

# **The dynamics of public participation in planning: insights from New South Wales, Australia and Shanghai, China**

**Tingting Cui**

A thesis submitted to fulfill requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

2025



**The University of Sydney School of Architecture, Design and Planning**

The research reported in this thesis was supported by the award of a Research Training Program scholarship to the PhD Candidate.

## Statement of originality

This is to certify that, to the best of my knowledge, the content of this thesis is my own work. This thesis has not been submitted for any degree or other purposes.

I certify that the intellectual content of this thesis is the product of my own work and that all the assistance received in preparing this thesis and sources have been acknowledged.

Name: Tingting Cui

# Abstract

This research explores the processes of public involvement in urban planning under varied governance legacies and participation cultures. It aims to investigate the complex dynamics between legislative frameworks, community perceptions, and the processes of public participation in planning. The analysis employs two contrasting case studies: the planning reform in New South Wales (NSW) from 2011-2013 in Australia and the development of the *Shanghai Comprehensive Plan (2040)* (SCP 2040) in China between 2014 and 2016.

The study constructs a conceptual framework with three key elements: objectives, operational processes, and outcomes of public participation. The framework examines the whole policy cycle and explains how objectives define the design of operations and shape the outcomes. The quantitative and qualitative research methods employed across these case studies (including two community surveys; N=101; 96) and expert interviews (N =29) yielded rich empirical data and policy relevant findings.

The Australian case study, illustrated by the NSW planning reform, reveals multiple objectives driving public participation. The perceived objectives by stakeholders include instrumental benefits, bureaucratic needs, social values, and legislative requirements. The case study also examines how public participation operates in practice and the level of satisfaction with the participation process by stakeholders in the planning reform.

In China, the study looks at the role community participation played in creating the SCP 2040. This plan-making process represented a collaborative attempt in planning in China. The case study investigates how factors such as the absence of clear legislation and low community interest shaped the design, operation, and outcomes of public participation in planning in China.

The comparative analysis shows significant differences in the focus of public participation between the two countries. In Australia, the focus is on achieving both better policy outcomes and consensus, although this approach meets resistance from community groups. In contrast, Chinese planners use public participation to gain both social and administrative benefits. Another key difference is that Australia's planning system on participation is mostly defined by established legislation and policy frameworks. In comparison, China is still in the stage of experimenting with participation practices and is using a more flexible and evolving approach.

One major finding is the importance of clear, top-down legislation in guiding planning practices. These laws set basic consultation requirements, including clear objectives and operational processes. Such a framework also safeguards the minimum standard and prevents the misuse of public participation by bureaucracies.

In addition, the study also explores the role of a community's capacity and knowledge of planning in shaping participation strategies. It addresses the role of 'active citizens' groups in Sydney in shaping the direction of the NSW planning reform.

Overall, the thesis advances theoretical knowledge on public involvement in planning across culturally and historically different governance and participation cultures. The research demonstrates a viable methodology for comparative analysis, despite these differences, and findings have important policy implications for contemporary planning practice.

# Acknowledgment

First and foremost, I extend my deepest gratitude to my supervisor, Professor Nicole Gurrán, for her exceptional mentorship and insightful advice throughout this journey. Her expertise in planning and urban development has been essential in shaping my research. In addition, her encouragement and patience provided me with the confidence to navigate the complexities of this research and overcome challenges along the way.

I am equally thankful to my associate supervisor, Professor Peter Phibbs. His constructive feedback and guidance broadened my understanding of public participation and urban planning. His support was essential in shaping the depth and breadth of this thesis.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Sandra Nicols for her careful editing and invaluable feedback, which have greatly enhanced the clarity and quality of this work. I acknowledge the use of generative AI tools in copyediting the corrections made to the final version of this thesis. All ideas, interpretations, and conclusions remain my own.

I appreciate the support from the School of Architecture, Design and Planning at the University of Sydney. The resources from the academic community were important for completing this work.

I am also very grateful to the participants of the questionnaire surveys and interviewees from both Sydney and Shanghai. I appreciate the time, perspectives, and experiences they shared with me on this topic. Their contributions have been central to this research, offering rich insights that brought depth and meaning to my analysis.

To my partner, Bo. I am grateful for your constant support and belief in me throughout this demanding process. Your understanding has been my foundation during moments of challenge.

To my parents, I thank you for fostering my curiosity and determination. Your love and support have carried me through every stage of my academic journey.

Finally, this thesis is for my two daughters, Evelyn and Alina. You bring joy to my life and inspire everything I do. This is dedicated to you, with love, laughter, and all my heart.

Thank you all for being part of this journey.

# TABLE OF CONTENT

<b>THE DYNAMICS OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN PLANNING: INSIGHTS FROM NEW SOUTH WALES, AUSTRALIA AND SHANGHAI, CHINA .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>STATEMENT OF ORIGINALITY .....</b>	<b>I</b>
<b>ABSTRACT .....</b>	<b>II</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGMENT.....</b>	<b>IV</b>
<b>LIST OF FIGURES.....</b>	<b>IX</b>
<b>LIST OF TABLES.....</b>	<b>XI</b>
<b>CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 RESEARCH PURPOSE.....	3
1.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES.....	3
1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS .....	4
1.4 DEFINING PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN PLANNING: FROM CONSULTATION TO COLLABORATION .....	5
1.5 NAVIGATING THE SHIFTS OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN PLANNING IN DIFFERENT POLITICAL LEGACIES .....	6
1.6 COMPARING DIFFERENT POLITICAL LEGACY PLANNING SYSTEMS: CASE STUDIES FROM AUSTRALIA AND CHINA .....	7
1.7 FRAMEWORK FOR COMPARISON - INTENTIONS, OPERATIONS AND REPORTED SATISFACTION ON PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT.....	9
1.8 SYSTEM-WIDE LEVEL FACTORS INFLUENCING PARTICIPATION PROCESSES IN PLANNING: TOP-DOWN AND BOTTOM-UP INFLUENCES.....	10
1.9 RESEARCH METHODS.....	11
1.10 OUTLINE OF THE THESIS.....	12
<b>CHAPTER 2 REVIEW OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND KEY STEPS OF THE PROCESS.....</b>	<b>14</b>
2.1 INTRODUCTION.....	14
2.2 UNDERSTANDING PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN URBAN PLANNING: A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE .....	14
2.2.1 <i>Similar but different concepts: public participation vs. community participation.....</i>	<i>15</i>
2.2.2 <i>The evolution of public participation in popular planning theories .....</i>	<i>16</i>
2.3 EXPLORING THE PRACTICAL PROCESSES OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN GOVERNMENT DECISION-MAKING- PERCEIVED OBJECTIVES, OPERATIONAL PROCESSES, AND OUTCOMES AND INFLUENCES.....	28
2.3.1 <i>Intentions matter – the objectives of public participation .....</i>	<i>29</i>
2.3.2 <i>Key factors influencing operational processes .....</i>	<i>33</i>
2.3.3 <i>Understanding the outcomes: the influences of community participation in final policy outcomes and the reported satisfaction of public participation by stakeholders.....</i>	<i>39</i>

2.4	CONTEXTS OF PARTICIPATION: POLITICAL LEGACIES, INSTITUTIONAL SETTINGS, AND PARTICIPATION CULTURES .....	40
2.4.1	<i>Influences of political legacies on public participation in planning</i> .....	41
2.4.2	<i>Impact of Temporality on Participation Practices</i> .....	43
2.4.3	<i>Legislations and policies on public participation</i> .....	44
2.4.4	<i>Communities' perceptions and public participation cultures on planning systems</i> .....	45
2.5	COMPARATIVE STUDIES ON PLANNING SYSTEMS AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN PLANNING.....	47
2.5.1	<i>Reasons for the emergence of public participation and its wide cultural and political contextual basis</i> 48	
2.5.2	<i>Different interpretations and applications of public participation</i> .....	49
2.6	THEORETICAL GAPS AND RESEARCH DESIGN.....	50
2.6.1	<i>Research gaps and research questions</i> .....	50
2.6.2	<i>Conceptual framework for the research</i> .....	51
2.7	SUMMARY .....	55
<b>CHAPTER 3</b>	<b>RESEARCH DESIGN .....</b>	<b>56</b>
3.1	INTRODUCTION.....	56
3.2	RESEARCH PARADIGMS.....	56
3.3	CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS AS THE BASIS FOR PRAGMATISM KNOWLEDGE CLAIMS .....	57
3.4	COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS.....	58
3.4.1	<i>Case studies</i> .....	58
3.4.2	<i>Objectives of applying comparative analysis</i> .....	58
3.4.3	<i>Reasons for case study selection</i> .....	60
3.5	DATA COLLECTION METHODS AND ANALYSIS TECHNIQUES.....	64
3.5.1	<i>Research method 1: document analysis</i> .....	67
3.5.2	<i>Research method 2: questionnaire survey</i> .....	71
3.5.3	<i>Research method 3: semi-structured interviews</i> .....	74
3.6	LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH DESIGN .....	77
3.7	SUMMARY .....	78
<b>CHAPTER 4</b>	<b>THE DEVELOPMENT OF LEGISLATION, POLICIES, AND PRACTICES OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN PLANNING IN AUSTRALIA AND CHINA .....</b>	<b>79</b>
4.1	INTRODUCTION.....	79
4.2	THE DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN THE STATUTORY PLANNING SYSTEM IN AUSTRALIA .....	80
4.2.1	<i>The emergence of public participation in legislation and setting up a fundamental public participation framework in the Australian post-war planning system</i> .....	82

4.2.2	<i>1970s and 1980s- the rise of participation awareness from the public and rethinking the role of planning</i> .....	85
4.2.3	<i>1990s onwards: continuous modifications of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979</i> .	89
4.3	THE DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN THE STATUTORY PLANNING SYSTEM IN CHINA .....	91
4.3.1	<i>Prior economic transition- Urban Planning Regulation 1984</i> .....	91
4.3.2	<i>In the process of economy transition - Planning Act 1989</i> .....	92
4.3.3	<i>Market-oriented economy period - Planning Act 2008 and local government practices</i> .....	94
4.4	TWO CASE STUDIES ON COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION: RECENT PLANNING SYSTEM CHANGES IN NSW AND SHANGHAI .....	98
4.4.1	<i>NSW planning reform and key stages for public participation (2011-2013)</i> .....	98
4.4.2	<i>Shanghai Comprehensive Plan (2040) and public participation in the plan making process - key policy initiatives, processes, and outcomes</i> .....	103
4.5	SUMMARY .....	109
<b>CHAPTER 5</b>	<b>SURVEY IN AUSTRALIA</b> .....	<b>110</b>
5.1	INTRODUCTION .....	110
5.2	QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY OUTCOMES- REPORTED SATISFACTION AND PREVIOUS EXPERIENCES OF PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES.....	110
5.2.1	<i>Reported satisfaction by the general community on the public involvement opportunities in the planning reform</i> .....	111
5.2.2	<i>Previous experience, knowledge and motivation for getting involved in planning matters</i> .....	114
5.3	THE OPERATIONAL PROCESS OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION FOR THE NSW PLANNING REFORM (2011-2013) .....	121
5.3.1	<i>The design of the participation framework</i> .....	121
5.3.2	<i>The selection of participants and tools used for consultation</i> .....	123
5.3.3	<i>Bottom-up informal power of interest groups that influenced the direction of the planning reform</i> ..	129
5.4	REAL INFLUENCES OR NOT? HOW THE OPINIONS RECEIVED WERE REFLECTED IN THE OUTCOMES OF THE PLANNING REFORM	138
5.5	DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS .....	145
5.5.1	<i>Objectives of public participation: enhancing effectiveness, building trust, and ensuring inclusivity</i> ..	145
5.5.2	<i>Operation of public participation: structured approach and efforts beyond the formal channel</i> .....	145
5.5.3	<i>Outcomes of public participation: mixed results from stakeholders</i> .....	146
5.6	SUMMARY .....	147
<b>CHAPTER 6</b>	<b>SURVEY IN CHINA</b> .....	<b>148</b>
6.1	INTRODUCTION .....	148
6.2	QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY OUTCOMES- REPORTED SATISFACTION AND PREVIOUS EXPERIENCES WITH PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES.....	148
6.2.1	<i>Knowledge and satisfaction of the community with the making of the Shanghai 2040 Plan</i> .....	149

6.2.2	<i>Knowledge and motivations of public participation in planning</i> .....	152
6.3	STAKEHOLDERS' VIEWS ON THE OBJECTIVES OF PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN THE MAKING OF THE SHANGHAI COMPREHENSIVE PLAN (2040) .....	156
6.4	THE OPERATIONAL PROCESS OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN THE MAKING OF SCP 2040 .....	160
6.4.1	<i>The design of the public participation process in the making of SCP 2040</i> .....	161
6.4.2	<i>Tools and methods of public participation</i> .....	163
6.4.3	<i>Motivations and attitudes towards taking part in the making of SCP 2040</i> .....	170
6.5	THE OUTCOMES AND EFFECTIVENESS OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION .....	172
6.5.1	<i>The extent to which the outcomes of public participation in the making of SCP 2040 have achieved its objectives</i> .....	172
6.5.2	<i>The extent that the opinions from community involvement were incorporated into policy outcomes</i> .....	174
6.6	DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS .....	175
6.6.1	<i>Multiple objectives of public participation: ambitious expectations and challenges in community involvement</i> .....	175
6.6.2	<i>Restricted public participation operation: Barriers to wider community involvement in planning processes</i> .....	176
6.6.3	<i>Outcomes of public participation: perceived success in achieving objectives with challenges in incorporating public feedback</i> .....	178
6.7	SUMMARY .....	179
<b>CHAPTER 7</b>	<b>ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION .....</b>	<b>180</b>
7.1	INTRODUCTION .....	180
7.2	COMPARISON OF THE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESSES IN TWO CASE STUDIES .....	180
7.2.1	<i>Objectives of community participation</i> .....	180
7.2.2	<i>Operation of community participation</i> .....	183
7.2.3	<i>Outcomes of community participation</i> .....	186
7.3	COMPARISON OF COMMUNITY PROFILES AND MOTIVATIONS OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN PLANNING .....	189
7.3.1	<i>General public's knowledge and willingness to participate</i> .....	189
7.3.2	<i>Perceptions on power influences in planning decision-making processes and how public participation influences planning outcomes</i> .....	190
7.4	CONTEXTUAL FACTORS: GOVERNMENT LEGACIES, LEGISLATIVE AND INSTITUTIONAL REQUIREMENTS, AND PERCEPTION AND AWARENESS FROM COMMUNITIES .....	191
7.4.1	<i>Influence by government legacies: colonial vs. socialist</i> .....	191
7.4.2	<i>Influence of statutory legislation and policy context on public participation in planning</i> .....	193
7.4.3	<i>Influence by the community: knowledge, interests and influences of active citizens</i> .....	197
7.5	SUMMARY .....	199

<b>CHAPTER 8</b>	<b>CONCLUSION OF THE THESIS.....</b>	<b>201</b>
8.1	INTRODUCTION.....	201
8.2	SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS BASED ON RESEARCH QUESTIONS .....	201
8.3	CONTRIBUTIONS OF THIS STUDY .....	205
8.3.1	<i>Contributions to participation theories in urban planning.....</i>	<i>205</i>
8.3.2	<i>Contributions to public participation practices in planning systems.....</i>	<i>206</i>
8.3.3	<i>Methodological contributions.....</i>	<i>208</i>
8.4	DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH .....	208
<b>REFERENCES.....</b>		<b>211</b>
<b>APPENDICES.....</b>		<b>225</b>
APPENDIX 1:	HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS APPROVAL .....	225
APPENDIX 2:	QUESTIONS OF SURVEY IN SYDNEY .....	227
APPENDIX 3:	QUESTIONS OF SURVEY IN SHANGHAI .....	232
APPENDIX 4:	INTERVIEW TOPIC FOR GOVERNMENT OFFICERS.....	236
APPENDIX 5:	INTERVIEW TOPIC FOR RESIDENTS AND COMMUNITY GROUPS .....	237
APPENDIX 6:	SUMMARY OF INTERVIEW INFORMATION .....	238

## List of Figures

<a href="#">Figure 1: Arnstein’s ladder of participation (Arnstein, 1969).....</a>	19
<a href="#">Figure 2: Proposed research framework- by the author .....</a>	53
<a href="#">Figure 3:Responsibilities of the three tiers of government (Source: AHURI website) .....</a>	82
<a href="#">Figure 4: White Paper Consultation Process (NSW Government, 2011) .....</a>	97
<a href="#">Figure 5: White Paper submission analysis (NSW Government, 2011b) .....</a>	100
<a href="#">Figure 6: Submission analysis by interest groups (Cui &amp; Gurrán, 2015) .....</a>	102
<a href="#">Figure 7: Public consultation strategy in the making of SCP 204 (Shanghai government website).....</a>	105
<a href="#">Figure 8: Media campaign for SCP 2040 (Source: Shanghai government website) .....</a>	107
<a href="#">Figure 9: Public consultation material (Source: Shanghai Government website).....</a>	107

<a href="#">Figure 10: Public’s awareness of the planning reform in Sydney</a> .....	111
<a href="#">Figure 11: Public’s awareness by suburbs in Sydney</a> .....	111
<a href="#">Figure 12: Public’s awareness by age in Sydney</a> .....	112
<a href="#">Figure 13:Level of influence by public involvement in planning in Sydney</a> .....	112
<a href="#">Figure 14: Appropriate amount of appeal rights</a> .....	113
<a href="#">Figure 15: Power of influences by different stakeholder groups in Sydney</a> .....	114
<a href="#">Figure 16: Previous experience of involvement in planning</a> .....	114
<a href="#">Figure 17: Previous experience by age group</a> .....	115
<a href="#">Figure 18: Previous experience of involvement in planning issues by suburb</a> .....	115
<a href="#">Figure 19: Planning stages for participation</a> .....	116
<a href="#">Figure 20: Understanding the level of influence</a> .....	117
<a href="#">Figure 21: White paper engagement activities (from NSW government, 2011)</a> .....	124
<a href="#">Figure 22: Community campaign against planning reform (from BPN website)</a> .....	134
<a href="#">Figure 23: Public's awareness of SCP in Shanghai</a> .....	149
<a href="#">Figure 24: Public’s awareness of the planning reform in Sydney</a> .....	149
<a href="#">Figure 25: Public's awareness by suburbs in Shanghai</a> .....	150
<a href="#">Figure 26: Public’s awareness by suburbs in Sydney</a> .....	150
<a href="#">Figure 27:Public's awareness by age in Shanghai</a> .....	151
<a href="#">Figure 28: Public’s awareness by age in Sydney</a> .....	151
<a href="#">Figure 29: Previous experience in the planning system</a> .....	153
<a href="#">Figure 30: Level of importance of public participation considered by participants</a> .....	153
<a href="#">Figure 31: Preferred participation method</a> .....	154
<a href="#">Figure 32: Power of influences by different stakeholder groups in Shanghai</a> .....	155
<a href="#">Figure 33: Power of influences by different stakeholder groups in Sydney</a> .....	155

# List of Tables

<a href="#">Table 1: Data collection method</a> .....	11
<a href="#">Table 2: Research questions and methods</a> .....	65
<a href="#">Table 3: Documents analysed</a> .....	70
<a href="#">Table 4: Questionnaire survey response</a> .....	73
<a href="#">Table 5: Interviewee profile</a> .....	75
<a href="#">Table 6: Summary of the contexts of the four rounds of public consultation</a> .....	101
<a href="#">Table 7: Summary of public participation in the making of SCP 2040</a> .....	108
<a href="#">Table 8: Summary of consultation methods</a> .....	126
<a href="#">Table 9: Summary of submissions by pro-development interest groups</a> .....	130
<a href="#">Table 10: Summary of submissions by community groups</a> .....	131
<a href="#">Table 11: Planning reform themes and impacting interests</a> .....	140
<a href="#">Table 12: Summary of the public consultation process in the making of SCP 2040</a> .....	164
<a href="#">Table 13: Participants of the Citizen Panel</a> .....	166

# Chapter 1 Introduction

Community involvement has become an increasing element in modern planning systems. As Kymlicka (2002) stated in his work on citizenship theory, “the health and stability of a modern democracy depends, not only on the justice of its basic institutions but also on the qualities and attitudes of its citizens”. Through the processes of being informed and involved in decision-making, interests and opinions of the community can be heard and negotiated, and consequently, the negotiated solutions are believed to achieve more acceptable outcomes for the public. The recent development of the concepts of participatory democracy and deliberative democracy has highlighted the benefits of public participation in governance (Cavalier, 2011). In addition, modern society is facing increasingly complex issues that the traditional approaches to governing through hierarchical instruments cannot handle (Newman, Barnes, Sullivan, & Knops, 2004). The role of governments has shifted from ‘direct control’ to collaboration with communities with a wide range of actors and interests to get their support to ensure the success of policies.

Although the concept of community involvement in planning is now a well-accepted principle and has been implemented in planning practices around the world, the evolution of the concept varies greatly between countries due to their cultural, political, and historical contexts.

Traditionally, colonial governance systems often implemented top-down planning approaches, where decisions were dominantly made by colonial administrators with little to no input from local populations. This approach not only marginalised indigenous knowledge and practices but also established a precedent for centralised decision-making. However, most Western countries using the British colonial model of governance during the mid-20th century significantly reshaped their approaches to public participation in planning systems. Two powerful citizen participation movements in the US, the Civil Rights movement and the ante-establishment movement, inspired an emphasis on participation in planning legislation and urban affairs practices after WWII (Marshall, Steinmetz, & Zehner, 2012). For example, in the US, the *Housing Act 1949* required participation in urban renewal through public hearings. Later, public participation legislation was further implemented by the *Housing Act 1954* which required the establishment of citywide advisory committees for wider communities (Day, 1997). It was clearly stated in the accompanying booklet that “It is why we are holding this Exhibition, for we wish not only to show you our schemes for planning and housing but to learn your views and invite your criticism” (Cullingworth, 1999).

In the Australian context, a range of participatory initiatives, activities and policies were well underway by the 1940s, such as town planning movements and planning exhibitions (Freestone, 2012; Freestone & James, 2015; Thorpe, 2017). In the UK, the exhibition of *A Plan for Hornsey* organised by the Borough Council was a milestone of public consultation in planning. Between the 1940s and 1950s, the concept of participatory planning and the implementation of a public participation model into planning practices became a standard practice through the *Urban and Rural Planning Act 1947* in the UK. It is fair to say that public participation has become a well-accepted and implemented planning principle in modern planning systems in developed countries.

Socialist governments have traditionally prioritised centralised planning and state control in urban development. This system is believed to address collective welfare over individuals' rights. As a result, public participation was often seen as tokenistic process that have no influences on changing pre-determined decisions. However, the shift of many socialist regimes in recent decades has prompted a reassessment of the role of public engagement. Many of them have experienced from purely centralised governance to more market-oriented or hybrid systems (Chiu, 2001). This transition to more democratic governance has introduced new opportunities for citizen involvement.

In Vietnam, for instance, enhancing public participation has become an important tool to improving governance and efficiency, particularly by involving the economically disadvantaged. Market reforms and economic expansion have widened socioeconomic disparities and introduced diverse interest groups that promoted the initiatives of public engagement (Nguyen, Le, Tran, & Bryant, 2015). Similarly, in Cuba, reforms have addressed community involvement in neighbourhood planning to encourage urban planning and governance collaboratively. Nonetheless, challenges such as resource limitations, bureaucratic hurdles, and political factors still question the effectiveness of these participatory efforts in socialist countries (Nápoles Rodríguez, 2009). The remnants of centralised authority still affect participation attitudes and methods. In China, for example, extensive research on public participation reveals that despite of increasing push for citizen involvement through the methods such as government consultations and digital feedback platforms, there is a prevailing tendency to limit participation within the bounds of state priorities (Gao, Wang, & Gu, 2020; Goldman, 2005; Morrison & Xian, 2016; Wang, Rees, & Andreosso-O'callaghan, 2004).

The evolution of decision-making processes for the built and natural environment, the shifting power dynamics under different governance models, spans several centuries, reflecting broader socio-political transformations across the globe. Such shift of governance systems reflects a centuries long evolution:

the rise of colonialism in the late 15th century; the wave of decolonisation in the mid-20th century, and the collapse of the Soviet Union at the end of the 20th century. These events have fundamentally altered governance models and power dynamics in planning the built and natural environment.

## 1.1 Research purpose

Historical governance contexts greatly shape the roles of urban planning and governance systems (Marshall et al., 2012). In many colonial countries like the UK, for example, planning systems originally served as instruments to ensure effective administrative control and economic productivity. Such systems frequently ignored the needs of local communities and disregarded indigenous practices (Porter, 2016). However, over time, these systems tended to shift towards more inclusive approaches by incorporating diverse community perspectives into the planning process (Yolande, Rashmi, Janelle, & Rajiv, 2022).

In contrast, in socialist countries, urban planning was conceived as a key tool to facilitate state control over resources. These planning systems were featured by their emphasis on centralised decision-making, large-scale industrial and urban development projects, and the pursuit of a unified socialist vision (Layson & Nankai, 2015; Li, Ng, & Skitmore, 2013). In recent decades, the collapse or transformation of some of the main socialist regimes has prompted a re-evaluation of the legitimacy of these system. Such shift has led to an increased acceptance of public participation and a gradual integration of market principles alongside state planning.

This research aims to explore the differences in public involvement between countries with different political legacies and participation cultures and focuses how these differences influence urban planning processes. This study seeks to uncover how political contexts shape the goals, practices, and outcomes of public participation.

## 1.2 Research objectives

The scholarly landscape on public participation in urban planning currently overlooks how different political legacies distinctly impact the decision-making process. While there's a wealth of information on participatory planning within democratic settings, the specific ways in which 'colonial' and 'socialist' contexts facilitate or hinder public involvement are less understood and, therefore appreciated. Insights into how these varied governance models influence public engagement in planning are crucial for a comprehensive understanding of global participatory planning dynamics. Bridging this gap could

illuminate the diverse challenges and opportunities for public participation across different political and historical contexts.

This thesis aims to address the identified gap by examining the varying focuses and processes of public involvement across different governance systems. Utilising a comparative framework derived from a literature review on the three critical stages of public participation processes—policy design objectives, the operation of public involvement, and the outcomes and influences of public participation—this study seeks to provide a structured understanding of participatory planning within colonial and socialist regimes. Based on insights from key scholars (Day, 1997; Forester, 1996; Webler, Tuler, & Krueger, 2001), the thesis sets out to achieve the following three objectives:

- **To compare the policy objectives of public participation in urban planning with different political legacies, institutional settings, and participation cultures;**
- **To analyse the operational mechanisms of public involvement in these countries; and**
- **To assess the outcomes of public participation on urban planning and communities' satisfaction on participation within different contexts.**

The first objective of this study aims to understand the goals to involve the public in planning processes. The second objective examines how genuine public participation is facilitated or restricted by different participation methods. The last objective seeks to evaluate the effectiveness of public involvement and examine how public participation changes policy outcomes.

These three objectives are designed to provide a structured approach to exploring the complexities of public participation in urban planning across distinct political frameworks. By focusing on the key stages of public participation that include policy design, operation, and outcomes, the research offers insights into how different power dynamics interplays during the public participation in planning under different political regimes and participation cultures .

### 1.3 Research Questions

Based on the research aims and objectives, three main research questions are proposed as follows:

1. How do the policy design objectives for public participation in urban planning differ between Shanghai, China, and Sydney, Australia, considering their distinct political legacies, institutional frameworks, and participation cultures?

2. What operational mechanisms for public involvement are employed in urban planning in Shanghai, China, and Sydney, Australia, and how are these mechanisms influenced by the respective political, institutional, and cultural contexts of each city?
3. What are the specific outcomes and influences of public participation on urban planning processes in Shanghai, China, and Sydney, Australia, given their differing political, institutional, and cultural environments?

The research questions are designed to dovetail with the overarching aims of the investigation, which are to provide a methodical framework for scrutinising public participation within diverse urban planning political settings. The foremost question explores into the policy design objectives across various governance landscapes, seeking to find disparities in public participation goals among colonial and socialist frameworks and to understand differences in policy formulation. The thesis dissects the mechanisms, practices, and challenges inherent in participatory processes and analyses how public involvement is carried out. The concluding question seeks to synthesise policy intentions with actual practices by probing the relationship between legislative underpinnings and societal perceptions of participation.

## 1.4 Defining public participation in planning: from consultation to collaboration

In planning theories, there has been a long history and a great number of developed theories and research on public participation in planning systems. Planning researchers picked up the idea of public participation from political science in the 1960s with the discussion of a revolt in the US against the urban renewal movement (Lane, 2005). Arnstein (1969) developed the famous 'ladder of participation' to shed light on theories and practices of public perception in planning. Symbolic public participation that only addressed 'actions' rather than the depth and influences of public participation that resulted was criticised. Based on Arnstein's opinions, inputs from the public can genuinely influence planning only if cross-organisational and open communication is established between all social interest groups including government authorities, private sectors, local communities, and non-profit organisations.

Since then, efforts have been made to discover the nature and value of public participation in planning and to develop methods to improve its performance. With improvements in transactive planning models (Friedmann, 1973), advocacy planning (Mazziotti, 1974), and communicative theory (Healey, 1992), public participation has become an essential component of modern planning systems.

Friedmann (1973) addressed the core of planning theory as a top-down tool for government control to a mechanism and medium for communication, which had inspired and encouraged a following 'communicative turn' in planning theories and practices. Later, Forester (1982) integrated Habermas's 'communication theory' and pointed out that the core component of planning is the negotiation process that enforces the value of communication. Innes (1998) reflected on the importance of communication in planning and acknowledged that 'communication behaviour and interactive practice' was an 'emerging paradigm' of planning theory. In the context of globalisation in the 21st century, collaborative planning requires accomplishing shared objectives through stakeholder cooperation, building on Habermas' concept of 'communicative rationality' and Giddens' 'structuration theory' (Healey, 2003). Public involvement is utilised to accomplish 'communicative democracy,' which is not just a means but also an objective for stakeholders for place-making and building the system.

As Lane (2005) review of the intellectual history of public perception in planning shows, planning has developed from highly normative, scientific-driven and blueprint- dominated models to the present where there is negotiation between stakeholders and solutions involving competing interests. Public participation in planning involves people in decision-making processes and therefore increases the legitimacy of decisions (Baker, Coaffee, & Sherriff, 2007) but should not only include the main groups of stakeholders but also the wider community (Marshall et al., 2012). Additionally, the process of citizen participation provides a mechanism for managing conflicts and achieving coordinated and 'win-win' solutions for development issues (Barlow, 1995).

## 1.5 Navigating the shifts of public participation in planning in different political legacies

In Western democratic contexts, public engagement is a well-established component of the planning decision-making process. Many countries such as the UK, US and Australia has included public participation in statutory planning process since 1940s (Day, 1997). Research on public participation in planning as primarily concentrated on these countries. Many famous theories in this areas such as Arnstein's *A ladder of citizen participation* (1969), Habermas's *The theory of communicative action* (1984 and 1987), and Healey's *Collaborative planning* (1998) all based on the social dynamics of Western democratic contexts. Significant effort has been made on how to ensure genuine participation and improve governance transparency and accountability in democratic settings (Bond, 2011; Inch, 2015; Zakhour, 2020).

In comparison, research on public participation in socialist regimes, particularly regarding its historical evolution and practical outcomes, remains limited (Miraftab, 2009). This gap addresses the need to investigate how socialist governance principles, such as centralised control and resource allocation, shaped public participation in planning. Traditionally, socialist systems imposed strict limits on citizen engagement in any political decision-making (Denhardt, 2009; Denhardt, Terry, Delacruz, & Andonoska, 2009). Decisions were made by the centralised government claiming that they are working for the welfare benefits of the whole population (Ye, 2024).

However economic reforms in recent decades have brought changes with greater focus on stakeholder involvement in urban development. These reforms, often driven by budget cuts or property privatisation, create competition over resources and motivate people to get involved to protect their interests (Lorens, 2019). For example, the commodification of housing system in China has greatly increased public's awareness and discussion on housing regulations (Chiu, 2016). These reforms often affect individuals' benefits and power dynamics, which leads citizens to voice their concerns. Abramson (1992) noted that the growing public interests in local planning matters is partly due to the increasing public awareness of privatisation. Additionally, the adoption of information and communication technology (ICT) tools such as social media platform, further encourages active citizen participation in urban planning processes in socialist countries (Cheng, 2013; Damurski, 2012).

Despite these developments, challenges such as bureaucratic inefficiencies and limited public trust persist in public participation efforts in socialist countries. These obstacles often lead to inefficiencies in public administration and make it difficult for policy-makers to fully understand how to involve the public effectively. In North Korea, the centralised government control in the process raises concerns about whether public participation is genuine or simply a tool for propaganda (Lankov, 2015).

## 1.6 Comparing different political legacy planning systems: Case studies from Australia and China

The notable gap in the existing body of knowledge is the understanding of public participation in urban planning across colonial and socialist regimes. As discussed above, while extensive literature explores public engagement within democratic contexts that originated from colonial legacies, there is less clarity on how socialist regimes facilitate or hinder public involvement in planning processes (Chen, Pearson, Wang, & Ma, 2017; Esser & Vliegthart, 2017). This thesis aims to compare examples of public participation in planning from both colonial and socialist countries. It highlights similar and different

dynamics of public participation and explores the unique challenges and opportunities presented by different political and historical contexts.

The choice of case studies is based on the three main reasons:

- **Contrasting Governance Models:** Australia's planning system offers a unique perspective on public participation evolution from a colonial democratic system. It contrasts sharply with China's socialist governance approach. This variance provides a rich comparative ground to explore how different political systems shape public engagement in planning.
- **Diverse Urban Development Practices:** The urban development and planning practices in Australia and China reflect their respective governance models' influence. Australia's approach is believed to be advanced in stakeholder involvement which addresses equitability and fairness of the process. However, the top-down planning system in China is always claimed to focus on economic efficiency.
- **Public Participation Mechanisms:** Examining the mechanisms of public participation in these countries reveals the complexities of implementing participatory planning. In China's case, planners act as mediators or activists within a tightly controlled system. It provides a case to compare with Australia's more open and community-driven model.

Most of the existing empirical studies and theories on public participation in urban planning are based on the practices and contexts of western countries. There is a lack of research on how these participation theories are implemented in centralised or non-democratic systems—particularly in rapidly developing economies like China. This thesis, in response, addresses this research gap by comparing the processes of public participation in planning practices in Australia and China.

In Australia, each state and territory is responsible for developing their own statutory and strategic land use planning framework. In New South Wales (NSW), early public participation practices included a public notice before rezoning could be proclaimed, required under the *Local Government Act* since the 1920s. The first systematic legislation for urban planning in NSW was introduced in 1945 and included public exhibition of plans, a provision for appeals against a plan and for considering public objections during the plan-making process. The global environmental movement in the late 1960s inspired public awareness and resulted in public participation in planning processes (Marshall et al., 2012). The establishment of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act) was the first

dedicated legislation to focus on a systematic planning framework. Public participation is, thus, formally recognised as one of the fundamental principles of the EP&A Act.

The Act requires public participation during the plan-making process of environmental planning instruments and when assessing development applications and statements of environmental influences. It also provides mechanisms to ensure the public's rights to access information is enabled through public inquiries and allows appeals challenging determinations by consent authorities and third-party rights to trigger court action if there is a breach of the Act.

In China, the traditional bureaucratic-based governance style has received broad criticism as the top-down approach is thought not capable of dealing with increasingly complex issues (Shan, 2012; Tan & Kytä, 2024). The top-down approach assumes that users' needs can be planned and managed by central management, even though such needs can be 'patronising' or even 'anachronistic' (Shan, 2012). However, market-based economic reforms have challenged this assumption. The role of government has shifted from purely planning and managing operations to facilitating and promoting users to engage in economic activities. As communities and individuals take on more economic rights and responsibilities, public participation is increasingly considered an important mechanism to establish collaboration between the government and stakeholders (L. Zhang, Hooimeijer, Lin, & Geertman, 2020). On the other hand, accessibility and transparency in decision-making are considered features of modern and good governance (X. Li, F. Zhang, E. C. M. Hui, & W. Lang, 2020).

As a result of planning system reforms in the 2000s, China's central government introduced public participation in planning decision-making processes. This approach was later widely adopted by local governments for plan-making. However, public participation in the planning system in China is still considered very limited. There is a lack of legislative requirement on the level and depth of participation and therefore, the real effects of public participation are questionable (Xu, Meng, Zhu, & Ding, 2024). The fact that the public do not have sufficient information, knowledge, and willingness to actively involve is another barrier for effective participation (Ye, Chen, Liu, & He, 2024).

## 1.7 Framework for comparison - intentions, operations and reported satisfaction on public involvement

This research undertakes a comparative analysis of public participation in urban planning through case studies in Australia and China. It specifically examines the planning reform in New South Wales (NSW)

from 2012 to 2014 and the development of the Shanghai Comprehensive Plan (SCP) 2040 between 2014 and 2016. The comparison is structured around a three-stage framework derived from a literature review on public participation processes in planning and political science:

### **Stage One: Objectives of Public Participation**

The initial stage involves assessing the objectives of public participation as perceived by stakeholders. Literature identifies three primary objectives, namely, enhancing policy outcomes through diverse stakeholder suggestions, fostering social benefits like enhanced social connection, and utilising public participation as a bureaucratic tool to build trust and gain community consent for decisions. This stage corresponds to the first research objective of comparing policy design objectives for public participation across different governance systems.

### **Stage Two: Operational Processes of Public Participation**

The second stage examines the operational mechanisms of public participation. This stage focuses on the issues like roles of planners and government officials as mediators, the selection of participants, and the influence of the nature and scale of planning issues on participation strategies. This analysis addresses the consequences of various operational factors on the participatory process.

### **Stage Three: Evaluation of Participation Outcomes**

The final stage assesses the outcomes of public participation processes through examining how input from consultation influences policy outcomes and community's satisfaction on participation. It provides insights into the effectiveness of participation strategies in driving policies that meet local needs and expectations. High satisfaction levels from the community indicate alignment with community preferences and involvement in decision-making, while areas of low satisfaction may reveal gaps in the process.

## **1.8 System-wide level factors influencing participation processes in planning: top-down and bottom-up influences**

The rationale for incorporating public participation into statutory planning processes has been widely debated (Burton, 2009; Rydin & Pennington, 2000). For example, Macridis and Burg (1991) state that participation in policy decision-making is a fundamental human right, similar to freedoms of expression, speech, and assembly, which reinforces democratic values of accountability and inclusion. Research

shows that planning laws on public participation ensure that governments prioritise community involvement and lead to better planning outcomes (Brody, Godschalk, & Burby, 2003). This thesis examines the effects of legislation and policy on public participation by analysing statutory requirements and guidelines, as well as how planning practitioners apply these provisions in their design and implementation.

Conversely, the influence of community perspectives on the design and effectiveness of public participation is also a key area of exploration. Ruming (2018b) highlights how public perceptions set the context for community participation, while Lowndes, Pratchett, and Stoker (2001b) emphasise the importance of understanding citizen views in an environment often marked by local political scepticism towards participation. The degree of policy understanding and willingness to engage significantly affects how public participation processes are structured and which participation tools are selected (Brannan, John, & Stoker, 2006; Coglianesi, 2004). This thesis aims to explore variations in understanding and motivation to participate in the planning systems of the case study countries, examining how these differences influence the design and execution of public participation processes in planning.

## 1.9 Research Methods

The thesis uses comparative analysis for investigating and comparing the processes and features of public participation in planning practices in Australia and China. The two case studies were chosen because of limited existing comparison research between western developed countries and state-led governance contexts. Also, planning reforms or planning system changes in both countries attempted to shift public participation in planning practices.

This research uses a mixed-methods approach for both data collection and analysis. It incorporates qualitative and quantitative methods to achieve a variety of outcomes (Patton, 2014). The primary data collection and analysis methods aim to answer each research question. These methods include document analysis, questionnaire surveys, semi-structured interviews, discussions with community members, and observation of public participation workshops and seminars. The study reviewed and analysed historical and current planning legislation, policies, and documents to trace the development of public participation in the two planning systems. A summary of data and analysis methods is in Table 1. The in-depth discussion about the research approach and the data collection process for this study is provided in Chapter 3.

Table 1: Data collection method

Data Analysis Methods	Information Type	Australia	China
Document Analysis	Key pieces of legislation	3	3
	Other publications	3	2
Questionnaire Survey		101	96
Semi-structured Interviews	Government sectors or government agencies	8	8
	Community members and representatives	6	7

## 1.10 Outline of the thesis

The thesis is divided into nine chapters. The organisation, connections and brief content outlines of the chapters are provided below.

Chapter One provides a general introduction and overview of the thesis. It outlines the context and background of the study, the research objectives and main research questions, as well as research methods and structure.

Chapter Two reviews the relevant literature in the field of public participation in broader political science and in planning disciplines more specifically. It is intended to reveal the relevant theories and knowledge on public participation in planning in both western democratic countries and in state-led non-democratic countries. In particular, it focuses on the key stages of public participation processes and how the broader historical and cultural contexts may have influences on public participation practices and reported satisfaction levels from relevant stakeholders. It aims to develop an analytical framework that was built on the current knowledge and to identify any gaps in the existing literature that this present study will explore.

Chapter Three explains the methodology employed in this research. It contains discussion on comparative analysis as the primary research method and the justification for the case study selections. It also details methods of empirical data collection and data analysis techniques. In addition, it raises the limitations of this study.

Chapter Four provides the historical and cultural background of public participation policies and practices. The chapter discusses how legislation and policies in the two countries responded to public participation policies revealed in the literature review. This chapter also highlights the processes of community participation in the two planning practices.

Chapters Five and Six present and discuss the outcomes of the empirical work explained above. In particular, the results of questionnaire surveys, semi-structured interviews and observations of community consultation sessions in Australia and China are examined. Data and evidence from various stakeholders including policy-makers, planning practitioners, general community members and community group members are also included. The discussion is based on the three-stage procedure developed from the literature review chapter.

Chapter Seven provides the findings of the research. The following discussion compares the similarities and differences of the two case studies based on the three-stage procedure of public participation processes. Implications of the research are presented. It also builds up the relationship between the findings to the existing literature and the focus of study of the thesis.

Chapter Eight concludes the thesis. It concludes the key findings of this thesis, outlines the contributions of this research and indicates the limitations of the research. It also recommends some future research directions.

# Chapter 2 Review of community involvement and key steps of the process

## 2.1 Introduction

Chapter 2 reviews literature in planning and political science to explore public involvement in diverse cultural and political contexts. The review connects directly to the research objectives by analysing how historical and cultural changes in planning systems influence public participation. The chapter compares participation practices in Western democratic systems with those in less democratic environments. This comparison helps to understand the role governance models play in shaping participation processes.

It also examines three key stages of public participation: the objectives of participation, the operational strategies employed for engagement, and its effectiveness in influencing policy outcomes. This approach provides a clear framework to study the processes and influences of public involvement across different contexts.

The analysis identifies three key factors that influence public participation. These include governance legacies, legislative and policy frameworks governing participation, and community perceptions and behaviours toward engagement. These factors are important for understanding how external and internal dynamics shape participation.

By presenting three primary research questions, the chapter lays the groundwork for comparing participation across countries. The chapter concludes by introducing a conceptual framework that supports the research objectives. This framework creates a foundation for studying public participation in urban planning under various governance models while ensuring the objectives guide the analysis in the following chapters.

## 2.2 Understanding public participation in urban planning: a global perspective

There is a large body of literature on public participation in planning, which has continued to evolve over the past several decades, beginning with the first debates about public involvement in development decisions that emerged in the 1960s. Much of the research literature has been undertaken in western countries, particularly in the United Kingdom and the United States, with a focus on issues such as the

rhetoric versus reality of public participation in planning, governmental influences on the process, and the actual efficacy and outcomes of public involvement.

Studies have also looked at practical applications and experiences of public participation in urban regeneration and strategic planning processes, aiming to link such participation to democratic renewal and active citizenship (Bailey & Peel, 2018). In Europe, scholarship tends to focus on empowerment, democracy, and neighbourhood planning, alongside broader debates on localism and participation practices (Bradley & Brownill, 2017; Yuille, 2022). In a non-European context, some notable contributions such as Wan & Chiu (2008) analysis focused on changes in Hong Kong's governance processes from elitist-led pro-growth to more community engagement in recent decades. Lim, Paidakaki, Verschure, and Van den Broeck (2023) explore the nuanced role of public participation within Singapore's authoritative governance framework, examining how the state's top-down planning approach has shaped and selectively integrated public input since 1985 (Lim et al., 2023). The core of debates lies in the interpretation of 'public participation' itself—what constitutes meaningful involvement, who is included in the 'public', and how is their input integrated into planning decisions (Arnstein, 1969; Kotus & Sowada, 2017).

In democratic regimes, public participation is often framed within a legal and policy framework that mandates the inclusion of community voices in planning processes. This approach is underpinned by principles of transparency, accountability, and the belief that involving a broad spectrum of stakeholders leads to more equitable and sustainable outcomes. In these contexts, the 'public' is viewed as a diverse group of individuals whose input enhances the planning process.

However, in socialist regimes, the mechanisms for involvement and the impact of public input on decision-making can differ widely. Participation tends to be more top-down, with government authorities determining who participates and how feedback is collected and used. This approach reflects a governance model where the government seeks to retain strong control over planning outcomes while limiting opportunities for genuine public engagement.

### 2.2.1 Similar but different concepts: public participation vs. community participation

In the intricate landscape of urban planning and policy formulation, the delineation between community participation and public participation has become a focal point for scholarly debate and practical application. While these concepts are frequently conflated in academic and professional discourse, a

detailed scrutiny reveals inherent differences that underscore their unique contributions to the planning process. Community participation involves working closely with local groups (usually residents) to address how planning decisions affect their environment, social connections, and economic wellbeing. The goal of engagement is to empower communities by giving them a real say in shaping changes that impact their daily lives (Arnstein, 1969; Fung, 2006).

Public participation, on the other hand, involves a broader range of stakeholders, including individuals, communities, interest groups, and the general public. This inclusive approach is an essential mechanism for democratic governance, which addresses transparent, fair, and reflective of diverse interests and needs in planning processes (Innes & Booher, 2004). Tools like public hearings, workshops, and online forums help gather a wide range of perspectives, enhancing decision-making with varied insights and expertise.

Recognising the connections between community and public participation is essential for building a thorough understanding of participation in planning. Although these two concepts focus on different groups, the processes, design, operation, and outcomes of both are closely related and equally relevant. (Cornwall, 2008; Wampler & Avritzer, 2004). This thesis will, therefore, explore into the theories and practices encompassing both community and public participation. By reviewing the rich body of knowledge within these domains, this work aims to construct a conceptual framework for the research. This framework will not only highlight the distinct characteristics of each approach but also explore their interconnections and the potential for integrating their strengths in fostering more inclusive, effective, and sustainable planning processes.

### 2.2.2 The evolution of public participation in popular planning theories

The participation theory within social and political sciences has significantly shaped the theories of public participation in planning. These theoretical advancements not only reflect broader changes in how planning addresses societal needs, they also expose the tensions between ideal participatory practices and their real-world application. The key scholars and their thinking is summarised in the Table 2-1.

Table 2-1: Key scholars and their thinking on public participation in planning

A ladder of citizen participation (1969)	Sherry Arnstein	Introduced a framework to assess the various level of public involvement. The framework provided a critical examination of the difference between genuine empowerment and tokenistic engagement. Arnstein highlighted how public participation can either reinforce or challenge existing power dynamics.
The theory of communicative action (1984 and 1987)	Jürgen Habermas	Provided the theoretical foundation for rational-critical debate in the public sphere. Habermas highlighted the role of communicative action in democratic decision-making processes. His work had a major impact on participatory planning discussions and shaped subsequent debates about the nature and effectiveness of public involvement.
Planning in the face of power (1989)	John Forester	Explored how communication and power dynamics influence public participation in planning. He advocated for a more deliberative approach that requires meaningful dialogue among all stakeholders.
Collaborative planning (1998)	Patsy Healey	Focused on consensus-building and collaborative practices. Healey addressed how participatory and inclusive planning approaches can integrate diverse interests in urban development. Her idea reflected a broader trend on increasing democracies in urban governance.
critical communicative planning (2002)	Judith E. Innes and David E. Booher	Highlighted the importance of dialogue, mutual understanding, and consensus-building to achieve more equitable and sustainable planning outcomes.
post-political participatory planning (2010)	Erik Swyngedouw	Addressed the challenges in the consensus-driven model of participatory planning. They argue that such consensus focused approach can marginalise alternative viewpoints and overlook the fundamental power imbalances.

### *2.2.2.1 Promoting genuine participation that represents wider society through empowerment within a scientific-based rational planning framework*

The history of practices of community and public participation in city planning and governance can be traced back to old Greek times. The first existing record of direct public participation was in the Greek rules (Roberts, 2004). Between 1900 and 1930, direct public participation was attempted in the US through the City Beautiful Movement to encourage slum eradication (Day, 1997; Roberts, 2004). It was not until the end of WWII, that direct public participation was formally endorsed by the governments in the US and many western democratic countries worldwide.

The rise of public participation in government decision-making processes in the 1960s, especially Arnstein's (1969) famous 'ladder of participation', is a frequent reference for scholars of public participation. Arnstein's ideas focused on the imbalance of powers held by different groups, and between decision-makers and the wider community. In her argument, planning should represent the benefits for, and interests of, wider society rather than just those of minority elite groups. This representation of wider interests can only be achieved when communities are empowered through real public participation. She also identified the relevant participation approaches and techniques to employ with different levels of community empowerment. Eight levels of empowerment reflected the level of power offered to the public from non-participation to real citizen power (see Figure 1 below).

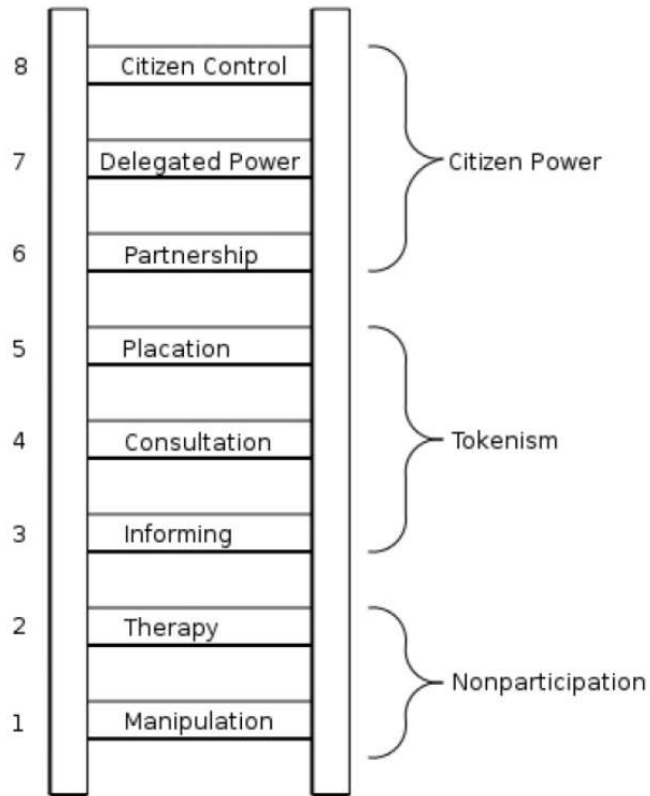


Figure 1: Arnstein's ladder of participation (Arnstein, 1969)

Derived from ideas of addressing empowerment and participation approaches in decision-making process, thinking had been made on the status of public participation in planning and identify the key players and methods and mechanisms to improve effectiveness and fairness of public participation in planning processes.

Planning scholars and practitioners also started to think that planners are essential in promoting such initiatives and choosing appropriate tools for public participation. For example, 'transactive planning' (Friedmann, 1973) introduced an alternative to the traditionally scientific-based planning model and put public participation at the core of planning. In his theory, planners act as mediators for different interests and promote dialogues between those with differing interests. In a similar timeframe, there was also the rise of advocacy and pluralism planning (Davidoff, 1965; Mazziotti, 1974) which addressed the ideas that planners should lead a planning process that is inclusive of the interests of pluralistic groups in the community and acts as an advocate for the benefit of less empowered groups, such as low-income groups, or for the environment. To achieve this goal, planners need to actively work with groups who do not have sufficient resources or awareness of the importance and knowledge of planning issues to

represent themselves. In this way, the less-empowered groups can achieve meaningful empowerment in plan-making processes. These ideas reflected the move from the traditionally top-down planning model before WWII that planners who hold expertise should have the dominant role plan-making process based on logical and technological best outcomes for all the stakeholders.

The ideology that public participation performs the function of supplementing technical-based and expert-oriented planning rationale was further developed by scholars who sought the value of non-expert knowledge in planning processes. Public participation promotes the generation of new knowledge and new perspectives in planning (Hanna, 2000). This effect is most clearly reflected in planning in specific localities Residents of local communities have life experience., They recognise specific characteristics of their local environment and/or situation often more clearly than planning experts (Corburn, 2003). Local, non-expert perspectives can add the values of future users of a designed space. Their insights about their environment and special places might never have been considered by planners (Laurian, 2003).

#### *2.2.2.2 Communicative planning as the dominant function of planning*

Since the 1980s, the debates have been more focused on the role of public participation in managing relationships between the government, planners and various stakeholders. Jürgen Habermas' (1984; 1987) 'communicative actions' and Michel Foucault's ideas on power, knowledge and discourse, received great interest from planners and produced profound effects on theories of public participation. All the emerging thinking of public participation in planning is considered to have somehow evolved from one or the other's work (Silver, Scott, & Kazepov, 2010).

Habermas (Habermas, 1984 and 1987) argues in his communicative behaviour theory that communicative rationality is "the power of unconstrained, unified consensus building in debating speeches." Communicative rationality is the basis of communication and understanding; negotiation rationality is a limited form of dialogue and communication. The value of rationality is reflected in the principles of fairness and social justice. Cooperative rationality is the "central experience" of human life (Habermas, 1984 and 1987). His ideas addressed 'consensus' and 'procedure' in participation work (Silver et al., 2010). Derived from Habermas' thinking, "deliberation plus law and due process constitute resources for the marginalised and powerless" (Silver et al., 2010). Habermas promotes a top-down process, where process rules are given in advance to accommodate ideal dialogue and discussion (Flyvbjerg, Richardson, Allmendinger, & Tewdwr-Jones, 2002). Influenced by Habermas' intelligence, the

works by Healey (Healey, 1998, 2020) and Forester (Forester, 1993) implemented communicative action theory into planning disciplines and addressed how to foster communication between stakeholders.

During this period, planning scholars also started to think about the meaning and function of planning. Public participation had been considered as one of the central ideologies of planning rather than as an additional mechanism for collecting information leading to better outcomes. The emphasis of planning had transformed from outcome-based to process-based that addressed communication, collaboration and interaction in plan-making processes. Some of the most influential theories of public participation in planning are discussed below.

The emergence theory of communicative planning was considered as a transformative point that had led to great progress in public participation in planning. The traditional technical and scientific-based planning model was challenged since it failed to foster agreement between the increasingly complicated and severe conflicts between stakeholders. In addition, the traditional expert-centred and technically based planning process prevented the potential for innovative and collaborative solutions (Forester, 1987; Healey, 1992; Innes, 1998). The introduction of communicative planning generally adopted Habermas' ideology of 'communicative action' into planning. As far as decision-making was concerned, language and arguments were incorporated into the framework of policy issues and processes, and support/opposition for planning proposals were thus considered. (Maginn, 2007).

In communicative planning theory, planners play an essential role to mediate and negotiate for agreed solutions between the conflicting views of stakeholders (Forester, 1987). Forester recognised the constraints and challenges that planners had to face when conducting democratic planning in terms of "inevitably limited time, poor information, competing views, suspicious and conflicting parties, loud and not always happy voices" (Forester, 1994). He argued that information represents a key source of the planner's power to exert influence in the planning process (Forester, 1982). This is because planners often have the skills and determining powers on technical matters; they also understand the administrative structure and decision-making processes. Thirdly, planners are able to decide how information is communicated so under-represented groups can participate more effectively in the planning process. Planners should be aware of, and try to avoid, misinformation and distorted communication that could alter power imbalances between advantaged and disadvantaged groups. Forester recognised, however, that this is often inevitable since planners' own incentives, ethics and alternatives can be a source of misinformation. Planners should apply a proper information strategy to promote genuinely democratic planning processes. He pointed out that the two essential focuses for

planning theory to identify are firstly, how planners can foster equality of representation of participation in planning proposals and secondly, how planners can lead the conversation between interests of different stakeholders to work on consensus.

Forester also investigated how planners can utilise their own mediation skills or involve trained mediators to effectively organise and lead a consultation process with stakeholders with histories of suspicion and acrimony. He found that through a process involving communication, arguments, critics and re-framing ideas, there is a shift in the attitudes and relationships between originally conflicting group. There is also the emergence of mutual understanding and learning achieved in the process (Forester, 2006).

(Healey, 1992) also echoed Habermas' communicative rationality and pointed out that the traditional technical and scientific rational approach to planning should be treated as equal to other rationalities such as equality and moral perspectives in planning. As Healey stated, communicative rationality offers a way forward that brings together all the differences and experiences of human life and provides an arena for "reasoning formed within intersubjective communication". Further to Forester's thinking, Healey believes that a communicative approach to planning is not a process for representing knowledge that is pre-formulated but is rather a process of producing new knowledge and thinking through exchanging perceptions and understanding, and argumentation.

Healey recognised the potential of communicative planning to promote a collaborative place-making approach during the era of neo-liberalism. The interests and demands for 'place' by different groups has varied greatly over the past three decades, and has played such an important role that Healey considered we now live in a "stakeholder society". Among the numerous stakeholders, some have clearly defined their interests and strategies, while others have only vaguely defined ideas and "come together to work out strategic ideas and build sufficient consensus to pursue new initiatives in place-making and place maintenance" (Healey, 1998). To realise a collaborative planning process that addresses place-making in an interactive and facilitative way involving many stakeholders, Healey pointed out that the traditional planning process and its fundamental principles should be reoriented to consider conceptions of place-making and redesign. This process should take stakeholders' concerns into account and thus move away from a performance, criteria-based form to a collaborative place-making form (Healey, 1998).

Innes (1998) further pointed out that information is gradually embedded in the minds of the actors in the community, through the processes of participation. In this process, all participants, including planners, collectively create the meaning of information. These participants may collect and rely on many types of information, which are not necessarily based on formal analytical reports and assumptions. The public participation process enables the sharing of information collected by different parties., Its accuracy and implications are then assessed and discussed. Innes claims that only through such a process can information prove meaningful and represent a socially constructed understanding from the community.

