publishing*
- 1991 *Working Procedure of Administrative Decision of House Removal*
- 1991 *Civil Procedure Law of the People's Republic of China*
- 1991 *Provisional Regulations on the Conveyance, Granting and Transferring of the State Land's Use rights in Cities and Towns*
- 1995 *Urban Real Estate Administration Law of the People's Republic of China*
- 1997 *Administrative Regulations on Electronic Publications*
- 1998 *Organic Law of the Villagers' Committees*

- 2003 *Plan of Construction and Redevelopment of the Village of Wang Shan and Plan of Wang Shan Tu Ku as Tourists' Attraction*
- 2004 *Regulations on Famous Historical and Cultural City of Changsha*
- 2005 *CCP's Opinions on Further Improving the Multiparty Cooperation and Political Deliberation System under the Leadership of the Party*
- 2005 *Important Decisions by the Central Committee of the Communist Party on Major Issues Regarding Construction of a Socialist Harmonious Society*
- 2005 *Notices on Strengthening the Protection of Cultural Relics by the State Council*
- 2005 *On Guiding and Encouraging University Graduates to Work for Grassroots Level*
- 2005 *PRC State Council White Paper: "Building Political Democracy in China"*
- 2005 *Regulations for Administration of Newspaper Publication*
- 2005 *Some Opinions on Comprehensively Promoting the Construction of Harmonious Communities*
- 2008 *Law of Urban and Rural Planning in the People's Republic of China*
- 2008 *Notices on Improving Investigation, Prospecting and Archaeological Excavations to Cultural Relics Underground*
- 2008 *On Steadily Improving Community Construction in Xinjian County*
- 2008 *Regulations on Protection of Famous Historical and Cultural Cities, Towns and Villages in Hunan Province*
- 2009 *Notices on improving the management of exploration and excavation of underground cultural relics in Changsha*
- 2010 *Notices on Further Strengthening Management of Expropriation of Land and Relocation of Households that Safeguard the Legitimate Interest of the Public*
- 2011 *Implementing Advices in improving management in rural planning and construction by Party's Committee and People's Government in Nanchang*
- 2011 *Notices on Issuing the Third Batch of Cultural Relics and Protection Areas in Xinjian County*
- 2012 *Changsha, Zhuzhou and Xiangtan City Cluster Demonstration Area Construction Plan*
- 2012 *Conservation Plan on the Ancient City Walls in Changsha*
- 2012 *Plan of Protecting Changsha as a Famous Historical and Cultural City*

2013 *Report on the Work of Government in the Year of 2013*

2014 *Important Decisions on Strengthening a Rule-of-Law State by the Central Party-State*

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

A commonly held impression of China, certainly in the West, has tended to be one that is determined by the influence of the Communist Party along with its associated censorship, corrupt officials and societal issues of inequality, poverty and injustice. However, much has changed in the past few decades and, due to drastic political and socio-economic reforms and subsequent economic and social growth, this impression is one that is now rather outdated. As Blecher (2003) suggests, there has been a broadening of the public sphere in China that has led to profound changes in its local governance in terms of institutional structures and its systems of rules. Therefore it is no longer correct to assume that governance of China is still under such dominance by the Communist Party. Governance, which provides a framework for understanding changing processes of governing (Stoker, 1998), has therefore become a matter of significant interest for academics. It has led to a broader discussion of state-society relations, power distribution and legitimization beyond the narrow focus on bureaucracy, the party, the legislature or the military system.

In a broader context, China has experienced a gradual opening-up and widening-out of the space for associational life (Howell, 2004). To legitimize its authority, the China Communist Party (hereafter CCP or the party) co-opted professionals, technocrats, private entrepreneurs as new party members. This economic liberalization led to the emergence of a large number of private enterprises and business elites. As a result of this, the decentralization of economic power and decision-making has given local government the autonomy to manage its own issues. How local government copes with these different groups of social actors is worth investigating. In this thesis I will use the issue of heritage conservation as a vehicle by which to examine Chinese local governance.

The rationale for this is that, firstly, heritage conservation is a research area that is useful for reflecting the tensions found in a wider modern Chinese society. Since the 1980s, a period considered the era of reform, heritage conservation has been hugely influenced by the economic transformations that have taken place and as such, has

faced various dilemmas including those between centralization or decentralization, a planned or market economy, autonomy or control. Within the context of this rapid economic growth, the economics of heritage is an area particularly worth investigation as it has been massively affected by the changes that have occurred. According to Shepherd (2013), heritage is being deployed as a resource for local development and the reconciliation of the economic and historic-cultural interests is a key issue. Thus, this study sets out to examine how local government deals with the conflict between rapid economic development and heritage conservation and additionally the conflict between economic interest and historical-cultural interests.

Secondly, heritage conservation involves a diverse group of social actors, including, for example, government, developers, specialists, and the general public. In recent years, heritage conservation, as a political-economic incentive for local development, has increasingly become a concern for both government and the masses. Over the past few decades, conflicted values and interests of the actors in heritage are evidenced by an enormous number of cases concerning reconstruction in heritage site, relocation of historic objects, displacement of local community, and the like. Thus, heritage conservation becomes one of the most direct ways to explore how governance in China proceeds and succeeds, successfully or less successfully, through the interactions between the different social actors involved.

Accordingly, certain individuals see possibilities for resistance in heritage conservation, in particular, when the central government introduced public participation mechanisms a decade ago. Given heritage is owned by the state in which “the people exercise state power”, as stated in the *Law of the People’s Republic of China on the Protection of Cultural Relics* (1982) and the *Constitution of the People’s Republic of China* (1982), the issue of the legitimacy of policy and decision making became a concern that was widely discussed amongst the public. Ordinary people, who increasingly aspire for basic citizenship rights with regard to a more just and democratic society, see it as related to larger issues: the collective ownership of historical relics, their sense of identity living in a country with historic traditions, the way that decisions are made, and the end and means of democratization in China. In this context, however, little research has been done on power relations within heritage conservation and how different forces negotiate the

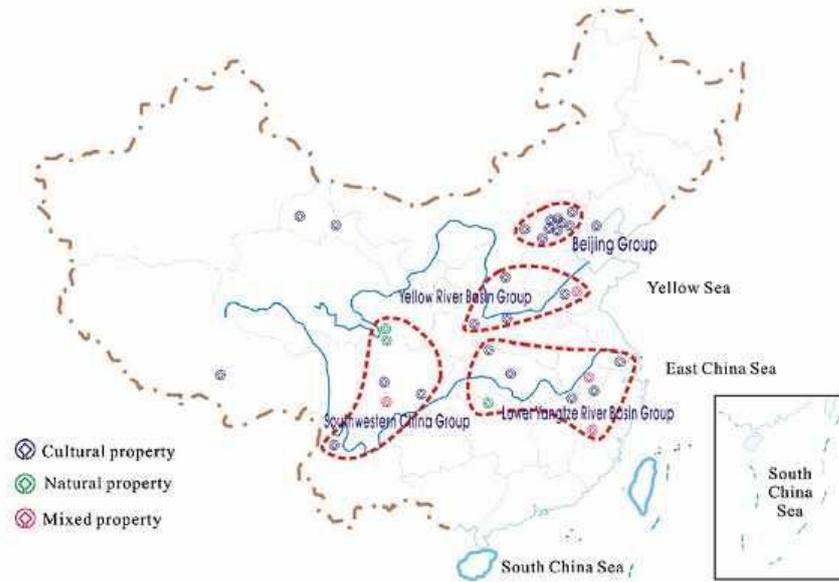
interests in transitional economies in local China. I will return to this later with the discussion on the theory of governance in this chapter.

This introductory chapter consists of six sections: an overview of heritage conservation in China; the rationale and justification for the research; the significance of the research; the research aims and objectives, and research questions; the theoretical framework; and finally, the structure of the research.

1.2 Heritage conservation in China

According to Bessière (1998), heritage can be considered as an identity marker and distinguishing feature of a social group. It is a representation of culture and of cultural diversity. China, a country with a long history, has a strongly defined cultural tradition. As Sofield and Li (1998) suggest, the large number of heritage sites, which record the formation and development of civilization, provide the evidence for an understanding of China's history and culture. There are clusters or groups of cultural and historical heritages, which have been listed in the World Heritage List. As indicated in the figure (see Figure 1-1), from a geographical perspective, there are four heritage groups in China, including Beijing Group, Yellow River Basin Group, South western Group and Lower Yangtze River Basin Group. Each group has its own features with diverse cultural, natural and mixed properties. By 2012, there were 37 world heritage sites in China, which ranks 3rd in the world.

Figure 1-1 World Heritage Sites in China (2002)



Source: Li, Wu, & Cai, 2007.

However, the historic cities and buildings and public spaces of which they are constituted are increasingly under threat from requirements for housing, commerce, transportation, and public services linked to development and modernization. . Since 1978, with the introduction of an open-door policy, economic development in China has been extremely rapid. Massive construction has occurred, industrial capacity has burgeoned, cities have grown, and population mobility, along with the desire for access to historic and natural sites, has occurred on a scale previously inconceivable (Perry & Seldon, 2003). In particular, according to Engelhardt (2010), threats from development and modernization have too often resulted in negative consequences, such as the destruction of heritage sites, replacement of original components with counterfeit, dislocation of the community that resulted to a loss of a sense of place, and others.

Against the background of social and economic reforms, heritage conservation in contemporary China sees gradual and continuing changes in its practices, among which “culture for economics” is the most significant one. It indicates that heritage is increasingly used as an instrument for economic interests. There are a large number of cases that historical and cultural interests of heritage itself are compromised for economic gain, for example, through commodification and commercialization of

heritage in the name of conservation, or destruct heritage sites for local development. Therefore, it is not difficult to recognize a conflict between economic boom and heritage conservation.

Another significant change is a multitude of stakeholders involved in heritage conservation resulted from the introduction of market forces and the loosening control of the party-state on social life. The issue of how to balance the historical-cultural interests and economic interests of heritage conservation have been of increasing concern to different actors in economic and social sectors, who start to play an even more important role than local authorities. Due to a lack of regular government funding to preserve heritage, business sectors, such as tourism companies and property developers, are significantly involved. In addition, to tackle concrete problems regarding how to better conserve the heritage sites, local authorities bring specific knowledge and skills of specialists and professionals. For example, in discourses concerning heritage conservation, architects and planners place emphasis on seeking better methods to conserve buildings and landscapes (Chen 2002; Wei 1999), while legislators focus on improving conservation system and solving the problems and conflict in practice (Zhang 2006). Significantly, since the early 1990s when Chinese government gave permission to international organizations, for example, UNESCO, to work in certain areas, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) prosper and start to make their influences through collaborating with both local authorities and communities. Hence, how do different social actors negotiate their interests in heritage conservation is of great concern.

Moreover, in a country under authoritarian rule, heritage conservation also relates to how local governments deal with the assembly of players. In particular, heritage conservation involves conflicts between different parties and interests, more than merely an activity of construction, planning and property development. Heritage conservation in contemporary China faces dilemmas regarding government's strategies such as whether to centralize or decentralize the decision making, emphasize on plan or market. Thus, this study concerns how local government copes with different groups of social actors and how do they reconcile their interests within the field of heritage conservation.

1.3 Research rationale and justification

This study does not seek to address the problems surrounding heritage conservation in terms of architectural and physical design, nor the values and identities of heritage itself. The study is designed more as an analysis of the social interactions that occur in the process of policy and decision making. As I have identified before, heritage conservation is mostly concerned with how local government copes with various actors and their different and often conflicting interests in economic and social sectors. The literature also suggests that increasingly complex multi-agency governance patterns have emerged in relation to heritage in recent years (Jessop, 2008; Wu, 2002). Governance is considered to be broader than government, in recognition that apart from the formal agencies of government, business, community and other actors can also be involved (Rhodes, 2001). It thus provides a new perspective in understanding a changing state-society relation in China.

When considering heritage conservation in China, the changes and transformations are primarily observed to have taken place within social, political and economic contexts. Reforms since the 1980s have seen a shift from state control to local intervention and from plan to market. Moreover, recent initiatives of the party-state, for example, “lawful administration”, “collaborative planning” and “public participation”, indicate open-mindedness to a more democratic policy and decision making process over public issues (Jeffrey & Sigley, 2009). In heritage conservation, the Chinese government has stressed that it is committed to “further improve the decision-making process that combines public participation, expert study and government decision-making to ensure that decisions made are based on scientific evidence and are correct”, as emphasized in the *Notices on Strengthening the Protection of Cultural Relics by the State Council* (2005). In this sense, “public participation under the government leadership” becomes the government’s narrative of heritage conservation nationwide.

Heritage conservation is closely associated with economic interest. It is evident that in the guiding ideology of heritage conservation in China funds can be obtained for conservation through development activity (Li, Wu & Cai, 2007). Due to the change from state control to local intervention, local officials are required to generate their own revenue sources and promote economic development, through which their

political performance is evaluated. Thus, local authorities, who might emphasize short-term results, tend to view heritage as a revenue source in terms of its economic and development potential (Shepherd & Yu, 2013). Therefore, there is a conflict between the calling for democratic process in decision-making and the pursuit of economic development in heritage conservation. In particular, given an increasing influence of the entrepreneurial elite in politics and economics, the Chinese government is facing a number of dilemmas. These include whether to follow a preservation strategy for historic-cultural interest or a developmental one for economic interest, whether to exercise power themselves or whether to empower the community in the policy process, finally and most importantly, how to legitimize its decision making in line with the requirements of a “democratic transition” nationwide. With these dilemmas in mind, this study aims to explore dilemmas of changes in Chinese local governance through the lens of heritage conservation.

1.4 Research significance

This study is unique in opening up a new discussion on Chinese local governance and analysing it as a network viewed from the political-economic perspective and in identifying the differences between urban and rural governance. A network, in the concept of governance, consists of the various interdependent and autonomous actors involved in service delivery provided by permutation of government, scales of government, NGOs, private organizations and citizens (Marsh & Rhodes, 1992). It emphasizes the management activities of every actor at engaging interactions and uniting goals and approaches. This study will contribute to exploring and comparing the relations between economy and democracy in a variety of specific settings, and finally, in providing practical implications for conflict resolution within a network of social actors.

Much critique in the current literature concerning the field of Chinese governance, suggests that the party’s repression of political dissent, spiritual sects, and ethnic minorities is ongoing (Potter, 2003; Thornton, 2002). However, it would be inaccurate to claim that nothing has changed in China’s processes of governance, especially in the light of political and economic reforms over the past few decades. Indeed, much has been written addressing the reform of the civil service, the rise of civil society, the gradual spread of public participation and the rule of law in the

society (Friedmann, 2005; Heberer & Schubert, 2006; Plummer & Taylor, 2004). Therefore, this study, attempts to further this body of work and to provide a nuanced picture of Chinese society and its governance.

The study is significant in that it makes an original contribution to the discussion on governance in Chinese academic circles. The concept of governance was first encountered in 1992 in the World Bank's Annual Report "Governance and Development". Since then it has largely been used to study the concept of corporate governance by Chinese economists (Hui, 2003; Ligu, 2003; Liu, 2006). In political sciences, some Chinese scholars started to distinguish governance from government, with the former referring to all public management activities, and the latter referring to the activities of the central and local authorities (Saich, 2004). During the past two decades, literature on governance has seen the prevalence of the concept of "good governance" and themes around institutional-building such as capacity building and legal reforms (Fu, 2008; Ho, 2001); enhancing party legitimacy through decentralization of power to lower levels, and co-optation of elite groups (Downs & Saunders, 2012; Zhao, 1998); improving government efficiencies such as promoting e-government (Chen, 2010; Davison, Wagner, & Ma, 2005; Ma, Chuang, Thorson, 2005). However, little concern has been given to actors and their interactions in the government activities, their beliefs and values, and their responses in the face of profound changes, especially when it concerns non-state actors such as citizens and NGOs. Thus, this study fills this gap by using a different theoretical framework for unravelling governance in China.

In addition, the current literature does not deal adequately with Chinese local governance when considering the relations between economic growth and democratization in different settings. Between different areas, especially between developed cities and rural areas, the conditions are quite different. The conservation in urban areas has often seen the destruction of heritage for urban regeneration and development. For example, in late 2004, bulldozers destroyed a Ming Dynasty (1368–1644) beacon tower and dozens of tombs from the Han Dynasty (206 BC–220 AD) in the city in Shanxi province, initiated by a construction company and approved by municipal government. Meanwhile, rural China has seen an increasing reconciling of interests between tourism and conservation; in a lower-level and more

traditional environment, the way of governing differs. Therefore, it makes this research, as a comparative study between urban and rural governance, a necessity for understanding processes of governance in China.

Finally, this study also addresses the implications for heritage conservation in regional planning within the context of rapid economic development. Since the changes in China's society are so swift and multifaceted, a generous share of the literature concerning planning in China centres around ensuring there is a thorough and up-to-date account of the ongoing transformation. Some of these previous studies were designed to analyse the process of macroeconomic reforms and their impact on economic development and raised concerns regarding the extensive and rapid transformation of land from agricultural to urban uses (Ash & Edmonds, 1998; Cartier, 2001). Many of these studies focused on defining and measuring urbanization and its related internal structure or patterns within cities (Fan & Scott, 2003; Lin, 2002; Pannel, 2002; Zhao & Tong, 2000). Another broad field of scholarship seeks to address policy concerns that stem from the process of rapid urbanization. Urban planning mainly concerns transportation issues, housing policy, and environmental issues and deals with the disputes or conflict within these issues in the literature of planning in China. However, in terms of the academic world, there is little research concerning the emerging issue in heritage conservation in regional planning within China (Lin & Ho, 2005; O'Brien & Li, 1995).

The significance of this study lies in its exploration of relations between the different key actors involved in heritage conservation and how local government copes with them. It will focus and build on, the dilemmas faced in heritage conservation and economic development, historical-cultural interest and the economic interest of heritage itself, and the exercise of control and decentralization of decision making driven by social and economic factors in a changing society. Extending on from these dilemmas, the following section outlines the research aims and questions of this study.

1.5 Research aims and questions

Through comparing urban and rural cases, the research aims are:

- To explore the dilemmas of change in Chinese local governance through the lens of heritage conservation;
- To investigate how key actors resolve the conflict in society and how they respond to the dislocations in the lifeworld by interacting with others.

To achieve these aims, the process and practices of heritage conservation in two specific sites are examined to reach four objectives which are:

- To map changes and transformations in Chinese local governance;
- To identify traditions, dilemmas and changing narratives and practices in Chinese local governance;
- To identify similarities and differences in Chinese urban and rural governance;
- To explore interpretations of governance from different actors in heritage conservation.

Drawing from the theoretical framework put forward by Bevir and Rhodes (2003), which studied governance using a network approach, the research in this study focuses on the changes, traditions, and dilemmas in Chinese governance. In order to explore and understand this concept and its practices, the research has been designed in order to answer the following significant questions:

(1) What are the changes and transformations in Chinese governance in the last three decades?

This question is primarily considered in providing an overview of a transitional China in Chapter Two. It is then further investigated in Chapter Six with regards to changes and their differences in the city and in the countryside that underpins the empirical case studies.

(2) What traditions can we distinguish in governance at the local level in China? And what dilemmas and dislocations do actors perceive and how do they react to these?

(3) What are the tactics or strategies employed by the local government in

dealing with different actors in changing traditions?

As indicated by the theoretical frameworks of networked governance by Bevir and Rhodes (2003) and their interpretive analytical approach (to be presented in Chapter Four), these questions are the central research questions that guide this thesis. They are also addressed in Chapter Seven where the main analysis will take place. Chapter Seven introduces the significant traditions inherited and re-adapted in society and relates these to the changes identified earlier to explore the dilemmas that occur in contemporary local governance. The chapter then examines the narratives and tactics employed by local government as governing approaches in two case studies.

(4) How do different actors interpret governance in heritage conservation in the transitional process?

This question investigates the local governance in heritage conservation from different the different viewpoints of actors. It focuses on the actors and their interpretations of government narratives and governing approaches. The empirical evidence for this question is presented in Chapter Eight.

Significantly, this research will use a grounded theory approach to explore conceptual ideas in Chinese local governance. There is little research in heritage conservation where the focus is on governance as a network and the conflict and dilemmas the actors involved face when multi-stakeholders is involved. This research helps to draw attention to such issues, to the interactions between the actors and how their responses be influenced by long held beliefs and traditions. Thus, an inductive research approach is used in theory building to guide the further studies and provide implications for real-world practices.

As identified earlier, little concern has been given to actors and their interactions in the government activities, their values and responses in the face of profound changes, especially from individuals. Moreover, in the literature, there is little research on the approaches and behaviours from the perspectives of local governance in heritage conservation. Each heritage site has its own characteristics, such as a local economy, a development model and its current conditions. Existing theory on

this subject is not fully developed enough to take account of changing Chinese local governance from the perspectives of their traditions and dilemmas and for this reason the application of a grounded theory approach is a useful one. Grounded theory method, is an approach designed to fit the situation being researched. According to Charmaz (2006), grounded theory method is considered the best approach for deriving substantive theory from empirical data (Charmaz, 2006). The purpose of using grounded theory in this research is to develop explanatory concepts that fit the immediate situation being addressed from the data and evidence.

To provide a thorough examination of the interactions between actors in heritage conservation, this thesis adopts an intensive case study strategy to allow an in-depth analysis of the situation in its entirety. According to Yin (1994) and Gerring (2007), using the case study research strategy, researchers are provided with original resources and rich data through research methods such as text analysis, in-depth interview and observation. The purpose of using two cases in this project is to thoroughly examine and compare practices and decision-making processes in heritage conservation and to explore conceptual ideas about the area. Based on the grounded theory process, the case study analysis in turn reflected research questions and generated new insights.

1.6 Theoretical perspectives

Before clarifying the concept of governance in this research, we must first explore the context within which it is used. In the past decade, China has started and continued to call for democracy through reforms, which led to some democratic elements in the society, such as village elections and social organizations. Moreover, such concepts derived from “democracy”, such as “civil society” and “public participation”, entered the discourse of government and scholars. Following on from this, He (2006a) produced a concept of “authoritarian deliberation”, which combines authoritarian concentrations of power with deliberative practices. More specifically, this concept refers to the increasing use of deliberative practices to legitimize and strengthen authoritarian rule, as a leading edge of democratization. It recognizes the leadership of the party and the limited public deliberation on various social and political issues at the local level.

In further examining the Chinese case, I argue that deliberation in authoritarian China combines “the leadership of the party”, popular participation in the policy process, and governance through “the rule of law”. It was built on the historical-cultural roots of Chinese conception on deliberation and driven by the institutional requirement of modern deliberative politics. I will discuss in Chapter Four that deliberation in China points to the process that decisions are made based on reasoning and through discussion among multiple participants. Moreover, the party has established a system of multiparty cooperation and political deliberation as the institutional deliberative practices.

Within this context, the process of Chinese democratization leads to the discussion on governance and its dynamic process toward democracy. In the literature, governance can be viewed through the use of different distinct approaches. On the one hand, it can be viewed focusing on the administrative and political use which distinguishes it from government. On the other hand, it emphasizes the actors, their interdependency and interactions in public and private sectors. In the second approach, governance is about self-organizing networks. Significantly, this form of governance concentrates more on actors who are characterized by “interdependence, resource exchange, rules of the game and significant autonomy from the state” (Rhodes, 1997, p. 53). The term “network” is used to describe the various interdependent actors involved in coordinating tasks of governance performed by government and private sectors (Marsh & Rhodes, 1992). They use the concept of policy network in a meso-level, which stresses continuity in the relations between interest groups and government departments. Thus, the concept of network allows the framework to be focused on the actors and their interactions in the policy process.

The framework of “a network approach to governance” is suggested here as a key framework to improve the understanding of Chinese governance. First, in analysing policy communities as a special type of policy network, special attention is put to the value systems in a particular community and the rules of the game and strategies. This is evident in Rhodes’s analysis of British governance which focuses more on the value systems and perceptions of actors in the network. Therefore, as will be

discussed later on Chinese traditions and values, the idea of governance as networks is applied in this research.

Second, governance is shifted from solely managing markets or hierarchy to managing networks, in which the government will have to “learn to live with” (Rhodes, 2003, p. 70). In China’s context, changes have taken place in the realm of governance. With the relaxation of political control in the reform period, especially in the late 1980s, independent organizations have proliferated although still under the party-state control (Perry and Selden, 2006). This led to concepts and theories, such as civil society and public sphere, entering the discourse of the Chinese government and scholars. The period throughout the 1990s was characterized by the emergence of a new stratum of organizations and by a proliferation of institutional forms. According to Howell (2004), these are concerned with the interests of marginalized groups in society and the circumvention of onerous state restrictions on association. Thus, the sphere of more independent association in China is no longer the abode of those with much to gain from the reform process, such as intellectuals, professionals, and businesspeople, but also of interests that are marginalized in the process of reform.

According to Saich (2004), under reforms, the state-society relations have changed and a more negotiated state has emerged, which deals with the dynamics of the interaction of different actors within the state sector and society. In the Maoist period, the state assumed “an all-embracing role” which was unchallenged by other organizations (ibid, p. 241). It was a state- dominated society in that period, which can be seen from the definition of correct ethical values on the basis of the prevailing interpretation of Confucianism, the political control of the intellectuals and literature, and the workplace system (*danwei*)¹ to ensure social control. Yet from the late 1970s onwards, reforms have led to a major transformation of urban and rural society. In this context, I argue that contemporary Chinese governance is more about managing networks of various actors rather than solely market and hierarchy in the Mao’s and Deng’s era.

¹ *Daiwei*, the basic work unit under socialism during the periods between the 1930s and the late 1950s, denotes the urban Chinese workplace (social organizations, such as factory, hospital, school, research institute, or party organ) and the specific range of practices and functions that it embodied, such as the provision of housing, free medical care, child care, and other welfare services (Bray, 2005).

Based on the above, I argue that the network approach to governance can be applied to the Chinese case. In particular, within the theoretical framework of governance as networks, the actors and their interactions are emphasized. Thus, the network approach of governance provides new perspectives in understanding governmental steering and potentials for conflict resolution in the network.

1.7 Structure of the thesis

This research begins in Chapter Two with a discussion of the political regime of China. I argue that China can be labelled as a developmental authoritarianism, which is neither a totalitarian regime nor a complete authoritarian state. It provides a broader context of its changing ideological, political, legal, social and economic system in exploring Chinese local governance. In Chapter Three I discuss the historical record and gradual changes in heritage conservation since ancient China. The heritage conservation system in current China is also identified. Special attention is paid to the political and economic incentives that are used to promote local development. It sets out a specific research area within which to study Chinese local governance.

Within the discussion of the vast political and socio-economic context and the specific research area, Chapter Four introduces the theoretical framework for this study. It firstly investigates China's democratization as authoritarian deliberation in the literature, which provides a social and political context for the discussion of Chinese local governance as network. It is followed by the investigation of the relations between economic development and democracy in the west and highlights its importance in identifying dilemmas faced by Chinese government. It then raises a significant question on how the aforementioned form of democracy survives in this new phase of rapid economic development. Different approaches of governance are identified, with particular focus on the network approach proposed by Rhodes (1997). It concludes by highlighting changes, traditions and dilemmas in the interactions of actors in a complex network.

Chapter Five draws together theoretical concepts into a set of research questions and further outlines the research methodology. The selection of cases is justified. The research methods and procedures in data collection and data analysis approach are

also discussed. An interpretive approach is used in data analysis to explore how Chinese local government manages the network in heritage conservation.

Following the theoretical and methodological discussions, Chapter Six introduces an urban and a rural case for a comparative study. It is designed to provide background information, including geographical, political-economic and social characteristics, of the two chosen cases for later analysis. The chapter then reviews changes in Chinese society, focusing on urban and rural reforms starting in 1979. It identifies and compares the changes and emergence of key actors in society. Chapters Seven and Eight are the main parts of analysis in the thesis. Significantly, Chapter Seven conducts a comparative analysis of governing practices and tactics between two cases. Through the lens of Chinese governmental and social traditions, these practices can be interpreted as responses to changes in the society. This chapter then concludes that the governance practices at the local level in China are embedded in the contexts of traditions and in responses to changes that have taken place in society. Following on from this, Chapter Eight identifies how key actors, the local government, the developers, and ordinary people conceive government narratives and practices in each case. It is to decentre the changes in local governance as understood by different actors in the network.

Chapter Nine outlines the findings and conclusions of this research. The implications of the findings are discussed, with reflections on local governance and democratization at grassroots' level in China. Finally in this chapter, the contribution this study makes to the field of heritage conservation and prospects for further studies in the future are also given.

CHAPTER TWO

CHINA AS A DEVELOPMENTAL AUTHORITARIAN STATE

2.1 Introduction

This chapter explores China's political regime in the post-Mao era. It focuses on reforms and changes that led to China being defined as a developmental authoritarian state. The objective of this chapter is to locate the study within a broad context, one in which Chinese government has shifted its focus from centralization to decentralization, from plan to market, from rule to governance, and from politics to economics. This chapter begins with a brief introduction of the concepts of totalitarianism and authoritarianism and argues that contemporary China shows a new face as a developmental authoritarian state although it is not defined as a complete authoritarian state, as in the western sense. The following four sections describe the changes from ideological, political, legal, social and economic perspectives respectively.

2.2 China as a developmental authoritarian state: an overview

There is general agreement that China in Mao's era was a totalitarian regime (MacFarquhar, 1997). However, whether it has transformed into authoritarianism or another regime constellation is one that provokes heated debate. The past few decades have seen significant changes and reforms in China, in terms of the ideological, political, legal, social and economic spheres. It is true that the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) still adheres to its ideological commitment although its influence on the general population is weakening (Saich, 2004). In addition, according to Bernstein and Munro (1998), the party still maintains its monopoly of power and its organizational control is still pervasive, yet it has relaxed its control over people's daily lives and economic activities. In general, the control over information and media is still tight although some civil publications are allowed. The legal system is still subjugated to the party rule while justice and legitimization are promoted and a certain measure of civil law practice is allowed. More importantly, greater individual freedom is evident, although open dissent is not tolerated.

These changes led to the argument, evidenced in the literature, that the regime in China is now authoritarian and has transformed from the totalitarianism of Mao's era (Chen, 1995; Goldman, 1994). For more than two decades, totalitarian authority has been decaying gradually. This does not mean that there are no traits of totalitarianism at present in China; instead, I argue that there is some overlap between these two rather complex situations

The definitions of the term "totalitarianism" can be explored from the basis of some classical definitions. In the original descriptive definition which was formulated by Friedrich (1969), totalitarianism has the following characteristics:

- A totalist or all-embracing ideology
- A party committed to the promotion of that ideology
- Reinforcement through organisations such as the secret police
- A centralised economy and a monopolistic control of society.

After presenting them, a more essentialist definition emphasizing the ultimate end of such systems has been reformulated and offered:

Totalitarianism is a new form of government falling into the general classification of dictatorship, a system in which technologically advanced instruments of political power are wielded without restraint by centralized leadership of an elite movement for the purpose of affecting a total social revolution, including the conditioning of man on the basis of certain arbitrary ideological assumptions, proclaimed by the leadership in an atmosphere of coerced unanimity of the entire population (Linz, 2000, p. 66).

In other words, the dimensions that characterize the totalitarian regime are an ideology, a single mass party and other organizations, and concentrated power in an individual or a small group. Compared to totalitarianism, an authoritarian state is rarely inspired by a utopian goal or an integrated ideology. Rather, the actual political processes are more affected by the implicit and intellectual attitude of the rulers in response to different situations (Linz, 2000). In line with this, the institutions of an authoritarian state are given a great degree of freedom in spiritual sphere.

According to Linz (2000, p. 255), authoritarianism in the literature refers to “political systems with limited, not responsible, political pluralism, without elaborate and guiding ideology, but with distinctive mentalities, without extensive nor intensive political mobilization, except at some points in their development, and in which a leader or occasionally a small group exercises power within formally ill-defined limits but actually quite predictable ones”. A more specific conception given by Voegelin (1999) presents that an authoritarian rule is marked by the hierarchic-authoritarian structure of the state (concentrating the power of sovereign jurisdiction while granting great freedom of self-administration to the corporative authorities) and the authoritarian function of the government (exercising ordered power in line with authorial representation and arranging the multitude of society’s interests into a whole). The literature also offers a sociological idea toward a definition of authoritarian regime. That is, an authoritarian regime, to a considerable extent, leaves whole areas of life untouched by official influence and control, for example, allocations of wealth, status, social values, and other resources (Guo, 2012). In particular, a relatively strong private property provides the socio-economic basis for an authoritarian state.

The different perspectives and emphasises on defining an authoritarian state place difficulties in developing typologies of such regimes. Linz (2012) in his book *Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes* presents six subtypes of authoritarian regimes: (1) bureaucratic-military authoritarian regimes; (2) organic statism; (3) mobilizational authoritarian regimes in postdemocratic societies; (4) postindependence mobilizational authoritarian regimes; (5) rational and ethnic “democracies”; (6) “defective” and “pretotalitarian” political situations and regimes. However, this classification confronts certain critiques, for example, Diamond (2002) states that Linz does not mention multiparty electoral competition within the regimes, in particular when electoral authoritarian forms have increased rapidly since the past four decades. New attempts to develop subtypes of an authoritarian regime include Sartori’s identification of “hegemonic-party systems” (1976), Diamond’s research on “hybrid regimes” (2002), and Levitsky’s and Way’s conceptualization of “competitive authoritarianism” (2010).

In the literature focusing on China, a number of researchers argue that the political structure of communist totalitarianism in Mao's era remains essentially unchanged with regards to the official ideology and the single-party dictatorship of the regime (Balzer, 2004). However, in the face of a changing society over the last three decades, it is critical that we do not simply identify China as entirely totalitarian or authoritarian. In this study, I suggest that China can be considered as a developmental authoritarian state, which experiences a range of differences from its counterparts in western authoritarianism. "Developmental", here, refers to the process whereby a state expects to bring about a positive transformation in society within a condensed period of time (Deyo; 1987; Evans, 1995; Johnson, 1982). It stresses the vision, leadership and capacity of the state to change or develop. This provisional concept thus contains a predictive element in the definition. Therefore, in this study, I conceive of China as a developmental authoritarian state as it is experiencing a profound change towards a more open and diverse associational life under socio-economic and political reforms, in particular, with regards to changes in the ideological, political, legal, social and economic domains.

2.3 Ideological commitment

Since the days of imperial China, ideological commitment has been an important source of the legitimacy of political institutions and authority. As described by Gray (1991, p. 19), these "habits of mind" lead to a stability of China through working with the functioning of political institutions. Certain practices, endowed by an ideology, for example, the selection of government officials and administrative mechanisms, thus influence everyday life in the society. In this way, in Chinese politics, different ideologies in varying forms have merged together at different times throughout China's long history and as such a sort of 'melting pot' of ideological thought has been produced that continues to influence all aspects of life in China today.

As Linz (1964) suggests, one of the distinctions between totalitarianism and authoritarianism lies in the spiritual sphere undermining the institutionalization of power relationships in the state. As I quoted early in the definition of "an authoritarian state", Linz uses the term "mentality" instead of "ideology" as one of the characteristics of such regimes. In a totalitarian state, ideology or related belief

system are employed for mass mobilization and manipulation. It has strong utopian element, which points to a priori model of ideal society. However, the ideological character of authoritarian systems takes a different form. It is the ways of thinking and feelings of rulers, reflecting more the social and political realities (Linz, 2012).

China was established under Maoism, which was the starting point for the Chinese communists. Maoism provides the authoritative leader with cohesion and a framework within which to organize (Christiansen & Rai, 1992). However, it is not accurate to suggest that contemporary China is still a totalitarian state in terms of its ideological commitment. Ideology is no longer the major source of its legitimacy in terms of political development, legal innovations, and socio-economic reforms during the past three decades (will be discussed later in this chapter).

In a time of modernization and socio-economic development, ideology in contemporary Chinese politics is used as a therapy to solve the problems within the CCP and the conflicts in society. It is a coordinating mechanism in addition to hierarchy, markets, and participation. Although a relaxation of control of the media, press, culture, and public opinions during the last few decades is evident, the ideological commitment to socialism is still strong. For example, the growing prevalence of the Internet and the creation of weblogs and micro-blogs facilitate the open expression of opinions and conceptions in most aspects of social life and on some political issues within a “socialist direction or boundary” (Guo, 2000, p. 63).

Socialism has long been given a central place in Chinese political culture. It has been interpreted and re-interpreted, leading to adapted versions in response to authority crisis at different times. According to Rosenbaum (1992), an authority crisis arises when the cultural and psychological bases for the legitimacy of political power are radically undermined by the developmental process. Modernization, as suggested by Glassman (1991), brought about new ideas that lead to a sense of dissatisfaction with authority and deep cravings for empowerment among the public. Ideologies including Deng Xiaoping’s theory from 1980s to late 1990s, the following “Three representatives” and “Constructing a Harmonious Society”, are formulated to cope with the problems and demands of the reforms. For example, in the 1980s, the stress of the party-state was put into ideological cultivation rather than purely economic efficiency in Mao’s time, demonstrated by the promotion of the concept “socialist

spiritual civilization” and the twin-goal culture (Deng, 1980). In Deng’s keynote speech in a conference held by CCP in December 1980, he explained,

The socialist China we are building should have a high level of material civilization as well as a high level of spiritual civilization. When I speak of a high level of spiritual civilization, I refer not only to education, science, and culture (which are of course indispensable) but also to communist thinking, ideals, beliefs, morality and discipline, as well as a revolutionary stand and revolutionary principles, comradely relations among people, and so on. (Deng, 1984, p. 348, translated and edited by Ding, 1994, p. 124)

The party pushed forward a series of programs called “Four have, three stresses, and two defy’s”². According to Ding (1994), these concepts were used to mobilize the people, making the policies and officially sanctioned norms a part of mass culture and integrated into people’s sub-consciousness. It has been a technique commonly used by the party-state. In 2005, in the face of increasing social conflicts with regards to social welfare, employment and a so-called “faith crisis”³, Hu’s “constructing a harmonious society” provides a source of legitimacy and the project of “a harmonious community” is thus promoted as a formula for governing everyday life by local governments. This can be seen as a rehabilitation of Confucianism, in which “harmony” is served as its core value (to be further discussed in Chapter Four).

Following the conception by Linz (2012) identified early, I argue that ideological commitment in Chinese state-party combines the totalitarian and authoritarian elements, that is, it has fixed-time purposes to legitimize the ruling and mobilize the masses while it reacts to different social and political situations. Although it is rarely inspired by such “-ism”, the regime continued to appeal to and act upon ideological principles and norms. And more importantly, government programs and activities are conducted under the premises of “socialist” and “the leadership of the party”, for example, as I will mention in this thesis, the “socialist rule of law” (see Section 2.5.3

² “To have lofty ideals, moral integrity, knowledge, and a strong physique; to stress appearance and bearing, manners, and sense of discipline; and to defy hardships and sacrifice” (Deng, 1984)

³ The “faith crisis”, according to Burton (1990, p. 5), means that people feel that “there is more or less nothing to believe in. They don’t believe in Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought, the leadership of the CCP, the superiority of socialism, or the brilliant prospect of Communism.”

in this chapter), the “public participation under the government leadership” (see Chapter 3), and the “socialist deliberative democracy” (see Chapter 4). Thus, in the ideological domain, I suggest that the paradigm for transitional China is developmental authoritarianism, in which ideological commitment is still important in the state-party’s legitimization.

2.4 Political development

Authoritarianism in China is evident in the administrative control and legitimization of the rules at governmental level. Since the 1980s, China has seen political reform aimed at streamlining the government bureaucracy and enhancing administrative efficiency. It is to make party-state cadres at various levels “better educated, professionally more competent, and younger” through decentralizing of power and streamlining the administrative structure (Maurice, 1996, p. 481). For example, in the heritage management and conservation, the central government has gradually decentralized its power down to the lower level or local government. In the following pages, I will present an overview on Chinese political structure and its development under reforms.

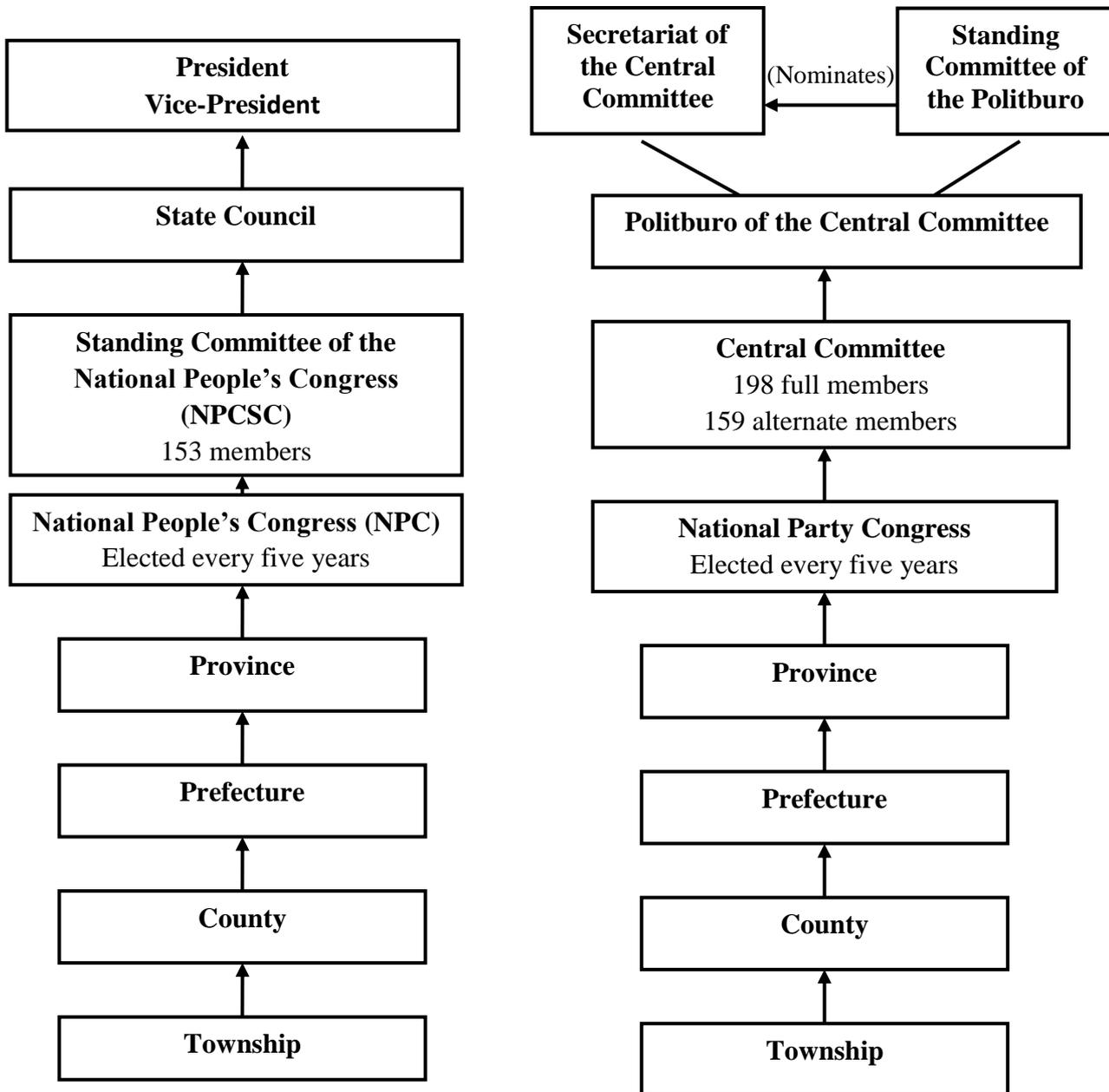
Chinese state-party

In China, party and state are closely intertwined and their functions are largely combined into one body, for which the term “party-state” has been created (Weatherley, 2006). As seen from Figure 2-1, the party structure mirrors that of the government with a hierarchy of congresses from the township level up to the national level. China’s Communist Party (CCP) is headed by the National Party Congress (NPC), consisting of about 2,000 members, which acts as a forum for debate on important party matters. In a similar way to the government, the system of election in the party also features direct and indirect nominations, and its function is carried out by a group of members, known as a Central Committee.

Since the centralized institutions of party and state were put in place in 1952, a detailed hierarchy of congresses, which has served as a decision-making body in China, and a legal rational system of procedures for reaching decisions and appointing and dismissing office holders, are set out (Weatherley, 2006). As indicated by the diagram (see Figure 2-1), the structure of Chinese government

comprises congresses at five, descending, levels: national, provincial, prefectural, county and township.

Figure 2-1 Chinese state structure and the party structure



Source: Schram, 1987

According to the Election Law in 1953, representatives at the national down to the county level were elected indirectly, that is, by congress members from the level below, whereas representatives at the township level were elected directly, by its residents. Theoretically, the NPC, comprised up to 2,000 delegates, holds the supreme legislative power, which has the role that is constitutionally defined as

devising laws, amending the state constitution, ratifying international treaties and nominating or appointing senior state officials.

The standing committee, which consists of 150 members, acts on behalf of the NPC and has seen an increase in its “law making powers and powers of supervision over the enforcement of the constitution, as well as examining and approving authority for any proposed adjustments to the state budget and the fixed term plan for the national economy” (Weatherley, 2006, p. 18). Some political analysts thus conceived that the reforms to the electoral system have introduced a much needed democratic edge to elections (Shi, 2000). However, as I will show below, there are some elements of totalitarianism in the electoral system, in which control is evident and significant.

The executive power lies with the State Council and with ultimate governmental authority. The state’s principal legislative body is the State Council and comprises a small number of senior officials who formulate government policy and administrative measures. The proposals made by the State Council are submitted to the Standing Committee for modification and then to the NPC for approval. In addition, the State Council is also responsible for the supervision of numerous policy commissions and ministries, such as the State Economic and Trade Commission and the Ministry of Construction. In the same way that the State Council has dominant power in reality, the supremacy of the NPC becomes an official rhetoric. As addressed by Ding (1994), all important government decisions are made behind closed doors by a small handful of men, which has done little to strengthen the legal rational legitimacy of the Chinese government.

In reality, the institutions of party and state in China are largely one and the same entity. Although it is officially maintained that the state and the party are separate, the party has always dominated the state by staffing the latter’s decision-making bodies with senior party personnel (Goodman, 2000). For example, the leading positions of NPC are held by party secretaries, deputy secretaries or party committee members. In general, the party still possesses firm and direct control over the society. However, the party policy making body is not controlled by a charismatic individual, as it was in Mao’s era, and therefore the party has recognized that political reform is necessary to sustain social stability. It is against the background of the social crisis brought by the socio-economic development (will be further discussed later in this

chapter). For example, more autonomy has been allocated to local authorities to ease the pressure of public services, such as health care, employment and housing. The local autonomy is spurred by the rapid economic and social transformation, resulting in a massive mobility of labours and a daunting agenda of social needs.

Many analysts argue that China is still essentially a totalitarian regime in terms of its dominance of one party politically and ideologically (Guo, 2000; Zhou, 1991). However, we cannot ignore the trend of development towards authoritarianism. Since the late 1970s, the state has abandoned its mass mobilization campaigns, and has withdrawn from direct control of large areas of the economy in both urban and rural areas, thereby sharply reducing its ability to dominate the lives of ordinary people. In contemporary China, it is evident that individuals have enjoyed greater freedom and party control over private morality is less effective. Most importantly, with the considerable economic changes in the last few decades, people in China have increasingly realized the importance of participation in policy and decision-making, and it is true to say that they participate more (Jeffreys, 2009). For example, the burgeoning of social organizations in 1980s and the community construction that began in the early 1990s promoted participatory procedures in policy process.

Meanwhile, the role of party has significantly changed, with much more focus on economic development. Decentralization of social power at all levels is evident, and there is no more promotion of a charismatic individual leadership in the party (Wei, 2000). Self-governance is a strong theme running through the post-reform era in China. However, it is worthwhile attempting to examine what “self-governance” might actually mean and how it is exercised in different settings within the context of developmental authoritarianism in China. As will be discussed further in Chapter 6 and demonstrated in case studies, the differences in electoral systems and institutional arrangements in the city and in the country lead to different degrees of “self-governance”.

Overall, despite the differences with regards to the degree of government involvement in the policy and decision making, the concept of community provides an institutional framework in understanding “self-governing” in China. Although it has some resemblance to community-centred forms of governance in some western countries (such as Britain), the concept of “community”, as well as its practices, has

some distinguishing features, among which “the degree of the idea of ‘community’ itself has been institutionalized” is the most notable one (Bray, 2005, p.112). The community has been built on the grassroots organizational structures in China, including the residents’ committee in urban areas and the villagers’ committee in rural areas (see Chapter 6), as well as the local Party branch. Moreover, it is staffed by a group of party or professional cadres, who has access to a wide range of resources, such as funding, labour forces, and social networks, to support its daily activities and is empowered to governmental interventions to a certain extent (Chan, 1993). In this sense, China is no longer a totalitarian regime with regards to the changing role of the party and its loosened control on society.

2.5 Legal innovations

Legal innovations are clearly one of the most significant areas of reform. Before 1978, the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) resulted in the collapse of the legal system, for example, the rebellions’ control over public security system and the dismissal of a large number of legal officials. In the wake of the democracy movement and mass demonstration, the post-1978 era has seen a revival of law and restoration of legal system. A total of 1888 laws, statutes, and other legal documents were made in the 1980s and 1990s (Twohey, 1999). Since then, the People’ Congress has extended its roles and importance in terms of representation, regime support, law making, institutional supervision, and procedural rationalization (Guo, 2000). Moreover, the legislative reform has also brought about some organizational changes, such as the strengthened NPCSC and its expanded scope of action in increasing specialization, procedural regularity, and improving internal organization.

Previous studies have identified that the legislative reform in China has been evident in two perspectives: rationalization and inclusion, although limited. First, rationalization includes legalizing and institutionalizing political power, which emphasizes a set of legal codes and rules, and a rational division of labour among government agencies, in order to prevent overconcentration of power and to increase government efficiency (O’Brien, 1990). Moreover, O’Brien (1990) also pointed out that it is evident that the efforts of legislative reform on increasing the system’s inclusiveness, institutionalizing the party’s legitimacy, and using the legislature to integrate the political community and organizing it around one party rule are

significant. These changes have helped to relax the tight leash on the legal profession and practices in civil law and business law with an increased number of law offices, legal advisors, and legal practices (Guo, 2003). Although the regime has attempted rationalization and limited inclusion, the legislative reforms have increased institutionalized responsiveness to some extent. The current legislative system in China can be seen from the discussion on the reform in the law-making system, judicial system and the principle of “the rule of law”.

