

**THE CHANGING ROLE OF URBAN PLANNERS IN  
TRANSITIONAL CHINA: EXPECTATIONS,  
APPROPRIATENESS AND 'MAKING A  
DIFFERENCE'**

Thesis submitted for the degree of PhD

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## **Abstract**

In planning literature there has been a deal of great interest in the development of urban planning roles in response to the changing planning conditions in cities. This dissertation contributes to this discussion by developing a framework which aims to support the understanding of the changing role of planners in this aspect of planning knowledge. What emerges from this research is a more complex understanding that suggests the role expectations of planners and planning knowledge should not be read as specially demarcated and unchanging social attributes. Instead, the focus of inquiry should be on the continuous process of social and political change which affects the way planners conceptualize problems, forming rules of practice. Research was carried out using a qualitative strategy in two phases of interviews with Chinese planners from Beijing and Harbin.

China offers fertile ground to explore these issues. Decentralization, economic reform and globalization have brought great changes to Chinese cities. Accelerated urbanization has generated continuous rapid growth creating a series of social problems. The transitions have brought new concerns to light, the ‘rule of law’, ‘GDP-oriented urban growth’, ‘making professional judgement’ and ‘getting the public voice involved’. The old planning traditions persist and continue to wield power, including, ‘keeping uniformity with the central power’, ‘giving legitimacy to local authorities’ and ‘setting the world in order’. By capturing these messy, dynamic and contextualised processes that construct the role of planners, the analytical lens of planning knowledge offers a view of understanding a transitional context. How planners located themselves in different roles, as ‘handmaiden of power’, ‘initiative knower’ and ‘active initiator’, has become important in clarifying

the rules, making distinctions and determining what the situation was and what kind of knowledge fits.

This research should be of interest to urban planning practitioners in China and also internationally, and to researchers interested in the planning profession.

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# Table of Contents

<b>Abstract</b> .....	i
<b>Acknowledgements</b> .....	iii
<b>List of Figures</b> .....	x
<b>List of Tables</b> .....	xi
<b>Chapter 1 Introduction</b> .....	1
<b>1.1. The role of planners</b> .....	1
<b>1.2. Urbanization in China and its problems</b> .....	3
<b>1.3. The role of Chinese planners</b> .....	6
<b>1.4. Research questions</b> .....	9
<b>Chapter 2 China in transition</b> .....	13
<b>Preamble</b> .....	13
<b>2.1 Planning system in China</b> .....	13
<b>2.1.1 Authorities related to urban planning</b> .....	13
<b>Legal system and administrative system of planning</b> .....	15
<b>2.1.2 System of urban plans</b> .....	19
<b>2.1.3 Preparation and approval of urban planning</b> .....	21
<b>2.1.4 Implementation of urban planning</b> .....	23
<b>2.1.5 Evaluation and monitoring</b> .....	24
<b>2.2 The changes in state power</b> .....	26
<b>2.2.1 The governmental apparatus</b> .....	26
<b>2.2.2 The change in land allocation</b> .....	28
<b>2.2.3 The decentralization</b> .....	29
<b>2.3 Urbanization: from planning for growth to land adjustment</b> .....	32
<b>2.3.1 Planning for urban growth</b> .....	32
<b>2.3.2 Planning for land use adjustment</b> .....	33
<b>2.4 The deficiency in public engagement</b> .....	36
<b>2.5 Research questions</b> .....	37
<b>Summary</b> .....	38
<b>Chapter 3 Theory and conceptual framework</b> .....	39
<b>Preamble</b> .....	39
<b>3.1 Professionalism</b> .....	39
<b>3.1.1 Research in professionalism</b> .....	39
<b>3.1.2 Professionalism in planning</b> .....	42

3.2	<b>Institutionalist analysis</b> .....	43
3.2.1	<b>Why institutionalism?</b> .....	43
3.2.2	<b>New institutionalism</b> .....	44
3.2.3	<b>Old and new institutionalism</b> .....	49
3.3	<b>Conceptual framework</b> .....	51
3.3.1	<b>Planning Knowledge</b> .....	52
3.3.2	<b>Role expectations</b> .....	53
3.3.3	<b>Rules of appropriateness</b> .....	54
3.4	<b>Research questions</b> .....	57
3.4.1	<b>Research question 1</b> .....	57
	<i>How does planning knowledge influence rules of appropriateness?</i> .....	57
	<i>How do rules of appropriateness influence planning knowledge?</i> .....	58
3.4.2	<b>Research question 2</b> .....	58
	<i>How does role expectation influence planning knowledge?</i> .....	59
	<i>How does planning knowledge influence role expectation?</i> .....	60
3.4.3	<b>Research question 3</b> .....	61
	<i>How does rules of appropriateness influence role expectation?</i> .....	61
	<i>How does role expectation influence rules of appropriateness?</i> .....	62
3.5	<b>The role of planners in different planning models</b> .....	63
3.5.1	<b>The rational comprehensive model</b> .....	63
3.5.2	<b>The advocacy planning model</b> .....	65
3.5.3	<b>The equity planning model</b> .....	67
3.5.4	<b>The social learning and communicative model</b> .....	68
	<b>Summary</b> .....	69
	<b>Chapter 4 Methodology</b> .....	70
	<b>Preamble</b> .....	70
4.1.	<b>An overview of methodology</b> .....	70
4.1.1	<b>Research design and methods</b> .....	70
	<i>Policy and document analysis</i> .....	70
	<i>Semi-structured interviews</i> .....	71
4.1.2	<b>Storing and analysing data</b> .....	73
4.2.	<b>Research process: phase 1</b> .....	74
4.3.	<b>Research process: phase 2</b> .....	81
4.4.	<b>A reflection on methodology</b> .....	85
4.4.1	<b>The initial answers to research questions</b> .....	85
4.4.2	<b>Validity and reliability</b> .....	87



4.4.3	Translation .....	89
4.4.4	Ethical and safety issues.....	90
4.4.5	Power and positionality.....	94
4.4.6	The limitation of the methods of this research.....	94
	<b>Summary .....</b>	<b>95</b>
	<b>Chapter 5 Planning knowledge and roles of Chinese planners at different times .....</b>	<b>96</b>
	<b>Preamble.....</b>	<b>96</b>
5.1	<b>A historical review of planning tradition and roles of planners in China .....</b>	<b>96</b>
5.1.1	<b>Planning tradition, planning knowledge and the role of the planner in ancient times 96</b>	
5.1.2	<b>The planning tradition, planning knowledge and the role of the planner in the Modern Era .....</b>	<b>101</b>
5.1.3	<b>The planning tradition, planning knowledge and the role of the planner in the communist time.....</b>	<b>103</b>
5.2	<b>The role of Chinese planners nowadays .....</b>	<b>110</b>
5.2.1	<b>Planning education .....</b>	<b>111</b>
5.2.2	<b>Urban planning qualification system for registered urban planners .....</b>	<b>117</b>
5.2.3	<b>Planners from different organizations.....</b>	<b>120</b>
5.2.4	<b>Organizational expectations of roles of planners.....</b>	<b>125</b>
	<b>Summary .....</b>	<b>126</b>
	<b>Chapter 6 Rules of appropriateness in planning knowledge .....</b>	<b>128</b>
	<b>Preamble.....</b>	<b>128</b>
6.1	<b>New rules of appropriateness .....</b>	<b>128</b>
6.1.1	<b>Rule of law.....</b>	<b>128</b>
6.1.2	<b>GDP-oriented urban growth .....</b>	<b>132</b>
6.1.3	<b>Making professional judgments .....</b>	<b>136</b>
6.1.4	<b>Getting the public voice involved .....</b>	<b>139</b>
6.2	<b>Traditional rules of appropriateness .....</b>	<b>143</b>
6.2.1	<b>Keeping uniformity with the central power .....</b>	<b>143</b>
6.2.2	<b>Giving legitimacy to local authorities .....</b>	<b>147</b>
6.2.3	<b>‘Setting the world in order’ .....</b>	<b>149</b>
	<b>Summary .....</b>	<b>151</b>
	<b>Chapter 7 The creation of planning knowledge.....</b>	<b>153</b>
	<b>Preamble.....</b>	<b>153</b>
7.1	<b>An overview of planning knowledge summarized from interviews .....</b>	<b>153</b>
7.2	<b>Planning knowledge created by new rules .....</b>	<b>160</b>

7.2.1	Rule of law .....	160
7.2.2	GDP-oriented urban growth .....	164
7.2.3	Making professional judgments.....	167
7.2.4	Getting the public voice involved.....	173
7.3	Planning knowledge created by old rules .....	178
7.3.1	Keeping uniformity with the central power.....	178
7.3.2	Giving legitimacy to local authorities .....	181
7.3.3	‘Setting the world in order’ .....	184
	Summary.....	189
	<b>Chapter 8 The role expectations of planners.....</b>	<b>192</b>
	Preamble .....	192
8.1.	The role expectation of ‘handmaiden of power’ .....	192
8.2.	The role expectation of ‘initiative knower’ .....	199
8.3.	The role expectation of ‘active initiator’ .....	204
	Summary.....	212
	<b>Chapter 9 Detailed examples of planners’ practice.....</b>	<b>215</b>
	Preamble.....	215
9.1.	Make a difference in formulating the indicator of FAR (Floor Area Ratio) ..	215
9.2.	Make a difference in public engagement.....	218
9.3.	The reason why sometimes planners want to make a difference .....	222
	Summary.....	225
	<b>Chapter 10 Conclusion .....</b>	<b>227</b>
10.1.	Findings of this study .....	227
10.1.1.	Research question 1: Within the dynamics of a transitional context, which rules are appropriate in planning knowledge? Why?.....	227
	<i>New rules of appropriateness</i> .....	227
	<i>Traditional rules of appropriateness</i> .....	231
10.1.2.	Research question 2: What roles are Chinese planners playing in interactions with local authorities? Why? .....	233
10.1.3.	Research question 3: How can planners make a difference? .....	237
10.2.	The profession of urban planning in China.....	239
10.3.	The contribution of this research .....	245
10.3.1	Theoretical contribution .....	245
10.3.2	The role of planners .....	247
10.4.	Limitations of this study and suggestions for further research .....	248
	Bibliography.....	249

Appendices .....	267
Appendix 1: A review on relevant documents .....	267
Appendix 2: A framework for interviews.....	280
Appendix 3: Interview questions in Phase 1 .....	289
Appendix 4: The list of interviewees in Phase 1 .....	293
Appendix 5: Interview questions in Phase 2 .....	297
Appendix 6: The list of interviewees in Phase 2 .....	298
Appendix 7 Information Sheet for interviewees.....	300
Appendix 8: Participant consent form for interviewees .....	302

## List of Figures

<b>Figure 1 Urban population shares in the national population, 1949-2010 .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Figure 2 Legal System of China.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Figure 3 The framework of the present urban planning administration .....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Figure 4 Five levels of Land Use Master Plan (Han &amp; Nishimura, 2006, p. 10) .....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Figure 5 Implementation of Urban Planning .....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Figure 6 Map of China: Showing Provincial-Level Administrative Divisions.....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Figure 7 Diagram of Wang Cheng (Capital City) in Kao Gong Ji.....</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Figure 8 The growing numbers of universities with undergraduate course of urban planning .....</b>	<b>111</b>
<b>Figure 9 Guarantee mechanism of urban planning quality.....</b>	<b>113</b>
<b>Figure 10 The index and system of education accreditation of the subject of urban planning .....</b>	<b>115</b>
<b>Figure 11 The routine process of plan formulation .....</b>	<b>124</b>
<b>Figure 12 The plan making process in practice .....</b>	<b>161</b>
<b>Figure 13 The administrative centre of a local government .....</b>	<b>181</b>
<b>Figure 14 The design sketch of a square.....</b>	<b>183</b>
<b>Figure 15 The design sketch of a square.....</b>	<b>183</b>
<b>Figure 16 The design sketch of a city .....</b>	<b>184</b>

## List of Tables

<b>Table 1</b>	<b>Number of cities in different size categories, 1995-2009.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Table 2</b>	<b>Instruments of legislation .....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Table 3</b>	<b>Vertical system of legal system of urban planning.....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Table 4</b>	<b>Horizontal system of legal system of urban planning.....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Table 5</b>	<b>Hierarchy of planning authorities and administrations.....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Table 6</b>	<b>Statutory Plans .....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Table 7</b>	<b>Statutory Plans and responsible authorities .....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Table 8</b>	<b>Statutory Plans and approval authorities .....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Table 9</b>	<b>Instruments of urban planning in China .....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Table 10</b>	<b>Provision for public engagement in the laws and regulations on city planning at the national level.....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Table 11</b>	<b>Research process: phase 1 and phase 2.....</b>	<b>74</b>
<b>Table 12</b>	<b>Different organizations who formulate laws and regulations .....</b>	<b>75</b>
<b>Table 13</b>	<b>A framework for interviews .....</b>	<b>77</b>
<b>Table 14</b>	<b>An example of the summarization of an interview .....</b>	<b>82</b>
<b>Table 15</b>	<b>Memos in data analysis.....</b>	<b>84</b>
<b>Table 16</b>	<b>The content of public engagement in the Urban and Rural Planning Law 2007.....</b>	<b>139</b>
<b>Table 17</b>	<b>Generations of Chinese leadership .....</b>	<b>144</b>
<b>Table 18</b>	<b>The topics of the Chinese Annual National Urban Planning Conferences .....</b>	<b>146</b>

**Table 19 Appropriate knowledge for Chinese planners in the process of plan  
formulation .....154**

## **Chapter 1 Introduction**

### **1.1. The role of planners**

In planning literature there has been a great interest in the development of urban planning roles in response to the changing planning conditions in cities. This dissertation contributes to this discussion by developing a framework which aims to support the understanding of the changing role of planners in this aspect of planning knowledge.

It is important to examine the changing role of planners. Forester (1999, p. 57) has said that planners ‘whether they like it or not are practical ethicists’. Campbell (2002, p.272) explains that ‘planning is about making choices, with and for others, about what makes good places’. In practice, the emergence of new planning forms challenges the traditional role of planners and raises requirements regarding new interactive roles for planners (Sehested, 2006, p. 2): they must interact increasingly with a diverse range of planning knowledge.

Much research has been done into the role of planners. Some authors focus on the interpersonal context of practice, noting how individuals create behavioural worlds which influence and are influenced by their activities and their ways of knowing (Bolan, 1971; Schon, 1982; Howe, 1980; Sager, 2009). They stress the importance of analysing the role of planners by identifying planners and their relationships. There is a considerable amount of literature about the ways in which the institutional context affects the role of planners (Healey & Shaw, 1993; Healey, 1992, 2008). The construction of their role helps us to understand the interaction between institutions and planners (Healey, 1992). Sehested (2009) adopts the institutionalist approach to analysis of the changing role of Danish planners under changing planning conditions. In terms of the planners’ expert

knowledge and their participation in local network governance, a hybrid role is emerging for planners who will carry different values and knowledge.

To understand such an abstract concept as the role of planners, we have to understand the knowledge they use in their work. Planning knowledge is embedded in organizations and framework, which is influenced by the ‘background assumptions, values and general orientation that guide planning endeavours’ (Friedmann, 2005, p. 30). When there is a transition, planning knowledge is in transition: for example, the planning knowledge of planners from wealthy countries has changed from

...strategic framework and regulation to innovative projects and the intense negotiations among all of the parties affected about their design, location, the means of financing, eventual subsidies, heritage issues, the relocation of local citizens from prospective building sites, and similar matters (Friedmann, 2005, p. 35).

Since many African countries are undergoing a process of overurbanization, planning knowledge in South Africa is changing. Planning knowledge has developed to deal with changes in its broader environment. Instead of focusing on how to develop, it now considers how to become more strategic, participatory and integrated in dealing with urban problems (Friedmann, 2005), which can be seen

...in the adoption of statutory Integrated Development Plans (IDP) — the centrepiece of planning in post-apartheid South Africa — by every local authority in the country to provide strategic guidance to newly constructed municipalities (Winkler, 2002, cited in Friedmann, 2005, p.42).

In this research, the study of role expectation is based on a new sociological institutional understanding which emphasises both the significance of context for human actors and



planners' 'ways of thinking'. Institutions shape the self-images of human actors to influence their behaviours. The understanding of role expectations sets a focus on the construction process through which planners create meaning with different patterns of planning knowledge. This research also presents planners' construction of their roles in a transitional context, through their choices of planning knowledge they would like to use and their rejection and exclusion of other knowledge. In this study, the focus is the dynamics of changing role identification of planners. Planners do not assume fixed roles. Their roles are defined according to empirical data derived from planners' experience in practice. The understanding of role expectations and planning knowledge is conducted against a background of qualitative interviews with urban planners about their daily work with planning, with a focus on 'rules of appropriateness' relevant for the study.

## **1.2. Urbanization in China and its problems**

The accelerated urbanization in China over the past 30 years (World Bank, 2008; Ren, 2013) has led to rapid growth on the economic, population and urban spatial scales (Liu, 2011).

Before 1978, China was a poor country with a large rural population and a lack of housing and infrastructure in urban areas (Ren, 2013). Three decades later, in 2010, China was the second largest economy in the world. In the 1982 census, the number of people living in towns and cities of the total population was only 20.6%, whereas currently half of the population of China lives in urban areas (Figure 1). According to the 2010 census, the urban population has increased by over 200 million between 2000 and 2010. Gross domestic product (GDP) increased from 365 billion Yuan in 1978 to 51.89 trillion Yuan in 2012, while GDP per capita increased from 381 Yuan to 38,420 Yuan in that period

(State Statistical Bureau, 2013). The area of total urban build-up dramatically expanded from 8842 to 32,520km<sup>2</sup>, a growth of 260% during 1984-2005 (Lin et al., 2014).

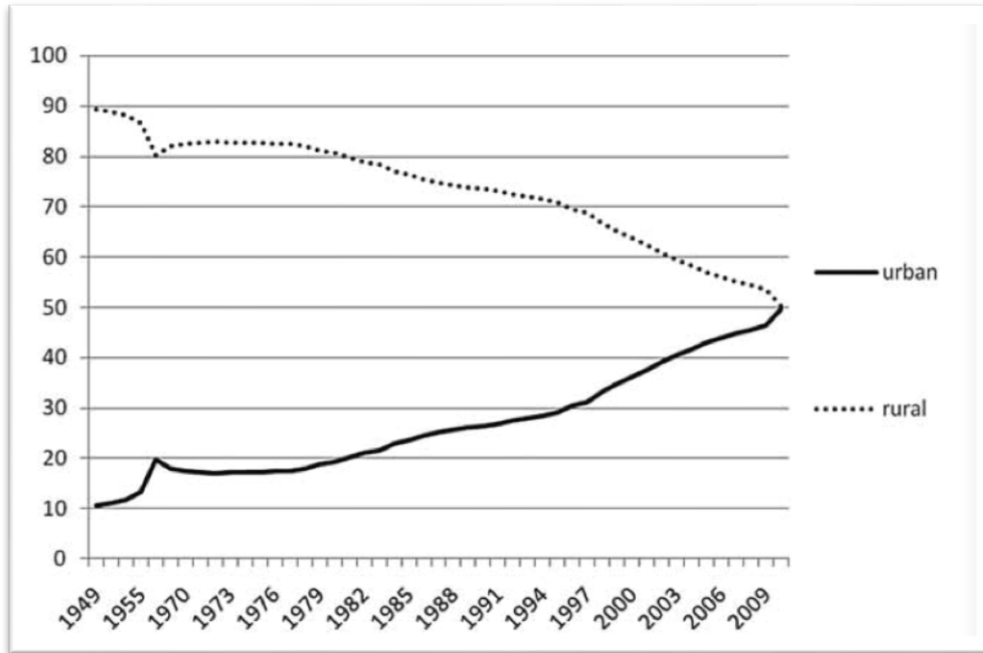


Figure 1 Urban population shares in the national population, 1949-2010

Source: (Ren, 2013; p10; collating data from *China City Statistical Yearbook, 1982-2010*)

Not only have large cities continue to grow, but also medium-sized and small cities have bloomed. In the 1980s, cities were classified according to their population size into five categories by the National Bureau of Statistics: super-large cities (more than 2 million), extra-large cities (1-2 million), large cities (0.5-1 million), medium cities (0.2-0.5 million) and small cities (less than 0.2 million). In 1981, 18 Chinese cities had a population of more than 1 million; by 2009, 129 cities had a population of more than 1 million, and another 110 cities had a population of between 0.5 million and 1 million (Table 1).

Table 1 Number of cities in different size categories, 1995-2009

	>2	1-2	0.5-1	0.2-0.5	<0.2
	Million	Million	Million	Million	Million
	Super-large Cities	Extra-large Cities	Large Cities	Medium Cities	Small Cities
1995	10	22	43	192	373
2000	13	27	53	218	352
2005	38	75	108	61	4
2010	42	82	110	51	2

Source: (Ren, 2013; p11; collating data from *China City Statistical Yearbook, 1996-2010*)

According to Zou (2014), urbanization in China had the following features. Firstly, China was a large agricultural country with large territory and population, yet economically backward, producing large total quantities but at a low per capita level. Secondly, with its socio-economic development, the rural population had gradually moved to cities. Thirdly, since reform and opening-up began in 1978, China's rapid economic growth had resulted in a large number of surplus rural workers flowing into the cities, creating a 'semi-urbanized population' of 'migrant workers'. Fourthly, the guidance and intervention of government policies had a significant impact on the urbanization process. (Zou, 2014)

In the context of China's current transformation from a centrally planned system to a market system (Zhao, 2012), rapid urbanization has brought many problems. Cities in China has become not only 'centres of social development', but also 'places of concentrated social conflict' (Liu, 2011, p. 20). These include tensions in the cities and the unequal distribution of resources among a large population (Shi, 2014). The 'incomplete interest-balance mechanism' (Liu, 2011, p. 20) has led to a series of problems including inequality development in different regions, different spatial distribution in urban areas, urban facility shortages and the over-intensive use of central

areas (Friedmann, 2005; He, Wu et al., 2010). Planners face controlling diverse urban problems.

Take city renewal as an example. The process of city renewal in China requires demolition and the relocation of urban residents. It has become a flashpoint for social conflicts between residents and local governments. One of the most famous incidents occurred in Longnan, when petitions to the local government from thirty people whose homes has been demolished turned into riots involving thousands of people and at least seventy casualties.<sup>1</sup> In June of 2005 a cadre in Yuhuazhaimoujia village, under the administration of Xi'an city, sold land without the villagers' permission, culminating in a massive brawl that resulted in eleven serious injuries.

### **1.3. The role of Chinese planners**

Decentralization, economic reform and globalization have brought great changes to Chinese cities. Accelerated urbanization has generated continuous rapid growth creating a series of social problems for planners. This dissertation reviews how political and social changes affected planning knowledge and role expectations of Chinese planners.

But this transition has also brought opportunity to Chinese planners. Decentralization has brought more power to the local state. Local governments can take more initiatives to develop their areas. Planners have greater opportunities to make urban plans and apply their professional knowledge, and planning law gives them the opportunity to freely apply professional theories and methodologies in the plan-making process. The transition has also brought challenges. The market economy has changed the plan-making process from absolute government control of behaviour to market-oriented behaviour, so planners have to bid to get plan-making projects in the market. The role of Chinese planners and the

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<sup>1</sup> Nanfang Baowang 19 November 2008 ([http://www.nfdaily.cn/opinion/opinionlist/content/2008-11/19/content\\_4714177.htm](http://www.nfdaily.cn/opinion/opinionlist/content/2008-11/19/content_4714177.htm))

way they use their professional knowledge is important in understanding planning practice, but most research has focused on planning practice, and less attention has been paid to human actors.

Urban planners are becoming a larger and larger group because of the high speed of urbanization in China. There are over 100,000 technical staff in urban planning agencies where there were only 20,000 in the early 1980s, for a total urban population of 712 million or 52.6% of the total population by the end of 2012, up from 26% in 1990 (1. UN, 2012). The ‘ways of thinking’ of planners impact on urban planning, although it is still treated as a primarily scientific process in China (Wang, 2004). Planners are seldom in the eye of the public in China: although everyone living there feels the results of their work, from the layout of a city to the landscaping of a road, planners are strangers to most Chinese people. There are very limited opportunities for them to face the public directly and they spend most of their time on CAD (a kind of drafting software) and files of designs (Yuan, 2012).

Chinese urban planners are also a mystery to academia to some degree, though a considerable amount of research has been done on economics, spatial planning and development strategies. Even in Chinese academia, the ‘ways of thinking’ of urban planners are not given enough attention. Research into urban planners is mainly focused on professional education (Chen, 1995; Zhao, 2006) and ethics (Chen, 1995; Shils, 2008). The paucity of the literature on what Chinese urban planners actually do is understandable because the lack of transparency regarding local government decisions makes it difficult to observe the decision-making processes around urban development directly, or the contributions which planners make to this process.

Little literature has directly addressed what Chinese planners actually do. Perlstein and Ortolano (2015) analyse the role planners play in relation to local governments, but they do not mention how planning culture influences their role. Leaf and Hou (2006) analyse urban planning in China in a historical context, but they too do not mention specific practices of planners. Zhang (2002) defines Chinese planners' roles in three dimensions, as citizens, as intellectuals and as planning professionals, and addresses concerns related to each role's change at a time of transition, in which their role is changing and they take on a wider range of identities (Perlstein & Ortolano, 2015).

The planners' voice in the planning process is not strong enough. Urban planning in China is currently characterized by a top down approach to high density urban development and extensive urbanization, and it is quite common for government officials to make decisions, leaving planners to do the drawings. In the interviews conducted by Yuan (2012), many planners admitted that planners in general are passive and compromised, 'The opinions of government officials are powerful and do not always make sense. Almost all of them like wide roads and huge squares' (Yuan, 2012).<sup>2</sup> An experienced planner with eight years of working experience commented, 'There could be 20 rounds of reviews! Reviews would not stop until all the developers and governments are satisfied with the results.'

However, Chinese planners are exploring their own ways of improving the process of urban planning. According to a Chinese planner Yuan, the working style of Chinese planners has begun to evolve from doing what they are told to do to seeking new ways of doing things; their means of expression has moved from doing the drawings to explaining and publicizing. Since the formulation of urban planning began to change from closed

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<sup>2</sup> Translated by the author

government-led action to public involvement, the thinking style of planners has started to move from the physical world to the humanistic world (Yuan, 2012).

Planners need to recognise their roles in practice. We need to consider the extent to which planners have the capacity and confidence to make a change, and strengthen their ability to deliver professional knowledge in practice by investing in their skills, capacity and confidence to add value to planning activity, setting an agenda for the education and professional training of planners. The next section will show how these considerations lead to specific research questions.

#### **1.4. Research questions**

This thesis is to examine the changing role of Chinese planners in a transitional context by examining planners' knowledge in planning practice.

The research questions are:

1. Within the dynamics of a transitional context, which rules are appropriate in planning knowledge? Why?

Empirical work shows that the planners' political context is important (Alexander, 1992). What is explored here are the factors which affect a planner's role location. The factors to be examined include social and political background, professional education and qualification as well as planning tradition. Because of the nature of the data available, only partial answers to the question of how people come to a role can be suggested, but these answers can indicate future directions for research.

In the transitional Chinese context, there are different 'rules of appropriateness' for planners to follow. Since the 1980s, the planning system in China has generally shifted from centrally-led planning to local municipalities-led planning under central control.

Recently the focus on urban planning has changed from planning for growth to planning for land use adjustment. Education and qualification constitute important socializing forces for planners (Howe, 2007).

Planning tradition provides ways to understand the role of planners, but can also act as a constraint on intellectual innovation, by locking their perception and understanding (Healey, 2006). In China, planning traditions from socialist times and from ancient times persists in current practice: a ‘Confucian-derived cultural system exists that defines and thus legitimizes social and political norms for state-society interaction’ (Leaf, 2005, p. 93).

So in the relationship between planning traditions and the current transition, it is important to understand different ‘rules of appropriateness’. To clarify how they influence planning practice helps us to understand role expectations and planning knowledge better.

2. What roles are Chinese planners playing in interactions with local authorities?  
Why?

Planners’ roles are uncertain, and the roles played by human actors differ in different contexts (Alexander, 1992). Under China’s hierarchical and rule-based system, urban planning, as a governmental function, performs a political role. During interactions between planners and local authorities, the role expectations of planners reflect the extent to which a planner can influence decision-making in the process.

This study of role expectations is based upon a new institutional understanding which views role expectations as the connection between planning knowledge and its environment, stressing ‘rules of appropriateness that are provided by the institutional context. Through the framing of role expectations of planners, we can understand the



dynamics of changing contexts, and through planners' own interpretations of their roles, we can understand the different values of each role.

### 3. How can planners make a difference?

In this transition, the conflict or ambiguity of the rules can be resolved by 'clarify[ing] the rules, make[ing] distinctions, determine[ing] what the situation is and what definition "fits"' (March & Olsen, 1989, p. 161). The ways planners internalize 'rules of appropriateness' and how they locate themselves in different roles are important. Role development occurs not only through institutional changes but also through the actors' shifting interpretations of those changes. Choosing a role involves deciding what kind of knowledge is appropriate for a planner (Howe, 2007).

As professionals, if they create the process they would like to use instead of following the rules of other groups, planners will have far more power and discretion (Innes, 1995, p. 185). However, we need to examine this in the field, and asking whether planners have the initiative to take more power in practice should be one of our objectives. If they want to make a difference, the triggers for them to take the initiative are worth examining to understand their values better. If they do not want to make a difference, the drivers should be examined to understand why.

Interviews are the main strategy that has been used to obtain information on the practice of urban planning in China. The planners in the study all make urban plans for local municipalities. The interaction between planners and local municipalities is examined in this research, and the role expectations and planning knowledge are examined through analysis of the planners' own descriptions of their work and action in practice.

The efficacy of the methodology of this research is constrained by the sensitivity to land use and urban development issues in China. Despite these limitations, this research aims to contribute to an understanding of planners' role in China on a practical basis, and of their efforts to influence government decisions.

## **Chapter 2 China in transition**

### **Preamble**

This chapter introduces the planning system in China in 2013-2014, the period of this research: authorities related to urban planning, the legal system and administrative system of planning, the system of urban plans, preparation, approval, implementation evaluation and monitoring of urban planning. The contemporary Chinese planning system is faced with the country in transition: a change in the exercise of state power, and a process of urbanization which has evolved from planning for growth to planning for land adjustment; there is an increased spatial inequality and an escalation of social unrest emerging. The existing deficiency in public engagement in planning is also introduced. Research questions are proposed at the end of this introduction.

### **2.1 Planning system in China**

Generally, Chinese urban planning systems are embedded in both macro-scale economic environment and physical construction of the spatial development. They determine the major direction of spatial planning, land-use policy and urban development. Within this institutional context, urban planning is hierarchically organized according to the scale and scope of planning objects, administratively and geographically.

#### **2.1.1 Authorities related to urban planning**

##### ***The Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development (MOHURD)***

The Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development (MOHURD) is responsible for drafting laws, policies and development plans in relation to city, village and town planning and construction, the building industry and municipal works. Its roles include: introducing new inspection procedures, issuing standards on construction materials and building codes; establishing national programmes to train project owners, managers,

engineers and technicians; setting national standards for construction projects and overseeing market access, project bidding and the supervision of quality of safety. This includes preparing plans for scientific and technological development and technical economic policies for related industries. Because of the increasing housing market and serious problems generated by the imbalanced provision of housing, it tries to increase control of the housing sector by leading housing construction, overseeing the reform of the urban housing system, and managing the industry of real estate. Additionally, a strong focus is laid on methods of economic appraisal for research into project feasibility, land-use targets, economic parameters and construction projects cost management; Special effort is also applied to developing sustainability in public facilities, such as environmental sanitation and national scenic spots and historic cities (Lawrence & Martin, 2013). In respect of urban planning, it functions by framing the drafting methods of urban planning, and town and village planning; supervising and approving towns system plans of provinces, autonomous regions and some big cities; and supervising and approving the plans of important national parks (Han & Nishimura, 2006).

#### ***The Ministry of Land and Resources (MLR)***

The responsibilities of Ministry of Land and Resources (MLR) include land reform regulations, such as formulating and implementing regulations for the assignment, lease, evaluation, transfer and governmental purchase of land use rights; formulating the guide for land use allocation for state-owned land and measures for land use by villages and townships; administering the land use transfer of non-agricultural land owned by rural collectives. It administers land prices evaluation (benchmark and standard land prices), validating the qualification of the evaluation of land and appraisal agencies, confirming the prices of land use, examining and submitting applications for land use which legally needs the Chinese State Council's approval. In respect of urban planning, it drafts the

national land use plan; frames the drafting methods of land use plans; supervises land use master plans and other thematic plans of provinces, autonomous regions and some big cities (Han & Nishimura, 2006).

**Legal system and administrative system of planning**

The legal system of China has three levels: the Chinese Constitution and all the laws based on it; the administrative ordinances promulgated by the State Council; and the local ordinances promulgated by local congresses, the local regulations issued by local governments and the sectional regulations issued by the ministries and committees of the State Council (the Organizing Law of All Levels of Local People’s Congresses and Local Governments, 1979; the Chinese Constitution, 1982; the Chinese Legislation Law, 2000). This system gives government sectors the power of legislation and the State Council administrative legislative power to supervise local regulations (ordinances) (Figure 2) (Han & Nishimura, 2006).

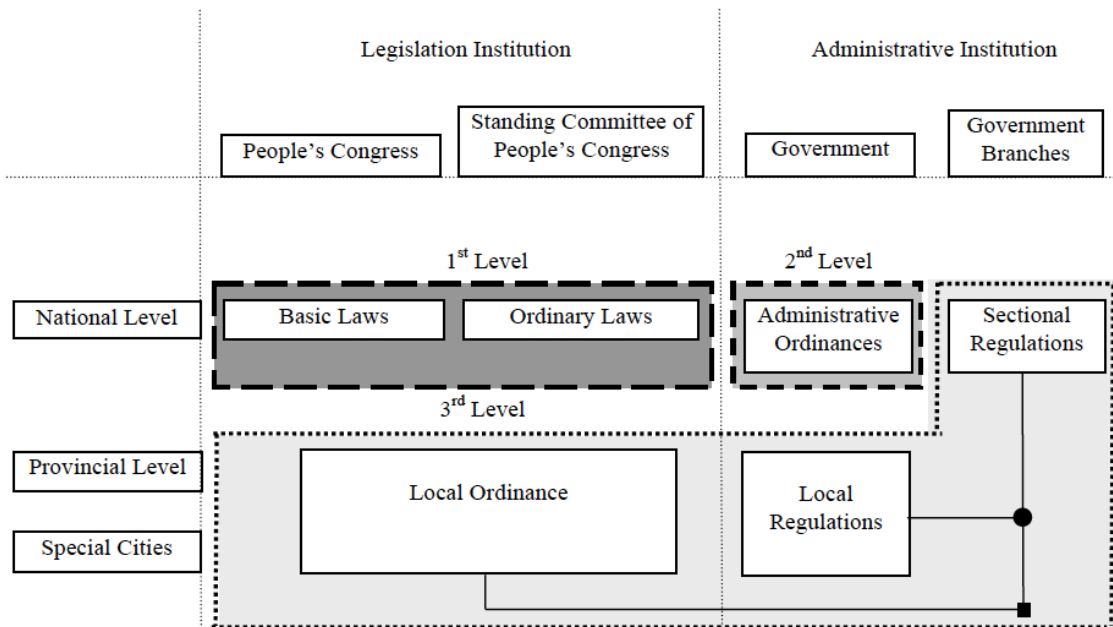


Figure 2 Legal System of China; Source: (Han & Nishimura, 2006, p. 7)

Terms are used to give definition to the application scope and authority enactment level (Table 2) (Management Method for the Documents of State Government, 2001; Chinese Legislation Law, 2000; Organizing Law of All Levels of Local People’s Congress and Local Governments, 1979). Terms include law (*Fa*), regulations or provisions (*Tiaoli*), rules (*Guize*), detailed rules (*Xize*), methods or measures (*Banfa*), decisions (*Jueding*), resolutions (*Jueyi*, *Guiding*) and orders (*Mingding*).

**Table 2 Instruments of legislation (Han & Nishimura, 2006, p. 7)**

<b>Classification</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Legislation Institution</b>	<b>Promulgator</b>
Law	Fa	National People’s Congress	President
Administrative Ordinances	Tiaoli Guiding Banfa	State Council	Prime Minister
Sectional Regulation	Guiding Banfa	Ministries and Committees of the State Council	Minister
Local Ordinances	Tiaoli Guiding Banfa	Local People’s Congress of Provincial Level and of Big Municipalities	Local People’s Congress of Provincial Level and of Big Municipalities
Local Regulation	Guiding Banfa	Local People’s Government of Provincial Level and of Big Municipalities	Provincial or Municipal Governor

As stipulated in Urban and Rural Planning Law (Urban and Planning Law), the legal urban planning system includes vertical and horizontal parts. The vertical system includes a four-tier system: planning, laws, ordinances, and regulations and directives issued by different authority levels (Table 3). The horizontal system consists of principal acts, subsidiary legislation and other relevant laws (Table 4).

**Table 3 Vertical system of legal system of urban planning Source: Derived from Urban and Rural Planning Law and constructed by author.**

Planning laws and regulations	Issued by
National Laws	National People’s Congress
National Administrative Ordinances	State Council
Local Ordinances and Regulations	Provincial governments
Local Regulations and Directives	Municipal governments

**Table 4 Horizontal system of legal system of urban planning (Wang C.-Y. , 2015, p. 251)**

<b>Principal Act</b>	<b>Urban and Rural Planning Law</b>
Subsidiary Legislation	Guidelines for making City Plans
	Regulations on Assignment and Transfer of Land
	Use Right on State-owned Land in the Urban areas
	Various Technical Standards and Norms
Other Related Laws	Land Administration law, Environmental Protection Law, Water Law, Construction Law etc.

The Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development (MOHURD) under the Chinese State Council is responsible for organizing the formulation of plans for national cities and towns; provincial governments or governments of autonomous regions are responsible for

organizing the formulation of plans for local cities and towns; municipal governments are responsible for organizing the formulation of plans for cities (Urban and Rural Planning Law, 2007). It is required that all cities should compile Statutory Plans, fundamental and important city plans specified in the Urban and Rural Planning Law. MOHURD is responsible for plan administration at the national level. Provincial construction administrations/commissions and planning bureaus are responsible for planning administration at provincial levels. Municipal and county planning bureaus are responsible for planning administration at local levels (Figure 3) (Table 5).

**Table 5 Hierarchy of planning authorities and administrations Source: Urban and Rural Planning Law and organized by author**

<b>The administrative hierarchy</b>	<b>Authorities in charge</b>
National level	MOHURD
Provincial level	Construction Administrations / Commissions, Planning Bureau
City and Country level	Planning Bureaus



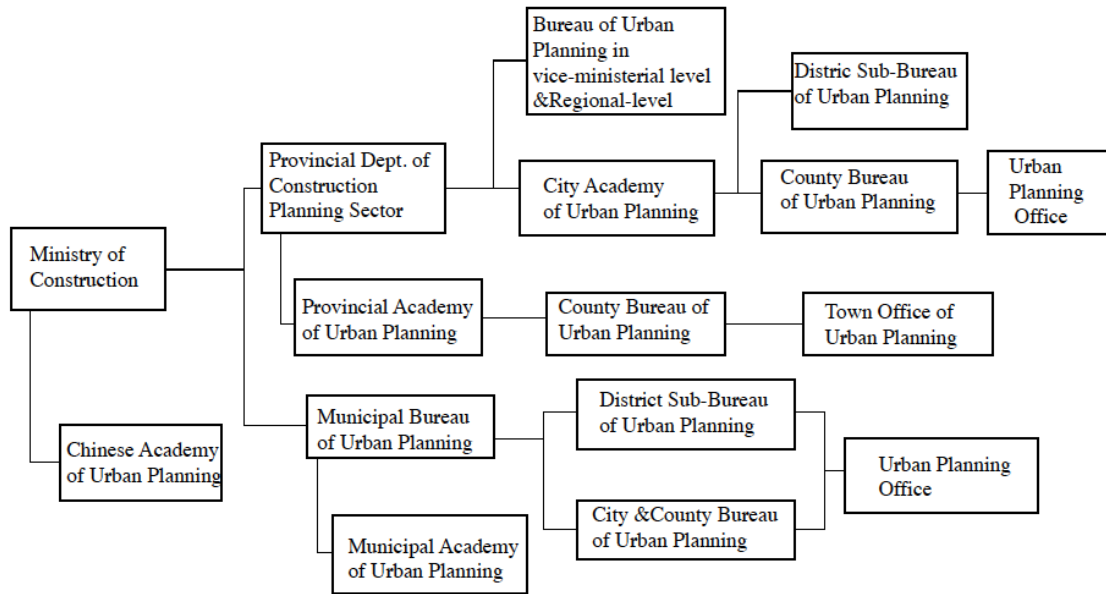


Figure 3 The framework of the present urban planning administration (Tang, 2004, p. 4)

### 2.1.2 System of urban plans

#### *Land use planning*

Land use planning is an important part of the Chinese state planning system. The land use master plan, yearly land use plan and thematic land use plan are included in the land use master plan system. According to the Land Administration Law, the land use master plan is carried through an up-down five-level hierarchical system, which includes the plans of national, provincial, municipal/prefecture, county/district and village/town levels (Figure 4), under control from the national level (Han & Nishimura, 2006).

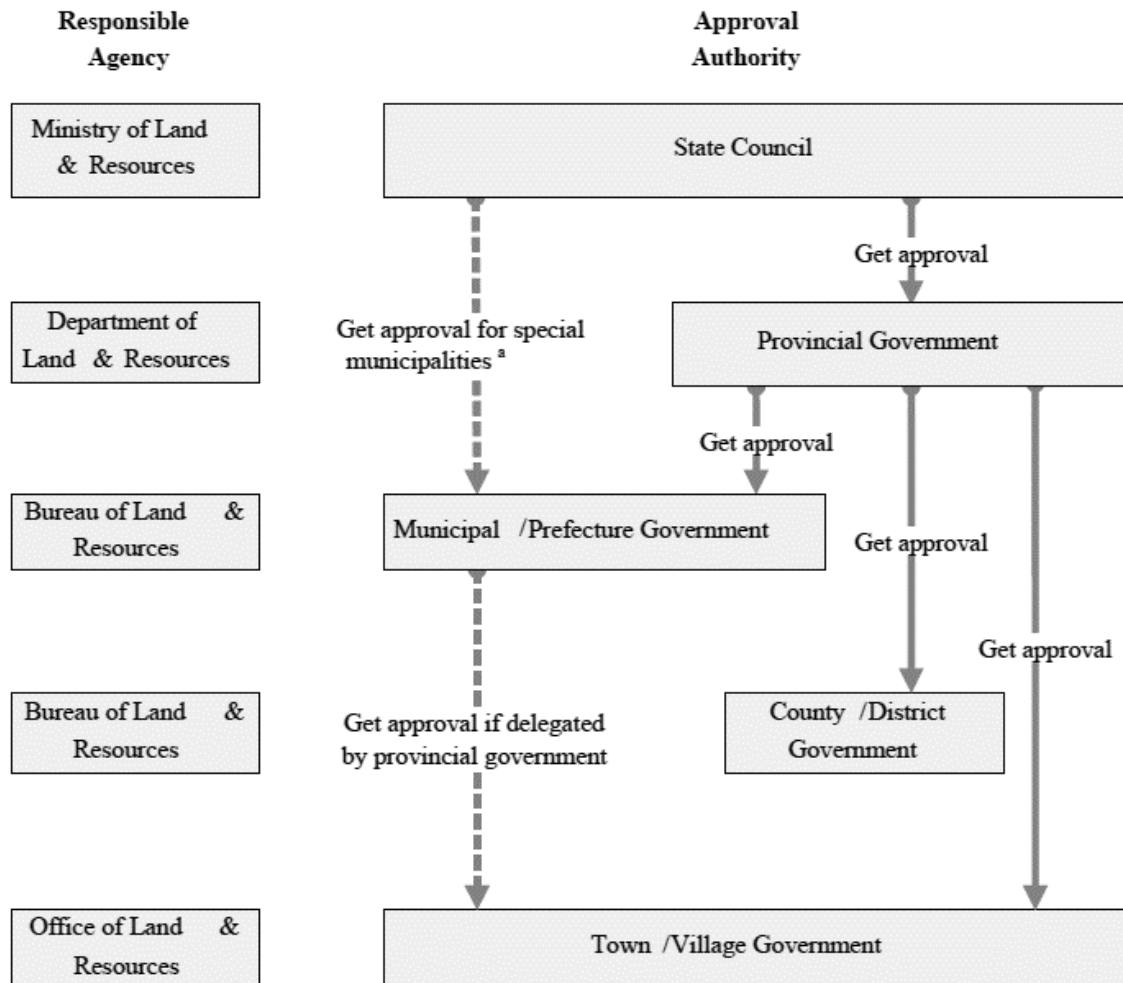


Figure 4 Five levels of Land Use Master Plan (Han & Nishimura, 2006, p. 10)

### *Urban and Rural plans*

According to the Urban and Rural Planning Law, an urban and rural plan should include Urban System Planning, City Planning, County Planning (Town Planning), Country Planning (Township Planning) and Village Planning (Table 6). In urban areas, City Planning and Country Planning is divide into City Master Planning (overall planning or *Zongtiguihua*) and Detailed Planning (*Xiangxiguihua*). Detailed Planning includes regulatory detailed planning and site detailed planning.