Innes also developed a framework to evaluate the effectiveness of communicative planning (Innes & Booher, 1999). She classifies the consequences and effects of communicative planning into two dimensions. The first dimension considers the tangibility of the consequences including the provision of agreed plans and policies, as well as intangible products such as improved relationships and mutual learning. The second dimension of communicative planning accounts for the level of direct effects resulting from the project. The most direct first order effects include high-quality agreements and innovative strategies; the second order effects are new partnerships and changes in perceptions; the third order effects, which can be long-term and not directly related to the project, are new collaborations, and reduced destructive conflicts. Innes also pointed out that it is difficult to draw a clear boundary to separate processes and outcomes in communicative planning since the process matters in itself and can be viewed as outcomes and also because processes and outcomes are likely to be tied together. Innes identifies a series of process criteria and outcome criteria to evaluate the performance of communicative planning.

### *2.2.2.3 Critical communicative planning and alternative approaches to power competition in public participation*

Another stream of theorists who were inspired by Foucault's ideas, address how conflicts and powers drive and shape decision-making processes in planning practices. Different to Habermas who believed communicative action can promote consensus, Foucault thought that power is the fundamental factor that drives social relationships and practices, and also "liberates and controls citizens simultaneously" (Silver et al., 2010). Foucault addressed the inevitable nature of conflicts in society and power struggles in participation. Under his ideology, participation may have the effect of managing disadvantaged groups to some extent, however, the lost opportunities to participate may make their situations of disadvantage even worse. The process of struggle for power and influence itself is the empowering moment, which is

not necessarily within formal participation procedures.. Different from the views of Habermas, who saw the reaching of agreement as a transcendental end for the conversation, Foucault thought there is no moment of closure for this power struggle. Examples of planning scholars in this category include Stein and Harper (2003) and Flyvbjerg (1998a).

Enlightened by Foucault's thinking on power and conflict, many scholars used this ideology as their theoretical basis for criticising communicative planning theory, which, is often criticised for its failure to take proper consideration and investigation of the role of power relationships (Huxley & Yiftachel, 2000; T. Richardson, 1996). As a result, communicative planning theory is unable to help us understand what happens in the real world and therefore, it is difficult to implement this theory as a basis for the direction of future change (Flyvbjerg et al., 2002; Huxley & Yiftachel, 2000; T. Ø. Sager, 2012)

(Huxley, 2000) questions the capabilities of communicative planning theory to promote consensus in real life. He addressed the complexity of interests in planning and grouped them according to their socio-economic features such as gender, race, economic wellbeing, and power relationships. These embedded features decide the strategic interests and instrumental actions deployed by different stakeholders towards the direction of policy changes. Huxley criticised communicative planning because it seldom discussed how and why individuals and groups can be induced to give up their original strategic interests and instrumental actions toward securing their own aims in order to gain agreement which seems unachievable in the real-world (Huxley & Yiftachel, 2000)

As T. Sager (2006) also pointed out, communicative planning assumes an ideal situation of unconstrained dialogue without any additional intervention as the basis of the theory. In this ideal world, all the concerned stakeholders should "take part, freely and equally, in a cooperative search for truth, where nothing coerces anyone except the force of the better argument". According to Sager such an assumption of openness, inclusiveness, and fairness of participation does not reflect real world practices and is one of the fundamental dilemmas of communicative planning. In addition, the rationality of the use of a language discourse-based scenario toward reaching mutual understanding greatly depends on whether the speech actions are sufficiently comprehensible and acceptable, and whether powerful and less powerful stakeholders are willing to participate in such discussions (T. Sager, 2006).

The alternative approach considers power as unavoidable and pervasive and addresses both its productive and destructive potential. This theory engages with policies made as a result of struggles between different interests and where the "rationality of planning is exposed as a focus of conflict".

Compared to communicative planning, it is more focused on 'real-life' rationality and shifting from what should be done to what is actually happening. This approach promotes the idea that rationality is shaped by power, as noted by Flyvbjerg (1998b) and Flyvbjerg et al. (2002).

Under this ideology, the function of social control and oppression by planning is addressed. Planning is the tool of the state attempting to influence and regulate spatial processes (Huxley & Yiftachel, 2000). Public participation therefore, serves as a platform for powerful parties to acquire legitimacy for their decisions to implement social control, manipulation and oppression; the 'darker side' of planning (Yiftachel, 1998).

Krumholz and Clavel (1994) explored various forms of manipulation in planning. An example of a commonly used strategy by authorities is when they deliberately include some controversial and unnecessary elements, which are later removed to show the outcomes have reflected suggestions from public consultation. Meanwhile, the substance of the plan remains unchanged. Other forms of manipulation include disclosing information to people not entitled to have it. These manipulations can be easily carried out by planners because they have insight into technical and institutional knowledge (Krumholz & Clavel, 1994; T. Sager, 2006).

McGuirk (2001) examined a participatory planning process for a redrafting of the Development Control Plans (DCPs) for Newcastle, NSW. In this case study, planners enthusiastically wanted to implement a deliberative planning process by including extensive consultation and workshops which were much more intensive than traditional processes. However, McGuirk found that it was very difficult to reach a consensus between stakeholders with different social, economic, political and cultural power-grids which made power irreducible and antagonism inevitable. McGuirk stated that "power and difference cannot be set aside, even temporarily, through epistemological realignment". She interpreted the nexus between power, knowledge and rationality and pointed out that power differences in terms of expertise, knowledge and resources have been well embedded into different categories of stakeholders before the participatory processes. These power relationships and conflicts are hard to change through communicative planning processes.

#### *2.2.2.4 Post-political planning - public participation as a tool to legitimate government decisions*

In response to the rise of neo-liberalism in government around the world, many scholars argue that public participation serves post-political governments and has become a tool for governments to legitimate their decisions (Brownill & Parker, 2010; Legacy, Metzger, Steele, & Gualini, 2019). This post-

political turn of planning research originates from critical communication planning, which puts power, conflict and divergence at the core of the planning theory debate (Legacy, 2017). However, these scholars mainly draw on the political aspect of public participation in planning, addressing the relationships between governments and citizens and they also pay more attention to real-life planning practices. The 'post-political' condition refers to a context in which genuine political contestation—characterised by ideological disagreement over social and economic directions—is suppressed. In its place, a seemingly consensual policy framework emerges, often grounded in neoliberal principles. (Swyngedouw, 2010).

Under post-political ideologies, governments seek to replace antagonism with consensus. Conflicts have not been removed, “but are instead more carefully choreographed and, in some cases, displaced or otherwise decidualised” (Johnstone, 2014). Public participation in the planning process does not perform the function of empowering an arena for a wide range of opinions and options to be discussed for future development, rather it is a stage-managed process with specific intentioned matters to be disclosed and open for debate. On the surface, the process shows participation and legitimacy, but it aims to provide a preferred solution through a well-designed participatory process, thus limiting those with conflicting views to a meaningful hearing. Post-political planning governance focuses on the expectation of diluting public participation and narrowing the scope of politics and competition (Bylund, 2012).

The consensus-based participation process in post-political ideology aims to legitimate particular positions by attempting to minimise any contest (Ruming, 2018a). It works for policy outcomes that align with politically powerful stakeholders, such as the government and owners of capital (MacDonald, 2015). Thus, post-political planning is seen to involve governments' attempts to manipulate the public participation process to achieve the goal of consensus for already decided options, closing off contests by formalising participatory processes and mobilising expert testimony (MacDonald, 2015; Ruming, 2018a).

With political intentions of achieving consensus to gain legitimacy for governments' decisions, the formal institutional systems, procedures and techniques are considered the most important efforts governments can take to secure consensus and limit conflicts (Ruming, 2018a). To reduce the consequences of confrontation, planners and elected officials may use the planning system for conflict management. The formal procedure for restricting participation proposed by the government excludes when and how the public can participate, which can be considered as the result of restricting

participation and making decisions on its effect. The technologies involved in this formal planning system include: large-scale community meetings; using social media to attract the attention of a wider range and variety of participants; and promoting citizen juries and citizen groups as a fashionable participation technology. This is a very popular way of community participation in politics (Legacy, Curtis, & Neuman, 2014). As stated by Maginn (2007), the participatory process formulated by the government has created an illusion of the consultative democracy process. However, careful inspection shows that such processes do not firmly follow the principle of consultative democracy.

However, in reality, conflicts and antagonism cannot be removed or avoided since local residents may turn to alternative channels outside formal participation processes (Ruming, 2018a). Haughton (2019) uses an example of a public participation process during the planning of a motorway *WestConnex* in Sydney. The author points out that the consultation activities, under careful management, can become a part of the non-politicised technology used by the government to express its preferred schemes and policies. The only 'rational' choice that can be reached is through a general consensus from these schemes and policies. Its intention is to reject the voices of different views and make concessions to the economic and political models that they regard as broken. It is noted that the strategy adopted by the government in the election process is to ensure that the protesters do not interfere with the distribution of existing power, such as providing only 'selected' information to the public, limiting the topics debated in the official public consultation process, and dividing the opposing protesters into 'broad communities'. (Inch, 2015) also found strategies such as educating the 'good citizens' (citizens and elected representatives receive education from government-funded agencies on the logic of the planning system and also on how much they should expect to influence the planning decision) and labelling practices (such as using label NIMBY to dismiss opposition to development as parochial and self-interested) are employed by governments to tackle opposition from communities.

From the bottom-up perspective, many scholars identified the mobilisation strategies used by community groups to combat post-political governance (Legacy, 2016; Legacy et al., 2019; Ruming, 2018a). The unsatisfied citizens and community groups who consider formal participation is improperly managed, may choose to create their own informal deliberative and democratic spaces such as public forums to exchange information and knowledge, organising online campaigns on social media, and/or preparing their own economic studies and appearing on local television and radio programs to present their own research outcomes and oppose the government's proposal. (Legacy, 2016; Searle & Legacy, 2020) pointed out that the post-political turn in participation in planning does not lead to a non-political

planning process, but rather the opposite. The political has emerged outside the formal process set by the government and is forming a “re-democratisation” of planning through the deliberative arena led by citizens in an informal manner. In these informal participation spaces, citizen action groups use various campaign techniques not only to dictate an alternative planning option they supported, but also to advocate for ways to improve democratic practices in planning by involving themselves in matters that impact their lives.

The thinking of public participation ideologies in planning theories has experienced four rounds of significant changes which are also greatly impacted by the development in theory of public participation in social and political science broadly. With these the evolution of the public participation in planning theories in western and traditional democracy systems in the past 30 years, it is identified that the public participation in planning practices now is combined with multiple models of above (Silver et al., 2010) and in different political and social contexts and also in stages of participation process, there tended to be emphasis on different participation model.

## 2.3 Exploring the practical processes of public participation in government decision-making- perceived objectives, operational processes, and outcomes and influences

There are similar stages in most public participation processes. For example, Bryson, Quick, Slotterback, and Crosby (2013) identified three key stages in designing a public participation process which covered understanding problems and identifying purposes; enlisting resources and managing participation; and evaluating the performance to improve future practices. This three-step guideline addresses the intentions of public participation, the operational process of public participation and the assessment of the performance of a public participation process.

The intentions or the objective of participation not only determines and sets out the policy goals but also influences how public participation processes are operated. The operational process of public participation, including choosing who to participate and which technologies to employ, decides the degree of legitimacy, representativeness and transparency of public participation which are important factors for the evaluation of a public participation process. Such evaluation assesses the performance of

how the public participation process has achieved its intentions and objectives. The following section examines studies on the three main steps mentioned above.

### 2.3.1 Intentions matter – the objectives of public participation

Many planning documents have recognised that the benefits of public participation lie in the rationality of the planning process (Brabham, 2009). At most, community participation can be regarded as a logical extension of the democratic process in a more local, direct and cautious manner (Pimbert & Wakeford, 2001). At the very least, the participation of citizens in the process of plan-making helps to ensure that future users have access to the information relating to the plan (Brody et al., 2003). Public participation has become an indispensable step in public affairs worldwide due to its considered significant benefits in government decision-making in three areas discussed below. Firstly, public participation is widely believed to have the benefit of improving the quality of government decision-making processes and outcomes, which may further impact the public's long-term satisfaction with their governments' performance in general (Halvorsen, 2003). Secondly, public participation is also considered to have social benefits for citizens and communities such as enhancing people's dignity and self-esteem; improving individuals' self-confidence to influence aspects of their lives; helping people develop a better understanding of their real interests; providing opportunities for people to express their opinions; and also contributes to a greater sense of belonging to the community and an enhanced sense of social cohesion (Richardson, 1983). Lastly, public participation is thought to encourage collaborative behaviours of stakeholders and promote trust in the legitimacy of governments' decision-making processes and outcomes.

#### *2.3.1.1 Instrumental objectives- improving government decision-making processes, outcomes and implementation*

Public participation is believed to lead to better decision-making outcomes and processes. Through bringing in different needs and ideas into the decision-making process, public participation is thought to promote understanding of diverse interests of stakeholders, provide opportunities for innovative solutions, as well as the potential to reduce risks to different parties in the community (Burton, 2009; Pagliara & Di Ruocco, 2018; Papadopoulos & Warin, 2007). Policy-makers responsible for making policies on a broad scale of spatial areas and on different issues may lack local or specific life experience on the subject matter (Graversgaard, Jacobsen, Kjeldsen, & Dalgaard, 2017; Rydin & Pennington, 2000). Lindblom & Cohen (1979) and Schon (1984) stated that the public's 'ordinary knowledge' is able to help ensure that policies proposed reflect local conditions and values (Burby, 2003).

Also, public participation that includes open discussion of different or even conflicting perceptions can enhance mutual understanding of the complexity of the issues faced by different parties, which consequently promote the process of identifying consensus solutions (Glasbergen, 1994; Habermas, 1984 and 1987; Innes & Booher, 1999; Pagliara & Di Ruocco, 2018). Even in the situation that consensus cannot be achieved, the knowledge of interests from other parties may reduce the severity of opposition and contribute to better implementation of decisions (Stephens & Berner, 2011).

In theory, the benefits of public participation are considered to include bringing different views and perspectives into discussion, which may lead to better planning outcomes (Brabham, 2009; Forester, 1987; Hanna, 2000; Innes & Booher, 1999; Van Herzele, 2004). Public participation is thought to have the capacity to promote learning and knowledge exchange between different parties and ultimately promotes creative solutions that can be agreed to by all stakeholders (Innes & Booher, 1999). The non-expert and local knowledge gained from life experience is thought to be essential in local or neighbourhood scale planning processes (Rydin & Pennington, 2000).

Participation in decision-making can provide the public with valuable opportunities to express their views and needs, and thus decision-making can better meet the various needs of the public (Shan, 2012). Burby (2003), for example, used empirical data from 60 local governments in Florida and Washington to examine public participation processes in the making of comprehensive plans. The data showed positive relationships between better public participation and stronger planning outcomes. Sometimes, though, the process of public participation may lead to slow and cumbersome decision-making. However, any short-term costs are likely to be offset by longer term benefits (Burton, 2009), especially for neighbourhood or site-specific projects where local knowledge and implementation by local communities has a greater impact on planning outcomes.

#### *2.3.1.2 Social objectives of community participation: improving social capital*

The second set of benefit is related to the social aspect of public participation. It is believed that through the interaction and communication in the public participation process, networks and relationships between individuals can be established which will lead to an increase in social capital in the community. Social capital is defined as the connections between individuals that promote “social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them” and that enable participants to act effectively to obtain shared objectives (Putnam, 2000). The three elements of social capital are relationships, trust and norms which are essential for an inclusive and desirable society (Mandarano, Meenar, & Steins, 2010). Social capital gained through public participation will also help community

members to seek more social justice, achieve better community identity and have a stronger sense of how they can impact matters important to their lives (Nikkhah & Redzuan, 2009). The forums for public participation, such as community meetings and focus group discussions, encourage people to become more sociable and, at the same time, contribute to a greater sense of social integration, cohesion and/or solidarity (A. Richardson, 1983). Also, the actor-oriented initiatives in public participation processes confirm communities' role in driving and performing social changes (Eversole, 2012). In addition, public participation is also believed to promote social justice by addressing the weakness of some principles embedded in society. For example, the ideal public participation encourages inclusive solutions for all participants and is not based on majority rule that can outvote poor and excluded minorities (Silver et al., 2010).

In planning related studies, this stream of benefit is also a frequently addressed initiative for public participation in planning processes. Researchers have confirmed that the interactions, relationships and networks built in the process of public participation can promote information sharing to achieve mutual understanding, thereby resolving conflicts, making decisions more effectively, coordinating more efficiently and enhancing the ability to respond to future challenges (Innes & Booher, 1999; Mandarano et al., 2010; Wondolleck & Yaffee, 2000). The stronger relationships and networks, confidence and information at the individual level is believed to contribute to more effective policy outcomes.

#### *2.3.1.3 Bureaucratic objectives of community participation or collaborative governance*

The above three streams of rationales are often referred as the reasons of public participation in classic participatory theory which are claimed cannot fully explain the practices of contemporary practices of public participation employed by governments (Fung, 2006). Increasingly, research on the purpose of public participation has focused on the third set of benefits, which the subject of benefit is more related to governments or the political regimes that governments operate.

The issues and interests involved in government decision-makings have become increasingly complicated that the traditional approach of managing through hierarchical instruments such as representative democracy system is incapable to handle.

The role of the state shifts from that of 'governing' through direct forms of control (hierarchical governance), to that of 'governance', in which the state must collaborate with a wide range of actors in networks that cut across the public, private and voluntary sectors, and operate across different levels of decision making (Newman et al., 2004).

A large number of documents show that the governments of the United Kingdom, the United States, Australia and most western European countries are trying to shift their attention to encouraging collaboration, working together with other organisations to maximise profits for their citizens through partnerships and community participation (Burton, 2006). Representative democracy provides citizens with limited opportunities to directly link citizens with governance institutions and processes, which are considered too hierarchical and bureaucratic to meet the needs of the government and deal with multi-interest world issues (Silver et al., 2010).

One of the complexities governments are facing is the rise of the 'stakeholder society'. As Healey (1998) noted, people and organisations are behaving differently from before and are performing new activities. Some stakeholders have well-defined perspectives and strategies on how they seek their objectives. Their ways of operating can lead policy-making processes to become like a battle of struggling between competing interests. Governments are facing great risks leading to failures of projects or, even worse, to their reputations if they cannot satisfy stakeholders' interests. This effect is becoming increasingly intense with the increased use of technologies and widely distributed information (Castells, 1996). People with similar values and interests are now more easily networked and differences in knowledge and values among individuals and communities are growing. Accomplishing anything significant or innovative requires creating flexible linkages among many players (Innes & Booher, 1999).

As a result, governments have to seek to break out of their traditional hierarchical structure and broaden the involvement and influence of citizens, businesses and other stakeholders from multiple sectors and work together to develop and implement policies to address a complex, multi-faceted problem or situation (Choi & Robertson, 2014). It is believed that public participation is a helpful tool to facilitate such conversations for consensus and collaboration.

The process building consensus involves forming a common vision through mass participation with the efforts of different stakeholders, and then developing a detailed way to achieve the goal. Policies have become constant consultations among decision-makers. The category of 'decision-makers' is widely defined by scholars (Lafferty & Eckerberg, 2013) and comprises many external groups of civil society engaged through different public participation and consultation mechanisms. New technologies used in public participation such as focus groups and citizen juries have also expanded the range of stakeholders co-opted as part of 'consultative democracy' (Jacobs, 2006).

Genuine and effective public participation processes are an important government initiative to show transparency of the government decision-making process, which improves the trust of their citizenship (Halvorsen, 2003; Kang & Van Ryzin, 2019). Many governments around the world are suffering from the decreasing trust from the public, which may lead to further negative outcomes on their performance. For example, individuals who do not trust their governments tend to not cooperate in implementing rules or policies made by them (Kang & Van Ryzin, 2019; Van Ryzin, 2011). This trust is particularly essential for elected governments because they need to win the trust of voters.

Public participation in the decision-making process is considered a benchmark criteria showing the responsiveness, accountability and transparency of a government (Irvin & Stansbury, 2004; Kim & Lee, 2012). As Grisez Kweit and Kweit (2007) noted, the belief that citizens have “had an impact and the city had attempted to involve citizens” can have strong positive influences on people’s satisfaction with their governments. This is because the “fundamental psychological meanings and attachments” triggered by the experience of participation influence how people view and value government (Kang & Van Ryzin, 2019).

Recent empirical studies have shown that participation can rebuild citizens' trust. It seems that people with a positive participation experience can enhance their trust in the government. However, the argument that "participation generates trust" assumes that participation is effective and satisfactory, but this phenomenon is rare. In general, process dissatisfaction seems to drive trust into a vicious circle (Åström, 2020).

Also, Nabatchi and Leighninger (2015) noted the participation experience (whether good or bad) causes people to form perceptions about their governments and these can be short-term within project timeframes or long-term that impact attitudes on other government actions. Furthermore, many scholars identified that getting the process right, can be more important than the outcomes and results of the decision-making (Van Ryzin, 2011). “The symbolic role of participation may be more important than its instrumental role” (Kim, 2010). Due to the great impact on people’s trust, more governments are using public participation as a compulsory step in their decision-making processes, which is an important strategy for improving trust in government (Kim, 2010).

### 2.3.2 Key factors influencing operational processes

Many authors try to link the mature theory of public participation with actual practice. For example, Roberts (2004) noticed that practitioners did not master the complex theory of participation needed to

properly engage in such work. The link between theory and practice may be an area that needs further in-depth study, although others try to solve this problem through process assessment. Political institutions are usually happy to know that consultations have been held, however, planners and politicians may lack of the means to assess the value of using the consultation process (Rowe & Frewer, 2000).

Indeed, public participation is a complex and systematic process with different players including governments, planners and various participants interacting and influencing one another and all act independently as well. As Innes and Booher (2004) suggested, the process is not one-way communication from participants to government or government to participants. However, “it is a multi-dimensional model where communication, learning and actions are joined together and where the polity, interests and citizenry co-evolve”.

#### *2.3.2.1 Roles and motivations of government officers and planners*

Governments and planners often perform the role of organisers of formal public participation processes. They play significant roles in the whole public participation process. In the initial stage, the design and operation of the public participation process uses specific mechanisms that often differs based on the goal of governments or decision-makers. In their study, Nabatchi and Leighninger (2015) classified the goals of public participation as below. Decision-makers want to:

- inform the public
- collect public opinions, feedback and preferences
- let the public suggest new ideas or data
- support voluntary services
- solve problems driven by the public.

Participants, on the other hand, often want to influence planning decisions and/or budgets. The goals set by participation leaders have great influences on how public participation is delivered and the outcomes (Nabatchi & Leighninger, 2015).

Planners’ goals are often guided by the government they serve. They often exercise power to decide what matters to include for debate, which stakeholders they engage with, and which participation approaches to employ, and what and how the relevant background information is provided to participants., They can choose how they advise the government of the outcomes and range of options produced through public participation (Thorpe, 2017). Forester (1982) pointed out that the technical and

institutional knowledge planners have and have access to is a source of power. Besides their technical role, often understood as the main role of planners in the traditional technically-based planning model, planners are recognised as having more active roles in advocating for public participation (Davidoff, 1965). Zhang, Hooimeijer, Lin, and Geertman (2019) identified five roles that planners have as advocates to address inequalities in stakeholder participation:

- by educating and bringing in disadvantaged groups into discussions
- as facilitators to promote debates between different interest groups
- as moderators to encourage participants to express their own opinions
- as mediators to transform antagonism into working relationships and practical agreements
- as activists to claim citizens' rights to the city.

### *2.3.2.2 Participants and reasons for participating*

Clarifying participants, or stakeholders, and understanding how they will impact, or be impacted by, the decision-making process is a crucial part of the design of a public participation process (Bryson et al., 2013). The literature has widely recognised that the “appropriate stakeholders should be involved in appropriate ways in a participation process” based on the broader context, the objectives of the task overall, and the purposes of the public participation process (Bryson et al., 2013; Friend & Hickling, 2005). To decide who are ‘appropriate stakeholders’, designers of public participation must consider whether the decision-making process should consider members of the public as consumers, clients or citizens depending on the backgrounds and problems to be addressed (Fung, 2006).

Fung (2006) has also summarised eight mechanisms to identify five direct and three indirect participation methods. For direct participation, the first approach is to consider opening to all who wish to be involved. This mechanism is in response to the fact that not every citizen will choose to participate in every, or indeed any, public decision-making process and there may be valid reasons for choosing not to do so (Burton, 2009). However, it is argued that people who are in better positions in terms of wealth and education tend to participate more than those who lack these advantages (Fiorina, 1999). The second and third mechanisms address this issue. One mechanism is to selectively recruit participants targeting groups such as low-income and minority communities that are less likely to participate. Another mechanism is to randomly select participants from the general population using the methods such as polling, citizen juries and planning cells (Gastil, 2000).

The next two direct mechanisms focus more on groups with particular interests. The fourth mechanism is to identify “lay stakeholders” who have deep interest in some public concerns such as sustainability and heritage and are willing to invest a great amount of time and energy to act as representatives for those who have similar interests but choose not to participate. The last mechanism is to intentionally gather “professional stakeholders” who are usually paid representatives of organised interests such as particular industries and public organisations (Fung, 2006).

There are three indirect participation mechanisms that contrast with the above direct participation methods. The first two indirect mechanisms are selecting individuals who have positions in the state, namely professional politicians who are supposed to represent the public’s interests and technical experts who provide advice to public bureaucracies. The last indirect participation mechanism is more diffuse such as using mass media and informal avenues of discussion. These eight mechanisms for identifying or selecting actors in the public participation process can be schematically arranged from the most exclusive to the most inclusive.

Scholars also tried to investigate the motivations of public process participants (Shipley & Utz, 2012). Clary and Snyder (2002), for example, pointed out that a majority of citizens have positive attitudes towards engagement opportunities for policies impacting their lives. However, attending public meetings or writing submissions tended to be a burden because of time constraints associated with modern lives (C. S. King, Feltey, & Susel, 1998). Participation is an activity that people only make after they have taken care of the essentials in their lives (Iannaccone & Everton, 2004). The level of interest of participants also varies between different nations where the politics and culture of participation influences motivations of participants (Silverman, 2006).

What is interesting is that the motivations and intentions of participants are not necessarily aligned with the goals of participation set by governments. Shipley and Utz (2012) noted that although the government and planners generally regard the participation process to inform the public about what is going to happen or to choose from a set of predetermined plans, the public generally believes that they will have a greater impact on the end result.

### *2.3.2.3 Nature and scale of planning issues for public participation*

Another important factor impacting public participation processes is the nature and scale of issues for participation. The nature and scale of issues will decide the population that will be impacted by planning decisions and thus they should be consulted in the decision-making process. For example, Burton (2009)

conducted a comparative analysis regarding the significance of decision-making along a spectrum of influence. On one end of this spectrum, it exerts an impact on the decisions made by all personnel within the jurisdiction, whereas on the opposite end, its influence is confined to just a few individuals. He categorized these two extremes as 'strategic' decisions (affecting the majority) and 'individual' decisions (affecting the minority) and positioned them within the context of planning. Within this planning framework, the effects of decision-making are experienced by the groups situated between the majority and the minority.

From a spatial perspective, such distinctions can be between the making of regional strategic plans and neighbourhood community plans. From an institutional perspective, such distinctions can be between decisions about constitutional matters and about the application of constitutional or policy decisions to specific cases.

Differences in the nature and scale of the planning matter impact the process of participant selection. Since strategic and constitutional decisions will impact a broader range of people, more participants can claim a right to participate in the process on the basis of being affected by it. If it is not achievable that everyone who is affected by the decision can participate and only a smaller sample of participants can be involved, consideration should be given to issues of fairness, representation and equality.

In addition, the nature and size of the topic will also affect the participants' motivation and ability to participate. Innes and Booher (1999) noted that ordinary citizens may attend public hearings at the local level as their interests are most affected and their understanding is greatest at that level. Burton, Goodlad and Croft (2006)'s research shows that compared with the broader and more strategic decision-making process, people are more willing to participate in the small-scale and narrow decision-making process because such events do not play a significant role in their daily life.

In addition, the more technical and knowledge-based decisions may limit participants' ability to make a valuable input. For example, Rowe and Frewer (2000) pointed out that if the policies and issues for participation are more knowledge-based decisions, the purposes of public participation should be set at a low level of involvement. . However, if the policies and issues are more value-based decisions, then more public input such as solicitation of public opinions or active participation of public representatives in decision-making processes can be considered.

#### 2.3.2.4 *Tools and methods for participation and communication*

Different purposes for public participation, the variety of participant groups, and differences in the natures of projects require appropriately matched participation methods and tools (Bryson et al., 2013; Cooper, Bryer, & Meek, 2006; Walters, Aydelotte, & Miller, 2000). Selection of the tools and approaches of public participation generally depends on the range and number of participants (for example, public meeting vs. focus groups); the level of directness and in-depth communication required (for example, face-to-face meetings vs. submissions); and the proposed outcomes of the process (for example, scenario workshops vs. a collaborative taskforce) (Shiple & Utz, 2012).

Many scholars have attempted to establish frameworks to identify appropriate public consultation approaches within specific policy contexts and considering the level of involvement sought by the public. Shiple and Utz (2012), for example, reviewed 11 approaches ranging from traditional public meetings and focus groups to more recent web-based techniques of public consultation and their applications in practice in response to the purposes set by government and the level of involvement and empowerment of the general public. As Rosener recognised: "[T]he decision to employ any technique, or combination of techniques, must be accompanied by an appraisal of the context within which participation will take place" (Rosener, 1978).

In recent decades, there has been a constant influx of novel tools designed to facilitate participatory decision-making. This influx has led to the emergence of what is commonly referred to as 'community activities,' as described by (Bryson, 2004). These activities serve as an adjunct to conventional models of democratic participation in certain countries. Such tools encompass a wide range of mechanisms, including "public investigation, legislation ensuring the right to access information, citizen juries, policy dialogues, assessments of public opinion influences, regulatory negotiations, mediation, and other third-party-driven conflict resolution methods" (Dryzek & Braithwaite, 2000).

More recently, especially in the planning context, traditional approaches to public participation have been criticised for:

- their lack of attention to translating policy proposals into easy-to-understand language;
- their inability to reach a broader range of participants; and
- failing to utilise the information produced (Kahila-Tani, Kyttä, & Geertman, 2019).

As a result, there are increasing discussions on using digital technologies and platforms to conduct public participation processes (Afzalan & Muller, 2018; Jankowski, Czepkiewicz, Młodkowski, Zwoliński, &

Wójcicki, 2019). For example, Al-Kodmany (1999) explored into strategies aimed at enhancing public participation in the planning and design processes. This involved directing community discussions towards design options, employing visualisation through planning technology, and guiding community members through the design process. These efforts were undertaken to heighten awareness of community design and facilitate improved communication.

The effectiveness of these approaches also depends on how they are used and how well the information is explained. (Frewer, Howard, & Shepherd, 1998), for example, identified that the approach of simply communicating and exchanging information clearly and efficiently would be sufficient to achieve public satisfaction, indicating that public misunderstandings and objections can be resolved by better explaining the concepts and contexts of the proposed policies.

### 2.3.3 Understanding the outcomes: the influences of community participation in final policy outcomes and the reported satisfaction of public participation by stakeholders

Effective and operable evaluation of public participation can help policy-makers learn from previous experiences so that they can enhance the effectiveness of future practices and build long-term institutional capacity to conduct effective participation (Laurian & Shaw, 2009; Rowe & Frewer, 2000). Evaluation is also important to test if the perceived benefits can be achieved and therefore support the viability of public participation in policy-making processes (Burton et al., 2006). In contrast to other forms of political engagement, public participation primarily addresses the questions of what is at stake and the potential impact of its outcomes on political decisions (Schroeter, Scheel, Renn, & Schweizer, 2016). Many authors concur that political representatives and decision-makers should either embrace or carefully consider the results of public participation processes. The success of proposals for participatory processes hinges on their clear identification and delineation before the commencement of the process. Only when participants grasp how their perspectives are factored into and integrated within the political process can they anticipate committed individuals striving for the most optimal proposal (Goodin & Dryzek, 2006).

However, in practice, while public participation is considered by many to be a good thing, there have been few empirical studies that have rigorously tested whether such 'good things' are realised in practice (Burton et al., 2006). The difficulties of designing a systematic evaluation framework is partly due to the mixture of tangible and intangible, short-term and long-term outcomes as a result of public participation

(Innes & Booher, 1999), and also because of the wide range of intentions and perceived benefits that the process of public participation is supposed to achieve (Burton, 2009). In addition, policy settings differ greatly in terms of the nature and scale of projects and benefits to different stakeholders of public participation processes. This leads to different perceptions of public participation for different stakeholders (Burton et al., 2006). The lack of evaluation methods may lead to concerns and questions about the legitimacy of public participation processes, the appropriateness of the solutions they produce, and the cost effectiveness of the time and money spent on participation (Innes & Booher, 1999).

While creating a clear framework to evaluate public participation is challenging, valuable lessons can be drawn from efforts to measure its influences and potential benefits on specific participation objectives. Some studies used a policy analysis approach to assess the extent of instrumental benefits that public participation has generated in policy outcomes. Brody et al (2003), for example, compared local environmental plans and investigated how engaging different types of stakeholders in the plan-making process affected the contents that the plan addressed. They found that mandates impact how local government address citizen involvement and that the design of citizen involvement programs affect the resulting level of public participation.

Surveys and interviews of participants are frequently used methods to assess the social benefits and bureaucratic values that public participation has brought about. These approaches often use participants' own subject perceptions as a measurement to evaluate the level of satisfaction with particular issues. Halvorsen (2003) surveyed participants before and after a series of high-quality public participation events and how these events had transformed participants' views on the public authorities that undertook the policy-making process. Kim and Lee (2012) conducted a questionnaire survey to test if the promotion of an online participation process improved the level of transparency perceived by participants and consequently enhanced participants' trust in their government. He found that the satisfaction from participants is directly associated with their development and their assessment of government transparency.

## 2.4 Contexts of participation: political legacies, institutional settings, and participation cultures

The existing literature on the contexts of public participation in planning is vast and multifaceted, primarily revolving around three core areas: political legacies, institutional settings, and community

participation cultures. The main debate in this field focuses on how these areas interact and shape the effectiveness and nature of public participation. Some research has examined the relationship between political legacies and current participatory practices, with a focus on the unique challenges and opportunities stemming from colonial histories. (Johnson, Porter, & Jackson, 2017). Zimmermann and Momm (2022) developed a framework for comparison of planning systems with colonial legacies and non-colonial legacies that concluded that governance frameworks have great influences on the level of maturity of planning systems.

Significant debate is also raised on the role of institutional settings in facilitating or hindering public engagement. This includes a deep dive into how legislation and policies can either empower communities to actively participate in planning processes or, conversely, constrain their involvement (Cornwall, 2004; Pløger, 2021). Additionally, a significant body of research explores how different aspects of participation cultures, including the knowledge, interests, and intentions of local communities, influence participation processes (Nienhuis, Van Dijk, & De Roo, 2011; Van Herzele, 2004). One of the most debated issues within this domain discuss the extent community cultures either facilitate a productive dialogue with authorities (Lowndes et al., 2001b) or lead to a mismatch of expectations and outcomes in participatory planning processes (Monno & Khakee, 2012).

### 2.4.1 Influences of political legacies on public participation in planning

Much of the literature addresses the influences of governmental legacies on planning systems, with a particularly robust focus on how these legacies affect public participation in planning. One key idea in this research is that historical governance systems, including laws, policies, and administrative practices, have great influences on modern planning processes. This linkage to the past plays a major role in either supporting or limiting public participation (King, 1977).

#### 2.4.1.1 *Colonial legacies on public participation in planning*

The debate in this field often centres on how colonial governance has shaped planning systems (Zimmermann & Momm, 2022). Some scholars argue that colonial legacies have reinforced the top-down approaches, which marginalise local communities through laws, policies, and administrative practices. These systems often concentrate decision-making power in the hands of a select few (Porter, 2016; Beebeejaun, 2022; Home, 2013).

On the other hand, there is also argument that colonial contexts show a shift towards more participatory planning processes. This shift challenges historical power structures and provide greater opportunities

for citizen engagement (Ng, 2008). Planning systems need to evolve to adapt with current democratic ideals. This shift has encouraged planning systems in colonial system to move away from traditional colonial planning practices and incorporate grassroots and community-based perspectives into planning processes (Porter, 2016).

In non-European contexts, Lim, Paidakaki, Verschure, and Van den Broeck's (2023) work on Singapore's governance transformation illustrates the shift from elitist-led pro-growth strategies to models that prioritise community engagement. This transition demonstrates how historically colonial societies can challenge and reshape power structures through participatory planning.

#### *2.4.1.2 Socialist legacies on public participation in planning*

The legacy of socialism has had complex and varied influences on public participation in planning. Research suggests that socialist legacies do not always guarantee meaningful public participation. For example, McGovern (2013) point that progressive regimes hesitate to fully empower citizens by restricting critical dialogue in public forums. Devine (2002) examines socialist legacies through the framework of participatory democratic planning. The analysis highlights both the limitations of Soviet-era administrative planning as well as the positive aspects of socialist governance.

In recent decades, post-socialist cities like Riga have shown how participatory planning practices have evolved since the end of socialism (Akmentiņa, 2020). This shift reflects a transition in public participation approaches while drawing on socialist principles that emphasised political participation and the role of the people in development. For example, in Cuba, political participation was presented as a strength of the revolution (Bonilla-Santiago, 2019). However, in such systems, centralised governments often overlook the real needs of individuals, focusing instead on achieving top-down political objectives. (Wei & Chiu, 2018).

In former socialist countries, it is important to build a sense of political efficacy to encourage more youth participation in politics. Youth involvement is often low because civil society was underdeveloped in periods of non-democratic governance (Kudrnáč & Allaste, 2023).

Vidal, Smith, Rotta, and Prew (2019) look at different socialist models for future economies, such as market socialism and democratic planning. They explain how ideas like social ownership and negotiated coordination impact public participation. The interaction between socialist legacies and democratic planning is an emerging area of focus in many socialist democracy initiatives. These initiatives in decentralised management often attempt to balance the tension between encouraging public

participation and maintaining efficiency (Vidal et al., 2019). Socialist legacies in urban governance have emphasised the value of political participation but have also posed challenges to achieving effective and democratic planning processes.

### 2.4.2 Impact of Temporality on Participation Practices

Time plays a role in how public participation grows and works within planning systems. In places where participatory planning is still relatively new, engagement often feels like an experimental process. Institutions and policy practitioners are trying to figure out how to involve people in ways that are meaningful and lasting. This early phase often reveals both the potential and unpredictability of participation: without established mechanisms or shared experience, public input can be scattered and have mixed levels of impacts on actual planning outcomes (Fung & Wright, 2003).

As participation becomes part of formal procedures, its character tends to shift. What began as open and flexible may become more structured through laws or policy requirements. This can make the process and outcomes more predictable, but it may also weaken the original focus on procedural rules, it may lose its deeper value and turn into 'tick box' exercise. In some mature systems, participation is carried out more due to obligation than genuine interest, leading to standardised forms of engagement that may no longer reflect community concerns.

Institutional memory is one of the key consequences of temporality. While it can support consistency and efficiency, it may also make systems resist change. As Forester (1999) notes, cycles of innovation are often followed by periods of system stabilisation that can limit responsiveness and flexibility. Established processes may persist even when they are no longer well suited to shifting public expectations or emerging urban challenges, particularly if previous reforms were politically sensitive or resource-intensive.

There is also a cumulative effect on how the public perceives participation over time. When earlier engagement efforts lead to visible outcomes, communities may maintain their interest in the process. However, if they repeatedly feel their input doesn't impact policy outcomes, they will lose interest in the process. Over the long term, this dynamic may weaken trust in the planning system itself. Participation, then, is not only shaped by time — it also shapes how communities relate to planning over time. In this sense, regular review of engagement frameworks becomes necessary — to ensure that they are not just meeting legislative requirements, but also staying relevant, flexible, and genuinely inclusive.

### 2.4.3 Legislations and policies on public participation

Legal frameworks serve as both enablers and barriers to community involvement, with substantive and procedural instruments playing pivotal roles (Guo & Sun, 2004). The line between 'hard' and 'soft' law, once viewed as a clear divide, is now seen as a spectrum where different types of legislations and policies interact and shape the practices. Abbott and Marchant (2010) point out that the success of legislative framework in encouraging community engagement depends not just on their formal adoption but also on how well they are interpreted and implemented by planners and the community. McGee et al. (2009) add that these legal and policy rules work across multiple levels, from global to local, influencing societal norms and governance practices.

In most cases, the analysis of legal frameworks draws attention to how legal norms can drive social and cultural change by formalising governance mechanisms, thereby institutionalising norms of public participation. This perspective underscores the critical role of policy in governance while pointing to the essential function of legal frameworks in embedding participatory norms within institutional practices, facilitating a more inclusive and democratic approach to urban planning and development.

Public participation is generally considered as an extension to democracy processes in more local, direct, deliberative ways to generate perceived benefits (Pimbert & Wakeford, 2001). However, it is not necessarily the case that a reasonable and robust public participation process is being conducted in planning practices. To ensure the quality and due procedure of public participation in planning practices, many countries have enforced public participation as a compulsory process in planning. The requirement of public participation in legislation varies greatly in different planning systems around the world. For some planning systems, generally in developed western countries such as the US and the UK, public participation has been considered an essential part of planning processes for a long time and there are extensive requirements on how to conduct participation as a compulsory process in nearly every planning jurisdiction.

There is a wide range of thinking on the reasons to include public participation into statutory planning processes. For example, Burton and Rydin argued that public participatory right is a self-evident and fundamental right that entitles people to influence decision on matters that impact their lives (Burton, 2009; Rydin & Pennington, 2000). The right of participation in the government decision-making process is often considered as a political right by its citizens associated with achieving consensus within a political system (Macridis & Burg, 1991). Roberts (2004) indicated that "Citizenship participation is the

cornerstone of democracy". For scholars supporting such thinking, participatory right is considered as a fundamental right and a principle supporting the rationale of a modern democratic polity which ought to allow citizens to directly influence the way the society operates beyond the occasional voting for their government (Beetham, 1994). This understanding of public participation as a political right also reflects the common notion of public participation, which is an "action through which ordinary members of a political system influence or attempt to influence outcomes" (Nagel, 1987).

Furthermore, Secker (2009) argues that participation rights should not be limited to political or civil rights. Public participation should also be considered as a more fundamental right that addresses people's freedom of expression, association, and assembly and allows opportunities for individuals to be empowered to influence decision-making that influences their lives both within and outside established political structures, without gender, age or minority discrimination. This understanding of participatory rights has brought about a more comprehensive perspective on them as a basic human right that every individual is entitled to. The validity of participation is, therefore, not restricted by governments' provision of participation channels.

In the planning spectrum, Brody et al. (2003) investigated the planning mandates for public participation requirements in different states of the US and identified that the level of legislative requirements for public participation in planning, together with administrative structures, have great influences on the six choices that planners must make when conducting public participation. In particular, Brody et al. (2003) found that authorising public participation in planning legislation does indeed enhance the importance of local governments for citizens and will affect the final degree of public participation. He suggested that policymakers who want authentic citizen involvement in plan-making must seriously consider the language of the planning system to include a sufficient level of detail of the objectives, timing, targeted groups, techniques and administrative framework of public participation.

#### 2.4.4 Communities' perceptions and public participation cultures on planning systems

The literature on how communities' perceptions and interests impact public participation in planning is extensive and diverse, indicating a broad consensus on the significant role these factors play in shaping participatory outcomes. Blair (2004) suggests that community perceptions and interests influence the level of citizen involvement in planning and implementation processes, highlighting the necessity for continuous and high levels of local commitment for successful outcomes. Similarly, Kamaci (2014)

underscores that community perceptions and interests significantly shape the understanding, role, and positions of citizen participation in urban planning, ultimately influencing decision-making processes at various levels. Cowell (2004) points out that community perceptions and interests influence the prioritization of public involvement over joint working, demonstrating added value in community planning initiatives. Ruming (2018b) addresses that the perception from the public sets the context for public participation for communities.

According to Lowndes, Pratchett, and Stoker (2001a), when many local politicians are deeply suspicious of participation, it is particularly important to explore the opinions of the public. If planning practitioners want to solve the real confusion about the ignorance of participating in initiatives and maximise benefits, they need to understand the mentality and behaviour of citizens more deeply.

Some studies attempted to explore the nature of participants who have more positive attitudes on participation and are more willing to get involved. Nienhuis, Van Dijk, and De Roo (2011) for example, studied to what extent the communities' perspectives and willingness to participate depended on the lifestyle of community members. He analysed how different experiences and perceptions such as a community member's sense of community, personal situation, and mindset towards participation impacted on their participatory behaviour and willingness to participate in neighbourhood projects. The study identified a positive relationship between the three dimensions of lifestyle, willingness to participate and possibilities brought about by participating. He noted that participants were not necessarily older or poorer than non-participants, but they often lived in the community for a long time and had a strong sense of belonging to the local community.

Lowndes et al. (2001b) investigated the reasons impacting whether community members got involved in public participation processes. He identified that there were gaps between communities' willingness to participate and the real actions that they committed to. People tended to express in the study that when conducting surveys, people often say that they are deciding what they think should be involved rather than reflecting on actual practices. In addition, compared with the broader 'problem' mentioned in the abstract, the real participation of people is more related to the direct interests of themselves or ethnic groups.

However, the commitments to participate even in matters with immediate interests are difficult to maintain. Many people expressed that they would rely on a few 'natural leaders' who committed their time and efforts to community and neighbourhood affairs. Although people often complained that 'the

same people dominate everything', it was clear that the efforts of local leaders and activists were also well appreciated. Lowndes et al. (2001b) identified that the most frequently mentioned reasons for not participating were a negative view of the local authority; a lack of awareness about opportunities to participate; a lack of council response; and issues of social exclusion.

## 2.5 Comparative studies on planning systems and public participation in planning

Research on comparative planning systems examines the varied approaches to planning across different countries and cultures. This field is essential for understanding the complexity of planning practices, which highlights how political, economic, social, and environmental factors shape planning systems globally (Hambleton, 1983; Sahabi & Hanaei, 2020).

One key area of these studies is to explore how different governance and institutional structures shape the formulation of planning policies. By comparing planning systems, researchers identify the legal and regulatory frameworks that guide urban development along with the influence of planning cultures and traditions (Bishwapriya Sanyal, 2005; Bish Sanyal, 2016).

Many recent comparative studies have also examined the connection between planning cultures and governance structures. These studies reveal how governance models shape the nature of public participation. For example, Chamusca (2023) found that the centralised government management that lead to excessive local funding competition made the participation process complex and reduce the proposed benefits of participation. Ruming's study (2019) also examines the influences of shifting from technocratic to democratic government models on participation practices. This work highlights the necessity of clear guidelines for stakeholder involvement to ensure a fair and transparent process.

Comparative planning research also identifies opportunities for successful policy transfer and adaptation. The studies highlight best practices that can be applied across jurisdictions to improve planning processes and outcomes. Such researches not only enhances theoretical understanding but also offers practical insights into the challenges and future directions of planning systems worldwide (Friedmann, 2005).

### 2.5.1 Reasons for the emergence of public participation and its wide cultural and political contextual basis

The idea of 'public participation' in the western world is closely related to the principle of democracy (King, Feltey, & Susel, 2015). Political participation in democratic countries includes the selection of government officials or the formulation of government policies through formal elections and other legitimate channels (Cai, 2004). Voting and elections present fundamental participatory opportunities for citizens to influence political decision-making in a democratic world (Innes & Booher, 2004). The public is used to the ideas that they have some form of 'power' to decide issues in their democratic society. Further development of the concept and practices of 'public participation' is due to the increasing demand from the public to have more power and direct influences on decision-making processes (Arnstein, 1969).

On the other hand, freedom and legitimacy of speech have reduced the strength of the Roman Catholic Church and its religious doctrines and made political modernisation the first choice in most countries in the western world (Dang, 2020). Democratic values have become one of the primary political ideologies influencing policy preferences. The idea of public participation which encourages the general public to express their views on decisions that will impact their lives, has greatly promoted the democratic governance ideology. Consequently, it is welcomed and easily accepted by both decision-makers and general communities in western countries.

In comparison, centralised government societies did not experience such radical revolution with more freedom and democracy for their citizens. With their long-term planning economies that resulted from the depression of the power and influence of the grassroots, Chinese authorities and citizens are not used to or willing to participate in political matters. However, as the result of market-oriented economic reform since 1994, many conflicts became more evident and serious than before. The traditional practices of top-down bureaucracies were increasingly criticised (Jiman, Foziah, & Muhammad, 2016; Yuen & Yeh, 2011), especially through the increasing pressures from various social groups (Feng, Wu, Wu, & Liao, 2020). Public participation was brought into the system to tackle numerous conflicts in society. Without proper channels to express their dissatisfaction, citizens started to use more dramatic forms such as protests and strikes, or they chose to approach upper-level state authorities to protest (Cai, 2004). Central government introduced statutory participation requirements to ensure local

governments considered the potential conflicts of interests in their decision-making processes (Feng et al., 2020).

Also, with fiscal reform, the role of planning also changed. Planning changed from a tool for the central government to distribute spatial functions to a systematic process that aimed to attract investments and businesses to the areas (He & Wu, 2005). In the past, urban planning practice was legalised under the thought of socialist planned growth, but now it has been fundamentally questioned (Yeh & Wu, 1999). The decentralisation of decision-making power was required to promote the development of market-oriented cities and decrease conflicts between actors and interests in the process of urban planning practice (Morrison & Xian, 2016). Public participation, therefore, provides mechanisms for different stakeholders to communicate their demands and needs to land developers.

### 2.5.2 Different interpretations and applications of public participation

The interpretation and application of public participation in planning varies significantly between systems characterised by decentralised/democratic governance and those under centralised/socialist government structures (S. Zhang, De Roo, & Lu, 2012). This divergence is reflected not only in theoretical underpinnings but also in practical implementations of public participation across these governance models.

From a theoretical perspective, the concept of 'public participation' within decentralized or democratic contexts is often rooted in the principles of democracy itself, where participatory practices are seen as fundamental to the democratic process. Terms like 'collaborative planning' and 'communicative planning' are closely associated with the empowerment of community voices and the active engagement of citizens in the decision-making process (Cao, Zhu, & Zheng, 2021). This association underscores the belief in participatory planning as a cornerstone of democratic governance, facilitating a more inclusive and transparent planning process.

Conversely, in centralized or socialist systems, the approach to public participation may be broader and encompass a range of activities that include non-governmental parties in planning-related activities (Zhan, 2009 335). However, the depth and impact of such participation can be markedly different. Despite moves towards decentralisation, such as fiscal reforms, and legislative demands for participation, the overall civil political framework may still be evolving, with the goal of multi-party involvement in social decision-making processes remaining aspirational (Yeh & Wu, 1999 234). In these

contexts, public participation might be constrained by the prevailing political and administrative systems, often resulting in a form of participation that lacks substantive engagement from the general public.

In practice, while decentralised/democratic systems strive to ensure the legitimacy of urban planning through robust public participation, centralised/socialist systems may rely more on public ownership and state control to legitimise planning processes (X. Li et al., 2020). Despite these differences, challenges such as lack of public awareness, insufficient knowledge, and limited willingness to engage in planning matters can be common across both systems (Shan, 2012). However, the degree to which these challenges affect public participation can vary greatly.

In centralised systems, urban planning often depends on the discretion of officials, as public participation requirements are typically vague and lack clear standards for planning activities (Shan, 2012). Such ambiguity leads to wide variations in the methods used, processes followed, and the extent of public participation across different regions under the same governance model (L. Zhang, Hooimeijer, et al., 2019).

## 2.6 Theoretical gaps and research design

### 2.6.1 Research gaps and research questions

Although there has been wide research on the ideologies of public participation in planning, there is a lack of existing empirical research comparing planning systems and the practices of public participation in different social and political contexts, especially in Asian countries (Chiu, 2007; Sahabi & Hanaei, 2020). This research aims to explore different focuses and processes of public involvement between traditional democratic countries and state-led countries as the result of institutionally and culturally evolved differences and how stakeholders in different contexts reported their satisfaction with public inclusion in planning decision-making processes. In response, this thesis addresses the following three main research questions:

1. How do policy design objectives for public participation in urban planning vary across countries with differing political legacies, institutional settings, and participation cultures?
2. What are the operational mechanisms of public involvement in urban planning across different governance systems, and how are they influenced by context factors?
3. What are the outcomes and influences of public participation on urban planning in countries with diverse political, institutional, and cultural contexts?

The formulation of the research questions is crafted to dovetail with the overarching aims of the investigation, providing a methodical framework for scrutinising public participation within urban planning amidst diverse political backdrops. The foremost question investigates into the policy design objectives across various governance landscapes, seeking to elucidate the disparities in public participation goals among colonial and socialist frameworks, thereby addressing the aim to comprehend differences in policy formulation. Ensuing inquiries dissect the mechanisms, practices, and challenges inherent in the participatory processes, aligning with the objective to analyse how public involvement is operationalised and its efficacy evaluated.

The concluding question seeks to synthesise policy intentions with actual practices by probing the relationship between legislative underpinnings and societal perceptions of participation, offering an integrative perspective on the dynamics of participatory planning across these distinct regimes. This structured inquiry model promises a concentrated examination of the influence exerted by varying political contexts on public participation in planning, endeavouring to shed light on the nuanced interplay between governance models and participatory practices.

## 2.6.2 Conceptual framework for the research

Based on the review of literature on the theoretical development of public participation in planning, the processes of public participation in government decision-making and various contextual factors that influence the processes and outcomes of public participation, a theoretical framework has been established to understand and explain public participation practices in planning (Figure 2). The thesis uses this theoretical framework to identify the differences in public participation process models in China and Australia. How broader contextual factors contribute to these differences and what implications can be drawn in relation to public participation in planning theories will also be examined.

To compare the public participation models in two case studies, the thesis uses the three key stages of the public participation process identified from literature review: the objectives of participation, the operational processes of participation and the outcomes of participation.

### 2.6.2.1 *Comparative analysis of community participation processes and stakeholders' perceptions*

#### **The design of the community participation process**

This thesis examines how policy-makers and community members in Australia and China perceive the objectives of community participation to uncover motivations shaping participation policies (Burton,

2009). These objectives, as identified in the literature: instrumental, social, and bureaucratic, are explored in the context of community participation in Australia and China. Instrumental objectives focus on the capacity of public participation to allow policy-makers to consider opinions from diverse interests. This inclusivity promotes more comprehensive and balanced policy outcomes (Graversgaard et al., 2017; Rydin & Pennington, 2000). Social objectives emphasise the role of community participation in fostering social capital, building trust, and strengthening relationships within and between communities (Eversole, 2012; Nikkiah & Redzuan, 2009). Lastly, bureaucratic objectives pertain to the administrative functions of governments and organisations, such as achieving consensus, legitimacy, and efficiency in planning and decision-making processes (Choi & Robertson, 2014; Healey, 1998).

The research engages with stakeholders from Sydney and Shanghai to gather their perspectives on which objectives in their ideas are prioritised in the community participation process in each country. Understanding how these objectives are ranked is important, as it sheds light on the factors that drive the different patterns and features of participation (Burton, 2009). When participation objectives align with community needs and expectations, people are more likely to feel a sense of ownership and get actively involved (Norbert, Cédrine, Corinne, & Thomas, 2021).

#### **Operation of the community participation process:**

This study examines the operational processes of public participation through a detailed comparison of the roles of government and planners, the willingness of participation by communities and the tools and techniques used in participation processes.

Governments organise and lead the public participation processes. They establish the agenda, determine the extent of engagement, and implement the necessary legal and policy frameworks. For example, as in the two case studies, governments are the one who initiate the public participation processes. Planners, in turn, transform these directives into actionable strategies (Thorpe, 2017; L. Zhang, Hooimeijer, et al., 2019). Their duties involve guiding discussions, addressing conflicts, and maintaining the relevance of the process (Forester, 1982).

The study also explores the bottom-up influences of the level of willingness by participants in the participation process. It focuses on factors such as personal interests, trust in the process, and perceptions on how participation will impact policy outcomes (Bryson et al., 2013; Fung, 2006).

In addition, the study examines how well the tools and techniques used in participation processes are able to capture diverse perspectives and encourage meaningful dialogues. It evaluates methods such as

traditional face-to-face consultations, submissions as well as more innovative tools like digital platforms, or citizen panels (Bryson et al., 2013; Cooper et al., 2006; Walters et al., 2000). The outcomes of this analysis will identify best practices and highlight areas that require improvement.

**Outcomes of the community participation process:**

The study examine two areas for the outcomes of public participation processes. The first area is to what extent the public input from participation process has been included in the policy outcomes. The analysis examines to what extent the participatory process aligns policy provisions that are more sustainable and equitable. It investigates whether community input has contributed to policies that are more informed, relevant, and effective (Burby, 2003; Burton, 2009; Burton et al., 2006).

The research also investigates community’s satisfaction on the process of public participation in each country. Their perspectives on the level of effectiveness and power of influence are explored, highlighting the importance of stakeholder satisfaction as a key measure of legitimacy and success (Halvorsen, 2003; Kim & Lee, 2012).

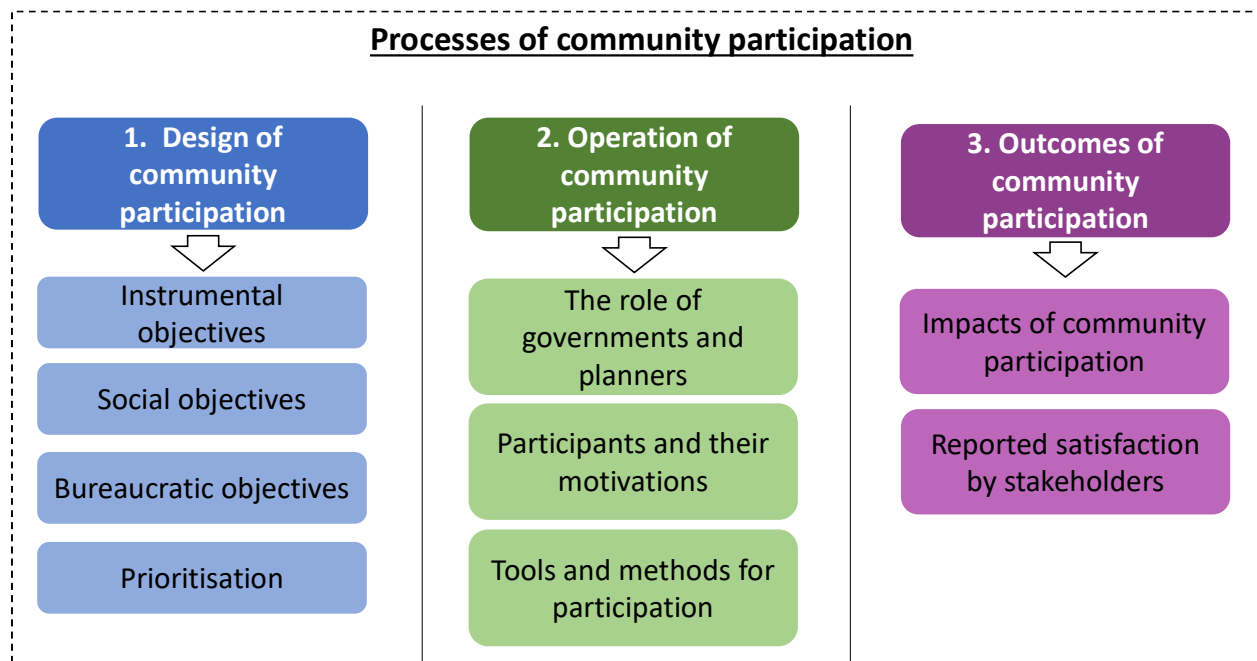


Figure 2: Proposed research framework- by the author

*2.6.2.2 Contextual factors - political legacies, institutional settings and participation cultures*

**Political legacies:**

Some literature on the influences of political legacies on public participation in planning highlights how colonial and socialist governance structures have shaped modern planning systems. Historical laws, policies, and administrative frameworks continue to influence the extent of public involvement in planning. Scholars like Porter (2016) point out that colonial legacies often embed top-down approaches that exclude local communities. In response, planning systems need to move towards more inclusive and participatory processes, which involves incorporating grassroots perspectives to better align with democratic principles.

