The London School of Economics and Political Science

Heritage construction in China: Negotiation and contestation of decision-making and heritage discourses

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Declaration

I certify that the thesis I have presented for examination for the MPhil/PhD degree of the London School of Economics and Political Science is solely my own work other than where I have clearly indicated that it is the work of others (in which case the extent of any work carried out jointly by me and any other person is clearly identified in it).

I declare that my thesis consists of 84,334 words.

Abstract

This thesis examines the negotiation and contestation between the actors involved in the Regeneration Project of Cangxiang Street Historic District, in Anyang, a mid-sized city in China. The negotiation and contestation are manifested in the decision-making and implementation process of the Project and the actors' heritage discourses of the historic district. Drawing upon the framework of fragmented authoritarianism, I argue that the decision-making and implementation process of the Project is led by the local government, yet influenced and challenged by the central government and nonstate actors. This process results from two interrelated dimensions of fragmentation, namely system fragmentation and fragmentation in state-society relations, as well as the authoritarian context of China. The reason for theorising decision-making and implementation in critical heritage studies is that I find that the Project is mostly determined by the local government's authorised heritage discourse, whereas the nonstate actors' heritage discourses are less visible. I argue this is because of the uneven power relations between the local government and the nonstate actors which determines whose heritage discourses can be materialised in the Project. In other words, power relations are more prominent in shaping heritage construction than value judgements. The latter's role also partly depends on the former. Heritage construction is done through different actors' power struggles largely bounded by the pre-existing heritage system which is essentially a part of the overall political system. To understand the complexity of heritage construction, it is necessary to understand how the political system of a given context operates. By integrating fragmented authoritarianism as an analytical tool into the theoretical framework, this thesis sheds light on heritage politics in contemporary China and, more importantly, calls for new research paradigms in critical heritage studies to combine concepts around power and politics to fully address the political essence of heritage construction.

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I have always known that doing a PhD is a mind-challenging and lonely journey. Even though I had been quite prepared for this journey before I started, it turned out to be more difficult than I had expected. However, at this point when I am about to finish it, I find it also surprisingly self-fulfilling and enjoyable. This journey is not just about learning how to do research and getting the research done, but also about re-discovering myself and rebuilding my self-confidence. The latter is undoubtedly more important for me, as a researcher as well as a person.

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At thirty, I found my balance through the rites.
At forty, I was free from doubts about myself.
At fifty, I understood what Heaven intended me to do.
At sixty, I was attuned to what I heard.
At seventy, I followed with my heart what my heart desired without overstepping the line.

—— Confucius (translated by Jonathan Spence)

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Abbreviations

AHD	Authorised heritage discourse
CBN	The Institute of New First-tier Cities affiliated to China Business Network Weekly
CCTV	China Central Television
CHS	Critical heritage studies
CPC	The Communist Party of China
CSHD	Cangxiang Street Historic District
FA	Fragmented authoritarianism/fragmented authoritarian
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ICOMOS	The International Council on Monuments and Sites
IUCN	The International Union for Conservation of Nature
LHD	Lay heritage discourse
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
PRC	People's Republic of China
SACH	State Administration of Cultural Heritage
SO	Street Office
sqm	Square meter
UNESCO	The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

Glossary

Notes on Romanisation of Chinese terms: this thesis follows the pinyin system to Romanise Chinese terms and characters. In the thesis, for short Chinese terms, I provide the pinyin and Chinese characters in the main texts of the thesis. For oral expressions in my interviews and longer Chinese expressions such as titles of government documents, I provide the pinyin and Chinese characters in the footnotes. In this glossary, the terms will be presented in pinyin first, followed by Chinese characters and English translation. The terms are in alphabetic order based on pinyin.

Angang 安钢: Anyang Iron & Steel Group Co. Ltd.

Anyanghua, 安阳话: the dialect of Anyang

Baohu guanli guihua, 保护管理规划: Conservation and Management Plan

Baohu zhengzhi, 保护整治: protection and rectify

Bukeyidong wenwu, 不可移动文物: immovable heritage

Buzhizhe wuzui, 不知者无罪: people who don't know are not guilty

Cang, 仓: granaries

Cangxiangjie, 仓巷街: Cangxiang Street

Chaiqian, 拆迁: demolition (of houses) and relocation (of residents)

Changzhu renkou, 常住人口: population of permanent residents

Chaoda chengshi, 超大城市: megacity

Chenghuang miao, 城隍庙: Chenghuang Temple

Dacangkou, 大仓口: The Opening of the Big Granary

Diaomin, 刁民: recalcitrant citizens

Dingceng sheji, 顶层设计: top-level design

Dingzihu, 钉子户: nail households

Dui, 怼: to confront

Fanxin, 翻新: refurbishment

Feiwuzhi wenhua yichan, 非物质文化遗产: intangible cultural heritage

Fengmao, 风貌: style and features (of heritage)

Foxi, 佛系: like a buddha, referring to being indifferent

Fu'erdai, 富二代: the second generation of rich people

Fuxing, 复兴: revitalisation

Gaoge si, 高阁寺: Gaoge Temple

Gengxin, 更新: regeneration

Gongzai dangdai, lizai qianqiu, 功在当代, 利在千秋: the work is at present, and the benefits are in the future generations

Guan'erdai, 官二代: the second generation of government officials

Guanxi, 关系: relationships and connections

Guanyu jiaqiang wenhua yichan baohu de tongzhi, 关于加强文化遗产保护的通知: *The Notice on Strengthening the Protection of Cultural Heritage*

Guojia baozang, 国家宝藏: National Treasure (a TV show produced by China Central Television)

Guojia wenwu ju, 国家文物局: currently National Cultural Heritage Administration (initially known as the State Administration of Cultural Relics, later changed into the State Administration of Cultural Heritage)

Guoyou tudi shang fangwu zhengshou yu buchang tiaoli (Guowuyuan 590 hao ling), 国有土地上房屋征收与补偿条例(国务院 590 号令): *Regulations on Expropriation and Compensation of Houses on State-owned Land (State Council Order No. 590)*

Henan sheng shishi "guoyou tudi shang fangwu zhengshou yu buchang tiaoli" ruogan guiding, 河南省实施《国有土地上房屋征收与补偿条例》若干规定: *Several Provisions for Implementing the "Regulations on the Expropriation and Compensation of Houses on State-owned Land"*

Hexin baohu qu, 核心保护区: core conservation zone

Houcangjie, 后仓街: Houcang Street

Houcangkeng 后仓坑: The Pond of Houcang

Huji renkou, 户籍人口: household registered population

Hukou, 户口: household registration

Hutong, 胡同: small alleyways

I xing da chengshi, I 型大城市: I big city

I xing xiao chengshi, I 型小城市: I small city

II xing da chengshi, II 型大城市: II big city

II xing xiao chengshi, II 型小城市: II small city

Jiachou buke waiyang, 家丑不可外扬: don't wash the dirty linen in public

Jiaguwen, 甲骨文: the earliest Chinese characters carved on animal bones and turtle shells

Jianshe kongzhi didai, 建设控制地带: construction control zone

Jiumen xiangzhao, 九门相照: nine doors corresponding to one another

Kangleyuan, 康乐园: The Garden of Kangle

Keyidong wenwu, 可移动文物: moveable heritage

Kuixingge, 魁星阁: The Tower of Kui Star

Laobaixing, 老百姓: the hundreds of last names, referring to the ordinary citizens without political power and lower down the socioeconomic hierarchy

Laominshangcai, 劳民伤财: labouring the people and wasting money

Laoyetai fuxing, xinyetai zhiru, 老业态复兴, 新业态植入: revitalising old businesses, implanting new businesses

Lingdao guanxi, 领导关系: leadership relationship

Lishi wenhua mingcheng mingzhen mingcun baohu tiaoli, 历史文化名城名镇名村保护条例: *Regulations on the Protection of Historical and Cultural Cities, Towns, and Villages*

Quanguo xuanchuan sixiang wenhua gongzuo huiyi, 全国宣传思想文化工作会议: National Working Conference of Propaganda, Ideology, and Culture

Renjia, *人家*: the other people

Renqi'er, *人气儿*: the atmosphere created by people continuing with their lives

Shangtou, *上头*: the top, referring to the central and/or local governments

Shunmin, *顺民*: obedient citizens

Siheyuan, *四合院*: courtyard houses

Teda chengshi, *特大城市*: major city

Tiaokuai, *条块*: strip and block (*Tiao* refers to the vertical structure of government agencies at different levels with similar functions. *Kuai* refers to the horizontal structure of government agencies with different functions within a given geographic area)

Wanghong daka di, *网红打卡地*: internet-famous site to take a snapshot

Wenfeng ta, *文峰塔*: Wenfeng Tower

Wenfeng zhonglu, *文峰中路*: Wenfeng Middle Road

Wenhua yichan, *文化遗产*: cultural heritage

Wenwu, *文物*: cultural relics

Xiaobalazi, *小巴拉子*: the very subordinate people

Xiaocangkou, *小仓口*: The Opening of the Small Granary

Xiujiu rujiu, *修旧如旧*: repair the old as old

Xiushan, *修缮*: restoration

Xuanchuan, *宣传*: promotion or propaganda

Xunfei yuji, *讯飞语记*: Ifly Voice Notes (a voice recognition application)

Yewu guanxi, *业务关系*: professional relationship

Yipiao foujue, *一票否决*: one veto rule

Yiyantang, *一言堂*: one-word hall, referring to no public input allowed in government affairs

Youpoli, *有魄力*: courageous and determined

Zaikafa，再开发: redevelopment

Zhengfu zhudao, qiye yunxing，政府主导，企业运行: led by the government, run by private businesses

Zhengji，政绩: political achievements

Zheng yizhi yan bi yizhi yan，睁一只眼闭一只眼: to turn a blind eye

Zhishang huahua, qiangshang guagua，纸上画画，墙上挂挂: drawing on the paper, hanging on the wall

Zhongdeng chengshi，中等城市: medium-sized city

Zhonggong zhongyang guanyu shenhua wenhua tizhi gaige tuidong shehui zhuyi wenhua dafazhan dafanrong ruogan zhongda wenti de jueding，中共中央关于深化文化体制改革推动社会主义文化大发展大繁荣若干重大问题的决定: *The Decision of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China on Deepening Cultural Reform and Promoting the Development and Prosperity of Socialist Culture*

Zhonghua renmin gongheguo wenwu baohu fa，中华人民共和国文物保护法: *Law of the People's Republic of China on the Protection of Cultural Relics*

Zhongyang shi enren, shengli shi qinren, xianli shi haoren, xiangli shi eren, cunli shi diren，中央是恩人，省里是亲人，县里是好人，乡里是恶人，村里是敌人: the Centre is our benefactor, the province is our relative, the county is a good person, the township is an evil person, and the village is our enemy.

Ziran yichan，自然遗产: natural heritage

Chapter 1. Introduction

This thesis is focused on the conservation of urban historic districts in China. It investigates the decision-making and implementation process of a heritage regeneration project as well as the citizens' various perceptions of heritage embedded in the project. Combining theories from critical heritage studies (CHS) and China Studies in terms of Chinese politics and bureaucracy, this thesis seeks to conceptualise how the power relations and value judgements of different actors involved in or relevant to the project shape heritage practices. Thus, it contributes to the debate around the complexity of heritage construction associated with the sociopolitical conflicts (and consensus-building and collaborations) within heritage construction and sheds light on the understanding of the political system, central-local relations, and state-society relations in contemporary China. This thesis situates the conceptualisation and discussion in the current domestic and international (geo)political context and a mid-sized city. Thus, it expands the studies on small and mid-sized cities and recognises the importance of the geopolitical contexts. It ultimately reveals the essence of politically bounded heritage construction in China and calls for new research paradigms for CHS to extend the discussion on heritage politics.

This introduction chapter is comprised of the following sections: Section 1.1 gives a brief introduction to my overall research rationale. Section 1.2 outlines China's current cultural and heritage strategies, including the culture promotion strategy and the cultural confidence discourse at the central level. Section 1.3 presents the main research question and sub-questions and clarifies some key concepts and terms that I will use in this thesis. Section 1.4 states the main arguments and contributions that this thesis seeks to make. Section 1.5 introduces the outline of the thesis.

1.1 Entry to the Thesis

My initial interest in heritage comes from my hometown, Anyang. Although it is classified as a small to mid-sized city in contemporary China, it was one of the most important imperial capitals in Chinese history. Since I was in elementary school, I have started to learn about its cultural

significance associated with the ancient royal palaces and tombs of the Shang Dynasty[1], the origin of Chinese characters, and so forth. My childhood has given me some first-hand experience in recognising the value of heritage and the importance of keeping heritage alive.

Nowadays, heritage conservation is indeed an increasingly important and widened topic internationally. It has covered a diverse range of themes such as the restoration of historic buildings (e.g. D'Ayala & Wang, 2014; Praticò et al., 2020), the revitalisation of desolate industrial heritage (e.g. Rautenberg, 2012; Yu & Liao, 2017) and declining historic centres (e.g. Delgadillo, 2016; Vološin et al., 2023), the repatriation of looted antiquities and Indigenous artefacts (e.g. Shyllon, 2017; Turnbull & Pickering, 2022), heritage conservation in the face of climate change (e.g. Fatorić & Seekamp, 2017; Hall et al., 2016), etc. The growing influence of international heritage organisations such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) has given additional momentum to heritage conservation worldwide, especially in developing countries (Meskell, 2018).

Zooming in on China, it is a country with exuberant heritage resources of diverse types that were inherited from its long history. However, conservation practices have witnessed many waves (Zhu & Maags, 2020). Entering the 21st century, China is experiencing an era of comprehensive conservation with various on-the-ground approaches that range from small-scale and incremental regeneration of historic districts (Xiao & Cao, 2017), to adaptive reuse of historic buildings (Yung et al., 2014), developing ecomuseums with traditional villages (Nitzky, 2012), and so forth. These approaches growingly emphasise the connection between heritage and its surrounding environment as well as the importance of local communities which constitute parts of the heritage value. These approaches are also largely influenced by the evolution of international heritage conservation principles, such as the framework of historic urban landscapes promoted by UNESCO (2011).

However, the evolution of heritage conservation principles and diverse practical trials, within China and internationally, have perhaps instigated a wider range of debates among heritage scholars,

1 The Shang Dynasty was established around 1600 B.C. and lasted until 1046 B.C. The region of current Anyang and Hebi (another city in Henan Province, next to Anyang and used to be administered by Anyang around the 1950s and the 1960s) became its capital city since around 1300 B.C. to the end of the dynasty.

practitioners, and other stakeholders regarding how to conduct heritage conservation and for whom. In other words, heritage practices have been full of negotiation and contestation between different actors involved in the practices of, or relevant to heritage. The negotiation and contestation, in different cases, can be centred around different and very specific issues, such as the debate on the concepts of authenticity and integrity (e.g. Chan, 2011; González Martínez, 2017; Wall & Zhao, 2017; Zhang, 2008; Zhu, 2015), the conflicts between national identity and memory and individual identity and experiences (e.g. Goulding & Domic, 2009; Oakes, 2000), the (over)commercialisation, museumification, and/or Disneyfication of heritage (e.g. Liu, 2013; Nitzky, 2012; Peters, 2013; Zhang & Lenzer, 2020), to name a few. The negotiation and contestation involve different social groups and cause different cultural, social, economic, and political consequences. So, how should we understand the processes and roots of the negotiation and contestation? How should we view the roles of the actors? What are the impacts of the negotiation and contestation on heritage conservation? These are the questions that have intrigued me to delve deep into the topic of negotiation and contestation in heritage practices.

To answer these questions, critical heritage studies (CHS), as an emerging and blossoming subfield within heritage studies, is a good starting point. According to CHS, heritage is not just a "thing" (Smith, 2006, p. 2), but a process "whereby objects, events, sites, performances and personalities, derived from the past, are transformed into experiences in and for the present" (Ashworth, 2011, p. 2). Worldwide, this process is often dominated by states which treat heritage as a political and economic resource and deliberately construct and promote certain heritage discourse to serve their official agenda (Ashworth et al., 2007). For example, heritage can be branded as national heritage and play a fundamental role in nationalism and national identity. As illustrated by English Heritage, "England's historic environment helps define our national identity. It helps shape how we think about ourselves and how other people see us. It is the mix of old and new, our interest in our past and our confidence in the future which defines our nation today" (English Heritage et al., 2007, p. 2, as cited in Preucel & Pecos, 2015, p. 224). The National Historic Landmark programme in the US serves similar ends (National Park Service, 2022).

However, the heritage process led by states is by no means static or monolithic. The discourse of the authorities is often challenged by various subaltern groups and alternative heritage discourses,

during which neglect, conflicts, and collaboration are observed (e.g. Arkaraprasertkul, 2018; Preucel & Pecos, 2015; Shaw, 2005; Zhu, 2015). In other words, the negotiation and contestation during heritage practices are manifested in variegated manners. Therefore, CHS conceives heritage as a source of social conflicts. Tunbridge and Ashworth (1996) use the concept of heritage dissonance to describe the intrinsic nature of heritage and the explicit social, economic, and political conflicts involved in heritage practices. In reality, there may not always be "dissonance" in heritage practices, but may well be "consonance". For instance, different actors sometimes have disagreements over heritage conservation and thus challenge each others' decisions, while other times may find common ground and collaborate with each other. On the one hand, the dissonance and consonance reflect the power relations of actors such as governments, heritage professionals, local communities, civil societies, businesses and developers (Wang, 2019). On the other hand, the dissonance and consonance reflect the diverse value judgements of the actors, i.e. how people perceive heritage, heritage value, and heritage reuse (Wang, 2019) and the broader worldviews, ideologies, etc. that underpin heritage perceptions.

CHS is the subfield of heritage studies that explores questions like how conflicts and collaborations occur, what kinds of power relations and value judgements of the actors are embedded in the conflicts and collaborations, and what the impacts of the conflicts and collaborations are. By criticising the dominating role of the authorities and heritage experts as well as the widely-circulated Eurocentric heritage ideals, the central goal of CHS is to fundamentally question and democratise the existing heritage system, which seeks to contribute to social inclusion and justice (Waterton, 2010). It believes that the current top-down heritage system needs more than revolutionising conservation and management methods and techniques (Pendlebury et al., 2004; Waterton & Smith, 2010). "How heritage should be defined and recognised" and "by whom" should first be re-answered so that the communities can be empowered from the very beginning of heritage conservation (Silva & Santos, 2012). In this sense, heritage is, in essence, political (Shepherd, 2009), because heritage practices serve certain needs of certain groups, which are usually in tandem with their political agenda, such as the states' agenda of nation-building. In the meantime, heritage has become a tool for some groups to challenge the existing power structure and social structure. Thus heritage practices are in tandem with different groups' power struggles.

Nevertheless, after a thorough review of CHS, I argue that CHS is thin on unpacking the political essence of heritage. CHS has been insightful and fruitful in discussing the role of value judgements in shaping heritage practices and causing conflicts through examining the diverse heritage discourses of different actors. However, how power relations play out in heritage practices is less clear (Smith et al., 2024; Su, X., 2010). Therefore, CHS is not able to explain why certain groups can express their heritage discourses to shape heritage practices, while others completely or partly fail to do so. Yet both value judgements and power relations are necessary to explain why the inherent heritage dissonance has diverse explicit manifestations under certain contexts. In state-dominated heritage practices, the role of power relations may arguably be more prominent. Within these state-dominated heritage practices, the political essence of heritage is not only derived from the state's political interpretation of heritage value but also embedded in the decision-making and implementation processes that are shaped by power struggles between state and nonstate actors. This is an important point that my thesis seeks to reveal and thus contribute to CHS.

Considering this research gap, CHS is not enough to disentangle the complexity of heritage practices in China and many other countries, as heritage practices usually occur within the pre-existing heritage system delineated by the state and may seek to break through the system. It is thus essential to understand how state and nonstate actors function and interact within and outside this system. This requires the comprehension of the mechanism and influence of China's specific bureaucratic structure and the authoritarian political system where the heritage system is embedded. In my previous experience working as a planner at a leading planning institute in the country, it is common for planners to be largely confined by the local governments. Making plans is more to fulfil the local officials' ambitions rather than using professional knowledge to solve social issues. In the meantime, at the central level, heritage conservation is growingly enmeshed in the overall development strategy of the Party-state. Patriotism, nationalism, traditionalism, etc. have become more deeply entangled with heritage conservation (Sun, 2016). In this regard, China's heritage system is indeed top-down and authoritarian.

However, the word "authoritarian" may be an oversimplified generalisation of contemporary China as it suggests an omnipotent and static state (Wu, 2022). In fact, heritage decision-making is constantly challenged by different state and nonstate actors, making the authoritarian state less

coherent and influential than it may at first appear. This feature is captured by the concept of fragmented authoritarianism which argues that the Chinese bureaucracy is fragmented, thus policy-making requires various bargaining, compromises, and consensus-building of different government agencies (Lieberthal & Oksenberg, 1988). Moreover, the fragmented bureaucracy has created opportunistic structures where nonstate actors have taken advantage of the "fragments" to participate in policy-making (Mertha, 2008). These contemporary changes since China's market reform in the 1980s suggest that heritage construction in China is an intricate network weaved by both state and nonstate actors. The conceptualisation of this network requires a thorough understanding of the actors' power relations in particular, in addition to their value judgements.

To explore how power relations and value judgements cause negotiation and contestation and shape China's heritage practices, especially to understand the role of power and the pre-existing heritage system, this thesis will combine concepts from CHS as well as studies on Chinese politics and bureaucracy, particularly, authorised heritage discourse and heritage dissonance from the former and fragmented authoritarianism from the latter. The objective is to further the understanding of the political essence of contemporary heritage construction.

1.2 Research Context: Evolution of China's Heritage Policy and the Current "Culture Promotion"

This section provides an overview of the evolution of China's overall cultural policy and heritage policy, as the heritage policy has evolved in tandem with the cultural policy. The current heritage policy is closely related to the latest culture promotion strategy at the central level. By culture promotion, I refer to the central strategy of promoting traditional Chinese culture and integrating traditional culture with the contemporary socialist culture to build a strong nation (Xi, 2017).

After the establishment of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949, the attitude towards Chinese traditional culture of the Community Party of China (CPC) and its cultural policy have witnessed a radical change. From the 1950s up until the 1970s, built upon Marxism-Leninism and Maoism, the CPC used culture as a weapon of class struggle to legitimise and stabilise the communist Party-state. Traditional Chinese culture was deemed "conservative" and "backward", and

as representing the feudalist past when China was humiliated by imperialism. Thus, devastating attacks on Chinese traditional culture occurred during the Cultural Revolution from 1966 to 1976 (Perry, 2017). Under the special guidance of Premier Zhou Enlai, a limited number of museums, antiques and archives were preserved (Zhu & Maags, 2020).

Following Mao's death, the Third Plenary Session of the 11th Central Committee of the CPC in 1978 was held, at which the Cultural Revolution was regarded as a huge mistake and cultural iconoclasm gradually stopped. In the same year, Deng Xiaoping proposed the Reform and Opening. The CPC decided to suspend the discussion on class struggle and revolution to better focus on economic advancement. Since then, culture started to be viewed as a viable economic sector to contribute to economic development, and the role of contributing to class struggle has been abandoned (Lin, W., 2012). In 1989, the "Tiananmen Incidence" alerted the CPC that the previously neglected ideology construction and patriotic education were vital for the stability of the nation (Perry, 2017). In order to legitimise itself, the CPC has turned to Chinese traditional culture to claim that the Party is an inseparable part of Chinese history (Madsen, 2014; Minafo, 2018; Perry, 2017; Tsang, 2016). From the early 1990s onward, therefore, culture has been expected to play a more comprehensive role: to continue developing the economy, to unite citizens, and to promote the cultural soft power of the nation (Lin, W., 2012; Wang, Y., 2015).

The CPC today places a high value on culture and cultural governance (Perry, 2017, p. 30). In 2010, former President Hu Jintao declared that "culture has become a more and more important source of national cohesion and creativity and a factor of growing significance in the competition in overall national strength" and that the Party-state must "enhance culture as part of the soft power of our country" (The State Council Information Office of the PRC, 2010). In 2011, the CPC issued *The Decision of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China on Deepening Cultural Reform and Promoting the Development and Prosperity of Socialist Culture*[2]. The document states the CPC's goal of cultural governance in the new era: building a strong socialist cultural power (Central Committee of the Communist Party of China [CPC], 2011). Soon after, it was included as part of the

2 *Zhonggong zhongyang guanyu shenhua wenhua tizhi gaige tuidong shehui zhuyi wenhua dafazhan dafanrong ruogan zhongda wenti de jueding, 中共中央关于深化文化体制改革推动社会主义文化大发展大繁荣若干重大问题的决定.*

"China Dream" initiative first mentioned by President Xi Jinping in 2012, aiming to realise the "great revival of the Chinese nation" (Sun & Wang, 2014).

Heritage, as a component and carrier of Chinese traditional culture, has experienced a similar change during the same period. Following the founding of the PRC, the CPC set up the Ministry of Culture and the National Cultural Heritage Administration (*guojia wenwu ju, 国家文物局*)[3], and implemented heritage legislation. However, during the Cultural Revolution, when heritage was regarded as symbolising the "feudal" and "repressive" old China, much was destroyed by the Red Guard (Zhu & Maags, 2020). The destruction gradually stopped with the end of the Cultural Revolution and large-scale conservation started in 1982 with the issue of the *Law of the People's Republic of China on the Protection of Cultural Relics*[4]. Despite that, a large amount of heritage, particularly urban heritage areas, was still bulldozed by local states and developers during the rapid urbanisation in the 1990s (Svensson, 2016).

Entering the new century, heritage conservation has been growingly emphasised by former President Hu Jintao and current President Xi Jinping due to the recognition of the cultural, economic and political significance of heritage (Yan, 2018). As stated in *The Notice on Strengthening the Protection of Cultural Heritage*[5] issued by the State Council in 2005, the conservation of heritage means being responsible for the nation's history and security (State Council, 2005). It is believed that cultural heritage is an embodiment of China's 5000-year history and culture. Conserving and inheriting heritage is essential to strengthen the national identity and cultural characteristics of Chinese citizens, develop heritage-led industries and urban regeneration, and promote cultural communication between China and the international community (Bao & Li, 2019).

According to President Xi's report at the 19th National Congress of the CPC in 2017, the Party-state's goal of cultural development is to build a prosperous socialist culture which draws on Chinese

3 The initial name of the National Cultural Heritage Administration was the State Administration of Cultural Relics. The name was later changed into the State Administration of Cultural Heritage (SACH). The change from "cultural relics" to "cultural heritage" reflects the change of scope of conservation in China, which was partly to keep the scope consistent with that of UNESCO. In 2019, "SACH" was changed into "National Cultural Heritage Administration". This thesis uses the latest version, while previous academic researches mostly use the acronym "SACH" and many continue to do so. What is worth mentioning is that while the English translation has changed a number of times, the Chinese name has been the same (Yan, 2018).

4 *Zhonghua renmin gongheguo wenwu baohu fa, 中华人民共和国文物保护法.*

5 *Guanyu jiaqiang wenhua yichan baohu de tongzhi, 关于加强文化遗产保护的通知.*

traditional culture and considers China's current demands while keeping the socialist system in order to unite the Chinese citizens, boost the economic and cultural development and enhance the soft power of China (Xi, 2017). Promoting Chinese traditional culture which is referred to as culture promotion in this thesis has thus become central to the Party-state's cultural strategy. China's culture promotion targets both domestic audiences as well as international audiences. For one thing, the economic prowess of China has failed to advance the cultural self-confidence of its citizens (Sun, 2016). For another, although the rapid economic growth has impressed much of the world, China's international reputation has been tarnished by its mercantilist business practices, poor record of human rights, and lack of environmental awareness (Manzenreiter, 2010; Shambaugh, 2015). The culture promotion strategy is thus carried out in response (CPC, 2011; Sun & Wang, 2014). Notwithstanding, in this thesis, the inward culture promotion towards Chinese citizens will be the main focus, particularly the culture promotion in a small to mid-sized inland city which is farther from the frontier of the international geopolitical disputes compared to the capital of the country and the coastal areas, yet is still entangled in the geopolitical complexities.

Guided by the culture promotion strategy, the CPC has been taking a series of actions. For instance, the CPC has been establishing Confucius Institutes and Confucius Classrooms overseas (e.g. Hartig, 2015; Hubbert, 2014; Lo & Pan, 2016), developing cultural industry (e.g. Su, W., 2010; Zhou, Y., 2015), hosting mega-events in China and "China culture year" in other countries (e.g. Bodet & Lacassagne, 2012; Brady, 2009; Maags, 2014), and proposing the Belt and Road Initiative[6] (e.g. Winter, 2016, 2018). Among these actions, heritage conservation is an important component (Xi, 2017). Through constructing the official heritage discourse, the state circulates certain narratives to cultivate Chinese citizens' shared identity and to conduct moral and patriotic education (Yan, 2015), which is termed "heritage as governmentality" by CHS scholars (Zhu & González Martínez, 2022). A prominent example is an increasing number of TV shows produced by China Central Television (CCTV) and local television to promote and celebrate China's heritage and conservation

6 The Belt and Road Initiative is geographically and metaphorically based on the ancient Silk Roads and the Maritime Silk Road which are deemed important cultural heritage in China (Winter, 2018). In 2013, UNESCO inscribed the "Silk Roads: the Routes Network of Chang'an-Tianshan Corridor" as a World Cultural Heritage co-nominated by China, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan (UNESCO, 2013). In 2021, UNESCO inscribed "Quanzhou: Emporium of the World in Song-Yuan China" as a World Cultural Heritage nominated by China, partly because Quanzhou has been widely acknowledged as the start of the ancient Maritime Silk Road (UNESCO, 2021). Scholars consider the World Heritage designations the legitimisation of the ancient Silk Roads and the Maritime Silk Road as well as the legitimisation of the contemporary Belt and Road Initiative (e.g. Sen, 2023; Winter, 2018).

achievements, such as the CCTV-produced TV show National Treasure (*guojia baozang, 国家宝藏*) which invites major museums in China to introduce some "representative" and "important" pieces from their collection.

At the same time, the cultural confidence discourse emerged and started to gain more momentum at the central level, which is a component of the grand culture promotion strategy. Former President Hu Jintao first brought up the idea of "cultural confidence" in 2011 and pointed out that "in order to construct a socialist cultural power, high cultural awareness and cultural confidence must be improved; civilised qualities of the whole nation must be enhanced; and the nation's cultural soft power should be strengthened" (Zhou, 2012, p. 140). Later in 2012, Hu stressed the importance of three confidences during China's modern development, confidence in the path, theory, and system. Cultural confidence at that point was on the sidelines. In 2016, President Xi Jinping developed Hu's confidence discourse and equated cultural confidence with the other three confidences to formulate the four-confidence discourse: the confidence in the path, theory, system, and culture of socialism with Chinese characteristics. Xi explained that the cultural confidence of China is rooted in the 5000-year Chinese history and traditional culture, the revolutionary era led by the CPC, and the advanced socialist culture (China Academy of Urban Planning & Design, 2019, p. 20). Nowadays, cultural confidence, as well as the other three confidences, are frequently mentioned by different levels of the Chinese government, policy-makers, and academics as a guide to overall development (Zhang, 2022).

At the most recent 20th National Congress of the CPC in 2022, Xi in his report emphasised that China needs to combine Chinese traditional culture with Marxism to achieve Chinese modernisation which is integrated with traditionalism and nationalism (Xi, 2022). When talking about heritage, previous national congress reports only mentioned "preserving cultural relics" (e.g. Hu, 2007, 2012; Xi, 2017). But at the 20th National Congress of the CPC, Xi's report contained a much longer and more comprehensive sentence emphasising the importance of preserving cultural relics, reusing cultural heritage in urban and rural construction, constructing national parks, and developing heritage tourism (Xi, 2022), demonstrating an enlarged scope for, and diversified approaches to heritage conservation in China. It was also the first time that Xi used words like "drastic changes" in the international environment; "external attempts to blackmail, contain, blockade, and exert

maximum pressure on China" to describe the geopolitical challenges that China is facing now (Xi, 2022), suggesting the significant impacts of this context on China's recent development trajectories.

This national and international context is also significant for this thesis. It is within this context that heritage in China is increasingly politicised and integrated into the cultural confidence discourse and the national development strategy. Domestically, the goal is to unite and educate Chinese citizens with traditional Chinese culture in a soft and incremental manner. Internationally, the goal is to demonstrate the determination to peaceful revitalisation with no threat to other countries (Hubbert, 2019). The importance of this context for this thesis also lies in the fact that the dramatic changes in the international context have already resulted in noticeable domestic changes in heritage practices. For instance, international geopolitics, including the COVID-19 pandemic, the trade war between China and the US, etc., have made nationalism and patriotism increasingly prevalent among Chinese citizens. Partly induced by this nationalism and patriotism, many Chinese citizens have spontaneously and increasingly engaged in promoting Chinese traditional culture, such as visiting heritage sites and museums, wearing traditional clothes, and learning ancient poems (personal observation on social media). It is fair to say that there is now a new wave of "heritage craze" in China because of nationalism and culture promotion, slightly different from the previous one during which the Chinese government was the main player and the Chinese citizens were less mobilised (Yan, 2018). Therefore, the current national and international context may have become an important factor that is shaping the central-local relations as well as the state-society relations, which ultimately influences the decision-making and heritage discourses of the state and nonstate actors.

The culture promotion strategy and the cultural confidence discourse are initiated by the CPC at the central level. Nevertheless, the on-the-ground decision-making and policy implementation are in the hands of the local governments which do not always follow the central instructions. How to reach the goal of culture promotion while maintaining sufficient revenue and achieving other local political objectives is the key concern of the local governments depending on local specificities. Some local governments prioritise local economic benefits over the CPC's political propaganda and the National Cultural Heritage Administration's call for balancing economic development and heritage conservation (Zhang, 2008). Other local governments are eager to attempt new conservation strategies in line with the central government's instruction in order to "seek approval" from the

central government (Yu & Huang, 2019, p. 126). In other words, China's current heritage policy from the central government is inherently related to nationalism and the CPC's culture promotion strategy. But how the local governments put the central government's instruction into practice is very much dependent upon the local officials' decision-making, and sometimes their power relations with influential entrepreneurs, scholars, and other nonstate actors (Madsen, 2014). Therefore, beyond acknowledging the significance of the national and international context, it is necessary to look into specific local practices in terms of local decision-making and the actors' heritage discourses, as the local practices are the direct manifestation of heritage politics in China. Bearing these in mind, this thesis will scrutinise a local heritage project in China and consider its relationship with the central-level culture promotion strategy and the cultural confidence discourse.

1.3 Research Questions and Key Concepts

Against the national and international context and built upon the theoretical discussions in academia, this thesis examines the local government-led Regeneration Project of Cangxiang Street Historic District (hereinafter the CSHD Project or the Project and CSHD for the historic district) in the City of Anyang, Henan Province. The main research question is: *How and why are decisions and heritage discourses negotiated and contested by different actors in China's heritage conservation project?*

Three sets of sub-questions are developed based on the main question:

- *How are decisions of the heritage project made by whom with what rationales?*
- *How and why do different actors' heritage discourses converge or diverge?*
- *What are the impacts of the actors' interactions?*

I identified the following key actors that were (some still are) directly or indirectly involved in the Project: (1) the local government, including the municipal, district, and Street Office levels[7], (2) the central government, (3) heritage professionals, including planners, designers, and local scholars, (4)

7 The Chinese government contains the following levels: the central government is the highest level, followed by the provincial level. The provincial level has four types, including twenty-three provinces (such as Henan Province), four municipalities directly administered by the central state (Beijing, Shanghai, Tianjin, and Chongqing), five autonomous regions (Inner Mongolia, Tibet, Xinjiang, Ningxia, and Guangxi), and two Special Administrative Regions (Hong Kong and Macau). Next is the prefectural municipal level, such as Anyang in this case, which is further divided into several districts and counties at the district/county level. At the lowest level, there are Street Offices in urban areas to directly govern the communities. The provincial level, prefectural municipal level, district/county level, and Street Offices are all the "local" governments (National People's Congress, 2022).

communities, including residents in CSHD (some of them have been relocated in other parts of the city), business owners in CSHD, and tourists who are mostly local citizens.

To set the stage for later discussion in this thesis, it is necessary to clarify four sets of concepts and terms that I will use: heritage discourse, types of heritage, preservation and conservation (as well as other treatments of heritage), and heritage construction. These four sets of terms are central in this thesis as they are directly relevant to different aspects of the CSHD Project that I will look at and the academic debates that I will engage with. They can also be confusing as different disciplines, heritage organisations, and countries sometimes have different definitions and usage of them. To avoid ambiguities, I will explain how I will use them in this thesis.

First, heritage is considered a discursive process by some CHS scholars (e.g. Smith, 2006; Wu & Hou, 2015). What is categorised as heritage and what is not, and the values and meanings represented by heritage are subject to people's interpretation. The oral and written interpretation, or more formally, provision of heritage concepts, criteria, and values forms heritage discourse (Wu & Hou, 2015). Heritage discourse can convey heritage knowledge, guide conservation practices, and be reflected by communities' daily practices, events, and activities related to heritage sites (Yu & Zhang, 2020). It is also the reflection of the broader value judgements of people (Wang, 2019). CHS believes that contestations during heritage practices are sometimes partly rooted in the conflicting heritage discourses of different actors (e.g. Parkinson et al., 2016; Smith, 2006). Thus, this concept offers an important research framework for CHS and is the basis for understanding the concept of authorised heritage discourse (Smith, 2006) in CHS.

Second, heritage is comprised of a wide range of types. Different countries and heritage organisations usually have different ways of categorising heritage. Taking UNESCO's World Heritage as an example, it contains the types of cultural heritage, natural heritage, mixed heritage, and cultural landscape as "tangible" heritage (UNESCO, 1972, 2023), and intangible cultural heritage (UNESCO, 2003) and Memory of the World (UNESCO, n.d.) as opposed to tangible heritage. In China, there are different ways and terms to refer to different types of heritage (e.g. see China Principles by ICOMOS China, 2015 for definitions and English translations of certain terms), such as moveable heritage (*keyidong wenwu, 可移动文物*) versus immovable heritage (*bukeyidong*

wenwu, 不可移动文物); cultural relics (*wenwu, 文物*); cultural heritage (*wenhua yichan, 文化遗产*) and natural heritage (*ziran yichan, 自然遗产*); and intangible cultural heritage (*feiwuzhi wenhua yichan, 非物质文化遗产*). This thesis will primarily focus on built heritage or immovable heritage which falls under the broad category of cultural heritage, specifically an urban historic district (or heritage area) as the case study. Intangible heritage such as traditional craftsmanship and cuisine that are embedded in built heritage will be briefly mentioned but is not the research object of this thesis.

Third, in heritage studies, preservation and conservation are two coexisting paradigms. Preservation is "a protective intervention to maintain the current condition of an artefact, building or ensemble" which stresses the "prevention of change, or at least mitigation of the effects of change" (Ashworth, 2011, pp. 4-5). Conservation considers heritage in the broad context of the built environment and is widely used by planners and place managers. According to the conservation paradigm, the contemporary use of heritage is "an integral and equal part of the decision to preserve" (Ashworth, 2011, p. 10). The idea of "adaptive reuse" has thus become more prevalent in Western Europe and North America (Ashworth, 2011, p. 10), which refers to "the act or process of making possible a compatible use for a property through repair, alterations, and additions while preserving those portions or features which convey its historical, cultural, or architectural values" (National Park Service, 2017, p. 2). This thesis perceives heritage as a part of the built environment and considers contemporary use, hence will use "conservation" as a broad term to refer to the holistic system of heritage practices, including value interpretation and presentation, technical restoration and maintenance, and regeneration and management for contemporary use.

In addition to the two paradigms, there are other more specific treatments to heritage, such as maintenance, repair, restoration, refurbishment, regeneration, etc. which are usually defined differently by different scholars, organisations, and state institutions (e.g. ICOMOS China, 2015; National Park Service, 2017). This research will use the terms regeneration (*gengxin, 更新*), redevelopment (*zaikafa, 再开发*), restoration (*xiushan, 修缮*), and refurbishment (*fanxin, 翻新*), considering the Chinese words' technical meanings and how my interviewees used them in our conversations, as well as which English words are the closest translation. Here, regeneration refers to the practice of the overall project of CSHD, while redevelopment refers to the economic development part of the Project by assigning new and usually commercial functions to the historic

and non-historic buildings. Restoration refers to the relatively comprehensive repair and maintenance of major historic buildings in CSHD, while refurbishment refers to the more superficial repair and beautification of the façades of historic and non-historic buildings along the main alleyways in CSHD. It is worth mentioning that in this thesis, I term the entire project of CSHD a "regeneration project", as it is the closest translation of what the local government calls the Project[8]. However, I do acknowledge that the word "regeneration" can be complex and controversial in urban studies and heritage studies considering how different stakeholders use the word as well as the positive and negative effects of regeneration (see e.g. Cochrane, 2007; Shaw and Porter, 2013).

Fourth, by heritage construction, I refer to the holistic process of designating, interpreting, (re)using, and managing heritage to serve present needs. In previous research, this process is also called heritagisation (e.g. Ashworth et al., 2007; Xia, 2020) or heritage-making (e.g. Aigner, 2016; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1998; Pietrostefani & Holman, 2021) by different scholars. There are no concrete definitions for these terms and scholars may use them interchangeably. The reason for using "heritage construction" in this thesis is to keep in line with the key argument in CHS which sees heritage as a "social construct" (Harvey, 2001), as I will discuss in Chapter Two. Thus the process of ascribing values and uses to heritage to fulfil certain demands is termed "heritage construction".

1.4 Findings and Contributions

To address the above research questions, I conducted five months of fieldwork in Anyang from May to September 2021. My empirical materials covered the interactions between several groups of actors: between the local government and the heritage professionals, between the local government and the original residents in CSHD, and between the local government and the local citizens as the wider sense of communities[9]. The central government usually appeared as the contextual actor that

8 The local government of Anyang, in our conversations and in work reports, called the project "*baohu zhengzhi (保护整治)*", and sometimes added the word "*fuxing (复兴)*" which literally translates as "protection and rectify" and "revitalisation". The literal translation of "protection and rectify" is especially misleading, as *baohu zhengzhi* in the heritage context in Chinese refers to a more comprehensive move than "protection", and "rectify" in English is less used in the heritage context. The English word regeneration, however, is closer to what the local government meant by "*baohu zhengzhi*", and plus "*fuxing*".

9 In the later elaboration, I will use "local government" to refer to both the municipal and district governments, if these two levels played into certain parts of the Project together. If one of them was dominating certain parts of the Project, I will specify. I will also specify when I discuss Street Offices. It is also worth mentioning that in my case study, technically, the municipal and district party committees and the municipal and district governments are not the same. However, I will only talk about the local "government" and not really the local "party committee". The reason

indirectly influenced the on-the-ground decision-making and heritage discourses.

Looking at the negotiation and contestation in decision-making and implementation, I will show that the CSHD Project has comprised a complex web of decision-making and implementation. The local government, as the major decision-maker and enforcer, has been at the centre of the web. Between the central and the local governments, the central government has exerted explicit and implicit influences on the local government through general regulations, the personnel evaluation system of Chinese government officials, and the re-centralisation of ideology embedded in heritage. The local government has had various responses to the central influence and control, not always submissively following the centre. Between the local government and the communities, the broadly defined civil society, including the heritage professionals and the original residents, actively or passively, and formally or informally contested the local government's decisions. In some cases, the local government needed to compromise to accommodate different actors' demands.

This decision-making and implementation web results from China's fragmented authoritarianism (Lieberthal & Oksenberg, 1988; hereinafter FA). In particular, there are two types of fragmentation. System fragmentation, generally following the original definition in the model, is sustained by the "one veto rule" of the personnel evaluation system, the relatively remote central-local distance in a small to mid-sized city, the community governance structure at the grassroots level, and the planning and heritage regulations. Outside the political system, there is also the fragmentation in state-society relations that has facilitated nonstate actors' policy bargaining, especially the bargaining from the original residents. In the meantime, the authoritarian nature of the system persists and is increasing under the current political leadership (Li, 2023; Zhou, 2023). The central and local governments' centralisation and re-centralisation efforts include certain elements of the personnel evaluation system and the current ideological re-centralisation. Consequently, fragmentation has indeed resulted in policy bargaining, compromises, and consensus-building; yet the extent of bargaining and the actual policy changes are not as substantial as previous studies have shown (Lieberthal & Oksenberg, 1988; Mertha, 2008).

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is that in my fieldwork, I found that these two institutions were not clearly distinguished in the decision-making and implementation process. The local government's work reports and the local officials all mentioned both simultaneously, and the local officials sometimes had dual positions in the local government and the local party committee or had transferred from one to the other during the CSHD Project.

Looking at the negotiation and contestation in heritage discourses, I agree with previous CHS findings that different actors have different perceptions of heritage and heritage value. Yet what I discovered is that some of the heritage discourses of the heritage professionals and the citizens did not directly feed into the Project. The restoration/refurbishment of buildings and the redevelopment of CSHD have been largely determined by the local government's authorised heritage discourse. That is to say, value judgements are sometimes not as manifested as power relations in shaping China's heritage practices. It is the uneven power relations that make the local government the primary decision-maker to determine what the Project looks like, which nonstate actors can become part of the decision-making and implementation web through what channels, and to what extent the nonstate actors can challenge the local government's decisions. Therefore, power relations determine what role value judgements can play in the Project. The Project has been mainly shaped by FA reflected in the decision-making and implementation as well as the local government's rationales for conducting the Project, not by what value is ascribed to heritage, how value is ascribed, and by whom.

Looking at the negotiation and contestation, overall, I will show how heritage, as well as culture, is politically bounded, going beyond the evident and simplified statement of "heritage is political" in CHS. In terms of decision-making and implementation, the final delivery of the Project has been the result of the power struggles of different actors which are determined by FA and, at the same time, has disturbed the existing political system. In terms of heritage discourses, the materialisation of these heritage discourses has been determined by authoritarianism, as it is this nature of the system that decides which heritage discourses can be translated into the Project. Therefore, in addition to the local government's political agenda that the Project serves, the political essence of heritage is largely embedded in the power struggles between the local government, the heritage professionals, and the local citizens during the Project, which is largely (though not completely) bounded by the pre-existing heritage system as a part of the overall political system.

Based on the main arguments of the thesis, I will make the following contributions to the framework of FA, CHS, and studies on small and mid-sized cities. In terms of FA, first, I will employ this to conceptualise the decision-making of heritage projects in China. It is more than testing the applicability of a concept derived from one policy area (China's energy sector) to a different policy

area. More importantly, I will show how the policy area of heritage in China renders particular characteristics to the political system. Second, as Lieberthal (1992) acknowledges, one of the limitations of FA is that the concept overemphasises fragmentation and bargaining within China's policy-making and overlooks the coherence of policy-making. In my research, I will examine how China's FA system is still authoritarian, despite having fragmentation features. Consequently, heritage decision-making and implementation contain some loopholes. Yet these loopholes are not substantial enough to radically shift the direction of heritage policies.

Third, another limitation of this concept is that it was considered a static framework when it was first developed and has been inadequate to capture the contemporary changes in China (Oksenberg, 2001). Through my case study, I will demonstrate and highlight that China's FA is dynamic. On the one hand, there are cyclical decentralisation and re-centralisation efforts from the Party-state to facilitate decision-making while sustaining or reinforcing authoritarianism (Tjia, 2023). On the other hand, the participation of nonstate actors in decision-making and implementation has added uncertainties to the final project deliveries. This means that the political system is evolving with the ever-changing central-local relations, state-society relations, and domestic and international (geo)political contexts. Heritage decision-making and implementation is a dynamic process shaped by the constant interplay of various state and nonstate actors.

Fourth, I will expand on how fragmentation can be interpreted. On the one hand, I will demonstrate that the fragmentation observed and defined by previous scholars not only results from the *tiaokuai* system (see p. 58 for further discussion) of Chinese bureaucracy. Within the political system, there are other characteristics or elements that contribute to fragmented policy-making. I term how the political system is structured with these characteristics or elements "system fragmentation". On the other hand, I will illustrate the "fragmentation in state-society relations", which comes from outside the political system, but is related to system fragmentation and also leads to policy bargaining. Due to these two dimensions of fragmentation, time-wise, policy bargaining is not confined to the "policy-making" process but can occur during the policy implementation process when policy changes are not necessarily formalised or institutionalised. Actor-wise, nonstate actors can, but do not necessarily, exploit system fragmentation to negotiate policies. Their seemingly random strategies are more prompted by fragmentation in state-society relations and can be effective to some

extent.

In terms of CHS, this thesis will expand the concepts and debates in CHS. With regard to the concept of AHD, I will question whose heritage discourse can be labelled as "AHD". In China, heritage professionals as nonstate actors have an ambiguous position. In relation to the general public, they possess professional knowledge and skills that make them more "authoritative". Their close collaboration with the local governments also makes them seem to be part of the "local authorities". Yet the political system confines their power in relation to the local governments. Therefore, a more precise and nuanced understanding of AHD in China is that the top leaders in the local governments possess *political* authority to actually authorise and realise their heritage discourse, while heritage professionals possess *cultural* authority which does not necessarily guarantee authority and realisation of their heritage discourse. AHD, therefore, becomes an exaggeration of their heritage discourse.

Meanwhile, the local government's discourse deviates from "heritage" in the sense that heritage here is overloaded with economic and political agendas. Yet I still consider this discourse AHD. Because the evaluation of AHD should not be too carried away by the focus on the Eurocentric heritage ideals but should emphasise how certain discourses formulated against a particular socio-political backdrop acquire authority. It is the authorised position of these discourses and the subsequent competition with other unauthorised discourses that makes the very cause of social suppression and marginalisation. The merit of problematising the concept of AHD is to thoroughly understand the mechanisms through which AHD is formulated, authorised, circulated, and functions to (attempt to) realise its dominant control of heritage practices, which is something that Smith fails to address in *Uses of Heritage* (Skrede & Hølleland, 2018).