2.5.1 Law-making system

The literature suggests that the Chinese legal system has seen significant changes under reforms (Potter, 1999). Among the significant achievements of the legal reform era has been the development of the NPC and its legislative functions. Under the Constitution (1982), the NPC’s legislative duties are extended, including enacting statutes of national application, passing amendments to the Constitution and reviewing decisions by the State Council and the NPC’s Standing Committee. The legislative procedure falls into the following four stages: (1) submitting a draft of law through the authorized institutions which are made of people’s deputies to the NPC Standing Committee; (2) discussing the draft laws in the various special committees in the NPC and examining by the NPC Law Committee; (3) voting laws through by the NPC membership; (4) implementing and enforcing laws (Du & Zhang, 1990).

By the end of the 1990s, efforts were underway to draft a Legislation Law, which called for greater democracy in order to improve the quality of legislation (Potter, 2005, p. 19). In contrast to the instrumentalist purposes of furthering social and economic order to socialist development that characterizes the bulk of PRC law and regulation, the Law emphasized protection of people’s interests. It emphasizes principles of fairness and equality, legislative procedure and clear lines of jurisdiction and authority. Significantly, the Legislation Law highlights objectivity and investigation as the basis for legislation. However, the leadership of the party is still evident. The legislation addressed the central tasks of the party-state on reform, development, social stability and democratization. In particular, the principles that “strengthening party leadership is the fundamental guarantee for making a success of legislation” drew back significantly from the principles of democracy (Potter, 2001,

p. 19). Therefore, in the law-making system, the party's central role would remain and the legislative bodies must reflect the policy priorities of the state and the party.

2.5.2 Judicial system

The judicial system, which is one of key branches of the legal system in China, has also changed. The efforts for the court reform include regulations on guaranteeing open trials to the public in 1999, regulations on rules of evidence in civil litigations in 2001, and evidence rules in administrative litigations in 2002. The court system, and particularly laws governing court organization, civil procedure, judges, and lawyers, may require revision in order to bring the judicial dispute settlement system into compliance with rule-of-law requirements (Dicks, 1995).

In the 1990s, with the expansion of economic reform and market-oriented policies, the courts were called upon to play a stronger role and act independently in dispute resolution. According to the *Civil Procedure Law of the People's Republic of China* in 1991, courts were given increased authority to resolve disputes authoritatively rather than through party consensus. The courts' jurisdictional structure is set forth in the *Organic Law of the People's Courts of the People's Republic of China* (1983). Like courts' system in other countries, the Supreme People's Court acts as a trial court at the national level and as a court of final appeal. The Higher- and Intermediate-Level People's Courts in China, and the Basic-Level People's Courts hear appellate and trial cases at the provincial, prefecture and county level. However, the key question is the independency of the state. As will be discussed later, the state's administration and judiciary power is not separated in China.

The enactment of the *Administrative Litigation Law* (ALL) was part of a broad effort by the party to make decisions by administrative agencies more accountable and to provide remedies for administrative misconduct. The ALL determines whether an administrative decision is lawful and in accordance with relevant laws and regulations (Potter, 2005). It is viewed as essential to the effective control of the bureaucracy, which is useful for promoting managerial autonomy in the context of the economic reform (Brown, 1997). Under the ALL, the People's Courts are granted the supervisory power on illegal administrative orders, action and thus, to revise unfair administrative sanctions.

However, the ALL also contains a number of problematic provisions that dilute its effectiveness. For example, since the courts have expressly been denied power to pass judgement on the propriety of administrative decisions that are not in violation of specific laws and regulations, administrative decisions that represent abuses of discretion yet are technically within the law might not be overturned under the ALL. Moreover, the ALL also places significant limits on the range of decisions that the People's Courts are authorized to review (Potter, 2005). Judicial review does not extend to party decisions or some specific administrative acts.

For example, to prevent social unrest within villages, the state highlighted the idea of using laws for villagers to take their disputes to court for mediation or resolution. In particular, the ALL claims to institutionalize the process for villagers to seek legal redress for a wide array of issues, such as zoning, land related abuses. However, it is not exercised in practice. In March 2009, the residents in *Wukeshu* received an announcement that the whole village would have to be moved and resettled. The county government gave the following reasons: during the submission of the application to join the World Heritage List, the government made the promise that the residents in the core protection zone would be evacuated within 3 years. In December 2009, 342 of 421 households in the village moved, however the rest of villagers were not willing to move. As a result of this, 43 households from the village sued the county government. However, the Intermediate Court of Kunming and High Court of Yunnan did not accept the case without any reply and written confirmation. By charging these villagers with riotous behaviours, the local authority arrested 15 villagers, who received a sentence for the crime of impairing execution of public affairs. In the end, they were released.

China has no separation of powers; the legal system and the administrative system in China are intertwined. The NPC and the Standing Committee not only originate and pass legislation but also supervise enforcement of the laws and enforce the work of the state's administration and judiciary (Guo, 2000). Although the ALL formalized the review and supervision of People's Courts in administrative agency decisions, the expansive interpretation of the NPC's legislative, supervisory and administrative roles is evident in the directives of the Party (Liang, 2006).

Finally, the legislation signalled an effort to grant the courts more power to resolve private disputes through arbitration. Courts have actively engaged in arbitration as a more flexible alternative to the litigation process (Deng, Zhang & Cordilia, 1998). However, in practice, the party committees and party-led adjudication committee in judicial decision making challenge the transparency of the dispute resolution system.

In the current court system, a judge panel, which consists of three judges; try, discuss, and rule on cases together. Each judge supposedly has an equal say in the final decision. As a practical matter, however, one judge usually acts as the leading judge during the trial and is responsible for the trial procedure (Liang, 2008). Governed by internal official rules, the most prestigious judge in the judge panel usually sits as the leading judge. The other two presiding judges can ask questions and help clarify issues during a trial. In addition, there is usually one charging judge within the panel who is primarily responsible for the case judgment. Judges and all judicial officers are selected and appointed according to a standard to ensure that reliable Communist Party members with professional education and competence come to the position of judge.

Besides professional judges, lay people can serve on a judge panel as a practice of the people's assessor system in China. Often referred to as a Chinese version of the jury system, the people's assessor system is officially established as part of the court system. It is designed to (1) increase the involvement of lay people in the legal system, (2) show that the system is indeed made by and serves the populace, and (3) serve an educational purpose among the populace (Wang & Zhang, 1997). People's assessors are usually recommended by their workplace and selected by the courts. Based on laws, people's assessors should have the same duty and power as professional judges, and their votes should carry equal weight in a final decision. Their actual performance, however, hardly matches such an expectation. Indeed, the actual role of people's assessors is questionable in reality; however, there is no sign of abolishing the practice (Cohen, 1997).

Based on above, we can observe a contradiction in China's legal innovations. On one hand, through a process of centralization of political and social control power, the bureaucratization of the legal system has been carried out. It was thus viewed as a nation under a totalitarian communist regime in which economic, political, and

social decisions were controlled and made by a few powerful individuals (Brown & Rogers, 1997; Jeffrey, 2009). However, in the other hand, regarding the contents of legal reforms that serve several key functions, it is evident that the central government gradually loosens its control and grants more power to local governments and entities.

2.5.3 “The rule of law”

The legal innovation and reform in terms of regime change has led to the argument that China has moved towards “the rule of law” (Cai & Wang, 2010; Zou, 2006). At the beginning of Article 5 of the *Constitution of the People’s Republic of China*, it introduces:

The People’s Republic of China shall practice ruling the country according to law, and shall construct a socialist rule-of-law state (translated by Orts, 2001, p. 125).

The question then arises: what is the rule of law, and in particular, “socialist rule of law”? Hill and Hupe (2002) have explored the variety of ways “the rule of law” is conceptualized in the western literature. They identify and discuss important issues about “the rule of law” from the viewpoints of sociologists, administrative theorists, legal theorists, public administration analysts, political theorists, and so on. Sociologically, derived by Weber’s idea on “authority”, “the rule of law”, or “rational legal order” in his term, is a basis for legitimate rule. This aspect of “the rule of law” highlights the rationality in the structure of the rules and the way the rules are made. A second important issue is related to administrative discretion. As Hill and Hupe (2002, p. 25) describe, this issue is concerning the extent to which “the behaviour of public officials can and/or should be precisely prescribed by laws, or conversely about the extent to which officials need to use their discretion to interpret and under some circumstances modify the impact of the law”. Another aspect of “the rule of law” is about the law-making process, whether the law is made with going through rigorous procedures.

Lastly, I want to discuss the division of powers in the context of “the rule of law”. In the western sense, in a society under the rule of law, “independence of the judicial

department” and “separation of powers” are highlighted in actual political and administrative activities. As Ferman (1990, p. 40) suggest, the separation of powers is to “institutionalize a system of checks and balances designed to guard against the worst abuses of power”. Conceptually, the rule of law must see a relatively independent judiciary and the creation of the legal institutions that are not directly subservient to the supervision of the political powers of the state under the rule of law (Dahrendorf, 1977; Orts, 2001). In other words, the focus is on the limitations of state power which emphasize fundamental human rights or basic civil and political rights. For example, English law has long protected the right to life, to liberty and security and guaranteed freedom of thought, conscience and religion and freedom of expression (Bingham, 2010).

As identified previously, in China, the power of the judiciary does not extend to making party decisions or some administrative acts, and the legal system and the administrative system are intertwined. In this sense, therefore, “the rule of law” must be understood and considered differently. In China’s view, “the rule of law” is explained conceptually by Jiang in the report to the 15th CCP National Congress entitled “*Hold High the Banner of Deng Xiaoping Theory for an All-round Advancement of the Cause of Building Socialism with Chinese Characteristics into the 21st Century*” in 1997:

To govern the country under the rule of law means to manage the state affairs, economic and social affairs by the people under the leadership of the Party in accordance with the Constitution and law stipulations through various ways and forms. It should be guaranteed that all the work in the state is carried out under the law. Institutionalization and legalization of the socialist democracy should be progressively achieved. (cited by Zou, 2006, p. 35).

In this sense, “the rule of law” in China highlights the institutionalization and legalization of a system which reflects the will of the people and sees “the leadership of the Party”. It thus emphasized the binding authority of the law and political leadership and their tight relationship. As Przeworski and Maravall (2003) suggest, it is the distribution and separation of power that distinguishes the rule of law. Therefore, the law is mostly an instrument of the rule when power is monopolized.

According to Zou (2006), the current legal reform in China can be characterized as the “rule of the Party by law”. It thus connotes “rule by law” rather than “rule of law”. It is above the “rule of man”, but not yet reaching the realm of the “rule of law” in the western sense. In order to put this forward, I now discuss the use of law in practices in China.

As identified earlier, some administrative laws were enacted to constrain the power of bureaucratic agencies in the most recent decades of legal innovation. For example, the *State Enterprise Law*, the *Equity Joint Venture Law*, the *Bankruptcy Law*, and still others, were designed and enacted to bring about a certain kind of economic order. According to National People’s Congresses Legislative Work Commission and the State Council Legal Bureau, some characteristics and guiding principles of the legislation are that laws must be designed to serve and be subjected to reform, development and stability and be based on legislation developed since the party central committee session. Similarly to the Chinese government focus on developing legal rational legitimacy, as evidenced in the literature and in practices, I argue that legal reform served as a means of governing national affairs and tried to legitimate and maintain its own political power and control when facing challenges brought about by social and economic reforms.

2.6 Social changes and economic reforms

The innovations in political and legal systems have brought about some considerable changes in Chinese society, particularly in terms of state-society relations. As a result of these reforms, as suggested by Perry and Selden (2003), China has witnessed a market reform and an economic modernization as well as more complexity with a greater diversity of social groups and interests in society.

The social changes in China are reflected in several aspects that explain its developmental authoritarianism. First, state control over society has been relaxed to some extent and action means have been diversified. As identified earlier, the regime has used legal, institutional and other means of social control, instead of relying solely upon the traditional administrative command and central planning. Second, decentralization of social and economic control has substantially affected the relations between the centre and the provincial or local governments. Moreover, the

decentralization has strongly affected the state-society relations with respect to freedom of individuals in economic activities, daily life, and living styles (Cao, Zhong & Liao, 2010). Third, the traditional management system of residents based on permanent resident certificates is being watered down, although it is still effective and continues to serve important functions.

In addition, society has become more complex in terms of industrial structure, employment structure, urban-rural structure and social stratum structure. According to Zhao (2006) and Guthrie (2001), the popularity of co-existence of multiple ownership forms has resulted in great change in social stratification and interest differentiation. Finally, and most importantly, China has witnessed the proliferation of semi-official popular social organizations or other non-governmental organizations. However, it is not to say that China has become a civil society that is free from the arbitrary interventions of the party-state and local officialdom. Instead, such an observation contradicts the fact that the market and economic reform has given state bureaucracies and local officialdom substantial control over new resources, such as market information, fees and tax collection (Guthrie, 2001). In other words, their power is redefined but not necessarily diminished. It is true that social organizations are drastically increasing in these decades; however, the regulations through license system, “hang-on” system⁴, and annual examination system restrict freedom of association. Although the regime has relaxed its control over the daily life and economic activities of its citizens, the party-state still defines the parameters of public spaces and shapes society in accordance with its own terms and values.

Therefore, in light of social changes, the road to a complete authoritarian state for China will probably be zigzagging for years to come, which is also the case with economic reforms. The most significant change in China has occurred in the economic field. Since 1978, rapid and significant changes have occurred in the industrial structure, ownership structure, decision-making power, and administrative organization (Guo & Hu, 2004). Moreover, the economy has become more market

⁴ “Hang-on” system (*guakao*) refers to a registered system that a social organization must be formally affiliated to a state organ or a nominal parent organization. For example, the China Youth Development Foundation, an NGO established for youths, especially for children’s education in the poorest areas in China. It is affiliated and supervised by the All-China Youth Federation, one of the oldest CCP front organizations. It indicates the confinement of the NGOs in China.

and outward oriented. Notably, with the advent of the “socialist market economy” at the Party Congress in 1990s, the role of central planning has drastically cut in terms of direct control over production and distribution. The share of planning has substantially decreased while the market mechanism has dramatically increased. Significantly, economic reform has experienced liberalization.

Economic liberalization is focused which promotes movement toward a market economy and all the efforts designed to bring the economy to be competitive and market-oriented to reduce the level of government intervention in economic activity, to allow the market to set prices and direct material and manpower resources to move freely through market distribution channels, to allow the private sector to have more economic freedom, and to connect the economy closely with the world economy (Guo, 2000, p. 162).

Moreover, the relationship between central government and local governments has shifted substantially in favour of the latter, as a result of the decentralization of administrative power, the decrease of central planning, and the greater achievement of administrative rationalization. This is reflected in that local governments and basic economic units have been granted greater autonomy in economic decision-making. As addressed by Guo and Hu (2004), the state has recognized and thus emphasized on the importance of market forces and guidance plans in directing economic activities and the importance of governmental laws and economic mechanisms in regulating economic activities. However, the market economy is still on the prerequisite of “socialist”, which means party-state continues to intervene in economic activities in a macro level and public ownership continues to predominate. It is observed that collectives still comprise the largest portion of the non-state sector (Chen & Dickson, 2010). Therefore, the economic liberation only applies to a certain extent; for example, the party still controls the banks, the land is still publicly owned, and state-owned enterprises are still dominant.

Finally, it is of great significance and necessity to look into the explosion and popularity of internet, news media, and their mobilization. In the digital age, media and internet mobilization has reinforced the dynamic of conflict in China’s society. The expansion of the internet and mobile technologies as well as highly dispersed

and versatile news media has further extended the depth and scope of disputes or conflicts (Damm & Thomas, 2006).

The internet is fast becoming the centrepiece in the Chinese party-state's enduring struggle to stay in power. In the field of internet control, the control of government is reflected in the "harmonized" and access blocking from some websites. The "harmonized" vernacular web language means that politics-sensitive messages on the website would be deleted and thus, everything on the website seems in "harmony". It is true to say that the Chinese party-state chose to live with the internet inside its borders, not wanting to seal it off completely from the wider web of the world, or the broader segments of its own populations (Lagerkvist, 2010). In addition, *The Great Firewall of China*, the country's filtering system for foreign web content, has disrupted access to some websites, such as *Facebook*, *Twitter*, *Youtube*, and some search results on *Google*.

The control of government in the news media industry and in the field of news publications can be seen as resulting from the issue of government regulations, such as the *Administrative Regulation on Publishing* (1991), the *Administrative Regulations on Electronic Publications* (1997) and the *Regulations for Administration of Newspaper Publication* (2005). Admittedly, the party now aims at effective monitoring rather than total control of media messages through censorship, which contributes much to developing the authoritarianism. In light of this, I argue that China can be labelled as a developmental authoritarian regime.

2.7 Summary

Discussions that identify China as a developmental authoritarian state in this chapter aim at situating heritage conservation and local governance in a specific social and political context. It is emphasized in this chapter that significant changes and reforms have taken place in China during the past few decades. Society has seen less dominance of the party and control of central government, from ideological, political, legal, social and economic perspectives. Thus, a new state-society paradigm has been recognized by both academics and policy makers which reconciled relations between economic development and spiritual cultivation, between economic interest and political democratic reforms. In particular, it is a

paradigm that is characterised by many contradictions such as, economic liberation under the party's intervention, the prevalence of the internet and the state's censorship.

The next chapter is the start of my research. In this chapter I will start by reviewing the historical record of heritage conservation since the time of ancient China, this will provide an explanation for current practices and policies. Through identifying conflicts caused by and within the system, Chapter Three will also highlight my reasons for choosing to examine Chinese local governance through the vehicle of heritage conservation.

CHAPTER THREE

HERITAGE CONSERVATION IN CHINA

3.1 Introduction

An overview of an evolving and ever changing China was presented in the previous chapter, one that focused on the ideological, political, legal and socio-economic domains. The chapter served to locate the research of this study within a broader context. Following on from this, this chapter will identify the historical record and gradual changes in heritage conservation practices and policies. I will draw attention to the way in which heritage conservation offers local authorities both political and economic incentives to promote local development, and furthermore how this emphasises the need to look at Chinese local governance from a political-economic perspective.

The chapter is organized into five sections. It begins with a synopsis of the historical background of heritage conservation by focusing on some important stages in its development. Section 3.3 examines the extension of the concept of “heritage” and economics of heritage conservation, which is followed by a discussion of the conflict between economic development and heritage conservation, between local governments, developers, NGOs, ordinary people, and so on. Section 3.5 discusses the government principle of “constructing a harmonious society” with reflections on promoting a mechanism of “public participation under government leadership”. How local government deals with these issues and how this informed the research for this study is addressed. At the end of the chapter, Section 3.6 identifies the gaps in existing literature and reemphasizes the significance of this study.

3.2 Heritage conservation in history

Since the Zhou dynasty (1000-250 BC), through the preservation of mainly tangible objects, “heritage” has served both cosmological and political purposes in China. In particular, under beliefs that these “heritage objects” enabled a communicative link with heaven and asserted the ruler’s legitimacy, “heritage objects” were originally collected, preserved, and displayed publicly (Chang, 1983). The term “heritage objects” was first encountered in 722BC in the *Chronicle of Zuo – 2nd Year of Duke*

Huan, that “the meaning of morality or virtue is one to be frugal and regulated. It is expressed by the drawings, scripts and objects with voices and colors in order to make it clear to all officials. Thus, officials will be reminded and alerted and dare not to break the law”⁵. “Heritage” thus refers to “drawings, scripts and objects” in ancient times, which are considered to be the embodiment of the state of being moral or virtuous. Interest in studying the past and its related objects emerged during the Song and Ming eras (960–1279 AD) and was intended as a vehicle by which to document proper and improper behavior, identify the just and the unjust, and thereby influence action in the present (Shepherd & Yu, 2013).

In the aftermath of the Nationalist government, the scientific search and public display of heritage objects was exercised. In 1916, the Geographical Survey was established and archeology emerged as a field of study among Chinese scholars (Gruber, 2007). In 1930, the first regulations of cultural artifacts – the *Law on the Preservation of Ancient Objects* was passed, followed by the *Statute for the Preservation of Scenic Spots, Points of Historical Importance, and Articles of Historical, Cultural, and Artistic Value* issued in the next year. This indicated the legitimization of heritage conservation in the country. In addition, this period also saw the emergence of a nascent tourism industry, evidenced from the opening of 77 museums, 56 art galleries, and almost 100 conservatories (Pao, 1966).

In 1948 shortly before the collapse of the Nationalist government, the country attempted to categorize the material heritage. Professors at Tsinghua University issued a list of 450 sites under the title of *A Brief List of Important Architectural Heritages in China*. Since the establishment of the People’s Republic of China in 1949, the presentation, depiction, and interpretation of China’s past has become a political and pedagogical project (Shepherd & Yu, 2013). This period saw the nationalization and reorganization of all museums in order to reflect a strict linear view of Chinese history based on a historical materialist interpretation. With emphasis on an ideological interpretation of the past, heritage conservation historically served primarily political purposes for the CCP.

⁵ 《左传·桓公二年》：“夫德，俭而有度，登降有数，文物以纪之，声明以发之，以临百官。”

Regarding policies and regulations during this period, the *Provisional Regulations on the Protection and Administration of Cultural Relics*, the country's first formal decree aimed at heritage conservation, was issued in 1961. Following on from this, a number of efforts were made to preserve important cultural objects. A national Cultural Relics Bureau within the Ministry of Culture, designed to categorize and collect important cultural objects, was established and in 1962, the bureau published China's first list of national cultural sites (Shepherd & Yu, 2013). However, the process aimed at heritage conservation in new China was never smooth. During the "Great Leap Forward"⁶ (1958-1961) and the ensuing Cultural Revolution⁷ (1966-1976), thousands of historic sites, including temples, churches, mosques, and other buildings were destroyed or turned into public buildings. Moreover, evidence of "old thinking" and "old culture" were eradicated under Mao's call to "smash the old" in 1966. For example, Confucianism was once regarded as "superstitious and out of place in the modern world", which in turn, called for the destruction of Confucian temples (Li, 1987, p.17).

Until the beginning of the reform period in 1979, the party-state saw a significant shift in its delivery of economic growth, the maintenance of public order, and a citizens' right to increase personal wealth. Since the early 1980s, with rapid economic development, urban development and redevelopment has become a priority in government agenda at all levels (Jin & Zhao, 2003). Without conservation laws to protect old buildings and ancient cities these important parts of China's history could be, and were destroyed, without recourse. Gradually there became an increasing recognition that this was a huge problem and as such, the concept of conservation and research work surrounding it began. Historic cultural heritage conservation has become a new concern for city construction.

The efforts of conservation in the following decades can be divided into two phases. In the first phase from 1982 to 1994, the first law regarding cultural historic conservation was issued – the *Law of the People's Republic of China on the*

⁶ *Da yue jin*: aimed at transcending Marxist historical stages and moving China from an agrarian-based feudal society to an industrialized socialist society in a generation. Millions of people were put to work to raise industrial output and food production.

⁷ *Wenhua da geming*: is generally portrayed as an Orwellian campaign of violence and destruction spurred by Mao Zedong's encouragement of youthful Red Guards to attack the "four olds" (customs, culture, habits, and ideas).

Protection of Cultural Relics. The second phase started in 1994 and runs to the present day when the different levels of the conservation system were implemented. It was identified that the historic district is the most important part of our cultural heritage conservation program and includes three levels: historic buildings and heritage, historic cultural districts and historic cultural cities (Jin & Zhao, 2003). These form the historic cultural conservation system and are one of the major tasks in heritage conservation. Furthermore, the law also clearly defined the criteria for the requirement for urban conservation planning.

Significantly, these efforts in heritage conservation indicated a shift in how the state authority viewed the past. Preserving the past began to link with the party's political objectives of nationalism, socialism and modernization (Sofield & Li, 1998). Thus, heritage conservation was redefined as an incentive to a national consciousness, a reflection of socialist values, which supports material development in the present.

3.3 Heritage conservation in contemporary China

As it enters this new era, heritage conservation faces dilemmas such as whether to adopt strategies of centralization or decentralization, plan or market, autonomy or control. These dilemmas are discussed from the gradual and continuing changes in the practices of heritage conservation under rapid economic development. Among these changes, "culture for economics" is significant. This refers to how historical and cultural heritage is used as an instrument for economic interests, against a backdrop of increasing commodification and commercialization of heritage in both urban and rural areas. In the subsequent pages, specific changes in heritage conservation are identified: the concept of "heritage", the socio-economic influences on local government's attitude and actions on conservation, especially the influence of market dynamics, and the ever increasing multitude of actors involved in heritage conservation.

3.3.1 Extension of concept of "heritage"

As previously identified, in ancient China, the heritage conservation system encompassed only "cultural relics" or "ancient artifacts or utensils", those which record the long history of cultural development in China. In new China, the architecture and buildings, such as palaces and gardens, were included in the

conservation list. This has been subsequently followed by a focus on the cultural and ecological environment, traditional urban fabrics and folk houses. As seen from the list of major heritage sites to be protected at national level in 1961 to the list of famous historical and cultural cities in 1982, it is clear that the concept of “heritage” has been extended to include a greater range of diverse sites. Since the 1980s, under the rapid economic development, the central government issued a number of laws, regulations and government documents on heritage conservation. In late 1981, the State Infrastructure Commission handed in *Application for Protecting Historical and Cultural Cities in the Country* to the State Council, in which it was stated:

The modernization does not mean the construction of a large amount of factories, streets, and high-rises. In particular, in the old town with historical and culture features, with sites of ancient cities, cultural relics, former residences of celebrities, ancient buildings and sites, ancient and well-known trees, etc. we must take more effective and strong measures in order to protect it without any destruction or removal due to construction. A protection belt needs to be set aside around the historical sites. Any construction, extension and changes in the belt have to be restricted.

In early 1983, the concept of planning on the historical and cultural cities was clarified in *Some Ideas on Promoting the Protection of Historical and Cultural Cities* by Department of Construction and Environment in Urban and Rural Areas, stating that

The planning of the historical-cultural cities aims to protect the cultural relics, scenic areas and its environment in urban areas. ... In the composition, the requirements and measures of protection and control must be based on the historical and aesthetic values of the objects to identify the levels and focuses of the protection. The protection sites and construction control areas include cultural relics, ancient buildings and architectural complex, as well as streets and districts, sites of ancient cities, ancient cemeteries, mountains and rivers.

In all, the concept of “planned protection in an area” is identified. Besides, the folk houses and streets which reflect the daily life of ordinary people have been included

in the plan, sites such as courtyard houses in Beijing, lanes in Shanghai and terraced buildings in Guangzhou. According to Wu and Wang (2007), due to the extension of protection areas, the conflict between regional development and heritage conservation has been aggravated.

Since 1980s, the investigation of folk houses and buildings conducted by the department of architecture in universities increased the knowledge and initiatives in heritage conservation. Thus, since 1988, in the list of major sites to be protected in national level, we can see the increasing number of heritages nationwide. Governments and departments at different levels put great efforts into conserving the historic buildings, and as such the conditions and environment of sites have been improved. It is evident from the statistics that as of 2000, there were 300,000 recognized heritage sites, 7,000 provincial, regional, and municipal protected sites; and 1,268 national sites (Zhang, 2004, p. 91). Within a decade, the statistics show that China had more than 400,000 heritage sites, of which 2,351 were officially recognized national sites, approximately 9,300 were recognized at the provincial level, and 58,000 were recognized by either municipal or county authorities.

Among all the efforts in heritage conservation, the application to be listed in World Heritage Sites of UNESCO put the heritage architectures and buildings under the global lens, for example, *Kaiping Diaolou* and *Fujian Tulou* in 2007 and 2008. However, there is a tendency that the listing of World Heritage Sites has been merely used as an instrument to attract investment from tourism operators and funding from upper government. It can be seen from the over-development of tourism in *Lushan Scenic Spots* in Jiangxi (Mao, Chang & Bao, 2005). Heritage conservation is thus closely associated with economic interest. Therefore, in the next section, economics of heritage conservation will be examined.

3.3.2 Heritage conservation and its effects on interests/interest groups

To fully understand the significance of the conflict and conflicting actors, the interest embedded in heritage conservation is a key issue to be examined. In particular, when heritage becomes a development resource for tourism and other third industries, special attention must be paid to the reconciliation of the interests of heritage conservation and tourism promotion or an emphasis on the protection rather than on

the development for economic purposes (Shepherd, 2013). Thus, we see two reactions where economic interests meet heritage: development for tourism and destruction for development gain. This connotes two main models which will be discussed in more detail in the following sections. These models consist of two opposing situations; firstly the preservation of heritage for tourism development and as a revenue source, predominately found in rural areas, and secondly, the destruction of heritage for local development and economic profit predominantly found in in urban areas.

Heritage preserved for tourism

It is not only in China that heritage tourism, which concentrates on the cultural, educational, and practical conservation aspects, has witnessed a growing popularity and much attention globally. For example, in the United Kingdom, heritage tourism has seen as a major strength in its tourism market and is estimated to generate about 28% of all its tourism expenditure per annum (Strauss & Lord 2001).

In China, travelling to famous historical and cultural sites can be dated back to the late Tang Dynasty (618-907). Under the influence of Confucianism, travel is regarded as an exercise to experience learning and enjoyment (Shepherd & Yu, 2013). In today's China, travel remains an overwhelmingly social activity for families or groups to experience the present and the past. In particular, the national government promotes domestic tourism as a by-product of heritage conservation. Heritage conservation has been explicitly defined in political terms as to “strengthen national unity and promote sustainable development of national culture” by the national government (Agnew & Demas, 2004, p.59). Visiting museums, national memorials, archaeological sites, and historic buildings and architectures, has been served as an explicit education purpose among the public since the 1980s. It was designed to develop “higher-quality” citizens with a “civilized” consciousness (Chio, 2010). The increasing demand for heritage tourism planning and development is also evident in the review and approval of the designation of National Historical and Cultural Sites and plans for National Scenic Areas and its land use. By 2009, 120 cities had been classified as protected urban sites with 208 national scenic spots identified, compared to 24 cities and 44 scenic spots in 1982 (Ministry of Housing and Urban–rural Development, 2010).

Indeed, tourist arrivals to heritage sites in localities continue to show phenomenal growth. According to the China National Tourism Administration (CNTA, 2012), in the year of 2012, the number of domestic tourists reached 2.957 billion with a revenue of 2270.622 billion RMB (227 billion GBP), a year-on-year increase of 12.0% and 17.6% respectively and the total revenue of tourism hit 2.59 trillion RMB (259 billion GBP), a year-on-year increase of 15.2%. In 2013, the city of Nanchang received 31.71 million tourists, generating 25.3 billion RMB (2.53 billion GBP) in revenues, which increased by 25.2% over that of 2012. These figures demonstrate that tourism has clearly generated substantial inputs in the local economy. In response, local governments have formulated plans for promoting cultural heritage tourism through redevelopment and reconstruction projects.

Heritage tourism also offers a political and cultural incentive for particular localities. Current literature suggests that heritage conservation, mostly found in rural areas, helps the government influence public opinion and gain support for national ideological objectives (Gordon, 1969). It is suggested that conservation is designed to work towards producing a national identity and consciousness (Hall, 1995), and as such, develop a positive local image (Richter, 1980). In particular, with China's long complex history, heritage tourism is promoted as an effective way to achieve an educational function.

Since the 1990s, in the quest for rural socio-economic regeneration, rural tourism has been promoted and therefore has become an important concept of tourism in China (Su, 2010). Since then, a series of rural tourism activities, for example, "China Rural Tourism Year 1998" and "China Eco-tourism Year 1999", has been created by the China National Tourism Administration (CNTA). These offered both financial incentives and government support for rural communities to develop different forms of rural tourisms. Significantly, heritage tourism has become prominent. In the early 1940s, scholars in the Academic Groups of Construction in China have carried out a large body of research and in-site investigations on the rural architecture and buildings in Sichuan and Yunan provinces. According to Yin (2011), of China's 600,000 villages, approximately 3000 are historic villages that have preserved traditional culture, and most of which have promoted tourism development in order to boost its local economy.

Rural heritage conservation has also seen the increasing influence of the market economic system. Heritage destinations in rural areas thus have been increasingly commoditized by local government through acquiring the land, contracting with tourism companies, redeveloping the site for tourism-related services (Sun & Deng, 2007). For example, the most controversial of these heritage conservation projects is taking place in Lijiang, a small town in northern Yunnan province. Since 1997 when Lijiang ancient town was selected as a world heritage site, it became one of the most popular tourism destinations in China. Many traditional buildings and streets were replaced by hotels, restaurants and bars through the requirement of tourism development. In 2000, the small town received a total of 1.344 billion RMB (approximately 134.4 million GBP) of tourism revenue in the local economy.

However, the huge body of research on the “Lijiang model” suggests that local residents have strong negative perceptions of the social and environmental impact brought about by the tourism development of this heritage site (Wei & Zheng, 2009; Zou & Zheng, 2012). Tourism was blamed for over-commercialization of the ancient town, overcrowding and traffic congestion, and an increased sense of insecurity by local residents (Zou & Zheng, 2012). This raises significant concerns surrounding the negative impacts on local communities when a heritage site is transformed into a tourist attraction in the name of historical-cultural preservation. The majority of villagers are often marginalized by local government in decision-making and benefit-sharing in this process of tourism development. Thus, local government has faced conflicting dilemmas between the quests for economic benefits on the one hand and the protection of intangible traditional culture on the other, both of which are consequential factors emerging from this process of large-scale tourism development in the countryside.

Heritage destructed for development

Since the economic reforms in 1978, cities in China have been undergoing major physical and socio-economic transformations. In particular, since 1999, large-scale urban redevelopment projects have been launched by the state (Dong, 2006). Historical buildings and architectures are facing different forms of destruction through requirements for housing, transportation, and public services linked to development and modernization. For example, in 1949 in Beijing, it was estimated

that the total area of traditional houses within the old city centre was approximately 1160 hectares, however, this figure had decreased to 500 hectares by 2005 (Dong, 2006).

Accordingly, heritage conservation in cities, primarily aiming to enhance the historical built environment, has functioned as a motivation for urban regeneration in order to improve urban competitiveness in the economy. According to Brenner (1999), local governments, being “entrepreneurial”, employed urban conservation as a “neoliberal” strategy of place-making and economic development. Heritage destinations in cities have seen a high profile trend of commodification for urban development, such as for real estate and commercial housing.

A large number of Chinese scholars suggest that large-scale redevelopment has generated great pressure for heritage conservation in urban areas (Dong, 2006; Fan, 2004; Fang, 2000; Wu, 1999). In response, the preparation of conservation plans has become a major undertaking of city management. However, without a sound theoretical basis, these conservation plans fell short of safeguarding the historical and cultural interests of heritages from rapid industrialization and urbanization. It is mainly attributed to the approach to urban conservation, being descriptive without much research and analysis. As a consequence, a great deal of destructive and inappropriate restoration and redevelopment in heritage destinations has taken place. For example, in 2012, in the city of Kashgar, an ancient Silk Road city in far west province of Xinjiang, about 50% of the ancient quarter has been demolished and replaced with commercial enterprises and apartment blocks. Local government seeks to generate local revenue through commercial real estate partnerships. These examples highlight the dilemma of heritage conservation in urban areas: whether to conserve or to construct?

Under reforms, the decentralization of economic power and decision-making has given local government both opportunities and challenges in local economic development. Local officials are required to generate their own revenue sources and promote economic development, through which their political performance is evaluated. Thus, local authorities, who might emphasize short-term results, tend to view heritage as a revenue source in terms of its economic and development potential (Shen & Chen, 2010). In 1998, the national government decentralized its

control on heritage conservation to provinces, municipalities and counties. On the one hand, local authorities began to realize the economic interest and potential in heritage conservation, and therefore sought to promote unique heritage sites in the locality through restoration and redevelopment however on the other hand, they also tended to compromise historical and cultural interest for more profitable reconstruction projects.

3.3.3 Actors in heritage conservation

The conservation of heritage involves different stakeholders in economic and social sectors. Traditionally in China, local government have their orders from the national mandatory plans. Since the reform has taken place and market-orientation dominated in the economic system, local governments' pursuits have changed. Thus, the interests of local government are strengthened since it became an economic organization that pursued independent economic objectives rather than merely a political agency. In this way, local government, the representative of local interests, became the main actor in heritage conservation.

In the efforts to preserve those historical buildings and architecture, local governments face a lack of funding due to the need for rehabilitation and maintenance. To address these financial issues, local governments have been trying to raise funds from alternative sources, due to a lack of regular government funding (Li, Wu & Cai, 2007). Business sectors, such as tourism companies, real estate developers and construction companies, have become significantly involved. Thus, local governments attempt to attract external capital in heritage conservation. For example, in the ancient village of Hongcun listed in World Heritage Sites as a unique surviving example of the integration of houses with comprehensive water systems, the county government brought in an external company – Zhongkun Company to take charge of Hongcun's conservation and tourism business for a period of 30 years.

Another important actor involved in heritage conservation is conservation organization which is made up of two parts: an academic organization – the Research Group of the Chinese Cultural Heritage City sponsored by the Architectural Society of China; and an administrative organization – the Committee of Chinese Historic Cultural Heritage Cities sponsored by the city government of

historic cultural heritage cities. In addition, an Expert Board of Conservation Planning has been established by local government in most cities. The proposed goal of heritage conservation is the coordination of conservation and development in the pursuit of sustainable development in physical construction. The principle of conservation is that those heritages should be preserved in accordance with their state of preservation; consideration of which should include both the heritage itself as well as its surroundings (Fan & Fan, 2008).

In today's heritage conservation in China, NGOs have seen their growing importance in terms of raising public awareness of social problems, facilitating ordinary people to articulate their interest, providing information and sources outside governments, and so on (Cros, et al. 2005; Yan & Bramwell, 2008). The Chinese government recognizes this importance of NGOs in supplementing the state through providing services to those who are in need. To conserve heritages in today's China, a balance between economic development and cultural respect is the goal to be attained. In reality, the government have made great efforts to achieve this through raising awareness of conservation, decentralizing the heritage management to local government, building partnerships with localities, promoting public participation, and involving more specialists or NGOs in conserving heritages.

In terms of recognizing the value of heritage as a resource for sustainable development, the most prominent international NGO in the field in China, the UNESCO, supported heritage conservation efforts worldwide. The 1972 Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage formed the framework for international action in the conservation of tangible heritage. It sought to "encourage the identification, protection and preservation of cultural and natural heritage around the world considered to be of outstanding value to humanity" (World Heritage Centre, n. d). Later in 1985, China signed the Convention to protect natural and cultural heritage sites nationwide. By 2012, China had 37 heritage sites on the World Heritage List, following Italy and Spain. In collaboration with the UNESCO, it is clear that China has made active efforts in the field of heritage conservation.

In this section the gradual changes that have occurred in heritage conservation throughout China's long history have been identified. Specifically, the opposing concerns of, on the one hand, conservation for tourism and, on the other,

development in urban areas for economic gain. The various actors involved were also identified and these subjects will be the context for the discussion of conflict to be addressed in the next section.

3.4 Conflict in heritage conservation

In this section, I will begin with the exploration of how conflicts have been addressed in China's context and further identify conflicts and challenges in heritage conservation. On a more basic interaction level, in the West, conflict is perceived as both functional and dysfunctional (Deutsch, Coleman & Marcus, 2006). In particular, the cooperative perspective of the conflict is noted in field theory (Lewin, 1997) and game theory about conflict (Shubik, 1982). They recognize the cooperation and competition intertwined in the conflict and thus emphasizes the interdependent parties in conflict. From this point of view, conflict is seen as both cooperative and competitive. In the East, however, conflicts are almost always perceived as dysfunctional and negative to relationships that the Chinese tries in every way possible to avoid conflict situations (Zhao, 2006). The literature and this research have emphasized that China has seen a significant party-state leadership in society. In this context, Chinese people prefer to avoid conflict, especially with more powerful others (Morris, et al. 1998; Tjosvold, et al. 2003). Conflict is then regarded as something bad and destructive and is viewed negatively in China.

In this study, I address the issue of conflict in China from two perspectives: one is concerning social conflict and dispute in a broad sense, the other stresses disagreements and disputes in an interpersonal and group context. First, social conflict regarding the polarization of social classes and change of interest patterns which produce new and different stratum and interest parties are highlighted. As previously addressed in Chapter 2, these decades have witnessed restructuring of economic system, adjustment of industrial structure and social change. Some important issues around employment, social welfare, unfair distribution cause serious social conflict and dispute, from tax riots, labour strikes and interethnic clashes to environmental, anticorruption, and gender protests, legal challenges, pro-democracy demonstrations, local electoral disputes, religious rebellions, and even mass suicides (Zhao, 2006). Facing the situation, the concept "harmonious society" is promoted by Chinese government (see Chapter 2).

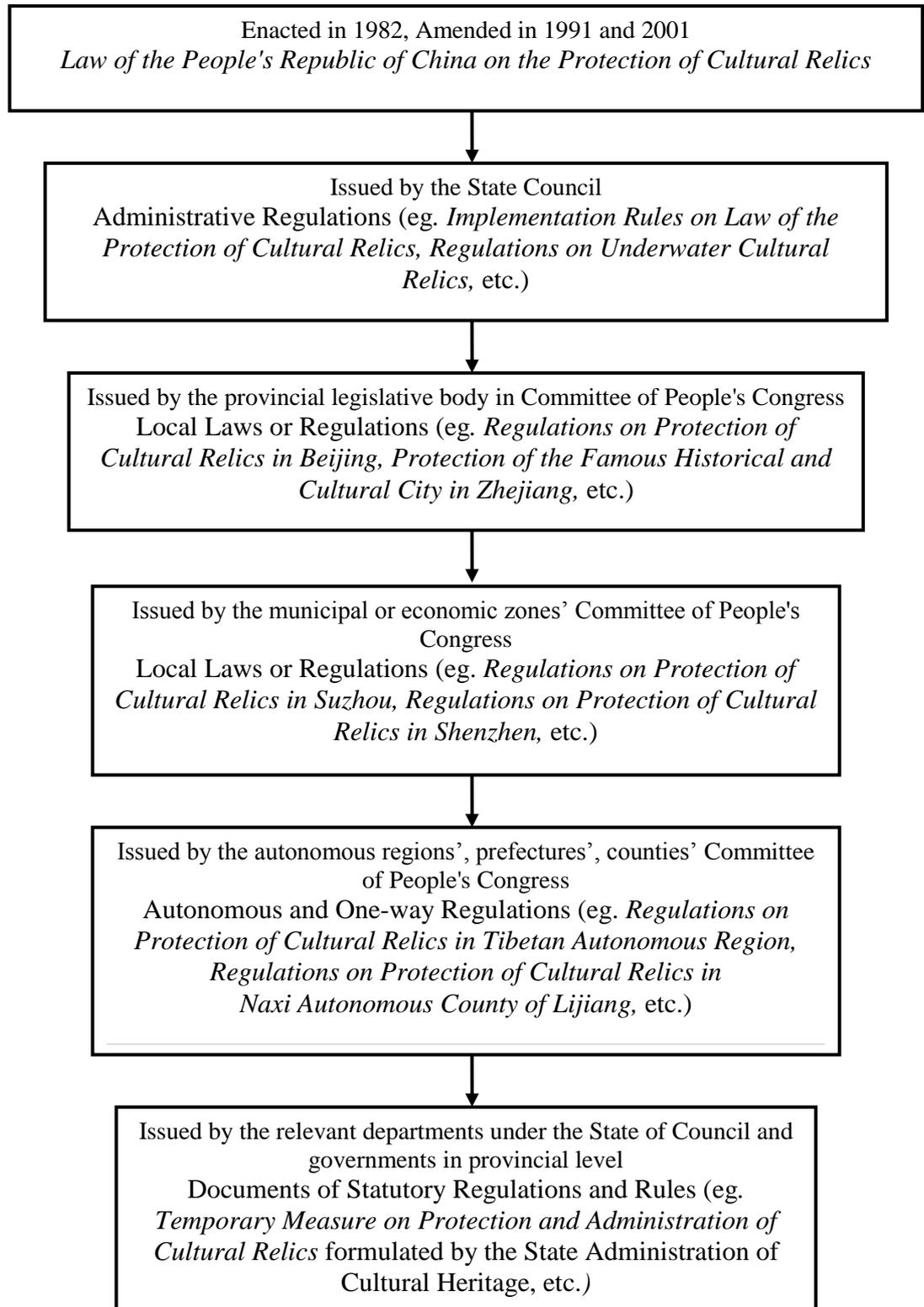
The other approach to conflict is concerning interactions between individuals and groups. In an interpersonal and group context, the term conflict can be explained as assault, disagreement, dissonance, and differences in Chinese. According to Lin (2002), conflict in interpersonal context can be viewed not only as an emotional expression of opposing views in which disputants are engaged in particular communication behaviours, but also as a social, public, and cultural event in which a mediator intervenes. Some conflict researchers in the West see conflict as “the interaction of interdependent people who perceive the opposition of goals, aims and (/or) values and who see the other party as potentially interfering with the realization of these goals (aims or values)” (Putnam & Poole, 1987, p. 552). In this sense, the conceptualization of conflict in the west and in China bears a resemblance in terms of interpersonal interactions. Conflict refers to disagreements arise from and lead to incompatible goals, values and behaviours. However, as will be discussed in a greater length in Chapter 7, influenced by Confucianism, conflict in China is characterized by a relationship-oriented approach of resolution which emphasizes a need for establishing and maintaining *guanxi* (interpersonal relationships).

Drawing from two approaches to conflict identified above, in the following pages, I will address the issue of conflicts and challenges in the substantive area of heritage conservation, regarding limited funding, an absence of authority for planners to implement and enforce planning and development codes, and tensions between government officials, private sectors, business, and local communities.

Firstly, when taking into account the demands of conservation and protection, it is clear that funding and financial support is still very limited. A large amount of public funding is needed for the conservation of historic and cultural heritages, especially for the protection of the old city landscape, house repairs, and construction of public facilities, population redistribution and so forth. With less attention placed on heritage conservation than on economic development and other public services in China, the government funding remains inadequate. When facing up to this situation, it is clear that the funding strategy which is mainly governmental investment with some public funding, simply cannot fulfil the needs of conservation and preservation in China.

Secondly, the political, administrative and legal system of heritage conservation is not well-established and thus needs to be improved, especially at local levels. In particular, although the government made great efforts to improve China's legal system, there are still very few detailed laws and regulations specifically designed to address economic construction, tourism development in heritage sites, and the issue of criminal behaviour, such as the theft of ancient cultural ruins or ancient tombs. This lack of adequate and suitable laws leads to difficulties in resolving conflict through legal device. Moreover, the ambiguity in languages, such as conservation, protection, maintenance, repairs, is also of great concern. Practices, such as the demolition of heritage sites, although criticized at the highest level, has as yet not been effectively legislated against. Figure 3-1 in the next page presents the legal system in conserving the heritage in China.

Figure 3-1 Legislative System in Heritage Conservation in China



Thirdly, conservation in heritage has seen conflict in land use, cultural identity, the development of heritage sites, and most significantly, between economic

development and heritage protection. The conservation activity could provide great potential for the environment and funds can be obtained for conservation through development activity, as pointed out in the guiding ideology of heritage conservation in China (Li, Wu & Cai, 2007). The conflict between preserving a heritage site for its intrinsic value and commercializing it as a business product is significant, and can be seen from the over-development of heritage tourism. For example, the heritage sites listed in the World Heritage Sites by UNESCO in China, being flooded with vast number of tourists, are increasingly commoditized and commercialized through the promotional policies by both local authorities and private sectors (Zhang, et al., 2008). The excessive demand and use of heritage sites led to subsequent issues that challenge sustainability.

Finally, heritage conservation involves conflicts between different parties and interests, more so than merely an action of construction, planning and property development. To pursue and maximize economic benefits, the government or other relevant organizations at local level might disregard heritage conservation. This in turn, has the capacity to cause various kinds of conflict among the different stakeholders involved. Among these stakeholders, the public sectors, which are under the party-state control, do not have the opportunity or space to express their interest directly and as such, their opinions are ignored by the authorities. This creates conflict and poses difficulties in resolving it.

This dilemma is exemplified in the conservation of residential courtyard houses (*Si He Yuan*). Since residents in the courtyard increased from one unit per house to seven or eight units per house and as 90 percent of the houses are public-owned so residents have no property rights, they have tended not to have strong sense of responsibility for protecting and conserving the properties. From the developers' perspective, they prefer to demolish the houses for lowering the budget because of the land transfer expense. Additionally, for those local governments who pursue a GDP-oriented growth model in urban planning, they are prepared to sacrifice the historical-cultural interests in return for the economic benefits derived from urban development. There are many other cases facing the conflict between these stakeholders in China.

Moreover, as mentioned earlier, NGOs have become an important actor in heritage conservation. However, as Lang (2012) suggest, there is a long-running tension between NGOs and the Chinese government. Most NGOs, especially those with close ties with overseas organizations, are under scrutiny by the Chinese government. For example, in March 2010, new restrictions on NGOs receiving foreign financial aids or donations were imposed by tax authorities. In addition, the foreign donations of \$150,000 or more can only be received under government permission. Being short of funding resources is one of the most important problems for most NGOs. In most cases, they rely on overseas funding sources, such as international NGOs in western countries. Therefore, the conflict between the government and NGOs also serves as a form of conflict.

Based on the above, conflicts caused by and within the heritage conservation system are prominent, especially the conflict between economic development and heritage conservation, between interest for economic purposes and for historical-cultural preservation, and between the groups of actors involved. Thus, in the next section, how central government responds to these conflicts and problems, and what the guiding principle in heritage conservation is, will be investigated with a focus on the dilemmas under the democratic processes.

3.5 The principle of “constructing a harmonious society” in heritage conservation

To maintain social stability, the requisite governmental response to “build a more transparent government and a more democratic decision-making process” in a time of rapid economic development was to re-inaugurate the ‘socialist moral standards’ and “socialist cultural development” (Bray, 2006). During the reform period that began in 1978, although the main structure of the Chinese party-state has remained essentially unchanged, there have been important legal changes, and this has led to possibilities of new forms of political participation. This period was accompanied by the emergence of the “person-based” rhetoric, as the party state delineated its working principle in the process of constructing a harmonious socialist society:

The principles in building a harmonious society include: adherence to a person-based approach, putting the maximization of benefits for the people and the country as the starting and standing point of our work.

