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A Multi-Scale Study of Stakeholder Participation and Visualisation in Chinese Urban Planning: The Case of the Pearl River Delta

Abstract:

It is widely assumed that stakeholder participation in China differs from that elsewhere due to China's unique historical, political and cultural context. Yet, hardly any systematic studies exist focusing on this topic. Generally, visualisation can serve as a bridge to connect stakeholders with diverse backgrounds. Studies of visualisation tools in participatory planning have mainly focused on the local scale. However, a multi-scalar approach that allows participants to explore planning across different levels is still lacking.

The thesis adopts a multi-scale framework to examine stakeholder participation and visualisation in Chinese planning policies and practices. Grounded in theories of communication, perception, and rigorous stakeholder analysis, a mixed-method approach is employed, incorporating document analysis, interviews, ethnographic observations, questionnaires, and eye/behaviour-tracking techniques. First, a framework analysis scrutinises stakeholder participation and visualisation tools in the Chinese urban planning system. Three case studies in the Pearl River Delta with varied planning scales and contents are then introduced: Urban planning exhibition halls (provincial level); the Pazhou Internet Innovation Cluster (sub-district level); and the Micro-renewal of Puntoon Wuyue Village (residential level). Finally, a critical comparison across institutional regulations and local practices are presented.

The research promotes our understanding of stakeholder participation and visualisation in Chinese urban planning processes. It feeds back into theoretical knowledge and practical implementation, ensuring that better utilisation of visualisation media can meet diverse stakeholder needs.

Keywords:

multi-scale, visualisation, stakeholder participation, perception