With regard to the concept of heritage dissonance, beyond recognising that it is an intrinsic nature of heritage, previous studies have described various collaborations, mild negotiations, and intense protests, which can be considered different manifestations of heritage dissonance (e.g. McGill, 2015; Xia, 2020; Zhu, 2015). However, these studies are vague in explaining why heritage dissonance takes on different forms under different circumstances. In this thesis, by linking the concept of FA with CHS, I will explore how power relations and value judgements are translated in certain

manifestations of heritage dissonance to shape heritage practices. As I have stated in my argument, in China's heritage projects, sometimes, power relations determine the role of value judgements. This expands our understanding of the roots of heritage dissonance. That is, value judgements are more related to the intrinsically dissonant nature of heritage; while power relations decide how this nature expresses itself as observable conflicts and/or collaborations between the actors. Moreover, this argument proves that concepts like FA are of value in CHS. Practically, only recognising different people's diverse heritage discourses is far from enough to improve the heritage system. The fundamental thing is to scrutinise and revolutionise the pre-existing heritage system that is confining the expression of the heritage discourses. Theoretically, CHS needs a new research paradigm whereby concepts and theories about politics, bureaucracy, and power can be combined with the existing framework to facilitate our study of heritage dissonance and heritage politics.

Last, this thesis uses a small to mid-sized Chinese city as a case study. Small and mid-sized cities are usually quite different from major cities. In my case study, for instance, the Project has some different and even unique features. The Project deliberately excluded private developers, different from the public-private partnership approach in many major cities, such as the development of Xintiandi in Shanghai (Yan, 2012). Yet due to the economic decline and less preferential policies from upper-level governments, this decision to exclude private developers has arguably worsened the local financial situation. The local government is currently thinking about inviting in private investors but lacks the ability to attract competent and deep-pocket investors as major cities can do. In addition, the Project imitated major cities' experiences, but relatively superficially. And the local top leaders were more arbitrary to intervene in the planners' work. These examples indicate the limited administrative capacity of the local government and the external challenges the city faces. Another difference is that in my case study, during the relocation of the original residents, there were no collective actions or violence to resist the local government's plan, different from some homeowner associations or capable residents' mobilisation of their neighbours in major cities (Cai & He, 2022), suggesting different manifestations of state-society relations. Considering all these differences, how small and mid-sized cities have specific FA decision-making and implementation processes and specific forms of heritage dissonance is interesting to look into, as the answers to these questions can nuance and expand the current theories by adding scale and locality as a factor.

In the meantime, how these cities can escape the development trap is an important practical question for policymakers and practitioners to reflect upon and is one aspect that this thesis will shed light on.

1.5 Outline of the Thesis

This thesis consists of eight chapters. Following the introductory chapter, in *Chapter Two*, I review the two bodies of literature that this thesis builds on and contributes to. The first is critical heritage studies, including the key arguments and concepts such as heritage dissonance and AHD, the research findings in CHS focusing on China, and the general critiques and my use of the concepts. The second is the concept of FA, including its original framework, later development, limitations, and my interpretation and definition. Based on the literature review, I identify research gaps that this thesis seeks to close. I also explain how I combine these two bodies of literature to form my conceptual framework in this thesis.

Chapter Three, Research Methods, discusses the methods of this thesis. I introduce how I used observation and semi-structured interviews to collect data and how I used content analysis to analyse data. I then elaborate on the practical difficulties and dilemmas that I encountered in the field and my strategies to overcome the difficulties and mitigate the negative impacts of the dilemmas. I last present some reflections on my fieldwork and the limitations of this thesis, including my positionality and conducting fieldwork during the COVID-19 pandemic and a natural disaster.

Chapter Four, The Context of Anyang and Cangxiang Street Historic District, introduces some contextual information about the field site. I explain my rationales for my case study choice and the current cultural-led revitalisation strategies of the local government of Anyang, including the regeneration of the entire Old City of Anyang for which the CSHD Project is a pilot project. I then introduce the context of Cangxiang Street Historic District and the Project, including the current property ownership and building conditions in CSHD, a brief overview of *The Conservation Plan of Cangxiang Street Historic District* (hereinafter the Conservation Plan) and the Project, and the formal administrative structure of the Project within the local government.

Chapters Five to Seven are the three empirical chapters that investigate different components of the CSHD Project and the actors involved in those components, see Table 1-1. Different negotiation and

contestation between different actors occurred in those components of the Project.

Table 1-1. Structure of the empirical chapters.

Empirical chapters	**Actors**	**Components of the Project**
Chapter 5 Conservation Planning	• Local government (municipal and district) • Heritage professionals • Central government	• Project initiation • Formulation of the Conservation Plan • Building restoration and refurbishment
Chapter 6 Relocation	• Local government (district and Street Offices) • Original residents • Central government	• Relocation of the original residents • Project branding and propaganda
Chapter 7 Heritage Discourses	• Local government (municipal, district, and Street Offices) • The general public (heritage professionals, original residents, tourists, and business owners) • Central government	• Project branding and propaganda • (Non-use) value interpretation • Economic redevelopment

Chapter Five, Conservation Planning, is the first empirical chapter. I focus on the local government's initiation, planning, and execution of the Project and the interactions between the local government and heritage professionals mainly during the formulation of the Conservation Plan and the restoration (and refurbishment) of buildings. The central government appeared as a contextual actor that indirectly influenced local decision-making. First, I ask why the local government launched the Project and how it has conducted the Project, and show the deeper rationales of the local government. The economic decline of the city induced by deindustrialisation and other causes has pushed the local government to turn to heritage tourism to revitalise the local economy. The previous failed experience of collaborating with a private developer to regenerate another heritage area in the Old City made the local government exclude private developers from the CSHD Project. To showcase the Project as a political achievement to upper-level governments, the first stage of the

Project was quickly finished. The exclusion of private developers, the economic development-oriented feature, and the speed of the Project together demonstrate that the rationales of the local government have been to enhance the local state's legitimacy, to increase local revenue, and more importantly, to acquire personal political promotion. The rationales imply the central government's influence on local decisions through grand policies and reforms as well as the personnel evaluation system of Chinese government officials and further reflect the role of the authoritarian nature of China's political system. Second, I move on to the formulation process of the Conservation Plan, during which the local government and the heritage professionals, particularly the planners, had many disagreements and each made some compromises. On the one hand, their interactions reflect that the planners as nonstate actors have entered the decision-making circle to challenge and change the local decisions. The planners' power is derived from the planning and heritage regulations in China, which is a significant origin of system fragmentation in the heritage field. On the other hand, the fact that the planners had to make more compromises while the local government's compromises were because of other inescapable constraints proves that the local government has still been the primary decision-maker, thus reflecting that authoritarianism has actual and indeed evident influences on decision-making.

Chapter Six, Relocation, looks at the interactions between the original residents of CSHD and the local government during the residents' relocation. The relocation involved some propaganda of the Project. The central government was still a contextual actor that directly and indirectly influenced local decisions. To standardise the compensation and relocation, the central government issued some regulations as a response to the previous violent forced eviction in many Chinese cities. Between the central level and the local level, how the local government followed the general direction of the central policies to conduct "voluntary relocation" instead of forced eviction, as well as how the local government distorted and took advantage of these policies reflects the influence of both the authoritarian nature and the fragmentation feature on decision-making. The relatively remote central-local distance in a small to mid-sized city, another important origin of system fragmentation in this particular type of locality, has facilitated the local government to pursue its own agenda. Within the local level, there is a hierarchy between the top leaders as the decision-makers and the Street Office officials as the executors. The latter's close and even personal relationships with the residents within

their jurisdiction opened up the channels for the residents to enter the decision-making circle. As a result, at the grassroots level, the residents actively or passively deployed certain strategies to alter or resist the local government's relocation plan, usually in a mild and subtle way. The channels created by the Street Office officials demonstrate that system fragmentation is rooted in China's community governance structure in this case. Additionally, residents' policy bargaining has also been prompted by fragmentation in state-society relations whereby residents have sought opportunities that are not necessarily created by system fragmentation. During the implementation of the relocation, how the local government propagated the Project to persuade residents to relocate is worth noticing. The propaganda implies the local government's inherent political agenda, i.e. achieving Chinese modernisation and boosting Chinese citizens' cultural confidence through heritage conservation, following the central government's current culture promotion strategy. This kind of heritage practice loaded with political intentions is an example of using heritage as a governance tool to (re)establish state sovereignty and educate the public, which constitutes an important part of the authorised heritage discourse that emphasises the political value of heritage in contemporary China.

Chapter Seven, Heritage Discourses, generalises the heritage discourses of the local government, the heritage professionals, and the local citizens and analyses how value judgements, as manifested by heritage discourses, have shaped the Project (or not). I recognise that the value judgements of the actors are indeed different, echoing CHS. Regarding the central and the local governments, the former's culture promotion strategy and cultural confidence discourse have provided a good reason for the latter to justify the Project and gain wider public support. The local government has thus actively embraced this central policy and strategically integrated the cultural confidence discourse into the authorised heritage discourse of the Project, which immediately reflects the policy coherence between the centre and the local and the impacts of authoritarianism. Yet the local response has been more of a gesture than an actual implementation of the central policy, as the local government has not fundamentally changed how it is implementing the Project because of the cultural confidence discourse. This indicates that the central government's attempt to sustain authoritarianism and to re-centralise its power through ideology embedded in heritage has been undermined by the fragmentation of the system. Regarding the local government and the heritage professionals, there existed a clear differentiation of roles that they played. The former dominated how to

restore/refurbish buildings and redevelop CSHD, while the latter dominated the (non-use) value interpretation as written in the Conservation Plan. The actual restoration/refurbishment and redevelopment have been quite irrelevant to the heritage values that the heritage professionals held. Regarding the local government and the general public, the former has never truly offered any meaningful channels for the latter to participate in deciding how to redevelop CSHD. Thus, the latter's heritage discourses have never been incorporated into the Project. The local government's exclusion of the heritage discourses of the heritage professionals and the general public is precisely because of their uneven power relations derived from the authoritarian nature of the system. That is, even if value judgements are different, whether or not and how the value judgements can influence heritage projects are determined by power relations. Therefore, I argue that value judgements are not as evident as power relations in shaping the Project because of China's FA, particularly the authoritarian nature that tends to confine nonstate actors' expression of heritage discourses.

Chapter Eight, Conclusions, synthesises and extends the findings and arguments in the empirical chapters and summarises the research contributions. First, I recapitulate the complex decision-making and implementation web in relation to China's FA. The research contributions to the framework of FA concern the expanded understanding of fragmentation and policy bargaining, the factors that play into FA, and a new perspective to view China's heritage system as well as the political system, central-local relations, and state-society relations. Then, premised on the analysis of the decision-making and implementation, I highlight my argument around how power relations and value judgements have shaped the Project differently and how heritage is politically bounded by the pre-existing heritage system as a part of the larger political system of a given context. The research contributions to CHS involve the scrutinisation of the concept of AHD, and more importantly, the call for new research paradigms to integrate concepts around power, bureaucracy, and politics in order to enrich the research around heritage politics. Finally, I close this chapter by discussing some future research directions.

Chapter 2. Conceptualising Heritage Construction in China: Situating Critical Heritage Studies within Chinese Politics

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the two bodies of literature that this thesis draws on and contributes to, critical heritage studies (CHS) and the framework of fragmented authoritarianism (FA) in Chinese politics and bureaucracy. This thesis is first and foremost built upon CHS in terms of understanding the essence of heritage as a social construct to serve present needs and thus a source of conflicts, which are reflected by multiple actors' diverse heritage discourses and rooted in the uneven power relations and various value judgements of the actors.

However, CHS mainly emphasises the socio-cultural dimension of heritage, i.e. the value judgements of different actors in terms of how and why the actors perceive heritage differently through analysing their heritage discourses. Even though it recognises that heritage discourses are to some extent an embodiment of power relations, the political dimension of heritage, particularly the political decision-making and implementation processes and how power struggles of different actors shape heritage practices are not fully addressed. Thus, CHS is insufficient to unpack the complexity of China's heritage construction in terms of understanding why heritage construction and the negotiation and contestation within it take certain forms, and how different actors play their roles in heritage construction. Thus, it is difficult to fundamentally make heritage practices more inclusive and beneficial for the communities and the general public merely relying on the framework of CHS. To bridge the socio-cultural and political dimensions of heritage and address the research gaps, I apply the concept of FA. This concept helps us understand how decisions regarding heritage projects are made by whom out of what rationales, thus understanding what roles the actors and their heritage discourses play in heritage projects, which will reveal how heritage is ultimately politically bounded.

This chapter is structured as follows. Section 2.2 focuses on CHS, including the key arguments and concepts that inform this thesis and the current research achievements and critiques of these key

arguments and concepts. Section 2.3 looks at the application of CHS in China and identifies the research gaps. Section 2.4 details the original framework of FA, the relevance of this framework to heritage conservation in China, the development of the framework, its limitations and critiques, and how this thesis will apply and contribute to it. Section 2.5 concludes this chapter with an explanation of how the two bodies of literature work together in this thesis.

2.2 Critical Heritage Studies: Redefining Heritage and Heritage Practices

Critical heritage studies (CHS) is a relatively young subfield of heritage studies (Gentry & Smith, 2019; Wang, 2019). It is insightful in "dematerialising" heritage to consider heritage as a process and social construct rather than focusing on its materiality and fabric (Harrison, 2013, p. 13). This allows heritage studies to incorporate multiple actors involved in the conservation process to further consider the socioeconomic and political consequences of heritage conservation (Harrison, 2013; Smith, 2006). One of the topics that CHS is interested in is the numerous conflicts as well as new possibilities for collaboration when multiple actors encounter during heritage conservation. In this sense, CHS seeks to untangle how and why different types of interactions between the actors occur, and what the results and impacts of such interactions are, particularly by probing the power relations of the actors at different scales, and their value judgements as reflected by their perceptions of heritage, heritage value, and heritage reuse.

In discussing the negotiation and contestation in China's heritage construction, CHS informs this thesis in terms of identifying the actors involved in heritage construction, capturing the various forms of negotiation and contestation between these actors, and understanding heritage construction as a socio-political activity loaded with the actors' demands and visions. Particularly, two arguments in CHS form the theoretical foundation of this thesis: heritage as a social construct to serve present needs, and subsequently, heritage as a source of conflicts.

Heritage as a Social Construct: The Theoretical Shift of Heritage Studies

Heritage is seen to be a fuzzy concept with a constantly changing boundary (Gibson & Pendlebury, 2009). Conventionally, heritage is a "thing", referring to historic buildings, structures, landscapes, antiquities, etc., focusing on the materiality and fabric (Gentry & Smith, 2019, p. 1149). However,

CHS argues that heritage is not a mere object, but a social construct process subject to people's interpretation (Harvey, 2001). What can be considered heritage, why something is valued over others, and how "heritage" should be preserved and (re)used are all determined by people (Smith, 2006). This perspective of viewing heritage as a process forms the theoretical core of CHS (Gentry & Smith, 2019).

CHS further explains that the purpose of constructing heritage is to serve present needs (Wang, 2019). David Lowenthal (1985) expounds on the idea of "changing the past" and "fabricating heritage" in his ground-breaking book *The Past is a Foreign Country* in which he points out that our various treatment of the past inevitably alters it. The motivation for altering the past reflects present needs:

> We reshape our heritage to make it attractive in modern terms; we seek to make it part of ourselves, and ourselves part of it; we confirm it to our self-images and aspirations. Rendered grand or homely, magnified or tarnished, history is continually altered in our private interests or on behalf of our community or country (Lowenthal, 1985, p. 348).

In his later book *The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History*, Lowenthal (1998, p. 147) further compares heritage and history and claims that heritage is intrinsically not an objective expression of history, but "radically restructures historical domains". The worth of heritage is not gauged by truth but by its potency of being used by the present (Lowenthal, 1998, p. 127). Through forming connections with the past, beautifying the ugliness of the past, forgetting the tragedy of the past, and celebrating the glories of the past, we constantly embellish history to construct fabricated heritage (Lowenthal, 1998). Similarly, in *The Heritage Industry*, Robert Hewison (1987, p. 10) criticises that the product of the heritage industry is an "improved version of the past". The motivation to conduct heritage construction is what Hewison (1987, p. 47) explains as follows:

> The impulse to preserve the past is part of the impulse to preserve the self. Without knowing where we have been, it is difficult to know where we are going. The past is the foundation of individual and collective identity, objects from the past are the source of significance as cultural symbols. Continuity between past and present creates a sense of sequence out of aleatory chaos and, since change is inevitable, a stable system of ordered meanings enables us to cope with both innovation and decay. The nostalgic impulse is an important agency in adjustment to crisis, it is a social emollient and reinforces national identity when confidence is weakened or threatened.

This idea of viewing heritage as constructed rather than existing has now been further developed by CHS scholars who use "social construct" to generalise heritage and to consider how and why heritage is constructed (e.g. Ashworth, 2011; Ashworth & Graham, 2005; Graham, 2002; Johnson, 2014). For example, McDowell (2008) argues that the process of drawing on the past to construct heritage is closely related to people's present identity requirements. The purposes of heritage construction range from validation to legitimisation and unity. Thus heritage is usually the politics of territoriality. Using European heritage sites and heritage policy as empirical cases, Lähdesmäki (2016) and Čeginskas and Kaasik-Krogerus (2020) more recently illustrate how the European Union is constructing heritage narratives to foster the sense of solidarity and sense of belonging amongst the European citizens.

Heritage as a Source of Conflicts: Power Relations and Value Judgements as the Roots

Heritage being a source of conflicts rests with its nature of being a social construct to serve present needs. Because of the different needs of different actors, such as government, professionals, developers, civil societies, local communities, and tourists, conflicts of interest inevitably occur:

> The past is in continuous creation and so are perspectives upon it. Mainstream heritage perspectives in public policy creation may be marked by tensions emanating from concurrent traditional (and perhaps obsolescent) and innovative perceptions and impulses, even among decision makers on the same policy team. The continuous renegotiation of the past in the present demands that places carry more layers of meaning, which enhances the potential for dissonance and conflict and for resistances to authorised discourses (Ashworth et al., 2007, p. 208).

Tunbridge and Ashworth's (1996) "dissonant heritage" or "heritage dissonance" develops the idea of heritage as a source of conflicts. Mainly focusing on the commodification and consumption process within the heritage industry, they argue that heritage dissonance inevitably emerges at various stages of heritage construction. In the original texts, dissonance is an intrinsic nature of all heritage (Tunbridge and Ashworth, 1996, p. 21). Dissonance is implicit in the heritage-products, different uses of one heritage-product, and the messages that heritage conveys. In other words, during heritage construction, different actors usually have different demands and visions for heritage. Thus, they negotiate, contest, or collaborate with one another regarding the approaches to constructing heritage, the uses of heritage, and the messages that heritage should convey (Tunbridge & Ashworth, 1996).

In this thesis, nevertheless, I focus on the manifestations of heritage dissonance. My later use of the phrase heritage dissonance refers to the observable negotiations, contestations, and sometimes collaborations of different actors during heritage construction. The purpose is to explore why different manifestations of heritage dissonance happen in different circumstances. Or to be more specific, why under certain circumstances, the subalterns can successfully negotiate heritage construction with the authorities, whereas under other circumstances, they fail to do so.

Building on the idea of heritage dissonance and drawing upon other concepts such as memory, performance, identity, and place, Laurajane Smith (2006) proposes the concept of "authorised heritage discourse" (AHD) to more specifically criticise authority-dominated heritage construction. AHD refers to a hegemonic heritage discourse:

> [AHD] is reliant on the power/knowledge claims of technical and aesthetic experts, and institutionalised in state cultural agencies and amenity societies. This discourse takes its cue from the grand narratives of nation and class on the one hand, and technical expertise and aesthetic judgement on the other. The 'authorised heritage discourse' privileges monumentality and grand scale, innate artefact/site significance tied to time depth, scientific/aesthetic expert judgement, social consensus and national building (Smith, 2006, p. 11).

In other words, AHD is a product of a dominant grouping which prioritises expert knowledge and authority's role and prioritises the monumentality, historicity, and materiality of heritage. This inevitably leads to the consequences of muting other groups, particularly underprivileged people, and narrowing the scope of heritage.

Additionally, AHD acknowledges that the subaltern groups are not always passive receivers of messages, but may actively participate in heritage construction and modify the AHD to some extent (Smith, 2006). However, in spite of the resistance from the subaltern groups, Smith reminds us to be aware of the negative consequences that AHD may bring:

> [AHD] is subject to variation and contestation. However, it is "real" in the sense that an authorised understanding of heritage exists and it has consequences. One of those consequences is to exclude those understandings of heritage that sit outside or are oppositional to it. Another consequence is that it continually validates those forms of knowledge and values that contribute to it – in particular archaeological and architectural knowledge and understanding. Heritage is, in a sense, a gaze or way of seeing. The AHD is itself part of the heritage process of value and meaning creation, arbitration and negotiation – it is a mentality or gaze that continually legitimises and de-legitimises a range of cultural and social values (Smith, L., 2009, p. 4).

According to Smith (2006, p. 80), the root cause of heritage dissonance lies in Tunbridge and Ashworth's observation that "heritage is created by interpretation. Not only what is interpreted, but how it is interpreted and by whom, will create quite specific messages about the value and meaning of specific heritage places and the past it represents…… These messages do not always find consensus and thus cause dissonance". In this sense, AHD sometimes explains why heritage dissonance happens, though the causes of dissonance are not limited to the existence of the AHD and conflicting heritage discourses (see Tunbridge & Ashworth, pp. 21-32).

The concepts of heritage dissonance and AHD, as well as CHS in general, points to two important themes around which conflicts between different actors are revolved: power relations and value judgements, as identified by Wang (2019). Because heritage is "one fundamental element in the shaping of power networks and in elaborating this 'identifiable but diffused' concept of power. It is a medium of communication, a means of transmission of ideas and values and a knowledge that includes the material, the intangible and the virtual" (Ashworth et al., 2007, p. 39).

On the one hand, the power relations between the dominators and the subalterns in heritage construction are usually uneven. The identification and conservation of heritage not only reinforce the identities and the dominant position of the authorities but also suppress the subaltern groups' identities and civil rights (McDowell, 2008). On the other hand, different actors have different value judgements of heritage (Waterton, 2005). For instance, for states, heritage is traditionally about national identity (Smith, L., 2009). While place identity and regionalism constantly challenge national identity and nationalism (Atkinson, 2008; Robertson, 2008). Meanwhile, states are increasingly challenged by globalisation which promotes the idea of universal value (Ashworth et al., 2007). For people, their identity is set against Otherness which has competing and conflicting beliefs, values, and aspirations (Said, 1978).

Recent empirical studies have demonstrated how heritage dissonance can be induced by power imbalance and value clashes which are sometimes reflected by their competing heritage discourses. For instance, when nominating Tongariro National Park in New Zealand as a World Heritage site, the authority ignored the cultural values of the place the Maori people cherished, only considering the scientific and archaeological value of the site. The nomination of Tongariro as a World Natural

Heritage impaired the Maori people's interest (Baird, 2015). Lähdesmäki (2020) analyses how the European Union used the European Quarter in Brussels to construct a sense of belonging across Europe. The authority's selective interpretation emphasised male actors while neglecting the colonial past and today's multi-ethnic reality in the local communities, which revealed the asymmetric power relations between the authority and the subalterns, i.e. women and ethnic minorities in this case.

It is worth clarifying that though this thesis looks at heritage dissonance and AHD more closely, it does not mean that CHS is solely about heritage dissonance and AHD (see Winter, 2013). In fact, especially the concept of AHD has some noticeable limitations. Smith (2006, p. 16) herself briefly notes that the way she generalises the characteristics of AHD glosses over "some nuances of this discourse", and that "this discourse is far more mutable across both time and space than I am characterising it". These reservations, as Skrede and Hølleland (2018, p. 86) criticise, have resulted in "a situation where the reservations are largely left unproblematised in the book, to the extent they are often unacknowledged by other scholars' uses of *Uses of Heritage* and the AHD". Indeed, Pendlebury's (2013) research on the conservation-planning assemblage in England demonstrates that the conservation-planning AHD is not entirely self-referential. Sub-AHDs exist with shared characteristics, but more importantly, bearing different rhetorical purposes and different conservation-planning practices. Under external forces and pressure, conservation in England has successfully repackaged itself through the evolving AHD as an active agent of change rather than a barrier to development. This is a vivid example of how AHD can be mutable across time in response to socioeconomic changes.

Similar to Pendlebury's methodological and epistemological position in the abovementioned research, Harrison (2013) adopts the Actor-Network Theory and assemblage theory to argue that heritage is not only a discursive process. It is still important to consider the material aspects of heritage, which departs from Smith's argument that all heritage is intangible (Smith, 2006, p. 3) and complicates our discussion of "what is heritage". While Smith develops AHD using Critical Discourse Analysis built upon Critical Realism, her emphasis on heritage as a discursive process is believed incompatible with Critical Realism which views societies as laminated systems where heritage can be intangible and discursive, but can also be monumental and material (Skrede & Hølleland, 2018, p. 83). Overall, the concept of AHD can fall into the trap of reductionism by

oversimplifying the heritage construction processes and overlooking the various internal and external changes in relation to AHD.

To sum up, CHS argues that heritage is intrinsically dissonant and thus can induce a wide range of conflicts between different actors. The concept of AHD criticises the Anglophone-originated heritage discourse that narrowly stresses the inherent value and materiality of heritage. It further criticises the dominant groups' suppression of the subaltern groups' heritage discourses and civil rights. To some extent, heritage dissonance and the processes and consequences of AHD are underpinned by and reflect the uneven power relations and diverse value judgements of the authorities and the subalterns. In this thesis, I apply heritage dissonance and AHD simultaneously for different purposes. The former is used to generalise the conflicts and/or collaborations during heritage construction as the expressions of heritage's intrinsically dissonant nature. The latter focuses more on understanding the role of the local authorities and their heritage discourse in heritage construction. Yet the limitations of AHD, in particular, remind researchers to be cautious about the nuances of AHD and heritage construction. Some limitations, as further discussed in the empirical chapters, are exactly something that I seek to address through this research.

Application of Heritage Dissonance and Authorised Heritage Discourse

Building on the theoretical discussions, many empirical studies have applied the concepts of heritage dissonance and/or AHD to explore how different actors interact with each other in the process of heritage construction. The empirical studies are valuable for this thesis because they have captured a wide range of negotiations, contestations, and collaborations between the dominators and the subalterns, based on which a more diverse, dynamic, and dialogical relationship between the dominators and the subalterns is unveiled. The view of AHD as a single hegemonic model is also questioned by these empirical studies.

As demonstrated by the empirical studies, how the subalterns use their heritage discourses to respond to the dominators' AHD can be broadly categorised into mild negotiation, subtle coexistence, intense protest, and collaboration. In terms of negotiation, in Belize, for instance, the nation appropriated heritage to construct and promote national identity, manage cultural diversity,

and cultivate a productive citizenry. Under the government-produced framework, school teachers produced their own heritage interpretation and educated children with the new heritage knowledge due to the teachers' concern about cultural loss and the complexity of explaining certain cultural issues (McGill, 2015). In Banda Aceh, Indonesia, although the local government and the Conservation Board were reluctant to accept tsunami debris as heritage, the persistent negotiation from the local community has made the authority finally include the tsunami debris as a heritage for its historical significance (Dewi et al., 2019).

In other cases, the subalterns may express their heritage discourses in a subtle or quiet way so that their discourses coexist with the AHD. Parkinson et al. (2016) observe that in three Irish towns, the local communities formed their own "lay discourses" based on their collective memory and local place distinctiveness, which was important to their sense of local identity. Using a private house in Qingtian, China as an example, Xia (2020) demonstrates how the local community managed to maintain their own understanding of the past and to express their alternate discourse of heritage outside the official discourse promoted by the local government. Lekakis and Dragouni (2020) investigate how the local community on Naxos Island, Greece, connected the rural landscape to their personal and family history and tied the rural monuments to their livelihoods and their ancestors' daily practice to formulate an "autobiographical" counter-narrative of the rural heritage as opposed to the AHD promoted by the local authorities.

Besides mild negotiation and coexistence, the subalterns may initiate intense protests in extreme cases. For example, in the case of Xingjiao Temple in Xi'an, the local government regarded the Buddhist pagoda and the monks' dwellings in the temple as independent constructions, thus required the monks to relocate outside the temple to demolish the dwellings and preserve the pagoda. Whereas the monks insisted that their daily lives were part of their religious practices, and thus they must live close to the pagoda. As a result of the polarising interpretation of the heritage, the monks initiated an influential online resistance campaign after the unfruitful negotiation with the local government, making the local government alter the plan ultimately (Zhu, 2015).

Even if conflicts are omnipresent, there are sometimes collaborations to gain mutual benefits. For instance, in Cochiti Pueblo, after long disputes, the Cochiti people eventually worked with the

authority by conveying how they interpreted their sacred places in order for a more inclusive and efficient conservation plan (Preucel & Pecos, 2015). In Shanghai, some residents actively participated in the local government-led regeneration of historic neighbourhoods for financial rewards and profits (Arkaraprasertkul, 2018). The common feature of these collaboration cases is that the authorities and the subalterns are able to identify shared values to work together in a more bottom-up manner, although the power structure is not necessarily fundamentally changed.

From the perspective of the dominators, their construction of AHD is not solely controlled by themselves. There is therefore a necessity to break down the dichotomous thinking of AHD and the subaltern discourses and examine their mutual penetration (Rico, 2015). Using Britain as an example, Cooper (2015) argues that government policy in cultural resource management, either short- or long-term decision-making, is sometimes influenced by a number of factors, such as political debates and media pressure. Yan (2021) reviews the World Heritage nomination of the Grand Canal in China and summarises that the state's intended discourse regarding the value of the Grand Canal and which sections to nominate was largely confined by a number of human and non-human factors, such as the uncooperative local bureaus, the national hydraulic project, and the damage to archaeological findings. Indeed, although AHD has long been deemed the dominating power, the subaltern discourses in fact work alongside AHD.

The above empirical studies have expanded our understanding of heritage dissonance and AHD in terms of recognising the various forms of negotiation, contestation, and collaboration, thus viewing the relationship between the dominators and the subalterns as dynamic and fluid. More importantly, these findings have allowed researchers and practitioners to fundamentally question the top-down, expert-led, and authority-dominated heritage system in order to democratise heritage construction and allow heritage to leverage economic development, social well-being, and environmental stewardship (Mason, 2006). This is the key goal of CHS, as well as the long-term objective of this thesis, i.e. to make heritage practices in China and beyond more inclusive to consider different actors' needs and visions so that more people, especially the marginalised groups, can benefit from heritage practices instead of merely being exploited by the authority-dominated heritage practices.

2.3 Critical Heritage Studies in China

Although originated in "the West", heritage dissonance and AHD have been widely applied across the Global North as well as the Global South, as the above empirical studies have shown. In this section, I focus on CHS in China, particularly in the Chinese government-led heritage construction[10], and summarise the key findings so far. The objectives are twofold: to better understand the socio-political context of China's heritage construction, and to identify research gaps in existing studies. I categorise the findings of previous studies into three topics and highlight the first topic which is more relevant to this thesis: (1) the AHD of the Communist Party of China (CPC) and the Chinese government, especially the discourse of using heritage as a governing tool; (2) the strategies used by the government, and (3) the various effects of these heritage construction cases.

Authorised Heritage Discourse(s) of the Party-State and Heritage as Governmentality

Government-led heritage construction in China serves the agenda of the CPC and the Chinese government. The AHD of the CPC, the central government, and the local governments share some similarities while having some conflicts. For the CPC, there are different objectives towards Chinese citizens and the international community. Inwardly, using heritage to enhance national unity and legitimise the ruling position of the CPC is considered the most important objective (e.g. Harrell, 2013; Swain, 2013; Zhang & Wu, 2016). Meanwhile, heritage is used as a way to resist the influx of Western ideologies and cultures (e.g. Ai, 2011; Zhu & Maags, 2020), and paradoxically, as a gesture of integrating into the international community by adopting international standards (e.g. Zhang & Lenzer, 2020). For the central government[11], it is noticed that the National Cultural Heritage Administration is increasingly emphasising the importance of striking a balance between economic exploitation and the conservation of heritage sites (e.g. Cui, 2018). For the local governments, however, the priority is local economic development coupled with local identity building and place branding (e.g. Oakes, 2006; Su, 2011; Wai, 2006; Zhang, 2008; see Appendix, Table AP-1 for a

10 The reason for only focusing on government-led heritage construction in this section is twofold. First, this thesis investigates this type of heritage construction in China. Second, although there do exist heritage practices initiated by different actors, the Chinese government is usually the major leader in most cases (Wong et al., 2021).
11 Technically, the CPC and the central government are not the same. However, in most studies, scholars do not always distinguish the CPC and the central government clearly. When talking about political agenda, the CPC appears more often; when talking about heritage legislation and administration, the central government appears more often. But the CPC and the central government do mix up in many studies as well.

summary).

One example that captures most of the AHD, as well as the changes of the AHD over time, is the colonial heritage in China that derived from the 1840s to the 1940s when China was partly colonised by some Western countries. In the 1950s and the 1960s, the Party-state viewed colonial heritage more as national humiliation and less as "heritage" (Liu & Chen, 2018). A number of colonial heritage sites were (and are still) used as the "patriotic education base" for nation-building under the instruction of the CPC (Zhou, 2020). Since the 1970s and the 1980s, local governments have increasingly commercialised colonial heritage sites for tourism and economic purposes (Zhang, 2018). The AHD has accordingly shifted to that these heritage sites demonstrate the cultural communication between China and Western countries (Wei & Wang, 2022; Zhang, 2018). In the meantime, the discourse of national humiliation lingers, and whether it is appropriate to exploit colonial heritage as an economic and tourism resource remains controversial (Wang, 2005; Wei & Wang, 2022).

One important theme that runs through the AHD of the Chinese state is captured by the concept of "heritage as governmentality". Combining Foucault's governmentality with CHS, Oakes (2016, p. 751) argues that the use of heritage in China is sometimes "a technology of government". Here, governmentality, "the ensemble formed by institutions, procedures, analysis and reflections, calculations, and tactics" (Foucault, 1992, p. 102), is practised through heritage conservation. The state claims that heritage conservation serves certain development goals of the nation and conducts heritage projects in certain ways, thus disseminating the AHD among Chinese citizens.

The AHD that the state attempts to instil into the citizens change over time, following the political discourses of the centre, and is related to the types of heritage. In terms of the centre's political discourses, after the economic reform, especially from the 1990s to the early 2000s when large-scale heritage conservation was started in China, the state attempted to use heritage and culture to "civilise" the Chinese citizens (Oakes, 2000) and "remodel the Chinese people from a state of backwardness and ignorance" (Anagnost, 1997, p. 76). During the era of President Hu Jintao and Premier Wen Jiabao, the central discourse was "building a harmonious society". The local governments thus claimed that heritage conservation was for building a harmonious society for the

citizens' benefit (Oakes, 2016; Yan, 2015). At the current stage, the AHD of the state is in line with an important political discourse of the centre, i.e. promoting traditional Chinese culture and boosting Chinese citizens' cultural confidence to achieve modernisation with Chinese characteristics (Xi, 2022). In terms of the types of heritage, revolutionary heritage has been widely used to conduct patriotic education and educate citizens about revolutionary martyrs and spirits that built the new China (e.g. Li et al., 2010; Wang, 2011; Zhang & Lenzer, 2020). The conservation of historic districts and villages is currently more used to enhance urban and rural governance, such as regulating land use and attracting investment (Wang & Li, 2017). Overall, the AHD of different times and different types of heritage are for nation-building and enhancing state legitimacy (Svensson & Maags, 2018; Zhang & Moore-Cherry, 2022).

Strategies and Effects of Heritage Construction and Actors' Interactions

During China's government-led heritage construction, the strategies are usually taken by local governments on their discretionary power following the general principles set up by the central government. There are three broad strategies usually deployed by the central and/or local governments: (1) developing tourism for economic benefits, public education, and political propaganda (e.g. Peters, 2013; Wall & Zhao, 2017); (2) nominating World Heritage for wider international recognition (e.g. Chan, 2018; Lai, 2016); (3) selective designation, conservation, and interpretation to promote the AHD of the central and/or local states (e.g. Hevia, 2001; Zhang & Wu, 2016). Within the broad strategies, certain specific actions are widely observed. The typical one is reconstruction-based conservation, which involves demolishing the original heritage and reconstructing the copied version, accompanied by the relocation of the original residents (e.g. Harrell, 2013; Su, 2011; Zhang, 2008; see Appendix, Table AP-2 for a summary).

In terms of the effects of such heritage construction, scholars' discussion can be divided into political, social, and cultural effects. The political effects are manifested in the audience's perceptions of the heritage construction and the Chinese government (e.g. Gao & Guo, 2017; Wall & Zhao, 2017; Zhao & Timothy, 2017). Chinese citizens hold positive attitudes as well as negative attitudes toward political propaganda through heritage construction. Internationally, the responses toward the Chinese government are mixed as well (e.g. Chan, 2018; Meskell et al., 2015; Winter,

2016). Among the various social effects, large-scale displacement and gentrification caused by demolition, relocation of residents, and reconstruction of heritage are the most prominent ones (e.g. Zhang & Lenzer, 2020; Zhao, 2013; Zhu & Li, 2013). Cultural effects refer to the impacts on heritage, such as fossilisation, museumification, and Disneyfication of heritage sites (e.g. Liu, 2013; Nitzky, 2012), over-commercialisation (e.g. Peters, 2013; Zhang & Lenzer, 2020), conflicting interpretations of heritage between different actors (e.g. Su, 2013a, 2013b; Wang, 2011;), the debate around the right to heritage, i.e. who has the right to access and use heritage (e.g. Shepherd, 2009; Zhu, 2015), and insufficient presentation of heritage value (e.g. Laukkanen, 2018; Wei & Wang, 2022; see Appendix, Table AP-3 for a summary).

Comparing the literature, one sees that the negotiation, contestation, and collaboration between different actors in heritage construction is a shared theme in the literature. Actors mentioned in the literature are the Chinese central and local governments, communities including original residents and newcomers who are gentrifiers in some cases, visitors, private developers, NGOs, and international organisations, mostly UNESCO and ICOMOS.

There are six types of contestation among the actors that are most observed in the literature (see Appendix, Table AP-4 for a summary). (1) Due to different political objectives, there are conflicts between the central government and the local governments, with the former prioritising political propaganda, while the latter prioritising economic benefits. (2) The commonly observed contestation is between the local governments and the communities because of controversial heritage interpretation, power imbalance, and unfair profit distribution. (3) Due to ideological differences, particularly different perceptions of heritage value, conflicts may occur between the original residents and newcomers regarding how to use the heritage resources. (4) Profit distribution and mutual distrust sometimes lead to conflicts within the local communities, which undermines the cohesion of communities. (5) There are conflicts between the Han majority and the ethnic minorities, as some scholars see the conservation projects as a way for the Han majority to assimilate and dominate the ethnic groups, which implies the Han superiority over ethnic groups. (6) Some scholars believe that there are fundamental differences between China's heritage concepts and conservation ideas and the international standards, which leads to disagreements between the Chinese government and international organisations.

Although the contestation involves multiple actors, literature usually focuses on local communities whose various forms of responses to government-led conservation projects most evidently manifest the contestation. The contestation may lead to confrontation between the local governments and the communities, such as loose or well-organised or even violent resistance against displacement (e.g. Svensson, 2016; Yan, 2015; Zhu, 2015). In some cases, however, local communities passively accept the government projects even if they have complaints about the conservation projects, as they do not feel like they have a say in the conservation process (e.g. Su, 2011).

Although contestation is a common theme, a small number of publications still pick up some desirable collaborations. The collaboration is mainly between local governments and communities and can be in a top-down manner or bottom-up manner. For instance, in Lijiang and Xi'an, newcomers and some of the original residents actively participate in the heritage industry framed by the local governments in pursuit of economic profits (e.g. Su, 2013b; Zhu, Y., 2019). In some villages inhabited by ethnic minorities where the local governments promote ecological tourism and brand "authentic" villages, the ethnic minorities actively participate in heritage tourism and deliberately maintain their primitive way of life to cater to tourists' stereotypes of them (e.g. Nitzky, 2012; Peters, 2013). In addition to the collaboration initiated by local governments, in Kulangsu for instance, the conservation and commemoration activities were initiated by grassroots organisations who gained support from the local government, hence is an example of collaboration in a bottom-up manner (Liu, 2017).

In summary, Zhu and Maags (2020) portray a spectrum of social responses to China's heritage construction, including the communities' *active embrace* of the government-led heritage construction for personal benefits, *passive acceptance* of the AHD, *reframing* the official conservation to practise the communities' own ideas of heritage, and *resistance* against the government-led heritage construction. This spectrum has generalised most of the results of the publications and helped this thesis to identify the negotiation and contestation in my case study.

Research Gaps

CHS in China is still in a relatively early stage (Wang, 2019; personal communication with heritage

scholars in China). I identify two major research gaps in existing studies. First, current CHS publications on China in English tend to use major cities such as Beijing, Shanghai, Xi'an, and Hangzhou, or borderlands where most ethnic minorities' heritage sites are located, such as Yunnan Province, Guizhou Province, and the Tibet Autonomous Region as case studies. The limited number of Chinese publications are centred around introducing concepts and explaining theories. The few empirical studies usually use World Heritage sites as case studies (Yu & Zhang, 2020). It is thus necessary to broaden the geographical scope and consider a more complex socioeconomic context of China because of the heterogeneity of Chinese cities, especially small and mid-sized cities.

Second, although scholars are keen on identifying power relations and value judgements as two main causes of heritage dissonance and consonance (Wang, 2019), more studies focus on how heritage discourses reflect different actors' value judgements and how these diverse value judgements play into heritage practices. In comparison, there is a lack of studies deeply investigating how power relations work and why power struggles exist (Smith et al., 2024; Su, X., 2010). Even though derived from the Foucauldian idea around how discourse reflects power (Foucault, 1969/2013; Waterton, 2010), academic discussions tend to simplify the power relations embedded in heritage discourses as "uneven". Yet it is less clear how and why the power relations are uneven and why in some cases the subalterns can successfully resist the authorities while in other cases not.

In fact, this research gap exists in CHS in general, not limited to the studies focusing on China, as reflected by the studies reviewed in the previous section that largely analyse the "contents" of heritage discourses. This is not surprising, as it is methodologically easier to describe different actors' heritage discourses as a reflection of their value judgements (for the discussion of methodologies in heritage studies, see e.g. Sørensen & Carman, 2009; Svensson, 2021). In comparison, it is more theoretically complicated and practically difficult to investigate power. Especially in countries like China where the political system is less open to the public, when it comes to the decision-making and the bureaucratic structure, outsiders may not obtain accurate or sufficient inside information (Zhang, 2002a). When it comes to the conflicts between the government and the citizens, the topic becomes politically sensitive, thus researchers may encounter more barriers when approaching the government (Svensson, 2006).

Theoretically speaking, this research gap can be attributed to the concept of AHD itself. Applying Critical Discourse Analysis to examine Smith's arguments in *Uses of Heritage*, Skrede and Hølleland (2018, p 77) notice that the term AHD is "nominalised and reified into an entity obscuring who does what to whom, thereby making the 'Authorised Heritage Discourse' a self-evident unit of explanation". That is to say, the mechanisms through which power and the actors work during heritage construction are obscured by the oversimplification of the concept of AHD.

As a consequence, at least in China, theoretical advancement has not resulted in practical solutions. A more inclusive and equitable heritage system has not been built. As Laurajane Smith (2009, p. 4) argues, the current discussion on democratising heritage practices is merely "centred on how a concern about getting more people to come to authorised heritage", rather than to question whether "the heritage that we save and promote as heritage actually is representative of the diversity of historical and contemporary social and cultural experiences". Therefore, we need to revolutionise the conservation and management approach not only by negotiating the conservation *per se* but also by negotiating the "very meaning and nature of heritage, so that the conservation ethic itself is open to renegotiation and redefinition" (Waterton et al., 2006, p. 351). Witcomb and Buckley (2013) further emphasise the discrepancy between heritage scholars and practitioners. The former are inclined to judge conservation by criticising the problems without pointing out the right direction to go, whereas the latter are the ones who need to worry about implementation. This discrepancy partly stems from the heavy focus on the discursive process and intangibility of heritage, which separates different "camps" in the heritage field between CHS researchers and practitioners working on the technical and material aspects of heritage. To address this research gap, it is necessary to scrutinise how power works in heritage practices. Therefore, this thesis attempts to engage more deeply with the power and politics of China's heritage construction in addition to the discussion of value judgements by looking at both heritage discourses and the decision-making and implementation process.

2.4 Fragmented Authoritarianism: Conceptualising China's Heritage System

The Framework of Fragmented Authoritarianism

To study decision-making and implementation, since it is a government-led process in this thesis, it

is necessary to understand the administrative and bureaucratic system of the Chinese government. This is where the framework of fragmented authoritarianism (FA) is of value.

Lieberthal and Oksenberg (1988) bring up the concept of FA when studying the energy sector (the petroleum industry, the Three Gorges Dam project, and the coal mining industry) of the Chinese government including the central and the local levels. They discover that the policy-making in the Chinese government has several features. Some of the features are, first, there is a fragmented structure of authority. Within the central government as well as between the central and the local governments, there are multiple layers of officials. “Different pressures and influences shape the behaviour of officials at each level”, and “the structure of authority requires that any major project or policy initiative gains the active cooperation of many bureaucratic units that are themselves nested in distinct chains of authority” (Lieberthal & Oksenberg, 1988, p. 22).

Second, consensus building is required to push forward the projects. Vertically, different levels of government need to reach a consensus; horizontally, different government departments and agencies with different responsibilities and jurisdictions at the same political level also need to reach a consensus (Lieberthal & Oksenberg, 1988, pp. 23-24). At the same time, “the Chinese system, after all, does permit the top leaders to bring enormous pressure to bear to advance a project over the objections of key participants” (Lieberthal & Oksenberg, 1988, p. 24). This indicates that the Chinese system is in essence authoritarian where the top leaders can be very influential and overcome fragmentation.

Third, there is a diffuse policy process. This process is (1) “*protracted*, with most policies shaped over a long period and acquiring a considerable history that is well known to many of the participants”; (2) “*disjointed*, with key decisions made in a number of different and only loosely coordinated agencies and inter-agency decisional bodies”; and (3) “*incremental*, with policy in reality usually changing gradually” (Lieberthal & Oksenberg, 1988, p. 24, emphasis in original). Comparing the Chinese system with those of other countries, Lieberthal and Oksenberg (1988, p. 27) notice that “central decisions often only set forth goals or prescriptions on what should be done. They do not bear close resemblance to the types of detailed implementing and regulating documents that frequently accompany high level decision making in the United States”. Mertha (2009, p. 996)

summarises FA as follows:

> policy made at the centre becomes increasingly malleable to the parochial organizational and political goals of various vertical agencies and spatial regions charged with enforcing that policy. Outcomes are shaped by the incorporation of interests of the implementation agencies into the policy itself. Fragmented authoritarianism thus explains the policy arena as being governed by incremental change via bureaucratic bargaining.

Ever since FA was coined, many studies have applied it in a wide range of policy areas to study the characteristics of Chinese bureaucracy and decision-making. In the book *Bureaucracy, Politics, and Decision Making in post-Mao China* edited by Lieberthal and Lampton (1992), contributors discuss the use of the framework in policy areas of education (Paine, 1992), the military system (Pollack, 1992), economic reform (Shirk, 1992), and so forth. More recent studies range from how the central state and local state agencies govern labour organisations (Fu, 2017), the social assistance programmes and unemployment insurance (Qian & Mok, 2016), the progress in environmental policies (Wang & Lin, 2010), etc. The book *China Politics as Fragmented Authoritarianism: Earthquake, Energy and Environment* edited by Brødsgaard (2017) mainly covers policy areas of health care reforms (Brombal, 2017; Kornreich, 2017), tobacco control (Qian, 2017), post-earthquake reconstruction (Sorace, 2017), etc.

According to Lieberthal and Oksenberg (1988), the characteristic or root of China's FA lies in the *tiaokuai* (条块, literally strip and block) system of the Chinese bureaucracy. *Tiao* refers to the vertical structure of government agencies at different levels with similar functions. *Kuai* refers to the horizontal structure of government agencies with different functions within a given geographic area (Li & Liu, 2018, p. 1404). The *tiaokuai* system is important because it means that:

> the officials of any given office have a number of bosses in different places…… It becomes important in these circumstances to determine which of these bosses has priority over others. Typically, the Chinese cope with this in a minimal way by indicating that the primary leadership over a particular department resides either on the vertical line (*tiao*)…… or with the horizontal line (*kuai*)…… The one with priority has what is termed a "leadership relationship" (*lingdao guanxi*) with the department in question, while the other has a nonbinding "professional relationship" (*yewu guanxi*) with it (Lieberthal, 1995, p. 187).

As a result, "this fragmentation of authority in the Chinese politics administrative hierarchy makes it relatively easy for one actor to frustrate the adoption or successful implementation of important

policies, especially since units (and officials) of the same bureaucratic rank cannot issue binding orders to each other" (Lieberthal, 1995, p. 188). Meanwhile, there have been constant reorganisations in the Chinese bureaucracy, especially after the Reform and Opening in 1978. The reorganisations aim at de-fragmenting certain policy areas (and have been to some extent successful), but at the same time have re-fragmented the policy-making in other ways (e.g. wind energy policies, Lema & Ruby, 2007; climate change policies, Marks, 2010).