“Harmonious society” is a political concept of wide comprehension in China, which basically refers to a heavenly and ideal social configuration that humans seek and long for ceaselessly. It was introduced against a background of the social disparities and conflicts that were induced by rapid economic development in China. Hu Jintao’s concept of “building a socialist harmonious society” currently contextualizes the acceptable modes of social activity, which admitted to active contribution to the new national project under the guiding principle of “mutual adaptation of religion and socialist society”. So what is “harmonious society”? According to President Hu (2005), a harmonious society is a society that is “democratic and ruled by law, fair and just, trustworthy and fraternal, full of vitality, stable and orderly, and maintains harmony between man and nature”. The concept also emphasized a balanced approach and named five areas of development or “five pairs of coordination”, which are rural versus urban, coastal versus central and western, economic versus social, human versus nature, and domestic development versus openness to the world. The concept of a harmonious society seeks to present the traditional Chinese thought of *he* (or harmony) as a universal view of global order (Hwang & Chen, 2010), which has its roots in Confucianism (will be discussed in details in Chapter 7).

In heritage conservation, local governments set out to “follow the guideline of ‘build a socialist harmonious society’, construct socialist advanced culture, and implement a scientific look on development, and” by “protecting first, rational development, and strengthening management” at local level. It stressed a commitment to “further improve the decision-making process that combines public participation, expert study and government decision-making to ensure that decisions made are based on scientific evidence and are correct”. In this sense, “public participation under the government’s leadership” enters the government narratives of heritage conservation nationwide.

Accordingly, the party-state put forward six guiding principles: in conserving cultural and historical heritages, both movable and immovable, both physical and

non-physical, local government and related departments must: (1) include the heritage conservation into the government agenda and socio-economic development plan, as well as in the regional planning; (2) establish and amplify the system of responsiveness and accountability in heritage conservation; (3) organize national heritage conservation leading groups to conduct fix-term research on the big issues; (4) exercise unified coordination and administration through setting up deliberative institutions in heritage conservation; (5) establish systems of regular information sharing and reporting, experts consulting and external supervision in order to promoting the democratization; and (6) developing mechanisms of engaging academic institutions, social organizations and enterprises to jointly working on heritage conservation.

In reality, the notion of public participation has prevailed since the 1990s. In the planning industry, the term “public participation” was regularly used to refer to the collaboration and coordination in the planning and decision-making process. It is significant that “public participation” is mentioned four times in the laws and regulations of urban and rural planning in the state. The *Law of Urban and Rural Planning in the People’s Republic of China*, which was issued in January 2008, highlighted the notion of “publicity and public participation” in planning, as specified in Article 26 “Formulation of urban and rural planning”, and Article 46 at “amendments to urban and rural planning” where in each there is asserted a claim for public participation respectively. Moreover, some cogent requests for public participation regarding “handling result of supervision and inspection upon urban and rural planning” and “amendments” are also prescribed in Article 26 at Chapter “Supervision/Inspection” and Clause 5 Article 60 at “Legal responsibility” of “urban and rural planning” process is embodied in a repetitive cycle of action chain, being “study-compilation-approval-implementation”. The mechanism of public participation in the planning is identified, as presented in the table in the next page (see Table 3-1).

Table 3-1 - Mechanism of public participation in the urban planning

Stages of Planning	Participatory Activities
Preparation of planning formulation	Nil
Preparation of first draft	Publicizing the decision of making plans; providing detailed introduction of the location, name and nature of the area to the public; investigating and collecting information from the public
Formulation of the plan	Seeking opinions from all sides; coordinating between the interests from different groups
Concluding stage of the preliminary plan	Displaying the plan to the public; organizing citizens' board of regents; discussing with citizens' representatives on the plan
Evaluation of the plan	Holding public hearings
Completion of the plan	Open up to the public
Implementation of the plan	Supervision from the public and the media

In the early 1990s, the central government gave permission to the international organizations, for example, UNESCO, to work in agreed provinces and also allowed the concept of “public participation” to enter everyday speech by government. In heritage conservation, the Chinese government put great efforts into thinking of the ways in which and the extent to which the public should be engaged in policy implementation. It is likely that levels of participation increased in accordance with the recognition that functions performed previously by local government would have to be taken on by local communities and organizations.

Accordingly, local government has faced a dilemma between whether to pursue economic development or heritage protection, between the pursuit of economic interest and the requirement of democratic processes. Given the dramatic economic growth and increasing decentralization in policy making brought about by the reforms since 1978 (see Chapter 2), some important actors in social and economic sectors nowadays have the scope to influence governance processes (Yan & Bramwell, 2008). This study takes this into account and as such focuses within this specific political and economic system to discuss the issue of changing local governance.

3.6 Summary

This chapter investigated the historical background and gradual changes in heritage conservation in China. It examined the historical background, current practices and policies regarding heritage conservation in China, where the state, local governments, business enterprises, NGOs, and other interested parties seek to balance the needs and demands of heritage conservation with rapid economic and social changes. In particular, the conflict between associated actors, between heritage conservation and economic development, between the historical-cultural interests for conservation and the economic interests for development purposes, were identified.

Through reviewing the historical record, I identified that heritage conservation is primarily treated as a political incentive to a national consciousness and a reflection of socialist values. Along with the following discussion on economic interests induced by the conservation, I suggest that heritage conservation offers local authorities both political and economic incentives to promote local development, which highlights the importance and necessity of examining Chinese local governance from a political-economic perspective.

Relevant literature on heritage conservation has seen abundant research on themes around public-private partnership (Chang, 1996; Hayllar, 2010; Du Cros, 2005), the rising role of non-governmental organizations (Harmon, 2007; Wang, 2010), and on institutional-building through policy making and legal reforms (Fu, 2008; Ho, 2001). However, there is still a lack of empirical study exploring how local government interacted with social actors and dealt with their conflicting interests. It is necessary to give more attention to the governance and governing approaches and to explore the re-established traditions and changing relations in this process. The next chapter will build a theoretical framework for understanding Chinese local governance based on the political and economic view of the state.

CHAPTER FOUR

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

4.1 Introduction

This chapter underlines the theoretical framework of Chinese local governance as networks within a context of authoritarian deliberation. In the research using grounded theory method, it is an ongoing debate about when to conduct the literature review. As Strauss and Corbin (1990) suggest, a preliminary review of literature and theories is required to provide justification for the study and to avoid conceptual and methodological pitfalls. Besides, being “open minded” but not “empty headed” (Charmaz, 2006), the grounded theory researcher is better equipped to sense the subtleties of the data. Therefore, the objective of this chapter is to review the relevant literature and introduce a theoretical perspective to analyze the practices of Chinese local governance in heritage conservation.

In China, under political reforms and rapid economic development, “democracy” has become the central and most debated issue (Nathan, 2003; Qian & Wu, 2003; Zhao, 1998): what kind of democracy it is? How does it coexist and relate to economic development in governing the society? This study thus attempts to provide a new perspective to reconsider democracy and power relations among different segments of society under economic growth. In the literature, there are different approaches in exploring governance and its dynamic process towards democracy. According to Bogason (2006), recent governance in western theories focused more on negotiated or deliberative models of democracy. Similarly, China has seen this form of democracy, although it bears both commonalities and differences with its western counterparts. Thus, there is a need to explore governance in the democratization in China’s context. As such, this chapter is structured into six sections accordingly.

First, I examine the democratization at the local level in China. Through introducing the concept of authoritarian deliberation by He and Warren (2011), I argue that China is experiencing this form of democratic process “with Chinese characteristics”. This concept highlights the feature of “under leadership of the Party” in Chinese deliberative politics. Driven by social and economic development, Section 4.4 examines the relations between economic development and democracy in the west

and identifies a lack of discussion surrounding this issue in the context of China. The chapter then raises a significant question on how the aforementioned form of democracy survives under the increasing influence of entrepreneurial development. Following this, I identify some different approaches of governance theories, with the focus on governance as networks. In particular, the discussion on a more-negotiated state and a broader public sphere in contemporary China leads us to consider governance from the network approach.

4.2 Democratization at the local level in China

In fact, the scope and model of democracy is puzzling. In the literature on democracy, positions taken derive in part from different ways of justifying democracy. According to Held (2006), democracy has been defended

on the grounds that it comes closest among the alternatives to achieving one or more of the following values or goods: rightful authority, political equality, liberty, moral self-development, the common interest, a fair moral compromise, binding decisions that take everyone's interest into account, social utility, the satisfaction of wants, efficient decisions (p. 2-3).

In the ideal or theoretical sense, democracy is served for the best political order, in which the process should meet some criteria that ensure citizens' effective participation, equality in voting, enlightened understanding, and exercising final control over the agenda (Dahl, 1982). However, these ideal criteria cannot be met by actual regime, which makes it significant to locate the discussion of democracy in the specific actual practices. Thus, the democratization is understood as building and deepening of democratic processes in dealing with crucial contemporary problems.

Since the 1990s, the process of democratization has taken place in many parts of the globe, such as Indonesia, Nigeria and other developing countries. It is associated with the processes of decentralization, citizen participation and efforts to deepen the inclusiveness and substance of the institutional forms and procedures of democracy (Gaventa, 2006). It is true that China is a long way from being called a country of liberal democracy, one which emphasizes the expression of interests of the mass of individuals through the vote, the secret ballot, a competition between political

groups, a separation of powers, and freedom of the press, speech and public association, and the rule of law (Held, 2006). Rather than abandon the concept of democracy entirely, the economic, social and political changes taken place in China's society suggest the need to more closely analyze "how the component parts operate" (Schneider, 1995, p. 220). It should be noted that, in the twentieth century, China has experienced a continued call for democracy through reforms, which has led to some democratic elements in society, such as village elections and business associations. Therefore questions, such as what is the form of democratization that is taking place in China and what are the characteristics of that democracy, remain pertinent.

4.2.1 The concept of authoritarian deliberation

As discussed earlier in Chapter 2, China is a developmental authoritarian state which mixes totalitarian and authoritarian practices. Significantly, it also sees some efforts towards democratization. In particular, in China, under social and economic reforms, the concepts derived from "democracy", such as "civil society" and "public participation", entered the discourse of government and scholars. In particular, the notion of "democracy" has been realized and emphasized in government narratives and policies, especially when deliberative practices for decision-making have been adopted at the local scale, such as democratic discussion meetings (*minzhu kentanhui*)⁸, public hearings (*tingzhenghui*), and residents' forums (*jumin luntan*). These concepts emphasize the notion of discussion and deliberation in an ideal sense. In this context, He (2006) produces a concept of authoritarian deliberation, which combines authoritarian concentrations of power with deliberative practices. More specifically, this concept refers to the increasing use of deliberative practices which aim to legitimize and strengthen authoritarian rule, and second, serve as a leading edge of democratization. This frames "two trajectories of political development in China" (He & Warren, 2011, p. 269). Echoing the argument that China is a developmental authoritarian state in Chapter 2, this concept recognizes the leadership of the party and the limited public deliberation on various social and political issues at the local level.

The literature shows a close connection between democratic institutions and deliberation (Bohman, 1998; Chambers, 2003; Warren, 2002; Young, 2000). As He

⁸ *kentanhui*, a meeting based on sincere discussion, with "heart-to-heart".

and Warren (2011) state, deliberation practices need protection provided by democratic institutions for argument, opinion and demonstration, and democracies enable deliberative influence in politics. Dryzek (2009) also argues that deliberation is central to democracy. As this study is located in the context of China, deliberation is examined at the local level under authoritarian circumstances. According to He (2006a), the development of deliberative practices and institutions at the local level may lead to increased political participation and better governance in a transitional society, like China.

To locate this study at the local-level in China, it is important to clarify “local” here. I refer to government below provincial level – municipality, county, township level. The reasons for the division between provincial and “local” level are due to different degrees of centralization and basis of coordination. First, macro-management may remain centralized at provincial level, while local systems below that level operate more as market-oriented enterprises. For example, plan and direction setting is still centralized for redistribution of resources as it is crucial for the entire state economy (Lin, 1995). However, the redistributive system in municipal government and government below that level is likely to be more profit-seeking, which will be discussed further in the case studies. Second, networks built upon traditions are more prominent in organizing local coordination below provincial level. In particular, in county and township government, kinship ties are a major component of forming and sustaining networks of participants. This indicates the importance of traditions and cultural values in discussing how local governments treat other social actors, which will be discussed later.

“Deliberation”, rooted in theories of democracy, suggests informed discussions and debates between participants to increase the quality and legitimacy of decision making. It advocates a “talk-centric” approach rather than a “voting-centric” approach to democracy (Chambers, 2002, p. 98). In the western literature on democratic deliberation, an idealized notion of the public sphere and a normative approach of discursive deliberation are much focused. For Gastil and Black (2008, p. 2), deliberation is defined as a process where “they [people] carefully examine a problem and arrive at well-reasoned solution after a period of inclusive, respectful consideration of diverse points of view”. This definition stresses the notions of

identifying and choosing solutions, considering and respecting others' opinions. It thus combines the Deweyan perspective on problem solving with Habermasian notions of the public sphere and communicative action.

However, in authoritarian systems, political deliberation seems unpromising, as evidenced by the centralization of decision-making power and in limits on spaces of public discourses, thus leading to an undeveloped public sphere (He, 2003). For Weber (1978), the ideal means of authoritarian rule is command and its ideal outcome is legitimate domination. It stresses the centralization of power in the hands of rulers who dictate and the ruled who accept commands under legitimate authoritarian rule. Deliberation can only occur under authoritarian circumstances as a means to maintain legitimacy by rulers. To distinguish between deliberation within democratic and authoritarian settings, He and Warren (2011, p. 272) use the term "deliberative influence". Unlike contexts in which deliberation is often related to democratic decisions within democracies, deliberative influence under authoritarian conditions is followed by the decisions of political authorities through persuasion without inducing or threatening participants with deleterious consequences (He & Warren, 2011). Thus, deliberation under authoritarian rule encompasses any act of communication that motivates others through persuasion without resort to coercion. Following the deliberation and reflecting the substance, an authority then makes a decision. As I will present in the next section, democratization at local-scale China is experiencing the authoritarian deliberation under the influence of Confucian tradition and contemporary political structure, driven and challenged by broad social and economic developments.

4.2.2 The Chinese case

The central government emphasizes the concept of "democracy" in all governmental activities. The concept was put forward as a guiding principle in the decision-making process. At the plenum of the 18th Central Committee of the Communist Party held in November 2012, a significant vocabulary of "a socialist deliberative democracy" was written in the government report, which was inherited from the deliberative theories and practices of Mao from 1949. In the speech made by President Hu at the plenum, he presented that "a socialist deliberative democracy" is

An important way to exercise mutual supervision and it must be implemented under the leadership of the CCP with multi-party cooperation. Decisions on the policies in all levels and on important public affairs must be made through democratic deliberation. This form of deliberation is democratic, equal, genuine, unconstrained, through discussion, communication and brainstorm in order to authentically reach agreement [...] a socialist deliberative democracy must be included in the process of decision-making, on the significant issues both at the state and at the local level. It is the principle of political deliberation. The Party Committees in all levels must attach great attention on the democratic deliberation, working out unified plans and measures to enforce the principle.

In the statement above, it is not difficult to recognize contradictions. In particular, the emphasis on “a socialist deliberative democracy” calls for cooperation and deliberation among a multitude of political actors, whilst the deliberation is “under the leadership of the CCP”. This refers to the formal form of political deliberation among the politicians or representatives, as suggested by Habermas (2005). The other type of political deliberation occurs among citizens within the informal public sphere, especially at the grassroots level. Rather than focusing on the regime-level democratization, the concept of authoritarian deliberation is utilized to examine procedural decision making at the local level. In the subsequent pages, to better understand the application of the concept of authoritarian deliberation in China, the historical-cultural roots of deliberation and institutions of deliberative politics are examined.

The cultural roots of deliberation in China

The Chinese concept of deliberation has a deeply-rooted cultural foundation in Confucianism. It holds a balanced theory towards deliberation: a society with talk-centric politics using deliberation strategically to persuade, whilst still using pragmatic authoritarian forms of discipline or control. The term, *yi* (议, deliberation), refers to the process that decision or judgment is made based on reasoning or thinking and through discussion or debate involving multiple participants. The deliberation practices are carried out by the exemplary person, *junzi* (君子), and

regulated by the moral principle of *ren* (benevolence, or humanness) and *li* (ritual). These three concepts indicated a political order in which “the rule of elites prevailed, the notion of duty was central, moral concerns override political bargaining processes, and harmony won over conflict” (He, 2002, p. 62).

Confucius stated that “in a world which follows the Way, there is no need for the common people to debate over politics” in *The Analects of Confucius* (Legg, 2010). Besides, the *Analects of Confucius* also reported that the common people “should not deliberate on rites lightly” (*wuqing yili* 毋轻议礼), only when one is qualified to do so through learning and practicing and thus become an exemplary person. Meanwhile, deliberation is important and crucial to check against the indulgent use of power and avoid misbehaviors of authorities.

Anciently, if the Son of Heaven had seven ministers who would remonstrate with him, although he had not right methods of government, he would not lose his possession of the kingdom; if the prince of a state had five such ministers, though his measures might be equally wrong, he would not lose his state; if a greater officer had three, he would not, in a similar case, lose (the headship of) his clan; if an inferior officer had a friend who would remonstrate with him, a good name would not cease to be connected with his character; and the father who has a son that would remonstrate with him would not sink into the gulf of unrighteous deeds (Legge, 2010, p. 483-4).

The statement above shows the importance and value of remonstrance (*jian*), a form of official deliberation. It stresses that officials or exemplary persons should remind the emperor of his duty of managing public affairs and correct his misconduct. To make deliberation productive, Confucianism developed a set of principles and norms. In the act of deliberation, three ways of persuasion are identified: morality, reason, and might (Cheng, 2006). Morality is normatively higher than reasoning, and reasoning higher than might. Moreover, the principle of publicity, which highlights all public discussions to celebrate, tolerate, and accommodate differences, leads to the realization of the Way (He, 2014). This also requires the subjugation of self-interest to public-mindedness. The great *Gong* (public) is promoted through public deliberation. Unlike liberal deliberation which values self-regarding interests,

Chinese deliberation promotes balanced or shared interests.

However, under the influence of the Confucian conception of the emperor as the “Son of Heaven” (*tianzi*) and the doctrine of heavenly principles (*tianli*), the goal of Chinese deliberation is to make a good ruler (He, 2014). As will be discussed later, given that the emperor was regarded as the “Son of Heaven”, the deliberation practices did not essentially question the legitimacy of the authority. Only in the face of the misbehaviors of the emperor, the remonstrators could challenge the authority following the will of the people.

Therefore, there is a strong tradition in China that public deliberation plays a role in enhancing and legitimating authority. However, this form of deliberation is practiced by a group of powerful bureaucratic elite. The Confucian tradition, which created these elites and their relationship with the political leadership or the ruler, contributes to the party’s effective control over society. Moreover, the attributes from Confucianism also provided the country with a network of well-educated and professional elites in its contemporary bureaucratic system (Guo, 2003). This will be discussed in more details in Chapter 7 on Confucianism as one of the major political traditions in China. It also echoes the discussion of the “decentred” approach of networked governance focusing on “traditions”.

Deliberative institutions

Actually, there has been a variety of institutional practices of deliberation from ancient China. In the imperial system, the formal *yanguan* (remonstrating office) is served as one of the main deliberative institutes. Historic records of the writings of remonstrations submitted to the emperor show that officials offer sincere and loyal advice and criticism and the discussion process often engaged debate and reason-based argumentation. For example, as recorded in the book *Shiji Zhoubenji* (史记·周本纪), in the remonstrance with King Li of Zhou, the Duke of Shao presented a vision of the good ruler’s solicitation of speech from his inferiors:

Thus when the Son of Heaven attends to policy matters, he has everyone from the highest ministers down to the many retainers present poems; the blind musicians present tunes and the scribes present writings; the masters

admonish, the blind expound, the sightless recite, and the hundred officials remonstrate; commoners pass along remarks, personal servants present all sorts of corrections, and relations redeem errors and attend to details; the blind musicians and the scribes present teachings; the tutors and instructions refine [these teachings]; and then the king makes his considerations [on the basis of these teachings]⁹ (translated by Schaberg, 2005, p. 146-147).

Another deliberative institute in imperial China was the *shuyuan* (schools or academies) where scholars could discuss public affairs. It was established by intellectuals at the local and community level in search of cultural autonomy and moral community. Ideally, it facilitated public deliberation through delivering lectures and discussing public policies. However, the schools and academies under Confucianism cultivated examination-centered education, which tends to produce a will to prestige rather than moral character (He, 2014). In particular, since the exemplary persons who become officials were selected from the schools or academies, the two spheres, the formal remonstrating system and the community-level academies, have always overlapped. It might contribute to a development of *guanxi* (interpersonal relationships, will be discussed in Chapter 7) between and within groups of elites.

Under the communist state, the remonstrating system has officially ended. Instead of this, in 1949, the party established a system of multiparty cooperation and political deliberation. The People's Political Consultative conference, as a special organization within the NPC, thus has the duty to deliberate upon the state-level important policy decisions (Guo, 2000). As stated in the *CCP's Opinions on Further Improving the Multiparty Cooperation and Political Deliberation System under the Leadership of the Party*,

The features of the system are: the Communist Party's leadership, multiparty cooperation, a multiparty politics with the power in the hands of the Communist Party. This reflects the nature of socialist democracy - the people as masters, reflects the characteristics of China's political system which has great advantages and strong vitality. Under the new historical conditions, the

⁹ 《史记·周本纪》：“故天子听政，使公卿至於列士献诗，瞽献曲，史献书，师箴，瞽赋，蒙诵，百工谏，庶人传语，近臣尽规，亲戚补察，瞽史教诲，耆艾修之，而后王斟酌焉，是以事行而不悖。

development of socialist democracy and building socialist political civilization, one important point is to uphold and improve multiparty cooperation and political deliberation under the leadership of the CCP, to expand political participation from all sides and to broaden channels of expressing interests, to promote social harmony, to realize the unity of the leadership of the Communist Party, the people as the masters and the rule of law.

It shows that political deliberation in China combines “the leadership of the party”, popular participation in the political process, and governance through “the rule of law”. Under this system, the principle of political deliberation is the leadership of the party. Public participation or deliberation must fully recognize the necessity and importance of the political authority. The forms of this formal deliberation among political authorities or representatives include democratic consultation, participatory meetings or seminars, etc. In addition to the deliberation through these activities, other democratic parties could submit written proposals to the CCP Central Committee.

The content of deliberation or consultation includes: important documents by the National Conference of the CCP and the CCP Central Committee, suggestions on amending the Constitution and other important laws, recommended candidates for state leaders, important decisions on enhancing reforms, medium- and long-term plans for national economic and social development, some important state-level issues, as well as other important issues that are worthy of discussion by the democratic parties, and so on. As for the procedure of these formal deliberation acts, the CCP proposes the annual political deliberation agenda according to the priorities. The CCP informs the democratic parties and related personages and provides relevant materials. The democratic parties make comments and suggestions based on the proposal. The official language with regard to the process of deliberation is “make full play to democracy and listen to opinions, seek common ground, and seek consensus”.

The prerequisite and core principle of this multiparty deliberation is to uphold the leadership of the party. According to He (2002, p. 197), the use of National People’s Congress and the People’s Political Consultative Conference by the party-state is “to

legitimize party rule”. At the central level, political deliberation is actually not realized due to the indirect elections (will be discussed in Chapter 6), and the party’s controls over the media and restrictions on demonstration and association. China lacks a thoroughly “deliberative capacity” at the central level (Fishkin, et al., 2010). However, at the local level, the participatory innovations under the rapid socio-economic development have brought some deliberative elements in the society.

Thus, I focus mainly on the deliberative institutions and practices at the local level for its relevance to and importance in this study. Under reforms, the local authority has been given more autonomy to manage their own issues. The concept of “community building” is developed as a significant implementation of state-level “harmonious society” at the local level. As identified before (see Chapter 2), the community provides institutional basis for “self-governing”. According to the government report, *Some Opinions on Comprehensively Promoting the Construction of Harmonious Communities*,

Community building, under the leadership of the Party and government, is to strengthen the functions, improve the services and solve the problems in the community, relying on various social forces and social resources. It is a new government program, which was required by the economic and social development in the construction of modernization in new era. The first condition is democratic self-governance, improving and smoothing the democratic systems, norms, channels of citizens’ participation in the community, formulating a mechanism of citizens’ autonomy under the leadership of the Party, increasing the influences of residents’ on grassroots’ economic, political, cultural and other affairs.

The notion of “under the leadership of the Party” is also emphasized in government agendas at the local level. It is to “empower the society” without challenging the party’s control of the political agenda. Following this concept of “community building”, local government employs a mechanism of public participation (see Chapter 3), which can be seen as an important deliberative effort at the local level.

As such, the concepts of “a socialist deliberative democracy”, “political deliberation system” and “community building” give space for deliberation, yet accentuate the

leadership of the party as its core principle. Therefore, I argue that China is experiencing a special type of democratization – “authoritarian deliberation”. It is democratic process “with Chinese characteristics”. In the process, political and socio-economic reform creates new elite with a structural and ideological autonomy that is often obstructive to the production of democratization or a civil society. In the next section, the relationship between market capitalism and democracy in western democracies will be examined; this will re-emphasize the significance of examining this issue within the context of China. This section will also examine the conflict and problems attributed to economic reforms and rapid development which can create pressure for a further opening up of space and a more democratic decision-making process for local governments.

4.3 Democracy under economic development

Since it was first demonstrated by Lipset (1959) the discussion of the relationship between economic development and democracy has been the subject of countless subsequent studies by academics. In this section, I review some important explorations and explanations on this relationship for a later discussion in China’s context. The literature suggests that capitalism supports and subverts democracy, while democracy also fosters and subverts market capitalism. However, in recent years, problems created by capitalist development are emphasized and may have the potential to threaten the democratic processes.

A positive relationship between economic development and democratic process is demonstrated and widely recognized in the western democracies. According to Lipset (1959, p. 75), the socio-economic level is correlated to the democratization, “democracy is related to the state of economic development. Concretely, this means that the more well-to-do a nation, the greater the changes that it will sustain democracy”. The explanations on their correlation lie in a higher level of a country’s economy leads to a higher level of education, literacy, media and political participation, which is essential to induce democracy. Moreover, in Lipset’s paper to reconsider this correlation, it concludes that “belief systems change; and the rise of capitalism, a large middle class, an organized working class, increased wealth, and education are associated with secularism and the institutions of civil society which help create autonomy for the state and facilitate other preconditions for democracy

(Lipset, 1994, p. 7). This correlation between economic development and democratic processes has been appreciated in subsequent studies (Diamond, 1992; Rueschemeyer, Stephens & Stephens, 1992). Moreover, unlike Schumpeter (1942) who believed that capitalism and democracy is strongly at odds, Lipset suggests that they reinforce one another, and thus find a way of coexisting. This was widely recognized and demonstrated by the western scholars that capitalism and democracy emerged as the dominant problem solving mechanism of modern society (Almond, 1991).

Significantly, how capitalism supports democracy is investigated from historical, theoretical and empirical evidence (Berger, 1986; Hirschman, 1986; Inkeles & Smith, 1974; Moore, 1966). In particular, changes in social structures caused by economic development in capitalism create the chances of democracy, since such developments shift the balance of power (Huber, Rueschemeyer, & Stephens, 1993). For example, democratic processes and institutions weaken the power of landlords and empower subordinates. Meanwhile, the literature also identifies factors concerning a growing consensus under an autonomous realm of politics which correlates with capitalist development to democracy.

Another important idea in explaining the relationship between economic capitalism and democracy was demonstrated by Lindblom (1977) and Dahl (2000). Similarly to Lipset, Dahl (2000) stated that the development of democratic beliefs and culture is closely associated with a market economy, and that “a highly favorable condition for democratic institutions is a market economy in which economic enterprises are mainly owned privately, rather than by the state, that is, a capitalist rather than a socialist or statist economy” (Dahl, 2000, p. 158). From a pluralist perspective, the factions or interest groups are the central expression of democracy. In this sense, they viewed economics as individuals who maximize personal interest, while politics as groups of individuals that maximize their common interests. Significantly, we can see a close relationship bilaterally from politics to economics and from economics to politics.

In this sense, market-capitalism is the basis for democratic institutions and process that it engenders favorable conditions for developing and maintaining democratic political institutions. Specifically, the elements in market capitalism including

privately owned enterprises and entities, their goals by self-interested incentives, independent but competing actors, and countless economic decisions are favorable to democracy (Dahl, 1991). They reduce social and political conflicts through providing more resources and alternatives. However, there is always a tension between these two. It is clearly demonstrated by Lindblom (1977) that modern capitalism, with the dominance of large corporations, produces a defective form of democracy. As he put it,

We therefore come back to the corporation. It is possible that the rise of the corporation has offset or more than offset the decline of class as an instrument of indoctrination.... That it creates a new core of wealth and power for a newly constructed upper class, as well as an overpowering loud voice, is also reasonably clear. The executive of the large corporation is, on many counts, the contemporary counterpart to the landed gentry of an earlier era, his voice amplified by the technology of mass communication.... the major institutional barrier to fuller democracy may therefore be the autonomy of the private corporation (Lindblom, 1977, p. 356).

Some argue that this statement is an essentially pessimistic conclusion on the contemporary political-economic society (Almond, 1991). However, the fact is modern society has seen a rise of a market-oriented democracy. More recent scholars are more critical of the driving force of the market in policy-making, such as Colin Leys and Colin Crouch. Both of them identify the greater influence of financial market forces on the policy, especially from those global and giant business enterprises (Leys, 2001; Crouch, 2011). A conflict has been identified, between capitalism and politics, between the market and the state. Leys (2001) suggests that governments' policy-making, both macro-economic and micro-economic, is constrained by the market. In particular, capital accumulation, which created inequalities and social problems, such as regional differentiation and migration, etc., has asserted a long-term and profound influence on the state and its politics.

Moreover, the political power of global and giant corporations on government and legislature has been noticed. It is demonstrated by Hertz (2002) that under globalization, multinational corporations have become as big as many nation states, evidenced by the statistics that the annual values of sales of each of the six largest

transnational corporations are exceeded by the GDPs of only 21 nation states. He suggests that corporations have increasingly taking over the government, making decisions and pushing forward political agendas. More explicitly, Crouch (2011) highlights the dominance of giant corporations in the society when they become “major insider participants” in the policy-making process. Significantly, he considers those giant corporations as “a third force” that is organized around market and the state.

The confrontation between the market and the state that seems to dominate political conflict in many societies conceals the existence of this third force, which is more potent than either and transforms the workings of both (Crouch, 2011, p. viii).

The unfavorable condition brought by economic development on politics in the western democracies has been increasingly emphasized. However, in the context of China, the condition is different, yet still with some resemblance. It is true that economic backwardness, with lower level of education and deeply rooted imperial logic and tradition, high inflation, minimal degree of openness, has handicapped democratization in historical China. This is demonstrated by the main democratic experiments that failed with the lower level of wealth, such as 1912’s interruption of the constitutional system and restoration of the empire, and the nationalist government’s failure to exercise constitutional power in 1947. Entering into a new era, China experienced a profound change in its political system, in the face of a dramatic economic growth. All of these obviously reveal a link between economic development and democracy.

However, as identified early in Chapter 2, although the hierarchical political system has been reshaped in response to the market forces by economic transition, the political structure of communist totalitarianism in Mao’s era remains essentially unchanged and the party-state still defines the parameters of public spaces. The processes of “constructing a harmonious society”, “building socialist market economy”, and searching for “democracy” do not work in an entirely smooth and uninterrupted manner. The progressive expansion of market relations has resulted to multifaceted conflicts, which is a significant attribute that the Chinese government embarked on major political and social reforms (see Chapter 2). Moreover, in the age

of globalization and modernization, large business enterprises have become more significant in shaping local economy and democracy.

Socio-economic development and its attributed problems

China's reform is a multifaceted process whose key elements include greater latitude for market mobility, modernization and globalization. According to Perry and Selden (2005), diverse patterns of conflict and resistance are directly attributable to the reforms. Thus, corruption, enlarged gap between social segments, wider social unrest created by China's rapid economic boom and capitalist development, are what lies behind the push for democratic reform.

First, corruption by government officials is an important issue in both traditional and modern China. According to Lu (2000, p. 8), the term corruption refers to "behavior which deviates from the normal duties of a public role because of private-regarding pecuniary or status gains; or violates rules against the exercise of certain types of private-regarding influence". This describes the cause of corruption which relates to the structural and institutional factors. In the Chinese context, the definition of corruption is often economic oriented. According to Lu (2000), corruption in China is defined as an economic crime which is often committed by public officials. In particular, corruption is significant at the local level. In 2011, about RMB 7.8 billion is involved in official corruption. Since the state has withdrawn from direct control of large areas of the economy, local authorities have been given much more power and privilege.

Secondly, the gap separating rich and poor, both between and within regions, has grown apace under the reforms. One of the problems that have occurred under the reforms is the widened gap in income between urban and rural areas. In 1984, as reported, the rural-urban income ratio was 1 to 1.85; however, in 2012, the ratio was reached 1 to 3.1 (Wen, et al., 2013). Average annual income for peasants was 792 GBP as compared with an average annual urban income of 2,456 GBP in 2012. The reforms are most significant in agricultural decollectivization and the expanding scope of the market. In terms of agricultural decollectivization, first, farmers are granted land use rights and regained control of their labor power. Meanwhile, the

state loosened control and restrictions on markets and production, villagers thus were provided new opportunities in increasing their income (Solinger, 1999).

Second, land ownership continued to reside in the village, and collectives continued in managing and directing rural industry. Alongside the reforms in rural areas, urban areas also experienced far-reaching economic and social transformation, especially in the dimensions of labor force. Although the transition and development of the Chinese economy have been carried out continuously, in both rural and urban reforms, the progress was not smooth and confronted problems, such as social inequalities and tensions. For example, there is a large gap between the Eastern Region and the Central and Western Regions. Regarding the level of urbanization, for example, industries are much more developed in the Eastern Region, where the gross output values of industry per capita are double or even triple those in other regions (Zhu, 1999).

As identified before (see Chapter 2), explosion and popularity of the internet and other news media is significant in this age. Moreover, the Chinese government has placed many efforts in reducing or avoiding the risks of instability in society. However, the rapid distribution of information through the internet and media cannot be totally controlled. Those stories which immediately spread to the internet and were widely reported by media outlets in a very short time across the country, would cause a national sensation. It was commonly seen that tens of thousands of people posted messages on the internet to express outrage or to tell their own stories of unfairness and abuse. These messages led to widespread social conflict and dispute. Admittedly, we must recognize the increasing importance of the internet in society, bridging the gap between government and citizens, and working between market and democracy. As will be discussed later, the internet is increasingly becoming the most important channel for the public to participate in some government programs. Thus, this study also expects to adapt the concept of authoritarian deliberation into broader use, not restricted to face-to-face setting focused by He (1996a).

Moreover, as will be discussed in details in Chapter 7, the introduction of market forces and emerging land market led to the creation of giant profit-oriented real estate companies. In particular, local authorities and these giant corporations become interdependent, as property development becomes a main contributor of taxes and

profits for local governments to finance local development, while these companies rely on the resources provided by local authorities, such as land acquisition, tax and rent, for future preservation, expansion and protection of their business. Negotiation between local authorities and developers becomes a major way in which they manage their interactions. In addition, a huge gap between coastal and remote regions, growing income disparities, high levels of surplus labour and unemployment, increased population mobility, and rapid distribution of information are evident in contemporary China. All of these threaten the stability and order of society and the economy, which has led to the challenge of the full realization of democracy.

In this context, the concept of governance, concerning how government copes with different segments in the society, is the focus of this study. Moreover, governance is also concerned with addressing the relationship between economic development and democracy in China. In the next section, governance theories are investigated and the theory of governance as a network (Bevir and Rhodes, 2003) is suggested and justified to be applied in this research.

4.4 Governance in China

4.4.1 Governance theories: different approaches

In the literature, there are different approaches in defining governance. The concept is used in various fields, such as politics, economics and organizational sciences. During the 1980s, political scientists referred to “governance” as a concept broader than government. In a wider sense, governance is about setting rules and institutions (Donahue, 2002; Kjaer, 2004; Kooiman, 1999). For example, Kjaer (2004) sees governance as “the setting of rules, the application of rules, and the enforcement of rules” (p. 10). More specifically, governance is conceived as measures or “systems of rule at all levels of human activity” to pursue goals through the exercise of control (Rosenau, 1995, p. 13). Similarly, Hyden (1999) suggests that governance is about setting the formal and informal political rules for the exercise of power and about dealing with conflicts. Drawing from the mostly used “steering” meaning of governance, Kooiman (1999) regards governance as “interactive arrangements in which public as well as private actors participate, aiming to solve societal problems, or creating societal opportunities, and attending to the institutions within which these

governing activities take place (p. 70). These definitions, to some extent, all focus on the setting of rules for the exercise of power or control.

Despite the similarity, the definitions are used in different context. For example, Rosenau (1995) talks about governance in the face of globalization and attributed political problems, such as trade regulation and conflict resolution; whilst for Hyden (1999), the term is placed in the field of comparative politics. In the field of public administration and policy, the use of governance stresses the role of networks in the pursuit of goals, which is introduced by public sector reforms since the 1980s. In this context, Kooiman (1993), Rhodes (1997a) and Kickert, Klijn, and Koppenjan (1997) refer to governance as networks. In particular, Rhodes (1997a) suggests six uses of the concept of governance in public administration: as minimal state, as corporate governance, as the new public management, as “good governance”, as a socio-cybernetic system, and as self-organizing networks. The main modes of governance are markets, hierarchies and networks according to Rhodes (1997). These six uses of governance fall into two main categories, one is the administrative and political use which is distinguished from government; the other emphasizes the actors, their interdependency and interactions in public and private sectors.

Firstly, the use of governance stresses market and hierarchy, which concerns public intervention and direction. It is closely associated with government reform, as Bevir and Rhodes (2003) argue, “the new public management”. It leads to the transformation of the public sector with “less government” but “more governance” (Osborne & Gaebler, 1992). As they argue,

Our fundamental problem is that we have the wrong kind of government. We do not need more government or less government, we need better government. To be more precise, we need better governance. Governance is the process by which we collectively solve our problems and meet our society’s needs (Osborne & Gaebler, 1992, p. 23-4).

In this context, Osborne (2010) later argues for a concept of “new public governance”. This form of governance focuses on the inter-organizational relationships and the effectiveness and outcomes of service through governing processes. As summarized by Rhodes, “new public management”, as well as

“corporate governance” and “good governance” echo the principle of accountability and responsibility of government. It is concerned with “openness or the disclosure of information; integrity or straightforward dealing and completeness; and accountability or holding individuals responsible for their actions by a clear allocation of responsibilities and clearly defined roles” (Rhodes, 1997, p. 48). Moreover, the systematic, political and administrative use of governance by Leftwich (1993) encourages markets and decentralizes administration to achieve efficiency in the public services. Hence, this category of governance use, in the sense of government reforms, advocates liberal democracy.

In the second definition, governance refers to networks. It describes governance as a form of network management and government is to manage complex networks. The network approach or model, by Klijn (1997), Kickert and Koppenjan (1997), and Sørensen and Torfing (2007), and Bevir & Rhodes (2003), considers governance to take place in networks consisting of various actors, including individuals and organizations in the private, semi-public and public sectors. Networks thus have seen increasing prominence in governing structures, with regard to the various agencies that deliver services and encourage public-private partnerships (Rhodes, 1997). In particular, at the local level, where most service delivery takes place, there is a rising importance of networks in policy implementation. Benyon and Edwards (1999) describe a transformation of local governments to local governance, which involves sets of organizations. They documented the focus, orientation, and techniques of local governance, which highlight the multi-actor interventions by public-private partnerships and flexible deployment of market and networking mechanisms in policy implementation. Moreover, as observed by Reid (1999), government policy is more oriented towards multi-lateral partnerships. Thus, this study, which focuses on local governance in China, adopts this network approach of governance.

Previous studies have widely used the concept of “good governance” in discussing state-society relations in China. Themes around institution-building, such as capacity building and legal reforms (Fu, 2008; Ho, 2001); enhancing party legitimacy through decentralization of power to lower levels and co-optation of elite groups (Sheng, 2009; Lin, 2012; Xie, 2010); improving government efficiencies such as promoting e-government and internet office (Chen, 2006; Ma, 2005), are mainly focused.

However, little concern has been given to actors and their interactions in the government activities. The approach of governance as networks analyzes policy processes in a complexity of interactions between various actors and a diversity of goals and strategies. Moreover, it emphasized the autonomy and interdependency of the actors, as well as their different and conflicting interests.

Admittedly, there are several critiques of the policy network approach to governance for neglecting the role of power, and lacking clear evaluation criteria. In response to these critics, Klijn and Koppenjan (2000) provide concise and strong explanations that justify the use of a network approach to governance. In particular, they emphasize the issue of cooperation in the policy network approach to propose the evaluation of policy processes and explain the power differences between actors through looking into the resources and rules. The network approach of governance is served as a theoretical framework that focuses on the actors and their interactions in the policy process. In the next section, the use of theoretical framework of governance as networks by Bevir and Rhodes's (2003) and their "decentering approach" are investigated and justified.

4.4.2 Governance as networks

An exploration of the concept of governance in networks emphasizes the management activities of every actor at engaging interactions and uniting goals and approaches. The term "network" is used to describe the various interdependent actors involved in service delivery provided by the permutation of government, scales of government, NGOs, private organizations and citizens (Rhodes, 1992a). Following this, he identifies and defines the concept of "policy network", as "a cluster or complex of organizations connected to one another by resource dependencies" (Rhodes, 1997, p. 37). The use of policy network recognizes this interdependency of actors in public policy making. Interdependency is developed based on the resource dependencies of actors and resources exchange in their interactions. It is an essential proposition of policy networks. As argued by Rhodes (1997) and Kickert, Klijn and Koppenjan (1997), any actor in a network is dependent upon other actors for resources to attain its goals.

Accordingly, the approach of governance as a network concentrates on actors and

their interactions. Within the group where governance is considered a network, there is diffusion in its definition and the strategies that political actors should adopt in modern complex systems, such as the Dutch school and the British system. The Dutch school sees governance largely as network management. Governance is conceived as “directed influence of social processes”, which is about managing networks of actors through “coordinating strategies of actors with different goals and preferences with regard to a certain problem or policy measure within an existing network of inter-organizational relations” (Klijn and Koppenjan, 1997, p.10). They emphasize the institutional framework in this network form of governance. Specifically, Kickert (1993) explores this use of governance as networks that are autonomous and self-organizing. He argues that government is not the only force that influences the policy making in the society. Other social institutions, being autonomous and self-governing, are other actors in the network.

Similarly, Sørensen and Torfing, (2007) also stress the voluntary participation and mutually dependencies of actors, their interactions through negotiations, and lack of hierarchical control in sustaining the network. The management approach on governance focuses on institutional structures which limit participation in policy-making, define the roles of actors, and shape their behavior through setting the rules and exercising power (Marsh & Rhodes, 1992a). For example, Kickert and Koppenjan (1997) relate governance to distribution of power, organizational features, and inter-organizational relations in analyzing public policy process. In this light, this school of theorists promotes privatization, deregulation and decentralization in policy networks for improving and sustaining interactions between the various actors.

However, the British literature on network governance is more sociological and focuses on organizing the structure of hierarchies, markets and networks. Rhodes (1992) sees governance as a broader term, one in which the system of local government was transformed into a system of local governance “involving complex sets of organizations drawn from the public and private sectors”. He describes governance as “networks”, which is a third way of organizing and structuring, as markets and bureaucratic hierarchy. Networks are a means for coordinating, allocating resources and public services. Incorporating these three elements, Rhodes

(1997, p. 15) thus defines governance as “self-organizing, inter-organizational networks”. These networks are characterized by interdependence between organizations, their continuing interactions based on trust, diplomacy and reciprocity, and a significant degree of autonomy from the state. The British school definition refers to governance not only in terms of managing the networks, but governing with, by and through the networks. It concentrates on how government enables networks and seeks out new forms of cooperation.

Bevir and Rhodes (2003) take an interpretive approach to unravel network governance, unlike others who highlight institutional structures in discussing the policy network. . The broader notion of governance highlights the informal authority of a network that “constitutes, supplements and supplants the formal authority of the state” (Bevir & Rhodes, 2003, p. 9). Unlike hierarchies and markets, trust, shared values and norms are essential for network co-ordination (Powell, 1991). When analyzing policy communities as a special type of network, Rhodes (1988) paid much attention to the value systems in a particular community. In his account, changes in the government patterns or forms arose out of competing webs of belief based on different traditions. In particular, in *Interpreting British Governance*, Bevir and Rhodes (2003) spelled out their version of an interpretive approach to networked governance, which was characterized as a “distinctive interpretive theory” that centered on three concepts –“tradition”, “decentring”, and “dilemma”, rather than a realist notion of “institution” common in traditional political science (p. 9).

“Decentring” refers to an approach for understanding the content and nature of a tradition. This approach in interpreting governance treats governance as “a complex set of institutions and institutional linkages defined by their social role or function” (Bevir & Rhodes, 2003, p. 62). To approach differentiation, it is to decentre institutions, networks and governance, investigating the diverse narratives, traditions, dilemmas and their informing actions of individuals.

A decentred approach to institutions changes our approach to governance in two more ways. For a start, a decentred approach encourages us to examine the ways in which our social life, institutions and policies are centered, sustained and modified by individuals. Institutions do not fix the beliefs that spur individual actions. They arise as individuals adapt traditions in response

to dilemmas. [...] We have to explore both how traditions prompt them to adopt certain meanings and how dilemmas prompt them to modify these traditions. When we decentre governance in this way, the idea that it arises from given inputs or pressures becomes difficult to sustain. (Bevir & Rhodes, 2003, p. 64)

Thus, in this sense, dilemmas and traditions are highlighted in the study of governance. Relevant actors construct their understanding of dilemmas and thus adopt policies taking traditions into account. Bevir and Rhodes (2003) specifically put emphasis on discussing social contexts in the view of agency, as traditions. They identify “tradition” as a group of ideas shared by individuals and passed from generation to generation, It is not a fixed entity, but a contingent product of the way in which “people develop specific beliefs, preferences and actions” and “produce through their own actions as agents” (Bevir & Rhodes, 2003, p. 34-35). In interpretive analysis, they see tradition is explanatory that it shows how individuals inherited beliefs and habits from communities, and how these beliefs and habits make up the tradition are linked, historical or temporal. The links thus explains how and why the beliefs and practices persisted through time.

“Dilemmas”, according to Bevir and Rhodes (2003), can be an external pressure or a new idea that stands in opposition to existing beliefs. They argue that the change of individuals’ beliefs and actions was linked to local reasons that make sense to them. Changes thus are responses to some specific “dilemmas”. Similarly, Geuss (2008) also defended that given that the interactions between human and institutional contexts change over time, the study of politics must be historically located that reflect the changes or dilemmas, as stated here. In line with this, Raymond Geuss stated that politics is not simply concerned about “values”, “beliefs” or any “ideal” theory in the view of realist political philosophy. He argues that politics in the first instance must start from “the way the social, economic, political, etc., institutions actually operate in some society at some given time and what really does move human beings to act in given circumstances” (Geuss, 2008, p. 9). That is, politics is more about actions, rather than mere beliefs or values. Thus, the decentredness, which significantly links the traditions, beliefs and practices or institutions, encourages us to look into differences in meaning by various actors in networks.

To explore the meaning in governance, the decentring approach treats institutions, bureaucracy, markets and networks as “meaningful practices” (Bevir & Rhodes, 2003, p.67). It focuses on the individuals’ responses to dilemmas to explain the changes and developments in governance, networks that tell stories based on multiple beliefs and preferences. Wagenaar (2011) specifically explained the tradition changes due to the struggle with dilemmas by actors. He suggested that the decentred approach of interpreting political phenomena enabled us to build “a multifaceted picture” of individuals’ understanding and actions, as well as to explain the meaning of the actions through ethnographic studies of individuals’ actions, historical and comparative analysis. Although there is a number of problems about this approach that they might lead to a certain partiality in the study (Wagenaar, 2011), it offers us a new and distinctive way to explain governing practices through beliefs and actions of individuals in response to traditions and dilemmas.

In this study, I suggest that the framework of “a decentred approach” to governance as networks by Bevir and Rhodes (2003) can be used as a key theoretical approach to improve the understanding of Chinese governance. This is designed to unpack Chinese local governance through first identifying the changes, then the traditions and dilemmas. As discussed earlier in Chapter Two, China is experiencing a profound change in its ideological, political, legal, social and economic system. This opening up of society has brought a larger number of autonomous actors upon the scene, as I will explain later. However, tradition still plays an important part in everyday lives and continues to shape our behaviors. Given that Bevir and Rhodes brought a philosophical and sophisticated interpretive approach which is in tune with the pluralist character of contemporary government (Wagenaar, 2011), their decentring interpretation of governance is to be conducted in this research. It is to understand changes and transformations in Chinese local governance, and to encapsulate the shift in Chinese government from the strong executive to governance through networks.

In this study, I argue that contemporary Chinese local governance is about dealing with networks of various actors. It is evident that within the last two decades, government reports and Chinese scholars are centered on the notion of “the transformation in government function” (*zhengfu zhineng zhuanbian*). In the 1990s,

the concept of “governance” has emerged which indicated a shift from a notion of “government” functioning as “planning” and “administration” to one that focuses on “management” (Yu, 2002). It is only since 2000 that the term “governance” has come into widespread use and was more adequately clarified in scholarly and government writings to describe the state-society relationship. In particular, the western phrase “good governance”, which focuses on the internal failure of the state, has been applied in a different context in China (Chou, 2007; Ferris Jr. & Zhang, 2005). In particular, Burns (2004) adopted six core elements of “good governance”- accountability, participation, predictability, transparency, efficiency and effectiveness to examine the civil service reform in China.