**Table 6 Statutory Plans (Source: Urban and Rural Planning Law 2007, organized by author)**

<b>Statutory Plans</b>		
Urban System Plan	National Urban System Plan	
	Provincial Urban System Plan	
City Plans and Country plan	City Master Plan	
	Detailed Plan	Regulatory Detailed Plan (applicable to cities and towns)
		Construction Detailed Plan (applicable to designated areas)
Country Plan and village plan	Country plan and village plan	

### **2.1.3 Preparation and approval of urban planning**

As is stipulated by the Urban and Rural Planning Law, every tier of urban planning has its responsible authorities (Table 7). In general, the preparation of a lower-tier plan should follow the guidance of the higher tier plan while small adjustments are permitted (

Table 8). To formulate a statutory plan, a qualified planning institute is usually commissioned by a responsible government authority. This institute puts forward several proposals of planning through on-site investigation, research and problems analysis. Relevant stakeholders such as government departments, professionals and the general public should be consulted on objectives and strategies. A final planning proposal should

then be made through supplementary investigations, modifications, improvements and consultations, then the proposal should be submitted to the responsible authorities for approval. Written documents, relevant sketches and maps should be included in the final planning product. Different levels of government authorities approve the statutory plans (Lawrence & Martin, 2013).

**Table 7 Statutory Plans and responsible authorities (Wang C.-Y. , 2015, p. 269)**

<b>Statutory Plans</b>	<b>Responsible Authorities</b>
National Urban System Plans	Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development and other relevant Government Departments under the State Council
Provincial Urban System Plans	Provincial Governments
City Master Plans (City and County System Plans Included in City Master Plans and Detailed Plans)	City Governments and City Planning Bureau
Country Plans and Villages Plans	Country Governments

**Table 8 Statutory Plans and approval authorities**

<b>Statutory Plans</b>	<b>Approval Authorities</b>
National Urban System Plan	State Council
Provincial Urban System Plans	State Council (Endorsed by MOHURD)
Urban and Rural System Plans	Approved along with Urban Master Plans
Urban Master	State Council

Plans	Other Designated Cities	Provincial Authorities
	Designated Towns	County Authorities
Detailed Plans		City Authorities

#### 2.1.4 Implementation of urban planning

The municipal government should promulgate the City Master Plan when it is approved and prepare the procedure for implementation (Figure 5). First, the planning department in local government is responsible for preparing a site selection report for each development proposal. Second, a land use planning permit and construction planning permit are required for all projects before they can be built (Table 9).

**Table 9 Instruments of urban planning in China (Sources: organized by author)**

Instruments		Prior to
Site selection report		Official setup of a development project
Land use planning permit	City level	Land use application submitted to local Land Administration
	Country and village level	
Construction planning permit		Building permit

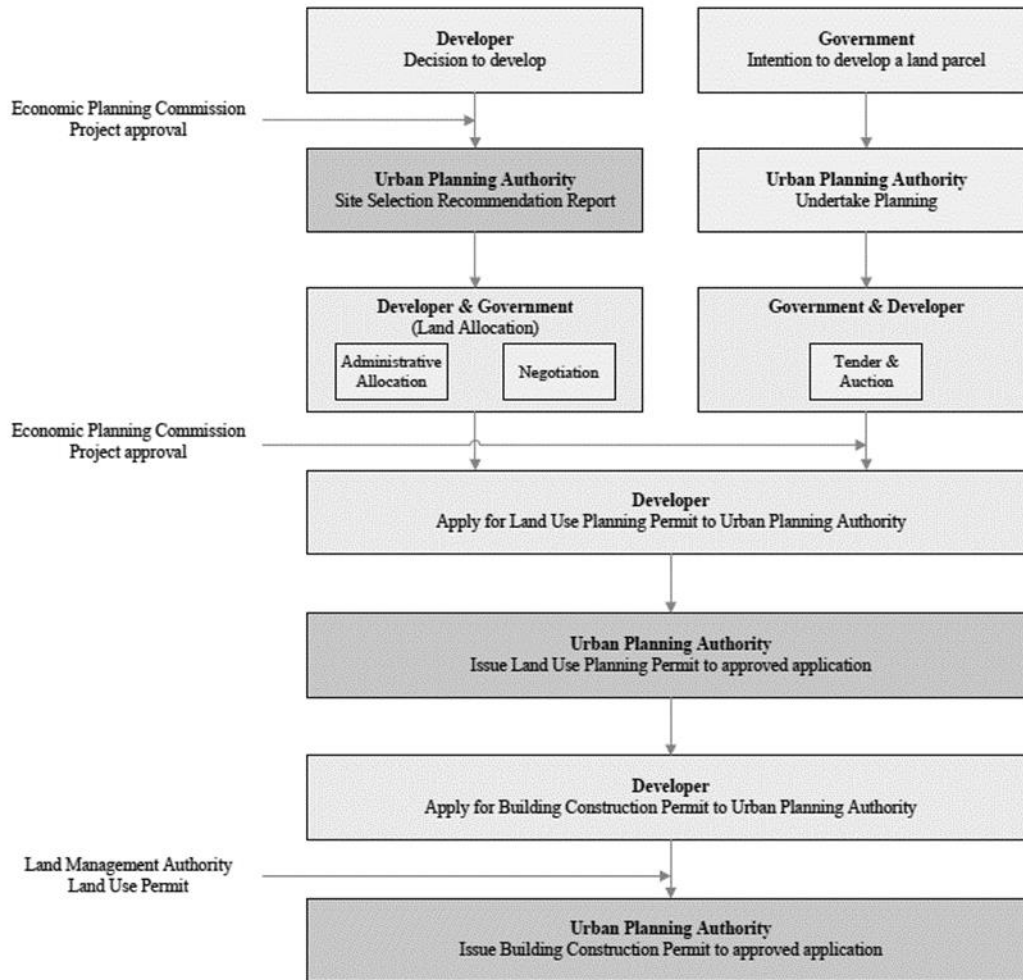


Figure 5 Implementation of Urban Planning (Hao, 2007, p. 24)

### 2.1.5 Evaluation and monitoring

According to the Urban and Rural Planning Law, the monitoring system includes three levels: the local administrative department, the local People’s Congress or Standing Committee, and the public. Monitoring should be carried out for the whole plan process, which includes plan formulation, approval, implementation and amendment. Urban system plans and master plans should be evaluated under two circumstances: before they are submitted to the government and when they need to be amended. The organizer of the plan should carry out evaluations by holding consultation and public hearings. The local

People's Congress, experts in relevant departments and the public should be involved at different stages. The evaluation result and relevant strategies should be open to the public.

**Table 10 Provision for public engagement in the laws and regulations on city planning at the national level**

(organized by the author)

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**Urban Planning Law (1989)**

Article 28: City plans should be publicly announced by the People's government of the city after they have been approved.

**Urban and Rural Planning Law (2007)**

Article 26: Before submitting urban and rural plans for examination and approval, the responsible government agency should announce the draft plan according to the law, and solicit opinions from experts and the public by means of that debate, hearings and other formats. The announcement period should not be less than 30 days.

**Regulation on The Formulation of Urban Planning (2005 Amendment)**

Article 16: Before submitting the city master plan for examination and approval, the People's Government of the city should solicit public opinions adequately by taking effective measures according to the laws.

In the formulation of city detailed plans, the opinions of the general public and members of organizations affected by the plan should be heard adequately through means such as open house, consultation and so on. The results of all public opinion considerations processes should be announced.

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The requirement of public engagement is made clear in laws and regulations (Table 10), so it is important for planners to deliver urban planning information and deal with the opinions. According to the Urban and Rural Planning Law 2007, the responsibility of planners includes 'improving people's living environment and promoting the integrated, harmonious and sustainable development of urban and rural society and economy' (Article 1, Urban and Rural Planning Law, 2007). It is required in law that the opinions of

experts and the general public should be fully considered, and an explanation of the adoption or rejection of the relevant opinions and an explanation of the materials filed should be attached for examination and approval (Article 26, Urban and Rural Planning Law, 2007).

The contemporary Chinese planning system faces a country in transition. Decentralization, economic reform and globalization have brought great changes to Chinese cities, because accelerated urbanization has led to a tendency towards continuous rapid growth on the economic, population and urban spatial scales, as well as a series of social problems planners have to face.

## **2.2 The changes in state power**

### **2.2.1 The governmental apparatus**

In the Chinese political system, the Chinese State Council is the highest government administrative body and the entire government apparatus consists of two parts: 1. a system of ministerial organizations; 2. the geographic organizations system, the administrative arm of the people's congresses and local governments.

The first part includes a system of ministerial organizations. They are mainly organized by activity. The ministries are organized into hierarchical layers with offices at provincial and local levels all over China. There are frequent consolidations of different ministries. Apart from the ministerial arm, there are special agencies and commissions.

The Chinese State Council's Standing Committee takes charge of the everyday administration of the government. The ministries are subordinated to the Chinese State Council and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and they wield decisive influence on policy making by interpreting, implementing and overseeing the central leaders' broad and often ambiguous definitions of Chinese policy goals. Ministries usually serve as



independent operators and the minister serves as a chief executive officer over the agency. Ministers are answerable to the board of directors in central government, the Party's Political Bureau. When the ministries establish and carry out policies, they must contend with the secretaries of the ministerial Party committees.

The second part of the Chinese government system is the geographic organizations system, the administrative arm of the people's congresses and local governments. Four levels of government entities are included: provincial level 3, prefecture level 4, county level 5, and township and village level 6. There are 34 provincial-level governments (Figure 6), over 300 prefecture level governments, almost 3,000 county-level governments, and over 40,000 township-level governments (Lawrence & Martin, 2013).

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<sup>3</sup> It includes provinces, autonomous regions, directly governed municipalities and special administrative regions.

<sup>4</sup> It includes prefectures, autonomous prefectures, prefecture-level cities, and leagues.

<sup>5</sup> It includes counties, autonomous countries, county-level cities, districts under the jurisdiction of the city, banners, autonomous banners, forestry areas, and special districts

<sup>6</sup> It includes towns, townships, sub-districts, ethnic townships, village committees, and neighborhood committees



Figure 6 Map of China: Showing Provincial-Level Administrative Divisions<sup>7</sup> (Lawrence & Martin, 2013, p. 9)

## 2.2.2 The change in land allocation

Based on the ideology and political premise that all land was common property, urban land in China has been nationalized since 1949. During the pre-reform era (from 1949 to 1987), land was publicly owned, and nominally worthless (Tian & Ma, 2009; Zhu J., 2005). This people's land ownership led to land being actually controlled by the central state in the interest of people. Local governments allocated land to users for the purpose of production through directives (Zhu J., 2005). No economic transitions of land were permitted between owner and users according to Marxist principles of socialist people's ownership.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Source: Esri Basemaps 2006. Map created by Hannah Fischer, CRS Information Research Specialist.

<sup>8</sup> Clause 4, Article 10 of the 1982 Constitution stipulates: 'Urban land belongs to the state.... No Organisation or individual may appropriate, buy, sell, or lease land, or unlawfully transfer it in any way'.

Commoditisation and marketization of urban land has applied formally to all the cities in China since 1988.<sup>9</sup> Urban land expansion has been characterised and indeed driven by a ‘fever’ of setting up numerous ‘development zones’ with a planned area of 38,600 km<sup>2</sup> – an area larger than the total urban built-up area of existing cities and towns estimated at 31,500 km<sup>2</sup> (Unirule Institute of Economics, 2007:20). (Lin et al., 2014)

Public land leasing was legalised, which meant that urban land could be leased to developers or users for a fixed period of time after paying rental to the central state. There are three ways of land leasehold acquisition: Tender, auction and negotiation (Zhu J. , 2005, p. 1372).

Land leaseholds are supposedly acquired at market prices. Transfers of land rights through auction and tender are allocated through market mechanisms, reflecting the full market value of land, while purchasing leaseholds through negotiation is a practice where land prices are determined by negotiations between two parties: the local government as a seller and developers as buyers. Sales by auction and tender are transparent to the market, whereas sales through negotiation are non-transparent deals where land prices can vary very much (Zhu J., 2005, p. 1372).

### **2.2.3 The decentralization**

China’s economic reforms have restructured the relationship between the central and local states (Y. Wei 2001, p. 7). Continued reference in political documents to the ‘centre’ and ‘local’ reflect this political structure: the state’s terminology for relations of the territorial hierarchy is between the *zhongyang* (centre) and *difang* (regional and local). Chinese territorial administration has largely revolved around a two-level system, in

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<sup>9</sup> In 1988, the National People’s Congress approved an amendment to the 1982 Constitution that states: ‘the rights of land use can be transferred in accordance with the law’.

which the centre is privileged and the meaning of *difang* encompasses multiple (from village to province) scale positions (Cartier, 2005, p. 22).

Since open-up, the central state still manages issues of vital national interest, such as political and social stability, socio-economic strategies, high technology, major infrastructure construction, key scientific and research institutes, universities, and crucial land administration functions (for example farmland conservation) (Wu et al., 2007, p. 120). In practice, government departments at the national and provincial levels are involved in formulating policy and supervision (Tian & Ma, 2009). The central government has been playing a leading role in land reform while local governments enjoy much freedom in local city development (Tian & Ma, 2009). The central government guides local administrations through policies, plans, and assigning tasks to local governments (Wu et al., 2007, p. 120).

The central state has substantial power in the process of urban rescaling and territorialisation. First, the National People's Congress and the State Council are empowered by the nation's constitution to approve the designation of cities and their boundary changes. Second, the State Council has the power to set up and revise criteria and guidelines for city designation and boundary changes. Third, the power of the central government has been implemented through the hierarchical administrative system, as local governments at provincial, prefecture and county levels are made responsible to both the People's Congress of their territory and the governments at higher level (Lin et al., 2014).

In contrast, municipal governments have more power in controlling land and real estate affairs (Tian & Ma, 2009). For example, the enactment of the Urban Planning Law in 1989 gave municipalities the right to prepare urban plans, to issue land use and building permits, and to enforce development control. Even projects that are under the central government must apply for land-use permission from the local government, and land leasing certificates should be acquired from the local land administration bureau (Wu et al., 2007). Local government's main function has become the management of the economy over which it has jurisdiction.

The central state has relaxed its control over local developmental affairs, decentralised the power of decision-making, and shifted a great number of responsibilities for social and economic developments to localities, to arouse local enthusiasm and individual incentives for efficient economic growth. In the cities, the maintenance and development of the urban built-environment, which used to be looked after by the central state through its regular state budgetary allocation, have been shifted on to the shoulders of individual municipalities. Local governments are encouraged to seek their own ways of capital mobilization for the maintenance and improvements of the urban infrastructure (Lin et al., 2014).

With the gradual withdrawal of the central state as a provider of capital, municipal governments have to find all possible ways of capital mobilization and accumulation including bank loans, foreign investments and land development. (Lin, Li, Yang, & Hu, 2014)

In China, under state-land tenure, the state not only regulates land use and transactions, but also owns land and profits directly from land rents. Urban land-use planning has replaced economic planning as the main vehicle of state intervention in the local political economy. Land rents have become one of the most important sources of local state revenue since the 1990s. Development projects, especially high-profile ones like high-tech parks, Special Economic Zones, high-rise clusters in Central Business Districts, or gigantic New Cities, are all built by local governments (Li et al., 2014).

The role of local government has changed from being a passive agent to being an active actor responsible for local development. Local governments have been offered more autonomy in making the decisions of investment and governing local growth, led by the fiscal decentralisation of 1984 which changed the fiscal system from profit remittance to taxation levy, when they became 'local development states' with their own preferences and policy agenda (Zhu J., 2005), making planning knowledge important for local economic development.

The state power reshuffling, urban land commodification and municipal finance have led to a significant expansion of the urban built-environment, an increased spatial inequality and an escalation of social unrest (Lin et al., p. 14).

## **2.3 Urbanization: from planning for growth to land adjustment**

### **2.3.1 Planning for urban growth**

Planning on the basis of expanding space constitutes planning for urban growth, with continual expansion of the land used for construction. There are various forms of urban plans of this kind, including: new town planning, such as new centres, university towns and sports towns planning; industrial park planning, such as industrial development zones, technopolis, logistics parks, financial towns, motor towns and emerging industrial base planning; major infrastructure planning, such as aviation towns, harbour towns and high-speed rail hubs new area planning; particular-use areas planning, such as tourism areas and scenic area planning; urban and rural overall planning and eco-city planning.

Usually, planning for growth fully reflects the will of ruling officials because of the fundamental dominance of the government, the uniform property rights and the relatively simple interests involved. Local governments, which hold a monopoly of the supply of the land for new construction, have control of land disposal rights. They can freely

dispose of land in a variety of ways, for example by allotting and selling by an agreement, bidding, auction or listing. This offers planners opportunities to apply their knowledge and pursue whatever captures their imagination so as to do heroic 'big planning' combining concept planning and space design.

Land finance has become an important source of income for local government, making it difficult to change the development model, which has mainly been driven by the expansion of the land available over a short period. As long as the GDP-dominated performance evaluation system is maintained, local governmental officials will inevitably seek immediate and short-sighted profits during their term. As long as chances to develop new areas arise, most local governments would not choose exceedingly difficult, contradictory and slow-working old-style area transformation projects for the pursuit of economic growth (Zou, 2013).

### **2.3.2 Planning for land use adjustment**

Recently there have been more and more planning projects for land use adjustment. Its planning is required in the redevelopment of built-up urban areas. The types of land use adjustment include: old town renewal and transformation planning; integrated environmental management planning; planning for transportation and infrastructure improvements; planning for protection on historic districts and their scenes; industry upgrading and integrated park planning; land reconditioning, demolition and relocation planning and so on.

By contrast with planning for growth, the political background of planning for land use adjustment has the following characteristics: the rights to land for construction use are dispersed to all land users, so the power relationships involved are very complicated. Governments cannot dispose of land at will, and land redevelopment revenue needs to be

balanced. As a consequence, planning for land use adjustment requires the participation of governments, communities and market players which takes the interests of all parties into consideration as well as providing consultative planning with interaction between leaders and members.

Planning for land adjustment is attracting increasing attention from city governments. The reasons are as follows: the land use policy constraints which strictly control the use of new land for construction; the new understanding and exploration of the value of the land in a district's centre; the urgent need to improve the functions and environmental protection of built-up areas; the protection of historic districts and feature remodelling. In a situation where urban development space is becoming more limited, both incremental planning and inventory planning have become inevitable choices for local governments in carrying out urban planning.

Changes in the focus of planning knowledge: planners do not only need to consider traditional physical space design, but also market assessment, economic calculations, financial analysis and other factors. Implementation performance should reflect shared interests and responsibility. Planning for land use adjustment is mainly about the distribution of interests, which means that whoever occupies more land will have more profit, and others will occupy and earn less (Shi, 2014). The difficulty of planning lies in benefit redistribution. It is difficult to solve practical problems if only relying on spatial design. The call for systemic design is urgent and research to support planning policies becomes increasingly necessary.

The policies for planning for land use adjustment are inadequate: the lack of property tax policies results in difficulties in making proliferation benefit a public possession after urban renewal; the lack of a space development rights transfer policy leads to a sharp



increase in development intensity during area renewal and renovation, which accelerates the destruction of historical buildings; disunited relocation compensation standards lead to uneven distribution of benefits and intensified conflicts (Zou, 2013).

Land development has become one of the main focuses of corruption and social discontent. With land sales contributing an important part of local revenue, local governments at various administrative levels have every motive to engage in land development, legally or illegally. In 2011 alone, a total of 70,000 cases of illegal land use involving 50,067 ha of land were found, recording a 5.8% increase in cases and an 11% increase in land area year-on-year (Editor, Global times, 2012). A survey conducted in 2005 and involving 1962 farmer respondents in 17 provinces found that incidents of land-taking had increased more than 15 times during the past ten years, and they continued to accelerate (Zhu et al., 2006, pp. 761-839)

## **2.4 The deficiency in public engagement**

According to the laws on urban and rural planning, the stages in conducting public engagement in the planning process are: the announcement of planning decisions after their approval and publication of a draft plan before final approval. It can be said that, in general, public opinion has had little practical influence on infrastructure plan-making processes (Shan & Yai, 2011). The public is only informed about planning decisions after the fact, at the stage when planning decisions have been approved. In publishing a draft plan before its final approval, the public is provided with opportunities to comment on draft plans that have already been formed and are therefore difficult to change significantly. Even when public engagement is practiced, the information available is extremely limited and far from being accurate or precise. For example, most cities publish road construction planning maps without accompanying information that would enable the ordinary citizen to understand the figures. Communication channels such as public hearings and websites are ineffective in bridging the huge communication gap that exists between the government and its citizens. Questionnaires, interviews and surveys are conducted in small-sized sample groups and only for some specially selected questions (He & Zao, 1999).

Although the requirements for public engagement in planning processes are increasing at the national level, public engagement is still in its infancy today. Public engagement in planning lacks specific methods and corresponding measures (Enserink & Koppenjan, 2007). There is no two-way communication, so public engagement consists mainly of public announcements before plans go for examination, a response to legal requirements rather than public feedback.

The present lack of opportunities for involving citizens in the planning process has also resulted in conflicts between citizens and governments, endangering social order. For example, in January 2008 Shanghai's citizens marched to protest against the Maglev railroad extension proposal, asking the government to provide sufficient information and opportunities for public input.<sup>10</sup> In another demonstration in the seaport city of Xiamen in 2007, thousands of citizens tried to block a huge chemical plant slated for construction in a city suburb.<sup>11</sup>

## **2.5 Research questions**

The move towards decentralization has seen the planning system generally shift from centrally led planning to planning led by local municipalities under central control. At the same time the focus on urban planning is changing from 'planning for growth' to 'planning for land use adjustment', which in turn has brought different interest groups into the process of urban planning, groups who have previously been excluded or ignored. So the first research question addressed by this study is:

1. Within the dynamics of a transitional context, which rules are appropriate in planning knowledge? Why?

Because of the ongoing process of transition, the role of planners remains unclear and open to examination. During interactions between planners and local authorities, local residents and other interest groups, the role expectations of planners are important to understand, because they reflect how much a planner can influence the decision-making in the plan-making process as well as reflecting China's unique planning environment. So the second research question is:

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<sup>10</sup> Guangming Daily Newspaper Group (2008).

<sup>11</sup> Southern Weekend (2008).

## 2. What roles are Chinese planners playing in the planning process? Why?

It seems that the process of state power reshuffling, urban land commodification and various interest groups' involvement have led to a significant expansion of the urban built environment, an increased spatial inequality and an escalation of social unrest. The present lack of opportunity for involving citizens in the planning process has resulted in conflicts between citizens and governments. In this context, the third research question is:

## 3. How can planners make a difference?

### **Summary**

The contemporary Chinese planning system is hierarchical with different levels and has a weak evaluation and monitoring system. It is faced with transition: the central state has relaxed its control over local developmental affairs, decentralised the powers of decision-making, and shifted a great number of responsibilities for social and economic developments to localities, to arouse local enthusiasm and individual incentives for efficient economic growth. The urbanization process has changed from planning for growth to land adjustment, so local government cannot freely dispose of land in land adjustment, since the land for construction rights have been dispersed to all land users. There is an increased spatial inequality and an escalation of social unrest emerging. The lack of opportunity for citizens to be involved in the planning process has also resulted in conflicts between citizens and governments. Thus, planners have to deal with uncertainties. Their roles and practical knowledge must be examined to understand the planning environment in China. Research questions emerge in this context and a conceptual framework is developed to answer them, which is to be explained in the following chapter.

## **Chapter 3 Theory and conceptual framework**

### **Preamble**

This research has adopted the concept of ‘rules of appropriateness’ as its analytical tool, from the sociological wing of new institutionalist analysis, so a brief introduction to old and new institutionalist analysis will be presented at the outset of this chapter. The indicators in conceptual framework, planning knowledge, role expectations and rules of appropriateness, will then be introduced separately. The conceptual framework has been developed to provide an analytical tool in answering the research questions. The interaction between different elements in the conceptual framework is presented, explaining how rules of appropriateness, role expectations and knowledge interact with each other. Finally, the different role expectations of planners in various planning models are reviewed, to show that different knowledge is appropriate for different social and institutional contexts.

### **3.1 Professionalism**

#### **3.1.1 Research in professionalism**

The conceptualization of research into the professions in the English-speaking world has been in flux. In 1940s and 1950s, scholars were keen on giving a definition of professionals, in order to distinguish professions from occupations (Freidson, 1986; Johnson, 1972). Since the 1960s, how professionals use their power and the role of the professionals in society became the key debate in this field (Freidson, 1986; Johnson, 1972).

The concept of a ‘profession’ is ambiguous. In a general sense, it refers to any occupation with ‘particular social usefulness’ (Barr, 1972, p. 155). This ‘traits’ approach stresses the importance of the self-produced ideology from the profession (Johnson T. J., 1972).

Unlike occupations, professions should have the power of self regulation, for example, to organize their own training (Freidson, 1986, p. 33). Professions should be able to provide licences, in the form of ‘degrees, diplomas, and certificates of completion of a course of training’ (Freidson, 1986, p. 64). This approach claimed ‘the inherent qualities of an occupational activity which autonomously determine[d] the way in which institutional forms of control will develop’ (Johnson T. J., 1972, p. 30). However, this way of seeing professionalism stresses a developmental sequence, thus it provides a certain route for the development of professionals’ roles and it might overlook the possibility of personal choices and how an institutional environment can influence professional roles.

Some studies of professions emphasise the power of professions in the wider social and political context within which professions operate (Johnson, 1972; Wilding, 1982). Social and political characteristics influence professional knowledge (Larson, 1977, p. 41). Freidson (1986) sought to understand how knowledge related to power in the professional institutions in the United States by making a detailed analysis of the way those institutions linked with each other, and the way those institutional positions influenced the work of producing and utilizing professional knowledge. His research told the story in America how the formal institutions shape professionalism (Freidson, *Professional powers: A study of the institutionalization of formal knowledge*, 1986), but, his work only showed the role of informal institutions in shaping professionalism.

Instead of professionalism serving as a collective entity and project, the new trend in studies of professionalism identifies ‘professional individualization’ as a highly personalized response to the institutional context (Casey & Allen, 2004). Knowledge is applied by individual professionals and individuals create behavioural worlds which influence and are influenced by their ways of knowing. An individualized ‘professional project of the self’ is emerging in housing management (Casey & Allen, 2004). It shows

that housing managers' self-images are important in their performance at work (Casey & Allen, 2004).

From this perspective, professions work differently in different contexts and there is no uniform process of professionalization (Johnson T. J., 1972). In England and America, successful occupations had the honour of the title of a profession, which was shown in 'the official occupational classification scheme' (Freidson, 1986, p. 33), in order to get political legitimation to obtain protection from market competitions. In Western European countries, the state plays an important role in organizing the training and employment of professions (Freidson, 1986, p. 33).

Profession might need to be used in a specific historical sense (Freidson, 1986, p. 33). Take the development of professionalism in America as an example. According to Wilensky (1964): in the first step, an occupation working full-time emerged; second, a training school providing education was established; third, a formal professional association was established; fourth, it gained 'political agitation in order to win the support of law for the protection of the job territory' (Wilensky, 1964, p. 145); fifth, a formal professional code was adopted.

Over time though, if the practice of professionals 'comes to have little relationship to the knowledge and values of its society, it may have difficulty surviving' (Freidson, 1988, p. 73). Therefore, social change should have great influence on professional practice (Freidson, 1988). Within their environment, each individual professional develops their own way of framing their role. Their professional knowledge takes on the character of the social and political contexts in which the problems are set, the strategies employed, the facts treated as relevant and so on (Schon, 1982). Bogason (2000) states that in the field of public reforms, the interpretations and strategies employed by professionals work

within institutional constraints. How professionals utilize their knowledge changes when their environment changing in a transitional context, it seems that the room for professional interpretations is wider than in other contexts (Bogason, 2000).

Campbell and Marshall (2005) suggested that ‘there is a need for in-depth empirical studies that investigate how practitioners perceive their role and how this matches with what they actually do in their working practices’ (p. 211). Reade also states that

Plain accounts of what the members of any occupational group actually do, in their daily lives, of the internal politics of their occupation, and so on, tend always to be socially ‘liberating’, for they lead us to see the structure of society afresh, in a new light (Reade, 1987, p. 130).

The approach in this research stresses the connection between roles of professionals and context, but also emphasises the professionals’ own understanding of their role expectations, looking at the framing of the professional knowledge of individuals according to the sense of appropriateness to certain environments.

### **3.1.2 Professionalism in planning**

Planning is a profession and its professional knowledge is highly related to its political and social environment (Healey, 1997; Schon, 1982). Although some authors argue that there is no definable knowledge or skills to distinguish planning from other occupations, since the activity of planning is embodied within a state bureaucracy (Reade, 1987).

Some authors claim that planning is a profession which has ‘an identifiable ethically centered and process-focused knowledge base’ (Bickenbach & Sue, 1994, p. 165).

Empirical studies show ‘the importance of the institutional context in determining the blend of knowledges and the vital and difficult judgements performed by planners in knowing this context’ (Vigar, 2012, p. 366). In this context, Howe (1980) argues that



planners have more than one role choice in their work. Because of the nature of planning knowledge, how planning professionals use their knowledge and what types of knowledge they choose to use in practice is important to reflect the social and political environment.

## **3.2 Institutional analysis**

### **3.2.1 Why institutionalism?**

The word institutionalism is being used widely for a series of developments in economics, sociology, urban and regional analysis, organizational studies and public policy. The term refers to ‘the embedding of specific practices in a wider context of formal organizations’, and to ‘the active processes by which individuals in social contexts construct their way of thinking and acting’ (Healey, 1999, p. 113). It is grounded in a relational view of social life, focusing on people constructing their worlds actively and interactively (Healey, 1997).

Institutionalism is related to a dynamic, relational point view of social action (Healey, 1999, 2004). Social change happens in a day-to-day way, not just by conscious resistance actions (Healey, 1997). People make their identities and relations with others through the flow of social relations in their lives (Perry, 1995). An ‘institutionalist’ focus began to spread across the social sciences not only conceptually but also in empirical research by the end of the 1990s (Powell and Dimaggio, 1991; Hall and Taylor, 1996).

Institutionalism provides an important approach to research in social, economic and political science. It is defined differently in different disciplines. Even within political science, ‘institutionalists’ vary in their relative emphasis on cognitive and normative aspects of institutions and in their weighting of micro and macro features. This research adopts the form of institutionalism used in political science.

Institutionalist analysis emphasizes the social contexts which shape individual actions (Healey, 2005). Unlike the new humanism which emphasizes individual interaction, the focus of institutional attention, either of analysis or of practical action, is more on the quality of the interactions through which what constitutes a decision or an action than individual decisions (Healey, 2005). Theories based on structural perspectives, such as urban regime and network structure, help us to understand structural change, but were not adequate on their own for exploring interpretations of the autonomy of actors. These theories were not selected for this research.

Institutionalist analysis helps to examine institutional constitution of action contexts, which enables and constrains the capacity for social change. Social change here means transformation in both material and cultural conditions (Healey, 2005). In such a context of social change, ‘the production of social structures—institutions, norms, values, habits—and the creative force of agency to adapt and invent new ways of dealing with old and new challenges interact in multiple ways and in all kinds of scales.’ (Healey, 2005, p. 304). At the same time, institutionalist analysis helps us to think systematically about the planning process (Innes J. E., 1995).

### **3.2.2 New institutionalism**

The key shifts from old to new institutionalism are ‘from a focus on organizations to a focus on rules; from a formal to an informal conception of institutions; from a static to a dynamic conception of institutions; from a holistic to a disaggregated conception of institutions; from independence to embeddedness’ (Lowndes, 2001, p. 1958).

The ‘new institutionalism’ emerged in the 1980s in political science, reasserting key tenets of the earlier institutional tradition: that political structures shape political behaviour and that political structures are normatively and historically embedded More

expansive definitions of 'institution' are being developed, compared with the old version, and new institutionalists are concerned with the central paradox, or 'double life', of institutions, which are both 'human products' and 'social forces in their own right' (Grafstein, 1998, pp. 577-578).

The study of institutions has been experiencing a renaissance throughout the political sciences. To some degree, this development is a rejection of two theoretical approaches: behaviourism and rational choice, which understand political and economics behaviour as the aggregate consequence of personal preference. However, their neglect of social contexts makes the approaches incompatible within a world in which social, political and economic institutions have become more powerful (March & Olsen, 1984).

The resurgence of interest in institutions began during the 1980s. Institutional explanations had remained popular in governance and policy research; however, the institutionalists paid more attention to revive their explanation in individual behaviours. This 'new institutionalism' approach retained many characteristics of the older version in understanding politics, but tried to provide fresh answers and tools to old questions about how social choices are shaped in an institutional environment while addressing concerns about behavioralism and rational choice analysis (Peters, 1999).

Another branch of institutional thinking is from fields like social history and cultural studies. In these fields institutions are regarded as an important basis of social and political life. Anthropology, history, functionalism and individualism provide insights to how meaning is socially constructed and how symbolic action changes notions of agency. This branch of thinking insists that personal preferences, social action, the state and citizenship are all shaped by institutions (Powell & DiMaggio, 1991).

The new institutionalist approaches reviewed in this research include historical institutionalism, rational choice institutionalism and sociological institutionalism.

### *Historical institutionalism*

Historical institutionalism developed in response to theories of politics and structural-functionalism prominent in political science during the 1960s and 1970s (Hall & Taylor, 1996, p. 937). It emphasizes that policies are shaped by institutions over time in a 'path dependency'. When a policy is made, it will have a continuing influence over policy in the future. To understand contemporary policies, it is necessary to understand their histories.

Institutions in historical institutionalism have a broad scope, from 'specific features of government institutions to the more overarching structures of state, to the nation's normative orders' (Ikenberry, 1988, pp. 222-223). Following Hall's definition, institutions are 'the formal rules, compliance procedures, and standard operating procedures that structure the relationships between people in various units of the polity and economy' (Hall, 1986, p. 7).

The historical institutionalist approach has a tendency to define the relationships between institutions and individual behaviour in broad terms. It is not concerned with how individuals relate to the institutions with which they interact. The historical institutionalist approach emphasises the persistence of institutional and policy choices made at the beginning of policy development, and effectively explains the persistence of institutions after they are formed. The central factors push historical development along a set of 'paths' (Krasner, 1988). This approach is good at explaining the persistence of patterns, but it is not good at explaining how those patterns might change. Institutions change through learning and move forward in response to new information. The information here

may come from experiences as they go on with their own 'path' or by learning from the experiences of others (Peters, 1999). To some extent, institutional change becomes an effort in how to change ideas (Reich, 1990). A new institution has been created when an idea becomes accepted and is embodied in a structural form (Peters, 1999).

Historical institutionalism will not be used in this research, because this approach is not enough to explain how planning tradition has evolved in different forms because of the transition.

### ***Rational choice institutionalism***

Rational choice institutionalism developed in response to the study of American congressional behaviour, at the same time as historical institutionalism, but it is definitely a different approach. Institutions as seen from this perspective are designed to 'overcome identifiable shortcomings in the market or the political system as means of producing collectively desirable outcomes' (Peters, 1999, p. 59). The perspective's analytical focus is on the decisions of utility-maximizing individuals.

In this approach institutions are described as:

...rules used by individuals for determining who and what are included in decision situations, how information is structured, what actions can be taken and in what sequence, and how individual actions will be aggregated into collective decisions...all of which exist in a language shared by some community of individuals rather than as physical parts of some external environment (Kiser & Ostrom, 2000, p. 56).

Rational choice institutionalism assumes that human actors have fixed preferences. Institutions influence individuals in a predictable way, to make their own utilities

(Weingast, 1996; Douglas, 1986; North, 1990). Instead of impersonal historical forces, human actors' behaviour is driven by strategic calculus. This calculation will be affected by an actor's expectations about how others might behave too.

Institutional change is a conscious process. It happens when the existing institution has failed to meet the requirements for which it formed (Peters, 1999, p. 56). It identifies the reason why changes occur in a world of fixed preferences too. The rational choice institutionalist approach is not applicable for this research, because it neglects the institutional constraints on human actors' needs, preferences and choices.

### ***Sociological institutionalism***

Sociological institutionalism has been developing in sociology. Although the normative institutionalist approach has its roots in sociological analysis, it emphasises the normative basis of institutions, which means that this perspective tells institutional members what is appropriate in any situation. The sociological institutionalist approach emphasises the cognitive basis of institutions, which means that this perspective determines how institutional members interpret data from their environment. In the normative approach, the emphasis on political behaviour has greater concern with the active molding of institutions by active political entrepreneurs. However, institutionalization from a sociological approach is a relatively less purposive process (Peters, 1999, p. 110).

The definition of institutions in this approach is greatly concerned with 'the process of creating values and cognitive frames' (Peters, 1999, p. 105) within an organization when it comes to the relationship between individuals and institutions. Some authors think that individuals and institutions are likely to exist separately (Meyer and Rowan, 1977; Preuss, 1991). On the other hand, scholars like Giddens (1979) argue that institutions do not exist if they do not shape the behaviours of their members. This perspective emphasizes the

practice of members in organizations becomes habituated through accepting the values and norms of their organization.

Institutions are reflected in and affected by the way individuals determine their strategies and conduct their relationships as they deal with specific projects and issues, and as they consider their future stream of activities (Friedland & Alford, 1991). Institutions shape the self-images of human actors to influence their behaviour (Friedland & Alford, 1991; Hall, 1996). This approach focuses on ‘the dynamics of social relations and how these get to be patterned in particular ways’ (Vigar, Healey, Hull, & Davoudi, 2000, p. 48).

The sociological institutionalist approach looks at institutional change in a functional way (Peters, 1999, p. 108). It is argued that institutions will find ways of adapting to changes in their environment. This kind of change includes recognizing challenges in the environment and then finding methods to make the institutions conform to those external forces. Institutions try to change the environment to meet their own needs (Peters, 1999, p. 108). At the organizational level, a new institutional practice is adopted because it is more suited to a broader cultural context (Hall & Taylor, 1996, p. 949). The theoretical approach adopted for this research will use sociological institutionalism to interpret the behaviour of human actors.

### **3.2.3 Old and new institutionalism**

#### *From a focus on organizations to a focus on rules*

‘Political institutions’ are not the same thing as political organizations; rather, the term describes the set of rules which guide and constrain actors’ behaviour. Such rules provide information on the likely future behaviours of others and on sanctions for noncompliance (Knight, 1992, p.17).

For the ‘sociological’ wing of new institutionalism, rules work by determining ‘appropriate’ behavior (March and Olsen, 1984, 1989); for the rational choice wing, they determine the basis of exchanges between utility-maximising actors (Weingast, 1996). Institutions, then, provide the ‘rules of the game’, while organizations- like individuals- are players within the game. At the same time, organisations have their own internal institutional frameworks that shape the behaviour of people within them (Lowndes, 2001, p. 1958).

### ***From a formal to an informal conception of institutions***

Apart from those rules that are designed consciously and specified clearly, new institutionalist perspectives also focus on informal rules and conventions. ‘Informal institutions may provide the ‘raw material’ for the development of formal institutions or they may exist alongside formal rules, in concert or contradiction.’ (Lowndes, 2001, p. 1958)

### ***From a static to a dynamic conception of institutions***

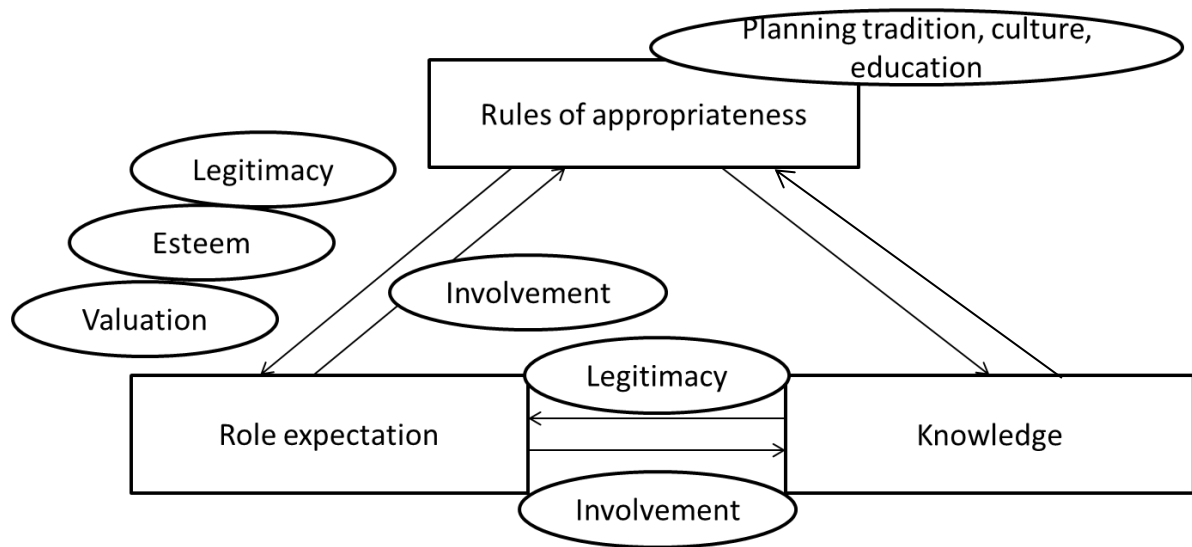
‘Old’ institutionalists are concerned with patterns of historical development, as unchanging ‘facts of life’. New institutionalist perspectives stress that institutions are not things but processes, and that institutional rules have to be sustained over time. Rational choice scholars argue that institutional arrangements will persist only as long as they serve the interests of utility-seeking rational actors (Shepsle, 1989, p.134) Those on the sociological wing argue that institutions, in general, change incrementally by responding to environmental signals (March and Olsen, 1989, p.34).

The sociological wing of new institutionalist analysis is adopted as the analytical tool of this research. My goal is not a general theory of ‘radical’ planning or of urban change. Instead it is a better understanding of the range of factors and players that are the focus.



Human actors are assumed to be rule-followers in this research, so the focus is directed towards understanding institutions as ‘rules’. In practice planners’ knowledge lies not only in formal institutions, such as laws or regulations, but also in informal institutions, including planning traditions. The role expectations of planners in a transitional and dynamic context are also examined.

### 3.3 Conceptual framework



Under transitional conditions, organizational forms keep changing and therefore cannot be treated as invariant and independent variables. To understand the situation of professionals and their environment better, the focus should be on various knowledge and rules used by professionals in different roles. The meaning of their knowledge is created through their participation in different roles, instead of something being handed down by a superior authority. The perspective from the top does not usually cover the understanding among professionals who work in the field. The instructions from the top may be inappropriate because the institutional processes in real world are not visible and not make sense from that angle. Also, under transitional conditions, actual institutional processes in the field may change so rapidly that a top-down perspective is out of date. In

this situation, a 'bottom-up' analysis is appropriate, whose departure is taken from the knowledge in the field. It serves the task in catching what is happening, which is probably not in accordance with the formal rules.

### **3.3.1 Planning Knowledge**

Not the same thing as data or information, knowledge is defined here as justifiable belief (Richard, 1979; Lindblom, 1990), which is 'a representation of competence and a reaffirmation of social virtue' (March, 1989, p. 418). 'It is knowledge that supports the use of that data or information that is important.' (Rydin, 2007, p. 53)

'Different forms of knowledge emerge as different sets of criteria for what may constitute justification...Local knowledge must be justifiable according to claims of connection with a particular place.' (Rydin, 2007, p. 53) Practical knowledge is justifiable on the basis of experience in practice (Kerkhoff & Lebel, 2006, p. 447). Planning knowledge, as a kind of political knowledge, must be justifiable according to the standards set in its political context (Rydin, 2007).

Knowledge is 'developed and certified within social institutions' (March, 1994, p. 240). Social processes validate knowledge and make it reliable (Innes J. E., 1995; March J. G., 1994). Reliability means knowledge is 'shared and reproduced among knowledgeable people' (March, 1994, p. 240). 'There are rules for certifying knowledge, and those rules are maintained in social institutions of research and education' (March, 1994, p. 240).

Knowledge changes with social change (Feldman & March, 1988, p. 425). Knowledge at one time often becomes ignorance and prejudice at another (March, 1994, p. 240). Social change brings new types of knowledge; meanwhile old types of knowledge might still work in practice.

Knowledge that is generated and validated through social processes involving its users becomes embedded in the taken-for-granted assumptions and practices of these users. It becomes institutionalized and it is no longer examined, evaluated, or criticized (Innes J. E., 1995, p. 186).

### **3.3.2 Role expectations**

#### *The concept of role expectation*

The concept of role expectations is the bridge between rules of appropriateness and knowledge. Following Sarbin and Allen's (1968) definition, role expectations are 'collections of cognitions—beliefs, subjective probabilities, and elements of knowledge—which specify in relation to complementary roles the rights and duties, the appropriate conduct, for persons occupying a particular position' (Sarbin & Allen, 1968, p. 498). The positions or status (in specialized contexts, jobs and offices) of human actors have their own rules of appropriateness (Sarbin & Allen, 1968). When a human actor chooses to become a professional, he adopts a 'form of life' (Bichenbach and Hendler, 1994; p163) to become a particular kind of person. The role expectations of them as professionals can only be understood through their particular kinds of forms of life and understanding of the world.

Role expectations operate as rules of appropriateness while human actor enacts a role by specifying 'how,' 'should,' and 'is,' ensuring that the rules will be appropriate (Sarbin & Allen, 1968). Rules of appropriateness are defined 'in terms of actions and qualities expected of the person who at any time occupies the position' (Sarbin & Allen, 1968, p. 498). The concept of role expectation is embedded in a broader cultural context, as role expectations are both constructed by individuals and imposed upon them.