The socialist legacy presents a complex scenario. Although the recent initiatives claimed to promote greater participation, the implementation of these policies often fails to deliver meaningful public engagement. Research indicates that socialist legacies often hinder the development of effective democratic practices in planning. Studies on authoritarian state reveal ongoing efforts to overcome these challenges and adopt more participatory planning approaches (Devine, 2002). These efforts reflect a gradual shift in both the ideologies and practices surrounding public participation.

#### **Statutory framework on participation:**

Regulatory frameworks shape the design, operation, and outcomes of community participation processes. When legislative systems are mature, participation processes tend to be well-defined and systematically integrated into planning activities (Brody et al., 2003). Strong and formalised legislation often serves as the foundation for community participation through mandated administrative process and consultation tools utilised (Burton, 2009; Rydin & Pennington, 2000).

In contrast, systems without effective institutional frameworks are still in the early stages of establishing such structures. This can result in less organised participation designs due to weaker mandates or limited enforcement (Thamrin, Ridho, & Nasution, 2022). For example, Denhardt (2009) highlighted that the lack of a comprehensive legislative framework for public participation in developing countries such as Chile, Pakistan, and Mexico has resulted in governments failing to uphold accountability in participatory processes.

Research suggested that well-designed regulations also enhance participation capacity and consequently result in more efficient and effective engagement practices (King et al., 1998). Such systems often require adequate resources, staffing, and expertise in place to support smooth operations. Legislative capacity also plays an important role in determining the outcomes of community participation. For example, as

seen in many developed countries, established systems often mandate the government to publish formal report on how community input are considered in the final policy decisions (Brody et al., 2003).

### **Cultural influences:**

Cultural norms also influence the community participation processes. Attitudes toward authority, communication styles, and ability in challenging the government's decisions impact how participation is structured in different societies (Rydin & Pennington, 2000). In contexts where trust in public institutions is high, there is often greater willingness to engage in participatory processes. On the other hand, cultures with lower levels of trust may require more carefully designed processes to encourage meaningful engagement (Swain & Tait, 2007; Swapan & Khan, 2022).

Cultural expectations further influence how stakeholders perceive the outcomes of community participation. Different societies may prioritise various aspects of participation, with some focusing on tangible policy changes and others valuing the strengthening of community relationships and the participatory process itself (Laurian, 2009; Yang & Pandey, 2011). These perspectives affect how success in community participation is measured and understood across diverse cultural contexts.

## **2.7 Summary**

Chapter 2 reviews the key concepts and debates about the purpose of public participation in planning theories and examines how these ideas have evolved during the changes in democracy and governance.

The review is organised based on a three-step conceptual framework that identified from literature. It explores how contextual factors including political legacies, institutional settings, and participation cultures influence public involvement processes. The first step categorises stakeholders' objectives for community participation into instrumental, social, and bureaucratic goals. The operational process analyses the key aspects of participation, such as the selection of participants, the tools and methods used for consultation and the role of government authorities and planners. The third step examines how public feedback shapes policy outcomes and community's satisfaction on the participation processes.

This framework prepares the ground for Chapter 3, which discusses the comparative research method on the two case studies of the NSW planning reform (2011-2013) and the Shanghai Comprehensive Plan (2040). Chapter 3 will describe the comparison basis, data collection methods, and research design limits. The three-step framework for participation developed from this Chapter will also guide the structure of Chapter 5 and 6 which present the outcomes of empirical analysis of two case studies.

## Chapter 3 Research Design

### 3.1 Introduction

Chapter 3 outlines the research design, data collection and data analysis methods of this study, developed from the extensive literature review presented in Chapter 2. It guides the systematic investigation of public participation across different governance systems presented in Chapters 4,5 and 6.

The research focuses on two case studies: planning reform in NSW between 2011-2013, Australia and the making of the *Shanghai Comprehensive Plan (2040)* in China. The research highlights the unique political, legislative, and cultural factors shaping public participation in each setting. This case studies provide both contextual insights and broader conclusions applicable to various governance models.

The chapter concludes with a discussion of the study's limitations, which acknowledge the constraints of the research. The contribution of the research is also discussed as well as realistic expectations for its findings.

### 3.2 Research Paradigms

Establishing a sound research design is important to ensure that the study's questions are meaningfully connected to the data collected. While different studies may frame their designs in different ways, a typical design usually includes a plan for how the study will proceed, a structure to guide that process, and a strategy for finding at answers to the research questions.

Creswell (2017) suggests that researchers begin by asking three core questions to help shape their overall approach. These include: What assumptions about knowledge underpin the study? Which strategy will be used to guide the research process? And what methods will be applied to gather and interpret data? Together, these questions encourage researchers to think structurally about how their theoretical framework, methodology choices, and data techniques relate to one another.

This thesis follows the above approach, not only because it provides a practical structure, but also because it leaves room for flexibility. The model—outlined in Figure 4.1—has helped frame a pragmatic design that combines both qualitative and quantitative methods.

### 3.3 Conceptual frameworks as the basis for pragmatism knowledge claims

The term 'knowledge claim' refers to one or a series of assumptions that will be used to scope what will be researched and how the research will be conducted (Creswell, 2017). Knowledge claims have similar meanings and functions in research paradigms. Creswell raised four types of knowledge claims for research, namely, post-positivism, constructivism, participatory approach, and pragmatism.

The first, post-positivism, is commonly associated with the scientific method and is typically aligned with quantitative or empirically driven research. It rests on the view that knowledge is best obtained through observation and measurement, albeit always within the bounds of acknowledged fallibility.

The second perspective, social constructivism, takes a different approach. It focuses on how individuals interpret and make sense of the world around them. Rather than seeking a single objective truth, constructivist researchers aim to uncover the diverse, often subjective meanings people attach to their experiences. These meanings are typically open-ended and context-specific, encouraging a detailed exploration of participants' views without forcing them into predefined categories.

A third type, known as the advocacy or participatory worldview, developed in response to critiques that traditional post-positivist frameworks often overlooked issues of power, inequality, and marginalisation. Advocates of this perspective argue that research should not only generate knowledge but also promote social change. Studies influenced by this approach often include an explicit agenda for reform.

Lastly, pragmatism offers a more flexible orientation. Rather than being tied to a single philosophical doctrine, it begins with the research problem and draws on methods—qualitative, quantitative, or both—based on what will best illuminate the issue. Pragmatic research acknowledges that inquiry is always shaped by broader social, political, cultural, and historical contexts. It places emphasis on practical solutions and real-world relevance.

Given the context and aim of this research, the pragmatism knowledge claim has been adopted. This is because, firstly, this research explores the differences between community participation processes in different countries and how top-down statutory policies and bottom-up communities' attitudes impact processes. This research must be understood in the broader cultural, social, historical, political contexts of the two countries. Secondly, the pragmatic knowledge claim provides flexibility to select research methods and techniques that best suit the purpose of the research. In this research, both qualitative and

quantitative data are collected and analysed to address research questions. These research methods and processes provide the best solutions to explore research questions.

## 3.4 Comparative analysis

Comparative analysis provides a powerful tool for understanding how different systems, structures, or practices operate across varied contexts. This method helps to identify the unique strengths and shared challenges and potential solutions that can apply to different situations. Informed by diverse experiences, comparative analysis is an effective tool to deepen the understanding of complex issues and support the development innovative solutions (Gurran et al., 2016). The following section outlines the rationale, objectives and design of comparative studies.

### 3.4.1 Case studies

The research focuses on two case studies: the planning reform in NSW 2011-2013 and the development of the *Shanghai Comprehensive Plan (2040)* during 2014 to 2016 in China. The case studies aim to examine the dynamics of public participation in urban planning within two distinct political, legislative, and cultural contexts. There are three reasons for conducting case studies in this research.

Firstly, case study method provides a detailed understanding of the unique factors that shape public participation in planning. Such understandings are essential for identifying the complexities that may be missed in direct comparison. Secondly, case studies allow for flexible data collection and analysis methods that suit each context. Thirdly, this approach enables a detailed investigation of the objectives, processes, and outcomes of public participation within each case.

The research integrates a review of various documentary sources, questionnaire surveys, interviews, and direct observations. These methods are applied to both case studies. This approach leverages the strengths of case study analysis to generate insightful findings about public participation in urban planning. It increases both the depth and breadth of the findings and offers a more comprehensive understanding of the factors shaping public participation under different governance systems.

### 3.4.2 Objectives of applying comparative analysis

Comparison is a fundamental commonly used method for human beings to observe and understand the world. As Swanson has stated, “thinking without comparison is unthinkable” (Swanson, 1971). Through identifying similarities and differences between subjects, comparison allows researchers to better

understand the features of objects, phenomenon, events, and tendencies as well as to identify correlations between causations and outcomes. Although almost every scientific social research method includes some comparison, the term 'comparative analysis' in social science generally refers to a specific kind of comparison: mainly of large macrosocial units. It is usually concerned with cross-societal differences and similarities of social phenomenon and how macro-scale factors such as political events, institutions, and cultures in particular paradigms affect the social phenomenon of interest. Comparative analysis has been a widely utilised research method in many subjects of social sciences such as education, political science, and behaviour studies.

The comparative case study method is chosen for its effectiveness in understanding complex phenomena within their real-life context. This approach allows for an in-depth exploration of the nuanced differences and similarities between Australian and Chinese urban planning participation processes (Milligan, 2003).

The objectives of comparative studies between countries have been discussed for a long time. Ragin, for example, pointed out that two goals of comparative analysis are to understand and interpret macro-social variation (Ragin, 1989). The study of similarities and differences between cases cross-nationally assists in the understanding of the topic of interest itself. Also, the analysis of relationships between factors and outcomes of macro-scale units enables comparative researchers to interpret reasons contributed to similarities and differences in the world, and therefore improve theoretical intelligence.

Comparative research is generally considered to have three functions (Esser & Vliegthart, 2017). Firstly, comparison is a means of dividing the development of social phenomena and is also a means of judging whether common phenomena can be explained by the same reasons. Moreover, the comparison also provides an analytical framework for the investigation (and interpretation) of social and cultural differences and their particularity. Thirdly, with the recent emphasis on the background and culture of subjects, cross-border comparison has increasingly become a tool for people to understand different societies and the structure of their social and political systems.

In the literature, there are generally three types of comparative research methods identified, namely, the case-oriented method, the variables-oriented method, and a mix of the two. These methods reflect qualitative, quantitative and combined research methods. The debate of which one of these methods is more appropriate for comparative social science has never stopped. Hantrals (2014) reviewed recent discussions and practices of comparative research and claimed that there is a tendency for multi-strategy research to combine qualitative and quantitative methods in a 'synthesis' approach. Further, he

categorised three approaches of this multi-strategy research, namely, triangulation, facilitation and complementarity, according to the relations between strategies and their particular contribution to the overall research objective.

However, despite the vast number of discussions of the objectives and methodologies of comparative research and practices from a wide range of social science subjects, the theoretical framework for comparative research is by no means perfect. The debates about the persistent problems in comparative research are still taking place. Mill et al (2006) for example, identified that the methodological problems in comparative research include: “(1) case selection, unit, level and scale of analysis; (2) construct equivalence; (3) variable or case orientation; and (4) issues of causality”.

The repeating debates about the rationale and feasibility of comparative research reflect its great strengths and potential for identifying the unique nature of every society. On the other hand, there are some unsolved questions in methodologies that reduce the precision and persuasiveness of the findings.

### 3.4.3 Reasons for case study selection

The core principle of the comparative method is to employ comparison as a tool to identify and explain both the similarities and differences across multiple cases in relation to a particular subject of interest (Pickvance, 2001). In this research, the comparative method is used to explore the evolving relationship between urban planning policies and public participation outcomes within the distinct political, economic, and cultural frameworks of two carefully selected case studies. A key review by Oxley (2001) have critiqued the strengths and limitations of established approaches to comparative policy research, particularly within the field of urban governance. He argued that many of the issues identified in earlier comparative studies could have been mitigated by clearly articulating the purpose of using comparison as an explanatory tool, and by aligning the research methods more closely with the study’s objectives.

In response to these critiques, the following sections outline:

- the rationale for selecting NSW and Shanghai as comparative cases in this study
- the focus on public participation policy in the two planning initiatives
- the approach to comparative analysis adopted
- the challenges encountered during the research and the strategies employed to address them.

This research adopted a comparative research approach that used a mix of case-oriented and variables-oriented methods of comparative methodology.

There are two main reasons for choosing the case studies for the comparison of the public participation processes in Australia and China:

*3.4.3.1 Lack of existing comparative research focusing on comparing the public participation processes in planning systems between democratic countries and state-led countries*

Most of the existing research on public participation in planning systems has focused on the practices of western countries, particularly on Britain's planning system (Taylor, 1998) and therefore, public participation theories were established mostly based on the principles of western democratic ideologies such as Habermas' thinking on 'communication theory'; and Arnstein's 'ladder of citizen participation'; and Healey's 'communicative planning theory' (Arnstein, 1969; Flyvbjerg, 1998a; Healey, 1996).

However, the reality and practices of public participation in state-led and most developing countries are very different from the models established under western contexts, particularly in terms of the origin, processes and outcomes of public participation processes. For example, Li et al. (2020) stated that the community participation model in developing countries is a combination of bottom-up and top-down, which is different from western countries where community participation is often triggered by the desires and interests from bottom-up communities.

In the theory and practice of participatory planning, individuals' social and economic status, race, family and beliefs can have an impact on people's intention to participate. Participatory planning theories developed in western countries often fail to consider possible political, social and economic contexts that can exist in developing countries (J. Richardson, Floyd, Jones, & Sheate, 2003). Thus, many scholars believe that participatory planning methods can only be used successfully in developing countries if their political and social contexts are considered (Kotus & Sowada, 2017).

In recent decades, there have been increasing studies of public participation practices in state-led countries such as China (X. Li et al., 2020; Shan, 2012); Brazil (Friendly, 2019); Japan and Korea (Kim, 2010) and in Southeast Asia more broadly (Rodan, 2018). In-depth and detailed investigations on the differences between state-led developing cities and western cities is also necessary. However, there is lack of comparison research on how public participation processes are different in democratic and state-led countries and the reasons for such differences (Dang, 2020).

The origins of planning systems in Australia were much influenced by the planning legislation from the UK during the 1950s. They were then developed under the influence of planning systems from both Britain and the US with a standardised set of rules and more place-specific guidelines (Freestone, 2012).

Since the early 1980s, neoliberal governance was popular in the western world and also evident in Australian planning systems.

The planning system in China, on the other hand, represents a top-down supply-induced institutional system, more recently, however, with dramatic bottom-up forces. Although planning theories and ideas borrowed from western countries have had great influences in China, many traditions of socialist planning still coexist due to “path-dependence mechanisms and the gradual transition of the socialist political regime” (Zhao, 2015)

This research fills the gap in the literature of a comprehensive comparison of the processes of public participation in planning systems between democratic and state-led countries and therefore contributes to the development of public participation in planning theories in developing countries.

#### *3.4.3.2 The tendency to address and shift public participation processes and participatory rights in planning systems in Australia and China*

During recent decades, both Australia and China have made significant changes to their planning systems. For example, five out of eight states and territories in Australia have had planning system changes referred to as ‘planning reform’. China introduced a new national planning act known as the *Urban and Rural Planning Law of the People's Republic of China* 2008 that replaced the previous act that had been enforced for 20 years. In the planning system changes of both countries, the change in participatory rights has been an important consideration.

Australia is generally recognised as a country with a high level of democracy and consequently, is often seen to have a claim for a long history of public participation in its planning processes since World War II (Gurran, 2011). The requirement for public notification of planning decisions was enforced in legislation as early as 1928 (Thorpe, 2017). At the time of its introduction, the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* in NSW, was considered one of the world’s most advanced planning acts addressing public participation (McFarland, 2011).

However, many scholars pointed that planning reforms in recent years presented a tendency towards ‘post-political planning’ which transformed the planning decision-making process and legitimised and narrowly defined in advance, through the participatory process, the scope of possible outcomes (MacDonald, 2018). This tendency led to a drastic decrease in local democratic representation and genuine participation in planning decision-making (Greiss & Piracha, 2021). For example, during the planning reform in NSW between 2011 to 2014, it was proposed to shift public participation into the

strategic planning stage rather than at the development assessment stage. A public participation charter was proposed that outlined the main issues and procedures of public participation in the local strategic plan-making process. The reform also promoted code-assessable developments which required design compliance with a series of pre-determined codes that minimised public participation in the development assessment stage.

China, on the other hand, is generally considered as a country with a centralised and strong communist government with limited democracy for common citizens to participate in political decision-making processes. However, with a modern governance system getting increasing attention, public participation has become a decisive focus in the process of China's planning system reform. The central government of China made it clear that public participation in the planning process was required compulsorily in its *Urban and Rural Planning Law 2008*. The government expanded the stress on public participation in planning through the *New-type Urbanisation Plan 2014-2020* (X. Li et al., 2020). Focusing on public participation, the Plan strengthens and innovates governance in urban and rural communities and promotes healthy interaction between government, society and the community. To address this initiative by the top-down legislation and pay attention to public participation in planning processes, many planning practices attach great importance to public participation. For example, in the preparation of Shanghai's strategic plan - *Shanghai 2040*, online voting, focus group meetings, public consultation meetings and other public participation methods have been carried out.

Many studies have investigated the interactions between the government, the private sector, residents and other stakeholders and the effect of these interactions on the outcome of urban renewal in China (Sonn, Chen, Wang, & Liu, 2017). They show that the property development led alliances formed by local governments, enterprises and developers in China have a more significant impact than in western countries (He & Wu, 2005). As a result, large-scale, top-down reconstruction projects undermine neighbourhoods' interests and benefits (M. Zhao, Lin, & Derudder, 2018), leading to the passive 'petition' phenomenon by community residents (Zhai & Ng, 2013).

The New South Wales planning reforms (2011–2013) and the development of Shanghai's 2040 Comprehensive Plan both emerged during periods of major urban changes and growing public pressure on planning systems. Each case reflected its government response to concerns about transparency, accountability, and the role of citizens in shaping urban development. Although they are shaped by different political systems, both efforts represented a shift toward recognising the value of public

involvement in planning decisions. Such similarities made them important comparable examples of how participatory approaches have evolved in distinct governance settings.

### 3.5 Data collection methods and analysis techniques

Based on the conceptual framework and the main research questions developed in the literature review chapter, a series of sub-research questions were designed to define and specify the research scope (Table 3). Both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection and analysis were used to achieve research aims and objectives. Content and policy analysis, semi-structured interviews, and questionnaire surveys were used to gather and analyse information and data.

Qualitative analysis was used to understand the contexts of the public participation processes of the cases studies as well as provide in-depth information on the opinions and experiences of communities and stakeholders. Qualitative studies explored the overall perceptions of wider communities on public participation in planning.

Table 3: Research questions and methods

Research questions	Sub-questions	Research methods/ data	Data analysis techniques
(1). How do the policy design objectives for public participation in urban planning differ between Shanghai, China, and Sydney, Australia, considering their distinct political legacies, institutional frameworks, and participation cultures?	1.1: What are the stated objectives for public participation in the urban planning policies of each country studied?	Document analysis on legislation and government documents; Policy analysis	Document analysis based on the themes of public participation requirements
	1.2: How do political legacies influence the formulation of these objectives?		
	1.3: In what ways do institutional settings shape the goals of public participation in these countries?		
	1.4: How do participation cultures within each country impact the design of public participation policies?		
(2). What operational mechanisms for public involvement are employed in urban planning in Shanghai, China, and Sydney, Australia, and how are these mechanisms influenced by the respective political,	2.1: What methods and practices are employed to facilitate public participation in the planning processes of each country?	Government documents analysis; media news analysis; semi-structured interviews	Document analysis; recording of notes; tape and film listening and content analysis
	2.2: How do political legacies affect the implementation of these methods and practices?		
	2.3: In what ways do institutional settings enable or hinder public involvement mechanisms?		
	2.4: How do participation cultures influence the operationalisation of public participation in planning?		

institutional, and cultural contexts of each city?			
(3). What are the specific outcomes and influences of public participation on urban planning processes in Shanghai, China, and Sydney, Australia, given their differing political, institutional, and cultural environments?	3.1: What tangible changes in urban policies and development outcomes can be attributed to public participation in each country?	Questionnaire survey; semi-structured interviews	Document analysis; recording of notes; tape and film listening ; content analysis and questionnaire analysis
	3.2: How do political legacies influence the effectiveness of public participation in achieving these outcomes?		
	3.3: In what ways do institutional settings impact the results of public involvement in urban planning?		
	3.4: How do participation cultures within each country affect the perceived and actual influences of public participation on urban development?		

### 3.5.1 Research method 1: document analysis

Document analysis is an essential qualitative research method that facilitates a systematic and in-depth examination of textual materials. This methodological approach involves critically analysing various documents, including reports, policies, and archival records, to uncover meaning, gain insights, and develop empirical knowledge. The strength of document analysis lies in its ability to provide a nuanced understanding of the content and context of the texts being examined. As Jacobs (2006) asserts, this method allows researchers to explore the underlying assumptions, ideologies, and power dynamics embedded within texts, making it invaluable for research that investigates socio-political contexts and governance frameworks.

Document analysis reflects social meanings and power structures and requires understanding the context of a document's creation. Jacobs (2006) argues that such analysis shapes and reflects the worldviews of their authors. For example, policy documents often reveal conceptual positions or political agendas shaping their development. Analysing such texts helps researchers explore how institutional discourses interact with broader socio-political forces. Earl, Martin, McCarthy, and Soule (2004) highlight that documents are valuable in historical and cross-cultural studies because they record events and processes within specific contexts.

In historical research, letters, official records, and newspapers reveal how individuals and societies perceived and responded to events. In cross-cultural research, documents from different contexts allow comparisons of how societies addressed similar issues, which uncover both unique and universal aspects of human experience. Existing documents often reveal gaps in the literature or highlight issues warranting deeper exploration.

Document analysis often complements other research techniques. Such a mixed-methods approach leverages the strengths of document analysis and integrates data from interviews, surveys, or observations. For instance, internal reports and policy documents could provide a foundational understanding in a case study on organisational change, while interviews with stakeholders might offer additional context. Combining different information sources and

data analysis methods helps validate findings and enriches the research by offering multiple perspectives.

Document analysis also helps to track changes over time. Researchers can trace the evolution of policies and practices by examining documents from different periods. This longitudinal perspective helps assess how and why changes occur and their implications for stakeholders. The analysis followed a structured qualitative approach informed by Bowen's (2009) three-step method: document selection, data extraction and coding, and interpretive analysis.

#### 3.5.1.1 *Document source selection*

This study draws on diverse document types to explore community participation in planning legislation and practices:

- Planning laws and legislation

Legal documents like the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* and the *Urban and Rural Planning Act 2008* provide a baseline for understanding public involvement in planning. These texts outline statutory requirements for community input.

- Government reports and draft plans

Reports and plans detail current practices and proposed changes and offer insights into policy directions and community involvement. For example, draft plans reveal strategies for engaging the public during consultation.

- Media news

News articles from media sources such as the Sydney Morning Herald capture public discourse and media framing of planning issues. Media coverage sheds light on community reactions, public controversies, and broader societal influences of planning decisions.

- Government websites

Official websites provide up-to-date planning information, including consultation opportunities, policy updates, and project announcements. These platforms reveal how authorities communicate with stakeholders and incorporate public feedback.

- Public submissions

Submissions collected during consultation periods reflect direct input from community members. These submissions reveal public concerns, preferences, and priorities and provide insight into how the public influences planning outcomes. Table 4 lists documents for analysis.

Table 4: Documents analysed

	Documents	Data and information analysed
Planning reform in China	City Planning Law 1989	Historical development of statutory policies on public participation in planning systems
	City and Country Planning Law 2008	Reformed planning systems; change of public participation
	Speeches from Minister about the planning reforms (from 2002 to 2008)	Objectives of planning reforms, the process of planning reform
	Local planning policies in Shanghai	Local policies on public participation in planning systems
	Media news about planning reform and public participation in this process (from 2002 to now)	Government's objectives of planning reform, the public's response
Planning reform in NSW	Environmental and Planning Assessment Act 1979	Previous planning systems; public participation in planning systems
	Environmental and Planning Assessment Regulation 2000	Previous planning systems; public participation in planning systems
	Local Environment Plans and Development Control Plans	Local policies on the methods, extent and issues of public participation in planning
	Green Paper (2012) & White Paper (2013) - A New Planning System for NSW	Government's intention and objectives of planning reforms, the process of performing planning reform
	Independent review and public submissions for the planning reform in NSW (2012)	Government's intention and objectives of planning reforms, the process of performing planning reform
	Media news on public participation in planning and planning reforms (from 2008 to 2014)	Government's objectives of planning reform, the public's response

### 3.5.1.2 *Document analysis procedures*

Once the relevant materials had been gathered, they were read and coded using qualitative software (NVivo). During this stage, similar ideas and phrases were grouped into categories reflecting the main themes, such as how consultation was structured, how legitimacy was framed, and how different stakeholders including community members or community group representatives and government policy makers. The codes were refined as the analysis progressed, and were later used to guide the comparisons between Sydney and Shanghai.

The analysis also considered when and why a document was produced, who drafted it, and what broader debates or issues it reflected. In Sydney, the changes from the Green Paper (2012) to the final reform Bill (2013) showed how public feedback was included or not during the drafting process. In Shanghai, the move from the 1989 to the 2008 planning law revealed how centralised governance was slowly responding to the growing pressure for planning reform.

Media reports also played an important role in the analysis. They offered insights into how planning reforms were received by the public and how stakeholders including residents, governments to industry lobbyists tried to influence the process. In Sydney, the review included reports from the main media channel like The Sydney Morning Herald and ABC News between 2008 and 2014. These articles were identified through keyword searches focused on planning reform and public consultation. For Shanghai, the media analysis drew from sources such as Xinhua News and Shanghai Daily, with coverage roughly from 2002 to 2020. These sources helped trace changes in official language and highlight moments of public concern or debate.

Not all media content from Shanghai could be formally cited. While many online articles and government documents were publicly accessible during the research period, some are no longer available. For the ones that were used, effort was made to ensure that translations were accurate, particularly when dealing with complex terms or context-specific language.

### 3.5.2 **Research method 2: questionnaire survey**

Survey research is a common method to collect primary information on people's attitudes, opinions, and preferences (Roopa & Rani, 2012). In this study, the survey was carried out over a three-month period in each city, between June and September 2015 in Sydney, and February to May 2016 in Shanghai. A total of 600 households were contacted, with 197 questionnaires completed (101 in Sydney and 96 in

Shanghai with overall response rate 32.8%). Face-to-face delivery was chosen to help increase participation and also to identify individuals who were willing to be interviewed later.

#### *3.5.2.1 Sampling Approach and Selection*

To make the sample more representative and reduce bias, a stratified sampling strategy was used. In both cities, neighbourhoods were grouped into three socio-economic tiers—low, middle, and high—based on available income and job data. One suburb was then selected from each group.

In Sydney, the classification was based on total family income from the Australian Bureau of Statistics ([ABS](#)), ranging from 2001/02 to 2005/06. The selected suburbs—Parramatta South, Lane Cove, and Randwick—were chosen not only for their varied income profiles but also to cover different parts of the city.

In Shanghai, equivalent government income statistics by suburb were not publicly accessible. Instead, the suburb classification was based on the sociological study of Xiao, Li, and Wei's (2021), which studied social class in Shanghai. In China, social class includes job type, income, and social status. Based on their study, Xuhui, Yangpu, and Songjiang were selected to represent upper-middle, middle, and working-class areas.

Although the sample size is relatively small compared to the total populations of Sydney and Shanghai, it is still suitable for analysis. In social science research, especially when dealing with specific populations such as those involved in planning processes, a smaller but well-targeted sample can still provide meaningful insights (Fowler, 2013). As noted by Cochran (1977), sample sizes in survey research are often challenged by practical constraints, and when a comprehensive census data is not available, smaller but carefully designed samples can still give reliable results.

#### *3.5.2.2 Data Collection Procedure*

In each of the six suburbs, a typical residential street was chosen, and dwellings were approached systematically. Every third household was selected—i.e., house numbers 3, 6, 9, and so on. In apartment buildings, units with numbers divisible by three were chosen. If residents were not available at the time of first contact, a second visit was made. Surveys were distributed in person, which allowed the researcher to briefly explain the purpose and helped to increase trust with participants.

Of the 600 survey visits, 197 questionnaires were completed. The questionnaire survey is summarised in Table 5 below:

Table 5: Questionnaire survey response

	No. of survey visits conducted	Questionnaire completed	Response rate
Sydney	300	101	33.7%
Shanghai	300	96	32%
Total	600	197	32.8%

### 3.5.2.3 Questionnaire Design and Themes

The questionnaire was designed to explore residents’ knowledge of planning systems, previous participation experiences, attitudes toward consultation methods, and levels of trust in planning authorities. It also collected data on participants’ age, gender, education, occupation, income bracket, and tenure type (owning vs renting). These demographic details were used to evaluate how closely the sample reflected broader population characteristics.

Although full population profiling data was not available for each selected suburb—particularly in Shanghai—care was taken to ensure a spread across socio-economic categories. The sample included a mix of home-owners and renters, individuals with varying education levels, and different age groups. This helped ensure that survey responses were not skewed toward one particular demographic.

### 3.5.2.4 Representativeness and Saturation

While this study did not aim to produce statistically generalisable results, attention was paid to data saturation—that is, whether new responses continued to yield new themes or insights. As survey responses were reviewed, clear patterns began to emerge, particularly in relation to trust, participation barriers, and perceived government responsiveness. After around 80–90 responses per city, few new issues were being raised, indicating that thematic saturation had largely been achieved. The remaining responses added minor variation but reinforced the key insights already identified.

The sample size—197 participants across two large cities—was considered adequate for a qualitative-driven study of this nature, especially when combined with interview data and document analysis. While further expansion of the survey may have yielded greater statistical robustness, the primary aim was to capture diverse perspectives and compare structural patterns across two different planning systems.

### 3.5.2.5 Data Analysis

All completed questionnaires were entered into a Microsoft Excel database. Responses were coded and cross-checked for accuracy. Basic statistical techniques—such as frequency analysis, percentage calculation, and cross-tabulation—were used to identify patterns in participants’ responses across key variables. These included perceptions of influence in planning processes, satisfaction with consultation methods, and awareness of opportunities for participation. The analysis also considered demographic trends to understand how different community segments engaged with the planning system.

A copy of the questionnaire is provided in the Appendix.

### 3.5.3 Research method 3: semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews involve the use of a guiding set of questions and topics prepared in advance, which the interviewer refers to throughout the conversation. However, this format also allows flexibility, giving participants the freedom to respond in their own words and elaborate on issues they find meaningful (Brown & Danaher, 2019). Such interviews are thought to be well suited to the exploration of attitudes, values, beliefs and motives (Blee & Taylor, 2002). They also have the advantage of overcoming the poor response rates of a questionnaire survey and ensure that all questions are answered by each respondent (Barriball & While, 1994) and can identify the complexity and details of the research topic through discussion, two-way communication and conversations.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with government planners, planning professionals. They were also undertaken with community representatives, other interest group representatives and normal community members to identify the perspectives, opinions and responses to public participation policies and practices in planning.

- Selection of semi-structured interview participants

The study selected key stakeholders of the two planning processes including government planners, planning professionals, and community representatives from both Sydney and Shanghai. These individuals were selected for their involvement in, or significant experience with, the public participation processes associated with urban planning. The interviewees represented a variety of perspectives, ensuring that key viewpoints were considered.

The total of 29 participants were interviewed from two categories of stakeholders who either worked with, or participated in, the public participation processes of the two case studies. These categories included:

- Staff from government sectors or government agencies who had directly worked on the preparation of public participation activities or the analysis of input from public participation
- Community members or community group representatives who were experienced in public participation in planning before or had participated in public participation processes for the two case studies, or had opinions and views on why they did not participate in these processes.

In this study, purposive samples were used together with a snowballing method to select participants for semi-structured interviews. This type of sampling involves choosing participants who are most relevant and can provide rich, useful information for the research (Patton, 1990). I first developed a list of potential contacts who worked on the planning reform in NSW, and on the *Shanghai Comprehensive Plan (2040)* by consulting relevant government or news websites and the LinkedIn app. Community members identified from the questionnaire survey were also invited if they were interested in taking part.

Throughout the process, potential interviewees with relevant experience and expertise were searched for using the Internet, then contacted by email, phone or a LinkedIn message to explain the study objectives and invite their participation. With participants' consent, interviews were conducted using a semi-structured format (see Appendix for interview topics), typically lasting between 45 minutes and an hour. During each interview, participants were asked if they knew others who might be suitable for the study. If they did, they were invited to pass along the researcher's contact details to those individuals. All interviews were carried out in full accordance with the University's human ethics approval conditions.

This study also considered saturation. Sufficient and key information has been collected when interviewees from the same groups started to express similar issues and ideas from the earlier discussions.

The number of interviews for each category in each country is shown in Table 6 below:

Table 6: Interviewee profile

Participant category	Sydney	Shanghai
Government sectors or government agencies	8	8

Community members and representatives	6	7
Total number of interviewees: 29		

In the Sydney case study, community representatives were interviewed individually rather than in a group. This approach allowed for a more detailed exploration of personal experiences and perspectives on public participation. It also helped to understand the broader perspectives, procedures and activities of the community groups they represented.

In comparison, in the Shanghai case, the study did not include interviews with key community organisations. This is mainly due to practical difficulty of accessing these community representatives through official contact channel. However, relevant information about their opinions and activities was found through public sources, such as news articles and their websites, where available. A summary of interview information is provided in the Appendix.

- Design of semi-structured interview questions

Semi-structured interviews gather information on:

- the extent to which, and reasons why, public participation is considered a principle of the planning process
- problems and difficulties government officers and planners encountered when conducting public participation
- to what extent actual planning policy outcomes reflect the opinions expressed during public participation
- who the key stakeholders are in the planning process and how or why their views are considered during the reform process
- participation problems with the current system and issues that need to be addressed.
- Analysis of semi-structured interview transcripts

The thematic analysis method was adopted for this research. At a fundamental level, thematic analysis is the process of recovering the theme or themes that evolve from the research. The interview transcripts and other documentary information have been analysed using the thematic method.

The thematic analysis process encompasses the identification, examination, and presentation of patterns within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Initially, a comprehensive understanding of the context was

developed through repeated interactions with the data, followed by preliminary coding (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996). This coding phase involved marking significant aspects of the data and assigning codes to them. The selected codes played a crucial role in navigating the data analysis process, aiding in the re-evaluation and refinement of the data through categorisation and grouping, and facilitating the extraction of meanings from the material (Savin-Baden & Major, 2023). The research adopted a flexible approach, focusing on the interpretation of key codes that encapsulated the research themes, rather than adhering strictly to word analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

In alignment with the research and sub-research questions, themes such as the objectives of public participation, governance frameworks, development of public participation plans, selection of participants, methods of participation and consultation, reactions to public input, effects of planning legislation, and community influences were identified and coded. The analysis and organisation of the interview transcripts address specific research questions, with the findings presented in Chapters 5 through to 8.

### 3.6 Limitations of the research design

Two limitations are identified in this research. The first limitation lies in the comparative framework between the two distinct jurisdictions. Although consideration have been given to develop a comparative framework that works for both case studies, the fundamental differences in their political, social and cultural backgrounds made it impossible to conduct a variable-controlled analysis. This limitation highlights the challenges of applying the findings from this research to broader contexts. Scholars like Mills, Van de Bunt (2006), & De Bruijn (2006) identify the persistent problems cross-nation comparison including units, level and scale of comparison, construct equivalence and issues of causality. Mills also addressed its distinctive value of such comparison: "Comparisons not only uncover differences between social entities but reveal unique aspects of a particular entity that would be virtually impossible to detect otherwise".

Secondly, there is risk related to the small survey sample which may cast risks for biased views from participants. This research could be perceived to have geographical bias and therefore the conclusions may not be generally representative (Sofoulis, 2009). Despite efforts to select a diverse range of stakeholders to capture a spectrum of perspectives (i.e. interviews with various stakeholder groups and questionnaire samples from different social-economic districts within each city), the views expressed by interviewees were inherently influenced by their individual experiences and interactions with public

participation processes. This subjective nature of data collection means that the insights collected may not have fully represent the breadth of experiences across wider populations or accurately reflected the diversity of public participation practices in other contexts. The limited number of responses of questionnaire survey (34% response rate in Sydney and 32% response rate in Shanghai) reduced the study's ability to capture the full range of perspectives. This low response rate also reflects the broader challenge of engaging ordinary people in planning processes. Although the small sample size limits the representativeness of the findings, it still provides valuable insights on community's perspectives towards planning systems for those who choose to participate.

### 3.7 Summary

Chapter 3 builds on the conceptual framework from the literature review and establishes an approach for comparative analysis. The research methodology integrates both quantitative and qualitative methods to address different aspects of research questions. One of the key features of this methodology is the conduction of two distinct case studies: the planning reform in NSW and the development of the *Shanghai Comprehensive Plan (2040)*.

The chapter also outlines the use of primary and secondary data sources, such as semi-structured interviews, questionnaire surveys, and document analysis. In addition, the chapter explains the selection of case studies, sampling of participants, and the rationale for data analytical techniques to ensure a clear and reliable research strategy. This approach also allows the research to uncover the legislative, policy, and practical mechanisms at work in each governance model.

Building on the research methodology developed from this chapter, Chapter 4 will analyse the legislation, policies, and practices of public participation in the two systems and provide broad contexts for the two case studies. Data collection and analysis tools outlined in this chapter will form the basis for Chapter 5 and Chapter 6, which explore the empirical surveys and analysis.

# Chapter 4 The development of legislation, policies, and practices of public participation in planning in Australia and China

## 4.1 Introduction

Legal frameworks shape how public participation operates within planning systems. The interaction between laws, regulations and governance structures forms the distinct features of public consultation, citizen representation and participation levels in different contexts (Burton, 2017). Research has shown that examining statutory systems reveals variations in citizen engagement practices and decision-making structures. Such findings form the basis for recommendations to improve public participation policies for more effective urban planning (L. Zhang et al., 2020).

Chapter 4 builds on the research methodologies outlined in Chapter 3 and explores the development of legislation, policies, and practices on public participation in planning systems in China and New South Wales (NSW). The chapter starts by exploring how community participation regulations have evolved in both countries. It emphasises the influence of political histories, institutional frameworks, and cultural norms on public engagement processes. This analysis highlights the principles and priorities that guide the statutory regulations on public participation within the planning systems of NSW and China.

The discussion then moves to the development of public participation in planning systems over time. In NSW, it examines the growth of participation practices from the post-war era through the ongoing updates to the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act (EP&A Act) 1979*. In China, the review focuses on three key phases: the pre-reform era, the transition to a market economy, and the modern economic period. Each phase reflects major legislative changes that have had influences on local government practices.

The chapter concludes with case studies of recent changes in the planning systems of NSW and Shanghai. These case studies provide detailed insights into how public participation operates in practice. The chapter provides key policies, processes, and outcomes, with a clearer understanding of how engagement is implemented in planning systems in both contexts.

## 4.2 The development of public participation in the statutory planning system in Australia

Australia became a federation in 1901 and established a system of government that divided governance responsibilities between the federal government and the six states (including NSW) and two territories. The Australian Constitution explicitly outlines the division of powers. Certain responsibilities were granted exclusively to the Commonwealth Government, while others were reserved for the states. This division reflects the priorities at the time of federation. Issues like community participation, urban planning, and environmental protection were not seen as critical concerns. Consequently, these areas were left to the states to manage, and the federal government was not given direct authority over them.

The Commonwealth's powers, as outlined in Section 51 of the Constitution, cover areas such as defence, foreign affairs, and trade, but do not extend to urban planning or community participation. However, starting in the 1980s, the federal government began to influence these areas indirectly through its broader powers, such as those related to corporations, external affairs, and taxation. The High Court's interpretation of these powers allowed the Commonwealth to have a greater role in planning and environmental matters.

Additionally, under Section 96 of the Constitution, the Commonwealth can provide financial assistance to the states through grants. This mechanism enables the federal government to influence state policies, including those related to urban planning and the environment; by attaching conditions to the grants it provides (Gurran, 2007). Despite these federal influences, the primary responsibility for land use planning remains with the states and territories.

Australia lacks a nationwide planning system, and each state and territory is responsible for developing their own statutory and strategic land use planning framework. Although there are differences in the planning frameworks in each state and territory in terms of planning jurisdictions, legislative frameworks, ideologies and planning mechanisms (Gurran, 2011), the provision for public participation was typical and included public exhibitions, public inquires and the making of objections (Thorpe, 2017).

"External affairs powers" under Section 51 of the Australian Constitution grants the Commonwealth Government the authority to influence environmental policy in Australia through participation in international treaties, conventions, or agreements. Several international treaties and agreements directly impact urban environmental planning, including the World Heritage Convention, the United Nations

(UN) Convention on Climate Change, and Agenda 21. Agenda 21 has been important in encouraging local communities across Australia to take part in the planning process (Gurran, 2007).

The Franklin Dam's case is a key example of how the Commonwealth Government used its external affairs power under Section 51 of the Australian Constitution to influence environmental policy. In the early 1980s, the Tasmanian government proposed a hydroelectric dam on the Franklin River, which faced strong opposition from environmental groups. The Commonwealth intervened by declaring the area a World Heritage site, using Australia's obligations under the World Heritage Convention to stop the dam. This led to a landmark High Court decision that affirmed the federal government's ability to legislate on international treaty matters, highlighting how international agreements can shape domestic environmental policy and public participation in planning.

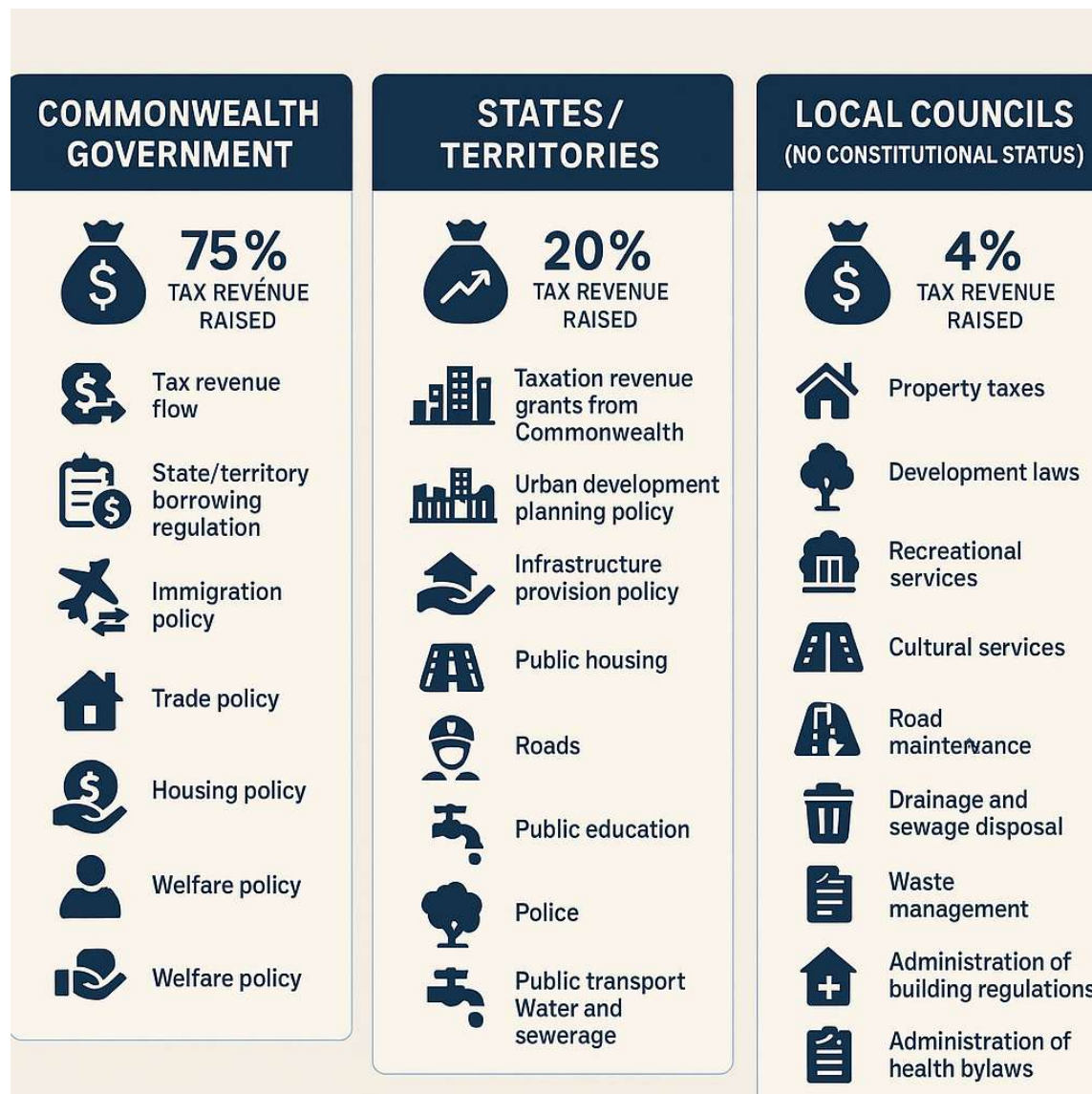


Figure 3: Responsibilities of the three tiers of government (Source: [AHURI website](#) reformatted by author)

#### 4.2.1 The emergence of public participation in legislation and setting up a fundamental public participation framework in the Australian post-war planning system

In the state of New South Wales, the initial concept of getting the public involved in the planning system was first introduced through the *Local Government Act 1919*. This legislation allowed for the proclamation of residential areas and the prohibition of certain land uses. However, from 1928 onwards,

a significant change was implemented requiring public notice before zoning could be proclaimed. Additionally, this change allowed any person of interest to raise opposition, and legislative processes included public inquiries (Thorpe, 2017). These measures aimed to increase transparency and public participation in zoning decisions, giving citizens the opportunity to voice their concerns and opinions regarding land use and development in their communities. The first systematic legislation for urban planning in NSW was introduced in 1945, as an amendment to the *Local Government Act 1919* - the *Local Government (Town and Country Planning) Amendment Act 1945*. This amended act established the legal framework for local councils to prepare comprehensive planning schemes for their areas. Also, based on this legislation, Cumberland Country Council was formed to prepare Sydney's first regional plan (the *Country of Cumberland Scheme 1951*) (Gurran, 2011).

More formal and extensive participatory provision in the planning framework was introduced by this act including public exhibition requirements of plans, making objections and appeals to plans and provisions for considering public objections during plan-making processes. For example, Clause 342F(3) of the *Local Government Amendment Act 1945* details public exhibition requirements:

*Any person interested in any land affected by the scheme and any such Department, statutory body or council may, within a period of three months after the publication of notice of the scheme (or where the notice is published more than once, within a period of three months after the first publication thereof), make representations to the council or councils concerned in connection with the scheme.*

Clause 342J (3) of the *Local Government Amendment Act 1945* entitles communities to raise objections and enquire about decisions on plan-making schemes., Planning authorities need to respond objections:

*“(a) On or before the date so specified any such person or council may, in the manner prescribed, object to the Minister against the scheme or any part of it and shall state the grounds of the objection.*

*(b) As soon as practicable after such date the Minister, after such inquiry as he deems sufficient, shall determine such objections: Provided that in any case where the objection is made by a council specified in the scheme as a responsible authority the Minister shall cause a public inquiry to be held and a report to be made to him with respect to the objection; and where in any such case it is a ground of the objection that provision has been included in the scheme by the Minister by alteration of the scheme or has been included in a scheme prepared under the authority of*

*section 342AH of this Act which is likely to involve the objecting council in undue expenditure, and it is stated in such report that the inclusion of such provision in the scheme will be likely to have that effect, the Minister shall allow the objection to the extent which he deems sufficient in the circumstances of the case to avoid involving the council in such undue expenditure.”*

Many scholars have highlighted a range of participatory initiatives that were well underway during the 1940s, from community town planning movements to planning exhibitions (Freestone, 2015; Freestone & James, 2015; Thorpe, 2017).

For example, Freestone (2015) pointed out that the process of making the *Sydney Metropolitan Plan - County of Cumberland Planning Scheme 1948* was a significant milestone which implemented the public participation requirement of the *Local Government Amendment Act 1945*. Freestone linked the rise of public participation in planning with the general appreciation of the ideological nexus established between planning and democracy in the 1940s post-war period. He considered participation in the making of the *County of Cumberland Planning Scheme 1948* (publicity, information, submissions) as ‘middle-range tokenism’ in Arnstein’s (1969) totemic ladder of citizen participation. However, the practice was already a breakthrough compared to the dominant pre-war planning ideology which largely focused on the technical and expert based decision-making paradigm. The plan-making process was conducted beyond statutory requirements and exhibited in four ways: 1. a first statutory exhibition, 2. an interpretive exhibition, 3. suburban showings, 4. and a final statutory exhibition to sell the plan to the general public by demonstrating the efforts and determination of the then government in promoting democracy in planning. In response, this creative participatory experiment received unprecedented stakeholder feedback with wide-ranging interest from the public. The exhibitions gathered nearly 3,000 objections on issues such as the master plan layout, the green belt boundary or open space reserves. The then chief planner indicated that the plan was modified in order to meet over 800 disagreements. There were a further 350 people whose opinions were strategically addressed in other ways. Regardless of its slower pace, Edmunds (Edmunds, 1947) still praised the promotion of public participation in the statutory planning process. It also improved cooperation and relationships between the community and technicians. On the one hand, this initiative was performed through public education during the exhibition of draft plans. On the other hand, legal provisions ensured the right of the public to object to aspects of the new plan. In this process, the fundamental public participation framework (public notification, exhibition of plans, collecting public objections, responding to public objections) was established.

## 4.2.2 1970s and 1980s- the rise of participation awareness from the public and rethinking the role of planning

The rise of the environmental protection movement worldwide promoted the public's awareness in taking actions to influence planning systems and decision-making in Australia. The 'green bans' movement in Sydney in the early 1970s was an example of the fights from citizens to protect traditionally working class areas from the encroachment of 'renewal' (Hamnett & Freestone, 2000).

In statutory planning systems, the establishment of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* was the first dedicated legislation that focused on a systematic planning framework emphasising the distribution of planning powers between the state and local government, statutory requirements for planning decision-making processes and the importance of environmental protection (Haigh, 1979). Roles and responsibilities of state and local government and communities were clarified by the Act. Three planning instruments were formed under the Act: State Environmental Planning Policies (SEPPs), Regional Environmental Plans (REPs) and Local Environmental Plans (LEPs).

The increase of public participation is a major feature in the EP&A Act. It ensures community involvement in formulating environmental planning instruments and contributing to decision-making for certain development applications and environmental impact statements. It also mentions the mechanisms employed, including public inquiries, appeals by objectors on the violation of the determination of a consent authority and third party rights, which could remedy or restrain a breach of the Act by initiating court action (Park, 2010). Public participation is formally recognised as one of the fundamental principles of the Act. In Clause 5 of the Act, it states that:

*"The objectives of this Act are—*

*to provide increased opportunity for public involvement and participation in environmental planning and assessment."*

The *Planning Bill 2013*, introduced as a reform to streamline the planning system, sought to address inefficiencies in the existing framework. While it acknowledged the importance of public participation, the emphasis was on early involvement in strategic planning rather than ongoing engagement in individual development decisions. In the Bill (2013), the objectives related to public participation are outlined in Division 1.1, which includes the aim:

*"to provide opportunities for early and ongoing community participation in strategic planning and to promote transparent decision-making."*

This difference reflects the broader intent of the *Planning Bill 2013* to promote economic growth and productivity by facilitating quicker approvals and reducing delays. The reduced emphasis on ongoing public participation can be seen as a response to criticisms that the planning process under the EP&A Act was too slow and cumbersome. By limiting public involvement to the strategic planning phase, the *Planning Bill* aimed to balance community input with the need for more efficient decision-making.

The EP&A Act also assigns public participation to the Minister and relevant planning authorities during the making of planning instruments. . For example, In Clause 33 it states that when the Minister is considering adopting a model as a basis for a planning instrument:

*"The Minister may take such steps as he considers appropriate or necessary to publicise draft model provisions or draft amendments to model provisions and to seek and consider submissions from the public before he makes the provisions or amendments, as the case may be."*

In Clause 34, it stated that after the draft planning instrument has been produced:

*"A copy of every environmental planning instrument shall be available for public inspection, without charge, at the office of the Department during ordinary office hours."*

Clause 39 provides a mechanism for the Minister to consider the suggestions from submissions when finalising the draft planning instrument:

*"The Minister shall take such steps as he considers appropriate or necessary to publicise a draft state environmental planning policy and to seek and consider submissions from the public before he makes such a recommendation."*

The Act also requires councils to hold public hearings on the local environmental plan's if there are significant issues raised during public notification period (Clause 68 (1)b):

*"Where—*

*(a) a person making a submission so requests; and*

*(b) the council considers that the issues raised in a submission are of such significance that they should be the subject of a hearing before the council decides whether and, if so, what alterations*

*should be made, the council shall, in the prescribed manner, arrange a public hearing in respect of the submission.”*

However, the Act leaves the Minister with a great degree of discretion in whether he or she consider it appropriate to take public participation such as submissions into account when making a decision and/or making a planning instrument.

For the process of assessing developments against environmental planning controls by relevant consent authorities, the Act specifies how public notices should be conducted and the relevant period of time.. In Clause 84 of the Act, it states:

*“within a specified period (not exceeding the prescribed period, if any) of not less than 30 days after the day on which notice of that development application is published in a newspaper in accordance with subsection (1) (c).”*

Clause 87 of the Act requires relevant consent authorities to forward to the Minister or Secretary issues raised by submission.. Clause 90 of the Act requires consent authorities to consider submissions in determining a development application. Clause 98 of the Act entitles the right of appeal to anyone who is not satisfied with consent granted to a development application and the objector can appeal to the court within 28 days of determination.

The Act also sets up requirements on the situations when public inquiries can be held and the process of organising public inquiries, although the issues that can trigger public inquiries are limited to issues on if the relevant authorities have taken appropriate procedures under the Act rather than an evaluation on the extent that the decision-making have achieved desirable outcomes. For example, in Clause 119 of the Act, it states that:

*“The Minister may at any time direct that an inquiry be held, in accordance with this section, with respect to—*

*(a) any matter relating to the administration and implementation of the provisions of this Act or any environmental planning instrument;*

*(b) the environmental aspects of any proposed designated development the subject of a development application referred to in section 88 (3) (this clause requires consent authorities do not determine a development application when the Minister request a public inquiry);*

*(c) the environmental aspects of any activity referred to in section 112 (1) (this clause requires consent authorities do not determine a development application if it has significant influences on the environment); or*

*(d) a proposal to constitute, alter or abolish a development area under section 132 or 133”.*

During the 1980s, urban governance in New South Wales (NSW) was shaped by three significant events: public service reform, the integration of urban planning with economic planning, and the restructuring of local government. However, the role of public participation during this period was inconsistent, lacking regularity and legislative support (Gleeson & Low, 2000). Consequently, public engagement in urban planning decisions varied, with some initiatives involving the community while others did not, resulting in a less predictable and standardised approach to citizen involvement.

The original Act, which had been in operation for over 30 years, underwent substantial changes since its inception, driven by growing pressure for reform starting in the late 1990s. Criticisms of the planning system being overly complex, lacking integration with other legislation related to natural resource management, and providing limited opportunities for meaningful public participation led to the release of a *Green Paper 1999* (DUAP), followed by the *PlanFirst White Paper 2001* (DUAP 1999, 2001). *PlanFirst* aimed to adopt a comprehensive whole-of-government approach to urban, regional, and rural planning, involving integrated local environmental plans, regional strategies, and comprehensive state-level policy guidance.

During this period, traditional land use zoning as a form of development control lost favour, and a novel approach of 'place-based' plans gained prominence. This new approach emphasised development control that aligned more closely with local character and aspirations. The Warringah local government area (LGA) in northern Sydney attempted this innovative model by creating a comprehensive Local Environment Plan (LEP) based on detailed, precinct-level 'locality statements' instead of relying solely on functional land use zones.

While the original Act was considered progressive when adopted, subsequent amendments raised concerns about inconsistency with the EP&A Act's objectives of fostering shared responsibility for environmental planning between state and local governments. Notably, amendments did little to change the structure and intent of community participation. As a result, community involvement became a mere formality under the Act, often limited to submission invitations or public hearings. The provisions lacked a clear definition of 'community' and failed to outline its purpose. Consequently, community

participation was perceived as an instrument rather than a process aimed at empowering local communities.

### 4.2.3 1990s onwards: continuous modifications of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979

The standard process for public participation in the EP&A Act which includes public notification, public consultation, submissions, and third-party appeal rights has remained largely the same for more than 40 years. However, changes in the Act on power distribution have influenced the extent of public participation in decision-making outcomes and the level of democracy in planning.

Although the Act provides increased opportunities for public involvement and participation. Successive amendments have diluted its original legislative intention (Gleeson, 2012). The recent series of planning reforms saw the lessening of local government power as :

- a decision on whether a major 'state significant development', should go ahead made by the state government not local councils
- development assessments are either streamlined 'code assessable' or centralised to the relevant panels rather than selected councillors
- public participation is regarded as a source of red-tape, consuming unnecessary cost and disturbing economic development. Thus, public participation was removed at the development assessment stage.

Many of the amendments increase and centralise the power of the Minister on certain types of development. This intent has consequently led to a reduction in the democracy in planning decision-making processes. For example, one of the main amendments in 1985 was to extend the Minister's power to step in and determine a development application that would otherwise be prohibited under an environmental planning instrument. This provision enabled the Minister to exercise his/her power to override planning instruments that had been through public participation process. The Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment Act 2017 introduced a new development category named 'state significant' where the Minister was the approval authority for projects considered by the Minister to be of state or regional environmental planning significance.

