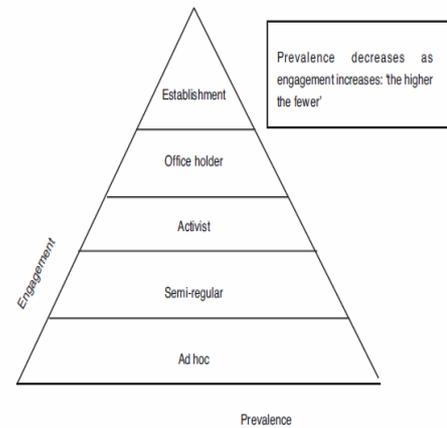
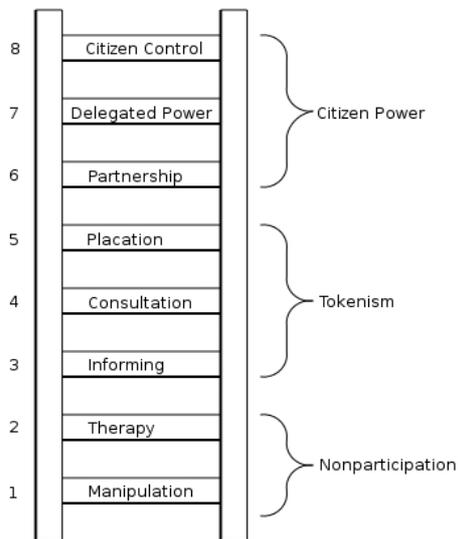


How Far Are We?

An Exploring study on Key Factors That Hinder the Implementation of Public Participation in China



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This thesis is written as final assignment for the master Landscape Architecture and Planning, specialization Spatial Planning at Wageningen University



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Preface

This research thesis is written as my final assignment before I graduate from MSc Landscape Architecture and Planning (specialization Spatial Planning) at Wageningen University. As an international student, the greatest wish may be to understand the new and advanced knowledge and contribute to the planning practice in my home country. This was my very basic ambition before I started this research. However, it was challenging. Presently public participation is a popular subject in Chinese urban planning. Although it is repeatedly claimed and emphasized in planning field, relevant research on this subject and specific approaches to fully implement it are still lacking. This research attempts to reanalyze the current planning system and legal framework concerning public participation; and to reexamine a case of four years ago by the theory from western world. The whole report was completed within a ten months period from October 2010 to June 2011. Excitement, hesitation, expectation, disappointment and confusion constantly crossed in these ten months. Eventually it was worked out. However this research was an impressive journey to me, in which I strengthened my understanding on the knowledge and learned to look at planning in China by a different perspective that I had never tried. Although there are still some limitations and knowledge gaps that could not be filled under current research context, I hope this thesis would bring inspirations of research on public participation to planning scholars in China and understand what China has to do in the near future as well as trigger more researches that commit to this subject in China.

With this preface I would like to thank everyone who has helped me during this long trip. First of all I would like to give my greatest appreciation to my parents for kindly supporting my study abroad. Secondly I would like to appreciate my hero and supervisor Gerrit-Jan Carsjens for his excellent guidance and inspiring remarks and suggestions as well as sharing his own experience in planning research with me. Thirdly I would like to thank officials of Xiamen Urban Planning Bureau and professors of Xiamen University for answering my questions and providing precious opinions. Last but not least, I would like to thank all my friends, teachers and colleagues for inspiring and encouraging me when I was depressed. Thank you all.

Please enjoy reading this thesis,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of stylized, overlapping loops and lines, followed by a small number '2' at the bottom right.

Hu Hao
June, 2011, Wageningen

Summary

Planning in the modernist era can be characterized by a technocrat and systematic nature. With the criticism on the modernism theory in 1970s, a new perspective that claimed for the importance of inter-subjective understanding of the world occurred. This led to a changing view on planning in the western countries like the Netherlands. This view signaled a more interactive planning approach, by which different actors in the society would be able to express themselves and cooperate with the policy makers.

With the economic transition, more and more market forces were brought to China and became influential to the planning decision making. This resulted in a rapid urbanization and interest diversification in China. Conventional urban planning system is incapable to cope with such changes. But public participation is not widely implemented in many places in China. Thus the research objective is **to identify the key issues that are hindering public participation in Chinese urban planning**. To support the research, the objective was divided into: 1. to identify key issues that determine an effective public participation in planning theory; 2. to explore the application of public participation in the Netherlands; 3. to explore the application of public participation in China. The research includes a case study on the Xiamen PX incident.

By analysing Chinese urban planning system, the case study and the learning outcomes from Dutch experience, a set of constrains was identified:

1. The current political institution determines a dominance of government and powerful parties in planning decision making. Planning has to comply with political decision making.
2. Economic development is crucial and prioritized in political decision. Public interests are excluded.
3. The commissioners of the local people's congress are powerless to represent and protect public interests.
4. There is no platform for the general public to have direct conversation with the government in plan making.
5. The legalization of public participation is slow. Thus there is no comprehensive guide line and guarantee for public participation.

However, Chinese transitional institution is gaining more collaborative characteristics. A participatory planning process is achievable in China in the future.

1. Introduction

1.1 Context

Since the criticism on the notion of modernism theory in 1970s that there is only one objective truth, a changing perceptions of human beings on science, knowledge and society occurred. In planning field, an instrumental-dominated planning approach and a top-down hierarchical institution are no longer sufficient to respond to a pluralistic society, because the conflicts between various interests involved and the limited margin for societal actors in decision making process limit the comprehensiveness of planning decision making. Instead, planning with an interactive characteristic as communication is gaining more and more popularity in contemporary planning field, especially in western capitalism world, like United States, EU including the Netherlands, Germany, etc., since the middle of 1960s. Increasingly, citizens expect to participate in planning processes that affect their life (Illsley, 2003). According to Illsley (2003), encouraging stakeholder involvement is expected to lead to better policy outcomes and greater public support. As Geurts and Joldersma (2001) put, the participation of policy actors should enable the analysts to enrich the planning process by including subjective sources of knowledge in addition to the 'objective' knowledge derived from theories and empirical studies. Taking the Netherlands as an example, communicative/collaborative planning theory has been advocated and applied in both practice in policy making and planning education in the universities. In the Netherlands, stakeholder participation has been designated as an important concept in spatial planning. In many relevant publications, such as Janssen *et al* (2005), communication or negotiation is claimed to be an indispensable tool in defining and solving problems and in generating more consensual decisions. It is generally recognized that involvement of stakeholders in the planning process will lead to more balanced plans and smoother implementation (Janssen *et al*, 2005).

China is at its preliminary stage of Socialism society. The state is under a transitional economic climate. Democracy is always designated as the main political objective of Chinese government. State interests and people's interests have been attached with great importance in the developments of the country. In the early 1990s, the concept of public participation was introduced to planning domain in China from abroad (Li, 2005). In recent years, with the remarkable progress of reform and open strategy, public participation is gradually and widely being attached with great attention in the society; and it is becoming a hotspot issue in planning field (Li, 2005).

1.2 Problem Description

In Chinese planning articles many Chinese planning scholars, like He (2010), have noticed the importance of public participation in planning process and the consequences

without it. According to He (2010), public participation is gradually become the hot topic in Chinese urban planning domain. But it seems that communicative or participatory planning isn't being widely applied in China. Citizen groups or other apolitical or non-professional groups can hardly participate in public policy making. Moreover, comparing to western society, public participation in Chinese urban construction is far less than sufficient. Today's Chinese planning system is still characterized by top-down decision making with marginalized status for public. The consistent lack of public participation in decision making in China has led to increasingly negative consequences, such as early-canceled or shortly used plan and social resistance to the public policy. As was revealed in an investigation by Bi (2010) on a sample of 4916 citizens in early 2010, 85.5% of the interviewees had noticed the just mentioned consequences in their cities. When it comes to the quality of the urban planning, 50.1 % of the group dissatisfied, 41.8% of the group show "normal" and only 8.0% of the sample satisfied with planning (Bi, 2010). In Bi's analysis, one of the most important causes for this situation was insufficient public participation. The citizens could not feel being a part of the plan and had no idea about what is happening in their cities.

The most remarkable example of the consequence of lacking public participation in China can be traced back to the "PX Event" in Xiamen in 2007. PX (P-Xylene) is a deadly poisoned carcinogen, which is widely used in chemical industries, such as chemical fiber, synthetic resin, pesticide, medicament, plastic, etc. In 2006, a large PX industry was invested in Haicang Business District of Xiamen; the project was approved by State Department in February, 2004 and the Environment Impact Assessment by State Environment Bureau in July, 2005. But surprisingly there was no relevant scholar and public group participated in, or even informed. Therefore a policy amendment for the relocation was claimed by Zhao, a chemical professor of Xiamen University and 104 other commissioners on the ground that the PX project would bring huge health damage to the large residential area within 1.5km away. The reaction of the government on the security issue was full of the statements that the citizen group could not understand. Thus a large protest was organized by public groups of the city of Xiamen (as described by the cartoon in figure 1). Eventually Xiamen government decided to restart EIA process and canceled the project under the great pressure from public resistance.



Figure 1. *the protest against PX project*
Source: CRI, 2007

These particular cases and investigation show the consequences of insufficient public participation in planning practice and the implementation of policy decisions. Therefore, what has led to the lack of public participation in Chinese planning need to be studied,

since this concept had already been introduced to China in early 1990s and has been given great attention as has mentioned.

1.3 Purpose Statement

The purpose of this research is to explore and identify the factors that constraining the implementation of public participation in local urban planning process in the current Chinese planning context. In this respect, the experiences with collaborative planning in the Netherlands will be used as a referential resource. In addition, the findings of this research are expected to assist and inspire the Chinese planning experts and decision makers as well as public actors to obtain deeper insight of the importance of the concept of public participation in planning practice. From an academic point of view, the findings of this research are also expected to contribute to explore the gap between the communicative planning theory and its utilization in real planning practice.

1.4 Research Framework

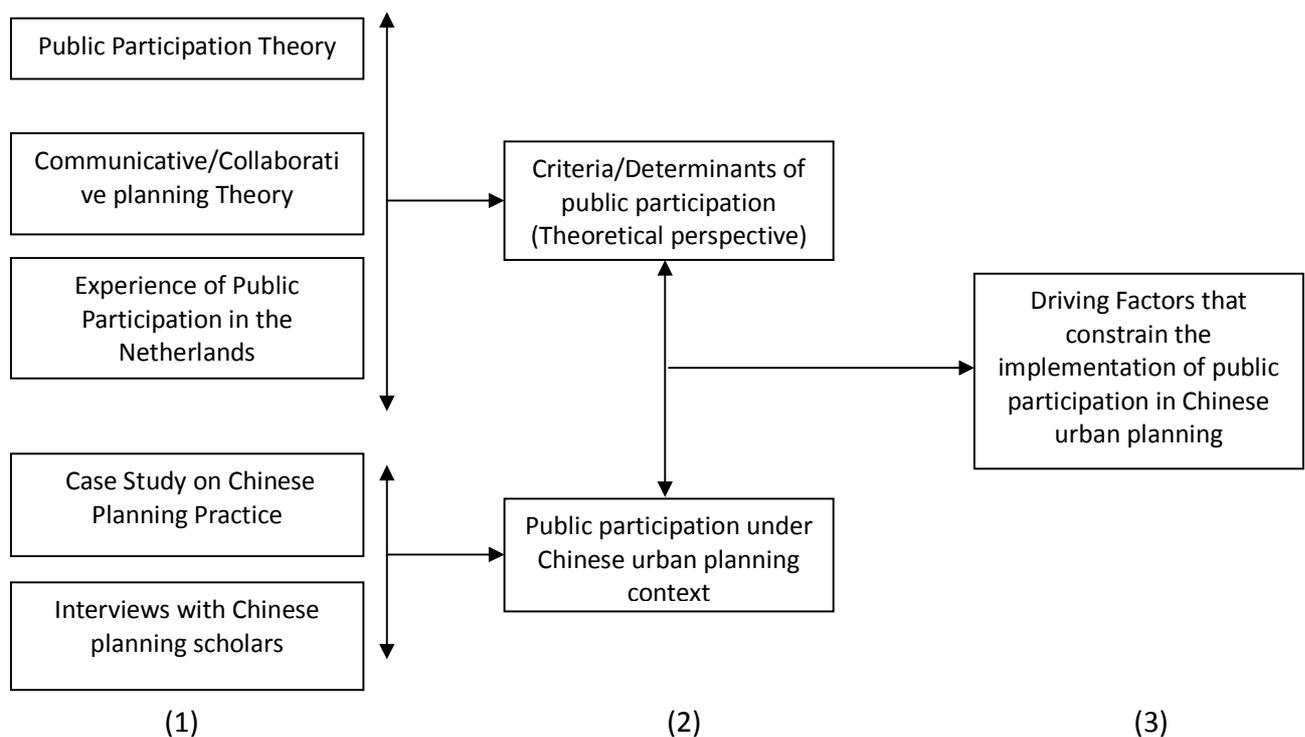


Figure 2 .Research Framework

Explanation of Research Framework

As concluded in the introduction part, the objective (column 3) of the research is to explore and identify the driving factors that are influencing the implementation of public

participation in current Chinese planning. To achieve this aim, the performance of public participation in Chinese planning context was designated as the main research object (column 2). For gathering information, documents on Chinese planning practice will be studied with a case study on the Xiamen PX project. Planning experts involved in this cases would be interviewed (column1). For analyzing obtained material, it is crucial to set up a specific research perspective (column 2) focusing on the determinants of public participation in planning. The theoretical perspective will be built from Communicative/Collaborative planning Theory, public participation theory as well as the experience of public participation from the Netherlands (column1). More specific research flow chart can be referred to *figure 3*.

1.5 Research Questions

Main Research Question

What are the driving factors that are constraining the implementation of public participation in current Chinese planning?

Key Research Questions

1. **What are the determinants of the implementation of public participation in spatial planning theory?**
2. **How is public participation implemented in Chinese planning law and regulation?**
3. **What are the experiences with public participation in Chinese planning practice?**

1.6 Research Strategy and Methods

Research Strategy and Case Descriptions

The whole research will be conducted under a qualitative research design. The main research methodology consists of in-depth literature study and a case study. Scientific literatures and publications or journals that are related to collaborative planning and stakeholder/public participation theory will be reviewed in order to obtain deep knowledge backgrounds and to establish theoretical framework that will be used in evaluating the cases; in addition to this, the reflections on Dutch experience of public participation and relevant examples will be analyzed to contribute to the elaboration of the theoretical framework. Due to the limited number of documents that reflect the public participation in China, case study will provide primary information on participatory practices in Chinese planning. Considering the difficulties in accessing available information, a case study will be a qualitative research by reviewing and inducing the results of the case as well as interviewing some Chinese planning officials and scholars. The aim of the utilization of case study is to obtain deeper understanding

on the phenomenon under particular context as Flyvberg claimed as study on particular, instead of merely studying on theories that have been concluded in different literatures. The main research route in association with research methods can be concluded as figure 3.

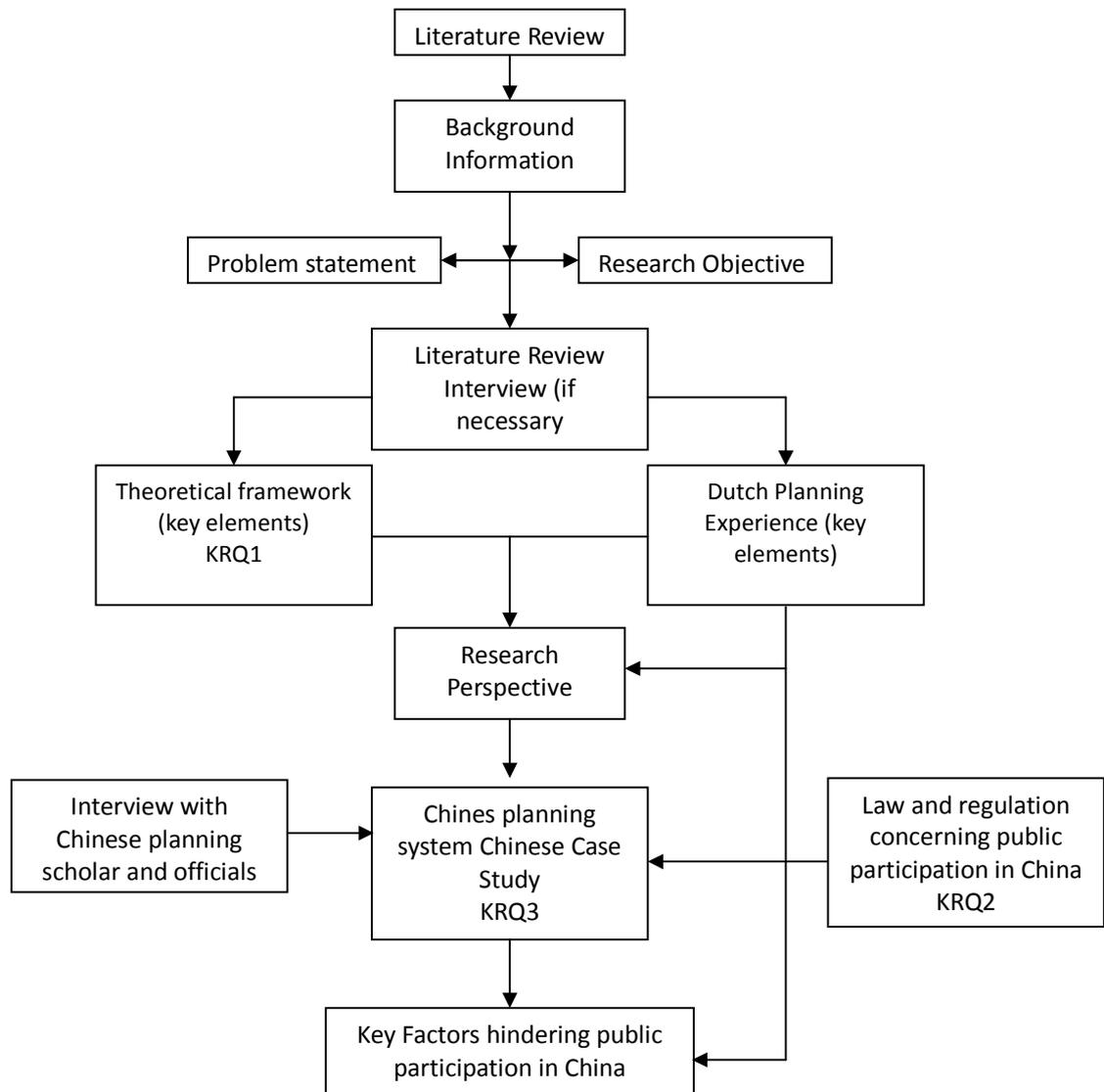


Figure 3. Methodological Flowchart of the Research

Research Methods

1. What are the determinants of the implementation of an effective public participation in local urban planning practice?