‘They [Individuals] build their own understandings of themselves using socially based distinctions. As collections of individuals define and solve problems posed by their environments, they develop shared rules for behaviour and shared attitudes toward experience. Those rules and attitudes are organized in terms of social roles or identities from which individual identities are formed. Being a ‘good accountant’ means knowing, accepting and following a variety of socially constructed and maintained rules that control individual behaviour in considerable detail’. (March, 1994, p. 64)

Role expectations change with the transitions of a society, since ‘historical processes bring about changes in role expectations’. Transitions lead to uncertainty and vagueness of role expectations (Parsons, 1968).

### **3.3.3 Rules of appropriateness**

#### *The logic of appropriateness*

In this research, human beliefs are understood from the perspective of the logic of appropriateness rather than the logic of consequentiality. In a logic of consequentiality, knowledge, as justifiable belief, is driven by ‘preference and expectations about consequences’ (March & Olsen, 1989, p. 160). Human actors try to make outcomes fulfil their desires. In the logic of appropriateness, beliefs are intentional instead of wilful.

‘Ambiguity or conflict in rules is typically resolved not by shifting to a logic of consequentiality and rational calculation, but by trying to clarify the rules, make distinctions, determine what the situation is and what definition “fits”.’ (March & Olsen, 1989, p. 161).

Institutions have a ‘logic of appropriateness’ rather than a ‘logic of consequentiality’ to shape the beliefs of individuals. That means that it is assumed in this approach that when an institution influences the knowledge of its members, the individual will consider

whether the knowledge conforms to the norms of the organization and not what the consequences will be for himself.

Following the perspective of ‘the logic of appropriateness’ on how human knowledge is to be interpreted, ‘rules of appropriateness’ are adopted in this research to help to understand individuals’ beliefs. It is assumed that it is through ‘rules of appropriateness’ that ‘the logic of appropriateness’ becomes effective (Peters, 1999).

### ***Actor as rule-follower***

Human actors are rule followers. Embedded in a social collectivity, they do ‘what they see as appropriate for themselves in a specific type of situation’ (March & Olsen, 2008, p. 689). Rules are followed by human actors because they are seen as ‘natural, rightful, expected and legitimated’ (March & Olsen, 2008, p. 689). Most of the time, human actors take the rules as a sort of ‘fact’. When individuals enter an organization and when they encounter a new situation, they try to discover, and are taught the rules (March & Olsen, 1989, p. 160). Individuals try to associate it with a situation for rules already exist when they encounter a situation (March & Olsen, 1989, p. 160).

Social systems socialize and educate individuals into rules associated with social position identities (March, 1994, p. 58). ‘University teach appropriate rules for members of professions. Individuals learn how a doctor or an engineer acts’ (March, 1994, p. 58). ‘Individuals and social systems depend on rules and on the standardization, routinization, and organization of actions that they provide’ (March, 1994, p. 59).

### ***Rules of appropriateness***

Appropriateness means a match of knowledge to a situation based on ‘role expectations’ (Sarbin & Allen, 1968, p. 550). Appropriateness is established through fitting a rule to a

situation (March & Olsen, 2008, p. 695). The process maintains consistency in action primarily through the creation of typologies of similarity (March & Olsen, 2008, p. 694)

Rules work by determining ‘appropriate’ knowledge (March and Olsen, 1984, 1989). Rules also tell actors ‘where to look for precedents, who are the authoritative interpreters of different types of rules, and what the key interpretative traditions are’. (March & Olsen, 2008, p. 693)

Rules may be imposed and enforced by direct and political or organizational authority (March & Olsen, 1989, p. 22), such as laws, policies, regulations and so on. However, it cannot be assumed this kind of unambiguous authority of rules always dictates or guides behaviour. ‘What is true and right and therefore what should be done may be ambiguous. Sometimes they may know what to do but not be able to do it because prescriptive rules and capabilities are incompatible.’ (March & Olsen, 2008, p. 695) Rather, it is necessary to ‘understand the process through which rules are translated into actual behaviour’ (March & Olsen, 2008, p. 693). Or rules may be part of a code of appropriate knowledge that is learned and internalized through socialization or education (March & Olsen, 2008; March, 1988). ‘Rules of appropriateness’ apply a form of enforcement-sanctions and rewards, both formal and informal, which the organization uses in order to pressure their members to conform (Peters, 1999). They guide behaviours and stabilize expectations. Rules of appropriateness empower and constrain actors differently and make them more or less capable of acting according to prescribed rules. In effective organizations, sanctions and rewards are built into the frameworks themselves through socialization, rather than requiring an external enforcement mechanism (Peters, 1999). Rules of appropriateness reflect ‘learning of some sort from history, but it does not guarantee technical efficiency or moral acceptability’ (March & Olsen, 2008, p. 690). Rules of

appropriateness evolve over time as new experiences are interpreted and coded into rules (March & Olsen, 2008, p. 697).

### **3.4 Research questions**

#### **3.4.1 Research question 1**

Within the dynamics of a transitional context, which rules are appropriate in planning knowledge? Why?

The relationship between knowledge and rules of appropriateness provides an answer to this question. In a transitional context, changes bring new rules, so different types of planning knowledge emerge. Planning knowledge, as a kind of practical knowledge, is justifiable on the basis of planners' experience in practice. Human actors, as rule followers, they do 'what they see as appropriate for themselves in a specific type of situation' (March & Olsen, 2008, p. 689). In a transitional context, rules of appropriateness change as new experiences are interpreted into rules (March & Olsen, 2008, p. 697). As both a representation of planners' competence in practice and their reaffirmation of social virtue, planning knowledge reflects what kind of rules of appropriateness planners internalize in a dynamic context.

#### ***How does planning knowledge influence rules of appropriateness?***

Knowledge can make a difference. Through learning from new experience, human actors can make a change to rules of appropriateness.

'The adaption of rules and procedures to experience involves forming inferences about the world from the events of history. The ability to use knowledge in making those inferences validly is essential'. (March, 1994, p. 240).

In the field of expert knowledge, if experts create processes such as questioning in order to decide what kind of knowledge to use, instead of following what they are told, they can make a change to the rules of appropriateness.

‘If professionals actually create such processes instead of following the rules of scientific inquiry, they have far more power and discretion than is legitimate, according to the norms that govern public choice. If knowledge that makes a difference is constructed through a process in which a planner is not only a player, but a guide and manager, initiating and framing questions and directing attention, then ethical principles for this planner become even more essential’. (Innes J. E., 1995, p. 185)

#### *How do rules of appropriateness influence planning knowledge?*

Planning knowledge is constructed inside a political, social and economic context (Innes J. E., 1990). ‘It is politics that is redefining the language and the scope of spatial planning, with the planning culture towing behind’ (Mazza & Bianconi, 2014, p. 525). In the context of understanding planning knowledge, the implications of the institutional and social construction of planning are profound.

In different cultures, there is different planning knowledge (Beauregard, 2001; Feldman & March, 1988, p. 425). Participation in a certain education and culture gives people common assumptions and blinds them to what might be obvious to others (Innes J. E., 1995, p. 185).

#### **3.4.2 Research question 2**

What roles are Chinese planners playing in the planning process? Why?

The relationship between knowledge and role expectation answers this question. Role expectations are collections of planning knowledge, appropriate conduct which is specifically related to complementary roles. Each role expectation has its related role



knowledge, such as appropriate experience and specific training. Role expectations change with the transition of a society. Transition leads to the emergence of new role expectations, so new knowledge is brought in to justify the new role expectations. The knowledge of planners is important because of its legitimacy and authority (Sandercock, 1998, p. 58) to justify their role expectations. Instrumental use of knowledge occurs when human actors use scientific knowledge to perform some specific tasks (Schrefler, 2010) and the motivation for using knowledge instrumentally may lie in a human actor's need to deliver outputs in line with his roles in the institutional context (Schrefler, 2010).

*How does role expectation influence planning knowledge?*

Role expectations are collections of elements of knowledge, which 'specify in relation to complementary roles the rights and duties, the appropriate conduct, for persons occupying a particular position' (Sarbin & Allen, 1968, p. 498). Knowledge serves to 'fulfil...the obligations of a role in a situation, and so of trying to determine the imperatives of holding a position' (March & Olsen, 1989, pp. 160-161). Rather than preference, human actors use their professional knowledge in practice by 'a concept of necessity' (March & Olsen, 1989, p. 161). Each role expectation has its related role knowledge, such as appropriate experience and specific training.

Different role expectations of human actors carry different knowledge (Barber, 1963), because different roles of human actors have different interpretation of what they observe. 'The same issues, events, and things observed by people with a different lens will generate different knowledge...' (Kerkhoff & Lebel, 2006, p. 453). Knowledge differs with different roles.

Role expectations change with the transition of a society. Transition leads to the emergence of new role expectations, so new knowledge is brought in to justify the new

role expectations. We can say that with the emergence of new role expectations, new practical knowledge is brought in or created.

*How does planning knowledge influence role expectation?*

The instrumental use of knowledge occurs when human actors use scientific knowledge to perform some specific tasks (Schrefler, 2010). This approach is usually associated with ‘technical rational’ accounts of the policy process (Caplan, 1979; Weiss, 1979). The assumption of this approach is that once policy problems are identified, knowledge is used to select the best solution for the issue (Schrefler, 2010). In fact, the motivation for using knowledge instrumentally may lie in a human actor’s need to deliver outputs in line with his roles in the institutional context (Schrefler, 2010).

The knowledge of planners is important because of the legitimacy and authority (Sandercock, 1998, p. 58) they need to justify their role expectations. A profession’s legitimacy rests on its knowledge (Innes, 1995). Scientific knowledge can be used to seek legitimacy from the policy environment or to improve a human actor’s standing in political games (Schrefler, 2010). ‘Political conflict throws up questions of legitimacy, for planners, as for politicians’ (Thomas, 1991, p. 44). In this context, using knowledge can be a method for policy actors to prove their rationality and competence (Radaelli, 1995, p. 162), to provide ‘a ritualistic assurance that appropriate attitudes about decision-making exist’ (Feldman & March, 1988, p. 418). Technical-rational ways of approaching policy and development languages become an excuse and sometimes a means to justify the decision of power (Mazza & Bianconi, 2014; Kerkhoff & Lebel, 2006).

Political actors can opt for a symbolic use of knowledge in order to respond to external expectations and pressures to conform to a specific trend within their policy sectors (Powell & DiMaggio, 1991). In this context, expert knowledge is used to deliver the goals

of the power (Boswell, 2008). The use of knowledge by political actors is strongly connected to expectations on the role of expertise for the legitimacy of appointed bodies (Schrefler, 2010).

### **3.4.3 Research question 3**

How can planners make a difference?

The relationship between role expectation and rules of appropriateness answers this question. In a clear and stable political context, rules of appropriateness are well defined and political actors follow them in practice. However, in a transitional and changing context, there are conflicts and there is ambiguity in rules of appropriateness. In order to clarify rules and determine what the situation is and what definition suits (March & Olsen, 1989, p. 161), the role expectations of planners are important. Planners internalize rules of appropriateness as their own role expectations. Rules of appropriateness become more legitimate as more planners use them (March, 1994). Human actors can make a change to rules of appropriateness through changing their involvement in their role expectations.

#### ***How does rules of appropriateness influence role expectation?***

Human actors internalize rules of appropriateness as their own role expectations (Sarbin & Allen, 1968, p. 503). Planners internalize rules of appropriateness as their own role expectations. People are likely to internalize rule that they fulfil effectively more than those that they do not. Professionals who feel competent in their profession are more likely to internalize the rules of the profession. (March, 1994, p. 66) Rules of appropriateness become more legitimate as more planners use them (March, 1994).

Social rules of appropriateness are the templates for individual role expectation: ‘that frequently come to be assertions of morality, accepted by individuals and society as what is good, moral, and true’ (March, 1994, p. 65). In a framework with legitimate, well-

defined and integrated rules, action is then governed by a dominant rule that provides clear prescriptions and adequate resources. In a transitional context, 'actors have to choose which rule to follow in the same situation, because actors have problems on resolving ambiguities and conflicts among alternative concepts of the self, accounts of a situation, and prescriptions of appropriateness'. (March & Olsen, 2008, p.693)

Fulfilling a role through following appropriate rules often involves 'matching a changing and ambiguous set of contingent rules to a changing and ambiguous set of situations' (March & Olsen, 2008, p.693). Role expectations wear with time and the edges become blurred.

#### *How does role expectation influence rules of appropriateness?*

In this research, the effects of rules of appropriateness are understood in a role model developed by Sarbin, Scheibe, and Kroger (1965). 'The status dimension is correlated with legitimate power and social esteem.' (Sarbin & Allen, 1968, p. 552) The human actor 'acquires legitimate power and esteem according to whether or not the placement of his roles' (Sarbin & Allen, 1968, p. 552). An individual might have multiple roles, 'each located at different points on the status dimension, some of which carry express grants of power and esteem, and others little or none' (Sarbin & Allen, 1968, p. 552).

Rules of appropriateness also provide valuation (Sarbin & Allen, 1968). Negative valuations include failures such as being dropped from a team, being placed on probation for poor grades and being laid off a job. Rules of appropriateness, on the other hand, lead to positive valuations, include gaining awards, public recognition, finance rewards and so on (Sarbin & Allen, 1968, p. 552).

Human actors can make changes to rules of appropriateness through changing their involvement. 'In order to survive as a member of a society, the individual must be able

accurately to locate himself in the social structure. From his repertory of roles, he must select one that is appropriate to the situation.’ (Sarbin & Allen, 1968, p. 506) ‘In doing so, of course, they shift role relationships. They have more audiences, larger networks of relevant others, and can shift perspectives and see each of his statuses from the viewpoint of the occupant of other statuses.’ (Sarbin & Allen, 1968, p. 553)

‘An individual ‘internalizes’ an identity, accepting and pursuing it even without the presence of external incentives or sanctions. The identity is protected by a conscience and by such emotions as pride, shame, and embarrassment’. (March, 1994, p. 65)

If role expectations are unclear the person does not know what rules are appropriate and cannot forecast the complementary conduct of other interactants. (Sarbin & Allen, 1968)

‘Observations in natural settings have suggested strongly that unclarity of role expectations influences group performance.’ (Sarbin & Allen, 1968, p. 503) ‘The lack of clarity in role expectations does lead to decreased effectiveness and productivity’ (Sarbin & Allen, 1968, p. 504).

After developing this conceptual framework, we need to see what has happened in other parts of the world. As will be mentioned in Chapter 4 Methodology, the author was educated in the Chinese planning system: learning from other’s experience is necessary and helps us to ‘think out of the box’.

### **3.5 The role of planners in different planning models**

#### **3.5.1 The rational comprehensive model**

For two full decades after the Second World War, the rational comprehensive model, shaped by and exported from the University of Chicago planning programme, was characterized by an underlying faith in the possibilities of reason in public life, which originated in Enlightenment epistemology (Sandercock, 1998). The role expectation of

the planner, in this model, was 'problem solver'. Their knowledge included the ability to 'aggregate diverse needs into a set of strategies to meet common objectives and goals' (Alexander E. , 1992, p. 120) .They relied on professional expertise and objectivity to formulate the best plan for 'an undifferent public' (Sandercock, 1998, p. 88). Their legitimacy rests on the quality of their expertise and appropriate rule for planners was the possibility of greater rationality in public policy decision-making (Sandercock, 1998).

The tacit assumption was that planners' purposes were to maximize welfare and solve problems. Through the design of regulations and implementation strategies, planners would produce the desired outcomes. The planner was seen as a rational man far away from politics (Innes J. E., 1995), sheltered under the legitimacy of the taken-for-granted social goals of city building. The knowledge planners had was supposed to be depoliticized to legitimate their role of expert. The tasks they were involved in were automatically 'in the public interest'.

However, actually in practice, planners also took the role of 'handmaidens to power' (Sandercock, 1998, p. 88) and in their ideal moments they 'speak truth to power'. Planners' expertise offered only the authority to propose instead of the power to achieve in the decision-making process. Expert knowledge is thus used to help officials to deliver their goals. The use of knowledge by planners was strongly connected to expectations of expertise for the legitimacy of appointed bodies. In a planning system with hierarchy, the rules of appropriateness in this 'handmaiden' role was perceived as a duty to serve those in power at the top and this led to an expert-driven and local-government-driven planning process having little appreciation for the varied views (Sandercock, 1998).

There is a range of critiques in this anti-democratic top-down planning approach. The planned 'scientific city', laid out according to a small number of rational principles, was

experienced as a social failure in most countries (Scott, 1998). Judith Innes has summarized the critiques,

Rittel and Webber (1973)...pointed out 'wicked problems' which could not be solved because the problem definition kept shifting and there was no way to aggregate incommensurable values. The unsolvable puzzles were many, including the tragedy of the commons (Hardin 1968), the prisoner's dilemma (Rapaport and Chammah 1965), the failure of collective action (Olson 1965), the limitations of cost-benefit analysis and other systematic analytic methods (Rivlin 1971), the indeterminacy of the implementation process (Bardach 1977; Pressman and Wildavsky 1973), the inevitability of uncertainty in goal and technology for planning problems (Christensen 1985), the impossibility of aggregating the public interest so that its optimization can be amenable to rational systematic analysis (Altshuler 1965), and the impossibility of relying on the large-scale model for societal guidance (Lee 1973) (Innes 1995:184: the references are those cited therein).

Although there are definitive critiques of this model, it continues to win support. In planning schools, exported from the University of Chicago planning programme, this model is taught because 'it offers decision rules that are logical and clear and that allow planners to study alternatives and consequences. The model seems to offer professional legitimacy (Sandercock, 1998, p. 88).

### **3.5.2 The advocacy planning model**

In the United States, concerned that the rational model of planning was obsessed with means, Paul Davidoff (1965) stressed the role of politics in planning. He urged planners to involve themselves in the political arena: those who had been unrepresented previously

would now be represented by planners. They would go to poor neighbourhoods and find out what the residents wanted and bring the opinions back to the decision making processes. Thus, in this model, planners took on a political role expectation of advocacy (Davidoff, 1965, p. 333), the rules of appropriateness in this role was 'the representative of the poor', to make different voices heard, to meet the needs of democracy in western countries.

The social context was that there had been major riots in US cities in 1964-5, and the Civil Rights movement by then had a decade of momentum. This created a climate in which dissenting opinions must be heard (Sandercock, 1998). Planning should be responsive to 'the consumer market' (Rein, 1969, p. 234). It is argued that planners should derive their legitimacy from the needs of people to be serviced. Planners derive their legitimacy from the preferences, choices, and needs of the users, consumers, and clients who are affected by planning decisions (Rein, 1969, p. 234). Planners are the translators of the user-groups.

Besides the scientific knowledge, other knowledge is also appropriate in this model, which includes the question of who gets what and the distributional question which the rational model had avoided, in order to serve both the rational model and plural democracy (Sandercock, 1998). Planners need to formulate many plans rather than one master plan, in order to stimulate the full discussion of the values and interests represented by different plans. Also, planners inform the public of all the social costs and benefits and formulate alternatives which should be incorporated into a better master plan (Sandercock, 1998).



### **3.5.3 The equity planning model**

Out of the advocacy tradition, a group of planners developed the equity planning model. They called for reducing racial and economic inequalities. They consciously sought to redistribute power, resources, or participation away from local elites and towards poor and working class city residents (Sandercock, 1998).

In this model, a planner must be a ‘problem formulator’ (Sandercock, 1998, p. 94), which means, planners must have an understanding of urban inequalities, asking questions about ‘who is getting what out of local urban policies and plans’ (Sandercock, 1998, p. 93). Also, planners began to develop the knowledge of how to gather information from their clients. Good communicative skills are needed in this role, to communicate effectively with diverse groups (Sandercock, 1998). The ‘rules of appropriateness’ was the initiative to redefine social problems.

By reformulating a problem, planners have some power to shape debates, to shape public attention to issues which planners see as important. Planners need to be bold, to seize the initiative, and never accept given definitions of tasks and problems (Sandercock, 1998, p. 94).

From this standing point, planners took on the role of ‘social reformer’. Planners ‘enlarged the scope of their mission well beyond that of plan making’ (Krumholz & Forester, 1990, p. 247). They knew the urban inequalities and fought for that. Planners should know how to ‘collect and harness fragmented power in order to bring about planned change’ (Rein, 1969, p. 233) by choosing the politicians they work for. The ‘rules of appropriateness’ was to fight for urban inequalities with limited power at hand (Rein, 1969).

### **3.5.4 The social learning and communicative model**

With the advocacy tradition, another group of planners developed the social learning and communicative model. In *Retracking America* (1973), John Friedmann described the growing polarity between planning experts and their clients, because the professional language adopted by planning experts was hard for others to understand. He argued that neither side has all the answers. As a solution, he suggested that bringing the two together to engage in a process of mutual learning, through the adoption of a transactive style of planning.

The role expectation of planners in this model was 'critical listener'. The rules of appropriateness was 'communication rationality' (Sandercock, 1998, p. 96) , to meet the needs of mutual or social learning in planning practice for democracy. Instead of the monopoly on expertise and insights by professionals, knowledge of the values of the locality is emphasised. This knowledge has shifted from a static conception to a more dynamic concept of learning (Sandercock, 1998). The knowledge of is appropriate for this role. Planners rely more on 'qualitative, interpretive inquiry than on logical deductive analysis, and they seek to understand the unique and the contextual' (Sandercock, 1998, p. 96).

Also, the knowledge of speech influences on listening, questioning and how to 'shape attention' through dialogue (Forester, 1989). What gives planning its legitimacy has shifted from 'professional expertise and efficiency towards ethical commitment and equity' (Sandercock, 1998, p. 97). Planners' role of 'critical listener' rests on the quality of their reasoning and arguments for the public good.

## **Summary**

It is clarified in this chapter why the new institutionalism instead of its old version is adopted in this research. Also, a conceptual framework with three factors- planning knowledge, role expectations and rules of appropriateness is developed to help to understand research questions. Roles of planners in different planning models are understood and summarized to give a view what has been happening in other countries, however, it seems that planning knowledge and role expectations of planners are different in the Chinese context. Thus the Chinese story from the empirical work is to be told in the following chapters following the conceptual framework- planning knowledge summarized from empirical work, rules of appropriateness in planning knowledge related to its political and social environment and, the role expectations of Chinese planners and how they see themselves can make a change in the process of urban plan formulation.

## **Chapter 4 Methodology**

### **Preamble**

This chapter presents the qualitative strategy used in this research and the underlying philosophical assumptions guiding the approach to inquiry, data collection and analysis. It also describes methods used, policy and document analysis and semi-structured interviews, and the process of the two phases of research. It ends with a reflection on methodology: the answers to research questions, validity and reliability, translation, ethical and safety issues, power and positionality and the limitation of the methods.

### **4.1. An overview of methodology**

#### **4.1.1 Research design and methods**

As stated in previous chapters, this research acknowledges the need for an understanding of the role expectations of Chinese planners in a transitional context, in respect of their changing knowledge in planning practice. Although there is much literature on various aspects of urbanization in China, little of it directly examines the role of professional planners. In order to achieve this understanding, this research's methodological strategy for collecting and analysing data is a qualitative approach, including semi-structured interviews and policy and document analysis. The nature of qualitative approach is appropriate because it employs an analysis of narratives and texts to understand problems and phenomena in depth from which insightful implications for knowledge and practice can emerge. (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994; Patton, 2002).

#### ***Policy and document analysis***

Planning practice as a tool of governance is situated in a governance landscape (Healey, 1997), so a review of laws and regulations related to Chinese urban planning legal

documents has been carried out to understand the institutional context in which planners work (See Appendix 1). They are used in ‘descriptive analysis’ to provide an initial understanding of the structures and processes forming the practice of planners.

Document analysis, as a secondary source of data, is one method that has been used to collect evidence. It has been important in supporting and expanding evidence from other sources. In accordance with the theoretical framework for this research, these documents have been analysed in the cultural or social context in which they were created rather than as sources of facts about particular individuals or events. They need to be interpreted for, ‘why they were prepared, made or displayed, by whom, under what conditions, according to what rules and conventions,’ as well as ‘what they have been used for, where they have been kept and so on’ (Mason, 2002, p. 110).

### *Semi-structured interviews*

Semi-structured interviews have been adopted for this research. Semi-structured interviewing is the most advisable method for collecting people’s views, knowledge, understandings, experiences, interpretations of and interactions with the world that surrounds them (Mason, 2002). Interviews can reveal additional topics for further inquiry, other persons to be interviewed and other resources of evidence, as well as access to documentary sources. In this research, the role of planners is considered as situational and the social explanations of it have been constructed focusing on nuance, depth, complexity and roundedness in data.

When a human actor chooses to become a professional, they adopt a ‘form of life’ (Bickenbach & Hendler, 1994, p. 163) to become a particular kind of person. The role expectation of them as a professional can only be understood through their ‘particular kinds of forms of life, ways of being in and understanding the world’ (Thomas, 2012, p.

403). To understand their role expectations requires 'entering into world in which they arise and are given meaning, sharing enough in terms of fundamental purposes and meanings in life to be able to have discussions of ethics where some common points of reference are possible' (Thomas, 2012, p. 403).

Rather more pragmatically, the real opinions of planners cannot be discovered through any other form but interviews (Mason, 2002), so the qualitative interviews of planners are considered to be the main source from which to generate a full and fair representation of their perspectives. Examining the work of urban planners in China provides one avenue for observing the urban development process more generally. The urban planners who provided useful insights to this research felt comfortable doing so because they were being offered a chance to reflect in their own work.

The attitudes of individuals constitute an entirely different kind of criterion than the attributes of occupational institutions. Unlike the latter, which can be determined empirically by the examination of legislation, administrative regulations, and other formal documents including prescribed curricula, the attitudes of individuals must be determined by the direct study of individuals (Freidson, 1988, p. 81).

The interviews were loosely based on guide questions but were conversational with a purpose and open-ended. The interview guidelines were designed to help the interviewee extend the length of their conversation, to ask about some inner events, to fill in detail and to identify actors and make them explicit.

The work of planners and the relationship between them and the local government officials they serve are very sensitive subjects, so all the interviews were conducted on the condition of anonymity, and details of the cities that they formulated plans for are not given here. When they are mentioned in the interview quotations in this thesis, 'XX' is

used to replace the names of the cities and organizations the planners work in. Within these limits, the interviews provide a sense of the level of the planners' professional knowledge and their experience of urban planning practice in transitional China.

#### **4.1.2 Storing and analysing data**

Transcripts (in Chinese) were made of the interview recordings, to facilitate their review, coding and interpretation. Transcripts are better for understanding the data in depth, and for noting the ways in which planners articulated their ideas rather than the substance of their opinions (Mason, 2002). In situations where the planners preferred not to be recorded, notes were taken of the main points they made. The analysis of the data was done reading data literally and reflectively (Mason, 2002). Important quotations were chosen to be translated from Chinese.

In order to give an explanatory structure for the research questions, this research has adopted a theoretical approach based on the new sociological institutional analysis, which emphasises both the significance of context and the 'ways of thinking' of planners. The political environment of planners provides appropriate rules for their planning knowledge in practice while planners, as rule followers, create meaning with different patterns of planning knowledge in their role expectations. This research draws on planners' knowledge in practice since it helps to understand their role in a transitional context, dealing with decentralization and marketization.

The analysis has aimed at making sense of the data so as to understand 'what was central' and 'what was peripheral' (Wolcott, 1994, p. 21). In qualitative research, 'data never speak for themselves' (Sanderson, 2009, p. 79). The data was broken down and recombined rather than simply put together in chronological order (Sandelowski, 1998). 'Raw data' from interview transcripts were interpreted and are not always presented in

the chapters as quotations, unless it was necessary to provide evidence to support arguments.

#### 4.2. Research process: phase 1

A step by step method was used in data collection and analysis (Table 11). Decisions in the research design of this research were made in a sequence of phases: firstly, a study with policy and document analysis and semi-structured interviews was conducted to achieve problem perception and goal articulation (Alexander, 1979); secondly, after analysing the data from the first stage, semi-structured interviews with planners were conducted, combined with document analysis. The purpose of phase 1 was ‘to clarify the aims and frame of the study before interview its primary respondents’ (Weiss, 1994, p. 15).


**Table 11 Research process: phase 1 and phase 2**

Phase	Research objectives	Methods	Data requirement
Phase 1	To clarify the aims and frame of the study	Policy and document analysis; semi-structured interviews;	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Laws and regulations related to Chinese urban planning (Details see Appendix 1);</li> <li>2. Basic information of Chinese planners such as profession and education;</li> <li>3. Gaining the experience of planners about the</li> </ol>



			expression of loyalty
Phase 2	To understand the knowledge of planners and their role expectations	Semi-structured interviews;	1. The everyday practice and knowledge of planners; 2. Their interactions with clients

Before going to the field, a review of the laws and regulations related to Chinese urban planning and legal documents from different organizations (Table 12) was carried out in order to understand the institutional context of planners, and to map potential expressions of loyalty, which was tested in the interviews in the first phase of the field trip and used to conduct the interviews. A formal framework (Table 13) of the rules for planners to follow in their work was formed according to the policy and document analysis. Based on the framework, interview questions were formulated.

Strong  Weak

**Table 12 Different organizations who formulate laws and regulations (Organized by the author)**

	National policy of the CCP	Laws	Administrative Ordinances	Sectional regulation	Convention of the planning professions
Legi	General	National	State	Ministry of	China Association of Urban

slati on Insti tutio n	Office of the CCP Central Committee	People's Congress	Council and local people's congresses	Housing and Urban- Rural Developme nt	Planning
Enf orce men t mod e	Publicity and education (disciplinar y sanction towards CCP members)	State Coercive Power	State Coercive Power	Normalizati ve document	<p>Rewards:</p> <p>An organization which obeys the convention well will be commended by the China Association of Urban Planning.</p> <p>It is also recommended to declare as a civilized unit and advanced collective in national or local construction system.</p> <p>Sanction:</p> <p>Admonishing, circulating a notice of criticism and cancelling qualification for assessment, even to discontinue membership.</p>

Table 13 A framework for interviews (full details see Appendix 2)

	National policy of the CCP	National Laws	Departmental rules	Convention of the planning professions
Allegiance	Insisting socialism, Deng Xiaoping Theory and Three Represents Theory, the Scientific Concept of Development; the CCP's governance		Make government affairs public and improve the open administrative system	1. Set up correct urban planning work values 2. The work direction of urban planning is to concentrate on building a well-off society.
Guild loyalty	Hardworking; the core values of serving the people	Public announce ment and consultatio n	The spirit of emancipating the mind and seeking truth from facts; Serving the people and making contributions to society;	
			Conscientious	

			and meticulous; strong skillful; strict in discipline	
				Obey the relevant laws and regulations

Semi-structured interviews were adopted for this phase, as a way of gaining the experience of planners about their expressions of loyalty to the CCP, the urban planning profession, their employer and colleagues in their planning practice. Since interviews were open-ended and resembled conversations, general interview categories with a sample of guiding topics and questions were formulated. There were six categories of interview questions designed to elicit different aspects of the loyalty of Chinese planners (details see Appendix 3): general or ice breaking questions; information about gathering information; decision-making in the urban planning process; the public engagement process of urban planning; the negotiation process with local officials and the public; the Party.

It is generally accepted that trying to gain access to research groups is a problematic aspect of conducting social research in China. Chinese planners are a relatively closed group, so it is easy for planners to know each other but hard for outsiders to get into their society. As a planner said,

The circle of our profession is so small that you will find wherever you go to the examinations, conferences; they are the same people everywhere. Planners know

planners. Take me for example, I am here [in this planning institute] and my girlfriend is in XX Academy of Urban Planning & Design, so we know many colleagues of each other (Interview No.12, 9th August, 2013).

At first I thought of interviewing some big names in the Chinese planning profession, and sent several emails; I did not receive any replies. My supervisor kindly offered me several business cards of top names in the Chinese urban planning profession, which he had received at various conferences. At first I wrote to them by e-mail but did not get any reply. Then I called them at the telephone numbers on the business cards. Soon I was able to make appointments for interviews.

Fortunately, I began my career as a planner and was educated in planning at a Chinese university. I interviewed some planners I knew from previous projects or from university. Then they introduced their colleagues and friends to me as potential interviewees. If this strategy has to be given a name, it is ‘snowballing’ or ‘chain referral sampling’ (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981, p. 141). Being referred by people known to both the interviewer and the interviewees had very obvious advantages in the interviews, which were more relaxed; they would like to share more with you than in the corresponding situation without referral.

Interviews were mainly carried out with planners working in three types of organization (for details see Appendix 4). Firstly, planners working for the planning departments of city governments, for example, XX Municipal Commission of urban planning (Interview No.2, 23, 24, 25). In this position, planners belong to the official Chinese administration system. They are involved both in coordinating and supervising the formulation of urban land use plans for their cities. They also have the power to regulate urban development and issue some of the permits developers need to proceed with construction. They have to

present their ideas on specific land use matters to their senior local government leaders. Secondly, planners working for private companies (Interview No.6, 17, 18), for example, Beijing XX Urban Planning Limited Liability Company. They usually provide consultation on urban design or the technological aspects of urban planning. Finally, planners working in non-local planning institutes (No.1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 19), based in China's major cities such as Beijing and Shanghai, for example, XX Academy of Urban Planning & Design. They work on projects for local municipal governments all over China, rather than a particular locality. Two planners from the university and the chief planner from Urban Planning Society were also interviewed for information, with help from my supervisor.

During the process of data collection, documents collected and interviews undertaken were stored electronically. A list of the interviews was made with clear specifications of the types of institutes the planners came from, the time period they had already been engaged in the field of urban planning, the positions they held, and the lengths and dates of the interviews.

There were two unexpected findings from the interview process. Public engagement was not a viable issue to raise in seeking to understand planners' practice. I had prepared questions about how Chinese planners see public engagement in China, but I found that what the planners were talking about was full of interactions with government officials. The dominant relationship in planners' work is with local government officials. Secondly, although the loyalty of planners is very important according to the relevant documents of urban planning, in practice this concept does not work well, which means, the 'ways of doing' and 'ways of thinking' of planners are sometimes different from those described in documents. The evidence was negative because it contradicted the hypothesis of this research.

### **4.3. Research process: phase 2**

The second phase of the study was designed with the experience of the first phase of the field trip in mind. Semi-structured interviews were adopted, and my decisions about what to ask were based on the findings of the first phase: to ask what Chinese planners care about in everyday practice, with an open question in the beginning, in order to understand the appropriate planning knowledge in everyday practice; and secondly, the focus would be on the role of planners in their interactions with local officials, rather than on the loyalty of planners. In China, decision-making of development control is basically a black-box for research. Because of the lack of transparency regarding the decision-making process around urban development, it was difficult to observe the contribution planners make to this process directly, so I started with questions like ‘what did you do today’ ‘what kind of projects have you been doing these days?’ (for details see Appendix 5), in order to gain their own direct and real experiences.

The interviews were conducted in a Beijing-based planning institute and a Harbin-based planning institute, whose professional planners carry out projects for local governments across China. Planners working in these organizations were chosen because they are carrying out the formulation of urban planning projects nationwide, so their role expectations are not confined to a certain locality and they have a general picture of planning knowledge in practice; and because they have a better experience and perspective of transitions and traditions in urban planning than other groups of planners. As an independent part of the Chinese administrative system, they have the opportunity to influence the decision-making process, so their role is important in making a change in urban development. Planners from the city of Beijing and Harbin were chosen as interviewees to make the data more valid.

In order to gain access to planners in Beijing, I used the method of ‘snowballing’. To gain access to planners in Harbin, I met the head of a planning institute at a summer school and convinced him to help me to find interviewees. He asked me to go to the institutes on the following day. When I did so, I was surprised to find everything was ready for me to undertake the interviews. I carried them out intensively over two days: every interviewee responded fully to my questions and talked with great patience. In a hierarchical society like China, power means convenience and efficiency, so gaining access to the powerful is one of the most effective ways to get interviews in the Chinese context.

As Wagenaar (2011, p.21) puts it, the ‘general’ and the ‘particular’ are folded into each other. A general political picture can be formed through particular interviews with Chinese planners. This research is focused on how planners express their ideas in order to reveal how they apply rules in practice, rather than on the substance of their opinions (Mason, 2002).

After reading each interview, since the main purpose of this research is to examine the transition, a reflection was made by summarizing ‘old rules’ and ‘new rules’ and the knowledge of the planner, the page number and line number was also marked in the form of PXXLXX (see an example in Table 14) .

**Table 14 An example of the summarization of an interview**

<b>Interview No.29, 7th, August, 2014</b>	<b>Findings</b>
<b>New rules</b>	1. Government policies both in national and provincial level P1L22



	<p>2. Related policies and research institutions P1L23</p> <p>3. Regulatory detailed plan, constructive detailed plan, or sub-plan for special topics P3L10,11</p> <p>4. Urban sociological study is separated from the theory of space P6L16,17</p>
<b>Old rules</b>	<p>1. Construction Movement (the beginning of the forthcoming large-scale urbanization) P1L2,3</p> <p>2. Migrant workers swarming into cities in large numbers P1L5</p>
<b>The knowledge of planners under new rules</b>	<p>1. Willing to take the lead in the planning process P1L19</p> <p>2. Planning in an active mode (take the initiative in the planning or designing) P1L28</p> <p>3. Interpret P2L35</p> <p>4. Different roles of experts, academics, and consultants P4L32, 37</p> <p>5. Practical planning (the whole process of communication, collaboration, and investigation) P6L23</p>
<b>The knowledge of planners under old rules</b>	<p>1. City planners have no choice but to listen to the government (government or related departments take the charge of planning while planners have few initiatives). P1L7,8,9</p> <p>2. Come up with the plan according to the Letter of</p>

	Authorization P2L28  3. Theoretical planning P6L23
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In the process of coding, I found that several inferences could be tied up in a more abstract statement. Rather than cluttering the recording of neat and slim packages with lengthy discussions, separate analytic memos were written to organize the ideas (Table 15). In the process of writing memos, I was able to develop and bring partial closure to some ideas. These memos became the heart of the final set of ideas.

After writing the memos to weave separate data together, the concept of ‘rules of appropriateness’ was adopted to understand the research questions, because firstly, planners are assumed as ‘rule followers’ in this research; secondly, this research tries to examine a transitional context, the ‘appropriateness’ helps to match planning knowledge to its environment based on ‘role expectations’. The professional knowledge of planners was put in different categories. By identifying ‘rules of appropriateness’ in each category, a comparison of the arguments was raised.

**Table 15 Memos in data analysis**

Memos	Content
Memo 1	The initiative of Chinese planners
Memo 2	The autonomy of Chinese planners
Memo 3	How laws shape the behaviours of planners
Memo 4	The Chinese context

## **4.4. A reflection on methodology**

### **4.4.1 The initial answers to research questions**

According to the interviews and document analysis, we can record initial answers to the research questions:

1. Within the dynamics of a transitional context, which rules are appropriate in planning knowledge? Why?
  - a. The ‘rule of law’ and ‘rule of man’ both exist in planning knowledge;
  - b. The rules of ‘keeping uniformity with central commands’ and ‘listening to local government’ both exist;
  - c. The rules of ‘making professional judgement’ and ‘giving legitimacy to local authorities’ both exist.

To conclude, there are ambiguities and conflict in which rules are applied in adopting the various kinds of knowledge planners employ in practice. In understanding ‘appropriateness’, different types of planning knowledge exist in different situations. This means that although decentralization and marketization brings new rules, planning traditions still work in some situations. So, literature about the transition in Chinese urban planning and the planning traditions of socialist times, even ancient times, will be reviewed in the following chapter to help to link planning knowledge with its environment, which means how planning knowledge become appropriate.

2. What roles are Chinese planners playing in interactions with local authorities?  
Why?

During the first phase of interviews, the interaction between planners and local residents in the form of public engagement seemed to be relatively weak, while the interactions

between planners and local municipal government officials were strong. So in the second stage of interviews, the experience and perceptions of planners towards the interactions with local officials were emphasized to obtain more information about their role expectations.

In this research, the concept of role expectation is defined by how planners use their planning knowledge instead just following what planners described their jobs. For example, although some planners have a self-image of ‘the decision maker’ of the plan formulation process (Interview No.4 Ma He), they actually serve the role of ‘initiative knower’ by trying to use their professional knowledge to influence decisions made by local officials. Based on the utilization of planning knowledge, the role expectations of planners are acquired from data analysis.

### 3. How can planners make a difference?

As established above, in the context of marketization and decentralization in China, there are conflicts and ambiguities in the rules of appropriateness. This can be changed by ‘clarify[ing] the rules, make distinctions, determine what the situation is and what definition ‘fits’’ (March & Olsen, 1989, p. 161). Thus the way planners internalize ‘rules of appropriateness’ and how they locate themselves in different role expectations are important.

According to the interviews, some planners locate themselves in the active role of ‘the initiative knower’ by trying to create ‘the active model of planning’ and ‘being the teacher of local authority’, meanwhile some planners stay tight to the role of ‘handmaiden of power’. The trigger of their initiative in being located in different role expectations has been examined in the interviews and will be clarified in analytical chapters.

#### 4.4.2 Validity and reliability

The validity of this research's design and its interpretation comes from belief in the socially constructed reality of the participants in the interviews. As explained in this chapter, the methods chosen match the theoretical perspective and research questions, which in turn match the data gained and the process of data analysis.

When it comes to the role of interpretation, the adoption of qualitative research imposed a challenge for the researcher in interpreting interviewees' understandings of their practice, since it is important to have an awareness of her biases and take them into account when analysing interviewees' comments and viewpoints. In this research, the researcher engaged in a reflective process so as to make valid inferences from the data and to make sure that the account was as close as possible a reflection of the meanings given by interviewees. Planners told their versions of practice, the researcher wrote the account based on what the story meant to this research and the theoretical and conceptual lenses adopted, but keeping interviewees' own words and concepts as much as possible. An effort was made to keep the voice of planners as the dominant ones in order to avoid a distortion of their own meanings in the process of analysis and interpretation (Polkinghoron, 2007).

Planning knowledge was used in the second phase as a practical tool for analysis of the interviews. Practical knowledge is justifiable on the basis of experience in practice (Kerkhoff & Lebel, 2006, p. 447). For the purpose of generating reliable data, instead of asking planners' 'rules of thinking' directly, it is more reasonable to examine the knowledge they use in practice. Also, multiple sources have been used to provide reliable general conclusions. This research combines opinions of planners from interviews, related documents and literature to develop the reliability.

Planners from Beijing and Harbin take on national planning formulation tasks and have similar role expectations. For example, sometimes they have to compromise with local government officials (Interview No.27; Interview No.35, see in analytical chapters) and when they have the chance, they would like to take the initiative (Interview No.12; Interview No.33, see in analytical chapters). Planners from different environments have similar role expectations and provide similar experiences to clarify the same issues. So the findings of this research can be transferred to a wider context.

Triangulation represents the use of multiple opinions to analyse the same dimension of a research problem (Jick, 1979), but it doesn't mean that the different opinions point to the same result. For example, in this research, some planners saw themselves as 'active initiators' and some of them had the role expectation of 'initiative knowers', so 'finding such inconsistencies ought not be viewed as weakening the credibility of results, but rather as offering opportunities for deeper insight into the relationship between inquiry approach and the phenomenon under study' (Patton, 1999, p. 1193).

I was educated in Chinese urban planning schools and used to be a professional urban planner, which allows me to interpret data in order to explore the world. On one hand, my training and work experience as a planner helped me to open conversations with planners in the interviews, and to understand the background of planning knowledge better; on the other hand, it could prevent me from seeing the planning knowledge from the perspective of an outsider, which would give the research scope to stand back and away from the prejudices and closed minds of insiders. In the process of data analysis, one of the focuses was avoiding taking phenomenon for granted and turning them into biased assumptions. Analyzing planning knowledge in larger contexts helped me to open my mind. Reading about the planning cultures in other countries (Tajbakhsh, 2005) and the role of planners in western contexts (Sandercock, 1998) has helped to get out of my own box.

#### 4.4.3 Translation

Since the interviews were held in Chinese, the native language of the researcher and interviewees, the data requires translation. According to Müller (2007), translation is a political, complex and subjective process during which the translator has the power to make sense and transfer meanings for one context to another and translates the cultural and social meanings of practice, perspectives and opinions. Considering this, the subtleties of the diverse social and cultural meanings rooted in the words and expressions of planners in China have been taken into account in this research. I have aimed to generate ‘a richer insight into diverse cultural understanding of concepts, as well as maintaining an awareness of the difference implications of different terms’ (Crane, Lombard, & Tenz, 2009, p. 61) and tried to keep the intellectual honesty of the planners’ insights, by understanding the implicit meanings behind words.

Generally, in the process of translating from Chinese to English, there are several problems: first, in the speaking Chinese, ‘it’ ‘she’ ‘he’ are the same word, so the translator has to figure out which of them is the interviewee actually means in the conversation,

Second, Chinese sentences are shorter than English ones if translated, so the translator has to go back to the context to make the meaning complete; in the translation process, I put these missing parts in [ ]; for example,

What seems unacceptable to her [local authority] is the situation where the land has already been taken [by developers]. For instance, the local authority has made its decision and approved [the transfer of] several pieces of land [for developers]. Though she [local authority] knows the truth, she would not tell you [planners] clearly. Just with the truth in their mind, they would propose objections against you

if your advice appears unreasonable [to local authority]. Therefore, in many situations like this, we will respect his ideas if she does not betray the basic principles (Interview No.26, 6th August, 2014).

Third, there is no clear time tense of verbs in Chinese, and as this research is focused on the relationship between planning transitions and traditions, time tense is important for data analysis. To solve this problem, I made a historical review of Chinese planning traditions, which helped to distinguish which information belonged to tradition and which belonged to the new transitions.