In 2005, there was an insert of Part 3A into the Act, which provided a new process of assessment and approval for major private and public process for the provisions of Part 4 or Part 5 the EP &A Act. Part 3A

simplified environmental assessment process that established Minister for Planning as the planning approval authority. In comparison, the provisions of Part 4 or Part 5 are more prescriptive than the Part 3A assessment. The category of development that would be declared to one of the Part 3A project has been defined in the Act. In Part 3A, the Minister and Director General have the overriding power on decision making process of the major developments. There was no specification on the process should make and what considerations ought to be given on whether grant approval or not. However, as aiming to tailor the assessment in terms of the projects' complexity and significance, the Director General of the Department of Planning emphasized the necessity of addressing matters in its assessment requirements. However, what should be noted is that this "tailored" process means that it was not a compulsory anymore that the Minister must consider public submissions for decision-making processes. With the overwhelming criterion on the Ministerial power in significant development, Part 3A of the Act was repealed in 2011.

Another focus of the amendments is to streamline and simplify development assessment processes for small-scale, routine projects with 'minor' environmental influences. . In the 1997EP&A Act Amendment, two new categories of development were introduced: 'exempt development' and 'complying development'. An environmental planning instrument can identify a development which is of minimal environmental impact as exempt development. When certain criteria are met, no development consent involving public exhibition and consultation is required before carrying out an exempt development. is required. Complying development requires councils or accredited private certifiers to authorise development projects subject to their compliance with predetermined development standards. Although public notification is required for complying development, there is no requirement for councils or accredited private certifiers to consider public submissions before issuing a complying development certificate.

In July 2012, the NSW Government proposed a wholesale change to the planning system including the development of a new Planning Act. For public participation it aimed to increase participation in the strategic planning stage. Although not specifically stated, the extent of public participation for an individual development application was supposed to be reduced due to the extended use of 'code-assessable' complying development. However, after two and a half years' effort, the planning reform did not succeed due to strong objections from interest groups and opposition during the parliamentary debate on the draft Bill (2013).

In 2017, a new division of ‘community participation’ was introduced to clarify and summarise the functions of public authorities and the mandatory minimum requirement for public participation. It required planning authorities to prepare community participation plans. Each council and NSW agency responsible for key planning approval functions are required to develop a community participation plan outlining their engagement approach with the public in the statutory planning process. These plans must adhere to the minimum community participation requirements specified by the EP&A Act, but planning authorities have the option to exceed these requirements if they deem it suitable. Moreover, the EP&A Act mandates that planning decision-makers must provide and publicly disclose the reasons behind their decisions, including how they took community perspectives into account when addressing significant planning issues. (<https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/Policy-and-Legislation/Environmental-Planning-and-Assessment-Act-updated/Guide-to-the-updated-Environmental-Planning-and-Assessment-Act-1979/Part-2-Community-Participation-Plans> ).

## 4.3 The development of public participation in the statutory planning system in China

### 4.3.1 Prior economic transition- Urban Planning Regulation 1984

The rationale of public participation in the planning system was China’s economic transition from a planned to a market economy. During the planned economy, the government was the only stakeholder of the plan-making process and there were no conflicts of interest. The state government was responsible for macro-level economic strategies allocating budgets to different industries and locations for local-level master plan-making processes. During this time the demand for public participation in the planning process was limited and there were only very high-level and general provisions in legislation for public participation in planning.

For example, in the first urban planning legislation in China, the *Urban Planning Regulation 1984*, Clause 4 states that the objectives of planning are:

*“to design urban and suburban system, set up economic and social target, establish the nature, scale and layout of cities, plan and utilise the urban land, deploy the economic, social and community infrastructure, to ensure the orderly and coordinated development based on the*

*national economic development strategy and long-term plan and the local natural, historical, current characters and limitations for construction of cities.”*

The above statement reveals the dominant role of the government in the plan-making process and no recognition of other stakeholders such as the community in this process, although there were very limited and general statements in the regulation about public participation. The only public participation provision in the *Urban Planning Regulation 1984* is in Clause 17:

*“During the time of making city comprehensive plan by relevant municipal governments, the government should widely consult the opinions of relevant agencies and the public and compare different planning solutions.”*

However, these were no additional provisions in the Regulation about when public participation should take place nor how to perform such practices, hence there was no statutory enforcement of public participation in the plan-making process.

At this time, public participation regulations and practices in planning in China were very limited. During the planned economy, all land, entities, and resources were owned by the state. The distribution of social benefits performed by the government did not generate any severe conflicts between interested parties. Consequently, the omission of public participation in planning did not lead to any evident complex issues or major conflicts.

#### 4.3.2 In the process of economy transition - Planning Act 1989

The concept of public participation in planning was introduced to China during late 1980 to early 1990 when China was experiencing the significant transformation from a planned economy to a market-oriented economy. During this time the traditionally centralised power of state governments started to escalate down to local governments and agencies. The *Land Administration Law 1986* turned previously state-owned land rights into privately-owned usage rights. This change caused profound changes to the distribution of wealth between the governments and community and also sought for sustainable development (Chiu, 2012). Also, during this time, there was an increase in scholarly studies about public participation, although these studies mainly focused on exploring public participation theories and practices in other countries (Cao et al. ,2021).

In December 1989, the then National People’s Committee (NPS) approved the *Urban Planning Act*. It was the first formal planning act in China that defined the hierarchy and plan-making process. In this Act,

however, there were only provisions for public notification when finalising plans. For example, in Clause 28 states:

*“The relevant government should exhibit the plans after approved.”*

In the *Measures for Formulating City Planning* that were enforced by the then Ministry of Construction, in Clause 9, it states:

*“During the plan-making processes, the relevant government should compare different solutions and conduct economic analysis and widely consult the opinions of other government agencies and the general public.”*

However, there were still no statutory requirements for any forms of public participation in plan-making processes, even though it was frequently addressed in high-level public talk and publications. For example, the Deputy National President, Jiabao Wen, in 1999, said:

*“It is important to ensure evidence-based and democratic decision-making processes. During the time of plan making and implementation, the government should ensure the process of public participation, the process must be scrutinised by the society.”*

Likewise, Jiabao Wen in 2002 stated in his article, *Some issues of urban planning and governance* that:

*“During the plan making and urban governance process, it is important to understand the current situation, widely consult with the public, address the process of investigation and research. The process should promote democracy and scientific bases and avoid making decisions randomly.”*

In 2005, the *Measures of Formulating City Planning* introduced more detailed regulations on public participation that had practical value for the direct plan-making process. For example, in Clause 6, it said:

*“The making of plans should comply WITH? a process that have the relevant government organised, experts led, public participated, evidence-based decision-making.”*

Clause 16 of the *Measures* stated:

*“Before the comprehensive plans are sent for approval, the relevant city government should consult the general public’s opinions thoroughly. During the plan-making process, the relevant government should employ the methods such as public notification, consultation meetings to gather the opinions from relevant agencies and local residents.”*

The national level *Planning Act 1989*, regulations and public speeches reflected the state government's top-down perspective, which provided some conceptual and general guidance but lacked detailed and enforceable requirements on actual planning practices.

At the local level, some local governments, particularly from more economically developed areas, attempted to implement public participation in plan-making processes. These attempts recognised the need to balance planning power between different interest parties from a bottom-up perspective. For example, the *Regulations on City Planning for Shenzhen 1998* included many detailed requirements on public participation in planning practice for the first time in a Chinese planning system.

In Clauses 4 and 16 of the Regulations, a statutory planning body of the Urban Planning Committee was introduced whose functions were organising public hearings and scrutinising the plan-making process. The committee members comprise employees of governments, independent experts and members of the public. Government employees were not more than 50% of the total committee members and the decisions made by the committee must be supported by at least two-thirds of the votes from committee members who attended the meeting. This committee performed the statutory functions of comprehensive metropolitan planning, district planning and detailed master planning; discussions of the site selection for significant developments; and approval of zoning and implementation. There is also a required notification period for different types of plans. The Regulations made by the Shenzhen government represented the most advanced public participation initiatives by legislative enforcement at that time and it set an example for other cities in China to improve and implement public participation legislation in their planning systems.

#### 4.3.3 Market-oriented economy period - *Planning Act 2008* and local government practices

The *Urban and Rural Planning Law 2008* is the current national statutory planning act that dictates how the planning system operates in China. It includes structured and meaningful requirements for public participation in planning systems in China. It includes statutory requirements for public participation procedures including when public consultation should take place, what forums the public can participate in and the length of the notification period. The most significant Clause in the Law relating to public participation is Clause 26:

*“Before the plans can be sent for approval, the relevant plan-making authorities must conduct public notification and consultation of the plans. The relevant authorities can organise discussion*

*seminar, public hearings or other forums to consult and collect opinions from experts and the public. The period for public notification must be at least 30 days.”*

The Law has many provisions (Clauses 8, 9 and 54) on the release of outcomes to ensure transparency of the decision-making process and enable public scrutiny.

However, in a few provisions of the Law, the requirements are very general and vague and lack practical guidance. For example, in Clause 18:

*“Suburban planning, village planning should begin from the existing situation, respect the opinions of local residents and reflect the local character in planning.”*

And Clause 28:

*“The relevant local governments should implement the plans designedly based on the situation of local economy and the willing of local residents.”*

These clauses do not provide any information on how to “respect the opinions of local residents” or “how to listen and consult local residents” and, therefore, there are no compulsory requirements for public participation procedures for plan-making authorities to conduct.

During this time, land use rights and ownership was also ensured by law. “The Property Law of the People's Republic of China came into effect as of October 1, 2007”. It was the first time that the private use right and the associated amenity of a property was claimed to be protected by legislation. In Section 7 of the law, “Relationships of Adjacency”, it was stated that:

*“As for the construction of a building, no entity or individual may violate the relevant engineering construction standards of the state or block the ventilation, lighting or sunshine of any adjacent building.”*

From these legislative changes and initiatives, many municipal governments have attempted to implement public participation in their plan-making process. The public participation in the making of the *Shenzhen Comprehensive plan 2010-2010* was considered a significant innovation in this area.

There were three main stages of public participation in the making of the *Shenzhen Comprehensive Plan 2010-2020*, namely, the initial information collection stage; in-depth consultation and a discussion stage and final public notification of outcomes.

During the initial information collection stage, the public are widely consulted through platforms such as community and school events, consultation with relevant industry representatives, focus group sampling investigations, and social media surveys.

In the in-depth consultation and discussion stage, public forums are held with relevant experts, industry groups, and the general public. Media such as TV and newspapers widely reported and promoted the events to encourage people to take part. There was also a series of public events with the topic 'planning and the public' that aimed to provide opportunities for the public to understand and participate in the making of the plan.

The final public notification of outcomes stage is the statutory public consultation requirement that happens before the plan is sent for approval. Notification takes place on social communication media, TV channels, newspapers and websites.

Public participation in the making of the *Shenzhen Comprehensive Plan* was widely recognised by the public. On the Shenzhen government website, it published the response profile to acknowledge the variety of participants and interest groups:

*"From 6 December 2005 to 12 January 2006, Shenzhen government received 87 written submissions, 75 telephone suggestions, 247 online submissions and 183 suggestions from public and industry forums, with a total of 592 suggestions and submissions. The people that are consulted are from the general public, relevant industry representatives, NGO groups, relevant agencies and experts."*

This response rate represented a great improvement in public participation in the plan-making process. Many public participation methods and tools were used such as social-media platforms, public notification in community and social events, public hearings and discussion forums, and questionnaire surveys. Also, there was an address on the 'whole participation process'. Opinions from the public were collected as well as responses provided to the questions and concerns raised by the public. This information was also publicly available on the government's website.

Theoretically, public participation in urban reconstruction is closely related to urban governance. Governance is the administration of collective affairs, which involves complex interactions among the state, market and civil society. In the planned economy period in China, the power of land use planning and important planning decisions were mostly decided by the state government. Individuals tended to comply with the decisions made by the government who was supposed to support the needs for the

whole society (Yeh & Wu, 1999). However, there were indeed some preliminary forms of public participation in government and decision-making. For example, the traditional concept of public participation in China can be traced back to farmers' participation in the rural collectivisation and commune programs in the 1950s (Cao et al., 2021).

With the market-oriented economy reforms during the past few decades, planning processes have become gradually captured and implemented by local governments. Although the central government still plays a crucial role in the formulation and implementation of urban redevelopment policies, cooperative governance shared between the government, private developers and residents has been significantly promoted (L. Zhang, Hooimeijer, et al., 2019). In the past 30 years, China's urbanisation has developed rapidly. During this period, the government and academia paid attention to spatial planning as a prime consideration when developments transferred from developed coastal areas in the east to less developed inland areas in the west. Chinese cities, especially big cities, are in urgent need of urban reconstruction (S. Zhang et al., 2012). However, social conflicts in the process of reconstruction pose a threat to social stability.

The development of a market-oriented economy and growing international attention on democratic values have increased public awareness of their rights. Additionally, the commodification of housing in China has further reinforced the importance of individuals' sense of safeguarding individual's rights within the housing market (Chiu, 2001). Traditional legislation which addressed the autocratic control power of the government did not work effectively anymore. The government had become part of the market as a player who could benefit from, or not be disadvantaged by, the market (Goldman, 2005). Therefore, the role of urban planning had also changed from the traditional master plan map for developments designed by the government, to more interactive and negotiable processes that needed to meet demand from interested parties. More comprehensive legislative and policy frameworks were required to ensure the efficiency of planning processes.

On the other hand, the diversification of property and land ownership (for example, the use right of land is assigned from the state to individual citizens and companies), led by the economic transformation, meant that people were more significantly impacted economically by spatial decision-making outcomes. Some tended to benefit from planning decisions while others were possibly disadvantaged. Individuals are no longer satisfied with government-led decision-making processes and are seeking channels to express their desires (P. Zhao, 2015). As a result, to address the issues, public participation has been

stipulated in national policies to alleviate these conflicts with the responsibility for implementation delegated to local governments.

The policy and practice of public participation in planning have just sprung up in China, but they are quickly understood and reflected in planning practice. In the past three decades, the western oriented planning concept has played a decisive role in China's planning (Morrison & Xian, 2016). In addition, China's continuous social and economic transformation has also provided fertile ground for the acceptance, inclusion and development of public participation and cooperative planning initiatives, reflecting the process of planning ideas from the English circle to the non-English world (Cao et al., 2021).

However, the public participation practices in China also faces multiple institutional challenges. As Morrison and Xian (2016) noted, the incentive structure applied for evaluating the performance of political leaders prioritise economic targets (e.g. GDP growth) over social and environmental goals. This system promotes a criteria-driven approach to planning that emphasise short-term economic efficiency at the expense of long-term sustainability. Furthermore, China's highly centralised planning system over-emphasises a technical rationality model, which heavily rely on expert-led decision-making and ignore the importance of citizen involvement in urban planning.

## 4.4 Two case studies on community participation: recent planning system changes in NSW and Shanghai

### 4.4.1 NSW planning reform and key stages for public participation (2011-2013)

There is a tendency for planning reforms to take place in many Australian states to address similar initiatives promoting economic growth by increasing the confidence in investments. Reform agendas often involve reducing 'red' and 'green' tape in the planning system and 'streamlining' decision-making processes. However, people with different interests and backgrounds have very different views on these agendas. Local communities are concerned that these reforms often imply less power and consultation, however, developers are always arguing for more certainty for their investments by advocating for less public participation in decision-making processes. The planning reform in NSW was conceptualised during the state election campaign of the Liberal-Coalition party promising to create a new planning system that is "returning planning powers to the community", "delivering certainty about planning rules" and "removing politics out of planning decisions" (Griffith, 2015).

The reform started with an independent review in July 2011 led by the Hon Tim Moore and The Hon Ron Dyer. During the review process, the independent review panel conducted a series of public consultations on what “should be the broad underpinning principles for new legislation to replace the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*”. Its purpose was to “conduct extensive consultations with national stakeholder groups and communities on matters to be considered in the development of the new planning system in the state” (Moore and Dyer, 2011). Figure 4 below outlines the main stages of the consultation process involved.

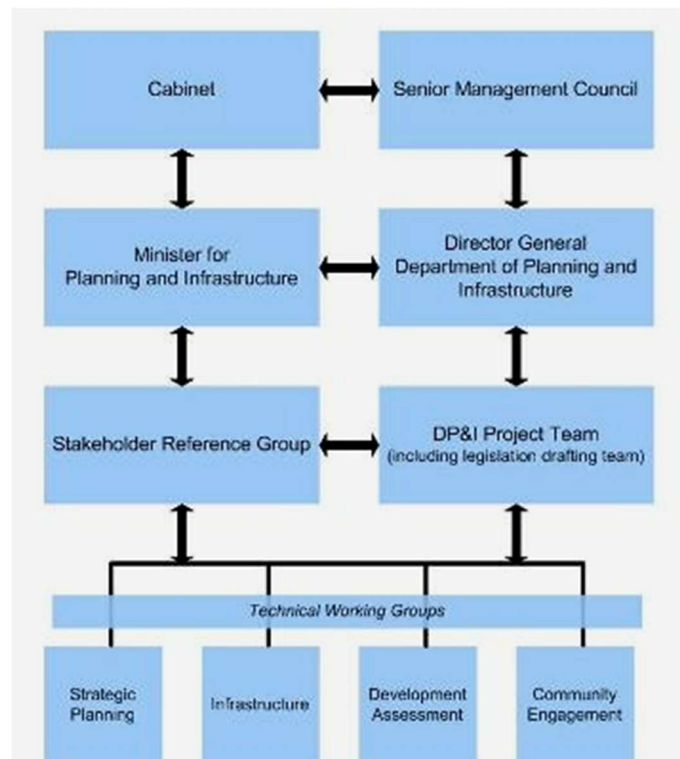


Figure 4: White Paper Consultation Process (NSW Government, 2011)

The independent review included two rounds of public consultation. The first phase of public consultation, titled *Listening and Scoping*, invited feedback on the broad principles for replacing the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (NSW Government, 2011a). This phase included over 100 community forums and meetings, and received 326 submissions—201 of which came from interest groups (NSW Government, 2011b). Based on this input, the co-chairs released an Issues Paper, *The Way Forward for NSW Planning* (Moore and Dyer, 2011), outlining their views on planning reform and seeking further public feedback on 238 issues. This led to a second round of consultation, culminating in two volumes of a Review Paper published in July 2012, marking the conclusion of the independent review panel’s work (Moore and Dyer, 2012a; 2012b).

In July 2012, the NSW Government released the *A new planning system for New South Wales - Green Paper(2012)*, which was an independent review of the NSW planning system published in May 2012. It makes clear the direction of planning reform, with a view to establishing a simple and strategy-based planning system based on four major reform agendas: "effective community participation in strategic planning, transition from planning practice to evidence-based strategic planning, a simplified development assessment process, and integration of infrastructure planning and land use strategic planning" (NSW government 2012a) This triggered another public exhibition, which lasted for two months and ended in mid-September 2012. The public exhibition brought a new round of meetings and written comments. More than 1,200 submissions were received from individuals, institutions, local governments, NSW government agencies, business, industry, planning professionals and peak organisations. In addition, about 2,000 people provided feedback and reflection through community and stakeholder seminars, practitioner forums and online discussions, all of which are outlined in the feedback report of the Green Paper (NSW government 2012b).

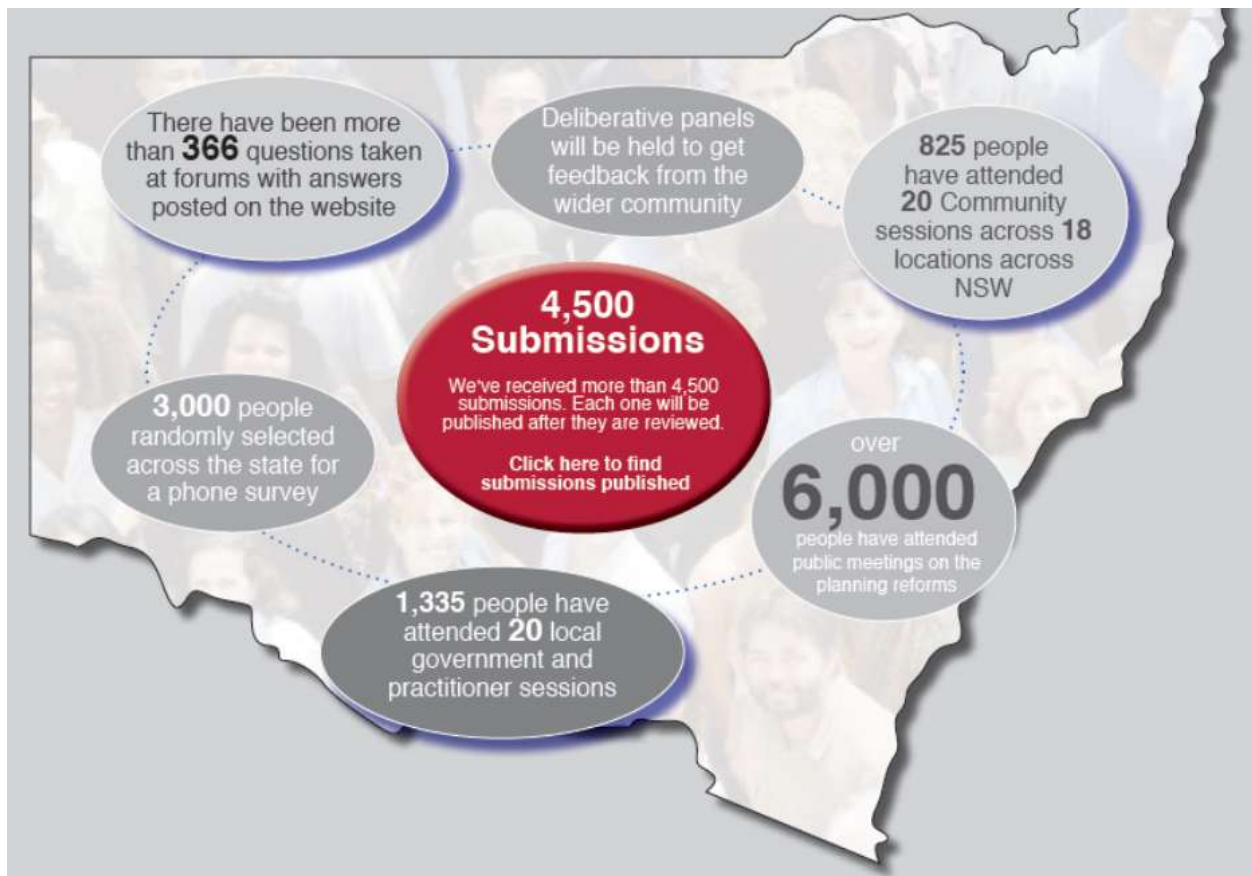


Figure 5: White Paper (2013) submission analysis (NSW Government, 2011b)

The White Paper (2013), published in April 2013, details the final reform proposals put forward by the government (NSW government 2013a) and the implementation of the reform through the revision of planning legislation (NSW government 2013b). With the introduction of the White Paper (2013) and the Bill (2013), the fourth round of public consultation was officially launched.

The fourth round of public consultation included more comprehensive participation activities such as stakeholder group meetings, an online discussion forum, Have your say, and submissions. Strong objections to proposals in the White Paper (2013) were raised by community and environmental groups on the potential reduction of community power in the development assessment process. However, business stakeholders and developers mostly supported the proposals in the White Paper (2013).

Four rounds of public participation shaped the planning reform process during the period under review. Table 7 outlines the timing and context of each round. The first two rounds were part of a comprehensive review of the planning system led by an independent panel appointed by the NSW Government. The third round focused on feedback for the Green Paper (2012), while the fourth centred on the White Paper (2013) and two associated Bills introduced in the same year.

Table 7: Summary of the contexts of the four rounds of public consultation

	Time of consultation	Objectives	Authorities
First round	Sep. 2011 – 4 Nov. 2011	Collecting opinions on the broad objectives for a new planning system for NSW	Independent panel appointed by the NSW Government
Second round	6 Dec. 2011- 2 Mar. 2012	Collecting opinions on the Issues Paper	Independent panel appointed by the NSW Government
Third round	14 Jul. 2012- 14 Sep. 2012	Collecting opinions on the Green Paper (2012)	The NSW Government
Fourth round	16 Apr. 2013- 28 Jun. 2013	Submissions on the White Paper (2013), Planning Bill 2013, and Planning Administration Bill 2013	The NSW Government

Figure 6 below shows the total number of submissions (dotted line) and the number of submissions from each category of interest group (the column figure) along with the total number of submissions from interest groups in each round. It is evident from the graph that the number of written submissions from interest groups showed a steady increase throughout the entire process, signifying a growing public interest in the planning reform. Notably, submissions from community groups saw a significant rise during the Green Paper (2012) and White Paper (2013) consultations. On the other hand, submissions from business groups, industry groups, and specialist groups generally remained relatively constant across all four conducted rounds of consultation, while other groups displayed greater fluctuations in their submissions.

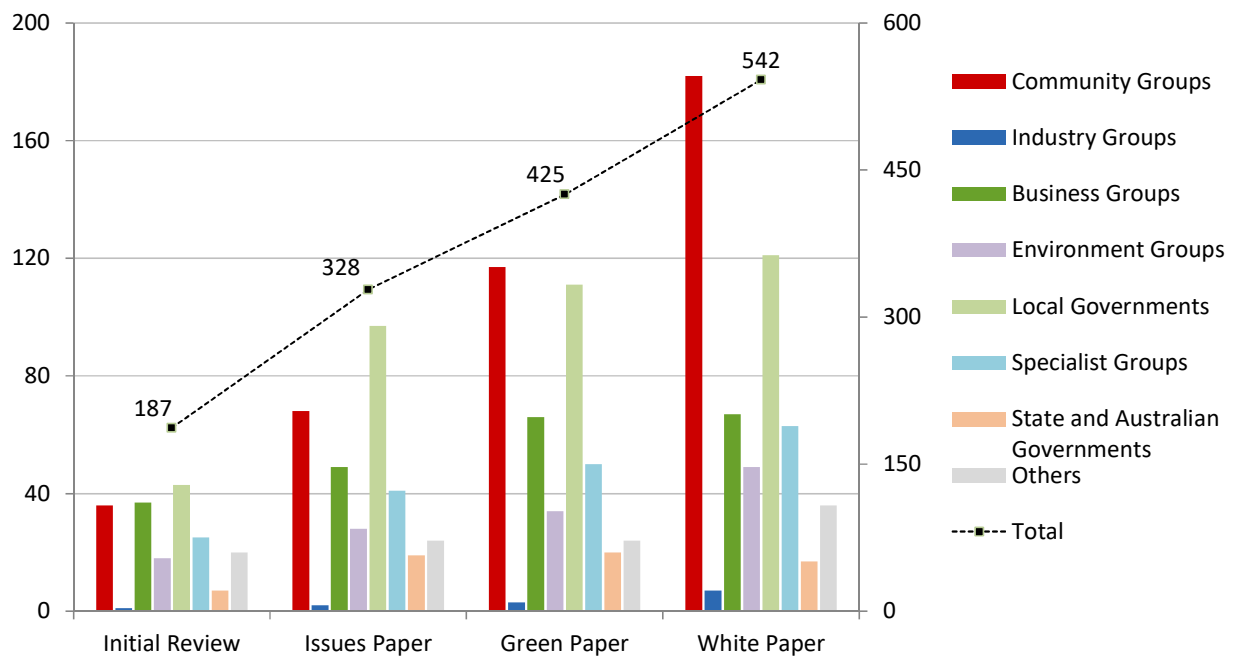


Figure 6: Submission analysis by interest groups (Cui & Gurran, 2015)

In response to mounting pressures from environmental and community groups, the government at the time decided to re-evaluate the Bills in October 2013. Several specific changes were made, including the removal of the key target that aimed for 80% of all development applications to be assessed by codes that are the applications assessed through fixed standards without discretionary determination. This provision would have allowed the Minister to amend strategic plans without a public exhibition (NSW Government, 2013d).

Subsequently, in November 2013, the NSW Government submitted the Bills to the Parliament for approval. However, opposition from three parties in the Upper House of the State Government, namely Labour, the Greens, and the Shooters and Fishers Party, resulted in 51 amendments to the legislation. The amendments with the most notably the removal of nearly all provisions related to code-assessable development, were met with strong criticism from development and business groups. One such body, the Urban Taskforce, voiced its opposition in an open letter, arguing that the changes would "significantly reduce [the Bill's] effectiveness and cannot be supported" (Urban Taskforce, 2013).

Faced with a version of the Planning Bill 2013 that had been substantially weakened and encountered mounting resistance from various sectors, the State Government ultimately chose not to proceed with enacting the legislation. Instead, it pursued incremental reforms through the existing planning framework. After more than two years of consultation and negotiation, the Government's attempt to deliver a new planning system for New South Wales was abandoned.

#### 4.4.2 *Shanghai Comprehensive Plan (2040)* and public participation in the plan making process - key policy initiatives, processes, and outcomes

In the statutory planning system in China, the role of the city comprehensive plan is to set up the strategic direction for a city's development, especially on how land use planning and spatial distribution of functions of a city can best respond to its economic development demand and its population, social-economic status and geographical locations of a city. Its content involves: the future development layout of urban and suburban areas, the distribution of functions, a land use master plan, transportation systems, the boundaries for prohibited development areas, restricted and suitable development areas, and overall urban facility planning. Comprehensive plans should also strategically consider the development plan for a longer term (*Urban and Rural Planning Act 2008, Clause 17*).

A city's comprehensive plan is required to comply with the strategies and city functions assigned by the territorial planning made by the State Ministry of Land and Resources. It is also the statutory basis for the detailed land use planning of a city. The timeframe for the plans is usually 20 years. Under the *Urban and Rural Planning Act 2008*, the comprehensive plans of municipalities directly under the central government such as Shanghai are made by the municipal government and approved by the State Council of China.

There are no detailed statutory requirements guiding the extent and implementation of public participation during a city's comprehensive plan-making process. The only legislative provision relevant is

in the *Methods of Plan Making Process* published by the Ministry of Construction in China. Before a city's comprehensive plan is sent for approval to the State Council of China, the relevant municipal government should effectively seek widely for public opinions. However, there has been a tendency in recent decades for the government to voluntarily increase the extent of public participation during the making of a city's comprehensive plan, especially for the more economically advanced cities such as for the development of the *Shenzhen Comprehensive Plan 2035*.

To investigate the objectives, operational process and effectiveness of public participation in the making of the *Shanghai Comprehensive Plan (2040)*, the community participation process was investigated to discover the practices employed during the period. The following stages were identified and analysed to see what level of participation with local communities the government allowed.

#### *4.4.2.1 Before the release of the making of Shanghai Comprehensive Plan (2040):*

The making of the *Shanghai Comprehensive Plan (2040)* had been on the government's agenda since 2012, two years before the formal process commenced. In May 2014, the Sixth Shanghai Land Planning Working Meeting led by the Shanghai Municipal Government was held which formally announced the making of the *Shanghai Comprehensive Plan (2040)* and the proposed timeframe. The Shanghai Land Planning Working Meeting is a forum led by the state and Shanghai government regularly and includes participants from Shanghai's Department of Planning and Natural Resources and other main plan-making authorities. The meeting determines the main directions and initiatives of planning and the priority projects for Shanghai in the next three to five years' time.

addressed the concept of "Open the door to hear everyone in planning process" which address the importance of transparency and public participation principle as the governmental initiative for planning. In this way, the municipal government showed their political willingness to set the process of public participation in the making of Shanghai Comprehensive Plan (2040) as a role model in planning practices of China.

Following the meeting, the Shanghai government adopted and published a document named *The Guidance* on the making of Shanghai's comprehensive plan . The Guidance outlined the strategic direction of Shanghai's development, the spatial and population scale of the city and the principles of Shanghai's spatial strategy, including aligning employment with the spatial distribution of urban functions, protecting the ecological environment and optimising the city's transport system (Shanghai Government, 2014 [Shanghai government website](#)) To increase the general public's awareness and

knowledge of the Guidance, a public brochure of the Guidance was published by the Shanghai government, which simplified and illustrated the strategies in graphs that were easier to understand (Figure 7).

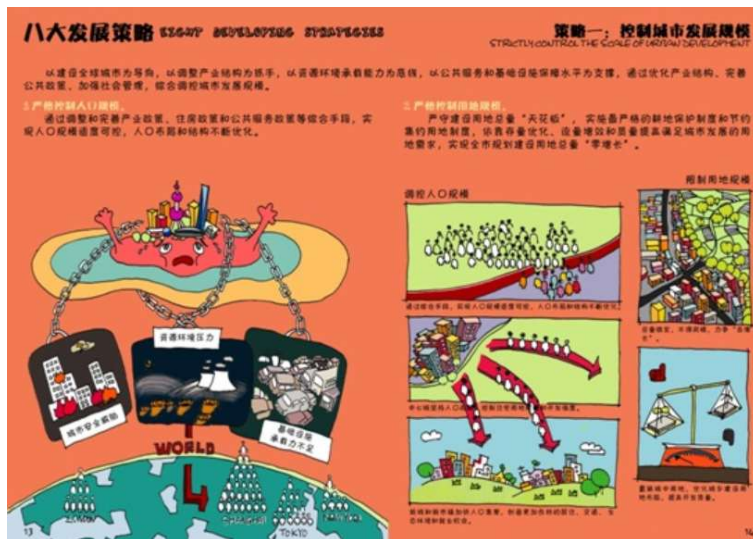


Figure 7: Public consultation strategy in the making of SCP 204 (Shanghai government website)

#### 4.4.2.2 Public announcement and formal commencement of the making of Shanghai 2040:

The announcement of the making of Shanghai 2040 was government media news after the meeting and consequently a Shanghai 2040 () website was established to publish updated information about the plan-making progress. . information was later incorporated into the website of the Shanghai Department of Planning and Natural Environment . On 6th May 2014, an introduction to the making of the new comprehensive plan was published on the Shanghai 2040 website for the general public In the article, it said that the making of the Shanghai Comprehensive Plan (2040) would enable wide public participation and “trigger the whole of society participation”.

The public consultation process for the preparation of the *Shanghai Comprehensive Plan (2040)* started in July 2014. There were three main stages for public participation planned by the Shanghai Planning Authority who was the plan-making administrative party.

The first stage was the pre-consultation stage that lasted for one and a half months. In this stage, there were media releases for television news, newspapers, and news advertising on the government website. Some key issues in the initial thinking of what the plan would cover were also discussed.

Since July 2014, there has been more intensive, wider public consultation and forums that encouraged discussion with communities on the making of Shanghai 2040 and the future of the environment of Shanghai in general. In this stage, various public consultation methods were applied:

- Firstly, a public consultation committee was established to represent opinions from a wide range of society. The committee comprised 15 renowned people from the municipal people's congress, the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, and other planning professional associations. The main function of the committee included monitoring and participating in the making of the *Shanghai Comprehensive Plan 2035* delegating the general public's interest and providing opinions on important matters
- public notification was performed through traditional media such as newspapers and local TV channels and radio streams, and more recent technical media platforms such as the software of Wechat to advertise the key messages from the government.
- In December, 2014, a city-wide questionnaire-based survey named *My ideal 2040* was held on the opinions and expectations of the community for the future of Shanghai. The questionnaire covered some 'hot topics' relating to people's daily life including transportation, their living environment as well as their strategic vision on issues such as the competitiveness of Shanghai. The survey was conducted using the online Wechat platform as well as randomly choosing participants on the street if participants were willing. A total of around 16,000 responses were received.
- There was also a series of public events and panel discussions for the general public. For example, there was an event held by the Shanghai government to invite children to draw their community in the future. One of the themes was called "I like to speak, I like to draw and I like to write for Shanghai 2040". There were also many panel discussions and public talks relating to the built environment of Shanghai.

倾听民声 汇聚民智——市规划国土资源局领导做客《市民与社会》畅谈公众参与上海市新一轮城市总体

规划编制

2014年05月26日 22:55:00 来源:



Figure 8: Media campaign for SCP 2040 (Source: Shanghai government website)



Figure 9: Public consultation material (Source: Shanghai Government website)

The making of Shanghai 2040 became a social and educational event for government to promote community engagement. The scope of discussion was greatly expanded to include a more broad planning approach than just the plan-making. Future environmental issues of the city were a key theme. The timeframe for public participation during the making of the plan lasted for more than two years.

#### 4.4.2.3 Public exhibition of the draft SCP 2040 and government adoption

Public exhibition of the draft *Shanghai Comprehensive Plan (2040)* lasted 30 days from 22 August to 21 September 2016. The exhibition took place in the Shanghai Urban Planning Exhibition Centre and also in

designated information centres in each district. The draft was also exhibited online on the Shanghai government and Planning Department websites, as well as on the Wechat social media platform. In Dec 2017, the final *Shanghai Comprehensive Plan (2040)* was approved and adopted by the State Council of China.

The summary of public participation is listed in Table 8.

Table 8: Summary of public participation in the making of SCP 2040

Key stages of the making of Shanghai Comprehensive Plan (2040)	Summary of Public Participation
Setting of government agendas on the making of SCP 2040	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No participation</li> </ul>
Publishment of guidance on Shanghai Comprehensive Plan February 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No participation during the making of The Guidance</li> <li>• Public version of The Guidance in March 2015</li> </ul>
Announcement of the commencement of the making of SCP 2040 in May 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public release on TV channels and social media</li> <li>• The establishment of ‘Consulting panel of citizens representatives’ in June 2014</li> <li>• Experts and stakeholder discussion forums</li> <li>• Commencement of questionnaire survey ‘Shanghai 2040- the expectation survey of the public’ in July 2014</li> </ul>
The making of SCP 2040 Outline -Wide publicity and consultation, September 2014- August 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publication of questionnaire survey result ‘Shanghai 2040- the expectation survey of the public’ in December 2014</li> <li>• Experts and stakeholder discussion forums</li> <li>•</li> </ul>

The making of detailed content of SCP 2040 September 2015- January 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exhibition of draft SCP 2040</li> <li>• Invitation of suggestions on SCP themes</li> </ul>
Final adoption of SCP 2040 December 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public version of SCP 2040</li> </ul>

(by author summarised from website)

### 4.5 Summary

Chapter 4 examines the development of legislation, policies, and public participation practices within the planning systems of Australia and China. It traces key historical changes and significant milestones that have shaped the statutory regulations on public engagement in planning in both nations. The analysis highlights how socio-economic factors and political systems have influenced the unique approaches to public participation in each country. The comparison of the main priorities in the public participation policies of both planning systems offers insights into how each has addressed the need for public involvement.

The chapter also focuses on recent developments in NSW, and Shanghai. This examination of contemporary changes highlights how current legislation and policies influence public participation today. These recent trends serve as a backdrop for the upcoming case studies in the next two chapters.

The findings from this chapter establish the groundwork for the empirical analysis in Chapters 5 and 6. Chapter 5 investigates public participation processes within the Australian planning system, while Chapter 6 focuses on the Chinese context. Both chapters draw on empirical data to explore how public participation functions in practice.

# Chapter 5 Survey in Australia

## 5.1 Introduction

Chapter 5 examines the process of public participation for the NSW planning reform from 2011 to 2013. It is based on the conceptual framework developed in Chapters 2 and 3. Two key research methods are used. The first one is a questionnaire survey distributed to 300 individuals across three districts in Sydney with different socio-economic residential backgrounds. It yielded 96 responses that offer valuable quantitative data. The second method involved semi-structured interviews with 15 participants from the NSW Government, interest groups, and community members. The survey results and interviews together provide a detailed understanding of public participation.

The chapter begins by analysing survey data on community experiences, awareness, and satisfaction with the public participation process for the NSW planning reform. It considers how past interactions with the planning system influenced people's perceptions. The discussion then examines stakeholders' views on the objectives of public participation based on instrumental, bureaucratic, social, and legislative values from the literature.

The chapter then examines the operational process of public engagement. It assesses the design and effectiveness of the consultation tools. The discussion also covers the roles of community groups formed by active citizens and how they advocate for their views formally and informally. This analysis highlights the power dynamics in the reform process. The chapter concludes with a discussion on the key features of the three key stages of the public participation process.

## 5.2 Questionnaire survey outcomes- reported satisfaction and previous experiences of public involvement opportunities

The following section presents the outcomes of the questionnaire survey with community members from Sydney. The response rate was 33.7% (101 out of 300). The survey explored perspectives from community members on public involvement opportunities in the planning reform activities and how their previous experiences with the planning system impacted their satisfaction, or otherwise, with the public involvement opportunities provided.

### 5.2.1 Reported satisfaction by the general community on the public involvement opportunities in the planning reform

Most of the community were not aware of the planning reform agenda. Only 34% of the general public mentioned they had heard of the planning reform proposed by the NSW government.

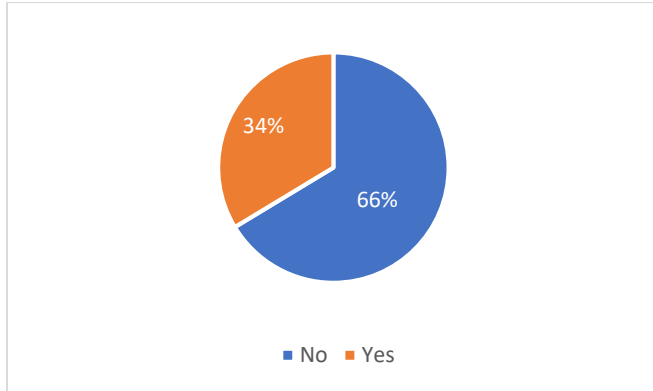


Figure 10: Public's awareness of the planning reform in Sydney

There is an imbalance in the level of awareness between areas with different social-economic statuses. Figure 11 shows that residents from higher socio-economic suburbs such as Randwick and Lane Cove were generally more aware of the planning reform scheme. However, a factor causing the imbalance in awareness may have been the low rate of English-speaking residents in Parramatta.

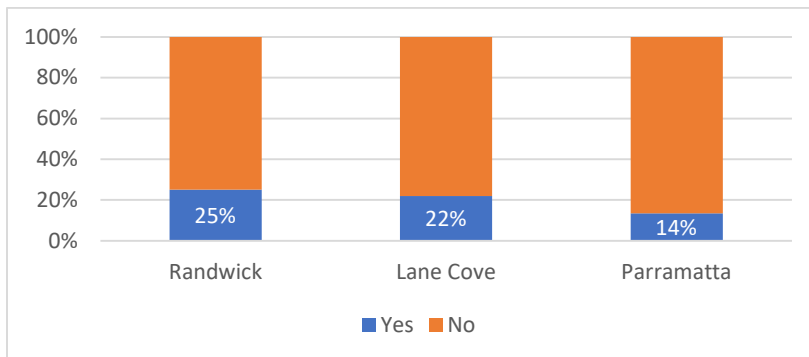


Figure 11: Public's awareness by suburbs in Sydney

In different age groups, residents above 56 years old had the highest level of awareness of the planning reform (30%) compared to those under 25 years old who had the lowest level of awareness (8%). News, social media, local petitions and community newsletters were the main sources of information about the planning reform

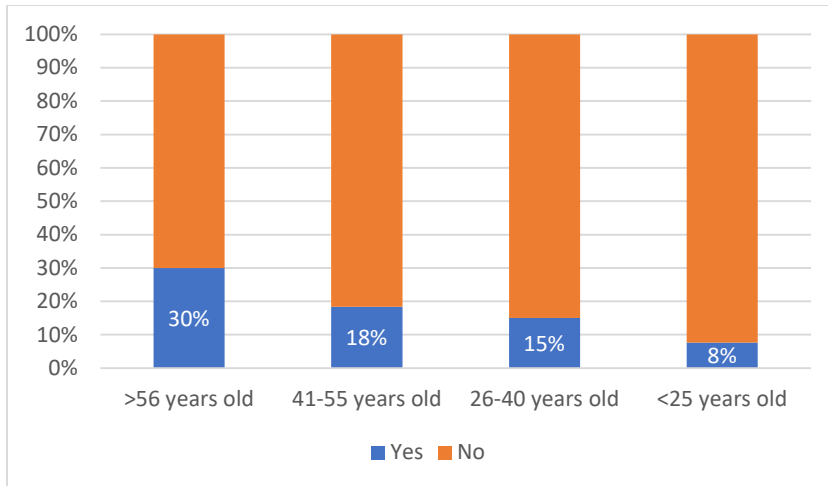


Figure 12: Public’s awareness by age in Sydney

In terms of the level of influence of public involvement on decision-making, the majority of the community felt the public participation is able to influence the outcomes of planning decisions. It is thought that there are more influences on local planning matters than regional or State planning matters. 56% of the participants in the survey felt public participation has made very influential or influential influences on local planning matters comparing to 35% of participants have the similar influences of public participation on regional or State planning matters.

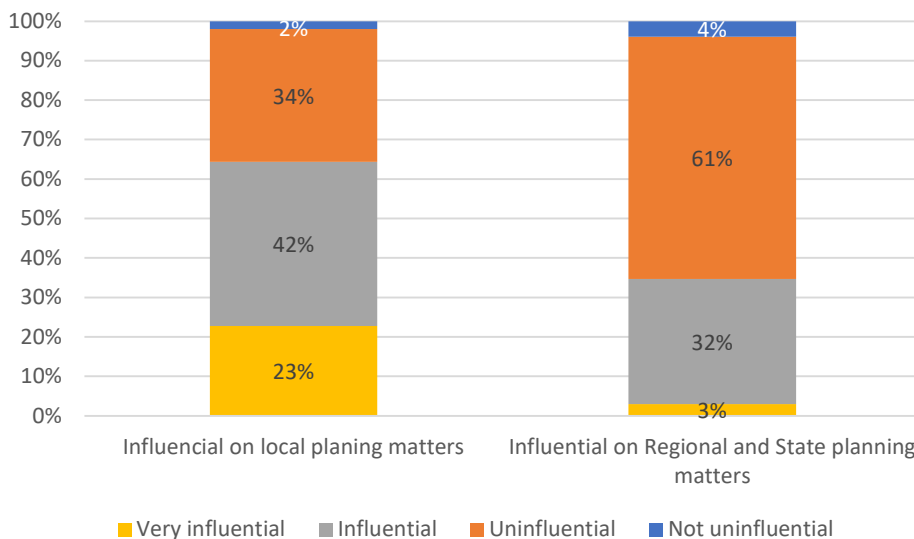


Figure 13: Level of influence by public involvement in planning in Sydney

32% of the participants agreed that there are sufficient appeal rights in the current planning system while 68% of the participants disagreed or unsure that there are sufficient rights of appeal in the system.

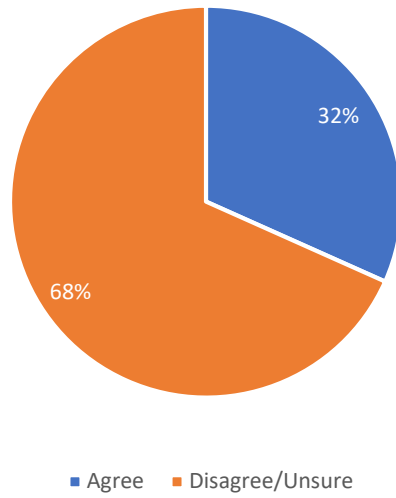


Figure 14: Appropriate amount of appeal rights

Figure 15 shows the level of satisfaction from the community members in the survey on the level of influence by six different stakeholder groups. Most community members thought that the power distribution between different stakeholder groups is appropriate. More than 30% of community members in the survey, however, thought developers and the state government have too much power and influence on the outcomes of planning decision-making. In comparison, community groups and property owners were thought to have the least impact (46% and 34% respectively) on planning outcomes.

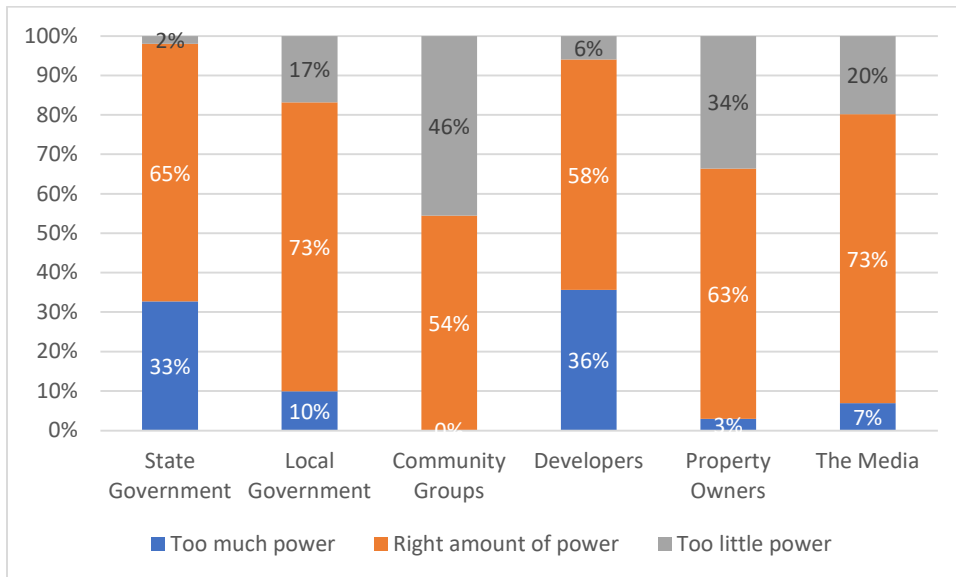


Figure 15: Power of influences by different stakeholder groups in Sydney

The survey results indicate a general lack of awareness about the planning reform proposed by the NSW Government, with only a minority of the general public knowing about it. Among those aware of the reform, satisfaction with public involvement opportunities was mixed. The majority believed public participation influences planning decisions, particularly at the local level, although there was less confidence in its impact at regional or state levels. Additionally, many participants felt that the current system lacks sufficient appeal rights. The power distribution among stakeholder groups was skewed, with developers and the state government perceived to have excessive influence, while community groups and property owners were viewed as having minimal impact on planning decisions.

### 5.2.2 Previous experience, knowledge and motivation for getting involved in planning matters

Among the 101 participants from the three suburbs of Sydney selected for this study, 81 (80%) had never participated in any planning processes, whereas 20 (20%) had previous experiences of participating in planning processes. The most frequent reasons given for not participating were: “Do not have time”; “Not interested”; and “Hard to influence decisions”.

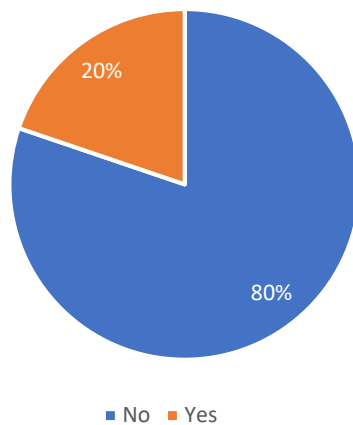


Figure 16: Previous experience of involvement in planning

As already mentioned, older residents tended to have higher participation rates than younger residents: 30% of people aged 56 years old and above had experiences getting involved in planning matters previously; whereas only 18% of participants aged between 41 and 55 years old had participated in planning processes before. The remaining age groups had similar and low participation rates (Figure 17).

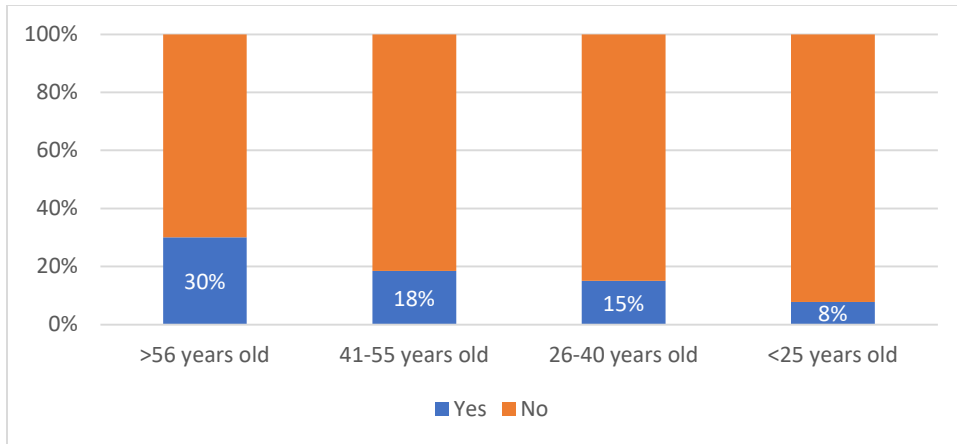


Figure 17: Previous experience by age group

Randwick had the highest participation rate of survey participants previously involved in planning processes with 25%. Lane Cove had a slightly lower participation rate of 22%. Parramatta had the lowest participation rate, only 14% of the participants had been involved in planning decision-making processes. This indicated that areas with lower socio-economic profiles often have a large proportion of overseas migrants who are often not willing to participate in planning processes. Some participants in the survey expressed that, although there had been recent efforts by the government to publish consultation documents in multiple languages, they still felt the broader context of policies and legislation were too complex to understand and were “somehow far from their daily life”.

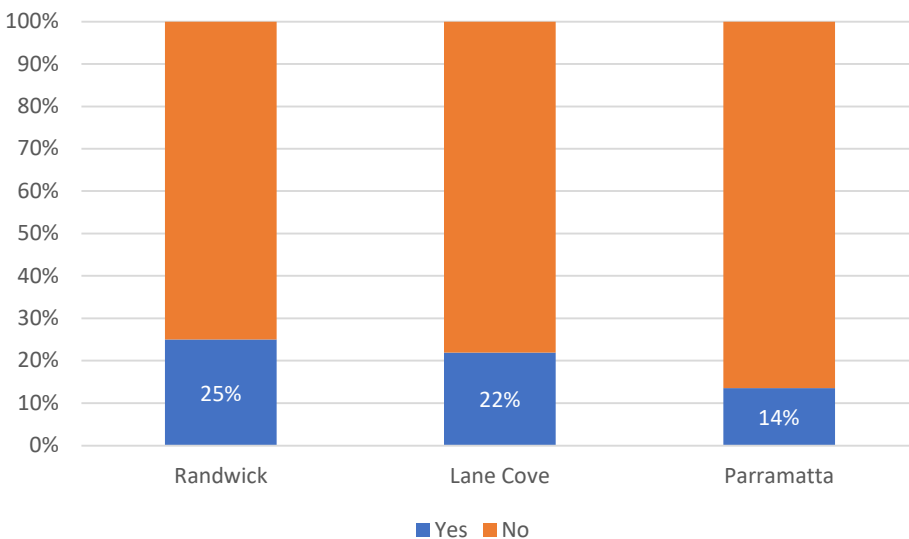


Figure 18: Previous experience of involvement in planning issues by suburb

Sixty-three percent of the participants thought it important to include more public participation in strategic plan-making processes. More people were interested in including more participation on individual developments with 87% of the participants supporting more participation in the development application assessment stage.

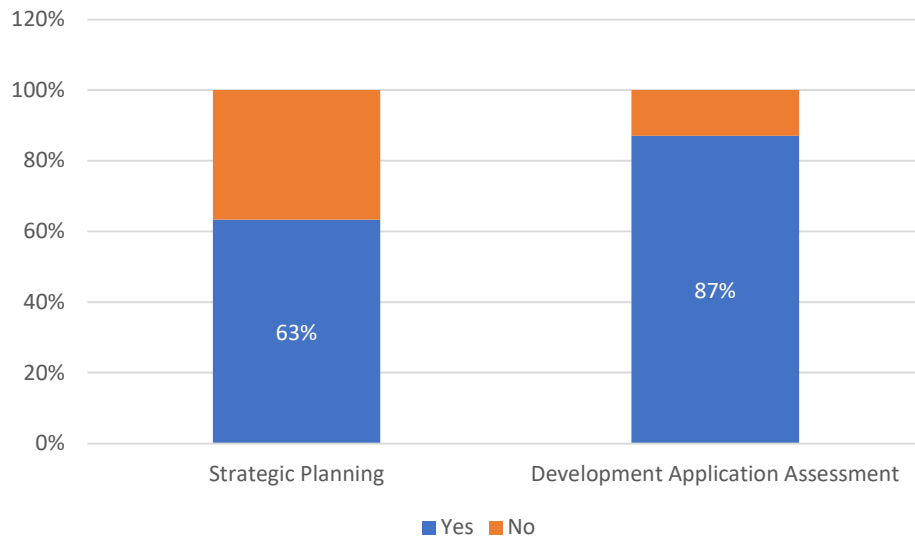


Figure 19: Planning stages for participation

From the survey, people with previous involvement in the planning system were more inclined to believe that public participation would make influential influences on planning outcomes compared to people without any previous experience in the planning system.

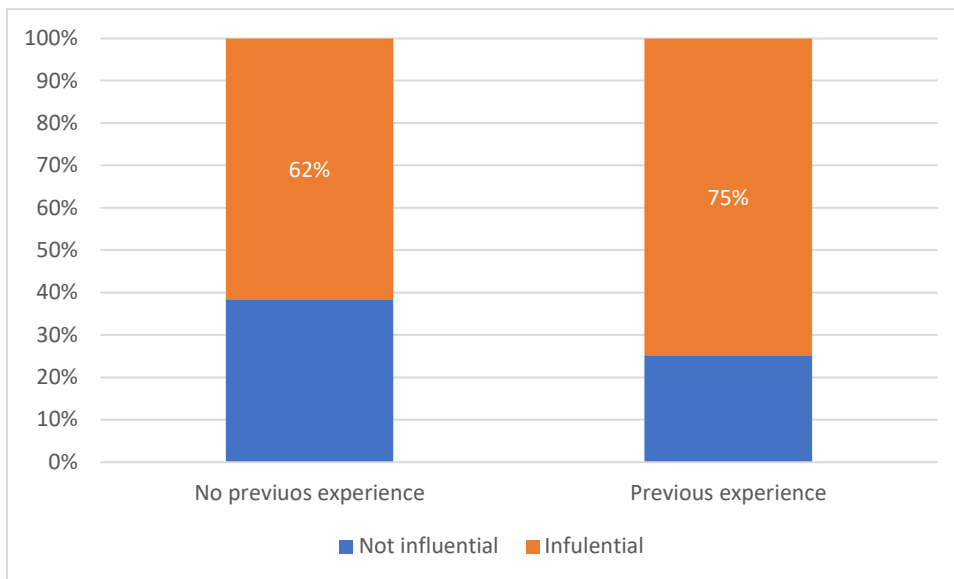


Figure 20: Understanding the level of influence

Stakeholders' interview comments on the objectives and operation of public involvement in planning reform

Interviews with various stakeholders revealed multiple objectives for public participation in the planning reform. State government officials and agency staff highlighted the importance of obtaining genuine community feedback to inform the new planning system. They acknowledged that public participation is a critical method for facilitating communication between the government and communities, allowing the latter to influence decision-making processes. However, community members expressed scepticism, viewing public participation as a means for the government to secure consent for decisions favouring developers. This divergence in perspectives underscores the complexities and challenges in aligning the objectives of public participation with the expectations of the community.