In China's heritage field, some scholars have also applied the concept of FA in order to analyse heritage conservation, with a particular focus on how the fragmented bureaucratic system has constrained the conservation of heritage (e.g. Maags, 2018, for intangible heritage; Shepherd & Yu, 2013, for heritage tourism management; Wang, 2019, for archaeological sites). Some typical examples are as follows. Lee (2016) studies the conservation dilemmas of Shamian Island, a colonial heritage in Guangzhou. She finds that Shamian Island has multiple heritage designation titles, each attached with different conservation principles. The two agencies at the local level, the Planning Bureau and the Cultural Bureau, have different responsibilities and adopt different conservation principles. The former formulates the conservation plan and promotes adaptive reuse, while the latter restores historic buildings and objects and insists on the principle of conserve as found. The contestation between the two bureaus has resulted in a policy deadlock.

In the case of preserving Dongyue Temple and developing the folklore museum located in the temple in Beijing, the fragmentation came from the structure of three local government agencies: Chaoyang District's Cultural Committee, Beijing Municipal Cultural Heritage Administration, and Beijing Tourism Administration. Each agency wanted to take advantage of the national policies to realise their conservation approaches and benefit from heritage conservation. Thus, the policy implementation involved many local officials' individual interpretations of the national policies and was less coordinated (Ashton, 2013). During the World Heritage nomination of the Grand Canal, which sites along the Grand Canal were included in the nomination and which were excluded were the results of bargaining and negotiation of government agencies with different functions at different levels in different cities and provinces (Yan, 2021).

Such fragmented heritage conservation practices are not confined to China. Zhang (2013) compares

the conservation practices of Beijing, Chicago, and Paris, and generalises three types of fragmentation. In Beijing, the functional fragmentation of local government agencies has hindered the coordination and collaboration of those agencies. In Chicago, territorial fragmentation along ward boundaries makes it easier to conserve historic neighbourhoods within a single ward, whereas conserving historic neighbourhoods that stretch across several wards becomes difficult. In Paris, intergovernmental fragmentation has rendered urban conservation a battlefield between the national and local governments for grappling with more power. Here, the functional fragmentation in Beijing and the intergovernmental fragmentation in Paris are both associated with the complex and entangled relationships between different government agencies. That is to say, fragmentation exists in most, if not all, bureaucratic systems. It is the degree and causes of fragmentation that distinguish different polities, similar to Huntington's (1968, p. 3) opinion that "the most important political distinction among countries concerns not their form of government but their degree of government".

The Development of the Framework of Fragmented Authoritarianism

FA was coined in the 1980s. In the past decades, scholars have developed the framework by recognising different actors as decision-makers. Lieberthal and Oskenberg (1988) mainly focused on state actors in their original research, including the Central Party Committee of the CPC and its departments, the central government (State Council and the ministries), and local party committees and local governments at the provincial, municipal, and district/county levels. With China's development and the reforms of the political system, it is argued that nonstate actors have been playing an increasingly important role in policy-making (Li et al., 2021).

In the book, *China's Water Warriors: Citizen Action and Policy Change*, Mertha (2008) details how the local government officials at the periphery of policy-making and nonstate actors have become policy entrepreneurs to influence the policy-making in China's hydraulic policies. In the study of the water and irrigation policies along the Yellow River in the Ningxia Autonomous Region, Wang et al. (2018) acknowledge a similar phenomenon where the village officials and villagers contested the policy discourse of upper-level government and distorted the policies during implementation. As Mertha (2009, p. 996) later summarises:

> Previously-excluded members of the policy-making process in China – officials only peripherally connected to the policy in question, the media, non-governmental

> organizations and individual activists – have successfully entered the political process precisely by adopting strategies necessary to work within the structural and procedural constraints of the fragmented authoritarianism framework. The point of entry is through the agency slack that results from the inability of institutions to adapt sufficiently to rapid socioeconomic change, the aggressive lobbying of pressure groups or the changing expectations of the citizenry. These spaces are fertile ground for policy change; that is, if the right set of elements is in place.

Nonstate actors entering the policy process, in a way, reflects the change in China's state-society relations. The study on demolition and relocation (*chaiqian,* 拆迁) during urban development by Li et al. (2021) demonstrates that China is not an exclusively authoritarian state. Residents contribute to fragmented policy-making through "rightful resistance" to demolition and relocation. Therefore, they conclude that the change in China's state-society relations after the economic reform is that the nonstate actors are increasingly empowered. Regarding this change in state-society relations, Lieberthal (1995, p. 300) comments that:

> Although these developments do not suggest the formation of a civil society in the classic sense, they do seriously qualify the idea, accurate in Mao's day, that China's state apparatus completely dominates its society (a situation characterised in the literature as a "strong state, weak society"). The national state administration is no longer tightly disciplined. Local officials negotiate their relations with the higher authorities and, at times, with the citizenry as well.

The aforementioned nonstate actors are mainly domestic, although international NGOs and other countries are sometimes involved (e.g. Thailand's government was against China's dam construction along the Mekong River out of the concern that the project may affect the use of water downstream, Mertha, 2008). In other policy areas, the influence of international actors is more prominent and more thoroughly discussed by scholars. Another book by Mertha (2005), *The Politics of Piracy: Intellectual Property in Contemporary China*, argues that the legislative process of China's intellectual property laws was largely shaped by the bargaining with the US who had urged and pressured China to enhance the regulation of intellectual property. However, it is also recognised that although at the national level, the US was able to push forward the legislation, at the local level, it has still been the domestic fragmented bureaucratic system that determines how the laws are enforced.

In the study of the New Rural Cooperative Medical Schemes during the time of President Hu Jintao

and Premier Wen Jiabao, Duckett (2019) argues that the domestic FA is not sufficient in explaining why this policy was successfully designed and implemented. Instead, international actors played a more important role. For example, the World Health Organisation had encouraged China to adopt such medical schemes. International NGOs had conducted experiments in Chinese villages. Their experiences were later incorporated into the final medical schemes. The Asian Financial Crisis in 1997 and China's entry into the World Trade Organisation in 2001 made China realise that the new economic development mode would heavily harm domestic agriculture and peasants. It was, therefore, crucial to deal with the low-income issue in rural areas. Duckett (2019) terms the confluent influence of international organisations, NGOs, and international events "network authoritarianism" which, in a way, can be conceived as an expansion of FA by considering the role of international actors in addition to domestic actors.

Limitations of Fragmented Authoritarianism and Contributions of the Thesis

Despite being widely applied and gradually developed, FA has its limitations, mainly in three aspects. As Lieberthal (1992) points out, the first limitation is that the original research focuses on the energy sector only, thus whether other policy areas are similar or different is undetermined. This limitation has largely been addressed by the aforementioned empirical studies which have proved that similar policy-making exists in various policy areas in China, including heritage conservation.

However, the application of this framework in China's heritage conservation can and needs to be further expanded, not only because there are relatively limited existing studies. More importantly, in comparison to many other policy areas where FA has been applied such as energy policies, reforms of state-owned enterprises, and construction of large-scale infrastructure, China's heritage conservation has its distinctive features. Not surprisingly, the stakes of heritage conservation are much lower, as heritage projects tend to involve less money, land, and people compared to large-scale energy and infrastructure projects and state-owned enterprises. Consequently, a relatively limited number of state actors are involved in heritage policy-making. In China, these state actors usually include the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, the National Cultural Heritage Administration (directed by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism), and the Ministry of Natural Resources (in charge of national parks, natural heritage, and spatial planning) at the central level, and cultural bureaus,

heritage administrations, and planning bureaus at the local level (Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China, n.d.; CPC, 2018; CPC & State Council, 2019; Wang, 2019). These agencies are relatively weak in terms of financial and personnel resources and political power compared to the National Development and Reform Commission, the Organisation Department of the Central Committee of the CPC, the Ministry of Finance, and the Ministry of Commerce at the central level, and their corresponding agencies at the local level that are usually involved in those energy and infrastructure projects and state-owned enterprises (Mertha, 2005, 2008). In the meantime, since heritage conservation is relevant to economic development and requires funding, the heritage administrations sometimes need to bargain with and are constrained by, for instance, the National Development and Reform Commission and the Ministry of Finance.

In addition, heritage conservation is mostly practised by the local governments, though policies are made at multiple levels. Except for a few very significant heritage sites (such as the Forbidden City, the Great Wall, and the Mogao Caves), most heritage sites in China do not receive direct and constant national funding or direct national regulations. My case study, as well as many other similar heritage sites in China (historic districts, traditional villages, local-designated historic buildings, etc.), does not involve the central government directly. Therefore, the bargaining and negotiation in heritage conservation may manifest different forms and characteristics than other policy areas. At the same time, due to the relatively local and small scale of heritage conservation, the communities may have more opportunities to negotiate with the local governments. Thus, the extent and channels of the nonstate actors' influence on policy-making may be different in heritage conservation. My research therefore looks at a heritage project that is at a comparatively local and smaller scale in order to diversify and expand our understanding of FA in China, particularly in heritage conservation.

The second limitation is that FA "lays considerable stress on bargaining relationships" and highlights policy incoherence due to fragmentation (Lieberthal, 1992, p. 10). However, coherence is still an important feature of China's political system. In addition to bargaining, there exist many other processes and interactions in policy-making. Therefore, not only that fragmentation may have diverse impacts, but studies have shown that fragmentation may be overcome through effective coordination (Lema & Ruby, 2007). Furthermore, the FA system is fundamentally authoritarian with

noticeable consistency between different levels of government vertically and different government departments horizontally. Until now, this limitation of the concept persists. One piece of evidence is that the aforementioned empirical studies almost exclusively focus on the fragmentation of the Chinese political system while overlooking this fundamentally authoritarian system (there are some exceptions which I will discuss shortly in this subsection).

The third limitation is that as a static framework, FA "no longer adequately captures the essence of the system" (Oksenberg, 2001, p. 28). Oksenberg (2001, p. 28) further explains that:

> an intellectually satisfying depiction had to capture the forces producing change in the system. "Fragmented authoritarianism" offered a detailed but static description of how the core state apparatus worked in the mid- to late 1980s and, to a considerable extent, still works. As a static mode, however, it did not anticipate the changes of the 1990s……. the revitalization of Chinese society requires us to include state-society interactions in any comprehensive model of the Chinese system.

To some extent, this limitation has partly been addressed by the studies described in the previous subsection, which have documented various interactions between nonstate actors, both domestic and international, and the FA system.

However, some debates concerning the last two limitations of the framework are lingering (overemphasis on bargaining and incoherence in policy-making and being a static model that fails to capture the change in state-society relations). To overcome the limitations, it is beneficial to look at how the Party-state has sustained and reinforced authoritarianism in China through centralisation and re-centralisation strategies and investigate policy-making after the 1990s. In this regard, the following relatively recent studies that discuss authoritarianism are insightful.

A prominent change in China since the 1990s has been political and economic decentralisation (Zhu, X., 2019). Measuring how the central and local governments split the budget, Landry (2008) argues that China is in fact one of the most decentralised nations in the world. However, he points out that, contrary to the opinion that decentralisation has weakened the central government's power, the central government actually maintains strong control over the local governments. The mechanism of achieving "decentralised authoritarianism", as termed by Landry (2008), is the cadre management system, including appointing major local officials, formulating detailed and stringent evaluation criteria, etc. (Landry, 2008). Edin (2003) similarly argues that China's decentralisation has not

resulted in the decline of the central state capacity. Her study investigates the township officials. By promoting successful township officials to hold concurrent positions at higher levels and rotating them between different administrative levels and geographical areas, the Party-state has improved its monitoring and strengthened its political control of the lower level (Edin, 2003). Here, we can see that the management of local government officials in China is a significant element in the political system. This is an important point that I will come back to in the empirical chapters of this thesis.

More recent studies have shown that in addition to the management of local officials, the central government has other strategies for maintaining or strengthening political control. For instance, Huang (2018) studies the merger of two state-owned enterprises, China South Locomotive and Rolling Stock Corporation, Ltd. and China North Locomotive and Rolling Stock Corporation, Ltd. She argues that China's centralised political authority and political power have dominated the reforms of state-owned enterprises. Thus, the bargaining among government departments and state-owned enterprises due to fragmentation is constrained and controlled. The national policy has been consequently smoothly implemented with little resistance, contradicting the incoherent policy-making and implementation in the original FA framework. The centralised political authority and political power are realised through the mechanism of "top-level design" (*dingceng sheji, 顶层设计*), referring to the ideas, opinions, and conceptions of very top leaders. Yet the top leaders' top-level design is usually vague without specific explanations and instructions on implementation. The policy-making process thus requires lower-level officials to figure out the top leaders' intentions and rationalise the decisions during the trials of the policies (Huang, 2018).

Tjia (2023, p. 2) generalises the vague top-level design as "charge ahead first, fix later". That is, top leaders come up with slogans, and ministries and lower-level officials tacitly understand the slogans to make and implement policies. This process indicates a decentralised policy-making where lower-level officials can take advantage of the vagueness of the top-level design to conduct policy innovation and solve persistent social issues. Thus, the fragmentation in the political system partly results from the vague slogans of the top leaders. In the meantime, it is still the top leaders that initiate and direct the policy-making, which indicates that the central state still maintains the capacity to exert power and control anytime as the top leaders see fit, especially when the top leaders notice conflicts of interest between different government agencies. Therefore, Tjia (2023, p. 1)

concludes that “despite fragmentation, China’s authoritarian governance endures”. More accurately, there is “a cyclical process of decentralisation and re-centralisation as well as continuous central-local interplay” (Tjia, 2023, p. 1).

The above cases suggest that the top leaders in China can have a strong personal influence on policy-making and implementation. This is not limited to the central level, as the above two papers have shown, but may happen at the local level. In the case of healthcare reform in Sanming City, Fujian Province, the Municipal Party Committee and the Municipal Government appointed Zhan Jifu, vice mayor, to be in charge of the reform. Zhan tacitly used the fragmented bureaucratic system at the local level to win over the support of the Finance Bureau which later helped him resist the objection of other departments. Equally important and somewhat opportunistic, the Finance Bureau connected Zhan to Vice Premier Liu Yandong personally who strongly supported the reform and ordered the central and local government departments to assist Zhan (He, 2018). In his research, He (2018) suggests that if Liu objected to the reform, the results could have been very different. In this case, both the influence of the central top leader, Liu, and the personal ability of the local top leader, Zhan, are prominent.

In heritage conservation, the typical example is Datong City in Shanxi Province. Mayor Geng Yanbo had a strong personal ambition of transforming the city into a historical and cultural hub and a grand plan of demolishing and reconstructing almost the entire city. His personal influence has changed the physical landscape of the city completely (Cui, 2018). Finally, Duckett (2019, p. 33) reminds us to pay attention to the recent changes in the Chinese system, as the very top leader, President Xi Jinping, “has become more personally powerful in a range of policy areas, and there has been since 2015 push-back against the influence of ‘Western’ ideas in some spheres”. Xi’s influence on heritage conservation is noticeable considering the culture promotion strategy at the central level, including Xi’s initiatives of “China Dream”, “Chinese modernisation”, and cultural confidence discourse. Much of his push for conducting heritage conservation and culture promotion is indeed to resist the “Western ideas” (Sun, 2016).

To sum up, the above empirical studies have shown that in China, authoritarianism persists and is potentially increasing under the current leadership (Béja, 2019; Li, 2023; Zhao, 2023). The

bureaucratic fragmentation may not always result in bargaining and policy incoherence. Therefore, authoritarianism cannot be overlooked or simplified as a mere pre-given context of China. Fragmentation needs to be situated within this fundamentally authoritarian system against the up-to-date domestic and international (geo)political context in order to fully understand the contemporary heritage policy-making and implementation in China.

Before doing so, it is necessary to clarify how I will use the term fragmentation in the later empirical discussions. As reviewed in the previous sub-sections, fragmentation describes the characteristics of the Chinese bureaucratic structure, especially resulting from the *tiaokuai* system. In Mertha's "FA 2.0 model" (Mertha, 2009), nonstate actors exploit such bureaucratic fragmentation to advocate for their own interests during policy-making and thus steer the direction of policy-making. In the following studies that have applied the framework of FA, the use of fragmentation sometimes deviates from the original definition (e.g. see Zhang, 2013, the "territorial fragmentation" in Chicago is in fact less about bureaucratic fragmentation but more about the fragmented spatial pattern of neighbourhoods that leads to inefficiency and bargaining in policy-making).

In my case study, fragmentation is two-fold: system fragmentation and fragmentation in state-society relations. The former generally follows the original definition to describe the characteristics of how the political system is structured. However, as I will argue throughout the empirical chapters, system fragmentation is not only rooted in the *tiaokuai* system but has other origins. Then, fragmentation in state-society relations refers to that the current Chinese citizens are more active and creative to not always be controlled or ruled by the Party-state. This is exemplified by the interactions between the original residents and the local government during the relocation process. As I will explain in Chapter Six, the active, flexible, and tactful negotiations and resistances of the original residents do not entirely rely on system fragmentation. Some of their strategies are more spontaneous and reflect the effects of fragmentation in state-society relations.

My interpretation and analysis of FA hint at an "FA 3.0" model. First, fragmented policy-making can be extended to include the implementation stage and *de facto* policy bargaining, rather than the "policy-making" process and "formalised" policy changes. Second, policy bargaining and consensus-building in China are not only bound by the fragmented bureaucratic structure but also

influenced by fragmented state-society relations. Nonstate actors' "point of entry [to policy-making]" is not only "through the agency slack" (Mertha, 2009, p. 996), but can be more self-created.

2.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, I outlined two bodies of literature that this thesis draws on. I first reviewed the key arguments and concepts in CHS and the empirical studies in CHS from different countries as well as focusing on China specifically. The essence of heritage being a social construct to serve present needs makes heritage a contact zone where multiple actors involved in heritage construction negotiate, contest, and/or collaborate with each other in order to express their heritage discourses and benefit from heritage practices. To facilitate the later empirical discussions, I focus heritage dissonance on the phenomena of negotiation, contestation, and collaboration during heritage construction. Then, I adopt the view of AHD in terms of criticising the role of the dominant actors in heritage construction and how their AHD marginalises the subaltern groups' lay heritage discourses. To some extent, the manifestations of heritage dissonance and the role of AHD are explained by the uneven power relations between the dominators and the subalterns and their diverse value judgements of heritage. Building on the key arguments and concepts, the empirical studies in CHS have documented various forms of negotiation, contestation, and collaboration, indicating complex and dynamic relationships between the dominators and the subalterns, and the inconsistencies within the dominators and the subalterns. This reminds us to be cautious of the limitations of AHD if treated as a singular, static, and hegemonic discourse.

CHS builds up the theoretical foundation of the thesis. To untangle the complexity of heritage practices, it is necessary to investigate the roles of multiple actors as they participate in constructing heritage, considering their demands, identities, and heritage perceptions. In addition, the forms of negotiation and contestation may vary, reflecting different relationships between the actors and the impacts of the socio-political contexts. However, there are some research gaps in CHS, particularly with regard to the concept of AHD. The empirical studies focusing on China tend to overlook many small and mid-sized cities. The up-to-date changes in the domestic and international (geo)political context can be more thoroughly incorporated into the studies. More importantly, although CHS is

keen on recognising the current injustice and inequalities in heritage conservation and acknowledging the roles of power relations and value judgements, the concept of AHD fails to address the mechanisms through which heritage discourses compete with and suppress one another. The existing investigation is more centred on value judgements, leaving power relations insufficiently investigated, due to the limitation of the theoretical framework of CHS. In other words, CHS has been useful in considering the socio-cultural dimension of heritage but is unable to adequately explain the political dimension of heritage.

To fill in the research gap regarding the power struggles between different actors during heritage construction and to bridge the socio-cultural and political dimensions of heritage, I turned to the framework of FA to understand the policy-making processes in China, which is the second body of literature that informs my research. I reviewed the original framework of FA, the later development of the framework, and the limitations of the framework. Noticeably, both the state and nonstate actors have been active in China's policy-making since the political and economic reforms. The bureaucratic fragmentation within the authoritarian system of China has greatly complicated policy-making and implementation in various policy areas. This framework helps me to understand how decisions are made by whom and for what rationales, and how different actors' heritage discourses play into the decision-making and implementation process (or not). Moreover, considering the limitations of the framework, this thesis will expand the definition of fragmentation and consider it in relation to the authoritarian system to further the theorisation of China's policy-making and implementation, particularly in the heritage field under the current leadership that has been increasingly politicising traditional Chinese culture.

The relationship of the two bodies of the literature is depicted in Figure 2-1 below. Drawing upon CHS, I narrow the original concept of heritage dissonance to describe the negotiation and contestation between different actors during the Regeneration Project of Cangxiang Street Historic District (hereinafter the CSHD Project) as one of the manifestations of the intrinsic dissonant nature of heritage. The conflicts between the local government's AHD and the nonstate actors' heritage discourses partially contribute to the negotiation and contestation. More fundamentally, uneven power relations and diverse value judgements of the actors induce such negotiation and contestation, which is partly reflected by the competing heritage discourses and heritage dissonance. Here, CHS

guides this thesis to identify research objects and research puzzles.

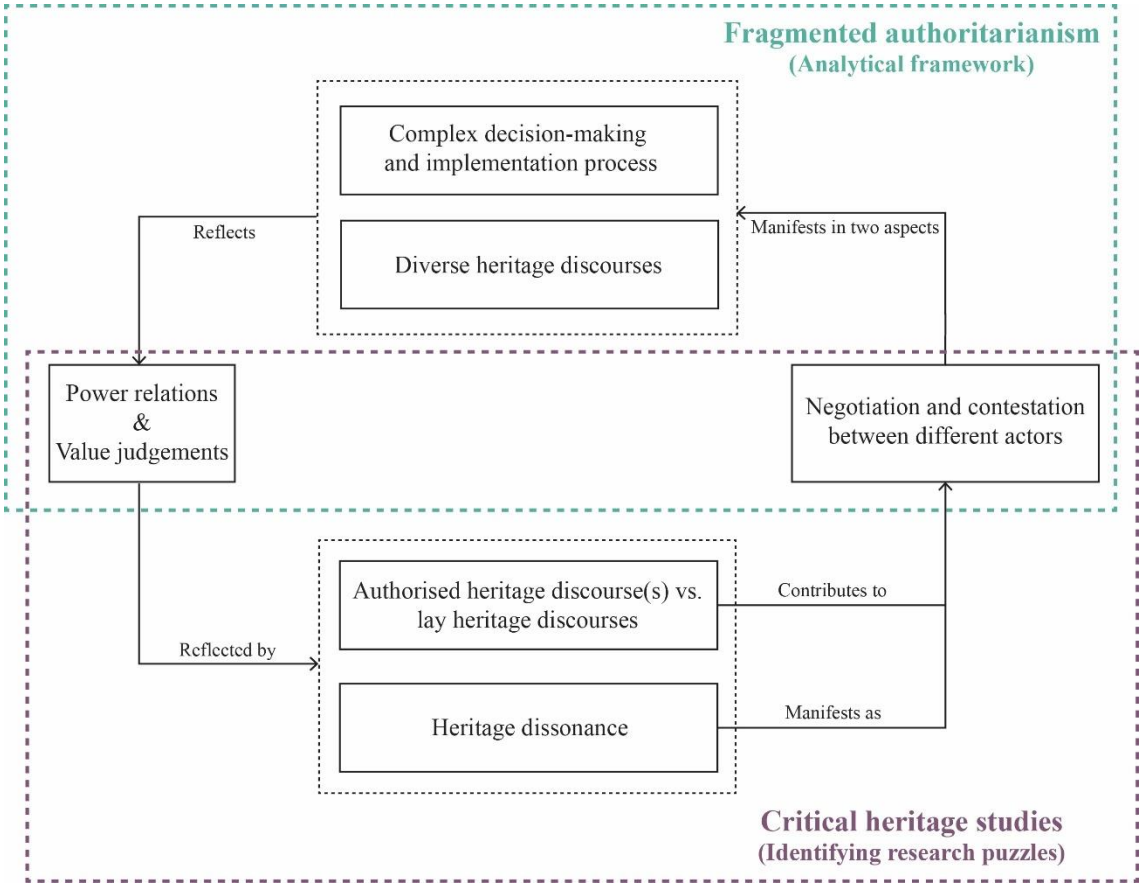

Figure 2-1. Relationship of the literature of critical heritage studies and fragmented authoritarianism in this thesis (*Source: author*).

However, CHS, particularly the concepts of heritage dissonance and AHD, is unable to fully explain the mechanism through which power relations and value judgements work in shaping the Project. This is where FA comes in to provide the thesis with an analytical lens to understand this mechanism. In this thesis, I will explore two themes. First, I will examine how the state and nonstate actors make and implement decisions about the CSHD Project through their explicit negotiation and contestation. I will apply FA here to conceptualise the complex decision-making and implementation process of the Project. This process directly reflects the power relations of the actors, thus FA directly explains the role of power relations in shaping the Project. Second, I will investigate whether the negotiation and contestation of the actors' heritage discourses have fed into the Project or not, which indicates the role of value judgements in shaping the Project. I will refer to FA again to demonstrate that the materialisation of certain heritage discourses in the Project is not determined by the heritage discourses *per se* but actually bounded by China's FA. Thus FA explains the limited role

of value judgements in shaping the Project.

Based on the frameworks of CHS and FA, I will examine different actors and their interactions in different chapters: Chapter Five on the local government and heritage professionals during the formulation of *The Conservation Plan of Cangxiang Street Historic District*; Chapter Six on the local government and original residents during the relocation of the original residents; and Chapter Seven on heritage discourses of the local government, heritage professionals, and the general public. The central government as the contextual actor will also appear throughout the empirical chapters. Before delving into the empirical materials, I will introduce my research methods in Chapter There and the context of my case study, including Anyang City and Cangxiang Street Historic District, in Chapter Four.

Chapter 3. Research Methods

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I discuss the research methods. I start with an overview of my data collection and analysis methods in Section 3.2, including semi-structured interviews, observation, and content analysis. Then, Section 3.3 details some of the practical difficulties and ethical dilemmas that I encountered in the field, as well as my strategies to mitigate the negative impacts. In Section 3.4, I reflect upon the limitations of this research, including my positionality and conducting fieldwork during the COVID-19 pandemic and another unforeseeable natural disaster. Section 3.5 concludes this chapter.

The overarching research question of this thesis is: *How and why are decisions and heritage discourses negotiated and contested by different actors in China's heritage conservation project?* To answer the overarching question, three sub-questions are asked:

- *How are decisions of the heritage project made by whom with what rationales?*
- *How and why do different actors' heritage discourses converge or diverge?*
- *What are the impacts of the actors' interactions?*

In the research questions, the actors involved in my case study include (1) the local government, including the municipal, district, and Street Office levels, (2) the central government, (3) heritage professionals, including planners, designers, and local scholars, and (4) communities, including residents (some of them have been relocated in other parts of the city) and business owners in Cangxiang Street Historic District (CSHD), and tourists who are mostly local citizens.

My fieldwork lasted for five months from May to September 2021 in Anyang. To understand the decision-making process and the heritage discourses of the diverse actors, I approached the local government of Anyang, the heritage professionals, and the communities of Anyang that were involved in or relevant to the Regeneration Project of the Cangxiang Street Historic District (hereinafter the CSHD Project or the Project) to collect first-hand data in my fieldwork.

3.2 Overview of the Data Collection and Analysis Methods

Semi-structured Interviews

My primary method of collecting data was through semi-structured interviews. I started my interviews with local government officials and heritage professionals who had worked on the Project to investigate what the local government's policies and plans were, how the Project had been conducted by which government departments, how the local officials and heritage professionals consulted the communities (or not, and why not), and what obstacles the local officials and heritage professionals had encountered. I then conducted interviews with local communities relevant to CSHD. The participants included original residents who still lived in CSHD, relocated residents who had moved out of CSHD due to the Project, new and original business owners[12], and local tourists. The purpose was to discuss their heritage discourses regarding CSHD, their attitudes toward the local government-let Project and the local government's political propaganda, their opinions on the connection between local heritage and the central government's cultural confidence discourse, and whether they participated in the Project in any way.

Table 3-1 lists the basic information of my participants. I do not provide a short profile or biography of each participant in order to keep them anonymous. From the side of the local government and planning institute that drafted *The Conservation Plan of Cangxiang Street Historic District* (hereinafter the Conservation Plan), there were relatively few people involved in the Project. The planners' names from the planning institute are published with the planning documents online. Detailed job descriptions of the local officials and the planners in the Project will make them easily identifiable. From the communities' side, describing their residences and small businesses in CSHD and disclosing other information such as age, gender, occupation, health condition, etc. will make them easily identifiable as well. To protect their privacy, I only give the numbers and categories of my interviewees, and the codes that I assigned to them. Due to the same reason, in the following

12 The difference between original businesses and new businesses relies on when they started their businesses in CSHD. If they started before the Project in 2018, I considered them original businesses. If they started during the Project since 2018 and rented the refurbished/restored houses from the residents or the district government, I considered them new businesses. My interviewees of businesses were all in CSHD at the moment, including the original businesses. According to the original business owners and residents (Business Interviews; Resident Interviews), there were only a few original businesses before 2018 as CSHD had mainly been a residential area. And no original businesses were closed or relocated because of the Project.

chapters, all names of the interviewees and other people involved in the CSHD Project that I mentioned are pseudonyms. The political hierarchy of the local government officials is not obscured as this directly relates to the decision-making and implementation of the Project.

Table 3-1. Summary of interviewees.

Categories (as cited in later chapters)	**Types of interviewees**	**Numbers of interviewees**	**Codes**
Government Interviews	Local government officials (including municipal, district, and Street Office levels)	6	GV01 ~ GV06
Professional Interviews	Planners	4	PL01 ~ PL03
	Designer	1	DS01
	Local scholars	2	SC01 ~ SC02
Resident Interviews	Original residents (still living in CSHD)	31	RN01 ~ RN31
	Relocated residents	3	RL01 ~ RL03
Business Interviews	Original small businesses (still in CSHD)	6	OB01 ~ OB06
	New businesses	14	NB01 ~ NB14
Tourist Interviews	Local tourists	32	TR01 ~ TR32
Other Interviews	Others (local government-hired workers in CSHD and residents living in other parts of the Old City)	5	OT01 ~ OT05
In total	——	**103**	——

All my interviews were semi-structured where I prepared a list of questions and asked follow-up questions based on the responses of my interviewees spontaneously and flexibly. However, there was a noticeable difference between my conversations with the local officials and heritage professionals and my conversations with the communities. The former interviews lasted from forty minutes to one and a half hours and went much deeper. Around half of these interviews were not recorded as

requested by some of the heritage professionals and local officials. In these cases, I took notes manually. Two interviews with two planners based in Beijing were conducted online as I did not travel to Beijing. All the other interviews were conducted in the offices of the local officials and heritage professionals or on Cangxiang Street. The latter interviews with the communities lasted from fifteen to forty minutes. Most of these interviews were recorded upon their consent. When they preferred not to be recorded, I manually took notes. Some of these interviews were conducted at people's residences or shops, and some were conducted on the streets in CSHD. The three interviews with the relocated residents were conducted via telephone.

Demographically, the tourists and new business owners were mostly young people in their 20s to early 30s. the original residents and original business owners were mostly in their 40s to 70s. This conforms to the demographic structure of CSHD which tends to attract young people for sightseeing and taking photos and videos. And the remaining residents are mostly elderly since young people tend to prefer and already moved to modern apartments with more privacy and better living conditions even before the Project (Business Interviews; Resident Interviews).

Observation

For geographical studies and heritage studies, it is essential to visualise the space and place (Garden, 2009). My observation can be divided into two parts. The first part was slightly different from the observation method usually used in sociology, anthropology, and psychology that studies human behaviour and social interaction (Bernard, 2011b), as this part mainly focused on what the physical space looked like. Thus it may also be considered to fall into the category of "visual methodologies" (Aitken & Criane, 2005; Bernard, 2011a).

This thesis involves the discussion of the principles and practices of building restoration/refurbishment which are reflected by the comparison of the physical space of CSHD before and after the Project. For instance, the typical way of restoring Chinese traditional architecture is retaining the stable and less deteriorated parts such as stone carvings, while partly or completely replacing the wooden structures and the bricks on the façade due to heavier deterioration. The paintings and finishes may be repainted due to degradation. In my fieldwork, I acquired

hundreds of photos from one Street Office in CSHD that were taken by the local officials before the Project started in 2018. One local official then gave me a tour of CSHD to show me major restoration/refurbishment works. By taking photos of these restoration/refurbishment results and comparing the current photos with the photos from before the Project, I was able to better understand how the district government did the restoration/refurbishment technically and what the visual results were, and further understand whether the local government claimed restoration principle was put into practice. Besides, during my fieldwork, there were workers hired by the district government who were refurbishing some building façades along the major streets in CSHD. I also observed their work to see how they did the refurbishment. These observations were later compared with my interviews with the local scholars and local officials to understand the restoration principles in theory and the actual restoration/refurbishment practices in CSHD.

The second part of my observation was participant observation during which I "immersed" myself in the field as a tourist. The participant observation involved observing the residents, businesses, and tourists' daily lives, practices, and events in CSHD. It was intended to help me visualise how the communities' daily lives, practices, and events took place in relation to the built environment of CSHD, and how the Project had changed their daily lives and their heritage discourses due to the change in physical space. The participant observation also helped me validate and triangulate data that I acquired from the interviews and government documents (Cook, 2005; McCall, 1984).

Content Analysis

The data for the content analysis came from two sources. The first source was the interview data that I transcribed. The second source was various documents that I acquired during my interviews with the local officials and heritage professionals. These materials were (1) work reports of different local government departments and offices that worked on the Project; (2) planning documents including *The Conservation Plan of Cangxiang Street Historic District*, *The Constructive Detailed Plan of Cangxiang Street Historic District*, *The Conservation and Revitalisation Plan of the Old City of Anyang*, *The Conservation Plan of the Historical and Cultural City of Anyang*, and *Master Plan of Anyang (2001 – 2020)*; (3) questionnaires and notification letters that the local government used to inform and consult the residents; (4) news reports drafted by the local officials and broadcasted by

the local media; (5) broadcasting videos from the local media and audio tour guide developed by the local government. I transcribed the fifth category of materials from video and audio to text.

The analysis comprised three steps. The first was transcribing the interviews. For the interviews in Mandarin, I used Ifly Voice Notes (*xunfei yuji,* 讯飞语记, an automatic voice recognition application) to transcribe. For the interviews in my local language, I hired a local college student as my research assistant to help transcribe around half of them, and I did the rest of them myself. I then double-checked all the transcriptions to correct some mistakes and omissions. When I hired the research assistant, I explained thoroughly to her about the research ethics and had her sign the consent form in order to avoid disclosing any information about the interviews and the interviewees.

The second step was coding with Nvivo. It is worth mentioning that all my data analyses were conducted in Mandarin Chinese or my local language, depending on which language I used to conduct the interviews, without translating into English. The primary reason is that the translation, even from the local language to Mandarin Chinese, may lose certain subtle and detailed information due to linguistic differences (Thøgersen, 2006). Another reason is that the translation would be too time-consuming. Only when I needed to quote some responses from the interviewees in the later chapters, I translated the sections of the quotes into English. The first round of coding aimed at identifying big themes that emerged in the interviewees' responses based on my own summary. Some examples of the codes are: the understanding of the restoration principles, relocation policies and processes, perceptions of the definition of heritage, perceptions of heritage value, visiting experiences and feelings, state-society relations, central-local relations, and attitudes toward the local government. The second round of coding was to identify keywords that the interviewees usually used. For instance, when talking about the restoration of historic buildings, many tourists and residents used words like "fake heritage" and "replica". When talking about state-society relations, the residents usually referred to the central and local governments as "the top" and called themselves "the ordinary". When talking about their perceptions of the definition of heritage, some residents mentioned residences of "the rich people" and "businesspeople" versus those of "the poor people" and "workers and peasants". When talking about visiting experiences and feelings, some tourists spontaneously mentioned "cultural confidence". These keywords were highlighted and used for further analysis.

The third step was analysing the texts based on the coding. The first-round analysis was to understand the basic meanings of the documents and the interviews. Noticeably, official documents and oral languages sometimes use different expressions to discuss the same things. The government documents in China have a customary way of writing which has certain connotations (Thøgersen, 2006). Thus, it is important to recognise the writing style and unpack the gist of the documents. This difference made the second-round analysis significant, which was to compare three groups of materials, namely (1) the local government's work reports and planning documents, and interviews with the local government officials; (2) interviews with heritage professionals; (3) interviews with the locals. The purpose was to corroborate certain information and help me organise the data. More importantly, I was able to compare different actors' heritage discourses by comparing these materials in order to understand how the diverse heritage discourses converge or diverge.

Hsieh and Shannon (2005) categorise content analysis into three types, conventional, directed, and summative, mainly depending on how coding is done. Here, my coding scheme started with conventional content analysis, a more inductive way of analysis (Mayring, 2000). My primary aim was to describe the phenomena during my fieldwork, not to test the theories of critical heritage studies and fragmented authoritarianism upfront. Thus I closely read the materials to let categories, themes, and keywords flow from the data (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). When I identified CHS and FA as appropriate theoretical frameworks to conceptualise the phenomena, I considered terms and phrases in CHS and FA to slightly revise my expressions of the codes to better fit my analysis into the theoretical frameworks. This was somewhat deductive and fell into the category of directed content analysis (Potter & Levine-Donnerstein, 1999). When organising my empirical materials, I mainly considered two interrelated threads, what happened during the Project (the "components" of the Project) and who participated in those components, since the analysis would be largely centred around different actors' roles and their interactions. Thus I grouped my codes and interpretation of data into three empirical chapters, each looking at different aspects of the Project with different actors that played prominent roles in those aspects. The quotes and anecdotes that I used in the empirical chapters are the relatively more representative (and also interesting) ones.

3.3 Practical Difficulties, Ethical Dilemmas, and Strategies for Mitigation

Gaining Access to the Local Government and Planners

My interviews started with the local government officials and the planners. My experience of gaining access to the local government reflects two things. Methodologically, personal or institutional connections through formal or informal channels can be quite important for accessing government officials, which is to some extent typical when doing fieldwork in China (Solinger, 2006). Furthermore, how I contacted lower-level officials through an upper-level official is the very manifestation of some of my findings and arguments in this thesis, that is, political power resides at the relatively high level of the Chinese government, while the lower-level officials usually perform in line with the preferences of upper-level officials. This finding partly echoes but also extends previous scholars' arguments. Within the Party-state, Oksenberg (2001, p. 22) points out that "enormous power resides in the pre-eminent leader and the Standing Committee and Politburo of the Party Central Committee", focusing on the central level. My research demonstrates that down at the local level, there are also relatively "preeminent leaders" who possess more power to command their subordinates. This hierarchical power structure within Chinese bureaucracy heavily influences how decisions are made and implemented by whom and how the authorised heritage discourse is formed and circulated, as I will elaborate on in the following empirical chapters in more detail.

To gain access to the local government, a family friend performed as my important gatekeeper. This family friend used to work for a district-level official in Anyang who was involved in the conservation projects of the Old City. When the family friend took me to meet with the district-level official, the district-level official made a few phone calls in his office to his subordinates, including Street Office officials and local planners. Because this district-level official was in a relatively high political position within the local government, his subordinates were very cooperative when they met with me later. With the district-level official's introduction, I encountered almost no difficulty during my interviews. All the lower-level officials were quite outspoken about the CSHD Project. When I asked for government documents and planning documents, they did not hesitate to give me the entire folder with all kinds of documents on their computer and promised that if I needed further help, I could contact them again. In my later interviews with the heritage professionals, residents, and

business owners, I was able to verify most of the information that the local officials provided. Although there were indeed some inconsistencies between the local officials and the nonstate actors, what was noticeable was that the attitudes of the local officials were very gentle and friendly.

However, there were three ethical issues and practical difficulties that emerged. First, as I mentioned previously, the hierarchical power structure of the Chinese bureaucracy explains why lower-level officials I met were more cooperative when the district-level official gave them certain instructions. In China, upper-level officials usually have a big influence on the political promotion of lower-level officials. Having good *guanxi* (*关系*, relationships or connections) with upper-level officials is crucial to guarantee such a promotion (Yan, 1995). This leads to the question of coercion in doing research (Sukarieh & Tannock, 2013). That is, the lower-level officials that I interviewed may have been under pressure from their superiors to talk to me and to be as candid as possible, but they may personally have not wanted to do so. It may have been the worry that they could irritate their superiors and not get a promotion due to their disobedience that urged them to answer my questions and provide me with the materials.

To mitigate the possible coercion effects, at the beginning of my interviews, I always made it clear that the local officials could decide whether they wanted to participate in the research or not, what my research was about, and if they did participate, I would make sure that they were anonymous. Additionally, I never disclosed any of my conversations with the lower-level officials to the district-level official, so the district-level official would not know whether his subordinates were "cooperative" and "obedient" enough or not and whether the subordinates said something that they were not supposed to say.

The second issue occurred when I was explaining my research to the local officials. It appeared that they had their own presumption of what my research was about and would not pay much attention to what I said about my research. They constantly mentioned that they hoped I could dig into the history of the Old City of Anyang, as well as help promote our hometown, CSHD, and the Project widely, even overseas so as to attract more international tourists. This gave me the impression that they did not fully understand what my research was. My strategy in the field was explaining my research to them over and over again until I felt that they had a better sense of what I was doing.

When I was reading more methodology papers after I returned from the field, I encountered one paper by a scholar doing research in China who faced a similar situation where the gatekeeper did not disclose the scholar's nationality and full research to other local officials. These local officials then "blindly" participated in one research they did not know much about. The scholar later discovered that it was in fact the local officials' self-protection mechanism. Because the topic was sensitive, the local officials may end up getting into trouble if the upper-level government found out about their conversations with the scholar. However, as the Chinese idiom goes, "people who don't know are not guilty" (*buzhizhe wuzui, 不知者无罪*). If the local officials did not know about the research and just answered some random questions from the scholar, they would not be responsible for any potential political risks (Yeh, 2006). As Yeh (2006, pp. 103-104) explained in her paper: "To him [the gatekeeper], the ethical course of action was to give the people with whom I spoke a way out. They did not want to be responsible for the knowledge of who I was, and if I forced them to be, they would either have to refuse to talk to me altogether, or they would have to bear responsibility that they did not want".

In retrospect, my interviewees may have taken the same strategy of "pretending" that they did not understand my research, so they could talk to me more freely. Under this circumstance, I agree with Yeh (2006, p. 104) that "giving my interviewees room to manoeuvre by pleading ignorance was a more, rather than less, ethical choice", as this is a safer way for them to avoid future trouble with the upper-level governments regarding their participation in my research.

The third dilemma was from the family friend. After we met with the district-level official, the family friend told me in private that I should report only on the positive side of the Project and the positive side of China overall, and avoid saying negative and controversial things about China abroad. The reason was that we Chinese people needed to be "responsible" for our motherland in terms of building an embellished image of her to the overseas audience, and "don't wash the dirty linen in public" (*jiachou buke waiyang, 家丑不可外扬*). Otherwise, the "dirty linen" may give Western countries the "weapon" to attack us. Similar conversations also happened when I interviewed the residents in CSHD. When some of them learned that I was a PhD student studying in the UK and would publish English papers, they reminded me that I should only focus on the "bright side" of the story and leave out the "dark side".

Arguably, the research ethics require me to report my research results upon my participants' consent. If they wish that I did not say certain things, I should not disclose our conversations, especially when we touch upon sensitive topics (Hopkins, 2020). However, these people did not ask me to strike any parts of our conversations. And they were quite vague about what was "positive" and "bright" about China and the Project, and what was "negative" and "dark". They merely made overall comments about my research which were arguably heavily influenced by the growingly tense relationships between China and Western countries in recent years. What they asked also indicates that they were aware of the "negative" and "dark" things that were going on, but were more reluctant to disclose those to certain audiences. If I did what they suggested, it would be more like lying about my research findings than omitting certain information. I do understand that different actors involved in my research have different expectations for my research due to their positionalities, socio-political backgrounds, and personal experiences (Darling, 2020). However, I believe that being a responsible researcher means sticking to the facts that I discovered in the field rather than deliberately selecting certain information to paint a clearly biased picture of China and the Project, which would undoubtedly be a departure from research ethics as it fails to represent my case and my findings in a reasonable way (Noxolo, 2020).

This makes me reflect on conducting heritage studies in China more generally. Usually, heritage is not a sensitive topic in China compared to, for instance, human rights, Tibet, and Taiwan. However, as Svensson (2006) points out, one issue's sensitivity may change and it depends on which aspects of the issue we look at. Cultural heritage can become quite sensitive when touching upon issues such as political decision-making, forced eviction, property ownership, economic benefits, and corruption (Svensson, 2006, p. 264). Meanwhile, "[s]ensitive issues can become less so over time and with policy changes, as the Chinese leaders' recent acknowledgement of the problem of demolitions and forced evictions also shows. These issues might however remain sensitive to local governments and individual officials who now become legitimate targets for criticism" (Svensson, 2006, p. 264). As the following chapters will demonstrate, the cultural aspect of heritage in my case study in terms of heritage definition and heritage value is less sensitive. Whereas the political aspect of heritage in terms of decision-making and implementation can be more sensitive, complicated, and controversial.

Compared to accessing the local government, accessing the planners was much easier and more

straightforward. To be precise, there have been four planning institutes involved in several conservation projects in the Old City of Anyang. Three of them are from Beijing, and the fourth one is the local planning institute of Anyang which is municipal government-owned and has functioned more as the local liaison in all the conservation projects, as I will explain in more detail in Chapter Five. Among the three planning institutes from Beijing, only one worked on the CSHD Project. This is the planning institute where I worked as a planner and research fellow. Thus, I contacted my previous colleague who put me in touch with a planner that directly involved in the CSHD Project, including conducting preliminary research, drafting *The Conservation Plan of Cangxiang Street Historic District* (hereinafter the Conservation Plan), and meeting with different levels of local officials in Anyang many times. The planner understood better what I wanted to study and why I asked certain questions, so the conversation was more in-depth and comprehensive. The planner was also able to clarify certain things that the local officials did not make clear. Frankly speaking, my previous work experience at this planning institute was very helpful, as it directly pointed to me whom I could talk to, and the person I talked to trusted me more even if we never met in person.

Interviewing the Locals

The locals constituted another important group of participants in my research. Before delving into the details of how I recruited and interviewed the locals, I would like to discuss the question of who qualified as the "locals" in my case study. In terms of residents and business owners, it was more straightforward to locate them within the boundary of CSHD. The boundary that I used as well as the boundary of the CSHD Project was based on the Conservation Plan which clearly demarcated the core conservation zone (green lines in Figure 3-1) and construction control zone (purple lines in Figure 3-1) of CSHD, according to the heritage regulations of China (State Council, 2017)[13]. Residents and business owners who are currently in CSHD or used to be in CSHD thus refer to people living or running businesses within the construction control zone of CSHD which has been

13 According to the heritage regulation in China, when the local governments and qualified planning institutes produce the Conservation and Management Plan for a historic district, they need to delimit the core conservation zone (*hexin baohuqu, 核心保护区*) and the construction control zone (*jianshe kongzhi didai, 建设控制地带*) of the historic district. The former is defined by the boundary of the officially designated heritage sites, thus needs the most stringent protection. The latter is the immediate surrounding areas of the heritage sites that may influence the heritage sites in any ways. The building heights, façades, and transportation flows are usually regulated in the construction control zone (State Council, 2017). Thus the CSHD Project has been carried out within the core construction zone. Both boundaries of the two zones of CSHD were decided by the planners based on their expertise and their communication with the local government of Anyang (Professional Interview – PL01 & PL02).

the general boundary of the CSHD Project.

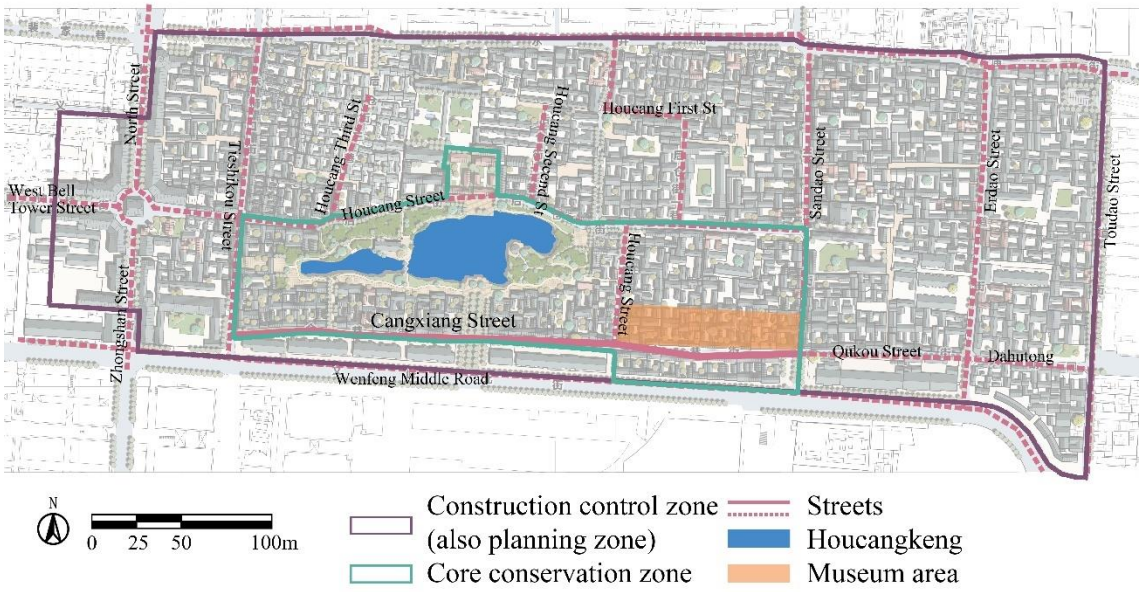

Figure 3-1. Site plan of Cangxiang Street Historic District (*Source: author modified based on The Conservation Plan of Cangxiang Street Historic District, 2018*).