However, these elements of “good governance” cannot adequately explain the current practices of “governance” in China. Under reforms, especially with the decentralization of economic power and the emergence of social organizations and private enterprises, state-society relationship has experienced a series of changes. As identified before (see Chapter 2), economic reforms in China have led to a further opening up of the market and changes in its relations with the state, with the concurrent decline of state control and increase in the use of market forces. Moreover, the political and social reforms have resulted in the emergence of new organizations and new trends in thoughts, and increased social mobility. It is also addressed by Perry and Selden (2003), that as a result of these reforms, China has witnessed market reform and economic modernization, leading to more complexity with a larger variety of groups and interests in the society.

As identified in Chapter 2, China has seen the most significant changes in its social and economic systems. The party has recognized the significance of engaging modernizing sectors to legitimize their rule and to achieve economic development. In particular, in pursuit of economic modernization, the party attempted to attract more sources of support and partnership. Through encouraging them to apply for party membership, the state has seen a growing number of intellectuals, private entrepreneurs and other social sectors participating in governmental activities. It is evident that the party continues to grow from almost 40 million in 1982 to almost 75 million members in 2007 (Gries & Rosen, 2010). Specifically, the statistics of party membership suggests that the proportion of higher learning acumen, especially with

education and professional experiences, rose drastically in these decades from 1970.

Apart from the cooptation of new elites into the party, new institutions that link state and society have been created. With the relaxation of political control in the reform period, especially in the late 1980s, independent organizations have proliferated although still under the party-state control (Perry and Selden, 2006). The period of the 1990s is characterized by the emergence of a new stratum of organizations and by a proliferation of institutional forms. According to Howell (2004), these are concerned with the interests of marginalized groups in society and the circumvention of onerous state restrictions on association. Thus, the sphere of more independent association in China is no longer the abode of those with much to gain from the reform process, such as intellectuals, professionals, and businesspeople, but also of interests that are marginalized in the process of reform.

Therefore, a new relation between the state and the society, being “small government, big society”, emerged (Ma, 2006). It is featured by the downsizing of government administrative apparatus and the growth of the non-governmental organizations (NGOs) sector. In this sense, governance as networks by Bevir and Rhodes (2003) can be used to explain the changes in the government forms and explore how the Chinese government deals with networks of actors in the society.

Since the early 1980s, the government initiated major institutional reforms aiming to downsize the administration. For example, the latest and largest downsizing in 1998 has led to two million government staff members leaving their positions, following the round of administrative reforms in 1991-1993, when the ministries and bureaus within the State Council were reduced from over 100 to 59 (Yang, 2008). Accordingly, to decentralize the decision-making, the party-state launched a program of “community building”, as discussed earlier. Meanwhile, a large number of social organizations have flourished in the last several decades with the introduction of market reforms (Howell, 2004). The last decade has witnessed a gradual shift in the balance of power between state and society, which has provided greater opportunities for social forces to exert influence over party-state institutions, for example, under the influence of technological development and the use of internet. Thus, the development of social organizations, or non-governmental organizations (NGOs), has been a crucial step in the emergence of a new state-society relationship (Ma,

2006).

Although a number of scholars argue that the civil society in China has remained largely disorganized and underdeveloped (Weatherley, 2006), given that the party-state dominance has remained in the social organizations of political and social significance, the development of NGOs indeed facilitates the formation of a civil society “of Chinese characteristics” (Ma, 2006). Thus, it is too simple to consider the western concept of “civil society” without reference to specific historical and cultural context in China. The western concept of civil society is considered to “criticize, harry and expose” the abuses of power and thus to increase the changes for democracy (Lindblom, 1977; Crouch, 2011). It denotes a public sphere distinguished from the state, the market and large corporations. However, a special term, “state-led civil society”, is coined by Frolic (1997, p. 56) to describe the Chinese civil society. It refers to the creation of a large number of social organizations and groups by the state as support mechanisms, which aims to extend the reach of the state into the changing social and economic community. As Frolic (1997, p. 56) put it:

This is state-led civil society. It is created by the state, principally to help it to govern, but also to co-opt and socialize potentially politically active elements in the population. ... State-led civil society is not only about helping the state to organize economy and society; it is also about the state acting as a powerful ally for individuals separating from society.

Therefore, Chinese civil society distinguishes from the western counterpart which contends with the state. The notion of a “constructive interaction” (*liangxing hudong*) between the state and civil society is introduced by Deng and Jing (1992). As suggested by Ma (2005, p. 287), Chinese civil society aims to “harmonize the relations between society and the government, providing autonomy to assist government” rather than opposing the state power. This definition articulates a special state-society relationship in China: the state recognizes the autonomy of civil society and provides legal protection and space for it, while it interferes with and regulates it when necessary. It can be related back to the application of the concept “authoritarian deliberation” in China’s context earlier in this chapter.

Therefore, in the context of authoritarian deliberation in China, based on the theoretical framework of governance as networks, this study investigates how the local government governs the network of actors and how democracy survives under the pressure of the Party and large corporations in China.

4.5 Summary

This chapter has set out the theoretical basis for this study. It started initially by discussing the concept of authoritarian deliberation. It drew attention to the employment of deliberative practices under authoritarian rule. Through examining the Confucian traditions and deliberative institutions in China, this study adopted this concept to explain the democratization “of Chinese characteristics”, which highlights “the leadership of the party” in any deliberative programs. Moreover, economic boom and social reforms in recent years lends both a grabbing and a helping hand for the party-state towards political democracy. Little research, however, has been done to explain the coexistence of political democracy and rapid economic growth in China. Therefore, before considering this, it presents an overview of existing literature concerning the relationship between market capitalism and democracy in the western scope.

Recent studies have highlighted the huge power of the market and large corporations in policy-making, a matter that is very relevant in the context of China. As such, in this chapter I investigated different approaches of governance and identified how China has seen a broader and more complex public sphere that includes a variety of groups with varying interests in society. I discussed the network approach of governance as suggested by Bevir and Rhodes (2003) and justified its use in this study. Using this theoretical framework, this chapter outlined an interpretive policy analysis – a decentring approach to look into Chinese local governance.

The next chapter outlines the methodological issues in this study and emphasizes why the use of a grounded theory approach has been applied to analyse the data. It will show how this approach is useful in terms of deriving conceptual ideas from the empirical data. Two case studies are used to draw attention to the dilemma of change in Chinese local governance. As such, I will examine the relationship between economic development and policy-making through the comparison of two case

studies; an urban one and a rural one.

CHAPTER FIVE

METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH METHODS

5.1 Introduction

The last chapter introduced the theoretical framework of networked governance in China's context. This chapter draws together these themes into a set of research questions and further outlines the research methodology. The chapter is organized into five sections, which start with the research aims, objectives and research questions. This is then followed by a rationale for adopting a case study approach as the research strategy and grounded theory as the inductive research approach. Significantly, Section 5.4 introduces the selection of cases and provides an overview of the case study sites. The next two sections review data collection and analysis approaches for both cases that are designed to answer the research questions.

5.2 Research questions

This research examines the changes, traditions, and dilemmas in Chinese local governance in response to conflict in heritage conservation. Using a grounded theory method through comparing an urban and a rural case, the research aims are:

- To explore the dilemmas of change in Chinese local governance through the lens of heritage conservation;
- To investigate how key actors resolve the conflict in society and how they respond to the dislocations in the lifeworld by interacting with others.

To achieve the aims, the process and practices of heritage conservation in two specific sites are examined to reach four objectives:

- To map changes and transformation in Chinese local governance;
- To identify traditions, dilemmas and changing narratives and practices in Chinese local governance;
- To identify similarities and differences in Chinese urban and rural governance;
- To explore interpretations of governance from different actors in heritage conservation.

Drawing from the analytical framework of the “decentred” approach of networked governance (Bevir & Rhodes, 2003) identified in the last chapter, the research questions are listed as follows:

1. What are the changes and transformations in Chinese governance in the last three decades?

This question examines changes in Chinese society from a broader perspective. It provides the larger political and social context for a later discussion of local governance. It focuses on the ideological, political, legal and socio-economic changes since the post-Mao era, which led to re-established traditions and changing governing approaches in dealing with different actors in heritage conservation. Specifically, changes under urban and rural reforms are examined and compared in relation to interactions between actors.

2. What traditions can we distinguish in governance at the local level in China, what dilemmas and dislocations do actors perceive and how do they react to these?

These question sets out to investigate the traditions in Chinese governance from imperial to communist times. It focuses on the political and social traditions, which are rooted in people’s lives and how they deeply influence their actions and interactions with others. To explore how these traditions were re-established and re-adapted in society, changes and trends in these traditions are identified, leading to discussions on the dilemmas conceived by different social actors and their responses.

3. What are the tactics or strategies employed by the local government in dealing with different actors in changing traditions?

In response to the changes identified previously, local governments have employed and acted upon different narratives and tactics. This study examines these tactics, identifying them as governing approaches in urban and rural areas.

4. How do different actors interpret the governance in heritage conservation in transitional process?

This question investigates the local governance in heritage conservation from the different perspective of the actors involved. It focuses on the actors and their interpretations of government narratives and governing approaches. The research

draws on the interpretive analysis approach suggested by Bevir and Rhodes (2006), which aims to “decentre” governance. It is to understand changes and transformations in Chinese governance, and to encapsulate the shift in Chinese government from the strong executive to governance through networks.

5.3 Methodological Approach

5.3.1 Selection of Research Strategy

According to Yin (1994, p. 23), there are three conditions upon which the research strategy is selected: “the type of research question posed”, “the extent of control an investigator has over actual behavioural events”, and “the degree of focus on contemporary as opposed to historical events”. Among these research strategies, the case study deals with the “how” and “why” questions being asked about a contemporary set of events over which the researcher has little control. Based on my research aims and questions and to make an in-depth analysis of the interactions of actors in heritage conservation possible, I adopt a case study strategy.

Significantly, Yin (1994) argues that the case study is able to deal with a full variety of evidence, including documents, interviews, observations, and so on. In this study, the case study is used to examine conflict resolution and decision-making process in heritage conservation in order to explore some conceptual ideas about Chinese local governance, how do they cope with an assembly of social actors. As will be presented later, grounded theory method is used in this study, upon which the case study analysis is used to answer research questions and develop some new ideas relating to network governance at the local level in China through an interpretive policy analysis suggested by Bevir and Rhodes (2003).

5.3.2 Interpretive policy analysis

According to Wagenaar (2011, p. 11), interpretivism in social sciences focuses on “the meaning of actions and institutions, based on precise observation and registration of data”. It provides a useful framework for understanding the meaningful actions embedded in the research. Bevir and Rhodes (2010) argue that the state is a meaningful activity that consists of contingent practices that reflect the intentionality and the beliefs of the actors. In this sense, the interpretation of

meanings in policy and its respondent activities of diverse actors are emphasized. Interpretivism in social sciences has a special role in revealing some features of social life, for example, the ideology that political actors adopt to legitimate their actions and cover up their real motivations (Bevir & Rhodes, 2003), speech acts of shared linguistic conventions (Skinner, 1974), and the concepts that underpin social practices (Koselleck, 1998; Doupnik & Richter, 1995).

As identified in the last chapter, Bevir's and Rhodes's (2003) "distinctive interpretive approach", designed to decentre governance, is used in this study. To explore meaning in governance, Bevir and Rhodes (2003, p. 67) use the "decentring" approach, a method that treats institutions, bureaucracy, markets and networks as "meaningful practices". These meaningful practices are produced, constantly made afresh and then interpreted through contingent beliefs and interactions of the various participants. As such this approach focuses on individuals' responses to dilemmas to explain changes and developments in governance networks and how these tell stories based on multiple beliefs and preferences.

Admittedly, there has been some criticism in using the "decentring" approach, for example, "the problem of practices", suggested by Wagenaar (2011). He argues that, without sufficiently considering the play of agencies in everyday practices of governance, there is a disconnection between the theoretical and the practical world. However, despite this, the approach offers a new and distinctive way to explain governing practices through the beliefs and actions of individuals in analysing their responses to traditions and dilemmas. In this study, Chinese government tactics, governance traditions and a comparative study of two cases in heritage conservation are to be investigated. In particular, the specific historical and socio-cultural context, including changes in governance thoughts, reforms, rules and ideologies are presented.

5.3.3 Grounded theory as methodological and analytical approach

In this section, I will justify why I use grounded theory as the methodological and analytical approach in this study. This choice reflects two factors: (1) an attempt to fill the gap in the literature and real-world practices using an inductive research

approach, and (2) the desire to build a connection between theories and the empirical world through developing explanatory concepts rather than descriptions.

As identified in the last chapter, previous studies have widely used the concept of “good governance” in discussing state-society relations in China. Little concern has been given to actors and their interactions in the government activities, their values and responses in the face of profound changes, especially from individuals. Improvement in the ways in which we conceptualize and then observe governing actions is crucial to further the development of governance theory. Moreover, specifically, facing the conflict and dilemmas in governance which involves a network of actors, there is little research on the approaches and behaviours from the perspectives of local governance in heritage conservation. Moreover, the role of local government in heritage conservation becomes significant facing the rapid economic development in China (Diamant, 2000). Each heritage site has its own characteristics, such as a management model and current conditions, as well as the political, social and economic context. Thus, an inductive research approach is adopted in this research.

A grounded theory approach is the most useful methodological approach here because, as Glaser and Strauss state (1967, p. 3), developing grounded or mid-level theory is a way of “arriving at theory situated to its supposed uses”. A more detailed definition is given below:

A grounded theory is one that is inductively derived from the study of the phenomenon it represents. That is, it is discovered, developed and provisionally verified through systematic data collection and analysis of data pertaining to that phenomenon. Therefore, data collection, analysis and theory stand in reciprocal relationship to one another. (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 23)

Therefore, a grounded theory is generated inductively from data. The inductive approach highlights the process of forwardness and backwardness between data collection, data analysis and literature or theory review. The process focuses on the support from evidence collected (such as documents, direct interview, and

observation) and insights or conceptual ideas derived from it. Therefore, grounded theory method is first used here as an inductive research method.

As I suggested in the last section, this research is to look into governance at the local level in China through an interpretive policy analysis. According to Wagenaar (2011, p. 26), to capture the meaning in action, there are varieties of interpretive approaches, which “address different questions, [they] construct meaning in different ways, [they] use different methods, [they] evoke different theoretical assumptions, [they] have different ethical and critical implications, and [they] conceive differently of the role of the analyst”. Following this, I will briefly review and compare other two approaches, commonly used in interpretive inquiry of policy research, and then, illustrate the application of grounded theory as the analytical approach in this study.

First, I begin with the exploration of discourse analysis. Discourse analysis is closely related to examining language, or more broadly, a structured symbolic system. According to Wagenaar (2010), discourse analysis considers meaning as language that the structural properties of the text are stressed. From this perspective, this structured symbolic order, residing in the use of language, produces the social reality. Taking little account of individual actors and their experiences, this approach explains the social phenomena, for example, social relations and power structure, through revealing the symbolic structures in texts. Different from discourse, narrative analysis begin with the experiences and stories told by individuals. It is a specific type of qualitative approach in which “narrative is understood as a spoken or written text giving an account of an event/action or series of events/actions, chronologically connected” (Czarniawska, 2004, p. 17). This approach focuses on individuals, which consists of collecting their stories, describing their experiences, and exploring the meaning of individual experiences chronically.

Grounded theory, involves a systematically theory-building process through constant comparative analysis, aims to explain process, action, or interaction on a topic. In particular, according to Creswell (2007), grounded theory helps the researcher best explain a process when a theory is not available. It explains how people are experiencing a phenomenon through taking full account of their views, actions and interactions. This is a key difference with other two qualitative methodologies I mentioned above. Grounded theory focuses on how individuals experience a process

and how it unfolds when asking the core phenomenon, causal conditions, solutions, consequences, and so on (ibid). From this perspective, since my research deals with actors and their interactions in heritage conservation, grounded theory is a good design to use. More specifically, the focus of this research project is on local governance and its interpretation from different actors from the window of heritage conservation, to understand what is at stake for these actors in the network: how do they express the interests, take actions, and experiment with relationships between each other, how they make sense of local governance in heritage conservation. Given the limited empirical research of governance as networks at the local level in the substantive area of heritage conservation in China, the study aims to identify governing practices, develop explanatory ideas rather than description, and relate findings to the literature.

5.4 Case selection and introduction

My research proposal is first to examine conflict resolution in heritage conservation. Its focus is the relationship between different actors in the process of conflict resolution. Since the starting point for any grounded theory study is to put aside one's professional concerns and to remain open to what is actually happening in the data, only the general topic – the actors, their conflict and conflict resolution is taken into account in this study, whilst the research questions are put aside in order to produce clear theory from the empirical data.

The first case study starts from the initial or open sampling, which is selected based on two considerations: the substantive area of interest and significantly, the access to data. In the research proposal, I have identified that the greatest challenge is to gain access to the higher level of Chinese government officers and other developers. I started from my hometown – Nanchang, which is the capital of Jiangxi province, located in the southeast of China. Once there, I identified potential case studies from the internet, magazines, and other social media. Moreover, in the selection of these cases, important issues to consider were the active role of local government and the observable participation of other actors. It materialised that one of my mother's teachers was working on a project in a historical village. In the light of these considerations, I chose Wang Shan Tu Ku (WSTK), located in the village of my

mother's teacher, a typical patio dwelling with local characteristics on its building type, structure and cultural connotation, as the first case.

Due to long time exposure as well as the lack of attention, WSTK was damaged to some extent. To protect and preserve the heritage site, in early 2003, the government in both municipal and county level made the decision to develop the project on the conservation and development in the area of WSTK. To accelerate the local economy, in 2012, the government in the county made a plan to attract an investment of 1 billion RMB (equals to approximately 100 million GBP) in the area. In line with the protection and preservation, the government actively promotes the cultural tourism in WSTK. Before the construction for the tourism in the area, removal and relocation of villagers was a big issue for both the local government and the developer. In response to this, the county government launched a project called "harmonious removal" under the principle of central government's "constructing a harmonious society" (see Chapter 4).

Before I began the fieldwork I spoke to the co-head of the conservation project through the personal network, and made an initial mapping of the conflict situation, as well as the actors and participants involved. At this point, I started by looking for the key informants and representatives of these actors in the case of WSTK, as recommended by the informant. The initial sample was put together through (1) mapping of the actors, their roles, and their interactions in the conservation of WSTK; (2) identifying the informants through network, contacts and other channels. In this case, the substantive populations include local government, the developer, specialists, villagers' committee and villagers.

In the process of coding and memo writing for the first case, I started to look for the second case to constant compare the situations and processes of conflict resolution in heritage conservation. Derived from the memo writing of the first case, a set of criteria was set out for selecting the potential case study:

- Unsolved conflict involved local government, specialists, developer, and ordinary people in the process of heritage conservation;
- Investigatory interactions between actors in the process of heritage conservation;

- Heritage site in urban areas;
- Accessibility of the case.

Considering all the issues above, the case of Ancient City Wall of Changsha (ACWC), as identified in the proposal, has come into my mind. In November 2011, a 120-meter ancient city wall was found in the construction site of Wanda Plaza and real-estate project in the urban area of Changsha. The ACWC can be dated back to the Southern Song dynasty, which has a history of more than 800 years. It is highly valued by the archaeological specialists and experts after discussion and investigation. How to conserve it in the construction became a hot debate in these months. On 27 February 2012, the Municipal Cultural Relics Bureau of Changsha held a conference to clarify the conservation plan, which was to conserve 20 meter of the city wall in the original place. The rest of the city wall was cut and relocated.

When searching for information and materials online it became evident that the local government does place great efforts into the conservation of ACWC. This involves different parties, including specialists and experts, property developers, the ordinary public, and the media. Compared to the case of WSTK, the time of decision-making was shorter and the outcome was disputed which caused a huge resistance, especially on the internet. Given there were a large number of online reports relevant to the case, I started the data collection through contacting the journalists. Through networking with journalists, I gained information from those important actors, the local government officials, the media and specialists.

5.5 Data collection

In order to investigate the roles and behaviours of different actors as well as their interactions in heritage conservation in the two cases, the methods of in-depth interviews, observations and text analysis on documents were used. Data collection in these two cases started in July 2012 and was conducted in three main phases, before, during and after the fieldwork.

5.5.1 Research methods

According to Charmaz (2006, p. 14), rich data “reveal participant’s views, feelings, intentions, and actions as well as the contexts and structures of their lives”. The data

should be detailed and full. Therefore, diverse kinds of data – fieldnotes, interviews, documents, observations, and records or reports are pursued based on the research problems. Given the research was primarily designed to explore the conflict resolution in heritage conservation which involves a multitude of stakeholders, different research methods, including qualitative interviews, participant observation and document analysis are used to explore the research questions for emerging grounded theory.

Qualitative Interviews

Qualitative interviews were conducted to understand the experiences and conceptions of people in the process of heritage conservation. More importantly, through talking to different people from different backgrounds, it is possible to explore those relationships and interactions that cannot be directly observed. As identified by Weiss (1995), the rationale for the use of qualitative interviews was to (1) develop detailed descriptions, (2) integrate multiple perspectives, (3) describe process, (4) develop holistic description, (5) learn how events are interpreted, (6) bridge inter-subjectivities, and (7) identify variables and frame hypotheses for quantitative research. Here in my study, there are mainly three aims that make the qualitative interview study the method of choice:

- Describing the process. According to Weiss (1995, p. 9), qualitative interviews “can elicit the processes antecedent to an outcome of interest”. The interview was centred by the question “what are the processes by which an event occurs?” Since my study was first designed to examine the processes of conflict resolution in the case, “how the conflict resolved?” “What are the consequences and outcomes?” qualitative interviewing was used.
- Integrating multiple perspectives. People often see or describe an event from different perspectives. It is noted in the research that an organization, development, process or event cannot be described in its totality; every respondent will have different observations to contribute (Weiss, 1995). In my study, the general concern, as presented in my research questions, were different actors, their conflicted interests and values, and relative power. Thus, qualitative interviewing, which is a way of exploring relationships

between different aspects of a situation (Arksey and Knight, 1999), served an important method in my study.

- Learning how events are interpreted. In the research, the interactions amongst different actors will be investigated. Qualitative interviews, which enable access to the perceptions and responses of participants and onlookers (Weiss, 1995) will be undertaken. For example; “How did the local residents interpret the actions and behaviours by government?” “How did they think about the causes and consequence?” “How did the government think about the conflict between developers and public?” These are questions to be examined in the fieldwork. .

A range of broad and open-ended questions is devised to conduct interviews. Since the grounded theory method suggests that the participant must lead the interview (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), the substantive content of the interview was broad, allowing the interviewee to lead the process. During the interviews, participants were free to explain things in their own words and encouraged to give descriptions on resolution activities of conflict, how the resolution activities were carried out and how conflict was resolved. The criteria of a successful resolution of conflict, its components and the influencing factors were raised by the participants. I also encouraged the participants to bring up their own ideas about conflict resolution in the field of heritage conservation. The interviews were all conducted and transcribed in Chinese. In two cases, 40 more interviews were conducted with generally five categories of actors, government, developers, specialists, the media and ordinary people.

Participant Observations

As stated by Silverman (2006), participant observation, in which the observer enters the group at an appropriate distance, enables the researcher to immerse him/herself in the milieu being observed in order to acquire a comprehensive understanding of the group or event. It is based on a description of the oral or written production that allows the researcher to relate a sequence of specific scenes to the context. Participant observations enabled me to understand the interactions among the different actors in daily life which cannot be obtained from interviews and

documents. It is specifically used in the activities attended by different actors, especially, the meetings and symposiums.

On December 2012, there was a seminar held by the county to discuss the conservation of WSTK. It was a seminar to reflect the progress of the conservation and redevelopment of the area, as well as the enforcement of the construction plans. As an assistant to the co-head of the project, I attended the seminar and observed the activities and participation of different actors. The participants included the officers of the local government, scholars and experts, news media. The secretary of CCP in the county, Head of the county, commissioners of Publicity Department and other officers in local government hosted the seminar, they invited the Director of Jiangxi Academy of Social Sciences, the Head of Municipal Tourism Bureau, professors of Jiangxi Normal University, the Head of Provincial Museum in Jiangxi, and the secondary director of Research Centre of Cultural Relics in Jiangxi. It was the fourth meeting on the conservation of WSTK. Furthermore, in addition there were also public hearings and symposiums.

During the observations, I recorded the participants' speak and observed the way the actors mediate with others. Notes were taken on the government officials' reactions and narratives, reactions and responses of specialists and representatives of local residents, as well as the developer. The participant observations on these activities directly provided me the picture about how local government dealt with the conflict between developer and local residents, how specialists participated in the process and how local residents responded to the decision.

Documents

The text or document analysis complements the interview and observational methods. It is crucial to note that these texts all provide useful information but equally, all have serious limitations. All the texts are situated in context, thus, exploring their purposes and objectives allows them to be placed into perspective and to seek more data from other sources (Silverman, 2006). When choosing documents, particular attention will be paid to four aspects (Scott, 1990, p. 6) - 'authenticity' to make sure unquestionable origin of the evidence; 'credibility' to draw attention to the accuracy and the producer of those documents;

‘representativeness’ to ascertain the typicality and untypically of the evidence; and the ‘meaningful’ documents with its evidence clear and understandable.

Documents in both cases were accessed primarily in three ways; firstly, through the online platform of an official government website, one that is accessible to the public. - notably, government working reports were posted on the website for surveillance and consultation from public; secondly, through the informants who were involved in the project of redevelopment and construction in both cases; thirdly and finally, through access to the master plan and other control detailed plans in the study areas that were collected from the Institute of City Planning and Design of Shanghai Tongji in WSTK, and from Commission of City Planning and Design in ACWC, who were the producers. These three channels were a useful combination that allowed access to essential documents which in turn complemented the interviews and observations. Moreover, this three pronged approach was crucial for conducting an in depth exploration of the interactions between the different actors.

5.5.2 Data collection in the case of Wang Shan Tu Ku

Before the fieldwork – texts and documents

The case of WSTK was first accessed and the data collected before the fieldwork was started. The materials on the internet, including the news report, blogs, editorials and still others, were collected in advance and thus a panoramic overall view of the whole picture was provided, which was useful for preparation of the next step. The paper documents, consisted of the government reports on WSTK including *Short-term Construction Plan of Xinjian (2011-2015)*, *Xinjian Master Plan (2011-2030)*, *Tourism Development Plan of Xinjian*, *Plan of Construction and Redevelopment of the Village of Tuku*, *Plan of Wang Shan Tu Ku as Tourists’ Attraction*, as well as the provincial official documents on placing WSTK as one of the 18 projects of *Construction of Economic and Cultural Circle of Lake Poyang*. The annual reports of the government in the county and township level were also collected in the government official website. Specifically, during the fieldwork, to deeply understand the interactions between the government and villagers, notes on meetings and activities by villagers’ committee were also collected and analysed.

During the fieldwork – Interviews, observations, additional documents

At this point, as identified earlier, I started by looking for the key informants and representatives of these stakeholders in the case of WSTK, as recommended by informants. The sampling size was a matter of concern at this stage. The number of participants in grounded theory research is determined by theoretical saturation since the data and analysis no longer yield new concepts or ideas. At this point, the most useful approach is to seek out diverse participants who would provide deeper insight into the emerging concepts. I conducted 19 interviews on key informants and observations on meetings, collecting 22 primary and secondary documents in the case of WSTK.

Data collection started through interviewing 19 key informants from local government, experts, and local residents. All the interviews were conducted in Chinese. I obtained the agreement of 10 interviewees to audio-tape, amongst which were local residents and experts. During this period, I attended one seminar and one hearing on discussing the conservation of WSTK held by local government. A number of additional documents, mainly government reports and research paper, were collected as well.

After the fieldwork – complementary interviews

Data collection in the case of WSTK continued even after I left the field. Additional and complementary interviews through mobile phone and *Skype* were conducted in the process of coding in order to seek new ideas and fill the gaps in the earlier data. According to Glaser and Strauss (1967), and many other grounded theory users (Charmaz, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 2008), data collection and analysis is conducted simultaneously and this can help researchers engage in developing categories.

The complementary interviews in case of WSTK, was initiated by the analytic step – coding, in which the lack of needed data was realized during the process. During the comparative study of two cases after I finished the fieldwork, I returned to the persons interviewed, local residents in WSTK and specialists through *Skype* to learn more and try to strengthen the analytic categories. Moreover, additional documents were collected to fill the gap.

5.5.3 Data collection in the case of Ancient City Walls in Changsha

The same as the case of WSTK, the methods of qualitative interviews, observations and text analysis on documents both paperwork and online were also used in this case study in order to investigate the efforts and experiences of different actors in the conflict resolution process.

Data collection before the fieldwork – documents and preparatory interviews

I was first introduced to this case through the internet at my proposal stage. The materials online provides me a sketch-up of the story. The news reports, editorials and comments in the online forums were collected beforehand. To have a closer look at the conflict and its resolution in current heritage conservation in China and to get better prepared, I conducted 3 preparatory interviews to the specialists in *National Research Centre of Historical Cities* when I took a short internship there. I was provided with their ideas and experiences in contemporary conflict resolution in heritage conservation in China. Through analysing these data, I also mapped the actors that involved in the conflict resolution process in ACWC and identified possible informants that had relative easier accessibility. After the preparation, I began the fieldwork.

Data collection during the fieldwork – interviews, observations and additional documents

In the case of ACWC, the actors consist of local government, developers, specialists, news media, online users, and the local community. Data collection in this phase started in December 2012 through the process of conducting 22 interviews, 2 observations on participatory activities, as well as collecting additional documents in the case of ACWC.

It is a huge challenge to gain access to government officials. I started by interviewing journalists, specialists and online users. There were hundreds of news reports and comments online, in which main news media, like *Sina*, *Soho*, and *Baidu*, had a special coverage on this case and these online materials were also collected as secondary data. Apart from this, reports in *Xiaoxiang Morning* and *Changsha Evening* were also investigated. The journalists and the specialists whom I

was recommended to were interviewed to gather deeper insights. During the fieldwork, there was a public hearing and a symposium with specialists on the evaluation of the construction process in ACWC. I was introduced by someone from the media and notes were taken on the attitudes and interactions of different actors during these activities.

Other significant actors I noticed were the online users on the weblogs and microblogs. They were accessed by emails and mobile phones after their consent in reply. Their words were also used as sources of data in this case study.

Data collection after the fieldwork – complementary documents and possible interviews

Further data was also collected once the fieldwork had been completed and the impetus for this tended to be wherever there was found to be a gap in the data already collected. This follow up data collection included gaining access to complementary documents and also possible interviews in the case of ACWC.

Based on above, data collection processes in both cases were chronologically presented. Significantly, the data analysis was conducted in the ongoing process of data collection. In the next section, data analysis, through coding, memo writing, comparing and sorting, are discussed.

5.6 Data analysis

According to Corbin and Strauss (2008, p. 47), analysis is a process of generating, developing and verifying concepts – a process that “builds over time and with the acquisition of data”. It was used to establish “analytic distinctions”. The purpose is to generate theory more systematically by using explicit coding and analytic procedures. Hence, the analytic tools of coding, memo writing, and theoretical sampling and sorting are discussed in this section.

In grounded theory method, it is argued that data analysis takes place during data collection, which promotes greater sensitivity to data and allows the researcher to redirect the interviews or observations (Charmaz, 2006). Thus, I began the data analysis after the first collection of documents. This helped me to identify relevant

concepts, follow through on subsequent questions, and listen and observe in more sensitive ways.

5.6.1 Coding

Coding, which is to derive and develop concepts from data, is the first analytic step in grounded theory research. According to Charmaz (2006), in the data analysis of grounded theory method, coding provides the data or materials for sorting and integration, and sorting and integration can also raise questions for further coding. It shapes the frame of the analysis.

After initial data collection, initial coding would take place. Grounded theory coding consists of two main phases, an initial and a focused coding phase. In the initial phase of grounded theory coding involves naming words, lines, or segment of data, which is followed by the second phase, which uses the most significant or frequent initial codes to sort and integrate large amounts of data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The process is to develop core conceptual categories in lots of data, which is the preparation for the theoretical integration in the subsequent analytic steps.

During the initial coding, I remained open minded whilst exploring what was happening in the data. This open approach allows for new ideas to emerge rather than them emanating from a constructed framework. Other important codes for coding, at least to me, suggested by Charmaz (2006), suggest that a researcher “stays close to the data” and “compares data with data”. Line-by-line coding was conducted consisting of interviews, observations and documents; this helped me stay focused on the early data and on later interviews before and during the fieldwork. In this stage, rough ideas on categories or initial categories were developed with new ideas or insights on the incident or issue.

Take the case of ACWC for example. In investigating the local government’s governing tactics in the case, key codes were distilled through coding the interviews and documents line-by-line and related it contextually. For example, in the interview with a specialist, he said that,

There was only one about the conservation projects, which, I said, was the conference on actual implementation of conservation projects on 23

February. It was on that conference that the final decision of conserving 20 meters of the city walls was announced.

The code “*backroom decision-making*” for this statement was developed. The code was enriched by the later interviews with other actors, for example, according to a government official,

We are not sure how many ‘backroom’ activities were taken place here, but it is always the case that, facing the project with a huge investment and potential benefits, the Chinese local government would hardly absolve themselves from the enormous economic benefits

Moving towards the next step, the code “*filtering information*”, “*controlling transparency*”, and “*delaying actions*” were grouped into the initial category of “*backroom decision-making*”. Moreover, incident-by-incident coding prompted me to constant compare data with data, especially, incident with incident. It worked better when I was transcribing and recapping the notes, allowing me to make sense of the data in analytic and comparative ways. In the field notes and transcriptions of interviews, I identified and coded similar events, such as the routine events of the discussion panels, and then compared dissimilar events for further insights, for example, the differences of interactions between pairs of actors. Through initial coding, data are distilled, separated, sorted and synthesized for making comparisons with other segments of data.

The second phase in coding is the focused coding, which refers to using the most significant or frequently used codes to “sift through large amounts of data” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 57). In this phase, more directed, selected and conceptual codes were identified and unexpected ideas emerged through comparing codes and data with each other. In the case of WSTK, “public trust” was highlighted, and a more specific code “influence of kinship and personal ties” was developed to generate the category for further comparison with the case of ACWC. Later, a category of “government-citizens relationship” was developed. These categories were adopted as theoretical concepts which were re-examined within the earlier data. During the coding, memos were written to record the ideas in order to keep the data fresh and allowed for a refocus on the earlier data in later analytic steps.

5.6.2 Memo writing

The analytic notes which are the initial memos will be developed to raise the codes to tentative categories. According to Charmaz (2006), memos are written, sorted and integrated to diagram concepts. The notes were written in each analytic step, through which the concepts or ideas were developed to examine the other segments of data, or incidents. In the data analysis of the cases, this step helped me clarify what the roles and behaviours of different actors were and how they interact with each other. During the fieldwork, as soon as I coded one piece of data, brief notes were taken that specified the rough ideas with key words and sentences selected from the data. These initial memos with ideas were refined to more advanced memos, using a generalized simple phrase and a more detailed explanation.

For example, during the data analysis, initial memos were written when coding the interview transcripts. In the memo, I first used “government tactics” as a category. After more data were collected and analysed, these initial memos were rechecked and questions such as, “which codes did the category subsume?” and “how did the category relate to others?” were asked. After looking deeper into the story, a more detailed memo that described one of the governmental tactics, “employing ambiguity and elasticity of laws and regulations” was developed (see Figure 5-1). It was written down, which subsumed a number of codes that implied the narrative of “the rule of law” which was employed by local government but not in practice. It was used by local government as a tool to cover up their pursuit of partial economic interest and their “backroom decision-making” with developers.

Figure 5-1 - The memo of “employing ambiguity and elasticity of laws and regulations”

- Employing ambiguity and elasticity of laws and regulations

The ambiguity of law and regulations has been a long-lasting problem in heritage conservation in China. It provided opportunities for local government to violate the interest of heritages. The ambiguity of the laws and regulations and its lack of entrenched clauses on heritage conservation were also the reasons that the local government inclined towards the developer. In fact, there are an enormous number of laws and regulations on the conservation of historical and cultural heritages. From the enactment of the *Law of the People's Republic of China on the Protection of Cultural Relics* in 1982 and its amendment

in 2002, there are over 400 regulations, measures and government documents related to the heritage conservation. However, the ambiguity of the law as well as its directory function was employed by local government in the pursuit of partial economic interest. According to one specialist in law, “most of these laws and regulations were directory, rather than rigid and imperative, they were relatively ambiguous and lack of operability. The enacting procedure of regulations and measures in local level has sometimes had problems of ignoring the supervision from the local People’s Congress. It led to some legal loopholes that government is exempt from being investigated and affixed to legal liability.” Besides, a specialist in cultural relics also stated that because there is no imperative punishment, a small section of local government do not need to pay any price for trading the historical and cultural interest of heritages to economic interest.

In this case, the laws and regulations applied in local level are *Regulations on Famous Historical and Cultural City of Changsha* and measures in the *Plan of Protecting Changsha as a Famous Historical and Cultural City*. The construction site of Wanda Plaza is in the area of Historical and Cultural Site of Small West Gate and Chaozong Street. According to the regulations, the height of the architecture and buildings in the core protection area has to be less than 12 meters and 24 meters in buffer area. However, actually, the height of the main building of Wanda Plaza is much more that. In response to this, the official in Bureau of Urban and Rural Planning in Changsha said that “the project of Wanda Plaza was approved rigidly according to the regulations. In the examination of the project in the area, the historical and cultural features were fully taken into account. The planning of Historical and Cultural Site of Chaozong Street, which Wanda Plaza is located, was added into the original plan in a new round, so after the development of the property, we cannot control the height effectively”.

The ambiguity of law was employed by the local government. According to *Regulations on Protection of Cultural Relics in Hunan Province*, “**Article 13**, the selection of construction site should be away from immovable heritage site as far as possible; if there is a case that cannot be avoided, the historic and cultural heritage sites should be in-site protected as well as possible. For those which is not investigated and publicized as immovable, the heritage that has to be removed or demolished should be agreed by the administrative departments in municipal or prefecture people’s government and approved by people’s government in county level, if required by special needs of construction.” I argue that there is no detailed enforcement in the regulation that local government can employ the ambiguity in the law by claiming that “there is a special need” and “we have done our best”.

In addition, for local government in Changsha, laws and regulations in heritage conservation had certain elasticity, which were even ignored. According to *Notices on improving the management of exploration and excavation of underground cultural relics in Changsha*, within the administrative area of Changsha as a historical and cultural city, any construction project over 20 acre needs to be prospected for cultural relics and inspection for archaeological excavations. However, in this case of ACWC, there was no prospection before the construction. It was stated by a local government official that in the regeneration of the old city, they faced the difficulty of removing all the old architecture and people. The prospection for cultural relics and inspection for archaeological excavations can only be done after the removing, whereas the land was already sold in advance.

Finally, the lack of the strong enforcement was also employed by the local government. According to the implementation report on the *Law of the People's Republic of China on the Protection of Cultural Relics* in 2012, in the third round of heritage survey nationwide, there were about 40,000 immovable heritage that were demolished, in which half of them were related to the construction. There is punishment specified in the laws and regulations in heritage conservation. I reviewed punishment in *Regulations on Protection of Famous Historical and Cultural Cities, Towns and Villages in Hunan Province*, according to **Article 41**,

“If serious consequences arise from tearing down a historical building, then the organizations can be fined from half a million to one million RMB (equals to approximately 50 thousand to 100 thousand GBP). The individuals responsible will be fined between 100 thousand and 200 thousand RMB (equals to approximately 10 thousand to 20 thousand GBP).”

However, since the local government did not lend the support for the enforcement and even take the lead in violation, the laws and regulations were weak and lost its effectiveness. A Fine of up to 500 thousand RMB (50 thousand GBP) cannot stop the pace of construction motivated by the economic interest. As one interviewee stated, “the fine was like a piece of cake for property developer, which cannot compare to the huge economic interest by real estate development. Local government turned a blind eye and even overlooked that on purpose”.

Thus, the combined processes of memo writing and making comparisons from the memos encouraged me to go back and forth between the data and relate the

categories to others. Memo writing, as well as memo comparing and sorting, helped towards the next analytic step, that of theoretical sampling and sorting.

5.6.3 Theoretical sampling, saturating and sorting

Facing large numbers of codes and memos, I struggled with what to do next. However I was eventually aided by the methodological guide; *Constructing Grounded Theory: a Practical Guide through Qualitative Analysis* (Charmaz, 2006), this suggested that the answer was to gather more data with a focus on the properties of the categories. This is the step of theoretical sampling, which means “seeking and collecting pertinent data to elaborate and refine categories in your emerging theory” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 96). Following suggestions made by my supervisors, the strategies of theoretical sampling, saturation, and sorting with continuous memo-writing helped me from becoming stuck.

Theoretical sampling mainly focused on the category and its properties that constituted the emerging conceptual ideas. Specifically, relationships between categories can be clarified. To apply the strategy of theoretical sampling in my research, its logic was identified, which involves starting with data, constructing rough ideas, and then examining these data through further empirical inquiry (Charmaz, 2006). It involved comparing the data, which led me to make conjectures or hypotheses about the categories comparing similarities and differences in two cases for further data collection. In the initial stage, I identified four themes through comparison: types of conflict, structural differences, power relations, participation process (see Figure 5-2 in the next page). After advanced coding, memo writing and comparing, I generated two themes regarding different relations between government and citizens, and between government and developers.

Figure 5-2: Memo comparing

- Comparing differences between WSTK and ACWC		
	Case of WSTK	Case of ACWC
Conflict Types	<p><i>Cooperative process</i></p> <p>“Similarity in beliefs and attitudes, readiness to be helpful, openness in communication, trusting and friendly attitudes, sensitivity to common interests and de-emphasis of opposed interests, orientation toward enhancing mutual power rather than power differences, and so on”.</p>	<p><i>Competitive process</i></p> <p>“Use of the tactics of coercion, threat, or deception; attempts to enhance the power differences between oneself and the other; poor communication; minimization of awareness of similarities in values and increased sensitivity to opposed interests; suspicious and hostile attitudes; the importance, rigidity, and size of issues in conflict, and so on”.</p>
Structural Linkage	<p><i>Direct elections</i></p> <p>Direct elections at the county level were the foundation for the elections for organs of state power at all levels throughout the country.</p>	<p><i>Indirect elections</i></p> <p>The principle of direct election of people’s deputies applied only at the county and urban district level. Above that level, deputies were elected by those of next lower-level congresses.</p>
Power Relations	<p><i>Cultural-nexus of power</i></p> <p>The cultural nexus integrates a series of traditional culture or norms as well as networks of interpersonal relationships that shape the exercise of power in rural society.</p>	<p><i>Interest-power nexus</i></p> <p>Such interests like economic interest, political achievement or vanity and similar lead the nexus an authority and respectability that in turn motivate those concerned with social responsibilities, status, and prestige.</p>
Participatory Process	<p><i>Bottom-up approach</i></p> <p>The power of public ideas – having the real power to affect the outcome of the decision making process through being equipped with information, provided with venues to express views and deliberate on alternatives, and empowered to make decisions to advance interests.</p>	<p><i>Top-down approach</i></p> <p>The increased decision-making – filtering or disclosing information, monopoly of power, making decision in advance, inviting discussion rather than effective participation.</p>

In the

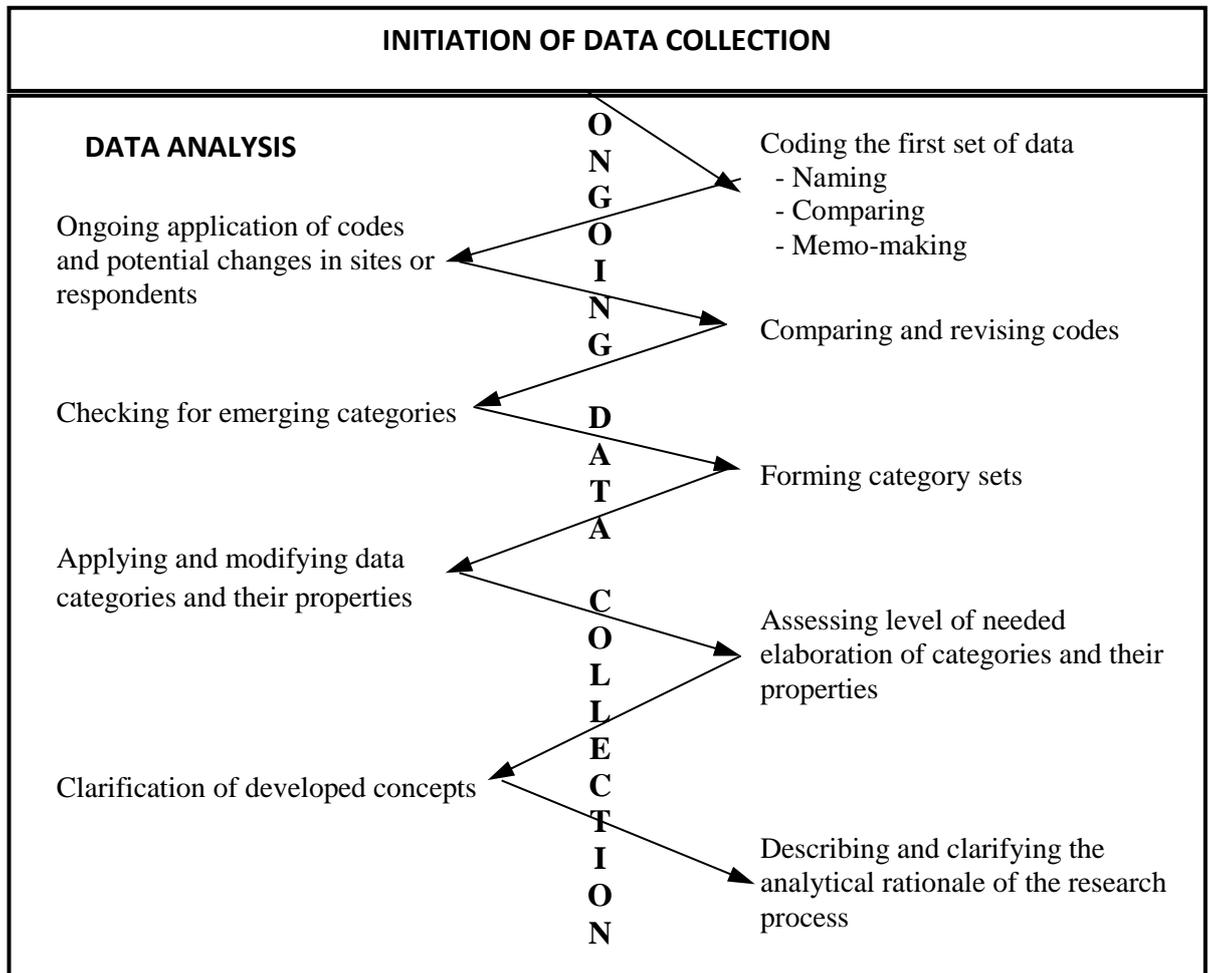
process, the concept of “abductive reasoning” was introduced in grounded it moved toward hypotheses information. At this point, after comparing the

data from two cases, I was to form follow-up hypotheses for each argument or explanation, and check them by examining and adding data. This was a move towards theoretical sampling, saturation and sorting in order to generate a substantive theory. The following analytic step is to saturate theoretical categories and sort, diagram and integrate the memos through constant comparative analysis.

5.6.4 Constant comparative analysis

Constant comparative analysis is conducted “to generate theory more systematically by using explicit coding and analytic procedures” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 96). The process of data analysis embedded in ongoing data collection in constant comparison is illustrated in the figure in the next page (see Figure 5-3).

Figure 5-3 Process of data analysis



Source: Glaser & Strauss, 1967.

After initial data collecting, initial coding, focused coding, theoretical sampling and theoretical memo-writing, certain categories are generated which refine some concepts to more theoretical ones. As mentioned earlier, I sought for additional data to fill the gap of the emerging categories and ideas. After that, the first draft was written for the case of ACWC, and the concepts and ideas developed to examine another case. Through an in-depth investigation of the case of ACWC, a more theoretical memo on “government-citizens relations” and “government-developers relations” are written and the case of WSTK is sampled theoretically for further verification of these concepts. The figure below (see Figure 5-4) presents the opening paragraph from the memo on “government-citizens relations”. Themes of “the bureaucrats”, “how local government cope with business elites” and “how local

government manage public voices” are then generated. Through constant comparative analysis, the research is reframed, which aims to look into dilemmas of changes in Chinese local governance through the lens of heritage conservation. Moving back and forward into the literature and the data, the final research topic is located in discussing the Chinese local governance.

Figure 5-4 The opening paragraph from the memo of “government-citizen relationship”

- Government-citizen relationship

The data suggested that the government-citizen relations were shaped and contested in four domains: political, socio-culturally, psychologically, and ideologically. The paper focused on the first two domains, in which how the local government employed various tactics will be examined. Although the tactics differed in urban and rural areas, it suggested an informal way of the authority in the state. In particular, drawing from the historical traditions and the practices, the government-citizen relations have seen a subtleness and ambivalence in urban areas, in which the local government keeps the distance but still seeks adherence to citizens. Meanwhile, in rural areas, the relations between government and citizens have experienced close personal and kinship ties, in which persuasion and ideological cultivation are dominant as the governing approaches.

5.7 Limitations and other concerns

The methodology of using interviews leads to some practical concerns, most significantly, the interviewees’ power and professional status on the content of interview. In particular, when interviewing people who are in a privileged position, I was concerning their neutrality during the interview and the possibility that they might lead the interview. During the interviews for this study, it is always the case that officials in government agencies recite public rhetoric rather than reveal personal views, much less a full account of their experiences. Moreover, accessing the government officials in China is the biggest challenge for the researcher, as in the case of ACWC, I had to search for different ways to collect data from the government officials.

The second concern is potential difficulties that may be encountered with cross-cultural and cross-language communications. As stated by Michaud, et al. (2001) and Redmond (2003), increasingly, researchers from English language countries are

conducting bodies of research with non-English-speaking subjects which, in turn, raises ethical considerations in terms of accurate translation and interpretation. This issue is worth much attention and discussion. In my research, interviews are conducted and transcribed using Chinese for latter coding and analysis, while the codes and categories were translated into and the report was written in English. Moreover, in this research, it is of great significance, since the Western audience might not be able to understand the concepts in Chinese culture easily. I came across this cross-cultural and linguistic issue throughout the whole duration of the research, especially the accuracy of translations. As a bilingual researcher-translator, I tried my best to remain neutral when conducting any research.