#### **4.4.4 Ethical and safety issues**

Ethical issues are important concerns in the research of social science because social and human aspects are included. Possible ethical issues relate to the types of questions to be asked, what we allow the interviewees to tell us, the guarantee of participants' anonymity and confidentiality and the power relations in the interaction of interviews (Mason, 2002).

The issue of informed consent was considered important to assure a rigorous moral practice. Before each interview, information sheets and consent forms (considering issues like the purpose of the interviews, direct attribution, confidentiality, and so on) were forwarded via email to interviewees when possible. There are presented in Appendices 7 and 8. Prior to the start of the interviews, to avoid any ambiguities related to the utilization of the data provided by interviewees, the researcher would explain the content of information sheets and consent forms to participants, the importance of their contribution and the confidentiality of the process. To establish a good interviewing partnership, before all the interview the researcher would ask: Is using the recorder OK? There are two copies of our consent form. Could you read one of them, and if it is all right would you sign it and give it to me and then hang on to the other? Is there anything



about the study you would like me to tell you before we begin? After the interview, reassurance whether the information shared in the record could be used in the research was also obtained after the meeting.

Because of the sensitivity of this research, the personal information of the participants has been kept secret and their names, their working institutes' names and the names of their projects has been removed in the writing process. The recordings have only been used for this research and only available to the researcher. No one outside the project has been allowed access to the original recordings. Some planners just allowed the researcher to record, while some refused to be recorded. The researcher had to respect the opinions of interviewees. In another situation, the planners allowed themselves to be recorded, however, the researcher found the interviewee quite nervous or they just answered the interview questions with an official voice, for example, 'according to the Urban and Rural Planning Law 2007 that...., what we did was strictly following the law, procedure 1,...,2...,3...' (Interview No.30, 7 August, 2014). The strategy was that when this situation happened during the interviews, the researcher suggested shutting down the recorder in front of the interviewee and then continuing the interview. Sometimes planners would tell more without a recording. The researcher had to record the length of the interviews using a watch, and after the interviews, it was necessary to find a quiet place to take notes of the interviews.

It is suggested attention should be paid to our skills as researchers. During the interviews, we should observe a proper balance between listening and talking while the interviewees are providing information (Mason, 2002). The questions to be asked should be considered so that they avoid making the participants uncomfortable, and should be careful about people's reactions. Tricky enquiries should be avoided so that participants aren't made confused and uncomfortable.

In relation to the questions asked, the interviews considered planners' working experience in the Chinese urban planning process, which is a very sensitive topic involving many conflicts. Sometimes there were some questions related to the secrets between them and their clients. If the interviewees started to feel uncomfortable when asked about their interactions with their clients, the topic was changed by the researcher with some more relaxed questions, in case the participants might not want to continue the interviews. There was a risk that they might provide biased or inaccurate answers if they felt their feelings were not going to be respected. Because the sensitivity of this topic, when planners gave the researcher ambiguous examples in explaining their viewpoint, the researcher could ask them to be clear and specific, however, to make the interviewees feel comfortable, the researcher just let it go and did not ask for further details on purpose. In the process of interviews, one problem always happened: because of the sensitivity of Chinese urban development, it was normal for planners to talk with ambiguity; I tried several times to try to interrupt and asked them to explain in further details, but what happened was either that they became anxious and the good atmosphere for conversation was ruined or they changed the topic. My way of dealing with this ambiguity was just let them talk. When there was a chance, I would ask, 'there was something I did not quite understand, could you please give me an example?' It usually worked. When it came to the process of data analysis, it was the responsibility of the researcher to understand what the planners really meant by what they had said, by checking relevant policies and reading other literature. However, evidence was only used in the writing after assessing that there would be no potential harm to interviewees, especially where sensitive information had been disclosed by them, like specific examples of corruption or 'closed door deals'.

Establishing rapport was important to help both the researcher and the participants to feel open and relaxed; however, the main concern was that sometimes the interviewees said more than they should. When they talked about private issues, they sometimes led to 'ethically important moments' in which 'often subtle, and unpredictable situations arise in the practice of doing research' (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004, p. 262). For dealing with these situations, a reflective attitude toward research was adopted. The reflectivity means a cyclical critical process of awareness of our roles as researchers in the field trip (Mason, 2002; Guillemin & Gillam, 2004). In the interviews, sometimes planners started to complain about their group leaders, that they were not fair to them. In this situation, the researcher listened carefully in less than ten minutes and then tried to change the topic gently from the position of a researcher.

During the two stages of interviewing, I usually asked planners to choose the site for the interviews for their convenience or to make them feel comfortable. Some planners chose their work place to do the interviews. In this case, two issues were noticed: firstly, due to the sensitivity of interview questions, a quiet corner was needed to protect the interviewee's privacy and the quality of the interviews; secondly, it was likely that planners were busy with their work and they squeezed their time to make the interviews happen, so they should not be interrupted long. In these cases, the researcher had to control the length of the interview for being considerate. Sometimes planners chose cafes. In these cases, planners might be too relaxed and forget they were doing interviews; the researcher had to keep in mind that she was conducting an interview and when it was necessary, she needed to remind the interviewee kindly of that.

As a young female, the safety of the researcher when conducting interviews was also under consideration. Since, planners are general quite busy with their overloaded tasks in China, sometimes planners ask for a late interview in the evening after their work. In this

circumstance, I usually suggested meeting another time during the day. During the field trip in Beijing and Harbin, I lived with friends for safety.

#### **4.4.5 Power and positionality**

Interviews are the main source of information in this research, so there were direct interactions with Chinese planners. As part of the well-educated elite in China, the interviewees had a relatively powerful position. Some planners put the researcher in an empowered position. Their attitude towards a young female interviewer sometimes might impact on the quality of interviews. However, my education as a planner and working experience was a big advantage, allowing me to do the interviews with them. There was a rich exchange of information, with direct and real knowledge and experience, between the interviewees and the researcher, with more disciplinary and academic knowledge on urban planning.

In the interviews with planners from Harbin in the second stage of interviews, interestingly, the power relationship changed. Since planners were brought to me by the head of the planning institute, they put me in a powered position. My strategy of dealing with that was trying to be as nice as I could and used my background of urban planning to make the obstacle smaller.

#### **4.4.6 The limitation of the methods of this research**

Because of the sensitivity of the issues of land use and urban development in China, they are hard topics to study because there have been frequent conflicts between Chinese local municipal governments and citizens. There had been a great deal of corrupt behaviour on the part of local officials, the main reason why in-depth conversation on the subject of the politics of urban planning is scarce. This political sensitivity was a major obstacle to questions about the details of land development and the process of urban planning.

Compared with the size of the entire Chinese professional planning community, there is only a small sample of interviewees in this research. The findings cannot represent planners all over China in terms of the numbers of situations or decisions where planners participate. This research only provides a way of understanding professional urban planning practice transitional China.

## **Summary**

This chapter provides a detailed justification of the methods chosen in this research and describes how the data was stored and analysed. It helps to understand how valid and reliable data was obtained in the field and how it was analysed. The two phases of research process are described and a reflection on methodology is based on it, which clarifies the initial findings to the research questions, the difficulties the researcher met on field trips and how they were solved. The experience reflects how a young female researcher made herself safe and kept herself in a proper position in meeting members of the educated elites (planners); what was noticed in the process of translating Chinese into English; and ethical issues raised in relation to a sensitive research topic.

## **Chapter 5 Planning knowledge and roles of Chinese planners at different times**

### **Preamble**

This chapter will review the changes in expectations of planners from traditional to modern times, examining planning traditions, planning knowledge and the roles of planners from a historical perspective. It will then review the role of planners today in terms of planning education and the professional assurance practice of urban planners. It will also consider the differences in expectations facing planners working for various organizations and in different organisational contexts.

### **5.1 A historical review of planning tradition and roles of planners in China**

The assumption made for this research is that tradition lies in layers ‘deep’ down in society, has been built up over a long period of time, as a consequence, is unlikely to be changed in a short time (Tajbakhsh, 2005). To understand Chinese planning practice, it is important to take planning traditions into account, so a historical analysis is presented here to provide a sense of the inherited planning traditions that we have to take into account in our current practice.

#### **5.1.1 Planning tradition, planning knowledge and the role of the planner in ancient times**

In theory, the emperor and the court through which he (or she) governed had absolute power in ancient China. Land belonged to the emperor and was allocated to members of the royal family and ministers who were loyal to the emperor. The ruling class believed that, ‘over the nation, there are only Crown lands; over the land, there are only subjects of the King’. Self-endowed with the title, Son of Heaven, many emperors were obsessed with the pursuit of eternity of governance. Cities were regarded as a means through

which to convey the power of heaven, consolidating their governance on earth (Chen & Thwaites, 2013, p. 11). A similar ideology was adopted by regional governors in their attitude to the land they governed.

Chinese society was accustomed to authoritative government.

All initiative and decision were concentrated in the major centre. The vast majority of the population, the common people, had no initiative and voice in any discussions about the society in which they lived (Shils, 1996, p. 59).

There was a fundamental difference between governor and common people. ‘The task of the former was to reign over the latter; the task of the latter was to support the ruler’ (Shils, 1996, p. 59) by working for them and obeying unconditionally. The common people could contribute nothing to ruling. Their responsibilities were hard working on the land, submission and devotion to the rulers (Mencius, 2004).

Confucianism held a dominant position as the official ideology of the state and in schools. It said rationality and authority should be established by the state (Chen & Thwaites, 2013, p. 12). The dominant idea of Confucianism emphasized the propriety of manners and dictated a hierarchical social status from the ruler class to the underclass. Imperial China was, for the most part, an autocratic institution which depended on strongly centralised power which was carefully guarded by those at the centre. The civil service examinations meant that there was some social mobility for clever members of the lower classes, but the overall pattern and the dominance of Confucian ideas of order and authority meant that imperial China was, for the most part, strongly autocratic. ‘It advocated that the order of the world consisted of heaven, the earth, emperors, ancestors, masters and common people as the positions descended in society’ (Chen & Thwaites,

2013, p. 12). Chaos, the absence of officially sanctioned and enforced rules, was seen as the greatest evil to be prevented (Moffett et al., 2003).

The role expectation of the planner was ‘the knower’. Their knowledge covered two areas: *Fengshui* and the realisation of ritual principles, and social order in urban form. *Fengshui*, literally ‘wind and water’, was used to choose the sites and layout of cities. There are three fundamental aspects of *fengshui* which affect Chinese urban design: ‘(1) orientation with the cardinal directions; (2) shape (square, rectangular, rounded and irregular) and symmetry; and (3) relative location’ (Wu & Gaubatz, 2013, p. 51).

For example, in ancient China, a city was planned in concentric rectangles surrounded by walls surrounded by lakes, hills, valleys, gardens, courtyards and parks. The Chinese tried to ensure that both the natural and the built environment were planned to enhance positive energy (Wang C.-Y. , 2015, p. 121).

Authorities who intended to build a city would first ask a *fengshui* practitioner for a site analysis. This practitioner, serving as a planner, believed in cosmology, in the need to create formidable defensive structures, and in the importance of maintaining the emperor’s power by abiding by natural principles.

According to Feng Shui, cultural and social issues are influenced by natural, metaphysical and cosmological factors. To practically use Feng Shui, one needs to understand the influence of cosmology on the earth, have knowledge of how astronomy and astrology influence the placing of buildings, understand classic Confucian philosophy, and understand the forces of nature and the weather on buildings and their surroundings. It is also essential to have knowledge of the magnetic fields in the earth and how they influence man, knowledge on how to place buildings in order to tap ‘Qi’ or the energy of the earth, understand the



geographical land forms like hills, valleys, flat land etc. (Wang C.-Y. , 2015, p. 120).

Social order was reflected in the layout of cities and urban space was used as a spatial tool for regulating social order. ‘The hierarchy and isomorphic spatial mode...are highly charged with social meanings and values; it is supposed to instill a sense of the equivalence between the physical space and social space.’ (Wang C.-Y. , 2015, p. 121)

The highest political goal was to deal with the confrontation between unity and diversity. In Chinese tradition, the ruling class usually looked for unity as opposed to variety to ensure its superior position (Wang C.-Y. , 2015). Architecture and urban space were spatial tools with which to reflect, represent and regulate the social order (Wang C.-Y., 2015). A conceptualized spatial structure was used as a powerful instrument to establish the social order and to represent ritual meaning according to the special needs of its rulers (Wang C.-Y. , 2015), which can be seen in *Kaogongji* (The Artificer’s Record)<sup>12</sup>: the palace city is at the centre, surrounded by an administrative complex and finally the outer city, mirroring the division of the universe into three levels as well as symbolizing the moralist division of the Chinese city into the emperor, scholar-administrators, and the commoners. Layers of strict social classification and a clear sense of order were also reflected in the master plan of these cities.<sup>13</sup>

The realisation of Confucianism and *Lizhi* in urban form was the Ideal City mode (Figure 7) recorded in *Kaogongji*. Cities in China were built and rebuilt along these lines from

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<sup>12</sup> *Kao Gong Ji* or The Artificer’s Record (simplified Chinese: 考工纪) is a classic work on science and technology in Ancient China, compiled during the Warring States Period (475-221 B.C.), the original author is unknown. In Han Dynasty (206 B.C.-220 A.D.), it had been edited as the sixth chapter of *Zhou Li*, due to the original sixth chapter of *Zhou Li* having been destroyed.

<sup>13</sup>清明上河图

ancient times until the nineteenth century (Wu & Gaubatz, 2013, p. 67). The Ideal City model suggested that,

A capital city should be oriented to the cardinal directions and have a square plan roughly 4000 feet on each side. In the wall that surrounds the city, there should be three gates in each side, and roads projecting out from these establish the grid of the city's plan. The central road on the south is the entrance for the major thoroughfare, nine cart lanes wide, which runs north to the palace complex. The palace itself is walled off from the rest of the city, preceded by an impressive courtyard and flanked by places of worship: the ancestral temple (to the east), and an altar to the earth (to the west). The city's marketplace is to the north of the palace compound... Walls and a moat around the city provide protection from enemies without, while walls around the palace and residential blocks establish barriers that clarify the social hierarchy... (Moffett et al., p. 93).

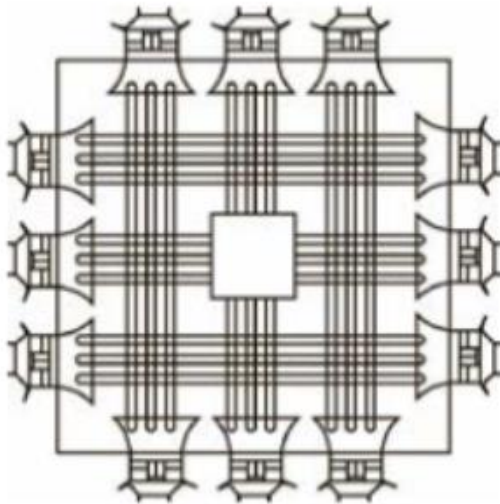


Figure 7 Diagram of Wang Cheng (Capital City) in Kao Gong Ji Source: Kao Gong Ji

### **5.1.2 The planning tradition, planning knowledge and the role of the planner in the Modern Era**

Since the turn of the nineteenth century, China has experienced dramatic change, partly in response to fundamental influences from the West. The responses to these influences gradually established a social, cultural and political foundation for modern China. Chinese planning as we understand it today has grown up within the context of a socio-political transitional society, which has been reflected in urban planning and planning knowledge.

Systematic urban planning was first implemented after 1928, when the Nationalist Party of the Republic of China established itself in power. An Urban Planning Ordinance was published in 1939, which gave urban planning a legal status. The government was keen on creating a modernised and advanced China, one which was completely different from the unenlightened conservative past, so western planning mechanisms were adopted. It was a breakthrough for the government to intervene in creating an urban environment suitable for the public to live in, which was new in China. In order to realise this idea, planning committees in local governments were formed by western-educated government officers and planners. Foreign designers were employed as consultants during the process.

Traditionally, educated Chinese were expected to have scholarly expertise merely in aspects of literature, classics and history in accordance with Confucianism. Since the 1920s, architects from other countries have practised in Shanghai, together with Chinese returnees who have been educated abroad in subjects such as civil engineering and architecture. The returning Chinese became part of a new intellectual force; they were educated in the West and committed to a Chinese national revival. Compared with other educated Chinese, they had skills and knowledge which emphasised on scientific rationality and its practical application to everyday life.

With the role expectation that they should be ‘the knower of modernisation’, these planners believed the West to be more advanced in planning theory and practice. Urban planning was used in the construction of new civic centres, like Nanjing and Shanghai. Based on rationalized analysis of land-use, institutional efforts to develop city functions were combined in the process. With a rationalist outlook on the use of their skills and knowledge, the plans they made embedded the nationalist ideology of the state through the use of ‘Chinese forms’ (Wang C.-Y. , 2015).

A new body of knowledge from western industrialized countries was adopted in urban planning. Concepts such as ‘neighbourhood units’ and land use zoning were brought into Chinese planning, to emphasise ‘scientific analysis and administrative efficiency’ (Wu F., 2015, p. 18). Works and textbooks published at that time covered urban planning, urban planning investigation and the methods of formulation, urban planning laws and regulations and administration, the renovation of old urban areas and the development of new ones (Tan, 2009). Ideas on social management including legislation and administration were integrated into urban planning which was regarded as a tool for solving urban problems. The knowledge of construction engineering was introduced, such as how to build roads, squares and parks, how to renovate old urban areas, and how to develop new urban areas. Planning knowledge at that time placed greater emphasis on functions supported by engineering knowledge, rather than social and political issues.

This led to one of the main problems of Chinese modernization, ‘avoiding scientific spirit by only emphasizing the matter of scientific-technological results’ (Wang C.-Y. , 2015, p. 141). For example, in the process of modernization, the lack of scientific spirit in the ruling class was one of the main reasons why the reform movement failed (Wang C.-Y. , 2015). The reason behind this was actually the conflict between planning tradition and modernisation.

Traditional Chinese culture centered on politics and ethics. Even though historically there were many inventions in Chinese civilization, unfortunately, most of them were used in superstitious ways rather than for the development of a truly scientific spirit. The lack of scientific spirit in combination with the emphasis on the ethical spirit devaluated [sic] the development of science and technology (Wang C.-Y. , 2015, p. 141).

In the process of modernisation, although western ideas began to be adopted in China, the Chinese tradition of the unity of national identity was still strong; this was one of the reasons that led to a fundamental social and political reform in China.

In the old cultural mode, the highest political goal was to deal with the confrontation between unity and diversity, which had always been related to the shift between different political favourites of the ruling class through time. In Chinese tradition, even in political terms, the ruling class searched for unity as opposed to variety to ensure its superior position...despite any short-term breaks resulting from changes from one political favorite to another, undeniably this original inclusive mode is deeply embedded in the value system of Chinese civilization (Wang C.-Y. , 2015, p. 138).

### **5.1.3 The planning tradition, planning knowledge and the role of the planner in the communist time**

When the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) took power in 1949, China was an agrarian society which had an urban population of only 7%. The government was under pressure to change the situation. Mao adopted the strategy of rapid recovery of production and industrialization, saying they were the keys to consolidating the political power of the people (Mao, 1969). So a planned economic system with central controls was adopted.

Between 1949-1978, the socialist state of the People's Republic of China relied on a centralized, top-down bureaucracy, in which the central state or the national level was the primary scale of decision-making (Cartier, 2005, p. 22). Local governments were seen as simply administrative units of the central government. They had to follow orders from the central state (Wu, Xu, & Yeah, 2007, p. 120). Based on the ideology and political promise that all land was common property, urban land in China had been nationalized in 1949. During the Mao era (from 1949 to 1987), land was publicly owned, and nominally worthless (Tian & Ma, 2009).

In the 1950s, following the Soviet model, industrialisation based on heavy industries in major Chinese cities was strongly promoted. Urban planning became a method of redistribution of social products for boosting the economy of the country and the industrialization. Since there was no private market at that time, planning served as the basic tool for coordination between the central government and its local forces. Top-down control mechanisms to control the distribution of resources were installed, assisted by the nationalization of land, property and other means of production. Under this system, the use and allocation of resources were determined by central plans (Zhu, 2000). A centralized planning system, characterized by strong vertical integration and the pre-eminence of state economic plans was rolled out by the central government to realise their aspiration to build a successful socialist country.

The economy was governed by five-year national economic plans. These plans, prepared by armies of technocrats and stamped by the state supreme legislative bodies, were the tip of a neatly hierarchical system of hundreds of small-scale industrial plans, which translated the national economic goals into objectives and strategies for every republic, region, county, city, town, and factory...although the five-year plans were not spatial plans per se, they directly influenced the spatial

organization and distribution of state resources at all levels, from national to local... (Hirt & Stanilov, 2009, p. 32).

Urban planning was considered as extension of the national planned economy, evident in the policy, 'construction of key cities in co-ordination with the national economic development programme', promulgated at a conference on urban development held in 1952 by the Central Finance and Economic Commission. At the same conference the policy, 'establishment of an urban planning structure to strengthen city development', showed that urban planning was actually the implementation of the planned system in its spatial aspect. By the end of 1959, project plans or master plans had been prepared for 180 cities, 1400 towns and over 2000 suburban residential settlements (Song, 1985).

In 1952, the Architecture Department of Tongji University established the first urban planning undergraduate degree in China (the major was called 'Urban Construction and Management' in keeping with the urban planning programmes established in the Soviet Union in 1952; the name was changed to 'Urban Planning' in 1955). At that time, urban planning education began to imitate the Soviet Union instead of Europe and the US. The first general-purpose urban planning text book for colleges and universities after 1949, *Town and Country Planning*, was published in 1961, the content of which was strongly characterized by an emphasis on engineering issues which was a consequence of Soviet influence. Because of the Cold War between the west and the Communist block, modern urban planning in western countries was seldom mentioned.

National interest was seen as the public interest at that time, under the cover of the 'All for people' slogan. The government, acting on the national interest, carried out urban planning in the public interest. The basis instrument of local, urban planning was the Master Plan, which usually covered a 20-year time span. Local planning was just a mechanism for the physical implementation of state goals and followed strict, state-mandated formulae for industry, housing, green space and services calculated per person. The Local Master Plans outlined the major local infrastructure projects in compliance with the priorities set by the powerful central state agencies. The local system was subordinated to the state system.

The system was highly centralized. Since the state had a near-monopoly over land and production means, Communist central planners had new industrial facilities. Viewing territorial conquest as a sign of communism's triumph, a 'big-is-beautiful' mentality was appropriate. This was often on display in urban plans. For example, monumental public spaces and buildings made of concrete forms were greatly used in physical planning.

Local, urban planning was strictly subordinate to the national economic plans and the chief role of the local planners was to act as technical translators of the state-level objectives into the physical layout of their cities (Hirt & Stanilov, 2009, p. 34). Local states had little autonomy. 'The central officers collected revenues generated from localities and relocated to local governments according to the central plan' (Zhu, 2000, p. 182). Local initiatives were suppressed because of a lack of sufficient revenues. 'Local party chiefs were given clear incentives to fulfil the central plans: advancement to higher rungs of the political ladder in their career path' (Zhu, 2000, p. 182). Local forecasts had to comply strictly with the economic objectives and projections adopted at the national level, as well as with the national planning and building norms. The ability of local authorities to challenge decisions made at higher government levels was limited.



Socialist planning was assumed to build up a new pattern for the city, which was emphasized through formal street patterns and grand designs for public buildings and monuments. Urban planning became a method of redistributing social products to develop the economy of the country and the industrialization. Planning knowledge emphasised physical reconstruction on a large scale and reorganizing the urban environment.

It was believed that there should be no distinction or structural division among the various parts of the city (Koshizawa, 1978). The quality of residential areas and their social composition should be the same everywhere.

Ideally, no part of the city should attract or repel certain classes. From the operational perspective, standardization and access to public facilities have to be stressed and secured in Socialist planning. Uniform matchbox-like apartments (3-4 storeys), public facilities and services should be provided for all residents. Citizens have an equal right to cheap facilities (eg low rent, low utility costs, free access or low cost for use of public recreation/parks, and cheap public transportation) (Xie & Costa, 1993, p. 105).

On the one hand, this rule brings ‘the Maoist tenet [of] relatively balanced development – a balance between city and country, industry and agriculture, efficiency and equity’ (Banerjee & Schenk, 1984, p. 488); on the other hand, this rule destroys the uniqueness of cities, as almost all the cities were built up in a similar way.

The political ideology of eradicating the ‘three great contradictions’, the difference between workers and peasants, city and countryside, and manual and mental labour, was contained in the urban construction principle called ‘Three Services’, which was formulated at the First National Conference on Urban Development in 1954. The services were to serve proletarian politics, to serve socialist production, and to serve the livelihood of the labouring masses.

In this statement of principle, the communist party was defined as the champion of social justice, planning as an arm of the Party-state, was assumed to advance the public good and follow the principles of social justice. Urban planning should serve the overall interest of the entire society in its economics, political, and cultural aspects. The idea that ‘urban planning is a process’ rather than a blueprint was ignored (Huang et al., 2007).

There was a belief in rational, scientific planning knowledge, that such planning would guarantee the equitable and efficient distribution of resources between the nation and its different agencies. Planners from the central state designated land for nature protection and produced intricate sets of spatial planning and building construction standards. These standards covered a broad array of matters, from minimum residential and green space allotted per person to types of plumbing fixtures required in housing projects, and acted as normative framework with which local plans had to comply. ‘Communist planners presume that the socialist urban setting is superior to that of the bourgeois or middle class in all aspects, thus producing a better physical and spiritual environment for urban man and a better human being as a result for that environment.’ (Xie & Costa, 1993, p. 103)

This led to several problems in planning: firstly, the system was so expert-driven and rigidly hierarchic that it left little room for citizen participation.

Citizen participation was never part of the planning process during communism. As already noted, national and regional goals were conceived by political elites which,

as communist theory claimed, represented the interests of all citizens. The political goals were then translated into urban spatial projects by trained experts-architects, planners and engineers- who claimed privileged understanding of their subject (Hirt & Stanilov, 2009, p. 52).

Secondly, the discrepancies between plans and their implementation were sometimes very obvious, yet they were almost never officially acknowledged. There was a lack of monitoring and evaluation. The achievement of legitimacy in eyes of the public seemed more important than anything else, since the Communist government came into power mainly because of the support from the majority, who were agrarian people. We can call this ‘ideological legitimation’ (Chen F. , 1995, p. 18), which emphasised certain high moral and normative principles that tended to link urban planning to ideology. Urban planning had the function of a discourse which placed emphasis merely on the long term and the macro level. It was quite common for General Plans to cover periods of 20-30 years even if they were required to do five-year reviews.

The objective assessment of stated goals was not a strong element of communist planning, which was dominantly by strict ideological imperatives. Little concern was given to how suited the plans were to meet actual local needs or how well they managed to achieve their objectives. Admitting failure was never an option; in fact, until their very last days communist regimes continued to produce reports glorifying their achievements (Hirt & Stanilov, 2009, p. 106).

Thirdly, ‘economic and physical planning were not fully integrated in the sense that there was little meaningful negotiation between the economic planners (who operate mostly at the national level); in fact, the former group held virtually all the power.’ (Hirt & Stanilov, 2009, p. 34)

Whereas the pre-modern planner had being 'the knower' as their primary function, the role of the planner in the Communist state was as 'the socialist technician'. Key representatives of architect-planner were given important official posts as spokesmen for the government. However, their professional expertise served mainly to give the legitimacy to the decisions of planning from the central government. The individual participation of architect-planners in many aspects of spatial planning was limited.

From 1958 to 1976, there were restless political campaigns introduced by the government such as the Great Leap Forward (1958-1959), Readjustment of Policies (1961-1965) and the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976). After the Great Leap Forward, urban planning was blamed for the problems which had arisen, and it was abandoned for three years following the National Economic Planning Meeting in 1960. Planning bureaus were closed down and planners were sent to the countryside to work on farmland. Western planning concepts were totally prohibited while Soviet planning rules were criticized, and buildings were erected randomly in cities. Planners, as intellectuals who had never been quite trusted by Mao, were condemned by ultra-Leftists with great contempt as the people of the 'stinking ninth class' (*chou lao jiu*) (Ma, 2009, p. vi). During the time of the Cultural Revolution, urban planning and its education was paid no attention.

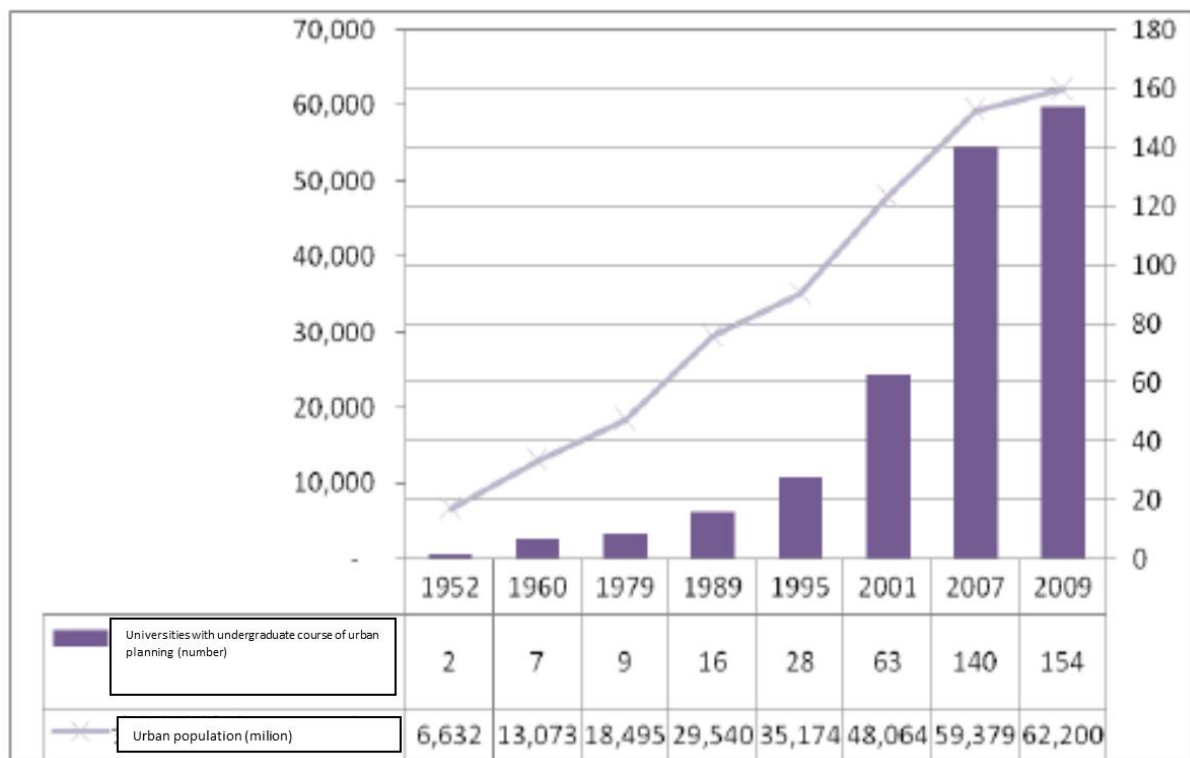
## **5.2 The role of Chinese planners nowadays**

With the implementation of economic reform and the open-up policy, urban construction has resumed and led to rapid urbanization. The significance of urban planning has been rediscovered after the suspension of almost two decades.

## 5.2.1 Planning education

### *Planning education in face of transition*

After its foundation in 1949 and the three-year economic recovery which followed, China entered a period of large-scale construction. Increased industrialization demanded the skills of urban planners. The first urban planning major was established in 1952, in the Architecture Department of Tongji University. The course was called, ‘Urban Construction and Management’ (the name was changed to ‘Urban Planning’ in 1955), and followed the pattern set by the urban planning programmes established in the Soviet Union in 1952 (Zhou & Qiu, 2009).



**Figure 8** The growing numbers of universities with undergraduate course of urban planning (Hou & Xu, 2011, p. 9414)

The pace of rapid urbanization in China greatly increased in the years following the introduction of economic reforms in 1978, so education in urban planning had to develop quickly. To meet this increased need for urban planning, the number of Chinese urban

planning schools has increased from just six in the early 1980s to more than 270 in 2010 (Zhou & Qiu, 2009).

Before 2000, graduations in urban planning were fewer than 1000 and there were fewer than 100 postgraduate each year. By 2010, undergraduate courses in urban planning produced more than 6000 graduates, and there were more than 1000 postgraduates each year. The expansion of planning organizations nationally was so great that they complained that they cannot recruit graduates from key universities, so we can anticipate that there will be more and more urban planning students in future.

Urban planning has become an independent subject in education. In 2011, the subject of urban planning was changed from being a branch of architecture to an independent first-level subject by *Ministry of Education and Academic Degree Commission of the State Council*. Architecture, urban planning and landscape architecture were all now included as first-level subjects in Chinese education. Six research directions were included in urban planning: regional planning and development, urban planning, rural planning and design, community development and housing construction planning, the history of urban and rural planning development and heritage preservation planning and urban planning management.

In planning schools, planners are trained to ‘think like a profession’, Planning education in China is delivered through the following disciplinary backgrounds: architecture, represented by Tongji University, Tsinghua University, Chongqing University and Southeast University; economic geography, represented by Nanjing University, Peking University and Sun Yat-sen University; landscape and forestry, represented by Nanjing Forestry University and Beijing Forestry University; engineering and mapping, represented by Wuhan University and Central South University. In the four disciplines of

urban planning education offered by Chinese universities, urban planning rooted in architecture still accounts for more than 50% of the total. This is because it has a long pedagogic history and a complete curriculum setting. Before the mid-1980s, urban planning was just a course in architecture schools. Many planners at that time were recruited from architecture schools and urban planning was not seen as an independent discipline.

***The supervision and evaluation of urban planning education***

Planning education is under the control of the central state (Figure 9). The Consultant Committee of Urban Planning Discipline, affiliated to the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development, is in charge of formulating the pedagogic scheme for undergraduate education in urban planning, articulating the unified regulations and requirements in the aspect of education, the qualification of graduates, and the setting of curriculum. An annual conference is held to exchange ideas in planning education.

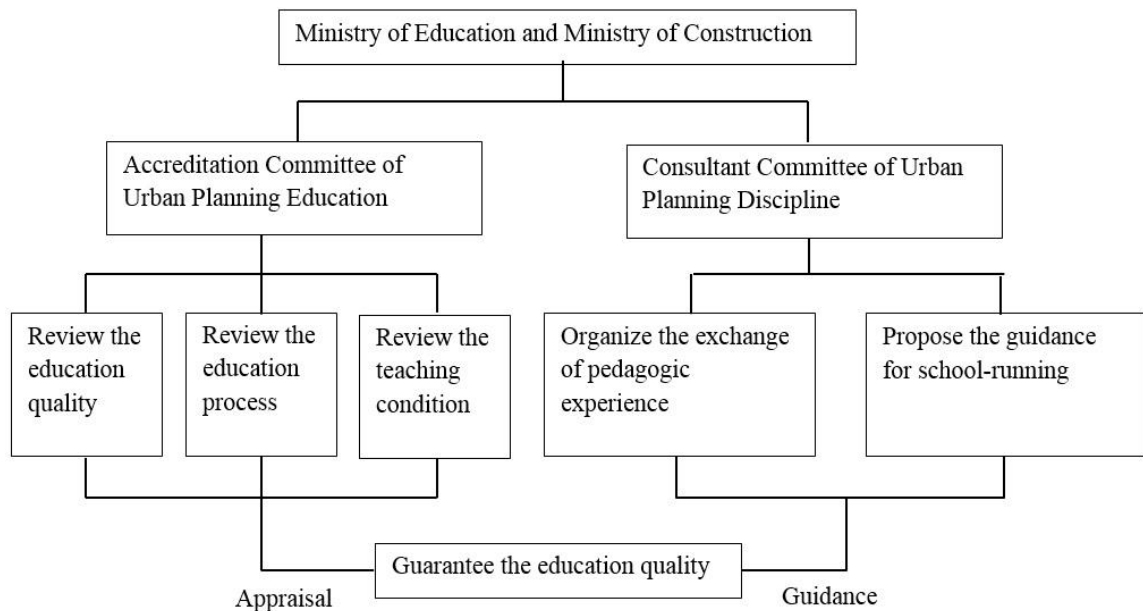


Figure 9 Guarantee mechanism of urban planning quality (Zhao & Lin, 2009, p.66)

There is also a supervision system in urban planning education. The Accreditation Committee of Urban Planning Education, authorized by the Ministries of Education and the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development, takes charge of organizing and implementing urban planning education accreditation in universities under the guidance of the Urban Planning Society of China. The Accreditation Committee is usually composed of 15 to 17 members, including officials from the governmental authority, representatives of the Urban Planning Society of China, experts in urban planning education, and senior planners (Zhou & Qiu, 2009).

Accreditation in urban planning education is also under government control. The accreditation results are classified into four categories, that is passing the accreditation with a validity of six years, passing the accreditation with a validity of four years, passing the accreditation at a basic level with a validity of four years with conditions imposed, and failing the accreditation. Universities that fail the accreditation can only apply for another accreditation after waiting four years. Graduates in urban planning who get a bachelor's degree in an accredited university can attend the Professional Qualification Exam for Registered Urban Planner one year ahead of the stipulated time, that is, they can attend the exam after they have worked in the field of urban planning for three years (Zhou & Qiu, 2009). We can see that in China, urban planning accreditation focuses on the examination and assessment of education quality, education process and teaching conditions (Figure 10).



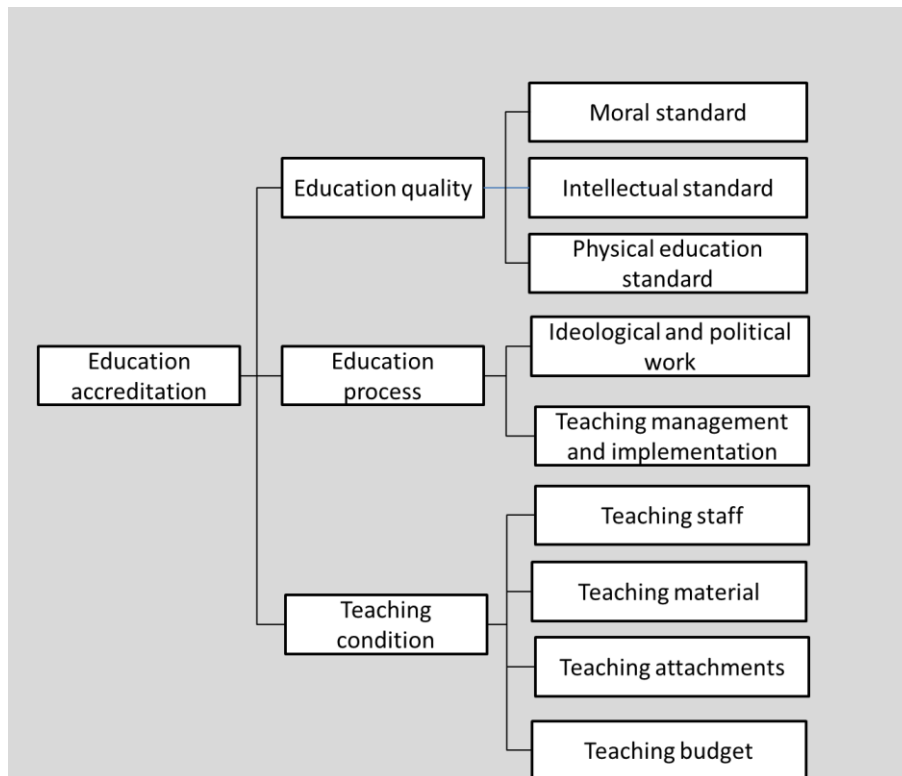


Figure 10 The index and system of education accreditation of the subject of urban planning (Hou & Xu, 2011)

### ***The deficiencies of planning education***

While the number of planning universities has grown rapidly, it seems that the overall teaching quality has not kept pace. (Zhou & Qiu, 2009). The increase in the number of programmes in urban planning education is appropriate for the demands of the expansion of the market for planning, but many universities, while keen to initiate planning programmes or expand their enrolment, cannot guarantee the quality of the instruction. This needs to be appropriate for the overall expansion in undergraduate enrolment in China. The Ministry of Education of China stipulates that the appropriate teacher-student ratio should be 1 to 7 in the undergraduate urban planning programmes, but it is hard for most of the planning universities to achieve this standard (Zhou & Qiu, 2009). Of around 200 universities with a major in urban planning, only 25 undergraduate courses and 12 postgraduate courses passed the accreditation in 2010. This is less than 10%, and most

universities are far from the national standard. Over half of the universities first offered the major less than 10 years ago (Zhou & Qiu, 2009).

The quality of urban planning education has had a problem with 'close breeding'. (Hou & Xu, 2011). The first five universities to establish Departments of Urban Planning were the Universities of Tongji, Tsinghua, Dongnan, Tianjin and Chongqing, all in schools of architecture. These five schools passed the accreditation established jointly by the Ministries of Construction and Education in 1998, so faculty members in all the other urban planning schools in China are overwhelmingly graduates of the five universities, whose approach and curricula has therefore influenced the newer schools. It has been quite popular for most of the 'old-brand' planning universities to employ their own graduates, exacerbating the problem of fixed patterns of pedagogical thought and methodology. For instance, in planning universities like Tongji and Tsinghua, about 70-80% of the mainstay teachers received bachelor's, master's and even doctoral degrees in planning from their own universities, a phenomenon which contributes to the long-term 'fixed patterns' (Zhou & Qiu, 2009). The high speed of the increase in scale of planning education has encouraged this 'close breeding', which has led to a lack of diversity in faculty members' academic backgrounds. The teaching methods of many urban planning universities have also been rigid, though this is a problem across the whole spectrum of China's educational system rather than a direct consequence of the rapid growth in planning in particular (Hou & Xu, 2011).

There are similar educational practices and lack of diversity in the other planning universities. The Chinese planning education is still derived from architecture and engineering, focused on the methodologies and subjective design ideas of the physical environment, and with only minimal influence from the social sciences. These architecture-based and physical-planning-oriented planning programmes dominate the

current planning education system, focusing on the prevention of urban sprawl, the control of land use intensity, the design of urban skylines, the enhancement of aesthetics through urban design, and the layout of green spaces and so on.

The role of urban planning in solving social problems and balancing interests and contradictions, which is popular in western countries, is not evident in Chinese planning education (Tan, 2009). Because of the lack of guidance for different planning specialities, this kind of programme is widely used in planning universities. Education in urban planning in the universities has focused on planning for growth (Zou, 2013), but it is increasingly difficult to meet new needs, including negotiation and communication skills and knowledge of policy making.

### **5.2.2 Urban planning qualification system for registered urban planners**

#### ***The National Practice Qualification Exam<sup>14</sup>***

The urban planning qualification system was stipulated by the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development, abbreviated as MOHURD) of the central government and officially launched in 2000. MOHURD established in January 2000 the ‘National Administration Board of Professional Planner System’ (Abbreviated as NABPPS). Led by the Qualification System Leadership Team of MOHURD, NABPPS is composed of more than 20 members including officials from MOHURD and the Ministry of Personnel, as well as representatives from the local planning administration departments, urban planning and design institutes, universities that provide urban planning education, and urban planning research and development (R&D) institutes.

They organize the *National Practice Qualification Exam for Registered Urban Planner*.

The exam has a uniform outline, uniform proposition and uniform organization

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<sup>14</sup> The text in this section has been taken from *Ten years progress of administration work for registered urban planners* (Ren, 2011), which reflects the official perspective of MOHURD

throughout China. Participants who pass can obtain the *Practice Qualification Certificate for Registered Urban Planners of the People's Republic of China*.

The principles of the exam content comply with state policies and industrial development needs:

The proposition design highlighted the testing of the examinees' understanding of planning related policies, laws, and regulations, as well as their proficiency in professional and relevant knowledge. In particular, the resting of subject with subjective questions tested the practical ability of the examinee, which helped the registered urban planners to really adapt themselves to the development needs of the urban planning industry (Ren, 2011, p. 67).

It is stated that all the practitioners of urban planning who have a degree in urban planning and worked in the professional field for a certain period of time can enter for the qualification exam. The exam includes tests on the following four subjects:

- i. Principles of Urban Planning, which concerns urban development and planning theory, land-use and spatial layout, and urban plan compilation and implementation;
- ii. Administration and Legislation of Urban Planning, which concerns fundamental knowledge of urban planning administration, professional knowledge of urban planning legislation and policy-making, and relevant knowledge of work ethics;
- iii. Other Knowledge Relevant to Urban Planning, which concerns the fields of architecture, road engineering, civil and public utility, information technology, urban economy, urban sociology, and urban ecology and environment;

- iv. Practice of Urban Planning, which concerns practical work such as formulating planning schemes, examining planning and design proposals, drafting planning documents, disposing administration cases, checking and accepting completed projects, and investigating and handling illegal constructions.

***Continuing education for registered urban planners<sup>15</sup>***

NABPPS has formulated and promulgated *Measures for the Implementation of Continuing Education for Registered Urban Planners* and the *Opinions on the Implementation of Administration over Continuing Education Training Institutions of Registered Urban Planners*. The continuing education of registered urban planners is aimed at helping them adapt to the needs of the urban planning development, know on a timely basis the developments in domestic and overseas urban planning practice in terms of compilation and design, technical management, and so on, and continuously updating their knowledge and skills. The Measures stipulate that the time which registered urban planners spend attending continuing education should add up to no less than 40 class hours every year, and no less than 120 class hours for the three years of the period of validity of their registration. All planning practitioners that have passed the registration or postponed the registration application have to participate in continuing education and complete the stipulated number of class hours.