By local tourists, I refer to local citizens of Anyang who have visited CSHD for shopping, sightseeing, etc., but do not live in the construction control zone of CSHD. As Waterton and Smith argue (2010, p. 9), in heritage studies, "'community' should not be pinned to geography alone, as it is a frame of reference or orientation that coalesces around shared interests, common causes or collective experiences". In this research, therefore, I not only include residents and business owners in the neighbourhoods of CSHD as community members but also local tourists even if they live far from CSHD. On the one hand, CSHD is relatively local without many tourists from outside the city so far. On the other hand, Anyang citizens have been reported as visiting CSHD often and enjoying it a lot (Feng, 2019). CSHD thus arguably has emotionally and functionally connected to and influenced the local tourists' daily lives and their shared identity. Their opinions regarding heritage construction should be noted. In order to distinguish "local" tourists, at the beginning of the interviews, I always asked where the tourists were from and whether they saw themselves as Anyang citizens regardless of their household registration status (*hukou,* 户口). If the tourists were not originally from Anyang but had resided and worked here for a long time, and shared the local culture

and identity, they were still considered "local" tourists[14].

Moving on to my practices of and reflections on interviewing the locals, I mainly had three strategies to recruit the locals as my interviewees, each targeting slightly different categories of people. The first strategy was "guerrilla interviewing" to talk to original residents, original and new business owners, and tourists in CSHD (Gold, 1989, as cited in Solinger, 2006). According to Gold (1989, as cited in Solinger, 2006, p. 161), guerrilla interviewing is a form of picking people for research interviews by spontaneously engaging in seemingly idle and friendly conversations with people at work on the street. In my fieldwork, I encountered many street vendors and shop owners who were running their businesses, residents who were chatting with their neighbours, walking a dog, reading a book, or sunbathing in the public space, and tourists who were touring around or taking photos. I would approach them when they were not too occupied and introduce who I was and what I was doing. If they consented to talk to me, I would proceed with my interviews.

As these interviewees were complete strangers initially, it was essential to gain their trust. I usually used my local language, *Anyanghua* (*安阳话*, the dialect of Anyang, quite different from Mandarin), to start our conversation, especially with the middle-aged and the elderly. Sometimes young people preferred using Mandarin. I would change it into Mandarin but still with an Anyang accent and certain local expressions. Since my family never lived in the Old City, I would sometimes mention my elementary school which was located in the Old City to tell them about my attachment to the Old City. When I interviewed business owners, I would also buy some of their food or drinks to initiate the conversation. When introducing myself, I would show them my ID from my undergraduate to prove my identity, because a lot of them were not familiar with the LSE, but knew my undergraduate university, Peking University (one of the two top universities in China), well. I would also let them know that I had already talked with the local government and that the local officials were aware of me doing research here.

The interviews with the locals went generally well, which was different from my experience of

14 The district government had not collected detailed data on tourists when I finished my fieldwork in 2021. Only during the Chinese New Year of 2019 that lasted slightly shorter than one month, the district government counted that around 70,000 tourists came to CSHD. In Chinese tradition, people celebrate the Chinese New Year in their hometowns with their families. Therefore, it is safe to say that the majority of the 70,000 tourists are Anyang citizens.

doing research in Beijing. In my previous experiences in Beijing, there were more people questioning my identity, such as if I purchased a fake ID online, or if I was a spy sent by some international organisations. Whereas in CSHD, no one raised such concerns and doubts. When I started my fieldwork, the COVID-19 pandemic was still severe globally. I was worried that if they learned that I travelled from the UK, a place presumably in a worse situation, they would refuse to talk to me. Thus I carried with me my COVID-19 test results, antibody test results, the proof that I finished the 21-day quarantine as requested by the central and local governments, and extra face masks and hand steriliser. Surprisingly, no one asked for any of these or showed their fear or worry of me being a potential virus carrier.

As I came to CSHD more and more, many people in the area remembered me. Some business owners even offered me food and drinks for free (I turned them down, eventually paying for them). Some elderly residents did not have many visitors, thus they would love to chat with me and invited me to their houses to take a rest and have some water. When I asked if I could take some photos of their houses, they agreed immediately and introduced to me when and how the houses were built and later renovated. As people were growingly familiar with me, our conversations sometimes could become more personal. For instance, when they learned that I was a PhD student studying in the UK, they showed much care about the COVID-19 pandemic and the pandemic-induced protests and reminded me to protect myself. In some conversations, I also discovered that some people were somehow remotely related to me (not by blood though), such as my previous classmate's friend, my aunt's old neighbour, my school teacher's new colleague, etc. These familiarities and connections that we cultivated or discovered together facilitated my fieldwork to a large extent.

However, the downside of these familiarities and connections was that sometimes the conversations became random chitchats and deviated from my research topic too much. As it is usually quite impolite to disrupt people in China, especially people who are senior to me in any way (Solinger, 2006), I had to figure out tactful ways to direct the conversations back to my research, like taking the chance of them pausing, and finding words in their conversations that were relevant to my research and following these words to ask my interview questions. These made some of the interviews less efficient than I planned. Another dilemma was that some elderly residents believed that I was connected to the local government. Therefore, they hoped that I could let "the top" (referring to the

local government) know about their suffering, like their houses needed repair, and they did not get enough pension. This is something that many researchers have encountered in the field (e.g. Sukarieh & Tannock, 2013; Svensson, 2006). My way of responding was to let them know the truth that I was merely a student, and such requests were completely out of my ability. The residents would usually understand but still wish that I could at least do some minor things. Lastly, there were indeed some people who refused to do the interview, or consented at the very beginning and became reluctant to answer certain questions later on. I did not continue with the interviews in these cases and did not use any information from these people in my later analysis.

The second "strategy" to recruit locals as interviewees was unintentional with enthusiastic friends offering to be my interviewees. When I returned home, some of my closest friends from high school learned about my research. As people with a physical science background (including myself), they were quite interested to see what "social science research" looked like, thus hoping to be my interviewees. All my friends that I interviewed fall into the category of local tourists. Before our formal interviews, I was worried about them saying things that they imagined I would like to hear, which indeed happened to other researchers when they interviewed their acquaintances (Hasnain, 2014). Therefore, at the beginning of our interviews, I specifically emphasised that they could say whatever they wanted without presuming what I would like to get from them.

These interviews went surprisingly well, as there was no need for me to build rapport and gain their trust. They were already very candid and open to me. At the same time, since they are all well-educated (at least with a master's degree from a prestigious university in China or overseas), they could better understand what my research was about, and sometimes even offered me interesting and inspiring opinions that I had never thought about. There were only a few interviews with my friends, but the amount of information that I acquired from these conversations was very helpful not only in supporting my research but also in broadening my understanding of heritage and urban regeneration in general. I do acknowledge that precisely because my friends were well-educated, their opinions were far from representative. However, I would like to make it clear that I do not intend to make the research results representative, but to more focus on individuals' feelings, experiences, and opinions from a humanistic perspective (Smith, J. M., 2009). In fact, my friends can represent the younger generations in China who are better educated and better informed by the internet compared to the

older generations, thus their responses point to the potential future changes in state-society relations.

The third strategy was snowball sampling to find relocated residents who used to live in the construction control zone of CSHD but have been relocated elsewhere by the district government during the Project. Before my fieldwork, I imagined that it would not be too hard to find relocated residents through my family friends and relatives, since Anyang is a small to mid-sized city compared to major cities in China, and the Old City is even smaller. However, in my fieldwork, I discovered that since the Project was still underway, not many residents in CSHD had actually been relocated yet. Through my family friends, I was able to find three of them. Due to the time limit of the fieldwork, which I will further discuss in Section 3.4, I did not meet them in person but did the interviews via telephone. This meant that I was not able to capture any information from their facial expressions and body language. Since they were acquaintances of my parents, they were most of the time quite candid and open to me, like my high school friends. Only when talking about their attitudes toward the local government, they were a bit reluctant at the beginning. When I assured them that the conversations were all confidential and I would never disclose their identity, they started to express their opinions. Their reluctance and the words that they used later actually better reflect the power relations between the local government and the citizens in my case study, which I will further discuss in Chapter Six. Overall, although the number of interviews with relocated residents was small, I did acquire a lot of information from them to help me understand the relocation policies and processes, and the relocated residents' feelings and views.

3.4 Limitations and Reflections

In addition to some reflections that I mentioned as I introduced my research methods, such as gaining access to the local government officials, there are some other limitations of my research. Due to my data collection methods and the case selection (doing research in my hometown), the limitations of my research first come from my positionality. Doing fieldwork during the pandemic and another rare natural disaster in Anyang also induced certain difficulties and limitations.

Regarding my positionality, first, the debate of "insider" versus "outsider" has been long noticed by researchers doing interviews and other qualitative studies (e.g. Breen, 2007; Dwyer & Buckle,

2009). Therefore, where to situate myself as a researcher was important in the fieldwork. As a "returning-home" researcher, my identity embodied an "in-betweenness" (Jin, 2020). Some people in CSHD indeed considered me an insider since I am local and spent my six-year elementary school study in the Old City. At the same time, others considered me an outsider and irrelevant to CSHD because I never lived in CSHD. Being a PhD student studying in the UK made my identity more complicated, as my level of education and the associated implication of my family background distinguished me from some of the underprivileged residents in CSHD. However, from my relationships with the locals especially how the connections between us grew and considering how the interviews went, I believe that my positionality did not cause major biases in this research.

Second, as noticed by Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999), interviewers may risk judging the interviewees' responses with their own perceptions. This is particularly true for me as a heritage preservationist. My professional training in the heritage arena usually influences how I perceive heritage and conservation projects. In my casual conversations with people outside the heritage arena, they tend to find me "conservative" in terms of opposing new constructions and the demolition of historic structures. My standpoint as someone cherishing heritage indeed subconsciously influenced how I felt about the local communities' responses in my fieldwork. For instance, when people mentioned that CSHD was full of "crappy and old" houses that were not worth protecting (Resident Interviews; Tourist Interviews), I did feel disappointed. To overcome this issue, during the interviews, I constantly reminded myself to give enough space for the interviewees to elaborate on their ideas and not induce them to any directions that were closer to my personal opinion. And in the later data analysis, I reminded myself to stick to the facts and not judge others for what they said.

Furthermore, the unforeseeable COVID-19 pandemic has more or less affected most people's research in different ways (e.g. Favilla & Pita, 2020; Johnson, 2022; MacLean et al., 2020; Santellano, 2022). The influence on my research was primarily disrupting the timeline of my fieldwork and shortened the amount of time that I spent in the field. My initial flight from London to Shanghai was cancelled at the last minute due to the pandemic, and I had to rebook another one which delayed my trip back to China. The trip was two days long, as I needed to transfer in Helsinki and had to wait for twenty-five hours for the connecting flight while doing one more COVID test at the Helsinki airport. When I arrived in Shanghai, I had to isolate myself in a local government-

designated hotel for fourteen days. After the first isolation and when I arrived in Anyang, I needed to self-isolate for one more week. Counting the time that I spent on getting all the COVID-related tests done to prepare for the international travel, the actual time of travel, and the isolation, the pandemic cost me more than one extra month to start the fieldwork. As a result, my schedule during the fieldwork was quite tight. Luckily, I did not encounter any outbreak in Anyang in the five months when I was doing the fieldwork. This meant that I did not need to change my face-to-face interviews to online interviews and I could conduct the observation as I planned.

However, another unforeseeable accident happened in July 2021 when many parts of Henan Province were hit by torrential rain that lasted for a few days, including Anyang. Such heavy precipitation usually does not happen in Henan Province. The local governments and the citizens were all quite unprepared. Due to the severe urban waterlogging, I had to suspend my fieldwork for two weeks. Later when I resumed my fieldwork, all the museums on Cangxiang Street were still closed due to some electricity problem. The district government did not completely fix the problem until late September when I was about to finish the fieldwork. After the rain, most of the stores in CSHD were closed for a few weeks and there were noticeably fewer tourists in CSHD. Toward September when the Mid-Autumn Festival and National Day were approaching, lives in CSHD started to come back to normal.

I was able to finish all the interviews with the local government officials and heritage professionals early on before the rain. However, after the rain, I still needed more interviews with the locals. Due to the delayed start of the fieldwork under the influence of the pandemic and the later urban waterlogging, after July, the amount of work that I was able to finish was not satisfying. In my later interviews, I did feel that I had reached the point of data saturation where I did not get much new information from the latest interviewees (Crang & Cook, 2011, pp. 14-15), particularly residents who were still in CSHD and local tourists. Still, there could have been more interviews with the relocated residents to more holistically comprehend under what circumstances residents decided to move and more interviews with the local officials to clarify some inconsistencies and ambiguities that I discovered in later interviews. And I could have done my interviews with the three relocated residents face-to-face. In retrospect, if I had been able to conduct the interviews over a longer time, the quality of the interviews might have been improved. Because then I would have been able to

flexibly adjust the interview questions when I talked to later interviewees based on the responses that I had acquired earlier and give more time to each respondent to elaborate on their ideas.

In addition, since the CSHD Project was and is still ongoing, I wished to do some follow-up fieldwork in the summer of 2022 before my thesis was fully developed. In this way, I could have seen some changes and new developments in CSHD during the later phases of the Project. However, due to the fluctuating situation of the pandemic and the price of flight tickets, I was not able to travel back to China in 2022. The pandemic has actually delimited the timeframe of this thesis which now only looks at the CSHD Project as of the autumn of 2021.

3.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have detailed my data collection and analysis methods. To answer the research questions of this thesis, the main task was to investigate the decision-making and implementation process of the Project and articulate the heritage discourses of different actors. My fieldwork mainly used semi-structured interviews and observation to acquire data, alongside acquiring local government reports and planning documents. These data were later used in content analysis.

During my fieldwork, dealing with various difficulties and limitations as well as conducting the fieldwork under the extreme circumstances of a pandemic and a natural disaster have taught me valuable lessons for planning fieldwork for my future research. The first lesson is organising the fieldwork more flexibly and prioritising the most important data collection. Being flexible under extreme circumstances is different from that during regular fieldwork. It is not only about considering how to schedule the fieldwork but also about being flexible in data collection methods themselves, such as using phone calls to replace in-person interviews to save time (Santellano, 2022). The second lesson is acknowledging the “emotional weight of the disruption” caused by the extreme circumstances on me as the researcher as well as on my participants and being mentally prepared and adjusted (MacLean et al., 2020, p. 1).

In the next chapter, I will provide some contextual information on my case study, including Anyang Municipality, the Old City of Anyang, and CSHD, in order to facilitate the empirical discussions in Chapters Five to Seven.

Chapter 4. The Context of Anyang and Cangxiang Street Historic District

In this chapter, I present some contextual information about the case study to set up the scene for the empirical analysis in the next three chapters. In Section 4.1, I discuss the rationale for selecting Anyang as my field site, that is, to address one of the limitations of critical heritage studies in China in terms of the lack of studies on small and mid-sized cities. I also introduce the context of Anyang in terms of the cultural-led revitalisation efforts of the local government. It is against this backdrop that the local government has been conducting the Regeneration Project of Cangxiang Street Historic District (hereinafter the CSHD Project or the Project). In Section 4.2, I introduce the context of Cangxiang Street Historic District (CSHD), including the current property ownership and building conditions, a brief overview of *The Conservation Plan of Cangxiang Street Historic District* and the Project, and the formal administrative structure of the Project within the local government. Section 4.3 summarises this chapter.

4.1 Selection of the Field Site

The Rationale for Selecting Anyang: The Ordinary Cities Matter

The rationale for selecting Anyang, a small to mid-sized city in northern China, as the case study is straightforward: ordinary cities matter. Jennifer Robinson (2002) has called for attention to cities off the world-city map. She argues that urban studies puts too much value on Western cities and urban hierarchy, and overemphasises world cities and global cities. As a consequence, "[t]he dearth of alternative vocabularies and approaches currently severely limits imaginations of possible futures for cities. The particular form of this limitation makes it particularly hard to mobilise creative ways to address the situation of poor and marginalised people in cities around the world" (Robinson, 2002, p. 533). In order to decolonise urban studies and break away from the dichotomy between Western cities and poor cities, Robinson proposes the "ordinary cities" approach which "move[s] beyond categories and hierarchies" and "abandon[s] claims to represent some cities as exemplars for others",

and views all cities as ordinary (Robinson, 2006, p. 94).

Similarly, Ofori-Amoah (2007) more explicitly points out that academic research on small cities is insufficient. However, it is small cities that make up the typical size of urban forms around the world (Jayne, 2004). Theoretically speaking, "exclusive focus on the biggest cities limits the generalisability of these grand theories and inhibits the development and impact of urban studies in the broader sense. What is lost as a consequence of the bias toward large cities is a full picture of urban form and function: the urban world is not made up of a handful of global metropolises, but characterised by heterogeneity. Studying small cities enables us to see the full extent of this" (Bell & Jayne, 2009, p. 683). Practically speaking, the spatial and structural patterns, as well as the trends of spatial transformation and functional development identified in big cities, do not necessarily exist in small cities. Practitioners thus may have trouble transferring big cities' experience to small cities due to the adaptability of big-city policies and ideas in a small-city context (Bell & Jayne, 2006; Ofori-Amoah, 2007).

As shown in Chapter Two, one of the research gaps of critical heritage studies in China is that the literature tends to use major cities (e.g. Beijing, Shanghai, Hangzhou, and Xi'an), borderlands where most heritage sites of ethnic minorities are located (e.g. Yunnan Province, Guizhou Province, and the Tibet Autonomous Region), and World Heritage sites as case studies (Yu & Zhang, 2020). As a result, the literature has not been able to explore a broader geographical scope and a more complex socioeconomic context.

Chinese cities are heterogeneous in culture, history, administration, level of economic development, and demographic composition. Major cities and coastal areas are more advanced in economy and administration and thus are usually chosen by the central government as pilot cities to try out new policies. The local governments are also more innovative in formulating local policies (Zhang & Marsh, 2016). Borderlands usually enjoy preferential policies due to their ethnic minorities. In comparison, the large number of second-, third- and fourth-tier cities in China have a medium level of administration and economic development by and large. From the central government, they are either less supported or receive different types of regional policies depending on their locations and industries. Therefore, the local governments of these cities may cope with heritage issues differently.

Yet a large number of them have as many heritage resources as the major cities and borderlands do and thus are facing acute issues in conservation. Some of them are found to be eager to imitate major cities (Ma, 2019; Wang & Lai, 2013), which is also observed in my case study, as the later chapters will demonstrate. Yet the efficiency of policy mobility remains questionable.

Therefore, "consideration of the small city can bring a new perspective on the wider urban fabric of which it is an element" (Kendall, 2015, p. 665). This research chooses Anyang City in Henan Province, a relatively lower-ranked Chinese city compared to major cities such as Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, and Shenzhen as a case study to explore its heritage construction, in order to place the issues in a different socioeconomic context underpinned by local specificities. Meanwhile, Anyang is a not-so-small city considering its current population and industrial legacies from the planned economy era, thus the municipal government has the capacity to carry out heritage conservation projects. The purpose of this choice is not to paint a comprehensive picture of the Chinese nation geographically, but to demonstrate the importance of locality and scale, and explore how locality- and scale-related factors play in heritage construction.

To understand Anyang's position within China's urban hierarchy, it is necessary to introduce how Chinese cities are classified. There are two sets of widely-used criteria to divide urban hierarchy in China. The one from the Chinese central government is based on the number of permanent residents in the urban area[15]. While the one defined by the Institute of New First-tier Cities affiliated to China Business Network Weekly (hereinafter the CBN standard) considers five factors: agglomeration of commercial resources, urban hub, urban activity, diversity of lifestyle, and future plasticity (the Institute of New First-tier Cities affiliated to China Business Network Weekly [CBN], 2023). Based on both sets of criteria, Anyang is medium-ranked.

According to the Chinese central government, the urban hierarchy in China is divided into seven levels, as shown in Table 4-1.

15 There are usually two population figures in China, population of permanent residents (*changzhu renkou*，*常住人口*) based on where people reside and work, and household registered population (*huji renkou*，*户籍人口*) based on people's household registration status. When calculating urbanisation rate, urban size, etc. the State Council uses the population of permanent residents (State Council, 2014).

Table 4-1. Urban hierarchy in China based on the Chinese central government's criteria (*Source: State Council, 2014*).

Levels of cities	**Chinese names**	**Population sizes (permanent residents in the urban area)**
Megacity	*Chaoda chengshi, 超大城市*	More than 10,000,000
Major city	*Teda chengshi, 特大城市*	5,000,000 ~ 10,000,000
I big city	*I xing da chengshi, I 型大城市*	3,000,000 ~ 5,000,000
II big city	*II xing da chengshi, II 型大城市*	1,000,000 ~ 3,000,000
Medium-sized city	*Zhongdeng chengshi, 中等城市*	500,000 ~ 1,000,000
I small city	*I xing xiao chengshi, I 型小城市*	200,000 ~ 500,000
II small city	*II xing xiao chengshi, II 型小城市*	Less than 200,000

According to the CBN standard, 337 Chinese cities are divided into six levels: (1) four first-tier cities including Shanghai, Beijing, Guangzhou, and Shenzhen (in the CBN order); (2) fifteen new first-tier cities which are usually capital cities and well-developed cities of some provinces, such as Xi'an, Hangzhou, and Wuhan; (3) 30 second-tier cities, 70 third-tier cities, 90 fourth-tier cities, and 128 fifth-tier cities (CBN, 2024; Table 4-2)

Table 4-2. Urban hierarchy in China based on the CBN standard (*Source: CBN, 2024*).

Levels of cities	**Numbers of cities and examples**
First-tier cities	4, including Shanghai, Beijing, Shenzhen, and Guangzhou
New first-tier cities	15, including Chengdu, Hangzhou, Chongqing, Suzhou, Wuhan, Xi'an, Nanjing, Changsha, Tianjin, Zhengzhou, Dongguan, Wuxi, Ningbo, Qingdao, and Hefei
Second-tier cities	30, such as Xiamen, Harbin, Quanzhou, and Zhuhai
Third-tier cities	70, such as Urumqi, Haikou, Luoyang, and **Anyang**
Fourth-tier cities	90
Fifth-tier cities	128

Anyang is located in Henan Province in the North China Plain (Figure 4-1). The city covers an area of 7,413 square kilometres in total with an urban area of 1,218 square kilometres (Anyang

Municipality, 2021a). The total population of permanent residents as of 2021 is around 5.4 million and the number of permanent residents in the urban area is 2.9 million, according to the Seventh National Census (Anyang Municipality, 2021b). Based on the State Council's standard, Anyang is an II-big city (with 2.9 million urban permanent residents). Based on the CBN standard, Anyang is a third-tier city as of mid-2024 (CBN, 2024).

Figure 4-1. Location of Anyang (*Source: author modified based on the China map acquired from the Ministry of Natural Resources of the People's Republic of China, http://bzdt.ch.mnr.gov.cn/*).

Seemingly, Anyang is not very low down the Chinese hierarchy of cities but is in the middle with a large population. However, the population figure needs to consider the fact that China is one of the most populated countries in the world, and Henan Province is one of the top three populated provinces in China. Even a less-developed county or village in China may have the same population as small and mid-sized cities in Europe and North America. A less-developed city in Henan Province

may have the same population as better-developed coastal cities in China. Meanwhile, compared to the nineteen top-ranked Chinese cities (four first-tier cities and fifteen new first-tier cities), the comprehensive strength of Anyang is lagging far behind. The gaps between Anyang and other lower-ranked cities, however, are not as prominent as those with top-ranked cities. Considering the ranking of the city, Anyang makes a typical case of hundreds of small and mid-sized cities in China.

More importantly, Anyang has been experiencing some development dilemmas that many small and mid-sized cities in China, and even around the world, are experiencing now (e.g. Brake, 2023; Dovaa et al., 2022; Liu et al., 2012; Shen et al., 2018; Wan et al., 2018). Since the local economy used to be based on heavy industry and (is still based on) agriculture, Anyang has suffered from air pollution and land degradation for decades. Partly to resolve environmental issues, some major factories are moving out of the city now, leading to severe deindustrialisation and increasing unemployment. The local economy was also heavily hit by a Ponzi scheme prevalent across the entire city around the 2010s. The urban governance of Anyang in terms of the public trust in the local government and the consistency of local policies has been severely damaged by the corruption and subsequent arrest of several local top officials in the past decades. I will give more detail in Chapter Five on some of the contextual information, as it is closely related to the local officials' rationales for conducting the CSHD Project.

In a word, the most prominent development dilemma for Anyang, as well as many other small and mid-sized cities in China is a stagnating or even declining local economy which then brings a chain effect to cause many other urban issues, such as unemployment, degraded infrastructure, deteriorated public service, etc. (Wan, et al., 2018). What is worse is that many of these issues reinforce one another, making the long-term development of these cities even more difficult. The development dilemmas demonstrate the importance of studying small and mid-sized cities in China and around the world.

Context of Anyang: Culture-led Revitalisation and Heritage Conservation

The current local government of Anyang has recognised the development dilemmas. Thus, it is exploring diverse approaches to boosting economic development and improving the built

environment of the city. The exuberant heritage resources have been deemed valuable opportunities by the local government. In fact, cultural heritage has always been a symbol of the entire Henan Province. The province is where the mainstream Han Chinese culture along the Yellow River originated. It is thus one of the provinces with the richest heritage resources in China ranging from archaeological sites of royal tombs and palaces to historic buildings and structures, grottoes, and various antiques. Four of the "Eight Ancient Capitals" in China are located in Henan Province, including Anyang[16]. In imperial China, seven dynasties established their capital cities in Anyang (An, 2016). The best-known heritage in Anyang is Yin Xu, the archaeological site where the royal palaces and tombs of the Shang Dynasty were located and where the earliest Chinese characters and thousands of bronze wares, including the heaviest one around the world, were excavated. In 2006, Yin Xu was designated a World Cultural Heritage (UNESCO, 2006). Despite the rich heritage resources and significance in Chinese history, among the Eight Ancient Capitals, Anyang is one of the least developed and ranked lowest on the Chinese hierarchy of cities (the other is Kaifeng; CBN, 2023; State Council, 2014).

Since around the 2010s, the local government of Anyang has been gradually attempting heritage conservation and heritage tourism. The local government aims at transforming the declining primary and secondary industries into the tertiary industry and raising the national recognition of the city. So far, the local government has made several moves. In 2009, under the guidance of the central government, the local government of Anyang constructed the National Museum of Chinese Writing, given that the earliest Chinese characters were discovered in Anyang (The National Museum of Chinese Writing, n.d.). In 2012, the local government started to plan and execute the regeneration of the Old City of Anyang, though the very first project failed, which I will discuss in more detail in Chapter Five. In 2020, the local government refurbished four historical villages in the rural area and promoted them as heritage tourism destinations (Jia, 2020). The National Archaeological Park of Yin Xu, one of the first national archaeological parks in China, has been under construction since January 2020, which is a part of the central government's heritage conservation plan (Shi, 2020). In 2023, the local government converted the desolate yarn-spinning factory into a tourist attraction as a

16 The Eight Ancient Capitals in China are Beijing, Nanjing, Hangzhou, Xi'an, Luoyang, Kaifeng, Zhengzhou, and Anyang. The last four are located in Henan Province.

strategy for reusing industrial heritage in the city (Gao & Niu, 2023). In the same year, Cao Cao's Mausoleum Site Museum was opened[17] (Xie, 2023).

Among all the heritage-related endeavours in the city, the regeneration of the Old City is of great importance, as it directly relates to hundreds of thousands of citizens' lives in the city, including people who live or work there or commute through the Old City, not only about urban heritage. After the failed first project in the 2010s, the local government has tried out heritage conservation in other historic districts in the Old City. It is against this backdrop that the Regeneration Project of Cangxiang Street Historic District has been planned and implemented. CSHD is one of the first historic districts in Anyang to be designated as a Provincial Major Historic District in 2018, and one of the first historic districts to finish the first-stage conservation "successfully". Other historic districts in Anyang will follow the conservation model of CSHD (Professional Interview – SC01). Therefore, this research will use CSHD as the case study in Anyang which arguably represents the current conservation approaches of the local government as a pilot project and has been highly publicised by the local government (Government Interviews; Professional Interviews).

4.2 Context of Cangxiang Street Historic District

Cangxiang Street Historic District (CSHD) is an integral part of the Old City of Anyang. Generally speaking, the Old City of Anyang is a typical northern Chinese city during the Ming and Qing Dynasties (similar and more famous examples are those in Beijing and Xi'an). The Old City of Anyang used to be demarcated by four City Walls and a moat. Four City Gates and some turrets were attached to the City Walls (Figure 4-2). Within the City Walls, the Old City was comprised of small alleyways (*hutong, 胡同*) and courtyard houses (*siheyuan, 四合院*), similar to those in Beijing. Two axes ran through the city from the north to the south and the east to the west. The Drum Tower and the Bell Tower were located along the north-south axis. Out of military defence considerations, the axes of the Old City of Anyang were not "central" axes like those in Beijing (An, 2016).

17 Cao Cao (*曹操*, 155A.D. – 220A.D.) is one of the most famous historical figures in China who lived during the Three Kingdoms period at the end of the Han Dynasty. His tomb was excavated in Anyang.

Figure 4-2. The Old City of Anyang during the Ming and Qing Dynasties (*Source: provided by local officials. English notes and labels added by author*).
Note. Anyang was called Zhangdefu in the Ming and Qing Dynasties.

CSHD is located in the north half of the Old City of Anyang (Figure 4-3; Figure 4-4) and is comprised of some of the most ancient alleyways and courtyard houses in the Old City (Figure 4-5). The buildings are residential dwellings mostly constructed with grey bricks and dated back to the 17th to the 19th century in the Ming and Qing Dynasties (Song, 2019; Figure 4-6). A few buildings with red bricks were constructed during the Republic of China from the 1910s to the 1940s (Professional Interview – DS01; Figure 4-7). The main street, Cangxiang Street, is approximately 500 metres long and 5 metres wide (Figure 4-8; Figure 4-9). An important element in CSHD is a pond, Houcangkeng (*后仓坑*; Figure 4-10) that connects to the underground canals and the moat of the Old City. CSHD prospered in the Ming and Qing Dynasties when the government-run granaries were located along Cangxiang Street and many wealthy businesspeople lived there (An, 2016).

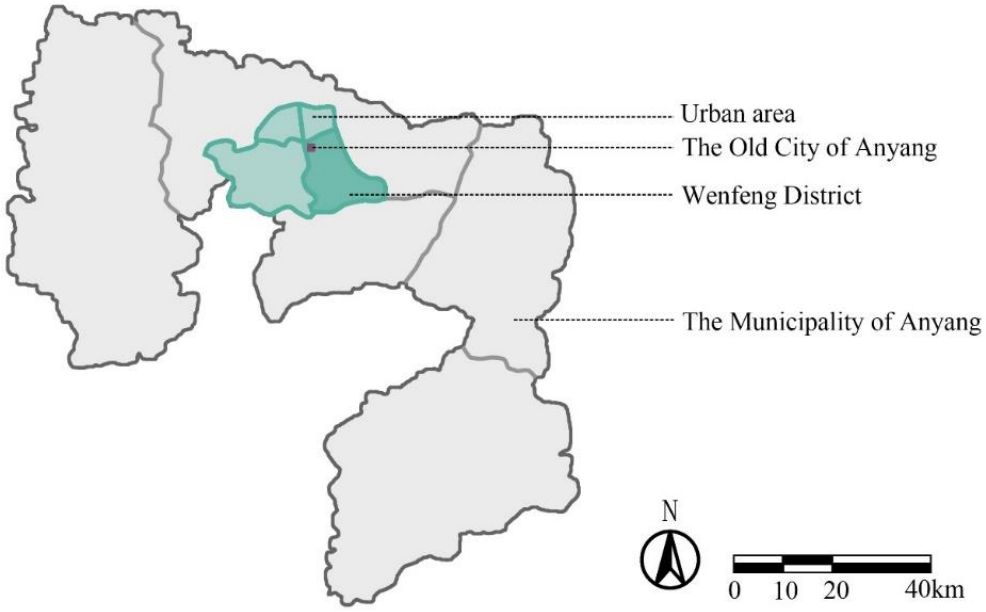

Figure 4-3. Location of the Old City of Anyang in Anyang Municipality (*Source: author modified based on The Conservation Plan of the Historical and Cultural City of Anyang, 2018*).

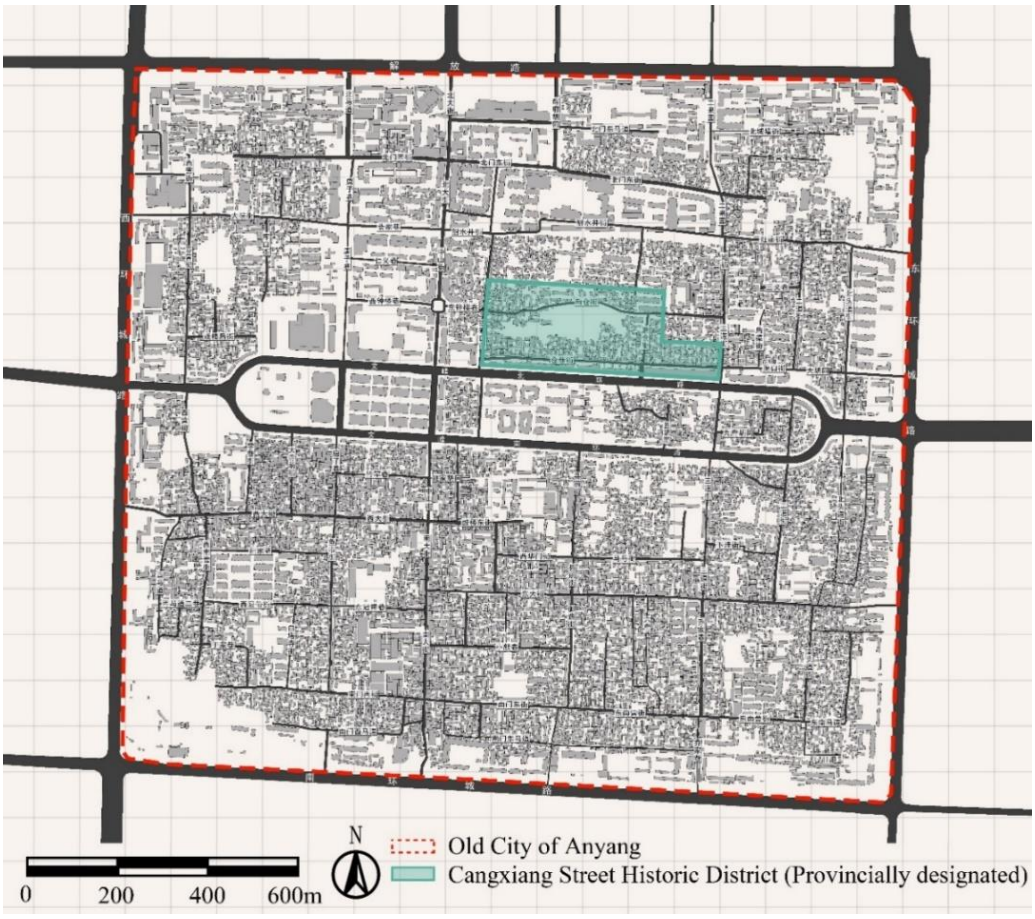

Figure 4-4. Location of Cangxiang Street Historic District in the Old City of Anyang (*Source: author modified based on The Conservation Plan of Cangxiang Street Historic District, 2018*).

Figure 4-5. Top view of Cangxiang Street Historic District (*Source: provided by local officials, taken in 2019*).

Figure 4-6. One residential courtyard house (after the district government's restoration) on Cangxiang Street (*Source: author, 2021*).

Note. The district government has converted some rooms of this courtyard house into a museum. The plan is to use all the space as a museum.

Figure 4-7. Buildings constructed during the Republic of China in Cangxiang Street Historic District (*Source: author, 2021*).

Note. These buildings are still owned and used by locals as small businesses now. The district government has refurbished the façades.

Figure 4-8. East section (museum area) of Cangxiang Street (*Source: provided by local officials, taken in 2019*).

Figure 4-9. West section (small business area) of Cangxiang Street (*Source: provided by local officials, taken in 2019*).

Figure 4-10. Houcangkeng (*Source: author, 2021)*.

Current Property Ownership and Building Condition

CSHD has been a residential area for hundreds of years. The current building conditions in this area are not ideal, making regeneration necessary for the well-being of the residents. The property

ownership, however, has added some difficulty to the CSHD Project.

The transformation of property ownership since the 1950s in CSHD is similar to many other heritage areas in Chinese cities. The self-constructed and privately owned historic buildings dating back several hundreds of years were confiscated by the Party-state after 1949 when the People's Republic of China was founded. The buildings thus became state-owned. In Anyang, the Party-state distributed these then-state-owned houses to locals who gradually purchased these houses at very low prices during the planned economy era. One big courtyard house was usually shared by two to dozens of households, each occupying very limited space. Before the one-child policy in the 1980s, each household had multiple children, thus the living space per person was even more limited. To expand their living spaces, some households constructed extra floors or extra buildings in the courtyards (Resident Interviews). Due to the incomplete property law back then, the households did not have officially-issued deeds. Only in the recent decade has the local government started to issue official deeds to these households. The local government sometimes considers the self-constructed floors and buildings illegal construction, so refuses to issue deeds which then avoids paying more compensation to the households when it comes to relocation (Resident Interviews). However, according to the residents in CSHD, if the households have personal connections with the local government, the local government may consider the "illegal construction" legal and issue deeds (Resident Interviews). Currently, most households who already acquired deeds own the buildings, while the urban land is still owned by the state according to the land law in China (National People's Congress, 2019b).

Before the households obtained official deeds, some properties went through some transactions and/or divisions between family members following the deaths of the first-generation owners after 1949 (Resident Interviews). This has become an acute issue in CSHD and other heritage areas in China, because during government-led relocation, how to divide the compensation among family members can be complicated. In some cases, some family members do not have official documents to prove their ownership. In other cases, in Chinese tradition, female descendants are not entitled to inherit the property, but younger generations are increasingly challenging this custom. The disputes among family members have become one of the reasons why some households refuse to move during regeneration in China's heritage areas (Wei, 2022), and are observed in CSHD (Resident

Interviews).

The building conditions in CSHD are generally poor. There is a lack of private toilets and functional spaces such as separate kitchens, storage spaces, parking spaces, and green spaces (Resident Interviews; personal observation). Some households have already moved to modern apartment buildings elsewhere before the CSHD Project. The buildings they left behind have gradually become dilapidated due to a lack of maintenance (Resident Interviews; personal observation). The Street Offices sometimes put up signage to warn the residents and passers-by to be careful about the dilapidated buildings (Figure 4-11). Some buildings are also very humid and have bad natural lighting (Resident Interviews; Figure 4-12).

Figure 4-11. A vacant and dilapidated house in Cangxiang Street Historic District (*Source: author, 2021*)
Note. The red signage says “This building is dangerous. Please stay away from it”. The Street Office of Tianshuijing Street put up the signage (Government Interview – GV02).

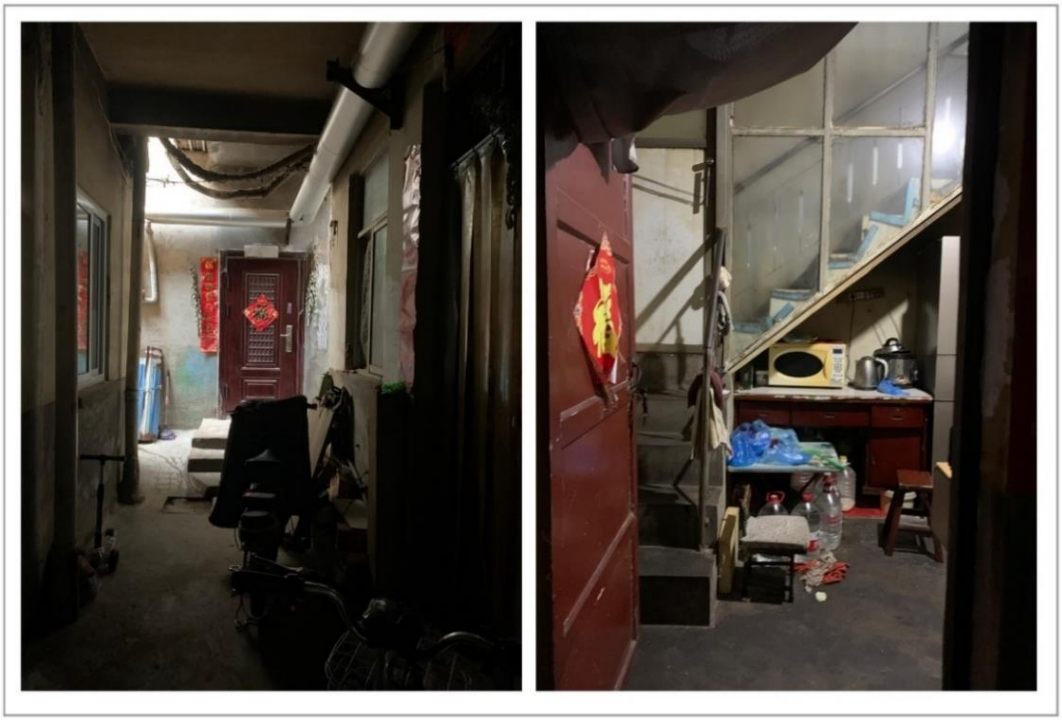

Figure 4-12. The hallway (left) and the kitchen (right) of a house in Cangxiang Street Historic District (*Source: author, 2021*).
Note. The owner granted me consent to use the photos. The owner said that the house is very humid. Even during the daytime, they need to turn on lights when entering the hallway and the rooms (Resident Interview – RN17).

There have been some tenants moving into CSHD since the rapid urbanisation of Anyang in the 2000s. Different from major cities in China, the tenants in CSHD are usually from the rural area of Anyang Municipality and live in CSHD temporarily. During school seasons, parents stay in CSHD to send their children to schools close to CSHD while finding temporary and short-term jobs in the city. During school breaks and when there is agricultural work to do, the tenants usually go back to the villages (Resident Interviews). Since the tenants do not own the properties, the district government does not consider them in the relocation plan.

Regarding “real” heritage, according to the residents (Resident Interviews), only Cangxiang Street has kept some original historic buildings dating back to the Ming and Qing Dynasties or the Republic of China. In other streets of CSHD, most of the buildings have been at least partly torn down and rebuilt by the residents in the past decades due to the deteriorating building conditions and the need to expand living spaces. Most of the reconstruction and repair did not follow the historical appearance, materials, or techniques. Considering this fact, I will discuss in the next chapters that the

current restoration and refurbishment approaches taken by the district government run the risk of Disneyfying CSHD.

Considering the building conditions and living conditions, as I have argued elsewhere, in order to at least meet the safety and hygiene requirements, it is necessary to repair or even reconstruct the dilapidated buildings, upgrade the infrastructure, and permanently or temporarily relocate the residents to reduce population density or to facilitate the repair and reconstruction in heritage areas like CSHD (Wei, 2022). In fact, the local government is upgrading the infrastructure in the Old City of Anyang. It has hired contractors to install heating and natural gas in individual households, add street lights, and move electric wires underground in public spaces (Government Interviews; Resident Interviews; personal observation). The plumbing and urban waterlogging issue and the dilapidated houses remain unsolved at this point. However, these upgrading projects are not part of the CSHD Project, but mainly to meet the environmental protection requirements of the provincial government (Government Interviews; Resident Interviews).

Overview of the Conservation Plan and the Project

The municipal government started to plan the CSHD Project in 2015. To facilitate the Project and to meet the requirement of the central government on conserving urban historic districts, the municipal government of Anyang hired one prestigious planning institute from Beijing to produce *The Conservation Plan of Cangxiang Street Historic District* (hereinafter the Conservation Plan). The main contents of the Conservation Plan include the boundaries of the core conservation zone and the construction control zone of CSHD; the heritage value of CSHD; major tangible and intangible elements that require preservation; measures of preserving the major elements; the land use plan of CSHD; infrastructure and disaster prevention in CSHD; and timeline of executing the Conservation Plan. According to the land use plan within the Conservation Plan (Figure 4-13), CSHD will keep its residential function in the areas of “mixed use of traditional courtyard houses”. Cultural industries, traditional businesses (referring to traditional food, craftsmanship, etc.), hotels and hostels, and cultural museums will be integrated into CSHD. As a result, commercial land will be largely increased. As I will argue in the following chapters, the CSHD Project has been highly economic development-oriented.

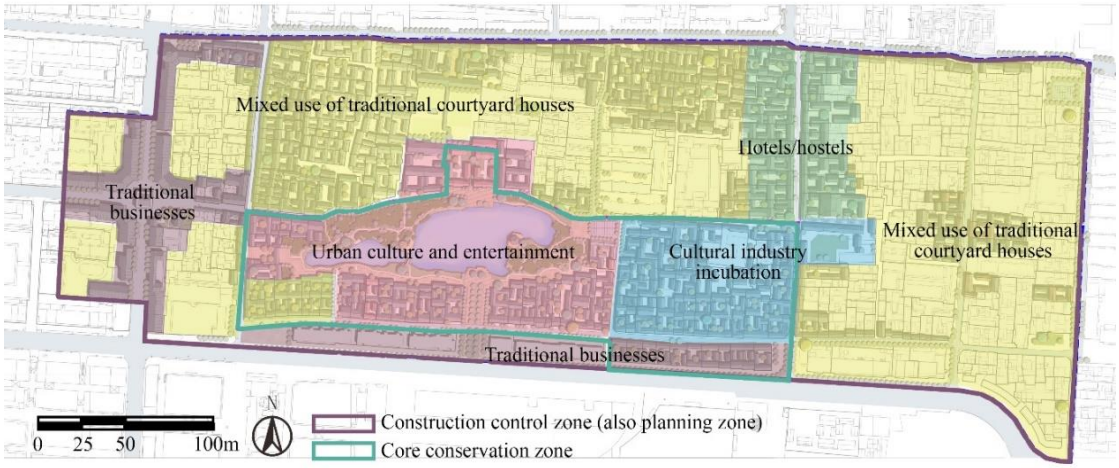

Figure 4-13. Land use plan of Cangxiang Street Historic District (*Source: The Conservation Plan of Cangxiang Street Historic District, 2018. English notes added by author*).

According to the timeline for executing the Project in the Conservation Plan (Figure 4-14), the Project constitutes short-term, medium-term, and long-term work. The Conservation Plan does not specify what it means by short-, medium-, and long-term. The planners envisaged short-term as the next five years, medium-term as the next ten years, and long-term as the next twenty and even fifty years (Professional Interview – PL02). However, as I will show in the next chapters, the Project has been moving much faster. The speed of the Project and the economic development-oriented feature of the Project both serve the political and economic agenda of the local officials.

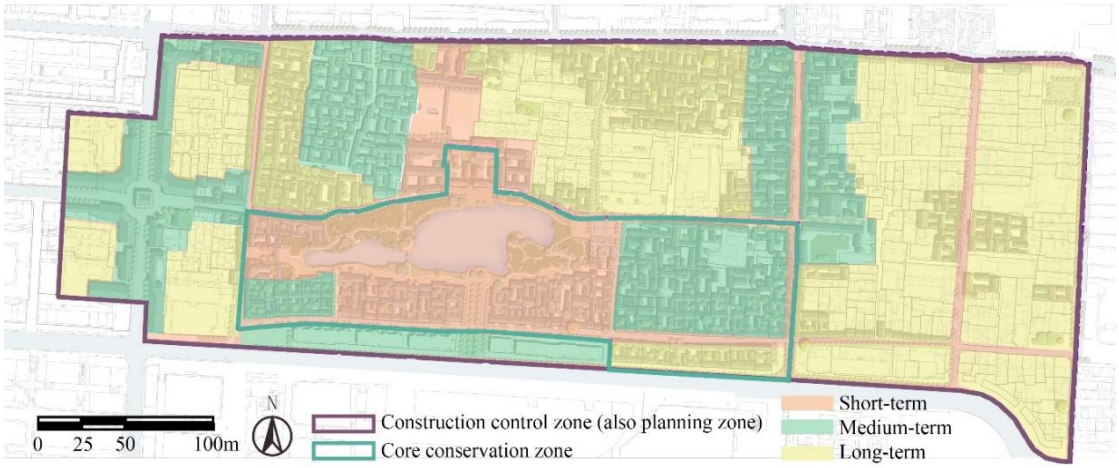

Figure 4-14. Timeline for executing the Project (*Source: The Conservation Plan of Cangxiang Street Historic District, 2018. English notes added by author*).

To better conduct the CSHD Project, the local officials travelled to major cities to learn from their experience of conserving urban heritage areas. Thus the conservation of CSHD is similar to other

conservation works in other cities such as Nanluoguxiang in Beijing, Xintiandi in Shanghai, and Kuanzhaixiangzi in Chengdu, which involves demolition and reconstruction of dilapidated buildings, restoration of major historic buildings, façade refurbishment of non-historic buildings, residents' relocation, and commercialisation (An, 2020).

After the first stage of the Project, the district government opened Cangxiang Street to the public before the Chinese New Year in January 2019. Since then, CSHD has become very popular among its own citizens, especially during the Chinese New Year (Figure 4-15) and other holidays and has been labelled as the "internet-famous site to take a snapshot" (*wanghong daka di, 网红打卡地*) by local media (Feng, 2019). This is quite different from the heritage areas in major cities which are mostly filled with tourists from elsewhere and criticised by residents and local citizens in general (e.g. Bideau & Yan, 2018; Shin, 2010). In my fieldwork, some tourists explained that the popularity of CSHD is because the recreational space in Anyang is relatively limited. CSHD has provided a new public space for entertainment (Tourist Interviews).

Figure 4-15. The crowd on Cangxiang Street during the 2019 Chinese New Year (*Source: provided by local officials, taken in 2019*).
Note. Identifiable faces are blurred.

As of the end of September 2021 when I finished my fieldwork, the district government had started to refurbish façades of buildings along other major alleyways in CSHD. It will finish the next stages of the Project in the following few years, including relocating more residents, finishing all the refurbishment and restoration, and inviting more businesses to CSHD (Figure 4-16). The local government also aims to connect CSHD with other heritage areas in the Old City to expand the area under conservation and create an integrated and large-scale tourist attraction. The long-term plan is quite ambitious and targets the entire Old City (Figure 4-17).