5.8 Summary

In this chapter, the design of the research is introduced, including the research questions, the methodological approach, case selection and introductions, data collection methods and process, and data analysis approach. Significantly, a constant comparative study between two cases was introduced which aimed to generate conceptual ideas on Chinese local governance. As identified in the last chapter, drawing from the theoretical framework in studying governance as network management in heritage conservation, this research uses the interpretive policy analysis by Bevir and Rhodes (2003), which is to “decentre” the governance, with focuses on changes, traditions and dilemmas in governance. Under this scope, the next chapter presents a more detailed and comprehensive introduction to the cases, which is followed by the analysis chapters, changes, traditions and dilemmas in Chinese local governance through comparing an urban and a rural case.

CHAPTER SIX

AN INTRODUCTION OF THE CASE STUDIES

6.1 Introduction

Following the theoretical and methodological consideration of network governance at the local level in China, this chapter introduces an urban and a rural case for a comparative study. As outlined in the previous chapter, the governing practices and actors' interactions in two heritage sites, the Ancient City Walls in Changsha (ACWC) and Wang Shan Tu Ku (WSTK), are the subjects of this analysis. The objective of this chapter is to provide background information on the two cases for later analysis. Therefore, the first part of this chapter is structured into two main sections: the case of ACWC and the case of WSTK. In each section, the background information, including geographical, political-economic and social characteristics, is presented. The main discussion will focus on the actors, their interactions, and conflict resolution processes in conserving the heritage. This chapter then depicts specific changes in the city and in the countryside with regards to the social, economic and political influences leading to a struggle of the key actors in heritage conservation.

6.2 The case of the Ancient City Walls in Changsha

In November 2011, a 120-metre section of the ancient city walls was found in the construction site of Wanda Plaza, a real estate project in the urban area of Changsha (see Figure 6-2). The Ancient City Wall of Changsha (ACWC) can be dated back to the Southern Song dynasty, and has a history of more than 800 years. Archaeologists and heritage experts immediately recognized its cultural value. How to conserve it in the construction site became a topic of wide spread debate during these months. On 27 February 2012, the Municipal Cultural Relics Bureau of Changsha held a conference to clarify the conservation plan, which was to conserve 20 meters of the city wall in the original place. The rest of the city wall was to be cut and relocated.

The following table (see Table 6-1) presents the key dates and actions regarding the decision making in this case. The process involved the local government, the developer, the specialists, the media, and the citizens of Changsha, all of whom

contributed to the discussion on how to conserve the city walls. However, despite the efforts put into investigation, demonstration, and discussion, the ACWC, which is an example of the history of Changsha, was largely destroyed by bulldozers.

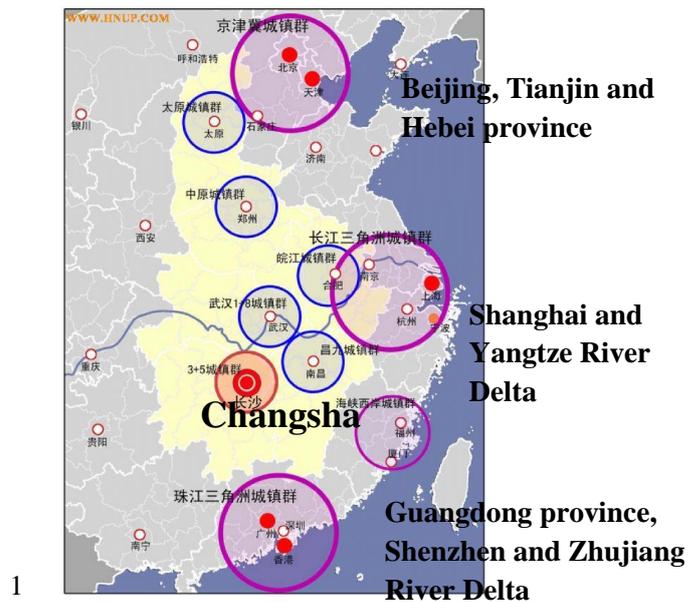
Table 6-1 ACWC: timetable (February 2012 to November 2012) of the decision-making process

Date	Actions
27/11/2011	Finding of ACWC and investigation of its main features
28/11/2011	Suspension of construction
29/11/2011	Emergency meeting held by local party's standing committee to appoint responsible department and to establish cooperation between them
07/12/2011	Conference on the conservation of ACWC and two conferences by specialists and experts, drafting and submitting conservation plan
08/01/2012	ACWC first made public and became focal point among newspaper, internet users, and the general public.
01/2012-02/2012	A micro-blog on in-site protection by a specialist widely shared
07/02/2012	Local government of Changsha made a formal approach to the Cultural Relics Bureau in Changsha to ask for suggestions on a conservation plan, and obtained a reply.
12/02/2012	Site investigation and conference on conservation with specialists and experts again.
15/02/2012	Three possible conservation plans were disclosed to the public, suggestions were sought from the general public and State Cultural Relics Bureau, and the reply of in-site protection was obtained
22/02/2012	Decisions on 20-meter in-site protection and destruction of remainder
02/2012	Changes in the construction plan by Wanda

6.2.1 Changsha: the city of a political-economic privilege

Changsha, the capital city of Hunan province, is located in middle China. The city has a long history of 3000 years and it is constructed along the Xiang River, a main tributary of Yangtze River. The urban area has occupied 1,938 square kilometers and has a population of 4.1 million according to statistics in 2012. The figure (see Figure 6-1) presents the location of Changsha and its surrounded cities and economic zones.

Figure 6-1 – Changsha’s location and its surrounding



Source: Municipal Bureau of Urban and Rural Planning in Changsha, 2011

According to the official statistics by the municipal people’s government, in 2012, the gross domestic product (GDP) of Changsha annually is 640 billion RMB (64 billion GBP), which increased 13 percent compared to 2011. In the non-public sectors of the economy, such as self-employed and private enterprises, the overall value reached to 391.4 billion RMB (39.14 billion GBP). The total financial income of local government was 79.66 billion RMB (7.966 billion GBP), in which the public budgetary defray was 61.66 billion RMB (6.166 billion GBP) in 2012. The main industry in Changsha is the manufacturing and service industry, which accounts for 56.1 percent and 39.6 percent in revenues respectively. It is highlighted in its official website of government that Changsha’s material flow exceeded RMB 1 trillion in a year and it is titled as Top 20 “China’s Best Cities to Start a Business”.

Changsha is regarded as an important commercial and industrial city in the middle and southern China. A group of projects concerning urban development has been launched in recent years, such as Metro Line 2, the new Changsha railway station, Cross-river Tunnel and Changsha Comprehensive Junction on the Xiang River. These projects are said to fuel local economic and increase the capability and competitiveness for long-term local development, as noted in the *Changsha, Zhuzhou and Xiangtan City Cluster Demonstration Area Construction Plan*. In 2012,

the comprehensive competitiveness in the city Changsha is ranked the first in middle China and the fourth with greatest competitiveness improvement in the cities worldwide.

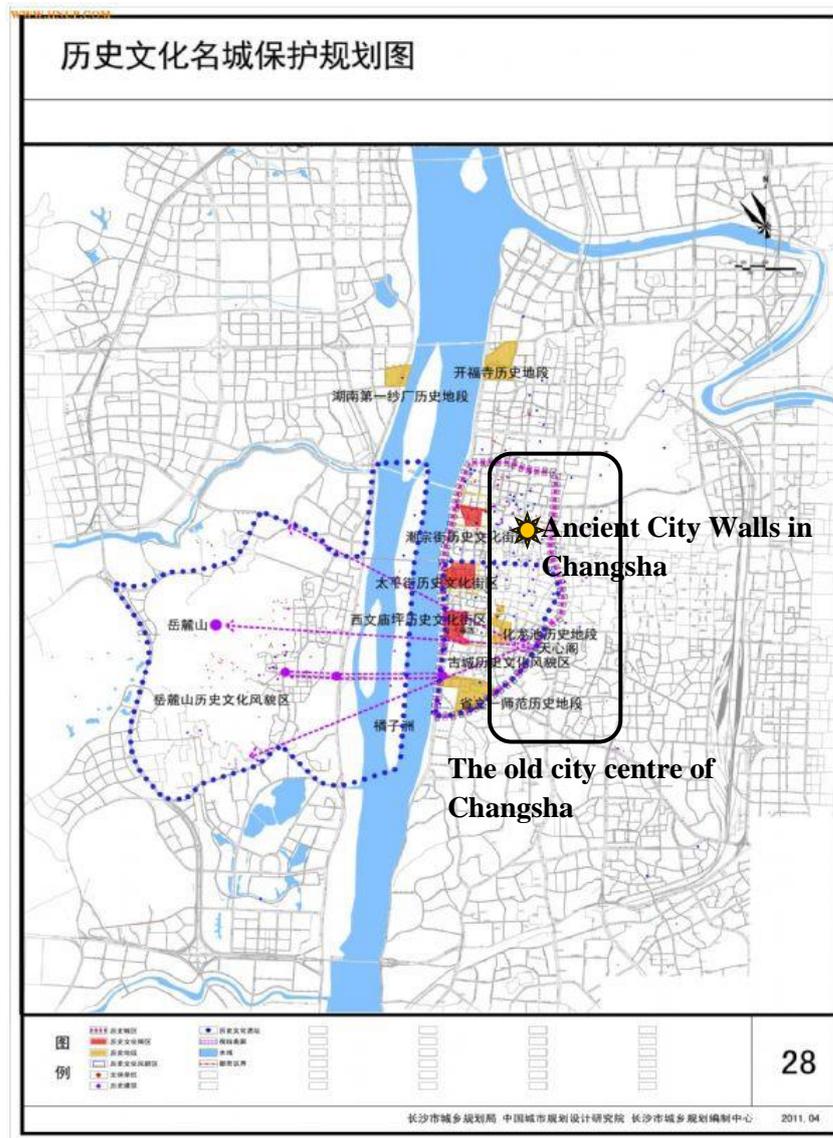
According to Hsing (2010), Changsha, with the presence of high-ranking state and provincial agencies in its jurisdiction, is also a political privilege. Changsha, as a large metropolitan city, hosts both provincial and municipal government institutions. As the political center in Hunan province, Changsha provides space for all high-ranking provincial authorities in its jurisdiction, including Hunan Provincial Department of Land and Resources, Department of Housing and Urban-Rural Development, Department of Civil Affairs, Department of Agriculture, Foreign and Overseas Chinese Affairs Office, etc.

Regarding its historical and cultural features, Changsha is the origin of culture of *Chu* and *Xiang*, with a long history stretching back more than 2,000 years. As early as the Spring and Autumn Period (770-476BC), Changsha was one of the key strategic locations for the *Chu* state that occupies the south China. The *Chu* culture is thus prosperous. In 1982, Changsha was selected and listed in the first group of the Famous Historical and Cultural Cities by the State Council. There are 24 sites in the list of national important cultural relics. In particular, Changsha is famous for its underground cultural relics, for example, the earliest piece of iron casting, underglaze porcelain, and printed fabric in the world, was found in Changsha. Therefore, Changsha is not only an important political and economic center in Hunan province, but also has great historical and cultural features.

6.2.2 Introduction to the Ancient City Walls of Changsha

The Ancient City Walls of Changsha (ACWC) are located in the old city center of Changsha. As seen in the *Plan of Changsha as a Famous Historical and Cultural City* (see Figure 6-2), there are seven protection areas in the old city center, and the city walls are located in the protection area of Chaozong Street. In 2004, the protection of Chaozong Street as a historical and cultural block was included in *Master Plan of Urban Planning in Changsha*, being *Historical and Cultural Protection Area of Chaozong Street*.

Figure 6-2 Plan of Changsha as a Famous Historical and Cultural City



Source: Municipal Bureau of Urban and Rural Planning in Changsha, 2011

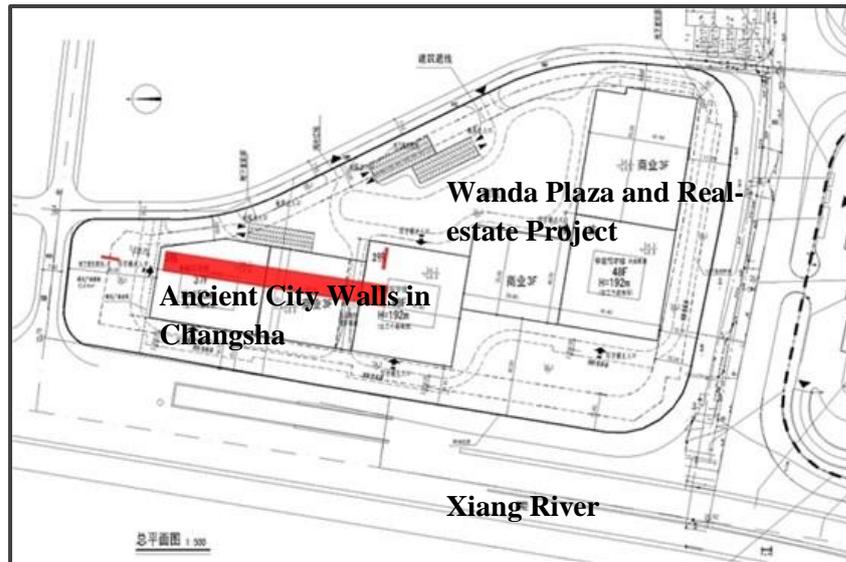
From 2011, the local government in Changsha started the redevelopment of this area in which the project of Wanda Plaza is part and attracted investment to this aim. The project of development in Chaozong Street is situated in Wuyi Business District which is the busiest business circle in Changsha. The project occupies an area of 330 acre while the area which can be developed reaches 1000 acre. It is planned to develop the business while also protecting the historic and cultural landscape. The plan also points at redeveloping traditional residential and commercial areas and the ancient Sesame Street exhibition area so as to transform the block into a historic and cultural site. The site is expected to possess such functions as fashion shopping,

dining and recreation, and leisure and social communication.

Despite a history of more than 800 years, the Ancient City Walls in Changsha has retained its main original features. The city walls provide a remarkable picture of people in Changsha fighting against the enemies. City walls are an integral part of civic defensive systems in ancient China. The system often consisted of city walls, towers and gates, which are built to protect towns and cities throughout the Empire. It can be dated from Xia Dynasty (2070-1600 BC). Several thousand walls for defending were built over the course of Chinese history, in which the most outstanding piece is the Great Wall. However, only a few city walls have preserved to the present day.

ACWC has both integrity and the typical characteristics of an ancient city wall; it is particularly outstanding because of its historical features. One-sixth of the city walls are in good condition, this is a length of wall that survived the Yuan, Ming, and Qing Dynasties and contemporary China. This reflects the architectural and building traditions of the Song people over the period from the 13th to the 19th century. In particular, the records in the bricks of the city walls, “*Changsha*”, “*Ningxiang*” and “*Shanhua*” and names of the insurrectionary army in ancient times, “Loyalty Army” (*zhongyi jun*), reflect the history of the times of wars and defenses. Moreover, the location of the city walls has moved 200 meters from the Xiang River over the centuries, which reflects the changes in the city’s geographic and hydraulic features. It records the development of the ancient city Changsha. The stretch of ACWC at the development site measures more than 120 meters in length, 5.7 meters at the top width and 6.2 meters at the bottom width, and 1.8 meters in height. Since the city walls have not been displayed, the overall features are still unknown. The city walls are located in the underground of business high-rises planned in the Wanda project. The figure in the next page (see Figure 6-3) presents the location of the city walls in the construction site of Wanda project.

Figure 6-3 ACWC in the site of Wanda project



Source: Municipal Bureau of Urban and Rural Planning in Changsha, 2012

6.2.3 Actors involved and their interactions

Local government

In this case, Changsha Municipal People's¹⁰ Government was the key actor. On 29 November 2012, local government and the local Party's Standing Committee held the first conference, establishing cooperation and appointing responsible departments. Since then, to the final decision in February 2012, the municipal government organized four specialists' in-site investigations and discussions on the conservation plans.

The leading character in the story of local government was the mayor. He is recognized as a well-educated government official, who obtained his doctoral degree in transport engineering at the University of California, Berkeley. He is now the vice secretary of Changsha Municipal Committee and the mayor of Changsha Municipal People's Government. The mayor has interacted with social media, such as Southern Weekly (*nanfang zhoumo*), the People (*renmin wang*), Finance (*caijing wang*) and Phoenix (*fenghuang wang*). He has recently been interviewed by the media on important public issues and furthermore, in press conferences and discussion panels;

¹⁰ *renmin*, which signifies the idea that the people are the original source of the political authority of the state.

he has made speeches on the issue of ACWC. The data used in this analysis is from those interviews by the social media and notes and observations in the conferences.

Developer

In this case of ACWC, the developer is Wanda Group, which is one of China's largest real estate companies. Within 26 years since its establishment in 1988, Wanda Group nationwide owns 72 shopping plazas, 40 five-star hotels, 1038 cinemas, 62 grocery stores, and 68 karaoke clubs, with more than 80000 employees and paid 20.2 billion RMB (2.02 billion GBP) taxes in 2012. It is a large corporate group in China specializing in four major areas: commercial properties, luxury hotels, cultural industries and chain stores. It also becomes the world's largest operator of movie theaters after the purchase of AMC Entertainment Holdings for 2.6 billion USD (1.67 billion GBP) in 2013. Moreover, in June 2013, it acquired the British yacht builder *Sunseeker* International for \$500 million USD (321 million GBP). As listed in *Forbes Asia 2013*, Mr. Wang, who is the President of Wanda Group, ranked first in the *Forbes* list of 100 richest mainland Chinese 2013, with an estimated net worth of 14.1 billion USD (8.83 billion GBP).

It is evident that Wanda has obtained huge capacity in economic, social and political resources, which can be seen from the construction of one Wanda Plaza. It takes only 18 months from taking over the land to construction and opening¹¹. In the process, they were good at establishing a close relationship with local authorities. In this case, the developer actively interacted with local government. The project director of Kaifu Wanda Plaza stated that they listened to the government. In particular, he stressed the coordination of local government with the investors to achieve a win-win situation in urban regeneration and redevelopment.

Specialists

In the process of decision-making, specialists were engaged; however their opinions were not taken. In December 2011, the municipal government organized a specialist group to a site visit, evaluating the value and conservation of the city walls. It

¹¹ It indicates that the developer exploits workers with substandard wages, long working hours, and dangerous working conditions. It is evident that in this case that the workers worked 18 hours every day under cranes and shovels with average wage of 5,000 RMB (500 GBP) per month.

consisted of researchers in Municipal Archeology and Cultural Relics Research Committee, members of specialist group in Protection of the Famous Historical and Cultural City in Changsha, former curator of Hunan Provincial Museum, former chief and engineers in the Municipal Bureau of Water Conservancy.

Later in December, the local government invited specialists to sit on two discussion panels, discussing possible conservation plans of the city walls. The technical difficulties became the focal point in the discussion of conservation plans by the specialist group. They proposed three possible conservation plans, building “a cement cell” for the city walls, lifting the city walls and lastly, preserving them for reevaluation after the flood season. These plans attempted to protect the city walls as a whole. However, there was a disagreement on the conservation plan. The problem of piping¹² was stressed by specialists from Bureau of Water Conservancy, who stated that the city walls should be removed “as soon as possible”. Although it was later demonstrated by other specialists that the technical difficulties of conserving the city walls were overstated and these problems can be tackled in better ways, the conservation plans were finally rejected by the local government.

On 8 January 2012, the discovery of the ancient city walls was made clear to the public by the local media. Since then, weblogs and micro-blogs were posted and widely shared on the internet. Prof. Liu, who is the vice principal of School of Architecture in University of Hunan, was the first to post an online micro-blog. It caused a huge reaction. He was one of the specialist representatives who put great efforts in conserving the city walls. He communicated with both the mayor and the developer, proposing the in-site conservation plan. He sent mails to the mayor and President of Wanda Group in February, asking for in-site protection. Although Prof. Liu and other specialists proposed possible conservation plans, there was no change in the final decision of conserving only 20 meters of the 200-meter city walls made by the local government.

The media

The media was involved in this case mainly through the process of reporting. These

¹² Piping (*guanyong*), a hydraulic and geotechnical phenomenon that soil fails induced by seepage force, is a kind of erosion effect which happens in geotechnical engineering structures. It often results to geotechnical structure failure and flooding.

reports on the case of ACWC were released in newspaper and social media in February 2012, three months after the discovery of the city walls. It took this length of time because (1) the information was released only when the main research jobs on the city walls were finished; (2) the delay of government actions as they needed time for maneuver, especially to negotiate with the developer; (3) it was nearly the end of the year and government officials were reluctant to work before the coming holidays.

The earliest news report on the case of ACWC was on *Xiao Xiang Morning (Xiao xiang chen bao)* on 15 February 2012. It is noticed that on 8 January, the journalist visited the construction site and took pictures of the city walls. On 9 February, Prof. Liu posted a micro-blog on *Sina Weibo* that attracted attention from a number of online users. However, it was only after 12 February when the municipal government hosted the seminar and asked opinions from specialists and the media, that the case was made public to the citizens through the media. After 27 February the decision of conserving 20 meters of the city walls was announced, the media, such as *Sina Hunan (xinlang Hunan)*, *ScienceNet (kexue wang)*, *Xiao Xiang Morning (xiaoxiang chenbao)*, and *Changsha Evening (Changsha wanbao)*, started to report the entire issue and to make comments. These were followed by a large amount of commentaries in social media and on TV programs in the subsequent months.

Citizens

Although there were five conferences during three months, the ordinary people were not actually engaged in the discussions, not to mention the decision-making process. In this case, the participation of ordinary people was mainly through expressing their opinions and dissent on the internet, especially, through micro-blogging. The leading Chinese micro-blogging platform, *Sina Weibo*, launched in August 2009, had around 503 million users in December 2012 and is growing at a rate of almost 10 million per month (Sina Annual Report, 2012). On *Sina Weibo*, there is a list of “hot topics” updated in accordance to the numbers of micro-bloggers “comment”, “share”, and “recommend”. “Conserving ACWC” was one of the “hot topics”, which had a number of 94003 micro-blogs quoting the topic. Moreover, there was “Weibo Talk” in *Sina Weibo*, which was an online discussion for participants shared their opinions

and had immediate feedback to and from specialists. There are a large number of online users who expressed their opinions and dissent on the internet.

6.3 The case of the Wang Shan Tu Ku

Wang Shan Tu Ku (WSTK), a typical patio dwelling with local characteristics on its building type, structure and cultural connotation, is located in the village of Datang, Xinjian County, a subdivision of the capital city Nanchang in Jiangxi province. In 2003, the county government made a plan to attract the investment of 1 billion RMB (approximately 100 million GBP) in redeveloping the area of WSTK. In line with the protection and preservation, the government actively promotes the heritage tourism, being “the bases for the cultural continuity of Gan-Po (赣鄱), to become the spotlight of new attractions in urban tourism and leisure activities” (*Nanchang Daily*, 2012).

In the development project of WSTK, the first difficulty they faced was the removal and relocation of villagers. A number of villagers refused to move, partly for dissatisfactory compensation schemes and partly for historical-cultural reasons. In response to this, the government in the county had a site investigation on the area and meetings were held to discuss the problem. Moreover, government officials at the municipal level also came to the village of Datang to inspect the construction and repairing activities in WSTK. As reported by *Nan Chang Daily* (15 June 2012), Li Douluo, the mayor of Nanchang, accompanied by other officials, canvassed the construction processes. After that, seminars were held to discuss the protection, development and construction in WSTK. The specialists and experts, members of villagers’ committee, as well as the representatives of villagers, were invited to attend the seminars. During this time, part of the construction activities was temporarily suspended.

Local government, the developer, and villagers’ committee worked together to seek opinions from villagers, through opinion polls and discussion panels. In October, detailed plans on the construction, amendment of *Plan of Construction and Redevelopment of the Village of Wang Shan* and *Plan of Wang Shan Tu Ku as Tourists’ Attraction* were issued. Moreover, in 8 November 2012, the government decided to build a base of experiments and practices on cultural tourism in WSTK.

Table 6-2 WSTK: timetable (February 2012 to November 2012) of the decision-making process

Date	Actions
18/03/2012	1 st operational meeting on projects in the county held by the local government
11/05/2012	Public complaints about noise and pollution revealed by Newspaper of Jiang Nan
28/05/2012	Site investigation by the government in the county and hold meetings
15/06/2012	Site investigation by the government in the municipal level
26/07/2012	2nd operational meeting on projects in the county, discussing the issues in the construction process, suspending the construction project temporarily
07/08/2012	Seminars held by the county government with different parties
08/2012	Conducting opinion polls, decisions on the project disclosed to villagers
10/2012	Enforcement of detailed plans on the construction, amendment of <i>Plan of Construction and Redevelopment of the Village of Wang Shan</i> and <i>Plan of Wang Shan Tu Ku as Tourists' Attraction</i>

6.3.1 Datang: the village of a family clan

The village of Datang is located 40 kilometers in the north suburb of Nanchang, the capital city of Jiangxi province. It is near Poyang Lake (*poyang hu*), close to Beijing-Kowloon Railway and Nanchang Airport. The village of Datang is in the jurisdiction of the county, Xinjian. The county provides space for 18 towns and 276 villages, with a population of 686,800 (nonagricultural population is 158,500). The whole area within its jurisdiction has about 2,208 square kilometers. The county of Xinjian is the major development zone of Nanchang. Two towns, *Lehua* and *Wangcheng*, are two core areas in the development project of “Five Piece-Core” (*yihe wupian*) in the Master Plan of Nanchang.

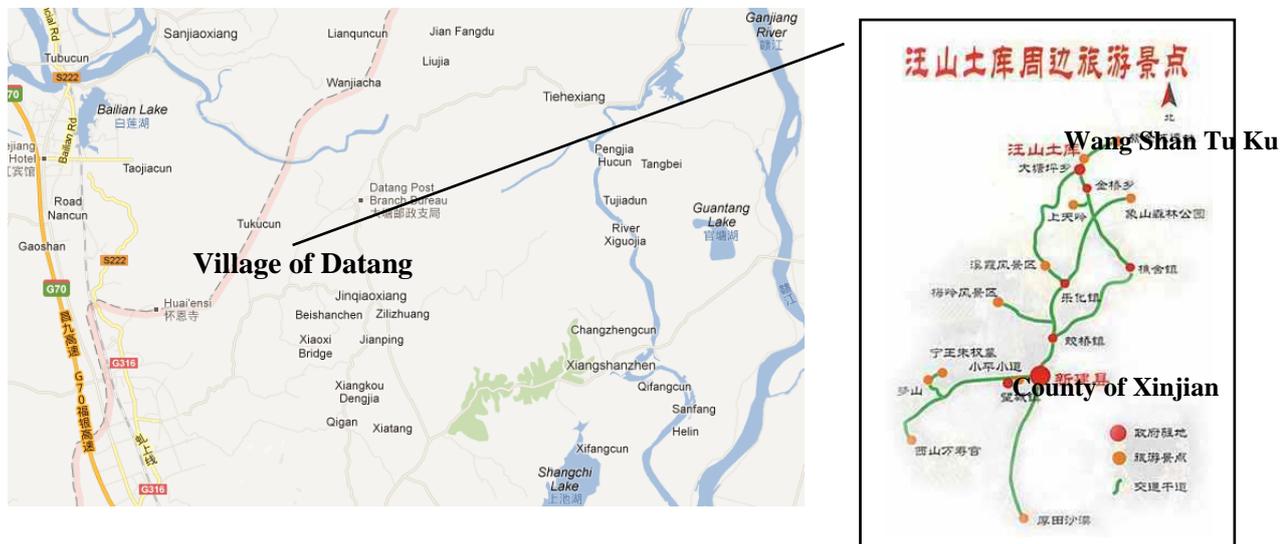
The excellent location and development potential provides a good environment for businesses. In the government report of Xinjian county 2012, it is stated that the annual GDP is 24.98 billion RMB (2.49 billion GBP), within which total fiscal revenue reaches to 2.01 billion RMB (0.2 billion GBP) and net income per capita of agricultural population is 8,603 RMB (860.3 GBP). The village of Datang has the area of 4.73 square kilometers with the population of 260, in which 226 of them are engaged in agriculture. The agricultural acreage is 860 acre. Most of the villagers

make their living from farming and run businesses within and near the village. A small part of villagers are working outside. In the whole town¹³, there are 10 town-owned enterprises, 21 village-owned enterprises, and 792 small private enterprises in the field of building materials, manufacturing and logistics, and in particular, the food industry with local characteristics. However, Datang village is one of the smallest villages in the town, which hosts only a few family-based enterprises, including a convenience store, a fishery and a noodle-making business. Significantly, the village of Datang hosts the family clan of *Cheng*. Local leaders were mostly born and raised in the village.

6.3.2 Introduction to Wang Shan Tu Ku

Wang Shan Tu Ku (WSTK), located in the village of Datang, was built by three brothers of clan of Cheng, *Jucui Cheng*, *Huancai Cheng*, and *Maocai Cheng*. All of them were selected as the provincial governors¹⁴ in the 1800s (mid-Qing Dynasty), which contributes to the idea of building *Tu Ku* in their hometown. It took 70 years to finish this work.

Figure 6-4 The village of Datang and the location of WSTK



Source: Google Maps, 2015
Clan Cheng in Datang, 2009

¹³ Town, a division in rural areas, is a fourth-level administrative unit. There are five practical levels of local governments: the province, prefecture, county, town, and village.

¹⁴ Zongdu (总督, 按察使, 巡抚, 侍郎), who plays vital roles in almost every facet of territorial administration. It possesses a high ranking in the administrative hierarchy in the Qing Dynasty (1644-1912).

WSTK is a property with 25 manor-houses of the bureaucratic family of *Cheng* from the year 1851 since its completion. *Tu Ku* is the name specifically given to the houses with an inward-looking, square floor plan used as housing for up to hundreds of people. Some of them are built for defense purposes around a central open courtyard with a few entrances. Hosting a whole clan, the houses functioned as a unit of a family and were known as “a little kingdom for the family”. It exemplifies a distinguishing type of communal living and an outstanding example of human settlement in southeastern China. WSTK, as with characteristics of this type of dwellings, featured fortified mud walls and tiled roofs. It was known as “the little emperor in Southeast” and “the museum of culture of dwellings”. WSTK has 1446 rooms and 572 patios, which takes up an area of 108 acre, 330 meters in length and 180 meters in width. In contrast with the plain exterior, the inside of the houses were built for comfort and were highly decorated.

In 1968, WSTK was once considered as “a negative example” of bureaucracy in Mao’s China, and was presented to the public as a “museum for education on social class”. After that, WSTK was used as a granary of the county and also, hosted some poor peasants. In early the 1980s, the granary was moved out of the houses, which fell into ruin gradually due to the lack of protection. From 2003, the municipal government of Nanchang as well as the local government at county level started the project of renovating and redeveloping WSTK. In 2004, WSTK was put in the list of Heritage Sites by the government in the municipal level.

Due to long time exposure as well as the lack of attention, WSTK was damaged to some extent. To protect and preserve the heritage site, in early 2003, the local government made the decision to develop the project on the conservation and development in the area of WSTK. It aimed to “protect the culture and tradition, reproduce the original features, and to take full advantage of the resources of WSTK which are rich and characteristic, having great development potency” (Nanchang Daily, 2008, translated by author). Moreover, the cement roads from highways were put into use. In the area, the ancient paths, pools, walls were all being repaired.

In line with protection and preservation, the government actively promoted cultural tourism in WSTK. To accelerate the local economy, in 2012, the government in the county made a plan to attract an investment of 1 billion RMB (approximately 100

million GBP) in the area. The plan was divided into three stages in the government report. Firstly, 100 million RMB (equals to approximately 10 million GBP) was to be invested in the construction of parking lots and functional services including food and drinks, accommodation and shopping, etc. In the second stage, 200 million RMB (equals to approximately 20 million GBP) was to be put into the industrialized development in the area, especially the products with local characteristics. The last stage is to cover ancient buildings and the improvement of the environments.

6.3.3 Actors involved and their interactions

County government

In accordance with the principle of “constructing a harmonious society” from the central government, the concept of “harmony” is stressed by local government in managing the major issues in heritage conservation. The emphasis is more significant in the countryside than that in the city. Regarding the historical reasons, the countryside has been a birthplace for popular protest and social movement since imperial China. In particular, Mao and the PLA stemmed from the remote areas and represented the interests of the peasants, establishing new China through political campaigns and mass mobilization. This shadow of the past makes “harmony” or “stability” the priority of the government agenda in the process of governing rural areas. Moreover, I have identified in Chapter 7 that self-governance is prominent in the countryside through direct elections, the villagers’ committee and networked relations. However, in the time of economic growth, there is still a conflict between heritage conservation and local development. Questions on how to maintain social stability and improve efficiency of government services arise. This leads to the question of how to control and mobilize the large population in the countryside.

The local government thus launched a program of “harmonious removal”. It was to set up a guideline regarding the relocation and removal of villagers in the time of rural redevelopment. It was promoted by rural governments to establish a basic pension and living security system for villagers, as well as the compensation scheme regarding the relocation and removal. Specifically, in the case of WSTK, a model of “separating relocation and construction” was developed by the county government. In the model, the villagers’ committee was the organizer and executor in the

relocation process. Villagers were organized to participate in the selection of resettlement location, project planning, selection of house styles, quality supervision. The developer was responsible for the construction, negotiating with the villagers' committee.

“Coordination and sustainability” was stressed in *Notices on Issuing the Third Batch of Cultural Relics and Protection Areas in Xinjian County* which stated that all towns and villages and all departments should properly handle the relationships between protection of cultural relics and socio-economic development, ensure the safety of cultural relics, and improve the work of protection, utilization and management of cultural relics. To boost the income and rural economy, heritage tourism was to be developed based on the historical and cultural resources in the village. Before developing heritage tourism in the village, the renovation and the redevelopment of the site and surroundings are carried out. In late 2012, the county government signed a contract with *Jiangxi Wang Shan Tu Ku Cultural Tourism Development Co., Ltd.* and attracted 600 million RMB (60 million GBP) to redevelop the area through tourist attractions. Under the contract, the county government established partnership and coordination with the developer in carrying out conservation and redevelopment activities.

Developers

The developer in this case is *Jiangxi Wang Shan Tu Ku Cultural Tourism Development Co., Ltd.* Compared to Wanda Group, the developer in this case is much smaller. Its president is Mr. Xiong, who is the consultant in Jiangxi Fellow Association of Texas in the U.S. and the manager of a capital management company based in the United States. The construction was carried out by the developer based upon the contract.

The first difficulty the county government and the developer faced was the removal and relocation of villagers. This was because (1) the development activities are always related to the expropriation of land and in some cases, the destruction of villagers' houses and accommodation of these villagers; (2) the traditional removal and relocation system in rural China is conducted by developers, who receive permission to use the land from local authorities; (3) in pursuit of economic interests,

local governments and developers tend to use a forcible way in the removal process, which always excludes the interests of villagers. This leads to dissent and protest among villagers. However, in this case, through negotiating with the local government, a new model of separating the relocation and construction was developed. This consisted of empowering the villagers' committee.

Villagers' committee

The villagers' committee of Datang played an important part in informing the villagers about the government policies and legal procedures in making decision in the villages, and collecting their opinions and reporting their needs. A villagers' committee is the basic unit at grassroots level to promote self-governance in the countryside. It aims to assist villagers to manage their own affairs in everyday life. As will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 7, it is a counterpart of the residents' committee in urban areas, which shares both commonalities and differences.

Through the villagers' committee and villagers' congress, the villagers directly elect the leaders and local cadres in the township level. In the case of WSTK, the villagers' committee mediated disputes, organized small-scale discussions among villagers, distributed and collected opinions polls, carried out a new model of removal, and provided feedback and suggestions to the township government.

Facing the problem of redeveloping the area, the county government actively engaged the villagers' committee in Datang village to manage the conflict. For example, the committee helped organizing economic activities in the village. They distributed the information on business opportunities among villagers, asked the upper government to send specialists to advice on planting and fishery, and so on.

Villagers

By 2012, there were about 260 registered villagers and more than 40 households in the village of Datang. In the development project of WSTK, according to villagers' committee, there were 13 households who refused to move. In response to this, opinion polls were conducted regarding the details in compensation schemes.

Moreover, these “nail households”¹⁵ were approached by a thematic working group, organized by local government. “The importance of villagers” was highlighted in the government document that stated that, “in the implementation stage, the villagers must play a main role; local government must respect their right to know, to participate, to make decisions, and to supervise, and it must rely on the masses”. It was government rhetoric, which was indicative of the shadow of Mao’s ideology, “the mass line” (*qunzhong luxian*). It required leaders to listen to and communicate with ordinary folks, and without it, the legitimacy of the rulers was questionable.

The next section introduces the decision-making process and actors involved in the two cases, one in the city and one in the countryside. I argued in Chapter 2 that China has seen a gradual political, social and economic transformation over the last few decades. In particular, the changing political and economic dynamics significantly impact on the relationship between actors in society. To examine these changes and their influences in different settings, the next section describes the main trends in urban and rural areas under the reforms.

6.4 Comparing changes in urban and rural areas

This section focuses on the differences of changes in urban and rural areas. As identified in Chapter 2, reforms in China since 1978 feature “autonomy” in the state sector and “economic development” at all levels. This called for a shift of strategy from overemphasized central planning to decentralization of the economic management and coexistence of a variety of economic entities (Guo & Hu, 2004). Market mechanisms were thus introduced to raise economic productivity. Indeed, market forces started to play a significant role in strengthening economic capacity in localities since late 1970s. In 1979, the National People’s Congress approved a new policy, known as “individual economy”. The rationale for this new policy was to encourage private enterprises to “play a role in supporting the socialist economy” to help spur production (Wang, 1999, p. 299). It is estimated that in 1983, there were around 2.6 million small private enterprises operating in cities compared to 1979 when the number was only 300,000 (Wu, 2002). The “individual economy” was also introduced into state enterprises to generate growth. During the period 1980 to 1981,

¹⁵ Nail households (*dingzi hu*): a metaphor referring to residents who refuse to leave in order to make way for new construction

thousands of state enterprises were allowed to produce for market demand and were given freedom to purchase much needed raw materials through the market.

Therefore, the economic reforms resulted in a market-led urbanization and industrialization, in which market forces play an important role in both urban and rural development. Significantly, it introduced two different phenomena in the city and in the countryside: urban land commodification and rural industrialization.

6.4.1 In the city: land and property commodification

Under the introduction of market forces, land is commercialised and priced as an economic asset (Zhu, 1999). Starting in 1984, cities in China embarked on land use management changes in the newly established market economies. An urban land-lease mechanism was introduced since the late 1980s which effectively separated land-use rights and ownership rights. In 1988, the *Land Management Law* was enacted and the *Provisional Regulations on the Conveyance, Granting and Transferring of the State Land's Use rights in Cities and Towns* was issued in 1991. Although the state still remained the owner of urban lands, the land-use rights could be transferred and traded as land leases in the market through negotiation, tender, and auctions with the permission of the government (Wu, Xu, & Yeh, 2006). Consequently, property has become a valuable asset, which involves land acquisition and new investments. Later in 1995, the *Urban Real Estate Administration Law of the People's Republic of China* was enacted, significantly laying down conditions and procedures for the allocation, transactions and management of urban lands for property development. In particular, the provincial governments and municipal governments, following the national legislation, amended the general policies and guidelines and introduced more detailed provisions according to local needs for implementation (Tian, 2014).

Consequently, property has become a valuable asset, which involves land acquisition and new investments. In particular, under the “open-up” policy, many Chinese coastal cities were opened up to foreign markets, the commodification and marketization of real estate is initiated by local governments to boost urban economy and to facilitate investment in manufacturing and services (Zhu, 1999). In this context, property development has become a strong theme in urban development.

Property development as an economic activity contributes substantially to local revenue. Property development, as defined by Byrne (2002, p. 4), is “the process by which development agencies, together or on their own, seek to secure their social and economic objectives by the improvement of land and the construction or refurbishment of buildings for occupation by themselves or other”. It becomes a main contributor of taxes and profits in localities. In the mid-1980s, in China, about 5 percent of enterprise profits were appropriated by local authorities (Tseng et al., 1994). Over the years, the coverage of fees is expanded with the property development. It is evident that the fees imposed on property development account for 25-30 percent of total development costs and add up to as many as 85 categories, covering items such as greenery maintenance, access road connection, substation installation, and contribution to education funds (Hsing, 2010). Land and property development is one of the most significant components in local governments’ agenda to finance local development. Therefore, local authorities start to notice the importance of land and property development and strive to cultivate a close relationship with large property corporations.

In the countryside: rural industrialization

During the mid-1980s, China began a program of rural industrialization using the slogan “A factory for every village”. The program was designed to utilize rural surplus labour in industries to process agriculture products (Byrd & Lin, 1990). Having become aware of the large gap between cities and rural areas, the party-state initiated industrial production in the countryside. It was to encourage the development of rural townships. In particular, the reforms have seen significant market-driven initiatives in its economy and thereafter saw great progress in its productivity (Putterman, 1993).

A number of small rural towns, particularly those with flourishing markets, developed rapidly. The rural cottage industries were owned by townships (formerly the entire commune) and villages (formerly the production “brigade”, individual peasants, and rural cadres”). From 1984 to 1985 the rural cottage industries employed 14 percent of rural surplus labour force¹⁶ and contributed about 40 percent

¹⁶ Huge surpluses of labour in rural China resulted from the rural reforms, which produced impressive increases in productivity during the early 1980s. It was also attributed to tight restrictions on rural-to-urban migration.

of rural output (Putterman, 1993). The cottage industries operated outside of the centralized planning system and were independent of state-owned enterprises.

A common trend in rural tax collection is for local governments to protect the private sector from centrally regulated taxes in order to leave more funds available for the local fees and levies (Byrd & Lin, 1990). To accomplish this, a mechanism known as the Responsibility System for Agricultural Production (*nongye shengchan zeren zhi*) was introduced in 1978. Under the system, individual households were given contracts that allow them to cultivate land, although they did not own the land. Instead, the collectives, townships and villages own the land and were granted the right to collect and remit revenue generated from local economic activities. In the rapid growth of rural industries, village-township-county government has played a new role as the “local corporate state” or “corporate headquarters” for rural enterprises. As noted by Young (1995, p. 34), there are as many as 18.5 million privately owned “small, market-driven factories” in rural villages, most of which were owned by township governments or village communities. These factories are recognized as the township-village enterprises (TVEs). They are small and medium-sized enterprises in rural regions to make use of local materials and to provide non-agricultural employment to those surplus labours due to improvement in farming efficiency. As a result, these rural governments run their economies like a corporation.

6.4.2 Decentralization

Under reforms, the relationship between the central government and local governments has shifted substantially in favor of the latter, as a result of decentralization of administrative power, the decrease of central planning, and the greater achievement of administrative rationalization, and the increase in economic power. Decentralization of social power at all the levels is evident, and the post-reform system was characterized by the active role played by local government in economic development (Wu, 1997; Yeh & Wu, 1999). It is reflected in that local governments and basic economic units have been granted greater autonomy in economic decision-making and thus created new entities of interest. In this context, in both rural and urban reforms, self-governance is a strong theme running through the post-reform era in China, as seen from the emergence of street-level government

in urban area and the villagers' committee in the countryside (will be further discussed later in this section). Thus, Chinese governance of society by that time is experiencing a profound change from state control to local intervention. Local governments began to gain economic autonomy, power, and responsibility for managing the state property.

It is now important to look at the fiscal reforms that redefined central-local relations here. Before 1980, the central government took full control of taxes and profits and then transferred back to local governments according to expenditures planned and approved by the state. Since 1980, the decentralization has brought about changing fiscal contracts between the central and local governments. It was to deliver incentives to localities (Hsing, 2010). The new fiscal system deals with three types of taxes: central fixed revenues, local fixed revenues, and shared revenues. Central fixed revenues, from the centrally supervised enterprises, are remitted to the central government, while local fixed revenues, derived from the profits by locally managed enterprise, go to local governments. Noticeably, local governments are also allowed to claim revenues from investments made locally. Lastly, shared revenues, the main resource of government income, are divided between the central and local governments following some formulas that vary across regions and periods (Wong, Heady & Woo, 1995). The decentralized fiscal control thus provided local governments with strong incentives for pursuing local prosperity.

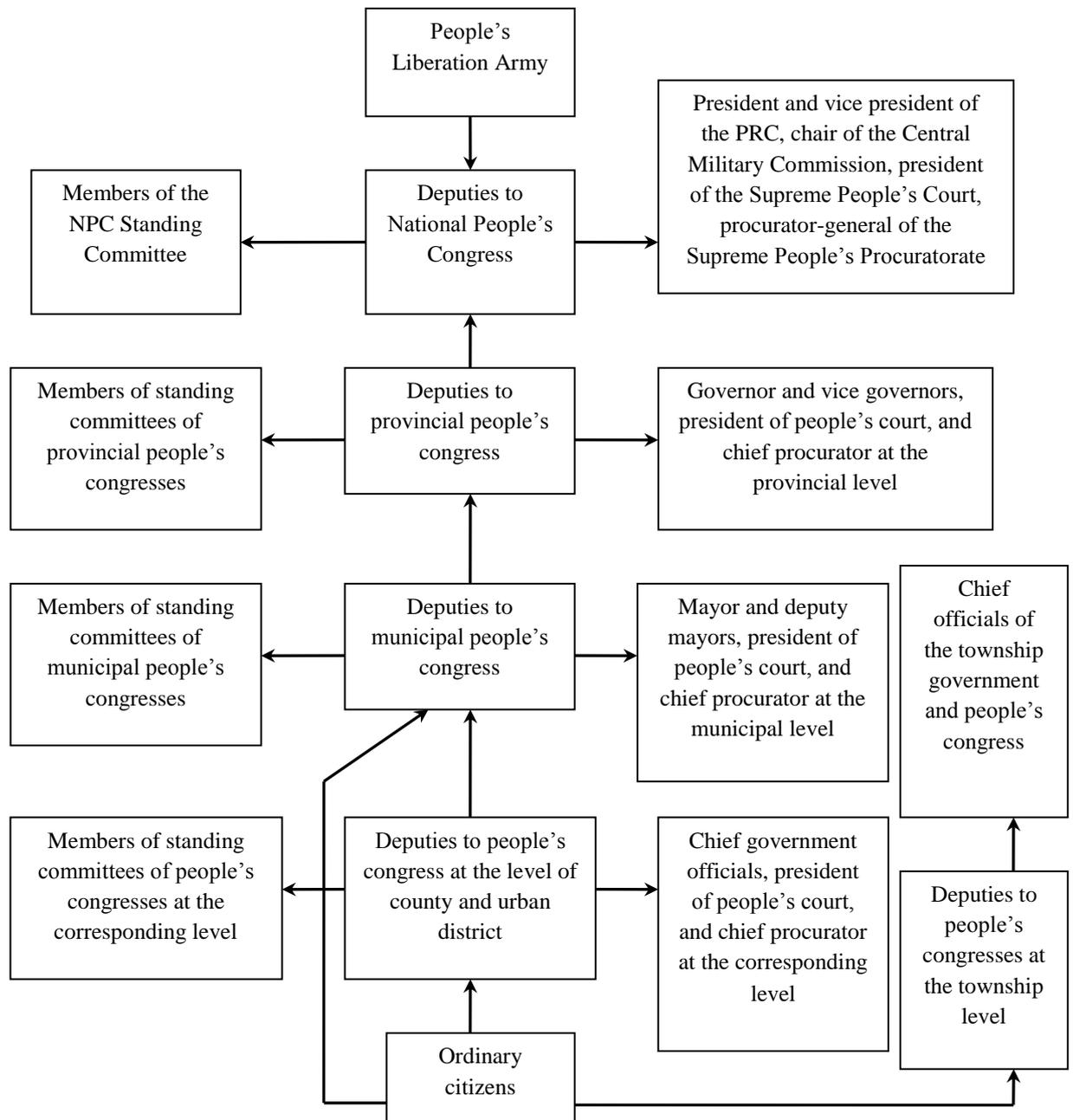
6.4.3 Political control

Electoral systems

Under the new electoral law (1979), the principle of direct election of people's deputies applied only at the county and urban district level. Above that level, deputies to each level are elected by those of the level below. As with the election of chiefs in the workplace, Party leaders usually discouraged local cadres from rigging direct elections, unless challenges to party leadership occurred, so as to guarantee a certain degree of spontaneous citizen participation and representation in the people's congress, as well as to impress ordinary voters with the seriousness of democratic reform. However, the higher the level of government, the further the elections became from the masses and closer to the central power in the Party-state hierarchy.

The figure below presents the electoral system based on the electoral law in China (see Figure 6-5), in order to explain the power-related differences between direct and indirect elections.

Figure 6-5 China's electoral system since 1979



Note: Arrows indicate who elects whom. At the central level, the premier and cabinet members, nominated by the PRC president and premier respectively, must be approved by NPC deputies by vote.

Source: Chen, 1999.

Direct elections at the county level are the foundation for the elections to organs of state power at all levels throughout the country (Chen, 1999). Holding direct elections at the county level enables the people to exercise direct control over the county people's congress. The county people's congress will elect its standing committee, the county people's government and deputies to the people's congress at the provincial level. In China's electoral system, the direct election of county-level congressional deputies suggests that the actual power is limited to only the lowest levels of government. Consequently, the direct election is too negligible to have any substantial impact on the issues of national politics or on the decision making process at the highest level (White, 1993). According to *the Constitution of the People's Republic of China* (1982),

Article 97 Deputies to the people's congresses of provinces, municipalities directly under the Central Government, and cities divided into districts are elected by the people's congresses at the next lower level; deputies to the people's congresses of counties, cities not divided into districts, municipal districts, townships, nationality townships and towns are elected directly by their constituencies.

Self-governance

As a counterpart of residents' committee and street office system in urban areas, the model of villagers' committee was adopted as the basic unit of its social, political and administrative organization in rural areas. Both residents' committee and villagers' committee are established as grassroots government agencies to promote self-governance in local areas. In the *Organic Law of the Villagers' Committees* (1998) and the *Organic Law of the Residents' Committee* (1989), it is clearly stated that both are "a mass organization of self-government at the grassroots level", in which local residents "manage their own affairs, educate themselves, and serve their own needs". The villagers' committee and residents' committee thus enable villagers and urban residents to administer their own affairs, leading to self-governance at grassroots level.