By answering this question, a theoretic framework of public participation in planning

practice including crucial determinative factors and level division of public participation. The findings will be the major components of building up the research perspective to approach the Chinese planning case later on. To answer this question, extensive but in-depth knowledge about public participation is needed. The exploration for the answer will be conducted in the literature review that can be accessed through internet search engine (e.g. Google Scholar) and the provisions (cases) from the lecturers in Wageningen University and book review (e.g. Allmendinger, 2002, Arnstein, S. R., 1969).

2. How is public participation implemented in Chinese planning law and regulation?

The answer to this question will be explored through a desk study on the internet. The on-line document of Chinese planning law is accessible on the different web sites. These websites can be easily found through internet research engine (Baidu, the biggest research engine in China). The local planning regulation can be found on the official website of local government and local planning bureau. The different articles concerning public participation in the regulations will be selected for analysis.

3. What are the experiences with public participation in Chinese planning practice?

To answer this question, first of all the general situation of public participation in Chinese urban planning will be explored by reviewing documents concerning relevant subjects. Also the planning context in China is an important part to analyze. Besides these, the case study contributes to large part of the answer by addressing the experience of implementing public participation in the case. Research on the case includes a document studies on the internet in order to explore the background information and the process of the project; and interviews with Chinese planning scholars and bureau officials will provide more concrete information about the experiences with public participation in the case, in China and their opinions on this topic. Due to the limited research environment, the interviews will be conducted through e-mail and posing on the official website of the planning bureau.

Descriptions of Chinese Case

Xiamen PX Project

Xiamen project was a chemical industrial project, which was invested by over 1 billion Chinese Yuan (approximately 1000 million euros) and was estimated to be “the largest industrial project ever” (Baidubaike, 2010). It was approved to implement by the State Department in February of 2004 and by Environment Impact Assessment in July, 2005. The deadly poison damage of the project to the surrounding residents led to a large scale public protest to the plans. The government was forced to make new decisions on the location of the project. This case has prompted the government to pay close attention to handle the relationship between growing civil society and public administration, to take serious consideration about the public opinion during decision-

making (Yan, 2009).

1.7. Content structure of the Thesis

In chapter 2, the theoretical background of the public participation will be introduced; and a theoretical framework that will be used to analyze the case study is created; furthermore the Dutch planning experiences are explored as examples for the theory. In chapter 3 the Chinese urban planning system will be described; and the general situation of public participation in China will be introduced. Chapter 4 will address the case study of Xiamen PX project. In chapter 5, the key research questions and main research question will be answered; and the barriers of public participation in Chinese urban planning were specifically discussed; moreover suggestions and direction for further research are stated.

2. Theoretical Background of Public Participation in Local Urban Planning

In this chapter, a comprehensive theoretical background on public participation in spatial planning, specifically focusing on local urban planning will be grounded through an extensive literature review. The theoretical perspective consists of three parts. Firstly a transition of from old classical model of public participation to a new theory of public participation will be presented; and the later one will be used to address the level of participation in Chinese case; secondly the fundamental elements that drive the organization of public participation will be explored and identified. Thirdly a set of barriers in theory that affect the effectiveness of public participation will be presented as another part of the theoretical perspective to analysis the case in China. However, the findings of the investigation merely stay in a theory level that might not represent the real situation of planning practice. Therefore some Dutch planning experiences at local level will be studied as well.

2.1 What is public participation?

Definition of Public Participation

According to Li *et al* (2005), public participation is considered as a human right by which the public is admitted to participate in governmental policy making through certain procedure or path. It implies that in social matters, citizens are unconditionally qualified to be involved in any interests-related environmental decision activities in order to assure the decision (s) coinciding the interests of public majority (Li *et al*, 2005). Collaborative planning is primary advocated by planning theorist considering the advantages of public participation (Rij, 2007). They evaluate processes on their capacity to stimulate learning. Their normative assumption is that a planning process should be as inclusive as possible (Healey, 2003). It can be understood that public participation is not only, a formalized attempt to expand margin to involve different social actors in order to arrive at a democratically political decision making in a political perspective, but also an effective way of gaining knowledge from different discourse communities. This stems from the philosophical perspective of social constructionism. Social constructivism first emerged in the 1970s as a distinct approach in the sociological and historical study of science. This particular approach aimed to show that scientific knowledge and scientific facts can be considered 'social constructions'. This demonstrates that so called "scientific knowledge", or generally saying knowledge, can be seen as the outcomes of negotiation processes between scientific investigators and other participants, outcomes that often bear the specific imprint of dominant interests in society (Van den Belt, 1987).

Who is (are) the Public?

According to Blake (1999), "the 'public' is best defined in terms of alienation from dominant political or knowledge regimes *in a particular context*". This implies that most of us, on issues of any complexity, fall into this category. (Commentary, 2000, p1141)

More significantly, perhaps, it suggests that delineation of a 'public' is inseparable from the motives of those claiming that the public must be engaged. (Commentary, 2000, p1141) It can also be found that the publics were defined as the groups that were not at stakes in certain planning context.

Purposes of public participation

Scanning through scientific literature about public participation, the essential ambitions of implementing public participation are in general similarly defined in different fields such as environment management, politics, spatial planning, etc. According to Innes and Booher (2000), three conclusive purposes of the public participation have been advanced in planning decision making.

The first one, which is most simple and obvious one, is to acquire information about the public's preferences for decision makers. So that the public group would at least partly participate in the decisions about projects, policies or plans. A stronger way to put it is that public participation is designed to help assure that the people's will is done (Innes&Booher, 2000).

The second one is a closely related purpose that is to improve the decisions that are made by incorporating the knowledge of the public or members of the public into the calculus of the decision (Innes&Booher, 2000). Thus, it might be that the people in a local community know about the traffic or crime problems on a particular street, and the planners and decision makers can learn about this through public involvement (Innes&Booher, 2000). To put it simply, the involvement of public actors will open up the dialogue between the government officials, scientific experts, citizens group (in specific target area, for which the decision is made) and other interest groups. In these dialogues, different participants will learn from each other. Especially for the latter one, local citizens reasonably know specific situations in their own everyday environment and what is exactly happening in the local community. This knowledge is what the other groups lack in their work.

Thirdly public participation is in relation with fairness and justice (Innes&Booher, 2000). An open public participation process can prevent those who were alienated in the early stage of decision making from missing the opportunities of being heard. And as Innes and Booher (2000) put, public participation is about getting legitimacy for public decisions. In another words, public participation also helps to accumulate public support to the plans or policies.

2.2 What is collaborative planning?

Nowadays planning is widely understood as an interactive process under a specific social context rather than a purely technical design, analysis and management (Healey, 1997). Collaborative planning, or interactive/participatory/communicative planning as different

planning articles put, is representing the generic planning perspective or planning style all in the western world. According to Philip (2002),

“Communicative (collaborative) planning is an attempt to find a way forward for planning, to justify its existence and provide a normative basis, which it has lacked since the rational-comprehensive approaches of the 1970s” (Allmendinger, 2002, p220).

It can be literally and easily understood that this type of planning approach aims to work collectively with different participants. Traditional rational-instrumental planning is vertically operated through hard data, model analysis and dominated by scientific knowledge toward a given end embarking major interests of government. Differently from this traditional model, collaborative planning emphasizes more on its horizontal dimension, in which more margin for non-scientific and apolitical groups are created in order to achieve a consensually formulated end. As Lowry *et al* (1997) put, collaborative planning involves interaction in the form of a partnership throughout consensus building, plan development, and implementation (Margerum, 2002). Theoretically the decision within this new approach should be made through interaction and communication between politicians, scientific experts and societal groups including stakeholders, citizens and other interests groups. Since the last decades of the twentieth century, traditional research-led planning made by professional planners, was considered to be inappropriate to cope with changes in space and society. And the traditional planning approach lacks public considerations (Rij, 2007). Collaborative planning is initiated upon the question:

“How can we ‘make sense’ of what is happening and plan for the future within a dynamic and increasingly complex society? When there is wholesale distrust of the political process, a fragmentation into single-issue political process, how can we come to agree on matters of concern?”(Allmendinger, 2002, p197)

The world is changing rapidly and is full of uncertainties. Planning is no longer an independent scientific activity for solving social problems through unquestionable scientific knowledge of professionals, but is produced under the ongoing social process, in which various actors interact and influence. Simply put, planning is already and should be a part of this social process. According to postmodernist and constructivism point of view, knowledge is no longer universally and objectively unquestionable, but is socially constructed and becoming more and more comprehensive with multi-perspectives and interpretations; as well as planning, which is gradually being seen as the achievement of complicated social processes that includes complex social relations.

Since 1970s, there have been lots of critiques and debates over instrumental rationality. Therefore, another new understanding of planning, which is planning as communication, emerged; and this perspective has gained increasing theoretical popularity (Allmendinger, 2002, p197). In the light of the this change, it is necessary to mention one name Jurgen Habermas, whose work of critique on modernity and re-emphasis on

alternative ways of knowing and understanding knowledge, as the essence, has the most important influence on communicative planning perspective.

Accompanying the technical shift in the planning theory and practice, the claim for participatory planning also reflects and is triggered under an institutional trend that changes from top-down government political climate to bottom-up governance context, by which centralized political power was fragmented into the societies on regional, local level or to a community level (e.g. The Netherlands). Therefore the previously alienated groups, like citizen groups, would have the chance to be involved with a say in the decision making process (more description on this issue will be presented in the study in Dutch planning). Although under within different governance context, collaborative planning is understood differently, in general as Healey (2003) demonstrated, collaborative planning is a plea for the importance of understanding complexity and diversity under the particular governance context.

Innes and Booher (2000) argued that collaborative planning becomes the dominant model and the dominant way of involving the public in planning decisions because it is the only one that can *accommodate the enormous fragmentation of interests and values we confront in public arenas today* (Innes and Booher, 2000). Even more importantly, as Innes and Booher argued it would be the only method of planning and public involvement that is *flexible, responsive and adaptive enough to be effective in the uncertain and rapidly changing environment* (Innes and Booher, 2000).

2.3 A Classical and New Model of Public Participation

In this section, a classical Participation Ladder theory and a new public participation theory, the Triangle of Engagement, will be presented (see also Schotsman 2011). The main contents and transition from the classical theory to the new theory will be discussed. And the Triangle of Engagement, as a new perspective of public participation, will be applied to analyze the case of Chinese urban planning in next chapter.

2.3.1 Participation Ladder

Although public participation has already been widely welcomed and accepted by planning field, the extent to which public participation is implemented and influencing variously differed in terms of political context, nation (administrative system), planning objective, actual situation of the project, etc. Thus a primary reference or starting point to analyze effect of public participation, defined here, is to clarify the current property of the public participation under certain context, namely vertically measure the level of public participation within certain planning or political context in order to obtain a rough image about how public group functions in planning process.

In “*A Ladder of Citizen Participation*”, Ms. Arnstein claimed that citizen participation is a *categorical term for citizen power*. Public participation implies the distribution of power

that enables the presently (or say previously) excluded citizen group to be deliberately included in decision making process in the future. Therefore she suggested a typology of citizen participation. In this “ladder” (figure 4), eight different rungs of citizen participation were claimed. Each stair illustrates the extent to which involved citizen power determines the end products of decision making (Arnstein, 1969). Put it simply, each level indicates the space for citizens (public) to participate in decision making and their influences to the final decision(s). As *figure 4* indicates, these eight rungs of participation, referring to the degree in which citizen group is involved and considered, can be roughly categorized into **Nonparticipation** including “Manipulation” and “Therapy”; **Tokenism** including “Informing”, “Consultation” and “Placation” and **Citizen Power** including “Partnership”, “Delegated Power” and “Citizen Control”.

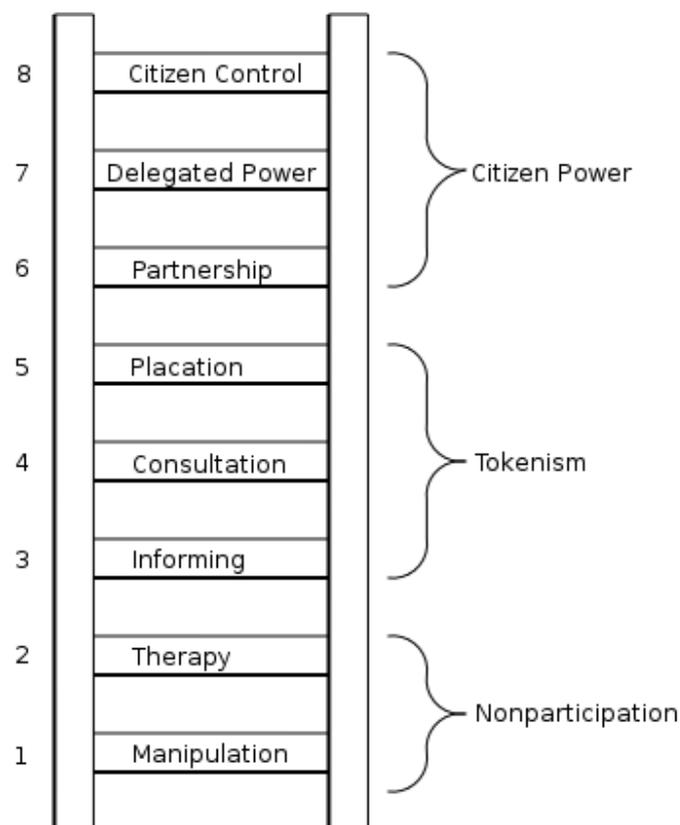


Figure 4. *Eight rungs on the ladder of citizen participation*

Source: Arnstein, 1969

Manipulation

Public participation under this manipulation level, which was initiated in urban renewal programmes, demonstrates a nonparticipation situation. In this situation, citizens are placed in the *advisory committees or advisory boards* in order to foster “information gathering”, “public relation” and “public support” for legitimatizing the political decision making (Arnstein, 1969). In actual meetings, citizen groups are *educated, persuaded* and

advised by the political officials. The citizen committees hold almost no legitimate power and function in the planning process. What they usually do is to sign on the planning proposal in order to prove that the government has gone through the procedure of involving citizen group; the citizen group obtains the feeling of having been involved in. But in fact the public groups hardly know what exactly is happening within the decision making, of course the content of the proposal that they just signed on.

Therapy

The second level of public participation, namely Therapy, was also designated as a nonparticipation situation (just like manipulation), which is dishonest and arrogant (Arnstein, 1969). Referring to an assumption of mental health experts, who direct the group therapy as citizen participation, *powerlessness is synonymous with mental illness* (Arnstein, 1969). Under this assumption, citizen groups are *subject to clinical group therapy*. The essential problem or major characteristic of this style of citizen participation is that the involved citizens are extensively participated in activities, but the decision making only focuses on solving the problems (“pathology” as Arnstein put) on the citizens. The actually basic causes of the problems such as racism and victimization, cannot be attached with any attention. The most essential and causal issues, such as citizens’ values or attitudes are always distorted or even neglected.

Informing

According to Arnstein (1969), “Informing” is the most important first step toward legitimate citizen participation. Public participation at such level would enable citizens being informed by their rights, responsibilities, and options. However the access of information is a one-way channel, which is from officials to citizens. And public group is not able to give feedbacks to the decisions and without power for negotiation (Arnstein, 1969). In spite of such a channel, there are hardly any opportunities for the citizens to have direct dialogue with government officials. In most of the cases, public group is informed through media, such as news, posters, etc. Moreover the provided information is always superficial, irrelevant and difficultly understandable to the majority of the citizen group. All above constrain the public group being influential to the end products, even though they are informed and know what is happening at this moment. Especially in the case that citizens participate in later steps of the planning process, their involvement seems to be fairly forceless.

Consultation

At the level of “consultation”, the citizen’s opinions are invited in the planning process by the method of attitude survey, neighborhood meeting, and public hearing. However mere consulting people cannot guarantee, if any, to what extent public’s concerns or opinions would be taken into consideration. For instance, attitude survey, according to Arnstein, as particular bone of contention in poor communities, does not provide clear image about what kind of options the residents might have. This likely leaves the demands of the public’s outside the consideration. Overall what citizens achieve in all this activities is having “*participated in participation*”; and power holders proved that

they had realized the wish of public group to be involved in the planning process (Arnstein, 1969).

Placation

At this rung of citizen participation, public group start to be influential to the decision making to certain degree. (Part of) The group is placed to certain public agencies and is involved in certain public activities, such as education, security. In other cases the group is empowered to give advices to the plans. But the judgments on the legitimacy and feasibility of the advices are still held on the hands of officials (power holders) (Arnstein, 1969). And the status of “hand-picked” group is always unstable. In most cases of Model Cities programs, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) demanded that “*citizens have clear and direct access to the decision-making process*” (Arnstein, 1969). But actually citizens were not required being included in the local decision making process. In the program, a great deal of time was spent on *fashioning complicated board, committees and task force structures for planning year* (Arnstein, 1969). But the rights and responsibilities are not clearly defined that might lead to considerable conflicts in the end of the planning process.

Partnership

When the powerful and powerless are working on a partnership level, it means that *power is in fact redistributed through negotiation between citizens and power holders* (Arnstein, 1969). In such type of citizen participation, citizens and power holders share planning and decision-making responsibilities through *joint policy boards, planning committees and mechanisms for resolving impasses* (Arnstein, 1969). Arnstein also introduced three important conditions that satisfy an effective partnership with influence over the outcome of the plans:

- An organized power-base in the community; and the citizen leaders should be accountable to the community;
- Enough financial resource to pay the efforts made by the citizen leaders;
- Adequate resource for the community to hire its own technicians, lawyers and community organizers. (Arnstein, 1969)

However in most cases, like Model Cities program, the shared power is not proffered or given by the powerful group to the citizen group, but is wrested by powerless.