Figure 4-16. Rendering of Cangxiang Street Historic District (from southeast to northwest) after regeneration (*Source: provided by local officials*).

Figure 4-17. Rendering of the Old City of Anyang (from south to north) after regeneration (*Source: provided by local officials*).

The Administrative Structure of the Project

In terms of implementing the CSHD Project, the local government of Anyang as the initiator, major policy-maker and enforcer, has developed its administrative system for the Project (Figure 4-18).

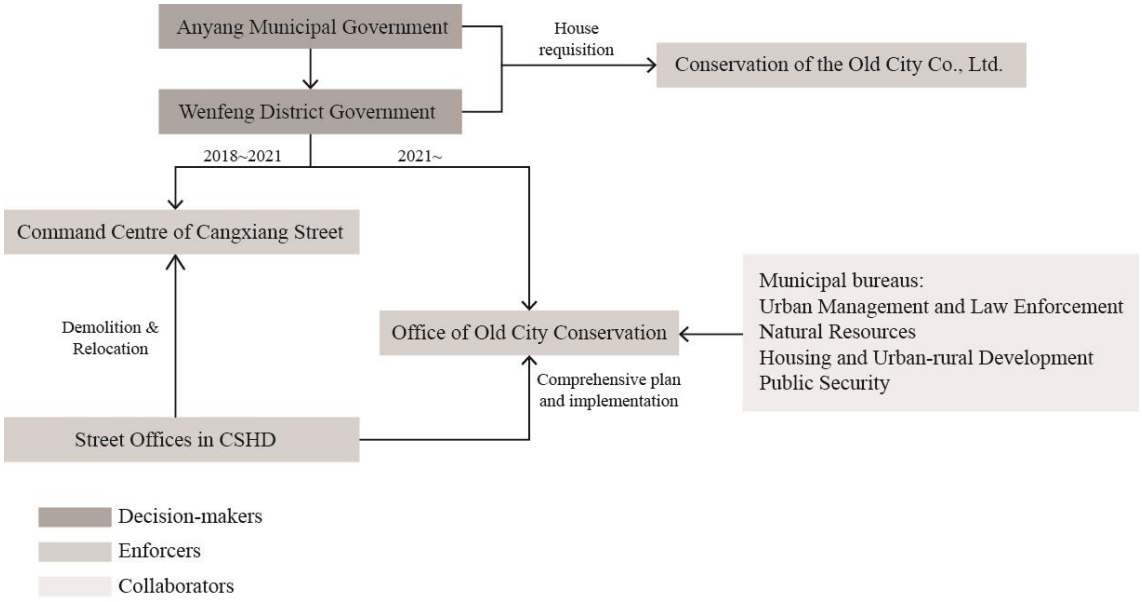

Figure 4-18. The administrative structure of the Project *(Source: author, based on Government Interview – GV05).*

CSHD as well as the entire Old City of Anyang is located in Wenfeng District, the biggest and wealthiest district of Anyang. The Municipal Government of Anyang initially planned the Project and then delegated it to the Wenfeng District Government to continue to plan and implement the Project. The district government soon set up a special office, the Command Centre of Cangxiang Street comprised of district government officials. From 2018 to mid-2021, This office worked with the Street Offices within CSHD to conduct the relocation of residents, demolition of dilapidated buildings, and building restoration/refurbishment in CSHD (Government Interview – GV02). In the meantime, the municipal government and the district government set up the Conservation of the Old City Co. Ltd. with 51% funding from the municipal government and 49% funding from the district government to conduct the requisition and restoration/refurbishment of buildings of the entire Old City, not limited to CSHD. This company also owns the requisitioned houses in the Old City. The profits from redeveloping the houses (like income from renting the houses to businesses) will be divided between the municipal government and the district government with a ratio of 51:49 (Government Interview – GV05).

In May 2021, the district government set up the Office of Old City Conservation to replace the Command Centre of Cangxiang Street which would be shortly dismissed. The Office of Old City Conservation involves staff of the district government and several municipal government agencies, including the Urban Management and Law Enforcement Bureau, the Natural Resources Bureau, the Housing and Urban-rural Development Bureau, and the Public Security Bureau. Since mid-2021, the Office of Old City Conservation has been responsible for the remaining Project, including the restoration/refurbishment and (re)construction work, relocation of residents, attracting businesses and investments, daily management, etc. It will also implement some other regeneration projects in the Old City in the next few years (Government Interview – GV05).

According to Lieberthal and Oksenberg (1988), China's fragmented authoritarianism is largely rooted in its *tiaokuai* (strip and block) system within the bureaucracy (see Chapter Two, p. 57). Thus it is possible that among the municipal and district government agencies, there are certain fragments and cracks and the decision-making involves bargaining and consensus-building among these government agencies[18]. However, this thesis focuses on the interaction between the state actors and nonstate actors, thus inter-governmental bargaining is out of the scope of this thesis.

4.3 Summary

Critical heritage studies has received increasing attention in China. However, there is still a lack of studies focusing on small and mid-sized cities. Research findings derived from a few cities and regions may not be applicable in these cities. Yet wider theorisation of heritage construction in China is needed to expand and nuance existing theories in critical heritage studies and China studies. And the challenges that small and mid-sized cities are facing call for more suitable solutions. To address this research gap and inspired by the idea of "ordinary cities"(Robinson, 2002, 2006), this thesis uses

18 I did not directly investigate the inter-governmental disputes, bargaining, and consensus-building in the CSHD Project. However, there is an example of inter-governmental fragmentation in Anyang's heritage conservation. Although the Old City of Anyang is fully located in Wenfeng District, the agreement between the district government and the municipal government is that the district government works on regenerating the northern half of the Old City, and the municipal government works on regenerating the southern half. In the Old City, another heritage area called Xianqian Street area has been going through a regeneration project as well, slightly later than the CSHD Project. The Xianqian Street project is directly led by the municipal government as this area is located in the southern half of the Old City; while CSHD is located in the northern half, thus the regeneration of CSHD is led by the district government. As the two projects are almost concurrent and the municipal government outranks the district government, when it comes to obtaining resources from different municipal and district bureaus and demonstrating the regeneration results to upper-level governments, the municipal government and the district government do compete with each other to some extent (Government Interviews).

Anyang, a small to mid-sized city in China, as a case study. According to the urban hierarchy in China, Anyang is a medium-ranked city. The deindustrialisation and corruption in the local government and the subsequent economic decline exemplify some development dilemmas of small and mid-sized cities. The local government's current efforts in heritage-led revitalisation exemplify a common strategy taken by small and mid-sized and deindustrialised cities for reversing economic downturns (e.g. Evans & Foord, 2006; Rautenberg, 2012).

It is against the backdrop of deindustrialisation and economic decline that the regeneration of the Old City of Anyang has been planned and implemented by the municipal government. The CSHD Project is the pilot project for the regeneration of the Old City. Different steps of the Project, including the designation of CSHD, the conservation planning, the relocation of original residents, the building restoration/refurbishment, and the economic redevelopment, represent the local government's approaches to dealing with heritage conservation and tourism. The characteristics of CSHD and the characteristics of the Project are similar to many other urban heritage areas in China and their regeneration projects. At the same time, CSHD and the Project are to some extent unique. The representativeness, as well as uniqueness, will both contribute to the theorisation and reflection on China's heritage construction. In the next three chapters, I will discuss the representativeness and uniqueness of CSHD, the Project, and the City of Anyang in more detail to explore how heritage is constructed in China.

Chapter 5. Conservation Planning: Conflicts and Compromises between Heritage Professionals and the Local Government

5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the initiation of the Regeneration Project of Cangxiang Street Historic District (hereinafter the CSHD Project or the Project), the conservation planning process of the Project, and the restoration/refurbishment of buildings in CSHD. It focuses on two actors: the local government of Anyang including the municipal and district levels, and heritage professionals including planners, designers, and local scholars. It also touches upon the role of the central government as a contextual actor.

I will show that the CSHD Project has demonstrated several characteristics, economic development-oriented, excluding private developers, and an emphasis on speedy delivery. These characteristics make the Project similar to other heritage (and urban development) projects in China in the sense of pursuing local economic growth and being conducted in a fast and efficient manner. But the Project is also unique in the sense of completely excluding the private sector. How the municipal government reached the decision to exclude the private sector, in particular, reveals the persisting development dilemmas that small and mid-sized cities like Anyang face. The characteristics of the Project, I will argue, reflect three rationales of the local government for conducting the Project: to acquire local officials' personal political promotion, to increase local revenue, and to strengthen the legitimacy of the local state. The rationales constitute part of the local government's authorised heritage discourse for CSHD: viewing CSHD as a political and economic resource to realise their political and economic agenda.

I will then highlight the conflicts between the heritage professionals and the local government and the compromises that each had to make. The conflicts and compromises were centred around what principles to follow to conduct heritage conservation and the timeline of the Project. Recognising and evaluating the conflicts and compromises are significant, as I will argue that the conflicts and

compromises first and foremost reflect the FA of China's heritage system (Lieberthal & Oksenberg, 1988), particularly how fragmentation is unfolded within the authoritarian system. Here, it is system fragmentation that is at work, since China's heritage laws and regulations specifically stipulate that heritage professionals are legitimate decision-makers. However, the authoritarian nature of the system grants the local top leaders paramount power that confines the heritage professionals. Consequently, heritage professionals can influence the local government to some extent, but their efforts may not necessarily result in policy changes.

In the meantime, the analysis of the conflicts and compromises links critical heritage studies with FA. The conflicts and compromises not only illustrate the diverse manifestations of heritage dissonance but more importantly point out that the roots of heritage dissonance are sometimes bounded by the pre-existing political system. Thus, the investigation of the system with the help of other frameworks such as FA is beneficial to deepen the arguments of critical heritage studies. The conflicts and compromises also differentiate heritage professionals from the local government. The former possesses cultural authority and the latter possesses political authority, which results in different roles in conservation planning. Therefore, how to understand the "authority (or authorities)" in the concept of authorised heritage discourse may be controversial. Relatedly, when we criticise the impacts of authorised heritage discourse, who or what we are criticising exactly needs to be clarified.

This chapter proceeds as follows: Section 5.2 looks at why the municipal government launched the Project and discusses the common development dilemmas for small and mid-sized cities. Section 5.3 details the interactions between the local officials and the heritage professionals. Section 5.4 reflects on the interactions with the concept of FA and the framework of critical heritage studies. Section 5.5 concludes this chapter.

5.2 Project Initiation: Rationales of the Local Government

In the CSHD Project, the Municipal Government of Anyang and the Wenfeng District Government were the initiators and major decision-makers of the Project. According to a local official (Government Interview – GV05), the municipal government planned the CSHD Project as part of

the regeneration of the entire Old City of Anyang to develop heritage tourism mainly to revitalise the local economy. This motive is induced by the development dilemmas that Anyang has been facing since its deindustrialisation and other incidents, which I will discuss in the first subsection. In the meantime, different from many other heritage areas in China (e.g. Baitasi area in Beijing, see Wei, 2022; Xintiandi in Shanghai, see Yan, 2012), the CSHD Project does not involve private developers, as I will explain in the second subsection.

Anyang's Development Dilemmas and Cultural-led Revitalisation

After the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949, Anyang has always been a small to mid-sized city compared to major cities in China in terms of economy. However, it did once have prosperous light and heavy industries operated by state-owned enterprises. Since the economic reform in 1978, these state-owned enterprises have been constantly reformed and reorganised. Some of them gradually declined or went bankrupt, while others still prospered up until the 2000s. Among them, Anyang Iron & Steel Group Co. Ltd., Henan Yubei Textile Co. Ltd., and Henan Ancai Hi-tech Co. Ltd. were the mainstay industries that accounted for a big proportion of the city's GDP and created many jobs for locals.

In recent years, the biggest company Anyang Iron & Steel Group Co. Ltd. (hereinafter Angang, *安钢*, the nickname used by the locals) has been reducing production and gradually moving some facilities to Zhengzhou and Zhoukou, two other cities in Henan Province. The reason for reducing production and moving to other cities is complicated. In addition to solving air pollution, Angang is located within the conservation zone of Yin Xu, the World Cultural Heritage site, thus it is difficult for Angang to expand spatially because of heritage conservation regulations. Zhoukou is another less-developed city in Henan Province. Angang will thus help boost the economy of Zhoukou. The decision to partly relocate Angang was made by the provincial government, several municipal governments, and the company together (Professional Interview – SC01). According to the interviewee (Professional Interview – SC01), the municipal government of Anyang had to support the decision of the provincial government as both levels of the government needed to consider the "bigger picture" of the province. However, the municipal officials did have frustration and concerns about Anyang's development.

Currently, the loss of major industries of Anyang has led to a dramatic economic decline in the city, making it one of the least-developed cities in Henan Province. Ayang's case gives us a glimpse of the potential contradiction between heritage conservation and economic development (for similar debates, see the conversation between Listokin et al., 1998 and Werwath, 1998; etc.), as well as the difficulty of coordinated development at the regional level (Li et al., 2014). These various internal and external factors all culminate in the development dilemmas faced by small and mid-sized cities.

Additionally, the economic situation of Anyang has been worsened by a city-wide Ponzi scheme. Some small-scale Ponzi schemes in the city started as early as the 1990s. In the 2010s, some big companies in the city started more rounds of fundraising with the support of the municipal government. Individuals and companies made more than 300 dummy corporations, with the endorsement of the municipal government (which was not fully aware of the true situation and some corrupt officials were involved in the Ponzi scheme). A large number of locals "saved" their money in those corporations. The heads of the corporations then absconded with the money. When people realised the truth, on the first day of 2012, thousands of them gathered at the local train station and other public spaces to ask the municipal government to act. Some sources estimated that around 30.7 billion yuan was defrauded (Anyang Intermediate People's Court, 2019), while other sources' estimation was around 43 billion yuan (Zhao, 2018)[19].

Although I could not trace the official record in terms of how many locals were defrauded, how much money was lost in total, and how many people were eventually criminalised and jailed, it is undoubtedly a huge Ponzi scheme that astonished the entire country and heavily hindered the economic development of the city (Resident Interviews; Tourist Interviews). Given that some local officials were involved in the crime, many local citizens have developed a strong distrust of the local government since then. The image of Anyang was also negatively affected in the country, which has become a hindrance to attracting outside investment (Professional Interview – SC01).

Deindustrialisation has been the direct cause of the economic decline of the city, while the Ponzi scheme has indirectly undermined the local economy by reducing the local citizens' savings and

19 These sources only counted some major dummy corporations, not all of them. So it is highly likely that the total amount of money lost was much larger than the estimated numbers.

local consumption. The drastic economic decline of the city means that it was, and is crucial to find other ways to boost the local economy. Similar to many deindustrialising cities and regions with heritage assets (for similar examples, see Evans & Foord, 2006; Rautenberg, 2012; etc.), one way of fulfilling the goal of economic revitalisation is using the rich heritage resources of the city to develop heritage tourism. Indeed, as Oakes (2006, p. 15) points out, "turning cities into economic growth machines [means] emphasising their unique place-based amenities and endowments". In Anyang, place-based uniqueness means its heritage and heritage-related titles, such as the National Historical and Cultural City (State Council, 1986), and one of the "Eight Ancient Capitals" in China. The heritage and titles have given Anyang a good cultural reputation in the country. As one local scholar commented in my interview:

> Anyang has experienced a painful transition. We used to have all kinds of industries. We didn't need to ask for anything from others because we produced everything on our own. After the Opening and Reform, many state-owned enterprises went bankrupt. We lost a lot of stuff……. But we have a beautiful history…… The ancient dynasties that built their capitals in Anyang were not long-lasting, but they were important in Chinese history. So, we need to strive for cultural revitalisation using these resources (Professional Interview – SC01).

Not only the local government and scholars, but some citizens are aware of the economic issue of the city and the economic value of the heritage, thus understanding and supporting the heritage tourism strategy of the local government. One tourist expressed that:

> In the beginning, our city was rich. Why? Because we had all those factories producing aluminium alloy, steel and iron, and so forth. Angang [Anyang Iron & Steel Group Co. Ltd.] used to be very rich because all the other companies were dependent on it. But when you need to protect the environment, production has to be stopped. Then what can those laid-off workers do? When you don't have a job, you have to develop tourism with the heritage and hope that the small vendors can bring more tourists here. When you have more tourists, you earn more money (Tourist Interview – TR23).

Therefore, the conservation of the cultural heritage of Anyang, including CSHD, has become the local government's major economic revitalisation approach. How the district government is reusing the historic and non-historic buildings in CSHD reflects this economic development-oriented goal. Currently, the district government has rented some restored/refurbished buildings to businesspeople to run different types of shops in the area, such as bubble tea, local snacks, traditional boutiques, bars, bookstores, and restaurants. The district government was working on a new round of inviting

businesses to the area when I was conducting my fieldwork (Government Interview – GV05). The land use plan for CSHD shows that a large area is indeed designated for businesses (see Figure 4-13 in Chapter Four, p. 107).

Failed Experience and the Exclusion of Private Developer

The municipal government's motivation *for* doing the CSHD Project is influenced by the economic decline of the city, while *how* to do the Project is influenced by a failed regeneration project in Anyang, the regeneration of the South Street area.

Similar to CSHD, the South Street area is also part of the Old City of Anyang, located on its southern edge (Figure 5-1). As the very first move of the Old City regeneration, the municipal government delegated the South Street project to a local private company, Yuda Real Estate, in 2010. However, the private company took a haphazard approach. According to a local planner (Professional Interview – PL01), "The policy was messy [in terms of inconsistent compensation plans for the locals to relocate and unregulated demolition of historic buildings, as this planner further explained]." As a result, the project caused disrupted life and emotional fluctuation for the residents, and "many historic buildings were demolished without the local government's permission". In addition, "the requisition of houses was fast" (Professional Interview – PL01). Given this speed and chaos, as noted by one local official (Government Interview – GV05), among the 1,616 households that the local government planned to relocate, about 30 poor households were unable to relocate due to costs. In the end, the municipal government pulled out the private developer and suspended the project. The area has been left mostly dilapidated (Figure 5-2).

Figure 5-1. General location of the South Street area (*Source: author modified based on the conservation plans provided by the district government*).

Figure 5-2. Empty and dilapidated buildings on South Street (*Source: author, 2021*).

Although the interviewees were reluctant to explain why the policy was messy, and why the private developer did not follow some policies and regulations, as this project may be an embarrassment for the local government, they concluded that "the project was a failure. The municipal government decided to take over all the jobs when it came to the regeneration of CSHD". The principle would be "conservation first" to preserve as many historic buildings as possible (Government Interview – GV05). In contrast, the planners attributed the municipal government's exclusion of private developers in later heritage projects to another reason. "It is because the municipal government could no longer afford another failed project, as it would turn into a *political risk* [emphasis added]", as noted by the planner (Professional Interview – PL02). The political risk would then affect the legitimacy of the municipal government as well as the local officials' promotion, which is the point that I will argue in the next subsection.

Three-fold Rationales of the Local Government

As noted, I argue that the historic background steeped in the failure of the South Street project has led the municipal government of Anyang to reconsider how it chose to instigate heritage projects. Taking this shift from reliance on the private sector to a local government-led approach, I will explore how this shift serves personal promotion, increasing local revenue, and enhancement of local state legitimacy. The local government's rationales, in the meantime, reflect a part of its authorised heritage discourse – viewing heritage as a political and economic resource for contemporary use.

In terms of the economic development-oriented feature of the CSHD Project, it is mainly associated with the key factor in the personnel evaluation system of Chinese government officials. As scholars have explained, one feature of China's authoritarian regime is that local officials are appointed by the upper-level governments instead of being elected by the citizens. Local officials, therefore, respond to the upper-level governments' requests more than the citizens' requests (Ren, 2020). The central government also determines the personnel evaluation criteria of Chinese local officials which are very detailed and comprehensive (Landry, 2008). Due to the need to reform the economic system and catch up with economic development, the evaluation criteria used to be local GDP-centric. That means, the economic development of the locale largely determined the promotion of the local officials (Li & Qian, 2010).

In recent years, scholars, as well as central-level officials, have criticised the personnel evaluation system as overemphasising economic performance which has led to many social issues, such as developing economy at the expense of the environment, and corruption and local protectionism in the local governments (CPC, 2019; Wu et al., 2016). The CPC and the central government have therefore reformed the criteria to include other aspects, such as moral quality, work attitude, and integrity of the officials (CPC, 2019). However, scholars argue that in practice, economic performance remains central (e.g. Chien & Woodworth, 2018; Göbel & Heberer, 2017). Yu and Gao (2019) further argue that the central government has transformed from development-oriented to social service-oriented, whereas the local governments remain development-oriented. The economic development of the city still largely contributes to the overall performance of the local officials. An efficient way to achieve economic development has been to engage in land development (Chen et al., 2017). In the case of Anyang, the CSHD Project is a typical example of land (re)development. If the Project can successfully stimulate the local economy, the Project will become a prominent "political achievement" (*zhengji, 政绩*) for the local officials. Their political future can thus be secured.

Regarding excluding private developers, it is associated with another key factor in the personnel evaluation system of Chinese government officials, i.e. the "one veto rule" (*yipiao foujue, 一票否决*). One may be curious why the planner called the private developer a potential "political risk" for the local officials (Professional Interview – PL02). One explanation is that the local government may lose control of the private developer, and the latter may do things illegally or violently. In fact, during the South Street project, there was forced eviction with violence. When some residents refused to relocate, the private developer hired a group of thugs to fiercely break into the houses and beat the residents at midnight. The construction team followed the thugs to demolish the houses with bulldozers that night. The victims actively sued the real estate company for compensation. They somehow obtained the CCTV footage and uploaded it on the Internet and tacitly posted images of their injuries in the neighbourhood to call for wider societal attention. On their posters, the victims used quite strong words to describe the assault and express their anger. To appease the victims and stop them from going to the upper-level governments, the municipal government and the real estate company finally settled with the victims with compensation of around three million yuan (Resident Interviews; Other Interview – OT05; CCTV footage and images online).

For the local officials in Anyang, such incidents are something that they need to avoid, because "social stability" has become one of the most important development goals in China since Deng Xiaoping's era in the 1980s (Buzan & Lawson, 2022) and was formally brought up by the central government in 2012 at the 16th National Congress of the CPC (Wang, J., 2015). The "one veto rule" in the personnel evaluation system means that if the local officials fail to maintain social stability and if conflicts, demonstrations, and protests from the citizens happen, these social disturbances will erase all other achievements of the local officials and deprive them of promotions (Göbel & Heberer, 2017, p. 303). Local officials who have done a good job in maintaining social stability may acquire additional promotions (Lee & Zhang, 2017). In the past decades, demolition and relocation (*chaiqian, 拆迁*) in China during urbanisation have become a heated stimulator of social disturbances (Chen, 2020). The South Street case in Anyang already gives us a glimpse into such social disturbances. The local officials of Anyang were lucky in the sense that the victims eventually did not go to the upper-level governments after they received the compensation, and this forced eviction case did not result in large-scale protests in the city. However, the local officials cannot be sure whether something similar would happen again, and whether they could handle future incidents relatively peacefully. It is again the local officials' consideration of their political future that made them decide to exclude the private developers whom the local government has deemed a "political risk".

Then what is the political future that the local officials in Anyang aspire to? Regarding the promotion logic of prefecture-level city mayors, Tingjin Lin (2012) discovers that local economic development does not always result in mayors' promotion. However, mayors who are promoted faster are easier to be appointed mayors of affluent cities. The economic base of the affluent cities then becomes a crucial edge for the mayors' future promotion. That is to say, Anyang as a less affluent city may limit the long-term career of local officials. In addition to climbing up the hierarchy within Anyang's local government, it would be promising if the local officials could be transferred to the provincial government or better-developed cities.

Even if actual promotion is less likely, local officials still strive to "save faces" in front of their superiors and peers during inter-city competition. As noted by a local official in my interview (Government Interview – GV02), the first time the municipal government nominated Anyang's

historic districts to the provincial government, Anyang's officials were very much not prepared as no one assigned any tasks to their subordinates due to lack of experience in heritage nomination. "When we went to Zhengzhou [the capital city of Henan Province] to have the meeting…… every city was presenting their projects and stuff, and we only had a piece of paper to introduce the history of Cangxiang Street [laughing and waving a piece of paper as an example]". When the nomination team returned to Anyang, "the municipal officials hugely criticised us and they were SO anxious…… It was awkward when other cities pulled out their PowerPoints and animations [laughing]" (Government Interview – GV02). Therefore, we can see that no matter whether a promotion can be realised or not, lower-level officials cannot bear to be humiliated in front of their superiors and peers, thus striving to work hard to build up political achievements. The CSHD Project can be such a good demonstration of Anyang officials' achievements to their superiors in the provincial government and peers in other cities.

In fact, the provincial government has already promoted some local officials of Anyang. Most of the district-level officials involved in the Project were promoted to the municipal government in mid-June 2021. These officials will continue to work on the Project and possibly the subsequent projects in other historic districts of the city in the next few years. Arguably, the political promotion of these local officials may not be because of the Project exclusively. I was not able to verify whether there were any other reasons for their promotion. However, the lower-level officials and some residents who claimed that they had "inside informants" at the local government believed that the Project played a significant role (Government Interviews – GV02 & GV06; Resident Interviews). Another piece of evidence that tends to verify this point is that as of June 2021, China Central Television (CCTV) has publicised the Project as a role model in promoting Chinese traditional culture, practising heritage conservation, and boosting local citizens' cultural confidence in different programmes and channels thirteen times[20]. The CCTV broadcasting means that the Project and the local officials' efforts have indeed been recognised and praised by the central government (Government Interviews – GV02 & GV05).

20 The usual process of getting broadcasted by CCTV, as introduced by the local official (Government Interview – GV02), is that the municipal government first submits broadcasting materials to the provincial government who then submits to CCTV. CCTV decides on what to publicise in accordance with the requirements of the CPC and the central government.

In addition to the personal political promotion, the economic development-oriented feature of the Project is also influenced by China's central-local fiscal system and the agriculture-based economy in Henan Province. In 1992, the central government launched the tax-sharing reform. The result, to put it simply, is that the central government acquires more taxes thus its power over financial affairs is enhanced in order to strengthen its ability to finance and redistribute. At the same time, local governments take more responsibility for providing social services and public goods with local revenue, thus having to bear more local expenditures (Zhu, X., 2019). Consequently, local governments are increasingly reliant on land transactions to increase local revenue. Urban development, encroachment of rural land, land acquisition and so forth are thus widely seen across China (Cheng et al., 2022).

In the case of Anyang, the economic decline means the reduction of taxes for the local government. In previous years, the requisition and development of agricultural land at the urban periphery of the city was fast (personal observation). However, as an agriculture-based city in an agriculture-based province, it is vital for the local governments of the entire province to preserve agricultural land to ensure that the agricultural land of China is no less than 1.8 billion mu (~0.3 billion acres) in total, a goal set up by the CPC and the central government in the 2010s (CPC & State Council, 2022). Therefore, when the rural land is limited and becomes difficult to requisition, redeveloping the Old City becomes another way to conduct land transactions. The local government of Anyang now has high economic expectations of CSHD so that it can release the financial burden due to a wide range of local expenditures (Government Interviews; various work reports provided by local officials).

The third rationale, strengthening the legitimacy of the local state is also important. Nathan (2003) argues that the durability of China's authoritarian state is partly contingent upon the Party's ability to consistently deliver rapid economic growth, which is termed "performance legitimacy" by political scientists (e.g. Shue & Thornton, 2017; Zhu, 2011). At the local level, to sustain the legitimacy of the local states and support the legitimacy of the central state, local governments need to constantly pursue economic growth. Since Anyang has been experiencing economic decline, it is now more urgent for the local government to find new approaches to stimulate the local economy. As aforementioned, the Ponzi scheme has caused strong distrust of the local government among the local citizens. Deindustrialisation and unemployment have also eroded citizens' trust and faith in the

local government (Business Interviews; Resident Interviews; Tourist Interviews). Therefore, for the local government of Anyang, it is necessary to pacify the anger and dissatisfaction of the citizens, sustain social stability, and rebuild the local state's legitimacy. The CSHD Project is such a pivotal move of the local government to achieve this goal.

As I will demonstrate in Chapters Six and Seven, the local government's approaches of relocating the original residents in CSHD and using heritage to educate the citizens also reflect the influence of the one veto rule as well as two of the three rationales, acquiring personal political promotion and enhancing state legitimacy.

Analysing the local government's rationales for the CSHD Project is important, as the rationales directly relate to how the decisions of the Project are made and implemented, as I will discuss in the next section here and in Chapters Six and Seven. Equally importantly, based on the framework of critical heritage studies (CHS), the local government's rationales constitute part of their authorised heritage discourse. CHS conceptualises heritage as a social construct to serve present needs (Harvey, 2001; Smith, 2006; etc.). The CSHD Project in Anyang is such an example of constructing heritage to serve contemporary needs, especially the local government's needs. The AHD of the local government is partly embedded in what it seeks to achieve through heritage construction. Clearly, for the local government of Anyang, CSHD is not merely a historic neighbourhood, but a political and economic resource to serve the local officials' political and economic agenda. This indicates that the local government's AHD strongly emphasises the political and economic value of CSHD, which exemplifies the AHD of many Chinese local governments in their heritage projects (e.g. Oakes, 2000; Zhu & Maags, 2020). In Chapter Seven, I will more comprehensively discuss the AHD of the local government of Anyang, particularly how the local government views the political and economic value of CSHD in relation to its non-use value, and how different components of the AHD influence the Project differently.

Persisting Development Dilemmas of a Small/Mid-sized City

The local government of Anyang's efforts to reverse the economic decline through heritage-led revitalisation, particularly the failed experience of the South Street project, shed light on the urban

development dilemmas for small and mid-sized cities. These development dilemmas partly explain my case study selection and why the study of small and mid-sized cities is important – the development dilemmas are closely associated with these cities' positions on urban hierarchy, and how to deal with the dilemmas is practically urgent and difficult.

The South Street project took a common strategy widely used in urban development, public-private partnership. In China, one of the most "successful" cases of public-private partnership (in the sense of branding the city and boosting the local economy) is the development of Xintiandi in Shanghai through the collaboration between the district government and Shui On Group from Hong Kong (Yan, 2012). However, in comparison to major cities that collaborate with big real estate developers, the Anyang municipal government's collaboration with Yuda, a local and relatively small-scale real estate developer in Anyang, reveals a few issues prevalent in small and mid-sized cities.

To start with, it is difficult for small and mid-sized cities to attract trustworthy and experienced private developers, as these cities are usually deemed to have less development potential. Yet the financial contributions from the private sector are crucial for the success of the projects (Shin, 2009, p. 2815), especially when the local governments are not affluent. In fact, at the very beginning, the municipal government of Anyang wanted to invite a well-known and big developer to conduct the South Street project but failed to do so, partly due to the "lack of development potential" of Anyang (Government Interview – GV05). Yuda took this opportunity to "actively respond to the municipal government's call" to "help" the municipal government, as self-boasted by Yuda's official website (Yuda Real Estate, n.d.). Unfortunately, halfway through the project, Yuda's financial chain broke because of its internal issues, which resulted in the suspension of the South Street project, in addition to the forced eviction case and the unregulated demolition of historic buildings (Government Interview – GV05).

Then, even if small and mid-sized cities sometimes work with private developers, the city governments usually lack experience and have lower levels of administrative abilities which constrain these cities' competence in managing the projects in terms of foreseeing potential risks and problems of the projects, accordingly delineating the legal boundaries of the projects, and timely correcting the wrongdoings of the private developers. One local official cautiously admitted that

"We lacked experience back then…… This was our first time doing an urban development project like this" (Government Interview – GV05). Meanwhile, although small and mid-sized cities may recognise their limited competence and learn from major cities, policy mobility can be less effective and even detrimental if the local specificities including locations, local budgets, personnel arrangements, etc. are not taken into full account (Evans & Foord, 2006; He et al., 2018).

Additionally, in Chinese small and mid-sized cities, the central-local relations are less intimate compared to those in major cities. The major cities usually obtain preferential policies as well as financial support from the central government and simultaneously are more closely supervised by the central government to avoid corruption and other misconduct. Policy innovations therefore usually happen in major cities and later spread to small and mid-sized cities (Ma, 2019; Wang & Lai, 2013). However, a large number of small and mid-sized cities (and townships) neither get many development opportunities nor much supervision from the central government (Wan et al., 2018). As a result, small and mid-sized cities have enjoyed less benefit from China's rapid economic growth (Shen et al., 2018). The relatively remote central-local distance in small and mid-sized cities is a significant point that I will come back to in later chapters, as it contributes to a particular cause of fragmentation in the political system of small and mid-sized cities and has a wider influence on heritage conservation.

To sum up, all of the internal and external factors culminated in the failure of the South Street project in Anyang, and have shaped how future projects in the city will be conducted. This case also reminds us that the development dilemmas of small and mid-sized cities have path dependency. The internal and external challenges that these cities face make such projects riskier and less likely to succeed, which exacerbates economic decline and suppresses public trust in the local government, which in turn makes the next efforts even more difficult to bring to fruition. The later CSHD Project in Anyang is the local government's endeavour to break this vicious cycle. To ensure the success of the CSHD Project, the local government excluded private developers, deliberately and actively. But this is also a passive decision in the sense that it would be difficult to build a stable partnership with a reliable private developer, thus the local government did not have other choices. However, the CSHD Project has still been through a bumpy process, as I will show in the next section.

5.3 Project Planning and Implementation: Conflicts and Compromises

After the initiation of the regeneration of the Old City of Anyang in 2015, the municipal government hired three planning institutes in Beijing and the Anyang Planning and Design Institute to formulate a series of conservation plans, including *The Conservation Plan of the Historic Districts of Anyang*, *The Conservation Plan of the Water System of Anyang*, and *The Restoration Plan of Twenty Historic Buildings in the Old City of Anyang* (Professional Interview – PL02). In August 2018, the municipal government nominated three historic districts, Cangxiang Street area, West Street area, and Chenghuang Temple – Gaoge Temple area as the Provincial Major Historic Districts of Henan Province. The provincial government soon designated the three historic districts (Government Interview – GV02; Figure 5-3). The same planning institutes then formulated separate plans for these historic districts, including *The Conservation Plan of Cangxiang Street Historic District* (hereinafter the Conservation Plan)[21] formed by one planning institute from Beijing which is the main actor in my later elaboration.

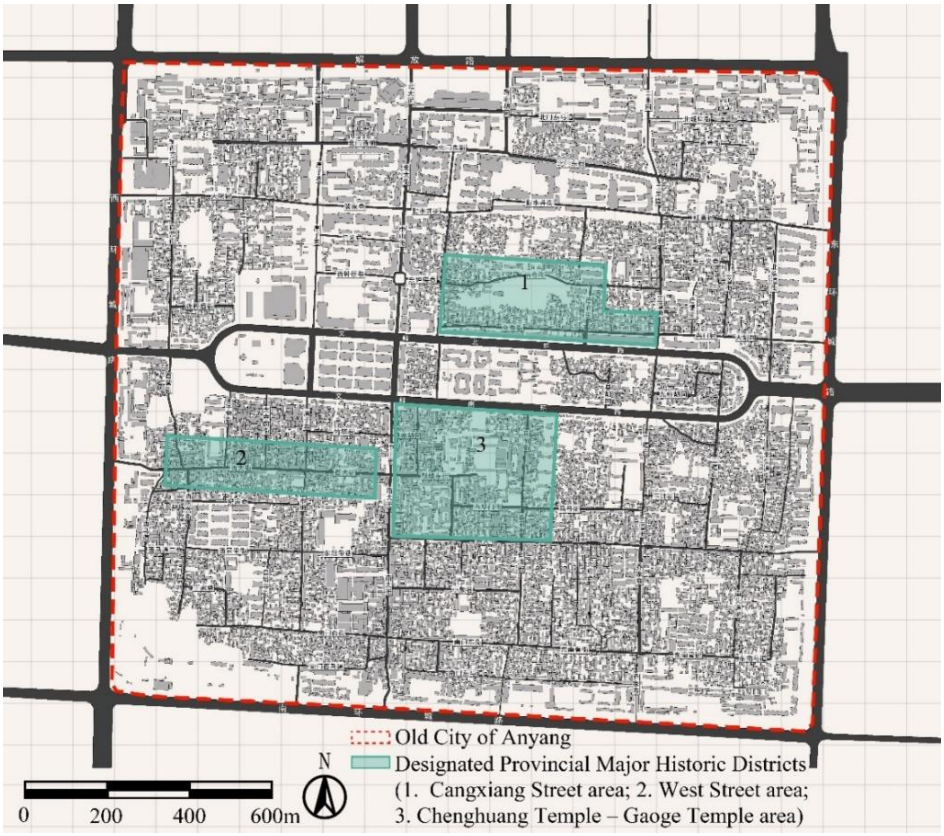

Figure 5-3. Location of the three inscribed historic districts (*Source: author modified based on the conservation plans provided by the district government*).

21 Refer to Chapter Four (pp. 106-107) for the overview of the Conservation Plan.

During the formulation of the Conservation Plan and the execution of the Project, the heritage professionals and the local (municipal and district) government had many disagreements and even direct arguments. These conflicts were mainly centred around the conflicting conservation ideals and approaches that the heritage professionals and the local officials had. To reach a consensus, each party had to make some compromises to accommodate the other's conceptions and intentions.

In this section, I will first present how the local government and the heritage professionals formulated the Conservation Plan, particularly how they disagreed with each other and what compromises they made. Then, I will elaborate on the overall timeline of the first stage of the Project and the local government's restoration of historic buildings, which still involved the heritage professionals' disagreements with the local government. However, the heritage professionals were unable to change the Project timeline and improve the restoration/refurbishment work. The conflicts and compromises reflect a complex decision-making process in the CSHD Project and a complex relationship between the local government and the heritage professionals, which hints at the fragmented authoritarian decision-making in China's heritage practices. Additionally, the planning and implementation of the Project demonstrate an important characteristic of the Project: fast, which is tied to the personnel evaluation of local government officials and reflects the local officials' pursuit of personal political promotion.

Formulating the Conservation Plan

The formulation of the Conservation Plan was not a smooth process. At the very beginning, the local officials and the heritage professionals, particularly the planners from Beijing, agreed to select CSHD as the pilot area very fast. Later on, as they started to develop the series of conservation plans for the Old City of Anyang and CSHD, their disagreements over how to conduct heritage conservation started to emerge.

When selecting the pilot area in the Old City of Anyang to start heritage conservation, the local government wanted to have visible regeneration results in a short time but claimed a lack of money to conduct a big project. The planners from Beijing wanted to keep the heritage as untouched as possible with only essential repair and maintenance. The two parties quickly chose Cangxiang Street

area as the beginning of the Old City regeneration after the failed South Street project because Cangxiang Street area was the best-preserved area with relatively prominent cultural significance in the Old City and a good location. That means, there could be "fast and visible results" without too much disruption to the heritage (Professional Interview – PL02). The later designation of CSHD as the Provincial Major Historic District was a purposeful move of the local government to acquire legitimacy for the Project. This was the first time that "moving fast" appeared in the local government's narratives. "Moving fast" indicates that the local government's purpose of heritage conservation is not purely about recognising and preserving the cultural significance of heritage, but more about demonstrating the local officials' personal capability through efficient heritage projects.

After the planners' fieldwork, the planners concluded that the regeneration of the Old City of Anyang was especially difficult compared to their previous works in other cities. As noted by the planner that I interviewed (Professional Interview – PL02), "The buildings in the Old City of Anyang are too dense. Most of the buildings are in similar conditions with similar cultural significance and are still inhabited by some residents". The planners thus found it difficult to decide which ones to demolish, which ones to conserve and restore, and what to do with the empty spaces after demolition. Furthermore, the planners understood that the conservation work was expensive with such a large number of historic buildings, and sympathised with the local government that was short of budget on heritage affairs (Professional Interview – PL02). Frankly speaking, the local government was and still is having trouble paying the salaries of the public university teachers, let alone affording heritage conservation (Tourist Interview – TR31). Therefore, the planners offered a long-term plan. They suggested that the local government "could take baby steps to restore some prominent buildings at the current stage and leave others untouched with essential repair and maintenance to keep them standing. In the next thirty to fifty years when the local government is able to provide more budget for heritage, it can start other works gradually". The important thing, as emphasised by the planner, was not to replicate what already disappeared (Professional Interview – PL02). In this way, the planners sought to avoid the Disneyfication of heritage prominent in China's other regeneration projects (e.g. Liu, 2013; Nitzky, 2012).

However, a top leader of Anyang when the Project was planned, Mr G, was eager to do something completely different. G was originally the top leader of another historic city Q in Henan Province

where he reconstructed almost the entire Old City of Q as his "heritage conservation" and "heritage tourism development" move. When the upper-level government transferred G to Anyang, G wanted to repeat what he did in city Q, i.e. demolishing the entire Old City of Anyang and reconstructing everything. G also wanted to develop the underground area of South Street to make a huge shopping mall that connected to other parts of the Old City. As the planner complained (Professional Interview – PL02), he and his teammates resolutely opposed G's proposal and had intense arguments with G and other local officials in several meetings, as the planners believed that "such large-scale demolition and reconstruction COMPLETELY disobey the conservation principles. And can you imagine how the local residents' normal lives would be disrupted?" The planners were also well aware of the financial situation of the local government of Anyang which would be unable to afford such a large-scale project (Professional Interview – PL02). And the development of underground space was impossible considering the topography and geological conditions[22]. However, it was not until the central government officially criticised the "regeneration" project of the Old City of Q that G "became quiet" on his ambitious proposal for the Old City of Anyang in later meetings (Professional Interview – PL02). This was fortunate as well as frustrating for the planners, fortunate because G's plan was not realised; and frustrating because it was not the planners' efforts that stopped G (Professional Interview – PL02), suggesting that in China, the planners' hands can be quite tied and the authoritarian nature of the heritage system can still be important despite its fragmentation feature (Zhang, 2002a).

When it came to the discussion of restoring historic buildings in CSHD, the planners and local officials had other different ideas. The local officials insisted on following the principle of "repair the old as old" (*xiujiu rujiu, 修旧如旧*), the principle initially proposed by China's pioneer architect and conservator, Zhu Qiqian (*朱启钤*), and developed and popularised by the most famous architect and conservator, Liang Sicheng (*梁思成*; Gao & Jones, 2020). By "repair the old as old", the local officials referred to using traditional materials and techniques to restore dilapidated buildings to revert them to their original appearances in the Ming and Qing Dynasties (Government Interview – GV02; Professional Interview – SC01).

22 The topography of the Old City of Anyang is like a turtle shell. The central area is higher than the edges where the South Street is located. Thus, the underground water flows to the edges including the South Street area, making the soil softer and unsuitable to develop underground spaces (Professional Interview – PL03).

Differently, the planners believed that “adaptive reuse is more ‘advanced’ in heritage area regeneration” and “we suggested and applied this approach in other projects, including Kuanzhaixiangzi [in Chengdu, Sichuan Province] and Sanfangqixiang [in Fuzhou, Fujian Province]”. By adaptive reuse, the planners referred to the practices where designers upgrade historic buildings with diverse design approaches and new materials to make the historic buildings compatible with contemporary needs. The pioneering examples are some courtyard houses in Beijing, such as No.14, Gongmenkou 2 by Shuhei Aoyama from B.L.U.E. Architecture Studio (Figure 5-4; Wei, 2022).

Figure 5-4. No.14, Gongmenkou 2 by Shuhei Aoyama in Baitasi area, Beijing (*Source: B.L.U.E. Architecture Studio, 2018*).

“Repair the old as old”, similar to the Western-originated “conserve as found” principle, is believed to suit monumental heritages better, not necessarily vernacular heritages (personal communication with Chinese preservationists). In academia and Western practices, there is also an ongoing debate around restoration principles, such as whether to visually distinguish restoration from original structures, which historical era should be the reference, the reversibility and compatibility of restoration, etc. (Martínez, 2008). However, the planners during their fieldwork realised that “the local government of Anyang definitely can’t afford the adaptive reuse approach” and “the locals are not as open-minded as people in major cities, and they [the locals] still quite prefer pure-traditional appearances of historic buildings”. The planners thus decided to make this “compromise” in terms of

how to restore the historic buildings (Professional Interview – PL02).

The “repair the old as old” in CSHD sounded promising and acceptable for planners and local scholars, as it is indeed widely supported by international heritage experts and charters (e.g. the Burra Charter, Australia ICOMOS, 2013; the Venice Charter, ICOMOS, 1964). However, the local government soon brought up other ambitious proposals that went back to reconstructing fake heritage that would lead to the Disneyfication of heritage.

What the local government wanted to reconstruct was the City Wall of the Old City including the City Gates and turrets and the Drum Tower that had completely disappeared decades ago. To rebuild the Drum Tower, the local government would have to demolish some surrounding buildings in the area including officially inscribed heritage sites. When the planners anxiously reminded the local officials that demolishing officially inscribed heritage sites would be illegal, the local government proposed to build a “smaller version of the original Drum Tower”. The planners naturally opposed the proposal, as they were very cautious about reconstruction and the concept of authenticity, following the principles promoted by UNESCO and ICOMOS (Professional Interview – PL02; ICOMOS, 1994). The leading planner of the planning team from Beijing, a prestigious heritage expert in China, even criticised the proposal as “crazy” and “ridiculous” (Professional Interview – PL02). Regarding the City Wall area, this expert suggested that since the moat still existed, the local government could make a waterfront landscape park. These suggestions were eventually taken by the local government, but they still reconstructed a turret, Kuixingge (*魁星阁*) on the southeast corner of the Old City in early 2021 (personal observation; Government Interview – GV02). After this reconstruction, the local government went to the planning institute and the expert to ask for their public endorsement, which was again firmly refused and criticised by the planners (Professional Interview – PL02).

Table 5-1 summarises the abovementioned conflicting conservation ideals and approaches that the planners and the local government had and the final results of their disputes. Seemingly, the planners successfully stopped the ambitious proposal of the top leader and the local government. In reality, it was other factors that stopped the unrealistic proposals, including the central government’s criticism of the Shangqiu project, the geological condition of the Old City of Anyang, and the budget

constraints of the local government. The local government is now still building new "historic buildings" in the Old City where possible and refurbishing the façades of historic and non-historic buildings in CSHD by attaching a thin layer of grey or red bricks to the façades (personal observation; Government Interview – GV02). In a word, whether to accept the planners' suggestions is more based on whether these suggestions are what the local government *wants* to do and *can* do.

Table 5-1. The conflicting conservation ideals of the planners and the local government.

The local government	**Planners from Beijing**	**Results**
Demolishing and reconstructing the entire Old City	Against conservation principles and disruptive to the normal lives of the residents	The local government accepted the planners' suggestion due to a lack of budget for heritage affairs.
Developing the underground area of the South Street area	Unfeasible due to the geological condition	The local government accepted the planners' suggestion due to the geological condition.
Reconstructing the Drum Tower	Would have to illegally demolish some designated historic buildings	The local government then proposed to build a "smaller version" of the Drum Tower.
Reconstructing the City Wall, the City Gates, and some turrets	Developing a waterfront park without reconstructing historic structures that already disappeared	The local government partly accepted the planners' suggestion and will do some waterfront landscape as well as reconstruction.

Interestingly, although the planners had many complaints about the local government, afterwards, they always tried to find some nice words for the local government and officials in order to avoid straightforward criticism of the local officials. As noted by one interviewee:

> So, we had a lot of conflicts regarding conservation ideas with the [local] government. I wouldn't say that the government has the wrong ideas. I think their ideas are fine. They are just a bit outdated. For example, we have already entered the 2020s. Their understanding of heritage conservation is still probably in the 2010s. It's

> not them to blame, because you do have a lot of practical things to consider…… including the citizens of Anyang. The government's field research is that the citizens of Anyang want to reconstruct the City Wall and the Drum Tower. So, we have to try to consider as many things as possible. Planning is a difficult thing to do. It's like you are in academia and you think you've gone far enough, but the citizens haven't updated their minds. Sometimes I even imagine that reconstructing the City Wall may not necessarily be a bad thing. This is a choice to make, a choice to make (Professional Interview – PL02).

> That Party Secretary is fine. He is a very courageous and determined person[23]. I would praise him for that. But as I said, you are in the 2020s, and his mind is still in the 2010s. So sometimes he does bad things with good intentions (Professional Interview – PL02).

In contrast, when the planner was talking about the formulation process of the Conservation Plan before these final remarks, he used the following expressions:

> We gave the plan of Kuixingge a lot of suggestions but they [the local government] didn't listen. It was awkward. Well, it's already done, what can we say? (Professional Interview – PL02).

> I directly confronted G and other local officials in a meeting[24]. But it's useless. I'm too subordinate[25]. And he wasn't happy (Professional Interview – PL02).

In the first set of quotes, we see that the planner used "an outdated mind", "practical difficulties", and "citizens' wishes" as excuses for the local government, and expressed his understanding and sympathy for the local government. But in the second set of quotes, he directly expressed his frustration and confrontation with the local government. This contrast makes the comment "does bad things with good intentions" interesting. The planner seemed to believe that the local officials were not necessarily bad, corrupt, or selfish, but were indeed trying to do good for the citizens. The officials just lacked the ability to accomplish their good intentions. In my conversations with some locals, similar comments of "doing bad things with good intentions" also came up (e.g. Resident Interview – RN07; Tourist Interviews – TR01 & TR02).

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23 The planner used the word *youpoli* (*有魄力*) to describe the previous Party Secretary. It literally means courageous and determined which is a commonly used and highly positive word to describe people, including political leaders, in China.

24 The planner used the word *dui* (*怼*), an internet-popular expression to express strong disagreement and fierce confrontation with people who have different opinions.

25 The planner used the word *xiaobalazi* (*小巴拉子*), a local and oral expression to describe oneself as the little man compared to people in power.