Multiple objectives have been identified from interviewing different stakeholder groups. State government staffs generally agreed that the priority aim for public participation in the planning reform was to get genuine feedback from the community on the new planning system. One government employee stated:

*“There is a real objective of getting genuine input from communities on the planning reform so, we can respond to these issues and can get a better document.” (State government officer 1)*

Interviewees believed that supporting genuine participation is crucial because it has become an established process for communication between the government and communities. One planner from a government agency stated that:

*“Public participation is an accepted method for the government to seek communities' input into the planning policy-making processes. It is a core part of the planning act that you need to consult. It is set in stone in planning practices. Also, there is an expectation from the communities that they are able to express their opinions and make influences on the planning outcomes through public participation processes”. (State government officer 2)*

The interview with state government policy-makers showed that they trusted the genuine interest for participation from the communities and appreciated that input from the community is a valuable information source for policy-making.

*“Communities are definitely interested and are keen to be involved...and we often receive many submissions from mums and dads in communities during the public exhibition period of development applications or draft planning policies. I think many residents have considerable understanding of the system- they know what they want to do and how to achieve their goals.”*  
(State government officer 3)

In addition, a key shift in planning reform involves introducing a new public participation model, emphasising engagement during the strategic planning stage. This marks a departure from the previous approach, where state governments predominantly made planning decisions. The reform aims to include community input early in the planning process, ensuring that strategic frameworks reflect public concerns and priorities. Interviewees highlighted the significance of this change, noting that it will reshape how communities engage with the planning system in the future, promoting a more collaborative and inclusive planning environment.

Political objectives were identified as another important objective of public participation by staff from state government departments and agencies. There was a feeling that the planning reform was an opportunity for the government to rebuild its relationship with communities. One planner from a government agency said in the interview that:

*“I think there was a lot of mistrust in the community with some of the government’s actions in the last few years. There’s a lot of action groups and others that are springing up because they don’t feel like their voice is being heard. They feel like it’s tokenistic consultation that’s being done. I think the issue we’ve got in New South Wales from the planning side is that there was not a lot done for a very long time, so all of a sudden, we need to catch up.”* (State government officer 2)

Indeed, the planning reform was one of the most significant commitments of the 2011 NSW state election with the public holding high expectations for the outcome. Consequently, public consultation and participation had become essential for the government’s promotion of openness and transparency in the planning reform process. The government’s aim was to increase the level of trust and confidence in the community that they were able to develop and deliver a better planning system. One government planner stated in the interview that:

*“There is a high expectation for the planning reform to be something different (from previous planning practices) ... It is common for an important event like planning reform to have a high-profile public participation process.”* (State government officer 5)

A 'rebuild trust and relationship' intention from the government was expected by the community as well. One community member also confirmed with this statement that:

*"The commitments made by the government for the planning reform, such as 'returning planning power to communities' sounds promising and we would like to see how the government can address this in the new planning system and the process of building the new framework."  
(Community group member 1)*

The educational purpose of planning reform was also mentioned by many interviewees from government agencies. The public participation process provided the opportunity to explain current planning issues to a wider audience and thus the reasons why the government was presenting potential solutions.

*"There is definitely an educational purpose for the public participation process. We have made great efforts and developed plain English guidelines for communities without planning backgrounds to understand how the new planning system would work and we held many workshops with them to respond to their questions. We have conducted a significant media campaign to spread the message. I think it is important that we need to ensure the community understand the new system before they can support it. I think that's a really important point, because that sort of taking the time to educate, inform, I think then at least, yeah, even if they don't get what they want, they at least feel like someone's taken the time to explain. So, explaining the decision if they didn't get their way, taking the time to go back to them and explain to them why. I think it's giving them that courtesy and that respect, basically." (State government officer 6)*

The same officer also mentioned that the objectives of consensus building between the government and communities also applied between stakeholders with different views. Although recognising that this objective is difficult to achieve, the public participation process should at least help:

*"We live in a democratic society and people should have that opportunity. You know, should be involved in a participatory way about how their city or area is growing. They should sit together to think about their future to come up with good ideas for us all. Not to be just about an individual saying, "You must do that. I want this... The importance of participation is that we all, hopefully, will come up with a bigger decision by all the different ideas and input about what should happen. But it's often difficult to achieve a solution to fit all." (State government officer 3)*

Answers to the question: What was the most important objective of public participation in the planning reform? state government interviewees felt that to receive genuine feedback from the community was the main objective.

*“Our aim is to get the opinions from the wider communities. It is not compromised by other reasons. We may be exposed to a range of conflicting ideas from different stakeholders or groups. It is good if some level of consensus can be achieved. But if not, we think it is important to collect and present genuine ideas on the planning system from the community.” (State government officer 7)*

However, members from the community and community groups held a different view and did not agree that the proposed prioritised objective for public participation in the planning reform was to get genuine feedback from the communities. Rather, they felt public participation was a tool for the government to get consent from the community on initiatives that were from and benefited developers.

*“Public participation has now become a tool to facilitate the Government’s arguments which is now all about prioritising economic growth. We are running with a liberal philosophy here. The conversation is generally driven by developers in the planning reform process and then they came to the community and said we have consulted you”. (Community member 1)*

It was also felt by community members that the public sessions were more for informing them of decisions that had already been made rather than for seeking genuine inputs that represented the community’s interest in the first place.

*“To be frank, while there were numerous opportunities for the public to ‘participate’, it often felt like a formality rather than a genuine attempt to gather our input. The sessions were more about informing us of decisions already made rather than seeking our feedback on potential decisions. It often seemed like the interests of big developers were prioritised. While I understand the importance of economic growth, it felt like the concerns of everyday residents were secondary.” (Community member 2)*

There was a feeling in the community that there was a shift of the objective of public participation at different stages of the NSW planning reform process. Genuine community input was addressed at the beginning with the independent review of the planning reform process. However, it was considered a government strategy to calm down the anger and distrust in the planning system.

*“They paid a consultant for the planning system review (independent review) and I think they were quite good. I mean they have done a proper consult and included community views in their report.” (Community group member 3)*

As discussed above, there were long-term complaints of the planning system and cumulative demand from the public to address their concerns. In response, the government provided a channel for communities to express their concerns during the independent review stage.

One of the members from a community group described the situation at that time:

*‘There are so many frustrations and areas needing to be fixed in the planning system and we were all eager to attend public consultations because we have a lot to say. I could see the good intentions and efforts at the beginning when all the opinions from the community were well considered and included in their review report.’ (Community group member 1)*

However, as the planning reform consultation progressed, interviewees from community groups stated they could feel an evident shift of the aim of the public participation to more focus on promoting the interests of developers and attempting to use public consultation as a means to support government decision-making.

*“The content of the Green Paper and the White Paper is dominated by the interest of developers, not the community. Although the government has conducted a huge media campaign praising itself on their wide public consultation for the planning reform, the underlying objective was to legitimate their problematic proposal.” (Community group member 5)*

## 5.3 The operational process of public participation for the NSW planning reform (2011-2013)

### 5.3.1 The design of the participation framework

The design of the public participation process in the planning reform followed “a similar routine employed by the government for organising public participation processes for new policies or legislation changes” according to a state government planner. Prior to the commencement of public consultation, a draft communication plan was made to set the strategies and methods to be used for public involvement and consultation. The communication plan identified media campaign strategies, key public consultation activities, timeframes and main stakeholders. Then the draft communication plan was sent

to senior executives in the planning department for feedback and approval. The planning department was then responsible for implementing participation and consultation activities and for the analysis of feedback received from public consultation. A report on the feedback from public consultation was then prepared and submitted to senior executives for consideration.

Planners generally agreed this process was efficient and effective and able to ensure the quality of public participation as well as address the key objectives of the process.

*“With the relatively standard process, we (the planning reform project team) are able to know what is expected for our work and the process also provides us a framework to follow. The process also ensures a consistent process and methods being used which are also familiar to the community.” (State government officer 3)*

However, one government agency planner also admitted that the design of public participation limited responses to the issues and the particular nature of policy context:

*“There are few incentives for planners or officers to innovatively design a process according to the features and requirements of the policy itself. Because of the linear process design, the practices (of public participation) that follow the plan cannot respond to the issues raised during the consultation. For example, I think in the planning reform process, they went out for enormous consultations and would listen to a lot of people on the issues of the current and proposed planning system. This is often within what they call ‘a community participation plan’. However, sometimes I think you've got to go past the listening and actually talk about what could you do. I would like to focus on, all right, that's an issue, so what do we do about it? What do we change or what do we make in this project that would mean that it's not an issue anymore? I think the consultation process for the planning reform focused a lot on just hearing about the negative and not actually challenging or saying, "What should change and how can we deal with these issues better?" Public participation should not be a standard process that people use to just tick the box for the policy-making procedure.” (State government officer 2)*

The design of public participation for the planning reform followed a routine commonly used for new policies or legislative changes, involving a draft communication plan outlining strategies, methods, and key stakeholders. This plan was reviewed by senior executives and implemented by the Department, which also analysed public feedback to inform legislative modifications. While planners found this standardised process efficient and effective, ensuring consistency and familiarity, it was criticised for its

inflexibility and inability to address specific issues raised during consultations. One planner noted that the linear design focused more on listening to concerns rather than engaging in problem-solving, emphasising the need for a more adaptive approach to genuinely address community issues and improve policy outcomes.

### 5.3.2 The selection of participants and tools used for consultation

The consultation approach was designed to ensure that the voices of various interest groups, ranging from local residents and community organisations to developers and environmental advocates, were heard and considered.

*“We tried to consult people with different interests, not just developers, businesses or environment and community groups. We actively approached people not commonly involved in consultation - interest groups not necessarily representing opinions from the community. We wanted to understand what the opinions from the real community were.” (State government officer 6)*

However, community groups held different views about the public participation processes used for the planning reform. Some believed that the process was not conducted properly to obtain the community’s feedback:

*“Consultation processes are manipulated by the Government’s willingness to push for certain policy initiatives held by certain interest groups and not the wider community.” (Community member 5)*

Similar tools and methods were employed over the four rounds of public participation with some minor variations. During the first two rounds of public participation leading up to the independent review, public submissions, community forums and stakeholder meetings were the main tools used.

During the third round of consultation, public submissions were also invited in response to the Green Paper (2012). During the drafting of the White Paper (2013), a few reference groups were established, including separate ones for stakeholders and local government, to provide suggestions to the project team from perspectives representing different interests. A series of community forums and focus group meetings were also held to gather opinions from the wider community.

For the final round of consultation on the White Paper (2013) and the draft Bills, public submissions, including a live online tool which was easy for users to record comments on for particular sections of

the document, were used. The White Paper (2013) consultation involved some new methods that reflected the development of new technology. For example, a communication tool called the *White Paper Meetings Tool Kit* allowed people in the community to initiate and hold public discussions rather than having to rely on the Department to lead and organise events. Also, there was a wide media campaign including advertisements on social media platforms such as YouTube and Facebook. Like the other three rounds of consultation, many community forums and stakeholder meetings were held during that time.

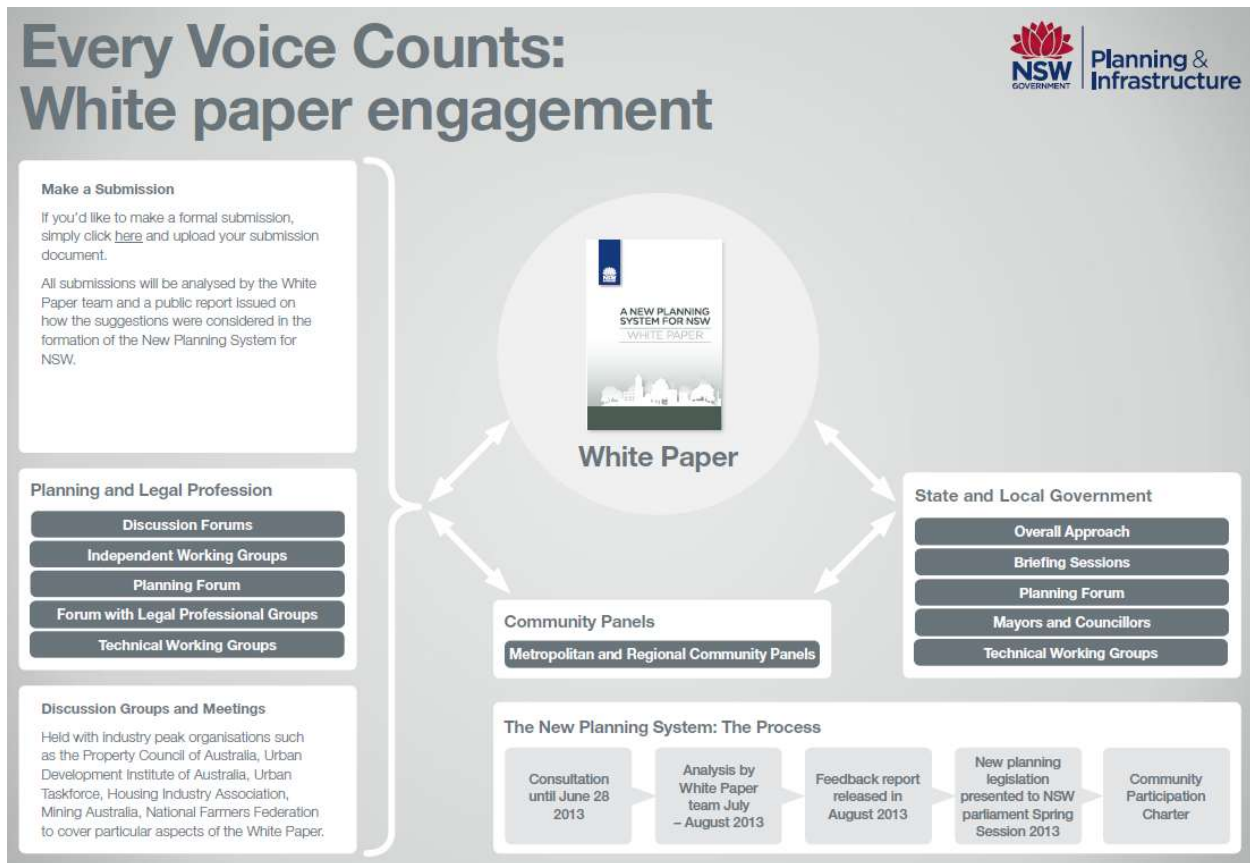


Figure 21: White Paper (2013) engagement activities (NSW government, 2011)

The innovative tools used by the planning reform program such as the randomised survey and deliberative panel in the White Paper (2013) consultation stage, aimed to get feedback from the wider community and received positive feedback from government staff.

*“We designed the deliberative panel to comprise members from the community. We paid the panel for the consultation sessions to achieve statistically relevant representation of community*

*views, not just hearing from community groups. We got a lot of in-depth information from the consultation sessions so this method was successful.” (State government officer 1)*

Table 9 lists the methods used in different rounds of public participation, along with the description and extent of participation/communication.

Table 9: Summary of consultation methods and analysis methods

Planning reform stage	Methods	Description	Scope
Independent review- listening and scoping	Community Forums	The forums were open to anyone who would like to tell the Review Panel what they thought should be the broad objectives for a new planning system	88 forums across whole NSW
	Stakeholder Meetings	Meeting with key stakeholder groups and individuals to gather their ideas on the new planning system	45 meetings
Independent review- feedback on issues paper	Submissions	Submissions made through email, snail mail and online platforms	Over 900 submissions received
Green paper (2012) and the draft White Paper (2013)	Submissions	Submissions made through email, snail mail and online platforms	1,220 submissions received
	Discussion and Consultation Sessions	Sessions with short presentations followed by question and answers targeted at different stakeholder groups	22 practitioner and community consultation sessions were held in 10 locations across NSW
	Online Discussion Forum	An online discussion forum addressing 24 questions around 5 policy reform areas	218 comments received
	White Paper (2013) Workshop	Stakeholder workshop to discuss options for policy solutions to include in the White Paper (2013).	One workshop attended by over 370 stakeholders

Consultation on White Paper (2013) and draft Bill (2013); and the amendments	Submissions	Submissions made through email, snail mail and online platforms	Over 4,500 submissions
	Various stakeholder Discussion Sessions	Sessions with short presentations followed by questions and answers targeted at different stakeholder groups (Community, Practitioner, Building Professionals, Certifiers, Independent Stakeholder Groups)	50 sessions attended by over 1,600 people
	Community Telephone Survey	A representative survey of people across all parts of NSW	2,700 people randomly selected
	Deliberative Panels	Randomly selected participants, representing NSW, discussed the key themes in the White Paper (2013) over two days each session	38 participants for 2 sessions- one in Orange and one in Penrith

Again, there were a variety of views on levels of satisfaction with the operation of public consultations on the planning reform. It was felt by staff from the Department that great improvement had been achieved in the public consultation process, in particular, the level of transparency, the extent of representation of the wider community and the depth of consultation.

*“We did put great efforts into the processes of public participation to get genuine community input on the reform process. For example, we published all the submissions of the Independent Review, Green Paper and White Paper on the website. It was very common practice before the planning reform. We would like to make all the opinions visible so they will know where the initiatives (from the Green and White Paper) come from.”(State government officer 1)*

There was generally positive feedback on the community forums and stakeholder meetings during the first round of the consultation that formed the independent review. For example, one member from a community group said:

*“The government started off on reasonably good footing by getting a labour and a liberal party person to go around and talk to the wider communities about planning and how you might change the planning law. The community forums were conducted in an encouraging way that promoted opportunities for ideas and issues to be raised and heard. I can feel the good intention of the review.”(Community group member 6)*

However, this satisfaction from community groups in the initial stage of the reform completely disappeared in the later stage of the Green Paper (2012) and White Paper (2013) consultation processes. There was a strong feeling that the Government was trying to weaken and cover the objection voices and conversation was dominated by particular group whose opinions were in accordance with the government’s Green Paper (2012) and White Paper (2013) direction.

One member from the community showed strong dissatisfaction with the performance of a stakeholder meeting during the White Paper (2013) consultation stage:

*“In these meetings, you have this again, community trying to have a voice in terms of “these are the things that we think are important,” and government basically trying to prosecute a position. There’re some quite classic ones. One of the ones that it’s worthwhile looking at, which was a bit of a flash point at the time, was the discussion about ecologically sustainable development (ESD). Every time you would ask about ESD in the meeting, which we saw as a pivotal issue, the government would basically say, “oh, we’re just trying to broaden this. We’re trying to bring in*

*the social aspect" but at no point did the government respond to our questions directly and they (policies on ESD) were prepared publicly." (Community group member 2)*

The perspectives on the operation of public involvement varied considerably between policy-makers and the broader community. Policy-makers held a largely positive view of the process, believing that they had made significant strides in ensuring that the reform was fair, transparent, and genuine in its approach to public involvement. They appreciated the value of the procedures of reviewing public submissions and holding public consultation sessions. Additionally, they felt that their efforts to conduct deliberative panels were a successful mechanism, promoting genuine feedback from the community and fostering a sense of collaborative conversion.

On the other hand, the community's perception strongly contrasted with that of the policy-makers. Many community members felt that the operational process of public consultation was not as transparent as was announced. They suspected that the consultations were manipulated and heavily influenced by developers, whose primary objective was to maximise financial gains. This perception was further triggered by the belief that the reform's agendas were skewed in favour of developers.

### 5.3.3 Bottom-up informal power of interest groups that influenced the direction of the planning reform

Various interest groups representing the community, environment, planning professions, businesses and developers actively participated in the planning reform processes. Interest groups had become influential factors in shaping the NSW system and practices in varying ways . It is interesting to explore how interest groups used different strategies, actively advocated in the formal public participation processes or spontaneously carried out activities by themselves.

Table 10 summarises the main suggestions from businesses and developer groups during the independent review public submission process. These interest groups advocated for a planning system that emphasised economic development by streamlining development approval processes through code assessable developments as well as the using planning panels and commissions to assess major developments, thus simplifying the approval consent process. They also wanted to shift public

participation into strategic planning processes to reduce the risks of community objections during the development assessment stage being ignored.

Increasing the use of code assessable development, which allows certain standard developments to be approved without local discretionary determination, is a position advocated by developer and business groups. Further, as the codes are determined by state government, proposals to extend this form of development assessment also has the effect of limiting local involvement in strategic rule setting. At the same time, submissions by industry groups emphasised the merits of shifting community consultation to the strategic plan-making stage through greater emphasis on formal and informal involvement opportunities (Urban Taskforce, 2012; NSW Business Chamber, 2011)

Table 10: Summary of submissions by pro-development interest groups - Source: outcomes (Cui & Gurran, 2015)

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Stakeholder(s)</b>	<b>Key Points</b>
Objectives of the New Act	PCA, NSWBC	Objectives should be balanced; ESD should not be given more weight than other objectives.
	UDIA	Greater emphasis on economic viability is needed.
	PIA	Objectives should be measurable and linked to legislated instruments.
	PIA	The Act should promote integrated planning, balancing ecological, economic, and social sustainability, and encourage community engagement.
Plan-Making Processes	UDIA, NSWBC	Public consultation should occur early in strategic planning.
	NSWBC	Strategic plans should be statutory instruments; local plans must align with metropolitan/regional strategies.
	PIA, AIA	Public engagement is fundamental to strategic plan-making.
Development Assessment Process	PCA, UDIA, NSWBC	Support for independent panels (JRPP, PAC) in development assessment.
	UDIA	Expand the use of code-assessable 'complying' development.

	NSWBC	The Minister for Planning (or delegate) should retain authority over state significant development and infrastructure.
--	-------	--

Table 11 identifies the key positions from community and environmental groups to the planning reform. Opposite to the views of business and developer groups who supported a faster and more streamlined planning system, community and environmental groups support far more emphasis on ecologically sustainable development as an objective of the Act and more public participation and scrutiny for planning policy-making and approval processes. Community and environmental groups opposed the use of planning panels and private certifiers in development assessment.

Opportunities for public participation in the new system had been stated as a main concern for community and environment groups since the very beginning stage of the planning reform. During consultation in the independent review, community groups generally expressed the need for more genuine influence on planning decision-making by the community. They sought more genuine public participation and opposed the use of Joint Regional Planning Panels which aimed to centralise assessment decisions for developments at regional significant level and remove the powers of councillors who were elected by the residents (Save Our Suburbs, 2012).

Table 11: Summary of submissions by community groups (Source: NSW State government website)

Topic	Stakeholder(s)	Key Points
Objectives of the New Act	NCOSS	Support for retaining the objectives in the current Act.
	EDO	Ecologically Sustainable Development (ESD) should be the overarching objective.
Plan-Making Processes	SOS, NCOSS	The creation of State Environmental Planning Policies (SEPPs) and Ministerial directives should be subject to public or representative scrutiny.
	NCOSS	Ministers and councillors should be actively involved in the planning and policy-making stages.

Development Assessment Process	Federation of Willoughby Progress Associations	Opposition to Joint Regional Planning Panels (JRPP), private certification, and uniform code-assessable development across all council areas.
	NCOSS	Ministers and councillors should have a reduced role in development assessment.
	EDO	The credibility and role of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) should be strengthened.

For the campaign strategies of interest groups, developer and business groups tended to be well prepared in the initial stages to get their specific demands for the new planning system well-articulated . They had clear ideas on what they wanted to achieve for the new system. They raised specific policy outcomes such as shifting public participation from development assessment into strategic planning.

In comparison, community and environmental groups tended to lack a specific focus of how they would like to shape the future planning system, especially at the initial stage of the planning reform. In the initial independent review submissions, they only talked generally on topics such as increasing the role of ESD and objecting to the use of planning panels in development assessment.

In July 2012, the NSW Government released a Green Paper (2012) setting out broad proposals for planning reform. It proposed a new planning system organised around four fundamental principles including: more effective community participation; more ‘strategic’ oriented planning; more ‘streamlined’ approvals; and new approaches to infrastructure delivery. Encompassing these four themes was a reformed “delivery culture” for “an increased focus on delivery and the creation of a more facilitative planning culture” (NSW Government, 2012a).

The proposals in the Green Paper (2012) seemed to be a response to suggestions benefiting industrial and commercial groups. The city task force therefore stated in their submission to the Green Paper (2012) that:

*"It is encouraging to see that the Green Paper confirms every important concern we have in the current bill" (Australian City Task Force, 2012).*

The Green Paper (2012) proposal raised concerns for community and environmental groups, as one member of a community group stated:

*“The Green Paper came out and basically pushed an agenda which was being promoted by developers and to some extent planning interests. It was unrecognisable from the initial report (Issues Paper) that had been produced when they had sent their people around to talk to the community. Suddenly you had an indication of the direction the government wanted to go in and it was very different from what both wanted to come out of this listening report and what the experience was of the community.” (Community group member 3)*

As a result, community and environmental groups quickly mobilised to oppose the proposals outlined in the Green Paper (2012). The number of submissions from these groups rose significantly—from 92 during the first round of the independent review to 220 during the Green Paper consultation. This increase reflected growing efforts by these sectors to raise public awareness and advocate against the proposed changes to the planning system. It also marked a notable surge in community-led advocacy challenging the direction of the reforms.

In particular, the formation of the Better Planning Network (BPN) emerged as a grassroots coalition of over 400 community groups from across New South Wales. They claimed their primary objective was to ensure that community voices were adequately represented. They criticised the reform for its lack of transparency, equality, and sustainability. The network was particularly concerned about the perceived prioritisation of developer interests over community well-being. By uniting diverse groups under a common banner, the BPN believed they played a pivotal role in advocating for a more inclusive and community-centric approach to planning in NSW, challenging aspects of the reform they believed were detrimental to the broader public interest. Their efforts highlighted the attempt of collective action to influence policy direction and ensure that community perspectives were not sidelined in the decision-making process. One organiser from the Better Planning Network explained how the group was established:

*“There was a round of quasi-consultation which I went to, it was just a very brief overview of the Green Paper. Interestingly enough, one name of a big developer in Sydney (name removed) and the Urban Taskforce from the developers’ lobby was in the room. I was at a table where a woman from the community was at the table. We all knew about the planning and were worried about this whole thing being rolled out with very little public consultation. She said to me halfway through the briefing when we realised that it was a waste of time, we weren't getting our voices heard. She said she ran into somebody from Lane Cove who was also thinking to put a group*

*together in response to the Green Paper. So, I joined the group and we started working on building the platform and the network.” (Community group member 3)*



Figure 22: Community campaign against planning reform (BPN website)

The BPN quickly gathered significant attention from the public through organising community forums, conducting petitions, running a series of protest activities and sending reports to the government on planning reform. Aligned community groups, who claimed to be ‘grassroot’, were actually combined with solely spontaneous community members as well as political forces who opposed the government proposals. As one community group member indicated:

*“I realised later that some of our signed members of community groups are paid by the Greens and Labor Party, but we (the chair committee) are not, which makes us quite different from those organisations. We also have the support and help from, for example, the Greens, but we didn’t receive payment from them. We can actually get up and talk, as far as I’m concerned uncompromised.” (Community group member 2)*

The activities of community and environmental groups had made a great impact. The then government withdrew the amendment bill in October 2013. The amendments were generally considered as an attempt to win the support of local councils and community groups, for example, abolishing the idea that development applications should be a major goal of ‘code evaluability’, that is, there would be no discretionary decision.

From the interviews with community group representatives many of their members had related backgrounds in planning, architecture, environment or legal expertise. They had the in-depth knowledge

and practical experience to understand the implications of the proposed policy changes. In addition, they tended to be capable of using various mechanisms to advocate for their opinions. For example, a planning and environment-based community group named the Better Planning Network (BPN), introduced previously, had their own website and social media page and dedicated people to manage their online campaign activities. They also had regular key members discussion forums where they shared and exchanged information on the progress of policy development. The members of the community and environmental groups often showed strong commitment and passion on planning and local issues. They dedicated significant time and effort to influence policy outcomes, showcasing their dedication to drive meaningful change. One of the organisers from a community group gave a review of how the group grew from one couple to more than 300 members which in their view had made 'important impact' on many policy outcomes.

*“Back in 2002 and 2003, there was a government exhibition on the proposed locations of human services in our areas.... What was happening was that people were being played...My wife and I started to put together an e-mail list that basically let people know what was happening in the area. Gradually, we had information fed to us from people in non-government organisations, human services organisations and wherever else we could get that information to let people know what was happening and to try to bring a level of transparency..... We were recently well-organised to be able to enter in the discussions with government and put pressure on government in the process. We had a series of meetings with the Minister, facilitated a meeting with the Aboriginal community and we could meet with the minister and met with the opposition in the cross benches and managed to get some reasonable significant changes to the legislation that was proposed.”(Community group member 1)*

Interviews with state and local government planners confirmed the important role that community groups played during the consultation process of the reform. However, they perceived that community groups were frequently critical and negative towards the proposed reform.

*“We hold key stakeholder groups meetings on the important policy initiatives and community groups are definitely one of them.... I think they (community groups) tended to focus on negative influences of the proposed policies or projects and they like to criticise. However, I think they do not necessarily represent the views of the wider general public.”(State government officer 3)*

In response to the growing influence of environmental and community groups, developers and business groups recognised the need to consolidate their efforts and present a united front. Adopting a strategy mirroring that of the BPN, these pro-development groups established the Planning Reform Alliance (PRA). This alliance was a coalition of various developers, industry stakeholders, and business groups. They came together with a shared objective of advocating for planning reforms that they believed would work for their benefits. The PRA launched an extensive media campaign with many strategies to amplify their voices. They utilised various media platforms including print and broadcast, digital and social media, to publicly voice their strong support for the Bill (2013). The PRA framed their arguments around the necessity for streamlining development processes and potential economic benefits. Furthermore, they organised a series of advertisements and public statements that aimed at building public support for the reform. PRA directly appealed to the State Parliament and called for swift action to pass the reform.

The revised Bill (2013), despite attempts to address concerns, still failed to gain support from community groups. These community groups believed that the revised proposals still did not adequately represent or safeguard community interests. A prominent member from one community group highlighted a deeper issue: a widespread lack of trust within the broader community towards the planning reform process:

*“We decided to run a ‘No’ campaign. The reason was because the legislation was felt from a community perspective, it wasn't going to work. We don't trust the government to work out a solution. Rather than taking bits and pieces out of it, they thought ‘stop it’ was a much easier thing. There was a kind of mentality that you don't negotiate, but you just stop. I'm not going to go into whether that's the right or wrong thing to do.” (Community group member 2)*

This mistrust, coupled with limited resources to sustain what could potentially become a protracted campaign, posed significant challenges. Given these constraints and the uphill battle they foresaw in negotiating a legislative outcome that truly reflected community desires, there was a growing sentiment among these groups to halt the planning reform in its tracks. Instead of pushing for further revisions, they decided to advocate for a completion of the reform, believing that this might be a more effective and achievable strategy to protect community interests.

The proposed Bill (2013) was under intense scrutiny during the parliamentary debate in November 2013. It was blamed for giving ‘great discretion’ to state government that undermined local communities'

rights and silenced their voices in local councils. Shoebridge's 2014 report highlighted this concern and argued that the Bill (2013) prioritised centralised power and discretion, which denied local communities' fundamental rights to participation in decision-making processes (Shoebridge, 2014, p. 7). The efforts of the BPN gained recognition, with Parliamentary discussions citing BPN's arguments as evidence of the community's strong opposition to the Bill (2013). For example, a Greens Party member, Jan Balham (NSW Parliament 2013) said:

*"I oppose the Planning Bill 2013...The Better Planning Network has undertaken extensive consultations and information sessions and used its website, Twitter and other modern dissemination tools. People will be shocked when they have a true understanding of how these bills will affect their lives."*

The planning reform in NSW revealed deep tensions between economic priorities and community interests. Developers and business groups aimed to simplify regulatory processes to drive economic growth and reduce delays in development processes. However, community and environmental groups emphasised the need for sustainable practices and greater accountability for public concerns. These groups called for reforms that balanced growth with long-term social and environmental goals.

Such competing priorities led to diverse advocacy efforts. Developers relied heavily on established networks and formal lobbying to influence decision-makers. Meanwhile, community and environmental groups, who were dissatisfied with the Green Paper (2012) proposals, organised both formal and informal activities. These groups took part in government-led public consultations to voice their concerns. They also organised grassroots campaigns, held public forums, and used social media platform to spread their message widely. These active community groups recognised the importance of collaboration in strengthening their influence and formed coalitions like the BPN to maximise their collective impact.

The involvement of the opposition party further increased the position of community and environmental advocates. This alliance provided additional support and created political pressure on the government to revise its reform proposals. This partnership also enabled community voices to gain greater influence within the broader reform discussion.

Ultimately, the reform process demonstrated the complexity of how varying priorities and collaborative strategies shaped policy outcomes in NSW. This diversity revealed the intense conflicts that planning processes must address to accommodate a range of public interests. The challenge lies in finding

mechanisms that not only reflect the values of different communities but also effectively resolve the tensions raised in the process.

## 5.4 Real influences or not? How the opinions received were reflected in the outcomes of the planning reform

This section discusses stakeholders' opinions, and to what extent the opinions and suggestions received in the participation and consultations for the NSW planning reform were included in the proposals. The real influences of public participation policy outcomes for stakeholders are analysed and assessed in this section.

The publicity of planning reform is an important objective for the public participation that aim to inform and educate the general public on the basic concept and proposals of planning reform.

The instrumental purposes of public participation in the planning reform aimed to gather opinions and information from different stakeholders and the general public to influence the outcomes of policy settings of the planning reform in NSW. Departmental staff interviews indicated generally positive feedback for the outcomes of the planning reform in reflecting the ideas from the community.

*"I think the public participation in the planning reform was successful in achieving its goal of incorporating genuine input from the community in the reform. It is a difficult process. We received a huge amount of information from public participation processes, submissions, community meetings, deliberative panel sessions, for example. The team put a great effort in classifying the information, coding and finally incorporating these opinions into the final documents."(State government officer 4)*

Analysis was done to extract key arguments and suggestions by stakeholder groups in the submissions to identify to what extent the Green Paper (2012) had set the proposed direction of change for the planning system and had have accommodated suggestions from public consultation processes.

As indicated in Table 12 , of the 19 proposed main changes in the Green Paper (2012), seven of the changes directly reflected the recommendations by different interest groups in the consultation process. Five of the Green Paper (2012) recommendations reflected opinions from developers and business groups, one recommendation was from community and environmental groups, and one was from local government groups. There was an evident link between the suggestions raised in the public consultations during the independent review and the Green Paper (2012) .



Table 12: Planning reform themes and impacting interests

Theme	Strategies	Interest groups
Community Participation	Public Participation Charter to require the appropriate level of community participation in plan-making and development assessment	-
	Strategic community participation to enable effective and early community participation	Developer and business groups
	Transparency in decision-making to increase public access to the evidence base for decisions	Community and Environmental groups
	Information technology and e-planning to simplify and improve community access to planning information and processes	-
Strategic Focus	NSW Planning Policies replace SEPPs and Section 117 Directions and provide practical high-level direction	-
	Regional Growth Plans to align strategic planning with infrastructure delivery	-
	Subregional Delivery Plans that affect immediate changes to zones, are based on evidence in Sectoral Strategies and linked to Growth Infrastructure Plans	-
	Local Land Use Plans with strategic context and performance-based development guidelines	-
	New Zones to capture investment opportunities and preserve local character	-

Faster and less complicated Development Approval as issues are resolved strategically	Depoliticised decision-making with development decisions streamed to independent experts	Developer and business groups
	Strategic compliance to allow development that complies with strategic planning to proceed	Developer and business groups
	Streamlined state significant assessment to deliver major projects sooner	Developer and business groups
	Smarter and timely merit assessment with requirements matching the level of risk	-
	Increasing code assessment to reduce transaction costs and speed up approvals for complying development	Developer and business groups
	Extended reviews and appeals to increase the accountability of decision-makers	-
	Contestable infrastructure to enable greater private sector participation	-
Provision of Infrastructure	Growth Infrastructure Plans to link strategic plans with infrastructure provision	Local Government
	Affordable infrastructure contributions to provide a fairer and simpler system to support growth	-
	Public Priority Infrastructure to streamline assessment for major infrastructure delivery	-

There was generally positive feedback from the community on the outcomes of the Issues Paper prepared after the independent review. One community group member commented:

*“The start of the planning reform was reasonably good... I can feel they are willing to listen to us so the consultation was effective They (the independent review panel) produced a very good report that looked at what the issues were and reflected the opinions raised from public consultation.”(Community group member2)*

However, the main issue raised was the uneven selection of suggestions by different interest groups. Most items for change in the Green Paper (2012) tended to reflect the suggestions of developer and business groups. This led to dissatisfaction of community and environmental groups with the Green Paper (2012). One community group member said that:

*“The problem was that our interests (community) were not reflected back into the Green Paper and the White Paper. The Green Paper came out and basically pushed an agenda which was being promoted by a developer and to some extent planning interests. It was unrecognisable from the initial report that had been produced when they had sent their people around to talk to the community.” (Community group member5)*

The Green Paper (2012) tended to use vague expression, perhaps with the hope that the tensions of conflicting views from different interest groups could be softened and minimised. For example, the objective of the proposed Act on page 3 of the Green Paper (2012) addressed economic development as the priority objective that would support developer and business interest groups’ suggestions: “The objectives of the Act will emphasise in particular the role of planning in facilitating and managing growth and economic development.” However, on page 17, the Green Paper (2012) emphasised sustainable development as the main objective which supported the position of community and environmental interest groups: “The achievement of sustainable development will remain the main objective of the Act.”

Another example was proposed changes to the public participation requirements in the new system. The Green Paper (2012) promised that community participation was ‘at the centre of the new planning system’ and there would be ‘more effective community participation at the strategic stages’ (NSW Government, 2012a). However, it was stated in the White Paper (2013) that there would be reduced public participation in the development assessment stage.

However, such intentions were unsuccessful in convincing the community due to the lack of clarity and conflicting expressions in the Green Paper (2012). Some community groups, such as Save Our Suburbs, criticised the lack of clarity on the role of ESD as an objective of the new system. They

commented that “this is a serious omission in the Green Paper (2012) and needs to be corrected” (Save our suburbs, 2012)

By the time of the publication of the White Paper (2013) and draft Bill (2013), most issues had still not been resolved. As a result, the White Paper (2013) and draft Bill (2013) received significant objections from community and environmental groups. As discussed in the above section, these interest groups conducted various campaign activities aiming to stop the progress of planning reform. In July 2013, BPN wrote a strong assertive letter of complaints about ideas in the White Paper (2013), arguing that it:

- did not adopt a comprehensive interpretation of ESD principles
- reduced judicial review rights of communities in strategic plan-making processes
- decreased the important role of the Heritage Council in development assessment of state listed heritage items.

The then Department of Planning published the letter and the correspondence letter by the Director General and Ombudsman to show the transparency of the process. In their correspondence letter, the Department generally acknowledged the issues and promised to investigate and work on them.

In October, the Department published the amended draft Bill (2013). The three issues identified in the BPN letter had all been addressed: a clause had been added to explicitly address the objective of the act, which was to promote ESD; exclusions and time limits on proceedings in the Land and Environment Court for judicial review were amended to be consistent with corresponding provisions in the current legislation; and the Heritage Council would continue to have the final say on local development applications for state heritage items. In addition, the 80% ‘code assessable’ target for development applications was strongly opposed by community and environmental groups and was removed. These amendments were widely seen as efforts to gain support from local councils and community groups. However, community groups remained unsatisfied. The BPN stated that “fundamental issues are still unresolved” (Better Planning Network, 2013).

Based on the above analysis, it appears that the direction of the planning reform proposals and position of the government were influenced by the suggestions of interest groups obtained from various public participation sources with, however, the government attempting to implement their own political objectives. However, even with ‘unprecedented public participation’ claimed by the government and efforts in adjusting the proposals to satisfy stakeholders, the political aim of balancing different views and obtaining consensus, as well as improving trust in the community, was

not achieved. Neither developer and business groups or community and environmental groups were satisfied with the Bill (2013) in their final version.

One planner from a government agency pointed out that the problems lay in the ambitious objective of the government to maximise public participation. However, public participation generated a misled message and high expectation that the public had the final say in all government decisions. To deal with this issue, the government had to set a boundary on the level of influence public participation provided compared to the final decision-making process. This would give rise to more reasonable expectations from the public.

*“Sometimes you've just got to draw the line and say no more. We've got to make a decision here, and people need to understand that too. I mean, they're often not the decision-makers. The government is in most of these, so I suppose it's understanding the parameters that's set in, and what you can influence, what you can't, what the government might listen to, but then why they refuse that decision or take that on board. Certainly, some groups may not be happy with the decision. We live in political democracy, but it's a political system, so there's always going to be having those decisions made. One would hope that planning decisions aren't made on political basis, but certainly in shaping legislation, it's made on government decision-making. Yeah, that's the reality, so planning and politics, hand in hand unfortunately.” (State government officer 2)*

Whilst conducting interviews with both government officers and community members, a nuanced understanding of the planning reform's dynamics emerged. While the proposals in the reform ostensibly reflected the feedback garnered from public consultations, a deeper examination revealed a distinct tilt towards developers and business interests. This observation suggests that while public consultations were conducted and opinions gathered, the weight given to various stakeholders' feedback was not uniform. The satisfaction derived from the public involvement process was, in large measure, contingent upon the extent to which specific interest groups saw their opinions mirrored in the policy outcomes.

Community groups, in particular, emerged as influential players in the process of the reform. Their expertise in understanding the planning systems, enabled them to assess the degree to which their feedback was incorporated. More importantly, their insights allowed them to anticipate the potential consequences of policy outcomes. Such knowledge empowered them to challenge proposals they deemed misaligned with community interests and to advocate for more inclusive and balanced reforms.

## 5.5 Discussion and analysis

In examining the NSW planning reform of 2011-2013, this research addresses the role and impact of public involvement across three stages: the objectives, the operation, and the outcomes of public involvement.

### 5.5.1 Objectives of public participation: enhancing effectiveness, building trust, and ensuring inclusivity

Policy-makers in the interviews addressed that the focus of public participation was to improve the inclusiveness of policy outcomes and fairness in policy-making. They tended to believe that public participation was a mechanism to gather genuine feedback from the community to ensure that policies were rooted in real needs and experiences. The media also used the term 'rebuilding trust and accountability' as the goal of the reform. However, there were conflicting views on the objectives of public participation from different stakeholder groups.

Community groups, for example, argued that the real objectives of public participation for the planning reform was to secure consensus from the community on the reformed agenda. They believed that the planning reform agendas favoured pro-development initiatives, and that public participation was used to legitimise these initiatives without genuinely addressing community concerns. However, policy-makers were reluctant to link public participation with the goal of consensus-building or legitimacy. The general public, however, believed that public participation was a channel for them to express their views and thus improve policy quality.

### 5.5.2 Operation of public participation: structured approach and efforts beyond the formal channel

The planning reform in NSW adopted a structured approach to public participation. However, significant challenges emerged during its implementation. The survey results revealed low levels of public motivation and engagement. Despite a comprehensive media campaign, only about one third of respondents were aware of the planning reform, and even fewer had actively participated. This low participation rate reflects the broader difficulties of engaging the public effectively, even in places where democratic governance has been a long practice. The survey data also showed a clear link between socio-economic status and knowledge of the planning system. Respondents with higher education and income levels were better informed and more likely to participate. The result highlighted the need for more targeted and inclusive engagement strategies.

A communication plan was developed to guide the participation process and identify campaign strategies, consultation mechanisms, key stakeholders and timelines prior to the launch of the reform. The plan, reviewed and approved by senior executives, aimed to ensure consistency and efficiency in public engagement. However, planners and policy-makers felt that this standard and the pre-determined approach lacked flexibility and failed to respond to specific concerns raised during consultations. The rigid governance structure limited planners' ability to act on emerging issues and made it difficult to address communities' concerns promptly. As a result, planners felt it was hard for them to build mutual trust with the community.

The consultation mechanisms used in the planning reform included media campaigns, public submissions, community discussion sessions, key stakeholder meetings and deliberative panels. These tools, which are commonly used in planning practice in NSW, represented standard approaches and were familiar to the community. However, the lack of trust between the community and the government led many interest groups to seek alternative avenues outside the formal consultation processes. For example, both community groups and pro-development groups organised their own alliances to amplify their voices and influence the reform process. These alliances used campaigns, social media platforms, and petitions to ensure their perspectives were heard. These groups sought to increase their visibility and directly shape public opinion and policy discussions.

### 5.5.3 Outcomes of public participation: mixed results from stakeholders

The NSW planning reform showed little integration of community input from public participation into the final proposals. This failing to act on feedback showed a gap between the objectives of public participation and its implementation. Planners and policy-makers admitted in the interviews that the routine nature of the participation process focused on collecting feedback without considering how to act as a result. The process made great efforts in identifying issues but gave little attention to designing meaningful policy changes.

Community groups believed that the planning reform operated on a pre-determined agenda that prioritised pro-development interests. While the state government claimed that some policy changes had addressed communities' concerns, their adjustments were perceived to be mainly on less significant aspects. Community groups observed that public participation was more about validating the reform process than shaping its outcomes. They questioned whether their efforts were truly valued or merely symbolic.

Different to the views of active community groups, the general community seemed satisfied with the power distribution and the platforms for public input resulting from the questionnaire survey. Although with limited participation experiences, many residents believed that public participation could influence planning outcomes in a meaningful way. This optimism likely came from trust in democratic principles, especially the belief that collective decisions and majority power can influence policies.

## 5.6 Summary

Chapter 5 presents an insightful examination of community engagement in the NSW planning reform. Awareness of the proposed planning reform was higher among older residents in wealthier areas, while immigrant communities and younger populations participated less. The most cited reasons of non-participation were: lack of interest, time constraints or a belief that their input would not affect decisions.

Stakeholders held different views on the objectives and implementation of public participation. State government officials expressed a commitment to collecting genuine community feedback. They considered public involvement important for transparency and accountability. In contrast, many community group members saw the process as superficial. This statement grew stronger in the later stages of the reform, where community groups felt their input had little influences on the reform agenda.

Opinions on the design and delivery of public participation efforts were similarly divided. Planners highlighted their efforts to engage a wide range of stakeholders, with multiple methods to gather input. However, community groups criticised the process for excluding opposing views and focusing on pro-development interests. The findings showed that the proposed reform struggled to achieve balanced dialogues or rebuild public trust. The reform appeared to prioritise political goals, with planners admitting difficulties in meeting community expectations under the existing decision-making framework. The chapter concludes that public participation in the NSW planning reform met with limited success.

This chapter sets the foundation for Chapter 6, which examines public participation practice in Shanghai's planning system. Together, these two chapters provide a comparative perspective of public involvement in planning processes across different governance contexts.

## Chapter 6 Survey in China

### 6.1 Introduction

Chapter 6 examines public participation processes of preparing the *Shanghai Comprehensive Plan (2040)* (SCP 2040). A variety of data sources including questionnaire survey with Shanghai residents, interviews with key stakeholders, public websites, social media news, and personal observations of public engagement activities were employed.

The chapter is structured based on the conceptual framework and research questions discussed in Chapter 1 and 2. It aims to provide a detailed understanding of public participation processes in urban planning in China. One of the key components of the study was a questionnaire survey conducted with 300 individuals from three demographically diverse districts in Shanghai. Out of these, 101 responses were collected. The outcomes of the survey data in Australia from Chapter 5 are also presented for each question where possible to provide an easy reference for readers. In addition, 15 interviews with government officials and community members offered qualitative insights that complemented the survey results.

The chapter begins with an overview of SCP 2040 and highlights the main phases of public engagement during its development. It then explores the three key stages of the participation process: its objectives, methods, and outcomes. Stakeholder perspectives are analysed to understand how objectives shaped the participation process.

This chapter not only examines the specific experiences in Shanghai but also explores their implications for urban planning practices with similar political and social contexts broadly. The chapter summarises the role and effectiveness of public participation in one of China's most ambitious urban planning initiatives and situates these findings within the comparative framework set in this thesis.

### 6.2 Questionnaire survey outcomes- reported satisfaction and previous experiences with public involvement opportunities

The following section presents the outcomes of questionnaire surveys by community members from Shanghai from three districts covering different socio-economic backgrounds. The response rate was 32% (96 out of 300). As well as exploring perspectives from the community on public involvement opportunities, the survey also reveals how their previous experience in the planning system impacted their satisfaction with the public involvement opportunities provided. Where applicable,

the results are compared to the questionnaire survey outcomes in Sydney to identify similarities and differences between the two contexts.

### 6.2.1 Knowledge and satisfaction of the community with the making of the Shanghai 2040 Plan

From the survey of Shanghai's residents on their knowledge of SCP 2040, around 50% of the participants were aware of the making of SCP 2040, mostly hearing about it from the TV local news.

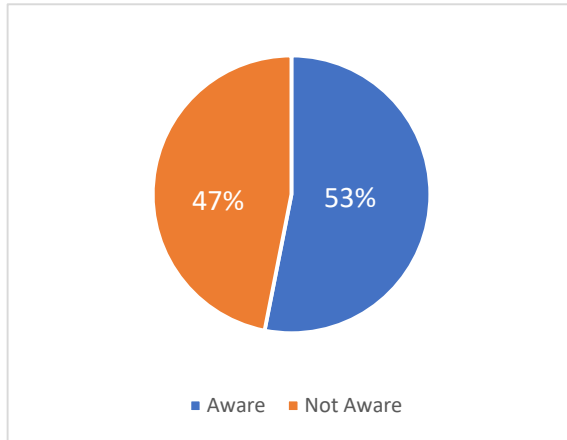


Figure 23: Public's awareness of SCP in Shanghai

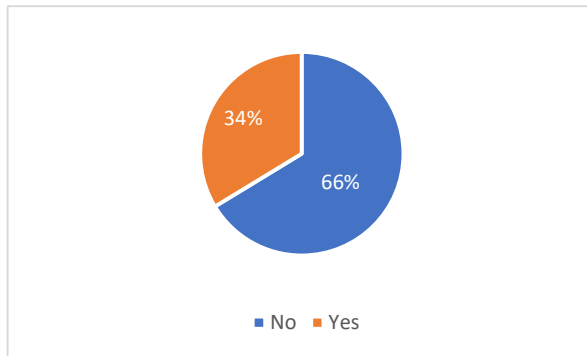


Figure 24: Public's awareness of the planning reform in Sydney

Overall, participants from higher socio-economic districts tended to have higher awareness of SCP 2040. However, the difference was not significant between the three districts.

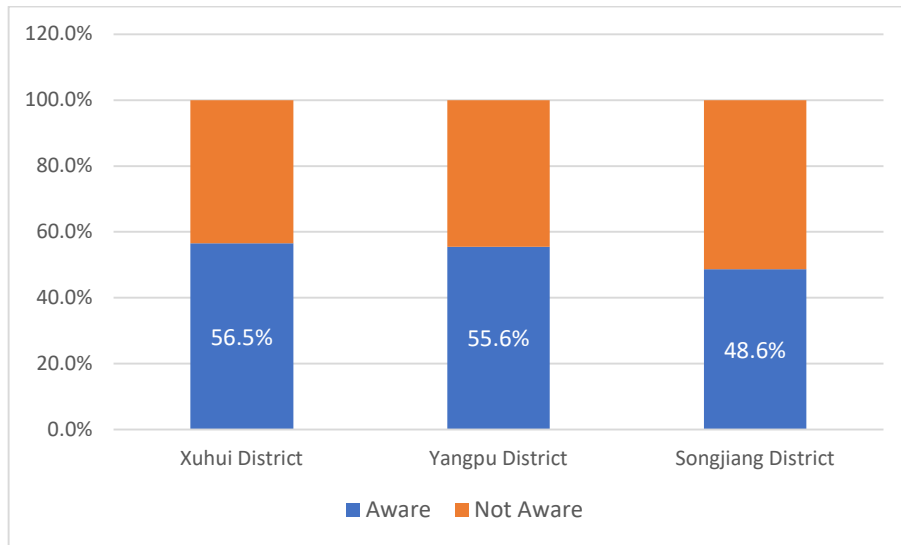


Figure 25: Public's awareness by suburbs in Shanghai

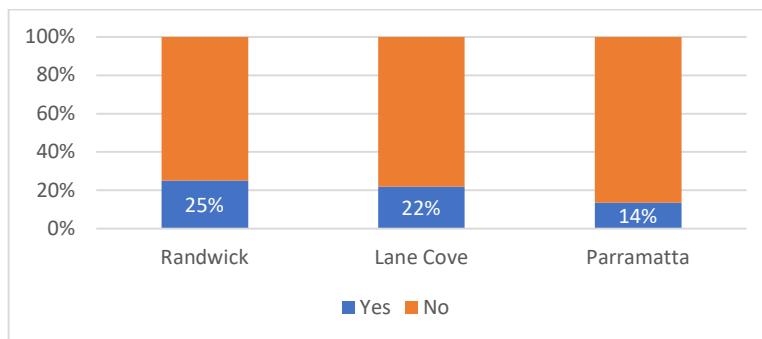


Figure 26: Public's awareness by suburbs in Sydney

People younger than 25 years old had the lowest level of awareness of the SCP 2040. There were similar levels of awareness for the remaining three age groups (Figure 27).

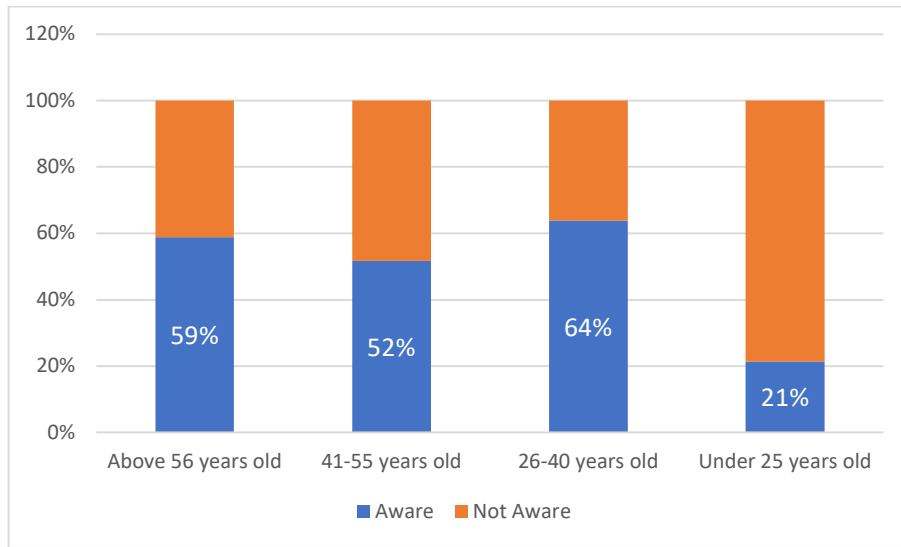


Figure 27: Public's awareness by age in Shanghai

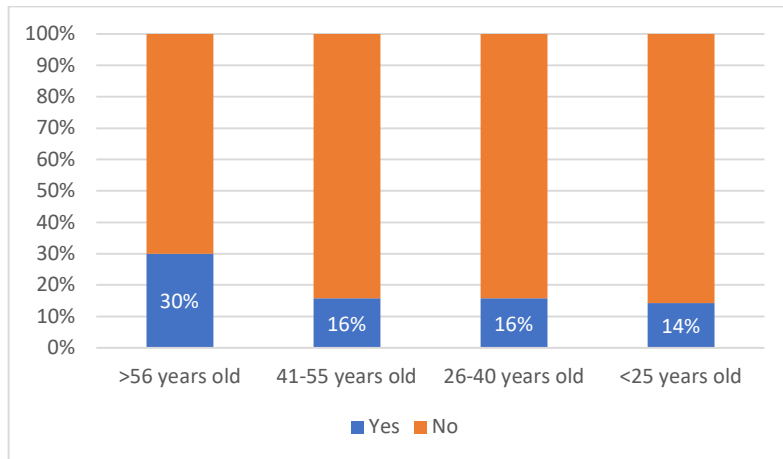


Figure 28: Public's awareness by age in Sydney

However, only five people in the survey had experienced the participation process, all on the social platform of Wechat.

There was also very limited knowledge of the SCP 2040 from the general public. Only two of the interviewed participants had heard about the related documents such as the Guidance or Outline and they were both working in the building and urban development field. .

Traditional news releases accounted for the main source of information for communities. Sixty-three percent of participants who were aware of the SCP 2040 obtained it the information from advertising videos or local TV news. Emerging social media platforms also played a significant role in

informing the public about the plan with 25% of participants using Wechat or Weibo. The remaining 7% of participants got their information from other sources such as friends and the website.

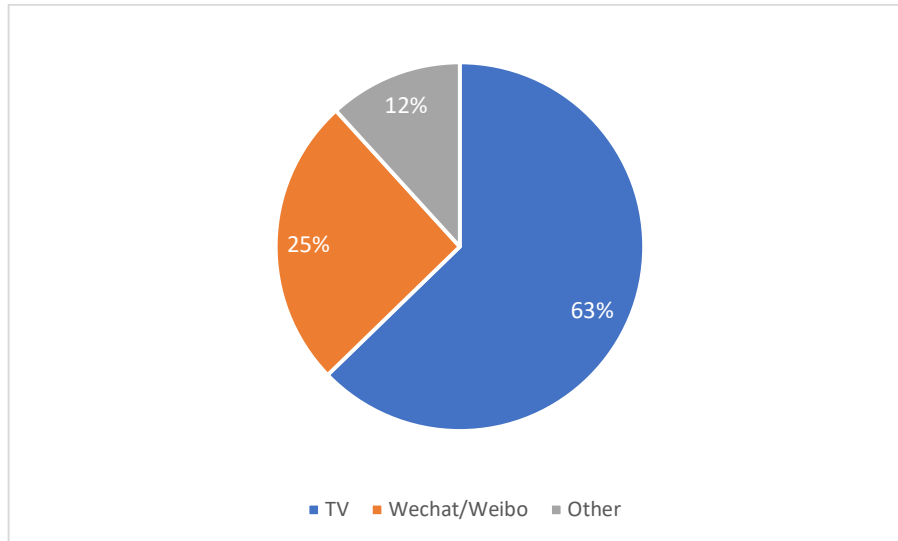


Figure 28-1: Source of information of the SCP 2040

The survey of Shanghai’s residents on their knowledge of SCP 2040 revealed that awareness of the project was moderately high, largely due to local TV news broadcasts. This suggests that the extensive advertising campaign successfully raised public awareness. Participants from higher socio-economic districts generally had greater awareness, although the difference across districts was not significant. Despite the awareness, actual participation in the SCP 2040 process was notably low.

### 6.2.2 Knowledge and motivations of public participation in planning

Among the 96 participants in the survey in the three districts of Shanghai, 89 (93%) of them had never participated in any planning matters in the past (Figure 29). Only 7 (7%) of participants had experience of public participation in planning such as through joining online surveys of plans, attending seminars or community meetings or calling a government hotline to complain. The results indicate that public participation in planning is not popular in China. “The lack of knowledge and understanding of the policies” and “the lack of time” are the most frequent reasons for not participating in policy-making processes.