Delegated Power

Citizen participation at this level enables citizen group to achieve a dominant decision-making authority over a particular plan or program. On the delegated agencies, citizens group has a “majority of seats”; and holds a specified power in order to bargain with the traditional power holders and to assure the “accountability of the program” (e.g. Model Cities program) to them (Arnstein, 1969).

There is another model of citizen participation as “Delegated Power” is *separated and*

parallel groups of citizens and power holders (Arnstein, 1969). In this model, citizen groups are provided with citizen veto if conflicts in the negotiation cannot be resolved.

Citizen Control

Citizen participation, at the top rung of the ladder, is actually in a great demand in now day's society, although it is not realistic that anyone would have absolute power to control any issue in a society. Simply the publics do demand such a powerful degree of control in order to guarantee a community, residents or participants of a planning process to govern a program or institution, such a school, policy plans, decision making without any influence from the traditional power groups. In many cases this style of participation is still being experimented. A neighborhood corporation is frequently advocated. In such a model, there are no intermediaries between the corporation and the source of fund. However many different models of such a citizen control are under developed for the same purpose of that citizens would *press for greater degrees of power over their lives* (Arnstein, 1969). Although citizen group could get such a high degree of power control, the final approval should be proceeding in the local council.

In conclusion, according to Arnstein's perspective, public (citizen) participation can be demonstrated as the involvement of public (citizen) power in planning decision making, which is dominated by traditional political or governmental forces and their interests as given ends. The eight rungs of participation describe such a dynamic situation that contains space, influence, power and functions of either governmental officials or citizens group which is corresponding with each other in planning decision making process.

2.3.2 Triangle of Engagement

The formulation of Participation Ladder demonstrates a hierarchical continuum of power/control relations from its bottom to the top. Each rung of the ladder runs progressively to the higher level. Top rung of the ladder means that the public would take over the entire job of planning, policy making and managing a programme. This implies an ideal situation in public participation on a policy makers' point of view. Traditionally *"increasing the numbers of people who take part in public consultation and community engagement is regarded by many as a desirable aim of public policy"* (May, 2007. p69). According to May (2007), such an appreciated objective embodies political and ideological reasons to create democracy and trust from the public; or marketing reasons to better understand and serve to consumers (May, 2007). Simply putting, the intention of public policy making is to get more citizens involved in local governance (May, 2007).

Admittedly at a practitioner's point of view, the Participation Ladder presents a very explicit power and control dimension of public participation as they applied in their work; and as May (2006) stated, many practitioners and social researchers followed the idea that the top of the model were always considered *"morally superior, ideologically more*

comfortable, more desirable or more socially acceptable than the bottom". Such a paradigm implies that large numbers of involved people represent a genuine community engagement; and the minority cannot represent the public at large (May, 2006, p311). From their points of the view as described previously, whatever formulation and motivation, the intention of the public participation is to get more citizens involved in local governance (May, 2007). Such an intention is clearly meant by the top rung of the Participation Ladder. As Rowe and Shepherd (2002) exposed, the basic attitude of large public agency (e.g. Health Authority) is actually *"to limit public influence over service planning by using representation to delegitimize user views"* (May, 2007, p69). In this respect, the public involvement is actually considered by the organizations and committees as an instrument to strengthen their credibility to the public. As May (2006) stated:

"Consequently attempts to move an agency's participation policy and practice up the ladder, without regard to the needs of the participants, will never succeed in driving up participation rates or improving the quality of participation...The way to reach new levels of usefulness and quality is to change perspective totally, and consider the needs of the participants themselves" (May, 2006, p313).

Unlike the classical participation ladder theory (or its upgrading development: five stances) which focused on the motivations and objective of practitioner or commissioners (May, 2007), a new participation theory, the Triangle of Engagement provides a totally different perspective on public participation exercise. The emphasis of this model is on (space of) the participants themselves. When changing to the perspective of participants, such a ladder seems to be an illusion and unrealistic. The hierarchic nature within the model cannot represent the real situation any more. As Sanoff (2000) stated, the main source of user satisfaction is the feeling of people that they are heard and influential to the decision making, instead of the extent to which their demand were met (Sanoff, 2000). If that is the case, then it is imaginable that the participation of large number of the normal public might be meaningless. Such a perspective of thinking about public participation is also reflected in several empirical studies that are discussed by May (2006). For example in a survey of the Electoral Commission (2004), it shows that three-quarter of the respondents showed wishes of having a say in "how the country is ran", but only one in seven were politically active (May, 2006). The reports of Electoral Commission (2004) and DETR (2000) together revealed that *"people are indeed interested in the issues that affect them, their families and the wider world, and that want a say in the way decisions are made and to know their voices have been heard"* (May, 2006. p310). But there is actually a minor proportion of the total public population are desired to seriously get involved and engaged in (May, 2006). To this point, that the public power and control over the decision making convey progressively from the bottom to the top doesn't make sense, because the involved proportion of total public population is decoupled from and disconnected with the power they would have in the participation activities. Although assuming that the majority of the public group is involved, it cannot be guaranteed that

most of them are definitely capable to be engaged in the process; and that the quality of decision making would be definitely improved.

“Usual Suspects”

A core concept in the discussion of the Triangle of Engagement is the ‘usual suspects’. As May (2006) described, the usual suspects is those from the public group, who are mostly willing to be engaged in and most committed in participation activities. **Number** and **engagement**, as May introduced, are the two important characteristics of the usual suspects. They are a relatively minority of the public, but the willingness and efforts regarding to the activities are in a much higher degree than most of the members of the public who have a relatively low degree of engagement (May, 2007). In a normal view of the practitioners, such a few should be dismissed on the ground of *being not typical of the normal public* (May, 2007). But in the light of the new perspective, they should be cherished. As will be shown below, the two important characteristics of the usual suspects are elaborated in as the two properties of the Triangle of Engagement.

The Triangle of Engagement

According to the new understanding on the new perspective and the “few”, the Triangle of Engagement is offered to demonstrate such as relationship between the scope of such a ‘usual suspects’ group and their required capacity of engaging in the participation exercise (see Figure 5). The Triangle of Engagement is determined by two important properties (May 2007). Vertically the model rises from the bottom to the top just as the Participation Ladder shapes. Those stairs represent different ways offered to public to participate in the activities (see figure 5, key). Each way requires a different degree of the engagement in the process. The required degree of engagement strengthens as the model rises. Correspondently more effort (time and energy as May termed) of the participants will be demanded in higher up level of the model. Another property of the Triangle of Engagement is the width of each successive layer (May, 2007), which represents the prevalence of the participation exercise, namely the number of those who are seriously and willing to be involved in the participation activities. As *figure 5* shows, the width of each layer narrows successively from the bottom to the apex; the prevalence decreases as the demand for engagement increases; similarly the number of involved participants shrinks with the increasingly required commitment. Overall the phrase “the higher the few” summarizes the essential idea of the Triangle of Engagement (May, 2007). Despite of the ascending shape, unlike the Participation Ladder, there is no continuous and progressive hierarchy running through the Triangle of Engagement. Each layer of the model is decoupled and discontinues.

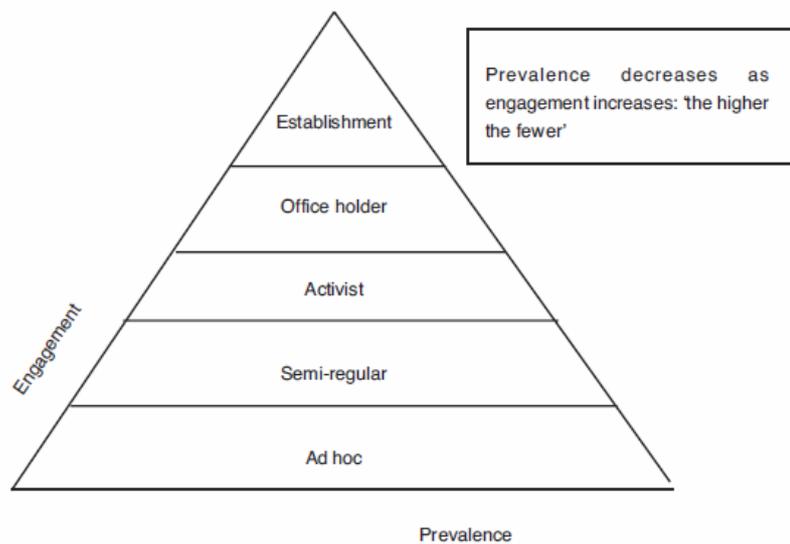


Figure 5. *The triangle of engagement*
Source: May, 2007

Key (May, 2007. p70)

Establishment: the highest level of public participation, for example metropolitan police authority member, local councillor, magistrate, school governor, non-executive director of an NHS trust, lay member of a non-departmental public body ('quango'). Involved *ex officio*.

Office-holder: chair/vice chair/secretary/treasurer of a community group such as a community police consultative group, residents' association, patients' forum or a non-locality based interest group such as a minority ethnic association. The 'usual suspects' tend to come from this layer of the triangle.

Activist: as the name implies, but without taking on the executive responsibilities of office. Some people on this layer might qualify as 'usual suspects'.

Semi-regular: engaged enough to attend more than one event or take more than one opportunity to have their say.

Ad hoc: the majority of the public, who will engage if and when the issue is sufficiently pressing and/or it is on their doorstep. May or may not also engage in passive continuous monitoring of the service.

In the analysis of the Chinese case, the number or proportion of the involved public in the planning process and their capacities, or the functions and roles they performed in the process, will be analyzed regarding the two important properties of the Triangle of Engagement, namely **prevalence** and **engagement**. Then the results will be positioned and reflected in the model for further discussions.

2.4 Key Characteristics of an Effective Public Participation

In this section, an inventory of key elements that characterize an effective public participation in planning practice will be presented. These factors are directly or indirectly concluded from scientific literature relating to public participation in (collaborative) planning theories. Presently there isn't an academically dominated framework for an effective public participation in planning theory or practice. According

to Konisky and Beierle (2001), the debate swirling around citizen participation is no longer representative government versus citizen participation, but what type of citizen-participation process is best (Irvin and Stansbury, 2004). Those mentioned here are most frequently discussed or introduced in different knowledge claims of various planning scholars. Afterwards a set of criteria that will be used to examine the case(s) will be specified and extracted from each characteristic.

Legitimacy (Inclusiveness) and Transparency Political Process (Openness)

Collaborative planning works toward a legitimate decision making under a transparent political climate. Often an interactive planning process is considered to increase legitimacy (Rij, 2007). Planning and decision making in this case is no longer a locked-up process that merely operates internally among governmental agents. According to Healey (2003) such a process should be as inclusive as possible. This is the basic assumption for an interactive planning process. The inclusiveness of such a process performs as an equal participation, in which those might be affected should have the right to participated; concerns of each involved group should be equally considered; and there is no say among participants can be privileged over another. Since contemporary planning is claimed by many planning scholars as an interactive learning process, then in such a process the information especially that was accessible to inter-organizations within government and planning ministry should be accessible to the public group as well; and should be more frequently flowing between political groups and public sectors. This is actually the very first step of building up trust among all of the participants including political groups and public groups.

In conclusion one issue can be extracted as one criterion to examine the case, namely **Inclusiveness and Access**. In theory the groups or individuals who have been influenced by the policy or have interests in the plan should be involved. Thus in the Chinese case those who had been affected by the planning programme will be analyzed to see the inclusiveness of the participation in the real practice by the questions: if those (general public) affected were involved or only interests group were involved? And if those designed as participants had access into the process instead of participating when the plan was made?

Multiple-Way Dialogue between Government and Citizens

According to the analysis of Innes and Booher (2000), each of the four planning models as they defined, namely *technical bureaucratic planning*, *political influence planning*, *social movement* and *collaborative planning*, contains public participation; but the degree of available public (citizens) influence to the political decision making are different. The first three models together represent the traditional form of public participation that mostly discourages or avoids the involvement of citizens or non-government group in planning decision making. If any, it was just an indirect or a one-way communication either from government to public or from public to government. However in the new paradigm of public participation (in collaborative/interactive planning model that Innes and Booher (2000) advocated), what is aspired to achieve in

collaborative planning process is not only a direct conversation between the government and the none-government group, but more importantly a multiple ways dialogue in which information and knowledge can be exchanged. Stiftel (1983) also suggested that participation mechanisms that allow for dialogue or two-way communication are superior to those that are limited to one-way communication (Julian *et al*, 1997). If that is the case, and then public participation would contain various purposes, interests and concerns that then being integrated as a representation of preference of the public group. This is conversely different from the traditional single way communication, in which the government just passively listened to what citizens spoke out as their preferences; and simultaneously worked toward its own end(s); furthermore there was no attention put on those who did not have any opportunities to express themselves in decision making process. Information within such a new paradigm is not only flowing between government and public, but is also being exchanged among all of the actors involved in the process. The effect is not expected to be that the actors hear different kinds of information or different purposes and preference, but that most of the players, if not all of them, would understand and exchange each other in others' perspectives, information and knowledge; and ultimately integrate well developed citizen opinions into collective actions and decisions under a public autonomy sphere (Innes&Booher, 2000).

Therefore in conclusion, a multi-ways communication between political and apolitical participants would be one of the key condition for an effective public participation in planning decision making under the precondition that the (public) participant are well empowered in the planning process. This point indicates the issue of **Information and Knowledge Exchange**. It is encouraged in public participation that interests and needs of participants would be discussed in the process. Opportunities should be created for the affected groups or individuals to clarify their concerns, perceived problems and so on. Thus the way and the extent to which dialogues between government and public participants was proceeded are the key criteria to be tested in the cases (what kind of information is open to the public? And what did the government learn from the public?)

Exercising of Participant Competencies

According to Arnstein (1969), citizen (public) participation implies the existence of citizen (public) power in political decision making. However, public participation is not only engaged in enhancing individual rights in decision making, but also even more importantly in working out a community objective that represents the majority of individuals in public group by building up consensus. Thus improving participation can be understood as a means of promoting power of public community that is closely influencing and influenced by different social issues. According to the research of Verba and Nie in 1972 in America, participation is associated with the demographic characteristics of social status, life cycle stage, and race (Julian *et al*, 1997). And participation that aims on influencing social issue declines due to that the concept of community is being less defined (Julian *et al*, 1997). This led to the decline of the ambition to advance collective community objective. According to Julian *et al* (1997)

individual psychological benefit is one important factor to promote participation, to enhance public power and to understand its benefit(s) (Julian *et al*, 1997). Such psychological benefits include **empowerment** and **sense of community**.

Sarason (1974) defines sense of community as “*the sense that one belongs in and is meaningfully a part of a larger collectivity*” (Julian *et al*, 1997). The sense makes individuals feel being part of the group, not a single existence in the community they belong to. People need to obtain the feeling that they are an indispensable sector of the entirety; and their words can be adequately influential and be agreed upon by other individuals who are also part of the community. Zimmerman and Rappaport (1988) described empowerment as the *connection between a sense of personal competence (I believe I am competent) and a willingness to take action (I am able to exercise my competencies)* (Julian *et al*, 1997).

When it comes to the relationship between public participation, empowerment and sense of community, theory research has suggested two models, namely “*sense of community leads to participation*” and “*participation leads to sense of community*” (Julian *et al*, 1997). Here in this research and current researches as Julian and *et al* (1997) mentioned, the first model is suggested since the sense of community would be important factor that triggers or even enhances public participation. In both models, **empowerment** of public appears to be an important mediating variable (Julian *et al*, 1997). According to Julian *et al* (1997), participation would be meaningful by involving power to influence pertinent decisions. And if using citizen (public) participation is expected to enhance planning practice, then the focus should be put on the degree to which citizen (public) participants are empowered to make decisions (Julian *et al*, 1997). According to the ideal (low-cost) conditions for an effective citizen participation discussed by Irvin and Stansbury (2004), it should be that “*citizens readily volunteer for projects that benefit the entire community*” (Irvin and Stansbury, 2004, p62).

The results of Stiftel’s research also suggested that dialogue (between public and agencies) was actually disable to increase the knowledge of participants on the issues involved in the project and to increase the congruence between the attitudes of the (public) participants and those of planning experts (Julian *et al*, 1997). And the presence or absence of dialogue is an insufficient measure of public participation (Julian *et al*, 1997). Instead empowerment or the extent to which participants believed they influenced policy decisions is considered as the important precondition that potentially determines the effectiveness of dialogue in planning decision making. When participants felt empowered in the process, dialogue might indeed increase their knowledge and the congruence of participant and staff positions (Julian *et al*, 1997).

In conclusion, this point implies the importance of **empowerment** to connect participants and participation. If people were expected to participate effectively, they first expected to be empowered in decision making process. At least people need to feel being empowered in the process. This criterion can be divided into two questions,

namely are they capable to work in such a process? And do they want to?

Network Paradigm without Centralized Authority (Power Sharing)

Innes and Booher (2000) had introduced a new paradigm for public participation in communicative planning as a collaborative network (figure 6). In this network, there is no centralized authority that guides the whole decision making process toward the powerful group's own end. And there is no hierarchy in the process that causes inequality by the ignorance of the opinions of the powerless or non-interest based entities. The power was equally fragmented into different players involved. The government is no longer a black box that provides superficial information or passive responses to the citizens' requests. In the perspective of Innes and Booher, the network is produced by a successful collaborative dialogue when specific discussions are finishes; and new dialogues would emerge; and power would be built on all of those who have participated (Innes and Booher, 2000). Therefore different types (professional or local) of knowledge will constantly flow in the decision making process between different entities involved, although not each of them are connected. Corresponding to Arnstein's claim for citizen (public) participation in the respect of available citizen (public) power, such a network can also be perceived as a shared-power network. Such a network paradigm can also refer to the concept of network power claimed by Innes and Booher (2002).