Two things are perplexing here regarding this comment. First, previous literature notices that this opinion on "good intentions" is usually held by the Chinese toward the central government. Many Chinese citizens tend to believe that the central government has good intentions, but the local governments are indeed greedy and corrupt (Sorace & Hurst, 2016). As the saying in rural areas goes, "the Centre is our benefactor, the province is our relative, the county is a good person, the township is an evil person, and the village is our enemy[26]" (O'Brien & Li, 1995, p. 778). In Chapter Six, I will return to this "hierarchical trust pattern" in China (Wu & Wilkes, 2018). Here in this chapter, it becomes questionable whether the planner and the locals truly meant what they said. It may just be them trying to avoid direct criticism of Mr G and the local government in my interviews. Or they could be expressing their true feelings, which would be a different phenomenon than what was observed in previous literature.

The second perplexing point is how to understand the contradiction between the local officials' "good intentions" and "bad actions". As I have argued in the previous section, one of the local government's rationales for conducting the Project is pursuing personal political promotion, which is manifested by how the local government has planned and implemented the Project. Some local officials have indeed already acquired promotion partly due to the Project. Arguably, there is the possibility that at least some local officials want to do good for the locals, in addition to pursuing political promotion. However, I argue that the intention of pursuing political promotion triumphs over the intention of doing good to the locals because the local officials' actions in the Project have clearly served the intention of pursuing political promotion, whereas have had mixed impacts on heritage and the locals. In this sense, the local officials are actually rational actors who actively respond to the incentives that are in place, i.e. personal political promotion as measured by the personnel evaluation system of Chinese government officials.

Overall, the contrast between the planner's nice words as well as the frustrating words, in addition to the compromises that the planners had to make, help begin to illustrate the concept

26 The original Chinese expression is: *Zhongyang shi enren, shengli shi qinren, xianli shi haoren, xiangli shi eren, cunli shi diren (中央是恩人，省里是亲人，县里是好人，乡里是恶人，村里是敌人).*

of fragmented authoritarianism. The planners sought to challenge the local officials' decisions, reflecting that the heritage decision-making process was indeed fragmented. However, this process did not result in as many policy changes as heritage professionals had expected, due to the authoritarian nature of the system.

Then, from the perspective of critical heritage studies, we can see that the planners and the local officials had divergent heritage discourses. The planners were more influenced by critical heritage studies to view heritage as a social construct that evolves over time and needs to accommodate contemporary functions (Smith, 2006), and the materiality cannot be completely preserved practically (D'Ayala & Wang, 2014). Whereas the local officials viewed heritage from the conventional heritage studies perspective which emphasises the fabric and materiality of heritage as the most significant value. Thus, heritage has to be kept intact and unchanged, at least as much as possible. In Chapter Seven, I will continue this comparison between the different actors' heritage discourses.

Timeline of the Project and Restoration of Historic Buildings

The above conflicts and compromises involved explicit confrontations and arguments between the planners and the local officials. Regarding the timeline of the Project and the restoration of historic buildings, the heritage professionals more complained about the local government in private. Meanwhile, this was where "moving fast", as we have seen at the beginning of the formulation of the Conservation Plan, played a more prominent role in the local government's plan, revealing the local officials' pursuit of personal promotion through the pursuit of speed.

The timeline of the Project was technically against China's heritage regulations. According to China's *Regulations on the Protection of Historical and Cultural Cities, Towns, and Villages*[27], any construction work within the construction control zones of officially inscribed historic districts needs to follow their conservation plans, and the conservation plans need to be approved by the provincial government (State Council, 2017). That means an officially inscribed historic district needs a conservation plan to be in place before any construction work. However, in CSHD, after the

27 *Lishi wenhua mingcheng mingzhen mingcun baohu tiaoli, 历史文化名城名镇名村保护条例.*

provincial government officially inscribed the CSHD in August 2018, the district government started the Project in October 2018. In 2019, the planning institute finalised the Conservation Plan. It was in May 2021 that the provincial government approved the Conservation Plan. Thus, the district government started the Project way before the provincial government approved the Conservation Plan (Government Interview – GV05; Professional Interview – PL02).

The planners working on the Conservation Plan were discontented that the district government downplayed their work. As expressed by the planner, "Yeah we were not happy about that, but this is common…… We then turned out to be indifferent [to the results of the Project] in the end[28]. We give you [the local government] the plan. If you want to do it, you do it. If you don't want to do it, then maybe you wait for a couple of years" (Professional Interview – PL02). The planner believed that for the district government, the Conservation Plan was merely to fulfil the legal request of the central government (Professional Interview – PL02). Since it took time for the planners to finish the Conservation Plan and even more time for the provincial government to approve the Conservation Plan, the local government actively took the strategy of starting the Project without the Conservation Plan. The purpose was clearly to speed up the Project.

In terms of restoring historic buildings, the planners and local officials reached a consensus in the end that the restoration would follow the principle of "repair the old as old". Although the district government claimed that they strictly followed this rule (Government Interviews – GV01, GV02, GV03, & GV05), the actual results of restoration were not as good as the heritage professionals had expected (Professional Interviews – PL02, DS01, & SC01).

The first controversy was that the district government constructed some new buildings in traditional style and refurbished the façades of many non-historic buildings, and claimed that this type of work was also "repair the old as old" (Government Interviews; Professional Interviews; personal observation). Second, due to a lack of budget and the local officials' pursuit of speed, the restoration work was of poor quality. As frustratedly noted by a lower-level official of the local government when she gave me a tour of Cangxiang Street:

> You see the real old bricks and their pointing and the new bricks and the new

28 The planner used the word, *foxi* (*佛系*) in Chinese, literally meaning Buddha-like. It is an internet-popular phrase to express indifference, no ambition, and whatever feelings, similar to the principle of Buddhism.

> pointing, they are completely different. You see, the old pointing is really thin, like a thread. It's obvious [pointing to the bricks for me]. There's a difference in the spirit of craftsmanship between ancient times and now. Now it's to *catch up on the schedule* [emphasis added]. But the old buildings were built sophisticatedly…… It's like now we can't concentrate on the work full-heartedly. The old pointing is almost completely parallel and very small. It's even hard to see the mortar in between. But now the restoration work, you see, has a wide gap between the bricks. And the bricks are coarse. The old bricks made in the Qing Dynasty have a smooth texture. You can feel it. But you touch the new bricks. You see? It's coarse. The proportion of the sand and gravel is different. When the old bricks are weathered, they won't crumble like the new bricks (Government Interview – GV06; Figure 5-5).

Figure 5-5. The contrast between the old bricks made in the Qing Dynasty and the new bricks used in the restoration (*Source: author, 2021*).
Note. The bricks on the left with a darker colour are the old ones, and the bricks on the right with a lighter colour are the new ones (Government Interview – GV06).

The local scholar commented that the principle of "repair the old as old" was not problematic *per se* as it followed the international charters and was supported by many prestigious Chinese heritage experts. However, he did acknowledge that "[t]he results, in the end, are not quite satisfying. I think the trace of the repair is a bit obvious as you can see a striking contrast with the original…… We scholars tried our best, but not 100% was done. There are regrets. There are indeed regrets"

(Professional Interview – SC01). The planner, again, interestingly criticised the district government's work while modifying his comments in the end to make them less harsh and negative:

> You can do "repair the old as old". Even if you build a new house in traditional forms, as long as you pay attention to the scale, the techniques, and the materials, it's fine. But they [the district government] can't even guarantee these. Their "repair the old as old" is that at first glance, it looks real, but the work is careless……. Anyway, I think it's bad. And honestly, I think the "repair the old as old" is wasteful, although the principle is not wrong itself. If you have money, you can do this. But the local government can't afford it. You know how expensive it is to repair a courtyard house? ……. It's A LOT of money! And the traditional building materials are difficult to get……. But they don't have other options. If you ask us to build these things, we can't make them well. Making plans is like bragging. You can always have beautiful words. But people who have to put everything into practice have their dilemmas. So, I won't blame them. I would say some things they've done are alright (Professional Interview – PL02).

To sum up, the planners, designers, local scholars, and lower-level officials had many complaints regarding the quality of the restoration work as well as the controversial reconstruction and refurbishment instructed by the district government. However, they were not able to persuade the district government to do better work, but could only express their frustration privately, which demonstrates their subordination in relation to the district government. As one local scholar said more bluntly, while shaking his head, "The planning work only has the voice from the government[29]…… I won't comment on it and it's pointless no matter what I say. It's not something for me to criticise" (Professional Interview – SC02). Technically, the lower-level official who gave me a tour is part of the local government, and some local scholars I interviewed have or had official positions in the local government. Still, as they are not high up the hierarchy enough, they are not able to influence the top leaders in the local government.

More importantly, the local officials' pursuit of speed is clearly seen in the restoration process. In the eyes of the local scholars and lower-level officials, the pursuit of speed is one significant reason why the restoration work is of poor quality. This has also added an extra workload to the designers and construction workers. According to a designer (Professional Interview – DS01),

29 The local scholar used the word *yiyantang* (一言堂), literally meaning "one-word hall". It is a Chinese colloquialism usually used to criticise the government when it is unwilling to listen to different voices.

there are officials from different levels of government inspecting CSHD constantly. They sometimes have whimsical suggestions and ask for certain constructions before big festivals to facilitate celebration activities. This means that "the first day we [designers] deliver the design plan, and the second and third days the construction workers finish the work" (Professional Interview – DS01).

However, in the local officials' eyes, speed is something they are proud of. As a local official wrote in one of the work reports of the Project, "The Municipal Party Committee and the Municipal Government requested us to open Cangxiang Street to the public before the Chinese New Year [of 2019]. We *only* [emphasis added] used five months to finish the work and achieved this goal, which has attracted a wide range of public attention in society" (Work Report of the Office, 2019). The exact timeline of the first stage of the Project, as introduced by that local official, was that the district government started to plan the restoration work (and relocation of residents, see Chapter Six) in September 2018, started the restoration work (and relocation) in October, and opened the main street to the public in January 2019. "It was VERY fast", he commented proudly with a firm tone (Government Interview – GV05).

Drawing upon the work reports and the interviews, I argue that speed is an important consideration of the local government, as speed is influenced by the personnel evaluation system in China and thus influences the local officials' political promotion. The personnel evaluation system of Chinese government officials essentially measures local officials' "achievements". Projects like the CSHD Project can become achievements as they may boost local economic development, increase the urbanisation rate, contribute to infrastructure upgrading, etc. (see Landry, 2008, pp. 83-84 for detailed municipal performance indicators that include the above items and beyond). In the meantime, local officials need to finish such projects fast. Chien and Woodworth (2018) find that Chinese mayors (as well as other local top officials) usually have a short tenure. In order to build up their political achievements, the local officials usually strive to finish the projects before their tenure ends, so that they can ensure that their transfer by the upper-level governments is a promotion, not a demotion. In other words, although speed is not a performance indicator directly, it is an implicit and essential requirement for local officials and becomes their active pursuit, because speed determines whether their achievements are timely or not. And speed and efficiency underline the personal ability

of local officials.

Moreover, when it comes to urban development projects and the like, including heritage projects, "moving fast to achieve urban growth is an expression of political imperatives" (Chien & Woodworth, 2018, p. 723). The best example of China's fast urban development is Shenzhen, the fast-growing icon Chinese city, which uses speed as its "self-worlding practice" (Roy, 2011, p. 314). The well-known "Shenzhen speed" is widely celebrated by Shenzhen as well as the entire China and fulfils the "temporal imagination" of the local officials (Roy, 2011, p. 316). In the CSHD Project, the fast speed demonstrates similar characteristics and bears the local officials' "imagination of their political future", to adapt Roy's words. That is, the speed of the Project is itself an achievement that can help secure the local officials' political promotion.

5.4 Interpreting the Conflicts and Compromises: The Role of Heritage Professionals

The above section has articulated the initiation, planning, and part of the execution process of the CSHD Project, with a particular focus on the conflicts and compromises between the local government and the heritage professionals. This section discusses how to understand the conflicts and compromises with the frameworks of fragmented authoritarianism (FA) and critical heritage studies and highlights the contributions of this thesis, which is tied to the role of planners and more generally, heritage professionals, in China's heritage system.

Fragmented Authoritarianism at Play

The conflicts and compromises in the CSHD Project directly reflect the uneven power relations between the heritage professionals and the local government. However, how to understand the uneven power relations may be more complicated. Indeed, I argue that the conflicts and compromises result from and reflect the FA feature of China's heritage system. Within this system, heritage professionals are empowered to some extent, yet not fully. Consequently, heritage professionals can challenge the local government's decisions sometimes, yet are not able to fundamentally change the decisions. In other words, the authoritarian heritage system is fragmented, but perhaps not as fragmented as previous scholars observed in other policy areas (e.g. Lieberthal &

Oksenberg, 1988; Mertha, 2005, 2008).

To begin with, it is necessary to clarify the role of planners in China, as the planners were significant actors in the CSHD Project. In China, heritage conservation planning is a branch of urban planning. Generally speaking, there are two types of planners in China: planners who work at different levels of government and planners who work at professional institutes. The former is responsible for issuing building permits, reviewing planning applications and documents, stipulating certain regulations, etc. They are government officials and not considered technicians. The latter is responsible for delivering plans and designs, advising local governments on local planning, etc. Some of them work for central or local state-owned planning institutes, while others work for private enterprises or joint-venture or foreign consultancies (Zhang, 2002a). The central and local state-owned planning institutes are trying to separate themselves from the government nowadays, following the market reform of the country (Perlstein & Ortolano, 2015; Zhang, 2002a). In other words, although planners are generally believed as working in the public sector as urban planning is a government function and ultimately a public policy (Zhang, 2002a), in China, professional planners are different from government officials, especially those who work at private planning institutes.

That said, I argue that the system fragmentation of China's heritage policy arena is originated in the planning and heritage regulations in China. The decision-making circle of heritage conservation in China, according to the heritage laws and regulations (e.g. National People's Congress, 2017; State Council, 2017), involves two sections, i.e. the government and the heritage professionals. The former includes multiple central and local government agencies. The latter means qualified planning and design institutes that are responsible for formulating the Conservation and Management Plans (*baohu guanli guihua, 保护管理规划*) for heritage sites. That is to say, heritage professionals are nonstate (or sometimes state) decision-makers. They are empowered by the laws and regulations and can wield their power by formulating Conservation and Management Plans to regulate the local governments as well as other actors' behaviours. Therefore, the heritage system in China is in nature fragmented, not only because of the different levels of government (*tiaokuai* system) but also because of the involvement of heritage professionals.

In the case of Anyang, there have been several planning institutes involved in the Project. The local planning institute is technically owned by the municipal government. Its main job was to provide the city's economic, demographic, and heritage-related information for the planning institutes from Beijing. The local planning institute sometimes discussed planning schemes with the planners from Beijing and usually attended meetings with the planners from Beijing and the local officials. However, it was mainly one of the planning institutes from Beijing that communicated with the local officials directly, decided on the conservation ideas and the boundaries of the core conservation zone and the construction control zone of CSHD, and formulated the Conservation Plan for CSHD (Professional Interviews – PL01, PL02, & PL03). This planning institute from Beijing is a privately owned company that is not associated with any level of government in any city. It can be seen as a part of the broadly defined civil society that is able to use system fragmentation for policy bargaining.

As for the authoritarian nature of the system, this refers to the fact that although heritage professionals are empowered by heritage laws and regulations, in practice, they are still constrained by the local governments. In the case of CSHD, we already see the uneven power relations between the local officials and the heritage professionals. The former selectively adopted the latter's suggestions, usually due to practical limitations. And the latter was cautious about their comments on the former. This is precisely because heritage professionals usually do not hold official rankings at any level of government. And even if they do, they are usually not high up enough in the political hierarchy to fully influence policy. It is always the local governments that have the actual power to make the final decisions. The local governments usually consider heritage professionals merely consultants rather than collaborators for decision-making (Chien & Woodworth, 2018). Therefore, it is the local governments that determine what decisions may be challenged by heritage professionals, through what channels heritage professionals can challenge the decisions, and to what extent heritage professionals can alter the decisions. In the case of CSHD, the channel was the formal work meetings of the planners and local officials.

In the planning field of China, there is a saying among planners (which I have heard since my undergraduate study in a planning programme), "drawing on the paper, hanging on the wall" (*zhishang huahua, qiangshang guagua, 纸上画画, 墙上挂挂*), suggesting that planning is merely a

legal process that every city has to go through. Whether to follow the plans or merely "hang the plans on the wall" as a "decoration", however, is determined by the local governments. This has been one of the major challenges in planners' work across the country (Perlstein & Ortolano, 2015; Zhang, 2002a; personal observation).

In the meantime, it is worth noting that top leaders can sometimes have strong personal influence, resulting from the authoritarian nature of the system (He, 2018; Huang, 2018; Tjia, 2023). In the CSHD case, the previous Municipal Party Secretary, Li, was such a leader. Although he was not officially a member of the group of local officials working on the Project, he still tried to alter the plan to pursue his political ambitions. Another prominent case in China's heritage conservation and urban regeneration is the city of Datong in Shanxi Province. The previous mayor, Geng Yanbo, demolished a large number of buildings in the Old City of Datong and reconstructed many "fake" heritage sites (Cui, 2018; Fu & Hillier, 2018). When the upper-level government transferred him to Taiyuan, the capital city of Shanxi Province, the project in Datong was left unfinished and the municipal government had a huge amount of debt because of the development work (Zhou, H., 2015).

The direct reason why top leaders can have such a strong personal influence still ties to the personnel evaluation system of Chinese government officials. In 1984, the evaluation system witnessed a major reform. Since then, the local governments have acquired certain power over appointing local officials, indicating that the central government has granted more decision-making power on personnel management to local governments (Yu, 2019). In the case of CSHD, the lower-level officials' evaluation and promotion are directly determined or indirectly influenced by different upper-level officials in the municipal and district governments. The lower-level officials thus tend to deliver works that satisfy the upper-level officials' political ambitions and preferences (Göbel & Heberer, 2017). Mr G as one of the top leaders of the city back then, could determine or influence many of his subordinates' promotions. His proposals were undoubtedly never doubted by other officials.

In summary, my case study expands the framework of FA by recognising that when discussing fragmentation, the broad context of authoritarianism cannot be overlooked as it has concrete

impacts. How the decision-making process is fragmented and to what extent policy changes can happen are ultimately bound by authoritarianism and contingent upon policy areas. In the heritage field, the heritage laws and regulations include heritage professionals as the decision-makers alongside the local governments, making the heritage system fragmented; while the authoritarian nature of the system determines that the local governments are the *de facto* power-holders and decision-makers, and grants the top leaders imperative power to transcend the subordinates.

Moreover, it is important to acknowledge that currently, although the influence of heritage professionals largely depends on the local officials' preferences and ambitions, they are still quite active in challenging the local officials and some of them can have more influence. In my case study, the planning team from Beijing took the meetings with the local officials as key opportunities to argue against the local officials, including the Municipal Party Secretary, and was never afraid of expressing different opinions. The prestigious heritage expert from Beijing was the one who could firmly refuse to endorse the local government's reconstruction of fake heritage, as his social status was considerably higher given his influence in academia and the professional planning societies as well as his connection with the central government[30]. In other words, heritage professionals are well aware of their potential to change the decision-making, thus actively participating in the decision-making even if the results may be frustrating. This suggests that although scholars have pointed out that China is overall moving towards more authoritarian (e.g. Béja, 2019; Li, 2023; Zhao, 2023), active nonstate actors may still complicate the picture piece by piece through policy bargaining in individual projects and cases.

Explaining Heritage Dissonance and Refining Authorised Heritage Discourse

In Chapter Two, I summarised the different manifestations of heritage dissonance captured by previous literature, including mild negotiation, subtle coexistence, intense protest, and collaboration. Zhu and Maags (2020) categorise the communities' responses to the authorised heritage discourse (AHD) as active embrace, passive acceptance, reframing, and resistance. In CSHD, the heritage professionals' interactions with the local government took the form of intensive, formal, but nonviolent resistance, which illustrates the diversity of the manifestations of heritage dissonance.

30 When I was working at this planning institute, I had the opportunity of working with this expert on one project.

Beyond the manifestations of heritage dissonance, it is more important to consider the roots of heritage dissonance. Critical heritage studies (CHS) argue that one factor that results in heritage dissonance is the power relations of the actors involved in heritage construction (Wang, 2019). In my case study, we can see that the power relations between the local officials and the heritage professionals were actually bounded by China's heritage administration and regulations that assigned different roles to them. In other words, the pre-existing heritage system in a given context is crucial in shaping heritage practices. It is therefore essential for CHS to investigate the decision-making (and implementation) processes in relation to the political system to deepen its theorisation of heritage politics, which is a prominent research gap in CHS and to which my research can contribute by applying the concept of FA.

In the meantime, the interaction between the heritage professionals and local officials in the CSHD Project elicits reservations about the concept of AHD. In the CSHD case, the heritage professionals' heritage discourse was largely drawn from international organisations and charters, which is the exact position that Smith (2006, 2009, etc.) and critical heritage studies seek to criticise. However, we have seen that the heritage professionals had an ambiguous and sometimes awkward position in decision-making. In relation to the local government, heritage professionals were "cultural authorities" because of their professional knowledge and skills (Yao & Han, 2016). While the local government was the "political authorities" who could actually determine the Project. Even the heritage professionals themselves were not sure how "politically authoritative" they were, because they were not able to put their expertise to full use (Professional Interview – PL02 & DS01). And their heritage discourse was indeed only very limitedly realised.

Therefore, the problem with the original concept of AHD is that it is a quite simplified and monolithic generalisation. By simplified, I mean that AHD overlooks "who the agents are and what they do to whom" (Skrede & Hølleland, 2018, p. 86). By monolithic, I mean that it tends to treat different "authorities" equally and fails to fully distinguish their roles. That said, I argue that when we criticise the impacts of AHD on the subalterns, it is not only the contents of AHD, particularly those institutionalised by intrinsically Eurocentric international organisations, that matter. It is also necessary to nuance the agents and channels of formulating and disseminating AHD as well as the competing forces between different "authorities" at different scales and from different socio-political

positions. In China's heritage system, in particular, we can see that cultural authority does not necessarily entail political authority. It is political authority, not cultural authority, that determines which segments of the AHD can be realised. In this case, does heritage professionals' heritage discourse still qualify as "authorised" heritage discourse? This is a question that I will continue to look into in Chapter Seven.

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter investigated the initiation of the CSHD Project by the municipal government in 2015, and the planning and some of the implementation of the Project since 2018. It focused on two actors, the local government of Anyang and heritage professionals, and touched upon the role of the central government. In this concluding section, I reiterate my arguments as follows.

First, I argued that the Project has served the local government's three rationales: securing the local officials' political promotion, increasing local revenue, and enhancing local state legitimacy. Regarding the background of the Project, Anyang's deindustrialisation and other factors have caused a severe economic decline, pushing the local government to turn to heritage tourism for revitalising the local economy. The current land use and future plan for CSHD contain a large area of commercial land. Meanwhile, the municipal government deemed private developers a political risk since the failed South Street project, thus deciding to exclude private developers from the CSHD Project. Regarding the timeline of the Project, the planning and implementation of the Project has been very fast. The district government started restoring historic buildings (and relocating residents which I will discuss in Chapter Six) way before the Conservation Plan was finalised by the planners and approved by the provincial government. The first phase of restoration/refurbishment work only took a few months. In a nutshell, the Project has demonstrated several characteristics: economic development-oriented, excluding private developers, and speedy delivery.

These characteristics are largely influenced by the personnel evaluation system of Chinese government officials. Although there have been reforms in the evaluation criteria to de-emphasise economic-related indicators, local economic development remains significant (and practically easier to quantify, Qian & Mok, 2016, p. 190). The one veto rule in the personnel evaluation system puts a

strong emphasis on social stability, thus requiring the elimination of political risks. Considering the short tenure of local top leaders, it is essential for them to have visible achievements within their tenure to secure their political future. Therefore, the characteristics of the CSHD Project all serve the local officials' pursuit of political promotion.

Since China's fiscal reforms, local governments have been growingly reliant on urban (re)development to increase local revenue and fulfil their responsibility of delivering social services. Thus, the economic development-oriented CSHD Project also serves the local government's agenda of increasing local revenue. Furthermore, the legitimacy of the Chinese Party-state largely rests on its ability to deliver fast and constant economic growth. In Anyang, in particular, deindustrialisation and the Ponzi scheme have noticeably eroded local citizens' faith and trust in the local government. The CSHD Project thus bears the local government's anticipation to win back the local citizens and re-establish its legitimacy.

The local government's rationales for conducting the CSHD Project is where the local government's authorised heritage discourse of CSHD is partly embedded. The AHD here is that the local government perceives CSHD as a political and economic resource, favours its political and economic value, and seeks to cash out the value as fast as possible. In Chapter Seven, I will continue the discussion around the AHD of the local government.

My second argument echoes the call for attention on cities "off the map" (Robison, 2006, p. 101). In Anyang, the failed South Street project and the subsequent exclusion of private developers in the CSHD Project point to the persisting and potentially self-reinforcing development dilemmas that small and mid-sized cities are experiencing. In China, many small and mid-sized cities have increasingly suffered from economic decline (Wan et al., 2018). Other barriers, including the limited capability of local administration, limited financial channels, lack of central government support, relatively poor infrastructure, etc., have culminated in the development dilemmas where these cities are trapped (Liu, et al., 2012; Shen et al., 2018). Similar issues such as deindustrialisation, unemployment, and a stagnant economy are threatening small and mid-sized cities in other countries as well (Brake, 2023; Dovaa et al., 2022). How the local government of Anyang is handling the heritage projects reflects the various external barriers and internal challenges that the city faces.

Therefore, this chapter proves the necessity and even urgency of advancing studies on small and mid-sized cities.

My third argument concerns the conflicts and compromises between the local officials and the heritage professionals. Their direct and explicit conflicts were centred around whether to demolish and reconstruct historic buildings on a large scale and whether to adopt the principles of adaptive reuse or "repair the old as old". Their indirect and implicit conflicts were centred around starting the Project without the Conservation Plan in place and the controversial restoration (and refurbishment) work. The conflicts and compromises crucially complicate the oversimplified generalisation of uneven power relations between the local government and the heritage professionals.

Drawing upon the concept of FA, we can see that heritage decision-making in China is complex and nonlinear. Here, the role of heritage professionals is important and interesting. On the one hand, system fragmentation comes from China's heritage regulations and laws that grant heritage professionals, usually as nonstate actors, decision-making power. On the other hand, China's planning system does not give any formal political rankings and positions to heritage professionals. In practice, they are confined as technicians. Thus, heritage professionals can use system fragmentation to challenge local officials' decisions. However, the overall authoritarian context makes them less successful in altering the decisions. In other words, policy bargaining does not always result in evident policy changes, as China's political system is still authoritarian, despite the existence of fragmentation. For now, it seems that the authoritarian system is still constraining heritage professionals, which is exemplified by the CSHD Project where the heritage professionals had to make more compromises and it was not their disagreements that changed the local officials' plan. However, we still see that the heritage professionals participated in decision-making very actively and never hesitated to challenge the local officials. Therefore, although the broad picture of China is growingly authoritarian, there are still policy entrepreneurs who do not passively accept local authorities' instructions and still seek to make changes.

In terms of CHS, the conflicts and compromises are diverse manifestations of heritage dissonance. The heritage dissonance here was to a large extent bounded by China's pre-existing heritage system. Given that one of the research gaps in CHS is its insufficient investigation of power and politics, this

chapter proves the usefulness and contributions of combining FA with CHS, which facilitates the understanding of why heritage dissonance expresses itself in certain ways and the impacts of heritage dissonance by discussing the decision-making process and the embedded power relations. Additionally, the role of the heritage professionals in the CSHD Project is again worth noting, because their cultural authority does not guarantee them political authority, the latter being the more important determinant of whether the AHD can be realised or not. This indicates that how to use the label of AHD, the agents of AHD, and the mechanisms through which AHD works need to be really nuanced when evaluating the consequences of AHD.

After investigating the initiation, conservation planning, and historic building restoration of the Project, the next chapter will look at another component of the Project, relocation of original residents. Residents of CSHD, another important group aside from the heritage professionals, interacted with the district government during the relocation in particular ways, which reflects the complex power relations between these two actors. In the meantime, how the district government branded and propagated the Project toward the residents is worth noting, as the propaganda embodies the current AHD(s) of the Chinese state in general and the everchanging state-society relations. By examining the interaction between the district government and the residents of CSHD, the next chapter will continue the discussion around fragmented authoritarian heritage decision-making and implementation and heritage dissonance in China.

Chapter 6. Residents' Relocation: Central Influence and Local Negotiations during Decision-making and Implementation

6.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on an important component of the Regeneration Project of Cangxiang Street Historic District (hereinafter the CSHD Project or the Project), the relocation of the original residents in CSHD which involves the district government's propaganda and branding of the Project. The actors directly involved in the relocation were the district government and the original residents of CSHD. The actor indirectly involved was the central government.

The interaction between the central state and the local state happened when the district government set up the compensation standards and propagated the Project to persuade the residents to relocate. I will show that how the district government set up the compensation standards reflects the system fragmentation of China's heritage field. The district government took advantage of the vagueness of the general and broad central regulations to facilitate the Project. This means that in certain policy areas, urban development and heritage conservation in this case, the local governments in China, especially those of small and mid-sized cities that are less intervened by the central government, enjoy a considerable amount of freedom. I will also show that by and large, the voluntary relocation in CSHD and the local propaganda of the Project were the local government's active embrace of the central government's current policy preference, thus reflecting the policy coherence from the centre to the local under authoritarianism. This is a point that addresses the limitation of the concept of FA which overemphasises fragmentation and policy incoherence while overlooking policy coherence (see Lieberthal, 1992). In the meantime, the local propaganda was underpinned by one important element of China's current authorised heritage discourse: using heritage to enhance urban governance, educate citizens, and strengthen state power. I will explain that this particular aspect of the authorised heritage discourse serves the ideological re-centralisation in contemporary China.

The interaction between the district government and the residents happened during the

implementation of relocation. The strategies and purposes of the residents' negotiation and contestation are worth noting. Their strategies first reflect system fragmentation which partly stems from China's community governance structure and the one veto rule within the evaluation system of government officials. In the meantime, the residents' flexible and tactful participation in the Project exemplifies fragmentation in state-society relations that is different from system fragmentation, but still contributes to policy bargaining and consensus-building. Noticeably, the residents' strategies are mild and nonviolent resistance and negotiation, which is associated with their purposes of joining in policy bargaining, their power relations with the district government, and the specificities of a small to mid-sized city. Their purposes, in particular, illustrate parts of their lay heritage discourses that converge with the local government's AHD to some extent: acknowledging the economic value of heritage and hoping to obtain economic benefits from heritage construction.

This chapter has the following sections: Section 6.2 looks at how the district government set up the compensation standards and implemented the relocation in order to analyse the central-local relations and the inner power structure of the local government. Section 6.3 elaborates on the residents' negotiation and contestation and their mixed attitudes toward the local government in order to analyse the state-society relations. Section 6.4 examines how the district government propagated the Project to persuade the residents to relocate in order to analyse policy coherence and the implicit political agenda of the local as well as the central governments with heritage construction. Section 6.5 concludes this chapter.

6.2 Local Decision-making and Implementation: Complex Power Structure of the Chinese Government

Compensation Plan and the Implementation of Relocation

The relocation officially started in the second half of 2018 with the planning and implementation of the entire Project. The district government designed the relocation policies in terms of setting up compensation standards and providing funding and resettlement houses, and the lower-level government (Street Offices in the case of CSHD) negotiated with the residents to make the relocation happen.

Regarding how to determine the compensation standards, in 2011, in order to standardise the compensation for relocation to avoid the previous conflicts between local governments and residents as well as to protect the residents' property rights, the State Council issued the *Regulations on Expropriation and Compensation of Houses on State-owned Land* (more widely known by Chinese citizens as *State Council Order No. 590*)[31]. In 2012, following the guidance of the central government, the Henan Provincial Government issued *Several Provisions for Implementing the "Regulations on the Expropriation and Compensation of Houses on State-owned Land (State Council Order No. 590)"*[32] in Henan Province. These documents stipulate that the local governments (municipal, district, or county, depending on who conducts the projects) should recommend prestigious and professional property evaluation agencies to the residents and let the residents choose the agency that they want to use. The local governments should then hire this agency to conduct the evaluation of property prices based on the principles of "impartialness, objectivity, and openness". The local governments should offer monetary compensation and/or resettlement houses to the residents based on the evaluation results and the level of economic development of the locality. If there are businesses or industries suspended due to the relocation, the local governments should also compensate for the loss of business or industrial profits (People's Government of Henan Province, 2012; State Council, 2011). It can be seen that the upper-level governments do not specify the exact amount of the compensation, the condition of the resettlement houses, and the like, but set up the basic standards and processes of how to calculate the compensation. The local governments have certain discretionary power to decide the compensation.

In CSHD, the district government hired a property evaluation firm from Zhengzhou, the capital city of Henan Province. Based on this firm's evaluation, the district government set up the following compensation standards. The basic line was 4,000~5,000 yuan/sqm[33]. If the residents moved early and quickly, they could obtain a bonus, which is a common way to encourage people to move in China (Zhang & Moore-Cherry, 2022). Usually, the residents could get as high as 7,000~8,000 yuan/sqm (Government Interviews – GV02 & GV05; Resident Interviews). As the residents

31 *Guoyou tudi shang fangwu zhengshou yu buchang tiaoli, 国有土地上房屋征收与补偿条例.*

32 *Henan sheng shishi "guoyou tudi shang fangwu zhengshou yu buchang tiaoli" ruogan guiding, 河南省实施《国有土地上房屋征收与补偿条例》若干规定.*

33 In 2021, approximately 6.45 yuan equalled 1 US dollar, and approximately 8.88 yuan equalled 1 pound. 1 square metre (sqm) equals 10.76 square feet.

explained, “illegal” constructions determined by the district government were not counted, usually referring to residents’ self-constructed extra floors, extended rooms, or independent buildings in the courtyards. The interior decoration and installation such as floor tiles, window frames, and doors could be converted into monetary compensation. If the buildings had higher heritage value and were better preserved as determined by the district government, the residents could also receive more monetary compensation (Resident Interviews).

With monetary compensation, the residents could either purchase commercial houses on the free market or purchase resettlement houses provided by the district government. The former was at least 9,000 yuan/sqm in 2021, and the latter was around 4,000 yuan/sqm (Government Interviews – GV02 & GV05; Resident Interviews). With regards to the resettlement houses, the local officials said that some houses were constructed and owned by the municipal or district government. Others were constructed by private developers. The district government negotiated with the private developers to have the developers offer some houses as resettlement houses. In exchange, the developers may acquire benefits from other urban development projects in the city. This was the only way that private developers were involved in the CSHD Project, different from many other urban development projects in China (e.g. Shin, 2009; Wei, 2022; Yan, 2012), as private developers in the CSHD Project did not directly develop CSHD. Compared to regular commercial houses, the resettlement houses were “nothing weird” with “normal” locations and layouts, to use one local official’s words. The only difference was that the resettlement houses were usually smaller and more compact (Government Interview – GV05). This statement was partly corroborated by the residents: the house layout was fine, but the location was in the “suburbs” and “far from the city”. The neighbourhood was “just so so” with high building density which resulted in little green spaces and bad indoor natural lighting (Resident Interview – RL01). In addition, the residents were not involved in selecting and hiring the property evaluation firm from Zhengzhou (Resident Interviews).

When implementing the relocation policy, the Street Offices (SOs) in CSHD were the ones who directly negotiated with the residents. According to the local official (Government Interview – GV05), the relocation was completely voluntary:

> We [SO officials] knock on doors household by household and talk to them [the residents]…… It’s ALL normal communication and conversations, with NO violence

> or coercion…… We [the local government] don't really have a goal saying like how many people we have to move. If they [the residents] don't want to go, they can stay.

If the residents agreed to move, they could sign contracts with the district government and then acquire monetary compensation from the district government.

However, the residents told me a slightly different negotiation process and a different kind of "voluntary". If the households occupied "good" houses, meaning houses with a good location (usually along the main streets and around the pond in CSHD), high heritage value that the district government recognised, and were well-preserved, the local officials would knock on their doors to actively negotiate with them. The way of negotiation was constant home visits to talk with the families and slightly raising the monetary compensation until the families agreed to move (Resident Interviews).

The reason that the district government insisted on these residents moving was that, first, since these houses were usually located along the main streets and around the pond, the district government needed to refurbish the façades of these houses so that the entire street could become heritage-like and keep a consistent streetscape, which was important for conserving the "*fengmao*" (*风貌*, style and features) of historic districts according to China's heritage conservation principle (National People's Congress, 2017; Professional Interview – SC01). Second, these houses were more suitable for running businesses because of their prime location. The district government wanted to convert these houses into shops to obtain more economic profits. The district government's plan for the pond has been to make it into a music bar area, similar to the Houhai area in Beijing (Government Interview – GV05). Therefore, residents whose houses were picked by the district government did not have the same freedom as other residents in the area. They needed to make space for the district government's plan.

For the rest of the households in the area, the local officials did not approach them, but the residents needed to go to the local officials to discuss the compensation if they wanted to move. Since the district government prioritised the "good" houses that it preferred, there existed some households who wanted to move but could not move, as the district government spent most of the money on compensating those prioritised households and had little budget left for other households (Resident Interviews). Consequently, there was a frustrating and paradoxical phenomenon in CSHD: some

households wanted to stay but had to move due to their house locations and conditions, while some households wanted to move but had to stay due to a limited relocation budget.

Here, we can see that the district government's purposeful selection of certain houses once again demonstrates that the CSHD Project has been highly economic development-oriented. Besides, the district government's restoration/refurbishment approach of keeping a heritage-like streetscape has arguably led to the Disneyfication of CSHD, as some buildings were not constructed in the Ming and Qing Dynasties (Resident Interviews). Converting their façades into Ming/Qing style unanimously is arguably "fake" and superficial.

Central-local Relations and Inner Local Structure: Fragmented Heritage Decision-making

From the above elaboration, we can see that the Wenfeng District Government of Anyang directly determined the relocation policies and processes, and the central government appeared more as a contextual factor. This indicates complex central-local relations of the Chinese government and a hierarchical structure within the local government. In particular, the former is reflected in how to determine compensation, and the latter is reflected in the negotiation with the residents.

Comparing the central and provincial governments' regulations on compensation and the district government's practice in Anyang, we can see that the strong central state does not dominate everything, and the local state does have certain discretionary power. The discretionary power is partly directly delegated by the central state following the decentralisation reforms since the market reform in the 1980s (Zhu, X., 2019). More precisely, Xufeng Zhu (2019, p. 140) summarises the characteristics of the reforms as "selective centralisation (or decentralisation) with heterogeneity in different policy areas", and "differentiated centralisation (or decentralisation) in different policy tools". Urban development and heritage conservation are the policy areas where decentralisation happens, and one of the policy tools is the regulations, guidelines, notices, and provisions issued by the central government (Wu et al., 2022).

In Chapter Five, I mentioned that the fiscal reform in the Chinese government has pushed local governments to engage in local land transactions and exploitation to stimulate the local economy through capital accumulation in cities (Zhu, 1999). This explains why the CSHD Project has been

overall economic development-orientated. In this chapter, we can see that the influence of the central government on the local government is not limited to defining the broader direction and nature of the Project, but also in a more specific and detailed area, i.e. setting up the compensation plan, as compensation during relocation induces state-society conflicts and social instability more often and needs extra attention from the central government (Zhang, 2022). Yet the central government still only focuses on general principles and leaves some space for the local governments to consider their own situation.

Leaving space for the local governments is an intentional and formal power redistribution within the Chinese government. However, I argue that the local governments may exploit the space left by the central government to their own advantage. In the compensation regulations from the upper-level governments, the phrase "level of economic development of the locality" (State Council, 2011) is such space for the local governments to adjust the compensation in their interest. In a small to mid-sized and less-developed city like Anyang, the local government can easily justify that, due to the low level of economic development of the city, the compensation is not as generous as residents expect. When talking about compensation, the local officials in Anyang constantly mentioned that the financial situation of the city was bad, the COVID-19 pandemic had made things worse, and the local government was struggling to allocate more money to the CSHD Project (Government Interviews – GV02 & GV05). Inevitably, "we probably can't make every household happy and satisfied, but we are doing the best we can" (Government Interview – GV05).

Therefore, the policy formulation in CSHD demonstrates a complex power structure and decision-making process of different levels of the Chinese government. The local states in China enjoy a considerable amount of power to decide on matters within their jurisdiction. Although there are central guidelines and regulations to direct local practices, how effective the central guidelines and regulations are is questionable. Since most of the guidelines and regulations are quite general, and the local specificities in China are complicated, the local states may use the ambiguity of the central state's regulations to justify their actions to their advantage. And since the central government is not able to monitor and oversee every detail, there is usually policy re-interpretation or even distortion at the local level (Ashton, 2013; Yu et al., 2021). Sometimes, the central government even intentionally leaves space precisely to accommodate local policy innovations and ensure regional economic

development (Wu, 2018; Yu, 2019).

This hierarchical policy-making reflects the concept of fragmented authoritarianism well, particularly how system fragmentation works in a particular policy area and where it comes from. Echoing the argument of Lieberthal and Oksenberg (1998), my case study demonstrates that in heritage and urban development areas, policy-making is porous and fragmented. Yet heritage policy-making has its own characteristics that are different from China's energy policies. In their research on the energy sector of the Chinese government, Lieberthal and Oksenberg (1998) show that bargains, resistances, and negotiations from the lower-level governments to directly confront and challenge the upper-level governments are common. The goal is to make the central government and other local governments compromise to reach a consensus in order to accommodate the bargainers' needs, meaning that there will be or at least the expectation of concrete policy changes in the end.

In my case study, differently, the negotiation between the central and local governments in heritage and urban development happened in a subtler and indirect way. The local government aimed more at using the existing central policy to its advantage and incorporating its interests into the policy than trying to alter the policy. The local government also did not directly converse with the central government. The main reason that explains this difference is that compared to energy policies (and many other policy areas such as reform of state-owned enterprises and large-scale infrastructure), heritage conservation is less an acute and vital area. For instance, in the case of Shamian Island in Guangzhou, heritage conservation was not the priority of the Municipal Party Secretary and Mayor. Instead, they devoted more resources to other urban development projects that they deemed easily implementable and immediately profitable (Lee, 2016). Besides, as I have explained in Chapter Two, heritage conservation usually involves fewer government agencies and less land, money, and citizens. These government agencies are usually less powerful in the political system. There are also relatively fewer benefits to bargain over.

In the meantime, Anyang is a small to mid-sized city that is less significant than major cities in China. The central government was not directly involved in the Project in any way. The central government possibly even did not know about the Project until the provincial government reported the Project to China Central Television when the first phase of the Project was finished (Government

Interview – GV02). There was therefore no such space for the local government to directly confront or challenge the central government. In this sense, the relatively remote central-local distance in a small to mid-sized city is one important cause of system fragmentation. That is, the bureaucratic structure from the central level to the local level is looser with less supervision and monitoring, leading to less powerful and vigilant "bosses" from the upper-level governments and more fragments between different levels of government. A prominent result of the less intimate central-local relations in Anyang was that the local government of Anyang enjoyed more freedom to shape the Project to its advantage without the central government's interference.

When it comes to negotiating with the residents, the negotiation process reveals an inner hierarchy within the local government (Heberer & Schubert, 2012). In the case of CSHD, the Street Office (SO) officials, as the actual negotiators, had no real decision-making power. It was the municipal and district governments who designed the CSHD Project. The SO officials merely received instructions from the municipal and district governments in terms of what to do and when to finish. They did have a certain degree of discretion to raise the monetary compensation to some extent during their negotiation with the residents, but this must comply with the budget plan pre-set by the district government (Government Interview – GV02). As the work summaries of the SOs documented, their work was very repetitive, laborious, and exhausting, different from that of the decision-makers. For instance, one male official was not able to take care of his family because of the heavy workload, thus his child's performance at school was affected and received bad grades on final exams. More tragically, one female official worked so hard to negotiate with the residents that she had a miscarriage due to a lack of rest (Work Summary of the SOs, 2018).

The implementation of relocation in CSHD thus gives us a glimpse of the power distribution within China's local governments, particularly between the municipal and district governments as the policy-makers with actual power and the grassroots-level government as the policy enforcer with very limited power. As Heberer (2019, p. 170) elaborated, the local officials in China form "a hierarchical structure with a core group at its top". In the case of the CSHD Project, the top leaders of the municipal and district governments (such as Mr G, the former top leader of Anyang, mentioned in Chapter Five) form the core group. While the SO officials are at the "grassroots level". Although the term "grassroots level" may seem confusing as to whether it is appropriate to use

"grassroots" to refer to the local government, I argue that in the Chinese context, this term quite accurately captures the ambiguous position of the SO officials. And other scholars have indeed also used this term to refer to the lowest-level government in China (e.g. Jing, 2017; O'Brien & Deng, 2015).

The ambiguous position of these grassroots-level officials in the CSHD Project is similar to that of the heritage professionals in Chapter Five in terms of whether they are the "authorities" or not. Technically, the SO officials hold official ranks in the local government and are part of the "authorities" (Fan, 2014; National People's Congress, 2022). Meanwhile, they work more closely with the residents within their jurisdiction. In my research, some SO officials live in or close to CSHD and have a very good personal relationship with the residents. The residents view them as both the "authorities" and "friends" or "neighbours", which clearly distinguishes them from the officials at the municipal and district levels who are considered "big people" and "out of reach" by the residents (Government Interview – GV02; Resident Interviews; personal observation).

Mertha (2009, p. 996) describes these grassroots-level officials as being "at the periphery" of decision-making, confirming that they are not the usual and major policy-makers. However, they may become policy entrepreneurs to actively participate in fragmented policy-making and seek policy changes (Mertha, 2008). This is something that I did not observe in my case study. Two possible reasons explain this difference. First, as Chapter Five discussed, local top leaders determine the career of grassroots-level officials. The latter are therefore reluctant to challenge the former. Second, in Mertha's cases (2008, 2009), the grassroots-level officials themselves were sometimes affected by the policies and projects or personally sympathised with the communities more, which pushed them to attempt to alter the policies. In my case study, the grassroots-level officials sided with the municipal and district governments to support the CSHD Project, and their families were not affected by the relocation (Government Interviews – GV02, GV04, GV05, & GV06). In fact, the grassroots-level officials actively used the abovementioned work reports that documented their hard work to demonstrate their competence, diligence, and obedience to their superiors (Government Interview – GV05). Thus we can see that who enters the decision-making circle is contingent upon many factors, including the actors' personal interests and relative power relations as well as personal relations with other actors (Mertha, 2005, 2008).

Although the grassroots-level officials in the CSHD Project did not seek policy changes themselves, they were still very important in the decision-making process, because the grassroots-level officials were the very channel that the residents used to reach the local government in terms of negotiating for more compensation and expressing other demands and objections. In other words, it was exactly the grassroots-level officials' ambiguous position that facilitated the residents' participation in policy bargaining to some extent. As I have defined for this thesis, system fragmentation is the characteristic of how the Chinese bureaucracy is structured and functions. Lieberthal and Oksenberg (1988) already recognise that the *tiaokuai* structure causes system fragmentation, which concerns the big picture of the Chinese bureaucracy. Here, we can see that system fragmentation is also because of the community governance structure in China at the grassroots level, which is a result of community governance reform that the central government has initiated since the 1990s (Heberer & Göbel, 2011). Due to the transformation from a planned economy to a market economy and the subsequent dissolution of work-units (and communes in rural areas), the Chinese central state has rebuilt the community governance with Street Offices, Resident Committees (Villagers' Committees), and other community self-organisations (Heberer & Göbel, 2011). Different scholars interpret the central state's intentions differently, such as to have the state "retreat" from society, or to "regroup" itself, or conversely, to actually strengthen the state's control of society (see Heberer & Göbel, 2011, pp. 3-4 for a summary). From my case study, we see that no matter what intentions the community governance structure serves in contemporary China, it has *de facto* made the system more fragmented and the (local) state more reachable for the citizens.

Additionally, considering the heritage discourses of CSHD, the grassroots-level officials were not directly involved in producing the authorised heritage discourse but mainly worked on communicating the AHD to the communities (Government Interviews – GV02, GV05, GV06). Thus, if we are to explore the agents of AHD, then the top leaders constitute the producers of AHD, while the grassroots-level officials constitute the medium of AHD. Collectively, this bureaucratic structure forms part of the mechanism through which AHD causes "real consequences" of marginalisation and suppression of the subalterns (Smith, L., 2009, p. 4).

6.3 Residents' Negotiations with the Local Government

Residents' Preferences and Causes of Conflicts

Since the ongoing relocation in CSHD has been in principle "voluntary", the residents' preferences are supposed to determine whether they move or stay. The situation of CSHD is common in many heritage areas in China. Usually, the elderly and people who rely on public facilities that are in proximity to CSHD like schools and hospitals are more reluctant to move. The wealthy and relatively young people had already moved out before the Project due to the poor living conditions in CSHD. While more people, usually the underprivileged people, regardless of their preferences, cannot afford relocation even with government compensation (Resident Interviews; similar research see Wang & Aoki, 2019; Wei, 2022; etc.).

In CSHD, there are three main reasons to stay (Resident Interviews). In the first case, some residents do not share their courtyard houses with other people, thus having good living conditions with courtyard spaces to work out and grow plants and vegetables. These residents actively and happily choose to stay. In the second case, the family members are not able to reach a consensus on how to divide the compensation among themselves, thus they are still negotiating among themselves. In the third case which is more common, residents are not happy with the compensation. The discontent with the compensation is the main cause of conflicts between the residents and the district government and the main focus of my research.