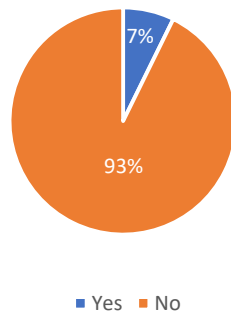


Figure 29: Previous experience in the planning system

Although the participation rate was low, there tended to be great appreciation and expectations of public participation in planning. More than 85% of the participants in the survey thought they were either very important or important in regard to their contribution towards creating better planning policy outcomes. Only 6% of the participants thought public participation was not important (Figure 30).

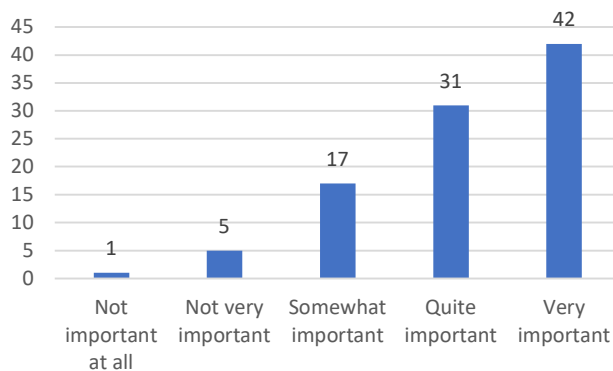


Figure 30: Level of importance of public participation considered by participants

Around 90% of participants considered it essential to increase public participation in plan-making processes, while more than 95% would have liked to have had more participation opportunities in the development assessment stage. This was where they thought developments would have more influences on their neighbourhood and daily life.

On the other hand, however, when it comes to writing submissions and attending meetings for more formal public participation activities, few people show up. This is because most communities still think of planning regulations and processes as ‘black boxes’ that they neither have sufficient knowledge of for them to establish a strong argument nor will they be able to influence the outcomes of decision-making which they perceive to be politically driven. The perceived marginal

cost is high for an individual community member who feels that if they are the only one participating in the process, there will be no impact on outcomes based on just their participation. Some people also think projects may not proceed. Therefore, they will not invest time and effort into participating and will keep silent. However, once actual construction started in Shanghai, those who were the most impacted did not hold back and started opposing activities. These activities were sometimes very severe, such as blocking construction or protesting on the streets. At this point, many other community members no doubt realised that the cost was little for showing support by signing a petition. There was then an increased possibility of winning the game.

From the survey, the favourite method of public participation was proper notification of planning news and progress of policy and project delivery following by the visualised model presentation of future projects and plans (Figure 31). The discussion forums and consultation meetings were comparatively not favoured by the participants.

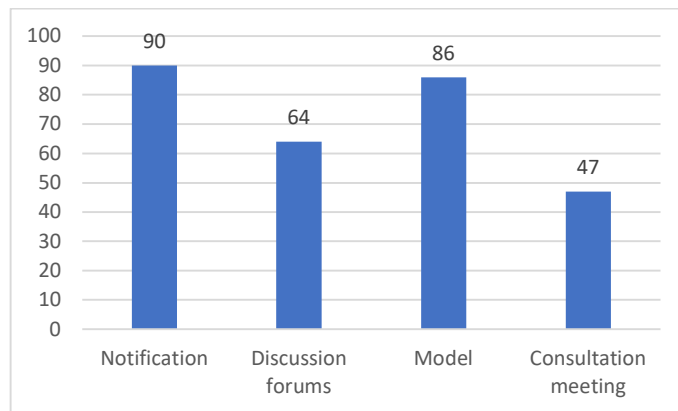


Figure 31: Preferred participation method

This implies that the participants were more willing to passively receive information that is easy to understand and up to date on planning matters. They then have the flexibility to decide whether to further explore or not. In comparison, more intensive and active participation methods such as consultation meetings, which require more time and liability, were not favoured by the participants. Also, there was great interest in, and increasing use of, online discussion forums where people may have felt safer and freer to express their opinions without disclosing their true identities. It was also found that there has been an increase in people using online forums to comment on and criticise the government's decision-making in China (Cheng, 2013).

When asked which government sectors or groups have the most powerful influence on the outcomes of planning, most people thought local government, developers and the state government have the dominant voices driving planning outcomes (Figure 32). It was considered that the media have some

influence in the process too. In comparison, community groups and property owners were believed to have the least influence on planning outcomes.

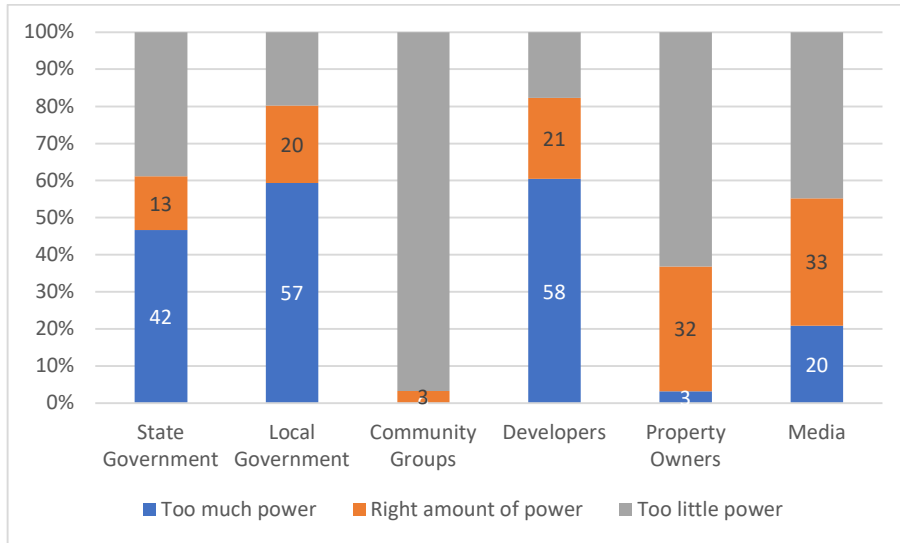


Figure 32: Power of influences by different stakeholder groups in Shanghai

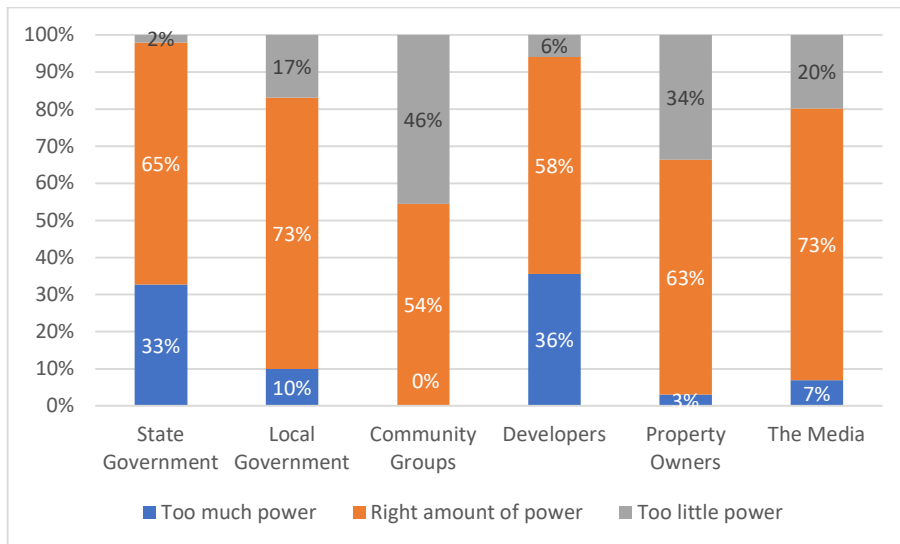


Figure 33: Power of influences by different stakeholder groups in Sydney

This survey question shows the dominant perception that the government and developers have the decisive power in determining the outcomes of planning policies in Shanghai, while it is thought that communities have the least impact on the decision-making process.

The survey also reveals that communities in Shanghai generally have limited understanding of the role of public participation in planning. Firstly, they do not have sufficient knowledge of public participation processes and planning regulations to make them confident enough to step up and

express their ideas through the formal public participation channels. Participants from the survey felt that there would be some liability on them if they decided to participate and provide opinions. To avoid this perceived threat but still wanting to express their strong interest in planning topics, most of the community did not attend public participation activities that required them to actively 'shout out' their opinions. Instead, some participants said they and others in their community often had casual conversations with their neighbours about the advantages, disadvantages and potential influences of planning policies or infrastructure projects.

In comparison, interviews with planners from local government indicated that the government did take actions to conduct public participation to address the issues raised by the communities during the decision-making process. The distrust between communities and planners has disabled communities from protecting their own legitimate benefits in the process

### 6.3 Stakeholders' views on the objectives of public involvement in the making of the Shanghai Comprehensive Plan (2040)

Since the early stages of deciding to introduce a new comprehensive plan, a stated objective of the plan-making process on the government's website and via public news was to "Open the door to make the process of plan-making publicly available". The intent of public participation was investigated by planning professionals working in municipal government, planning experts on the assessment panel for the plan, as well as by community members.

The bureaucratic value of public participation was considered an important objective by both policy decision-makers and community members. Public participation indicated the democracy of governance and helped the government establish a desirable image of transparency and accountability in their decision-making. Policy-makers pointed out that the historical lack of public participation in planning and in governance in general compared to many western countries had led to critics and complaints of governments from communities. One planner from the Shanghai Department of Planning and Natural Environment expressed the intention to build a leading role of the Shanghai government in promoting public participation in planning practices in China:

*"The public participation in the Shanghai Comprehensive Plan (2040) is an experimental experience and can be an example of planning practices for other parts of China. We have incorporated public participation experiences overseas into the design of public participation processes. We have reviewed and learnt experiences from plan-making processes with increasing public participation in some economically advanced cities such as Guangzhou and*

*Shenzhen. I think the extent of public participation in the making of the Shanghai Comprehensive Plan (2040) has exceeded these cities.” (Government officer 1)*

Furthermore, policy-makers believe that public participation reduces the risk of public misunderstanding led by false news sources. With developments in information technology and the use of social media such as Weibo and Wechat, there is the risk that the general public’s opinions may be led by undesirable media channels and governments may lose the public’s trust. Therefore, governments need to actively disclose their information and decision-making processes to avoid such misunderstanding and thus achieve legitimacy for the decisions made.

*“There are still so many different channels to release governments’ information, even if governments attempt to hide their information. These media channels may utilise the governments’ behaviours and misinterpret governments’ information for their own purposes. This may generate panic and misunderstanding from the public towards governments which is the worst scenario we would like to see. I think it is better for governments to disclose everything during the process of decision-making and show that the government is willing to seek suggestions from the public. In this way, governments will obtain satisfaction and legitimacy from the public and guide the public’s opinion in a desirable direction. We established our own social media channel and publish our information on any progress of (Shanghai Comprehensive Plan (2040)) plan-making processes and how decisions are made.” (Government officer 2)*

From the perspective of community members, the practice of community involvement in the making of SCP 2040 serves a crucial purpose of reinforcing the image of fairness, openness, and transparency within the government. This perception is deeply rooted in the understanding that a transparent and inclusive governance system is instrumental in maintaining Shanghai’s competitiveness on the global stage, especially in attracting high-quality individuals and talent to the city. By actively engaging citizens in the planning process and valuing their input, the government not only fosters a sense of ownership and pride among the people but also demonstrates commitment to accountability and responsive governance. One of the community members expressed in their interview that:

*“There is more transparent and open government decision-making in Shanghai than in most other cities in China. Public participation is an important vehicle for public scrutiny. I can have access to the information from the website, so I know it (the decision-making process) is following a legitimate and fair process. This is important for us who were born and came from other cities, as we do not have social connections and relationships to fight with governments’*

*decisions as people who have lived in Shanghai for a long time. I feel safe and comfortable that the transparency in governance will ensure I will not be significantly impacted by any decision made or at least I will know if there are such decisions. This is one of the reasons I chose to live in Shanghai... I think this is one of the reasons why Shanghai can attract so many skilful and capable young people coming from all around China and even around the world.”*  
(Community member 3)

Instrumental benefits are also considered as objectives of public participation in the making of the *Shanghai Comprehensive Plan (2040)*. Historically, community involvement in urban planning has been limited, and there is a growing eagerness among planners to bridge this gap. The genuine curiosity lies in comprehending how the community envisions the future of their city and what they consider essential for its development. By actively seeking input and involving residents in the decision-making process, policy-makers aim to gain valuable insights into the collective aspirations, concerns, and needs of the community. One decision-maker from the Shanghai government said:

*“We like to hear how the public think. In the past, Shanghai experienced a period of high-speed economic development. We would like to see if citizens are willing to maintain such high-speed development and get living standards improved; or if more people would like to see the improvement of the natural environment, the sense of happiness. This is what we have noticed, that many Shanghai residents are not so eager to see the development in the economy. The result of public consultation will be the evidence and support for our decision-making.”* (Government officer 5)

However, there were also concerns that limited knowledge of the planning system and the specific plan had greatly reduced the viability of instrumental benefits of the public participation process:

*“We realised that for the suggestions from submissions, most of the points raised are not relevant to the scope of the making of SCP 2040 and cannot be accepted. This is because the majority of citizens have very limited knowledge of comprehensive plans, and they tend to only care about projects near or within their neighbourhoods. They cannot link between high level plans with influences on their properties and everyday life. When being consulted on matters with broader spatial scale or more strategic level such as Shanghai Comprehensive Plan (2040), they will keep silent. However, if we plan to make any changes in their neighbourhood, they tend to be very active, and some may even protest to show their objection to the government.”* (Government officer 7)

Consequently, another objective of community involvement was to educate the public on the planning system and raise their awareness of the making of SCP 2040:

*“The process itself is an opportunity to educate citizens on what is a comprehensive plan and how a comprehensive plan is made. For common citizens it is hard for them to understand, or they are not interested in understanding and getting involved in planning processes especially on strategic level planning. They cannot see how significant planning can impact their life and build the link between the comprehensive plan and their communities.” (Government officer 4)*

Community members also believed that the community involvement process was essential for educating the public about the intricacies of the planning system and for shaping the development of the SCP 2040.

*“The planning system can be quite complicated, with various technical terms and processes that may not be familiar to the general public. So, I think it's essential that one of the objectives of community involvement is to educate the public about how the planning system works. When people have a better understanding of the process, they are more likely to participate meaningfully and provide informed input.” (Community member 1)*

A factor impinging on opinions that public participation should be considered as ‘a right’, was the transformation of property rights was promoting in established cities like Shanghai:

*“Shanghai has come to a point that most of the planning is for established areas, which is very different from the planning for new cities where a lot of lands are vacant and development rights are still in the hands of governments. In the case of Shanghai, where the development right of land is in the hands of communities and various companies, the government cannot simply enforce a plan without proper consultation with stakeholders. Communities and companies whose property values and life will be greatly impacted by the SCP 2040 should have the right to know and influence the plan.” (Government officer2)*

A second opinion from interviewees that supported consultation with relevant stakeholders and communities was that they were likely to be the parties that will invest and implement the SCP 2040 :

*“When we look at the investment information on urban development such as the building of service infrastructure and community facilities, the government only accounts for about one third of the investment. The remaining investment is by various companies and through ‘user pays’ in communities. The implementation of SCP 2040 will greatly impact their decisions on*

*investment. I think it is eligible and valid they need being consulted and satisfied with the plan.” (Government officer 5)*

In summary, the following features can be identified from the objectives of the public participation process in the making of SCP 2040.

Public participation is considered as a modern planning ideology in China and by employing wide public consultation and various participation tools, the Shanghai government is setting itself up as a model for planning practices for other cities in China. This image of government promoting democracy in politics will also enhance the competitiveness of Shanghai in attracting people and businesses. Therefore, the Shanghai government has actively advertised their initiatives in promoting public participation in the making of the *Shanghai Comprehensive Plan (2040)* in both traditional mass media and the emerging social media channels.

It was realised by government decision-makers and planning experts that Shanghai had entered the stage required public participation because the distribution of costs and benefits to communities generated by the spatial strategies would be complicated. Most of the future developments in Shanghai are related to urban intensification or urban renewal which will occur in established areas. This is a significant change compared to what happened in past decades and is common in many cities in China today. Most developments, however, are new town strategies happening in rural areas. The government believes citizens are entitled to know and approve the plans that will immediately impact their life and property value.

It was mentioned by some interviewees that the government did hope to get information and opinions for better policy outcomes from the public. However, there were difficulties in obtaining valuable suggestions from public participants due to their limited knowledge and interest in planning matters. Thus, public participation was used as an opportunity to educate the general public on planning. The educational and bureaucratic value of public participation is combined when governments advertise their achievements and show off their many consultation events. Also, governments often have a dominant role in providing selected information to guide the opinions and values of the general public in their desired direction.

## 6.4 The operational process of community involvement in the making of SCP 2040

Public participation in the making of SCP 2040 started in May 2014 and lasted for two and a half years to the end of 2017. A range of participation events were held during different phases of the

plan-making process. The following sections present relevant stakeholder opinions on the operation of the community involvement process.

#### 6.4.1 The design of the public participation process in the making of SCP 2040

The requirements for community participation in comprehensive plan-making, as stipulated in the primary planning act and other statutory regulations, are characterised by a degree of minimalism and vagueness (X. Li, F. Zhang, E. C.-m. Hui, & W. Lang, 2020). As noted previously in Chapter 4, the requirement of community participation in the *Urban and Rural Planning Act 2008* was public consultation and information disclosure. Therefore, it is largely up to the individual municipal government on how they want to design and operate their public participation processes.

The challenges surrounding the practice of public participation in China stem from a notable lack of experiences and comprehensive guidance for practitioners. While there is a growing recognition of the importance of engaging the public in decision-making processes, the relatively recent adoption of such practices in the country has left practitioners grappling with limited precedents and established best practices. As a result, many find it challenging to navigate the intricacies of effectively involving citizens in governance and policy-making. Without well-defined frameworks and a wealth of prior experiences to draw upon, practitioners often face hurdles in devising and executing meaningful public participation initiatives that align with China's unique socio-political context and the diverse needs of its population. One of the planners from Shanghai City Government indicated in the interview that:

*“The public participation of planning in China is still in the initial stage of attempting to implement the ideal concept into practices. Indeed, the idea of public participation is not a new idea in planning academic discussions but it is still long a way to go for the common people to actually get involved in the (public participation in planning) processes.”*  
(Government Officer 6)

In response to the challenges posed by the lack of experience and guidance in public participation practices, the design of community involvement was undertaken after a thorough review of international examples and experiences.

*“We have reviewed public consultation and participation examples internationally. For example, we have borrowed the concept of “Consulting panel of citizens representatives” from the plan making processes in Seoul, South Korea. We have comprehensively reviewed their experiences including how they selected citizen panels, the role of citizen panels and in which stage the citizen panel was involved. We thought it was a good model for collecting*

*opinions from industries efficiently and effectively and implemented this model for the making of SCP 2040.” (Government officer7)*

The practice of borrowing international examples of community involvement had become common for plan-making processes in many cities in China. It was felt that public participation in the planning system and in the government decision-making process in general was an idea derived from and developed in western democracies and economically advanced countries. The public participation processes in China therefore should learn from their experiences. This inclusive approach sought to bridge the gap between theory and practice, equipping practitioners with the tools and insights needed to make public participation a cornerstone of Shanghai’s sustainable urban development vision.

However, in regard to learning from international experiences for public participation in planning, there were also concerns that the implementation of public participation in the more democratic societies have greatly reduced the efficiency of the planning system and delayed the time of decision-making. Such deficiencies worried the planners and decision-makers in China:

*“I heard in other countries (countries with advanced public participation standard), there is intensive public participation even for small-scale projects. For example, the application for removing trees require consent from all the neighbours. Planning decisions cannot get through due to the objections from residents...We cannot afford such time for public participation in planning in China considering the amount of development and planning activities happening to support the high-speed economic development and increasing demand from residents.” (Government officer 5)*

Proper legislation is imperative to establish a robust framework for community involvement in China's planning system. Enacting legislation dedicated to community involvement not only provides a legal mandate for such practices but also ensures that they are conducted transparently, consistently, and equitably across the country. Such legislation would outline the rights and responsibilities of both the government and the public, establish mechanisms for consultation and feedback, and set standards for information disclosure. There were views from government officers that proper legislation on the procedures is essential for effective community participation processes in China:

*“China has a history of strong government culture where most decisions are made by governments without any consultation of the public. By introducing public participation into the decision-making processes, the power will be shared between the government and other*

*parties. This means the power of government in controlling decision-making will be reduced. Consequently, governments will have little incentives to promote genuine public participation processes. I think only legislation has the power to regulate governments' action and ensure the fundamental standards have been performed. In this way the ideal effects of public participation can be realised.” (Government officer 2)*

However, there were also opinions from planners that the lack of detailed and specific legislation promotes innovations and experiments in designing public participation processes that suit different people and circumstances.

*“I think it is appropriate that the legislation only regulates the high-level principles on public participation processes. Each city has their own features in terms of the public's knowledge, willingness and governments' cultures in operation. For cities like Shanghai which have the demands and resources to implement high standard of public participation, it is easier for us to work beyond the legislative requirements and common practices to innovatively design and organise a public participation process that best suit our needs. For example, in the current practices of the making of comprehensive plans, many cities utilised consult companies to organise the public participation processes. The consultants are responsible for organising and collecting information from public exhibitions and producing reports to governments and planning authorities. However, in the making of SCP 2040 we have established a public participation team from the Department of Planning and Natural Resources. In this way we are in a better position to integrate public participation with plan making processes, and we can quickly respond to the feedback from the public and adjust public participation processes.” (Government officer 4)*

Due to the lack of detailed requirements in the legislation, the design of public participation in the making of SCP 2040 was largely dependent on the ideas of government decision-makers who decided on appropriate methods and level of community empowerment. As discussed in the previous section, the significant importance of bureaucratic value to the government limited the operational process of public participation so that it did not genuinely empower the public to influence the outcome of SCP 2040.

#### 6.4.2 Tools and methods of public participation

The process of public consultation and involvement in the formulation of the *Shanghai Comprehensive Plan (2040)* (SCP 2040) relied on a diverse array of tools and methods. Due to the emphasis on efficiency and the governments' strong control, the majority of these methods resulted

in minimum influence on the timing of the process and reducing conflicts of interests between stakeholders (Table 13).

Table 13: Summary of the public consultation process in the making of SCP 2040

Participation and citizen event names	Participants	Description and summary of processes	Extent of participation
Related to the Shanghai Comprehensive Plan 2040			
Exhibitions of key documents (Guidance on the making of Shanghai Comprehensive Plan (2040), draft Shanghai Comprehensive Plan (2040))	Available to residents in Shanghai	Reports and documents are available for public inspection in Shanghai Planning Exhibition Centre and the Department of Planning and Natural Resources website.  In March 2015, a public version of the Guidance was released that aimed to interpret the content of the report in a simple and diagrammatic manner.	Informing
Consulting panel of citizen representatives	15 citizen representatives recommended by Municipal People's Congress and CPPCC	Six representatives selected by Shanghai People's Congress; 6 representatives selected by Shanghai People's Political Consultative Conference; the remaining 3 representatives are from Shanghai Planning Association	Consultation and placation
Questionnaire survey: My 2040: the desires and expectations survey of Shanghai residents	Randomly selected from Shanghai residents	The survey was conducted both online and on streets to cover wide representation of communities.  Around 16,000 valid questionnaires received.	Consultation
Paper based and online submissions; hotline	Available to residents in Shanghai	Exhibition of SCP 2040 Outline and Draft SCP 2040 on Shanghai 2040 website	Consultation

Experts and stakeholder discussion forums	11 expert discussion forums that are also available to all residents of Shanghai	The forums cover the main themes of the comprehensive plan such as sustainability, urban transport, population and employment etc. Top experts nationally and internationally were invited to the forums. The forums are open to the general public.	Consultation and placation
Public forum named <i>2040 the future of Shanghai and me</i> held in October 2014	Available to residents in Shanghai	The public forum was held at Shanghai Planning Exhibition Centre. It involved representatives of Shanghai People's Congress, planning experts and key stakeholders from the industries talking about the survey results of <i>My 2040-survey on residents' expectations</i> .	Informing and consultation
I would like to see; I would like to write, and I would like to draw	Available to residents in Shanghai	A series of incorporated public events on the SCP 2040. <i>I would like to see</i> focuses on exhibitions and interpretation of key governments reports and planning outcomes; <i>I would like to write</i> focuses on receiving suggestions from the public; <i>I would like to draw</i> focuses on inviting children to draw what they expect for the future of Shanghai	Consultation
Events beyond the consultation of Shanghai Comprehensive Plan (2040)			
<i>Sea-Hi</i> public forums	Available to residents in Shanghai	<i>See-Hi</i> held a series of public forums inviting architects, writers, artists and planners to talk about topics related to SCP 2040 and all aspects of urban development including urban history,	

		social, cultural, economic development.	
Worldwide undergraduate student competition on the urban design concept of Shanghai 2040	Worldwide undergraduate students	Held by SCP 2040 plan-making team of Shanghai government. The competition requires participants to provide a spatial design concept on one of the five given sites in Shanghai with high ecological, historical, social and economic value.	
Exhibition on the historical review of Shanghai's development and achievement in the past 20 years	Available to residents in Shanghai	A series of exhibitions on the historical development of Shanghai.	

(summarised by author)

#### 6.4.2.1 Consulting Panel of Citizen Representatives

The introduction of the Consulting Panel of Citizen Representatives was considered an 'experimental and innovative' approach by both decision-makers and planners. The consulting panel comprised 15 citizens representing the interests from a wide range of industries and community groups. From these 15 representatives, six were nominated by the Shanghai People's Congress, six were nominated by the Shanghai People's Political Consultative Conference and the remaining three were from the Shanghai Planning Association. The industries and associations that each panel member represented are listed in Table 14. The aims of the consulting panel included "performing functions of providing suggestions and feedback into the making of SCP 2040, scrutinising the process of the making of SCP 2040, and also collecting information from the industries or community groups they represent."

Table 14: Participants of the Citizen Panel

Representatives nominated by Shanghai People's Congress (SPC) (6 members)	Vice Director of Shanghai SPC Built Environment Protection Committee; Party Secretary of Pudong District; Director of Shanghai Party Committee on Media; Vice Director of Shanghai Urban Investment Pty Ltd; Business, financial and economic director of Jiading District Party Committee
---	--

Representatives nominated by Shanghai People's Political Consultative Conference (6 members)	Vice Director of Shanghai Committee for Population, Resource and Built Environment; Vice President of Shanghai Committee for Disabled People; Dean of Welfare Association of Children's Theatre; Director of Urban Ecological Planning and Design Centre in Fudan University; Director of Employment and Social Security Centre in Shanghai Academy of Social Science; Secretary General of Shanghai Youth Federation
Representatives nominated by Shanghai Planning Association	President of Shanghai Planning Association; Honorary President of Shanghai Planning Association; Vice Secretary General of Shanghai Planning Association

Source: Shanghai government website

The concept of the panel was borrowed from the planning practices of Seoul, South Korea, and was one of the most frequent selling points in the media to show the strong public participation initiative in the making of SCP 2040. However, as can be seen from Table 14 above all the representatives of the citizen panel were from government, social welfare or research related sectors. Although some of the representatives were from business and economic development areas in government sectors, there were not any representatives purely from third parties working in industry. The extent to which the panel members were able or willing to speak for all relevant stakeholders is questionable. One interviewed planner admitted this deficiency in selecting panel members but also stated the difficulty in selecting members in another way:

*"Indeed, the selection of representatives did not follow a bottom-up process and it was greatly influenced by government action, and it was very difficult to form a 'citizen panel' purely consisting of common residents like the practice of the Seoul government in South Korea. I think at the moment the understanding of planning by the general public is very limited and it is hard for them to form a group to provide valuable suggestions for the making of SCP 2040." (Government officer 7)*

#### 6.4.2.2 Questionnaire survey by Shanghai Government

The questionnaire survey was another frequently mentioned 'success' by media in the making of SCP 2040. Between July and October 2014, the Shanghai government had conducted three rounds of questionnaire surveys (round one with 12 questions, rounds two and three with 15 questions each) for Shanghai residents to gather their opinions and expectations on the planning and future development of Shanghai. The questions in the surveys covered the topics of transportation, community facilities, and leisure and open spaces. The surveys were carried out both online and

randomly on the streets to avoid biased results. The on-street survey had covered “more than one third of streets among all 17 districts of the Shanghai Metropolitan Area”.

On the *Shanghai 2040* website, it was published that the number of valid questionnaires was around 16,000 with about 24.5 million population of Shanghai in 2014. The survey result was summarised in the report *Overview of Shanghai public survey* and in three *Data Report* documents for individual rounds of the survey. The survey result was presented to the consulting panel along with key findings. The following finding was published on the Shanghai 2040 website: “Twelve questions are considered to be with a high level of agreement by participants and with significant impact on SCP 2040”.

Questionnaire surveys are a favourite method of planners for public consultation because of their efficiency in collecting needed information:

*“Questionnaire surveys are efficient in collecting the public’s opinions in a constructive way. The majority of common residents do not have sufficient knowledge about what is a comprehensive plan of a city and how the plan will impact their life. They may have better understanding and are more interested in the planning matters near their neighbourhood and therefore, their comments will be too small scaled and too detailed if we ask them open questions and let them comment on SCP 2040. By asking them multiple choice questions, we have set up the scales and options for them to choose. In this way, I think we can get more useful information from the public about the making of SCP 2040.”(Government officer 2)*

#### *6.4.2.3 Publishing of the public version of key reports and other educational events*

The Shanghai government have taken several methods to three of the key reports address the educational objective of public participation processes in the making of SCP 2040. For example, ‘Guidance on SCP 2040’, ‘Outline of SCP 2040’ and ‘Draft of SCP 2040’ all have their public versions which used simple language and comics to convert information into easy-to-understand documents. There were also videos introducing SCP 2040 that were frequently aired on Shanghai TV channels. One of planners have expressed the strong willingness and great efforts they have put to help the general public to understand the SCP 2040:

*“We really wanted the public to understand what we are doing. Without proper understanding of the key concepts and terminologies, it is impossible for the public to make any meaningful participation. Therefore, we think to make the process and plans understandable to the public is the fundamental and important step. We have invited experts of planning, graphic design and artists in writing the public version of the reports to ensure*

*they are precise and accurate in explaining the messages and policies as well as attractive and interesting enough for readers. The hard copies of these public versions of reports are circulated in the neighbourhood community committee for easy access". (Government officer 6)*

What is interesting is that besides the direct notification and consultation of SCP 2040, Shanghai government held many public events that were not directly related to the content of SCP 2040 but had relationships with the broader social, cultural and spatial development of Shanghai. These events including "Sea-Hi" public forums and a series of public exhibitions that reviewed the historical urban planning and development of Shanghai. These events were intensely organised between July and December 2014 and published on the Shanghai 2040 website.

The limited knowledge, understanding and interest in participating in the making of SCP 2040 by the general public was the most significant barrier for the public to be able to comment and express their opinions. The Shanghai government took initiatives to address this issue through the questionnaire survey, which at least provided some guidance on the type of suggestions sought. The publication of public versions of key reports, wide exposure of SCP 2040 on various media channels and a great range of events run by the Shanghai government showed the educational intention of the public participation process. However, this method also had the limitation that the process could be easily manipulated since the government could selectively present information for its own benefits and the public's attention can be attracted on areas the government wanted.

When it came to assessing the most efficient participation tool in the making of SCP 2040, both policy-makers and planners agreed on the citizen panel and questionnaire survey. Their reasons were generally from two perspectives: they saved time and feedback was clear.

*"Our previous experiences with methods like open submissions and community meetings often suffered from the dilemma that residents raised many questions not relevant to the subject matter and that could not be used in our work. This is partly because of the limitation of knowledge of general public of planning and partly because communities tend to be interested only specifically in their own areas. Due to these factors, both the community and us have wasted time in public consulting. This situation was better managed in the making of SCP 2040 by introducing the 'consulting citizen panel' and the large sample questionnaire survey. The feedback was constructive and the information received is able to support our decision-making processes." (Government officer 2)*

Many of the events in addition to the normal exhibition and consultation events that aimed to notify and receive feedback on the making of *Shanghai Comprehensive Plan (2040)* were not directly related to the Plan itself. Some of them were for educating the public on planning matters in general such as *Sea-Hi* which provided talks by artists, journalists and planning professionals on the future environment and life of Shanghai. Some of the events and exhibitions aimed to promote achievements of the Shanghai government in improving Shanghai's development and lives of its citizens. The educational and the bureaucratic objectives of public participation were mixed since the government could arbitrarily choose topics and information that they wanted the public to see and understand to promote all their success and legitimacy.

Efforts were made to assist communities to understand planning reports and processes. Also, many cultural events not linked to an understanding of planning issues were held to promote general public participation..

*"We have published the public version of the government reports such as 'Guidance on the making of Shanghai Comprehensive Plan (2040)' to help the understanding of the plan-making process for the general public. We have invited experts of graphic design and planning to design the report. These reports were published by most governments and government agencies on their official websites and social media channels such as Weibo and Wechat. We have held many activities for residents to participate in including 'I would like to see; I would like to write and I would like to draw' where people can express their feelings and desired future in a creative manner." (Government officer 3)*

#### 6.4.3 Motivations and attitudes towards taking part in the making of SCP 2040

Despite a wide media campaign and a series of tools and methods employed, the surveys and interviews indicated a low participation rate by the wider community. Policy-makers thought the lack of knowledge and understanding of the planning system was the main barrier.

*"One key reason for the low participation rate is the complexity of urban planning. Many members of the public may find the technical aspects and the intricacies of planning processes challenging to grasp, which can discourage their active engagement." (Government officer 5)*

In interviews with local residents, similar views confirming their lack of planning knowledge reduced their capacity to participate. Additionally, there is a prevailing scepticism towards governance entities, which could have eroded their confidence in the value of their input. Many residents felt

uncertain about whether their opinions would be genuinely considered in the decision-making process and whether their concerns would be addressed.

*“I know it is important to participate because the projects will have influences on our living environment as well as have important influences on the value of our properties... I noticed there are some activities for such participation from the newsletters to the residents... But for myself, I do not know much about the regulations and feel I cannot contribute much to the discussion... In addition, I am not sure to what extent they (the decision-makers) will take my suggestions into practice. I do not want to waste my time on this matter.” (Community member 3)*

The scepticism among residents significantly dampened their enthusiasm and willingness to engage in the planning process. This scepticism created a sense of apathy, where residents were reluctant to invest their time and effort into actively participating.. When asked the reason for not participating, one community member said in their interview that:

*“From the video (on the TV) it seems that the plan is about how the future will be like for Shanghai in 2040. I feel it is too far from my daily life and I do not have the time to understand in a more detailed way what the plan is about to make any comments.”(Community member 5)*

One interesting phenomenon identified by the policy-makers was that there was often a tendency among residents to show limited interest or engagement in the early stages of the planning process or project exhibitions. However, the shift occurred when these projects were eventually approved and implemented. It is at this point that residents become more actively involved, particularly when they begin to realise the negative influences on their daily lives as a result of the projects. One local government planner commented:

*“We do organise public participation activities such as inviting opinions and submissions from the communities on the new planning projects... I would say nearly all the large projects or major plans in Shanghai require public notification and a participation period set by the Shanghai government. And there was a requirement from the Shanghai government to properly consider and address the issues raised by the community. What we found is that there were seldom opinions and suggestions received in the formal participation processes. However, once the planning approvals have been granted and construction occurred, suddenly, you will have these neighbourhoods and communities who strongly object, usually not few people but a large number of residents opposing the projects and claiming that the*

*projects will bring significantly negative influences to their life. Since the participation period had already passed and approvals have been granted, it is a very difficult position for us to conduct the negotiation especially if the other side is a private developer.”(Government officer 7)*

## 6.5 The outcomes and effectiveness of public participation

Analysis of the perceived outcomes and effectiveness of public participation in the making of SCP 2040 is now discussed from two stakeholder viewpoints: firstly, to what extent have the objectives been achieved from the perspective of the key stakeholders, namely the general public, policy-makers and planners? Secondly, how effective was the operational process of public participation in the making of SCP in facilitating the realisation of the proposed objectives outlined in previous sections of the thesis. The analysis is based on questionnaire survey results and interviews with key stakeholders.

### 6.5.1 The extent to which the outcomes of public participation in the making of SCP 2040 have achieved its objectives

One of the key objectives of the public participation process of SCP 2040 was to widely advertise the plan to establish the government’s image of openness and transparency.

The above-mentioned findings imply that although the wide announcement and advertisement of SCP 2040 had achieved a high rate of public awareness, they still had very limited understanding of what the plan was about. They may have formed a vague idea that a ‘plan for the future of Shanghai’ was being made, but they did not have the capacity both in knowledge and resources to genuinely participate. The efforts employed by the government in educating the public to trigger their interest in urban planning were to no avail.

The initiatives to involve the wider community in strategic plan-making were considered as a bold experiment and significant achievement by planning practitioners.

*“I think the design of public participation in the making of SCP 2040 employed a method that can accommodate opinions from planning experts, a wide range of industries and wider public. We have held 11 experts and key stakeholder discussions with the topics covering the key themes of SCP 2040. We also established the Consulting panel of citizen representatives which represent interests from different industries in the key decision-making processes. The questionnaire survey aims to collect opinions from the wider public. To ensure the*

*representativeness of the questionnaire survey, we have used both online surveys and a random selection of participants on streets.”(Government officer 3)*

The making of the *Shanghai Comprehensive Plan (2040)* significantly increased public participation processes compared with previous rounds of comprehensive plan-making.

*“Back in 2008, we did not have such wide public consultation... it is great progress for the Shanghai government to achieve a high level of transparency and interaction with the public in the making of the Shanghai Comprehensive Plan (2040).” (Government officer 2)*

There were three main sources of information from public participation, identified by policy-makers and planners, that were considered for incorporation into the SCP.

The most formal and informative source of comments and suggestions from public participation considered in the process of the making of SCP 2040, was from the consulting panel formed by the Shanghai government.

*“After each panel meeting or presentation to the panel at each plan-making milestone, the panel members will have discussion and their key suggestions will form a report. The report will then be reviewed by the chairman of the panel and submitted to the SCP 2040 plan-making team. The SCP 2040 plan-making team will review and prepare feedback on how they have considered the discussions and suggestions from the ‘Consulting panel of citizen representatives.’ (Government officer 2)*

The result of the questionnaire survey was another source of information that had to be considered during the making of SCP 2040. As noted by a government officer:

*“From the 42 questions in the three phrases of the questionnaire survey, 13 questions were selected to be published in the Overview of My 2040: Survey on the expectations of Shanghai Residents. The selection of questions is based on their relevance and importance to the making of SCP 2040 as well as the level of agreement achieved between all participants. Then the SCP 2040 plan-making team prepared a report on how they considered the outcomes of the survey in their plan-making process.” (Government officer4)*

Submissions and phone calls were the last source of information from public participation considered for inclusion in the plan-making process. “The submissions and suggestions were recorded, classified and forwarded to the specifically relevant specialist team for their consideration into SCP 2040.”

However, as one planner identified in the interview:

*“To be honest, most of these suggestions did not fit the scale required for a comprehensive plan and could not be incorporated into plan-making processes. One of the key difficulties we face is aligning the diverse viewpoints and preferences of our large and dynamic population with the complex urban planning requirements and long-term development goals. Additionally, ensuring that the technical feasibility of proposed changes matches the expectations of the public can be quite intricate.” (Government officer 2)*

However, although it was stated by planners in their interviews that the plan-making team had to prepare various reports to explain how the suggestions from the above three public participation mechanisms were considered during the plan-making process, these reports were not published or made available to the public. Without any public scrutiny, it was totally up to the government to decide if the suggestions would be accepted or not and to what extent they would be incorporated into SCP 2040, if at all.

### 6.5.2 The extent that the opinions from community involvement were incorporated into policy outcomes

However, as one planning expert raised in their interview, the design of both the content and procedure of these methods is greatly impacted by the willingness of government to provide opportunities for genuine discussions involving the public.

*“These forms of public participation are too much influenced by governments. Members of the ‘citizen panel’ were recommended by organisations or associations strongly linked to government and there were no conflicts of interests between panel members. In the public participation processes overseas, for example in the UK, parties representing different interests debate and argue to protect or seek more benefits for their own interests. They also hear the arguments from other parties and then compromise or negotiate with other parties in public participation processes. Such discussion is difficult to find within the participation methods employed by SCP 2040.” (Community member 6 with planning expertise)*

The missing forums for open debate on topics that attracted the public’s interest were somewhat replaced by social media platforms.. The virtual anonymous environment provided people with more freedom and a sense of security for open discussion. After the publication of the draft content of SCP 2040 in August 2016, there was an increasing debate on the Internet about the inappropriate and unrealistic population control of 25 million by 2040. The discussion of population was further triggered by an article named *Shanghai Comprehensive Plan (2040): what population strategy is required for global cities?*. Many readers made comments on this topic and shared the article on

their personal social media page. However, the government did not directly respond or comment on the concerns raised on the Internet. The plan was officially adopted without changing the population numbers from the draft plan.

Overall, the SCP 2040 public participation process achieved a wide public awareness.. However, besides knowing the plan is being made and a vague understanding of what the plan is about, the public has very limited knowledge on plan-making processes and how they can participate to influence the outcomes of SCP 2040. The educational purpose of the public participation on the making of SCP 2040 was not achieved.

Both policy-makers and planners were positive about the methods of the consulting citizen panel and questionnaire survey, since they both provided efficient and focused structure that guided the public on the right amount of feedback to provide to government. However, these participation methods were also too structured, leaving little opportunity for the community to choose the topics that they were interested in nor any forum for parties with different interests to debate and negotiate potential solutions.

## 6.6 Discussion and analysis

In this section, the thesis will investigate into various findings and theories sourced from scholarly literature to dissect and comprehend the perspectives of stakeholders regarding the community participation process in Chinese urban planning. By drawing upon established research and theoretical frameworks, this section aims to elucidate the characteristics and nuances that shape these views.

### 6.6.1 Multiple objectives of public participation: ambitious expectations and challenges in community involvement

The interviews with policy-makers from the government highlighted the multifaceted advantages of community involvement in planning processes. Historically, planning in China was characterised by a top-down approach, where decisions were made unilaterally by government entities with limited public participation. However, as the country underwent rapid urbanisation and society became more pluralistic, the conventional approach faced increasing challenges, prompting a shift towards public participation mechanisms to address conflicts between the government and the community (Zhou, 2017). Policy-makers and planners were optimistic and ambitious about the effectiveness of community involvement (Chung & Zhou, 2011). In the case of SCP 2040, policy-makers aimed for multiple objectives through community involvement.

The primary objective of community involvement, as indicated by the interviews, was bureaucratic. Policy-makers showed a strong willingness to achieve community consensus. By actively involving the public, the government endeavoured to cultivate an image of inclusivity, counteracting traditional perceptions of top-down governance and showcasing their commitment to collaborative decision-making (Yeh & Wu, 1999). The extensive media campaign, including local TV news, social media platforms, and community newsletters, aimed to demonstrate this shift in attitude. However, instrumental objectives were not a priority. Policy-makers admitted that community involvement was less effective in gathering valuable feedback for the plan due to the public's lack of relevant knowledge and limited interest in the process. Consequently, the ideal of community involvement in China faced significant challenges in genuinely obtaining feedback or facilitating public scrutiny (L. Zhang, Geertman, Hooimeijer, & Lin, 2019).

One of the primary obstacles is the public's limited capacity to engage effectively, often stemming from a lack of awareness, knowledge, or interest in intricate planning details (L. Zhang, Hooimeijer, et al., 2019). While policy-makers emphasised using community involvement to educate the public about the planning system, public forums and events often served more as platforms to showcase governmental intentions and achievements rather than genuine engagement sessions. As a result, public participation sometimes risks being reduced to a tool for governmental propaganda, portraying a particular narrative or agenda favourably while maintaining the facade of inclusivity. This approach turns public participation into "managed participation," a process easily controlled and manipulated by the government to fit its desired narrative (Cai, 2004).

### 6.6.2 Restricted public participation operation: Barriers to wider community involvement in planning processes

Community surveys and interviews revealed that traditional top-down governance has strongly influenced norms of non-participation in governance. In this model, centralised authorities make decisions that are passed down to the grassroots level, often creating a disconnect between policy-making and the actual needs and aspirations of the community. This disconnect fosters alienation and mistrust, discouraging public engagement. Lian (Lian & Yin, 2020) notes that governance structures also weaken local empowerment. Additionally, traditional cultural norms emphasise respect and compliance toward authority (Marafa, Qi, & Chan, 2019). Such perceptions further reduce the motivations of ordinary people to participate. Interviews highlighted such cultural and structural challenges as many residents showed reluctance to participate actively in governance decisions.

Despite extensive media campaigns and multiple participation channels, surveys and interviews revealed limited public awareness regarding the formulation of the Shanghai Comprehensive Plan (2040). Most of the public did not understand the plan's intricacies or its direct implications for their daily lives (L. Zhang, Hooimeijer, et al., 2019). Policy-makers acknowledged a reliance on participation tools borrowed from democratic nations with advanced economies, which often failed in China's socio-political context. As Tian (Tian, Liu, Liang, & Wu, 2023) noted, these methods did not address the centralised governance structure or the limited planning knowledge among the public. Consequently, these tools often failed to encourage meaningful feedback or engagement in China (S. Zhang et al., 2012).

Policy-makers also expressed concerns about the legislative framework for public participation in the planning system and noted that while provisions for public involvement exist in current legislation, they often lack practical guidelines to ensure genuine engagement. In particular, the *Urban and Rural Planning Act*, China's principal planning legislation, requires revisions to address the gaps. Although the Act explicitly mentions that public participation is required in planning processes, it does not provide detailed legal guidance for its implementation (Chang & Wu, 2011). Scholars also raised the need for a stronger framework with well-defined objectives, procedures, and accountability mechanisms (Guo & Sun, 2004). Policy-makers have also called for the Act to include practical guidance to help local governments adapt participation practices to different needs and contexts (P. Zhao, 2015).

Additionally, planning legislation must also address information accessibility and transparency. A well-defined framework should guarantee that all relevant information is easily accessible to the public, enabling meaningful contributions to the planning process. Policy-makers highlighted the importance of presenting information in a way that aligns with community comprehension levels. For SCP 2040, visual aids, summaries, and explanatory notes helped translate complex planning jargon into understandable terms. Proactively creating and sharing accessible information can capture public interest and encourage feedback, especially given the public's limited capacity and interest in urban planning matters. Ensuring transparency is equally critical. Policy-makers must openly communicate the rationale behind planning decisions and disclose potential conflicts of interest (Qunhui & Kai, 2020). These practices empower the public to participate actively in planning because they foster trust and accountability between communities and planning authorities. Strengthened transparency and accountability mechanisms would contribute to more equitable and sustainable urban development outcomes.

### 6.6.3 Outcomes of public participation: perceived success in achieving objectives with challenges in incorporating public feedback

The public participation process for SCP 2040 sought to achieve several objectives, such as promoting government transparency, gathering public input, and educating the public about urban planning. Planners in the survey agreed that the process had raised the awareness of SCP 2040 among Shanghai residents. Although many residents were aware of the plan, they tended to lack a clear understanding of its content. This limited knowledge by residents indicates that the goal of using public participation to educate and stimulate public interest in urban planning was only partially achieved.

Despite the above limitations, policy-makers, planners and the community viewed the consultation effort by the Shanghai government as a significant step forward. The various methods used in the consultation, including public forums, expert discussions, and public surveys, were a shift from traditional top-down approaches. The community also believes these methods reflect a government commitment to more transparency in planning. Media campaigns and multiple participation channels further demonstrated a move toward more interactive planning processes.

However, integrating public feedback into SCP 2040 presented significant challenges. Policy-makers claimed that they had considered the public input collected through citizen panels, surveys, and submissions during the plan-making process. However, they did not disclose how these inputs influenced the final plan. Reports prepared by planners detailing how public suggestions were included were not published. The decisions about the influences of public feedback on the plan were entirely dependent on the government.

Moreover, although public submissions and phone calls have been forwarded to relevant specialist teams, the process often failed to align with the scale and scope required for a comprehensive urban plan. Planners struggled to reconcile the public's diverse viewpoints and preferences with the plan's principles or contents. This disconnection implied a managed participation process controlled by the government rather than a genuine two-way engagement.

Social media platforms provided an alternative for more open and anonymous discussions. For instance, after the draft SCP 2040 was published, the unrealistic population projection of 25 million for Shanghai by 2040 received significant debate online. Articles and discussions on the topic were widely circulated on social media. However, the government chose to remain silent and did not provide any response to this public enquiry. There was no mechanism to ensure public feedback was adequately addressed.

## 6.7 Summary

Chapter 6 examines public participation in China and uses the making of Shanghai Comprehensive Plan (2040) (SCP 2040) as an example. It also compares these findings from the Australian context discussed in Chapter 5. The study reveals that despite efforts to promote SCP 2040 as an inclusive initiative, public engagement remained limited. Participation process was highly restricted, with only basic information sharing and consultation. The processes were driven by bureaucratic priorities and offered minimal opportunities for meaningful public involvement.

The lack of detailed legislative guidelines strongly constrained the efficacy of public participation. Without clear procedures and mechanisms, local governments have considerable discretion in designing these processes that aligns with their political objectives. For example, the efforts of wide social media campaign of SCP 2040 is viewed by stakeholders as a government-led showcase to demonstrate government's transparency and accountability. The government highly restricted and managed tools like citizen panels and large-scale surveys. The findings raised concerns about whether these methods could effectively represent public interest or influence planning decisions.

Another challenge of public participation in making SCP 2040 was the public's limited knowledge and interest in planning issues. Indeed, the government attempted to translate and simplify planning information through public talks, exhibitions, and accessible materials. However, the impact of these efforts was questionable. Survey results did not indicate significant improvements in public awareness or engagement.

The findings from this chapter connect to the Australian survey in Chapter 5 and set the foundation for further analysis in Chapter 7. Chapter 6 highlights the difficulties in designing public participation processes that genuinely engage and empower communities in China. Chapter 7 will expand on these themes and compare the experiences of China and Australia to offer broader insights about the dynamics of public participation in planning processes.

# Chapter 7 Analysis and Discussion

## 7.1 Introduction

Chapter 7 describes comparative landscapes of community participation in urban planning across Australia and China, offering a robust analysis and discussion of the findings from this study. Derived from the knowledge and insights from the theoretical review and empirical data, this chapter aims to reveal the genuine goal of community engagement processes, evaluate their efficacy, and understand stakeholder satisfaction within these divergent socio-political and cultural contexts. The analysis is built upon the foundational questions and objectives outlined in Chapters 1, 2 and 3, and integrates the legislative, policy, and practice frameworks discussed in Chapter 4, alongside empirical insights from Chapters 5 and 6. The discussion aims to enrich our understanding of community participation dynamics in urban planning systems across varied institutional and cultural settings.

Employing the comparative case study methodology in Chapter 3, the chapter analyses both qualitative and quantitative data to navigate the multifaceted aspects of community participation. This mixed-methods approach facilitates a systematic exploration of the varied experiences and satisfaction of community engagement in planning in Australia and China.

Starting with an examination of the three stages of public participation identified in the literature review (objectives, operations, and outcomes), this chapter employs a structured framework to compare and contrast these processes between the two countries. It then aligns these public participation practices with diverse planning theories, analysing their ideological underpinnings and operational variations. The analysis highlights how statutory legislation for public participation together with community perspectives, attitudes and knowledge have shaped the current forms of public participation. The analysis ends with a summary of the strengths and weaknesses of public participation methods within the Australian and Chinese planning systems.

## 7.2 Comparison of the public participation processes in two case studies

### 7.2.1 Objectives of community participation

As identified in the literature review, there are three general categories of objectives of public participation in policy decision-making processes. Firstly, it is believed that input from wider communities will contribute to policy outcomes that balance different interests and thus contribute to better policy outcomes overall (Glasbergen, 1994; Habermas, 1984 and 1987; Innes & Booher,

1999; Pagliara & Di Ruocco, 2018). Secondly, public participation should increase general social capital by improving social relationships and networks between community members. An individual's sense of responsibility will most likely be enhanced as well as mutual understanding between groups with different backgrounds and interests. These factors will ultimately lead to conflict resolution, more effective decision-making and coordination and an increased capacity to respond to future challenges (Innes & Booher, 1999; Mandarano et al., 2010; Wondolleck & Yaffee, 2000). Thirdly, bureaucratic benefits will arise as governments use their public participation processes to showcase their efforts to solve problems and to achieve legitimacy for their decision-making process and policy outcomes.

As discussed in the Chapters 5 and 6, the survey and interview data from both Australia and China reveal a different understanding of the objectives underpinning public participation in planning decision-making processes. This understanding aligns with the categorisations identified in the literature, such as those by Innes and Booher (1999), who suggest that public participation serves multiple purposes. Policy-makers, including planners from government bodies in both nations, have expressed a clear intention to obtain community opinions and preferences through participatory processes.

In the Australian case study, government officials addressed the institutional objective as the primary driver for public participation. New South Wales (NSW) decision-makers recognised that gaps in the knowledge of policy-makers can be bridged through contributions from communities and industries. Moreover, they advocated for the inclusion of the wider community in the decision-making process. They asserted that the government is genuine in pursuing a range of stakeholder opinions through the participatory process.

In contrast, Chinese policymakers have ambitious expectations for community participation. They aim to use it as a multifunctional tool for gaining community trust, educating the public, and showcasing transparency and openness. This multifaceted approach indicates a strategic utilisation of public participation, aligning with global trends towards more inclusive governance. In Shanghai, policymakers acknowledge the bureaucratic objective of public participation to enhance government legitimacy and credibility. They aspire to set a democratic and transparent example for other Chinese governments by actively involving the community in the development of the *Shanghai Comprehensive Plan (2040)*. While acknowledging the importance of public participation, the Shanghai's approach seemed to prioritise the government's openness and modernisation image over the substantive engagement of the public in planning decisions. The current low participation rates

and limited public knowledge for community members in China temper the policy makers' expectation on instrumental and social benefits can be achieved in these areas.

The above findings are consistent with the arguments made by Bächtiger, Dryzek, Mansbridge, and Warren (2018), and Nabatchi and Leighninger (2015) that in democratic societies, public participation has been considered as is an integrated component of the policy-making process. Policy-makers consider that appropriate participation is crucial to inform policy outcomes. However, participatory governance is still developing in China. There is a strategic move towards using public participation as an 'additional tool' outside normal planning models to solve problems generated by urban complexities with multiple objectives such as social stability and legitimising government actions (Xixin & Yongle, 2018; Yuen & Yeh, 2011).

Community members from both countries have reported feeling a heightened sense of responsibility and community connection from their participation. However, they approach the concept of consensus building with caution, suggesting that while it may occur, it is not a central goal of the design of public participation processes, nor is it a substitute for the intrinsic value of authentic participation.

Opposite to the view of policy-makers, community group members from Australia voiced concerns that the objectives of instrumental and social benefits were not prioritised in the planning reform process. They perceived public participation as a tool used by the government to project transparency and thereby secure public credibility and legitimise decision-making, rather than as a genuine attempt to integrate community input. Unlike in Sydney, community members in Shanghai did not express significant disagreement with policy-makers, instead welcoming public participation as a strategy to position Shanghai as an open and competitive city.

The case studies explore the complex interplay of the various objectives of public participation. While objectives like achieving transparency and accountability are often explicitly stated in government declarations, the underlying motivations can vary greatly. For instance, as suggested by the two case studies, legitimising governmental control were the unstated aim in both cases. The genuine objectives of public participation become clearer when examining how participation processes are designed and managed in practice. In Shanghai, the case study revealed that a centralised government tended to prioritise maintaining control through its participation initiatives.

Furthermore, this study indicates that stakeholders with different interests hold different, or even opposing, views on the objectives of public participation. These perspectives are shaped by their individual interests and personal backgrounds (Halvorsen, 2003). As illustrated by the case study in

NSW, perceptions of the objectives of public participation can influence how individuals choose to engage with and respond to proposals during the participation process.

## 7.2.2 Operation of community participation

Many factors influence the operation of public participation. As identified in the literature review, the objectives of public participation are closely linked to the design and implementation of participatory processes (Nabatchi & Leighninger, 2015). Also, the degree to which the public is familiar with planning issues and their level of interest also significantly influences the choice of participation methods and tools and their effectiveness (Jankowski et al., 2019). In addition, the role of planners and policy-makers, the motivations of key participants, and the choice of participation tools and methods are interconnected components that define the success and direction of public participation (Brand & Gaffikin, 2007).

### 7.2.2.1 *Systematic vs. fragmented participation processes*

In Australian context, the community participation framework in the planning reform was carefully designed and well-organised. There were four stages of participation in the reform including two rounds of consultation in Green Paper (2012), one for White Paper (2013), and one for revised Bill (2013). Each stage matches a specific phase of the reform. For instance, the extensive community workshops during the Green Paper (2012) consultation tended to be particularly effective in collecting the broad ideas on issues with existing planning systems and preferred solutions.

However, the public participation process for the Shanghai Comprehensive Plan (2040) took a more experimental approach since the formal public participation in planning is still an emerging concept in China. There was no notification or participation at all during the initial conceptualisation of SCP 2040. The media campaign and questionnaire survey only occurred after the plan had been designed and drafted. Despite the 'significant effort' made as by planners to promote engagement, these methods did not significantly increase the involvement of the broader community. The limited engagement reflects findings by Healey (Healey, 2020), who argues that effective public participation requires not just innovative methods but also a supportive cultural and institutional context. The culture of non-participation in politics and government decision-making in China, as noted by scholars like Tang, Wong, and Lau (2008) may have contributed to the observed low levels of engagement.

Without standard rules on participation, planners in Shanghai had to be creative to adapt the strategies to their local context. They relied on the review of 'international advanced examples' for insights and recommendations for performing consultation functions. However, their focus was to

search and borrow the mechanisms and tools for consultation that can be quickly applied in practices. There was no intention of understanding how the plan will impact interest tensions and power dynamics of different stakeholders (Dang, 2020). As a result, the public participation in the making of SCP 2040 was fragmented by different consultation tools and mechanisms without a comprehensive design of the whole process.

The contrast between the two approaches highlights the different stages of the development of public participation in the planning systems of the two countries. The structured and detailed approach in NSW reflects a mature system with a long history of public engagement culture. In comparison, Shanghai's exploratory approach shows a system still developing its participatory frameworks. This study also confirms the finding by Zhang, De Roo, & Lu (2012) that with the primary goal of seeking economic efficiency and productivity, it is difficult for decision makers in China to bring in social and environmental consideration in planning spectrum.

#### *7.2.2.2 Consultation tools- balancing inclusivity and efficiency*

Another challenge of public participation in planning is the lack of effective methods to engage the public in a meaningful way. Most of the existing participatory mechanisms are struggling to achieve a balance between obtaining valuable input and operational efficiency. In the case of the Shanghai 2040 plan, the government employed a structured questionnaire survey as their primary consultation tool. Although questionnaire surveys are efficient in collecting standardised feedback, they largely limit the scope of the areas the community can comment on. The government's efforts to raise awareness through media campaigns and public events may have succeeded in distributing information. However, they fell short of establishing a substantive two-way dialogue on what the community was willing to accept.