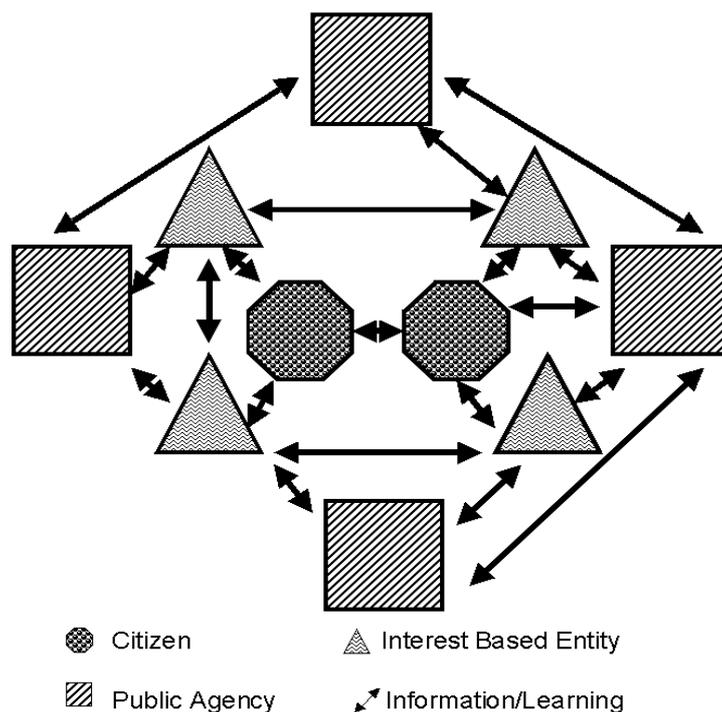


Figure 6. Collaborative network paradigm for citizen participation
Source: Innes&Booher, 2000

According to Innes and Booher (2002), network power is a shared ability of linked agents to alter their environment in ways advantageous to these agents individually and collectively. The concept of network power uses a connectionist network, like the neural

network of the brain, which is composed of individual agents connected together with information exchange links with no central or top-down control over information flow or individual behaviour (Innes and Booher, 2002). According to McCarthy and Shorett (1984, 13), “power parity is reached when each interest group is unable to impose its proposed solution on the other affected parties”. (Margerum, 2002). Different groups need to learn to depend on each other instead of dominate or replace each other.

Innes and Booher (2002) also introduced three basic conditions for enabling network power (figure 7).

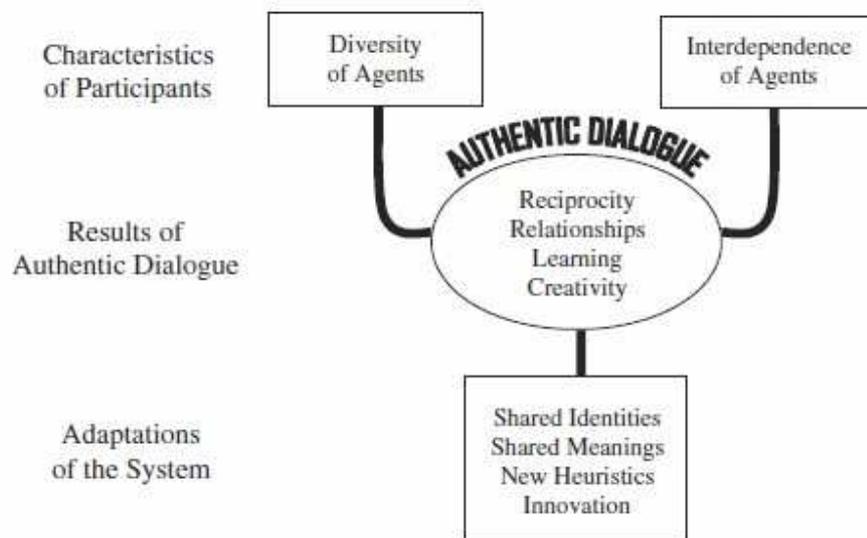


Figure 7. Diversity, interdependence and authentic dialogue network dynamics
Source: Innes&Booher, 2002

- The agents in the network (including stakeholders, agencies, and citizens) should be diverse in a way that is consistent with the full range of interests and knowledge relevant to the issues at hand; such a diversity of the network should contain different values, interests, resources, experiences, information as well as race, genders, geographic roots and so forth. Such diversity is also a challenge to contemporary planning practice in researching agreement and consensus. But it provides the decision making process with a cluster of perspectives toward the issued problems that develops new complexities of the problems. This is fundamental for participants to understand and share others' identities as different stakeholders; such a diversity also offers opportunities for innovations (Innes and Booher, 2002);
- Agents must be in a situation in which their ability to fulfil their interests depends on each other's actions and in which they recognize this interdependence; this points emphasises the importance of the existence of

interdependence among the participants. Interdependence based on self-interest and reciprocity among diverse participants fuels network power. Based on such a interdependence, involved players should be able to offer something that others might need; and received something that he or she might need from other participants (Innes and Booher, 2002);

- Authentic dialogue. This point is somehow discussed in previous section. An authentic dialogue offers an open and free arena for the involved agents and public participants. Based on such a dialogue, the benefits of diversity and interdependence will be truly performed, the ideas of participants will be truly exchanged, shared and understood by other participants in order to create shared meaning of decisions, shared understanding of problems, shared interest (s) over the community goals (Innes and Booher, 2002).

However, such a shared-power network doesn't mean that there is no powerful group or organization existing in the process. Government agencies or organizations are still seen as power holders. According to the case studies directed by Margerum (2002) in United States and Australia, power sharing may require a deliberate effort on the part of powerful organizations, especially the government agencies (Margerum, 2002). They need to be encouraged to give up their autonomy in exchange for increased respect and support (Margerum, 2002).

Overall such a new paradigm indicates a **shared decision making authority**. Different from Innes and Booher (2000)'s previous three planning models (traditional public participation) that protect agencies' or government's administrative direction (Moote *et al*, 1997), in such an authority, individuals, especially the public or other noninterest-based entities should not only be given chances to comment and reflect on the results of the plan and policies in the end of the planning process, but also have rights to participate in the final decision making. Obviously such a paradigm does not only introduce a new formalization of planning process, but also highlights an important component of a proper public participation that (social)public values and interests should be seriously attached in the government agencies' actions. As Wondolleck (1988a), Shannon (1992b) and Paelke (1987) stated critics of traditional approaches contended that "*public policy decisions are ultimately social value choices, which government agencies cannot effectively make without significant public participation*" (Moote *et al*, 1997). Thus the integration of policy decision and interests of participants directly reflects that effectiveness and usefulness of public participation. In the case study following question will guide the analysis on this respect: do the action of government and agencies really reflect the interests of the public?

Redefinition of the Role of Planners

In the traditional planning models, planners played a dominant role in planning process. Such planners tend to believe in the potential for getting accurate information that can show the best way to do things. They believe that there is a truth out there which they

are best qualified to uncover through their analytic skills (Innes&Booher, 2000). Since it was introduced earlier that collaborative planning or participatory planning includes different parties that represent interests differently, one may ask: does it mean that planner's power became weaker than in the time dominated by scientific approaches? What kind of role do they play at present? In the participatory planning process, planners play a different role to that in the conventional planning procedure, in which scientific and technological objectivism prevails over or dominates the final decision making. They started to enter into the communities and talk to the people who are involved in the policy making in order to gather local knowledge and to try to understand what do the locals think, expect and perceive. In communicative theory perspective, the planner's primary function is to listen to people's stories and assist in forging a consensus among differing viewpoints. Rather than providing technocratic leadership, planner is an experiential learner (Fainstein, 2000). Leadership consists not in bridging stakeholders around to any particular planning content but in getting people to agree and in ensuring that whatever the position of participants within the social-economic hierarchy, no group's interest will dominate. According to Innes (1998), *"what planners do most of the time is talk and interacts"* and *"this 'talk' is a form of practical, communicative action"* (Fainstein, 2000). Therefore in collaborative planning, planners should not only be capable to provide information to the participants and collect knowledge from different discourse communities, but, most importantly and difficultly, also be able to lead all of these parties that represent different interests and beliefs, ultimately to the final consensus, in other words, trying to get each actor agreed upon each other's stance, although the final agreement would not be the most effective or valuable to anyone according to rational theorist's point of view. Planners should pick off their privilege mask of expertise; and then try to understand how the non-professional group perceives our reality. In the discussion of the concept network power by Innes and Booher (2000), they also indicate that planners play a key role of building up such a network, participating in it and shaping its form and direction (Innes and Booher, 2000). And their voices represent nothing more than the value of the planning profession; they should be able to communicate with others who work on the issues. *"They are part of the flow of network power and help to shape how that power works and what it produces"* (Innes and Booher, 2000).

To sum up, planners play a role of a facilitator of a planning process or a coordinator who bring all the involved agents together in the network and guide the direction and products of public policy decision making in collaborative planning. This will be a criterion to analyze the role of planner in the case study. So the question "What kind of role do the planner play in the case(s)?" and "what are their (or normal Chinese planners) attitude towards their role in local urban planning practice?" will direct the analysis of this point.

Law Requirement

Last but not least, the restrict legal requirements for public participation are a fairly important precondition for composing an effective public participation, although,

according to the literature review of public participation, this point isn't deeply discussed in most of the scientific literatures. However, it is mentioned that most of decisions or comments made among citizen (public) participation are of no legal status; and need to be eventually approved through government group (local council). Thus for increasing the power or effectiveness of the public participation, increasing its legislative position is indispensable. Therefore **adequate legal framework** that enables and encourages publics involving in local planning process will be the last criterion to analyze the case(s). What have been carried out in the legal framework concerning public participation in case area(s) will be investigated; the implementation of the law in the cases will also be analyzed.

2.5 Barriers Limiting an Effective Public Participation

Admittedly public participation in many points characterizes a generally advanced thinking in planning field; and in many cases (e.g. environment management) has improved the quality of decision making. There are theoretical, instrumental and substantial arguments for supporting public participation in decision making. But Kapoor (2000) stated that *"the attractiveness of the participatory approach in theory, however, does not necessarily translate into successful practice"* (Kapoor, 2000. p273). There are still barriers that limit the effectiveness of public participation. Following-up is a set of barriers constraining public participation discovered through the literature search.

Time and Financial Effort

Different from the traditional approach of planning with its rational nature that focuses on formal procedure and speed-up decision making, participatory planning is with a multi-dimensional nature, in which different (affected) participants are involved with their interests and understandings on planning issues. Correspondently, its comprehensive account, such as its inclusiveness, leads to broader considerations on various issues of participants and organization of the planning process. This apparently demands for much more time and budget. For example, it takes time and money to prepare a public conference; and for participants to attend the meetings; or for formulating a proper final decision. According to Army (1987), Carpenter and Kennedy (1988), financial and time requirements of planning are frequently cited as barriers to public participation (Moote *et al*, 1997). As Kapoor (2000) stated, *"participatory approaches entail, at least at the outset of programmes, a heavy commitment of time and resources (human, institutional and financial) to ensure adequate stakeholder involvement"* (Kapoor, 2000). Many of the public (citizen) consultations in a local participatory planning process are of an informal status; and many specific techniques to implement them are still under experimenting. More time and effort will be needed to better institutionalize participatory approaches and its further developments (Kapoor, 2000). Therefore insufficient time and financial support will lead to the incapacity of public participation in sufficiently taking into account involved issues in planning process. In the case study, the time span and financial situation of the project will be investigated; and more importantly "if the time and financial effort directly or indirectly influence the

participatory activities in the project?" will be an crucial question to guide the research in this respect.

Institutional Reticence

Public participation or participatory approaches do not independently and suddenly occur, but is operating under an appropriate context. As Kapoor (2000) described, the transition towards participation requires *"change of organizational culture, involving a movement towards broader, more flexible and longer-term goals, procedures, results and time horizons"* (Kapoor, 2000). Kapoor (2000) also indicates that those shifts largely depend on a change of structural and political changes, which often are not happening. Such a static political climate will seriously constrain the progression in institutionalizing and implementing public participation, for example, the establishment of relevant legal framework. Thus in the case study, the institutional or political context of China will be explored; and how did this context, more precisely government's attitude/actions, influence the availability of public participation in the case?

Continuity of Public Participation

According to Kapoor (2000), participatory approach (Environmental Management as Kapoor specified) requires involvement by relevant stakeholders in all decision-making phases and throughout the programme cycle to make the participation meaningful. But as Shannon (1990b), Blahna and Yonts-Shepard (1989) and Facaros (1989) stated, *"typically public input to agency planning takes place only at formal meetings held at the beginning and end of the planning process, or through written correspondence"* (Moote *et al*, 1997). Such organizational arrangement would discourage the passion of participant to join the decision making, because they would probably miss large part of the process; and their feeling of being influential (as termed above) would be decreased. Those would consequently affect the quality of participation process. Besides this organizational issue, there is another danger that might prevent a participatory planning process from sustaining. As Kapoor (2000) described an inordinate emphasis on seeking to quick and easier (*"single" and "once-and-for-all"*) community consensus. Such a tendency would ignore the multiple-dimensional nature of a community and the essence of public participation. Thereby conflicts, interests and debates would be limited to consistently generate new understandings and discussion points in planning process. So in the case study, following questions will specifically direct the research in this point: are those involved settled throughout the whole decision making phases (or which phases)? Are different conflicts or debates fully encouraged? Or avoided by power inequality for a quick decision making?

2.6 Dutch Planning Experience

A shift from a traditional technocrat-oriented planning to a participatory planning has successfully taken place in Dutch spatial planning in recent decade. In this section the development of Dutch planning in the respect of public participation and some experiences in the practice will be presented in order to provide an elaboration of the theory abstraction.

2.6.1 Brief Introduction of the development of Dutch Spatial Planning

The origins of Dutch spatial planning can be traced back to 1901. The Housing Act (*Woningwet*) was initiated for responding to the depression of slums (Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and Environment). Although not a formal spatially focused planning act, with its spatial characteristic (designation of lands for streets, squares and canals constructions) the Housing Act can be seen as a primary departure of Dutch spatial planning. After many years' work, in 1941 with the establishment of Government Agency for the National Plan (*Rijksdienst voor het Nationale Plan*), which renamed the National Spatial Planning Agency (*Rijksplanologische Dienst*) in 1965 the government was engaged in spatial planning works in the Netherlands. In the next year regulations for a National Plan, which became law in 1950, were drawn up. Also in 1950, a Spatial Planning Act (*Wet op de Ruimtelijke Ordening*) was proposed to regulate spatial planning and finally became effective on August 1st 1965. In the Spatial Planning Act, responsibilities were distributed into different governments in different administrative levels; and relevant legislation was drawn up for the first time (Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and Environment). In the following years until 1990's, additional amendments were proposed and came in force to comprehend the Dutch spatial planning framework.

In general, Dutch spatial planning system consists of three administrative levels, namely **national level**, **provincial level** and **local level** or **municipal level**, which intervene in the policies of one another. According to Hajer and Zonneveld (2000), the only legally binding plan exists on municipal level: municipal land use plan (Zoning Scheme). Traditional Dutch planning ran in a top-down approach. A planning hierarchy was the primary intention. The hierarchical instruments operates from the national 'Key Spatial Planning Decision' (*PKB-Planologische Kernbeslissing*) through the provinces' 'Regional Plan' (*Streekplan*), to the municipal 'Zoning Scheme' (*Bestemmingsplan*) (Wolsink, 2002).

To cope with increasing demand for economic development, Dutch spatial planning blatantly derivate from the five basic Dutch planning principles ("*concentration of urbanization*", "*spatial cohesion*", "*spatial differentiation*", "*spatial hierarchy*" and "*spatial justice*") to an infrastructure approach, which is characterized by "project-led" approach and prioritized with national interests. In the infrastructure planning, the procedure is "*put first*" then "*fit in spatial distributions*". Such an emphasis on infrastructure and speed, according to Hajer and Zonneveld (2000), is resulted from the emergence of an alignment with mainly economic instruments. In spite of criticism, the Council kept supporting such a planning hierarchy and government-centered approach. Then the Bill of Trajectories and NIMBY (*Not In My Back Yard*) Bill were proposed in order to accelerate the policy decision making. These with the Funnel Model, however, led to the failures in practice by the procedural characteristic and ignorance of alternatives, especially concerning Environmental Impact Assessment (Wolsink, 2002). From the cultural-political perspective, the consultative nature of Dutch democracy is focused on intra-government deliberation as well as powerful interest groups (Hajer and Zonneveld, 2000). Public is involved only in the end of planning process after the

extensive intra-government negotiation (Hajer and Zonneveld, 2000). The case of Sand Excavation in the village of Maasbommel in Gelderland province in 2000 and the case Dike Reinforcement programme in the 1970s and 1980s, which resulted in a lots of local resistance and social discussion, classically illustrated the attempts and failure of speed-up legislation and instruments.

In the Sand Excavation project, as Donkers, 2000 stated, the province attempted to change the local zoning scheme by imposing the national and provincial interest of excavating sand from the riverbed of Mass River in order to supply throughout the Netherlands. But the flooding risk of the village of Maasbommel was not taken into consideration. The ignorance of local interests led to years of resistance from the local inhabitants and the municipality. Furthermore after several months, need of sand was announced to be less urgent by Ministry of Public Works (Wolsink, 2002)

In 1970 the flooding risk attracted central government's (Department of Public Works) attention; and large-scale dike reinforcement programmes were initiated in the flooded areas. But the interest of the local population was the valuable landscape and along the riverbeds and cultural heritage, which were under destructed by the dike reinforcement programmes. Although the River Dikes Committee was set up in 1975 to facilitate the protest from the local and to involve different stakeholders to collaboratively discuss problem and to develop solutions, the finally-achieved collaborative plan was insufficiently executed due to the insufficient financial effort granted to the implementation of the new plan. Until 1990s, new Dike Reinforcement programme was operated, but under high time pressure. This, according to Wolsink (2002), resulted in that "*the new policy window only allowed for quick projects*" (Wolsink, 2002), which were less environment sound and more costly.

These two cases describe the typical Dutch planning context and decision making approach. Obviously central authorities or higher level government were highly involved in the projects; and imposed and prioritized national interests over municipal policy plans. And the local residents and other interest groups were excluded from the decision making process from the outset. Thereby such a procedure always initiated local protest against the plans. Eventually such intervention of higher-level authorities was proven to be less necessary or unnecessary. According to Wolsink (2002), such failures essentially concern the issue of governance in decision making process, not the speed.