Many residents complained that if purchasing commercial houses, the monetary compensation was far from enough because their houses in CSHD were tiny. If purchasing the resettlement houses, the interior decoration and new furniture would cost an unexpectedly large amount of money which exceeded the monetary compensation. Moreover, the resettlement houses were too remote with low market prices and inadequate facilities in surrounding areas. It would be big trouble for them to go to work and send children to school and not a profitable investment (Resident Interviews). As one resident of CSHD, Uncle Bin, agitatedly complained:

> Many people have moved out. They have houses elsewhere, so they moved [before the Project]. But a lot of us don't have the ability. It's not like every household is a billionaire, or every household has connections with the top [referring to the Chinese

> government in general]. When there are rich people, there are ordinary people, right? The rich people have dozens of houses. They can move whenever they want. This kind of house [in CSHD], if they sell them, no matter how much money they are worth, it's still money. But some ordinary people share like 50 sqm among three generations. Well, big or small, it's liveable[34]. But with the compensation money and the resettlement houses, you think about the layout, how can three generations squeeze in one bedroom and one living room? …… If you move, what about the old furniture? They are too old and fragile to move. So you have to buy new ones……And for new apartments, you need to decorate. And that's another twenty thousand yuan……(Resident Interview – RN01)

Regarding the resettlement houses, the district government openly claimed that "the Flour Factory area has a superior location and is surrounded by prosperous commercial areas; Guangming area is in great proximity to the new People's Hospital in Dongqu with good transportation, complete facilities, and beautiful environment" (A Letter to the Residents of the Old City, 2018). However, an inside work summary of the district government admitted that one issue of the current relocation policies was that "the resettlement houses are remote; there is a small number of resettlement houses available; and the construction of new resettlement houses is time-consuming" (Work Summary of the Command Centre, 2018). Thus, the resettlement houses were indeed not satisfying. It may be difficult to decide whether the relocation policies were reasonable or not, considering different actors' interests and demands. However, what is known for sure is inadequate government transparency when the district government released information about the relocation policies to the residents, which is a common issue in China's relocation projects (e.g. Wei, 2022; Zhou, H., 2015).

Residents' Negotiation with the Local Government and Exploitation of the Relocation Policy

It is common in China that residents are discontent with the compensation during relocation. Previous studies document various forms of residents' conflicts with, resistance to, and challenges of the state policies (e.g. Smith, 2020; Standaert, 2020; Verdini, 2015; Xie & Zhu, 2014; Zhang et al., 2015). In CSHD, I observed three types of negotiation between the residents and the district government, which has affected the relocation policies and implementation to some extent.

34 Although the courtyard houses are small in heritage areas in China, many residents smartly manage to highly efficiently use the spaces, thus can suffice the daily living demands. Whereas some residents do not like the layout of modern apartments where the space is less well planned in their opinion.

First, some residents have managed to acquire more monetary compensation through formal or informal negotiations with local officials. For instance, as aforementioned, residents living in houses with prime locations usually had to move even if they did not want to. Some residents understood why the district government wanted them to move. Therefore, when the local officials approached them, they took the chance to ask for more compensation. As long as the compensation they asked for was within the district government's budget plan, the district government would accept their offer (Resident Interviews). I call this type of negotiation "formal" because it conforms to the district government's budget plan and negotiation regulations. Another example is that some residents have personal connections (*guanxi,* 关系) with the local government through their relatives, friends, schoolmates, etc. These residents would use their personal connections to directly ask for more compensation or to obtain deeds for their supposedly illegal construction to maximise the floor area for which they could acquire compensation (Resident Interviews). I call this type of negotiation "informal", as the central and local governments' regulations apparently forbid nepotism.

Second, legal processes are another way to deal with what residents think are unfair policies. Uncle Bin told me about a lawsuit of one of his neighbours. The district government spent 900,000 yuan to requisition the courtyard house of this neighbour and then sold it to a private business owner for three million yuan. The neighbour was furious when he heard the news and decided to sue the district government for the unfair transaction to acquire more compensation. "But he lost. Of course, he lost. This is China! Ordinary people suing the government is impossible!" said Uncle Bin with a raising volume (Resident Interview – RN01). It is hard to fully determine whether this neighbour's demand regarding compensation was reasonable or not as this level of detail was hard to obtain, though the stories told by my interviewees appeared to be consistent with this view.

This case represents a typical way through which residents resist and challenge the relocation policies in China (Zhou, H., 2015). Yet this is the only case in CSHD that I discovered, and such examples are less prevalent in Anyang. In the South Street project that I mentioned in Chapter Five, there was one class action case. A group of residents were unhappy about the compensation offered by the municipal government. These thirteen households hired some experienced lawyers from Beijing to file a class action against the municipal government and asked the municipal government to follow *State Council No.590* (*Regulations on Expropriation and Compensation of Houses on*

State-owned Land, State Council, 2011) to implement the relocation. Their effort was successful in the end. However, my interviewee noted that "we had to constantly travel to Beijing to discuss the case with our lawyers. It was very exhausting and costly" (Other Interview – OT05). In fact, these thirteen households are all resourceful and wealthy, which is unsurprising, as otherwise, they could have not thought of or afforded to hire lawyers from Beijing and to travel to Beijing often.

The lack of lawsuit cases in Anyang reveals one specificity of small and mid-sized cities compared to major cities where such phenomena are more prevalent (e.g. Feng, 2009; Shin, 2013; Zhang, 2004). To use legal tools, one needs a certain level of education to be aware of how to initiate and proceed. Economic inputs as well as free time are also necessary to file and follow up with the lawsuits. However, for many citizens in small and mid-sized cities, especially senior and unemployed residents living in the Old Cities who are underprivileged and marginalised (Arkaraprasertkul, 2016; Wang & Akoi, 2019; Wei, 2022), it is difficult for them to think of and actually use this strategy, as they lack the economic, social, and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986) compared to their counterparts in major cities. As some of my interviewees unanimously said, "There's simply no time" and they had to "struggle to make ends meet" and thus did not have the energy to think about pursuing lawsuits (Business Interviews – OB05 & OB06; Resident Interview – RN01). In addition, the residents in the South Street area hired lawyers from Beijing, not Anyang, because there were no experienced lawyers in Anyang to deal with such cases (Other Interview – OT05), affirming that such class actions are less common in small and mid-sized and less-developed cities. This once again proves the necessity to study small and mid-sized cities. The practical difficulties for these citizens and how they interact with the local governments are associated with the level of development and urban hierarchy of these cities. Research results based on major cities can be hardly transferrable to small and mid-sized cities and solutions are consequently not applicable (Bell & Jayne, 2006; Ofori-Amoah, 2007).

Third, the residents' most common and currently ongoing strategy in CSHD is what I call "wait and see". For residents who do not have a preference over moving or staying, or who want to move and do not rush to move, but are dissatisfied with the compensation, they decide to stay for now and see how the policies will change in the future. If the district government raises the compensation, they will then move. If the district government refurbishes their houses in CSHD to a substantially better

condition, they will permanently stay. While they are waiting, they do not approach the local officials to negotiate compensation (Resident Interviews). Since the district government does not prioritise their houses, the local officials do not approach them, either (Government Interview – GV02). Some residents are aware of the local government's financial difficulty in recent years. The COVID-19 pandemic has made many things uncertain, including what the district government will do regarding the next phases of the Project. Hence the residents consider waiting to be their best strategy (Resident Interviews).

Seemingly, their waiting does not affect the local policy. However, the residents are actually exploiting the "voluntary" feature of the relocation policy. They know that under the slogan of "voluntary" relocation, they can "volunteer" to stay without getting into trouble. The district government cannot tarnish them with the term "nail households" (*dingzihu, 钉子户*)[35] and cannot coerce them to move with aggressive means as they used to do (Resident Interviews; Ong, 2014; Zhang, 2004). In other words, the new type of "voluntary" relocation has allowed the residents to deploy the strategy of waiting.

Interestingly, the district government is also waiting for these residents to come to them. According to the grassroots-level official, what the district government is expecting is that when the residents see their neighbours moving out without getting more compensation, and when their neighbours move into "fancy" new apartments, they will understand that it is impossible to ask for more compensation and it is good to move to new houses. And then they will come to the district government to ask for a move. "Some people are already hesitating [to move] now." (Government Interview – GV02). Therefore, there appears a silent confrontation between the residents and the district government. Both parties are waiting for the other to compromise first.

The politics of waiting is noticed and developing in sociological studies (Ozoliņa-Fitzgerald, 2016). These studies focus on the temporal politics of the interaction between the states and the citizens.

35 Nail households refer to households who refuse to move and usually ask for more compensation from the local governments and/or private developers during China's urban development. In such resistance cases, when the local governments and/or private developers have demolished the surrounding houses, the few houses left look like nails pinned down on the floor, thus these households are termed "nail households". Li et al. (2021, p. 1594) argue that sometimes the local governments and private developers deliberately portray "nail households" as greedy people who pursue more compensation and hinder the development of the city. This is a strategy to relocate these households as early as possible while not surrendering much of the local governments and/or private developers' profits.

Although the state policies legitimise citizens' demands and requests such as providing housing, employment training, etc., the states still constantly put citizens on the waiting list or have citizens wait at the reception to meet the state officials (Oldfield & Greyling, 2015). For the citizens, waiting can be conceived as a mode of resistance and struggle. For the states, waiting can be conceived as a mode of governance (Joronen, 2017), because waiting is "[a temporal process] in and through which political subordination is reproduced" (Auyero, 2012, p. 2) so that "the state creates docility among the poor" (Auyero, 2012, p. 157). In the case of CSHD, waiting can be conceived as carrying these two layers of characteristics as well. That is, waiting is a strategy actively pursued by the residents to silently resist the relocation policies and compensation plan. It is also a governance strategy deployed by the district government to discipline the residents.

Waiting also creates one more chance of encounter between the district government and the residents (Oldfield & Greyling, 2015). As the residents are waiting, some of them have started their street vending businesses on the main streets, which is a common way for residents to actively participate in the heritage industry in China (Shin, 2010; Su, 2013a, 2013b). The CSHD Project has attracted more tourists to the area, which has become a business opportunity for the residents to earn extra money. The district government does not plan to rent the houses that it has requisitioned and restored/refurbished to residents to run small businesses. The district government also has regulations on street vending in CSHD. For instance, smoky and greasy food is not allowed as it pollutes the environment. When upper-level government officials come to inspect, all street vending is not allowed (Government Interviews – GV02 & GV05). Therefore, residents whose houses are along the main streets choose to sell products that the district government allows within their own houses and stay home when the police officers or urban management officers come to notify them that "someone big" is coming (Resident Interviews; personal observation). Although the district government does not give them a direct chance to participate in the Project and share profits, they still make use of the Project and policies to strive for benefits.

Here, the police officers and urban management officers are similar to the Street Office officials in the sense that they are also at the "grassroots level". They usually maintain a friendly relationship with the residents and turn a blind eye to (*zheng yizhi yan bi yizhi yan, 睁一只眼闭一只眼*) the residents' street vending as long as no upper-level officials are coming to inspect. For instance, a

police officer usually rode his scooter to CSHD and chatted with Uncle Bin and other neighbours and small businesses during his patrol (personal observation). This again illustrates the political hierarchy within the Chinese local governments. The result of the inner hierarchy is that the grassroots-level officials are "at the periphery" of policy-making (Mertha, 2009, p. 996), but they form the very channel through which the citizens can reach the local states.

Different from the residents who have been negotiating and resisting the relocation, some residents were happy to move with the existing compensation plan. The families that I found during my fieldwork are all relatively wealthy. They could obtain enough compensation to buy new houses because their houses in CSHD were big (Resident Interview – RL01), or they could afford the extra cost of relocation (Resident Interview – RL02), or they already moved out of CSHD before the Project (Resident Interview – RL03). Uncle Shang mentioned that:

> The house [in CSHD] was too dilapidated to live in. We have a big family but a small house. So the demolition and relocation was an opportunity for us [to get rid of the house]. We thought we'd just give the house to the government (Resident Interview – RL03).

The above evidence demonstrates that the residents in CSHD do not have formal power or political positions within the bureaucracy to directly participate in the local government-dominated decision-making. However, they do have certain degrees of negotiation and contestation available to them, particularly during the implementation stage. On the one hand, they have sometimes managed to have the district government raise the compensation to some extent. On the other hand, the residents have exploited the policies and the Project to their advantage, such as joining street vending while waiting or getting rid of the dilapidated houses timely. In critical heritage studies, according to Zhu and Maags' (2020) spectrum of social responses to China's government-led heritage projects, including active embrace, passive acceptance, reframing, and resistance, we can see that in the case of CSHD, the residents' responses are widely distributed along this spectrum from acceptance to resistance, implying that the communities are hardly consistent and unanimous within themselves.

According to the framework of fragmented authoritarianism, it is evident that the district government has pre-determined the policy boundaries of the relocation and the channels that the residents can use to bargain. The residents' negotiation and contestation essentially cannot cross the boundaries.

Thus the heritage system in China sustains its authoritarian nature which facilitates policy implementation. The relocation policies have been by and large coherent and efficient considering the actual implementation in the first stage: the district government used less than four months, from October 2018 to early January 2019, to relocate 95 households out of 200 on Cangxiang Street and around the pond and simultaneously restore/refurbish these requisitioned houses (Work Summary of the Command Centre, 2018). The district government will continue with the relocation in the next few years with the same policies (Government Interview – GV02). Thus, one of the characteristics of the Project, speedy delivery, has been guaranteed by the authoritarian system.

However, the residents in CSHD have still actively and even creatively sought policy bargaining and policy changes. Noticeably, their participation mainly has two differences compared to the nonstate actors studied by previous scholars (e.g. Mertha, 2005, 2008). (1) Residents in CSHD did not participate in the actual policy-making process but achieved policy changes during the implementation stage when the policy was already formulated. (2) The residents' strategies did not entirely rely on system fragmentation, such as the lawsuit case and the "wait and see" (though combining what I have explained in the previous section, the negotiations with SO officials were facilitated by the community governance structure. Thus, this negotiation strategy can be considered derived from system fragmentation).

These differences entail some revisions to the original framework of FA. First, policy bargaining as a prolonged process can extend to the policy implementation process. Even if policy changes are not formalised on paper, they still have *de facto* impacts on the final delivery of the policy. That means FA has consequences on a much broader policy process. Second, fragmentation not only exists in the political system itself but also in state-society relations. The latter can also foster policy bargaining. Since the economic reforms in the 1980s, Chinese citizens have become more self-aware and more active in taking the initiative and pursuing their interests (Lieberthal, 1995, p. 289). This is what I call fragmentation in state-society relations, thanks to which the residents in CSHD have been able to use legal tools and the creative "wait and see".

Furthermore, I argue that fragmentation in state-society relations can feed back to system fragmentation. The evidence is relevant to the one veto rule and the central government's

requirement to maintain social stability. As I mentioned in Chapter Five, social stability is a significant development goal in China at this stage (Buzan & Lawson, 2022; Wang, J., 2015). The current voluntary relocation in replace of the previous forced eviction is an urban development measurement to ensure social stability during demolition and relocation (Zhang & Moore-Cherry, 2022), as the one veto rule has essentially eliminated the possibility of using violence and coercion during demolition and relocation (Göbel & Heberer, 2017). To avoid social unrest, the local government of Anyang has not only excluded private developers from the CSHD Project but also only peacefully bargained with the residents who asked for more compensation. In other words, the one veto rule has made the relocation policies less concrete and more negotiable and opened a space for the residents to bargain for their benefits.

I conceive this rule as an element of system fragmentation because it is institutionalised in the evaluation system of government officials. However, this rule is derived from fragmentation in state-society relations. In the past decades, there have been many protests and demonstrations from peasants in rural areas (O'Brien & Li, 1995; Mertha, 2008), factory workers in Southern China (Fu, 2017), urban residents affected by forced eviction (Li et al., 2021; O'Brien & Deng, 2015; Zhang, 2004), etc. It is these nonstate actors' active participation in socio-political affairs that urged the central government to add this constraint on the local governments (Chen, 2020). That is, to some extent, fragmentation in state-society relations has reinforced system fragmentation.

Another noticeable feature of the residents' negotiation and contestation in CSHD is that they were relatively mild without direct and fierce confrontation, different from some other cases in China (e.g. Li et al., 2021; Zhou, H., 2015; Zhu, 2015). The one veto rule has already partly explained this feature. The second reason is why the residents engaged in negotiation and contestation. The residents actually did not seek to fundamentally change or stop the CSHD Project. They only hoped to maximise their economic gains through relocation or operating businesses. As my interviewees expressed, they did have place attachments (Resident Interviews). Nevertheless, "as life carries on, changes happen anyway" (Resident Interview – RN27). Thus they did not object to relocation *per se*. Many of them did take the relocation and the Project as a good opportunity to improve their living standards as they had seen that "a lot of places are doing this kind of thing [heritage regeneration and tourism development] now, like Shanxi and Hebei [Provinces], and it could be good for the economy

and people's lives" (Resident Interview – RN07). Therefore, radical contestation and concrete policy changes were unnecessary. This is a point that expands the concept of fragmented authoritarianism in a different way compared to the previous two points. That is, actors' goals of participating in decision-making are variegated. They may not pursue concrete policy changes but only seek to share as many benefits as possible from the existing policies. The goals then shape the extent of policy bargaining and changes.

According to critical heritage studies, the residents' negotiation and contestation in CSHD are different manifestations of heritage dissonance (Tunbridge & Ashworth, 1996). The above analysis shows how the concept of FA can be bridged with critical heritage studies, that is, FA helps understand why heritage dissonance displays itself in particular forms under the influence of power relations and value judgements. In terms of power relations between the local government and the residents, they are directly reflected by the relocation policy-making and implementation process and have directly determined how the residents can challenge the district government or would rather obey the district government. In terms of value judgements, the residents' pursuit of economic benefits from the Project reflects one dimension of their lay heritage discourses: they favour the economic value of heritage, converging with the local government's authorised heritage discourse to some extent. This dimension of the lay heritage discourses has influenced how they interacted with the local government. In Chapter Seven, I will look at how the residents and the general public perceived the non-use value of CSHD and whether this perception in their lay heritage discourses played into the Project in any way.

Residents' Complex Attitudes toward the Local Government

In addition to the actual negotiation and contestation, the residents in CSHD showed mixed attitudes toward the local government of Anyang (municipal and district) during the relocation, as manifested by the residents' word choices and some stories that they told me in my interviews. Their attitudes, alongside the above negotiation and contestation, reflect the complex state-society relations in contemporary China. The complexity first concerns how the Chinese citizens trust the central and local governments differently, and second concerns the divide between the "obedient" residents and the "recalcitrant" residents.

Previous research on the government trust pattern in China finds a "hierarchical trust pattern", i.e. Chinese citizens trust the central government more than the local governments (Wu & Wilkes, 2018). Zhai (2022) further clarifies that in certain policy areas such as food safety and environmental protection, Chinese citizens do not necessarily trust the central government more than the local governments. Two sets of theories explain the hierarchical trust pattern. The cultural approach attributes the difference to Confucian cultural heritage in China (Zhai, 2022). The admiration and submission to the ancient emperors and authorities have become political trust inertia till the present day. Strong trust in the central government is a legacy of the centralised and authoritarian regime in Chinese history. Whereas the local governments were usually the bullies who needed to be punished by the central government (Wu et al., 2016). The political approach focuses on the government's performance and responsiveness to citizens (Zhai, 2022). Some commonly-mentioned factors in this regard are government transparency, government performance in terms of quality and efficiency of work, and public participation (e.g. Liu & Raine, 2016; Wu et al., 2017; Zhao & Hu, 2017; Zhong, 2014). For instance, the central government's efforts to deliver rapid economic development have significantly raised Chinese citizens' political trust. However, the local policy implementation in certain fields, especially urban development during demolition and relocation, sometimes involves the local governments' corruption, nepotism, and brutality. Thus citizens tend to attribute the achievements to the central government while placing the blame on the local governments (Wu et al., 2016).

This hierarchical trust pattern is clearly observed in CSHD. Among some residents, there are some rumours about the relocation, the CSHD Project, and the local government, demonstrating the residents' strong distrust of the local government of Anyang (Resident Interviews). For example, regarding who can rent the government-requisitioned and refurbished houses to run businesses, Uncle Bin told me that only the second generation of government officials and the rich (*guan'erdai, 官二代*, and *fu'erdai, 富二代*) can rent the houses from the district government. "They have connections to the top" (Resident Interview – RN01). When I discussed this statement with the local officials, heritage professionals, and other residents, it appeared that this "connection" referred not exactly to nepotism. Instead, the district government has invited some well-known people and businesses in the city to run businesses in CSHD. For instance, one professor from a local university

was invited to run a small restaurant and a museum to exhibit his calligraphy works. One chain restaurant specialising in Western food was invited to open more stores in the area because of its "brand effect" (Government Interviews – GV02 & GV05; Professional Interview – PL01; Resident Interviews). Some artists and traditional handicrafts people have also rented the houses at a lower price or used the houses for free (Business Interviews – NB03 & NB13).

Another rumour is from Aunt Xue, a resident in the area who agitatedly complained about the compensation:

> The money from the top [the central government] is definitely more than what the city offers us now! It's without saying! The money that the top [central government] allocates equals 8,500 yuan/sqm. When it comes to us, it should be 11,000 yuan/sqm. But now the city gives them [the residents who agreed to move] only 6,100 or 6,200 yuan/sqm…… You [the municipal government][36] exploit the money that the nation gives you! How much money have you stolen? Where do you spend the money? (Resident Interview – RN06).

When I asked her how she knew the numbers, she replied, "It's without saying! When calculating compensation, it's always 1 sqm gets 1.3 sqm[37]. It's been this for years" (Resident Interview – RN06). This calculation rule was not confirmed by any of my sources. In fact, the central government and the provincial government did not allocate money for the relocation of CSHD or the entire CSHD Project. All the funding has come from the municipal and district governments of Anyang (Government Interview – GV01). Besides, it is reasonable that different relocation projects in the city have different compensation plans since the property value is not the same in different parts of the city.

A third rumour comes from some elderly residents:

> If they [the government] ask you to move and you don't move, you will be beaten up [didn't mention by whom]. Right in front of Xialvdi [a shopping mall near CSHD], they [residents] had conflicts with the government. They [residents] even prepared buckets and bottles of gasoline to fight the developers! (Resident Interview – RN15).

"Getting beaten up" has never happened in CSHD this time. The Xialvdi incident that the elderly talked about happened a decade ago during the development project of the shopping mall

36 Many residents in CSHD did not distinguish the central, municipal, and district governments in our conversations. When I asked them to clarify, they would explain which one they meant. Some residents did not know how the municipal and district governments divided the responsibilities in the Project, so they may randomly refer to one.
37 Here Aunt Xue meant that the coefficient of compensation should be 1.3. One sqm of the old house should be converted into 1.3 sqm to calculate the compensation.

(Government Interview – GV02; Resident Interviews). So to be precise, this is not a rumour in the city, but also not true in CSHD.

In contrast to the rumours about the local government, the residents in CSHD tended to express more positive feelings toward the central government in our conversations (Resident Interviews). As one grandpa said, "The new era led by Xi Jinping is better than any other period. It's full of hope…… Now they [the central government] are truly doing good to the ordinary people. I've experienced a lot…… (Resident Interview – RN04)". And Uncle Bin agreed that "in Beijing, there's less corruption because it's close to the central government" (Resident Interview – RN01). Interestingly, in Chapter Five, I mentioned that the planner and some residents commented that the local government of Anyang "does bad things with good intentions". In this chapter, the more commonly seen hierarchy trust pattern in CSHD and China generally explains why I questioned whether the planner (and those residents) truly meant what he said when he praised the then Municipal Party Secretary and found excuses for the local government at the end of our conversation.

In terms of the impacts of this hierarchical trust pattern, especially the residents' distrust of the local government, although I had not seen noticeable and direct results when I finished my fieldwork, arguably, the distrust may make the local government's job in heritage projects more difficult in the future. Since the local government plans to expand heritage conservation to the entire Old City (Government Interviews – GV01 & GV05), they may encounter more resistance. Beyond the assumption regarding the future of the CSHD Project and the regeneration of the Old City, one concrete impact that I did observe was that the residents had mixed readings of the CSHD Project. As I will discuss in more detail in Chapter Seven, some residents, as well as some Anyang citizens in general, did not accept and even strongly opposed the authorised heritage discourse of the local government and insisted on their lay heritage discourses, which implies more fragmented and unstable state-society relations in contemporary China compared to the Mao era and has complicated the results of the current nation building by the central and local states.

In addition to the hierarchical trust pattern, there are clearly two groups of residents in CSHD. One group is the aforementioned "recalcitrant ones" (*diaomin,* 刁民) who have disseminated the rumours and who have resisted the relocation. The other is the "obedient ones" (*shunmin,* 顺民) that

we will see shortly, usually residents who agreed to relocate quickly. Scholars have noticed this divide among Chinese citizens, indicating that the citizens themselves are far from consistent and united (O'Brien & Li, 1995). Scholars argue that the mentality of some citizens being subordinate to the government has entailed a lower awareness of public participation in China, which further hinders wider community empowerment (Fan, 2014; Heberer, 2009). My case study affirms this argument: the divide among the citizens has undermined the citizens' potential collective efforts to participate in policy bargaining.

The three relocated residents that I found in my fieldwork are all the "obedient" ones. Aunt Ying, one of the relocated residents, explained why her family decided to move:

> We agreed on the relocation terms quite fast. We didn't ask for much. They [the district government] wanted us to move, so we moved. We didn't discuss any conditions…… The government said that they would do the relocation, and the living conditions [in CSHD] weren't too good. You know, the toilet was inconvenient. So we moved. We didn't want to *make trouble* [emphasis added] for the government (Resident Interview – RL01).

Brother Yao, another relocated resident, explained similarly:

> Wei: You thought the money was enough?
> Brother Yao: *[Laugh] There was no other way even if it wasn't* [emphasis added]. We could only discuss it among our family members. We thought let's get the money after all.
> Wei: So you didn't think about being used to living here and so didn't want to move?
> Brother Yao: We didn't think too much. The government wanted to get the houses. You *need to cooperate [laugh]* [emphasis added] (Resident Interview – RL02).

The words they used, such as "not make trouble for the government" and "cooperate", evidently demonstrate the residents' obedience to the local government. Even some people still living in CSHD said things like "It's not our turn yet [to relocate]. But when it comes to us, if the government wants us to move, we will move. *What they say is what we do. We don't have the power to intervene in their plan* [emphasis added]" (Resident Interview – RN27).

Later, Aunt Ying complained to me about her "unreasonable" neighbour:

> She [the neighbour] is already in her 70s. She's lived here her whole life. And she doesn't want to move. But some of her constructions are illegal…… The government is not forcing them to move. Their house is about 200 sqm. And they ask for six apartment houses! I was like, SO MANY houses you are asking for! They [the

> government] don't agree. You have limited space, and you ask for so much. This is OUTRAGEOUS. We only got three small apartments with our more spacious house [in CSHD, more than 300 sqm]. We didn't even ask for so much. I think one household getting one apartment would be enough (Resident Interview – RL01).

When referring to the government, both local and central, the residents usually use the word "*renjia* (*人家*)", literally meaning "other people", or "*shangtou* (*上头*)", literally meaning "the top". When referring to themselves as citizens, they usually use the word "*laobaixing* (*老百姓*)", meaning "ordinary people". In this context, these Chinese words imply that the central government as well as the local government is "higher up" and unreachable, while the citizens are subordinate and inferior, especially politically. Asking for too much compensation from the district government is not what a "good" citizen should do. Then where does this submissive mentality come from? Perry (2008) attributes this mentality to Chinese traditional culture which values collectivism over individualism and emphasises collective socioeconomic development over political participation rights, different from the West. Zhai (2022) argues that this is also associated with the persisting influence of China's authoritarianism legacy from imperial China as well as the planned economy era. Beyond the submissive attitude, however, what is interesting is that even if the relocated residents felt submissive, they still put themselves on the opposite side of the government, i.e. the Self versus the Other. Thus there is a clear divide between the Chinese government and the citizens, in addition to the divide among the citizens.

To sum up, the hierarchical trust pattern, the divide among the citizens, and the divide between the Chinese government and the citizens all point to complex and even self-contradicting state-society relations in China, which has complicated our understanding of the "authoritarian" state. That is, on the one hand, authoritarianism is persisting and sustained by factors such as traditional Chinese culture and political inertia. On the other hand, there are many existing and potentially more fragments between the state and society that make policy-making and implementation less unidirectional and the nation less monolithic. A more accurate or useful interpretation of this contradiction may be that while the nation is persistently and even increasingly authoritarian, on-the-ground decision-making and individual projects can have many variations, contingent upon a broad range of factors such as the capacity of the local government, the social and cultural capital of the citizens, the presence of civil society, and the relationship between various actors.

6.4 Local Government's Objectives of Relocation: Heritage as Governmentality

The previous sections have documented the relocation policy and process. In this section, I discuss why the district government has attached so much importance to relocation. As noted by a local official (Government Interview – GV05), although the first-stage relocation in CSHD went generally well, there were some misunderstandings and resistance from the residents at the very beginning. In order to acquire wider support from the residents, the Street Offices (SOs) used a specific propaganda[38] approach to advertising the relocation and the Project. I argue that this propaganda strategy reveals the local government's immediate goal for relocation, as well as its deeper and embedded rationales for conducting the Project and its authorised heritage discourse. The immediate goal is to use heritage to achieve "modernisation with Chinese characteristics". The deeper rationales are for the local officials to acquire political promotion and for the local state to enhance its legitimacy, two of the three rationales that I have discussed in Chapter Five. The authorised heritage discourse is using heritage as a political resource to strengthen urban governance, educate citizens, and (re)establish state sovereignty.

The propaganda tool is *A Letter to the Residents of the Old City* (hereinafter the Letter) drafted by one of the SOs in CSHD. All the SOs put up the Letter on the notice boards on the streets and distributed some copies directly to the residents (Government Interview – GV05). The Letter contained information like how to compensate the residents and the laws and regulations that the compensation plan was based on. More importantly, the Letter explained why relocation was necessary and significant:

> Due to historical reasons and objective limitations, the infrastructure in the Old City of Anyang is relatively backward; the traffic is congested; the building conditions are usually poor; the living environment needs to be improved immediately. There are many citizens with financial difficulties and many underprivileged groups. It is not only the Old City citizens' long-lasting anticipation but also the [local] Party Committee and Government's undeniable responsibility to improve the living environment and upgrade the living taste. To inherit the history and culture, re-present the Old Cityscape, improve the living environment, and demonstrate the charm of the city, the Municipal Party Committee and Government decided to implement the

38 In English, the word "propaganda" has a negative connotation. While in Chinese, the word "*xuanchuan*" (*宣传*) is neutral (Shambaugh, 2015). *Xuanchuan* sometimes is translated as "promotion", usually in a commercial or marketing context. Sometimes, especially in a political context, it is translated as "propaganda", like the "Propaganda Department of the Central Committee of the CPC". I use the word "propaganda" to reflect the political use of the word as well as to imply that the "propaganda" of the relocation in CSHD was indeed controversial.

> regeneration and revitalisation project of the Old City of Anyang…… Dear resident-friends, the conservation, regeneration, and revitalisation of the Old City are related to citizens' well-being and tied to the big picture of the city. The work is at present, and the benefits are in the future generations[39]. We sincerely hope that our resident-friends can tightly grasp the invaluable historical opportunity, and more self-consciously care, support, and serve the conservation and construction of the Old City of Anyang. Let us work together, participate together, and construct the magnificent Old City of Anyang hand-in-hand! (The Letter, 2018).

From the exciting and powerful Letter, we can see that the local government tied the necessity of the relocation to the significance of heritage conservation and city beautification and modernisation, demonstrating the grand purpose of the relocation and the entire Project: pursuing "modernisation with Chinese characteristics" and boosting Chinese citizens' "cultural confidence" (Buzan & Lawson, 2022; He, 2022). He (2002) systematically summarises China's fluctuating encounter with modernity originated in the West from the late 19th century to the late 20th century, and Buzan and Lawson (2022) extend the summary to the present day.

At the present stage, the central state led by Xi Jinping is pursuing "Chinese modernisation" which combines some components of market capitalism and the absolute role of an authoritarian state. This version of modernisation involves an important element, traditionalism. Although modernity seems in contradiction with tradition to some extent, modernity is never the stark opposite of tradition but may replace or reshape tradition (Buzan & Lawson, 2022; He, 2002, p. 119). In China, the discourse of revitalising traditional Chinese culture and boosting Chinese citizens' cultural confidence is an attempt to blend tradition into the Chinese version of modernisation (Sun, 2016). Buzan and Lawson (2022) further explain that the reason for doing so is to retool the ideals of hierarchy, submissiveness, and harmony embedded in Confucianism to support the authoritarian regime and justify the peaceful revitalisation discourse in China's current diplomacy. Heritage as an embodiment of traditionalism is thus instrumentalised for governing purposes. When the local states practise the central political discourse in heritage conservation projects, the cultural projects become loaded with political connotations.

39 In Chinese, this saying is *gongzai dangdai, lizai qianqiu (功在当代，利在千秋)* which is commonly used to promote certain collective actions and stress the importance of the actions such as environmental protection and heritage conservation.

Drawing upon the concept of fragmented authoritarianism, the CSHD Project reflects an important aspect of the central-local relations in China nowadays. The local government of Anyang has actively embraced the central government's preferences, indicating the FA system is still in nature authoritarian, which has real impacts on decision-making. In Chapter Five, we saw that due to the personnel evaluation system of Chinese government officials, the local government has delivered the Project in a fast and economic development-oriented way so that the local officials can be recognised and promoted by the upper-level governments. In this chapter, it is clear that the upper-level governments' preferences at present are not limited to rapid economic growth but also include cultural revitalisation. Heritage conservation is an important constituent of and approach to both economic growth and cultural revitalisation. Consequently, the local government of Anyang has actively used discourses like Chinese modernisation and cultural confidence to brand and legitimise the CSHD Project (Government Interview – GV05). After all, no matter how fragmented the political system is, the regime remains authoritarian and the central state remains the sole and highest leader that values political loyalty from the lower-level governments (Hamrin & Zhao, 1995; Zhang, 2002b). Political conformity, alongside economic performance, is an explicit evaluation criterion (Landry, 2008; Zhang, 2002b). Embracing the central policy is thus an effective way for local officials to demonstrate their political conformity to secure their promotion and political future (Göbel & Heberer, 2017).

In fact, heritage-related projects were suspended in Anyang for around a decade. In the past decade, the municipal government has used a scenic area in one of the counties of the city to promote paragliding as a leisure activity to develop a tourism economy. When the central government started to pay more attention to heritage conservation, and when major cities benefited from heritage projects, the municipal government of Anyang decided to refocus on heritage (Professional Interview – SC01). Many residents also mentioned that the local government had talked about relocation for years. The local government had sent groups of contractors to measure and register the residents' houses several times. But the relocation never happened, probably because of the lack of budget for the Old City upgrading and the constant change of the mayors in the past decades (Resident Interviews). In 2018, the relocation was re-started with a new slogan, heritage conservation (Government Interview – GV05).

This illustration of the central-local relations addresses one of the limitations of the concept of FA which overemphasises fragmentation and policy incoherence, whereas overlooking policy coherence from the centre down to the local (Lieberthal, 1992). How the local government of Anyang embraces the central government's call for heritage conservation is a vivid example of a certain degree of policy coherence in China. However, it is necessary to make two further points here. First, fragmentation, in this case, is not overcome through policy coordination between different government agencies, as observed by scholars in some policy areas (Lema & Ruby, 2007). Instead, it is how the central government evaluates local officials that helps overcome the fragmentation, highlighting the importance of the evaluation system of government officials in China (Landry, 2008). Second, as I will discuss in Chapter Seven, this policy coherence is deep down less coherent than the central government expects, as the local government's active embrace of the central policy is more tokenistic.

Then, drawing upon critical heritage studies (Wang, 2017; Zhu & González Martínez, 2022), the Letter reflects a common practice in China, "heritage as governmentality". The Letter was widely used when the SO officials negotiated with the residents, i.e. during the negotiation, the SO officials usually mentioned that the relocation was for the benefit of heritage conservation and the city as a whole. As a result, "the residents saw hope. They understood that the [local] government would not half-finish the Project and leave them unattended, so they were generally quite supportive. There was no difficulty in the later implementation stage. Now we are able to expand the conservation area of the Old City [based on CSHD]," as introduced proudly and confidently by one local official (Government Interview – GV05). Considering the speed of the relocation and the timeline of the Project, the implementation process of the relocation was indeed relatively smooth, which may be attributed to the Letter to some extent.

Heritage as governmentality has been widely practised in China. Here, governmentality refers to "the ensemble formed by institutions, procedures, analysis and reflections, calculations, and tactics" (Foucault, 1992, p. 102). By conducting heritage projects in certain ways and propagating the heritage projects with certain political discourses of the central and local states, heritage conservation becomes a tool to educate and regulate the citizens. For instance, Yan (2015) finds that when nominating Fujian Tulou as a World Cultural Heritage, the local government claimed that

heritage nomination and conservation were for "building a harmonious society". The local government thus integrated the national discourse of "building a harmonious society" into heritage nomination and conservation and used this discourse to educate the citizens. In Oakes' (2016) case study of Guizhou Province, the local government used the aesthetics of the heritage to rebuild a governable and harmonious space and to educate the citizens to be more modern and civilized. Similarly, Zhu and González Martínez (2022) observe that in Xi'an and Shanghai, the local governments used heritage to stimulate citizens' sense of belonging and identity and further enhance their local and national pride.

Fundamentally, "cultural heritage and its values become a tool of legitimacy used to regulate populations through spatial management and the reproduction of state power and sovereignty in the 21st century" (Zhu & González Martínez, 2022, p. 489). This has become an important constituent of the current authorised heritage discourse across the country (Zhu & Maags, 2020, pp. 57-58). This political use of culture and heritage is a common practice widely observed outside of China as well (Silva & Santos, 2012). For instance, the European Union often uses culture as a medium to promote the unification and integration of Europe (Čeginskas & Kaasik-Krogerus, 2019; Lähdesmäki, 2016), pointing to the "progressive 'governmentalisation' of culture" (Barnett, 2001, p. 405).

In the case of CSHD, we can likewise conceive heritage as state governmentality. The first idea that the local government of Anyang is attempting to disseminate among the residents is the significance of the traditional Chinese culture, as constantly mentioned in the Letter, following the central government's requirement of achieving "modernisation with Chinese characteristics". The objective is for national building and enhancing the collective identity of Chinese citizens. In the meantime, given Anyang's current local specificities of deindustrialisation, economic decline, and the previous Ponzi scheme scandal, the local government has devoted much energy to conducting the relocation. It hopes to demonstrate the capability of the local government in handling urban development projects and solving the city's economic decline. Thus the second idea is a still powerful and trustworthy local government (Government Interview – GV05).

Importantly, this AHD reflects a re-centralisation process in China nowadays. There have been many studies discussing decentralisation in China (e.g. Landry, 2008; Yeh & Wu, 1998; Zhu, X., 2019).

The decentralisation is occurring mainly within the CPC and the Chinese government in terms of delegating policy-making power to different levels of Party Committees and governments, including urban development, heritage conservation, and even management of local officials (Landry, 2008). The purpose is to facilitate decision-making and boost economic development as well as release the burden of the central state (Zhu, X., 2019). Similar re-centralisation through institutional reforms is also occurring in different policy areas with different policy tools (Zhu, X., 2019), thus there is a "cyclical process of decentralisation and re-centralisation" in Chinese bureaucracy (Tjia, 2023, p. 1).

Differently, the re-centralisation that I discuss here is targeting not only the local governments but also the Chinese citizens through (re)shaping ideology. In China, moulding citizens' ideology has a long history (Anagnost, 1997). During the Mao era, the CPC's strategies were more radical, forced, and even violent (Lieberthal, 1995, Chapter Ten). After the Mao era, ideology control remains a key issue for the Party-state, yet forced ideological indoctrination is no longer feasible (Landry, 2008; Yan, 2015). Instead, culture is deemed a viable tool by the Party-state. The CPC thus integrates itself into the uninterrupted 5000-year Chinese history to establish its legitimacy (Madsen, 2014; Minafo, 2018; Perry, 2017; Tsang, 2016). In recent years, the geopolitical challenges for China have become increasingly prominent, including territorial disputes with Southeast Asia, relations with the US, the Taiwan issue, etc. (Xi, 2022). China has also discarded its previous "keeping a low profile" on the international stage and become more active in diplomacy (Winter, 2018, p. 16).

Under this international background, the CPC believes that maintaining domestic stability and unifying Chinese citizens are pivotal (Xi, 2022). As Xi points out on different occasions, "social stability is the prerequisite of a strong and prosperous country" (Xi, 2022), and "propaganda, ideological and cultural work is related to the future and destiny of the Party, the long-term stability of the country, and national cohesion and centripetal force. It is an extremely important task" (Zhao, 2023)[40]. One of the strategies for cultural development is "[promoting] the protection and inheritance of China's excellent traditional culture" (Xi, 2022). Xi's statements clearly illustrate the role that culture, including heritage, can and should play in maintaining social stability. He even explicitly puts propaganda, ideology, and culture side by side. At the local level, consequently, the practices of

40 Quoted from Xi's speech at the National Working Conference of Propoganda, Ideology, and Culture (*quanguo xuanchuan sixiang wenhua gongzuo huiyi, 全国宣传思想文化工作会议*) held in October, 2023.

heritage as governmentality have become a very specific as well as prevalent way of realising ideological re-centralisation.

This ideological re-centralisation serves similar purposes compared to the abovementioned decentralisation (and re-centralisation) through institutional reforms. The latter directly facilitates policy-making and implementation by reorganising state apparatus. The former aims at unifying the development direction of the entire country and clearing out obstacles in the wider society that impede efficient policy-making and implementation. In this sense, different forms of decentralisation and re-centralisation prove that the Chinese regime is pragmatic with flexibility and resilience (Nathan, 2003). However, interestingly, as I will discuss in the next chapter, the effectiveness of the central state's ideological re-centralisation targeting the local states as well as the citizens is arguably limited due to various reasons. How the Chinese regime sustains flexibility and resilience through pragmatism may become a new challenge for the central state.

In summary, the CSHD Project, as reflected by the propaganda of the relocation, is a political use of heritage, i.e. "heritage as governmentality". The first rationale of the local government for conducting the CSHD Project in this political way is, again, to acquire personal promotion by actively responding to the central government's preferences. The second rationale is to enhance state legitimacy by instrumentalising heritage for governance. The first rationale demonstrates how the personnel evaluation system can help overcome system fragmentation and sustain authoritarianism (Landry, 2008). The second rationale is an important element of the contemporary AHD in China. This element stresses the political value of heritage and links heritage to the comprehensive development of the nation, particularly to realise ideological re-centralisation. Thus, heritage, and indeed culture, is increasingly politicised in China.

6.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have analysed the relocation process within the CSHD Project in terms of the compensation and relocation plans, the negotiation and contestation from the residents, the residents' mixed attitudes toward the local government, and the local government's propaganda of the Project during the relocation. The relocation process has manifested the complex relationships between the

central government, the local government, and the residents, which reflects the FA in the Chinese heritage system as well as the various heritage discourses of different actors.

Drawing on the concept of FA, the decision-making and implementation process is influenced by system fragmentation as well as the authoritarian nature. Looking at the interactions between the central and local governments, the district government took advantage of the vagueness of the central regulation, particularly the expression of setting up compensation based on "the level of economic development of the locality" to justify the relatively unsatisfying compensation for the residents. When hiring the property evaluation firm, the district government did not let residents choose the firm, as stipulated by the regulation, but self-picked the firm. This means that in certain policy areas, the Chinese local governments do enjoy considerable freedom in policy-making and implementation. What is special about the case study is that the small to mid-sized city context renders a relatively remote central-local distance in the sense of less supervision and monitoring from the centre, which constitutes part of the system fragmentation.

Due to this relatively remote central-local distance, the policy-making and implementation in the CSHD Project did not involve direct conversations and bargaining between the local and the central governments. But this no direct communication is also associated with the policy area. Heritage projects in China are usually practised at the local level without direct intervention from the central government, as heritage is less significant than say energy policies, reforms of state-owned enterprises, and large-scale infrastructure development where FA is usually observed. In the meantime, because heritage policy-making has fewer benefits to bargain over, what the local government of Anyang wanted was not to fundamentally change the central regulations, but merely to accommodate the local government's interests and agenda. Therefore, the policy re-interpretation and even distortion at the local level in fact were not for concrete policy changes at the central level, demonstrating a different degree of bargaining and a different result of system fragmentation compared to those in other policy areas.

In terms of the impacts of authoritarianism, the relocation in CSHD has been "voluntary" given that no violence or coercion has been involved, following the central government's regulation. Moreover, the local government's propaganda of the Project through the Letter has been an active embrace of

the current central preferences and policies. This embrace is to demonstrate local officials' political conformity and loyalty in order to acquire political promotion, one important rationale of the local government for conducting the Project. Here, we can see that the personnel evaluation of local officials is an important tool for the central government to maintain and even strengthen local control, echoing Landry's (2008) argument. This is a point that addresses one limitation of the concept of FA: despite fragmentation and the subsequent policy incoherence, there is still policy coherence in China's policy-making (Lieberthal, 1992). In addition to policy coordination between different state and nonstate actors, the personnel evaluation system is a significant mechanism to overcome fragmentation and sustain authoritarianism.

Looking at the interactions between the local government and the residents, there are both system fragmentation and fragmentation in state-society relations at work within the authoritarian context. First and foremost, authoritarianism determines that it was the district government that drew up the policy boundaries. The residents' negotiation and contestation were by and large within the boundaries. The speed of the relocation and no large-scale resistance proved the efficiency of the relocation policies. Additionally, some residents' submissive attitudes toward the local government also imply the authoritarian legacy from Chinese history and Confucianism.

Then, what is more interesting is how system fragmentation and fragmentation in state-society relations function. In terms of system fragmentation, in CSHD, SO officials have been the crucial channels through which the residents join in policy bargaining. The effectiveness of the residents' strategies is also closely linked to the one veto rule in the personnel evaluation criteria. Thus, the community governance structure and the one veto rule become two important causes of system fragmentation. At the same time, fragmentation in state-society relations, i.e. the increasing awareness and activeness of Chinese citizens, has fostered residents' flexible and tactful resistance strategies that do not purely rely on system fragmentation. Moreover, *de facto* policy bargaining and policy changes brought by both dimensions of fragmentation have been observed in a prolonged process from policy-making to implementation.

What is worth noticing is that fragmentation in state-society relations may feed into system fragmentation. This is exemplified by how the one veto rule, rooted in the former, has been

institutionalised and thus resulted in the latter. The formation of this rule, the shift from forced eviction to voluntary relocation in China, and the residents' resistance in CSHD all suggest that nonstate actors and both dimensions of fragmentation can lead to concrete policy changes eventually, despite the increasing authoritarianism. Here, we see a perhaps perplexing contradiction around China's FA. Drawing on the case of CSHD, we can deduce that fragments are generally being eliminated in President Xi's era (Li, 2023; Zhang, 2023). Yet there are many variations and possibilities at the local level during specific projects. When certain conditions are in place, e.g. if the "recalcitrant" citizens are resourceful enough and their interests are immensely impaired by government decisions, they may become effective policy entrepreneurs.

Building on the framework of critical heritage studies, there are three points worth discussing. The first one concerns the role of grassroots-level officials. Considering the concept of authorised heritage discourse, grassroots-level officials may not produce the AHD, but more function as the disseminators of the AHD. This argument addresses one limitation of AHD, i.e. the nominalisation of the phrase neglects the agents of AHD in terms of "who does what to whom" (Skrede & Hølleland, 2018). Distinguishing the roles of different "authorities" in AHD in the CSHD case more clearly illustrates how AHD is produced and circulated and how AHD interacts with lay heritage discourses.

Second, residents' negotiation and contestation in CSHD, as different manifestations of heritage dissonance, take relatively mild forms, different from some previous studies (e.g. Svensson, 2016; Yan, 2015; Zhu, 2015). This difference can be attributed to three factors: their power relations with the local government, the purpose of negotiation and contestation which reflects the residents' value judgements, and the specificities of a small to mid-sized city. With regard to their power relations with the local government, the above analysis based on FA has already displayed how power relations have influenced the interactions between the local government and the residents. This confirms the usefulness of my conceptual framework: the concept of FA is of value for critical heritage studies in understanding how power relations shape heritage dissonance.

With regard to the purpose of negotiation and contestation, the residents do not seek to fundamentally change the approaches of the Project or to halt it but strive to maximise their

economic gains through the Project, in ways of getting more compensation or running businesses. Differently, in other cases, the communities may strongly disagree with the authorities' approaches or heritage interpretation, thus seeking to steer heritage practices in a completely new direction (e.g. Dewi et al., 2019; Kang, 2009; Liang, 2013; Zhu, 2015). In this regard, the CSHD residents' lay heritage discourses converge with the local government's AHD to some extent. Both sets of heritage discourses acknowledge the economic value of heritage and hope to cash out the economic value. Therefore, this case verifies the arguments of critical heritage studies that value judgements are a factor that influences heritage dissonance and heritage practices. Further, it provides an example of how AHD and other heritage discourses are not always in conflict.

With regard to the specificities of a small city, residents in CSHD, in comparison with citizens of major cities, usually lack the economic, social, and cultural capital to initiate large-scale and influential campaigns to challenge the local government. Even resourceful citizens needed to rely on the expertise and resources of other, usually major, cities. Still, the residents in CSHD have come up with other strategies of negotiation and contestation. These represent some distinctions between small/mid-sized cities and major cities and prove the value of studies on small/mid-sized cities.

Third, a significant element of the AHD of the Chinese government, from central to local, is the so-called "heritage as governmentality". Heritage and its political value have been exploited by the state to legitimise itself, strengthen local governance through ideology, and enhance state power. The importance of this particular element of AHD lies in the fact that it points to the current re-centralisation in China. This re-centralisation, on the one hand, takes a different approach than previous decentralisation (and re-centralisation) through institutional reforms. On the other hand, this ideological re-centralisation and institutional decentralisation (and re-centralisation) serve similar purposes. Institutional decentralisation (and re-centralisation) is explicitly redistributing state power within the state apparatus. The re-centralisation that we see here is implicitly unifying the state apparatus as well as citizens through ideology. They both aim to facilitate decision-making and implementation to ensure the rapid advancement of the nation.

