

Negotiating inner-city redevelopment in Shanghai

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Housing requisition is defined as the power to take the use rights of residents' housing for public use by the state. Between 1995 and 2010, one million residential units were relocated from the inner city of Shanghai to the outskirts of the city or to suburban counties. In post-reform China, residents have historically been excluded from decision-making in urban redevelopment projects. However, the *2011 Regulation* requires Shanghai residents to vote on housing requisition for inner-city renewal. This opens up a new paradigm for urban redevelopment and housing requisition schemes in China.

Entering into the debate from Fainstein's *Just City* (2010), this paper seeks to understand how citizen participation shapes the decision making process around housing requisition for urban renewal and determine if a participatory approach significantly responds to the needs and interests of the disadvantaged. Among planning theorists there is a debate between those who emphasize communication, negotiation and democratic decision making, and just city theorists who argue that planning should meet the interests of the disadvantaged groups. This dissertation examines the complexities of citizen participation in urban renewal property-takings in Shanghai. It is especially important in the context of developing countries, where rising inequality, mobility, and low levels of citizen involvement make local solutions more important. In my dissertation, I will enter into the conversation regarding the impact of changes of regulations on citizen participation, and factors affecting citizen participation in urban renewal. Fainstein (2010: 36) refers to "equity" as a distribution of both material and nonmaterial benefits derived from public policy that does not favor those who are already better off at the beginning. Further, it does not require that each

person be treated the same but rather that treatment be “appropriate”. Relative disadvantage may be defined in terms of class or group characteristics. I refer the equitable outcome of citizen participation in urban renewal property takings in terms of sufficient means to occupy an equivalent dwelling, adequate compensation for improving living condition, and the equal opportunity for the residents to move back.

I utilize qualitative methods to recognize the complexities of citizen participation in urban renewal in Shanghai, and to develop an understanding of the dynamics of citizen participation and governance structures. The study aims to offer a tangibly better framework for understanding the new context of urban renewal in China. This research draws on document analysis and in-depth interviews with municipal housing officials, district housing authorities, developers and investors on the role of housing requisition and compensation policy in the relocation conducted between June and October of 2014. I interviewed residents impacted by the project to determine whether they feel empowered in the process. Additionally, I attended and observed resident meetings on property taking issues and collect compensation information in the housing requisition center to examine how the participation scheme responds to the needs of disadvantaged groups. Findings from this research will provide a nuanced understanding of the dynamics of citizen participation in urban redevelopment in Shanghai.

The *2011 Regulation* provides a more transparent, open and interactive process for community residents who are directly affected by the housing requisition projects. Residents are able to participate in the resettlement plan-making and decide the fate of the housing requisition project. The new policy offers the opportunity of resident participation, which affects the power dynamics during the decision-making process of housing requisition. It is a positive move. However, there are major factors that may make the resident participation less meaningful and dis-empower certain groups of residents or vulnerable groups such as low-income residents, and senior citizens. Those factors affect the decision-making of residents from old lilong housing when confronting the conflicts in family relations and community service availability. Policy makers should care about the disadvantaged groups and develop “appropriate” equitable compensation, relocation and redevelopment policies. The trust of the

relocated residents in district government officials, as well as their perceptions of fairness in the decision-making process factors into the decisions regarding whether to sign the contract with the district government.

Compared to the negotiations that underpin governing regimes in American cities, the nature of the negotiating process in the Chinese context is different. First, the district government plays a central role in the negotiating process while the city officials usually play a facilitatory role in the U.S. Second, it reveals the characteristics of a socialist regime featuring strong government intervention, active business cooperation, limited community participation, and uneven distribution of benefits and costs of new developments as the socialist legacy used to rely on bureaucratic system to maintain its effective control on land redevelopment. Third, the roles of the planning and historic preservation professionals are marginalized in shaping the discussion of inner-city redevelopment in Shanghai.

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