2.6.2 A Shift towards an Interactive Planning

Up to recent years, Dutch spatial planning was facing serious problems of erosion of the current administrative institution and decision making procedure. Many planning scholars and political decision makers expressed their view that the current planning system needs to be reshaped. In 2000, the Dutch government embarked on an ambitious project: the revision of the planning system (Wolsink, 2002). Such a changing

thinking in Dutch planning is bound to the emergency of a new context, namely *network society* over the last decade. As Hajer and Zonneveld (2000) stated, “*a network society requires a new generation of intermediary practices that do not only allow for the public to have its say (as in the participatory practices) but approach the variety of ‘stakeholders’ as acknowledged actors in the plan making process*” (Hajer and Zonneveld, 2000). According to WRR (1998), not only in national level, but in local and regional level many initiative were proposed to bring together the new actors (stakeholders, interest groups, NGOs and citizens) in a new setting to discuss strategic planning (Hajer and Zonneveld, 2000).

According to the new Dutch policy memorandum (National Spatial Strategy, time horizon 2020), specific requirements for spatial development will be imposed only when national or international interest are at stake (Vink and Van der Burg, 2006). The new policy enlarges the role and responsibilities of provincial and local government; and provides a channel for the involvement of other authorities, civil organizations, entrepreneurs and members of public. The emphasis was on a different approach to government control under the motto of “decentralize if possible, centralize if necessary” (Vink and Van der Burg, 2006). The new approach, as Vink and Van der Burg (2006) introduced, can be summed up in three key terms: “*focus on development*”, “*decentralization*” and “*deregulation*”. The restrictive central government involvement is abolished, and then is on the National Spatial Network containing that projects like river dikes reinforcement and national road infrastructure” (Vink and Van der Burg, 2006). In the term “decentralization”, more responsibilities were passed to the provinces and municipalities to determine what should be the actions to take. In meanwhile, local and regional governments, organizations, private actors and citizens were explicitly invited to participate in the planning process and to carry out the regional and local vision and policy implementation with a broadened support base (Vink and Van der Burg, 2006). Following examples were found in Neuvel and Van der Knaap (2010)’s research on flooding risk management from a spatial planning perspective. These two cases illustrate the new approach, especially in the participation respect, that implemented in the Netherlands, which has just described previously.

Water Retention Area—Nieuwe Driemanspolder

Nieuwe Driemanspolder was suggested as the most appropriate water retention area to cope with the local flooding risk in south-west of the Netherlands. And according the provincial plan, this area was expected to be transformed from an agricultural land to nature with agricultural, recreational use as well as water retention area (Neuvel and Van der Knaap, 2010). In the decision making process, the province became the coordinating authority for elaborating the project. Two water boards and three municipalities were involved and established a steering committee aiming to develop ideas and spatial plan with different spatial claims from the local plans (Neuvel and Van der Knaap, 2010). The local stakeholder was consulted in end of the process. The participation of the local population was formalized by the establishment of a sounding board group that consisted of representatives of local inhabitant, land owners, farmers,

etc., to advise the committee about the ideas, objections and desires from the local stakeholders. Although the proposed water retention area was conflicted with the values and preferences of part of the local inhabitant, they considered and admitted it as the most desirable development of this area at present and future (Neuvel and Van der Knaap, 2010). The most important emphasis of the Nieuwe Driemanspolder project was on integrating and balancing different claims from the locals; this also encouraged them to support this proposal for the water retention area.

The Kampen Bypass

The national government proposed to develop a river bypass near Kampen to prevent the flooding risk from River IJssel. But this proposal was conflicted with municipal plan and other spatial claims from local level, such as housing construction, railway. Thus the province brought together other authorities to discuss that method to integrate those conflicted claims. According to Grijzen (2010) and Schuwer (2008), three information meetings were held to the public; and five different scenarios concerning the bypass were presented. And the participants were free to give comments (Neuvel and Van der Knaap, 2010). Although the most popular scenario ("new Secondary River") received strong opposition from the inhabitants of Kamperveen, the province offered an opportunity for the inhabitants to create a new alternative with the help from experts. Therefore the opposition was compromised by the creation of sixth scenario. Just like the previous case, the master plan was carried out by a project including provincial and local authorities and a steering group. The representatives of the non-governmental groups were involved in the sounding board group. Although there are still resistance from the local inhabitants and farmers concerning their daily life or relocation, this case, as Neuvel and Van der Knaap (2010) concluded, shows that the governance and participatory style that are being applied in Dutch spatial planning had enlarged the scope of the decision making and the comprehensiveness of the plan making.

In conclusion, from both cases, it evidently shows that comparing to the situation in the last decade(s), provincial and local government are holding more power and taking more responsibilities in drawing up master plans and in coordinating local planning process. But the governmental interests were not imposed to the plan. During the elaboration of the plans, those affected from the local communities were involved and actively consulted. And their values, interests and preference were extensively taken into consideration instead of being ignored. Although conflicts repeatedly emerged in many respects, the authorities were trying to integrate those different claims; and kept the whole process as inclusive and interactive as possible. On the other hand, those conflicts always sustain the participation process and generated new ideas (e.g. the sixth scenario in Kampen case). However, in these cases, the public did not participated in the beginning of the whole planning process, in which the problem, objective and the master plan was formulated; but only in the elaborations of the plans. Thus the participation in these two cases took place only in the end phase of the decision making process and a full-time participation in the process was not realized. The public group in the cases could not participate in the formulation of the planning objective and the

original master plan; but the formulations of the plans in the cases were worked out towards an integration of different spatial claims from national level to local level, from national spatial strategy to local interests.

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter covers extensive information of public participation in planning including background information and theory. The background information includes the definition of public participation and its purposes as well as the development of collaborative planning. A theoretical framework for analyzing the case in next chapter can be derived from theory and the Dutch experiences. Besides these theoretical abstractions, the Dutch planning experience in a shift from rational planning to an interactive planning was discussed as the elaboration of the theory. The theoretical framework consists of three parts. The description and use of the framework are summarized in *table 1*. The first part is the utilization of the new participation theory: the Triangle of Engagement. **Prevalence** and **Engagement** are two key issues that will be taken into account in the case study. These two elements will together determine the position of the public participation of the cases in the Triangle of Engagement. The analysis on these key issues will be specifically guided by the small questions stated in the third column of the table; similarly to the first part, the guiding questions in the following two parts that will be used to examine the case(s) are stated in the third column of the table. The second part of the theoretical framework is a cluster of key theoretical criteria (including **“Inclusiveness and Access”, “Information and Knowledge exchange”, “Empowerment”, “Shared Decision Authority”, “Role of Planners”** and **“Adequate Legal Framework”**) that form an effective public participation in local urban planning. These criteria were derived from a set of general characteristics of public participation. The third part of the theoretical framework is a set of barriers that limit an proper public participation including **“Time and Finance”, “Institutional Reticence”** and **“Continuity of Public Participation”**. These barriers have already been discovered in different planning researches. The results of the case study based on this theoretical inventory will be discussed in the *discussion* chapter.

Table 1. Theoretical Framework for analyzing the case study

Analysis based on the Triangle of Engagement		
Key Issues	Description	Presence/Absence/What turns out in the case(s)
Prevalence	This point indicates the number or the proportion of the total participated population who are seriously active in the decision making.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How many of the affected public groups/individuals take it seriously about what happened in the planning process?
Engagement	This issue describes the way the those involved participate in the process and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What kind of role or function

	the capacity and effort they hold in the process.	<p>do those involved show in planning process?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were those involved capable to cope with the problems according to the Triangle of Engagement?
Key Criteria forming effective public participation		
Key Issues	Criteria	Presence/Absence/What turns out in the case(s)
Inclusiveness and Access	Those who would be affected by the policy or the project are qualified to have a say in the decision making process and should be heard during the process through (informal) platform.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were those (general public) affected involved or only interests group involved in the decision making? • Did those designated as participants have access to the process instead of participating when the plan was made?
Empowerment	There is no direct signal that participants would be effectively engaged in planning process unless they are empowered. It is important for them to feel that they are influential and empowered to realize a common goal for their community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are those involved public participants capable to work in such a process? • Did they will to?
Information and Knowledge Exchange	Different values and interests are encouraged to discuss and exchange under a learning context in order to improve mutual understanding of problems, objective and concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What kind of information was released to the public? • What did the government learn from the public?
Decision-making Authority	There is no centralized or dominated decision-making authority. Instead a shared authority should be established in order to build up shared perceptions within all involved in the process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do the actions of government and agencies really reflect the interests of the public? • Or it embodies only governmental interests and objectives?
Role of Planner	As most of the literatures about collaborative planning indicated, planners play a role of facilitator to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What kind of role did the planners play in the case(s)? A facilitator? Scientist? • If applicable, what do they think?
Legal Framework	Adequate legal framework on public participation will comprehensively guide and institutionalize the implementation of public participation in planning practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What have been carried out in the legal framework concerning public participation in urban planning of the research area(s)?

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are those requirements full or partially implemented in the case(s)?
Barriers Limiting an Effective Public Participation		
Key issues	Description	Presence/Absence/What turns out in the case(s)
Time and Finance	Insufficient time and financial support always constrain the effectiveness of public participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did the time and financial effort directly or indirectly influence the participatory activities in the project?
Institutional Reticence	The application of public participation should be aligned with relevant institutional context (e.g. government to governance)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under what institutional/political context was the project directed? • How did this context, more precisely government's attitude/actions, influence the availability of public participation in the case?
Continuity of Public Participation	The continuity of public participation is always limited by both external influence(space for public) and internal influence (micro-power)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are those involved settled throughout the whole decision making phases (or which phases)? • Are different conflicts or debates fully encouraged? • Or were potential conflicts avoided or hidden by power inequality for the purpose of a quick decision making?

3. Chinese Urban Planning System

The first part of this chapter (3.1) provides a general introduction on Chinese urban planning system; the second part (3.2) specifically addresses the generally situation of public participation in China (3.2.1) and the problems that are encountered (3.2.2).

3.1 Chinese Urban Planning System

Chinese current urban planning system is generally characterized by a systematically procedural, top-down hierarchy with limited public participation. Such a planning system operates under Chinese current social-economic and political environment. The implementation of the reform and open up policy led to rapid housing provision, land development and foreign investment. These brought great impacts to Chinese urban development (Wu, 2001). A transitional economy and rapid urbanization resulted in the inability of conventional planning system to deal with the control over rapid economic developments (Yeh and Wu, 1999) and the complexities of social changes, conflicts, interests and other issues. Urban planning was required to change its functions from supporting state projects to regulating undesirable land development since the great economic reform in 1978 (Yeh and Wu, 1999). With the promulgation of the Urban Planning Act in 1989, the new urban planning system was established to formalize a multiple-tiers planning system (*figure 8*); and although not specified in the Act in the early decades, new planning activities including Urban District Plan, Detailed Development Control Plan (DDCP) and Urban Design & Parcel-Based Detailed Construction Plan (DCP) were experimented to coordinate the traditional two-tiers (master plan and detailed layout plan) planning system (Yeh and Wu, 1999). The goal of Chinese urban planning is focused on spatial organizations and economic orientation (Yeh and Wu, 1999). Therefore, planning decisions can be easily bent by pressures from both growth-oriented local government and newly appeared real estate developers (Wu, 2001). And the government leadership and commercial profits dominate the project-planning processes with less concern to environmental issues and public opinions (Johnson, 2010).

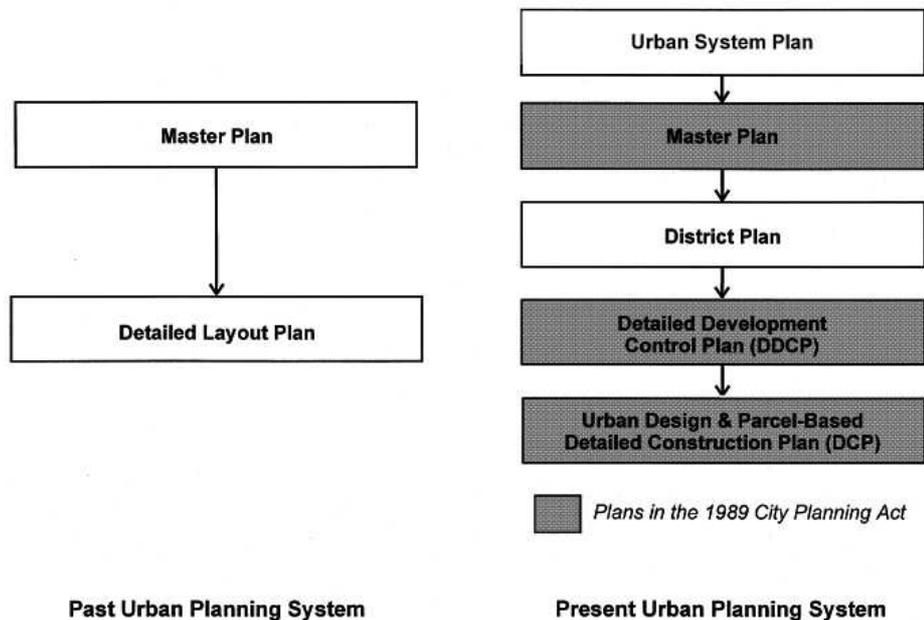


Figure 8. *The changing urban planning system in China.*

Source: Yeh and Wu, 1999

Urban System Plan

With the new administrative system of 1984, central city and surrounding towns and counties merged into a large municipal government (city-region). The urban system plan aims to coordinate the growth of the cities and towns within a city-region and development between different levels of government (Yeh and Wu, 1999).

Master Plan

The urban master plan outlines the general land use pattern of the city. Such a type of plan aims to comprehensively determine the designated function, scale and spatial development of the city; to arrange different construction lands and infrastructure of the city; to properly deal with the relationship between long term(10-20 years) and short term (3-5 years) development (Li, 2001, p49). The general time horizon of the master plan is twenty years.

District Plan

The urban district plan is prepared after making master plan in order to coordinate the master plan and development control. The district plan is made based on the philosophy of master plan for large and medium sized cities. It aims to a further control and arrangement of urban land use, population and job allocation, public facilities, boundaries of developments as well as to coordinate infrastructure, public amenities at the district level (Li, 2001, p49; Yeh and Wu, 1999). The urban district plan attempts to complement master plan by disaggregating land developments into urban districts (The districts in this sense are not the same with the administrative districts) (Yeh and Wu, 1999).

Detailed Development Control Plan (DDCP) and Detailed Construction Plan (DCP)

Originally Chinese urban planning plan was a governmental instrument to control the construction of the city, while the detailed layout plan was the spatial realization of such constructions (Yan, 2008). Under the transition of Chinese economy and the enactment of the Urban Planning Act in 1989, the original detailed plan was separated into detailed development control plan (DDCP) and detailed construction plan (DCP) for a deeper and comprehensive control over urban developments. In the *Urban and Rural Planning Act of People's Republic of China* enacted in 2008, such types of plan were attached with forceful legal status. These plans were established to increase the flexibility of urban planning in order to cope with a plural market development (Yan, 2008). The DDCP aims to determine the land use in a specific construction area, where future development projects are uncertain (Yeh and Wu, 1999) and guide the land use intensity, spatial environment. The DDCP provides a comprehensive framework for the establishment of DCP. The DCP is prepared in the areas that are facing immediate construction (Yeh and Wu, 1999). It provides specific guidelines for design and construction of spatial components (architecture, green system, infrastructure, traffic, etc.) of a constructions area (Li, 2001).

Urban and Rural Planning Act of People's Republic of China was carried out by National People's Congress (NPC) in 2007 and became effective in 2008. Presently it is the fundamental legal framework for urban planning in China. In this framework, the new planning activities, such as DDCP, were strengthened in the functionality and legal status. In general, such an urban planning system works collectively with three subsystems, namely **legal system**, **administrative system** and **plan-making system** at various levels. In some other researches, administrative system and plan-making system are discussed as one subsystem. Such subsystems should comply with relevant requirements from the legal system.

Legal System

The legal system is the backbone of the urban planning system. It is strictly complied with *Urban Planning Act*, which was carried out by the State Council and Congress in 1989. The Urban Planning Act is the core legislation of the legal system that guides planning activities in different administrative levels (national level, provincial level, autonomous region level and municipal level). Its enactment signaled that China established a comprehensive urban planning system (Yeh and Wu, 1999). There are also other complementary laws and regulations in the legal system in order to increase the legitimacy and effectiveness of urban planning. These relevant laws and regulations are regionally and locally distinguished. Provinces and municipalities are empowered to carry out their own regulations and restrictions in relation to the current social and economic developments. But the Urban Planning Act and present Urban and Rural Planning Act as the primary planning frameworks should be followed (Wang, 2007).

Administrative System and Plan-making System

As regulated in the planning Act, Chinese urban planning administrative system as well

as plan-making system in general operates under a top-down hierarchy. This system consists of four levels of governmental controls, respectively national level, provincial level, autonomous region level and municipal level. The basic responsibilities of governments and administrative organs in various governmental levels are plan making, plan approval and implementation management (Wang, 2007). In the plan-making system, according to the urban planning system, legally regulated urban plans (figure 8) include: an urban system plan at various levels (by national ministry of construction, provincial/regional/municipal government), a master plan (by local government), district plan (by local government), a DDCP (by local government and relevant administrative organs) and DCP (local government and relevant administrative organs). In the state level, the State Council is responsible to examine and approve system plans of the country, provinces, capital cities, and municipalities that are under direct jurisdiction of State Council and cities with population of over 0.5 million (Wang, 2007) and master plans of cities specified by the State Council. Provincial governments are responsible to examine and approve master plans of other municipalities or towns; and municipal governments examine and approve district plans and detailed plans (DDCP and DCP) (Wang, 2007). Provincial and local master plans should be submitted to the people's congress in corresponding level for amendment and comments before submitting to the higher government for examination and approval (Yeh and Wu, 1999).

3.2 Public Participation in Chinese Urban Planning

In this section, the general situation of public participation in Chinese urban planning, the philosophy behind it and its development (3.2.1) will be presented. In part 3.2.2 latest legal regulations concerning public participation in Chinese urban planning will be introduced; problems concerning public participation in China will be described in part 3.2.3.