RUPAO organized and compiled the *Scientific View of Development and Urban Planners*, the first set of teaching materials for continuing education. RUPAO also designed and made the *Registration Manual for Continuing Education of Registered Urban Planners*, which provided guidance for registrants. Aiming at training teachers and improving the teaching quality of all the special subjects of the compulsory courses, RUPAO organized

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<sup>15</sup> The text in this section has been taken from *Ten years progress of administration work for registered urban planners* (Ren, 2011), which reflects the official perspective of MOHURD

training classes for the teachers in charge of the compulsory courses, which have laid a solid foundation for the implementation of continuing education training all over China.

In order to implement the *Urban and Rural Planning Law of the People's Republic of China* and carry out continuing education for registered urban planners, RUPAO has actively supported and cooperated with the Urban Planning Society of China, the China Association of City Planning, and the training institution of the Registration Centre to conduct lectures and training sessions related to new policies and new techniques of urban and rural planning, taken as part of the class hours of the elective courses. This has helped the continuing education of registered urban planners to disseminate and update new knowledge.

As we can see, in China, the urban planning qualification system is administered by the central government. The knowledge system is mainly scientific-oriented, and the updating of planning knowledge is carried out through continuing education for registered urban planners.

### **5.2.3 Planners from different organizations**

The official requirement of urban planners is that those who are engaged in urban planning field pass *The National Practice Qualification Exam*, obtain *Practice Qualification Certificate for Registered Urban Planners of the People's Republic of China* and get registered in *China Association of City Planning*.

Individual planners can become registered planners by passing registration exams. In the Chinese planning system, individual planners are not permitted to provide planning services. Only after they join a qualified planning organizations can they so. Planning organizations need to get qualifications which specify limitations on their activities in

planing from MOHURD. The requirement includes numbers of registered planners and other professionals.

However, in the first stage of interviews conducted for this research, it became clear that planners do not really need a certificate to work in planning organizations. Generally urban planners work in three types of planning organizations in China and all of them are supposed to obey public policies related to urban planning. Firstly, planners work for the planning departments of city governments, for example, XX Municipal Commission of urban planning. In this position, planners belong to the official Chinese administration system and they are civil servants. They are involved both in coordinating and supervising the formulation of urban land use plans for their cities. They also have the power to regulate urban development and they issue some of the permits developers need to proceed with construction. They have to present their ideas on specific land use matters to their senior local government leaders. They must obey instructions from the central government. They must obey instructions within the scope of the Chinese administration system, such as *Regulation Issued to Punish Wayward Civil Servants (2007)*.

Take planners who work in the bureau which regulates detailed planning (Interview No.23, 24, 25). The bureau deals with various interest groups including district governments, district land coordination and reserve centres, developers and land owners. When there is an application for a change of urban planning index, such as floor area ratio, they need to organize a meeting to discuss it with different departments of local government related to urban planning. If the application passes, the planners organize a public announcement. Some local residents give comments of tens of pages and there have been cases of residents who have written letters with their own blood in some extreme cases. Usually, when local residents submit a joint letter, they put their fingerprints on them.

There are two forms of public announcement: firstly, public announcements on site. Several announcements are put around the site where changes will be made, saying what the changes are, the exact floor area ratio, building height and so on. The building programme is attached if there is one. The email address and telephone number of the planning department is also on this announcement. Secondly, announcements are made on the website of the municipal commission of planning, where there is a section called public engagement. Planners post the names of planning projects, a brief description and planning indexes there. Local residents can give feedback online. 30 days after the public announcement, planners begin to deal with the feedback from local residents.

When planners receive the feedback of local residents, they deal with it first by establishing its validity according to a principle of admissibility. When feedback is reasonable, they ask the developers to solve the problems raised by local residents. For example, if a new building blocks the light of other buildings, planners ask the developers to redesign according to the national norms or standards, so the feedback will go back to the developers. Planners reject the feedback they do not consider reasonable, such as affairs between local residents and developers. Planners need to record all feedback from local residents, the developer's response and the comments of the municipal planning commission. Finally, the planners are required to put all these communications on line.

Secondly, some planners work for private companies, like for example, Beijing XX Urban Planning Limited Liability Company. They mostly provide consultation on urban design or the technology aspect of urban planning. Their clients are mainly developers in real estate companies. Their planning task is mainly focused on urban design, regeneration and so on, taking on projects such as planning consultations and urban design. They do not have the legal right to formulate statutory urban plans. In this research, they have not been selected as the focus group, because the scale of their work



is relatedly small and the influence they have in urban planning is relatively small compared with the other two types of planners.

Finally, some planners work in nonlocal planning institutes based in China's major cities such as Beijing and Shanghai, where they are known as the XX Academy of Urban Planning & Design. Planners from these qualified planning institutes can be employed by local governments from any part of China, because according to the law, '*Organs organizing the establishment of urban and rural planning shall authorize entities with corresponding qualification grades to undertake the specific establishment work...*' (Article 24, Urban and Rural Planning Law, 2007). Planners' tasks include formulating urban plans, including the statutory City Comprehensive Plan, statutory Regulatory Detailed Plan and non-statutory plans such as urban development strategic plans. Their clients are usually local government officials and sometimes developers in real estate companies. They must follow instructions within the scope of policies related to planning institutes, such as *The convention of self-discipline in national formulation urban planning institutes*.

Their general working procedure in the plan making process is shown in Figure 11. In their work they mainly deal with local government officials, experts in urban planning. They first formulate draft urban plans and then submit them to a review committee which consists of representatives of different departments of local governments and experts in the field of urban planning. Then planners make modifications to respond to feedback from the review committee, after which the final plans are made.

Quite a few planners noted that most evaluation is carried out internally, within the planning institutes, municipality, and higher levels of planning departments. There is little involvement from external evaluators such as community groups. Internal staff are

composed of academic experts, officials and professional planners. In this process, from the point of view of the planners, the experts speak for the public and are supposed to represent fairness in resource allocation from a professionally neutral perspective. In reality, the opinions of the experts are probably/usually shaped by the ideas of local government officials (Interview No.1, 3, 5). The evaluation of planning is not popular amongst Chinese planners, who make more effort on their plan preparation, spending less effort on their evaluation. Planners are usually unsure about the effectiveness, efficiency and impact of the plans they are involved in. They rarely interact with local residents in the process of plan formulation, because ‘there is not a habit to ask the opinions of the public in the plan formulation process in our planning institute’ (Interview No.1, 16 August, 2013).

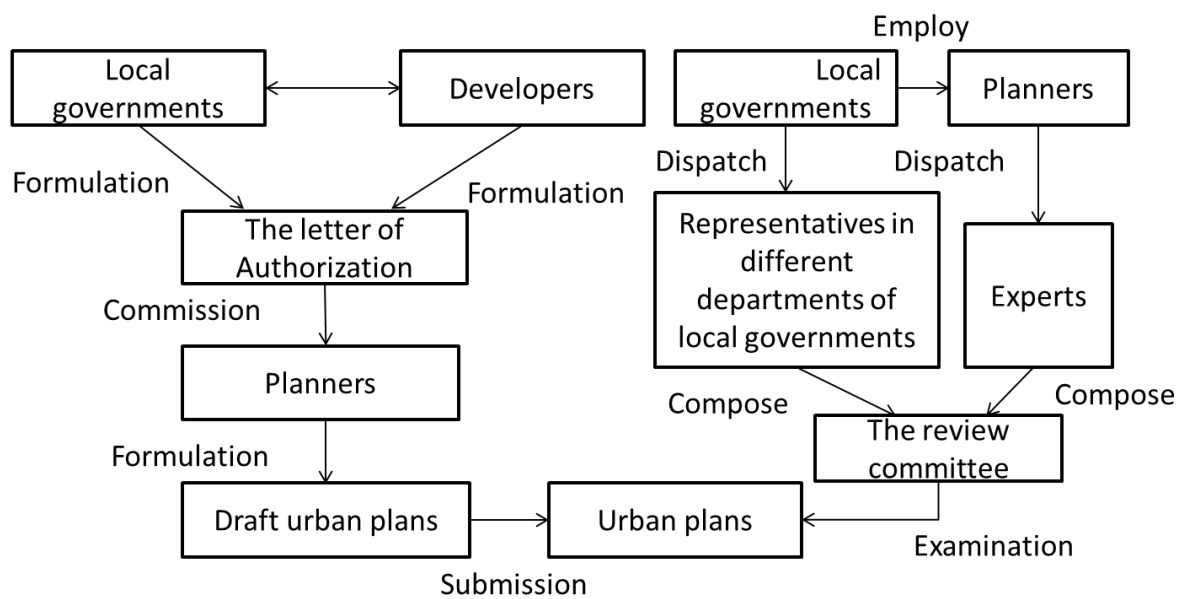


Figure 11 The routine process of plan formulation (organized from the interviews by the author)

For this research, planners working in nonlocal planning institutes were chosen as interviewees, firstly because it was easier to get access to them for interviews; secondly, compared with planners working in private companies, they formulate urban plans mainly

with municipal governments, so they have greater experience and perspective in relation to transitions and traditions in urban planning than other groups of planners; thirdly, unlike planners working in the planning departments of city governments, they are independent of the Chinese political administrative system. Because they have no power to make decisions, their role expectations and planning knowledge in practice is important in reflecting the real situation of professionals in contemporary China.

#### **5.2.4 Organizational expectations of roles of planners**

The organizational expectations of the role of planners are that they should be ‘law-defenders’, ‘scientific technicians’ and a ‘representative of the poor’.

In their role as law-defender, planners are supposed to learn laws and regulations very thoroughly and use them in planning practice. In the tests for professional qualification, there is a subject of Administration and Legislation of Urban Planning. When there are conflicts between the requirements of their clients and the law, they should obey the law, not their client's requirements.

Planners should maintain the legal concept of urban planning. The bottom line of the role of planners should be [as] defenders of planning law. Planners should formulate urban plans within the disciplines under law, science and democracy, and they should strictly obey relevant laws, regulations and technical specifications (Chen, 2010 16; Urban Planning Formulation Organizations’ Self-Disciplinary Convention, 2007).

In their role of scientific technician, planners should have sufficient professional knowledge; they should also have the capability to give scientific justifications to their practice, like their methodologies, their logic in formulating urban plans.

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<sup>16</sup> The orientation of CAUPD (China Academy of Urban Planning & Design), Chen (2010)

The professional codes of planners should cope with the ideology of ‘scientific development’: When formulating urban plans, planners should balance development between urban and rural areas; balance development between economics and society; balance development in different regions; balance development between humans and nature. Planners should respect the nature, history and local culture, the interest of local residents; rules of economic and social development. Planners should preserve historical cultural heritage (Chen, 2010).

In the tests of professional qualification, there is a subject of Principles of Urban Planning, which concerns urban development and planning theory, land-use and spatial layout, and urban plan compilation and implementation.

As representatives of the poor, ‘Planners should safeguard public interest, especially respect and safeguard disadvantaged groups and the masses, with the methodology of public engagement.’ (Chen, 2010) They are supposed to focus on the opinions of local residents and vulnerable groups, so that those who had previously been unrepresented would now be represented by planners. They should be willing to go to poor neighborhoods, find out what those folks wanted, and bring that back to the table in the planning office. This role does not receive enough attention in the test of professional qualification, as the relevant subject concerns only the practical work such as formulating planning schemes, examining planning and design proposals, drafting planning documents, disposing administration cases, checking and accepting completed projects, and investigating and handling illegal constructions.

## **Summary**

This chapter has provided a review from traditional to current perspective before looking at what planners actually do. The planning tradition of ‘keeping uniformity with the

central power’, ‘lack of scientific spirit’ and ‘setting the world in order and see chaos as an evil’ over time. Nowadays, with planning education and professional licensure totally under the control of the central government, it is claimed that planning knowledge taught in planning schools does not meet the planning knowledge needed in practice, which is supposed to meet the organizational expectations of roles of planners as ‘law-defender’, ‘scientific technician’ and ‘representative of the poor’.

In following chapters, planning knowledge and role expectations of planners in practice will be introduced, beginning with new rules brought by the transition and old rules from tradition. In the next chapter, ‘rule of law’ ‘GDP-oriented urban growth’ ‘making professional judgements’ and ‘getting the public voice involved’ will be examined to explore areas of transition. ‘Keeping uniformity with the central power’, ‘giving legitimacy to local authorities’ and ‘setting the world in order’ will also be examined to see what happen to the old rules.

## **Chapter 6 Rules of appropriateness in planning knowledge**

### **Preamble**

This chapter reviews the context of planners operating within the transition from old to new knowledges. New rules of appropriateness have been applied: ‘rule of law’, ‘GDP-oriented urban growth’, ‘making professional judgement’ and ‘getting public voice involved’; they have been brought to attention by decentralization and marketization. It also introduces contexts in which traditional rules of appropriateness from socialist and sometimes ancient times still persists: ‘keeping uniformity with central power’, ‘giving legitimacy to local authorities’ and ‘setting the world in order’.

### **6.1 New rules of appropriateness**

#### **6.1.1 Rule of law**

The Economic Reform in China gave opportunity to urban development. The Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party held in December 1978 initiated a series of economic reforms in China and opened China to the global economy. The transition brought new applications of the concept of appropriateness to urban planning in China. A legal system was created to manage the process of urban development by the central government. The statutory planning system officially started in the late 1980s. The first planning norms ‘City Planning Ordinance’ were issued by the Chinese State Council in 1984. In 1989, the People’s congress passed the Urban Planning Law.<sup>17</sup> The Act set up the statutory status of urban planning for the first time and granted local governments to enforce development control over its territory.

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<sup>17</sup> Urban Planning Law or City Planning Law. Adopted at the 11th Meeting of the Standing Committee of the Seventh National People’s Congress on December 26, 1989, promulgated by Order No. 23 of the President of the People’s Republic of China on December 26, 1989, and effective as of April 1, 1990, at <http://www.china.org.cn/english/environment/34354.htm>.

Before the adoption of development control, urban planning existed largely to assist economic planning in assigning space for development projects. In the socialist period, the master plan was only a guideline, without the power of legal enforcement. Individual state work-units and enterprises managed their own land, and could only be persuaded to follow the master plan. After the City Planning Act, all development projects were required to conform to the master plan. For example, the number, location and character of grants and allocations of construction lands were fixed in relation to city development plans, according to the Land Management Law, first drafted in 1986 and then revised in 1998. Municipal governments had the power to make urban development plans, and this legal status brought concern for appropriateness into the effective implementation of urban planning. Urban planning became a crucial instrument in guiding the national development of construction.

The Urban Planning Law 1989 initiated a statutory planning system in China: institutionally, urban planning had been assigned a more important position in the administrative hierarchy. 'Cities and towns shall work out city planning and town planning in accordance with this Law. Construction activities within a city or town planning area shall be conducted in accordance with the planning requirements.' The law empowers urban planning through assertions like these. According to the article, any action must obey urban planning regulations when it is related to construction activities within a city or town planning area, so any construction which disregards urban planning controls is not only a challenge to the planning authority, but also illegal. The development control mechanism consisted of 'one report and two permits'. Decisions followed discretionary judgment of the development in relation to the urban plan. The planning department of the local government was responsible for preparing a site selection report for each development proposal, and a land use planning permit and

building permit were required for all projects before they could be built. The land use permit was a formal document to prove that planning permission had been granted. Since the enactment of the Land Administration Act in 1986, the land authority has been responsible for issuing land certificates (of ownership). For new acquisitions, the developer has had to seek planning permission. Building permits were needed for all construction, including the building of roads and other engineering works.

A decade after the economic reform had been launched, the planning system was formalized, giving comprehensive planning power to local governments to manage their cities. National and professional planning norms and standards were formulated and published at the same time as a guidance and reference for plan preparation and approval. They included 'Regulations for Urban Plan's formulation' 'City Planning and Environmental Protection Acts' 'National Standards of Urban Land Use Classifications and Planning Standards' (National Standard Number GVB137), 'City Residential Area Design Norms', 'City Road's Design and Transport Planning Norms', and others. Corresponding plans were made in all cities and most towns and villages to guide and coordinate land use and construction activities.

Changes were made in the 2007 Urban and Rural Planning Law. These included statements that urban plans should not be changed according to personal or sectional interests; that public engagement should be involved in the planning process; and it says that planning institutions who make urban plans must share responsibility for urban plans with planning departments in the government who have legal responsibility for them, (Article 62, Urban and Rural Planning Law, 2007).

Because the economy was now market-led in comparison with the preceding period, city plans and implementation proposals have to be produced in a climate of greater



uncertainty, conflict and competition, making the task of urban planning more important. Urban plans become more complex, for example by including 'regulatory detailed plan, constructive detailed plan, or sub-plan for special topics' (Interview No.4 Ma He, 7th, August, 2014). 'Government policies both in national and provincial level' (Interview No.4 Ma He, 7th, August, 2014) are published. More urban problems are emerging and related policies and research are increasing in number in response. The changes in the status of the profession of urban planning have redefined the knowledge required for urban planning and its scope. In socialist times, urban planning was seen as merely assisting economic plans in distributing space for development projects. The role of planners then was to be 'scientific technicians' who arranged the layout of space according to economic plans or commands from party cadres. After the Urban and Rural Planning Law, planners needed to formulate urban plans according to laws and all development projects which had to conform to the master plan. According to the Urban and Rural Planning Law (Article 3, 2007), 'Cities and towns shall work out city planning and town planning in accordance with this Law. Construction activities within a city or town planning area shall be conducted in accordance with the planning requirements'.

Given the appropriateness of the 'rule of law', because such a rule is in the best interests of society as a whole, planners are supposed to learn laws and regulations very well and have the capacity to use them in planning practice'. This knowledge gives planners legitimacy and authority. When planners receive the commission of planning tasks from their clients, they need to define their specific in accordance with laws and regulations related to urban planning. When it comes to conflicts between their clients and planning laws and regulations, it is appropriate for planners to obey the law instead of other requirements.

### **6.1.2 GDP-oriented urban growth**

The 1978 plenary conference required local governments to prepare master plans and detailed construction plans based on the national economic development plans. In 1980, an Urban Planning Conference was held by the State Planning Commission, when it was made clear that the mayors of municipalities should supervise the planning, construction and management of urban developments. The handing of state power to local government gave them the responsibility for local prosperity. Local government acquired the power to make development plans for urban areas and planners from qualified planning institutes were employed to formulate development plans.

To introduce the unknown 'market' economic mechanism, something which had never been addressed by the socialist regime, the central government created the idea of an experimental base (*Shi-Dian*). Cities played an important role in these experiments with 'the market'. A Special Economic Zone was established to attract foreign capital. By incorporating new approaches into urban development, these cities were seen as pioneers of economic reform and centres of modernization. With the economic success of cities in the Special Economic Zone, a GDP-oriented urban development mode was developed in China. Urban planning became an useful instrument for accomplishing political, social, economic and spatial reform. It was used to lead the allocation of national resources in relation to private investment and urban land became a manifestation of economic accumulation. Learning from the successful experience, other cities accepted this practice of 'GDP-oriented growth'.

The economic reforms have changed the focus of China's development from national equality to economic productivity. Priority is given to economic efficiency rather than social equality and regional coordination has been replaced by regional competition (Zhu, 2004). A GDP-dominated performance evaluation system was created for local

government officials, and land finance has become an important source of income for local government, who coordinate land development projects by soliciting funding from a variety of sources other than state investment. Local government made a great effort to attract investment for major projects.

Now it is land finance nationally. Land is being sold in the East, Middle and West.

When it comes to land sale, the developer is involved. The land sale is linked with finance of the entire city (Interview No.12, 9th December, 2013).

For a local government, the revenue generated out of land development has three parts:

(1) the land conveyance income paid by commercial land users to the state when the rights to use state-owned land are conveyed or granted; (2) tax revenue generated directly from land use and development (e.g. housing property tax, urban land use tax, land value-added tax, cultivated land occupation tax, deeds tax); and (3) tax revenue generated indirectly from land use and development (e.g. corporate tax and income tax paid by the housing and construction industries) (Lin et al., 2014, p. 12).

In socialist times, planners formulated physical plans according to economic plans. Planners used technical knowledge to make the ideas in economic plans come true. Social physical patterns and consideration of the long-term interests of a city for 20 years were required to make a physical plan. Planning knowledge was mainly focused on technical elements: identifying competing relationships through regional analysis; determining functions through short and long term planning in construction areas; determining the concept of the development through the analysis of natural resources and ecological background; planning spatial layout, function area and transportation infrastructure and so on. This planning knowledge was appropriate for the time, because resources were

distributed by the central state and local governments did not need to worry about investments.

This new appropriateness, 'GDP-oriented urban growth', brought changes in planning knowledge which treated economic development as a priority in the plan-making process. As such planning now occurs in the context of growing urban spatial economies, planning decisions now must always be interpreted in relation to market forces to be in accordance with the emphasis on GDP-oriented growth. The creation of new urban environments (for business, housing, shopping recreation, and so forth), and beyond this are meant to bring amenity value which attracts further capital investment. Real estate projects are at the heart of the big push in planning for urban growth, so require planning knowledge of development steps and timing of construction, the concept of packaging and project planning, investment source and development body, management system and operation mode and so on.

In the Chinese administrative system, the term of a mayor is five years. The political achievement of a mayor is largely evaluated in terms of the economic growth they bring to their area. Because there is great pressure on local government officials to develop their economy, its development is seen as the priority in the plan making process, and planning knowledge for economic growth is a focus of the growing urban spatial economies.

In the current stage, China is pursuing economic growth, in the form of GDP. It is required [from the central government] that the GDP should be doubled [in local areas]. Thus politicians in different localities have to achieve [the goal set by the central government], thus they have to pursue 'the land finance', 'the land economy' and so on (Interview No.20, 31st December, 2013).

In this context, a mayor needs advice from planners for the benefit of local development. Planners need to have a knowledge of local government revenue and land prices, so that they can provide consultation to local government for local economic development.

To benefit perceptions of the political achievements of government officials, planning for GDP-oriented urban growth is 'realistic' in practice, and the professional ideas of a planner have to cope with it, even if doing so goes against other principles of planning in law. Urban planning should work out urban plans by the rules of improving ecological environment, enhancing the conservation of resources, maintaining local features and so on (Article 4, Urban and Rural Planning Law, 2007).

Planners' expertise in local development is appropriate to the new planning situation when applied for example to the efficient use of land resources and effective spatial arrangement for land use. Ways of producing the maximum profit in the shortest time have become an accepted criterion for weighing-up the quality of an urban plan. Local governments need to develop their city with local characteristics to attract investment. In contrast to the cellular urban image based on work-unit compounds with comprehensive functions of socialist times, specialization and differentiation was now required in planning knowledge. Large housing estates which are separate from employment centres have been developed. The creation of new urban environments for business, commercial centres, housing and so on was appropriate to attract the growth domestic middle-class consumers. The creation of new urban environment was designed to bring amenity value, which attracted capital investment. Planning knowledge of 'place making' and 'city branding' become appropriate for this urban entrepreneurialism in the Chinese planning system.

A hierarchical planning system achieves efficiency by planning with the most important 'rules of appropriateness' first, and considering other elements later. Prioritizing 'GDP-oriented urban growth' can generate a risk to other aspects of urban planning, such as ecological preservation, living environment of local residents, which are more likely to be ignored in the urban development process.

Government officials at different levels, especially at the level of municipality, want to be clear that regional planning should serve for the benefit of local development. Under this circumstance, when it comes to other aspect of regional planning, such as how to deal with the relationship between development and environment protection, how to balance different interests of different groups of people... (Interview No.20, 31st December, 2013).

So quite a few problems emerge, such as social conflict, environment deterioration and so on.

### **6.1.3 Making professional judgments**

Between 1979 to 1991, the main aim of development in China was the development of the economy, so urban planning institutions were set up by different levels of governments. They took over the making of mandatory plans from government, including urban master plans. Most of them were established as government affiliated institutions fully funded by the government. The organizational system of the planning institutes was formulated in the planned economy period. They became important technological support departments acting on behalf of governments in the 'top-down' system. Their functions of formulation, design and consultation served the requirements of administration required by urban planning management in the period of the planned economy. So far as administrative relationships were concerned, most of the planning institutes belonged to

urban planning management departments, and their functions of formulation, design and consultation were included in the procedures of urban planning management.

With the development of the market economy, some of the planning institutes went into enterprise-oriented operations. Most of the urban planning institutions take on both mandatory plans and market-oriented plans. Between 1992 and 2000, there were development and construction booms in many cities, with investment from foreign countries. Because most of the investments were not from governments, urban planning institutions began to take on projects from the market and their financial mechanisms evolved from fully funded by the government to balance allocation. The publication of Standards of Charge in urban planning showed that the position of urban planning had changed from a governmental function to a technical consultation and service function. They have fewer links with the government though they are sometimes supervised by a government department. Planning institutes have become increasingly independent and planners are becoming a group outside the government administration system. Instead of making judgements from the perspective of government, they have the opportunity to make professional judgements from the perspective of planners.

Under the 2007 Urban and Rural Planning Law, planners have the opportunity to decide which theories and methodologies to apply into the plan-formulation process (Article 10, Urban and Rural Planning Law, 2007). The planners' choice is mainly dependent upon their capacity and professional background. In socialist times, planners had formulated urban plans according to economic plans, but nowadays they have to make their own judgements, for example between the needs of clients and requirements from laws and regulations. Because of the rapid urbanization process, there have been rapid changes in the regulations relating to urban planning, so planners have to make professional judgements according to specific circumstance. Economic Reform opened up China to the

world, creating this opportunity for Chinese planners to learn new ideas and knowledge from foreign countries. Foreign planning theories and experiences have been welcomed for use in China, and modern techniques such as applied mathematics, computer-based mapping or design and remote sensing have been introduced to practice. For example, GIS technology has been used in analysis and evaluation and RS has been adopted in land-use planning.

Since 1978, the open-door policy and economic reform have put China into transition, from a centralized allocative system of state socialism to an open market economy (Leaf, 2005). The rapid urbanization process has generated many projects which rely on land use adjustment rather than building on new land. The land use adjustment has different characteristics because land use rights are dispersed to all land users: government cannot dispose of land at will. Apart from central government and local governments, developers, local residents and local committees have been involved in this process. There are multiple interests in the planning process. By contrast with urban planning in socialist times, when resources were allocated by the central government, planners now have to deal with uncertainty in their work. Because local government lacks experience in dealing with planning for land use adjustment, planners have the chance to communicate and negotiate with people and to discover their different needs. The planners have to develop professional knowledge of consultation skills in order to figure out a plan which meets the needs of the various interest groups it is their responsibility to deal with. They need to know how to allocate resources fairly in balancing different interests, not helped because the definition of public interest is loosely given in law, and, there are contradictions in the Urban and Rural Planning Law 2007 and other laws. The planners' professional judgement is important, which means, the 'ways of thinking' of planners towards public



interest and how to distribute resources have a great influence on the results of urban planning.

#### 6.1.4 Getting the public voice involved

In China, it used to be governments and developers that carried out planning evaluations. Because of the increase in conflict between municipal governments and local residents, public engagement was required under the 2007 Urban and Rural Planning Law (Table 16). It stated that the opinions of the general public should be fully considered (Article 26, Urban and Rural Planning Law). Planners in the institutes were given the responsibility of engaging with the public (Article 62, Urban and Rural Planning Law). The skill of communicating with local residents became a necessary part of planning knowledge. Planners needed to learn to deal with different opinions from the public, which had to be learned by going to poor neighbourhoods as well as rich ones to find out what local residents wanted, and bring those opinions back to the plan-making process.

**Table 16 The content of public engagement in the Urban and Rural Planning Law 2007**

<b>Public engagement</b>	
<b>Public announcement</b>	<p>Article 26 Before filing an urban or rural planning for examination and approval, the organ establishing it shall announce the draft of the planning and collect opinions from experts and the general public by way of argumentation, hearing or other...</p> <p>Article 8 Organs organizing the establishment of urban and rural planning shall publicize legally approved urban and rural planning in a timely manner...</p>

<p><b>Right of the public</b></p>	<p>Article 9 All entities and individuals...have the right to inquiry of the competent department of urban and rural planning about whether a construction activity affecting their interests is in compliance with the planning requirements.</p> <p>Article 54 Supervision and inspection situation as well as handling results shall be opened according to law for the general public to refer to and supervise.</p> <p>Article 48 To modify a regulatory detailed planning, the organ establishing it shall demonstrate the necessity of the modification, take counsel with the interested persons within the planning area...</p> <p>Article 50 ...The general site layout of a site detailed planning or an engineering design plan approved according to law may not be modified without approval. If it is really necessary to modify it, the competent department of urban and rural planning shall hear the opinions of the interested parties in the form of hearing, etc...</p>
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<p><b>Legal responsibility</b></p>	<p>Article 58 If any organ is required by law to establish urban and rural planning but fails to do so, or fails to establish, examine and approve or modify urban and rural planning in accordance with the prescribed procedure, the higher level people’s government shall order it correct, circulate a notice of criticism and impose punishments on the principal of the related people’s government as well as other directly liable personnel.</p> <p>Article 60 Where the people’s government of a town or the competent department of urban and rural planning of the people’s government at or above the county level commits any of the following behaviours, the people’s government at the same level, the competent department of urban and rural planning of the higher level people’s government or the supervisory organ shall, within the authorized power limits, order it to correct, circulate a notice of criticism and impose punishments on the directly liable person in charge and other directly liable person according to the law;</p> <p>4. failing to publicize the general site layout of an approved site detailed planning or engineering design plan;</p> <p>5. failing to hear the opinions of the interested parties in the form of hearing or other form before approving the modification of the general site layout of a site detailed planning or engineering design plan;...</p>
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The new appropriateness is imposed and enforced by direct and political or organizational authority (March & Olsen, 1989, p. 22), including through laws, policies and regulations. To sum up, the state of transition has made it appropriate to ‘get the public voice involved’, and to develop planning knowledge to encompass the skills of consultation this requires. Since public consultation in China is quite new, planners have to find their own way to do that. The skills of listening, communicating and negotiating with local residents have become important in understanding local conditions; planners have developed their own knowledge on how to make local consultation work, and the capacity to explain professional terms to outsiders is necessary. ‘Public participation’ is regarded by some planners as a way to help solve the conflicts in planning for land use adjustment.

## **6.2 Traditional rules of appropriateness**

Knowledge brought by the new concern for appropriateness is sometimes ignored in practice, because older planning traditions still persist. Knowledge generated and validated through planning tradition has become embedded in the assumptions and practice of planners.

### **6.2.1 Keeping uniformity with the central power**

The central government has superior position. The central government considered urban planning to be a key method and basis for guiding rational construction, development and administration (Wu, 2015). Key decisions are made by top leaders and quickly enforced nationwide. Planners follow those central commands closely in the government-driven and top-down planning system. This makes it appropriate to ‘keep uniformity with the central power’.

With the changes in ‘problems in urban planning’, the goals and objectives keep shifting. As new leaders (Table 17) took office, the strategy of urban planning changed (Table 18). Planners follow the policies and ideology from the central government tightly. National and regional goals are conceived by political elites, which claimed to represent the interests of all citizens. The political goals are then translated into urban spatial projects by urban planners, who claim privileged understanding of their subject. This has contributed to the continual change in problem definition in urban planning, which lead to too many unsolved puzzles. For example,

After taking office, Chinese president XI Jinping immediately put forward the word ‘new urbanization’. Back in 2003, China brought up the ‘overall urban-rural development’ for the first time, which means urban area and rural areas should not develop separately because too many problems arise in rural areas. But nobody

could figure out how to interpret the word back then. People just had the basic concept that urban area must feed poor rural area. In 2004, China began to conduct new countryside construction pilot program. And in 2006, to answer the call of WEN Jiabao, the then president, new countryside construction scaled up. The core issue was to return money to rural areas for infrastructure such as roads and the like. But the then construction ways differed since China has long neglected construction in rural areas, having no idea on overall rural development. The ways of urban planning were copied to rural planning such as adding floors to reduce land resources or invest unwisely in infrastructure. For another instance, the government soon halted the project, which was launched to build something in each village. Then the government began reflecting upon how to carry on rural construction and did not take action until 2010 probably because the then new leadership had some fresh ideas (Interview No.33, 18th August, 2014).

**Table 17 Generations of Chinese leadership (Wang, 2015; p229)**

<b>Generations of Chinese leadership</b>			<b>Position</b>	<b>Characteristic</b>
First	1949 - 1976	Mao Zedong as core	Chairman	The guiding political ideologies for the first generations were the general principles of Marxism and Mao Zedong's Thought.
Second	1976 - 1992	Deng Xiaoping as core	Paramount leader	This turns of focus from class struggle and political movements to economic development, pioneering Chinese economic reform. Dominant

				political ideology of the era was Deng Xiaoping Theory.
Third	1992 - 2003	Jiang Zemin as core	General Secretary	Continuing economic development, the establishment of the early stage of reform. Continuing the direction of Deng Xiaoping, the dominant ideology was Jiang Zemin's 'Three Represents Theory'.
Fourth	2003 - 2012	Hu Jintao as core	General Secretary	A new technocratic style of governance and a less centralized political structure. The majority of this generation was engineers; unlike their predecessors and likely successors, they have spent very little time overseas. The dominant political ideology of this era is Hu's Scientific Development Concept with a goal for a Harmonious Society. They are seen as more populist than the previous generation.
Fifth	2012 -	Xi Jinping as core	General Secretary	Incorporating the Scientific Outlook on Development into Constitution, along with Marxism-Leninism, Mao Zedong Thought, Deng Xiaoping

				Theory and the important “Three Represents Theory” of Jiang Zemin
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**Table 18 The topics of the Chinese Annual National Urban Planning Conferences  
(Organized by the author)**

<b>Year</b>	<b>The topics of the Annual National Planning Conferences</b>
2002	Urban construction issues in the rapid urbanization process
2004	Urban planning in face of the well-off society
2005	Healthy urbanization
2007	Urban planning in face of the harmonious society
2008	Urban planning in the perspective of ecological civilization
2009	Urban planning and scientific development
2010	Urban planning innovation
2011	Urban transformation and restructuring
2012	Diversification and containment in urban planning
2013	Collaborative planning in city life
2014	Urban and rural governance and reform’



‘Keeping uniformity with the central power’ is in conflict with ‘getting the public voice involved’, which emphasizes locality and the diversity of urban plans. Control of urban planning comes from top governors rather than the real needs of localities. The policy objective is made by central government and translated by planners. Little concern is given to how suited the plans are to meet actual local needs or how well they manage to achieve their objectives.

### **6.2.2 Giving legitimacy to local authorities**

Although the Urban Planning Law of 1989 brought the ‘rule of law’, the planning tradition of ‘rule of man’ still persisted. Because of decentralization, local government had the autonomy to initiate local urban development. The local cadres acquired a certain degree of autonomy and showed some flexibility in dealing with central state directives. Although new analytical tools and techniques have been brought to planning, sometimes the scientific-technological results in planning are emphasized to justify decisions made by local authorities in power.

In China, land resources allotted by the country are in your hands. You can permit anyone you like to use the land just by changing rules. China is a country governed by the rule of man, so rule is elastic and can be possibly changed, which, ironically, marks China’s best example of matching “talents” with jobs. The current custom in China is that rules made by the former mayor will be replaced by new rules formulated by the new mayor (Interview No.13, 14 June, 2014).

This lack of scientific spirit in the ruling class has been one of the main reasons why sometimes professional judgements are not respected in practice. The skills of presenting the result of urban plan plans vividly become important. It is appropriate that a good and vivid sketch is a good advantage. Under ‘the rule of man’, planners use their planning

knowledge to try to meet the needs of the person in power to win the competition for the bid.

Under the current system, planners are just like a drawing master-hand of their leaders. Your design can be called good if your leader likes it. This is the criterion. Planners had better make drawings look great because leaders do not understand your technical expression but always focus on drawing sketch. The so-called excellent drawings are those with a specific guide and a flashy appearance (Interview No.27, August 6th, 2014).

Planning knowledge is used to justify the decisions made by local authorities, since mayors have had great discretion in the arena of urban development. Traditionally, people who govern were assumed to have the requisite moral qualities: their obligation was to bring prosperity to local residents. Planners make every effort to research the rules of space and they believe that if they can make clear the spatial rules and have a democratic planning procedure, there would be a scientific and just city. However, their spatial rules are very weak in relation to the interests of politicians and developers, and in some situations, planners have to make the best use of ‘the edge ball’, to maximize the benefit of local authorities and developers. What is most important is meeting the ruling officials’ need for performance in office. In reality, some of the officials in local government just abuse their power. ‘I come to realise that planning in China is a great nonsense after going through the domestic planning process. The approval system changes if your leader changes and planning also has to change accordingly.’ (Interview No.27, August 6<sup>th</sup>, 2014)

Economic development is seen as the priority in the plan making process, planning knowledge for economic growth is developed in the growing urban spatial economies. The party-state still play an important role over local governments, because the local

officials' political existence and advancement are still determined by the central state according to their performance, which has been largely measured by economic growth rates and urban physical changes (Zhu, 2005, p. 1375). As their term was fixed, they needed to demonstrate achievement in order to get promotion, short-term quantitative growth is thus pursued at the expense of long-term quality development (Wu et al., 2007; Zhu J., 2005). As long as the GDP-dominated performance evaluation system maintains the same, local governmental officials will inevitably seek immediate and short-sighted profits in their term. As long as there are chances to develop new areas arise within a short-term, most local governments will not choose exceedingly difficult, contradictory and slow-working old area transformation projects involved in 'public voice' for the pursuit of economic growth. The appropriateness is to 'give legitimacy to local authorities', which also goes against 'making independent judgment'.

### **6.2.3 'Setting the world in order'**

The traditional role of planners, as an educated elite, was to help the rulers to 'set the world in order', which means, the appropriate rules were to maintain political and social stability (*anding*) whose practice should not bring potential or actual domestic disorder (*luan*) (Ma, 2009, p.v). The governors and elites were assumed to have requisite moral qualities, thus the vocational ideal was appropriate for the governors to set the world in order. 'Confucian-derived cultural system exists that defines and thus legitimizes social and political norms for state-society interaction' (Leaf, 2005, p. 93). The social elites were assumed to have the responsibility to help governors to set the world in order by assuming a position of leadership and rendering public service to society (Hao, 1996).

It is assumed in urban planning that all interest groups should work together for the common good. Most of the time, planners have the thought that public interest means group interest or national interest. During the period when there was a planned economy

stage, public interest was considered to be national and community interest. People were educated by the Communist Party with ‘Sacrifice personal interest for public interest’, ‘Communist party’s interest and national interest was beyond everything’ and so on. Any pursuit of personal interest and small group interest was considered to be a capitalist selfish thought, which was a shameful thing.’ At that time, personal interest was regarded as something unreasonable and even illegal. This kind of value choked off the existence of personal value, so the line between public interest and private interest were erased. Everyone behaved as though everything was for the public interest, which played a leading role in everyone’s life.

It was reasonable to have such a value in a planned society, in which everything, from the economy to details of one's personal life were all planned by the nation. People can maintain their basic requirements for life only in such a ‘we are in the same boat’ thought in face of nearly in shortage of everything.

A market economic system has been set up since the introduction of the open door policies and marketization, since then. A key function of the market economic system becomes increasingly obvious in the area of resource allocation, when the economic operation changes from unitary public ownership to market bodies including multiple economical elements and multi-formats. Some planners still think in the same way, that in a planned economy the national and sectional interest is beyond personal interest. ‘Public interest’ in Chinese planning is more a phrase in political slogans than an arrangement in planning system (Interview No.12, 9 December, 2013).

‘Setting the world in order’ is in conflict with ‘getting the public voice involved’. The common people should sacrifice their own interest for the benefit of national or group

interest, instead of making chaos to protect their own right. It still wields its power in the ‘ways of thinking’ of Chinese planners.

It seems that whenever it is related to the public in urban planning, a lot of trouble will be brought... In my opinion, the local government and the public are in the stage of playing a game: the government will consider the public hard to govern, while the common people will consider local governments very mean (Interview No.12, 9th December, 2013).

I think at least in this present time, China's development suits the one-party system. It will be chaotic and finished soon if we adopt multi-party system. Internal fighting will explode. Disagreement among the people is always a life-and-death struggle. Instead, contradictions between ourselves and the enemy is negotiable. Who holds power dominates resources. It is a life-and-death struggle. If the social change does not come in a proper way, so many dissatisfied Chinese people without too much thinking would easily be stirred up once get bamboozled by you. In consequence, people have a lot to complain, feel pissed off and then frustrated and never get satisfied (Interview No.38, 14th June 2014).

Traditionally, elites helped the rulers to set the world in order, which also means, to keep ‘Great Harmony’, in which disruptive change was minimized, all groups worked together for the common good. Planners and local governments are not used to dealing with different opinions and conflicts. The state sets the appropriateness for individuals, to keep the common good in the first place.

### **Summary**

The transition in China has brought about new rules of appropriateness: ‘rule of law’, ‘GDP-oriented urban growth’, ‘making professional judgement’ and ‘getting public’s

voice involved' contribute to new planning knowledge. However, planning traditions still persists through 'keeping uniformity with the central power', 'giving legitimacy to local authorities' and 'setting the world in order', which prevent the evolution of planning knowledge. There is ambiguity about which rules planners should follow in practice, and in some circumstances, old rules and new rules conflict with each other.

Clarification of the rules and how they can be appropriately applied to the conduct of planners becomes important. Planners internalize perceptions of appropriateness in their own role expectations. In a context with changes and ambiguities, planners have to choose which rules to follow according to their role expectations. So we need to know more about the contemporary role expectations of planners.

Since role expectations are the collection of elements of knowledge and knowledge serves to fulfil the obligations of a role in a situation, in a transitional context, if there are the emergence of new role expectations, new practical knowledge should be created. In the following chapter, the institutional creation of knowledge by Chinese planners will be introduced.

## **Chapter 7 The creation of planning knowledge**

### **Preamble**

Knowledge is developed and certificated within social institutions, and social processes validate knowledge and make it reliable. Social change brings new types of knowledge; meanwhile old types of knowledge might still operate in practice. This chapter begins with an overview of planning knowledge summarized from the interviews to show a broad picture of the knowledge planners need in contemporary China; then the planning knowledge created by new and old rules will be explained in detail, in order to provide the evidence of later arguments related to the role expectations of planners.

### **7.1 An overview of planning knowledge summarized from interviews**

In a developing country like China, the level of urbanization has increased, bringing challenging environmental and social problems. Efforts to deal with these problems need urban strategies, plans and urban planners. Their knowledge needs to be explained, to give a better understanding of planning in China's transitional context.

Planners work in nonlocal planning institutes, based in China's major cities. Beijing and Harbin were selected as the interviewees for the second phase of field trip in this research because they formulate urban plans with municipal governments all over China, so they have a better experience and perspective on transitions and traditions in urban planning than other groups of planners; secondly, because they are independent from the Chinese administrative system. Although they do not have decision making power, they have the opportunity to influence decision-making processes, which makes their role important in making a change in urban development. Their planning knowledge in the process of plan formulation is summarized from interviews (Table 19).

**Table 19 Appropriate knowledge for Chinese planners in the process of plan formulation (Organized from interviews conducted in 2013-2014 by the author)**

Categories	Planning knowledge	Skills
Setting Tasks	Planners need to know how to define their scope of work.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The capacity to formulate urban plans which satisfy the needs of clients and are in accordance with the relevant provisions of law;</li> <li>2. The capacity to access available data, to organize and analyse the data for plan formulation;</li> <li>3. The capacity to formulate plans and provide consultation;</li> <li>4. The capacity to provide financial plans for urban development plans and knowledge of local government revenue, land prices and relevant information.</li> </ol>
Tools and technology	Planners need to know tools and software which are relevant to their work	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The application of Word, Power Point, data base and other general softwares;</li> <li>2. The application of SPASS and related financial analysis software;</li> </ol>



		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. The application of drawing software (Auto CAD, Photoshop, Sketch up, 3D Max) and GIS;</li> <li>4. The capacity of surveying and mapping on site;</li> <li>5. The capacity to read and interpret graphs.</li> </ol>
<p>Planning knowledge in formulating urban plans</p> <p>1</p>	<p>Knowledge relevant to formulating urban plans</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Laws and regulations: laws and regulations related to urban planning; the procedure of the whole planning process from formulation to implementation;</li> <li>2. Engineering: engineering science and the application of engineering technology;</li> <li>3. Urban planning: planning theories; the technology, tools and principles in urban planning;</li> <li>4. Cartography: knowledge of drawing lines and shapes, colour, position, land form and engineering scale; the capacity to identify</li> </ol>

		<p>what the modifications of colour and shapes of urban plans mean in the real world; the capacity to formulate working results electronically;</p> <p>5. Industry economy: knowledge of production technologies, locational conditions, land demand, service facilities and so on;</p> <p>6. Finance: the knowledge of local government revenue, land prices, the floor area ratio in the buildings of the planning area, development costs, creating value for local development;</p> <p>7. Public administration: strategic planning, resource allocation, human resource management and leadership skills;</p> <p>8. Aesthetics: knowledge of landmarks, the art of constructing, building materials and so on;</p> <p>9. Public interest: public facilities, environmental resources; environmental resources and planning ethics.</p>
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<p>Planning knowledge in formulating urban plans</p> <p>2</p>	<p>Basic skills of dealing with planning in a dynamic context and interpersonal skills</p>	<p>6 Problem definition and problem solving: the capacity to define problems in urban planning, based on which the capacity to provide strategies to solve the problems is required;</p> <p>7 Logics and deduction: the application of logical reasoning to ensure the rationality of urban plans;</p> <p>8 Making judgements and decisions: based on the evaluation of cost and benefit of urban plans, making rational judgements and decisions;</p> <p>9 Reading comprehension: The capacity to interpret laws and regulations, the Letter of Authorization, contracts, opinions of clients and other documentation;</p> <p>10 Time management: the capacity to break big tasks of urban planning into small tasks and achieve goals before deadlines;</p> <p>11 Social context: knowledge of social</p>
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		development.
<p>Planning knowledge in formulating urban plans</p> <p>3</p>	<p>Soft skills required in the process of plan formulation</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The awareness of problems: the sensitivity of recognizing the occur and impact of potential problems in local areas;</li> <li>2. Inductive ability: the capacity to organize different sources of data into general rules and produce conclusions;</li> <li>3. Communicating: the skills of explaining information and professional terms to non-professionals and the patience to listen;</li> <li>4. Negotiating: the skills of negotiating with local government officials and different interest groups in the form of official documents, by telephone, face-to-face, interviews, discussions, focus group meetings, by internet (QQ, Wechat) and so on;</li> <li>5. Obtaining information: the capacity to acquire information from different sources (newspapers, other social media, discussions, on site) by employing different methods</li> </ol>

		<p>(survey, observation, questionnaire, interview and document analysis);</p> <p>6. The validity of information: using professional knowledge and judgement to identify the validity of information;</p> <p>7. Priority: The capacity to set the priority of their work;</p>
Work context	The working environment of planners	Mainly office work, supported by on site investigation
Job zone	Professional requirement or qualification	<p>1. Graduated from courses related to urban planning and design;</p> <p>2. Qualification for registered planners.</p>

We can see from the table that compared with their knowledge in socialist and times and earlier, planners have been promoted away from being purely technical designers to being comprehensive planners and researchers. They deal with a range of factors, including government policies, social issues, and other related technology applications.