In the case of the planning reform in NSW, communities tended to favoured the open-ended workshops in the Green Paper (2012) consultation where they can freely express their concerns of the existing system and thinking towards the future one. In contrast, policy makers found such mechanisms 'difficult to manage and take long to analyse the feedbacks'. There conflicts between the level of flexibility for genuine participation and efficiency in policy-making (Nabatchi & Leighninger, 2015; Thorpe, 2017). The study indicates the need for a tailored approach which considers both the specific context and needs of the community to ensure that the process is not only inclusive but also effective in capturing a wide range of in-depth perspectives (Fung, 2006).

The balance between inclusivity and efficiency also raises further questions about the what are the underlying objectives of public participation. In contexts like Shanghai, where participation is often framed as a means to demonstrate government openness rather than genuinely empower the

communities. Tools like questionnaires and wide media campaigns align with these political goals. Conversely, in NSW, there is general belief that participation should serve as a mechanism for shaping policy design. This perspective has prompted the use of more consultative methods such as submissions and workshops, which provide opportunities for detailed community input.

### *7.2.2.3 Bottom-up community power to shape public participation*

The Australian experience showcases an example of how community groups can shape the direction and outcomes of the participation process. In the NSW planning reform, community groups actively challenged the government's proposals and organised a structured means for community interests to be heard (Scattoni, 2018). For example, the Better Planning Network, an alliance of community groups who had in-depth knowledge in planning system, were able to use various campaigns strategies to challenge the 'unfair' proposals in the White Paper (2013). Their activities extended beyond formal government-led processes and fostered a continuous dialogue about urban planning issues. The efforts from these community groups demonstrated the potential of grassroots movements to shape planning policy outcomes. This finding aligns with the argument of scholars like Innes and Booher, who emphasise the role of community groups in enhancing collaborative planning and safeguard the principles of democratic decision-making (Innes & Booher, 1999).

Interviews with community groups in Sydney revealed a broad negative attitudes from the general public towards the notion that 'planning should facilitate development for economic benefit.' Community and environmental groups believed that planning practices should under careful assessment that may take time but can result more sustainable outcomes. Therefore, ideas like 'streamlined assessment' and 'shift participation to strategic plan-making' received strong opposition by the community. Similarly, scholars have identified community groups actively resisting planning processes that they perceive as favouring development at the expense of community welfare (Williamson & Ruming, 2019).

The absence of such community dynamics in the Shanghai context reveals a more passive participation process. For example, the informal online discussions that expressed the objection to SCP 2040 failed to gain the attention of the government to response, indicating a disconnect between public sentiment and the planning authorities (Wang et al., 2004). There are limited avenues formally or informally for the genuine community opinions to be heard or addressed in China. The top-down approach to planning in China reflects the controlled political expectations about the role of the public in governmental decision-making.

#### *7.2.2.4 Shared problem: low motivations and capability to participate*

In both Australia and China, the low public participation rate and the limited participation in urban planning processes is a shared challenge. Only 20% of community members in the survey in Sydney said they had engaged with planning system compared to 7% of the community members in China. In the case of NSW, despite the government's great effort and various mechanisms such as multiple sessions of community consultation workshops and online submissions in the planning reform, the overall participation rate among the general public still remained modest. This finding suggests that there was a gap in motivating the wider community to actively engage in the planning process (Kang & Van Ryzin, 2019). More comprehensive efforts are needed to address the key barriers like distrust of government and low motivations to engage prevent the wider community to participate (Bouregh, 2022; Creighton, 2005).

Furthermore, scholars such as Arnstein (1969) and Innes and Booher (1999) have discussed the challenges of meaningfully engaging the public in urban planning processes. The findings from this study suggest that for the emerging system like China, comprehensive and systematic review is required to consider the real objectives of participations. Arnstein's 'ladder of citizen participation' provides a framework for identifying opportunities to move from tokenism to genuine empowerment. For a more mature planning system in Australia, where public participation has become a common practice for planning matters, the focus should be on establishing collaborative dialogue and encouraging mutual understanding as suggested by Innes and Booher (1999)

### **7.2.3 Outcomes of community participation**

To evaluate the outcomes of community participation, the study focuses on two aspects: firstly, the level of awareness and satisfaction from the community and secondly, the extent policy outcomes reflect input from community participation. Evaluation of the outcomes of participation is important because it helps assess whether the process has achieved its stated objectives and identifies areas for improvement (Burton et al., 2006).

#### *7.2.3.1 Level of awareness and satisfaction from the community*

Both policy-makers from the two case studies in the interviews stated improving the awareness of the general public on the planning initiatives as one of the key goals of the public participation. As a result, in Shanghai, 53% of survey respondents were aware of the SCP 2040, compared to only 28% in Sydney being aware of the planning reform. The result indicates that the extensive media coverage and community activities during the making of SCP 2040 successfully raised the awareness of the general public. The Shanghai government used various opportunity and packaged all the campaigns under the theme called 'My Shanghai 2024', which involved public forums and exhibitions on the

history of urban planning in Shanghai, the drawing and writing competitions on public's ideas on the future of Shanghai, the advertisement in the community centres and the continuous reporting on the progress of SCP 2040 in local television news have attracted the attention of the public on this new plan being prepared. In comparison, the media campaign on the planning reform in NSW was relatively normal and lacked the cohesive and engaging strategies seen in Shanghai. It primarily focused on traditional communication methods, such as government websites and official announcements, without leveraging creative approaches to actively involve or capture the interest of the broader public.

In terms of the level of overall satisfaction with the community participation in planning process, interestingly, there was higher satisfaction with the participation processes in Shanghai, with 82% of participants expressing general satisfaction. In contrast, only 63% of Sydney respondents are satisfied with the public participation in the planning reform process. The different level of satisfaction in the two cities can also be explained by the findings of Norbert et al. (2021) that the increased participation will promote the sense of belonging and satisfaction by community members. In Shanghai, even though the influence of public participation on policy outcomes was limited, the noticeable increase in opportunities for involvement compared to past practices led to greater satisfaction. In contrast, in Sydney, despite the proposed reforms, the perception of reduced public participation in development assessment as the result of planning reform overshadowed any potential benefits, leading to dissatisfaction and resistance among communities.

The research also assessed the stakeholders' views on if the participation processes have achieved the objectives. The NSW State government planners and policy-makers believed that the instrumental objectives were achieved. They felt that the input from the public participation greatly contribute to the formation of the White Paper (2013) and draft Bill (2013). The document analysis on the submission analysis also showed a level of alignment between the proposals and community's opinions. However, community groups in NSW contested this view, arguing that the changes in the White Paper (2013) and draft Bill (2013) were superficial and failed to address core issues that would diminish community involvement in the proposed planning system. This result mirrors the challenges highlighted in the literature on the conflicts of evaluating tangible and intangible outcomes of planning policies, and the inconsistent assessment outcomes by different interest parties (Innes & Booher, 1999).

The findings from this study indicate that public participation may not be a complete solution of the complexities of a 'stakeholder society' to achieve universal agreements (Healey, 2020). In such societies, each stakeholder group is well-informed and equipped to advocate and protect for their

own interests and rights (Halvorsen, 2003; Kang & Van Ryzin, 2019). The NSW planning reform case study highlighted this issue that with the tensions between community groups and developers in the preferred planning policies, it is difficult to achieve satisfaction for all stakeholders. As the participation process progressed, community groups shifted from negotiation to actively seeking to halt the reform, indicating an intention to move towards confrontation rather than collaboration (Kotus & Sowada, 2017).

For the case study in Shanghai, the public participation of the making of SCP 2040 appeared to achieve more social benefits than other objectives. The community members felt that the attitude and determination of government to incorporate public participation in the planning process was already a satisfied achievement. Similar satisfactions were identified from the interviews with policy-makers that the increased participation is a positive signal to begin the dialogue between the community and government authorities. Such move from the traditional strong top-down approach fostered a sense of connectivity and openness from the government (Xixin & Yongle, 2018). Many community member believed that the shift towards involving communities in the planning process was a progressive step to further promote transparent and accessible government (Yeh & Wu, 1999).

#### *7.2.3.2 The extent policy outcomes reflect input from community participation*

The study also assess to extent that the policy outcomes have reflected the feedback received from community participation in the two cities. In the case of the NSW planning reform, there was a notable divergence in perceptions between policy-makers and the community. Policy-makers believed that the policy outcomes were significantly shaped by community feedback. This was partly supported by the result of document analysis that some items addressed by the communities were included in the policy outcomes (Cui & Gurran, 2015).

However, this perspective was not shared by members of community groups. These groups expressed dissatisfaction with the proposed policy outcomes, arguing that the reform was skewed towards pro-growth interests. Their argument was that the reform, despite incorporating some community feedback, fundamentally worked for the benefit of development and economic growth including the reduction of participation rights in development assessment stages.

As a result of this perceived misalignment, community groups responded with a vigorous campaign to halt the reform. They believed that their efforts in both formal and informal participation channels were decisive in stopping the planning reform. The success of this grassroots' action demonstrates the ability of the community to shape policy outcomes that outside formal participation processes. This finding confirmed the literature by Legacy (Legacy, Cook, Rogers, & Ruming, 2018) that where

community power is well-established, community groups are adept at exerting their influence in participation processes.

In China, both policy-makers and community members are concerned about the impact of community feedback on policy outcomes. In the making of the *Shanghai Comprehensive Plan (2040)*, which is a complex and strategic plan, it is generally believed that the plan is well beyond the comprehension of the average citizen. Policy-makers noted that the quality of feedback from community participation efforts was often poor, irrelevant or non-existent. This aligns with findings from studies like those by (Feng et al., 2020), which highlighted the significant gaps in the effectiveness of community participation in urban planning in China. Communities with limited understanding and interest in planning matters will have little impact on policy outcomes.

## 7.3 Comparison of community profiles and motivations of public participation in planning

### 7.3.1 General public's knowledge and willingness to participate

The surveys conducted in Shanghai and Sydney provide a comparative perspective on public participation in urban planning, revealing a stark contrast in engagement levels. In Shanghai, a mere 6% of residents reported participating in planning processes, compared to 28% in Sydney. This disparity may be reflective of the different cultural and institutional approaches to urban planning in the two countries. For instance, Zheng (2022), discuss the elite-led planning approach in Shanghai, particularly in the context of public art, suggesting that public participation is not always seen as essential for a positive reception of planning projects.

Despite the geographical and cultural differences, low participation in the urban planning system is a shared challenge. The survey shows that 20% of the participants in Sydney had reported previous involvement in planning systems compared to 7% of the participation in Shanghai. In the interviews with community members, the most cited reasons for non-engagement include time constraints and lack of interest. However, literature have identified there may be deeper structural and systematic reasons for the lack of public trust in governmental processes. For example, Williamson and Ruming (2020) offers a critical views on the barriers of participation and suggests that the effort focusing on using emerging tools such as digital platforms is insufficient to increase the participation rate as there is still deep-rooted public suspicions that their input will be ignored in the decision-making process by the government.

In China, the notion of participation in political and governmental decision-making is often viewed as inefficient or unnecessary (Shan, 2012). Residents in the interviews in Shanghai expressed that although they have the interests in planning matters, they prefer to express during informal discussions over formal channels. This behaviour aligns with the findings of Zheng (2022), where the public showed varying interests and attitudes towards planning initiatives based on their locality and the context of their everyday lives.

Demographic analysis of the surveys indicates that older residents in more affluent suburbs are more likely to participate in both cities. This could be due to a combination of factors, including greater social and economic capital as well as previous knowledge and experiences of the planning system. People from more affluent suburbs are believed to be more likely to benefit from more homogenous, cohesive, community identities that facilitate collective action by paying more attention to their urban environment (Daren Carroll Brabham, 2010).

### 7.3.2 Perceptions on power influences in planning decision-making processes and how public participation influences planning outcomes

The surveys in Australia and China reveal that community members in both cases studies believed that developers and government bodies dominate the decision-making processes. In Sydney more than 50% of participants in the survey said they believe the community and community groups have right amount of power in the planning process. This figure is only 3% for the survey result in Shanghai. The contrast reveals the weak role of the community in planning process in China.

The sentiment in China reflects its historical roots in a centrally planned economy prior to the 1980s, where decision-making was tightly controlled by government authorities. As Wang et al. (2004) and Heberer (2009) note that the transition towards a market economy between 1980-2000 has seen a rise in the influence of large developers, often in partnership with local governments, to create master plans that serve mutual interests. However, the negotiation on the outcomes of planning controls was only between developers and governments without any public input (Li, Li, Li, & Webster, 2023). The community still remained excluded from the planning process (Shan, 2012). To address this situation, scholars like Dang (2020) pointed out that China need to a transitional shift from bureaucratic oriented to a more liberal and pro-democratic planning model.

In Australia, there has been a long history of participatory democracy in political decision-making processes, which are regulated by legislation since 1970s (see EPA Act 1979). Although it is still essential for developers to establish some 'informal relationship' with local governments to promote smooth progress of their development applications (Ruming, 2010), planning legislation has ensured

broader confidence from the community in planning decision-making processes (Legacy et al., 2014). Despite not always participating directly in the planning system, there is level of trust among community members that the participation channels allow them legitimate avenues for expressing their views. As a result, Australian communities generally viewed the distribution of power as balanced, with most believing that stakeholders possess an appropriate level of influence within planning processes. From the questionnaire survey, communities generally believed that their opinions can be voiced through various channels, such as public forums, written submissions, and representative consultations, and that these expressions will be given due consideration by planning authorities. Therefore, community campaigns and advocacy against government policies are more evident in Australia compared to China as perceive that their efforts will make a difference.

## 7.4 Contextual factors: government legacies, legislative and institutional requirements, and perception and awareness from communities

### 7.4.1 Influence by government legacies: colonial vs. socialist

The study revealed that structural legacies of governance shape the dynamics of public participation in the planning system. The analysis compares these dynamics by two governance legacies: the colonial roots of planning reform in NSW and the socialist governance shaping the SCP 2040 in Shanghai.

#### *7.4.1.1 Structured and constrained participation of the colonial system*

The NSW planning reform process reflects Australia's colonial history, particularly in its reliance on hierarchical decision-making process. The participation process relied on formal consultation methods, such as submissions and community meeting, which are the typical consultation methods of colonial planning traditions. Scholars like Home (2013) noted that formal consultation tools that are commonly applied under colonial government frameworks were shaped by administrative practices inherited from European empires since the 19th century. However, these tools tended to be ineffective in fostering productive dialogues or collecting authentic feedback that are crucial for addressing modern planning complexities.

Power imbalance is another feature of colonial legacies that continue to influence the public participation in Australia. The situation of socio-economic inequalities, spatial injustices, and urban-rural divisions, rooted in colonial governance principles, still excludes marginalised communities in

the planning decision-making (Holston, 2007). Healey (2020) critiques such power injustices as key obstacles to creating inclusive planning frameworks.

In the NSW planning reform, these power dynamics were evident, as the process and outcomes largely reinforced existing socio-economic hierarchies. The formal and informal participation channels are all dominated by groups with expertise, capabilities and resources. There is no motivation or intention to actively seek opinions from marginalised groups. In such a system, participation may further stretch the historical inequities as observed by Yiftachel (2006) and Porter (2006).

#### *7.4.1.2 Uniform and state-driven participation by the socialist system*

On the other hand, the development of SCP 2040 highlights the strong influence of socialist governance on public participation. In this system, public engagement is a tool that aligns with government objectives but often neglects individual and community perspectives and empowerment (Fung & Wright, 2001). O'Brien (2008) also questioned the authenticity and legitimacy of citizen participation in an authoritarian system, where governments' interests often override grassroots voices and diminish their willingness to contribute. Jensen (2006) noted that socialist governments exclude the diverse insights of the community, which are essential in building equitable and responsive planning outcomes. Yeh and Wu (1999) noted that while socialist planning may be able to deliver large-scale urban development efficiently, it frequently neglects the needs of individuals and communities at the micro-level.

The case study of the making of SCP 2040 is a representative example confirming the above discussion. The participation process was structured to align with government pre-determined objectives which reflected the government-driven nature of socialist governance. This approach framed public participation more as a managed process to support Shanghai government's vision rather than as an avenue for genuine citizen engagement. The design of the process highlighted the Shanghai government's emphasis on presenting an image of openness and inclusiveness.

The wide media campaign highlighted the government's commitment to Shanghai's future as a leading global city, focusing on ambitious visions and promises of future development. However, these communications were carefully articulated to avoid raising conflicting issues that might have disrupted the narrative. The consultation process further reinforced this controlled approach since the methods used, such as questionnaire surveys, were designed to efficiently collect standardised responses within a set timeframe. In the opinions of both policy-makers and communities, the outcomes from the participation did not have much value in changing the content of SCP 2040. The

direction and final decisions for the plan remained firmly in the control of government authorities and left minimal opportunities for alternative discussion from the community.

## 7.4.2 Influence of statutory legislation and policy context on public participation in planning

Legislative frameworks not only set objectives and operational requirements for community participation but also influence the level of influence between stakeholders and government authorities. Ultimately, legislation is the fundamental factor impacting the overall effectiveness of the participation process. This section explores the legislative dynamic on public participation through considering three key aspects.

### 7.4.2.1 *Legislative regulations enable the framing of objectives and content of community participation*

Governance around public participation in urban planning is heavily influenced by legislative frameworks. These regulations determine the methods and extent to which the public can engage in the planning process. They set the stage for how participation is solicited, the kind of information that is sought from the public, and how this information is used in the planning process. The effectiveness of public participation is largely contingent on these legislative frameworks, as they provide the necessary structure and guidelines for meaningful community involvement.

The literature has identified the influences from institutional requirements on how public participation processes are governed and how powers in the planning system are distributed and managed. (Pløger, 2021) suggested that public participation is implemented by law, which provides a formal practice and a series of decisions to determine how professional knowledge, private and practice ethics, place and scene sense, tactics and strategies are generated. The politically adopted planning laws and regulations give specific treatment to the planning process (land use plan, participation rights, guidelines, etc.), which can become a "process with excessively recognised functions" and a "directory" for decision-making.

More specifically, the literature suggests that a clearer set of objectives and more specific requirements for the process of public participation, including its timing,, would promote authentic participation and also ensure accountability, transparency and the efficiency of public participation (Brody et al., 2003).

The two case studies confirmed arguments in the literature that different types of governance have influences on public participation practices. Two influences from top-down legislative requirements can be identified on the process of public participation. Firstly, the statutory requirements of public

participation such as the timing of consultation, the period of notification and methods for collecting public opinions provides planners and practitioners with a basic model to draw on and encourages the formation of procedures to fulfill these requirements. Without formal requirements for public participation procedures, there is no reason for policy-makers to provide these participation methods (Aref & Redzuan, 2009). Secondly, more profoundly, the long-term enforcement of these public participation activities gradually fosters increasing knowledge of the planning system by each interest group, as well as strengthening the understanding of the interests and positions between interest groups. This knowledge and understanding helps each interest group to better achieve benefits in the public participation process.

The long-time enforcement, relatively detailed regulations and developed government procedures provided NSW government officers with familiar paths to design and deliver public participation activities. They had clear perspectives on the objectives of public participation, understood their key stakeholders and competently undertook consultation methods such as public submissions and community meetings. On the other hand, communities including key interest groups also understood the processes of public participation and had the capacity to be involved and provide meaningful feedback. It is evident from the interviews that these stakeholders were familiar with the planning system and knew to what extent the proposed planning reform would increase or reduce their benefits.

In comparison, public participation is a relatively new concept in planning practices in China. Provisions for public participation in planning legislation still lack details and guidance on how it can be implemented (L. Zhang, Geertman, et al., 2019). In the case study of the making of SCP 2040 in Shanghai, however, planners had to be explorative and innovative in designing a participation program within a limited timeframe. They reviewed international best practice examples to develop their own participation schemes which may not have been suitable for Shanghai. Due to the unfamiliarity of communities with public participation activities, the Shanghai government decided to use an online questionnaire survey which was an easier choice for the community as it provided pre-populated options to choose from.

Legislation can prescribe formal mechanisms in the planning system to dictate how public participation processes are undertaken and how powers of different stakeholders are enabled (Metzger, Soneryd, & Tamm Hallström, 2017). Pre-determined processes have influences on the choices planners make in crafting and implementing a public participation program (Brody, 2003). The compulsory requirements of public participation in planning legislation provide a baseline for planners to draw on to safeguard the minimum requirements of participation (Roberts, 2004). The

lack of appropriate institutional instruments may lead to inefficiency, lack of certainty and therefore the failure of participation practices (Wesselink, Paavola, Fritsch, & Renn, 2011).

#### *7.4.2.2 Legislative regulations on public participation decide the distribution of powers between stakeholders*

Legislative regulations on public participation significantly influence how power is distributed among stakeholders in urban planning, determining the balance of authority and representation. For example, Metzger et al. (2017) illustrates how these regulations establish formal structures while shaping the exercise of power in community participation. Depending on their design and implementation, these regulations can amplify community voices or restrict their influence to a tokenistic role. Klein and Arts's (2022) research demonstrates how specific legislative frameworks either enable or hinder public influence over planning decisions. Planners may feel hesitate to explore for more effective methods if they already complied with the procedural requirement for consultation. Participation process is constructed by the laws and guidelines, which create a standardised environment with predefined rules, formal structures, and an uncontested agenda. Such an environment often fosters discussions that are not necessarily open or unrestricted (Pløger, 2021). Bylund (2012) argues that when public participation in planning is geared towards achieving political predictability and consensus, participation processes prioritised predictability over meaningful change.

This is evident in the case of planning reform in NSW, where legal requirements for public participation predominantly focus on procedural aspects like public notifications, comment periods, and the timing of participation opportunities. Traditional methods, such as public submissions and meetings, are often revered but criticised for their inability to foster true collaboration (Abbot, 2020; Innes & Booher, 2004). Over time, this has led to a 'normalised procedure' for public participation that, while meeting legal requirements, establishes only a minimum baseline for public involvement.

The way in which legislation is crafted and implemented can create spaces for inclusive and equitable participation or. The legal framework sets the stage for public participation, defining its scope and limitations, thereby determining the extent to which different stakeholders can exert influence (Burchell, Gordon, & Miller, 1991). The legislative control over public involvement often sets parameters that can both enable and simultaneously limit community power. This is a point of contention among scholars. Arnstein (1969), for example, highlights the inadequacy of power vested in the public, and the consequent superficiality of participation compared to how little civil power the public really have.

In Shanghai, public participation in urban planning is guided by the Law on Urban and Rural Planning (2007), which mandates consultation but follows a more centralised, top-down approach. The government largely controls the process, which manages and limits the extent of influence the public can make. Although tools such as public meetings and written submissions are widely used, they rarely translate into meaningful changes of planning decisions.

In New South Wales, the framework offers clearer procedures for public input, but this does not always result in collaborative planning. Compared to Sydney, participation in Shanghai is typically more restricted, with greater emphasis on administrative control and less opportunities for broad community engagement.

Both cities formally recognise the public's role in planning, but the extent to which these frameworks produce meaningful outcomes depends largely on the political culture and how openly the government accepts public input. Without a commitment to implement suggestions gained from public participation processes, even well-designed participation laws risk becoming symbolic rather than genuine and effective.

#### *7.4.2.3 Without proper legislation and scrutiny, public participation is more likely to be used as a tool to achieve the bureaucratic purpose of government*

Without proper legislation and oversight, public participation in urban planning often becomes a formality that reinforces bureaucratic objectives rather than enabling democratic engagement. For instance, Innes and Booher (2004) illustrates how inadequate legal frameworks allowed participatory processes to legitimise decisions without genuine community involvement. This situation can lead to public disengagement, as the participatory processes are perceived as mere formalities without real influence on policy outcomes. MacDonald (2018) discusses how participatory processes were used to validate pre-existing decisions, without considering community input.

The two case studies show that a comprehensive and detailed legal framework for public participation has influences on the extent to which governments may use public participation to realise their political aims. In the case of the making of SCP 2040 in China, there were neither clear statutory requirements nor well-shaped public participating processes. From the interviews with government officers, it seemed that planning practitioners in China were more willing to accept that public participation can be an opportunity to advertise achievements of the government and legitimate government decisions. However, government officers in NSW tended to insist that the aim of public participation was for institutional benefits such as improving policy outcomes for communities rather than just to obtain consensus or legitimacy, although such views were opposed by some community groups.

Some of the events organised by the Shanghai government in the name of 'public participation', such as inviting citizens to draw pictures of their desired future Shanghai, or public forums on the cultural traditions of Shanghai, did not provide much information that could be used to improve policy outcomes. Rather, these activities attempted to show off the achievements and openness of the Shanghai government. In addition, no reports on how the results of the questionnaire surveys had influenced the making of SCP 2040 were made available for the public. In NSW, however, the state government published a summary report on public consultation outcomes and addressed how they had changed policies to address community input. Thus, the public participation process had achieved the basic quality standard and transparency.

### 7.4.3 Influence by the community: knowledge, interests and influences of active citizens

Communities bring local knowledge, lived experiences and diverse perspectives into the public participation process. Their understanding and perceptions play an essential role in designing and carrying out public participation.

#### *7.4.3.1 The level of knowledge and interest shapes how public participation processes are designed and performed*

Community knowledge, interests, and attitudes play a crucial role in shaping the effectiveness of public participation in urban planning. As seen in the two case studies, the advanced knowledge and capacity held by the community groups in NSW on planning system enabled them to be more active and efficiently in securing their benefits. A wide range of literature supports the notion that the success of public participation depends on the community's interest and understanding (Brannan et al., 2006; Coglianesi, 2004). Surveys in both countries show that most respondents felt they lacked the knowledge needed to engage actively in planning processes. This finding reflects Antonini's (2015) observation that citizens often struggle with the complexity and technical demands of modern planning issues.

Another significant barrier to community involvement identified in the literature is a lack of trust in the impact of their opinions on policy outcomes (Fowler & Kam, 2007). This distrust often originates from the perception that public input is ignored or used as propaganda to legitimise pre-determined decisions. When individuals feel that their contributions will not make any difference, they will not make efforts to get involved. Further, the repeated experiences of negative feedback or exclusion have a cumulative effect so that people do not appreciate the relevance of their own values to the

system. This was evident in the making of SCP 2040 where none of the people who filled out the survey believed that community input would make any difference to policy outcomes.

#### *7.4.3.2 Dominance of active community groups in public participation*

In the planning reform process in NSW, active community members, with professional backgrounds in planning, law, and architecture, had a significant influence. These individuals, referred to as 'critical citizens' by scholars (Norris, 1999), had the knowledge and skills that enabled them to engage deeply in policy discussions, identify flaws in the system, challenge government proposals and advocate effectively for their interests.

The Better Planning Network (BPN) in NS was a coalition of community and environmental groups fighting against the planning reform and full of 'critical citizens'. They advocated for more public participation and transparency and wanted to push for more environmental sustainability in the planning system. Their members had a good understanding of planning laws, as evidenced in their interviews. They engaged in various communication channels such as Facebook, online petitions and protests to advocate their voice.

In fact, the alignment of such active citizen groups was so powerful that they even challenged the traditional influential players like developers and business associations. In the case of the NSW planning reform, it seemed that these community groups drove the direction of the planning reform.

The dominance of active citizens creates a participation gap. The broader community who lack the same level of knowledge, resources, or time, finds it harder to engage in the process. The lack of voices from the wider community raised a critical concern about the inclusivity of the process. Policy-makers noted that the interests of vocal participants were not necessarily aligned with the broader community's needs. To address this issue, the NSW government decided to use mechanisms like citizen juries, which involved a representative sample of the population, to bridge the participation gap to obtain more balanced views from the wider community.

In Shanghai, community groups have played a smaller role in urban planning due to the city's centralised, top-down governance structure. While these groups exist, their ability to influence is limited compared to those in NSW, since the government controls consultation processes, restricting their ability to shape policy. However, since the early 2000s, non-governmental organisations and local community groups have gradually taken on a bigger role in advocating for more transparent and inclusive planning, though their impact remains limited. Future research should explore the growing role of community groups in Shanghai to see how their influence might evolve as urbanisation progresses.

## 7.5 Summary

Chapter 7 compares the outcomes of the two case studies through exploring the objectives, operations and outcomes of public participation in planning systems in Australia and China. It examines the influences from legislative frameworks, participation cultures, and stakeholder dynamics and attempts to evaluate how public participation is shaped in these two distinct government systems.

The chapter analyses the objectives of public participation against three elements identified in the literature: instrumental objectives for improving policy-making processes and outcomes; social objectives for fostering social cohesion, and bureaucratic objectives for legitimising government actions. In Australia, public participation is believed to improve the fairness and quality of decision-making through incorporating diverse community input reflective of established democratic traditions. However, in China, public participation is considered more as a means to fulfill the objectives of the government and help with building an image of transparency and openness. Such differences reflect the traditions of governance and culture in the two systems.

Public participation represents a complex interaction between participants, planners and consultation methods. Both cases in the study highlight the challenges of creating meaningful participation within the broader community. In Australia, participation often depends on active interest groups. They can establish influential communication channels outside of formal participation processes provided by the government. In China, only tokenistic top-down consultation mechanisms such as media campaigns and questionnaire surveys are used. These methods tended to prioritise efficiency over meaningful two-way communication.

The chapter also examines the outcomes of participation in the two case studies and compares the gaps between expectations and actual influences. In the case of the NSW planning reform, policy-makers believed that public input had influenced the reform proposal. However, the community expressed strong dissatisfaction and argued that the participation process and outcomes favoured development interests. Interestingly, in Shanghai, the community showed a level of satisfaction for the increased opportunities for getting more involved than in previous projects. Even so, they tended to believe that they did not have the knowledge or skills to make productive suggestions and therefore would not have any impact on policy outcomes. Such differences indicate cultural and institutional factors can shape community expectations and satisfaction levels with public participation in planning processes.

The chapter then discussed the importance of governance legacies and legislative frameworks in driving participation processes. Australia's colonial history tended to shape their structured but constrained participation frameworks. These frameworks are capable of ensuring the right procedures are being conducted but are unable to promote creative and transformative policy design. In China, socialist governance principles were deeply embedded in the system that prioritises government efficiency and stability over collaboration. These legacies have shaped the design of participation mechanisms and power distribution among stakeholders.

Knowledge, interests and attitudes in the community also influence the public participation process. It is obvious that urban planning is not a popular topic for the community due to the comprehension barrier involving complex legislation and policies. In Shanghai, the participation process had to shift its focus to educating citizens about planning. Questionnaire surveys were used due to their simplicity of use, although their effectiveness for recording genuine ideas was doubtful. In comparison, communities in Sydney showed more diverse and informed knowledge of the planning system. For example, members of community and environmental groups, who are wide range of occupations and backgrounds are able to use their skills in planning system and actively involved. As a result, the planning reform in NSW employed consultation methods such as submissions and stakeholder meetings that supported richer dialogue and negotiation than the case in Shanghai.

One notable feature of the NSW planning reform was the influence of active citizen groups. Groups like the Better Planning Network (BPN) challenged the reform proposals by organising powerful campaigns, such as petitions or public forums, to rally community opposition. These groups, formed by well-informed and equipped individuals, used various campaign methods to effectively halt the progression of the planning reform. Their efforts shifted the balance of power that were predominated by developers and industrial groups who believed to have resources for organising influential campaign. This case study demonstrates how citizen-led initiatives can influence planning decisions.

This chapter provides a comparative analysis of public participation processes in urban planning in Australia and China. It examines the case study findings against insights from the literature review in Chapter 2. By discussing the objectives, operational processes and outcomes of public participation in the two countries, the chapter highlights how government legacies, legislation and cultural contexts and stakeholder dynamics shape participatory processes. The chapter addresses the complexities and difficulties in achieving meaningful engagement across diverse contexts. These insights will be used in Chapter 8 to integrate broader theoretical and practical implications for public participation in planning.

## Chapter 8 Conclusion of the thesis

### 8.1 Introduction

Chapter 8 concludes this thesis. The chapter begins with a review of the main findings, organised according to the three research questions introduced in Chapter 1. Differences between the objectives, operational processes and outcomes of public participation in the two case studies are explored and reasons given for them. The analysis focuses on the influences of governance legacies, institutional frameworks and community dynamics in shaping participatory processes.

The chapter goes on to highlight the contributions of the research. It discusses how the insights of this study can benefit planning theory and practices specifically. The three-stage framework used in this study has the potential to provide scholars, planning practitioners and the community with a structured framework to narrate and comprehend participation processes in a systematic manner. The study also fills a gap by examining public participation in less democratic settings. The case study of Shanghai presents the unique characteristics of public participation under a centralised governance environment.

The chapter then examines the limitations of the study. For example, it acknowledges the difficulty of comparing systems with fundamentally different political and cultural contexts. It also describes the challenges generated by subjective data and a small survey sample size. These limitations are important factors to consider when interpreting the research findings.

Finally, the chapter outlines recommendations for future research, which could include expanding the research focus to include examining public participation processes from a wider range of governance systems. The study also calls for studies on how influence is exercised in planning decisions and how to overcome barriers to encourage broader community involvement. Thus, the chapter ties together the findings and provides a roadmap for advancing the study and practice of public participation in urban planning.

### 8.2 Summary of main findings based on research questions

This section provides an overview of the main findings of the research. Findings from this study highlight the huge influence of government legacies, legislative frameworks and community knowledge and interests on the public participation process. These factors are interrelated and have significant implications for how public participation should be designed, implemented and evaluated in practice.

**Research Question 1: How do the policy design objectives for public participation in urban planning differ between Shanghai, China, and Sydney, Australia, and how do their distinct political legacies, institutional frameworks, and participation cultures impact the objectives?**

In both cities, policy-makers and planners in their interviews stressed the instrumental benefits of public participation. They believe that the purpose of public participation is to enhance the quality of policy outcomes. In the planning reform in NSW, under an established democratic system, both policy-makers and the community expressed greater confidence that public participation contributes to more inclusive policy outcomes. This confirms Burton's (2009) statement that practitioners often perceive public participation as a tool for gathering diverse viewpoints that provide valuable input for policy-making.

However, a deeper analysis reveals that the objectives of public participation often conceal underlying bureaucratic goals. Participation tends to be used as a tool to achieve consensus and obtain public support for policy proposals (Forester, 2006). Despite the planning system in NSW having a long history of statutory requirements for public participation, during the period of the reform proposal, the community argued that consultation mechanisms were tokenistic and that the reform proposal favoured pro-development interests. This sentiment accords with the observations of Forester (2006) and Arnstein (1969) that statutory regulations often allow governments to manipulate the process to suit bureaucratic goals, such as consensus-building or securing predetermined policies and that public participation does not always empower the community in decision-making processes} also agrees

In comparison, the bureaucratic objectives of public participation are even more evident in Shanghai. Both policy-makers and the community felt government wanted to use public participation as a method to promote an image of transparency and openness. With a more centralised governance model, the principles and scope of public participation remain tightly managed. The primary objective is the maintenance of authority rather than open and community-driven engagement. The political legacy of top-down governance in China continues to shape public participation processes, limiting the extent to which public involvement influences decision-making. This finding also supports Morrison and Xian's (2016) observation that public participation in China is often tokenistic and limited by institutional structures focusing on meeting political leaders' performance targets over meaningful public engagement. In both contexts of Australia and China, despite the official narratives of promoting genuine participation, the realities reveal a prioritisation of bureaucratic goals. This finding reinforces Zakhour's (2020) argument that the influences of the manipulated participation are to maintain political power.

**Research Question 2: What operational mechanisms for public involvement are employed in urban planning in Shanghai, China, and Sydney, Australia, and how are these mechanisms influenced by the respective political, institutional, and cultural contexts of each city?**

The study shows that operational processes for public involvement in urban planning in Shanghai and Sydney are greatly shaped by the political, institutional, and cultural contexts of each city. The institutional framework set basic requirements of procedures of public participation. In Sydney, public participation has been a legislative requirement since the 1980s under the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act), which guides planners in applying consultation procedures and selecting participatory methods. The commonly used participation methods include public notification and submissions, community consultation, and using digital platforms to facilitate community involvement. Such relatively long history of compulsory requirements for participation has encouraged key stakeholders such as community groups and developers to acquire enough knowledge and capacity to engage successfully in the process (Buijs et al., 2016). In the case of the planning reform in NSW, some active citizens with greater interest and abilities are able and willing to challenge the planning reform proposals and align themselves with other like-minded people. However, policy makers in the interviews doubted the representativeness of these 'active citizen' of the general public, which supported the findings from Fung (2015).

In contrast, Shanghai's participatory mechanisms are less rigidly defined. Although there is requirement to include the public in 'planning matters' in general, there is lack of explicit guidelines such as when should consultation start or what methods should be used. The development of Shanghai's SCP 2040, for example, revealed an experiment involving innovative approaches to public engagement. Without formal procedures to follow, planners had to review the best practices globally which they believed to be advanced in participation practices. Although various consultation mechanisms including large-scale media campaigns, city-wide questionnaire surveys, citizen representative consultations and public forums were employed, there is no intent for the community to influence the pre-designed plan. As Healey (1992) argued, participatory processes have to adapt to specific contexts, and in Shanghai the barriers for deep engagement stemmed from the interaction of centralised governance legacies and the limited knowledge and interest from the community. The research findings suggest that while statutory frameworks provide a procedural foundation for public participation, both top-down government attitude and intention on participation and bottom-up community interests and knowledge in planning play crucial roles in shaping how participation is performed in both cities.

**Research Question 3: What are the specific outcomes and influences of public participation on urban planning processes in Shanghai, China, and Sydney, Australia, given their differing political, institutional, and cultural environments?**

The outcomes and influences of public participation on urban planning processes in Shanghai and Sydney are deeply influenced by the political, institutional, and cultural environments of each city. In Sydney, public participation has resulted in tangible changes to planning proposals such as the reinforce of ESD (Environmentally sustainable development) in the objectives of the Bill (2013) and the removal of 80% target for code assessable developments in the White Paper (2013). However, many community groups argue that these changes focusing on minor issues that have less influences on community's benefits, rather than addressing the fundamental flaws in the planning reforms. Similar findings are noted by Rydin and Pennington (2000) that governments are able to craft the policies in ways that appear inclusive but ultimately preserve existing power structures. This tension between the official narrative of inclusion and the reality of community involvement highlights the limitations of participation processes that are driven by bureaucratic objectives (Porter, 2016). These findings confirm the statements by Brownill and Parker (2010), that while public participation can be formally integrated into the planning framework, its depth and influences are often constrained by political considerations, reflecting a superficial level of engagement.

In Shanghai, the influences of public participation on policy outcomes are even more constrained by the government's tight control on community influence. Although citizen panel and questionnaire surveys were conducted to collect public's input, planners in the interviews admitted that they did not generate any influences on altering the contents of the plan. The wide media campaign selectively exposed the information that help to advertise the government's achievements. The SCP 2040 development provides a clear example of how the Chinese government portrays its participatory process as a democratic model, yet the reality remains one of limited community influence. The findings are in consistent with suggestion by Lim et al (2023) that in China, a clear institutional framework with detailed procedures for public participation would help ensure a consistent standard and quality of engagement in planning processes.

In both case studies, the actual influences of public participation on policy outcomes are constrained by the procedural and political frameworks that govern the process. In Sydney, the emphasis on formal procedures ensures transparency but tends to only address surface-level concerns. In Shanghai, the centralised system prioritises control, limiting the transformative potential of participatory processes. As Bailey and Pill (2015) suggest, meaningful change through public

participation relies not only on the existence of participatory mechanisms but also on the readiness of political actors to relinquish some level of control.

## 8.3 Contributions of this study

This research provides valuable insights for both planning theory and planning practices on public participation. The findings offer a deeper understanding of planning theory in relation to processes of public participation under different political and cultural contexts. The research also contributes and provides guidance on how to design public participation strategies suitable for unique governance legacies, legislative frameworks and community profiles.

### 8.3.1 Contributions to participation theories in urban planning

This thesis contributed to the procedure theory of public participation. By mapping and classifying participation theories and studies from the literature, the study summarised a three-stage process to understand public participation, namely, its objectives, operational processes and outcomes. This framework echoes the structured approaches discussed by Bryson et al. (2013), Innes and Booher (1999), and Forester (1996) who all emphasised the need for a systematic approach to understand participation. This research attempted to test this three-stage process by applying it to two case studies of public participation in Australia and China respectively. It also reviewed and examined the key elements of each stage to enable more in-depth understanding of the process.

This research also fills a gap in understanding the development of public participation in planning in less democratic settings. As identified in the research design chapter, most of the existing studies and participation theories are developed based on the practices in western developed countries. However, public participation in planning in less democratic countries, and especially in developing countries, is very different from the 'popular' participation theories in countries as varying political and cultural environments shape participation theories and practices. The findings of this study align with the observations of Lim et al. (2023) and Wan and Chiu (2008), who highlight the unique participatory dynamics in state-led contexts. This research therefore contributes to the understanding of how the processes of public participation in planning systems operate differently according to the political context. It used the procedural framework developed from the literature review as the comparison framework to identify similarities and differences of public participation processes in different countries.

This research also offers an analysis of the debate around the efficiency of top-down legislation setting rules for public participation and how this legislation ensures the assumed benefits from public participation. As suggested by Arnstein (1969) and Healey (1996), while detailed and

comprehensive legislation can enforce basic standards such as information, notification and consultation, it cannot ensure the quality and accountability of public participation processes nor can it manage competition for power and stakeholder conflicts.

The research confirms the findings of Fung (2006) that communities with higher expertise and knowledge in the subject policies tend to be more critical of public participation processes, whereas those with less understanding are more easily influenced by governments. This dynamic is also reflected in the studies by Rydin and Pennington (2000), and Bailey and Pill (2015), that discuss the significance of community capacity on driving participatory outcomes.

### 8.3.2 Contributions to public participation practices in planning systems

The thesis also contributes to enhancing public participation practices within urban planning systems in three potential areas. Firstly, three three-stage framework developed in this study provide both the planners and community members an effective mechanism to understand and manage public participation in planning processes, which is thought to be an important factor for successful policy practices (Bryson et al. 2013; Shipley and Utz, 2012). For planners and practitioners, this framework can be used to design, monitor and evaluate public participation processes in planning practices. The more detailed elements within each stage can help planners and policy-makers identify gaps, refine their strategies and align participation practices with broader policy goals. The final stage of outcomes also highlights the necessity of closing the feedback loop by informing participants how their input have influenced the final outcomes. For the public, this framework offers a practical guide to navigating complex planning processes that are thought to be technical and difficult for the public to comprehend (Healey, 2020). This framework breaks down the participation process into manageable stages with clearly defined components, which simplifies the technical systems and empowers communities to understand their rights and opportunities. The increased transparency and accountability generated by this framework helps bridge the knowledge gap between planners and participants and foster trust in the system.

Secondly, the thesis identifies the importance of legislative frameworks to support effective participation processes. The findings from two case study highlight that a well-established legislative foundation sets up standard participation processes and maintains consistency across planning systems. These statements support the findings of Brody et al.(2003) and Rydin and Pennington (2000). For example, the long history compulsory participation requirement on public participation in Australia has formed a culture of participation among all stakeholders and, as a result, more active and influential participation is identified in Sydney than Shanghai. For practitioners, legislation serves as a baseline to guide their approach to consultation and ensures that essential steps are taken. For

the community, legislation provides them with confidence that necessary actions are in place to protect their rights and interests. This study suggests that planning legislation should mandate basic requirements for public participation, such as clarifying objectives, basic procedures and consultation methods and defining what matters to consult on. It is important that significant planning decisions are subject to public scrutiny by legislation. Over time, well-designed legislation should foster collaboration by building trust and promoting a culture of healthy communication between stakeholders.

Thirdly, the study reveals why public participation processes should reflect the unique profile of the local community, who have different levels of knowledge, interests and ability to participate. Participation processes should not be a standard 'one-size-fits-all'. Planning practitioners need to consider the specific needs and circumstances of their local communities (Kahila-Tani et al., 2019; Shipley & Utz, 2012). For example, in China, communities have limited knowledge or interest in planning processes. Rather than purely learning from the consultation methods from established planning processes in developed countries, planners may adopt a more creative and hands-on approach, such as actively getting out into the community to observe their daily activities and thus uncover hidden needs. This study raises a critical point that planners in China should be facilitated with the skill of translating complex planning terms into simple and easy-to-understand daily language to ensure all community members are able to comprehend the proposed planning initiatives.

In Australia, however, where more citizens actively engage in public participation activities, a planner's role may shift to a facilitator or a mediator. They should build up their listening and facilitating skills to promote productive dialogue and foster two-way communication among stakeholders with different or even conflicting interests such as developers and community groups. In addition, considerations should be given on creating new mechanisms and avenues to encourage meaningful input from less vocal individuals- the 'silent majority', who might not have engaged in a public participation process before. Some emerging efforts such as 'citizen jury' adopted by the City of Sydney Council seem to address this issue. This approach actively brings in a diverse group of individuals into an intensive and educational engagement process. From the series of training sessions and discussions in citizen jury meetings, the participants gain a deep understanding of the planning matters and are then able to provide meaningful feedback and insights into the proposed policies.

As planning processes continue to evolve in both Sydney and Shanghai, the issues raised in this study are still relevant. In Sydney, recent discussions around ongoing planning reforms show a continued

push for more inclusive participation. New ideas like citizen juries are gaining more attention. In Shanghai, more local organisations are starting to speak up for better community involvement and more open planning processes.

These changes show why the strategies and frameworks in this thesis matter. They also suggest that public participation will keep being a challenge and an important topic for future research and improvement in both cities.

### 8.3.3 Methodological contributions

This study is based on a pragmatic research design (Creswell, 2017) that prioritises real-world practical solutions over focus on rigidly theoretical paradigms. By adopting this approach, the study integrates methods and data that best address the research questions (Sanyal, 2005; Zimmermann & Momm, 2022). The comparative approach in this study enables the identification of similarities and differences in public participation practices across different systems and investigates how specific cultural and institutional factors shape participation processes. The comparison also provides a unique perspective to examine each case study from a contrasting political and social context that would be impossible to detect otherwise.

Indeed, the challenges of conducting research in different jurisdictions are well recognised by scholars (Esser & Vliegthart, 2017; Pickvance, 2001). The study demonstrates a replicable and scalable methodology which allow future researchers to use the same approach to investigate public participation in diverse cultural or governance settings. Although the persistent issues of cross-nation comparison such as units, level and scale of comparison; construct equivalence; and issues of causality (Mills et al., 2006) still exist, this research provides insights for other researchers who are interested in building broader understandings of the ways in which normative objectives around participation are mediated by political, legal, and social characteristics.

Overall, despite the research limitations discussed in Chapter 3 (relating to the difficulties of comparing very different case studies, generalising from small questionnaire samples, and verifying individual interviewee responses), the research methods adopted by this study—proved effective in illuminating the ways in which governance traditions and cultural norms intersect with the interests and willingness of individuals to participate in planning processes.

## 8.4 Directions for future research

This research explores the top-down and bottom-up dynamics in shaping public participation in urban planning in Australia and China. One observation from the study is that these dynamics often

depend on, and influence, each other. For example, enhancing the community's capacity to participate often requires a top-down framework that embeds participation in legislation. Meanwhile, the performance of these legislative frameworks will heavily depend on the public's willingness and ability to engage in the process. Efforts should be made to balance and connect government-led initiatives with the wider community's involvement to achieve meaningful engagement.

The planning reform in NSW brings in an interesting phenomenon that, despite strong public participation policies and a long history of democratic governance, active involvement in planning processes often comes from a small, elite segment of society. Such groups, with their resources and expertise, can navigate planning systems effectively, while most of the population remain excluded. This example highlights the need for future research to explore the barriers to participation experienced by ordinary people, and how to trigger and maintain their interest in planning and in the mechanisms of public participation to ensure that participation reflects the diversity of the broader community. An example of such a creative mechanism is the citizen jury, already mentioned, that was used by the City of Sydney with a diverse range of individuals who participated in the educational and deliberative process and ultimately, were able to produce meaningful input into the policy decision-making process.

In Shanghai, the government's top-down planning system has made it harder for community groups to be involved in urban planning. Even though these groups exist, their influence is still quite limited because the government controls most parts of the planning process. Future research should focus on how these community groups can find ways to deal with these challenges to enhance genuine and fair public participation in planning system. Increasingly, powerful stakeholders are often able to shape the communication and construct planning narratives to support their interests. Consequently, these stakeholders can gain influence over decisions, which can disadvantage the wider community. For example, during the planning reform process in NSW, active community groups, developers, and industry groups often dominated discussions. Their resources and expertise allowed them to frame narratives in their favour. Future research is recommended to investigate the strategies these groups use to shape communication and promote their influence. Researchers should also examine the implication of such manipulated influence and assess how these practices impact the inclusivity and fairness of planning processes.

Lastly, further research could benefit from exploring the process of public participation beyond the comparison between Australia and China and include case studies from a diverse range of systems. Case studies from emerging democracies or transitioning governance systems might reveal how

participation evolves in different contexts. Such a broader comparative approach would provide a richer understanding of the global practices of public participation in planning.

## References

- Abbot, C. (2020). Losing the local? Public participation and legal expertise in planning law. *Legal Studies*, 40(2), 269-285.
- Abbott, K. W., & Marchant, G. E. (2010). Institutionalizing sustainability across the federal government. *Sustainability*, 2(7), 1924-1942.
- Abramson, D. B. (1992). *Participation in post-socialist housing*. Massachusetts Institute of Technology.
- Afzalan, N., & Muller, B. (2018). Online participatory technologies: opportunities and challenges for enriching participatory planning. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 84(2), 162-177.
- Ahmed, S., & Bartlett, D. (2018). An evaluation of the effectiveness of the co-management approach in selected protected areas of Bangladesh. *International Journal of Biodiversity and Conservation*, 10(12), 510-516.
- Akmentīņa, L. (2020). Participatory planning in post-socialist cities: a case study of Riga. *Architecture and Urban Planning*, 16(1), 17-25.
- Al-Kodmany, K. (1999). Using visualization techniques for enhancing public participation in planning and design: process, implementation, and evaluation. *Landscape and urban planning*, 45(1), 37-45.
- Antonini, M., Hogg, M. A., Mannetti, L., Barbieri, B., & Wagoner, J. A. (2015). Motivating citizens to participate in public policymaking: Identification, trust and cost-benefit analyses.
- Aref, F., & Redzuan, M. r. (2009). Community leaders' perceptions toward tourism impacts and level of community capacity building in tourism development. *Journal of Sustainable Development*, 2(3), 208-213.
- Arnstein, S. R. (1969). A ladder of citizen participation. *Journal of the American Institute of planners*, 35(4), 216-224.
- Åström, J. (2020). Participatory Urban Planning: What Would Make Planners Trust the Citizens? *Urban Planning*, 5(2), 84-93.
- Bächtiger, A., Dryzek, J. S., Mansbridge, J., & Warren, M. E. (2018). *The Oxford handbook of deliberative democracy*: Oxford University Press.
- Bailey, N., & Peel, D. (2018). Building sustainable networks: A study of public participation and social capital. In *Planning in the UK* (pp. 157-181): Routledge.
- Bailey, N., & Pill, M. (2015). Can the state empower communities through localism? An evaluation of recent approaches to neighbourhood governance in England. *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy*, 33(2), 289-304.
- Baker, M., Coaffee, J., & Sherriff, G. (2007). Achieving successful participation in the new UK spatial planning system. *Planning, Practice & Research*, 22(1), 79-93.
- Barlow, J. (1995). The Politics of Urban Growth: 'Boosterism' and 'Nimbyism' in European Boom Regions\*. *International journal of urban and regional research*, 19(1), 129-144.
- Barriball, K. L., & While, A. (1994). Collecting data using a semi-structured interview: a discussion paper. *Journal of Advanced Nursing-Institutional Subscription*, 19(2), 328-335.
- Beebejaun, Y. (2022). Provincializing planning: Reflections on spatial ordering and imperial power. *Planning theory*, 21(3), 248-268.
- Beetham, D. (1994). *Defining and measuring democracy* (Vol. 36): Sage.
- BETTER PLANNING NETWORK. 2013. May 20 2013-BPN Forum
- Bishop, P., & Davis, G. (2002). Mapping public participation in policy choices. *Australian journal of public administration*, 61(1), 14-29.
- Blaikie, P. (2006). Is small really beautiful? Community-based natural resource management in Malawi and Botswana. *World development*, 34(11), 1942-1957.
- Blair, R. (2004). Public participation and community development: The role of strategic planning. *Public Administration Quarterly*, 102-147.

- Blee, K. M., & Taylor, V. (2002). Semi-structured interviewing in social movement research. *Methods of social movement research*, 16, 92-117.
- Bond, S. (2011). Negotiating a 'democratic ethos' moving beyond the agonistic–communicative divide. *Planning theory*, 10(2), 161-186.
- Bonilla-Santiago, G. (2019). A Case Study of Local Community Development and Citizen Participation in Cuba: A Comprehensive Neighbourhood Transformation Approach. *International Journal of Cuban Studies*, 11(2), 174-199.
- Booher, D. E., & Innes, J. E. (2002). Network power in collaborative planning. *Journal of planning education and research*, 21(3), 221-236.
- Bouregh, A. S. (2022). A Conceptual Framework of Public Participation Utilization for Sustainable Urban Planning in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. *Sustainability*, 14(18), 11470.
- Brabham, D. C. (2009). Crowdsourcing the public participation process for planning projects. *Planning theory*, 8(3), 242-262.
- Brabham, D. C. (2010). *Crowdsourcing as a model for problem solving: leveraging the collective intelligence of online communities for public good*: The University of Utah.
- Bradley, Q., & Brownill, S. (2017). Reflections on neighbourhood planning: towards a progressive localism. In *Localism and Neighbourhood Planning* (pp. 251-268): Policy Press.
- Brand, R., & Gaffikin, F. (2007). Collaborative planning in an uncollaborative world. *Planning theory*, 6(3), 282-313.
- Brannan, T., John, P., & Stoker, G. (2006). Active citizenship and effective public services and programmes: how can we know what really works? *Urban Studies*, 43(5-6), 993-1008.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative research in psychology*, 3(2), 77-101.
- Brody, S. D., Godschalk, D. R., & Burby, R. J. (2003). Mandating citizen participation in plan making: Six strategic planning choices. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 69(3), 245-264.
- Brown, A., & Danaher, P. A. (2019). CHE principles: Facilitating authentic and dialogical semi-structured interviews in educational research. *International Journal of Research & Method in Education*, 42(1), 76-90.
- Brownill, S., & Parker, G. (2010). Why bother with good works? The relevance of public participation (s) in planning in a post-collaborative era. *Planning Practice & Research*, 25(3), 275-282.
- Bryson, J. M. (2004). What to do when stakeholders matter: stakeholder identification and analysis techniques. *Public Management Review*, 6(1), 21-53.
- Bryson, J. M., Quick, K. S., Slotterback, C. S., & Crosby, B. C. (2013). Designing public participation processes. *Public administration review*, 73(1), 23-34.
- Buijs, A. E., Mattijssen, T. J., Van der Jagt, A. P., Ambrose-Oji, B., Andersson, E., Elands, B. H., & Møller, M. S. (2016). Active citizenship for urban green infrastructure: fostering the diversity and dynamics of citizen contributions through mosaic governance. *Current opinion in environmental sustainability*, 22, 1-6.
- Burby, R. J. (2003). Making plans that matter: Citizen involvement and government action. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 69(1), 33-49.
- Burchell, G., Gordon, C., & Miller, P. (1991). The Foucault effect: Studies in governmentality.
- Burton, P. (2006). David Taylor and Susan Balloch (eds), *The Politics of Evaluation: Participation and Policy Implementation*, The Policy Press, Bristol, 2005, 261 pp., pbk. *Journal of social policy*, 35(2), 337-338.
- Burton, P. (2009). Conceptual, theoretical and practical issues in measuring the benefits of public participation. *Evaluation*, 15(3), 263-284.
- Burton, P. (2017). Is urban planning in Australia hindered by poor metropolitan governance? *Urban Science*, 1(4), 34.
- Burton, P., Goodlad, R., & Croft, J. (2006). How would we know what works? Context and complexity in the evaluation of community involvement. *Evaluation*, 12(3), 294-312.
- Bylund, J. (2012). Postpolitical correctness? *Planning theory*, 11(3), 319-327.

- Cai, Y. (2004). Managed participation in China. *Political Science Quarterly*, 119(3), 425-451.
- Cao, K., Zhu, J., & Zheng, L. (2021). The 'Collaborative Planning Turn' in China: Exploring three decades of diffusion, interpretation and reception in Chinese planning. *Cities*, 117, 103210.
- Carpenter, J., & Brownill, S. (2008). Approaches to democratic involvement: widening community engagement in the English planning system. *Planning theory & practice*, 9(2), 227-248.
- Castells, M. (1996). The information age: Economy, society and culture (3 volumes). *Blackwell, Oxford, 1997, 1998.*
- Cavalier, R. (2011). Approaching Deliberative Democracy. *Theory and Practice*.
- Chamusca, P. (2023). Urban planning and policy in Portugal: An overview on the role of EU funds and guidelines. *Urban Research & Practice*, 16(1), 44-65.
- Chang, I.-S., & Wu, J. (2011). Planning and rationalization of public participation in China's environmental management. *Management Science and Engineering*, 5(1), 37.
- Chen, S., Pearson, S., Wang, X. H., & Ma, Y. (2017). Public participation in coastal development applications: A comparison between Australia and China. *Ocean & coastal management*, 136, 19-28.
- Cheng, Y. (2013). Collaborative planning in the network: Consensus seeking in urban planning issues on the Internet—the case of China. *Planning theory*, 12(4), 351-368.
- Chiu, R. (2016) Power and Decision Making in Hong Kong's Planning System. In Gurran, N., Gallent, N., & Chiu, R. (Eds.), *Politics, planning and housing supply in Australia, England and Hong Kong*: Routledge.
- Chiu, R. L. (2001). Commodification of housing with Chinese characteristics. *Review of Policy Research*, 18(1), 75-95.
- Chiu, R. L. (2007). Planning, land and affordable housing in Hong Kong. *Housing Studies*, 22(1), 63-81.
- Chiu, R. L. (2012). Urban sustainability and the urban forms of China's leading mega cities: Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou. *Urban Policy and Research*, 30(4), 359-383.
- Choi, T., & Robertson, P. J. (2014). Deliberation and decision in collaborative governance: A simulation of approaches to mitigate power imbalance. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 24(2), 495-518.
- Chung, H., & Zhou, S.-H. (2011). Planning for plural groups? Villages-in-the-city redevelopment in Guangzhou city, China. *International Planning Studies*, 16(4), 333-353.
- Clary, E. G., & Snyder, M. (2002). Community involvement: Opportunities and challenges in socializing adults to participate in society. *Journal of Social Issues*, 58(3), 581-591.
- Cochran, W. G. (1977). Sampling techniques. John Wiley & Sons.
- Coffey, A., & Atkinson, P. (1996). *Making sense of qualitative data: Complementary research strategies*: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Coglianesse, C. (2004). The internet and citizen participation in rulemaking. *ISJLP*, 1, 33.
- Cooper, T. L., Bryer, T. A., & Meek, J. W. (2006). Citizen-centered collaborative public management. *Public administration review*, 66, 76-88.
- Corburn, J. (2003). Bringing local knowledge into environmental decision making: Improving urban planning for communities at risk. *Journal of planning education and research*, 22(4), 420-433.
- Cornwall, A. (2004). Introduction: New democratic spaces? The politics and dynamics of institutionalised participation>>. *iDS Bulletin*, 35, núm. 2. In: Wiley Online Library.
- Cornwall, A. (2008). Unpacking 'Participation': models, meanings and practices. *Community development journal*, 43(3), 269-283.
- Cowell, R. (2004). Community planning: fostering participation in the congested state? *Local Government Studies*, 30(4), 497-518.
- Creighton, J. L. (2005). *The public participation handbook: Making better decisions through citizen involvement*: John Wiley & Sons.
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2017). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*: Sage publications.