3.2.1 Current Situation of Public Participation in Chinese Urban Planning

Public participation in urban planning significantly reflects political democratization; in meanwhile it is an important tool and guarantee for the realization of planning as a science (Chen, 2007). Governance is based on coordinating the relationship between government and society in order to stimulate the interaction between state and society (Zhao and Liu, 2010). As a concept, "Governance" penetrated politics, economy, sociology and various fields in China since 1990s. As Huang and Long (2003) argued, the embarked self-organizing nature of governance would significantly guide the establishment of public participation in urban planning. With the deepening of reform and opening up policy and the transitional economic institution (from planned centralization to market orientation), interests within the society were pluralizing; and people's quality of life was improved (Chen, 2007). People's awareness and desire of participating in planning decision making is gradually rising. Under such a context, the concept public participation was claimed in China since early 1990s (Chen, 2007; Lu and Guan, 2008). In spite of such discussion in academic and political fields, there was no term relating to public participation regulated in *Urban Planning Act of People's Republic of China* in 1990.

Most of the time, public participation is not conducted as it was meant in theories (Habermas's communicative rationality and communicative planning), but just a passive action. Public participation is activated in planning practice only when public interest is at stake. In general, the importance of the public participation is given great attention, but relevant methods to conduct an effective public participation are lacking. In practice, Chinese urban planning in its present form is totally a government action. There is hardly any announcement to the public in authorizing, deliberating and managing process. As Wu (2001) argues, in current urban development in China, plan making processes struggle with insufficient public participation (Wu, 2001). In the western world, the legitimacy of urban planning is guaranteed by public involvement; but in China, public ownership and control ensure the legitimacy of urban planning (Yeh and Wu, 1999). According to Chen (2007), until now the practice of public participation in China is still at relatively low level. But in recent years the enactment of the new *Urban and Rural Planning Act of People's Republic of China* in 2007 (effective in 2008) signaled a tendency of institutionalization and legalization of public participation in Chinese urban planning. In the Act, there are several articles concerning public participation regulated in different planning stages (more details will be described in section 3.2.2). What should be mentioned here is that the case that will be discussed in next chapter was happened after the Urban and Rural Planning Act became effective.

3.2.2 New Legal framework concerning Public Participation in Chinese Urban Planning

On 28th of October 2007, new **Urban and Rural Planning Act of People's Republic of China** was promulgated in the thirteenth meeting of the Tenth Standing Committee of National People's Congress (SCNPC). And this Act was implemented since 1st of January 2008 as the newest legal framework and standards of urban and rural planning in China (CACP, 2009). In the same time Urban Planning Act of People's Republic of China was abolished. In general the Act consists of seven chapters including: "*General Provisions*", "*Establishment of Urban and Rural Planning*", "*Implementation of Urban and Rural Planning*", "*Modification of Urban and Rural Planning*", "*Supervision and Inception*", "*Legal Liabilities*" and "*Supplementary Provisions*". Hereby concerning the context of research, the first five chapters will be studied on in order to find out what have been mentioned in terms of public participation or public rights in urban and rural planning:

General Provisions

- Article 8: "*Organs that established the urban and rural planning shall publicize legally approved urban and rural plan in a timely manner, except for contents which shall not be disclosed as required by laws or administrative regulations*" (CACP, 2009).

Establishment of Urban and Rural Planning

- Article 26: "*Before submitting an urban or rural plan for examination and approval, the organ that established it shall announce the draft of the plan and collect opinions from experts and the general public by means of argumentation meetings,*

public hearing or other ways. The duration of the announcement should be no less than 30 days. The organ that organized the planning shall fully consider the opinions of experts 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” (CACP, 2009).

Implementation of Urban and Rural Planning

- Article 28: *“The local people’s government and those at various levels shall, in light of the local economic and social development level, and according to their abilities, respect the willingness of the general public and organize the implementation of urban and rural planning in a planned and step-by-step manner” (CACP, 2009).*

Modification of Urban and Rural Planning

- Article 46: *“The organ establishing a provincial urban system plan, a city master plan or a town master plan shall organize the related departments and experts to evaluate the implementation of the plan on a regular basis and collect public opinions by argumentation meetings, hearing or other ways. The organ shall submit an evaluation report attached with the collected opinions to the standing committee of the people’s congress at the same level, the people’s congress of the town and the organ examining and approving the planning” (CACP, 2009).*

Supervision and Inception

- Article 52: *“A local people’s government shall report the implementation situation of urban and rural planning to the standing committee of the people’s congress at the same level or the people’s congress of the township or town, and shall be subject to the latter’s supervision” (CACP, 2009).*
- 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” (CACP, 2009).*

3.2.3 Problems Concerning Public Participation in Chinese Urban Planning

In general with the rapid urbanization, economic development and increased people’s life quality, public participation in Chinese planning decision making attracts the attentions from the society in now days. In meanwhile problems evidently occurs. Xu (2009) identifies four problems within public participation in Chinese urban planning.

Firstly public participation is not in the core step of planning process (Xu, 2009). According to Xu (2009), the degree of public participation implies the influence of the public opinions to the planning decision and implementation. Presently public participation in China is focused on going through such a procedure instead of the content of the process. As Xu (2009) stated, citizen involvement was a passive action that emerges only after the government publicize the plan to the society. Furthermore in most of the cases public opinions were not taken deep consideration and were passively

responded.

Secondly public participation was not conducted throughout the whole planning process (Xu, 2009). In the plan making step, public participation was limited to survey, interview relating to specific project. In the final decision making step, participants are always scientific research institutes and local political elites (Xu, 2009).

Thirdly participation mechanism is still under explored (Xu, 2009). Unlike that in western world, China is still attempting to construct a mature and appropriate public participation mechanism. The current planning institution is insufficient to participatory planning (Xu, 2009). The frequent public complains reflect such lack of participation mechanism.

Last but not least, the legal regulations to support and guide public participation in planning process is not comprehensive (Xu, 2009). In China, law and regulations work towards an administrative empowerment. Public participation is rarely embodied. Although any individual or unit is qualified to involve and monitor planning affairs, the relevant capacity, roles and approaches are not specifically regulated in the legal framework (Xu, 2009).

4. Case Study: Xiamen PX

In this chapter, the research will be moved on to the Chinese urban planning context. The theoretical framework established in previous chapter will be elaborated by analyzing a case study in the Xiamen PX project. In section 4.1, the background information of the PX case will be presented in time sequence. Following up in section 4.2, relevant information on the data collecting will be introduced. Lastly in section 4.3, the results of the interviews will be presented and analyzed in the context of the theoretical framework.

4.1 Background Information of the Case Study: Xiamen PX Project

The “2007 Civil Demonstration for Xiamen PX Project” has already been labeled as a popular case for researches on various topics such as public participation, urban planning, environmental protection, social sciences, etc. in China. PX (Para-Xylene) is a chemical material that is widely used in the production of medication, pesticide, plastic industries, etc.; but is also a highly dangerous carcinogen (Zou, 2007). This project was invested 1.08 billion Renminbi (equivalent to approximately 100 million Euros) by Taiwan FangXiangLu Petrochemical Ltd and other concerned enterprises (TengLongFangQin Ltd). The yearly output is expected to reach 80 billion Yuan (8 billion Euros), which is estimated to contribute to one the quarter of the GDP account of Xiamen City (Wu, 2009). Xiamen PX project was included into the list of 7 National PX Projects by the National Development and Reform Commission (Wu, 2009). The original location was designated in Haicang District, which is 7km from the city center of Xiamen (*figure 9*).



Figure 9. Xiamen and Haicang District
Google map. Edited by Hu

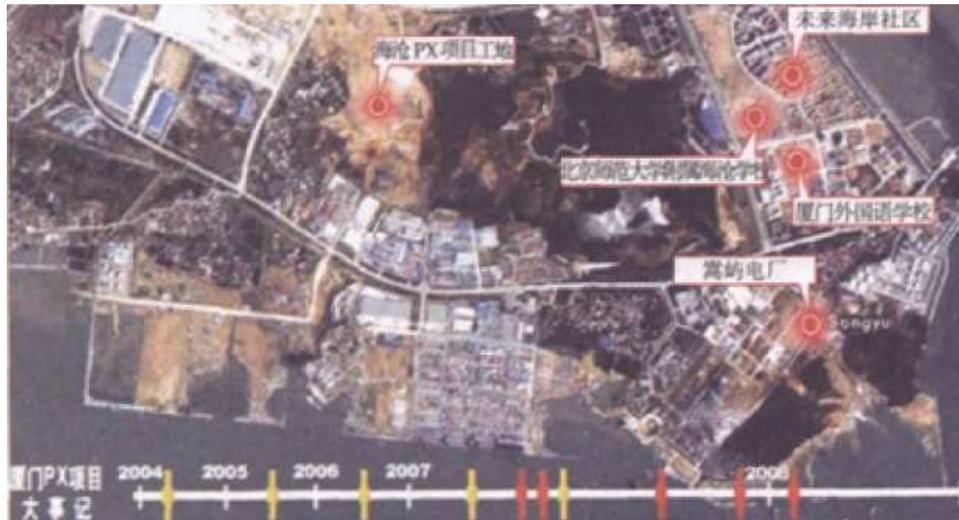


Figure10. Original Location of PX plant
Source: Zhao and Liu, 2010

Throughout the main storyline, time has to be traced back to the year of 2002, when PX project in Xiamen was just established by the National Development and Reform Commission. In 2004, the plan was approved by the State Council. In July 2005, the plan was enacted by the Environmental Impact Assessment by National Bureau of Environment. One year later, the project was finally approved by the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) (Wu, 2009) and formally started to construct. Apparently, from plan establishment to approval and implementation, each step of the PX project is reasonable and legal (Chen, 2008). When things appeared to be smooth and successful, the project reached its turning point. In March 2007, Mrs. Zhao, who is a both professor in Xiamen University and academican of CAS (Chinese Academy of Science) and other 104 commissioners of CPPCC (Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference) together proposed an amendment to relocate the Xiamen PX Industry during the NPC (National People's Congress) and CPPCC 2007 annual conference (Wu, 2009). In the amendment, Zhao pointed out that the location of PX chemical plant is only 1.5km away from a residential area (Zhao and Liu, 2010); the production of the project would pose a seriously risk of impact on the environment of the surrounding residential area and potential damage the health condition of the locals. PX might lead to a congenital malformation of embryo (Zou, 2007). But Xiamen government did not actively and convincingly response to the statement of Zhao; and just claimed that the project was strictly complied with the legal framework and procedure.

The opposition from Zhao and other 104 commissioners immediately attracted great attention of the government and residents of Xiamen, media, newspaper and fields alike. On the 1st and 2nd of June 2007, the famous PX demonstration was peacefully triggered in front of Xiamen Government (*figure 11*. Content of the red banner: "say no to PX project, care about the health of the inhabitants, protect Xiamen's environment") after a text message advocacy. Under the pressure from the public and media, Xiamen

government was compelled to announce the cancel of the undergoing construction of the industry area and delegated the China Research Academy of Environmental Science (CRAES) to reevaluate environmental impact of the PX project (Wu, 2009). The EIA report was ultimately released to the public in the beginning of December (Ma, 2008).



Figure 11. Demonstration of PX project

Source: New.cn

Eventually from 13th to 14th of September 2007 Xiamen government organized a colloquia participated by 100 citizen representatives. In the discussion about PX project, as Wu (2009) stated, over 85% of the representatives argued against the construction of PX project. Thus a conference concerning the problem of PX project was held. The decision of the conference was that the original project site would be relocated to Gulei Peninsula of the city of Zhangzhou (figure 12). According to Wu (2009), the ending of the event reflected a transition from the traditional enclosed intra-governmental decision making to a more participatory decision making (Wu, 2009).

Ma (2008) described that the provincial official of Fujian refuted the decision on relocation of the PX chemical plant on the ground that this decision triggered an unexpected violent conflict between the residents living in Dongshan Island of Zhangzhou and the local government. On February 29, 2008, thousands of people in Dongshan protested against the proposed settlement of the chemical plant. As a continuation of Xiamen PX event, this incident in Zhangzhou was largely unreported within China and further details about this incident are missing (Ma, 2008). However, the reports on the ultimate treatment on the PX industry varied. And the effect of the PX event on the planning mechanism in Xiamen encountered different discussions. According to most of the reports about the PX project reviewed in this research, the

effect was positive. Many scholars reflected optimistically on governmental actions of opening up decision making to the public. But as Johnson (2010) argued in his research, one media had reported that the decision of the relocation had already been made before the public hearing took place (Johnson, 2010).



Figure 12. Relocation of PX project
Source: Google map. Edited by Hu

4.2 Questionnaire Development

It has been three years since the relocation of PX chemical plant was decided. But the documents and reports do not provide information about what happened after PX incident. Did such a remarkable incident stimulate the institutionalization and legalization of public participation in urban planning in Xiamen in the following years? And how is the government and planning organs implementing public participation in Xiamen (in China) nowadays? What is Xiamen government's attitude towards public participation in urban planning? Therefore, a questionnaire was set up in order to gather more information on these questions. The information is collected from the officials of Urban Planning Bureau of Xiamen and staff members of Xiamen University (urban planning group). Furthermore, a desk study on the open information on the official website of the planning bureau and documentary materials was also conducted. The questionnaire included open end questions. The questions are focused on the public participation in Xiamen's urban planning system in a "Post-PX" period; this aims to find out if the PX event had concrete influence on the government actions in planning decision making in Xiamen. The main questions are:

1. How were the decisions of PX relocation made? Can you provide more specific information on the process?
2. After PX, was Xiamen's planning system influence to certain degree? Has the general decision making procedure in Xiamen changed?

3. After PX, did the government and relevant planning departments obtain new understanding on the importance of public participation? Besides a change of attitude, are there any more concrete approaches to conduct public participation in urban planning?
4. After PX, was public participation fully institutionalized and legalized?
5. After PX, how was public participation implemented? Can you provide the specific procedure for it?
6. What is your opinion about the role and function of public participation in Xiamen and in China? What should be improved?

Interviewees

Since there was no specific contact information of bureau officials provided, there was no directly intended contact person in the urban planning bureau. The questionnaire was sent to the urban planning bureau by posting on the “consultation platform” and “public participation platform” of the official website. Furthermore staff members of the university were contacted through e-mail. In total 10 staff members of the urban planning group of Xiamen University were contacted. This group consists of 3 professors, 3 adjunct professors and 4 assistant professors

Responses

Eventually 6 responses were received. One response was received from the official responder of the bureau website; 5 out of 10 staff members replied to the e-mail, only two of which provided informative information and opinions. Details about the responses will be used in section 4.4.

Desk Study

Besides the interviews, a desk study on the legal framework and relevant open information on the official website of Xiamen Urban Planning is also conducted. On the website, *Urban Planning Regulations of Xiamen*, *General Principles of Urban Plan Making, Approval and Examination of Xiamen* as well as *Procedures of Urban Plan Making, Approval and Examination of Xiamen* have been publicized. But the latest version of these two documents stem from the year 2008.

4.3 Results of Interview and Desk Study

In the section, the information collected from the interview and desk study will be shortly presented. The contents of this section contain the information about what happened after the PX incident until now. And the information will be used to analyze the case study in section 4.4.

Interview Results

As the responses of these professors show, it can be concluded that in academic field the

information of PX was also confidentially kept; and this case was not widely studied in a further step. The two professors in the university did not specifically discuss the PX incident from the public participation perspective. Their arguments are around the context of general China. However according to the these professors' points of view, PX event generated great influence on people's understanding on public participation and effectively motivated public to involve in urban planning decision making in Xiamen. Zoom out to Chinese urban planning in now days, public participation or stakeholder involvement do exist. In some stages of planning process like data collecting, plan showing and reflecting, public opinions plays a rather important role. Urban planning democratization in Xiamen is at a relatively high level. However various stakeholder conflicts in the discussion still cannot be sufficiently coordinated and solved. The government is still playing a dominating role in the final decision making. Public opinions do not show a clear and concrete effect in influencing the decision, although they are invited to be consulted.

Desk Study Results

Urban Planning Regulations of Xiamen

The planning regulation in the City of Xiamen is **Urban Planning Regulations of Xiamen**. This law was originally promulgated in 22nd of April 1995 and was implemented 1st of July 1995. On 29th of May 2003, the newest Urban Planning Regulations of Xiamen was approved in the fourth meeting of the twelfth Xiamen People's Congress Standing Committee. And it was formally implemented after the fourth meeting of the Tenth Fujian Province People's Congress Standing Committee on 1st of August 2003. The law covers nine chapters: "General Provisions", "Urban Planning Committee", "Establishment of Urban Planning", "New Development and Urban Renewal", "Planning and Management of Construction Land Use and Construction Projects", "Urban Facility Planning and Management", "Supervision and Inception", "Legal Liabilities" and "Supplementary Provisions" (Xiamen Government, 2008). The Urban Planning Law of Xiamen will be studied on in order to find out concerned legal requirements for public involvement and public rights in Xiamen's urban planning.

General Provision

- Article 4: "Urban Planning should be established legally. Any approved plan cannot be modified by any unit or individual without legal procedure. The plan establishment should be fully democratized; and ensure the public to participate in the planning activities through various channels" (Xiamen Government, 2008).
- Article 5: "Any unit or individual is responsible to comply with urban planning and management; furthermore is qualified to provide comments on planning affairs, to supervise the implementation of urban planning and to impeach any illegal behavior" (Xiamen Government, 2008. Translated by Hu).

Establishment of Urban Planning

- Article 12: "Master plan should be formulated by the local (people's) government.

Before submitting for examination and approve in the higher authority, the draft master plan should be submitted to the local people's congress or its standing committee for approve. In case of decision of modification from the congress, the local government should strictly follow the decision. The local government should publicize the main contents of the master plan to the public through media or its official website within 30 days after the plan was approved" (Xiamen Government, 2008. Translated by Hu).