It is significant to notice that the villagers' committee might be confused with the residents' committee. In fact, these two concepts, although both are supposed to be

self-governance organizations at grassroots level for self-management, self-education and self-service, are essentially different. Residents’ committees have been in existence since the early 1950s, which has its roots and is established in urban areas. The purpose is mainly to facilitate government administrative and policing tasks at the neighbourhood level, as well as to mobilize those who do not belong to a work unit. In addition, residents’ committees are also made to be less intrusive and more responsive to residents’ needs.

More specifically, the organic laws envisaged significant differences between those two committees, at least in four respects: provisions for elections; relationship to the party, relationship to higher levels of government; and gender composition (Benewick, et al., 2004) . These differences are presented in the figure below (see Table 6-3).

Table 6-3 Differences between Villagers’ Committee and Residents’ Committee

Differences	Villagers’ Committee	Residents’ Committee
Elections	Direct and democratic	By representatives; heavy involvement of the street office above it
Relationship to the Party	Core leadership of the Party	Almost irrelevant ¹⁷
Relationship to higher levels of government	Guidance but not leadership	Resource provision (budget, office, salary, etc.)
Gender composition	Women in a certain proportion	No such provision

Source: Benewick, 2004

In particular, the *Organic Law of the Villagers’ Committee* significantly pointed out that the “election is conducted, decision adopted, administration maintained and supervision exercised by democratic means” in the countryside and “the villagers’ committee shall manage the public affairs and public welfare undertakings of the village, mediate disputes among the villagers, help maintain public order, convey the villagers’ opinions and demands and make suggestions to the people’s government,

¹⁷ Formally and officially stated, but not in practices.

and support the villagers and ensure that they carry out self-government activities and exercise their democratic rights directly”. More importantly, the clearest difference lies in the role of the people’s government in the next higher level. It is regulated that the people’s government of a township or a city shall “guide, support and help” the villagers’ committee and residents’ committee in their work respectively, however, in the countryside, the affairs within the scope of the villagers self-government cannot be interfered.

In practices, the role and function of the self-governing organization might differ. In the case of ACWC, the residents’ committee had little influence over the decision making in the conservation of the city walls. This relates back to the discussion on the municipal government as the key player as local authority (see Section 6.2.3). However, in the case of WSTK, the villager’s committee played an important role in organizing social and economic life and engaging villagers in policy and decision making. I will further discuss this respectively in two cases in Chapter 7.

The two cases indicate that although the governing systems in urban and rural China are different, self-governance is more important in the countryside. In particular, the development of the village self-government contributes to new forms of political influence and political participation in the rural areas as well as new political discourses which potentially create new rights for the villagers.

6.4.4 Key actors in local development

As identified earlier in this chapter, after land reforms in 1980s, local governments gained control over state land and began to use the land for developing the local economy. Thus, the role of local government is crucial. As the manager of land, local governments link existing land users, for example, residents or state work units, with developers (Wu, 1999).

Most significantly, businessmen have grown into a new breed of elite in Chinese society, with the transition from a planned economy to a market economy, and from a traditional culture to a commercial culture under reforms. The term “business elite” used here denotes a group with a high position in the hierarchy of the society in terms of their income, education and access to political power brokers (Pearson,

1997). In particular, the new private entrepreneurs who have owned private capital exhibit the prominence of Chinese business elites, which is demonstrated by the Forbes and the China-based Hurun List selecting the top 100 wealthy individuals. Moreover, the 1978 “open policy” for foreign investment also boosted the emergence of business elites in the foreign sector. Under this new policy and continuous economic liberalization, business enterprises and elites had been grown as an important actor in state-society relations.

In particular, to maintain the legitimacy and authority of the party-state, entrepreneurs or businessmen in private sectors are encouraged to join the CCP (Hong, 2004). It was initiated in 2001, when the party added Jiang’s “the three representatives” (see Chapter 4) to its agenda. The percentage of private entrepreneurs who were party members had risen to about 40 percent by 2003 (Finkelstein & Kivlehan, 2003). Currently, the private entrepreneurs possess the highest percentage of party members compared with other social groups (for example, intellectuals, artists, and workers) within the CCP (Chen, et al. 2006). Thus, in addition to their influence on Chinese economy, the business entrepreneurs emerged as a group of elite who began to play an important role in the politics.

6.5 Summary

This chapter introduces an urban and a rural case – Ancient City Walls in Changsha and Wang Shan Tu Ku, with the focus on the decision-making processes and actors involved. In particular, changes in the political and socio-economic domains under urban and rural reforms are investigated. It identifies and compares differences focusing on changes in the market and network in the city and in the countryside.

Although self-governance is a strong theme in both urban and rural governance, there is a different political and institutional arrangement (electoral system and self-governing organizations). In particular, the direct elections and the villagers’ committee in the rural areas contribute to new forms of political influence and discourses which grant more power for villagers. Another important difference between the urban and rural governance is concerning the actors involved and their relations. Under reforms, modernization and fiscal decentralization has provided local governments more power and incentives to attract investment in localities.

The literature suggests that these changes added a new breed of actors to the state-society interactions, which provides specific socio-economic context for the comparative analysis on urban and rural governance. In the city, under the introduction of the new land-lease system, land became largely commoditized and property market prospered. In this context, local authorities and large corporations in property development become main actors in urban development. Meanwhile, against the background of rural industrialization, the countryside has seen prosperity of small and medium-sized business enterprises, which also become key actors in local development. However, based on the empirical studies through comparing an urban and a rural case presented in the next analysis chapters, I argue that the relationships between local authorities, business elite, and citizens (or villagers) differed significantly.

Following the interpretive approach by Bevir and Rhodes (2003), the next two chapters aim to unravel Chinese local-level governance, triangulating the literature, the data and the insights gained. It tells stories of different government narratives and governing approaches in the process. In particular, the following analysis chapters examine and compare changes, traditions and dilemmas in urban and rural cases, echoing three key concepts in the interpretive policy analysis by Bevir and Rhodes (2003) discussed in the methodology chapter.

CHAPTER SEVEN

COMPARING TWO CASES: INTERPRETING DILEMMAS

7.1 Introduction

The previous chapter introduced an urban and a rural case giving an account, with relevant background information, of the heritage sites and conservation efforts by different actors. It also investigated the divergent trends resulting from the reforms. This and the following chapter will now present the main analysis of this thesis. In this and the following chapter I discuss local governance, through a comparison between an urban and a rural case study. Themes on their differences concerning local bureaucracy, and how local government copes with the business elite and engages public voices are also developed and examined.

Based on the interpretive policy analysis to “decentre” governance by Bevir and Rhodes (2003), the objective of this chapter is to identify, interpret and compare changes, as well as dilemmas in the urban and rural cases through analyzing traditions. As such, this chapter consists of four sections: First, some important governmental traditions are identified. Following this, a comparative analysis of governing practices and tactics between the two cases is conducted and as such, this chapter is divided into two large sections. Significantly, through the lens of Chinese governmental and social traditions, these practices can be interpreted as responses to the changes in society, identified in the last chapter.

7.2 On traditions

7.2.1 The centralized power and the local autonomy

The history of ancient China prior to the 20th century was characterized by dynastic cycles, which experienced the ruling of an emperor with unlimited power over the country. Power was determined by the mandate of heaven, and emperors were named “Son of Heaven”. According to Wang (1999), legitimacy was established through the mandate of heaven as long as the emperor ruled in a righteous way and maintained harmony within the Chinese society. Moreover, under dynastic rule, an elaborate bureaucracy exercised highly centralized power, while citizens were subjects of the emperor, not participants in a political system (Wang, 1999).

While the Chinese imperial government was centralized and was hierarchical in structural, the system did permit some degree of autonomy at local level, on the condition that this did not interfere with the absolute authority of the emperor (Wang, 1999). A magistrate for a county, the lowest administrative unit in traditional China, could not possibly carry out his duties without working with and through the “local power structure”. This power structure was headed by the large landowners, including merchants, artisans, and other persons of wealth and power in the community. As a convenient administrative arrangement, these groups were permitted by the magistrate to manage their own affairs within their own established confines. The magistrate naturally reserved the right to intervene if he deemed it necessary. As identified in Chapter 2, local autonomy is important under political reforms in contemporary China.

7.2.2 Confucianism

Confucianism, or Confucian ideology, has influenced Chinese society for over two thousand years since 6th century BC and still continues to influence our behaviors. The central concept in Confucianism is to achieve harmony in society through moral conduct in all relationships. As Charles Moore put it, writing of the humanism of Chinese philosophy as a whole, “people come first in China”. Wright (1964) has observed some separate “approved attitudes and behavior patterns” distilled from the *Analects of Confucius*. For example, among these patterns, ordinary people’s submissiveness to authority (refer to parents, elders and superiors) and submissiveness to the mores and norms (represent reasons and rationality) are the central theme of Confucianism in terms of the treatment to others. Moreover, preference for non-violent moral reform in state and society, as well as non-competitiveness, indicates a “harmonious” way in resolving conflict and disputes. More significantly, Chinese people’s value on history, culture, and tradition are also deeply influenced by some Confucian ideas, such as reverence for the past and respect for history, courage and sense of responsibility for a great tradition, and exclusiveness and fastidiousness on moral and cultural grounds demonstrate.

As the officially sanctioned political ideology, Confucianism conditioned and controlled the minds of rulers and subjects alike, which became the undisputed “orthodox doctrine of the imperial state” (Wright, 1964). It is noted that the political

ideology, as mentioned earlier in discussing China as a developmental authoritarianism, has a central role in both the imperial and communist Chinese systems. Although it has been deposed given it stands for the official philosophy in despotism in the 1900s, the new leaderships in the post-Mao era carry forward and foster “the great national spirit” and redefine the importance of Confucianism in modern times. As identified earlier (see Chapters 2 and 4), “constructing a harmonious society”, which is based on beliefs founded in Confucianism, is a reinterpretation and practice. As the central concept in Confucianism, “morality” and “harmony” have been promoted by government as principles that guide people’s behaviors in society. This study mainly focuses on the three key elements in Confucianism: the belief on “harmony”, *guanxi* (interpersonal relationships), the family-based fabric, and gentry-officialdom.

The belief of “harmony”

Among these values, harmony is the core and cardinal cultural value. Chinese people consider that the end of human communication is to establish harmonious relationships. Conflict is regarded as a detractor from harmony and a toxin in healthy communication. Therefore, as stated by Chen and Xiao (1993), Chen and Chung (1994), the ultimate goal of Chinese communication is to pursue a conflict-free relationship and reach the status of harmony in society. It strives to establish a long-term, mutually beneficial relationship and to promote the active handling of a conflict. The belief in harmony is regarded to be embedded both in the occurrence of conflict and process of conflict resolution.

The philosophical foundation of harmony in China is based on the belief that the universe is a constant changing and transforming process in line with the dialectic interaction between two opposite but complementary forces, yin and yang, and harmony stays in equilibrium and establishes the mutual dependency, which brings continuity to the process of change (Cheng, 1987, Chu, 1974). In accordance with the doctrine of Confucianism, Moism, and Taoism, harmony is the end and also the means of human interaction, one in which people display a sincere and wholehearted concern for each other through interdependence and cooperation.

According to Leung (2011), harmony maintenance has two motives in responding to a conflict situation – the prevention of relationship disintegration and relationship promotion, which holds a dualistic view and thus, sees harmony as a dualistic concept. It is stated that these motives of harmony can be identified as “disintegration avoidance” and “harmony enhance”, which would lead to different strategies in conflict management. This belief in harmony has influenced Chinese society for over two thousand years and continues to influence Chinese behaviours, which mostly resist people from being involved in conflict and even if in a conflict situation, resisting them from a destructive course of conflict resolution.

To pursue conflict-free interaction, Chinese have developed five main rules in communications, self-restraint-self-discipline, indirect expression of disapproval, saving or making face for counterparts, reciprocity, and the emphasis on particularistic relationships regulated by *li* and *yi* (Chen & Xiao, 1993). *Li* means the Chinese practice of propriety, rite, ritual, ceremonies, decorum, etiquette, and rules of conduct (Chen & Ma, 2002), which can be used to deal with human conflict in traditional thought as stated in the Confucian classical *Book of Rite* (Liji, 1991).

Therefore, under the influence of harmony, the social agenda of contemporary China is characterized as “harmonious society” (see Chapter 4). It indicates the new development of Chinese leadership development being different from the old paradigm “getting rich first” (Lee, 2009). Conceptually, a harmonious society seeks to present the thought of harmony as a universal view of social order. It signifies the effort to seek a consensus or common interest in the society.

Guanxi (interpersonal relationships)

Guanxi, which can be loosely translated as “connections”, means “relation” or “relationship”. It is one of the fundamental cultural values in China. According to Fan (2007), *guanxi* can be understood as the network of relationships in which various parties work together. It is informal but serves important psychological and behavioural functions in Chinese’s life, historically and in modern times. The notion of *guanxi* can be traced back to traditional Chinese philosophy, in relation to the emphasis on “human heartedness” by Confucianism. It stresses the centrality of social interactions in the formation of the individual’s sense of fulfilment as a

“person” (Gold, Guthrie & Wank, 2002). For the Chinese, the self is realized in the social sphere under the belief that the individual cannot be fulfilled as a “person” in isolation from his fellow men.

In Confucianism, the key concept is *ren*¹⁸, or human heartedness, which significantly involves self-cultivation and learning how to treat other people. That is to say, being Chinese, how to understand and manage *guanxi*, or interpersonal relationships, are essential. It is noted by a Chinese scholar that Chinese society is relation-based, in which the emphasis is placed on the relation between individuals: “the focus is not fixed on any particular individual, but on the particular nature of the relations between individuals who interact with each other. The focus is placed upon the relationship.” (King & Bond, 1985, p. 63) Moreover, Tu (1998, p. 114) argues that the self so conceived is a dynamic process, which needs to be “in touch with other selves and to communicate through an ever-expanding network of human-relatedness”.

Guanxi refers to a way of social interactions featured by an informal relationship between people, or more narrowly as “particularistic ties” (Jacobs, 1979). These ties are established either through kinship, native place, ethnicity, or through achieving characteristics such as having shared the same or similar experiences. Within this mode of social ties, society is composed of overlapping networks with differentially categories of links. Significantly, given *guanxi* is “based on mutual interest and benefit”; the notion of reciprocal obligation and indebtedness is prevalent and central. According to Yang (1994), once *guanxi* is realized by two people, one can ask a favour of the other with the expectation that he or she will repay in the future. Thus, in this sense, *guanxi* is more than simply an issue of personal interrelations. Rather, it is often relate to the manufacture of obligation and indebtedness through exchanging gifts and asking favours.

In this way, *guanxi* has both positive and negative connotations. Some scholars see it as fuel to the corruption, also, an obstacle of “the rule of law” in the country. However, those who see it in a more favourable light contend that *guanxi* is essential

¹⁸ *Ren* (仁), dealing with the problem of how a human realizes the virtue in everyday life. Confucius defined *ren* in the following ways: “wishing to be established himself, seeks also to establish others; wishing to be enlarged himself, he seeks also to enlarge others”, and *ren* “is not to do to others as you would not wish done to yourself.”

in Chinese culture, handed down relative unchanged through time and space. Still others argue that as the state has loosened its control on the society and the economy, the role of *guanxi* has expanded. In this study, *guanxi* also presents two sides in social interactions, one is more interest-oriented, and the other is featured by social ties, when local government dealt with different actors.

Family-based social fabric

As formally institutionalized organizations between state and the people were strictly watched, a strong civil society based on informal institutions and organic organizations, especially lineage-related ones, prospered. It is thus crucial to understand the role of families and lineage systems in societal organization and quotidian life. Even in contemporary China, these informal institutions still play an indispensable role for local governance (Tsai, 2007). In other words, a patriarchal lineage system, based on families, coexisted with formal government structures. In Chinese imperial times, human relationships were the center of life (Wang, 1999). In this net woven by personal ties, as mentioned earlier, harmony is crucial. It is then achieved by the coordination among people through negotiation, compromise, and through moral virtues which demanded that everyone “behave properly” and fulfilled their obligations.

Gentry-officialdom

Officials in the government, under the imperial system, held office by virtue of imperial degrees obtained through the civil service examination. They dominated the political and economic life in the land. Under the imperial Qing Dynasty (1636-1911), officials wielded complete and arbitrary power over their subjects, and were responsible for the lives and well-being of about a quarter of a million of people (Wang, 1999). Government officials, especially the magistrate, therefore, had to seek the cooperation and support of large landholders to administer the county on behalf of the emperor and the central administration. Under the provincial level of administration, all important decisions affecting the community were made by the elites with the blessings of the magistrate. Elites were those who constituted the small and privileged upper class of the Chinese agrarian society. Thus, ancient China has seen the arbitrary decision making by the officials and elites that exercised

control over the mass of people. It is the gentry-officialdom in the traditional Chinese political system in which government officials as well as elites take the lead.

7.2.3 “The rule of law”

The term “law” in ancient China since Spring and Autumn period (722-479 BC) was related to the disciplined power by the sage king. Recorded in *Yanzi Spring and Autumn Annals – Admonition Nine*¹⁹, “in early times, the territory during the era of the Emperor Huan in Qi was smaller, he consolidated the rule of law, popularizing education and morality, and thus he secured for Qi the hegemony of other kingdoms”. Han Feizi in pre-Qin conceived that the legal system is the first cause of the rise of a state. He emphasized the significance of a stern system of officials, which will make a state strong: “when officials are ruled, then the state is rich; when the state is rich, then the army is strong and all the business of being a hegemon or sage king is accomplished (*Han Feizi 46 Six Crimes*²⁰)”. The rule by the disciplined power is generally the prevailing principle of “law” in imperial China.

From 1949 to 1976, the focus of the party-state was “the rule by policy”. As the Party’s leader, Mao realized the importance of the state’s construction of democracy and “the rule of law”. Significantly in 1954, Mao led the formulation of the first Constitution of People’s Republic of China, emphasizing the constitution as a general rule and a fundamental law for a country. In particular, for China, it determines the principle of people’s democracy and socialism and provides a clear direction to the public, thereby increasing the initiation of the people (Mao, 1954). However, in the governmental practices under the reality of domestic and international threats and the lack of governmental experiences, “rule of policy” was prominent.

¹⁹ 《晏子春秋·谏上九》

²⁰ 《韩非子·六反》

“Rule of policy” refers to a government strategy that government administrative officials used policies as a main method to deal with the social, economic and political public affairs. The advantage, according to Mao, was the increase of the flexibility and efficiency of the government. It not only eases the restriction of earlier policies, but also allows the government conducts’ free from the current laws and regulations. In the following years of socialist revolution and construction, the Communist party strongly believed “policies and strategies were the life of the party” as the government ideology. In practices, “rule of policy” was actually exercised that the communist party, as the ruling party, increased its capacity in formulating, implementing and enforcing the policies. Noticeably, there is a very different meaning of policy from the West. Here, the policy in the term “rule of policy” refer to the working goals, guidelines, principles, general or detailed tasks, or standards written in government reports or documents or outspoken by important government officials at all levels of people’s governments.

In 2006, following Deng and Jiang, Hu Jintao presented his idea of “rule of law”, being “rule of law, assuming power for the people, fair and just, serving the major interests, and leadership of the party”. It was then called “lawful administration”. He argued that “the rule of law is that all people from all social segments take charge of the economic, cultural and social public issues, under the leadership of the communist party, according to the constitution and laws, through various kinds of channels and methods, in order to realize the systemization and legalization in socialist democracy. It is free from the changes of leaders, their opinions and attentions.” (Hu, 2006) It illuminates the premise of “the rule of law” in China as “under the leadership of the party” and the aim, which is to legitimize the rule. This, again, leads to the argument that laws in China are employed as an instrument in the hands of the ruling elite to govern the country as they see fit.

7.3 Comparing and explaining differences in two cases

In the last chapter, I reviewed changes under urban and rural reforms with regards to the local bureaucracy, the increasing influence of business enterprises and the changing relationship within the network of social actors. As argued by Bevir and Rhodes (2006), traditions are central to understand and explain changes and differences in governance practices. Therefore, following the dominant

governmental and social traditions identified in the last section, this section attempts to examine and compare different governing practices in both the urban and the rural cases. Through analyzing these governing practices, I emphasize the differences between the two cases whilst still identifying similarities. This section further identifies and interprets the dilemmas faced by the urban and rural government, illuminated by the two case studies.

7.3.1 Local bureaucracy

Urban bureaucrats: the privileged

In urban areas, as identified in Chapter 6, the residents committee is mainly concerned with community service activities, such as welfare, public health, family planning, social relief, and juvenile education. However, the literature suggests that this grassroots organization and the emphasis on “voluntary participation and mutual benefit” among the state since the time of urban reforms, did not curb the growth of bureaucratic power. According to Wang (1999), the party cadres in urban areas still held the decision-making power and became a special privileged class. The bureaucrats in the cadre system had access to both information and power, thus, they were in a special position to exploit the condition and seized the unique opportunities. They began to notice that liberalization increased their opportunities to translate political power into economic wealth. For example, corruption in China is always conducted by government officials, who use their political privilege in exchange to economic interests. Therefore, it is no fundamental change in the urban bureaucracy that the decision-making power is still in the hands of the party cadres. I argue that the local bureaucrat is still a special privileged class, as traced to long-term traditions. Following the “decentred” framework (Bevir & Rhodes, 2003), I thus attempt to explain the governing approaches and behaviors through identifying the traditions.

In the case of ACWC, the municipal government of Changsha used tactics to cover up their actual purposes of pursuing partial economic interest which compromised the historical-cultural interest of heritages. I drew these government tactics from the behaviours and actions by the local governments in the process of dealing with the assembly of actors. This is also applied in the case of WSTK. Through identifying and examining these tactics, I gained some insights regarding the different

government-businessman and government-citizens relationships, which helps to develop new ideas in the theoretical analysis through the application of the grounded theory method.

Government tactics refer to the techniques and actions employed by government to fulfil the tasks related to its problems and intentions in their conduct. The word ‘tactic’ has been selected as it suggests a less rational and more instrumental approach (Flinders & Buller, 2006). As we shall see below, there are different tactics for implementing the objective: “back-room” decision-making, spreading false information, token participation, and corruption of government officials. I observe that, in urban areas, the municipal government maintained distance with citizens; however, under the pressure of different voices and social ties, they required closeness with ordinary people, which led to the public participation policies.

“Backroom” decision-making

“Backroom” decision-making refers to the municipal government made decisions in advance, but made public afterwards. There was only one conference on conservation projects, in which the decision was announced rather than made. And the public did not know how the decision was made concerning the protection of the length of city walls. Given the local government officials and specialists used obscure vocabularies and a highly professional plan sketch. I observed that most of the residents did not understand the explanation and the community could do nothing but accept the information. According to a member of the residents’ committee in Shouxing Community in Tongtai Street Office,

We did not have a say on this issue. We only received the announcement that there will be a huge construction, which benefited the urban development and local economy.

Moreover, in the hearings, seminars and meetings held by the government in Changsha, although media and other specialists were attended, the absence of ordinary people was noticeable. In the interview of one of the local residents, he said that

I am not sure and clear, but it is always the case that there is “behind-scene relationships”. Superficially, they had discussion and negotiation openly, which was reported by the media and through internet. However, we do not know what we cannot see. How was the decision made? Who decided? It is still unclear that what conditions would the conservation be? The overall process was not transparent.

Actually, it can be traced back to imperial China, when there was keen competition and manoeuvring by officials within the bureaucratic setup to gain favourable decisions on a particular issue. In all instances, some political activities were conducted in secrecy or backroom (Oi, 1995). Although the communist party attempted to re-establish government-citizens relationships through reforming and modernization, for example, by encouraging social organizations and e-government, these old traditions still shape China's political processes, and influence the actions and beliefs of elites and citizens alike.

Spreading false information

“Spreading false information” means that the local government publicized filtered and false information, not originally received from national level. This was designed to legitimize their pursuit of partial economic interest. In this case, I observed that the municipal government spread false information to the public, which in turn, breaks down trust between them. Before the decision was announced, the municipal bureau of Cultural Relics reported to national bureau, which was regulated in the law. The feedback of National Bureau of Cultural Relics was “in-site protection”. However, the municipal government delivered false information to the public. According to a specialist in cultural relics from the specialists’ group,

There was one time that Municipal and Provincial Bureau of Cultural Relics reported to the national bureau, and the feedback of the report was the “reflection of in-site protection” from National Bureau of Cultural Relics. So, finally, the Municipal Bureau of Cultural Relics explained that the in-site protection was on part of the city walls, not as a whole.

This indicates that local government has gained autonomy in managing their local

issues that the central government is only served as “a guide” in this case. This can also be traced back to the tradition that the Chinese imperial government did permit some degree of autonomy at the local level, on the condition that this did not interfere with the absolute authority of the emperor (Wang, 1999). In heritage conservation, “local autonomy” is protected by the laws and regulations. It is clearly stated in the *Law of Protection of Cultural Relics in the People’s Republic of China*, that

Article 8 Local people's governments at various levels shall take charge of the work concerning the protection of cultural relics within their own administrative areas. Departments in charge of the work concerning the protection of cultural relics under local people's governments at or above the county level shall exercise supervision and control over the protection of cultural relics within their own administrative areas.

In this way, local government takes full charge of the protection of the cultural relics. In this case, it was the Changsha municipal government who made the final decision on the conservation of the city walls. They formulated the *Conservation Plan on the Ancient City Walls in Changsha* in strict accordance with the laws and regulations for immovable cultural relics. For the local government, in the name of “doing the best”, they decided to build a museum for the 20-meters city walls, which was regarded as “following the legal procedure” by the mayor.

Employing ambiguity of laws

In this case, in the efforts to conserve the city walls, the mayor insisted that “the rule of law” was crucial. He emphasized that

The trump to the overall planning is “the rule of law” and “scientific protection”. Any heritage which is under the protection of law and regulations should be conserved in accordance with the Law of Cultural Relics in the People’s Republic of China and related regulations, acting according to legal procedures. In the urban construction touched on heritage conservation, we should listen to the opinions of associated departments and act in accordance with the law and rules.

As evidenced in his statement, theoretically, heritage conservation should be conducted in accordance with the law and regulations, however, the actual practices contrasted starkly with this. First, before the construction in historic areas, according to the *Law of the People's Republic of China on Protection of Cultural Relics*:

Article 29 Before launching a large-scale capital construction project, the construction unit shall first request a report from the administrative department for cultural relics under the people's government of the relevant province, autonomous region, or municipality directly under the Central Government, to make arrangements for institutions engaged in archaeological excavations to conduct archaeological investigation and prospecting at places where cultural relics may be buried underground within the area designated for the project.

Moreover, specifically for the heritages underground, in 2008, the municipal people's government of Changsha issued the *Notices on Improving Investigation, Prospecting and Archaeological Excavations to Cultural Relics Underground in Changsha*. In this government document, the first clause states that:

Underground archaeological investigation and prospecting should be conducted in any construction project over 3.3 acre within the administrative region in Changsha, and any construction project within the designated places where cultural relics are buried underground by people's government at all levels.

As clearly stated in the law and the regulation, before the construction in the historic city area in Changsha, the archaeological excavation is mandatory. As presented in Figure 6-3, the land where Wanda Plaza is located is in a restricted area in the Scenic Belt along the Xiang River, which belonged to the historic city area. The land should have been investigated and prospected for archaeological excavations before it was handed over to the developer. However, claiming that “we had no choice” due to “reasons of local economic capacity”, the local government in Changsha handed the land over to Wanda without underground investigation in advance. Thus, I argue that the municipal government of Changsha used “rule of law” as a cover up.

As I explored in Chapter 2, in China, “the rule of law” cannot be considered as the counterpart of that in the west. The literature suggests that “law” in China is an integration of constitution, guiding laws and operational laws, government policies and political systems. These were integral components of government, of the systems of acting upon and directing the conduct of government. In all these accounts, there is arbitrary use of law, which sees a strong resemblance to “the rule by man” in China. In this case, the municipal government employed the ambiguity in the laws to legitimize their pursuit of partial economic interest, which reflected the tradition of “the rule of man” and “the rule by law”. Although the Constitution states that authority is vested in the people, it was not exercised in practices, illuminated in the case of ACWC.

Corruption

Corruption is another important issue for government officials in traditional and modern China. It was a recent case that the vice-chief of Changsha Municipal Planning Bureau was accused of bribery in December 2012 and made public on the newspaper and internet. The report was titled “Business skills of power by Chief of Planning Bureau”. It was revealed that the vice-chief owned 16 apartments, among which two of them were villas in Changsha and Beijing. The housing properties alone were worth 116 million RMB (11.6 million GBP). It was reported that the vice-chief made the plan “deliberately” with property developers, on land use, bidding, approval procedures, application fees and alike. Besides, he exchanged the “first-highly confidential” information in planning to the developers from the year 2000, through which he was once bribed 200 thousand RMB, 100 thousand HKD, and 20 thousand USD from one developer among many others. Furthermore, his wife and brother were also involved. This report was followed by a large number of criticisms by online users.

The conduct of government significantly affects public trust in them. In this case, the ordinary people questioned the “back-room decision making” of government and articulated their distrust due to the government officials’ misconduct. As stated by Mr. Wang, an online user, *“it is not that I do not trust them at the first place, rather, their misconduct failed it. The problem was not that I did not participate, it was that there was little space and it made no difference.”* Therefore, given the “back-room

decision-making”, “spreading of false information” and corruption of government officials, it was hardly surprising that there was a great amount of public dissent surrounding this controversy.

Deflecting attention

In the face of this public dissent and differing voices, the local government deflected attention of the public, by constructing problems and creating obstacles in the process. The municipal government deflected the attention of the public when dealing conflicts of interest by drawing their attention to potential problematic obstacles and risks although these later proved to be ‘red herrings’. For example, it was evident in the interviews that during discussion and debate, specialists spotted issues of flood prevention and planning in restricted areas of the scenic belt. This became “a main topic” of conversation initiated by local government officials. One of the specialists stated that:

There are alternatives that are feasible and practical, but the government still stuck to their decision of cutting off the city walls. It indicates that it was not the problems of flood prevention or, whatever else, matters.... the flooding season is coming, and nothing goes wrong, in fact, no such great danger existed.

Another detailed obstacle, the piping effects, was created. It was a technical problem, which was indigestible for many lay people. In the interviews with local residents, few of them knew what exactly the piping was. One of the residents responded that “we did not know, but it seems that the problem was serious and crucial to the in-site protection of the city walls”. The conference later became a technical seminar for government officials and specialists, to which the public was not invited and thus this increased their impression that there was an insurmountable difficulty with on-site protection. However, in response to the technical difficulty, the specialist stated

Through in-site investigation, it was found that the piping can be prevented. In the surrounding of city walls, we made a water-resisting wall, deep into the sand-gravel layer, and fill the pores or holes which might cause the pipe

effects. That is ok. All the high buildings in Changsha need the water-resisting wall before construction.

Although specialists offered solutions, such as to delay the construction until after the flood season, the municipal government did not accept this, indicating that the problem, obstacles and risk were irresolvable. Thus, it looks like the local government constructed these problems and created obstacles to deflect the attention of the public in the face of social dissent. This suggests that whilst urban governments appear to seek out different opinions, in reality they still hold the decision-making power. In urban areas, local governments maintain distance from citizens. In this case, the public participation was actually tokenism. However, under the pressure of different voices and social ties, local authorities required closeness with ordinary people, which led to public participation policies. To be specific, these pressures were brought about by social and cultural factors within a clan in the case of WSTK. As will be discussed later in this chapter, the reputation amongst villagers is a concern by local government officials. This also indicated the important influence of family-based social fabric in the countryside.

Token participation

People had no efficient way to express their interest except on the internet and the local government did not take their voices seriously, which led to the inactive participation of ordinary people. In the case of ACWC there were five conferences over a period of three months. However, the ordinary people were neither engaged in any of the discussions nor in the decision-making process.

In the hearings, seminars and meetings held by the government in Changsha, although the media and other specialists attended, the absence of ordinary people was noticeable. Given that the government had already made its decision, this level of participation was ineffective and led to tokenism. Local residents thus doubted the effects of participation, *“the thing is even if I participate, what changes will there be?”* In the interviews with local residents, they felt powerless and distanced, *“We can do nothing. Talk to the media? Useless. Talk to government? Useless. I’d rather be silent. It is useless to talk to authority....no one wants to know our opinions”*.

This can be related back to the discussion on traditions of deliberation in ancient China which maintains that ordinary people should not take part in or debate important political and public issues (see Chapter 4). It is the authority who makes decisions and participation or deliberation is practiced by groups of powerful bureaucratic elites only.

Rural bureaucrats: the middlemen

As identified in the last chapter, rural reforms are evidenced by industrialization, burgeoning small and medium sized TVEs, and emphasis on self-governance. All of these developments have resulted in the emergence of “middlemen” in rural bureaucracy, thus creating a new breed of local cadres: skilled, better educated, and more technologically inclined. They are the fruits of government funded programs to bring forth “university- educated grassroots government officials” (*daxuesheng cunquan*) promoted by central government since 2005. In July 2005, the General Office of the Central Committee and the General Office of the State Council issued a government policy “*On Guiding and Encouraging University Graduates to Work at Grassroots Level*”. It was stated in the document that:

To actively guide and encourage grass-roots-oriented employment of university graduates is beneficial to the growth of young talents and the improvement of grassroots personnel structure, to the coordination between urban and rural areas and their regional economy, to the construction of a harmonious socialist society and the strengthening of the party's legitimacy.

Since 2009, Xinjian County has employed 53 university-educated government officials in three years. In this case the vice township commissioner is a graduate in the University of Nanchang. In the interviews with members of the villagers’ committee who worked closely with these university graduates, it was suggested that:

In recent years, there are more and more university graduates working at grassroots level government. They actively participate in the daily activities in the village and improve the public service, using their advantages in knowledge and information. They are creative and bring new blood to the

village. For example, in conserving the WSTK, they put great efforts in communicating with the county government and worked together with the thematic working group.

With this new blood, local government began to realize the significance of public involvement. In the process of relocating households, the local government worked closely with the villagers' committee to engage the community. In the evaluation report of the project, the outcomes of the opinion polls were highlighted, which effected the overall planning of the removal and construction, especially in relation to housing location and style. Thus, I observed the effects of "empowering the community" by local government.

Empowering the community

The concept of "community" in rural China was borrowed from systems of urban governance. According to a government policy document in 2000, "community" in urban China is defined as "a social collective formed by people who reside within a defined and bounded district". It was interpreted as a new site for governmental intervention, which was demonstrated by the extension of the systems of residents' committee and street office. In 2009, the central government issued a policy document *On the Promotion of New Urbanization in Rural China*. It was designed to "realize the urbanization of rural basic infrastructure and the citizenship of villagers, focusing on public services in the community". Thus, it indicated the adoption of the term community in rural China as a new form of institution. Community construction and empowerment are seen as the implementation of the concept of "a harmonious society" (see Chapter 4). According to the government report *On Steadily Improving Community Construction in Xinjian County*:

Community empowerment or construction, under the leadership of the party and government, is to strengthen the functions, improve the services and solve the problems in the community, relying on various social forces and social resources. It is a new government program, which was required by economic and social development in the construction of modernization in new era.

Most of the villagers I interviewed operated small family-based enterprises, such as a convenience store, a fishery and a noodle-making business. One of the interviewees who took over the contract for a pond in a fishing business said that,

We took over the contract with another family. We need to keep an eye on the pond and the fish every night. So we, two families, take turns. And we share the harvesting [...] we are all honest folks from the same village; it is better to do business together.

In interviewing members of the villagers' committee, the term "community" was often mentioned. "Community", according to the director of villagers' committee, includes all the villagers, members of the villagers' committee, and government officials at township level. In their view, the community is significant, a community which can be seen as relating to the "memory" and "tradition". According to villagers:

We, a whole family, have lived in houses for ages. Everything is different in apartments. Here, we have meals outside, chat with neighbours, and see children running in front of us in the courtyard. We have a big courtyard, where we feed the chickens and ducks. We plant pear trees and have jubilees. Everything we have is natural. We have no idea why people in urban areas like living in apartments, they are like drawers.

This also indicated a traditional family-based social fabric from ancient China, as indicated in the previous section. Wang (1999) argues that in modern China, although social ties based on family may not be dominant, the prevalence of personal ties and the interpersonal network-based view of society still influences people's perception of self, values, rights, etc.

In the case of WSTK, the villagers' committee mediated disputes, organized small-scale discussions among villagers, distributed and collected opinions polls, carried out a new model of removal, and reflected the opinions and suggestions back to the township government. To resolve the conflict, the rural government encouraged full involvement of the villagers' committee and villagers in the new model of removal and relocation. This indicates that self-governance is more important in rural areas.

7.3.2 Coping with business elite

As identified earlier (see Chapter 6), economic reform has brought a new breed of entrepreneurial elite in the social network in both urban and rural areas. They have recognized the tremendous importance of cultivating good relations with officials to achieve their business goals. In the land and property market, negotiation between local authorities and developers becomes a major way of leasing state land. Land was seemingly leased at a very low price; however, as mentioned earlier, various taxes and fees were imposed on developers. Thus, for those land speculators who emerged from the burgeoning land and property development, this connection is crucial in land acquisition, tax and rent, and future preservation, expansion and protection of their business. It is evident in the statement “[n]o one can say that he acts in a way that is totally independent from government, anyone who says that ‘I am independent from government in China, I do business without dealing with governments’ is hypocritical” which was made by the project director of Wanda Kaifu Plaza. The literature suggests that, as a payback of the land rent to local governments, developers are asked to build infrastructure and social projects, or compensation for current tenants (Wu, 1999). Accordingly, under this framework, a coalition is developed between local governments and enterprises to benefit both parties.

Given that the local government has seen greater interdependence on the large corporations, it is evitable that segments of the business elites start out more closely tied to the government (Guo, 2000). In actual practice, local officials and business entrepreneurs share a common ground, which is likely to foster a degree of cooperation, as seen in both cases. The negotiation, coalition or cooperation is developed through establishing and maintaining a good personal relationship. I argue that this use of informal personal ties, or *guanxi* in Chinese, pervaded the Chinese context in conjunction with the formal authority relations in both cities and countryside.

In the city: interest relations

First, “economic interest” and “interest relations” are prominent in urban government programs since the urban reforms. The sole economic players in urban

China in 1978 were state and collectively owned enterprises. It was a traditional “battlefield for political and economic rents” (Aglietta & Bai, 2013, p. 91) that involved perplexing interest relations among the bureaucrats. The 1984 party decisions called for a profit sharing scheme between enterprises and supervising governmental bodies. Thus, the urban reforms in China have resulted in a greater interest relation among bureaucrats and enterprises. As discussed earlier in this chapter, the bureaucrats began to notice the translation of political influence into profit, the interest relations in the bureaucracy is important under urban reforms.

In the case of ACWC, the project of Wanda Plaza has occupied an area of 180 acres, which has investment of over 10 billion RMB (1 billion GBP). The in-site protection of the city walls encountered a large number of difficulties technically, which posed threats to the interests of developers, as well as the economic interests of government gained from the project. In the interviews with journalists and specialists, “government’s compromise in front of economic interests” and “under the pressure posed by the developer” is noted.

Interdependence with developer

As discussed in Chapter 6, large corporations in the land market have emerged and burgeoned in the city. In urban development, they have experienced increasing importance and even have the upper hand over the local government. As stated by a specialist in National Historic and Cultural Protection Institute, Mr. Zhang:

It has been a long time that the local government and developer have been interdependent. Eighty percent of the urban infrastructure depends on the investment of the developer, thus, the local government had no choice but to compromise to satisfy the needs of developer.

Moreover, the local government made their point that Wanda has acted efficiently and done a good job in communicating with associated departments, which “fully demonstrate the corporate social responsibility”. In the view of the mayor, both local government and developers were responsible for heritage conservation and they shared common ground in conducting conservation activities.

After the finding of the city walls, Wanda communicated with associated departments over time. They stopped the construction in November last year. After the conservation plan was decided, they claimed that they would behave exactly according to the plan of the government. In this respect, Wanda is an enterprise which is responsive and is willing to take on responsibility. Of course, they are worried but considerate, because of the time limit of the construction and flood season. We have a common ground in taking on the responsibility of heritage conservation.

Meanwhile, the president of Wanda also stressed the enterprise's interdependence to local government, as he emphasized that "*the relationship between local governments and business enterprises should be partnership and coordination*". It is highly aware that the government still has the leading role in the market, thus, maintaining a good relationship with government is essential to do business in China. Thus, I argue that the common interest and interdependencies of local government and the developer formed an "alliance"; sometimes the developer even had an upper hand over local government.

In this case, the local government faced pressure from the developer, which contributed to the speed-up of the decision-making. In the interview with the project director of Wanda Kaifu Plaza, he emphasized that:

What we ask is to make decision as soon as possible [...] but no matter what is the decision of the government, we will follow.

Moreover, the dominance of large businesses is also demonstrated by another government official, the Secondary Chief of Section of Heritage Conservation in Bureau of Cultural Relics, that:

Due to some reasons of local economic capacity, most of local governments hand the land over to developers soon after the removal begins. Thus, there would be a lot of troubles once a piece of heritage was discovered; we had no choice but to make way for developers.

Based on this, I argue that local government and developers became the elite groups who shared common interest and thus formed the alliance in the decision-making process, which reflects the tradition of gentry-officialdom in urban development.

In the countryside: networked relations

Compared to urban areas, rural China has experienced closer personal and kinship ties. A more potent force, the villagers' committee, appears as a key institution that leads to some democracy at grassroots level due to networked relations. According to White (1999), in rural China, the symbolic values, norms and traditions play an important role in shaping people's conceptions and practicing daily activities. The local leaders elected directly by villagers are affected by the socio-cultural influences. It is evident in the case of WSTK that the head commissioner in the county is actually the relative of one of the local residents being interviewed; the pressures of street-level public opinions were significant. In rural China, people were interlocked through the personal relationships in informal networks. Unlike urban areas, the personal interactions were much more frequent and close in the countryside.

As mentioned earlier, in WSTK, villagers were from the same clan. They all knew each other and had worked together in harvesting times. Local leaders had all originated and been raised in the county, and shared cultural values, traditions and norms. In the interviews, the director of villagers' committee said that:

The last thing we want to see is dispute with and protest from villagers. We would not want to see any of us in a lawsuit. It would hurt our feelings and our relationships.

Under the influence and pressure of personal and social ties in the village, local government in the case of WSTK consulted the public and authentically included their opinions in the decision-making process. Moreover, door-to-door visiting and consultation were also important in this case. In interviews with government officials, they emphasized the significance of communication with villagers in person, of knowing their needs directly and showing affection for them. In particular, for the nail households, it became an essential form of persuasion (will be discussed

later in more details). According to one middle-aged villager from the nail households, he was upset and doubtful about the intentions of local government's visiting, stating that:

I know what they want, my house. If not, they wouldn't show up forever. They are not concerned about our lives; they care about themselves, about the land. They can use it for more economic interest [...] They know if we protested and petitioned to an upper level, they would get investigated and of course, get a bad reputation in the area.

This indicated that “reputation” is significant in social interactions, which can be regarded as a kind of special relationship between two parties. In a society centred on *guanxi* and a lineage system, reputation is important to boost one's credentials, thus, to establish and develop these personal and social connections. In other words, reputation can be transferred from one party to another through *guanxi* networks, and thereby further develop it. According to Fan (2000), in Chinese traditional culture, the set of core values - virtue, moral consciousness, integrity, trustworthiness, the sense of shame and the fear of losing face are all associated with reputation. In this case, “reputation” derives informally from personal interactions in the village. The importance of reputation was also proved by the statement of local government officials. According to the secretary of Chief in Culture, Broadcasting, Tourism, News, and Publications Bureau in Xinjian County:

The image and reputation of the government reflects the interactions between government and citizens. To build the image and develop the reputation among the villagers, the key solution is to gain their support and trust through effective communications. If we had their support and trust, everything will be easy.

Therefore, under the influence of personal ties, the local government in rural areas cared about its relationship with and reputation amongst villagers. Besides, as identified earlier, the local government established close working relationships with the villagers' committee when conducting surveys and collecting opinions, its relations with villagers are developed. In this sense, I argue that “community” with

close personal ties is emphasized in rural governance when dealing with actors in local development.

Partnering with business enterprises

Before developing heritage tourism in the village, the renovation and the redevelopment of the site and surroundings must be carried out. With regard to the funding, the vice commissioner said that:

The redevelopment in the village and the maintenance and renovation of the ancient buildings require substantial funding, but where does this funding come from? We must seek multiple channels to raise funds for construction [...]. To encourage social forces to participate in the protection and development, through the use of private capital, commercial loan to support the village, to accelerate reform and improve the implementation of the rural landscape. Partnership between the village and enterprise domestically and overseas can be established, comprehensively protecting and running the historical and cultural heritage.

In late 2012, the county government signed a contract with *Jiangxi Wang Shan Tu Ku Cultural Tourism Development Co., Ltd.* and attracted 600 million RMB (60 million GBP) to redevelop the area as tourist attractions. Under the contract, the county government established partnership and coordination with the developer in the heritage conservation and management. In this case, unlike the Wanda Group, in the case of ACWC, I observed that the developer has little influence on the local government's decision-making. Thus, in the process of conflict resolution, the local government demonstrated a closer relationship with the villagers' committee rather than the developer. According to the project manager in Bureau of Cultural Relics in Xinjian County:

When we first knew it, we stopped the construction immediately. Only after all the problems were settled, the project can be continued.

Moreover, in the interview with a director in the company, it was pointed out that "local government is the boss". They were asked to attend the meetings and

symposiums with different parties. Besides, the materials and techniques used in the construction were also under surveillance. With regard to the business life in the village, as identified earlier, small and medium-sized enterprises have dominated. Their influence on local government is limited. Therefore, I argue that in the partnership between the government and these business enterprises, the rural government has realized the importance of and stayed close to villagers in carrying out development activities.

7.3.3 Engaging public voices

In the city: on internet

As discussed earlier, in the case of ACWC, “token participation” and “backroom decision-making” led to dissent and resistance on the internet. A number of online users criticized Changsha municipal government in “off-trading the historical and cultural values of heritages”. In this context, urban government has actively used internet technology to improve the efficiency of government services and government transparency. The internet thus provides a space for the public to express their interests, yet they still see the pointlessness of public participation. The following pages illustrate how the urban government engages public voices, highlighting the importance of the internet as a new platform for the ordinary person to speak, however this does not mean that they can necessarily act. Under the traditions of social ties, urban governance in China has experienced both a distance and an connection between local government and citizens.

The engagement of public voices was acquired through the media, including newspapers, such as, *Hunan Daily*, *Xiaoxiang Morning*, and *Changsha Evening*, through TV programs, and most importantly, the internet. The popularity of online space is evidenced by the rapid growth of the number of online users and its prevalence. According to a statistical report presented by the China Internet Network Information Centre (see Table 7-1 in the next page), China saw an explosive increase in the number of internet users from 2005 to 2012, a number that continues to increase dramatically. In March 1995, only 3,000 people were able to access the Internet in China. However, with the opening of the China Public Computer Internet in 1996, the internet was made available and soon became prevalent among the Chinese (Wang, 1999). In little more than six years, China attained the second

largest number of online users in the world. Indeed, the percentage rate of internet use climbed to 42.1% of the population, compared with only 8.5% seven years previously. Thus, we can see a rapid expansion of the internet population, despite the restrictions. Although the Chinese government takes efforts to control it, there is a suggestion that the internet was actively promoted as an engine for economic and technological development (Zhou, 2006).

Table 7-1 Internet growth: number of online users and its prevalence

Year	Number of Online Users	Prevalence
2005	111,000,000	8.5%
2006	137,000,000	10.5%
2007	210,000,000	16.0%
2008	298,000,000	22.6%
2009	384,000,000	28.9%
2010	457,300,000	34.3%
2011	513,100,000	38.3%
2012	564,000,000	42.1%

Source: China Internet Network Information Centre, 31st Statistical Report on the Internet Development in China 2012, <http://www.cnnic.net.cn/hlwfzyj/hlwxzbg/hlwtjbg/> (accessed August 1, 2013).

In the case of ACWC, the participation of ordinary people consisted mainly of those expressing their opinions and dissent on the internet. Some of the posts were constructive regarding a better idea on conserving the city walls, for example:

My opinion regarding what ACWC found in the construction site of Wanda Plaza is: the boss of Wanda should and has had the capability to modify the design of the plaza. Building a city wall museum underground, the upper levels can be apartments or hotels, whatever. And being mayor and superiors in civilized Changsha, they are well placed to help Wanda solve the problem. (Gong)

However, there are a large number of online users who expressed their dissent on the internet, for example:

What the hell is Wanda's idea? Wherever they go, there is destruction; it is the typical Chinese style. Is ACWC still facing the destruction and then fake reproducing? Wanda, stop! (mufei zai lushang)

The empire [a prank nickname for Chinese government on the internet] always disrespects and not knows how to protect history. Their people's main objective is going after money and achievement. (huichengqiang que buhui sajiao、xiaonai)

In the posts above, noticeably, the prank nickname “the empire” referring to Chinese government was made by the online users to try to avoid the censors. It is one of a large amount of examples where “sensitive words”, mostly radical, are filtered or “harmonized”, a humorous way to say it was deleted. It indicates control on the internet by the government, which is achieved through the censorship. The censorship is mainly aimed at clamping down on disruptive activities by internet users or operators (Wang, 1999). Various provisions included in censorship were mainly on forbidden contents, which might threaten the ruling of the party. However, although Chinese government still strengthened its regulative power to minimize its negative effects of the free circulation of information, dissent and resistance cannot be fully driven down. Thus, although the Chinese government was once labelled as “control-crazy” regarding the censorship and blocks on the internet, the other side of the story was neglected the one that related to the growing overwhelming numbers of online users and the huge prevalence of the internet. The real situation is not so clear-cut therefore it is important to bear in mind that censorship, under the principle of the harmonious society, targets radical expression on any anti-government or pro-government sentiments.

According to the mayor of Changsha,

There are a large amount of cultural relics in Changsha with a great density and diversity. It is not enough to solely rely on the government and Department of Cultural Relics. The municipal government made several points in mobilizing the social forces... we valued the opinions and suggestions from the public, through the internet, especially in the times of e-government.

Noticeably, the Chinese government has actively used internet technology to its own advantage, for example, the e-government project was launched in 1999 to improve the efficiency of government services and government transparency. As seen from the figure (Figure 7-1 in the next page), Changsha municipal government has put personnel information, newly issued government policies and reports online, furthermore, “mayor’s mailbox” is also accessible for general public. Significantly, Changsha Master Plan was publicized on the internet to seek for public opinions.