## **7.2 Planning knowledge created by new rules**

### **7.2.1 Rule of law**

Planners need to know how to define the scope of their work when they receive a commission. They need to have the capacity to make job objectives clear and interpret the requirements of a specific task.

After Party A (the local government) assigned a task, you have to interpret it first, right? It is because Party A (the local government) is very likely to be unclear about the project himself after he commissioned you to finish the task. He may say 'I'd like to make an urban design for a town or a county', but he actually doesn't have a professional background in this regard. You may ask 'what kind of plan would you want, an overall plan or a regulatory detailed plan', and he reply 'what's the difference'. So you have to communicate with him (Interview No.29, 7th August, 2014).

Planners tasks include the Statutory City Comprehensive Plan, Statutory Regulatory Detailed Plan and Non-statutory plans such as urban development strategic plans. A City Comprehensive Plan includes a description of the nature of a city, development objectives and their scale, development objectives and their scale, general development norms and index, land use structure, zoning and comprehensive arrangement of different developments. It includes a set of special plans, for example, short-time construction plan, civil engineering plans, landscaping, green space plan and so on. A Regulatory Detailed Plan, as a tool for planning development control and management, is supposed to regulate the development of a specific piece of land by interpreting the policies decided by a City Comprehensive plan through detailed indexes and codes, ordinances and plans for land use and buildings.

During planning in the past, Party A provided the Letter of Authorization and planners would then provide him with plans according to the Letter of Authorization and relevant policies. Well, that is the earliest planning mode (Interview No.29, 7th August, 2014).

Planners working now can no longer rely simply on the commands they receive from authorities: they need to make their work plan both to satisfy the needs of clients as well as being in accordance with the relevant provisions of law. This procedure is required for the project contract, because ‘if you (planners) do not go through such a procedure and let the stakeholders provide you with a Letter of Authorization directly, you will receive an unprofessional one [scope of tasks]’ (Interview No.29, 7 August, 2014).

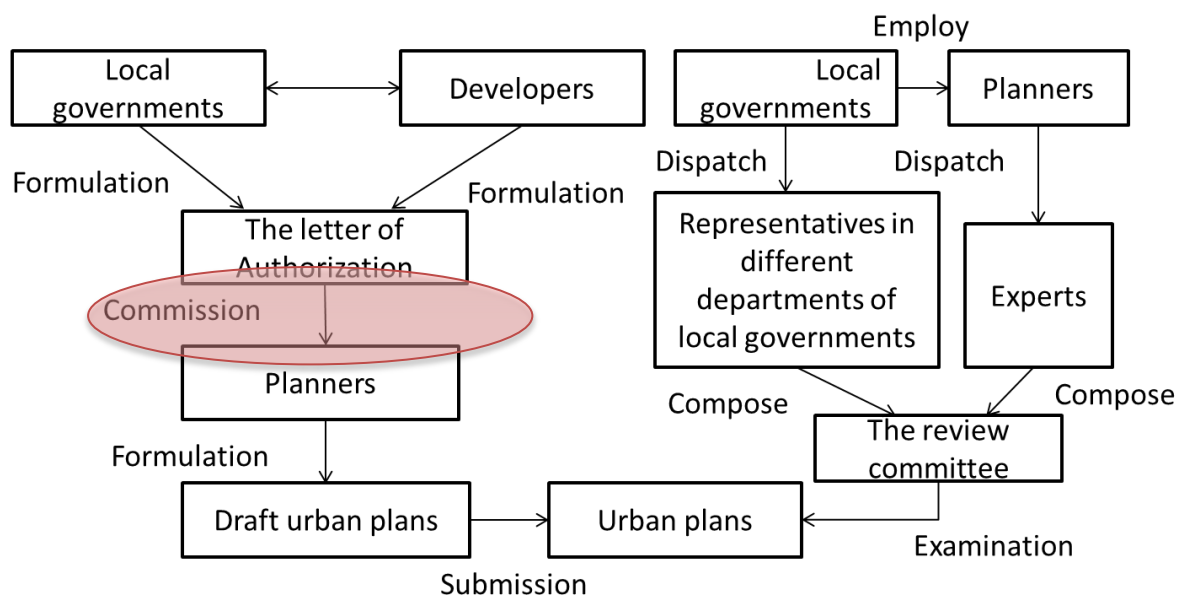


Figure 12 The plan making process in practice (organized from the interviews by the author)

Another planner also stated,

You (planners) should explain backward, which means pointing out the plan type for [the local government] according to its requirements. Maybe the local government officials put forward three or four requirements, and you should help

them sort things out, telling them 'you may need one or three plans at last to solve your problem'. So you need to make a work plan. First, it's the project description, which shows what we should do in the project. Second, it's the project objectives. What is the objective of the overall urban plan? What is the objective for the regulatory detailed plan, the constructive detailed plan, or the sub-plan for specific topics? You have to make the classifications for the local government officers, and explain to them what should be done in this or that section and saying what the objective is. Then they will know about the classifications and objectives. Because some of the officials don't know that they should first do the classifications for their urban plan, you have to classify them on your own and explain them one by one (Interview No.29, 7 August, 2014).

Planning knowledge related to task setting is a match of the situations that first, local government officials might not have enough knowledge of urban planning, especially laws and regulations relevant to urban planning; second, local government officials change every five years.

Sometimes local government officials do have not sufficient planning knowledge,

This is a common phenomenon that he (the local government) is merely unable to work out a professional Letter of Authorization (Interview No.29, 7th August, 2014).

Most of the time, the head of government does not know what is the meaning of urban planning, they does not know the difference between Master Plan and Controlled Plan. What they know is to discuss the issue in a certain land (Interview No.12, 9th December, 2013).



For directors or section chiefs of the planning bureau, who usually have some professional knowledge, they would know about the difference. But for mayors, they are usually unclear about the classification of plans (Interview No.29, 7th August, 2014).

A senior planner reflected that,

Sometimes he might make some stupid mistakes, which in fact should not be called stupid, because he simply has no idea about this. He says he wants an overall plan, at the same time he also wants an urban plan of full coverage. Besides, he adds that he wants sub-plan for special topics of full coverage, as well as a regulatory detailed plan. So actually he has a blind spot when commissioning the project. Hence, you first have to tell him those tasks should be done separately, step by step. Second, you ought to tell him that he doesn't need to cover all the plans. If you want an overall plan of full coverage, the urban plan should focus on the downtown area. So, it is OK that the regulatory detailed plan on the downtown areas will be made in the next three years. Right? (Interview No.29, 7th August, 2014).

When local government officials change every five years,

...the mayors are newly appointed and discuss with director of planning bureau about what they need to do, but the director might also just take office, who does not know all the stuff, such as how to describe the project or what kind of planning it is (Interview No.29, 7th August, 2014).

In the other case, leaders at all levels are mobilized. If only one leader is mobilized, his thinking may be 'slightly' changed. In this situation, it is still possible to combine your work with his thinking (Interview No.30, 7th August, 2014).

The total cycle of many planning extends as long as several years. Our XX County has witnessed several changes of leadership. In accordance with this, we connect with the leaders and possibly combine our work with their thinking. Sometimes we may propose some suggestions to them. It is natural that some new leaders' thinking is totally different to that of the previous ones. Take the leaders of XX city as an example, some leaders would like to develop XX area, some prefers river-span development and some tends to develop areas towards XX. They may differ with each other. Besides, it's possible that the predecessors seek new path when they have almost achieved their goals. He may at least sell some land to support public finance or seek other alternatives (Interview No.26, 6th August, 2014).

‘The rule of law’ empowers planners who hold legitimate power from laws and regulations concerning their work. Planners are supposed to learn the laws and regulations very well and have the capacity to use them in planning practice. Their knowledge gives planners authority.

### **7.2.2 GDP-oriented urban growth**

‘GDP-oriented urban growth’ gives planners opportunities to apply their knowledge in practice. and the professional ideas from planners are considered important for local authorities. Planning decisions must now always be interpreted in relation to market forces. Rather than just beautifying the urban environment, knowledge of planning for ‘place making’ and ‘city branding’ is important in attracting investment for local development.

That is to say, they should master authority figures and use analysis tools to coordinate and communicate with all sides to maximize the spatial profits based on their professional knowledge (Interview No.32, 7 August, 2014).

When talking about the project intention at the very beginning, you should present him ideas and suggestions, thus saving money for him (Interview No.29, 7 August, 2014).

Priority is given to economic efficiency rather than other elements.

Take the greenbelt to be built along the river bank as an example: the reality is that the government will pay a huge amount of the cost if all the areas along the river bank are used to build greenbelt. In this case, you might build a small piece of land into greenbelt and leave some space for development. You may find that some ideas of planners turn out to be hard to carry out, so your plan ought to be better rather than unrealistic. Therefore, you can first draft the ideal plan and then make some adjustments to your plan so as to meet the criterion of realistic conditions. We call this a compromise (Interview No.35, 20 August 2014).

This shows that the priority of urban planning is saving money for local government and requires the sacrifice of greenbelt for development like new business centres. Real estate projects are the largest component of current work in planning for urban growth, requiring knowledge of development steps and timing of construction, the concept of packaging and project planning, investment source and development body, management system and operation mode and so on.

Planners must understand the economy because what they plan out will be put into use, add value to cities and promote the quality and depth of cities (Interview No. 32, 7 August 2014).

Planners' main obligation is to define the standards, norms and criteria for the main construction in urban plans. These include permitted land use type; Maximum floor area

ratio, maximum building height; maximum lot coverage ratio (footprint area divided by the lot size); minimum open space ratio; the location of the entrance; minimum car parking standard; public facilities contribution. The planning parameters stipulated by planners are attached to the land use planning permit. Among these parameters, permitted land use type and plot ratio are the most important factors in determining land value. As the key feature of land resource allocation and the core index of micro density control, the regulation of the floor area ratio (FAR) is important knowledge for planners in practice, because the more additional space that can be built, the more commodity space a developer will have to sell.

The mechanism of land-transferring fees is absolutely related to the floor area ratio in China, unlike other countries in the world. This is the most important characteristic of Chinese urban planning. Of course the land price is related to different sites, however, it is more directly and closely related to the floor area ratio, so all the ‘behind closed doors deals’ [of urban planning] are related to floor area ratio. If [the developers] want more development right, they need a higher floor area ratio. However, [from the point view of planners], when we tried to formulate the floor area ratio in a place like Beijing, a historical and cultural city, [according to related regulations], there is a strong restriction on the height of architecture. Also, according to the regulations of health and safety principles and the requirement of open space, the development density is strongly restricted as well. In fact, the floor area ratio is restricted to a certain amount. However, [The developers] usually want to negotiate with the floor area ratio (Interview No. 20, 31 December 2013).

In the Chinese administrative system, the term of a mayor is around five years. As the political achievement of a mayor is largely evaluated in terms of the economic growth

they bring to their area, they need advice from planners for the benefit of local development.

For instance, a mayor who is transferred to another post in Shenzhen or somewhere else may not necessarily know what he can achieve in his next five years in office. He certainly needs many guides from planners who are expert at providing insight about his work (Interview No. 28, 6 August 2014).

The planning knowledge for the benefit of GDP-oriented urban growth matches the political situation in contemporary China.

### **7.2.3 Making professional judgments**

‘Making professional judgment’ provides planners with the chance to apply various theories and methodologies in practice. Backed up by rich data and reliable analysis, when there is disagreement between planners and local authorities in the plan-making process, planners get the opportunity to justify their own judgments. Professional voices become stronger in final decisions.

Based on the evaluation of cost and benefit of urban plans, planners need to make rational judgement and decisions. In the process of using theories and principles in urban planning, planners have the opportunity to make professional judgements.

For example, a planner gave me a concept of an Edge Ball (*cabianqiu*), which means, ‘operating on the ambiguous margins of policy and regulations such as the ambiguously formulated standards and rules or those within predictable scope’.

The equipment for a commercial development is within a predictable scope. Say, the scope is 300 to 400 parking lots. The specific number varies according to

different developers. 300 is the minimum number within the scope. The maximum level of development within the predictable scope may take the minimum number within the scope as the indicator, which actually exploits the loophole. This kind of loophole will inevitably emerge in the process of explaining policies. Some policies are not exactly rigid but elastic with a predictable scope, which will definitely produce 'edge ball' and developers will take the chance to exert the margin effect to an extreme (Interview No.34, 18 August 2014).

This opportunity to make a professional judgment also comes from rapid urbanization. Fast urbanization has brought quick changes in the regulations of planning.

To begin with rules, our standards are set based on previous social phenomena. Take a simple example, the floor area ratio of prior homestead is 1.5 and the range between 1.2 and 1.5 means multi-storey buildings. But now, the floor area ratio 1.2 can also represent a mix of multi-storey and low-rise buildings. Our planned system would be affected by the change in type of market activities. But we cannot modify rules and systems every year, which will thus cause a lag time between rules and realistic market. The so-called margin effect would make it easier to operate on the margins of rules (Interview No.34, 18 August 2014).

It is assumed in regulations that planners will calculate a certain indicator according to their technical analysis.

We take every aspect into consideration and carry out a very refined analysis. One consideration is that we increase the floor area ratio on the condition of the fixed area of the land given by the stakeholder. Another consideration is how we apply planning technologies spatially to many aspects, such as supporting facilities, landscapes, transportation, communities and more. And if you plan a residential

area, you should take the demands of residents into consideration, such as the building orientation in northern China. If too many changes occur on the land of more than ten hectares, you should consider building orientation. There should be two main orientations, east-south and west-south, which are reverse symmetry (Interview No.26 6 August 2014).

With the rapid urbanization process, there have been more projects emerging requiring land use adjustment. In planning for growth in land use adjustment, planners have to innovate to meet new requirements. Unlike planning for urban growth, planning for land use adjustment has different characteristics because land use rights are dispersed to all land users and under these circumstances government could not dispose of land at will. Due to the diversification of subjects who were investing, urban planning had to deal with many various interest groups.

But the re-engineering of old cities will involve in many householders and stakeholders. For instance, some officials in the neighbouring bureau will be involved in your planning on a re-engineering site. It is the task of the planner to take their thoughts into consideration. The main decision-making process includes tracing paper at home, discussing it with the related personnel and improving the planning based on their views. The planning can be counted as completed when everyone agrees with the planning. Even if it is not their most satisfactory work, at least the planning meets their minimum requirements. Each side can accept the imperfect planning. To me, this is planning, and it is not a perfect map to express the ambitious career aspirations of planners. In my opinion, what counts most is that the planning map can be put into practice and keep benefits of all sides in balance (Interview No.34, 18 August 2014).

Various interest groups conflict and react with each other in a complicated and changing environment. Urban construction has been transformed from the exclusive investment behaviour of governments to that of diversified bodies, and every investor wants his own share of the generous profit from urban development. Along with the possession of property rights and the awakening of rights consciousness, citizens are calling for their rights in local development affairs. In these circumstances, it is impossible to solve all the complicated social problems by a simple blueprint.

Planning for land use adjustment means more understanding and promotion of space policy. So under this condition, we need to coordinate the interests of all sectors so as to achieve breakthroughs and innovation in specific stock planning and facilitate tangible development. Restrained by the current rule, no development will be achieved any more. The change also makes many things change. System breakthrough and even policy innovation emerges in relation management. It indicates that bottlenecks can raise possibility of a series of breakthroughs (Interview No.34, 18 August 2014).

Planning is to keep benefits in balance, is to seek balance in the game. We used to think that planners are the one to tell the local the truth. But the current planning has come a long way and now there is not so much planning for growth. Do you know what is planning for land use adjustment? Now a lot of planning works on the reform and update of stocks, which becomes more like a benefit game. Even the government doesn't know how to carry out planning for land use adjustment... (Interview No.35, 20 August 2014).

In this case planning knowledge of market assessment, economic calculations and financial analysis became appropriate for planners to balance different interests. The



professional knowledge of planners is important because local government lacked experience in dealing with planning for land use adjustment. Planners' knowledge of 'balancing different interests' brings planners a leading role in front of different departments in local government, and the different interest groups involved in land use adjustment.

The implementation performance should achieve shared interests and responsibility. Planning for land use adjustment is mainly about the distribution of interest, which means, who occupies more land, which will have more profit, others will occupy less (Shi, 2014). The difficulty of planning lies in benefit redistribution. It is difficult to solve practical problems if only relying on spatial design. The call for system design is urgent and research on supporting planning policies becomes increasingly prominent.

The responsibility of planners is no more than coordinate different interests, so I can neither send word to the government nor treat the common people unfairly... So planners are stuck in the middle and in a dilemma that find it hard to please either party (Interview No.12, 9 December 2013).

Planners' knowledge of how to allocate resources enables them to consider what is most appropriate, especially in the context of planning for land-use adjustment, because unlike planning for growth, there are more interest groups. Not only the public interest but also private rights are supposed to be guaranteed in the process of plan-making process.

XX is a part of the old area of the city. The internal resource of XX project is rather scattered, not as fully-fledged as that of new areas, so internal construction could easily focus on this area alone without taking others into consideration. The eagerness for instant benefits could cause high individual efficiency but low collective efficiency. The solution to the problem is overall planning because the

local planning may seem an economy but when put together the collective benefits become unreasonable. Nobody would consider the total benefits if each local planner only cares about respective benefit (Interview No.34, 18 August 2014).

Technical skills alone do not make an effective planner. Social abilities (in the form of organizing and communications skills) are also required. Planners need to have the skills and patience to explain information and professional terms to non-professionals.

Planners should be capable of expressing their planning. It not only needs presentation skills but also drawing skills and copywriting capabilities. That is, your planning should be understood by both farmers and mayors. Or else, it will take a long time to come to an end of the planning outcome and lead the planning to a failure, which is very common (Interview No.32, 7 August 2014).

You have to communicate with stakeholders in the process, like a cooperative game. Then you get the dominant position and you'll be more likely to convince him. Based on that, you can put forward your own ideas since there have been communications (Interview No.33, 18 August 2014).

The importance of the body of knowledge of communication was addressed by another interviewee.

As a communicator and negotiator, a planner should use authoritative data and analytical tools to negotiate with different interest parties in the process of urban planning (Interview No.32, 7 August 2014).

The planner requires the skills of negotiating with local government officials and different interest groups in the form of official document, by telephone, face-to-face, interviews,

discussions, focus group meeting, by internet (QQ, Wechat and so on); knowledge of how to communicate with their clients has become important.

#### **7.2.4 Getting the public voice involved**

The transition in China makes it appropriate to ‘get the public voice involved’. Since public consultation in China is quite new, planners have to find their own way, and learn how to do that.

When our plan comes to a certain stage, we will have a meeting with local residents to tell them what we are going to do to design this area. Then we do public announcements in the form of board designs, we try to use an easy-to-understand way to tell the local people what we will solve the urban problems for you. We will not discuss technical issues with the local common people directly, but we respect their opinions (Interview No.33, 18 August 2014).

The capability to communicate with different types of people is basically required. Students should go to talk with residents in communities and learn to cope with the situation when people purposely make difficulties (Interview No.22, 8 January 2014).

The skills of listening, communicating and negotiating with local residents become important in understanding local conditions.

Planners should first learn the skills of listening, then comes the skills of coordination (Interview No.34, 18 August 2014).

Apart from doing technical analysis, planners should listen to the need of common people in order to overcome the limits of technical analysis (Interview No.33, 18 August 2014).

It is claimed that the common people do not realize that the formulation of urban plans impacts on their everyday life.

In western countries, it is easier to realize that if there is anything [related to urban planning] against the laws and regulations going on, because they do not usually have massive urban development or huge scale of urban design like in China. People will realize immediately if there is something wrong going on because it is obvious that if you walk on the road and find there is an extremely tall and exaggerated building under construction. However, because of high speed urban development in China, it is quite common that local residents have no idea what is going on around them. This might be one of the reasons why there are so many urban projects against laws and regulations in construction (Interview No.20, 31 December 2013).

In interaction with local residents, planners develop their own knowledge on how to make local consultation work. They develop different strategies in urban and rural areas.

We should carry out case-by-case studies on urban and rural planning...In rural planning, we would hold village meeting to publicly display on boards what kind of problems the planning is for in a way that villagers are able to understand when the planning comes to a certain stage. By doing this, you can not only respect their opinions but also avoid directly discussing very technical issues with them. What's more, the frequency of communication and interactions in rural areas is much higher than that in urban areas. All in all, we should take different ways in different places (Interview No.33, 18 August 2014).

In the urban design at village level, we send our questionnaire to all the villages we plan for. For example, we are doing urban design for a certain village, there are

around 4000 villagers. We sent our questionnaire to every family. In the end, we sent around 1200 copies, and then we have all of them back. According to their responds, we make decisions for the village (Interview No.33, 18 August 2014).

The planning knowledge required for ‘getting the public voice involved’ is appropriate in an environment in which local realities have become important in the process of urban plan formulation. Planners need to consult local common people in order to know local realities.

Planners have to make their knowledge work in the locality; the plan you make has to be rooted in that place instead of using a plan from somewhere else (Interview No.33, 18 August 2014).

In socialist times, all investment, production, quantity of products and even their prices followed decisions made by central government. Planners only needed to apply one theory everywhere in their practice, which meant making every city the same to realize the goal of equality. However, China is a large country with different social and geographical environment. Different cities have different socio-economic conditions, land use patterns, urban development models and the appreciation of architecture. The local realities are necessary to meet the new environment for development. The locality and diversity of urban plans are emphasized. Planners need to have the sensibility of recognizing the occurrence and impact of potential problems in local areas and have the knowledge of the whole planning process from plan formulation to implementation

For research on urban space and urban social planning, the work of planners have become a kind of practical planning, instead of theoretical planning in the past. This practical planning means the whole process of communication, collaboration, and investigation (Interview No.20, 31 December 2013).

We should formulate urban plans based on real life and find solutions to meet real demands. Planners in many planning institutes are assigned to the branch offices and bureaus of local government to work and understand the planning implementation and management in the frontline. Planners should know the form of expression of their work, in oral languages or in words and to what degree their planning ideas should be expressed. Good planning is characterized by both rigidity and flexibility, which can be really understood after working with the colleagues in the frontline of planning and management (Interview No.32, 7 August 2014).

A senior planner reflected that,

Planners should be capable of translating planning into public policy. It seems that planners do not need to do anything after the planning formulation is done. Therefore, it is very important to take public policies into consideration during the process of plan formulation, especially the situations which can be predicted in the implementation of planning (Interview No.32, 7 August 2014).

Another planner also refers to

We should understand the whole process. It is a simple question, that is to say, clearly explaining how to turn the planning into a real house. I have discussed it with teachers in colleges and director general of planning bureau. To be honest, I haven't heard of a satisfactory answer from them yet. What we plan is not a drawing but the real space or even the life in it. If we do not understand the whole process, we surely fail to make ideal full-fledged and we are just a tool. So I think planning education should involve the education concerning economics, politics and administration (Interview No.22, 8 January 2014).

Apart from public engagement being required by law, there is a need for public participation to solve conflicts in planning for land use adjustment, according to a respected Chinese planner.

The reason why there is relatively less public participation in China [than in western countries] is because of our mechanism: in China, residents do not have the right to occupy the land. However, recently there is more pressure to require public engagement. Because of the Property Right, local residents have the residence right, the right to rent and use the property. So, when it comes to urban planning, [if the local government or developers] want to regenerate, redevelop local area, the interest of local residents have to be involved (Interview No.20, 31 December 2013).

The local residents would say: if you want to take my land, you have to compensate me the amount of money I am satisfied with. However, you [local government or developers] do not want to give that much money to local residents, so there are lots of problems in urban planning (Interview No.20, 31 December 2013).

Before, urban planning mainly dealt with transforming and rebuilding old and dilapidated buildings, and it was easier for local residents to accept a relatively low level of compensation for resettlement. However, with the development of the real estate market, land price has been increasing; it is harder for local residents to accept a relatively low price of compensation of resettlement. It is not easy to satisfy them anymore. There are lots of conflicts between local residents and developers and local government. So, there is a need of public participation in some planning projects. 'Public participation' is different from 'Public engagement' in law, which we have done for a long time, after we formulate urban plans and we announce the result to local residents. The public participation here means the local

residents should come and get into the plan making process (Interview No.20, 31 December 2013).

To sum up, the transition has made it important to have expertise in ‘getting the public voice involved’ so that decisions are appropriate for their intended application.

### **7.3 Planning knowledge created by old rules**

#### **7.3.1 Keeping uniformity with the central power**

The ancient Chinese tradition of ‘keeping uniformity with the central power’ persisted during socialist times and still has force. Planners need to have a knowledge of central policies and know how to interpret them into urban plans.

Planners have to practice their ability of combining the national policies, the requirement of local authority and the information of local society (Interview No.32, 7 August 2014).

Planners should be familiar with the ideologies and policies of the CCP, have well-thought-out plans based on the known policies and make the knowledge we have learned go down all the way through the process of urban plan formulation (Interview No.32, 7 August 2014).

A senior planner reflected that,

I come to realize that many planners are expert in spatial arrangement, know a thing or two about economy and nothing about politics. What will they bring out? The outcomes make us feel frustrated. We make good planning and do many things, but National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) shows no interest, let alone the mayors (Interview No.22, 8 January 2014).



Technical skills alone do not make an effective planner.

Many factors influence urban development, such as planning. We should pay attention to the scientific outlook of planning, such as its rigidity, technicality and requirements. Decision-making at different levels should also be considered. Technology decisions are at the basic base. Above is policy decision. It would be difficult if the real-life investment is modest no matter how full-fledged the ideal is. So the proportion of technicality is small when it comes to policy making (Interview No.22, 8 January 2014)

Especially for the students of planning who just graduate three years, five years and even eight years, they usually lack the understanding or have a weak understanding of national ideologies and policies (Interview No.32, 7 August 2014).

Urban planning is an industry that has a strong relationship with politics because decisions are made by government and depend on government to implement them, so essentially it has already kept a high degree of uniformity with the central polices (Interview No.12, 9 December 2013).

In the Chinese context, urban planning is an industry that has a strong relationship with politics because decisions are made by government and depend on government to implement them, so planners feel it essential to ‘keep a high degree of uniformity with central government’ (Interview No.12, 9 December 2013).

I come to realise that planning in China is great nonsense after going through domestic planning process. Approval system changes if your leader changes and planning also has to change accordingly (Interview No.27, 6 August 2014).

Planners gain information from the central documents and the annual conference of urban planning such as Annual National Planning Conference, because ‘the national policies from central government are like arrows, the job of planners is to draw the target in relation to this arrow’(Interview No.32, 7 August 2014).

Key people including the so-called masters, big head and big planners in the circle of planning will express their opinions at the annual conference of urban planning. Their views represent Chinese planners’ attention such as what are the core opinion, the cutting-edge opinion and the widely accepted opinion and what’s your direction of research. All of them are called directional cues (Interview No.33, 18 August 2014).

Key decisions in urban planning are made by top leaders and quickly enforced nationwide.

The One-party system in China and its corresponding political leadership, elite group, government-run agencies and approval procedures are internally consistent. As a consequence, we can directly install the directions of top leaders into the mind of the planners at the bottom. They will develop a city form management plan in accordance with the needs of elite group at the top. With the cooperation of developers, building construction can be quickly completed. What’s more, provided special preconditions, we can reduce approval process and simplify procedures. That’s the situation we call “handle special cases with special methods (Interview No. 38, 14 June 2014).

Planners follow those central commands closely in the government-driven and top-down planning system. This explains the appropriateness of ‘keeping uniformity with the central power’ in planning knowledge.

### 7.3.2 Giving legitimacy to local authorities

Although the Urban Planning Law in 1989 brought the ‘rule of law’, the planning tradition of ‘rule of man’ still persisted. Because of decentralization, local government had the autonomy to initiate local urban development. Local cadres acquired a certain degree of autonomy and showed some flexibility in dealing with central state directives. Planning knowledge is used to meet the needs of local authorities, since mayors had great discretion in the arena of urban development.

A planner showed me the case of an administrative centre of a local government (Figure 13), which covers an area of 330 square kilometres with a ‘central axis’ and ‘central emphasis’ layout. The will of the local officials is fully presented here.



**Figure 13 The administrative centre of a local government (source: google maps)**

Planning has a hierarchy in which planners prepare plans for local authorities (Sun H. , 1997). Under ‘the rule of man’, planners used their planning knowledge to try to meet the needs of the person in power to win the competition for bid, to work out what he wants

and accommodate his every desire so that they can rapidly advance the urban design project.

The role of planners is like party B and now it is party A that goes through the simple and brute decision-making process. In spite of the contractual relationship between two parties, Party A and B, who should act as client and trustee, are still unequal. Party B is usually disrespectful in an uncooperative relationship (Interview No.27, 6 August 2014).

When you present him (the government official) with the work plan, it is no longer obscure document or collection of some simple provisions... (Interview No.29, 6 August 2014)

Another planner also says that,

In our presentation, we have built the planning model using the SketchUp software and also made some vivid and intuitive animations. The client chooses us finally (Interview No.26, 6 August 2014)

In practice, planners have found that a good and vivid sketch is a good advantage (Figure 14; Figure 15; Figure 16). It is a quite common sense in the planning practice to make a good design sketch (Interview No.26; Interview No.27).

Under the current system, planners are just like a drawing master-hand of their leaders. Your design can be called good if your leader likes it. This is the criterion. Planners had better make drawings look great because leaders do not understand your technical expression but always focus on drawing sketch. The so-called excellent drawings are those with a specific guide and a flashy appearance (Interview No.27, 6 August,2014).



- 说明
1. 行道树每 4m 一棵  
 可选择树种：  
 云杉  
 糖槭  
 白榆  
 柞树
  2. 分道灌木球间植  
 可选择树种：  
 中华金叶榆  
 云杉球  
 小叶丁香球

Figure 14 The design sketch of a square (Source: from an interviewee)



总体鸟瞰

Figure 15 The design sketch of a square (Source: from an interviewee)





**Figure 16** The design sketch of a city (source: from an interviewee)

That means in the plan-making process, much effort was put on how to make the sketch look better. This kind of ‘blueprint planning’ represented that the future urban plan is an explicit blueprint with binding indexes and large-scale maps. Less concern was put in the planning process, which meant how the plan could come true.

Since the local government officer needs ‘short-term growth’ to get promoted, good sketches showing there would be a big promotion in short time within the construction area, which is needed to gain the promotion. In many cases, the local authority had little professional knowledge (Interview No.26; Interview No.27), as a person ‘outside the door’, instead of trying to understand the rules in planning practice, the local authority valued the quality of a plan by its appearance.

### **7.3.3 ‘Setting the world in order’**

It is assumed in planning that all interest groups should work together for the common good. Here is just one of the examples of how planners see the conflicts between residents and local authority in urban planning.

For example, the house in front blocks the light of the house at the back. In northeast China, we often calculate the amount of light exposure and lighting rate in accordance with the standard of no less than two hours' light through the window on Dahan (the day in Chinese lunar calendar indicating the near end of winter). Our calculation and software testing result both show that the sunlight is sufficient. It's really not a big deal to block a little bit, if such is the case. But people are dissatisfied about this. Put bluntly, you have to pay me money, whatever your clarification is. Anyway, you have to pay me money, much money. If not, people would roll on the floor disturbing orders. As a result, the hearing has to be terminated. You, at any rate, have to give me money. It is okay to see people kick up a row for one or two days. But government cannot be held up by one person for a long time. Hearings will usually be held before the initiation of demolition or construction projects. People will take the chance to make a scene at hearings. You will end up holding several hearings. In this case, your leaders will blame you as the scheduled timeline is approaching and the work cannot be completed by this year. In the end, you may choose to give him some money and treat him as the "the squeaking wheel gets the oil" kind of people. He would find out that every time he can get money when making a scene. Afterwards all his neighbors will use this trick to make some money. They all claim that they are dissatisfied about something. This will lead to bad consequences. People will not give in even when getting considerable money. See, you give him 100,000 yuan and he wants the double. They all are like that. They know they can get money just by making a scene. They just think of themselves instead of the related people who are held up by them. They wouldn't think about how many people are anxious to live in the houses to be

built on the land. They are just obsessive about money, which is quite common in China (Interview No.38, 14 June 2014).

We can see from above that the rule in planners' mind was national interest or group interest is more important than individual interest. The definition of public interest in the socialist time still influenced rules Chinese planners followed in practice. Planners would consider 'total benefits' more important than 'respective benefit' (Interview No.9, 18 August 2014). Almost all the planners in the interviews considered it not a right thing for planners to only care about 'respective benefit'.

Most of the time, planners have the thought that public interest means group interest or national interest.

In the current stage, our basic principle of planning aims at maximizing the benefit of the overall city, for example, more efficient traffic, both development and ecology as well as both temporary economic and long-term interests (Interview No.35, 20 August 2014).

The knowledge of public interest of planners is important for planning practice because definitions are loosely given in law. For example,

The overall planning of a city or town shall include: the overall arrangement for the development of the city or town, functional zones, land use layout, comprehensive traffic systems, regions prohibited, restricted from or appropriate for construction and various kinds of special planning, etc. The following contents shall be included in the overall planning of a city or town as mandatory contents: coverage of the planning area, scale of the land used for the construction of the planning... (Article 17, Urban and Rural Planning Law, 2007).



It was shown that only some defined contents and the structure to form the plans and no strict or detailed definitions and standards for plan formulation methods. Also, planners were encouraged to

Adopt advanced scientific technologies to make urban and rural planning more scientific and to improve the efficiency of the implementation, supervision and administration of urban and rural planning (Article 10, Urban and Rural Planning Law, 2007).

Within this context, in the process of plan formulation, planners had the power to decide what methods to use, which is dependent upon the capacity and professional background of the urban planners.

As Tang Kai<sup>18</sup> claimed, urban planning in China should maintain public interest and fairness, dealing with the conflicts between public interest administrations and the protection of private rights should be included in urban planning (Tang, 2004).

Although laws in urban planning were enacted, there are still conflicts between the Urban and Rural Planning Law and other laws. For example, in the process of urban construction in China, if there are changes in land use in planning area, some of the residential housing will be demolished as a consequence. According to the Constitution and Property Rights Law, personal interests should be protected in the plan formulation process. However, in the Urban and Rural Planning Law, the property rights of individuals are neglected. There is a lack of balance and insufficient attention given to the need to negotiate the interests of different parties and a compensation plan for those whose interest is offended. It is stipulated in the Urban and Rural Planning Law:

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<sup>18</sup> Director General, Department of Urban and Rural Planning in 2004, Ministry of Construction, P.R. China,

Where a construction project is carried out within a township or village planning area without obtaining the necessary planning permit for rural construction or violating the provisions of the planning permit for rural construction, the people's government of the township or town shall order the construction entity or individual to stop construction, make correction within a certain time limit, and, if the entity or individual fails to do so within the time limit, dismantle the building or structure (Article 65, Urban and Rural Planning Law, 2007).

However, it is stipulated in the Property Rights Law that

The owner shall enjoy the right to possess, utilize, obtain profits from and dispose of the exclusive parts of the apartment building, provided that the exercise of its rights neither endangers the security of the apartment building, nor do harm to the legitimate rights and interests of other owners<sup>19</sup> (Article 71, Property Rights Law, 2007).

In China, land belongs to the nation but individual has the property right of the building on the land.

Urban land belongs to the state...No organisation or individual may appropriate, buy, sell or lease land, or unlawfully transfer it in any way (Clause 4, Article 10, the 1982 Constitution).

When it comes to conflicts in law, planners have the opportunity to make professional judgement.

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<sup>19</sup> Translated in <http://www.lehmanlaw.com/resource-centre/laws-and-regulations/general/property-rights-law-of-the-peoples-republic-of-china.html>

## Summary

Apart from an overview of appropriate planning knowledge of planners in practice, this chapter gives a detailed understanding of new types of knowledge:

‘The rule of law’ empowers planners to get legitimate power from relevant laws and regulations. It also gives planners authority, when planners receive the commission of planning tasks from their clients, they need to define their scope of task in accordance with laws and regulations related to urban planning.

‘GDP-oriented urban growth’ brings planning some knowledge of ‘place making’ and ‘city branding’, which is important in attracting investment for local development. Priority is given to economic efficiency rather than other aspects. The regulation of floor area ratio (FAR) is important knowledge for planners in practice, because the more additional space that can be built, the more commodity space a developer would have to sell. Planners’ expertise for the benefit of local development is required in the new planning situation, including the efficient use of land resources and effective spatial arrangement for land uses.

‘Making professional judgment’ provides planners with the chance to apply various theories and methodologies in practice. In planning for growth in land use adjustment, urban planning has to deal with many various interest groups, planners have to innovate the knowledge to meet new requirements. Planners’ knowledge of ‘balancing different interest’ is important and brings planners the opportunity to make professional judgements.

The transition brings concern for appropriateness through the process of ‘getting the public voice involved’. Since public consultation in China is quite new, planners have to find their own way to do that. Different strategies have been developed to make local

consultation work. The skills of listening, communicating and negotiating with local residents become important to understand local conditions. 'Public participation' is recommended by some planners to solve the conflicts in planning for land use adjustment.

At the same time, planning traditions also create planning knowledge, which has been embedded in the taken-for-granted assumptions and practice of planners:

'Keeping uniformity with the central power' requires knowledge of central policies and knowing how to interpret them into urban plans. Key decisions in urban planning are made by top leaders and quickly enforced nationwide. Planners follow those central commands closely in the government-driven and top-down planning system.

'Giving legitimacy to local authorities' requires knowledge of making good and vivid design sketches to meet the needs of local authorities. Since mayors had great discretion in the arena of urban development, under 'the rule of man', planners use their planning knowledge to try to meet the needs of the person in power to win the competition for bid.

'Setting the world in order' makes it appropriate that all interest groups should work together for the common good. Planners would assume that 'total benefits' are more important than 'respective benefit'.

The knowledge of planners is important because of the legitimacy and authority it brings to justifying their role expectations, which include collections of planning knowledge, the appropriate conduct which specify related to complementary roles, such as the rights and duties. Role expectations are changing with the transition of a society. The transition leads to the emergence of new role expectations: new knowledge is brought in to justify the new role expectations. The instrumental use of knowledge occurs when human actors use scientific knowledge to perform some specific tasks and the motivation for using

knowledge instrumentally may lie in a human actor's need to deliver outputs in line with his roles in the institutional context. In the following chapter, the role expectations of planners in the interaction with local government officials will be explained to have an understanding of how planners utilize different types of planning knowledge in practice.

## **Chapter 8 The role expectations of planners**

### **Preamble**

This chapter introduces Chinese planners' role expectations in their interactions with local government officials. The fundamental distinction among different role expectations lies in the instrumental use of knowledge by planners. In different situations, there are three types of role expectations, 'handmaiden of power', 'initiative knower' and 'active initiator', each of which carries different rules of appropriateness.

### **8.1. The role expectation of 'handmaiden of power'**

Some Chinese planners see themselves as 'purely technical designers' (Interview No.28, 7 August 2014), a role which is assumed to be value-neutral. It is believed that the quality of the local urban environment will be improved through 'modern' or 'scientific' planning practice. Traditionally, planners in China take on the role of technician: their practice was focused on using their professional knowledge on the layout of the city, in order to realize a plan which can represent the common good. However, in some situations, planners actually use their professional knowledge to serve the people who are in power.

In fact, it is quite common for us planners to just follow the opinions of our clients and it is almost a hidden rule that [planners] formulate urban plans for the benefit of their clients [local government officials or developers] (Interview No.1, 16 November 2013).

Planners should have service awareness. That is, planners provide planning and management service [to their clients] (Interview No.32, 7 August 2014).

Generally speaking, you find out what he wants and present your solutions to him with a design drawing, which will definitely make his eyes light up (Interview No.27, 6 August 2014).

Mayors have great discretion in the arena of urban development, and planners use their planning knowledge to try to meet the needs of the person in power to win the competition for the bid. Planners sometimes have to please their clients. 'You have to find the answer in the mind of local authorities and they will like your plan' (Interview No.27, 6 August 2014). 'The challenge for the planner is to work out whatever the client wants and accommodate his every desire so that planners can rapidly advance the urban design project' (Interview No.27, 6 August 2014). They are 'just like a drawing master-hand of government officials' (Interview No.27, 6 August 2014). An urban plan can be called good if 'the key person in government likes it' (Interview No.27, 6 August 2014).

This illustrates the fact that some planners have a role expectation of 'handmaiden of power', which embodies the rule of 'giving legitimacy to local authorities'. In line with this role expectation, planners use their knowledge to execute the ideas of their clients (local government officials or developers). Professional knowledge of planners is used to implement their clients' initiatives in the interest of people's livelihoods, economic development, land distribution, and in forming the spatial image of a city. Although planners are expected to serve the public interest, they are actually captives of the political and economic urban establishment and their plans are for the benefit of the privileged few.

The reason is that the head has the final say under the current system (Interview No.30, 7 August 2014).

In my opinion, first, urban planning is actually the tool of governance; second, urban planning is the tool of adding value to cities, so planners should perform the role of being a tool (Interview No.37, 7 August 2014).

The assumption is that the problems in urban planning are defined for the benefit of the clients. Planners provide a planning service for their clients' interests, maintaining confidentiality, and are obedient to their instructions. Being a good planner means that they can find out exactly what their clients want, and that they can provide professional solutions to satisfy them.

Planners use their knowledge in a symbolic way in order to respond to external expectations and pressure from local authorities. Their knowledge is used to deliver the goals of power. Since planners in China have no real power to hand, planners can only provide plans for the government to make a decision. Planners have to listen to the local authority, their Party A, most of the time. Sometimes professional ideas from planners have to be modified to adapt to the requirements of those in control. Here is a case in identifying the function of land.

What seems unacceptable to the local authority is the situation where the land has already been taken [by developers]. For instance, the local authority has made its decision and approved [the transfer of] several pieces of land [for developers]. Though the local authority knows the truth, they would not tell you [planners] clearly. Just with the truth in their mind, they would propose objections against you if your advice appears unreasonable [to local authority]. Therefore, in many situations like this, we will respect their ideas if they do not betray the basic principles (Interview No.26, 6 August 2014).



This implies that there might be some deals behind closed doors. Decisions on land use are subject to the wide discretion of government officials. Businessmen generally bargain with the planning office to obtain favourable planning parameters, usually for higher density, more floor space or a lower public contribution. Planners have to compromise under the power of the local authority in this case, find a professional excuse and give a justification to give legitimacy to this behind-closed-doors behaviour.

It seems all right 'from the public perspective' as we go through complete procedures, including bidding, tendering, reviewing, submitting for approval, public participation and issuing certification (Interview No.38, 14 June 2014).

In real world implementation, the fact is that 'every single procedure has something fishy' (Interview No.38, 14 June 2014). Regulations are implemented 'elastically' and 'can be possibly changed', under the current system, 'the head of government has the final say' (Interview No.30, 7 August 2014). For example, it was quite common in the urban planning system that 'regulations made by the former mayor will be replaced by new rules formulated by the new mayor' (Interview No.38, 14 June 2014). 'Approval system changes if the leader changes and planning also has to change accordingly' (Interview No.27, 6 August 2014). Planners have to use their professional knowledge to give legitimacy to the decisions made by local governments.

In China, the invisible hand, that is, market, is controlled by rule of man and core interest group because there are many cases like collusion between the government and businessmen. The most common vision of both power interest group and market interest group is interest. The job of planners is not to balance but serve all the interest groups. Their professional ethics is the only bottom line. Some have

stooped below the bottom line and do planning for anything if paid bribes. There's little we can do to prevent this (Interview No.38, 14 June 2014).

There have been changes in institutional context such as laws and bureaucracy, most of the planning institutes are separate from the Chinese political administrative system because of the transition, however, quite a few of them still have a special relationship with the local government and are influenced a lot by them. In other word, some planners who work in planning institutes are closely related to the political system. So it is appropriate for them to have the role expectation of 'handmaiden of power'.