- Cui, T., & Gurran, N. (2015). *Planning reform, interest group participation and influence: the case of New South Wales*.
- Cullingworth, J. B. (1999). *British planning: 50 years of urban and regional policy*: A&C Black.
- Damurski, L. (2012). E-participation in urban planning: Online tools for citizen engagement in Poland and in Germany. *International Journal of E-Planning Research (IJEPR)*, 1(3), 40-67.
- Dang, W. (2020). How culture shapes environmental public participation: case studies of China, the Netherlands, and Italy. *Journal of Chinese Governance*, 5(3), 390-412.
- Davidoff, P. (1965). Advocacy and pluralism in planning. *Journal of the American Institute of planners*, 31(4), 331-338.
- Day, D. (1997). Citizen participation in the planning process: An essentially contested concept? *Journal of Planning Literature*, 11(3), 421-434.
- Denhardt, J., Terry, L., Delacruz, E. R., & Andonoska, L. (2009). Barriers to citizen engagement in developing countries. *Intl Journal of Public Administration*, 32(14), 1268-1288.
- Devine, P. (2002). Participatory planning through negotiated coordination. *Science & Society*, 66(1), 72-85.
- Dryzek, J. S., & Braithwaite, V. (2000). On the Prospects for Democratic Deliberation: Values Analysis Applied to Australian Politics. *Political psychology*, 21(2), 241-266.
- Earl, J., Martin, A., McCarthy, J. D., & Soule, S. A. (2004). The use of newspaper data in the study of collective action. *Annu. Rev. Sociol.*, 30(1), 65-80.
- Edmunds, R. (1947). Town and country planning and democracy. *Twentieth Century*, 1(4), 56-60.
- Esser, F., & Vliegenthart, R. (2017). Comparative research methods. *The international encyclopedia of communication research methods*, 1-22.
- Eversole, R. (2012). Remaking participation: challenges for community development practice. *Community development journal*, 47(1), 29-41.
- Feng, L., Wu, Q., Wu, W., & Liao, W. (2020). Decision-Maker-Oriented VS. Collaboration: China's Public Participation in Environmental Decision-Making. *Sustainability*, 12(4), 1334.
- Fine, J. D., & Owen, D. (2004). Technocracy and democracy: Conflicts between models and participation in environmental law and planning. *Hastings LJ*, 56, 901.
- Fiorina, M. P. (1999). A dark side of civic engagement. *Civic engagement in American democracy*, 395-425.
- Flyvbjerg, B. (1998a). Habermas and Foucault: thinkers for civil society? *British Journal of Sociology*, 210-233.
- Flyvbjerg, B. (1998b). *Rationality and power: Democracy in practice*: University of Chicago press.
- Flyvbjerg, B., Richardson, T., Allmendinger, I. P., & Tewdwr-Jones, M. (2002). Planning and Foucault. *Planning futures: New directions for planning theory*, 44-63.
- Forester, J. (1982). Planning in the face of power. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 48(1), 67-80.
- Forester, J. (1987). Planning in the face of conflict: Negotiation and mediation strategies in local land use regulation. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 53(3), 303-314.
- Forester, J. (1993). *Critical theory, public policy, and planning practice*: SUNY Press.
- Forester, J. (1994). Bridging interests and community: advocacy planning and the challenges of deliberative democracy. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 60(2), 153-158.
- Forester, J. (1996). Beyond dialogue to transformative learning: how deliberative rituals encourage political judgment in community planning processes.
- Forester, J. (2006). Making participation work when interests conflict: Moving from facilitating dialogue and moderating debate to mediating negotiations. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 72(4), 447-456.
- Fowler Jr, F. J. (2013). *Survey research methods*. Sage publications.
- Fowler, J. H., & Kam, C. D. (2007). Beyond the self: Social identity, altruism, and political participation. *The Journal of politics*, 69(3), 813-827.

- Freestone, R. (2012). Learning from planning's histories. In *Urban Planning in a Changing World* (pp. 11-29): Routledge.
- Freestone, R. (2015). The exhibition as a lens for planning history. *Planning Perspectives*, 30(3), 433-446.
- Freestone, R., & James, P. (2015). Exhibition to implementation: Introducing democratic planning for metropolitan Sydney 1948–51. *Urban Policy and Research*, 33(1), 1-16.
- Frewer, L. J., Howard, C., & Shepherd, R. (1998). The influence of initial attitudes on responses to communication about genetic engineering in food production. *Agriculture and Human Values*, 15(1), 15-30.
- Friedmann, J. (1973). *RETRACKING AMERICA; A THEORY OF TRANSACTIVE PLANNING*.
- Friedmann, J. (2005). Planning cultures in transition. In *Comparative planning cultures* (pp. 53-68): Routledge.
- Friend, J. K., & Hickling, A. (2005). *Planning under pressure: the strategic choice approach*: Routledge.
- Friendly, A. (2019). The contradictions of participatory planning: Reflections on the role of politics in urban development in Niterói, Brazil. *Journal of Urban Affairs*, 41(7), 910-929.
- Fung, A. (2006). Varieties of participation in complex governance. *Public administration review*, 66, 66-75.
- Fung, A. (2015). Putting the Public Back into Governance: The Challenges of Citizen Participation and Its Future. *Public administration review*, 75(4), 513-522. doi:10.1111/puar.12361
- Fung, A., & Wright, E. O. (2001). Deepening democracy: Innovations in empowered participatory governance. *Politics & society*, 29(1), 5-41.
- Fung, A., & Wright, E. O. (2003). Deepening democracy.
- Gao, Z., Wang, S., & Gu, J. (2020). Public participation in smart-city governance: a qualitative content analysis of public comments in urban China. *Sustainability*, 12(20), 8605.
- Gastil, J. (2000). Is face-to-face citizen deliberation a luxury or a necessity? *Political communication*, 17(4), 357-361.
- Glasbergen, P. (1994). *Managing environmental disputes: network management as an alternative* (Vol. 5): Springer Science & Business Media.
- Gleeson, B., & Low, N. (2000). Revaluing planning: Rolling back neo-liberalism in Australia. *Progress in planning*, 53(2), 83-164.
- Goldman, M. (2005). *From comrade to citizen: The struggle for political rights in China*: Harvard University Press.
- Goodin, R. E., & Dryzek, J. S. (2006). Deliberative impacts: The macro-political uptake of mini-publics. *Politics & society*, 34(2), 219-244.
- Graversgaard, M., Jacobsen, B. H., Kjeldsen, C., & Dalgaard, T. (2017). Stakeholder engagement and knowledge co-creation in water planning: can public participation increase cost-effectiveness? *Water*, 9(3), 191.
- Greiss, G., & Piracha, A. (2021). Post-political planning in Sydney: a turn in the wrong direction. *Australian Planner*, 1-10.
- Griffith, G. (2015). Integrity in government: issues and developments in New South Wales, 2011-2015 Briefing Paper No 1/2015.
- Grisez Kweit, M., & Kweit, R. W. (2007). Participation, perception of participation, and citizen support. *American Politics Research*, 35(3), 407-425.
- Gudowsky, N., & Bechtold, U. (2013). The role of information in public participation. *Journal of Public Deliberation*, 9(1).
- Guo, J., & Sun, H. (2004). Some legal issues on public participation in urban planning '. *City Planning Review*, 28(1), 65-68.
- Gurran, N. (2007). *Australian urban land use planning: Introducing statutory planning practice in New South Wales*: Sydney University Press.
- Gurran, N. (2011). *Australian urban land use planning: Principles, systems and practice*: Sydney University Press.

- Gurran, N., Gallent, N., & Chiu, R. (2016). *Politics, planning and housing supply in Australia, England and Hong Kong*: Routledge.
- Habermas, J. (1984 and 1987). *The theory of communicative action: Lifeworld and systems, a critique of functionalist reason* (Vol. 2): John Wiley & Sons.
- Halvorsen, K. E. (2003). Assessing the effects of public participation. *Public administration review*, 63(5), 535-543.
- Hambleton, R. (1983). Planning systems and policy implementation. *Journal of Public Policy*, 3(4), 397-418.
- Hamnett, S., & Freestone, R. (2000). *The Australian metropolis: a planning history* (Vol. 25): Taylor & Francis.
- Hanna, K. S. (2000). The paradox of participation and the hidden role of information: A case study. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 66(4), 398-410.
- Hantrais, L. (2014). Methodological pluralism in international comparative research. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 17(2), 133-145.
- He, S., & Wu, F. (2005). Property-led redevelopment in post-reform China: A case study of Xintiandi redevelopment project in Shanghai. *Journal of Urban Affairs*, 27(1), 1-23.
- Healey, P. (1992). Planning through debate: The communicative turn in planning theory. *Town planning review*, 63(2), 143.
- Healey, P. (1996). The communicative turn in planning theory and its implications for spatial strategy formation. *Environment and planning B: Planning and design*, 23(2), 217-234.
- Healey, P. (1998). Collaborative planning in a stakeholder society. *Town planning review*, 69(1), 1.
- Healey, P. (2020). *Collaborative planning: Shaping places in fragmented societies*: Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Heberer, T. (2009). Evolvement of citizenship in urban China or authoritarian communitarianism? Neighborhood development, community participation, and autonomy. *Journal of contemporary China*, 18(61), 491-515.
- Holston, J. (2007). *Insurgent citizenship: Disjunctions of democracy and modernity in Brazil*: Princeton university press.
- Home, R. (2013). *Of planting and planning: The making of British colonial cities*: Routledge.
- Huxley, M. (2000). The limits to communicative planning. *Journal of planning education and research*, 19(4), 369-377.
- Huxley, M., & Yiftachel, O. (2000). New paradigm or old myopia? Unsettling the communicative turn in planning theory. *Journal of planning education and research*, 19(4), 333-342.
- Iannacone, J. I., & Ashby-King, D. T. (2023). Addressing participation, belonging, and temporality in public formation and maintenance: Advancing a rhetorical approach to publics. *Public Relations Review*, 49(2), 102319.
- Iannaccone, L. R., & Everton, S. F. (2004). Never on sunny days: Lessons from weekly attendance counts. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 43(2), 191-207.
- Inch, A. (2015). Ordinary citizens and the political cultures of planning: In search of the subject of a new democratic ethos. *Planning theory*, 14(4), 404-424.
- Innes, J. E. (1998). Information in communicative planning. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 64(1), 52-63.
- Innes, J. E., & Booher, D. E. (1999). Consensus building and complex adaptive systems: A framework for evaluating collaborative planning. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 65(4), 412-423.
- Innes, J. E., & Booher, D. E. (2004). Reframing public participation: strategies for the 21st century. *Planning theory & practice*, 5(4), 419-436.
- Irvin, R. A., & Stansbury, J. (2004). Citizen participation in decision making: is it worth the effort? *Public administration review*, 64(1), 55-65.
- Jacobs, K. (2006). Discourse analysis and its utility for urban policy research. *Urban Policy and Research*, 24(1), 39-52.

- Jankowski, P., Czepkiewicz, M., Młodkowski, M., Zwoliński, Z., & Wójcicki, M. (2019). Evaluating the scalability of public participation in urban land use planning: A comparison of Geoweb methods with face-to-face meetings. *Environment and Planning B: Urban Analytics and City Science*, 46(3), 511-533.
- Jensen, L. M., & Weston, T. B. (2006). *China's transformations: the stories beyond the headlines*: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Jiman, C., Foziah, J., & Muhammad, Z. (2016). Challenges Impeding Public Participation for the Development of Urban Communities in Nigeria. *Indian journal of science and technology*. doi:10.17485/ijst/2016/v9i46/107117
- Johnson, L., Porter, L., & Jackson, S. (2017). Reframing and revising Australia's planning history and practice. *Australian Planner*, 54(4), 225-233.
- Johnstone, P. (2014). Planning reform, rescaling, and the construction of the postpolitical: the case of The Planning Act 2008 and nuclear power consultation in the UK. *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy*, 32(4), 697-713.
- Kahila-Tani, M., Kytta, M., & Geertman, S. (2019). Does mapping improve public participation? Exploring the pros and cons of using public participation GIS in urban planning practices. *Landscape and urban planning*, 186, 45-55.
- Kam Ng, M. (2008). From government to governance? Politics of planning in the first decade of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. *Planning theory & practice*, 9(2), 165-185.
- Kamaci, E. (2014). A novel discussion on urban planning practice: citizen participation. *ICONARP International Journal of Architecture and Planning*, 2(1), 1-19.
- Kang, S., & Van Ryzin, G. G. (2019). Coproduction and trust in government: evidence from survey experiments. *Public Management Review*, 21(11), 1646-1664.
- Kim, S. (2010). Public trust in government in Japan and South Korea: Does the rise of critical citizens matter? *Public administration review*, 70(5), 801-810.
- Kim, S., & Lee, J. (2012). E-participation, transparency, and trust in local government. *Public administration review*, 72(6), 819-828.
- King Penny Wan, Y., & Har Rebecca Chiu, L. (2008). Transforming the governance of plan-making in Hong Kong. *Journal of Place Management and Development*, 1(3), 256-271.
- King, A. D. (1977). Exporting 'planning': the colonial and neo-colonial experience. *Urbanism Past & Present*(5), 12-22.
- King, C. S., Feltey, K. M., & Susel, B. O. N. (1998). The question of participation: Toward authentic public participation in public administration. *Public administration review*, 317-326.
- King, C. S., Feltey, K. M., & Susel, B. O. N. (2015). The question of participation: Toward authentic public participation in public administration. In *The age of direct citizen participation* (pp. 391-408): Routledge.
- Klein, L., & Arts, K. (2022). Public participation in decision-making on conservation translocations: the importance and limitations of a legislative framework. *Restoration Ecology*, 30(1), e13505.
- Kotus, J., & Sowada, T. (2017). Behavioural model of collaborative urban management: extending the concept of Arnstein's ladder. *Cities*, 65, 78-86.
- Krumholz, N., & Clavel, P. (1994). *Reinventing cities: Equity planners tell their stories*: Temple University Press.
- Kudrnáč, A., & Allaste, A.-A. (2023). Students' School and Political Participation in a Former Socialist Country. *Problems of Post-Communism*, 70(6), 629-639.
- Kymlicka, W. (2002). *Contemporary political philosophy: an introduction*: Oxford University Press.
- Lafferty, W. M., & Eckerberg, K. (2013). Introduction: The nature and purpose of 'Local Agenda 21'. In *From the Earth Summit to Local Agenda 21* (pp. 1-16): Routledge.
- Lane, M. B. (2005). Public participation in planning: an intellectual history. *Australian Geographer*, 36(3), 283-299.

- Lankov, A. (2015). *The real North Korea: Life and politics in the failed Stalinist utopia*: Oxford University Press.
- Laurian, L. (2003). A prerequisite for participation: Environmental knowledge and what residents know about local toxic sites. *Journal of planning education and research*, 22(3), 257-269.
- Laurian, L. (2009). Trust in planning: Theoretical and practical considerations for participatory and deliberative planning. *Planning theory & practice*, 10(3), 369-391.
- Laurian, L., & Shaw, M. M. (2009). Evaluation of public participation: the practices of certified planners. *Journal of planning education and research*, 28(3), 293-309.
- Layson, J. P., & Nankai, X. (2015). Public participation and satisfaction in urban regeneration projects in Tanzania: The case of Kariakoo, Dar es Salaam. *Urban, Planning and Transport Research*, 3(1), 68-87.
- Legacy, C. (2016). Transforming transport planning in the postpolitical era. *Urban Studies*, 53(14), 3108-3124.
- Legacy, C. (2017). Is there a crisis of participatory planning? *Planning theory*, 16(4), 425-442.
- Legacy, C., Cook, N., Rogers, D., & Ruming, K. (2018). Planning the post-political city: exploring public participation in the contemporary Australian city. *Geographical research*, 56(2), 176-180.
- Legacy, C., Curtis, C., & Neuman, M. (2014). Adapting the deliberative democracy 'template' for planning practice. *Town planning review*, 85(3), 319-340.
- Legacy, C., Metzger, J., Steele, W., & Gualini, E. (2019). Beyond the post-political: Exploring the relational and situated dynamics of consensus and conflict in planning. In: SAGE Publications Sage UK: London, England.
- Li, T. H., Ng, S. T., & Skitmore, M. (2013). Evaluating stakeholder satisfaction during public participation in major infrastructure and construction projects: A fuzzy approach. *Automation in construction*, 29, 123-135.
- Li, X., Zhang, F., Hui, E. C.-m., & Lang, W. (2020). Collaborative workshop and community participation: A new approach to urban regeneration in China. *Cities*, 102, 102743.
- Li, Y., Li, W., Li, X., & Webster, C. (2023). Developer obligations and negotiation-based benefit distribution in urban redevelopment: Evidence from Shenzhen, China. *Cities*, 134, 104166.
- Lian, H., & Yin, B. (2020). The land-lost farmers and local government: grassroots governance in China's urban-rural peripheries. *Journal of contemporary China*, 29(124), 614-631.
- Lim, J. H., Paidakaki, A., Verschure, H., & Van den Broeck, P. (2023). Producing and Contesting Meanings of Participation in Planning: The Case of Singapore (1985–2020). *Urban Affairs Review*, 59(6), 1775-1808.
- Lindblom, C. E., & Cohen, D. K. (1979). *Usable knowledge: Social science and social problem solving* (Vol. 21): Yale University Press.
- Lorens, P. (2019). *Civilizing the public participation practice in post-transition countries*. Paper presented at the IOP Conference Series: Materials Science and Engineering.
- Lowndes, V., Pratchett, L., & Stoker, G. (2001a). Trends in public participation: part 1—local government perspectives. *Public administration*, 79(1), 205-222.
- Lowndes, V., Pratchett, L., & Stoker, G. (2001b). Trends in public participation: part 2—citizens' perspectives. *Public administration*, 79(2), 445-455.
- MacDonald, H. (2015). 'Fantasies of consensus:' Planning reform in Sydney, 2005–2013. *Planning Practice and Research*, 30(2), 115-138.
- MacDonald, H. (2018). Has planning been de-democratised in Sydney? *Geographical research*, 56(2), 230-240.
- Macridis, R. C., & Burg, S. L. (1991). *Introduction to comparative politics: Regimes and change*: Pearson College Division.
- Maginn, P. J. (2007). Deliberative democracy or discursively biased? Perth's dialogue with the city initiative. *Space and Polity*, 11(3), 331-352.
- Mandarano, L., Meenar, M., & Steins, C. (2010). Building social capital in the digital age of civic engagement. *Journal of Planning Literature*, 25(2), 123-135.

- Marafa, L. M., Qi, H., & Chan, C.-S. (2019). The roles of hierarchical administrations of tourism governance in China: a content analysis. *Journal of Policy Research in Tourism, Leisure and Events*, 11(2), 354-369.
- Marshall, N., Steinmetz, C., & Zehner, R. (2012). Planning Australia: An overview of urban and regional planning. In S. Thompson & P. Maginn (Eds.).
- Mazziotti, D. F. (1974). The underlying assumptions of advocacy planning: pluralism and reform. *Journal of the American Institute of planners*, 40(1), 38-47.
- McFarland, P. (2011). The best planning system in Australia or a system in need of review? An analysis of the New South Wales planning system. *Planning Perspectives*, 26(3), 403-422.
- McGee, B. (2009). Community referendum: participatory democracy and the right to free, prior and informed consent to development, The. *Berkeley J. Int'l Law*, 27, 570.
- McGovern, S. J. (2013). Ambivalence over participatory planning within a progressive regime: Waterfront planning in Philadelphia. *Journal of planning education and research*, 33(3), 310-324.
- McGuirk, P. M. (2001). Situating communicative planning theory: context, power, and knowledge. *Environment and Planning A*, 33(2), 195-217.
- Metzger, J., Soneryd, L., & Tamm Hallström, K. (2017). 'Power' is that which remains to be explained: Dispelling the ominous dark matter of critical planning studies. *Planning theory*, 16(2), 203-222.
- Milligan, V. (2003). How different?: comparing housing policies and housing affordability consequences for low income households in Australia and the Netherlands. (*No Title*).
- Mills, M., Van de Bunt, G. G., & De Bruijn, J. (2006). Comparative research persistent problems and promising solutions. *International Sociology*, 21(5), 619-631.
- Miraftab, F. (2009). Insurgent planning: Situating radical planning in the global south. *Planning theory*, 8(1), 32-50.
- Monno, V., & Khakee, A. (2012). Tokenism or political activism? Some reflections on participatory planning. *International Planning Studies*, 17(1), 85-101.
- Moore, T. & Dyer, R. 2012a. The Way Ahead for Planning in NSW: Recommendations of the NSW Planning System Review, Volume 1-Major Issues.
- Moore, T. & Dyer, R. 2012b. The Way Ahead for Planning in NSW: Recommendations of the NSW Planning System Review, Volume 2- Other Issues.
- Morrison, N., & Xian, S. (2016). High mountains and the faraway emperor: Overcoming barriers to citizen participation in China's urban planning practices. *Habitat International*, 57, 205-214.
- Nabatchi, T., & Leighninger, M. (2015). *Public participation for 21st century democracy*: John Wiley & Sons.
- Nagel, J. H. (1987). *Participation*: Prentice-Hall.
- Nápoles Rodríguez, E. (2009). Participation and decision making in local spaces in Cuba: Notes for a debate on the challenges facing popular power after 30 years. *Latin American Perspectives*, 36(2), 104-113.
- Newman, J., Barnes, M., Sullivan, H., & Knops, A. (2004). Public participation and collaborative governance. *Journal of social policy*, 33(2), 203-223.
- Nguyen, T. V., Le, C. Q., Tran, B. T., & Bryant, S. E. (2015). Citizen participation in city governance: Experiences from Vietnam. *Public administration and development*, 35(1), 34-45.
- Nienhuis, I., Van Dijk, T., & De Roo, G. (2011). Let's collaborate! But who's really collaborating? Individual interests as a leitmotiv for urban renewal and regeneration strategies. *Planning theory & practice*, 12(1), 95-109.
- Nikkhah, H. A., & Redzuan, M. (2009). Participation as a medium of empowerment in community development. *European Journal of Social Sciences*, 11(1), 170-176.
- Norbert, L., Cédrine, Z.-L., Corinne, R., & Thomas, J. R. (2021). Triggering participation in smart cities: Political efficacy, public administration satisfaction and sense of belonging as drivers of

- citizens' intention. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*.  
doi:10.1016/j.techfore.2021.120938
- Norris, P. (1999). *Critical citizens: Global support for democratic government*: OUP Oxford.
- NSW BUSINESS CHAMBER 2012. NSW Planning Reform Issues Paper Submission.
- NSW government 2012a. A NEW PLANNING SYSTEM FOR NSW- GREEN PAPER. In: NSW GOVERNMENT (ed.).
- NSW government 2012b. A NEW PLANNING SYSTEM FOR NSW- GREEN PAPER- FEEDBACK SUMMARY. In: NSW GOVERNMENT (ed.).
- NSW GOVERNMENT 2013a. A NEW PLANNING SYSTEM FOR NSW- WHITE PAPER. In: NSW GOVERNMENT (ed.).
- NSW GOVERNMENT 2013b. Planning Administration Bill 2013- Exposure Draft.
- NSW GOVERNMENT 2013c. Planning Bill 2013- Exposure Draft.
- NSW GOVERNMENT. 2013d. Summary of Bill changes.
- O'Brien, K. J. (2008). *Reform without liberalization: China's National People's Congress and the politics of institutional change*: Cambridge University Press.
- Ostad-Ali-Askari, K., Gholami, H., Dehghan, S., & Ghane, M. (2021). The role of public participation in promoting urban planning. *Am J Eng Appl Sci*, 14, 177-184.
- Oxley, M. (2001). Meaning, science, context and confusion in comparative housing research. *Journal of housing and the built environment*, 16, 89-106.
- Pagliara, F., & Di Ruocco, I. (2018). How public participation could improve public decisions on rail investments? *Regional Science Policy & Practice*, 10(4), 383-403.
- Papadopoulos, Y., & Warin, P. (2007). Are innovative, participatory and deliberative procedures in policy making democratic and effective? *European journal of political research*, 46(4), 445-472.
- Park, H. (2010). NSW planning framework: History of reforms. *NSW Parliamentary Library Research Service*.
- Patton, M. Q. (1990). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods*: SAGE Publications, inc.
- Patton, M. Q. (2014). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods: Integrating theory and practice*: Sage publications.
- Pickvance, C. G. (2001). Four varieties of comparative analysis. *Journal of housing and the built environment*, 16, 7-28.
- Pickvance, C. G. (2001). Four varieties of comparative analysis. *Journal of housing and the built environment*, 16, 7-28.
- Pimbert, M., & Wakeford, T. (2001). Overview—deliberative democracy and citizen empowerment. *PLA notes*, 40, 23-28.
- Pløger, J. (2021). Politics, planning, and ruling: the art of taming public participation. *International Planning Studies*, 1-15.
- Porter, L. (2006). Planning in (post) colonial settings: Challenges for theory and practice. *Planning theory & practice*, 7(4), 383-396.
- Porter, L. (2016). *Unlearning the colonial cultures of planning*: Routledge.
- Putnam, R. D. (2000). *Bowling alone: The collapse and revival of American community*: Simon and schuster.
- Qunhui, Z., & Kai, Z. (2020). [phrase omitted]/RESEARCH ON THE COMMUNITY CO-PRODUCTION PRACTICES: A CASE STUDY OF LONDON AND CHANGSHA. *Landscape Architecture Frontiers*, 8(5), 46-60.
- Ragin, C. C. (1989). *The comparative method: Moving beyond qualitative and quantitative strategies*: Univ of California Press.
- Richardson, A. (1983). *Participation* (Vol. 1): Routledge.
- Richardson, J., Floyd, P., Jones, P., & Sheate, W. (2003). Community and public participation: risk communication and improving decision making in flood and coastal defence.

- Richardson, T. (1996). Foucauldian discourse: Power and truth in urban and regional policy making. *European Planning Studies*, 4(3), 279-292.
- Roberts, N. (2004). Public deliberation in an age of direct citizen participation. *The American Review of Public Administration*, 34(4), 315-353.
- Rodan, G. (2018). *Participation without democracy: Containing conflict in Southeast Asia*: Cornell University Press.
- Roopa, S., & Rani, M. (2012). Questionnaire designing for a survey. *Journal of Indian Orthodontic Society*, 46(4\_suppl1), 273-277.
- Rosener, J. B. (1978). Citizen participation: can we measure its effectiveness? *Public administration review*, 457-463.
- Rowe, G., & Frewer, L. J. (2000). Public participation methods: A framework for evaluation. *Science, technology, & human values*, 25(1), 3-29.
- Roy, A. (2005). Urban informality: Toward an epistemology of planning. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 71(2), 147-158.
- Ruming, K. (2018a). Post-political planning and community opposition: asserting and challenging consensus in planning urban regeneration in Newcastle, New South Wales. *Geographical research*, 56(2), 181-195.
- Ruming, K. (2018b). Public perceptions of stakeholder influence on Australian metropolitan and local plans. *International Planning Studies*.
- Ruming, K. (2019). Public perceptions of stakeholder influence on Australian metropolitan and local plans. *International Planning Studies*, 24(2), 110-124.
- Ruming, K. J. (2010). Developer typologies in urban renewal in Sydney: Recognising the role of informal associations between developers and local government. *Urban Policy and Research*, 28(1), 65-83.
- Rydin, Y., & Pennington, M. (2000). Public participation and local environmental planning: the collective action problem and the potential of social capital. *Local environment*, 5(2), 153-169.
- Sager, T. (2006). The logic of critical communicative planning: Transaction cost alteration. *Planning theory*, 5(3), 223-254.
- Sager, T. Ø. (2012). *Reviving critical planning theory: Dealing with pressure, neo-liberalism, and responsibility in communicative planning*: Routledge.
- Sahabi, F., & Hanaei, T. (2020). A Comparative Study of the Role of Integrated Urban Management in Local Economic Development: A Case Study of Iran and South Africa. *Creative City Design*, 3(1), 55-64.
- Sanyal, B. (2005). *Comparative planning cultures*: Routledge.
- Sanyal, B. (2016). Revisiting comparative planning cultures: is culture a reactionary rhetoric? *Planning theory & practice*, 17(4), 658-662.
- SAVE OUR SUBURBS 2012. Submission to the NSW Planning System Review.
- Savin-Baden, M., & Major, C. H. (2023). *Qualitative research: The essential guide to theory and practice*: Taylor & Francis.
- Scattoni, P. (2018). Flipped transparency in Community Strategic Framework. A bottom-up approach for transparent planning and urban design in Italy. *Italian Journal of Planning Practice*, 8(1), 38-60.
- Schon, D. A. (1984). *The reflective practitioner: How professionals think in action* (Vol. 5126): Basic books.
- Schroeter, R., Scheel, O., Renn, O., & Schweizer, P.-J. (2016). Testing the value of public participation in Germany: Theory, operationalization and a case study on the evaluation of participation. *Energy research & social science*, 13, 116-125.
- Searle, G., & Legacy, C. (2020). Locating the public interest in mega infrastructure planning: The case of Sydney's WestConnex. *Urban Studies*, 0042098020927835.

- Secker, E. (2009). Expanding the concept of participatory rights. *The International Journal of Human Rights*, 13(5), 697-715.
- Shan, X.-Z. (2012). Attitude and willingness toward participation in decision-making of urban green spaces in China. *Urban forestry & urban greening*, 11(2), 211-217.
- Shan, X.-Z. (2012). Attitude and willingness toward participation in decision-making of urban green spaces in China. *Urban forestry & urban greening*, 11(2), 211-217.
- Shipley, R., & Utz, S. (2012). Making it count: A review of the value and techniques for public consultation. *Journal of Planning Literature*, 27(1), 22-42.
- SHOEBRIDGE, D. 2014. Hansard-Legislative Council- Full day Hansard transcript
- Silver, H., Scott, A., & Kazepov, Y. (2010). Participation in urban contention and deliberation. *International journal of urban and regional research*, 34(3), 453-477.
- Silverman, R. M. (2006). Central city socio-economic characteristics and public participation strategies. *International journal of sociology and social policy*.
- Sofoulis, Z. (2009). Social construction for the twenty-first century: A co-evolutionary makeover. *Australian Humanities Review*, 46, 81-98.
- Sonn, J. W., Chen, K. W., Wang, H., & Liu, X. (2017). A top-down creation of a cultural cluster for urban regeneration: The case of OCT Loft, Shenzhen. *Land Use Policy*, 69, 307-316.
- State Council of China (2008). Urban and Rural Planning Act
- Stein, S. M., & Harper, T. L. (2003). Power, trust, and planning. *Journal of planning education and research*, 23(2), 125-139.
- Stephens, J. B., & Berner, M. (2011). Learning from your neighbor: The value of public participation evaluation for public policy dispute resolution. *Journal of Public Deliberation*, 7(1). Retrieved from <https://www.scopus.com/inward/record.uri?eid=2-s2.0-80455168762&partnerID=40&md5=b2c91ed40709863545677612ad319c75>
- Swain, C., & Tait, M. (2007). The crisis of trust and planning. *Planning theory & practice*, 8(2), 229-247.
- Swanson, G. (1971). Frameworks for comparative research: Structural anthropology and the theory of action. *Comparative methods in sociology: essays on trends and applications*, 141-202.
- Swapan, M. S. H., & Khan, S. (2022). Urban informality and parallel governance systems: Shaping citizens' engagements in urban planning processes in Bangladesh. *International Planning Studies*, 27(1), 1-17.
- Swyngedouw, E. (2010). Impossible sustainability and the post-political condition. In *Making strategies in spatial planning* (pp. 185-205): Springer.
- Tan, X., & Kytta, M. (2024). Incentives and Disincentives in Public Participation—A Review of Public Participation in Planning Practices in China. *Journal of Planning Literature*, 08854122241262748.
- Tang, B.-s., Wong, S.-w., & Lau, M. C.-h. (2008). Social impact assessment and public participation in China: A case study of land requisition in Guangzhou. *Environmental Impact Assessment Review*, 28(1), 57-72.
- Taylor, N. (1998). *Urban planning theory since 1945*: Sage.
- Thamrin, M. H., Ridho, H., & Nasution, F. A. (2022). Strengthening community participation in spatial planning of riverflow regions in Medan City. *International Journal of Sustainable Development and Planning*, 17(60), 1849-1854.
- Thorpe, A. (2017). Rethinking participation, rethinking planning. *Planning theory & practice*, 18(4), 566-582.
- Tian, L., Liu, J., Liang, Y., & Wu, Y. (2023). A participatory e-planning model in the urban renewal of China: Implications of technologies in facilitating planning participation. *Environment and Planning B: Urban Analytics and City Science*, 50(2), 299-315.
- URBAN TASKFORCE. 2012. A better planning system to make New South Wales No.1 again.
- URBAN TASKFORCE. 2013. Implementing planning policy that supports housing production without new legislation.

- Van Herzele, A. (2004). Local knowledge in action: Valuing nonprofessional reasoning in the planning process. *Journal of planning education and research*, 24(2), 197-212.
- Van Ryzin, G. G. (2011). Outcomes, process, and trust of civil servants. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 21(4), 745-760.
- Vidal, M., Smith, T., Rotta, T., & Prew, P. (2019). *The Oxford Handbook of Karl Marx*: Oxford University Press.
- Walters, L. C., Aydelotte, J., & Miller, J. (2000). Putting more public in policy analysis. *Public administration review*, 60(4), 349-359.
- Wampler, B., & Avritzer, L. (2004). Participatory publics: civil society and new institutions in democratic Brazil. *Comparative politics*, 291-312.
- Wang, Y., Rees, N., & Andreosso-O'callaghan\*, B. (2004). Economic change and political development in China: findings from a public opinion survey. *Journal of contemporary China*, 13(39), 203-222.
- Webler, T., Tuler, S., & Krueger, R. (2001). What is a good public participation process? Five perspectives from the public. *Environmental management*, 27(3), 435-450.
- Wei, Z., & Chiu, R. L. H. (2018). Livability of subsidized housing estates in marketized socialist China: An institutional interpretation. *Cities*, 83, 108-117.
- Wesselink, A., Paavola, J., Fritsch, O., & Renn, O. (2011). Rationales for public participation in environmental policy and governance: practitioners' perspectives. *Environment and Planning A*, 43(11), 2688-2704.
- Williamson, W., & Ruming, K. (2019). Urban renewal and public participation in Sydney: Unpacking social media strategies and use for contesting consensus. *Urban Policy and Research*, 37(3), 350-366.
- Williamson, W., & Ruming, K. (2020). Can social media support large scale public participation in urban planning? The case of the# MySydney digital engagement campaign. *International Planning Studies*, 25(4), 355-371.
- Wondolleck, J. M., & Yaffee, S. L. (2000). *Making collaboration work: Lessons from innovation in natural resource management*: Island Press.
- Xiao, W., Li, H., & Wei, Y. D. (2021). Understanding jobs-housing imbalance in urban China. *Journal of Transport and Land Use*, 14(1), 389-415.
- Xixin, W., & Yongle, Z. (2018). The rise of participatory governance in China: empirical models, theoretical framework, and institutional analysis. *U. Pa. Asian L. Rev.*, 13, 1.
- Xu, H., Meng, M., Zhu, F., & Ding, Q. (2024). The role of local officials in promoting public participation during local urban planning processes: Evidence from Chinese cities. *Land Use Policy*, 141, 107108.
- Yang, K., & Pandey, S. K. (2011). Further dissecting the black box of citizen participation: When does citizen involvement lead to good outcomes? *Public administration review*, 71(6), 880-892.
- Ye, C., Chen, W., Liu, Y., & He, Q. (2024). Institutionalisation of public participation in China's urban regeneration from the perspective of historical institutionalism: Three-stage cases in Guangzhou. *Political Geography*, 108, 103036.
- Yeh, A. G.-o., & Wu, F. (1999). The transformation of the urban planning system in China from a centrally-planned to transitional economy. *Progress in planning*, 51(3), 167-252.
- Yiftachel, O. (1998). Planning and social control: Exploring the dark side. *Journal of Planning Literature*, 12(4), 395-406.
- Yiftachel, O. (2006). *Ethnocracy: Land and identity politics in Israel/Palestine*: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Yolande, E. C., Rashmi, K., Janelle, M., & Rajiv, S. (2022). Public Participation in Policy Making: Evidence from a Citizen Advisory Panel. *Public Performance & Management Review*. doi:10.1080/15309576.2022.2062398
- Yuen, B., & Yeh, A. G. (2011). *High-rise living in Asian cities*: Springer.

- Yuille, A. (2022). Can the marooned flagship of local democracy in English planning be refloated? The case of neighbourhood planning. *Town planning review*, 93(4), 341-352.
- Zakhour, S. (2020). The democratic legitimacy of public participation in planning: Contrasting optimistic, critical, and agnostic understandings. *Planning theory*, 1473095219897404. doi:10.1177/1473095219897404
- Zhai, B., & Ng, M. K. (2013). Urban regeneration and social capital in China: A case study of the Drum Tower Muslim District in Xi'an. *Cities*, 35, 14-25.
- Zhan, J. V. (2009). Undermining state capacity: vertical and horizontal diffusions of fiscal power in China. *Asian Politics & Policy*, 1(3), 390-408.
- Zhang, L., Geertman, S., Hooimeijer, P., & Lin, Y. (2019). The usefulness of a web-based participatory planning support system in Wuhan, China. *Computers, Environment and Urban Systems*, 74, 208-217.
- Zhang, L., Hooimeijer, P., Lin, Y., & Geertman, S. (2019). Roles and Motivations of Planning Professionals Who Promote Public Participation in Urban Planning Practice: Two Case Studies from Beijing, China. *Urban Affairs Review*, 1078087419895116.
- Zhang, S., De Roo, G., & Lu, B. (2012). China: what about the urban revolution? Rapid transformations in Chinese planning and its links with a slowly emerging European planning theory. *European Planning Studies*, 20(12), 1997-2011.
- Zhang, S., De Roo, G., & Lu, B. (2012). China: what about the urban revolution? Rapid transformations in Chinese planning and its links with a slowly emerging European planning theory. *European Planning Studies*, 20(12), 1997-2011.
- Zhao, M., Lin, Y., & Derudder, B. (2018). Demonstration of public participation and communication through social media in the network society within Shanghai. *Environment and Planning B: Urban Analytics and City Science*, 45(3), 529-547.
- Zhao, P. (2015). The evolution of the urban planning system in contemporary China: an institutional approach. *International Development Planning Review*, 37(3), 269.
- Zheng, J., & Zheng, X. (2022). Does Public Participation Matter to Planning? Urban Sculpture Reception in the Context of Elite-Led Planning in Shanghai. *Sustainability*, 14(19), 12179.
- Zhou, Z. (2017). New urban paradigm beyond the west: investigating the regeneration of urban villages in Guangzhou, China. *Journal of Urbanism: International Research on Placemaking and Urban Sustainability*, 10(3), 257-274.
- Zimmermann, K., & Momm, S. (2022). Planning systems and cultures in global comparison. The case of Brazil and Germany. *International Planning Studies*, 27(3), 213-230.

# Appendices

## Appendix 1: Human research ethics approval



**Research Integrity**  
Human Research Ethics Committee

Friday, 24 April 2015

Prof Nicole Gurran  
Urban & Regional Planning & Policy; Faculty of Architecture, Design & Planning  
Email: nicole.gurran@sydney.edu.au

Dear Nicole

I am pleased to inform you that the University of Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) has approved your project entitled "Urban Governance and Public Participation: Comparing the Drivers and Outcomes of Planning System Changes in Australia and China".

Details of the approval are as follows:

**Project No.:** 2015/119  
**Approval Date:** 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2015  
**First Annual Report Due:** 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2016  
**Authorised Personnel:** Gurran Nicole; Cui Tingting;

**Documents Approved:**

DATE	TYPE	DOCUMENT TYPE
26/01/2015	Interview Questions	Interview topics for developers
26/01/2015	Interview Questions	Interview topics for planners
26/01/2015	Interview Questions	Interview topics for residents
09/03/2015	Other Type	Questions for focus group
09/03/2015	Other Type	Translated document
26/01/2015	Participant Consent Form	Participant Consent Form
26/01/2015	Participant Info Statement	Participant Info Statement
16/04/2015	Participant Info Statement	PIS
09/03/2015	Participant Info Statement	Modified PIS for focus group residents
09/03/2015	Participant Info Statement	Modified PIS for questionnaire to residents
09/03/2015	Participant Info Statement	Modified PIS for interview to residents
09/03/2015	Participant Info Statement	Modified PIS for interview developers
09/03/2015	Participant Info Statement	Modified PIS for interview to planners
09/03/2015	Questionnaires/Surveys	Modified questionnaire in Sydney
09/03/2015	Questionnaires/Surveys	Modified questionnaire in Shanghai
26/01/2015	Questionnaires/Surveys	Questionnaire for residents in Shanghai
26/01/2015	Questionnaires/Surveys	Questionnaire for residents in Sydney
26/01/2015	Safety Protocol	Safety Protocol

Research Integrity  
Research Portfolio  
Level 6, Jane Foss Russell  
The University of Sydney  
NSW 2006 Australia

T +61 2 8527 8111  
F +61 2 8527 8177  
E ro.humanethics@sydney.edu.au  
sydney.edu.au

ABN 15 211 513 464  
CRICOS 00026A

HREC approval is valid for four (4) years from the approval date stated in this letter and is granted pending the following conditions being met:

Special Condition/s of Approval

- Copies of Independently certified public documents to be provided in Chinese (Mandarin) to be lodged as a condition.

Condition/s of Approval

- Continuing compliance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans.
- Provision of an annual report on this research to the Human Research Ethics Committee from the approval date and at the completion of the study. Failure to submit reports will result in withdrawal of ethics approval for the project.
- All serious and unexpected adverse events should be reported to the HREC within 72 hours.
- All unforeseen events that might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project should be reported to the HREC as soon as possible.
- Any changes to the project including changes to research personnel must be approved by the HREC before the research project can proceed.
- Note that for student research projects, a copy of this letter must be included in the candidate's thesis.

Chief Investigator / Supervisor's responsibilities:

1. You must retain copies of all signed Consent Forms (if applicable) and provide these to the HREC on request.
2. It is your responsibility to provide a copy of this letter to any internal/external granting agencies if requested.

Please do not hesitate to contact Research Integrity (Human Ethics) should you require further information or clarification.

Yours sincerely

[Redaction]

Dr Stephen Assinder  
Chair  
Human Research Ethics Committee

This HREC is constituted and operates in accordance with the National Health and Medical Research Council's (NHMRC) National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007), NHMRC and Universities Australia Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (2007) and the CPMP/ICH Note for Guidance on Good Clinical Practice.

## Appendix 2: Questions of survey in Sydney



Urban & Regional Planning & Policy

Faculty of Architecture, Design & Planning

---

### Questionnaire for Residents in Sydney

Public participation in urban planning includes community consultations during applying permissions for individual development from local councils or the State government, and in the making of state, regional and local land use plans.

This survey asks your opinions about participation in urban planning decisions. It also asks about your views on the performance of public consultation on recent proposals including the Green Paper (2012), the White Paper (2013) and draft Bills (2013) for a reform to the NSW planning system (currently on hold). You are invited to participate in this survey whether or not you have had any prior experience with local processes or the making of the Planning Reform.

The survey is anonymous. The answers you provide will be coded and only used for statistical analysis and there is no identification of the participants. You only need to tick the most appropriate answer from the answers provided or write on the spaces provided.

If you have any question relating to this study, please contact me on 0430 338 400 or email to [tingting.cui@sydney.edu.au](mailto:tingting.cui@sydney.edu.au).

Thank you for your participation.

Tingting Cui

1. Have you ever attended a meeting or written a submission about a planning issue or engaged in the planning process in another way?		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes (please specify how you participated and go to question 3)
		<input type="checkbox"/> No
2. Can you suggest why you did not participate in planning issue?		<input type="checkbox"/> I am too busy
		<input type="checkbox"/> It is not relevant to my life
		<input type="checkbox"/> It is difficult for me to understand/participate
		<input type="checkbox"/> The government will not hear my opinions
		<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please specify)
3. Which of the following issues or planning process do you think should involve more community participation as legal requirement for decision-making? (You can tick more than one)		<input type="checkbox"/> Making of land use plan affecting what future development and change can occur
		<input type="checkbox"/> Assessing proposals for small-scale residential developments (for instance, new houses and extensions of existing houses)
		<input type="checkbox"/> Assessing proposals for medium and high density residential developments (for instance, town houses, and apartments )
		<input type="checkbox"/> Assessing proposals for local facilities (for instance, libraries or community centres )
		<input type="checkbox"/> Assessing proposals for major developments (for instance, industrial sites, large-scale mixed-use development)
		<input type="checkbox"/> Evaluation and monitoring plans
		<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please specify)
4. To what extent do you think community	a. Local planning decision-making?	<input type="checkbox"/> Very influential
		<input type="checkbox"/> Influential

views have influenced		<input type="checkbox"/> Unsure/Neutral
		<input type="checkbox"/> Uninfluential
		<input type="checkbox"/> Very uninfluential
	b. Regional or State planning decision-making?	<input type="checkbox"/> Very influential
		<input type="checkbox"/> Influential
		<input type="checkbox"/> Unsure/Neutral
<input type="checkbox"/> Uninfluential		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Very uninfluential	
5. To what extent do you agree community members have sufficient amount of right of appeal on planning decisions that affect them?		<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree
		<input type="checkbox"/> Agree
		<input type="checkbox"/> Unsure/Neutral
		<input type="checkbox"/> Disagree
		<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree
6. Are you aware of the recent proposals of the Green Paper, the White Paper and draft Bills that aim to introduce a new planning system for NSW (If not, please go to question 9)?		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
		<input type="checkbox"/> No
7. Did you participate any of the consultation processes?		<input type="checkbox"/> Made a written submission
		<input type="checkbox"/> Attended a meeting/forum held by the State government or local council
		<input type="checkbox"/> Petition
		<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)
8. Why do you think the government was proposing to introduce a new planning system for NSW?		<input type="checkbox"/> Please write here
		<input type="checkbox"/> I do not know.

9. Do you think the existing planning system provides sufficient opportunity for community involvement?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
	<input type="checkbox"/> No
10. How do you think the planning system could be improved in terms of public participation? (You can tick more than one)	<input type="checkbox"/> Increasing participation and community's influence in the making of metropolitan and regional plans
	<input type="checkbox"/> Increasing participation and community's influence in the making of local land use plans
	<input type="checkbox"/> Increasing participation and community's influence in the assessing of developments in local areas
	<input type="checkbox"/> Increasing right of appeal for community members on planning decisions that affect them
	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)
11. Please circle on the most appropriate statement in your opinion	
"The State government has ( <input type="checkbox"/> too much/ <input type="checkbox"/> the right amount/ <input type="checkbox"/> too little) influence in planning decision making in my local area"	
"Local governments have ( <input type="checkbox"/> too much/ <input type="checkbox"/> the right amount/ <input type="checkbox"/> too little) influence in planning decision making in my local area"	
"Community groups and NGO have ( <input type="checkbox"/> too much/ <input type="checkbox"/> the right amount/ <input type="checkbox"/> too little) influence in planning decision making in my local area"	
"Developers have ( <input type="checkbox"/> too much/ <input type="checkbox"/> the right amount/ <input type="checkbox"/> too little) in planning decision making in my local area"	
"Property owners have ( <input type="checkbox"/> too much/ <input type="checkbox"/> the right amount/ <input type="checkbox"/> too little) influence in planning decision making"	
"The media ( <input type="checkbox"/> is able to/ <input type="checkbox"/> cannot) accurately report issues associated with planning system and specific development proposals"	
Gender	<input type="checkbox"/> Male

	<input type="checkbox"/> Female
Age	<input type="checkbox"/> 25 or under
	<input type="checkbox"/> 26-45
	<input type="checkbox"/> 45-65
	<input type="checkbox"/> 65 or older
Working status	<input type="checkbox"/> Part-time employment
	<input type="checkbox"/> Full-time employment
	<input type="checkbox"/> Unemployment
	<input type="checkbox"/> Studying
	<input type="checkbox"/> Retired
	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)
Highest education level	<input type="checkbox"/> High school
	<input type="checkbox"/> Diploma or certificate
	<input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor degree
	<input type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate degree
	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)
First language	<input type="checkbox"/> English
	<input type="checkbox"/> Mandarin
	<input type="checkbox"/> Thai
	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)
Years of residency in Sydney	<input type="checkbox"/> Less than 2 years
	<input type="checkbox"/> 2-5 years
	<input type="checkbox"/> More than 5 years

## Appendix 3: Questions of survey in Shanghai



Urban & Regional Planning & Policy

Faculty of Architecture, Design & Planning

---

### Questionnaire for Residents in Shanghai

This survey asks your opinions about participation in urban planning decisions. It also asks about your views on the performance of public consultation on the Shanghai Comprehensive Plan (2040). You are invited to participate in this survey whether or not you have had any prior experience with local processes or the making of the Shanghai Comprehensive Plan (2040).

The survey is anonymous. The answers you provide will be coded and only used for statistical analysis and there is no identification of the participants. You only need to tick the most appropriate answer from the answers provided or write on the spaces provided.

If you have any question relating to this study, please contact me on XXXXX or email to [tingting.cui@sydney.edu.au](mailto:tingting.cui@sydney.edu.au).

Tingting Cui

1. Have you ever engaged in any of the following types of participation in relation to planning processes or decisions (please tick)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Plan-making processes (for example, the making of Comprehensive plan, community planning strategies)
	<input type="checkbox"/> Assessment of individual development
	<input type="checkbox"/> Others (please specify)
2. Which of the following issues or planning processes do you think should involve community participation as legal requirement for decision-making?	<input type="checkbox"/> Plan-making processes (for example, the making of Comprehensive plan, community planning strategies)
	<input type="checkbox"/> Assessment of individual development
	<input type="checkbox"/> Others (please specify)
3. To what extent do you think your opinions and participations are important to contributing to better planning policy outcomes?	<input type="checkbox"/> Not important at all
	<input type="checkbox"/> Not very important
	<input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat important
	<input type="checkbox"/> Quite important
	<input type="checkbox"/> Very important
4. Are you aware of the Shanghai Comprehensive Plan (2040)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
	<input type="checkbox"/> No
5. Have you ever participated in the making of Shanghai Comprehensive Plan (2040) (If not, please go to question 10)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
	<input type="checkbox"/> No
6. How did you express your opinions?	<input type="checkbox"/> Submit written or online submissions
	<input type="checkbox"/> Attend community consultation
	<input type="checkbox"/> Others (please specify)
7. What issues did you expressed?	<input type="checkbox"/> Open ended
8. To what extent are you satisfied with your	<input type="checkbox"/> Very satisfied

opportunities to participate in the making of the Shanghai Comprehensive Plan (2040)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Quiet satisfied
	<input type="checkbox"/> Generally satisfied
	<input type="checkbox"/> Not very satisfied
	<input type="checkbox"/> Not satisfied at all
9. Can you specify which areas in this process need to be improved in terms of your opportunities for participation?	Open ended
10. Which of the following public participation methods do you prefer in consultations on planning matters in your local area?	<input type="checkbox"/> Public notifications at community centres
	<input type="checkbox"/> Online discussion forums
	<input type="checkbox"/> Online 3D model showing opinions
	<input type="checkbox"/> Public consultation meetings
	<input type="checkbox"/> Telephone or in person surveys
	<input type="checkbox"/> Others (please specify)
11. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?	
“The State government has ( <input type="checkbox"/> too much/ <input type="checkbox"/> the right amount/ <input type="checkbox"/> too little) influence in planning decision making in my local area”	
“Governments have ( <input type="checkbox"/> too much/ <input type="checkbox"/> the right amount/ <input type="checkbox"/> too little) influence in planning decision making in my local area”	
“Community groups and NGO have ( <input type="checkbox"/> too much/ <input type="checkbox"/> the right amount/ <input type="checkbox"/> too little) influence in planning decision making in my local area”	
“Developers have ( <input type="checkbox"/> too much/ <input type="checkbox"/> the right amount/ <input type="checkbox"/> too little) influence in planning decision making in my local area”	
“Property owners have ( <input type="checkbox"/> too much/ <input type="checkbox"/> the right amount/ <input type="checkbox"/> too little) influence in planning decision making”	
“The media ( <input type="checkbox"/> is able to/ <input type="checkbox"/> cannot) accurately report issues associated with planning system and specific development proposals”	

Gender	<input type="checkbox"/> Male
	<input type="checkbox"/> Female
Age	<input type="checkbox"/> 25 or under
	<input type="checkbox"/> 26-40
	<input type="checkbox"/> 41-55
	<input type="checkbox"/> 56 or older
Working status	<input type="checkbox"/> Part-time working
	<input type="checkbox"/> Full-time working
	<input type="checkbox"/> Not working
	<input type="checkbox"/> Retired
	<input type="checkbox"/> Others (please specify)
Highest education level	<input type="checkbox"/> Middle school
	<input type="checkbox"/> Diploma or certificate
	<input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor degree
	<input type="checkbox"/> Master and higher
	<input type="checkbox"/> Others (please specify)

## Appendix 4: Interview topic for government officers



Urban & Regional Planning & Policy

Faculty of Architecture, Design & Planning

ABN 15 211 513 464

**NICOLE GURRAN**  
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR

Room 546  
Wilkinson Building G04  
148 City Road  
The University of Sydney  
NSW 2006 AUSTRALIA  
Telephone: +61 2 9351 7729  
Facsimile: +61 2 9351 5665  
Email: [nicole.gurran@sydney.edu.au](mailto:nicole.gurran@sydney.edu.au)  
Web: <http://www.sydney.edu.au/>

### **SAMPLE QUESTIONS / TOPICS FOR INTERVIEWS**

#### **(Government officers in Sydney and Shanghai)**

The semi-structured interviews canvas the experiences and opinions of the planning system, and the need for change to enable more public participation in planning decisions.

Key topic areas will guide interviews are:

- The importance of public participation in planning
- Whether the planning system includes appropriate and sufficient participatory rights
- Problems or obstacles affecting participation in planning processes
- Views about the need to change (reform) planning systems
- Views about the motivations of planning reforms
- Views of the efficacy of previous planning system and reforms relating to public participation

## Appendix 5: Interview topic for residents and community groups



Urban & Regional Planning & Policy

Faculty of Architecture, Design & Planning

ABN 15 211 513 464

**NICOLE GURRAN**  
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR

Room 546  
Wilkinson Building G04  
148 City Road  
The University of Sydney  
NSW 2006 AUSTRALIA  
Telephone: +61 2 9351 7729  
Facsimile: +61 2 9351 5665  
Email: [nicole.gurran@sydney.edu.au](mailto:nicole.gurran@sydney.edu.au)  
Web: <http://www.sydney.edu.au/>

### **SAMPLE QUESTIONS / TOPICS FOR INTERVIEWS (Residents/community representatives in Sydney and Shanghai)**

The semi-structured interviews and focus groups canvas the experiences and opinions of the planning system, and the need for change to enable more public participation in planning decisions.

Key topic areas will guide interviews are:

- The importance of public participation in planning
- Whether the planning system includes appropriate and sufficient participatory rights
- Problems or obstacles affecting participation in planning processes
- Knowledge and experiences of local planning processes
- Views about the need to change (reform) planning systems
- Views, if any, of the efficacy of previous planning system and reforms relating to public participation

## Appendix 6: Summary of interview information

Interview ID	City	Participant Category	Descriptor	Date of Interview
COM-SH-01	Shanghai	Community representative/member	Community Member 7	26/04/2016
COM-SH-02	Shanghai	Community representative/member	Community Member 8	2/03/2016
COM-SH-03	Shanghai	Community representative/member	Community Member 9	7/04/2016
COM-SH-04	Shanghai	Community representative/member	Community Member 10	5/04/2016
COM-SH-05	Shanghai	Community representative/member	Community Member 11	29/03/2016
COM-SH-06	Shanghai	Community representative/member	Community Member 12	12/02/2016
COM-SH-07	Shanghai	Community representative/member	Community Member 13	22/04/2016
GOV-SH-01	Shanghai	Government sector	Government Officer 1	30/05/2016
GOV-SH-02	Shanghai	Government sector	Government Officer 2	8/02/2016
GOV-SH-03	Shanghai	Government sector	Government Officer 3	19/04/2016
GOV-SH-04	Shanghai	Government sector	Government Officer 4	21/03/2016
GOV-SH-05	Shanghai	Government sector	Government Officer 5	4/05/2016
GOV-SH-06	Shanghai	Government sector	Government Officer 6	2/05/2016
GOV-SH-07	Shanghai	Government sector	Government Officer 7	28/03/2016
GOV-SH-08	Shanghai	Government sector	Government Officer 8	11/05/2016
COM-SYD-01	Sydney	Community representative/member	Community Group Member 1	15/07/2015
COM-SYD-02	Sydney	Community representative/member	Community Group Member 2	1/07/2015
COM-SYD-03	Sydney	Community representative/member	Community Group Member 3	26/08/2015
COM-SYD-04	Sydney	Community representative/member	Community Group Member 4	2/09/2015
COM-SYD-05	Sydney	Community representative/member	Community Group Member 5	5/08/2015
COM-SYD-06	Sydney	Community representative/member	Community Group Member 6	2/07/2015
GOV-SYD-01	Sydney	Government agency	Government Officer 1	9/06/2015
GOV-SYD-02	Sydney	Government agency	Government Officer 2	19/08/2015
GOV-SYD-03	Sydney	Government agency	Government Officer 3	7/08/2015
GOV-SYD-04	Sydney	Government agency	Government Officer 4	12/06/2015
GOV-SYD-05	Sydney	Government agency	Government Officer 5	18/06/2015
GOV-SYD-06	Sydney	Government agency	Government Officer 6	4/09/2015
GOV-SYD-07	Sydney	Government agency	Government Officer 7	3/09/2015
GOV-SYD-08	Sydney	Government agency	Government Officer 8	4/08/2015