Figure 7-1 The Official Website of Changsha Municipal People’s Government



Source: <http://en.changsha.gov.cn/>

In the countryside: in-person persuasion

In rural China, ideological cultivation through in-person persuasion through is dominant as the governing approach, which suggests an informal form of the authority in the countryside. It is through the practice of “doing ideological work”. It means that local government, following the order from the central government, delivered the political and moral ideology to the public in order to ensure smoothness of government activities. It was a gentle, informal but relatively effective way to resolve the conflict in rural China. In 1983, the Party issued *Notices on Improving Political Ideological Work in Rural Areas by CCP and Central Government*, in which the problem of leftover of old ideology is highlighted. Thus, it signifies the delivering of government ideology and spiritual cultivation, that:

Everyone should work on the propaganda and ideological work, improve the knowledge and reach a common understanding on government activities. The ideology and practices need to follow the central government, through a strong sense of responsibility and credibility, using a powerful weapon of thoughts of political rationality. Local government should improve the leadership of doing ideological work, and promote the socialist systems of ideology and values. In the rural reform, local government should promote the creativity of ideology and methods in grassroots level.

In practice, indeed, local government did put great efforts in doing ideological work in the removal of households in this case. They sent a thematic working group to the village. In the process, the villagers' committee worked closely with the group by identifying the problem of villagers. According to a member in the working group:

The removal was associated with the demolition of villagers' ancestral grave and their ancestral houses, which was difficult for them to accept inwardly. Besides, the concept of land runs deeply in villagers' consciousness. They believe that land provides food and clothing; property is the guarantee for living. The priority for the removal project is to bring them around through doing ideological work.

Thus, in the case of WSTK, the delivery of ideology is significant in government activities. In the interviews with members of the working group, three ways of "doing ideological work" are identified. First, the villagers' committee held discussion panels amongst the villagers, to discuss the future development of the heritage site and surroundings, better living conditions and new opportunities for making money. Secondly, through sending the thematic working group to visit the nail households door-to-door, the villagers held the expectation of long-term economic interests. According to a member in the thematic working group:

At first, we visited nail households several times, but with little effect. But the group staffs were patient and persuasive so that resistance from villagers was eased. They held discussion panels, called door to door, and emphasized the merits of the government policy. I remembered there was

an 80-year-old villager who suffered from heart disease and high blood pressure. The family asked us not to knock on their door, to call them, or visit in person. We would be blamed if the senior gets ill. It was really hard to take any action. But we tried hard, teaching them to weigh up the pros and cons, calculate the profits before and after the removal and redevelopment. Then they changed their mind themselves from the perspective of economic interests.

Finally, the ideological work was delivered through “maintaining the correct orientation in public opinions”. It was to emphasize the government ideologies among the group members, local cadres, and villagers through community meetings and discussions. During the project, training was carried out in the working group; conferences were held among local cadres, party members, and villagers to widely spread the preferential policies on relocation, compensation and redevelopment in the area.

Therefore, although the level of public engagement is higher in rural areas than that in urban areas, I argue that rural Chinese still have little space to act under the condition that they are ideologically persuaded not to. This is consistent to the traditions of ruling in Chinese imperial system, as I have identified in Chapter 7. China’s history before the 20th century was characterized by dynastic cycles, in which citizens were subjects of the emperor, not participants in a political system (Zhou, 2006).

Since new China, Maoism stressed the importance of staying connected to the ordinary people through a process called “the mass line” (see Chapter 6). However, throughout these decades, the leadership of the party that exercised centralized power has come under a great deal of criticism (Guo, 2000). For example, the Tiananmen incident in 1989 marked a significant rebellion and rumbling against the party. Over 4,000 persons nationwide were arrested within that week and a number of them were given five-year prison terms. It was known as the Tiananmen massacre and in the following decades, there continued to be crackdowns on the demonstrators and protestors. Moreover, although the freedom of speech, of the press, assembly, association, marching and demonstration is guaranteed by the 1982 Constitution, the *Law of the People’s Republic of China in Assembly and Demonstration* regulated:

Article 7 Whoever holds an assembly, parade, or demonstration must apply to the authority in accordance with the law and get authorization.

Article 15 Citizens cannot start, organize or attend the assembly, parade, or demonstration outside their residence.

Therefore, the *Law of Assembly and Demonstration* is regarded by online users as “the Law of No Assembly and Demonstration without Permission”. It also indicates that the Constitution in China is nominal that “the rule of law” in China is actually referring to rule by laws, regulations and government policies (as was discussed earlier). The status of human rights and freedom to speak and act in China have depressed and disappointed the people. Ordinary people see “action” as “labour in vain”, which results in their inclination not to act.

7.4 Summary

Focusing on the concept of “changes”, “tradition” and “dilemmas” in Bevir and Rhodes’s “decentred” approach of governance, this chapter has examined and compared the governing practices in dealing with the network of actors involved in both an urban and a rural case of heritage conservation. This chapter started by identifying three important governmental traditions from imperial China: the centralized power and the local autonomy, Confucianism, and “the rule of law”. In particular, four elements of Confucianism, the belief in “harmony”, *Guanxi*, the family-based social fabric and gentry-officialdom, are investigated to show how these traditions are maintained and readapted in response to the changes in the market and the network of actors in urban and rural areas.

To be specific, under the reforms, the economy has become more market based and more outward oriented. Within this context, the business sector has grown rapidly, experiencing the burgeoning of private enterprises and a rising class of business entrepreneurs. In urban areas, large corporations, especially in the property development, have seen its increasing influence on the local politics, whereas small and medium sized enterprises still dominate the rural business sectors. In particular, when rural local government became a “local corporate state”, the relationship

between government and citizens changed. I also argue that self-governance is more important in the countryside.

Drawing from historical traditions and practices in two cases, I conclude in this chapter that government-citizen relations have seen a conflicting scenario in urban areas where, on the one hand local government keeps its distance whilst, on the other, it still seeks a connection with the citizens. However, in rural areas, the relations between government and citizens have experienced close personal and kinship ties and, in this case, the data suggests that persuasion through ideological cultivation is more dominant as the governing approach, which suggests an informal form of authority in the countryside. To understand the adjustments and changes, in the next chapter, I will return to a discussion regarding the involvement of the actors in these scenarios. This approach is designed to further unpack local governance through the views of different actors: how do they conceive the changes in the governance and thus inspire diverse actions?

CHAPTER EIGHT

NARRATIVES OF URBAN AND RURAL GOVERNANCE

8.1 Introduction

In this chapter, narratives in two cases of local governance are discussed respectively. Particular emphasis is placed on how they resemble or contrast with political traditions that have emerged since the days of imperial China. Moreover, this chapter also sets out to decentre the changes in local governance as understood by different actors in the network. I discuss how the key actors, local government, the developer, and the ordinary people conceive the government narratives and practices in each case. Changes, traditions and dilemmas, identified in the previous chapters, will be revisited to analyse how different actors articulate them. This approach is designed as a vehicle by which to further understand the changing practices in more depth. Significantly, the stories that are told reveal differences in the way these changes are experienced and understood, which refers to an “implementation gap” in the policy processes (Bevir & Rhodes, 2010, p. 21).

I structure this chapter into two main sections, narratives of urban governance and narratives of rural governance, based on the two case studies. Following this, I will summarize the key arguments in Section 8.4, and relate them back to the discussions in the last chapter.

8.2 Narratives of urban governance

8.2.1 On “managing the city”

The story of heritage conservation of ACWC starts from the narratives of local government. Since the economic reforms that began in the 1990s, a key phrase in governmental narratives is “economic development”. These have been constantly challenged by increasing conflicts and different narratives in society. In this situation, as identified earlier, local government decentralizes its power in the market yet centralizes decision making. Facing those conflicts, the Changsha municipal government employed “public participation under government leadership” as response.

The leading character in the story of local government is the mayor. He considered himself not as the top leader of the city as was traditional. The role of the mayor, as he made emphatically clear in interviews with Southern Weekly (*nanfang zhoumo*), was as follows:

The mayor is not the boss, he is a manager employed by the citizens. Any profit of the government belongs to all taxable individuals, not the mayor. I do not think the mayor has a great power. We are constrained in doing many things.

Here he sees governing as managing in which the mayor's power is limited and constrained. The role of local government has changed from "controlling" to "managing" the social and economic activities in the city. When managing the city, the dominant narrative of the mayor is that "development is of overriding importance", (from Deng, will be discussed later). In response to the conflict between the urban development and heritage conservation, the mayor emphasized the priority of development in government agenda. He stated that:

I always make a point that heritages are not a burden of the city, but a fortune. The key point is how to give an overall consideration in order to achieve the harmony between ancient and the modern. Constructions anywhere take the chance to be destructive to heritages. If the construction stops after the excavation and the identification of a heritage, for Changsha as a famous historical and cultural city, there will be no development. It would be a huge loss if the construction stops. We expect to fight for dreams, but being a pure idealist, we cannot do anything at the end! [...] Do you want a mayor who is not willing to do anything for the citizens? Do you expect a mayor who does nothing in his term?

Contradiction can clearly be seen in his statement. On the one hand, he highlights the importance of heritages as "a fortune" for the city, which should be protected; whilst on the other, he recognizes the conflict between the construction of new buildings and the destruction of heritages and stresses the requirement for development

Development, in the conditions proposed, is the top priority of a city, which echoes the government agenda – “development is of overriding importance”. Therefore, I argue that local government has become “development-oriented” in dealing with local public issues. In the process, an “alliance” has been established between the local government and the Wanda group, as discussed in the last chapter. In addition, the latest strategy, CAIP, is a new type of coalition between local government and enterprises in Chinese cities. Its formation reflects changing local governance, which is a transition trend in Chinese cities. However, the “alliance” or coalition has been challenged and highly criticized in society. The “alliance” is explained by one of the online users in this following excerpt;

They must have had an alliance in the decision-making, within which Wanda has the upper hand, in both economic and political perspectives [...] Local government and the developer shared a common interest while exchanging the resources they want from each other. Government authorities and businessmen have become the elite groups, there were sayings that “officials collude with businessmen” and “to make money power deals”.

Facing the dilemma of how to a network of actors with different interests, as identified in the last chapter, “public participation under the leadership” is the response from the local government. It can be seen in the local government’s re-interpretation of political governing traditions. However, the process does not work entirely smoothly or without interruption. As explained by Bevir and Rhodes (2003, p. 62), gaps “between what is supposed to be happening and what is actually taking place, between what has been promised and what has been delivered” are constantly appearing. In the following sections, how different actors conceive “public participation” are investigated respectively.

8.2.2 In search of “public participation”

The local government highlights public participation in the heritage conservation system and government documents. For the mayor, these efforts by local government facilitated public participation, which in turn achieves a “socially benign result” that appeases the dissenters and maintains social stability. In particular, following “public participation under government leadership” in government narratives, it is stated that

the decision to preserve 20 meters of the city walls was made following a legitimate procedure.

After rounds of discussion, based on the opinions of specialists, the current plan is partly in-site protection and partly removal. The formulation of the plan is following such a procedure.

Therefore, I suggest that local government perceived public participation as a way to legitimize its decision making. As such, in the developer's view, the role of the media was central to obtaining public participation, a crucial element in promoting interaction with the public. Citizens were informed and their opinions collected through the channel of social media, however, the outcome did not changed. Through this process of public participation, the conflict was resolved and the result "satisfied", at least favourably for Wanda. Through Wanda's actions; immediately suspending the construction and asking for participation of citizens and the media, they stressed their part in taking full social responsibility for resolving the conflict. According to the project director from Wanda,

If there is something of real value discovered, we need the media to participate, deliver the information to the public to mold public opinions. In this case, through participation of the citizens and interaction with the media, as well as the concern from the government, the result is considerably satisfied. It is really good [...] In protecting the ancient site, the Wanda Group has fully demonstrated its corporate social responsibility.

For both local government and the developer, the result through public participation in this case is good given that the public made the final decision. "Public participation" for local government and the developer is designed mainly to legitimize the decision making and to perform their social responsibility. However, the "backroom decision-making", identified in the last chapter, indicates a different view in the case of ACWC. In the following sections, the practices of "public participation under government leadership" with different views from actors are investigated.

Participation of specialists

From the first finding of ACWC in November 2011 to the final decision in February 2012, there were two conferences, four specialists' in-site investigations and discussions, two public panels, as well as further discussions on the conservation plans. On 29 November, local government and local Party's Standing Committee held the first conference, establishing cooperation and appointing responsible departments. In December, the local government organized a specialist group to a site visit, evaluating the value and conservation of the city walls. Later in that month, local government invited specialists in two discussion panels, discussing possible conservation plans of the city walls.

In these conferences, members from the specialist group were invited. The technical difficulties became the focal point in the discussion of conservation plans by the specialist group. It is evident that there was a conflict within the specialist group in terms of whether to follow a course of in-site protection or one of removal renovation. For those who suggested in-site protection, mainly from the specialists of archeology and cultural relics and from professors in universities, the view was as follows:

As the most ancient city walls discovered in Changsha, ACWC is unique and special as an immovable heritage. There is still a ray of hope that we should protect it in-site. If the location is changed, the value of the city walls will see shrinkage. The city walls are of a great importance in its historical and cultural information, which cannot be destructed rashly.

However, regarding the problem of the piping effects that would cause flooding, specialists from Bureau of Water Conservancy in the group stressed that the city walls should be removed "as soon as possible". In the interviews with engineers from Bureau of Water Conservancy, it was said that:

The conservation of the city walls must take the flood-prevention and safety into full consideration. ...Because there are only 40 days left to the flood season, considering the flood control and safety, the city walls should be removed as soon as possible.

The protection is not only based on the requirement of flood prevention, but also the long-term water-resisting and embalmment. It is extremely difficult.

As identified earlier (see Chapter 3), “specialists’ consultation and demonstration” is one of the most important parts in the narrative of “public participation” in heritage conservation. Heritage conservation has witnessed a significant conflict between specialists who proposed in-site protection and those who asked for removal. However, they embraced a shared view of the participation in this case, that is, the local government still held the decision making power. In the interview of Prof. Liu, he stated that:

There was only one about the conservation projects, which, I attended, was the conference on actual implementation of conservation projects on 23 February. It was on that conference that the final decision of conserving 20 meters of the city walls was announced.

For him, the decision was “announced”, rather than “made”. That is, the decision was not made through discussion between participants; instead, it was made in advance. It was later confirmed by the former chief of Municipal Bureau of Water Conservancy, that:

We are employed by the local government, and we provided specific and professional knowledge on this issue. We are consultants that expressed our opinions but we did not make the decisions.

Although not all the specialists agreed with the conservation plans, they still held the view that local government was active in heritage conservation, evidenced through its efforts in involving different actors in this case. In the specialists’ view, public participation witnessed efforts by local government and the developer to resolve the conflict. According to Prof. Liu:

The local government had an active response and tried to find the best way to resolve the conflict, while the developer actively the support, it is understandable, and they also bore a huge loss.

Public participation, for the specialists, is to resolve the conflict. Under government

leadership, although the final decision was made by local government, the effort of involving different actors has still influenced the outcome. According to a specialist from Cultural Relics:

In-site protection of 20 meters of the city walls is a matter for rejoicing, which was resulted from the joint efforts from the local community, online users and specialists. If there were no large-scale appeals, the city walls might be destructed at the very beginning.

Thus, I argue that the specialists saw the narrative of “public participation under the government leadership” as an improvement of urban governance, that although local government still centralizes the decision-making power, the process has been improved through participatory activities.

Participation of the media

The media participated in the case mainly through its reporting. Since 28 February 2012, social media sites, such as Sina Hunan (*xinlang Hunan*), ScienceNet (*kexue wang*), Xiao Xiang Morning (*xiaoxiang chenbao*), and Changsha Evening (*Changsha wanbao*), started to make special reports on this case. These were followed by a large amount of commentaries on social media and TV programs in the subsequent months. Here, I present pieces of work from both the traditional and electronic media from different point of views to explore how the media interpret “public participation” in conserving ACWC.

Roundtable discussions – an improvement in urban governance

On 15 February, Xiao Xiang Morning (*xiao xiang chen bao*) made the first report on the issue of conserving city walls, named “46 days, ancient city walls racing with the flood season” (Shen, 2012). This report introduced the process from the discovery of the city walls to the efforts to conserve them from all sides. Speaking of the efforts by local government, in the report,

From the discovery of the city walls, the municipal government hosted five conferences; the Provincial Bureau of Cultural Relics initiated four specialists’ reviewing and discussions, revealed by an official in Municipal

Bureau of Cultural Relics.

Then the report stressed these participatory discussions engaging specialists and upper level government. After discussion with the specialists, the municipal government reported to the Provincial and National Bureau of Cultural Relics, asking for suggestions on the proposals. In addition, the invited participation from all sides by local government was emphasized in terms of its role in conserving the city walls. In the report, it is said that:

In the afternoon on 12 February, the mayor, Head of Provincial Bureau of Cultural Relics, Prof. Liu and specialists in cultural relics went to the site. Then, with the engagement of these celebrities, specialists, representatives of ordinary people and the media, the government opened a discussion panel, communicating on the work and progress of the conservation by municipal government and listening to the opinions and suggestions face-to-face.

Noticeably, there is an inconsistency that goes back to the earlier statement by Prof. Liu that he attended only one of the conferences which was on 23 February. It is hard to believe that Prof. Liu lying in his efforts to conserve the city walls. In accordance with this, the only thing left for us is the “unreal report” by the media. The report also discussed the efforts from the public in conserving the city walls, especially on the internet. It explained the huge reaction on the site *Sina Weibo* resulted from the micro-blog from Prof. Liu, that:

“The city walls won’t be preserved”. The micro-blog by Prof. Liu made a number of people sigh deeply. “Actually, I just missed the word ‘in-site’”, Prof. Liu felt sorry for that. His meaning was “the original site of the city walls won’t be preserved”. Due to the missing words, a large amount of local residents and online users believed that the city walls will be destructed and their thoughts propagated through micro-blogging.

The report deflected the attention to the mistakes that Prof. Liu made that resulted in the online protest. The original web-blog on 9 February 2012 by Prof. Liu was

I have gained reliable news that the city walls won’t be preserved. It gave me

a lump in my throat. I stopped for a while and finally proposed that if it has to be destructed, the city walls should be removed to museums. Do not reproduce parts of the city walls in the scenic belt, which is only a fake heritage. In particular, it misleads visitors and later generations that the city walls were originally in that place. The location of the gate of the city walls is clear, do not mislead later generations.

As is shown, the later part of the micro-blog has made his point very clear that the city walls won't be in-site preserved, as the public had been informed they would. Furthermore, the final decision was to remove 100 meters of the city walls to the scenic belt, which is actually "a fake heritage". The specialists conceived it as "a fake heritage" since it was manually created. Regarding the efforts made by the public on the internet, it was revealed in the report that the response from local government was:

The mayor did appreciate the attention from the specialists and the citizens, stating that "the process of discussion was actually a living example for us to increase the awareness of heritage conservation".

It was further proved that public participation in this case did not include opinions from the specialists and local community; rather, it was "attention". This supports the argument again that public participation in this case was "tokenism" that although there were participatory activities, the decision making process did not engage actors from all sides. From the perspective of the mayor, the discussion of how to conserve the city walls for the people was to increase their awareness.

The final report was subtitled "the developer: daily loss of 500 thousand RMB (equals to 50 thousand GBP) – Wanda put heritage conservation on its priority", it emphasized that Wanda hoped more and more people would understand their efforts in conserving the city walls. The officials in department of Cultural Relics claimed that Wanda did a great job in taking social responsibility.

This report by Xiao Xiang Morning (*xiaoxiang chenbao*) stood on the positive side of the practices of "public participation under the government leadership". It emphasized the efforts of local government to engage different actors in the case,

especially the specialists, the media, the online community and the developer. These actors were actively involved in the case. In this view, the process of discussion, rather than the result, was much more important. It can be seen as an improvement in urban governance in Changsha in the media's view. This can be also seen from a special report by a TV show – Zhongshan Comments (*Zhongshan shuo shi*) on 4 March. It is a live TV show in Hunan province produced and hosted by Zhongshan who comments on the public livelihood, news and affairs. The special report was named “ACWC – those bricks, those city walls, and that dream for all ages”. In Zhong's response to the decision of conserving 20-meter of the city walls,

I do not know whether it is the final decision, but undoubtedly, it is an active response. After all, there are 20 meters left. In the key issue concerning the history and culture in a city, the public, specialists, and relevant departments have actively and effectively participated. Everybody considers this as their own thing. It is so good, to some extent, which is the necessary path towards a harmonious society.

For him, the case has seen effective participation. Moreover, “their own thing” refers to increasing awareness of participation and heritage conservation, which reflected the requirement of “building a harmonious society”. Moreover, according to New China News Agency and Opinions China, the conservation of ACWC can be seen as a “model” of engaging different actors for further activities in historical buildings and heritage sites. It was stated that:

Facing the conflict between heritage conservation and urban development, Changsha municipal government attached great importance on the preserving of cultural and historical heritage sites. They were sincere and attentive, not notorious and ignorant as a ‘culture destructor’ in citizens’ impression. In the process of conservation, different actors have sufficiently expressed their opinions and interest, which formed an open and unilateral gaming process based on reciprocity. Although the result had seemingly too much compromise and transience in it, however facing such complexity, it is the most practical and substantive way.

Therefore, regarding the efforts from all sides in the conservation, in the mainstream

media's view, the case saw a great improvement for the government. "Public participation" is an active response to the conflict of urban development and heritage conservation; more importantly, it is the condition towards building a harmonious society. The following part shows the other side of the story, the criticism from the media.

Developer's thrashing of local government – "culture destructor"

A news report was placed on *YNet (beiqing wang)* on 29 February, 2012, which was soon after the decision of leaving 20 meters of the city walls was announced by the local government. The topic of the report is "*The developer 'thrashes of' local government, only 20 meters of ACWC are left*" (Wang, 2012). The report first quoted the specialists' statement that the future of the city walls is "heart-wrenching". Drawing from the comment of the specialist on the whole case, it is said that the result of conserving 20 meters of the city walls is negotiated between the local government and the developer.

In the view of the specialist, 20-meter protection is resulted from the negotiation and bargaining between the local government and the developer. It was stated, "it seems that the city walls can be partly protected is already a hard-won victory.

It indicates that the historical and cultural interest of heritages is marginalized facing the huge common interest shared by local government and developers. Noticeably, there is also a report named "the game in the conservation of ACWC" on the Economic Observer (*jingji guancha bao*). It is a private-owned weekly newspaper, which is one of three key newspapers in economy. It is stated in the report that:

In the urban development, the degree and result of heritage conservation is determined by the trade-off and inclusion-exclusion of economic interest and social interest. It is finally a game between the local government, developers and the public. For the local government, the protection of history and culture requires a negotiation with the developer, which not only breaks the promise to the culture, but also loses its dignity.

Both the reports made the point that “local government satisfied the needs of the developer”. In a time of rapid urbanization and economic development, the historical and cultural interests of heritages have to be sacrificed. It finally made a comment on the issue of conflict between urban development and heritage conservation.

A series of heritage conservation and removal in the urban development is a game that exhausted the developer, local government and the public. The conflict between urban construction and heritage conservation is growing in intensity.

On the internet, there were many other social media sites questioning the conduct of local government. In the case of ACWC, metaphors of “a defended war” and a “pooling-of-interest” were used in telling the story. These metaphors helped depict the relationships between different actors involved in ACWC, as well as the current condition of heritage conservation in China. By appealing to the conservation of ACWC, through the lexical choices of words such as “war” and “pool”, we can see how these metaphors help to give form to the relationships between local government and general public, and between local government and the developer. Local government was seen as the “enemy”; they were accompanied by another group of “partners”, the developer – the conservation of ACWC was to fight against those who aimed to destroy the city walls. The general public, including specialists, local residents, the distant public, and the media were conceived as “warriors” in this “defended war”. Furthermore, “pooling-of-interest” described the relationships between local government and the developer – there were a large number of varying interests that were interdependent and worked in unison to maximize their interests.

Based on the above, I argue that the media embraced divergent views and reported differently on “public participation” in this case. First, in the view of the mainstream media, the practice of “public participation” is an improvement in urban governance whereby the government’s initiation and leadership is essential. It is certainly evident that they did not fully reflect the true picture when reporting. This indicates that the media did not function well as a “supervision and questioning mechanism” on the government’s conduct or as a “loudspeaker” on important public affairs. .

Admittedly, in China, state-owned and some mainstream media have not served to

promote democracy or safeguard the public interest (Guo, 2000). Under the rule of the CCP, it was impossible to use the telegraph to express political opinions publicly without official sanction. According to the regulations, it is clearly stipulated that “if the telegraph service station, based on facts, judges that the content of a telegram is harmful to the national or people’s interest, the matter should be handed over to the local government”. However, due to the rapid development of technology and commercialization in media infrastructure in China, the size and diversity of the media has increased, thus creating openings for private owners and a gradual loosening of party-state control (Perry & Seldon, 2003). According to the *Report on the Work of Government in the Year of 2013* made by Premier Wen Jiabao during the First Session of the Twelfth People’s Congress on 5 March 2013:

We should stick to democratic supervision, legal supervision, and the media supervision from the public and improve the restriction and supervision mechanism on exercise of power. Let the people supervise the power, let the power exercised in the light.

In this case, the “controlled transparency” of China party-state allows certain room for journalists to cover news, social conflict and public affairs, however, all coverage is still under the leadership of the government.

However, it is evident that in view of other forms of media, such as privately owned and online media, local government compromised and sacrificed the historical and cultural interest of heritages for huge economic interest and benefit. In their view, facing the conflict between urban development and heritage conservation, “public participation under government leadership” is essentially a camouflage for the negotiation or bargaining between the local government and the developer.

Participation of the ordinary people

As identified earlier, the mechanism of “public participation under government leadership” encourages local community to engage in the discussion and decision-making process by facilitating the participatory activities in the community on the public affairs. However, in this case, there was a low level of participation of ordinary people in the community. Thus, I argue that we, the ordinary people of

China, have a space to speak, but not to act. First, regarding the space to speak, it is evident that the internet has become the platform by which the public can express their opinions. On the site *Sina Weibo*, over 90,000 online users shared their opinions and had a heated discussion on this issue. I contacted one of the web-bloggers, Mr. W, and we had an interview via the telephone. Mr. W is a university student who has currently studied Architecture in Beijing. He was born in Changsha and lived there for 17 years. Once he saw the web-blog posted by Prof. Liu, he shared it and posted his opinions accordingly:

Protest, a strong protest, the tragedy is on again. Unite, the citizens in Changsha, resist Wanda! Wanda, do you value money only?

In later interviews, he accused Wanda of its “enclosure of land” labeled by Guangdong Evening (*yangcheng wanbao*) on the report on 3 June 2012. He mentioned that after he read an online blog about Wanda’s enclosure, he finally understood why and how Wanda had prospered in the cold market of land. This also indicates the influence of the media on the perceptions of ordinary people:

Local government and the developer shared the common interest while exchanging the resources they want from each other. The top priority in local government agenda in all cases is to attract investment. The investment of 10 billion RMB (1 billion GBP) not only brought huge economic interest in local economy, but also generated “a political monument” by constructing an urban complex in the city center. ... The president of Wanda Group has a good interpersonal and working relationship with members of Standing Committee for the People’s Congress. They can manipulate the promotion of local government officials.

Mr. W accused Wanda of “enclosure of land” and explained to me the upper hand of the big corporation, which supported the argument of dominance of businesses in the interactions with local government again:

There is no ground for negotiation that Wanda gets the land as long as they want from local government. Under the economic interest, the government is also powerless.

He clearly made his point that the dominance of the big corporation is not only due to economic interest, but also the political benefit brought by making way for the developer. These narratives indicate that the public has fostered the idea on the “backroom deal” between local government and developers and their exchange of economic interest and political influences. Not only Mr. W has this view, there are also a large number of online users who equally expressed their opinions and dissent on the internet.

However, in the ordinary people’s view, although there is a space to speak; many still preferred to remain silent. This passivity was evident in the interviews with local residents, where key words such as “powerlessness” and “helplessness” were present in their narratives. In an interview with Mr. C, a 34-year-old local resident, he stated that people preferred to stay silent, since they felt “powerless” and “helpless”. In his view, there was a sense of uselessness in terms of speaking to anyone about their views and an awareness concerning an ignorance of their opinions, all of which obstructed their intention to express their dissent.

The later part of the argument is “not to act”. There is no space for the ordinary people to act; and thus, they themselves have no incentive intention to act. On 5 March 2012, the removal of the city walls started. During this period, the dissent and criticisms about local government and the developer began to rise on the internet. The construction site was fenced off and could not be accessed by the general public. They could peep into the site through the fence, but were sent away by the workers inside. In interviews with the local residents who lived nearby, they said that they were monitored by people who called themselves “the street office”. However, the residents did not recognize them. Moreover, the journalist I interviewed also confirmed that he had met with obstruction when taking photographs. The following is the picture taken by the journalist at the construction site. The blur in the right part of the picture is fingers of a person who tried to stop the journalist to take pictures.

Figure 8-1 A picture showing that the journalist was stopped by someone when taking pictures



Source: taken by Mr. F, the journalist on 8 March, 2012

Mr. F, the journalist, stated that:

In the five days after the removal started, they worked for 24 hours every day and 70 meters of the city walls have been removed. At the beginning on 5 March, we climbed up to the balcony of a residential building to record the scene of the removal. However, it became more and more difficult. Someone sent away the ladder to the balcony. On 8 March, someone took all the rooms from where you can see the construction site with amounts of money. In that evening, when we took pictures at the doorway of the construction site, an unidentified man drove us away.

It is now difficult to find out who these people were from “the street office”, “someone” and “unidentified”. But the fact is the ordinary people had little space to act in any way concerning the conservation of the city walls. This is in great contrast to the concept of “participatory democracy” promoted by the current central government (will be discussed later). Rather, it is consistent with the traditions of ruling in the Chinese imperial system (see Chapter 7).

As I observed, in this case, the status of freedom to speak and act in China depresses and disappoints the people. Ordinary people see “action” as “labor in vain”, which

results in their inclination not to act. In this case, the participation of the ordinary people was mainly on the internet. When speaking of the actions in participatory activities, Mr. C told me:

Public hearings, I know, but I have not ever attended, neither have other people around us. The thing is even if I participate, what changes will there be?

For him, “public participation” in China is token participation, referring to the practices of local government’s behaviors representing the formal structure or symbolic gesture rather than the actual participation and inclusion of opinions from different actors in decision making. Only the participation in the decision making process and the contribution to the final decision can be said as a true participation. Mr. C doubted the effects of “public participation under government leadership”:

“Public” is just a rhetoric, leadership is the essence of participation.

Moreover, he questioned the purpose of local government in terms of their inviting specialists to draw up the conservation plan. For him, consultation with the specialists is only employed by the local government for legitimacy. With regard to the specialists who have to be consulted by the local government, Mr. C said:

Speaking of the specialists, there is also a question here: who are the specialists? Employed by local government? Or true specialists?

Therefore, a distrust of the Chinese government led to disappointment and contributed to the indifference of ordinary people in acting and participating in local issues. Moreover, the sense of heritage conservation is weak among ordinary people. According to the survey conducted by Beijing Cultural Heritage Protection Center (CHP) on the awareness of historical and cultural heritages among residents in the old city center in Beijing, only 15 percent can name one of the laws and regulations in heritage conservation. 84 percent of them asserted that the determining factor in heritage conservation is from the government, only 9 percent accounted to the ordinary people.

In summary, when talking about “public participation”, different actors had different

views, which led to their different actions. Firstly, from the perspective of the mayor, public participation in heritage conservation concerned the attention of society, not real participation in the final decision making. In particular, among ordinary people, public participation was about increasing their awareness of heritage conservation. Secondly, for the specialists, “public participation” was a space in which to clarify and discuss the problem and in which to resolve the conflict. They conceived of themselves as identifying the problem and providing professional knowledge in the participation, which they did correspondingly.

However, the media has divergent views regarding the participation in this case. For the mainstream media, it was an improvement in urban governance, which reflected the active response from local government facing the dilemmas of urban development and heritage conservation. Meanwhile, there were other media sites that showed a different view one in which public participation, in this case, was actually a negotiation between the local government and the developer who exchanged their interests. Thus, the divergence of views resulted in the different reports on the case. Moreover, when talking about “public participation”, ordinary people are talking about “the actual participation in the decision making process”, about “changes in the final decision”. Thus, participation in this case is considered as “token participation”, which is used by local government to legitimize their pursuit of partial economic interest. From interviews with the public, it is clear that in their view, “public” is “government rhetoric”, while “leadership” is the “essence”. Most importantly, the argument of “we have a space to speak, but not to act” for ordinary people is presented regarding the practices of “public participation under government leadership”.

8.3 Narratives of rural governance

8.3.1 On “harmonious removal”

As identified earlier (see Chapter 2 and 4), “constructing a harmonious socialist society” was announced as the Chinese government’s policy guideline to deal with ensuing threats since the economic reform. To actualize this government mission, strategies were deliberated in a central policy document entitled “*Important Decisions by the Central Committee of the Communist Party on Major Issues Regarding Construction of a Socialist Harmonious Society*” (2005), in which the

political significance of maintaining social harmony was addressed:

Social harmony is the underlying nature of socialism with Chinese characteristics. It is an important guarantee for the prosperity of the country, revitalization of the nation and wellbeing of people.

Following this government objective, “harmonious removal”, which is to implement the policy of “relocate before removal”, was promoted to establish a basic pension and living security system for villagers in the context of building up new communities in rural areas. In this case, the removal in the protection of WSTK borrowed the concept of “harmonious removal” as a principle for the implementation. In the government document regarding the conservation of WSTK and removal project, it was stated that:

The “harmonious removal” was exercised when truly reinvent the model of removal, not led by government, but following the laws and regulations. The key point is to build up a new model of “villagers’ committee leadership”. Villagers’ committee is responsible for the removal, including the land reallocation and housing selection. According to interviews with specialists, “harmonious removal” is to deal with the relationships between government, constructor and villagers, as well as their interests.

Unlike the municipal government in ACWC, the county government emphasized the idea of “mutual benefits” in their narratives. As recorded in the meeting attended by representatives of the construction company and the villagers’ committee, the vice commissioner in the county said:

With the developed economy, we have more possibilities to improve other parts of our lives, to maintain the stability and harmony. We look for common development and mutual benefit. We are sure that, not only the villagers in the redevelopment area in WSTK, but also people nearby, will be benefited.

In the statement above, “common development and mutual benefit” was stressed as the objective of the conservation project. Moreover, we can also see the importance of “economic development”. However, referring to a coordinating and sustainable

development of “economic, social and cultural sectors” in a later interview, the commissioner of the village stated:

To protect the heritage in the village is beneficial to maintain the attractiveness of our village, as well as adding new blood in our local economies, promoting the coordination and sustainability among economic, social and cultural sectors. We must recognize the importance of heritage conservation, fastening the conservation project and carrying out the work on renovating the traditional appearance of WSTK and improving living conditions for villagers nearby.

In line with the principle of “constructing a harmonious society”, in this project of “harmonious removal”, the importance of villagers was realized. According to the vice commissioner’s speech in the discussion conference,

The power of human beings is great. In heritage conservation, we cannot rely solely on the government departments or the private sectors. [...] During the process, we must realize the importance of villagers. People have feelings; we need to appreciate our own history in the environment, looking for memories of life, tracing the past.

“The importance of villagers” was also pointed out in the government document that “in the implementation stage, the villagers must play a main role; local government must respect their right to know, to participate, to make decisions, and to supervise, and it must rely on the masses”. However, under this condition, how did the county government resolve the conflict in practices? The answer, as identified in Chapter 7, was through “doing ideological work”. I have identified that in the persuasion, the importance of “law” was highlighted. In the subsequent pages, I will examine the practices of “the rule of law” and how is it understood by different actors.

8.3.2 Different views on “the rule of law”

In the case of WSTK, “the rule of law” was stressed, as seen in the county government document the *Implementing Advices in improving management in rural planning and construction by Party’s Committee and People’s Government in Nanchang* that:

All localities should improve the publicity of regulations. All counties and towns should improve the publicity of Law of the People's Republic of China in Urban and Rural Planning, Law of the People's Republic of China in Land, Regulation on Urban and Rural Planning in Jiangxi Province, Administrative Measurement on Urban and Rural Planning and Construction in Nanchang, as well as their implementation advices. It is to make these regulations known to all households and get them familiar with the approving procedure of construction, and to establish the scientificness, authoritativeness and seriousness.

Moreover, specifically in the project of removal and relocation of villagers, the county government emphasized the importance of acting under *Working Procedure of Administrative Decision of House Removal*. They clarified the responsibility of government officials under the condition that people who did not accept that decision can apply for administrative reconsideration or bring an administrative lawsuit in accordance with law.

Any government officials who are involved must provide warm and high-quality services and improve their working efficiency. Anyone who delay and obstruct the procedure and ask for bribery must be criticized and educated sharply, stop and correct in time. If the circumstances are serious, officials should be investigated for the legal responsibility by offices of inspecting and disciplining; if suspected as a criminal case, officials should be transferred to judicial organs for handling.

As identified both in the literature and in the statement above, the policies and government measures are also included in the concept of “law” in China. In this sense, in the view of local government, they kept up every step of the way with the policies from upper level, through which their actions were claimed to be supported. In the interviews of government officials in this case, they frequently mentioned the government policies from central government and their actions accordingly, for example, following *Notices on Further Strengthening Management of Expropriation of Land and Relocation of Households that Safeguard the Legitimate Interest of the Public*, they conducted a public survey and opinions polls regarding this project.

Thus, I argue that, compared to the municipal government in Changsha, the local-level government in the countryside were more aware of and more concerned about upper and central government. It is also suggested by Oi (1999) that the role and significance of central government and its political elite in the formulation of policies has been recognized in rural China since the reforms. It is the policies at the national level of government and the political elite by central leaders that the institutions of rule in the countryside are established and rural economies are developed. As noted in the site visit of the vice commissioner to the county recorded by the villagers' committee, he pointed out that:

The central government issued policies on the land uses and expropriation in rural areas, which clarified the compensation to the expropriated villagers, including detailed calculation formulas on cash compensation or the housing of the same value. They [the central government] are conscious about our problems in the countryside and we are to strictly follow the policies and our aim is to develop the rural economy, build homeland for peasants so that they can live comfortably.

Therefore, in the view of local government, they acted strictly in the accordance with the law, including their engagement of a villagers' committee, inclusion of public opinions and implementation of compensation policy. However, I observed that in the view of villagers, local government played a strong hand in the forcible policies concerning villagers, such as birth control and land expropriation; however, regarding the law concerned about their conduct and administration, they ignored it strategically.

Compared to the case of ACWC, instead of "loopholes and ambiguity" in law and regulations, the county government employed its "mandatory nature" in land expropriation. This means that local government explained and emphasized the enforcement and forcible measures of the law and regulations in order to push villagers to move spontaneously, especially for nail households. According to one villager:

The relocated household who did not move within the time scale is to be moved forcibly by the relative administrative department urged by county

government, or through management department of house removal by applying to people's court. They explained the responsibilities of the relocated through the perspective of law and regulations.

This indicated the forcible execution of land expropriation on villagers. Admittedly, the rights of villagers' petitioning and suing were clarified by the government documents and the law – the *Administration Litigation Law (ALL)*. As discussed earlier on the legal reforms, the ALL was formalized as part of a broad effort by the party to make decisions by administrative agencies more accountable and to provide remedies for administrative misconduct. However, the effectiveness of this law is diluted, evidenced by previous studies addressing the problem of how local officials pre-empted or undermined the administrative lawsuits by blocking access, discrediting attorneys and intimidating litigants (O'Brien, 2004). However, in this case, most villagers did not consider it as an option under the local government strategy of “persuasion”.

From the perspective of villagers, their view of “the rule of law” is complex. On the one hand, they are not well aware of laws; whereas on the other, they are afraid of laws. In the first instance, their awareness of laws is attributed to the traditional living style and networked culture. As discussed earlier, the traditional family-based social fabric, beliefs in “harmony” and existing personal ties contributed to villagers' reliance on interrelations in conflict resolution, rather than through lawsuit. Second, the traditional beliefs in law have heavily influenced the perspectives of ordinary people. It is known that the ancient legal system in China was characterized by “all laws in one, no distinguishes between civil and criminal laws”. It is a deeply rooted belief that the punishment was strict, fast and fatal when violating the law. As such, when local government emphasized the coercive acts and forcible clauses, the villagers signed the contract of removal.

Noticeably, the villagers' view on the role of villagers' committee and villagers' conference as institutional support of “the rule of law” in this case, was divergent. For those nail households, the policies and plans in the concept of “the rule of law” were made by local government which benefited local cadres and elites. Local cadres and elites here refer to the villagers' committee, which became local

entrepreneurship. In essence, the interest of ordinary villagers was not safeguarded. According to a mid-aged villager,

It was only idealism that the villagers' committee stands on our side, the real-world practices cannot be like this. You know what I mean. They [villagers' committee] distorted the policies, which lined their own pocket. We have not actually benefited.

However, for some villagers, the villagers' committee did promote “the rule of law” in the countryside in terms of its role in managing the conflict between local government and villagers, and amongst villagers. In this case, as identified earlier, the villagers' committee played an important part in informing the villagers about the government policies and legal procedures in making decisions in the villages, and collecting their opinions and reporting their needs. In the interview with a villager, he said that

We were informed about the legal procedure regarding the removal project. All decisions should be made through the villagers' conference. I do not understand why there are some villagers who did not accept it, they [the villagers' committee] did what they should do.

Based on the above, I argue that in the view of local government, they fully exercised “the rule of law” in the project, while the villagers' view was more diversified. Noticeably, the villagers' committee links the state and villagers and provides a useful window for ordinary villagers on the interplay of legal and political mobilization.

8.4 Summary

In this chapter, I firstly examined the government and business elite narratives and understandings. This was followed by discussions on the experiences and understandings from the other actors in the network. In the first section focusing on the urban case, I show different narratives on “public participation”, which tell stories of the “powerlessness” and “helplessness” of the ordinary people and the “distance” in government-citizen relationships. However, the local government has

established a “coordination” and “alliance” with the business elite in “managing the city”. In particular, in the concluding chapter, I will discuss this further with reference to the concept of urban entrepreneurialism.

Secondly, in the rural case, I focus on the villagers’ view on “the rule of law”, which was emphasized in rural government narratives. In articulating the narrative of “harmonious removal”, the local government has realized the importance of the villagers’ committee as a bridge that links the state and the villagers. Thus, they have empowered the community and adopted an innovative way of removal that combines past traditions of “centralized decision-making” with new trends of “self-governance”. In the face of dissents among villagers, the local government employed “in-person persuasion”, which suggests an informal way of authority in governing the network. I will also recap on this point and reflect on the democratization in grassroots’ level later. As for the conclusion of this study, I will divide it into two chapters. I will first summarize the key findings in the next chapter and end the thesis by a further reflection on Chinese local governance and its implications for the democratization in times of economic development at local level in China in the final chapter.

CHAPTER NINE

CONCLUSION

9.1 Introduction

My intention in this study was to explore the dilemmas of change in Chinese local governance through the lens of heritage conservation and to identify the changes and transformations, the traditions, dilemmas and re-established traditions in governing different actors within this sphere. In addition, I aimed to explore the similarities and differences of urban and rural governance. The study sought also to investigate the relations between key actors in society and further explore their interpretation of governance.

The introduction suggested that heritage conservation, as a political-economic incentive for local development, has become a window through which to examine Chinese governance at local level. In Chapter 3, I provided an overview of the historical background of heritage conservation in China and its development in modern times. The historical reality of conserving heritage in China, unclear definition of heritage, lack of laws and regulations, old socialist ideology, the “Great Leap Forward” (1958-1961) and the subsequent Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), led to the demolition of a large number of historical and cultural sites. Since the 1980s, in the reform era, heritage conservation faced dilemmas of whether to follow a strategy of centralization or decentralization, a planned or market economy, and autonomy or control, influenced by the transformations that had occurred over the previous few decades. In particular, under rapid economic development, historical and cultural heritage had been used as an instrument for economic interests.

In both urban and rural areas, commodification and commercialization of historical sites is significant and as such, becomes a growing threat to heritage. Moreover, the heritage conserving and decision-making process also demonstrates the realities of a conflict between local authorities, developers, NGOs, ordinary people, and other related social groups. These concerns lead to a practical question: how to balance the growing needs of the present with historical preservation in the face of continual rapid economic development? How to integrate the conflicted interests of different actors involved in heritage conservation? These questions reemphasize the

significance of studying heritage conservation in within this new phase of economic boom.

As I identified both in the literature and in the case studies, the position of heritage conservation differed between the urban and rural areas. Heritage conservation has seen different iterations of “displacement”. In the city, this was manifested through the displacement of the heritage site, and in the countryside, through the displacement of the local community. The case study of ACWC in the city evidenced a common phenomenon of the displacement of historical-cultural heritage sites, motivated by commercial projects aimed at urban development. In particular, when large property corporations, for example, the Wanda Group, work on redeveloping the area, it is often the case that local authorities exclude local communities in the decision-making process.

In most rural and remote areas, the mode of transforming the heritage site into a separate tourist site while displacing local residents in the name of preservation, is prevalent. Tourism development was blamed for the over-commercialization of historical-cultural areas, overcrowding and traffic congestion, creating an increased sense of insecurity of local residents (Zou & Zheng, 2012). This raises concerns surrounding the negative impacts on local communities when a heritage site becomes a tourist attraction in the name of historical-cultural preservation. In the case of WSTK, the nail households have engaged in protests about compensation rates of their dislocation. During the plan making in preserving the historical-cultural site, the local community was excluded, despite that, the local government did ask for their opinions later after the exposure of the issue. However, this case still saw the displacement of the local community under “ideological persuasion” by the local government, making way for tourism development.

In reality, there is no easy answer to the question of how to balance the preservation of the past with the material development needs of the present. The two cases in this study, thus, raise the question of how to define the success of heritage conservation: place or people? According to Wright (2009), sustainable heritage conservation is not only about conserving the materials or physical properties of artefacts or buildings but also about the spirit of them that comes from the interactions between the place and the people. He further argues that it is the people that matter most and

conservation of heritages must concern the residents first of all. Following this, I suggest that whether the interest of people in local communities are taken into consideration and protected, should be the first and most important consideration. However, it would be worth investigating whether it should be the current residents of communities who take decisions about conservation, since heritage is also conserved for the future generations (Wright, 2009).

Therefore, at the very start of resolving the conflict between heritage conservation and local development, we must think about the following questions: if heritage is a collective good as officially recognized, to what extent do all social actors have a stake? To what extent do the local residents have a right to participate in decision making? It might be the most pressing question for heritage conservation in China. Indeed, in the interviews, ordinary people, especially online users, viewed heritage conservation as related to larger issues; to the way in which local government deals with different social segments, to how decisions are made and to the end and means of democratization under social and economic pressures in China. In a broader sense, this relates to the local governance and democratization at local-level China.

This thesis thus started by identifying the conflict between economic development and heritage conservation within the context of China, a country which has been experiencing huge ideological, political, legal, social and economic changes in society. In particular, under the political and economic reforms over the past three decades, the public sphere in China has become a battlefield for different segments of society, such as politicians, intellectuals, professionals, and businesspeople. As I justified in Chapter 5, grounded theory method has been used in this study to fill the gaps in the literature, focusing on the actors, their interactions and their values and responses in the face of changes in society. I first located the processes of generating new ideas within a large theoretical framework that specifies the context.

Based on the concept of authoritarian deliberation introduced by He and Warren (2009), I argue that China is experiencing this form of democratic process featuring deliberative practices “under the leadership of the party” (see Chapter 4). The political deliberation in China combines “the leadership of the party”, popular participation in the political process, and governance through “the rule of law”. In heritage conservation, the mechanism of public participation which highlights

information sharing and reporting, experts consulting and external supervision has been employed by local governments (see Chapter 3). The literature thus suggests that Chinese state-society relations have changed – a negotiated state has emerged which deals with the dynamics of the interaction of different actors within the state sector and society. This in turn, leads to the use of the network approach of governance, focusing on the actors and their interactions in the policy process, as the theoretical framework of this study.

In particular, a sociological approach of the network governance put forward by Bevir and Rhodes (2012) is applied. They argue that governance is not only about managing the networks, but governing with, by and through networks. Specifically, they focus on the “meaning and beliefs” of actors in policy networks (Bevir & Rhodes, 2008, p. 2). For example, trust, shared values and norms are conceived essential in facilitating network coordination. In the next few paragraphs, I will qualify this by identifying the advantages and disadvantages of using this approach. In addition, the distinctiveness of the approach that underpins the design of this research will be also justified.

First, the pros of using Bevir’s and Rhodes’s network approach of governance in this study are concerning the character of contemporary Chinese governance and the gaps identified in the literature. As I emphasized in Chapter 4, the last two decades have seen changes and transformation in government functions, which have indicated a shift from the strong executive to governance through networks. In particular, the downsizing of government administration and the growth of more independent associations, such as those for intellectuals, professionals, and business people, are evident. The gap in the literature of Chinese governance was a discussion of actors and their interactions in response to these changes in the society. Therefore, I adopted the network approach of governance significantly to discuss the role of actors in the policy network in this study.

More specifically, based on the sociological approach of network governance by Bevir and Rhodes (2012), I attempted to “decentre” the governance through exploring individuals’ responses to dilemmas to explain the changes and developments in Chinese governance. This approach focused on “changes”, “traditions” and “dilemmas” (see Chapter 4). Further in Chapter 7, I identified some

important governing traditions which influenced the current governance practices significantly, such as the centralized authority and local autonomy. In this light, Bevir's and Rhodes's "decentring" approach was distinctive in explaining the changes in the government forms and to explore how the Chinese government deals with networks of actors in the society.

Second, regarding the disadvantages, I want to refer to Wagenaar's (2012, p. 89) discussions on "the problem of practice", pointing to a disconnect between the theoretical and practical worlds of using this approach. As Wagenaar (2012) argues, since Bevir and Rhodes treat the contingent belief as the major driver of change and responded actions to these changes, this approach does not adequately consider the play of agencies in everyday practices of governance. In other words, this indicates the unintended consequences of a policy. For example, when Chinese governments exert control over the internet through censorship, the online users employ prank nicknames substituting those political-sensitive words in response. Therefore, the central critique of this approach lies in their wholesale adoption of "living traditions" (Bevir & Rhodes, 2010, p. 157) to explain their political behaviours.