- Article 24: *"In the process of formulation and approve of master plan, zoning plan, detailed plan or other regular plans, drafts should be opened to the public for no less than 15 days. Specific date time and location should be notified through local Medias or official website. Any unit or individual is qualified to give comments on the draft plans in the form of letters. Concerned organs should seriously consider the emerged comments or advices. If necessary, organs should invite units or individuals to attend relevant meetings" (Xiamen Government, 2008. Translated by Hu).*

Plan Making Principles and Procedures in Xiamen

According to the newest version of *General Principles of Urban Plan Making, Approval and Examination of Xiamen* and *Procedures of Urban Plan Making, Approval and Examination of Xiamen*, public group is only involved in commenting and reflecting the completed plans. From the establishment of the project to plan modification, there is no issue concerning public involvement. Only in the public showing, it states that *"the plan should be shown to the public not less than 15 days. The date and location should be stated in the major local medias and government website. Any individual or unit is qualified to comment and reflect on the plans"* (Xiamen Urban Planning Bureau, 2008). There are no specific articles stating a systematic approach and qualification for citizens to participate in the plan making and discussion that is participated by the experts and government officials. In the *Procedures of Urban Plan Making, Approval and Examination of Xiamen*, such processes for Master Plan, District Plan, Detailed Development Control Plan (DDCP) and Detailed Construction Plan (DCP) are included. The local government, urban planning bureau, delegated design organizations and other administrative organs together dominant the whole process. For the formulations and evaluation of the plans, experts are invited to the discussion. Government and planning bureau will be responsible for making guidelines and coordinate the discussion. Expect the Master Plan, which will be submitted to the State Council for approval, the District Plan, DDCP and DCP are approved and examined by Xiamen government and planning bureau. Only after these procedures, the plan will finally be shown to the public. The legal rights for the public and their behaviors are not specified in the documents.

According to those legal frameworks, it shows that relevant legal statements for public participation in urban planning activities are fairly limited. As Huang and Long (2003) argued, the legal frameworks of urban planning imply an unfairness between the politicians who are attached with more rights and public who are attached with more

responsibilities. Moreover the legal justice and fairness was dismissed; and the passive position of public is highlighted (Huang and Long, 2003). In general public group has the right to comment on the draft plans before they were submitted to the high authorities; and relevant law should be disclosed to the public. During the establishment of plan(s), public is allowed to provide opinions to the draft by different ways such as public hearing; and those opinions, according to both laws, should be fully considered by the organs; and flow to the higher authorities during examination and approve. Furthermore on national level, it is require that the implementation of the plans should take into account and respect the willingness of the public. On the local level, the newest decision of the plan(s) should be published through website or local media. But in the Urban and Rural Act of PRC, public is also involved in plan modification and supervision, but the local regulation dose not state clear requirements for public participation. Overall in spite of a certain degree public participation, public group can only have a say after the draft plan(s) were accomplished; the earlier steps are taken over by experts and various levels of governments; and there are no concrete approach to realize public involvement described in the mentioned steps (chapters). And it seems that local regulations do not totally follow the requirements of the national law (modification and supervision). In Xiamen, the planning committee does not clarify if public group is a part of the working group (it terms “not civil servants” in the documents).

4.4 Analysis on the Research Results

In this section, the theoretical framework established in the previous chapter will be used to analyze the information collected in the case study. The analysis will be separated into three parts as structured in the framework, namely analysis based on the Triangle of Engagement, comparison with the key characteristics of effective public participation theory and the core limitations of public participation found in previous researches. Each criterion will be used to analyze the case. The information source for the answers to the questions will be the case documents and scientific literatures concerning the case, and the results of the interview with the officials in Xiamen Urban Planning Bureau and the staff members in Xiamen University.

Analysis based on the Triangle of Engagement

In this part, the public participation in the case will be analyzed based on the Triangle of Engagement. In this analysis, *prevalence*, which stands for the size of the participant group; and *engagement*, which represents the capacity of the participants will be together investigated.

As described in previous sections, from establishment of the project until prof. Zhao claimed for the proposal in the light of the potential damage of the PX project, the decision making was undertaken in an enclosed intra-governmental environment. Most of the participants were governmental actors including National Development and Reform Commission, National Bureau of Environment, local government, planning

bureau, private investors (interest groups) and experts in concerning fields. There was no information opened to the general public, especially to the residents surrounding the project site. One professor in Xiamen University responded in the interview that in general a lot of information is kept confidentially in China.

After Zhao and other 104 commissioners proposed the relocation of the chemical plant, thousands of people joined the demonstration; and eventually 100 citizen representatives were involved in the decision making of the industry site organized by Xiamen government. Obviously only these representatives participated in the conference. As a student from Hong Kong Chinese University had witnessed, those participated in the great protest showed strong sense of responsibility and legal awareness (Cheng, 2008). Apparently the demonstration triggered by the citizens had effectively influenced and brought great pressure to the local government, who just passively responded to the proposal for the relocation of the PX project. And 85% of the citizen participants opposed the construction of PX project in Xiamen, at least seemingly, implied that involved citizen representatives influenced the final decision. The citizen representatives are from different fields of the society. There was no specific evident indicated in the documents on to what extent those involved are capable to be engaged in the decision making. The information just showed the public participants voted for the new location. There was no extra or special task of the public participants described in the documents.

According to the both parts of the decision making process, the public participation in Xiamen PX case can be positioned *semi-regular* in the first part and *activist* in the second part. In the documents, there was no evidence indicating that involved public population took any executive responsibilities in either the primary decision making of the PX project. After the expose of Zhao's argument, the majority of the public were actively engaged in the opposition to the PX project and its relocation.

Analysis based on the Key Characteristics of Effective Public Participation

In this section, the key (issues of) characteristics of an effective public participation learnt from collaborative planning theories will be used to examine the case in order to discover the gap between public participation in theory and that in practice, precisely in the case.

Inclusiveness and Access

As argued in the collaborative planning theory, those who might be affected by the plan(s) are qualified to have a say in the decision making process; and should be informed and heard in the process. According the descriptions in relevant reports on the internet, the PX project itself was strictly operated and progressed in a legal manner and met relevant environmental regulations. But there was no public group involved in the process until the civil demonstration in 2007. The public, especially those who were living around the project site, were even not informed with any message of the project. The plan was just made among the governmental agencies before there was an

opportunity offered to the public to have a say in the decision. Surprisingly Zhao and others, as a representative of local people's congress standing committee, was not informed at all. After the big demonstration, the local government finally built up a direct channel to communicate with the society. The public would then access in the discussion on the relocation of new PX industry site. Throughout the whole story, public participation did not appear to be in a legally settled nature. It seems that public involvement implemented only after the local government was reluctantly "pushed".

The interviews results from Xiamen Urban Planning Bureau show that since the PX incident the government has created different new windows for citizens to access relevant information, such a newest plans. As one professor stated in the interview, public opinions are involved as an important part of the background information in the beginning of the process and reference for plan modification. The latest plan will be shown to the public. And citizens can provide their comments to it. This was also regulated in the new planning act. So it is difficult to conclude what has caused this change.

Empowerment

In the early part of the decision making of the process, there was no citizen informed with the project. Thus it can be seen as no empowerment of the public at that period. The analysis on this point should start from when Zhao's argument was announced in the conference. When posing strong opposition to the government, the public attitude is unfaltering. According to the descriptions in the documents (such as Cheng (2008)), slogans, such as "Protecting My Xiamen", "We Need Blue Sky" and alike, were widely posted on the internet community (Cheng, 2008). Besides this, according to Cheng (2008) a huge "text message discussion" was triggered among the citizens of Xiamen in order to accuse the one-side decision of the local government and concerned planning department. The later demonstration even more evidently embodied a strong "sense of community". The demonstration showed sense of responsibility and awareness of protecting the environment of Xiamen. However, the text message discussion and demonstration were self-organized behaviors that are not empowered by the government. Conversely the local government attempted to limit such public behaviors in order to protect the social order and stability by blocking the text message facilities.

Apparently the public were aspired to collectively prevent the PX industry from damaging the environment quality and people's life quality. And the public were active in opposing the original decision on the project. However, such public behaviors were actually triggered based on the public consciousness of protecting the basic interest of the citizens, which is health and safety. And these actions were neither legally encouraged nor politically empowered, but a self-organized behavior. Similarly to the earlier discussion, the public's concern was not concentrated in the PX industry itself, but in the environment in Xiamen. Thus probably the public just expected a relocation of the industry site; and participating in the decision making.

Information and Knowledge Exchange

The decision making process of the original plan of the PX industry was operated in an intra-governmental manner (Chen, 2008). The information, like the plan, concerned research reports, technical issues, EIA report, etc. was exchanged between governmental agencies on various levels. Apparently there was no consultation taking place in the society. Thus no public knowledge input was contributed to the original decision making. And the plan was not open to the public in the first place. In spite of the proposal for site relocation from Zhao and strong reactions from the society, in the first part of the decision making the local government's responses were passive and superficial in vague language that non-expert people could not easily understand. Moreover the government was trying to block relevant information of PX project by controlling the media and internet forum alike (Chen, 2008). The purpose was to maintain the social stability (Chen, 2008). However, these actions of Xiamen local government strengthened the doubt and misunderstanding of the public on the project; and generated instability of the social order (Chen, 2008). After the demonstration, relevant information of the project, such the plan itself, newest progress (the citizen representative conference), was open to the public. The public representatives were invited to participate in the discussion of the project relocation. As stated in section 3.3.2, the public and the people's congress has the right to be informed after the plan was established and made, although relevant power attached to the public was limited. The legal requirements, as open governmental information, can be easily found in various websites (e.g. official website of local government) or relevant publications (e.g. monthly magazine of the government).

According to the response from an official of Urban Planning Bureau of Xiamen, Xiamen local government and the planning bureau have given great attention to the public affairs and citizen involvement in urban planning practice since the PX incident. Various channels have been created for the communication between government, public and other interests groups. On the one hand, relevant planning information, like plan documents, are shown to the public by means of tv programme, new paper and plan exhibition when the plan was completed; on the other hand, citizens are able to provide their comments, doubts and suggestions to the plans that are shown or those concerns their own interests by means of internet (official website of the bureau) and the receipt day, in which the bureau is open to the public to ask questions and give comments. As the official described, those public opinions are seriously considered and replied. After a deliberative discussion, the citizens are invited to vote for the most appropriate scenario. The chosen one will be submitted to the government for approval.

However, in-depth information of PX project is still not available to the public, although it happened several years ago. Two professors in Xiamen University stated that they obtained the information from media and discussion on the internet. Most of the information is kept confidentially in the government.

Decision-making Authority

From the planning process of the PX project, the decision making was following a rational top-down procedure. Each step in the procedure sticks to relevant legal requirements and guidelines of urban planning. The planning task was technically focused on the industry factory itself. The decision-making authority is centralized in governmental agencies, scientific experts and project developers. This implies that the decision for original location of PX project (Haicang District) did not reflect the interests of general public, but the governmental objective, which is, according to the documents, to promote PX production in Xiamen and the economic development of Xiamen. More specifically the yearly production value of the project is estimated to reach 8 billion Euros. This would contribute to one quarter of the GDP of Xiamen city (Cheng, 2008). Such a huge benefit was undoubtedly written down and prioritized in the urban development strategy of the Xiamen government.

But on the other hand, citizens, specially the residence around the planned industry site, hold their interests on an environmental friendly life (Cheng, 2008), which refers to the basic value: health and safety. Although the PX project itself was no problematic according to the Environment Impact Assessment and was beneficial to the development of the city, this plan did not provide a healthy living environment to the people living in surrounding neighborhoods. Thus the plan did not reflect the interests of the public, instead public interest was damaged; and the interests of the government and the project developers and investors were prioritized. Under the great pressure from the public, the local government eventually compromised the previous decision on the industry site and took into account the opinions of the public by organizing the citizen conference. The new decision on the location of the project reflected the public interest to maintain a healthy and safe environment to Xiamen.

However, although the official in the planning bureau argued that citizens are able to provide their opinions and comments to the latest plans, they are still not involved in the making of the plans. The authority of decision making is still occupied by the government and relevant organs. Furthermore one responder from Xiamen University stated that although such stakeholder involvement exists in China, the effect is not clear; often there are serious conflicts between stakeholders; this leads to a governmental domination in decision making. From this respect, planning functions as an instrument of government to control the construction of the city. And these opinions again reinforce the idea that planning decisions in Xiamen and in China are still made by a centralized authority, in which government, planning bureau, experts and interest groups are the main participants and operators. The fact that citizens are powerless in final decision making obviously still exists.

Role of Planner

Throughout the documents studies on the case, the emphasis in reviewed discussion was put on the relationship between government and public; and there was no direct discussion on the role of planners in this case. Thus the role of Chinese urban planner is

analyzed in a more generic context by reviewing relevant literatures.

According to He (2003), rapid developments in NGOs and community organizations in China provide an opportunity to reposition the role of urban planner. Although Chinese the urban planners are trained in a traditionally and legally formulated planning model at the university, the methods and techniques of planning education and the role of planner are gradually doubted by the public. Most of the Chinese urban planners in most of the cases are just working as a decoration technician for the “developing blueprint” of the political and economic elites (He, 2003). Planners themselves actually suffer from a dilemma position with insufficient resource to control and govern (He, 2003). In this case, as He (2003) argued, planners might have great potential to cooperate with citizens and NGOs, if they were reluctantly working for those elites. However, this doesn’t mean a direct contradiction to government or project developer. Such a corporation may at least operate based on a concrete guarantee for public interests (He, 2003). With the transformation of Chinese economic situation from a planned economy to a market-led economy, the social plurality increases; and urban planning gradually aims to deal with different interests from the social complexity. This implies that more would be expected from planners.

In the case of the post-earthquake housing reconstruction in Dujiangyan in Sichuan, Sun and Zou (2010) argued that planners have played a plural role. Community planners provided condition for local residents to effectively participate in the reconstruction, solved technical problem in the process and accurately brought public opinions to the planning organs through deep negotiation with local population (Sun and Zou, 2010). However, community planners were also confronted with a conflicting situation. On the one hand, planners are empowered by the government with the responsibilities to implement the plan, educate the public and explain planning information to the public; on the other hand, they had to transfer public opinions in to technical communication in order to guarantee the presence of those opinions in the plan; and they were responsible to coordinate conflicts among public (Sun and Zou, 2010). In other words planners represent both governmental interests and public interests.

Legal Framework

From the first part to second part of the decision making of Xiamen PX project, the planning process complied with Urban Planning Act of People’s Republic of China and Urban Planning Regulations of Xiamen.

The Act became effective in 1990. There was no article concerning public participation regulated in the Act. And the Urban Planning Regulation of Xiamen was promulgated in 1995. There was no article concerning public participation in both documents. This resulted that the general public was not involved in the establishment of plan.

In 2003 the newest version of this regulation became effective. As stated in the new

regulation, the opinions of public should be taken into consideration in the establishment of a plan before it was submitted to higher authority for examination and approval. But there was no specific procedure of operating public participation

However, after the civil demonstration the local government finally chose a participatory way of decision making. In this new phase, public participants would have a position in the process. But according to relevant descriptions on new decision on PX project, it showed that opening up space to the excluded public is a breakthrough of the local government in planning decision making.

Nowadays, the Urban Planning Act of PRC was abolished with the promulgation of Urban and Rural Planning Act in 2008. In this new Act, public participation is regulated in the establishment, implementation and modification of the plan. But the Urban Planning Regulation of Xiamen remains the 2003 version.

Analysis based on the Barriers Limiting an Effective Public Participation

In this part, the barriers of implementing effective public participation will be approached in the case. This is also to compare the existing barriers in theory to what happened in the case.

Time and Finance

Due to the insufficient information source, it was not possible to find any relevant data about the specific time spent in the decision making (except the year span) and the budget for the project. Thus it is difficult to evaluate if time and finance constrained the public participation in the case.

Institutional Reticence

Before the reconsideration of the PX project in 2007, there was an obvious reticence from Xiamen local government in responding to the reactions of the society. As discussed earlier, Xiamen local government was trying to prevent the public from acquiring relevant information of the PX project by means of information control, internet control and so on. Thus in the first place, the government's attention was not given to the public. Besides this case, the situations throughout China are more or less the same. As Lu and Guan (2008) argued, such an insufficient public involvement nature of Chinese urban planning is closely related to the institutional situation in China. In traditional institution under a planned economy, government was responsible for almost every public affair (Lu and Guan, 2008). Such a sense of governmental behavior deeply marked in the public perception that urban planning is merely a government function, an internal affair of the government; the results of urban planning is attributed to government and planners (Lu and Guan, 2008).

Continuity of Public Participation

As introduced earlier, there was no space designed for public participation in the decision making process for the original location of the PX chemical plant. From the

establishment of the plan in 2002 to 2005, when the chemical plant was started to construct, it was almost 4 years' time span. There was no evidence shown in the documents that the decision on the project location was urgent; but it was remarkable that this project would generate huge profits to the city (one quarter of the GDP count). And the biggest beneficiaries are the government officials and project developers, who are the two most powerful local stakeholders of the project. It can be inferred that the power inequality and the incentive of benefit led to a one-side dimensional objective of the planning and marginalization of public involvement. Thus there were no conflicts on the involved interests; the whole procedure operated smoothly and successfully.

Under the pressure generated by protest, the government realized the importance of interests of the public. In the new decision making, the full consideration on public interests resulted in the continuity of public participation and a socially harmonized decision making. However, these issues were not specifically mentioned in the documents. There are another two barriers claimed by Cheng (2008) referring to Xiamen PX event. These barriers also specifically reflect the situation in public participation in this point.

Choice of Proper Public Interest

As Cheng (2008) argued, governments should set up maximizing public interests as the highest priority; but over decades, the choice on the boundary of the public interests was one of the greatest difficulties to governments in different countries and administrative levels (Cheng, 2008). As Li stated in the e-mail response, although different interests of participants were involved, the conflicts inside was seriously influencing the coordination in the process; and in most of the cases governmental interest was eventually privileged over other interests. Thus where the boundary for is so called "public" and to what extent of the public participation can be seen as fair are two key questions in public administration. In this case, PX project would bring 8 billion euro profits to Xiamen. Is high benefit to the city a proper choice that represents the public interests? According to Cheng (2008), the answer might be no.

Tension between Democracy and Sufficiency

Public participation has already been one important constitutional theme of countries all over the world in now days. As described in the theory, the general citizens should participate in whole administrative process including administrative decision making. But technically there is no effective method to handle it, because democratic process requires material basis, time basis; and the sufficiency is the key emphasis of such action (Cheng, 2008). Those issues are together generated the inherent conflict of democratic administration.

Generally these two points are two variables in public participation. Any power inequality (micro power) might seriously impact the continuity of an effective public participation.