It is usually hard for planners to insist the 'right' values, at least insist the values that you think right, or use the ideology 'scientific development' from our central government. Most of the time, insisting their own values is hard for planners, because planners are deeply related to our political administrative system. For example, planners are barely self-employed or partners in a firm, they usually work for planning institutes. These planning institutes usually have special relationship with the local government. Most of the time, the head of planning institutes is appointed by the government. Generally speaking, planning institutes are influenced a lot by the government (Interview No.20, 31 December 2013).

In this context, the rule of 'getting the public voice involved' is relatively weak. 'Setting the world in order' prevents planners from bringing different voices into the plan-making process which can make it difficult to 'get the public voice involved'. The 'order' here has a hierarchy, which means people who are in power has a stronger voice while people with no decision power have a weak or no voice in plan-making process. Planners use their professional knowledge to help the powerful to free local areas from conflicts by ignoring voices from the bottom. It is considered that bringing the voices of local

residents into planning might cause disorder in local areas and bring trouble to local government. The asymmetry of information is common. Planners' initiative for surveying more public ideas in the plan formulation process might be easily rejected by local authorities.

Therefore, I think the good side is that many people [local common people] do have little advanced consciousness while officials, after all, in themselves have certain quality. Their thinking and practice bring progress instead of retrogression to China. Looked at another way, their high efficiency allows construction projects to be completed in a short period, which enables people to move into new houses within a few years. Therefore, people are willing to pay. From the perspective of market returns, Chinese officials achieve recognition from market and also macro-economic environment (Interview No.38, 14 June 2014).

In this role expectation of 'handmaiden of power', planners consider themselves have the responsibility to help local governors to 'set the world in order' and have the avoidance of representation of conflicting interests (Marcuse, 1976). Traditionally, people who could govern were assumed to have the requisite moral qualities: their obligation was to bring prosperity to local residents. The governors were assumed to have requisite moral qualities, thus the vocational ideal was appropriate for the governors to set the world in order. In other words, in some cases, planners trust them because they believe that local government officials can bring the common good- better economic environment and efficiency in local development.

As far as I can see from the perspective of management, officials can have means if they have ascended the officialdom ladder or have known the local conditions to some extent and meanwhile have the willingness to dedicate themselves to serve the

locals. Actually, most officials' words make some sense. We are technical people and used to views things from a technical perspective. As a result, we may find what officials talk very ridiculous or illogical. But you could find, if you take another look at them, that their understanding about the place and feasible approaches are reasonable (Interview No.33, 18 August 2014).

The transformation of the southern and northern parts of Shenzhen LOFT sparked the vitality in the area. At night, more than half of people there were foreigners. They liked it so much there. These four product types were very advanced and attractive. It is also a vanity project with its own highlights. But it really brings benefits for the public. Moreover, officials are so ambitious and this project is validated by experts and proves to be tenable. Otherwise, experts would not agree with the official's idea. So I think there are some advantages. Maybe many civilians are not aware of advanced technology while officials have some learning. They put ideas into practice, moving China forwards not backwards. Well, from another perspective, their high efficiency can push the project to be completed quickly. As a result, people will soon be able to enjoy the benefits within a few years. So people are willing to pay for this. In terms of market return, they win recognition of market. They also win the recognition of the major economic environment. All in all, this can ensure efficiency and a top-down consistent thinking (Interview No.38, 14 June 2014).

Some planners consider that as long as government officials have the capacity to bring local prosperity, it does not matter if they are corrupt or accept bribery.

Corruption is not the most worrying thing but no action. As long as you make a move with your ingenious plan, that's fine. If you take action without any idea in mind, it's done (Interview No.38, 14 June 2014).

As a government official, at the very least, he wants to do something awe-inspiring even by virtue of bribery and corruption. He is trying to do a good job. It is a fact that your business [developers] provides him money yet he also want to do a similar thing with you, but you are not the boss, we have to make our ideas connected. If officials want to get promoted, he would not want to do this thing not only for the money but also for political achievements, which, in fact, serves as making yourself [the local area] look good and benefiting the city (Interview No.16, 16 December 2013).

'Giving legitimacy to local authorities' makes planners use their knowledge to justify decisions made by local government officials. Instead of 'making professional judgments', they have to meet the needs of local authorities, even if a command from government officials goes against the law.

## **8.2. The role expectation of 'initiative knower'**

Sometimes planners serve in the role of an 'initiative knower', using their professional knowledge to make their voice heard in the decision-making process, by 'thinking from the perspective of our clients' (Interview No.29, 7 August 2014). 'It is more important to play as the top-notch think tank for the CCP municipal committee and municipal government.' (Interview No.32, 7 August 2014)

Being a 'knower' means 'we [planners] will help you [local authorities] think about, analyze and solve problems in terms of urban design' (Interview No.29, 7 August 2014). It also means, 'you [planners] have to save money for them [local authorities] and you

have to provide them with effective and practical plans' (Interview No.29, 7 August 2014). Although planners might view themselves as 'decision makers of the development and the whole framework' (Interview No.29, 7 August 2014), because compared with socialist times, they have more opportunities to use their professional judgement, they actually play the role of an 'initiative knower', because they still have no legal power in decision making.

This role expectation relies upon the rule of 'GDP-oriented urban growth'. Although the transition has not brought planners the power to make decisions, planners have the opportunity to use their knowledge in the political, market and other related areas to influence the decision-making process of local authority.

When the government is considering a particular subject and it finds it complicated because of so many different influence factors, then it asks us for help in decision making, which is feasible for phased implementation. Sometimes we will even help the government to come up with fiscal expenditure plans. For example, when the local government gets state funds from central government, it will determine how to distribute the funds in different parts (Interview No.29, 7 August 2014).

At present, many officials come to realize that it is professionals that should finally decide professional things. What officials need do is to set the tone for the planning, modern, retro or something else. In other words, officials give general directions and then planners follow them and review all the specific details (Interview No.38, 14 June 2014).

This extract illustrates the kind of situation that may arise when officials know little about planning knowledge or local situation; they have to seek help from professionals. 'The rule of law' empowers planners to get legitimate power from relevant laws and

regulations, planners are supposed to learn laws and regulations very well and have the capacity to use them in planning practice. It gives planners a bottom line when there was disagreement between planners and local authorities. Anyone who goes against the law will be punished. Local authorities cannot dispose land at will any more. Urban plans should be formulated in accordance with the Urban and Rural Planning Law 2007.

‘GDP-oriented urban growth’ gives planners opportunities to apply their knowledge in practice and the professional ideas from planners are important for local authorities. Land finance has been important for local governments and urban development plans became the priority for decision-making. Rather than just beautifying the urban environment, planning knowledge is about creating city images, attracting domestic and foreign investment and so on. Planners have the chance to influence the decision-making process in urban development. They provide information and professional judgement to local government officials and professional knowledge which benefits local development brings legitimacy and authority to their role expectation of ‘initiative knowers’.

Our work is not to do everything for government but to provide information for government so as to make right decisions, which exactly meets the needs of government. During the procedures, government may have some opinions on your work and you can adopt his doable ideas. As for the impractical ideas, you can tell government officials. They could understand that as they have wider experience and broader field of vision. If they really do not, you can list out the potential harm for their consideration. If they still insist on carrying the ideas out, it’s not your misconduct (Interview No.30, 7 August 2014).

[Planners provide] a list like this, telling you in which direction your city planning should follow and what should be paid more attention in next three to five

years...you should ensure two aspects. First, the plan ought to be sustainable and effective, meaning that you are able to keep improving and upgrading your work based on your previous plan, in accordance with your core ideas. Second, you should ensure the availability of the funds and services... (Interview No.29, 7 August 2014).

In this case, if local government officials are convinced, planners can not only take the planning project for the moment, as they might also get more urban planning projects in the same localities.

Institutes like us [planning institutes]are basically market-oriented. Because we do not have stable contracted work, we should develop new markets to attract more projects from every place in China. We first get it, negotiate with the stakeholder if we have confidence in the project and execute it after reaching an agreement (Interview No.26, 6th August, 2014).

Then I tell him that he can achieve a phased project under the overall planning framework, like two years or three years as one phase. Then, he can make regulatory detailed plan once each year. That is a step-by-step work plan. So there will be much less pressure on him, since the overall budget will be divided into years, like just two million a year, which is still better than 6 million in one year. In such a communication process above, you reduce his pressure and make him more acceptable. And that is a highly sophisticated technique in project negotiations (Interview No.29, 7 August 2014).

The transition has introduced more and different rules for the local government to follow in the decision-making process, compared with the clear and detailed commands from central government in socialist times. Planning decisions must now always be interpreted



related to market forces. Local government officials needed urban planners' professional knowledge in the decision-making process, including in the interpretation of central policies. So the role expectation of 'initiative knower' also carries the rule of 'keeping uniformity with the central power' and planners' independent viewpoints of interpreting central commands into planning practice are important for their clients.

In fact, the local authority does not know where to and how to follow the central policies. Planners have to help them (Interview No.32, 7 August 2014).

When the central government has pointed direction in new urbanization, local officials may have different understanding since no clear definitions come from the central government. Planners in different provinces have to quickly draft design drawings when given orders. But officials have no idea how to achieve new urbanization since they are forced by superior leaders to do this. As a consequence, planners should think independently and critically in the interactions with officials (Interview No.37, 20 August 2014).

In the end, when you (planners) present your plan, he (the government official) will find it creative, stunning, and rightly great. He (the government official) will say that it just accords with the city and lives up to his thoughts. But he also thinks that the plan is much better than his expectations. To plan the city in this way is very promising. He (the government official) thinks that you have made so many extra contributions and suggestions (Interview No.29, 7 August 2014).

'Keeping uniformity with the central power' is appropriate for a top-down planning system. Instead of independent judgment, planners merely have the chance to interpret central ideas and use that in urban plans. Professional knowledge serves the requirement of central government instead of real needs in local areas. Problems in urban planning

were defined by the central state and planners who made urban plans for local areas were responsible for solving these problems with their professional knowledge.

### **8.3. The role expectation of ‘active initiator’**

The transition also brought planners the opportunity to use their knowledge to influence the decision-making process. Planners, as a different party from ‘the ruling class’, people who are not in the public administration system of the Chinese government, can influence the decision-making process in plan-making. Apart from their role of technician, the transition has brought planners a political role as ‘active initiator’. Although compared with planners in other countries, such as in the US, this political role was so limited, for the first time in Chinese history, planners had their opportunity to make a change.

Planners sometimes create the process of getting themselves involved in the role expectation of ‘active initiator’, which means they have the initiative to guide and manage plan-making process to influence final decision making. In this role expectation, not only is their knowledge of technical analysis important, but also their knowledge of how to explain things to outsiders. In the process of urban plan formulation, sometimes, planners were ‘the teacher of local authority’ (Interview No.27; Interview No.28). Planners ‘try to educate the local authority, let them know the planning knowledge, social knowledge and planning law...’ (Interview No.29, 7 August 2014)

Since the power of decision-making is mainly at the hand of government officials, if planners want to achieve their professional rule of appropriateness when some government officials go against them because of short-term interest, planners have to ‘spend more time explaining to him and guiding him during the entire planning process’ and thus ‘keep them from making bad decisions’. (Interview No.27, 6 August 2014)

By explaining professional knowledge to local authority, planners can influence the decision-making process (Interview No.27; Interview No.28), by trying to guide in the process of presentation to persuade them to follow the professional judgement of planners (Interview No.27, 6 August 2014). ‘During our interaction with local authorities, what planners actually do is 1/3 education, 1/3 guidance; 1/3 discussion...’ (Interview No.27, 6 August 2014).

For directors or section chiefs of the planning bureau, who usually have some professional knowledge, they would know about the difference (between plans). But for mayors, they are usually unclear about the classification of plans. So you have to explain this to them. You should explain backward, which means pointing out the plan type for him according to his requirements. Maybe he puts forward three or four requirements, and you should help him sort out, telling him “you may need one or three plans at least to solve your problem (Interview No.29, 7 August 2014).

There are so many serious problems in our development; one of the reasons is that the local governments are dominant and powerful in the process of urban planning. In this situation, some planners insist their own values to persuade the government officials through successful or failed cases from abroad or China, or you can persuade them from the professional knowledge in urban planning. Thus the initiative of planners to obey the professional principles is important (Interview No.20, 31 December 2013).

Planners try to lead different interest groups including stakeholders, the government and other relevant agencies ‘all the way into planners’ own design thoughts’ (Interview No.29 He Ma, 7th August, 2014). As a result of lack of professional knowledge on the part of

some clients, 'making independent professional judgment' became appropriate in planners' practice. 'What planners can do is that we lead the local authority through our professional knowledge to insist the quality of our plans.' (Interview No.30, 7 August 2014). The aim of this education is 'then it is easier for them [officials] to accept our plans later...in the end, they admitted planners help the city with its development' (Interview No.29, 7 August 2014).

Some planners try to plan in 'the active mode of planning' (Interview No.29, 7 August 2014). For experienced planners, most of them are not satisfied their role as merely 'draftsman' (Interview No.26; Interview No.27; Interview No.28), which gives them 'a passive role' (Interview No.26, 6 August 2014) in front of their clients. Once a planner becomes the 'draftsman', he will listen to the command of their clients. If the guidance is 'wrong or illegal' (Interview No.26, 6 August, 2014), and things might go wrong accordingly.

In my previous experience of overall planning, I would report local conditions to government officials with detailed research and then communicate to them. To be blunt, mayor or some other leaders entrust you with planning and you report to them what problems urban planning can solve. This process won't be so passive, at least in my current experience. Sometimes you need prepare some slides for a clear report and instill in them your thoughts. They have their concerns and you should answer for theirs first and can possibly impose your tangible and intangible stuff on them. Relatively speaking, local governments of northern areas are in a stronger position than those of southern ones (Interview No.28, 6 August 2014).

Your [single department in local government] idea is just one-sided and short-sighted. We will collect all your respective ideas and make a summary combined

with the consideration of actual space. Under this condition, we will work out a plan in accordance with overall benefits (Interview No.35, 20 August 2014).

A planner also reflected,

Planners cannot just follow project stakeholders, otherwise they become draftsmen. Moreover, they later will find themselves in a passive condition. What is a passive condition? Once you become his draftsmen, problems might emerge in a lot of things. For instance, his guidance may be wrong or illegal. Some inexperienced planners would make such mistakes (Interview No.26, 6 August 2014).

Listening to local government officials blindly may lead to mistakes in their practice.

There is a regulation from the Ministry of Construction in a certain period that new golf yard and mansions should not be built. If you make urban design by just following local authority to design a golf yard or mansions, you may make a big mistake (Interview No.35, 20 August 2014).

If you listen to the mayor blindly, in the aspect of technical details is OK, however, if in some important aspects, especially when it comes to the core principles in urban planning, this might lead to serious problems. Because sometimes politicians make their requirement of urban planning for the benefit of their own interest, however, from the point view of planners, we might want to do urban planning with the rules of scientific development, social justice, ecology and so on... (Interview No.37, 22 August 2014).

A senior planner said,

There are some extreme examples: since floor area ratio is directly linked to economic benefit, some developers even bribed some planners to make a change to

the floor area ratio in the final draft of urban plans after the examination of local governments. For example, in the final draft, what should be there is a piece of green land, however, if the developer wants to build houses on the piece of land, or if he wants to build road on it, he might ask somebody to move some lines on the plan or ask somebody to change the color of the line from green to red or yellow. Although you just change a bit on the drawing, in practice your changes are related to several billions (RMB)! Since the revision in the final process of the approval of urban plans might not be that strict. In this case, what planners did actually went against the law... some planners and local officials might take risks because of the money...most of the time, nobody will examine what they did after the approval of urban plans (Interview No.20, 31st December, 2013).

Instead of the instructions of their clients, experienced planners have the confidence to trust their own expertise in practice, which means, that ‘making independent judgements’ becomes appropriate in planning knowledge. Making professional judgment’ provides planners with the chance to apply various theories and methodologies in practice. Backed up by rich data and reliable analysis, when there is disagreement between planners and local authorities in the plan-making process, planners get the opportunity to justify their own judgments. Professional voices become stronger in final decisions.

As planners, we need independent thinking. In my opinion, we need independent thinking rather than just do the drawing according to what we are told (Interview No.32, 7 August 2014).

In my previous experience of overall planning, I would report local conditions to government officials with detailed research and then communicate to them. To be blunt, mayor or some other leaders entrust you with planning and you report to

them what problems urban planning can solve. This process won't be so passive, at least in my current experience. Sometimes you need prepare some slides for a clear report and instill in them your thoughts. They have their concerns and you should answer for theirs first and can possibly impose your tangible and intangible stuff on them. Relatively speaking, local governments of northern areas are in a stronger position than those of southern ones (Interview No.28, 6 August 2014).

We will also serve as your think tank, which means we will help you think about, analyse, and solve problems in terms of urban plan. You know, this is an active plan (Interview No.29, 7 August 2014).

A senior planner reflected that,

The proper way is that you make the Party A feel that you are there to give a helping hand and to solve problems of the city and its development. In other words, you put forward advice and suggestions for the development and construction of the city. You are the experts, academics, and consultants, and therefore you will be paid by good portion. In fact, you will get more income in the end, due to your really beneficial planning solutions. So you will harvest not only economic, but also social benefits, since you contribute to the entire community of the city, and to the decision-making for the city leadership (Interview No.29, 7 August 2014).

Since the quality of urban space had been a key factor affecting the competitiveness of a city for new investments and resources, planners now felt it appropriate to trust their own technician analysis and professional knowledge, compared with 'listening to the commands of senior officials' in socialist times. In terms of a 'good' urban planning for promoting the competitiveness and sustainable development of cities, planning

knowledge is more than beautifying urban environment, but also creating city image, attracting domestic and foreign investment and so on.

They need to know the application of logical reasoning and think independently and ‘getting public voices involved’ in the planning process in order to have a better understanding of local situation. ‘Getting public voice involved’ creates a ‘bottom-up’ process in plan making. Although the final decision was still made by local authorities, planners had the chance to bring various needs to the table. How to gather information from their clients becomes the next question to ask. In the interaction with local residents, planners develop their own knowledge on how to make local consultation work. Real conflicts and problems in local areas emerged through getting the voice from the bottom involved. This helped to define problems in the urban development plans of a locality.

We should think more about the data and information that we find. We should not directly use the information collected by others because some are totally disparate when integrated (Interview No.32, 7 August 2014).

They tried to create more room for themselves. For example,

According to the legal procedure, Party A provided the Letter of Authorization and planners would then provide him with plans according to the Letter of Authorization and relevant policies.... these days, after we get the Letter of Authorization, instead of starting formulating plans directly, we study the conditions and nature of this plan, then make a proposal to specify the working details (Interview No.29, 7 August 2014).



In this case, planners had the initiative to interpret the task by themselves because Party A is very likely to be unclear about the project himself after he commissioned you to finish the task. He may say

‘I’d like to make an urban design for a town or a county’, but he actually doesn’t have a professional background in this regard. You may ask ‘what kind of plan would you want, an overall plan or a regulatory detailed plan’, and he reply ‘what’s the difference’. So you have to communicate with him... (Interview No.29, 7 August 2014).

When we formulated urban design plans for a county, there is an area along the river. The county is so small that local authority wanted to develop the area. They wanted to make the river bank a residential area thus they can find developers to build buildings there. However, according to our analysis, there is almost farmland along the river, furthermore, in the same area, they are already a big residential area, thus they do not need any more. So we need to persuade the local authority that it is better for you only have a small residential area along the river bank...they agreed with us in the end (Interview No.33, 18 August, 2014).

In this case, the local authority would like more residential area because he wanted to bring more money to local area by real estate; however, planners insisted their professional judgment that the area actually needs no more residential area practically and economically. Thus we can see that in the role expectation of ‘active initiator’, planners have the initiative to influence the decision-making process and sometimes they can make it.

## Summary

In different role expectations, being a 'handmaiden of power' includes 'giving legitimacy to local authorities' 'setting the world in order'; 'initiative knower' carries 'GDP-oriented urban growth', 'keeping uniformity with the central power' and 'rule of law'; 'active initiator' carries 'making independent judgement' and 'getting the public voice involved'.

Some planners have the role expectation of 'handmaiden of power', which carries the rule of 'giving legitimacy to local authorities' and 'setting the world in order'. In line with this role expectation, planners use their knowledge in a symbolic way in order to respond to external expectations and pressure from local authorities. Their knowledge is used to deliver the goals of power. The rule of 'getting the public voice involved' is relatively weak and planners' initiative for surveying more public ideas in the plan formulation process might be easily rejected by local authorities. Planners consider themselves to have the responsibility to help local governors to 'set the world in order' and have the avoidance of representation of conflicting interests.

Sometimes planners served in the role of an 'initiative knower', using their professional knowledge to make their voice heard in the decision-making process, by thinking from the perspective of clients. This role expectation executes the rule of 'GDP-oriented urban growth'. Planners provide information and professional judgement to local government officials and professional knowledge which benefits local development. The 'rule of law' empowers planners get legitimate power from relevant laws and regulations, planners are supposed to learn laws and regulations very well and have the capacity to use them in planning practice. The role expectation of 'initiative knower' also carries the rule of 'keeping uniformity with the central power' and planners' viewpoints of interpreting central commands into planning practice are important for their clients.

The transition also brought planners a political role, as 'active initiator'. They have the opportunity to use their knowledge to influence the decision-making process. Planners, as a different party from 'the ruling class', which means, people who are not in the public administration system of the Chinese government, can influence the decision-making process in plan-making. Planners sometimes create the process of getting themselves involved in the role expectation of 'active initiator', which means they have the initiative to guide and manage plan-making process to influence final decision making. Backed up by rich data and reliable analysis, when there is disagreement between planners and local authorities in the plan-making process, planners get the opportunity to justify their own judgments. Professional voices become stronger in final decisions. Planners try to lead different interest groups including stakeholders, the government or other relevant agencies 'all the way into planners' own design thoughts', thus, 'making independent judgement' is appropriate in this role expectation. In the interaction with local residents, planners develop their own knowledge on how to make local consultation work, thus, 'getting public voice involved' is appropriate as well. 'Getting public voice involved' creates a 'bottom-up' process in plan making. Although the final decision was still made by local authorities, planners had the chance to bring various needs to the table. How to gather information from their clients becomes the next question to ask. Real conflicts and problems in local areas emerged through getting the voice from the bottom involved. This helped to define problems in the urban development plans of a locality.

In a clear and stable political context, rule of appropriateness are well defined and political actors follow them in practice. However, in a transitional and changing context, there are conflicts and there is ambiguity in rule of appropriateness. In order to clarify rules and determine what the situation is and what definition suits, the role expectations of planners are important. Planners internalize rule of appropriateness as their own role

expectations, meanwhile different rule of appropriateness provides different legitimate power, social esteem and valuation to role expectations. In the following chapter, detailed examples of planners' practice in FAR and public engagement will be given to illustrate how Chinese planners can make a difference in their practice in changing their role involvement in some situations.

## **Chapter 9 Detailed examples of planners' practice**

### **Preamble**

In this chapter, detailed examples of planners' practice in the important fields of FAR and public engagement will be given to illustrate how Chinese planners can make a difference in their practice in changing their role involvement in some situations. An analysis of why planners want to make a difference is also provided to gain a deeper understanding of planners' motivations.

### **9.1. Make a difference in formulating the indicator of FAR (Floor Area Ratio)**

A planner shared his successful experience in persuading the local authority of a county to change its mind about insisting on a higher FAR in the process of formulating regulatory plans. There are examples of cases where planners have tried to indicate an appropriate floor area ratio (FAR), some local governments were not satisfied with planners' plans because it was too low. 'Most local governments say they want a higher floor area ratio, whereas actually they want a higher price for the land' (Interview No.12, 9 December 2013). The planners considered it unreasonable to set a higher floor area ratio. City officials wanted the flexibility to allow developers to build big and tall, so that their city can generate more revenue from their lease of land to developers.

Frankly speaking, at the level of the county in the Chinese estate market, it is not realistic to rely on a high density of houses to obtain a higher price for the piece of land, because there are not so many people to buy houses. The situation there is not like Beijing: there, no matter how high your density is, people are always willing to buy the houses. Previously selling more houses supported the real estate market at the county level; however, it has to be supported by the environment now. That

means it is necessary that you build better houses with a more beautiful environment. Only in this way is it possible to attract more people to buy houses. If you rely on the high density as before, as a county, its advantage is your beautiful environment compared to prefecture-level cities and provincial capitals. Thus you can foresee, on the same land, the more houses there are, the lower the unit price of these houses will be. We hope the total amount is not so high that we can make the unit price higher with better built environment. In fact, there is very little difference when the total amount is a multiple of the unit price; however, it is more attractive if we adopt the method of lower amount and high unit price (Interview No.12, 9 December, 2013).

In this case, the reason why the planner that it was their obligation to make the plan better was that he felt ‘as professionals from XX, we can provide a good method to build the environment and spatial plan for you to choose’. (Interview No.12, 9 December 2013). The reason local government officials have trusted planners’ judgement was because of their background. They work in one of the best planning organizations in China, had a strong research background. Planners used research data from the organization to back up their judgement:

The number of houses in China has already gone over the number of families in China until last year. Thus we can say that the houses are not in shortage now, in the following step, it is time to compete with quality rather than quantity. Party A cannot reject us because we have done surveys and research and made a judgment. They will consider our proposal makes sense. We do not listen to Party A blindly and we have our own opinion (Interview No.12, 9 December 2013).

However, sometime planners have to compromise. Negotiations are inevitable inasmuch as the amount of real estate development is hard to predict, and many Chinese cities are being built out by real estate speculators, a prospect which is attractive to some city governments because they can generate substantial revenue through the initial leasing of land use rights to developers. This kind of negotiation is common in Chinese city planning exercises aimed at creating Detailed Control Plans. Many planners' interviews for this study described haggling over building heights and densities as the main issue in preparing such plans.

Take this case for example, we do not want floor area ratio higher on this piece of land, however, the government wants it higher, then OK, the [local] government establish an official letter stamped with an official seal to announce that it is the government who wants the plot ratio in this piece of land higher, and not the responsibility of urban planning (*XX Academy Urban Planning & Design*) (Interview No.12, 9th December, 2013).

In this case, the planners negotiated in collaboration with the local authority on FAR, , because his organization *XX Academy Urban Planning & Design* shared the legal responsibility with planning department in local government as well.

Organs organizing the establishment of urban and rural planning shall authorize entities with corresponding qualification grades to undertake the specific establishment work... (Article 24, Urban and Rural Planning Law, 2007).

Planners have to obey instructions within the scope of the employment. There can be sanctions from the planning institutes if planners make some mistakes in their professional knowledge. The planning institutes they work with undertake all the responsibility because planners take the work in the name of the planning institutes rather

than in an individual's name. So in this case, the planning institutes the planner works in may 'suffer a financial loss and even be criticized if he makes any mistake in formulating urban plans' (Interview No.12 Yipan Li). If a planning institution carries out 'urban and rural planning by going against the relevant state standards', 'if the circumstances are serious, it shall be ordered to stop business for rectification...' (Article 24, Urban and Rural Planning Law, 2007).

Because we cannot force the government to take our advice (laughter), we cannot make it, however, we wish that we can let others know the attitude of we planners, even our organizations. At least it is shown in the document that it is the government rather than planners who want the floor area ratio higher (Interview No.12, 9 December 2013).

During the interaction between planners and local government officials, the 'rule of law' pushes planners to make independent judgments rather than to do whatever they are told to do.

## **9.2. Make a difference in public engagement**

Although public engagement was advocated in the Urban and Rural Planning Law 2007, the voice of the public is still too weak to be heard by decision makers. Planners need to think harder about how to get the public voice involved and use their established knowledge to integrate their views more thoroughly. This weakness is a consequence of deficiency in planners' training: in the test for professional qualification and registration, the relevant subject concerns only the practical work such as formulating planning schemes, examining planning and design proposals, drafting planning documents, disposing administration cases, checking and accepting completed projects, and



investigating and handling illegal constructions: there is almost nothing related to public involvement.

In the role of ‘handmaiden of power’, planners’ idea of getting public voice involved might be easily rejected by their clients.

I really hope there is the chance for us to contact the common people in local area; local government officials do not hope that. From our point of view as planners, we hope that we can follow the urban planning procedures step by step, we even hope to do surveys from door to door, to investigate local living environment, however, people from local government said it would be better if we could do things like this less, for after doing them, the results might be terrible. According to current experience of urban planning governance, the public is good at taking advantage of policies. For example, if we do nothing and say nothing to the public, officials of the government can just need to do urban planning projects following the rules, however, most of the public, if they know that their house will be demolished, it is possible for them to build houses overnight, since the fees in compensation for the demolition are related to how big their houses are directly. I have the experience to witness this kind of issue; we said that this area was going to be demolished, there are several thousand square metres more house existing the next day... (laughters)... (Interview No.12, 9 December 2013)

Since public consultation in China is quite new, if planners want to see themselves as ‘active initiators’, they have to find their own way of doing that. In the stage of consulting common people’s comments, planners have the choice of either not completing it properly or doing it carefully. ‘Local residents do not have the power to get involved in the decision-making process, but we would like to ask their opinions about how to

improve our plan' Interview No.33, 18 August 2014). Some planners have developed certain approach to make this stage better. Planners can take the initiative and do public consultation, even without a proper evaluation system, when they would like to do their work in a better way.

You may also need to consult common people. But you need first work out a plan in advance and then present and explain it to people as most of them do not have their own ideas. Only by doing this can you make yourself clear. Some planners are really good at this. They would give people many options such as what do you think is lacking here or how you would think if something more is put there. That is to say, guide them into expressing their own ideas. Actually, many have also begun to take similar approaches and achieved a certain amount of outcomes (Interview No. 38, 14 June 2014).

Although there are only a few cases of public participation in China, in my opinion, there will be more and more similar cases in the years to come. Frankly speaking, local government and developers can barely afford the cost of moving the residents from a whole site. For example, I am formulating a plan about historic district regeneration at the moment. From the perspective of professionals, you need to protect not only the physical space of the historic district, but also the social structure there, and you need to consider the sustainable development of this neighbourhood. So you should not move all of them away. Because, if you move all of them away like XX, in that case they tore down all the old buildings and rebuilt the antique buildings. They moved all the time-honoured shops away and spent tens of billions RMB to rebuild a new one. When you want to move the shops back, they could not afford the price anymore. So that case is definitely a failure in historic district regeneration because planners did not respect the principle of market

economy and the real needs of local residents...from my perspective, I like the concept of 'regeneration', which emphasizes the planning process instead of the result. You need local residents to participate in this process instead just renew the physical space, in order to improve the vigor and enchantment of cities. So I would argue that public participation is necessary in urban planning (Interview No.38, 14 June 2014).

Sometimes planners do not want to get public voices involved: 'local residents were usually not well educated enough to understand urban plans' (Interview No.38, 14 June 2014) which were full of professional terms and gave insightful advice. When it comes to public consultation, some planners did not consider it important. 'Most of the time public participation is only a form to make the methodology of urban plans sounds more advanced.' (Interview No.39, 4 July 2014).

However, the professional ideas coming from XX may overpower people's ideas. Moreover, he may have neither the time nor the vision for that. Sometimes they would work out some ways of public participation to show that his ideas come from the public instead of himself. He is just bending the truth (Interview No.38, 14 June 2014).

The prejudices of planners about the common people still persist in practice. Confucius did not admire the moral qualities of the common people (Hao, 1996), nor do some planners in modern China. Some planners hold the attitude that they should avoid the common people being involved too much in the urban planning process. We can say that, they refused 'real' public participation. Confucianism 'valued hierarchy in both political and social spheres', an assertion that in the political sphere citizens were not and should not be equal (Lieberthal, 2004, p. 7). As Mencius, it is supposed that 'those who worked

with mind were fit to rule, and those who worked with their hands were not' (Lieberthal, 2004, p. 7). It explains why planners sometimes consider themselves superior to the common people, and that some planners do not consider their opinions useful. The lack of enough qualitative skills and the weakness of the voice of common people, has resulted in the problem that it is very hard for both government officials and planners to identify the real problems in urban planning.

### **9.3. The reason why sometimes planners want to make a difference**

Planners sometimes like to take the role of 'active initiator' because they do not want their organization to lose reputation, or because they do not want to go against their legal responsibilities or want a better reputation. Following the 'rule of law' and 'making professional judgements' might help planners to get positive evaluations, gaining trust from their clients. Instead of short-term benefits, some planners might prefer long-term benefit. The rewards of taking the role of 'active initiator' can include not only short-term benefits like money, but also the chance to 'gain trust and respect from your clients' (Interview No.29, 6 August 2014). After getting the trust from local authority, planners can have a long-term cooperation with it (Interview No.29, 6 August 2014). This also helps to build up a personal brand in the professional field. A good personal brand will help a planners' future market. The sanctioning of a planner's technical mistakes can give the planner a negative valuation in his reputation, which might influence his future market. A planner gave an example, 'if you make a big mistake in a province, it is likely that you will not have the opportunity to take on other projects in the same province' (Interview No.33, 18 August 2014).

In order to survive as a member of the urban planning profession, a planner must select one is appropriate for the situation. For example, the 'rule of appropriateness' changes

from ‘giving legitimacy to local authorities’ to ‘making independent judgement’ if a planner chooses to be ‘active initiator’ rather than a ‘handmaiden of power’ in practice, once he internalizes the rule of appropriateness, accepting and pursuing it even without the presence of external incentives or sanctions.

The role expectations of planners can be unclear. If planners are not clear about their role and cannot foresee how others might behave, there can be decreased effectiveness and productivity.

In China, the relation between local government and planners differs in different places. The local government in certain places may be in a stronger position than planners, which always play a supporting role in their relation. Their [the planners] proposals are always partially accepted. But in more developed places government would be more likely to follow planners’ advice. Government officials would seek help from think tank and experts for evaluation because they both know that you are expert in planning and also do not want major slip-ups or mistakes in urban planning. Therefore, the more developed the place is and the more full-fledged the system is, the slimmer the chance of going wrong would be, the more possible decisions for the market would be and the higher the autonomy of planners would be (Interview No. 38, 14 June 2014).

In other situations, planners have to make a choice between different roles because of the external pressure to make a living. Planners from the qualified planning institutes are employed by local governments from any part of China. They have to finish urban plans in a short time constraint by their contract with local governments. Here is an example of a planner from Beijing,

... for those employees who want to make a living in Beijing, they do not have the time and energy to do certain tasks because of the great life pressure. For instance, the lowest housing price in Beijing would be 30,000 yuan per square metre. Do you know what do this figure means? Let's assume that you can earn 30,000 yuan (around 3,000 pound) a month, which means you must earn 1000 yuan each day in order to stay in Beijing. And if you work 10 hours a day, you earn 100 yuan an hour. Do you know what is this concept after all? That means, every hour you spend in our planning institute, you have to create the value of 10,000 yuan or more (Interview No.12, 9 December 2013).

There are other situations, for example, some planning institutes take on too many tasks [of the formulation of urban plans], so planners have no time to think about their positionality of urban planning. Some planners know that it is not proper to just listen to the power, however, for stress of making a living, it is quite common for planners to listen to people who give them money. You could not say that they are against the law and what they actually do is that they go against the rules of our profession (Interview No.37, 22 August 2014).

It is not easy for planners to take the initiative, 'the relationship would not change easily unless you are doing very well or has some weight or local officials happen to accord with the values of planners' (Interview No.27, 6 August 2014).

Role expectations wear with time and the edges become blurred. Some parts lose relevance in society while others gain it. If being a 'good' planner means a professional has the capacity to take the initiative in the plan formulation process to influence final decisions. Then it is important for planners to follow the 'rule of law' and 'making professional judgement' rather than 'giving legitimacy to local authorities', he takes the

role of ‘active initiator’; in order to improve the status of the entire profession, if being a ‘good’ planner means the professional helps to bring social justice and individual right into planning, then it is important for planners to follow ‘rule of law’ and ‘getting the public voice involved’ rather than ‘keeping uniformity with the central power’ and ‘setting the world in order’ in the form of ignoring different voices in planning, then it is important for planners to take the role of ‘active initiator’.

Planning in the market-based economy, what we emphasize today, has many differences to that in the planned economy. I think the major difference for planners is to face the big challenge, that is, what the career values and corresponding system are and who you are. Where do you stand and from what perspective do you see things? How do you make judgment? What's your opinion on topography and natural environment? What attitude do you take towards leaders, common people and peers? Will you avoid or face the difficulty or make things clear when your report your work to senior leaders? All is about technicality, knowledge and most importantly, values. And honestly speaking, the fundamental and underlying problem is values. If you stick to the values, you will lose the design reward; if not, you will betray five years' education (Interview No.22, 8 January 2014).

## **Summary**

We can see from the examples in this chapter that in the case of formulating the indicator of FAR, although sometimes planners have to comprise in front of local government officials, they can make a difference in some situations. The ‘rule of law’ empowers planners to make judgment using professional knowledge according to relevant state standards, that is to say, it gives legitimacy to the independent judgment of planners. In the example of public engagement, although public engagement is advocated in the Urban

and Rural Planning Law 2007, the voice of the public is still too weak to be heard by decision makers. In the role of ‘handmaiden of power’, planners’ idea of getting public involved might be easily rejected, however, if planners see themselves as ‘active initiator’, the situation might be changed because of their effort.

The instrumental use of knowledge occurs when human actors use knowledge to perform some specific tasks and the motivation for using knowledge instrumentally may lie in a human actor’s need to deliver outputs in line with his roles in the institutional context. In order to survive as a member of the urban planning profession, a planner must select one role is appropriate for the situation.

Planners would like to take the role of ‘active initiator’, sometimes because they do not want their organizations to lose reputation, or they do not want to go against their legal responsibilities, or they want to get a better reputation. Following ‘rule of law’ and ‘making professional judgement’, planners might get positive valuations, such as gaining trust from their clients. Instead of short-term benefit, some planners might want their long-term benefit. The reward of the role of ‘active initiator’ is not only the short-term benefit of money, but also planners are able to gain trust and respect from their clients. To be a ‘good’ planner, it is important for planners to follow the ‘rule of law’ and ‘making professional judgement’ rather than ‘giving legitimacy to local authorities’.



## **Chapter 10 Conclusion**

### **10.1. Findings of this study**

This thesis set out to examine the changing role expectations of Chinese planners in a transitional context, while examining planners' knowledge in planning practice. A conceptual framework with three factors, planning knowledge, role expectations and appropriateness have been developed to help to understand the research questions and empirical work was conducted to answer the questions.

The research questions were:

1. Within the dynamics of a transitional context, which rules are appropriate in planning knowledge? Why?
2. What roles are Chinese planners playing in interactions with local authorities? Why?
3. How can planners make a difference?

#### **10.1.1. Research question 1: Within the dynamics of a transitional context, which rules are appropriate in planning knowledge? Why?**

##### ***New rules of appropriateness***

Knowledge changes with social change (Feldman & March, 1988, p. 425) and develops within social institutions (March, 1994, p. 240). Planning knowledge, as an important kind of political knowledge, is justifiable according to the standards set in its political context (Rydin, 2007). Transition has made appropriateness an important concern, and new practical planning knowledge has been generated in relation to the 'rule of law', 'GDP-oriented urban growth', 'making professional judgement' and 'getting the public voice involved'.

## 1. Rule of law

The City Planning Act 1989 initiated a statutory planning system in China. In socialist times, urban planning had been seen as merely assisting economic plans in distributing space for development projects. The role of planners then was as a ‘scientific technician’ who arranged the layout of space according to the result of economic plans or the commands from party cadres. Since the City Planning Act, planners have needed to formulate urban plans according to laws and all development projects have had to conform to the master plan. Institutionally, urban planning has been assigned a more important position in the administrative hierarchy.

Planners now need to know how to define the scope of their work when they receive commissions for planning tasks. They need to have the capacity to make job objectives clear and interpret the requirements for specific work. ‘The rule of law’ empowers planners to get legitimacy from relevant laws and regulations; planners are supposed to learn laws and regulations very well and have the capacity to use them in planning practice. When it comes to conflicts between their clients and planning laws and regulations, it is appropriate for planners to obey the law instead of other requirements. It also gives planners authority, when planners receive the commission of planning tasks from their clients, they need to define their specific in accordance with laws and regulations related to urban planning.

## 2. GDP-oriented urban growth

The change of state power gives local government the responsibility for local prosperity. Local government has acquired the power to make development plans for urban areas and planners from qualified planning institutes have been employed to formulate development plans. The economic reforms have changed the rules from national equality to economic

productivity. Priority has been given to economic efficiency rather than social equality and regional coordination has been replaced by regional competition (Zhu, 2004). A GDP-dominated performance evaluation system has been created for local government officials. Land finance has become an important source of income for local government, which needs to coordinate land development projects by soliciting a variety of sources other than state investment. Local government makes a great effort to attract investment for major projects.

‘GDP-oriented urban growth’ requires knowledge of ‘place making’ and ‘city branding’, important in attracting investment for local development. Priority is given to economic efficiency rather than other aspects. Planners need to know how to regulate floor area ratio (FAR), because the more space that can be built, the more commodity space a developer can sell. Planners’ expertise for the benefit of local development is useful in the new planning situation, including knowledge of the efficient use of land resources and effective spatial arrangement for land uses.

### 3. Making professional judgments

Under the 2007 Urban and Rural Planning Law, planners have the opportunity to decide which theory and methodology to apply to the plan-formulation process (Article 10, Urban and Rural Planning Law, 2007). The function of planning institute's work is that it has changed from governmental functions to technical consultation and service functions. That is to say, planners are becoming a group outside the government administration system.

‘Making professional judgment’ provides planners with the chance to apply various theories and methodologies in practice. Backed up by rich data and reliable analysis,

when there is disagreement between planners and local authorities in the plan-making process, planners get the opportunity to justify their own judgments. Professional voices become stronger in final decisions.

Under the context from planning for growth to land use adjustment, urban planning has been transformed from the exclusive investment behaviour of governments to that of diversified bodies, and every investor wants his own share of the generous profit from urban development. Along with the possession of property rights and the awakening of rights consciousness, citizens are calling for their rights in local development affairs. In these circumstances, it is impossible to solve all the complicated social problems through a simple blueprint. Planning knowledge of market assessment, economic calculations and financial analysis became appropriate for planners to balance different interests. The professional knowledge of planners is important because local government lacks experience in dealing with planning for land use adjustment. Planners' knowledge of 'balancing different interest' brings planners a leading role in working with different departments in local government, and different interest groups involved in land use adjustment. Planners' knowledge of how to allocate resources fairly is important in the context of planning for land-use adjustment, because unlike planning for growth, there are more interest groups to consider. It is not only public interest but also private rights that are supposed to be guaranteed in the process of plan-making process. Social abilities (in the form of organizing and communications skills) are also required. Planners need to have the skills and patience of explaining information and professional terms to non-professionals.

#### 4. Getting the public voice involved

It is required in law that the opinions of the general public should be fully considered (Article 26, Urban and Rural Planning Law). Since public consultation in China is quite

new, planners have to find their own way to do that. Various strategies have been developed to make local consultation work. The skills of listening, communicating and negotiating with local residents have become important in the understanding of local conditions. 'Public participation' is proposed by some planners as a solution for the conflicts in planning for land use adjustment.

To sum up, the transition brought new appropriateness into planning knowledge. However, knowledge brought by the new appropriateness was sometimes ignored in practice, because planning tradition from socialist times and earlier still persists.

### ***Traditional rules of appropriateness***

The old planning traditions nevertheless persist and continue to wield power: 'keeping uniformity with the central power', 'giving legitimacy to local authorities' and 'setting the world in order'. Knowledge generated and validated through planning traditions had become embedded in the taken-for-granted assumptions and practice of planners.

#### 1. Keeping uniformity with the central power

The ancient Chinese tradition of 'central direction matters' has persisted. Key decisions in urban planning were once made by top leaders and quickly enforced. Planners followed those central commands closely in the government-driven and top-down planning system. This gives the appropriateness of 'keeping uniformity with the central power' to planning knowledge.

'Keeping uniformity with the central power' requires knowledge of central policies and how to interpret them into urban plans. Key decisions in urban planning are made by top leaders and quickly enforced nationwide. Planners follow those central commands closely in the government-driven and top-down planning system.

‘Keeping uniformity with the central power’ is in conflict with ‘getting the public voice involved’, which emphasizes locality and the diversity of urban plans. Control of urban planning comes from top governors rather than the real needs of localities. The policy objective is made by central government and translated by planners. Little concern is given to how suited the plans are to meet actual local needs or how well they manage to achieve their objectives.

## 2. Giving legitimacy to local authorities

Although the Planning Act in 1989 brought the rule of law, the planning tradition of ‘rule of man’ still persists. Because of decentralization, local government has the autonomy to initiate local urban development. The local cadres acquired a certain degree of autonomy and showed some flexibility in dealing with central state directives.

‘Giving legitimacy to local authorities’ brings appropriate knowledge of making good and vivid design sketches to meet the needs of local authorities. Since mayors have great discretion in the arena of urban development, under ‘the rule of man’, planners use their planning knowledge to try to meet the needs of the person in power to win the competition for a bid. The appropriateness is to ‘give legitimacy to local authorities’, which goes against ‘making independent judgment’. Planners use their knowledge in a symbolic way in order to respond to external expectations and pressure from local authorities.

## 3. ‘Setting the world in order’

The traditional role of planners, as an educated elite, was to help the rulers to ‘set the world in order’, which means, the rule of appropriateness were to maintain political and

social stability (*anding*) and their practice should not bring potential or actual domestic disorder (*luan*) (Ma, 2009, p.v).