When considering all these points fully, the advantages and disadvantages in using this "decentring" approach to governance leads to the design of this study. Through the process of capturing the practices of government tactics and combining this with the existent governing traditions, I used the in-depth and qualitative case study to explore the interplay of agencies in everyday practices of local governance. More importantly, the adoption of a grounded theory method, through triangulating the literature, the data and the insights, also led me to use Bevir's and Rhodes's specific version of the interpretive policy analysis, focusing on "changes", "traditions" and "dilemmas" (see Chapter 5).

To address these three key concepts running through the study, this thesis considered the following four broad research questions:

- What are the changes and transformations in Chinese governance in the last three decades?
- What traditions can we distinguish in governance at the local level in China, what dilemmas and dislocations do actors perceive and how do they react to

these?

- What are the tactics or strategies employed by the local government in dealing with different actors in changing traditions?
- How do different actors interpret governance in heritage conservation in the transitional process?

As a theme embedded in this study, the relationship between economic development and democracy draws attention to the local government's employment of different governing approaches in heritage conservation and decision making. It can be traced to long-term traditions that underpin social interactions and increasing challenges at the time of rapid economic boom. Thus, the “decentred” approach proposed by Bevir and Rhodes (2012), which focuses on the value systems and perceptions of actors in the network, is used in this study to explore dilemmas of change in Chinese local governance.

Through a comparison between an urban and a rural case, the preceding chapters firstly examined governing practices with regard to how local government copes with the business sector and the public. Following this, the analysis in Chapter 7 linked individuals' traditions and actions in response to the changes to an understanding of Chinese local governance. Insights gained concerned how different actors conceive the narratives and practices of local governance in heritage conservation, as presented in Chapter 8. In the face of conflict between the economic interest and the historical-cultural interest of heritage, and the challenge of democratization during rapid economic development, the two case studies drew attention to the relationships between actors in the decision-making process, a process that involves local bureaucracy, an entrepreneurial elite, the media, ordinary people in urban areas, those in the countryside, grassroots level government, business enterprises, and villagers.

To provide a better understanding of the empirical findings and, further, theoretical implications, I divide the conclusion of this study into four main parts: firstly, findings of this study, secondly, reflections on heritage conservation, thirdly, the transition of Chinese local governance and finally, concluding remarks on Chinese democratization. To complete the story of Chinese transition in the face of social and

economic development, this concluding chapter also provides some suggestions for future research areas.

9.2 Fragmented governance at the local level in China

Taking network governance theory by Bevir and Rhodes (2012) as the basis for the theoretical foundation of this study; the research questions were designed to explore the dilemmas of changes in Chinese local governance and furthermore, to investigate the relations between key actors in society and their interpretation of governance. With this as a proviso, through the process of literature review and the comparison between an urban and a rural case, this study afforded answers to these questions. To provide a link between these questions and answers, this section now recaps on some key points and presents the following findings:

(1) What are the changes and transformations in Chinese governance in the last three decades?

It was identified in Chapter 2 that China is experiencing a series of changes under ideological, political, legal, social and economic reforms. It is a multifaceted process that features a number of key developments including the decentralization of economic power and decision-making, the introduction of market forces, the emergence of social organizations and private enterprises, and the “open-up” policy.

Reforms over the last three decades in China have brought with them an increasing number of social organizations with varying degrees of influence, such as labour unions, chambers of commerce, youth groups, all with different interests. Therefore in these times of rapid economic development the emergence of diverse patterns of conflict and resistance is being observed. In all, these changes lead to more complexity with a larger variety of groups and interests in society. In this context, Chinese government has recognized the importance of “the transformation in government function” (see Chapter 4).

In pursuit of economic modernization, the party attempted to mobilize and attract more sources of support and partnership. As such, the state has encouraged intellectuals, private entrepreneurs and other social sectors to apply for party membership and to participate in governmental activities. In addition, the

downsizing of government administrative apparatus and the growth of the non-governmental organizations (NGOs) sector are evidenced from the institutional reforms and the introduction of market reforms since the early 1980s. Throughout the last two decades, the government has focused more on “management” than “planning” in both its narratives and practices. This indicates a shift in Chinese governance from the strong executive to governance through networks.

By way of example, under urban reforms, the Chinese urban community management system saw a shift from state control to governance through a more community-based approach. More specifically, in 2009, the Beijing municipal government issued a new community policy “community building and standardization” (*shequ guifanhua jianshe*). It calls for a greater plurality of actors with a particular focus on the participation of all relevant actors including government agencies, residents’ committees, community-based organizations, small businesses and enterprises, and residents in the community. It thus indicates a network approach of community governance. Chinese governance has witnessed a gradual shift in the balance of power between state and society. To fully comprehend the complexity of the changing roles of government in how they deal with different social actors, I conducted an examination of Chinese governance from the perspective of a network approach.

(2) What traditions can we distinguish in governance at the local level in China?

Some major governmental and social traditions in China have been identified in Chapter 7 in analyzing and comparing governing practices in two cases. These traditions are summarized as follows:

- Centralized power and authority of the ruler

Ancient China’s history before 20th century has experienced rule by emperors with unlimited power over the country. Power was determined by the mandate of heaven, naming them “Son of Heaven”. Legitimacy was thus established through the mandate of heaven as long as the emperor ruled in a righteous way and maintained harmony within Chinese society. Additionally, power passed from one emperor to the next through hereditary connections within the ruling family. Under dynastic

rule, Chinese citizens were subjects of the emperor, not participants in political system (Wang, 1999).

- Local autonomy

While the Chinese imperial government was centralized and hierarchical in structure, the system did permit some degree of autonomy for the local authority to manage their own affairs. At the local level, a magistrate for a county, the lowest administrative unit in traditional China, carries out his duties working with and through the “local power structure”, which was headed by the large landowners, including merchants, artisans, and other persons of wealth and power in the community. This also indicates a special relationship between local authority and powerful elites in the community, a tradition of gentry-officialdom.

- Gentry-officialdom

In modern times, the relationship between leadership and bureaucracy is attributed to their shared interest and support for each other under political and economic reforms. With the absence of thoroughgoing marketization, business elites and entrepreneurs began to play an important role in Chinese politics. They have recognized the tremendous importance of cultivating good relations with officials in order to achieve their business goals. In return, to maintain the legitimacy and authority of the party-state’s governance, private entrepreneurs are encouraged to join the CCP.

- Confucianism

As a long and deeply embedded cultural value for Chinese people, Confucianism still continues to influence our behaviors. In this study, I mainly focused on three key principles: the belief in “harmony”, *guanxi* (interrelations), and the family-based social fabric. For Chinese people, harmony is the end and also the means of human interaction, in which people display a sincere and wholehearted concern for each other through interdependence and cooperation. Under this principle, *guanxi*, an informal relationship between people based on mutual interest, is cultivated. The literature suggests that *guanxi* is more than simply an issue of personal interrelations. Rather, it is often relate to the manufacture of obligation and indebtedness through exchanging gifts and asking favours. Apart from this form of social connection based on interests and benefits, the family-based social fabric also has influence on people’s perception and behaviors. The cardinal values to be exercised within the

family and within society as a whole include “brotherliness, righteousness, good faith and loyalty”, and also “humanity, optimism, humility and good sense” (Wang, 1999). In this sense, a *guanxi* system based on interests and benefits and a patriarchal lineage system based on families coexist alongside the more formal government structures.

- “The rule of law”

In imperial China, “the rule of law” has been emphasized in terms of its role in governing the country. Against this background of a centralized authority, there is a strong tradition of “the rule by man”. However, in contemporary China, a new idea is that of the “rule of law” in which law is defined as “assuming power for the people, fair and just, serving the major interests, and leadership of the party”, as developed and promoted by Hu (2006). “Lawful administration” has been reemphasized in the governmental agenda to develop socialist democratic politics and to construct socialist political civilization. Furthermore, in Chapter 7, a set of meanings of “law” that emerge from the different socio-political societies were identified, namely, disciplines, constitutions, policies, political systems, and constitution and laws. Noticeably, “the leadership of the party” is still emphasized in all government programs or practices, as evidenced in the government reports and in the case studies.

As I explained in Chapter 2, Chinese conception of “the rule of law” is different from its Western counterpart. It focuses more on developing its legal rational legitimacy, as evidenced in the literature on moving towards rationalization and inclusion, institutionalization and legalization. “The rule of law” in the Chinese context thus connotes “rule by law” rather than “rule of law”. In this context, it is worth reflecting on the way in which a “fair and just government” (as one of the elements in “a harmonious society”, see Chapter 3) is constructed and legitimated in contemporary China. Under the current people’s congress system, the state power, including legislative power, decision-making power, power of appointment and removal and supervisory power, is exercised by the National People’s Congress (NPC) and its permanent body, the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress (NPCSC). For example, as identified in Chapter 2, the law-making system is functioned by the NPC and the NPCSC in four stages. In addition, the state is

legitimized through implementing the formal laws, such as the Legislation Law, ALL, and substantive laws, such as the resolutions and decisions adopted by the NPCSC and decrees issued by the State Council and local people's governments at all levels.

And what dilemmas and dislocations do actors perceive and how do they react to these?

As explained by Bevir and Rhodes (2012, p. 103), a dilemma arises “when a new idea stands in opposition to an existing idea”, which forces reconsideration and adaptation. Chapter 7 has sought to explain the different governing practices in both the city and the countryside in response to the political and socio-economic changes under reforms. In both rural and urban reforms, the aim of the reform was to raise administrative efficiency through decentralizing of power and streamlining the administrative structure. However, the differences in the content of reforms and policy consequences in the last three decades have thrown up different dilemmas in the city and in the countryside.

In urban areas, the rapid economic development under reforms has resulted in an increasing influence of the entrepreneurial elite and development-oriented local bureaucrats in the decision-making process. With the continuous calling for “democracy” and “civil society” in the society, a dilemma for urban governments about their role in steering society and the economy has been created: how do they govern the networks, within the bureaucracy and with other actors? In the case of ACWC, the answer is the employment of “public participation”. However, the concept is not the counterpart as in the western democracies, as identified earlier in Chapter 4. The use of “public participation” here emphasizes the centralized decision-making power of the local authority and their “alliance” with the business elite, which can be traced back to the long-term traditions of the centralized ruling and gentry-officialdom since imperial China, as explained earlier.

However, in rural areas, the dilemma is how to maintain “harmony”, how to control and manage the public “ideologically”. As explained in Chapter 6, the difference from the city contains historical, cultural and practical reasons. Illuminated by the case of WSTK, “ideological persuasion” was employed by the local government as

an informal control of authority in the countryside. “Ideological persuasion” itself stresses the importance of beliefs and perceptions in shaping people’s behaviors. It then indicates that dilemma arises in the contestation of traditions and new ideas, resulting in different adjustments in narratives and practices of local governance.

(3) What are the tactics or strategies employed by local government in dealing with different actors in changing traditions?

Using grounded theory method and constant comparative analysis, I have drawn out a series of government tactics from the data in Chapter 7. In the table below (see Table 1), I revisited and explained some important tactics employed by the local governments in two cases respectively.

Table 1 – Government tactics in two cases

Government tactics	Explanations
The case of ACWC	
1. deflecting attention	The municipal government created diversion of attention of the public through constructing problems, creating obstacles, and overstating possible risks in dealing with conflicted interests. It can be called a “red herring”.
2. employing ambiguity and elasticity of law	The ambiguity of the laws and regulations and its lack of strong enforcement, leading to some legal loopholes on heritage conservation, were employed by local governments in the pursuit of partial economic interest.
3. token participation	Although the municipal government invites diverse participation from specialists, developers, social media and the local community, it did not actually include their opinions into the decision making.
4. spreading false information	The municipal government publicized filtered and false information, not originally received from the upper level. They released the information which was selected to their preference.
5. backroom decision-making	The municipal government made decisions in advance, only made public afterwards. The public had no idea about how the decision was made and who was responsible for the decision.

6. The use of the internet	The municipal government placed some important government policies and reports, such as <i>Changsha Master Plan</i> and <i>Plan of Protecting Changsha as a Famous Historical and Cultural City</i> , on the official government website.
The case of WSTK	
1. empowering the community	The local government encouraged full involvement of the villagers' committee and the villagers to carry out the conservation and redevelopment activities. It was seen as the implementation of the concept of Chinese "a harmonious society".
2. partnering with business enterprises	The county government signed a contract with a tourism development company to redevelop the area as a tourist attraction. Under the contract, the county government established partnership and coordination with the developer in heritage conservation and management.
3. employing mandatory nature of law	The local government explained and emphasized the enforcement and forcible measures of the law and regulations in order to gently push villagers to move spontaneously, especially for nail households
4. doing ideological work	The local government, following the order from the central government, delivered their political ideology to the public in order to ensure the smoothness of government activities. There were mainly three ways: (1) through the villagers' committee, expecting the future development of the heritage site and surroundings, the better living conditions and new opportunities for making money; (2) through sending the thematic working group to visit the nail households door-to-door, weighing the pros and cons and calculating the profits before and after the removal and redevelopment; (3) through "maintaining the correct orientation in public opinions", emphasizing the government ideologies among the group members, local cadres, and villagers through community meetings and discussions.
5. Consulting public opinions	The local government consulted the public and authentically included their opinions in the decision-making process. The

	opinion polls were conducted, which affects the overall planning of the removal and construction, especially on the housing location and style.
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Three key themes on governance concerning local bureaucrats, how they cope with the business elite and how they engage public voices, are thus developed in Chapter 7. In analyzing the tactics in two cases, firstly, I observe that the urban bureaucrats are still in a privileged position, while the rural bureaucrats act as “the middlemen” in carrying out government programs. Secondly, given that the urban reforms in China have resulted in a greater interest relation among bureaucrats and enterprises, I argue that local government and developers became the elite groups who shared common interest and thus formed the alliance in decision-making process. This reflects the tradition of gentry-officialdom in modern urban development. However, in the countryside, in the prevalence of personal and kinship ties, “community” and “traditions” are emphasized, leading to a closer relationship between the local government and the villagers than the business elite. Finally, in order to engage more public opinions under the pressure of social ties, the urban local government actively used the internet to improve the efficiency of government services and government transparency. It provides a space for the public to express their interests, yet still see a token public participation rather than an authentic one. In rural China, ideological cultivation among the villagers through in-person persuasion is dominant as the governing approach.

(4) How do different actors interpret governance in heritage conservation in the transitional process?

In the case of ACWC, when talking about “public participation” in the narratives of urban governance, it had different meanings for different groups. Firstly, from the perspective of the mayor, public participation in heritage conservation is a tool for attention management in society, not real participation in the final decision making. Secondly, for the specialists, “public participation” is designed to clarify and discuss the problem, thus to resolve the conflict. They conceived themselves as identifying the problem and providing professional knowledge in the participation, which they did correspondingly. However, the media has divergent views regarding the participation in this case, which resulted in the different reports on the case. When

talking about “public participation”, the ordinary people are talking about “the actual participation in the decision making process”, about “changes in final decision”. Thus, participation in this case is considered as “token participation”, which is used by local government to legitimize their pursuit of partial economic interest. For ordinary people “public” is viewed as “government rhetoric”, while “leadership” is the “essence”.

In the rural case, I examined different interpretations of “the rule of law”. In the view of local government, it acted strictly in accordance with the law, including its engagement of villagers’ committee, inclusion of public opinions and implementation of compensation policy. From the perspective of villagers, their view of “the rule of law” is complex. On one hand, they are not well aware of laws; on other hand, they are afraid of laws. Their awareness of laws is attributed to the traditional living style and networked culture. Noticeably, the villagers’ view on the role of villagers’ committee and villagers’ conference as institutional support of “the rule of law” in this case was divergent. For those nail households, the policies and plans in the concept of “the rule of law” were made by local government which benefited local cadres and elites. However, for some of the villagers, the villagers’ committee did promote “the rule of law” in the countryside in terms of its role in managing the conflict between local government and villagers, and among villagers.

9.3 China’s local governance: changes and tradition

In this section, I relate the three key themes identified in Chapter Seven, local bureaucracy, coping with business elite, and managing public voices, to the account of Chinese local governance, concerning the changes and transformation in urban and rural governance. It therefore draws attention to the first argument that urban governance in China follows the trend of entrepreneurialism in response to the crisis of state-led socialist development. However, Chinese urban entrepreneurialism features both commonalities with and differences from its western counterparts. Another important argument concerns rural governance, which is experiencing an informal form of authority.

9.3.1 Urban governance: Chinese urban entrepreneurialism

Here, I address urban entrepreneurialism in China and how the Chinese case resembles and differs from the entrepreneurial governance in western countries. In the west, “entrepreneurialism” as a version of urban governance emerged in late capitalism, which is related to the discourse of “globalization” (Jessop & Sum, 2000; Harvey, 1999; Ward, 2003). This transformation has seen an increasing entrepreneurial endeavour of the city government. “Market-friendly” becomes the keyword in the policy making by city governments who seek to establish partnership with investors in local economic development (Harvey, 1989). In particular, there are three ways in the process, as outlined in the literature.

First, the focus of the city agenda shifts from social policies to economic plans (Harvey, 1989; Harding, 1995). The function of city governments thus changes from delivering social welfare to promoting economic development. Second, public-private partnership becomes a popular way of boosting economies by local governments (Harvey, 1989; Molotch, 1993; Mossberger and Stoker, 2001; Harding, 1994). Key players, including elected politicians, landowners, chambers of commerce, property developers and others, can realize their interests by working with city governments. Third, practices and discourses initiated by these partnerships are proactive, innovative, and business friendly. City marketing, land-use design, image making, and competition with other localities are all cases in point (Jessop & Sum, 2000; Ashworth and Voogd, 1990).

As identified in Chapter 2, Chinese socialist market economy features the manipulation of the state that “increasingly incorporates neoliberal elements with authoritarian centralized control” in order to promote economic development. In the literature, like their Western counterparts local and city government in China has been described as “the tax collectors for the centre” (Zhang, 1999, p. 141), “industrial firms” (Walder, 1995), “economic interest groups with their own policy agenda” (Zhu, 2004), or “market builders” (Wu, 2008). In particular, on conditions that the land and property market prospers (see Chapter 7), city governments in China constantly intervene and play a proactive role in urban development.

The Changsha municipal government, as identified in the first case study, emphasized the creation of “a friendly investment environment” in daily management, which consciously promote entrepreneurial endeavour. Place promotion has been highlighted in forming business partnership with Wanda in developing a new urban complex and increasing investment in related infrastructure development. Moreover, entrepreneurialism in Changsha’s urban governance is also reflected in the use of land-leasing instruments and designation of commercial and development zones by the local government. From this perspective, China resembles its western counterparts in implementing entrepreneurialism as a version of urban governance.

However, China’s urban entrepreneurialism is quite different from that of its western counterparts. There are three points that should be noted. First, China’s motivations for market reform and attitude to the market are different. Although this form of urban governance is initiated by the state to fix the crisis (Jessop, 1994; Goodwin & Painter, 1996), China’s urban transformation to entrepreneurialism is regarded as part of the gradual reforms undertaken in response to the social and economic conflict and crisis, as identified in Chapter Two. In consequence, “market-regulated” (the state regulates the market), rather than “market-friendly”, is a better term to describe the attitude of China’s entrepreneurial state on the market.

Second, local China has seen land-centred accumulation in the urban entrepreneurialism. According to the *Land Management Law of the People’s Republic of China*, Article 2, “All urban land belongs to the state; land in the countryside and in suburban areas is under collective ownership.” A land leasehold market, which separates land ownership from land-use rights, has been established. As identified in Chapter 6, the reforms since 1978 have seen the introduction of market forces and the emergence of a land and property market. Driven by these market-oriented changes and requirements for urban expansion, land values increased dramatically. Under this system, local authorities lease urban land for different development purposes at a profit for a fixed period of time, such as infrastructure projects and special economic zones. As a consequence, land becomes an asset manipulated by the local authority, especially when land rents and taxation become an important source of local revenue and capital accumulation (see Chapter

6). Accordingly, China's urban entrepreneurialism is particularly related to the land. Urban space is thus mobilised to absorb capital when "the city is commoditized in all facets from its hard to its soft assets: branding and selling the city is a tactic" (Wu, 2008, p. 1094-1095).

As shown in the case of ACWC, property development by a large corporation contributes to the selling and branding of a city, as evidenced in the interview with the project director of Wanda Kaifu Plaza who stated that the project, being developed as an active urban belt featured with the rich cultural and landscape resources, contributed to an upgrade of the urban core in Changsha. Meanwhile, the mayor of Changsha also emphasized that the top priority of a city is "economic development". Noticeably, he mentioned land transfer in the project of Wanda, "*the government made no money in the project of Wanda, instead, we paid more. The removal costs about 2.45 billion RMB (245 million GBP); the land transfer fee is 2.45 billion RMB. The government had to pay another amount of money to renovate the Peace Ancient Street (taiping laojie) nearby.*" Therefore, I argue that local authorities in China have transformed into an entrepreneurial ensemble aspired by land-centred accumulation.

Finally, urban entrepreneurialism in China transcends what Harvey (1989) calls the public-private partnership and fosters official-businessperson collusion with focuses on economic profit and political achievement, as evidenced in the case of ACWC. The story of ACWC is a common story of Chinese cities who strive to increase their political and economic capacity, without caring much about ordinary people's interests, such as, place attachment and rights to participate. In this process, urban bureaucrats and business elite, especially property developers, restlessly engage in commodification and profit-making. Despite formulating a coalition with the business sector, local authority still plays a significant role in the process of development and regulation. It thus goes back to the first point of the local state's role in regulating the market through a wide range of policy instruments on the consideration of localized economic competitiveness.

Taking the three points together, I argue that China's urban governance features entrepreneurialism which shares both commonalities with and differences from its western counterparts. It reveals a transformation of urban governance in China,

which departs from the prototype of neoliberal entrepreneurialism in western literature. Therefore, China's urban entrepreneurialism is characterized by market regulation, official-businessperson collusion, and centred on land speculation in implementing entrepreneurialism.

9.3.2 Rural governance: Informal ways of authority

As discussed in Chapter 7, self-governance is significant in rural areas. A self-governing system, the direct electoral system and elected village committees, are set up by the central government to conduct village affairs. Moreover, the government program of "university-based grassroots government officials" (see Chapter 7) also contributes to the effectiveness and responsiveness of self-governing institutions. It might be debateable and worth further investigation to establish whether university graduates are inherently better at governing than non-university graduates. However, I observed that, in the case of WSTK, these highly-educated university graduates did care about the villagers' cultural life and their rights to participate in decision-making process. Through the government program, local government officials did realize the importance of villagers' involvement, thereby empowering the community in dealing with the local redevelopment. Similarly, in the literature, evidence suggests that this system does enhance local authorities' accountability to the villagers (Wang & Yao, 2007).

Furthermore, I argue that informal ways of authority under the influence of traditional norms in rural governance are highlighted. The case study of WSTK illustrated that local authorities have been influenced by and draw on social networks in mobilizing resources for public projects in local development. As indicated in the case study, people in the village were interlocked through personal relationships in informal networks. A sense of "community" was thus developed among villagers in carrying out local activities, such as public welfare and economic activities. Evidence has shown that the local leaders elected directly by villagers are affected by this networked relationship. In particular, "reputation" is considered significant by local authorities in the daily management. Under the influence and pressure of personal and social ties in the village, local government consulted the villagers when relocating the community. For the nail households who refused to leave, "ideological persuasion" is employed as an important governing approach.

According to Lindblom (1977), persuasion refers to a kind of communication that inscribes fact, analysis, entreaty, exhortation and lies. It is used to avoid the conflict and disputes through informing and educating citizens, which is “control of minds” (Lindblom, 1977, p. 54). In Mao’s China, persuasion was seen as the major form of social control that is said to help in developing “a correct standpoint” that is in line with the party ideology. In this case, “ideological persuasion” was exercised through door-to-door visiting and “doing ideological work” by a working group consisted of members of the villagers committee and local government officials. This supports my argument when discussing rural governance in China: inclusive networks in villages based on social and kinship ties and local authorities’ and “ideological persuasion” complement formal institutions in the governance of rural societies.

In summary, Chinese local governance is changing although it still sees traits of traditions in its daily management. In the city, we have observed the entrepreneurial endeavour by local authorities; however, the distinct historical-cultural factors bring together three ingredients, market regulation, official-businessperson collusion and a focus of land speculation which merges into urban entrepreneurialism. In the countryside, rural governance also features a combination of changes and traditions: a formal institutional authority of the grassroots self-governance system and an informal way of authority generated under the influence of inclusive social and kinship ties.

In the new era of technological development and rapid economic boom, local authorities face new challenges in governing society. As I discuss in the next section, in dealing with these issues and moving towards China’s democracy, both of the case studies illuminate positive implications.

9.4 Reflections on China’s democratization

China’s democracy is a people’s democracy under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party. Without the Communist Party there would no New China. Nor would there be people’s democracy. This is a fact that has been borne out by history.

PRC State Council White Paper,
“Building Political Democracy in China”,

October 19, 2005

Realizing people's democracy and ensuring the status of people as masters require us to carry out an extensive consultation and deliberation within people in all aspects in governing the country. Under China's socialist system, it is the essence of people's democracy: people talk and discuss all things in order to find the greatest common divisor of all the wishes and demands in the society.

A speech made by President Xi
At the ceremony marking the 65th founding anniversary of the CPPCC,
September 21, 2014

The two statements above powerfully illustrate democracy “with Chinese characteristics” in government narratives, which takes the form of public deliberation in the context of authoritarian rule. This resonates with the argument that China is in a state of “an authoritarian deliberation” that has been made by He and Warren (2009). Moreover, it also reemphasizes the significant influence of historical reality on the current political structure. As a central theme of this research, this Chinese-specific deliberation under the leadership of the party provides a specific social, political and cultural context to discuss deliberative practices and democratic process in a time of rapid economic development in China.

As suggested in the literature, the development of democracy in China requires not only the process of developing deliberative spaces but also attracting participation from citizens who have previously been indifferent towards and unconfident about public deliberation in the real world (He, 2011). In line with this, the two case studies in this research have demonstrated the growing significance of the internet and participatory practices in governing societies. This supports my argument that the expansion of public deliberation through the internet and the formation of a functioning civil society at grassroots' level contributes to some degree of democracy in changing China. In particular, I attempt to extend the concept of “authoritarian democracy” by He and Warren (2009) to an online setting.

In the literature, there were debates on the political benefits of the internet in terms of the public sphere – can it promote rational discourse, do online discussions foster democracy? Thus does it contribute to deliberative citizenship as the condition of a

democratic society? (Brants, 2005; Papacharissi, 2002; Ward, 1997; West, 2013) Some researchers suggest that the internet is simply a space for the general public to express their dissent and resistance. In particular, in China's context, with proactive control on the Internet, there is the question of whether it is accessible to people from a range of diverse backgrounds and thus can contribute to a democratic society? Here, I am not purely focusing on the use of the internet and debating whether the internet will transcend to the public sphere. Rather, based on the two case studies, I use the concept of the public sphere to discuss the contribution of the internet to a functioning civil society at grassroots' level and its role in promoting the cause of democracy in China.

According to Kendall (1999) and Dahlgren (2000), the internet interacts with the offline world and we must therefore consider the use of the internet in conjunction with other offline activities. Such online space and deliberative practices have to be negotiated in accordance with the social institutions and organizations and the needs and values of the community. That is, the discussion of the internet as a public sphere is context - and case - specific. This leads to my argument that focuses on the interaction between online and offline activities at the grassroots' level in the context of "authoritarian democratization" in China.

As Habermas (1997) describes, a public sphere consists of social spaces with open discussion, leading to public consensus and decision making. In particular, the process must see "discursive argumentation" and "rational approach" (Kellner, 2000, p. 264; Calhoun, 1999, p. 9). Although Habermas's conceptualization of the public sphere has seen critiques from various perspectives (Carey, 1995; Fraser, 1992; Lyotard, 1984), I argue that this concept provides us with a starting point in exploring the efforts of promoting the cause of democracy in China and helps us to reach an understanding of how the internet measures up to the expectations and efforts of ordinary people.

In an ideal sense, the public sphere must be facilitated with freedoms of speech and assembly, free participation in decision-making and a free press where individuals or groups have rights to discuss the public affairs. In this sense, the media within the public sphere has been functioned as "shaping, constructing, and limiting public discourse to themes validated and approved by media corporations", rather than

facilitating rational discourse. Unlike traditional media services, the internet transcends limitations of time, space and access and “interactive and deliberative citizenship, not hindered by the elite character of traditional mass media” (Brants, 2005, p. 143). It thus provides private persons with a considerable open space to discuss and negotiate their interest.

As identified in Chapter 2, the internet provides the Chinese with a considerable open space, not intentionally considering their age, gender, education, to express their opinions on public issues. On the online platforms, different players are discussing and negotiating, leading to a major increase in public engagement in some important social issues. These online platforms were produced and rapidly prevalent among the Chinese, for example, *Sina Weibo* (see Chapter 7). According to the Sina Weibo Research Report (2012), micro-bloggers, 80% of whom are highly-educated and 81.68% aged below 39, are more critical of the state and more supportive of democratic norms. They are exceptionally active and social, regularly making their views known and sharing them with other people. In this sense, the internet does play a role in enabling discussion and enlarging participation through offering a new and easy way of obtaining information and sharing opinions.

Not only providing a platform for discussion as a public space, the internet facilitates deliberative practices that promote an exchange of ideas and opinions, thereby creating a participatory culture within the society. In the case of ACWC, although the discussion and communication did not result in an authentic public participation, the internet facilitates the process. Meanwhile, in the case of WSTK, it seems that there was little influence of the internet on the conflict resolution in heritage conservation process. However, there is a trend that the internet will be increasingly used in rural areas. According to the statistics in *31st Statistical Report on the Internet Development in China 2014* (CNNIC, 2014), although there is a huge gap between the urban and rural areas in terms of the number of online users, the prevalence of the internet, there was a significant increase in the number of online villagers (about 1.7 million more than that in 2013). Ordinary people are thus enabled to instantly access government information, policy options and proposals, freely discuss their interests, and express their opinions. To promote the cause of

democracy in China, an offline world with a functioning deliberative system that interacts with the internet is a must.

The literature suggests that China has hardly seen a civil society given the arbitrary interventions of the party-state and local officialdom. However, as Frolic suggested, many of the elements associated with the West-derived concept can be traced in contemporary China. It also provides an opportunity for us to rethink the constraints and possibilities in the state-society relationship. As such, I use the concept of civil society as an analytical purpose and further discuss how public sphere and civil society link together conceptually, in particular, how civil society might contribute to properties of the public sphere in China's context.

In western literature, a number of civil society theories do put emphasis on the public sphere dimension. As Fraser (1990, p. 60) argues, civil society is "the soil that nourishes the liberal public sphere". Appealing to a critical conception of public sphere, he distinguishes the "weak publics" and "strong publics" of civil society, both of which generates public opinion that could enhance political accountability through institutional arrangement. On the normative idea of the liberal public sphere, Cohen (1999) further articulates the relationships between civil society and public sphere, as well as their contributions to conception of democracy. As he put it,

The democratization of civil society entails the reflexive application of the normative conception of the public sphere to itself: processes of deliberation, negotiation, and accommodation developed in informal civil publics must be provided for in the important non-state institutional arenas – in professional associations, in science, and in economic society – and open to general discussion as well (Cohen, 1999, p. 216).

Through communication and deliberation, the public sphere mediates the weak and strong publics that generated by the civil society. It is seen as constitutive of the modern form of democracy. A further development in theorizing civil society is Edwards's (2009) conception of the civil society as the public sphere. He put emphasis on the concept of a "public", "a while polity that cares about the common good and has the capacity to deliberate about it democracy" (Edwards, 2009, p. 63).

Civil society, in its role as the “public sphere”, thus becomes the place that people argue, deliberate, and collaborates.

Different from western countries with a strong liberal element, Chinese civil society articulates a special state-society relationship: being interdependent and interlinked (see Chapter 4). Here, I revisit the conception of Chinese civil society put forward by Deng and Jing (1992): it is both a private sphere where social actors engage in economic and social activities following some principles based on contract, voluntariness or common ground and a non-governmental public sphere for participating in policy discussion and making. It can hardly oppose the state power, as in some west democracies. However, the conceptualization of the “public sphere” and “civil society” is idealized. In reality, the practices within and across associations and organizations are always related to elite’ formation and power negotiation (Fraser, 1990). Therefore, some practical questions, such as, how do associational life help realizing the common interest, and how to revive the public sphere that transmitted the civil society and the public, are raised. I suggest that, like the internet, developing a Chinese grassroots-level civil society helps create a participatory culture and to facilitate discussions and negotiations amongst the public.

According to Odgen (2002), at the county, prefectural, and provincial level in China, there are more than 200,000 interest groups and professional associations, as diverse as commerce, technology, social welfare, sports, movies, and still others. In particular, there is a growing interest within society to research community-based organizations and their activities in daily life (Chan, 2012; Wang, et al. 1997; Zhou, 2005). Since the program of “community construction” or “community building” initiated by the central government in the early 1990s (see Chapter 2), community-based organizations, who carry out activities by working with the formal self-governing institutions in most cases, proliferated.

It is evident in empirical studies that these organizations do promote knowledge, awareness and action among local residents through their activities, such as offering special interest or educational classes, recreational and cultural activities. For example, Chan (2012) suggests that the labor NGOs in the Jiangsu province helped support the migrant construction workers in the community. Through interacting and

cooperating with the community, these organizations have created a space for a diverse group of social actors to participate in local issues. They are expected to promote democratic or participatory procedures at grassroots' level. In the context of changing governance at local level, it is anticipated that the growing use of the internet and the developing civil society will generate more participation and deliberation and lead to the creation of a greater public sphere, thereby promoting the cause of deliberative democracy in China.

Finally, considering the future trend of advancing democratic transition China, I focus on one of the recent initiatives by the central government: “constitutional review” in the requirement of “building a rule-of-law state” and prospects for the Chinese civil society. First, recent years have seen a calling for a constitutional court and as such, a discourse about “constitutionalism” has emerged. In particular, under the leadership of the President Xi, constitutionalism, as a term of suspicion, is interpreted as a check against the party’s authority and a push for more freedoms in social life. It was expressed and emphasized in the *Important Decisions on Strengthening a Rule-of-Law State by the Central Party-State* issued in October 2014. It pointed out that

Upholding “the rule of law” must first adhere to the rule of the Constitution. We must establish an implementing and supervisory system of the Constitution, improve a constitution supervisory system functioned by the NPC and the NPCSC, and further develop a procedural mechanism of interpreting the Constitution’s provisions.

This indicates an emphasis on the functions of the Constitution and the supervisory power of the NPC in building a rule-of-law state in contemporary China. “Constitutional review”, derived from the U.S., is the power of courts “to examine whether legislation enacted by the parliament or acts of the executive authorities are consistent with the written constitution and, within this query, to determine their validity” (Zhu, 2010, p. 625). It has become a standard component of democracy. In this sense, given there is no such provision in the Constitution and courts are not given the review power in China, constitutional review is far from being a part of constitutionalism in Chinese jurisprudence. However, similarly to the concept of “civil society”, “the rule of law”, a different interpretation on “constitutional review”

emerges within the Chinese context. According to Zhu (2010), considering the functions of constitutional review, being the assurance of constitutional compliance of legislation and the dispute resolution among different branches of government, a unique brand of Chinese constitutional review is evolving. The mechanism of constitutional review has been built up with the power of review vested in the NPC and the NPCSC instead of the courts. Noticeably, the Constitution grants the NPCSC the power:

to interpret the Constitution and supervise its enforcement... to annul those administrative rules and regulations, decisions or orders of the State Council that contravene the Constitution or the statutes [...and] to annul those local regulations or decisions of the organs of state power of provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities directly under the Central Government that contravene the Constitution, the statutes or the administrative rules and regulations (Zhu, 2010, p. 630).

It is often called “legislative supervision” or “legislative review”, which is actually the constitutional review in theory. However, there is always a disparity between theory and practice. The Chinese Constitution, itself, contains contradictions and problems in the provisions. For example, on the one hand, “all political parties and public organizations [...] in the country must take the Constitution as the basic norm of conduct, and they have the duty to uphold the dignity of the Constitution and ensure its implementation;” but on the other hand, “the Chinese people of all nationalities will continue to adhere to the people’s democratic dictatorship and the socialist road.” This indicates the Chinese constitutionalism “under the leadership of the party”. The dilemma we are now facing is whether the CPC and its decisions are subject to constitutional review. Another example of the problems in the Constitution is that it protects free speech and private property; however, it has rarely been realized in practice. In this sense, the first question is how to realize these constitutional provisions gradually.

The second point concerns the prospects for civil society in China, the trend towards representation of social organizations and associations for a more diverse and differentiation of interests and for more marginalized social groups. As explained in Chapter 4, Chinese civil society has seen an interdependent and interlinked state-

society relationship. Unlike those in other western democracies with a long history of liberal civil society, social organizations and associations in China do not consider themselves as being independent and hostile to the state power. In this context, as identified in Chapter 2, this resulted from the changes and developments under reforms, especially the loosening control of state authority, the growing importance of business sectors, the rapid differentiation of social interests and the intensification of social conflict, there is a strong anticipation about a gradual transition from traditional state-regulated mass organizations to more diversified and autonomous social organizations. In particular, these social organizations and associations seek to represent interests of different groups in society, especially for those marginalized groups, at the city, county and community level.

For example, trade unions or labor unions, traditionally being official agencies of the party-state, began to gain certain autonomy and to function as representatives of workers and “mediators” in workplace disputes. In addition, the legalization concerning rights of workers, for example, the *Labor Law* and the *Regulations on Handling Labor Disputes in Enterprises*, has put the trade unions on the side of workers. Particularly, in recent years, peasant-workers (*nongmin gong*)²¹, those who have always been economically and socially discriminated against, began to realize the importance of setting up their own unions to defend their interests in the workplace. Using the Association of Entrepreneurs in Zhenan, Xi’an as an example; a non-profit organization for migrant and peasant-workers, founded in 2009 by a group of Zhenan-originated entrepreneurs in private enterprises in Xi’an. It was designed to help members to protect their own interests and to provide skills training and employment opportunities for entrepreneurs and peasant-workers. Within five years, the association dealt with 150 cases concerning the rights of its workers and helped them to request wages of over 0.3 million GBP. The number of members now reaches to a figure over 20,000 (Lang, 2012).

Although the current literature suggests that the NGOs do not consider themselves as the vanguards of society or as an independent sector battling state intrusion (Ma, 2006), the future of Chinese civil society is promising. Nesbitt-Larking and Chan

²¹ *Nongmin gong*, the surplus agricultural workers who enter the urban labour markets against the background of economic openness and the relaxation of control measure on migration. They are predominantly young and poor-educated, working in manufacturing, transportation, commerce, food service, and so on. They enjoy the low wage rate and high mobility in unskilled or semi-skilled industry.

(1997) suggest that Chinese youth, who were born in the 1970s and 1980s, became increasingly exposed to a broad range of new ideas and thus, aspired for greater political and social rights. They also provide empirical evidence showing that Chinese youth are more materialistic and individualist, more cynical toward the government, and more inclined to participate and support political protest than older generations. Against this background of a large population of youth who are liberty- and democracy-minded, a sense of citizenship is developing. As defined by Turner (1993, p. x), citizenship is “a bundle of rights and duties relating to an individual as a member of a political community”. It points to critical citizens, who exhibit a propensity to regard their political institutions, practices, and personnel in a discriminating manner. Following these conceptions, I suggest that Chinese youth, who generate a sense of citizenship, serves to undermine a developing civil society in China.

9.5 Methodological implications

In this section, I will reflect on the choice and use of grounded theory in completing the research. For me, as an early researcher, grounded theory process was challenging. The main resource was the book *Constructing Grounded Theory* by Kathy Charmaz (2006). During the process, I worked closely with my supervisors in coding, memo writing and finally conceptualizing. First, regarding the use of grounded theory in this research, the main difficulty I encountered is to find the literature which fits the data and how to engage it with the data.

Grounded theory researchers are supposed not to impose preconceived framework or theories on the data. At the early stage of my research, I did not read a lot of the literature on the democracy, policy process, and governance. As I was working through data analysis, I could not find the direction when returning to the literature. After writing the memos, such as “government tactics”, I read Foucault’s governmentality, while for memos like “debating on the internet”, I read Habermas. These grand theories offered very inspiring concepts, but did not quite “fit” the data. I kept on reviewing the literature relevant to my data and developed more memos. This involves a lot of work in reading and writing. Only after more advanced and theoretical memos were developed, I found the theoretical framework of networked governance by Bevir and Rhodes (2012) in a specific context of a country with

“authoritarian deliberation” (He & Warren, 2009). Therefore, grounded theory is a continuing process which engages the data and insights with the existing literature.

The reflections on the choice of grounded theory in this research are developed through identifying its strengths and limitations. In the literature, the strengths and limitations and grounded theory have been explored in regards to development of a mid-range theory. For example, Boudon (1991) states that grounded theory is good to use which producing generic propositions based on empirical data. However, a potential “conceptual stretching” in the abstraction of a concept or theory is identified (Sartori, 1970, p. 1991).

In this research, the main advantages of using grounded theory is that it (1) fills the gap in the literature as an inductive research approach, and (2) develops explanatory concepts which fit the data. Compared with other policy analysis approaches, grounded theory focuses on the process, explaining how people are experiencing a phenomenon through taking full account of their views, actions and interactions, Given this research sought to examine the process of conflict resolution in heritage conservation, grounded theory method is useful.

A significant limitation of grounded theory lies in its potential of researcher-induced bias. According to Bryant and Charmaz (2007, p. 422), grounded theory method fails to “recognize the embeddedness of the researcher and thus obscures the researcher's considerable agency in data construction and interpretation, as well as the framing of accounts”. This potentiality is likely to exist in all qualitative research to some extent, researchers have responsibility to reduce. Drawing from this perspective, one implication of using grounded theory is theoretical saturation, which is also the key to know when to finishing the analysis. This analytical step requires many attempts that in one hand, researchers' mind-sets start at the very early stage of data collection and analysis, in the other hand, they need to allow concepts and categories emerge themselves before drawing conclusions.

Another concern of using grounded theory in this study is generalization, which requires more empirical studies on the topic. Since I researched on human interactions and lifeworld phenomena that have always multiple meanings, generalization is not my goal in concluding the thesis. I concluded with context- and

case-specific statements that describe relationships which are valuable only under certain conditions and similar situations. Both of the cases are typical in heritage conservation in China. The urban case evidenced a common phenomenon of the displacement of historical-cultural heritage sites, motivated by economic profits, while the rural one saw a prevalent model of transforming heritage into tourist sites in the name of conservation.

9.6 Contributions of this study

Given the arguments presented previously, this study has sought not to identify a solution to balance heritage conservation and local development; it is more concerned with the transition of Chinese local governance, leading to a unique version of democratization in a time of economic development. To this end, this study has conducted two case studies in heritage conservation, an urban one and a rural one. By triangulating the literature, the data and the insights gained, this study has developed a number of arguments related to Chinese local governance in order to further understand its dynamics and how it can pave the way to a greater democracy in China. In this section, the contributions of this study, both theoretical and practical, are presented.

The theoretical framework of “authoritarian deliberation” (He and Warren, 2009) suggests a unique version of China’s democracy. This study revisits the idea that this concept can well describe the current deliberative efforts and practices in the context of the authoritarian leadership of the state-party in China. Moreover, it is noted that such a form of democracy is more important at local level than at state level, against the backdrop of market regulation and local self-governance. The concept of “authoritarian deliberation” is also extended to an online setting, illuminated by the city case study that the internet creates a new platform for participatory activities. This thesis supports other studies in evidencing the fact that a dramatically growing number of people discuss and negotiate important public issues in society. This is a matter that has become an important attribute in advancing democracy in China

Secondly, drawing from these two empirical studies, this research also provides insights for the debate on the prevailing notion of “public participation” and how it is interpreted by different groups of social actors. It has focused on the changes

underpinning the structure of democratic institutions and the historical-cultural traditions of “authority”, “autonomy”, and “*guanxi*”. It has also explored the dilemmas faced by the local government and their responses from the perspective of a network approach of governance. Therefore, this study has added empirical weight to Bevir’s and Rhodes’s “decentring” approach to interpreting governance (2003).

Finally, looking into governance through a different lens, this study, researching heritage conservation, has used empirical findings to show that the current public participation policy is not making the anticipated impact on decision-making. The arguments in this thesis suggest the need for consideration of local needs in policy making and the reconciliation of interests among different social groups towards successful conflict resolution in heritage conservation which concerns people first and most. This, therefore, requires a well-functioning mechanism of public participation from the very bottom of society that facilitates an expression of interests by people who are directly influenced, rather than a top-down initiation of projects and vertical integration of social organizations by local government.

In summary, democratization in China is not just a case of developing democratic structures or institutional innovations. In the context of its historical and cultural background, it is also about encouraging informal links that are designed to bring people together. This would generate values of democracy amongst the public alongside the structural transformation of institutions that this entails. It necessitates the adoption of new participatory and deliberative governing practices and cultures from the bottom of a society that currently faces challenges from rapid economic development.

9.7 Future research areas

The study has offered a comparative perspective on the issue of local governance in different settings in China. In particular, it adopted the grounded theory method in generating new ideas and identifying some theoretical implications based on two case studies in heritage conservation. Informed by the limitations identified in Chapter 5, there is a need for more empirical case studies at local level to generate achievable policy strategies with regard to a greater democracy in a fast-developing China.

-It has been argued in this study that China is experiencing “authoritarian deliberation” as its specific form of democratic processes. The discussion on “deliberation” in the Chinese case suggests that this form of deliberation, promoting common interests and a harmonious way of resolving conflict, is actually practised by the powerful bureaucratic elite. Moreover, as has been emphasized, traditional values and informal ways of authority are crucial in governing the society. This indicates a strong influence of historical and cultural factors. Thus, the extent to which these traditions can be a source of democratization at the local level is a question that can be further explored. Future research could also conduct a comparative examination of the prospects for promoting democratic deliberation and participation from the bottom up in different settings, for example, what ways or settings engage more people.

Another crucial issue in this study has been the role of the internet in enabling ordinary people to articulate their interest. As the literature and this thesis have suggested, the internet enhances opportunities for public interaction and policy discussion. However, in the new phase of socio-economic development, the potential of the internet to be extended into the public sphere is compromised by many problems, such as the domination of commercial activity and individualized forms of politics. Therefore, this internet-based initiative, as well as the historical and cultural influence addressed in the first point, leads to a difficult but promising question: can these informal sources help democratic transitions in China, and if so, how?

The comparative perspective has sought to investigate the empirical evidence of local governance in the city and in the countryside, thereby illuminating forms of democracy in China. To fully understand and improve the current political system, there is a need to position it in a global context. According to Almond et al. (2003), comparing the experience of our nation with that of other nations is useful in order to see a wider range of political alternatives and to expand our awareness of possibilities. Therefore, exploring and comparing the way of democratization in China with that of other democracies, for example, with the consociational democracy²² in terms of elite coalition and domination, can facilitate a better

²² Consociational democracy, pointing to the Dutch, Swiss and Austrian experiences, refers to a political style marked by government by the elites, grand coalition and neutralization of political disputes by compromise and mutual concessions. (Lijphart, 1969)

understanding of China's specific approach to democracy and its role in global politics. This might offer a further fruitful avenue for research.

9.8 Summary

This concluding chapter outlined the study's findings where the focus was on the changes, traditions, and dilemmas in Chinese local governance. Through investigating and comparing an urban and a rural case, this study identified three key themes, concerning how local government copes with different actors. Based on the "distinctive policy analysis" to "decentre" the governance (Bevir & Rhodes, 2012), this study then provided different interpretations of local governance in both cases.

The second part of this chapter was a reflection on the real-world problem of conserving heritage sites in China. I addressed the dilemmas in different settings, in the face of the displacement of heritage sites for urban development and the dislocation of the local community required by tourism development in rural areas. However, it is difficult to give an answer to the question of how to balance heritage conservation with local development in one single piece of research. To see things through one small lens, heritage conservation has become one of the most visible and accessible fields where ordinary people have presumed to think more about "public participation", "civil society" and "democracy".

Later, I considered how these findings interact with the transformation of Chinese local governance and with the theory of democratization in a time of rapid economic development. The theoretical implications of this study were put forward, which justified the objective of using a grounded theory approach. The theoretical implication I wanted to highlight relates to China's democratization. In Section 9.3, I discussed the transformation of local governance in China, which provides a chance to theoretically understand the changing state-society relation in the new phase of capitalist development. I reemphasized that local China is now experiencing the "authoritarian deliberation" put forward by He and Warren (2009), which is inherited from the governing traditions and is reinforced by continual social and economic development. As theoretical implications of this study, this concept was extended to an online setting and specifically fits with the two case studies from the perspective of local-level governance in China.

Finally, considering a future trend, I discussed the prospects for change towards “a rule-of-law state” and civil society, which are essential in advancing the cause of democracy in China. Recent initiatives on “constitutional review” indicate the state’s focus on the functions of the Constitution and the supervisory power of the NPC in building a rule-of-law state in contemporary China. A second development regarding civil society in China points to the role and functions of social organizations and associations at local level, as well as the emergence of citizenship brought about by a new category of youth, who are more materialistic and individualist, more cynical toward the government, and more inclined to participate and support political protest than older generations.

Put simply, the key dilemma for China is the degree of power held by society relative to the state, that is, whether autonomy or control. As I have presented in this thesis, traditional Chinese culture has deeply influenced society’s relationship with the state, thereby shaping the behaviours of government and social groups. These historical and cultural factors, especially the state-party’s authority and the centrality of *guanxi* or kinship ties, are being redefined under the socio-economic and political reforms. This, again, reemphasizes the argument relating to a special entrepreneurialism in Chinese urban governance and informal ways of authority in rural governance. As a concluding remark, I suggest that, although the current institutional environment in China is not friendly towards democracy, there is a strong anticipation of the positive role that the internet and the civil society can play at grassroots level in China. No matter how limited, informal and disorganized it is, Chinese democracy will ultimately benefit.

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