5. Conclusion and Discussion

In this chapter the research questions will be answered; and the answers will be discussed. In section 5.1.1, the conclusions concerning collaborative planning theory, Chinese planning experience (planning system and case study) (5.1.2) and constraints of public participation in China (5.1.3) will be drawn. Then discussion on those constraints (5.2.1) and suggestions concerning the application of public participation in Chinese planning (5.2.2) and further research directions concerning this research subject (5.2.3) will be presented.

5.1 Conclusion

In the first chapter, three key research questions were formulated to answer the main research question. These key research questions concern western collaborative planning theory and public participation in China. In this part the answers to these key research questions will be explained; then the answer to the main research question will be given based on the answers to these key research questions.

5.1.1 Theoretical Framework of Public Participation

The first key research question “what are the determinants of the implementation of an effective public participation in local urban planning practice?” was answered by extensive literature study and is concluded as follows:

- Participation Model

The Arnstein's *Participation Ladder* and May's *Triangle of Engagement* respectively illustrate two different perspectives on public participation. The ladder implies a common ideology of governmental agencies that the more citizens participated, the more democratic the process would be and the closer the decision making would be to its legitimacy and usefulness. In other words, the power that the public would own in planning process determines the quality of decision making. While the triangle claims for the capacity of the participants in their engagements.

- Characteristics

First of all an effective public participation needs the openness of the decision making. In such a process, those who are affected by the plan should be able to participate; and relevant information should be accessible to the public. Secondly the participants and the organizers should work collectively toward a common goal, although personal interests varied. It is crucial that all the participants are empowered or at least feel being empowered by the powerful. Such empowerment would encourage the participants to better commit to the decision making. Thirdly an open conversation between the government and the public should effectively lead to an information and knowledge exchange. This would strengthen the understanding between the powerful and powerless. In most of the cases, the governments always try to avoid providing relevant information about the plan to the public; and the responses from the government

concerning the questions and requests of the public are always superficial and passive. Fourthly the decision of the plan should be made in an equalized manner. The decision making authority should be not centralized among governmental actors, but should be decentralized to concerned interests entities that might hold different perspectives. The consensus should be built based on interactions among different actors. Fifthly planners play multiple roles in a collaborative planning process. In conventional planning model, planners worked as technical experts and consultants of the government. But in a participatory planning model, planners become a facilitator of the process. They start talking and listening to participant; and coordinating different interests and conflicts that might occur in order to lead to a consensus. Sixthly an effective participatory process need the support of the comprehensive legal framework, in which public participation are attached with legal status.

-Barriers

Three barriers of public participation were found in the theory. Firstly insufficient time and financial support would limit the effectiveness of public participation; secondly the application of public participation is always aligned with relevant institution context; thirdly conflicts always discourage in the process by unequal power relations; this would lead to an absence of continuity of a participatory planning process.

5.1.2 Public Participation in China

In this section, current Chinese planning system and the public participation in China will be concluded. Other two key research questions (as following) are concerning public participation in China:

- How is public participation implemented in Chinese planning law and regulation?
- What are the experiences with public participation in Chinese planning practice?

The answers to these two research questions will be given under the subtitle “legal framework” and “case study”.

-Chinese Urban Planning System

Chinese current urban planning system is generally characterized by a systematically procedural, top-down hierarchy with limited public participation. The system consists of four levels of administration, namely national level, provincial level, autonomous level and municipal level. Governments at various levels dominant the policy and development strategy making. Political decisions are prioritized in the policy decision making. Overall state government

-Public Participation in China

Under the influence of the transitional economy since the end of 1970s and rapid

urbanization, market force and private sectors emerged in the policy making in China. Interests are pluralized in the society. Therefore a centralized hierarchical regime and a top-down planning system were not capable to cope with the influences of diversified interests and increasing private economic activities. Public participation or stakeholder participation was claimed in the policy making arena in China in the early 1990s. But this new concept was not institutionalized in Chinese urban planning field. Presently public participation in Chinese urban planning is still revealing an insufficient level. Four major problems of the public participation in China are as follow:

1. Public participation is not in the core step of planning process. Public opinions do not generate strong influence on the decision making. Participation is more treatment as procedural add-in.
2. Public participation was not conducted throughout the whole planning process. The steps of a planning process that allow citizen to participate are very limited. Most of the time citizens are excluded from the process.
3. There is no mature and comprehensive participation mechanism to guide the participatory activities in China.
4. Participation is not specified in relevant laws in terms of public capacity, roles and methods.

-Legal Framework

In since the new urban planning was established in early 1990s, the Urban Planning Act of People's Republic of China became effective in 1990. In this same period, public participation was just claimed in China (Chen, 2007). But there was no article concerning public participation regulated in the Act.

Until *Urban and Rural Planning Act of People's Republic China of 2008*, public participation has been regulated in several steps of local urban planning process. In both plan establishment and plan modification steps, public participation are regulated to be organized by means of public hearing, argumentation and other ways. It is also emphasized in the Act that the planning authorities should fully take into account the opinions of experts and general public; and that the general public are free to comment and supervise the implementation of the plan by any means. Furthermore the reflections from the public should be reported to the people's congress before submitting to the government at higher levels. From this point, it can be understood that public opinions regulated as indispensable references that might be influential to the establishment and modification of the plan. With the establishment of Urban and Rural Planning Act, public participation is gradually being legalized in Chinese urban planning.

Also there are local urban planning regulations that are formulated by the local governments. These regulations are varied by cities according to social and economic developments at local level. Thus there is no uniformed local planning regulation in China. According to the case study as an example, the new Urban Planning Regulation of

Xiamen was promulgated in 2003. As stated in the regulation, public participation was regulated in the general provisions and establishment of the plans (Xiamen Government, 2008). Thus conclusion can hardly be drawn on the public participation at local level.

-Case Study

The case of Xiamen PX incident sets up an example of the experience with implementing public participation under current Chinese urban planning system. This plan was established by National Development and Reform Commission in 2002. The plan aimed to construct a large PX chemical plant in Haicang District of Xiamen, which are just a few kilometers away from the city center of Xiamen. The plan was strongly protest against in 2007 on the ground of total exclusion of public participation and was modified in 2008 with the creation of communication channel for the general public. In general the decision making of the PX project can be divided into two parts. In the first part from the establishment of the project in 2002 to the civil demonstration in 2007, public was completely excluded from the decision making process and government was trying to avoid communicating with the general public. After 2007, some planning information about the project was opened to the public and 100 citizen representatives were invited to the public conference and discussed with the officials of government and concerned planning organs.

Nowadays public participation is involved in planning process by different means in Xiamen. According to the interview with an official in Urban Planning Bureau of Xiamen, the government and the bureau has put great attention on public involvement in planning affairs. Different channels have been created for the citizens to participate in the planning process in the form of obtaining the latest information of the plans and providing comments after the plan was publicized. With the help with website, newspaper and exhibition, the plans are shown to the public.

This case has also experienced change of local planning regulation in the respect of public participation. But there was evidence showing that PX incident had triggered this change.

5.1.3 Constrains that Limit Public Participation in Chinese Urban Planning

According to the answers to the three key research questions as well as the research on Dutch planning experience, the answer to the main research question: "What are the driving factors that are constraining the implementation of public participation in current Chinese planning nature?" are concluded as follows:

- As the research has shown (the case and the interview with professors in Xiamen University), the planning decision in China is still in many respects made by a centralized authority, although public in now days have chances to participate in the planning process. Citizens are still powerless to influence the decision. This point is closely related to current Chinese political and economic context. Under such institution, governments control and manage the development of the cities. They

comply with the political decisions from authority at higher levels, especially the national level.

- With the economic transition, a great deal of private economic forces was brought to China (Yeh and Wu, 2009). These economic activities are fairly influential to the policy making. Economic growth, state interests and governmental interests are always prioritized in the political decisions (Yeh and Wu, 2009). As described in pervious chapter, Chinese public participation mechanism is under exploration (Xu, 2009). Diversified stakeholder and public interests in the society cannot be efficiently coordinated at this moment. Thus this situation resulted in neglect of public interests.
- From the case study, it revealed a weak role of commissioners of Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference and People's Congress, like professor Zhao. Since the commissioners were voted by the general public, they should be responsible and influential in representing the willingness of the citizens. But in the PX case, Zhao and other commissioners opposition to the PX project was not seriously taken into consideration in the first place. And according to Cheng (2008), they were even not informed. But as stated in the Urban Planning Regulation of Xiamen, the plan should be submitted to the local people's congress for evaluation.
- There is hardly direct cooperation between the government and the public. Comparing to the examples in Dutch planning, the affected citizens in PX incidence played a different role, which was powerless and excluded. As described in the Dutch planning experience, although the citizens were not involved in the plan making process, they cooperated with decision makers and experts when conflicts occurred. The conflicts were seriously considered and resulted in new ideas instead of ignoring them. The response from one professor of Xiamen University was exactly a case to point that when there are many stakeholder conflicts, the government always dominates the decision making.
- Relevant legal requirements are slowly upgraded. Although the official in Urban Planning Bureau of Xiamen stated that different approaches had been built up for public participation, the newest Urban Planning Act of Xiamen still stays in 2003 version (Xiamen Government, 2008). This means that there is still no legal guarantee for a comprehensive implementation of public participation. Furthermore according to the Urban and Rural Planning Act of People's Republic of China, public participation has been regulated in articles concerning establishment, implementation and modification of the plan (CACP, 2009). But the local planning regulation, for example in Xiamen, was not upgraded relevant issues based on the newest planning regulation in state level.

5.2 Discussion

In this part, the answer to the main research question will be discussed and the possibility of application of public participation in China will be analyzed (5.2.1); then some suggestions concluded from the learning process of this research will be stated (5.2.2). Furthermore the research methodology and environment in many points influenced the research results. Thus in the part 5.2.3, some important methodological aspects that have influenced the research will be mentioned. In the last part of this chapter (5.2.4) some points that need further investigations will be claimed to strengthen the research under this topic in the future.

5.2.1 Discussion on the Constrains of Public Participation in China

Finally a set of issues that constrain the application of public participation in Chinese urban planning has been concluded as the end of this research.

In general public participation in China is at a low level comparing to the western society. Primarily the political institution in China was different from that in many western countries. A hierarchical administration emphasizes the dominant role of the (state) government and concerned departments in decision making (Cheng, 2008; Yeh and Wu, 1999; Zhao and Liu, 2010). Such political context has rooted for decades; and directly diminishes the involvement and freedom of the general public in decision making, although nowadays, it is changing and claiming for a more democratic regime. On the one hand public power and freedom was limited; on the other hand this kind of regime had fostered a traditional public perspective that planning decision making is a governmental action (Zhao and Liu, 2010). This results that not only the government, but also the citizens are passive in the awareness of participating in planning decision making. As stated in Dutch spatial strategy, more power and responsibilities have been passed to provincial and local level (Vink and Van der Burg, 2006). Stakeholders and general public are empowered to cooperate with the local government in planning decision making and implementation of planning actions. So far in China power cannot be decentralized to local level and the room for public to cooperate with the government is limited. This fact cannot be totally changed at this moment and in a near future. According to the theory public should be able to participated in all phases of the decision making process (Kapoor, 2000), but both Dutch and Chinese experience did not reveal full-time participation. It is also difficult to prove that it is impossible to realize such full participation.

Although the transition of an institution in China will take a long period, many of the barriers that we are facing need to critically reflected and reconsidered. According the researches on the planning regulation in China and the response from the bureau official in Xiamen, it shows that the new approaches that the official described to achieve an interactive planning process were just partly addressed in the urban planning regulation of Xiamen. Thus these new approaches were not formally supported by the legal

framework. They might be an official announcement to the public in order to increase the credibility of the government and to protect the social stability as described in the theory (May, 2006). Although by these means public opinions might occur in the planning process, there is still no platform for the government, stakeholders and citizens to directly work together in the local plans like that in the Netherlands. So there is no evidence to show if public opinions were considered. Furthermore the ignorance of public ideas resulted from the prioritization of economic profits might lead to an encouragement of public participation. From the case study, as one important “examiner” of urban plans, the role of commissioners of Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference and local people’s congress appeared to be weak. This point was also argued by Cheng (2008). In the PX case, the opposition to the PX project by the commissioner (Zhao) of CPPCC and People’s Congress of Xiamen was easily rejected by Xiamen government. This weak role is also risky to represent the interests of the general public. This implies that government is the only actor that holds concrete power to influence the decision in a real planning decision making. As argued by the professor in Xiamen University, public participation in Xiamen is at a relatively high level. It can be imagined that in many poor regions, cities or rural area, participation can be even weaker. Thus the cooperation and communication between regions and cities need to be strengthened.

However, although a public participation mechanism in today’s urban planning in China is just at an exploration stage, it is undeniable that Chinese urban planning is under the tendency toward a more participatory planning, in which different actors would be involved in the planning process and cooperate with each other. The current political and economic institution gradually reveals some shared issues with what have been argued in collaborative planning theory. Such the increasing influence of stakeholder and public interests require a more interactive planning approach to deal with the gradually pluralized interests and fragmented power. Also relevant planning legal frameworks are being improved in the respect of public participation. Some suggestions on applying public participation concerning current situation in China will be addressed in section 5.2.2.

5.2.2 Suggestion for Application of Public Participation in China

Nowadays, public participation or collaborative planning is highly advocated in China, especially in academic domain. Many Chinese planning scholars have noticed the advantages of such a new planning perspective to cope with rapid urbanization in China and diverse interests and conflicts emerge in the gradually complicated planning decision making. In spite of this, it still appears to be difficult to apply such a western planning theory in current Chinese planning context concerning its political and economic climate. Here are some general directions for the application of public participation in China inspired from this research:

- “Governance”, as discussed in previous chapter, concerns coordinating the relationship between government and the society. The institutional transition from government to governance is crucial to trigger a collaborative planning. An administrative decentralization from national level to local level might lead to a more interactive planning context and a relatively equal network power, in which politicians, experts, private stakeholders and lay populations would have an opportunity to exchange knowledge and opinions in order to build up a relatively common understanding on planning issues.
- Referring to the experience of Dutch planning based on a governance institution, more power and planning responsibilities should be decentralized to local level. State government involve when national interests are at stake. Such a power fragmentation might lead to an involvement of diverse participants and a positive interaction between government agencies and the public. Also in the local level, stand committee of people’s congress as a representative of the majority of the public should be more highlighted and powerful. As seen in the case, Zhao’s proposal was excluded by the government in the first place. The proposal was actually considered when great pressure generated from the society.
- In academic field, new theories should be introduced to support the theoretical basis for the research. Most of the literatures reviewed in this research included Arnstein’s participation ladder as theoretical background. The May’s new perspective seems not widely used in scientific research in China.
- Comprehensive legal framework is indispensable to support the application of public participation in China. As learned in the research in both *Urban and Rural Planning Act of China* and *Urban Planning Act of Xiamen*, there was no concrete approach regulated to guide the implementation of public participation in urban planning process. And articles in the legal frameworks concerning public participation are simply superficial. This might result in the fact that public participation were neglected or passively followed.
- Collaborative planning should be operated in a double-sided manner. Not only institutional and technical changes are demanded, but people’s knowledge in participatory planning and legal consciousness should also be improved. Politicians or academicians should provide open lectures to the citizens.
- Local planning regulations should be strictly drawn up according to the newest planning act promulgated by the authority in the higher level. This would lead to coherence in the legal system in order to support and coordinate the operation of participatory planning process.
- Since the current institution cannot be changed immediately, participatory planning process can be operated in a more informal nature. Public consensus building can be widely applied in planning decision making, in which different stakeholders and

citizens can cooperate with planning policy makers. Thus educating the general public with relevant theories and techniques becomes indispensable.

5.2.3 Methodology Concerns

This thesis research was completed within a limited research context. Hereby some issues of the case study need to be addressed.

First of all, the relevant information of the PX case and discussion on Chinese urban planning system was limited. This somehow influenced the coherence of the case study. Generally saying, it was hard to collect in-depth data concerning the case study. Especially the topic alike, relevant researches are limited and relatively sensitive in China. The professors from the university also stated that they did not have specific information of the case. Thus for example, the current situation of the PX factory in Zhangzhou is almost unknown. Secondly the list of interviewees is limited to its diversity. There were only two types of target groups, respectively Urban Planning Bureau of Xiamen and professors in Xiamen University. The responder from the urban planning bureau was not identified. There wasn't a direct contact with this responder, who is an official responder of the communication platform of planning bureau's official website. It is hardly possible to find out other contact information to conduct an interview with specific officials of the bureau; and to have a deeper conversation. Since the response from the bureau was posted on the website, apparently the interview results were somewhat conserved and superficial. Interviews with important political officials in the government and stakeholders involved in the project were not possible. Thus the opinions of those actors, which are impossible to find on the internet, but indispensable, were missing. This seriously influenced the quality of the information collecting. For example, the decision making process of the relocation of the PX cannot be comprehensively studied. Thirdly this research was conducted in the Netherlands, although the case was a Chinese case. This directly led to an absence of field trip, especially an extensive investigation with the citizens in Xiamen. Thus the public opinions on the PX project and on public participation cannot be gathered. Fourthly as stated in the research objective, this research is about to explore barriers of realizing public participation in China. Only one case in Xiamen might not be representative enough to reflect the general situation in China, although public participation in Xiamen is at a relatively high level. This is also in relation to limited time horizon.

5.2.4 Further Research

Based the research shortcomings concerned in the previous part, some further researches are recommended to conduct in relevant investigation in the future. Firstly the decision making process of the relocation of the project need to be elaborated. The tasks and opinions of different participants should be included in the research. Secondly how were those opinions included in or excluded from the final decision should be investigated in order to understand how different ideas shaped the decision. Thirdly according to relevant literatures, information concerning PX chemical plant in the new

location was largely unreported. Thus the opinions of the residents of Zhangzhou on the PX plants are interesting to know.

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Appendix

Abbreviations

CAS	Chinese Academy of Science
CPPCC	Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference
DCP	Detailed Construction Plan
DDCP	Detailed Development Control Plan
NDRC	National Development and Reform Commission
NPC	National People's Congress
PRC	People's Republic of China
SC	State Council
SCNPC	Standing Committee of National People's Congress