‘Setting the world in order’ makes it appropriate that all interest groups should work together for the common good. Planners will consider ‘total benefits’ more important than ‘respective benefit’ (Interview No.9, 18 August 2014). Almost all the planners in the interviews considered it wrong for planners to only care about ‘respective benefit’. It goes against with the appropriateness of ‘making professional judgement’. Traditionally, elites helped the rulers to set the world in order, which also means, to keep ‘Great Harmony’, in which disruptive change was minimized, all groups worked together for the common good. Planners and local governments are not used to dealing with different opinions and conflicts. The state sets the appropriateness for individuals, to keep the common good in the first place.

#### **10.1.2. Research question 2: What roles are Chinese planners playing in interactions with local authorities? Why?**

The contemporary Chinese planning system is hierarchical with different levels and it has a weak evaluation and monitoring system. It is faced with transition: the central state has relaxed its control over local developmental affairs, decentralised the power of decision-making, and shifted a great deal of responsibilities for social and economic developments to localities, to arouse local enthusiasm and individual incentives for efficient economic growth. The urbanization process has changed from planning for growth to land adjustment, so the local government cannot freely dispose land in land adjustment, since the land for construction rights are dispersed to all land users. There is also an increased spatial inequality and an escalation of social unrest. The existing lack of opportunities to involve citizens in the planning process has also resulted in conflicts between citizens and

governments. Planners have to deal with uncertainties. so their roles and practical knowledge have to be examined to understand the planning environment in China.

At current time, with the planning education and professional licensure totally under the control of the central government, it is claimed that planning knowledge taught in planning schools does not meet the planning knowledge needed in practice, which is supposed to meet the organizational expectations of roles of planners as ‘law-defender’, ‘scientific technician’ and ‘representative of the poor’. However, in practice, role expectations of planners are different.

Under a hierarchical and rule-based planning system in China, the planning tradition of ‘giving legitimacy to local authorities’ and ‘setting the world in order’ give planners the role expectation of ‘handmaiden of power’. Planners consider themselves to have the responsibility to help local governors to ‘set the world in order’ and have the avoidance of representation of conflicting interests. Although Zhao<sup>20</sup> (2013) claims that Chinese planners should take the role of ‘handmaiden of power’.

The [local] government is the client of planning, and the government is ‘an enterprise of space production,’ the core technique of urban planning is to design the best ‘business model’ for the government...to maximize the interest of the client should be the major objective of professional planners. The role of the planner is to lobby the government and sell professional knowledge to those cities that wish to adopt its advice; the purpose is to help the client ‘defeat’ other city competitors. This is now the new professional ethics of planners (Zhao, 2013, p. 3, 5, translated by Wu, 2015).

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<sup>20</sup> Yanjing, Zhao, an important person in the Chinese planning profession, who was a former senior planner of CAUPD and is now director of Xiamen Planning Bureau



I would argue the ‘handmaiden of power’ is a passive role, which prevents planners from developing a professional voice. Planners acquired little legitimate power and esteem from this role since they had to listen to the powers that be while their own professional judgments are likely to be neglected. ‘Giving legitimacy to local authorities’ makes planners use their knowledge to bring the needs from the authority into a set of strategies to deliver their objectives and goals, or justify decisions made by local government officials. Instead of ‘making professional judgments’, they had to meet the needs of local authorities, even in the case that a command from government officials goes against the law. ‘Setting the world in order’ prevents planners from bringing different voices into the plan-making process so this appropriateness goes against ‘getting public voice involved’. The ‘order’ here has a hierarchy, which means people who are in power have a stronger voice while people with no decision power have a weak or no voice in plan-making process. Planners use their professional knowledge to help the powerful to free local areas from conflicts by ignoring voices from the bottom.

The weak professional ethics of planners (Chen & Thwaites, 2013) leads to the consequence that they might be easily compromised under political pressures, such as the command from local government officials and the central government’s strategy on local development. Rapid urbanization has brought more plan-making projects and planners are likely to be overloaded with tasks, which gives them no time to do more for the public than is required by their clients.

Sometimes planners served in the role of an ‘initiative knower’, using their professional knowledge to make their voice heard in the decision-making process, by thinking from the perspective of clients. This role expectation executes the rule of ‘GDP-oriented urban growth’. Planners provide information and professional judgement to local government officials and professional knowledge which benefits local development. It gives planners

opportunities to apply their knowledge in practice and the professional ideas from planners are considered important by local authorities. Land finance has been important for local governments and urban development plans became the priority for decision-making. Rather than just beautifying the urban environment, planning knowledge is about creating city images, attracting domestic and foreign investment and so on. Planners have the chance to influence the decision-making process in urban development.

The 'rule of law' empowers planners get legitimate power from relevant laws and regulations, planners are supposed to learn laws and regulations very well and have the capacity to use them in planning practice. It gives planners a bottom line when there is disagreement between planners and local authorities. Anyone who goes against the law will be punished. Local authorities cannot dispose land at will any more. Urban plans should be formulated in accordance with the Urban and Rural Planning Law 2007.

'Keeping uniformity with the central power' is appropriate for a top-down planning system. Instead of independent judgment, planners merely have the chance to interpret central ideas and use that in urban plans. Professional knowledge serves the requirement of central government instead of real needs of local residents in local areas. Problems in urban planning were defined by the central state and planners who made urban plans for local areas were responsible for solving these problems with their professional knowledge.

The transition also brought planners a political role, as 'active initiator'. Planners, as a different party from 'the ruling class', which means, people who are not in the public administration system of the Chinese government, can influence the decision-making process in plan-making by using their professional knowledge. Although compared with planners in other countries, such as in the US, this political role was so limited, for the first time of Chinese history, planners have had an opportunity to make a difference.

‘Making professional judgment’ provides planners with the chance to apply various theories and methodologies in practice. Backed up by rich data and reliable analysis, when there is disagreement between planners and local authorities in the plan-making process, planners get the opportunity to justify their own judgments. Professional voices become stronger in final decisions.

‘Getting public voice involved’ creates a ‘bottom-up’ process in plan making. Although the final decision was still made by local authorities, planners have the chance to bring various needs to the table. How to gather information from their clients becomes the next question to ask.

### **10.1.3. Research question 3: How can planners make a difference?**

Since the 1990s, urban land expansion has been characterised and land development has become one of the main sources of corruption and social discontent. With land sales contributing an important part of local revenue, local governments at various administrative levels have every motive to engage in land development legally or illegally. In 2011 alone, a total of 70,000 cases of illegal land use involving 50,067 ha of land were found, recording a 5.8% increase in cases and an 11% increase in land area year-on-year (Editor, *Global Times*, 2012). A survey conducted in 2005 and involving 1962 farmer respondents in 17 provinces found that incidents of land-takings had increased more than 15 times during the past 10 years and they continued to accelerate (Zhu et al., 2006).

Severe economic and social inequalities, which were generated in a top-down planning system, should not be ignored; if left unchecked, inequality, together with poor social welfare and the lack of social justice, can lead to serious personal stress, social unrest and regional and national disorders. Social change is necessary in urban planning. How planners can make a difference through their work becomes an important question.

In a clear and stable political context, rules of appropriateness are well defined and political actors follow them in practice. However, in a transitional and changing context, there are conflicts and there is ambiguity in rule of appropriateness. In order to clarify rules and determine what the situation is (March & Olsen, 1989, p. 161), the roles of planners is important.

China's transition has brought planners ambiguity or even conflict in rules. How planners have located themselves in different roles is important for clarifying the rules, making distinctions and determining what the situation was and what kind of knowledge 'fits' (March & Olsen, 1989). As transitional planning takes shape, the initiatives and preferences of planners has become important. Apart from the dynamics of the transitions, we also need to be critically aware of planners' political sensitivity about their roles. This role development occurs not only through institutional changes but also via planners' shifting interpretations of those changes. As can be seen in the examples of planners' practice in the important fields of FAR and public engagement, some planners created the process of getting themselves involved in the active role of 'the initiative knower', which meant they had the initiative to guide and manage plan-making process to influence final decision making.

Some planners have tried to plan in 'the active mode of planning' (Interview No.29 He Ma) and managed to be 'the teacher of local authority'. In this way they created more room for their professional ideas in the plan making process. The internalized appropriate rules of their behaviours were 'do not want their organizations to lose their reputation'. 'our professional ideas delivered' 'we do not want to go against our legal responsibilities'.

Being a 'good planner' meant that a professional had the capacity to take the initiative in the plan-making process to influence final decisions. It is important for planners to take

the initiative in their practice and bring a different voice into the process of urban planning, in order to improve the status of the entire profession in the administrative hierarchy system. Some planners have got themselves involved into the role of ‘active initiator’, which means they take the initiative to guide and manage plan-making processes to influence final decision making. They try to plan in ‘the active mode of planning’ and managed to be ‘the teacher of local authority’. In this way they create more room for the rule of appropriateness of ‘making professional judgement’ in the plan making process. They gain more confidence in choosing the theory and methodology to apply in the process of formulating urban plans. In this way they can influence the decisions of local government officials around key issues in urban planning (Interview No.12; Interview No.30). If planners do not agree with what local governments want, they had to provide their own technical analysis that informs government decisions. The role of ‘active initiator’ gives planners the legitimacy to justify the rule of ‘making professional judgement’ and the social esteem of ‘making professional voice heard’ and ‘being respected because of professional ideas’.

## **10.2. The profession of urban planning in China**

Some authors do not think the occupation of urban planning can be called a profession (Tang, 2000), it is argued in this research that in the Chinese context, the occupation of urban planning is on its way becoming a profession with power. Planning, as an occupation, does not ‘naturally’ come by so unusual a condition as professional autonomy, given the ambiguity of much of reality, and the role of taste and values in assessing it. In the US context, a profession attains and maintains its position by virtue of the protection and patronage of some elite segment of society which has been persuaded that there is some special value in its work (Freidson, 1988). In the Chinese context, planners gain their position in front of government officials with their expertise, which could bring

benefits to both the political achievement of local government officials and real development in the local area. In the US context, the position of profession is secured by the political and economic influence of the elite which sponsors it, however, in the Chinese context, the position of planners is secured by the government, so their work will represent or express some of the important beliefs or values of the central government, which always has a strong ideology in governance. Since it is chosen by the officials in the government, the work of the urban planning profession need have no necessary relationship to the beliefs or values of the average citizen. However, once a profession is established in its protected position of autonomy, it is likely to have a dynamic of its own, developing new ideas or activities which may only vaguely reflect and which may even contradict those of the dominate elite.

The only uniform criterion for distinguishing a profession from other occupations refers to autonomy (Goode, 1960; Freidson, 1988). According to Goode (1960), there are some characteristics of the autonomy of a profession: ‘The profession determines its own standards of education and training’, ‘professional practice is often legally recognized by some form of licensure’, ‘most legislation concerned with the profession is shaped by that profession’ and ‘the practitioner is relatively free of lay evaluation and control’ (Goode, 1960, p. 903).

Although the number of Chinese universities providing a degree in urban planning increased from only six in the early 1980s to more than 270 in 2010 (Hou & Xu, 2011, p. 9414), the planning education tradition of ‘close breeding’ had influenced education with a relatively ‘rigid’ teaching method and long-term ‘fixed patterns’. Chinese planners are usually educated in architecture schools and this architecture-oriented urban planning approach focused on physical forms rather than social investigation methods. After conducting interviews with planners in Guangzhou, Huo stated that quite a few planners

only knew how to present descriptive data and had a very poor sense of what kind of knowledge need to be collected and how to do data analysis so as to achieve goals in planning (Huo, 2002). Furthermore, planning education is totally under the control of the central state.

In China, the occupation of urban planning is under the strong control of the central government. The standards of education are determined by the central government (the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development and the Ministry of Education) in the form of education accreditation. Urban planning practice is legally recognised by *Practice Qualification Certificate for Registered Urban Planners of the People's Republic of China* and the *National Practice Qualification Exam for Registered Urban Planner* for that is organized by the central government (the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development and the Ministry of Personnel). They also organize the continued training for registered planners. The legal system of urban planning gives government sectors power over legislation, and gives the State Council administrative legislative power to supervise local regulations (ordinances). The evaluation and monitoring of urban planning is under the control of central or local government and the common people have little chance to get involved into that.

Clearly, the attitudes of individual planner constitute an entirely different kind of criterion than the attributes of occupational institutions. It is important to make a clarification to the role of urban planners to promote the name of Chinese urban planning profession. According to the empirical study of this research, planners have different role expectations in the content of their work, including 'handmaiden of power', 'initiative knower' and 'active initiator', each of which represents different professional status. In different situations, they have the autonomy to perform different roles. Their role expectations are important, because as the link between the government and local

residents, in a hierarchical Chinese planning system, planners have to chance make a difference in dealing with conflicts in urban planning and have to chance to prove the state that the occupation's work is reliable and valuable.

That autonomy is neither absolute nor stable, depending for its existence upon the toleration and even protection by the state and not necessarily including all zones of occupational activity. Through a process of political negotiation and persuasion, society is led to believe that it is desirable to grant an occupation the professional status of self-regulative autonomy (Freidson, 1988, p. 83). How planners perform their roles is important as it becomes a profession with power to speak.

The fact that the professionalization of planning is incomplete means that there are two sets of norms to which the practitioner is socialized. One describes the posture expected of the planner with respect to technical competence, client relationships, rules concerning advertising and actions in the community. The other related to the search for a clearer professional identity, and describes not the job of the planner but the changes which must take place within the occupational system to promote the professionalization of planning (Rabinovitz, 1969; p.133).

So it is important for Chinese planners to clarify their role expectations in practice to improve the good name of professional urban planning in China. The passive role expectation of 'handmaiden of power' makes planners the courts of the ruling class, meanwhile, the active role expectation of 'active initiator' reproduces the knowledge of planners and gives planners a new set of relationship with the ruling class. Planners are becoming a new middle class in China.

As this thesis research was coming towards an end, the policy and the regulations covering registered planners in China was changed: MOHURD relinquished control of



the urban planning qualification on 5 July 2016. The China Association of City Planning (CACCP) will take over full responsibility in all the issues related to registered planners in China. This is a further step towards the establishment an independent profession of urban planning in China.

In an ideal model, the entrance of an occupation, such as the training of new recruits and the exams of qualification, and the establishment of the codes and standards of practice should be under the control or influence of a professional association (Johnson, 1972; Campell & Marshall, 2005; Freidson, 2001). Also, it should also have the responsibility to formalize

the particular kind of knowledge and skills claimed by an occupation and for providing an intellectual basis for its jurisdictional claims and its relation to other occupations. It is the factory that produces new knowledge and skill and, to some degree, tests and approves it. It is the authoritative source establishing the legitimacy of the practical work activities of the occupation's members... (Freidson, 2001, p. 84)

The role of state intervention should have 'the effect of placing greater power in the hands of academic institutions such as universities and technical colleges' (Johnson, 1972, p. 79). In the field of urban planning, professional association should also focus on 'transforming ideas about the role planning should play in governance' (Campell & Marshall, 2005, p. 206), which should be reflective, as Johnson suggested 'We must develop ways of talking about state and profession that conceive of the relationship not as struggle for authority or control but as the interplay of integrally related structures evolving in the combined product of occupational strategies, government policies and shifts in public opinion.' (Johnson T. , 1995, p. 16)

For many years, the urban planning occupation in China has been criticized for not reflecting and responding to changes in society. Led by the government, the plan-making process has commonly been seen as a 'top-down' process. This led to goal-oriented blueprint planning becoming the dominant methodology. As Clifford Geertz said, 'No one lives in the world in general', people live in 'localities where human ties and familiar landscapes give rise to sentiments of place' (Friedmann, 2007, p. 277). To help with solving social conflicts, a 'bottom-up' process methodology is needed in urban planning. This method gives more consideration to the balance and coordination in the plan-making process.

Planning for land adjustment focuses on policy-design instead of drawing urban plans. In the interviews, some planners realized that they needed policy design skills in practice, however, there was not sufficient relevant knowledge in their education. Universities should provide up-to-date practical knowledge. To cope with the transition, practical planning knowledge in many aspects should be brought in planning schools, more than technological knowledge. Planners' roles other than as 'technicians' should not be ignored in text books.

Also, the concept of 'reflective planner' should be adopted in planning education. 'Critical thinking' is also a part of what is missing in current Chinese planning education. Currently, instead of paying enough attention to local conditions, some planners might apply general urban methods to different places, which results in rigid urban plans. There are some fixed patterns in the results of contemporary urban planning, such as the structures of city design, which reflects planners' lack of creativity and research capacity. Being 'reflective planners' becomes important in planning education. In this context, social skills required from uncertain circumstances should be seen important.

The establishment of professional codes of ethics and standards of practice should be under the control of professional association. The fundamental question of ‘who are planners’ and ‘how do they get recruited’ should be asked next. In addition within this transitional and dynamic context, questions like ‘what should planners do when professional values are in conflict with values from the Party?’ are worthy of discussion. Also, how to translate regulations into ‘rules of appropriateness’ in practice is worth to be discussed in future research projects. The policy-making is never a linear process, with the old rules still wielding power, what the central power can do to make an independent profession of urban planning appropriate is an interesting question.

### **10.3. The contribution of this research**

#### **10.3.1 Theoretical contribution**

China is an excellent example for researching how political actors deal with a transitional and complicated institutional context because there has been a great transition taking place in recent decades, while planning traditions from socialist times and earlier still persist strongly in current practice. In this context, actors have to choose which rule to follow in the same situation and they need to match changing and ambiguous rules to the changing situations (March & Olsen, 2008). In this research, rather than providing recipes for Chinese development, more focus has been put in understanding of actual practice socially and culturally embedded in the roles of planners according to the theoretical framework.

As a professional field, urban planning is institutionally embedded. ‘The activity of planning is understood and practiced differently in different institutional settings that vary significantly across countries and even cities’. The analytical framework of this research provides a tool to understand the varieties of planning in different cultures in the aspect of

planning knowledge and role expectations, which are seen embedded in 'rule of appropriateness'.

Under transitional conditions, new channels may develop for professionals to exert influence. Not only in transitional China, but also those who are living in the Western democracies are becoming challenged by changes in social and political conditions. A process perspective rather than a structural perspective becomes important to understand the driving rationale behind professionals. Decentralization to localities has taken place, empowering planning professionals in ways they have never seen before. This research takes a 'bottom-up' perspective. The conceptual framework provides an understanding of the possibilities for professionals to respond to prescribed goals and adapt them to specific conditions. It is based on the perceptions of professionals with everyday responsibilities for making things work, rather than the perceptions from the top. This research brings a way to catch new forms of practical knowledge, favoring an understanding of processes rather than of formal institutions. The analytical framework in this research has explored a different way of understanding the dynamics of a transitional context.

Transition provides new rules for appropriate knowledge and tradition persists old rules for knowledge. The changing planning knowledge brings changes in role expectations of planners. In different role expectations, the initiative of planners is important to make a difference in planning practice. What emerges from this research is a more complex understanding that role expectations of planners and planning knowledge should not be read as specially demarcated and unchanging social attributes. Instead, the focus of inquiry should be the continuous process of social, political change, which affects the way planners conceptualize problems and form rule of appropriateness in response to them.

### **10.3.2 The role of planners**

The story in this research clearly demonstrates that the role expectations of planners are the result of a complex process of social change, not the inevitable and predictable outcome of a static definition. To understand the role expectations of planners, we need to understand how change occurs in a broader context. This research has taken a critical review on planning knowledge and the role of Chinese planners, who hold in part responsibilities for the problems and challenges in the Chinese context. In Chinese literature, critical analysis about Chinese urban planning under the one party system was mostly ambiguous. The state is seen as a taboo, an area has to be taken for granted and may not be examined. This is understandable, especially after those days of Cultural Revolution. Literature often gave suggestions of problems of urban planning in technical terms and as context dependent. Comments are usually that institutional-urban planning should be beneficial for the vulnerable group and urban planning should get more public participation involved and so on. Focus was often put on the government's institutional reforms and lacked concern with 'ways of thinking' of political actors under the change. This gap impeded further exploration on the changing everyday practice of planners, whose role was important in the process of urban plan making. This study has filled this gap by examining planning knowledge in planners' everyday practices according to interviews. It pointed out that the institutional reforms had brought changes in planning knowledge and examined planning knowledge in relation to its transitional context. New appropriate planning knowledge brought new role expectation as 'the initiative knowers' for planners.

Much attention had been paid to how to 'solve problems' under 'the central commands' and how planners can realize social justice for the common good with technical knowledge. Urban planning in China emphasized actions rather than analyzing the current

situation and identifying problems. Little attention had been paid to who should have the right to define problems such as who decides the focus of urban plans and who determines what problems in urban plans should be solved. This research has filled this gap by examining the planners' willingness and the reason why they would like to make a change. It has been suggested that planners have an opportunity to take a new role in influencing the decision-making of urban development problems from a professional point view.

This research should be of interest to policy makers, decision makers and practitioners in urban planning in China and internationally, and researchers and commenters interested in planning, transition and profession. Planners are not the only group searching for new meaning in their occupation at a time of rapid and uncertain changes. There are signs of such efforts in other domains of social action as well. Learning from the experience from Chinese planners, this research addresses how professionals influenced by the forces of social change are attempting to create new knowledge and cultivate social meaning.

#### **10.4. Limitations of this study and suggestions for further research**

The role of planners is a grand topic in the Chinese context, since China is a big country with various regions. This research only opens a small window to understand the changing dynamic of the role of planners in transitional China and only focuses on a certain groups of planners who work in nonlocal planning institutes based in China's major cities in contemporary China. So this research does not generate a precise formulation of role expectations of planners who work in all types of organizations.

Due to the nature of interviews and time limitation, this study has limitations. This research shows that the influence of the institutional context of planners is more important than planning ethics in laws and regulations in China. It is suggested that the

further research can focus on to what extent planning ethics can influence the practice of Chinese planners, and recommended that the method of questionnaire and case study can be used for similar research in future to gain further data. On-site observation in planning institutes is suggested to be used to observe more about the everyday practice of planners. Research in relation to officials in urban departments in municipal governments would provide a different insight into Chinese planning knowledge.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1: A review on relevant documents

Organizations	Types of document	English name of the document	Chinese name of the document	Date of issue
National People's Congress (全国人民代表大会)	Law	Urban and Rural Planning Law of the People's Republic of China	中华人民共和国城乡规划法	2007-10-28
	Law	Land Administration Law of the People's Republic of China	中华人民共和国土地管理法	2004-08-28
State Council (国务院)	Regulation	Regulation Issued to Punish Wayward Civil Servants	行政机关公务员处分条例	2007-04-22
	Regulation	Regulation Issued to Environmental Impact Assessment in Urban Planning	规划环境影响评价条例	2003-09-01
		Working rules of State Council	国务院工作规则	2008-03-21

		The decision to deepen and reform land management more strictly	国务院关于深化改革严格土地管理的决定	2004-10-21
		Temporary rules of the registration and management of public institution	事业单位登记管理暂行条例（修订）	2004-06-27
		Opinions of further regulation of calling for and submitting bids	国务院办公厅关于进一步规范招标投标活动的若干意见	2004-07-12
		The notice of strengthening the supervision and management of city and country planning	国务院关于加强城乡规划监督管理的通知	
General Office of the CPC Central Committee (中共中央办公		The working plan of education and training of CPC members in national wide during 2009-	2009-2013 年全国党员教育培训工作规划	2009-07-24

厅)		2013		
		The decisions of strengthening socialist cultural and ethical progress	中共中央关于加强社会主义精神文明建设若干重要问题的决议	1996-10-10
CPC Central Commission for Discipline Inspection (中央纪委)		Regulation Issued to disciplinary punishment of CPC in planning institutes	机构编制违纪行为适用《中国共产党纪律处分条例》若干问题的解释	2009-06-30
Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development and the State Council (城乡建设部)		Opinions of carrying out Arbitration law system further in national construction system	建设部、国务院法制办关于在全国建设系统进一步推行仲裁法律制度的意见	2001-04-27

Ministry of Land and Resources (国土资源部)		The working rules of Ministry of Land and Resources	国土资源部工作规则	2000-03-30
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Organizations	Type of document	English name of the document	Chinese name of the document	Date of the document
Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development and Ministry of Supervision of the People's Republic of China(中华人民共和国住房和城乡建设部 中华人民共和国监察部)	Notice	The notice about the improvement of the change of urban plans and plot ratio in real estate development	关于对房地产开发中违规变更规划、调整容积率问题开展专项治理的通知	2009-04-10
Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development (中华人民共和国住房和城乡建设部)	Notice	The notice of working rules of the examination of mater plans	建设部关于印发《城市总体规划审查工作规则》的通知	1998-08-03

城乡建设部)			知	
Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development (中华人民共和国住房和城乡建设部)	Rule	The temporary rules of compulsory content of urban planning	城市规划强制性内容暂行规定	2002-08-30
Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development (中华人民共和国住房和城乡建设部)	Measure	The approval measure of the formulation of provincial town and regional planning	省域城镇体系规划编制审批办法	2010-04-05
Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development (中华人民共和国住房和城乡建设部)	Guidance	The guidance about annual plan making and construction planning of housing	关于做好住房建设规划与住房建设年度计划制定工作的指导意见	2008-02-25
Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development (中华人民共和国住房和城乡建设部)	Notice	The notice about building up national architecture market fidelity information	关于启用全国建筑市场诚信信息平台的通知	2007-11-05

城乡建设部)		platform		
Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development (中华人民共和国住房和城乡建设部)		The fifth Five-year Plan of legal publicity and education in construction system	建设部关于在建设系统开展法制宣传教育的第五个五年规划	2006-06-09
General Office of the State Council (国务院办公厅)		General Office of the State Council forwarding the opinion of Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development about	国务院办公厅转发建设部关于加强城市总体规划工作意见的通知	2006-06-23
Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development (中华人民共和国住房和城乡建设部)	Notice	The notice about national key scenic spots comprehensive rectification	关于做好 2006 年国家重点风景名胜区综合整治工作的通知	2006-03-07
	Plan	The implementation plan of combating bribery in business in construction	建设部治理建设系统商业贿赂实施方案	2006-03-14

		system by Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development		
State Environmental Protection Administration (国家环境保护总局)		The eleventh Five Year Plan of national environmental protection standard planning	“十一五”国家环境保护标准规划	2006-02-06
Ministry of Land and Resources (国土资源部)	Notice	The notice about further strengthening executing the law supervision of land and resources	关于进一步加强国土资源执法监察工作的通知	2005-10-26
Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development (中华人民共和国住房和城乡建设部)	Guidance	The guidance about making government affairs public in construction system	关于进一步推行建设系统政务公开的指导意见	2005-08-31
Ministry of Land		The standard of filling a criminal	查处土地违法行为	2005-08-

and Resources (国土资源部)		case of illegal act in land use	立案标准	31
Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development (中华 人民共和国住房和 城乡建设部)		The notice about the training and learning of legal knowledge of migrant workers in the construction field	关于做好建设领域 农民工法律知识学 习培训工作的通知	2005-04- 07
Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development (中华 人民共和国住房和 城乡建设部)	Notice	The notice about strengthening the formulation and approval of master plans	关于加强城市总体 规划修编和审批工 作的通知	2005-01- 05
Ministry of Land and Resources (国土资源部)		The decision of deepen reforming land management by the State Council	国务院关于深化改 革严格土地管理的 决定	2004-10- 31
Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development (中华 人民共和国住房和 城乡建设部)		The rule of 15 conditions about administrative licensing decided	建设部关于纳入国 务院决定的十五项 行政许可的条件的	2004-10- 15



城乡建设部)		by the State Council	规定	
Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development (中华人民共和国住房和城乡建设部)		The management measure of the report of illegal and violate behaviour	建设领域违法违规 行为举报管理办法	2002-07-11
Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development (中华人民共和国住房和城乡建设部)		The temporary measure of short-term planning	近期建设规划工作 暂行办法	2002-08-29
Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development (中华人民共和国住房和城乡建设部)		The answer to the request of how to deal with the relationship between the bid of design plans and the management of urban planning	关于如何理顺设计 方案招标与城市规 划管理关系的请示	2001-04-18
Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural		The grading standards of	建筑业企业资质等	2001-04-20

Development (中华人民共和国住房和城乡建设部)		enterprise qualification in architecture industry	级标准	
Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development (中华人民共和国住房和城乡建设部)		The outline of the tenth Five Year Plan in construction industry	建设事业“十五”规划纲要	2001-05-10
Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development (中华人民共和国住房和城乡建设部)	Rules	The rules of the management of promotion and application new technology in the field of construction	建设领域推广应用新技术管理规定	2001-11-29
Ministry of Land and Resources (国土资源部)	Opinions	Some opinions about land development and consolidation	土地开发整理若干意见	2003-10-14
Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development and Ministry of	Measures	Measures for the implementation of the examination of the qualification of	注册城市规划师执业资格考试实施办法	2000-02-23

Personnel (中华人民共和国住房和城乡建设部和人事部)		registered city planners		
Ministry of Land and Resources (国土资源部)		The notice of strengthening the examine and approval of urban construction land	关于加强城市建设用地审查报批工作有关问题的通知	2003-09-04
Ministry of Land and Resources (国土资源部)	Notice	The emergency notice of letter and visit work of Ministry of Land and Resources during the two sessions in 2004	关于做好“两会”期间国土资源信访工作的紧急通知	2004-02-11
Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development (中华人民共和国住房和城乡建设部)	Opinion	The opinions of the implementation of <the decision of further strengthening the talents by the State Council and CPC	建设部关于贯彻《中共中央、国务院关于进一步加强人才工作的决定》的意见	2004-07-07

		Central Committee> by Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development		
National Development and Reform Commission (国家发展和改革委员会)	Measure	The measure of dealing with the bid events in construction projects	工程建设项目招标 投标活动投诉处理 办法	2004-07- 06

Organizations	Type of document	English name of the document	Chinese name of the document
Ministry of Education(教育部)		National middle and long term education reform and development plan outline	国家中长期教育改 革和发展规划纲要 (2010-2020)
Ministry of Education(教育部)		Excellent engineers development program plan	卓越工程师教育培 养计划

Tongji University (同济大学)		Education of the major of urban planning in universities in national wide	全国高等学校城市规划专业本科（五年制）教育培养方案
China Association of Urban Planning (中国城市规划协会)	Rule	The rules of China Association of Urban Planning	中国城市规划协会章程
China Association of Urban Planning (中国城市规划协会)	Convention	The convention of self-discipline in national formulation units of urban planning	全国城市规划编制单位自律公约
China Association of Urban Planning (中国城市规划协会)	Speech	The organization serving as a bridge and belt to promote the construction of urban planning profession and sound development	充分发挥协会的桥梁和纽带作用促进城市规划行业建设和健康发展
China Association of Urban Planning (中国城市规划协会)	Discussion	The discussion about the system reform of city planning and design academy	城市规划设计研究院改制工作若干问题的探讨

**Appendix 2: A framework for interviews**

	<b>National policy of the CCP</b>	<b>National Laws</b>	<b>Administrative regulations</b>	<b>Departmental rules</b>	<b>Convention of the planning professions</b>
Allegiance	<p>1 Insisting socialism with Chinese characteristics</p> <p>2 Taking Deng Xiaoping Theory and Three Represents Theory as its guide to action</p> <p>3 To implement the</p>			<p>1 Make government affairs public and improve the open administrative system</p> <p>2 The Party is built for the public and it exercises state power for the people</p>	<p>1 set up correct urban planning work values</p> <p>2 insist Scientific Concept of Development</p> <p>3 The work direction of urban planning is to concentrate on building a well-off</p>

	<p>Scientific Concept of Development thoroughly</p> <p>4 According to the endeavors to strengthen the Party's governance capability and vanguard nature, the education and training of the Party members are needed.</p> <p>5 To build up the Socialist Harmonious Society, well- off society and</p>			<p>3 the Scientific Concept of Developmen t; Correct view of political performance</p> <p>4 Three Represents Theory</p>	<p>society.</p>
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	<p>speed up the socialist modernization.</p> <p>6 To build up the Socialist Spiritual Civilization on the condition that developing the socialist market economy and open-up policies</p> <p>7 Insist Patriotism, collectivism and socialism education, strengthen social morality,</p>				
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	professional ethics and family virtues.				
Guild loyalty	<p>1.the hardworking and enterprising spirit</p> <p>2. the core values of serving the people, focusing on the new collectivism</p> <p>3. Fully implement the Party's education policy in every</p>	<p>Article 4 Urban and rural planning shall be worked out and implemented by following the principles of planning the urban and rural areas as a whole, reasonable layout, saving the land, intensive growth and planning before constructing so as to improve ecological environment, enhance the conservation and</p>		<p>1 The spirit of emancipating the mind and seeking truth from facts.</p> <p>2 The spirit of keeping up the pace and making bold changes and innovations.</p> <p>3 The spirit of running into</p>	<p>1 Take on the responsibility of serving the government and society and insist on the professional ethics of people oriented.</p> <p>2 Insist public interest coming first and emphasis public participation</p>

	<p>college and university.</p> <p>Insist socialism in education, to strengthen the moral education work, and strive to cultivation of all-round development of socialist builders and successors.</p> <p>4.Strengthen ideology ,morality and political theory course.</p> <p>Combine</p>	<p>comprehensive utilization of resources and energy, protect farmland and other natural resource as well as cultural heritages, maintain local features, ethnic features and traditions, prevent pollution and other public nuisance, and satisfy the needs of regional population development, national defense construction, disaster prevention and alleviation, public health and public safety.</p>		<p>difficulties and go ahead boldly</p> <p>4 The spirit of working hard and seeking practical results; the spirit of indifferent to fame and fortune; the spirit of selfless dedication.</p> <p>5 Serving the people and making contributions to society;</p>	<p>in the formulation process of urban planning</p> <p>3 Reflect</p>
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	<p>knowledge transfer with cultivating one's taste and behaviour habit.</p> <p>5. Combine individual education with the country's future and social demand to form an social morality of love the party and the country, working in unity and help one another concerned about the collective</p>	<p>Construction activities in the planning area shall be conducted by observing laws and regulations governing land management, natural resources and environmental protection, etc.</p> <p>The local people's government at or above the county level shall, in light of the local social and economic development level, reasonably determine the development scale, steps and construction</p>		<p>There would be pacesetters of the industry and examples in provinces and cities; there would be typical examples in the nationwide.</p>	
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	<p>interests.</p> <p>6. Philosophy and social science should be conducted by Marxism-Leninism, Mao Zedong thought and Deng Xiaoping theory. Combine theory and practice and serve the decision of the Party and government.</p>	<p>standards of a city or town in the overall planning of the city or town.</p> <p>Article 5 The establishment of the overall planning of a city or town, a township planning or a village planning shall be based on the national economic and social development planning as well as the overall planning on land use.</p>			
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		<p>Article 26 Before filing an urban or rural planning for examination and approval, the organ establishing it shall announce the draft of the planning and collect opinions from experts and the general public by way of argumentation, hearing or other. The draft shall be announced for at least 30 days.</p> <p>The organ establishing the planning shall fully consider the opinions of experts</p>			
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		and the general public, and attach an explanation on the adoption of the relevant opinions and an explanation to the materials filed for examination and approval.			
Loyalty for the employer				Conscientious and meticulous; strong skillful; strict in discipline	
Statutory loyalty					Obey to the relevant laws and regulations

### Appendix 3: Interview questions in Phase 1

Number	Categories	Interview questions
A	General/ Ice breaking questions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Please tell me more about yourself (age, education, degree).</li> <li>2. Where do you work?</li> <li>3. What is your current job?</li> <li>4. What is your job title?</li> <li>5. What are you doing specifically?</li> <li>6. What does your job mean?</li> <li>7. What is your position?</li> <li>8. What are your responsibilities?</li> <li>9. Do you have management responsibility? Do you manage other planners?</li> <li>10. Who do you work for?</li> <li>11. Who is your manager?</li> <li>12. How long have you been in that job?</li> <li>13. Do you work in a team or do you work on your own?</li> </ol>

		<p>14. Who do you interact with?</p> <p>15. How many jobs did you have?</p> <p>16. Do you meet other planners outside of the current groups you work with?</p> <p>17. (Higher position) How many people work for you? How can you keep people loyalty to their work? What is the content of sanction and reward?</p> <p>18. (Lower position) Who has the responsibility for you? What do you mean by loyalty to your work? What is the content of sanction and reward?</p>
B	The information gathering information	<p>1. Have you ever got involved in the information gathering process?</p> <p>If yes,</p> <p>2. What is your understanding of the information gathering process, how does it work? Why?</p> <p>3. In your experience, how has the information process changed in China in recent years? Why?</p> <p>4. What is the role of planners? Of public? Of officials? How will they interact with each other?</p>



		Why?
C	Decision-making in urban planning process	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How are urban planning decisions made? Who makes them? What has to be taken into account?</li> <li>2. Who gets included/excluded from urban planning decision making? By whom? Under what circumstances? How? Why?</li> <li>3. What has been your experience of the implementation of planning policies?</li> <li>4. What is your organization's/department's role in the decision-making process? How does it work?</li> <li>5. What is the relationship between you/your department and the planning professionals?</li> <li>6. How has the decision-making process changed in China recent years?</li> </ol>
D	The public engagement process of urban planning	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Have you ever received feedback from the public/expert groups? How will you deal with the feedback from them? Could you please give me some examples?</li> <li>2. What if there are conflicts between the opinions</li> </ol>

		<p>from the officials, experts and the public? What if you don't agree with the feedback?</p> <p>3. How has the public engagement process changed in China recent years?</p>
E	The negotiation process with local officials/the public	<p>1. How does the current negotiation process with economic-oriented development/ multiple-oriented development (human and ecological)/planned development/ harmonious society/ the profession of planners/western ideas?</p> <p>2. How has the negotiation process changed in China recent years?</p>
F	The Party	<p>1. Are you a Party member?</p> <p>2. How long have you been a Party member?</p> <p>3. Do you have the activities about the Party in your organization?</p>

#### Appendix 4: The list of interviewees in Phase 1

No.	Institution	Position held	Date	Length of interview
1	XX Academy of Urban Planning & Design	Associate planner	2013/11/16	25 min
2	XX Municipal Commission of urban planning	In charge of the department of urban detailed controlled planning	2013/11/16	15 min
3	XX Academy of Urban Planning & Design	Associate planner	2013/11/16	1 hour 20 min
4	XX Academy of Urban Planning & Design	Associate planner	2013/12/03	40 min
5	XX Academy of Urban Planning & Design	Associate planner	2013/12/06	1 hour
6	Beijing XX Urban Planning Limited	Associate	2013/12/07	38 min

	Liability Company	planner		
7	XX Academy of Urban Planning & Design	Associate planner	2013/12/09	30 min
8	XX Academy of Urban Planning & Design	Urban planning intern	2013/12/11	25 min
9	XX Academy of Urban Planning & Design	Urban planning intern	2013/12/11	40 min
10	XX Academy of Urban Planning & Design	Urban planning intern	2013/12/09	25 min
11	XX Academy of Urban Planning & Design	Urban planning intern	2013/12/14	35 min
12	XX Academy of Urban Planning & Design	Deputy director of department of town and regional planning	2013/12/09	40 min
13	XX Academy of	Senior planner	2013/12/15	50 min

	Urban Planning & Design			
14	XX Academy of Urban Planning & Design	Associate planner	2013/12/16	40 min
15	XX Academy of Urban Planning & Design	Associate planner	2013/12/16	20 min
16	XX Estate Company	Chief planner	2013/12/16	2 hour
17	XX Real Estate Company	Head planner	2013/12/20	30 min
18	XX Real Estate Company	Associate planner	2013/12/22	25 min
19	Beijing Institute of Architecture Design	Senior planner	2013/12/23	20 min
20	XX University	Head of Department; Professor	2013/12/31	1 hour 30 min
21	XX University	Post-doctor	2014/01/05	45 min
22	Urban Planning Society of China	Secretary general	2014/01/08	1 hour

23	XX Municipal Commission of Urban Planning	Junior officer	2014/01/02	1 hour 20 min
24	XX Municipal Commission of Urban Planning	Junior officer	2014/01/06	35 min
25	XX Municipal Commission of Urban Planning	Head of Urban Controlled Detailed Planning	2014/01/10	30 min

## Appendix 5: Interview questions in Phase 2

Number	Interview questions
1	May I ask that what did you do today?
2	Could you please let me know the whole process of plan formulation, with a focus on the interactions with local officials and residents?
3	In your experience, have there been any changes in the interactions with local officials and residents in recent years?
4	It is quite common these years that there are changes in the mechanism of planning institutes. Are these changes influencing your everyday practice? If yes, could you please give me some examples?
5	Could you please let me know the reason why you chose the occupation of urban planning?

## Appendix 6: The list of interviewees in Phase 2

No.	Cities come from	Position held	Years of experience (approx.)	Date	Length
26	Harbin	Deputy director of department of urban planning	15	2014/08/06	2 hours
27	Harbin	Deputy director of department of urban design	15	2014/08/06	1 hour 19 min
28	Harbin	Senior planner	10	2014/08/06	1 hour 10 min
29	Harbin	Chief planner	30	2014/08/07	2 hour 5 min
30	Harbin	Junior planner	5	2014/08/07	50min
31	Harbin	Junior planner	5	2014/08/07	45min
32	Harbin	Head of department	25	2014/08/07	3 hours
33	Beijing	Deputy director of department of urban and rural planning	10	2014/08/18	1 hour
34	Beijing	Deputy director	15	2014/08/18	2 hour 16 min



		of urban studies			
35	Beijing	Senior planner	6	2014/08/20	1 hour 20 min
36	Beijing	Junior planner	3	2014/08/20	30 min
37	Beijing	Senior planner	10	2014/08/22	50 min
38	Harbin	Senior planner	20	2014/06/14	2 hours 30 min
39	Beijing	Junior planner	2	2014/07/04	57 min
40	Harbin	Senior planner	10	2014/07/02	50 min

## **Appendix 7 Information Sheet for interviewees**

### **参与者信息表**

在个人利益和部门利益的影响下，城市规划工作者如何去保护公共利益？——转型中的中国城市规划师职业忠诚度研究

### **邀请函**

您被邀请参与到本研究课题中。在您决定是否要参与本研究前，有必要了解一下这项研究的意义以及该项目的包涵内容。以下的信息会由访谈者口头通知，与此同时您也可以阅读以下信息并保存作为您的记录。如果有任何信息不清楚或者您需要了解更多本研究的情况，请联系我们，我们会乐于回答您的一切问题。请认真决定您希望参与本课题与否。

### **感谢您阅读以下信息**

#### **此研究课题的意义是什么？**

本研究课题意在研究在转型期间的中国城市规划师的职业忠诚度与影响其的社会因素，所以本课题会深入了解中国城市规划工作者对于本职工作的态度以及感受。

#### **为什么我会被选择参与到该研究课题中？**

您会被选择参与到本研究课题，主要因为您可以与我们分享在城市规划工作中的经验以及您的看法。

#### **我必须要参加吗？**

参加与否由您自己决定，如果您决定参与到此课题中来，您可以保留此信息表并且签一份同意书，与此同时，您可以随时退出此研究课题，甚至不需要理由。

### **如果我参与到此研究课题中，接下来会发生什么？**

您会邀请参与一个面对面的，有关于您在城市规划过程中工作经验的访谈。访谈的时间不会超过一个小时，访谈地点与时间会尽量选择在舒适的地点与时间段。访谈过程会被电子录音。

### **如果我参与其中，对我会有什么帮助？**

对于此研究课题的参与者来说，并没有直接相关帮助。但是您的参与会弥补国际上相关研究领域的空白，令世界更好地了解中国城市规划师。

### **如果参与过程中出现问题了怎么办？**

如果您在参与过程中有任何不满意，可以向研究者本人反映（联系方式在本页最下方），或者向本研究课题的负责人 Gordon Dabinet 教授投诉，投诉地址为 [g.e.dabinett@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:g.e.dabinett@sheffield.ac.uk)。

### **我参与到此研究课题中的安全性怎样？**

研究者会对参与者的个人资料进行保密。录音仅会用于本研究，并且录音资料仅限于研究者本人使用，此项目之外的人无权接触。

### **此研究课题的成果将会怎样？**

此研究课题的成果将会告知参与者。研究成果将被用于本研究和与本研究相关的论文与著作中，并且可能用于以后更加深入的研究。如果有机会的话，研究成果将发表于研讨会和学术会议。

**联系方式：**

冯歆，博士候选人，英国谢菲尔德大学

电子邮件：[trp12xf@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:trp12xf@sheffield.ac.uk)

联系电话：13261846312

**Appendix 8: Participant consent form for interviewees**

研究课题：在个人利益和部门利益的影响下，城市规划工作者如何去保护公共利益？——转型中的中国城市规划师职业忠诚度研究

研究者：冯歆

参与者编号：

请√

1. 我确认已经阅读并理解了参与者信息表（2013/10/06 版）中对于本研究课题的解读，并且确定本人有机会询问有关本研究课题的一切相关问题。

2. 我确认本人的参与完全出于自愿并且随时可以退出，不需要任何理由，  
也无需承担任何后果。并且，如果我不想回答某一或某些问题，我有  
权拒绝回答。

3. 我确认本人的回答会被严格保密。我允许研究组成员接触我的匿名回答。  
我确认本人的名字不会在研究相关材料中提及，并且不会在研究相关报  
告中被识别出来。

4. 我同意本人提供的数据会被用于将来的研究中。

5. 我同意参与到以上研究课题中。

\_\_\_\_\_  
参与者姓名

\_\_\_\_\_  
日期

\_\_\_\_\_  
签名

\_\_\_\_\_  
研究者姓名

\_\_\_\_\_  
日期

\_\_\_\_\_  
签名