This chapter has touched upon the local government's AHD and residents' lay heritage discourses. In the next chapter, I will include tourists and business owners as other actors in the CSHD Project and

more thoroughly investigate the AHD and lay heritage discourses regarding CSHD. Through discussing the heritage discourses in relation to the central government's culture promotion strategy and cultural confidence discourse, I will continue to argue that heritage is a governance tool to realise ideological re-centralisation. I will also reflect on the effectiveness of the central government's governance strategy and the local government's practice. The objective is to demonstrate that heritage conservation is less determined by the contents of heritage discourses but largely bounded by the pre-existing heritage system embedded in the overall political system.

Chapter 7. Heritage Discourses: Implicit Disagreements and Impacts on Heritage Construction

7.1 Introduction

The previous two chapters have covered several components of the Regeneration Project of Cangxiang Street Historic District (hereinafter the CSHD Project or the Project), focusing on how different actors' negotiation and contestation during decision-making and implementation explicitly shaped the Project. This chapter focuses on other components of the Project, including the value interpretation, economic redevelopment, and branding and propaganda of the Project and looks at how different actors' various heritage discourses embedded in these components implicitly shaped the Project. The actors are the local government of Anyang, heritage professionals, and the general public (including residents and business owners in CSHD and local tourists). The Chinese central government is still a contextual actor.

I will show that these actors indeed had diverse heritage discourses for CSHD. However, different from the negotiation and contestation in decision-making and implementation that directly shaped the Project, the differences in heritage discourses did not influence the Project in significant ways. Therefore, I will argue that power relations as manifested by previous chapters are a more important factor in shaping heritage practices than value judgements as presented in this chapter.

Notwithstanding, discussing the diverse heritage discourses is still important, as they also illuminate China's fragmented authoritarianism. Looking at how the local government integrated the central government's cultural confidence discourse into the authorised heritage discourse of CSHD, I will argue that the authoritarianism of the system requires the local government to actively embrace central regulations and preferences. However, the Anyang local government's discretion allowed its response to the centre to be more of a gesture. Thus contemporary China's authoritarianism is still fragmented, despite the re-centralisation efforts of the CPC and the central government. Looking at how the general public has perceived the cultural confidence discourse in relation to the Project, I

will argue that the state-society relations now are rather delicate and full of fragments and cracks. Though the fragments and cracks, in other words, fragmentation in state-society relations, have not translated into concrete policy changes, they do potentially add more difficulties for the CPC and the central government when attempting to sustain and increase authoritarianism.

This chapter contains the following sections. Section 7.2 examines the local government and heritage professionals' AHDs of CSHD in terms of heritage definition, value, and redevelopment approaches[41]. Section 7.3 discusses how the local government incorporated the central government's cultural confidence discourse into its AHD of CSHD, highlighting the political value of heritage in China. Section 7.4 compares the local citizens' lay heritage discourses with the AHDs and looks at the local citizens' responses to the cultural confidence discourse. Section 7.5 concludes this chapter.

7.2 The Authorised Heritage Discourses: The Cultural and Economic Dimensions

The AHD that Smith (2006) criticises is reliant on technical expertise and institutionalised in state agencies. In CSHD, given the local government's political authority and the heritage professionals' discourse in relation to that promoted by international organisations, the heritage discourses produced by the local government and heritage professionals can be considered "AHDs" for now. However, I will demonstrate that these two actors were not always consistent in opinions with equal power during the Project. Whether AHD is the appropriate label here needs to be reflected upon.

Heritage Definition, Value Interpretation, and Redevelopment Approaches

The definition of "heritage" is a fundamental constituent of heritage discourses. This constituent in the AHDs of CSHD is reflected by the nomination and designation of CSHD. Before the Project, some local scholars had been personally studying the historical records and maps of the Old City of Anyang, and interviewing many older people who lived in the Old City for decades (Professional Interviews – SC01 & SC02). Based on their research, the planners that the municipal government hired from Beijing selected three areas in the Old City of Anyang that have the most well-preserved historic buildings, including CSHD, to be the potential areas where conservation work could start

41 I deliberately use plural AHDs here to differentiate heritage professionals and the local government. I will discuss this point later in this chapter.

(Professional Interviews – PL01, PL02, & PL03). In 2018, the provincial government designated the historic districts as Provincial Major Historic Districts.

When selecting the historic districts, the planners from Beijing not only considered monumental historic buildings such as Gaoge Temple (*gaoge si, 高阁寺*) and Chenghuang Temple (*chenghuang miao, 城隍庙*) but also traditional residences and the overall layout and fabric of the Old City. This demonstrates that the heritage professionals' understanding of heritage has been expanded from monumentality to vernacular heritage, and from buildings to more complex built environments and intangible elements, which is consistent with the international evolution of the definition of heritage (Wang et al., 2017, p. 1835; see the Getty Conservation Institute, 2015, for a summary of international heritage charters that signify the evolution of heritage definition). In the meantime, the principles promoted by international heritage organisations, particularly authenticity and integrity[42], were important factors for the planners, because they believed that theoretically, authentic heritage areas with high integrity were more significant; practically, it was easier to conduct conservation work in such heritage areas (Professional Interview – PL02). This demonstrates the strong influence of UNESCO, ICOMOS, and IUCN on Chinese heritage professionals (Lai, 2016).

Heritage value constitutes another important part of heritage discourses. In heritage studies, scholars usually emphasise the non-use value of heritage, such as historical value, aesthetic value, and symbolic value (e.g. Riegl, 1996, one of the earliest scholars studying heritage value systematically, though the Chinese professionals' categorisation of value is different from Riegl's original framework; summary of the definition and evolution of value in Gibson & Pendlebury, 2009). According to China's heritage regulation, the Conservation and Management Plans of heritage sites need to identify the value of the heritage, mainly referring to the non-use value (State Council, 2017). Thus, the planners directly wrote the official interpretation of the heritage value of CSHD in *The Conservation Plan of Cangxiang Street Historic District* (hereinafter the Conservation Plan).

42 According to *The Nara Document on Authenticity* (ICOMOS, 1994), authenticity is measured by multiple elements of heritage, including "form and design, materials and substance, use and function, traditions and techniques, location and setting, and spirit and feeling, and other internal and external factors". According to IUCN (2011), integrity refers to "a measure of the wholeness and intactness of the natural and/or cultural heritage and its attributes" which is based on whether the heritage "(a) includes all elements necessary to express its outstanding universal value; (b) is of adequate size to ensure the complete representation of the features and processes which convey the property's significance; and (c) suffers from adverse effects of development and/or neglect". In academic research and heritage practices in different contexts, the definitions and indicators of authenticity and integrity may vary and be debatable.

The Conservation Plan acknowledges three elements as the heritage value of CSHD, based on the main street of the historic district, Cangxiang Street, and some other streets that directly connect to Cangxiang Street (The Conservation Plan, 2021; Professional Interviews – PL02, PL03, & SC01).

The first element is the granary history of CSHD. In the Ming and Qing Dynasties, there were many government-owned granaries and private grain stores on several streets, including Cangxiang Street (*仓巷街*), Houcang Street (*后仓街*), Dacangkou (*大仓口*), and Xiaocangkou (*小仓口*). Cang (*仓*), the Chinese character that appears in the names of the streets, means granaries. Ancient China was an agriculture-based country, thus government-owned granaries were important as the economic and livelihood support of a Chinese city. The streets in CSHD and the location of the government offices used to be well-planned to suit the traffic of the vehicles that were loaded with grains. Therefore, the heritage professionals considered granary history the most important element of CSHD (Professional Interview – SC01; The Conservation Plan, 2021; Figure 7-1).

Figure 7-1. Dacangmen (*大仓门*) (*Source: author, 2021*).

Note. This courtyard house was a government-run granary in ancient times. Before the Project in

2018, 14 households lived in this courtyard house. The district government relocated all of them during the Project and converted the courtyard house into a museum exhibiting the granary history of CSHD and China in general (Resident Interview – RL03; personal observation).

The second element is the traditional residences on Cangxiang Street. In the Ming and Qing Dynasties, partly due to the prosperous granaries and grain stores, many wealthy businesspeople lived on this street. Their residences were traditional courtyard houses in northern China built with grey bricks. Different from the well-known courtyard houses in Beijing, the courtyard houses in Anyang are known by the feature of "*jiumen xiangzhao*" (*九门相照*, literally meaning nine doors corresponding to one another). That is, all the front doors and back doors of the main halls of one courtyard house are situated on the central axis of the house, thus when looking from the first door, one can see through all the doors. The biggest houses usually have as many as nine doors on the central axis. Smaller houses may have seven or five doors. Similar to other traditional residences in China, the residences on Cangxiang Street have delicate stone carvings and ornaments on different parts of the buildings. The heritage professionals believed that these stone carvings and ornaments contribute to the aesthetic value of the area and represent one type of Chinese traditional residence (Professional Interview – SC01; The Conservation Plan, 2021; Figure 7-2).

Figure 7-2. Stone carving ornament of the traditional residence on Cangxiang Street (*Source: author, 2021*).

The third element is the water system in CSHD which represents the water system of the entire Old City of Anyang. The water system of CSHD mainly refers to the artificial pond in the centre of the area, Houcangkeng (see Figure 4-10, p. 102). It was first built as part of a public garden, Kangleyuan (*康乐园*), by the well-known government official of the Song Dynasty, Han Qi (*韩琦*, 1008A.D. – 1075A.D.) who was originally from Anyang. The pond is connected to the underground canals scattered in the Old City and finally connected to the moat of the Old City. In ancient times, Houcangkeng and many other ponds and the underground canals in the Old City had the functions of adjusting the temperature and moisture of the surrounding areas, providing water for fire control, and most importantly, storing extra rainwater to avoid inner-city floods. The heritage professionals conceived the water system of the Old City of Anyang as representing Chinese ancestors' wisdom of city construction and called the water system "the earliest model of sponge city" (Professional Interview – SC01; The Conservation Plan, 2021).

Combing the three elements, the Conservation Plan interpreted the heritage value of CSHD as follows:

> Cangxiang Street Historic District is the core component of the Historical and Cultural City of Anyang……. The historical and cultural characteristics of the area are comprised of three aspects: (1) The historic district is where the government granaries and warehouses were located, thus it is an important part of the city construction, and witnessed the historical evolution of the layout of the Old City. (2) The historic district is the area where traditional Anyang residences with clear fabric and delicate architectural forms are concentrated and well-preserved. (3) Houcangkeng in the area is an important element and typical representation of the water system of the Old City of Anyang and is an important heritage to study the ancient gardens in Anyang (The Conservation Plan, 2021).

In addition to heritage definition and heritage value, the restoration of historic buildings in CSHD indirectly reflects the AHDs. As I discussed in Chapter Five, the planners from Beijing preferred adaptive reuse as a more advanced restoration principle to accommodate contemporary needs and aesthetics, while the local government preferred and finally decided to use the approach of "repair the old as old". This is where the heritage professionals' heritage discourse and the local government's heritage discourse diverge. Although the local government acknowledged vernacular heritage and intangible elements of CSHD as they followed the heritage professionals' suggestions to nominate CSHD, they still applied the restoration technology that is currently largely used in

monumental heritage to restore vernacular heritage, which was seen by the planners as “outdated” and as a failure to update thinking (Professional Interview – PL02).

Lastly, how to redevelop CSHD also indirectly reflects the AHDs. The district government’s plan and practices have aimed at (1) developing recreational and tourism businesses and cultural industries and (2) exhibiting the history and culture of the entire city of Anyang in this area, not limited to the history and culture of CSHD (Government Interviews – GV04 & GV05). Currently, on the west half of Cangxiang Street where most of the houses along the street have been requisitioned by the district government, the district government has opened several museums exhibiting the evolution of Chinese characters, the granary history of CSHD and China, the historical development of the Old City of Anyang, and the building components of the traditional residences in the Old City. The district government also rented several storefronts to handicrafts-people for free or at a very low price to promote traditional handicrafts, although these traditional handicrafts are not originally from CSHD or even Anyang (Business Interviews). On the east half of Cangxiang Street where most of the houses are still privately owned, some residents have been using their own houses to run small restaurants, beverage stores, and coffee shops or have rented their houses to small business people to run these businesses (Business Interviews). Around Houcangkeng and the far east of Cangxiang Street where most of the houses are requisitioned by the district government, some businesspeople have rented the houses from the district government to run music bars, cafeterias, and bookstores (Business Interviews). In comparison, business use has taken much more space than museums and culture demonstrations, which means that the district government does recognise the non-use value of CSHD and has devoted certain space and effort to preserve traditional culture, but it favours the economic value of CSHD (See Figure 4-13, the land use plan of CSHD in Chapter Four, p. 107, that shows a much larger area for commercial use compared to cultural use).

Looking at how CSHD was selected from the Old City of Anyang, the value interpretation in the Conservation Plan, the restoration principles applied in the Project, and the current redevelopment approaches, we can see that although I combine the heritage discourses of the heritage professionals and the local government as the AHDs of CSHD, their heritage discourses are not consistent. The heritage professionals’ heritage discourse is broad and influenced by international heritage organisations and the advancement in academia, while the local government’s heritage discourse is

relatively narrowly focused on monumentality and materiality. The heritage professionals emphasise the non-use value of CSHD, while the local government favours the economic value of CSHD. Moreover, as I will continue to discuss in the next subsection (and as I have mentioned in Chapter Five), heritage professionals do not have political authority that actually "authorises" their heritage discourse. So, is it still fair to call their heritage discourse "AHD"? In the meantime, does the local government's overemphasis on the economic use (and political use) of CSHD make its AHD less "heritage" discourse? I will give my interpretation of these questions in the following discussion.

Heritage Professionals versus the Local Government

The reason for recognising the differences in the heritage discourses from the heritage professionals and the local government is that the two discourses have different impacts on the Project. In Chapter Five, I have discussed the negotiation and contestation between the local government of Anyang and the heritage professionals. The overall conservation strategies and restoration principles were determined through intensive bargaining and compromises between the local government and the heritage professionals. However, the value interpretation of CSHD in the Conservation Plan was comparatively straightforward and peaceful and was dominated by the heritage professionals. As a planner explained to me (Professional Interviews – PL03), "We did the work based on the local scholars' research, and the local government didn't intervene". That is to say, there appeared to be no noticeable conflicts between the local government and the heritage professionals regarding the official interpretation of the heritage value of CSHD.

This is because the local government believed that interpreting heritage value was a relatively specialist job that should be conducted by professionals. Local officials without such expertise in heritage knowledge and skills to do historical research should not be responsible for the professional job. Yet this job was unavoidable as it was written in China's heritage regulations (Government Interviews – GV01 & GV02; Professional Interview – PL02). More importantly, I argue that the local government did not consider the interpretation of heritage value a significant task of the Project. What the local government valued the most was how to redevelop CSHD, as this was where the economic profits and political achievements would come from. Whereas the heritage value was merely a few words written in the Conservation Plan that would not fundamentally change the

direction of the Project.

The local government's downplaying of the heritage value interpretation is reflected in the connection, or more precisely, little connection, between the redevelopment of CSHD and the heritage value interpretation. Currently in CSHD, except for one museum exhibiting the granary history of Cangxiang Street and one museum exhibiting some building components of the traditional residences on Cangxiang Street, most of the museums and handicraft-people's traditional craftsmanship are irrelevant to the heritage professionals-interpreted heritage value of the area. Although there are some QR codes posted on the walls and the tourists can scan these QR codes to listen to the audio guide on their phone that tells the history of Cangxiang Street, the layout of the main courtyard houses, etc., the QR codes are too small and scattered to be found by the tourists. Some of the tourists complained about a lack of explanation and interpretation of the history and cultural significance of this area (Tourist Interviews; personal observation). As more explicitly criticised by some tourists, "If we want to see the history of Chinese characters and bronze wares, why not go to Yin Xu and the [National] Museum of Chinese Writing?"; "I don't think anyone is really interested in these government-built things [referring to the exhibitions and "fake" historic buildings in CSHD]" (Tourist Interview – TR01 & TR02).

Besides a few museums, most of the district government-requisitioned houses are used by businesses, which has been the main focus of the district government. Even preserving and demonstrating traditional culture has been realised through cultural industries that can generate economic profits. The district government has developed many slogans to summarise its redevelopment goal. The heritage professionals were completely excluded here (Government Interview – GV05; Professional Interview – PL02). For instance, the approaches of the district government to attracting businesses have been "led by the [local] government, run by private businesses" (*zhengfu zhudao, qiye yunxing, 政府主导, 企业运行*), and the guiding principle has been "revitalising old businesses, implanting new businesses" (*laoyetai fuxing, xinyetai zhiru, 老业态复兴, 新业态植入*; Work Summary of the Housing and Urban-rural Development Bureau of the Municipality, 2021).

All these businesses need to be relevant to culture broadly, and/or have a brand effect that can

stimulate the regeneration of the entire Old City, such as Chinese tea, antiquities, bars, and bubble tea. The district government has also supported some designers to start their cultural businesses, including a Jiaguwen Studio that designs emoji and stationary with *jiaguwen* (*甲骨文*, the earliest Chinese characters carved on animal bones and turtle shells), and a store selling antique-shaped ice cream. This kind of slogan is commonly seen in some central and local governments' reports (Wang, 2017; for wider discussions around China's political slogans, see e.g. Shambaugh, 2015; Wang, M., 2015; Zhang & Moore-Cherry, 2022). The district government believed that the well-phrased slogans were catchy, encouraging, and sophisticated. They usually used these slogans to report the Project to upper-level governments and promote the Project among local citizens on social media and local TV news (Government Interview – GV04).

Comparing the decision-making and implementation of the Project analysed in Chapter Five to the AHDs in this chapter, it is clear that the local government and the heritage professionals played different roles in the process of formulating the AHDs and materialising the AHDs. The local government has dominated the redevelopment and restoration/refurbishment plan and practices, and the heritage professionals led the official value interpretation. Yet the latter did not have much to do with the actual Project. This differentiation of roles importantly questions the simplified way that AHD is originally defined in two aspects (Smith, 2006).

First, AHD is an "authorised" discourse. But who gets to authorise whose heritage discourses? In the CSHD Project, and many other heritage projects in China, heritage professionals' cultural authority is not enough to authorise their heritage discourse. Holding the same ideas as those of the international organisations does not necessarily put them in the authority's position. It is usually the local government with political authority that determines whose heritage discourses triumph over others. Thus, labelling the heritage professionals' heritage discourse as AHD risks exaggerating the impacts of their heritage discourses. After all, who possesses power seems to be more important than who possesses technical expertise. In some cases, power and expertise belong to the same actor; while in others, they may be separately owned. This means that critical heritage studies should substantially enrich its research on how power and politics work. The application of AHD in empirical cases should be more carefully nuanced to recognise the subjects and objects of AHD, their rationales and motives, and their interactions and relationships.

Second, AHD is a "heritage" discourse. Then what counts as heritage discourses? The local government of Anyang's discourse is certainly authorised. However, it treats CSHD more as an economic and political asset than a cultural asset. The (over)commercialisation and politicisation of CSHD, especially the pursuit of political promotion through the Project, make the local government's discourse to some extent deviate from Smith's original definition of AHD that "takes its cue from the grand narratives of nation and class on the one hand, and technical expertise and aesthetic judgement on the other…… [and] privileges monumentality and grand scale, innate artefact/site significance tied to time depth, scientific/aesthetic expert judgement, social consensus and national building" (Smith, 2006, p. 11). This discrepancy indicates that the scope of AHD can be enlarged. What we criticise about AHD is its consequences of reinforcing and perpetuating social inequalities by "legitimis[ing] and de-legitimis[ing] a range of cultural and social values" (Smith, L., 2009, p. 4). Therefore, I argue that as long as the discourse is grounded in heritage and has such consequences, even if it departs from the Anglophone-originated heritage ideas that are endorsed by international organisations, it can be considered AHD. In other words, heritage is the medium, while the "authorised" discourse is the real force. This ties back to my first point, i.e. a key question to answer in CHS is "who gets to authorise whose heritage discourses", and the agents and mechanisms of AHD are as important as the contents of AHD.

Going back to the CSHD Project, what is frustrating about the different roles of heritage professionals and the local government is that their differentiated roles have resulted in a disconnection between heritage practices and value interpretation in the CSHD Project, which is contrary to the "values-centred preservation" approach that some heritage scholars and international organisations promote (e.g. Australia ICOMOS, 2013; de la Torre, 2002; Mason, 2006). This approach is premised on a dynamic understanding of heritage as a social process instead of an object-centred practice and suggests that conservation should rely on heritage value and aim at protecting and demonstrating heritage value (Mason, 2006). This is clearly not the approach of the local government of Anyang in the CSHD Project. Since the economic redevelopment has been dominated by the district government that is overreliant on the economic value of CSHD, the heritage professionals' interpretation of the non-use value of CSHD has been inevitably sidelined.

Here, I do not mean to praise values-centred preservation as the "best" or "only correct" way for

heritage conservation. What I intend to show is that a complete neglect of heritage value has negative consequences. In recent years, many heritage areas in different Chinese cities have gone through similar regeneration projects that disregard the (non-use) value interpretation. Although these heritage areas have diverse non-use values and are developed by different government and/or non-government agencies, the result is usually the same. The development agencies transform the heritage areas into commercial districts with high-end boutique shops, cafeterias, and restaurants to usually attract elite tourists. Famous examples are Nanluoguxiang in Beijing (Shin, 2010), the Ancient Town of Lijiang in Yunnan Province (Peters, 2013), and Xintiandi in Shanghai (Wai, 2006). Less famous examples are the Ancient Town of Huishan in Wuxi (Chen et al., 2021), Dongxinanyu in Luoyang (Shen & Zhang, 2022), and so on and so forth (personal travel experiences and observation). As a result, tourists usually complain about these homogeneous conservation and regeneration practices for over-commercialisation (Zhang & Lenzer, 2020) and Disneyfication (Fu & Hillier, 2018; Nitzky, 2012). I heard similar comments from my tourist interviewees in CSHD (Tourist Interviews). The language used by the current news media, “fake ancient towns produced on the assembly lines”, seems an accurate depiction (Li, 2023).

7.3 The Authorised Heritage Discourse: The Political Dimension

Integrating Cultural Confidence into the Authorised Heritage Discourse

The political dimension of the AHD in China generally is as important as, if not more important than, the economic dimension. Since the establishment of the People’s Republic of China, especially since the Opening and Reform, China’s heritage has been increasingly institutionalised and instrumentalised to serve the political agenda of the Party-state, which constitutes the political dimension of the AHD in China (see Zhu & Maags, 2020, Chapter Three, for a summary). In the current era, the political dimension of the AHD across the country is closely related to the culture promotion strategy and cultural confidence discourse initiated at the central level. In the CSHD Project, the local government has actively integrated the cultural confidence discourse into its AHD of CSHD, which exemplifies how the local state practices and realises the central state’s cultural confidence discourse.

At the central level, former President Hu Jintao first brought up the idea of "cultural confidence" in 2011. President Xi Jinping developed Hu's ideas in 2016 to increasingly emphasise the important role that cultural confidence can play in contemporary China. At the most recent 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China in October 2022, Xi in his report instructed that China needs to combine Chinese traditional culture with Marxism to achieve Chinese modernisation, because "China's fine traditional culture is extensive and profound; it is the crystallisation of the wisdom of Chinese civilisation" (Xi, 2022). One of the elements of Chinese modernisation is "the modernisation of material and cultural-ethical advancement" which requires "develop[ing] advanced socialist culture, foster[ing] strong ideals and convictions, and carry[ing] forward China's cultural heritage" (Xi, 2022). One of the objectives of the CPC is to "enrich the intellectual and cultural lives of our people; enhance the cohesion of the Chinese nation and the appeal of Chinese culture" (Xi, 2022). To achieve this objective, one of the guiding principles is "building cultural confidence and strength and securing new successes in developing socialist culture" (Xi, 2022).

These expressions clearly illustrate the important role of traditional Chinese culture in boosting Chinese citizens' cultural confidence and enhancing nation-building. Cultural heritage is one indispensable element of traditional Chinese culture. When talking about heritage, previous national congress reports usually only mentioned "preserving cultural relics"[43] (e.g. Hu, 2007 & 2012; Xi, 2017). But at the 20th National Congress of the CPC, Xi's report contained a much longer sentence that emphasised more comprehensive cultural conservation and connected traditional Chinese culture to nationalism more explicitly:

> We will put more effort into protecting cultural relics and heritage, better protect and preserve historical and cultural heritage in the course of urban and rural development, and build and make good use of national cultural parks…… We will adhere to the position of Chinese culture, refine and display the spiritual symbols and cultural essence of Chinese civilisation, accelerate the construction of Chinese discourse and Chinese narrative system, tell Chinese stories well, spread Chinese voices well, and present a credible, lovely, and respectable image of China (Xi, 2022).

We can see that the second half of the above quote is actually more concerned with the international

43 The term "cultural relics" in Chinese (*wenwu*, 文物) can be ambiguous. Sometimes it refers to historical objects and antiquities which are generally believed as one type of cultural heritage. Now the scope of the word *wenwu* in Chinese has been expanded to include a wider range of tangible heritage (ICOMOS China, 2015). While the term "cultural heritage" (*wenhua yichan*, 文化遗产) refers to a broader range of heritage including tangible and intangible heritage (Wang et al., 2017).

audience, suggesting the salient influence of international geopolitics. As Xi (2022) explained,

> the once-in-a-century pandemic has had far-reaching effects; a backlash against globalisation is rising; and unilateralism and protectionism are mounting…… The world has entered a new period of turbulence and change…… External attempts to suppress and contain China may escalate at any time……Our country has entered a period of development in which strategic opportunities, risks, and challenges are concurrent and uncertainties and unforeseen factors are rising. Various "black swan" and "grey rhino" events may occur at any time. We must therefore be more mindful of potential dangers, be prepared to deal with worst-case scenarios and be ready to withstand high winds, choppy waters, and even dangerous storms.

This description of international geopolitics, I argue, implies the significance of the cultural confidence discourse in maintaining the domestic social stability and international security of China. The cultural confidence discourse, as well as the growing importance of heritage in this discourse, indicates that the CPC and the central government are seeking to increase the leverage of politicising Chinese traditional culture including heritage for nation-building (Hubbert, 2019).

At the local level, following the central government's instructions and propaganda, cultural confidence is frequently mentioned by different levels of the Chinese government, policy-makers, and academics as a guide to overall development (Zhang, 2022). Anyang has arguably become a representative example in the country. On October 28th, 2022, right after the 20th National Congress of the CPC, President Xi went to Anyang for inspection. One of his destinations was Yin Xu, the previously mentioned well-known World Cultural Heritage in Anyang. Although Xi did not visit CSHD, his speech at Yin Xu re-emphasised the goal of cultural governance: "I have looked forward to coming to Yin Xu for a long time. I came here this time, hoping to learn and understand Chinese culture more deeply, to use ancient culture for modern times, and to find the reference for building Chinese modern culture" (Yang, 2022). Xi's inspection was encouraging for Anyang. My social media accounts during those days were full of news reports and videos promoting Xi's inspection and speech produced by official accounts of the local government, local newspapers, and individual citizens. This inspection undoubtedly was a new motive for the local government of Anyang to expand and promote the CSHD Project in line with the central state's cultural confidence discourse.

However, interestingly, one of the planners told me that the local government did not consider the connection of the Project to the cultural confidence discourse when it initiated the Project in 2015. Although the culture promotion strategy and cultural confidence discourse came out earlier than

2015, this national strategy was not influential and important enough back then. In 2018 when the local government started to implement the Project, this national strategy was becoming more prevalent and significant. The local government of Anyang realised that the cultural confidence discourse was a good fit for propagating the Project, thus started to deliberately connect the Project to the cultural confidence discourse (Professional Interview – PL01). So far, the local government has indeed used this discourse to brand the Project. For instance, in local news, the journalists and reporters as well as the interviewees who were local citizens constantly and joyfully mentioned their "cultural confidence":

> I saw the report on Cangxiang Street from CCTV [China Central Television]. As an Anyang citizen, I feel very proud. I feel that my hometown can get the attention of the entire country, so I'm very happy (Tourist Interview by Anyang News, 2018).

> I didn't expect that Anyang could have such a street with classic style and modern fashion. I feel very proud. When I return to Nanyang [where this person goes to school], I will tell my friends about it. I'm so proud of being an Anyang citizen (Tourist Interview by Anyang News, 2018).

The reporter later summarised that:

> The transformation of Cangxiang Street makes citizens pleasant. Citizens all say that it is significantly meaningful that the Municipal Party Committee and the Municipal Government use scientific methods to restore historic districts, for example, Cangxiang Street. This makes Anyang, the Historical and Cultural City and one of the Eight Ancient Capitals, re-shine. It also has positive effects on raising Anyang's reputation and influence…… The restoration of Cangxiang Street Historic District not only leaves the citizens with valuable memories but more importantly, with cultural treasures (video clip of Anyang News, 2018).

Although it is usually the local television station that produces the news, it nonetheless deliberately selects interviewees to say positive words about the Project (and other matters in general). The reports also need to conform to the central and local governments' requirements in order to go on air. Some of the reports about the Project were even drafted by local officials (Government Interviews – GV02 & GV05; news drafts provided by local officials, 2021). Therefore, the above news reports were indeed the local government-endorsed propaganda of the CSHD Project. The propaganda indeed intentionally linked the Project to the central government's cultural confidence discourse and disseminated the local government's claim of reviving traditional culture.

This is a strong example of "heritage as governmentality" that I have discussed in Chapter Six, i.e. heritage in China is used by the Party-state as a tool to educate the citizens and enhance state power at the local level through spatial management strategies such as heritage regeneration projects (Huang et al., 2019; Zhu & González Martínez, 2022). The political dimension of heritage and AHD in China is therefore prominent. The local government's AHD of CSHD intentionally incorporates the cultural confidence discourse to strengthen local governance. In the CSHD Project, the local government considers CSHD the "cultural treasure" of the citizens. It is the local government-led regeneration project that preserves the heritage and allows the citizens to experience traditional culture. Consequently, the citizens supposedly increasingly appreciate the local government's efforts and support the local government's heritage industry with stronger cultural confidence.

Considering the above illustration of the emergence of the cultural confidence discourse and its integration into the AHD of CSHD, the concept of AHD can be further nuanced. That is, AHD is not only determined by the definition and criteria of heritage, heritage value, and the conservation principles that are usually derived from Anglophone heritage ideals and studies and institutionalised by Eurocentric international organisations. AHD is also shaped by the socio-political and geopolitical context of a nation or locality (Cooper, 2015), because of which the actual contents of AHD can vary in different countries and regions. Thus, when evaluating the consequences of AHD, the socio-political and geopolitical context that breeds AHD is important, as it can help explain why certain heritage discourses can be "authorised" by whom. This, again, shifts our attention from AHD itself to the agents and mechanisms of AHD.

In the case of China, the domestic and international challenges are more prominent in the overall socio-political and geopolitical context, which has shifted the central government's strategies from class struggle before the 1980s to speeding up economic development after the 1980s (Lin, W., 2012), and now to culture-sustained nation-building in addition to continuing the economic development. Thus, heritage in China is not only an economic asset but also a political and geopolitical asset. This political and geopolitical asset needs to be used to strengthen the national identity and cultural characteristics of Chinese citizens (Bao & Li, 2019). Even in a small to mid-sized inland city like Anyang which is internationally and geopolitically less significant and far from the frontline of geopolitical disputes, such political propaganda through heritage conservation is

increasingly prevalent, demonstrating the profound influence of the central state strategy against the current international context.

Local Decision-making: Interplay between Fragmentation and Authoritarianism

China's current emphasis on the political value of heritage alongside its economic value tells us more than the AHD of CSHD and the AHD of the Party-state. How the local government has integrated the cultural confidence discourse into the AHD of CSHD, in particular, points to certain features of FA in China's heritage system (Lieberthal & Oksenberg, 1988). The local government of Anyang's decision to use cultural confidence discourse to brand the CSHD Project, first of all, reveals the central government's influence on local decision-making and the active local response to the central preferences, a direct manifestation of the authoritarian nature of the system and policy coherence that authoritarianism brings to the heritage system (Lieberthal, 1992).

However, what is more interesting and worth noting is that this policy coherence may be superficial because China's authoritarianism is still fragmented. In the case of CSHD, the cultural confidence discourse has not fundamentally changed how the local government has planned and implemented the Project. The Project has still been focusing on economic and tourism development with more and more businesses. When I was finishing my fieldwork in September 2021, many music bars around the pond were finishing up the decoration and about to open. The Project has still been conducted at a fast speed. The restoration/refurbishment and some reconstruction have still been Disneyfying CSHD. The demonstration of traditional Chinese culture and the non-use value of CSHD has still been quite limited. The few cultural events and activities usually do not engage with the wider public. I attended two events during my fieldwork, one public lecture on *jiaguwen*, the earliest Chinese characters, and one traditional clothes and etiquette show celebrating the Mid-Autumn Festival. The public lecture only attracted around twenty people, half of whom were friends of the lecturer. And people who participated in the traditional clothes show were all "volunteers" recruited by the local officials through their families and friends. The only change is that now when the local government talks about the Project in public, the local officials deliberately add expressions like "enhancing local citizens' cultural confidence" (Government Interviews; various work reports provided by local officials).

In other words, the central influence does not fundamentally change the essence of the local decision but only changes how the local government legitimises and brands its decision on the surface. In the CSHD Project, this is partly because much of the work in the first stage such as relocating some original residents, restoring historic buildings, and attracting new businesses was about to be finished when the local government decided to link the Project to the cultural confidence discourse, which precisely implies that the local government's decision was rather spontaneous. Moreover, it is because the local government's inherent political agenda of increasing local revenue and building up political achievements to acquire personal promotion has not changed. To realise promotion, both economic development and political conformity are important. In comparison, political conformity is easier to showcase through project branding and propaganda, whereas economic development and local revenue require concrete GDP numbers. For the local government, branding the Project in one way and conducting the Project in another are not in contradiction. As long as the local officials can make their superiors believe that they are following upper-level instructions, the local officials do not necessarily need to change the economic development-oriented essence and the speed of the Project. This implies that the local response to the central strategies is more of a gesture than actual compliance. The seemingly coherent policy from the centre to the local is deep down less coherent.

This policy incoherence is still attributed to system fragmentation, not in terms of the overlapping department agencies and "bosses" from the *tiaokuai* system, but in terms of the characteristics of the central regulations and guidelines. In China, there are usually no detailed implementation instructions and close supervision from the centre. As Lieberthal and Oksenberg (1988, p. 27) explain, "central decisions often only set forth goals or prescriptions on what should be done. They do not bear close resemblance to the types of detailed implementing and regulating documents that frequently accompany high level decision making in the United States". Therefore, the local governments have much freedom to deviate policy-making and implementation from their alleged objectives such as "preserving traditional culture" and "leaving cultural treasures to the citizens". In this sense, system fragmentation is created by how the central government formulates regulations and guidelines and then communicates them to the lower-level governments. Such fragmentation can also help local governments elude the constraints of authoritarianism.

From the above analysis, we can see how the FA system has influenced China's heritage practices.

At the same time, I argue that the Chinese central government is attempting to use heritage practices to achieve re-centralisation and enhance authoritarianism, which is a force that will disturb the existing FA system. On the one hand, the central government is re-centralising its political power in relation to the local governments through cultural policies and discourses to steer the development direction at the local level. On the other hand, the central government is re-centralising its control over the ideology of the Chinese citizens. It aims at using strategies such as heritage conservation and tourism to have citizens recognise the beauty and prosperity of traditional Chinese culture, and consequently generate a stronger national identity and patriotism and follow the Confucius ideas of "submissiveness" and "hierarchy" (Buzan & Lawson, 2022). The ultimate goal is to sustain the domestic stability of the nation in order to cope with the volatile international geopolitics.

This argument is affirmed by the flourishing TV shows to promote and celebrate China's heritage and conservation achievements, as I mentioned in Chapter One. Thus, I partly agree with the opinion that China has "abandoned an ideology-driven approach to governance" (Jing, 2017, p. 37). I argue that currently, the Party-state indeed forces ideology on the citizens less and tends to abandon big theories like Marxism, communism, and socialism under some circumstances, as the big theories are less appealing to the younger generations (Minafo, 2018; Perry, 2017). However, ideology-driven governance still exists. It takes the form of ideological re-centralisation that subtly permeates through the citizens.

Yet the effectiveness of the central government's re-centralisation attempt is questionable and perhaps less ideal. On the local government's side, we have already seen that system fragmentation results in policy incoherence and lowers the effectiveness of ideological re-centralisation. Thus, the cyclical decentralisation and re-centralisation process in China, as noticed by Tjia (2023), is influenced by the effects of fragmentation. On the citizens' side, as I will demonstrate in the next section, there are polarising responses to the AHD, implying fragmentation in state-society relations.

7.4 Interactions of Heritage Discourses

The previous sections have described the AHD of CSHD. In addition to the AHD, the general public has their own perceptions of heritage which are termed "lay heritage discourses" (hereinafter LHDs;

Parkinson et al., 2016). Critical heritage studies finds that sometimes different actors' heritage discourses may feed into one another to evolve their own heritage discourses and shape heritage practices (e.g. Lu et al., 2020; Waterton & Smith, 2010; Yan, 2015). This section, therefore, examines the cultural, economic, and political dimensions of the LHDs of Anyang citizens regarding CSHD and the Project. The political dimension particularly concerns how they respond to the central government's cultural confidence discourse and the local government's political propaganda through the CSHD Project. Based on the comparison between the LHDs and the AHD, I will then discuss how the interactions of different heritage discourses affect heritage practices.

I will argue in this section that the interactions between the LHDs and the AHD are quite limited. The influence of the LHDs on the Project is also quite limited. However, the public does not passively accept the political propaganda from the local (and central) government but holds onto their LHDs. Features of China's FA are once again evident here: (1) power relations rather than value judgments of different actors play a more important role in shaping heritage practices, reflecting the influence of authoritarianism of the system; and (2) despite authoritarianism, the public is not always penetrable by the AHD, indicating the existence of fragmentation in state-society relations and its potential effects on the system.

Citizens' Heritage Perceptions: Power Relations versus Value Judgements

In my conversations with the residents, business owners, and tourists, I asked them whether they thought CSHD was heritage or not, why or why not, and how they envisioned the conservation of CSHD. The answers I received were quite diverse, thus it is difficult to generalise a singular LHD of the general public. Broadly speaking, the citizens' perceptions of what is heritage, what value CSHD has, and how to restore and redevelop CSHD can be divided into three types.

First, some people did have a general or even clear idea of the concept of heritage and believed that CSHD was indeed a heritage site, although they did not necessarily agree with the heritage professionals and the local government's delineation of the officially designated historic district. For them, Cangxiang Street was the "real" heritage, but not necessarily other alleyways. The elements that made Cangxiang Street heritage were the "ancient" and "beautiful" traditional architecture and

the wealthy and famous businesspeople who used to live on the street (Business Interviews; Resident Interviews; Tourist Interviews). Because the residents of Cangxiang Street in ancient times had higher socioeconomic status, Cangxiang Street stood out among all the streets:

> Cangxiang Street had rich people living there. Their houses were big and pretty. In our street [Toudao Street near Cangxiang Street, also in CSHD], the residents [in ancient times] were all workers, peasants, and street vendors. So they [Cangxiang Street] are heritage, and we [Toudao Street] are not (Resident Interview – RN09).

Some of the citizens had relatively insightful opinions on how to conduct heritage conservation in this area. For instance, one elderly resident commented that when the local government developed Wenfeng Middle Road (*wenfeng zhonglu, 文峰中路*, an artery in the city) back in the 2000s, the new roads cut across the Old City, thus already destroying the original fabric and the integrity of the Old City. What the local government has been doing now in CSHD is just "fixing and repairing" the small issues "here and there", which is "nowhere near the original heritage" (Resident Interview – RN14). Another resident on Cangxiang Street mentioned that "heritage conservation and people living here don't contradict…… I don't think it's good if all the people are relocated. Otherwise, it's gonna be an empty street and an empty Old City…… So no matter what, it needs *renqi'er* [*人气儿*, the atmosphere created by residents continuing with their lives] (Resident Interview – RN27)."

There is also one successful bottom-up heritage conservation case. Mr Z lives in a traditional courtyard house with his family. Decades ago, Mr Z and his wife started to restore their courtyard house with traditional materials they found in some demolition and construction sites in the Old City. Their house is now the best-preserved courtyard house in CSHD with the original layout, building structure and materials, and ornaments. With the help and support from local scholars, the district government officially designated this courtyard house the Cultural Relic Protected at the District Level in 2004. Now Mr Z and his family are enthusiastic about showing their courtyard house and telling the conservation stories of their courtyard house to visitors like me (Resident Interviews – RN29 & RN30).

Additionally, since the public understood the need to revitalise the local economy, they did agree that redeveloping CSHD as a tourist attraction was a valid option (Business Interviews; Resident Interviews; Tourist Interviews). For new businesses and street vendors in CSHD, it meant more

business opportunities (Business Interviews; informal conversations with street vendors). For the citizens, it meant "a new place to entertain and relax" (Tourist Interview – TR11). However, differences between the district government and some residents emerged regarding developing small businesses in CSHD. Some residents in CSHD wanted to rent district government-requisitioned houses to open their small businesses as they do not live along the main street. Uncle Bin had approached the Street Offices, the Command Centre, and the Office of Old City Conservation (refer to Figure 4-18, p. 110, for the formal administrative structure of the Project) many times, hoping to rent a district government-requisitioned and restored/refurbished house to run his small business. "I know they have rules about what we can sell and what we can't. I promise to follow their rules. If they want me to sell coffee, I'll sell coffee. If they want me to sell beer, I'll sell beer. But they just won't rent me a house" (Resident Interview – RN01). After several turndowns, Uncle Bin was not trying anymore. According to the local officials, they "don't plan to include residents in the business development" due to the potentially big workload on reviewing the residents' applications and managing their businesses (Government Interview – GV05). As some citizens recognised, the residents in CSHD "have not really benefitted from the regeneration" (Business Interview – OB04; Tourist Interview – TR01) and some original business owners have even been harmed by the regeneration because of the increasing rent after the regeneration (Business Interview – OB05).

Second, many citizens did not consider CSHD heritage, but more of a "commercial street" (Tourist Interview – TR01), or a "fake and new development" (Tourist Interview – TR17). In their mind, the "real" heritage in Anyang was Yin Xu, the World Cultural Heritage listed by UNESCO in 2006, as it marks the start of Chinese characters and represents China's prosperous Bronze Age. And "Yin Xu is not just important for us Anyang or for China. It's a huge deal in archaeology internationally, you know, its reputation" (Tourist Interview – TR32). The cultural relics exhibited in Yin Xu were real heritage, whereas the cultural relics in the museums of Cangxiang Street were "crappy pots and something like that" with no value (Resident Interview – RN24). Other people also mentioned other monumental architectural sites in the city, such as Chenghuang Temple, Gaoge Temple, and Wenfeng Tower (*wenfeng ta, 文峰塔*), but believed that "adding old bricks to ordinary buildings is meaningless because they are not worthy of being protected" (Resident Interview – RN21).

The third group was more cautious or reluctant to express their understanding of heritage and

heritage value. For instance, some people's responses to my questions were "not sure" because they "don't know the definition of heritage, and the criteria of the government" (Tourist Interviews – TR10 & TR13). In other cases, the interviewees did not see the relevance of heritage to their lives. As one business owner impatiently explained,

> Let me tell you, it's not about whether it's necessary to protect heritage or not, and not about whether we care about heritage or not. It's just this heritage thing and the government's conservation project have nothing to do with us. As long as my business is profitable, I will continue running it here. If not, I will just move to a new place. No matter how the government brags about the Project, it's not relevant to me. I'm just here to make a living (Business Interview – OB05).

Comparing the LHDs and the AHD, there are similarities as well as differences. For instance, a few residents recognised the importance of the "integrity" of the heritage, and the important relationship between communities and the built environment, similar to the heritage professionals' ideas. Some residents recognised the value of monumental heritage more than that of vernacular heritage, different from the heritage professionals and local government's view regarding what heritage is, but similar to the restoration principles adopted by the district government. This reflects the strong influence of international heritage organisations, particularly UNESCO, on China at the local and grassroots levels. This influence is through school courses, social media, TV advertisements, tourism promotion, etc. that mostly prioritise World Heritage sites and other monumental sites in China and around the world (Resident Interviews; Tourist Interviews; Gao et al., 2021).

The divergence and convergence of different actors' heritage discourses echo the findings of previous critical heritage studies (e.g. Baird, 2015; Zhu, 2015). But there is something different from previous studies (e.g. Dewi et al., 2019; McGill, 2015; Zhu, 2015) that is more important. I recognise that even if the LHDs and AHD disagree with one another to some extent, the LHDs do not influence AHD or the CSHD Project in any significant ways, because the local government has essentially excluded the LHDs of the Anyang citizens. Even the heritage professionals' value interpretation of CSHD that was written in the Conservation Plan was not considered by the local government or reflected in the Project. In other words, previous critical heritage studies attributes the conflicts and/or collaborations between the authorities and the subordinates to both power relations and value judgments (Wang, 2019). However, my case study reveals that the factor of value judgments is not as explicit as the factor of power relations in some cases, as reflected by the

invisible LHDs in the CSHD Project.

In my fieldwork, most of my interviewees confirmed that the local government never consulted them regarding how to restore historic buildings, what types of businesses can open in CSHD, and who can run the businesses (Business Interviews; Resident Interviews; Tourist Interviews). Heritage professionals were the only actors who were included in some of the decision-making processes. Whether heritage professionals were on the local government's side or the civil society's side was unclear to the citizens (Business Interviews; Professional Interviews; Resident Interviews; Tourist Interviews). Original residents were only involved in the negotiation of relocation (particularly compensation), not the restoration and redevelopment afterwards. Most of the citizens who were not involved in the decision-making regarding the restoration and redevelopment, on the one hand, were not aware of any channels through which they could express their ideas. Most of the tourists learned about the regeneration of CSHD from TikTok or WeChat when the district government finished the first phase of the Project, thus deciding to "come here and have a look" and "take some photos and videos" (Tourist Interviews). On the other hand, they were not confident in their "unprofessional" opinions. As one tourist cautiously expressed:

> Speaking up or not is related to the matter itself. If this matter is something I'm familiar with, like if my school is planning a new canteen or something like that, then I feel like this is relevant to my life, and I have good reasons to speak about the pros and cons and make convincing arguments, and I believe my opinions are truly helpful…… But about heritage, I'm not sure if I'm right or wrong because I'm not an expert. And I feel like there are professionals who already did the job, so I don't think I can fundamentally change their conclusions (Tourist Interview – TR30).

Interestingly, when asked about whether they would like to participate in heritage projects and give their opinions to the decision-makers if there were chances to do so, most of my interviewees quickly and firmly said yes, and then immediately questioned whether such chances could ever exist (Business Interviews; Resident Interviews; Tourist Interviews).

Then what does the local government's exclusion of the LHDs say about China's heritage construction? I argue that it evidently demonstrates that power relations are more important than value judgements in shaping heritage projects, at least in the CSHD Project. Due to the uneven power relations between the local government and the citizens, the local government dominated the

decision-making and implementation process of the Project. By not providing meaningful public participation channels, and only announcing the results after finishing the Project, the local government essentially excluded the citizens from expressing their understanding of heritage. Thus the LHDs did not have the chance to determine what the Project would look like.

Meanwhile, the uneven power relations between the local government and the heritage professionals also confined the heritage professionals' role in the Project. As Chapter Five has analysed, the heritage professionals did not have enough power compared to the local government and thus were left with "insignificant" issues such as heritage value interpretation. When it came to "significant" issues such as restoration and redevelopment, the heritage professionals had difficulty altering the local government's plan. They had to bring up more practical reasons to change the local government's mind, such as budget issues and geological condition issues. Frankly speaking, in China generally, planners' job ends when their plans are approved by the upper-level governments. Afterwards, whether the local governments stick to the plans to implement the projects is out of the planners' control and even out of their knowledge if the local governments do not hire them to do follow-up work. That means, the planners cannot guarantee the effectiveness of their plans (Professional Interviews – PL01, PL02, & PL03; Zhang, 2002a). Likely, the plans will only be "drawing on the paper, hanging on the wall" as a legal process and a "decoration".

Therefore, in heritage studies, I argue that power relations determine the role of value judgements, at least in some Chinese cases. In other words, value judgments can become an explicit factor that leads to confrontations; they can also remain an implicit factor that does not fundamentally shape heritage practices or only influence heritage practices in a limited way. Whether value judgements become explicit or remain implicit is reliant on the power relations. This is because it is the power-holders that determine whether the subordinates' value judgments can reach the power-holders, to what extent the power-holders are willing to take in the subordinates' value judgments, and whether the power-holders want to stop the subordinates' subtle and even secret expression of lay discourses.

This argument indicates that the current heritage construction in China to a large extent keeps its authoritarian and top-down features. Or more accurately, heritage construction is more fragmented in certain areas and at certain political levels, while more authoritarian in other areas and at certain

political levels. For instance, in the case of CSHD, at the local level, the formulation process of the Conservation Plan and the relocation of the original residents were more fragmented. Heritage professionals and residents were able to participate in policy bargaining. In contrast, the economic redevelopment of CSHD and the propaganda of the Project have been more authoritarian, and the citizens in general as well as the heritage professionals have been less included. The local government remains the primary authority to make these decisions.

The argument about the roles of power relations and value judgements also amends the findings of critical heritage studies. It points out that value judgements and power relations are not always equally important in shaping heritage practices and heritage dissonance and can be interrelated rather than independent. The consideration of the pre-existing heritage system of a given context is necessary, as it pre-determines the power relations. Since a heritage system is rooted in a political system, this argument once again demonstrates that CHS needs to pay more attention to power and politics, not just heritage discourses. Bringing concepts about politics and bureaucracy into CHS, such as the concept of FA in this thesis, to extend the research paradigms is of value for understanding how a heritage system operates and how power relations within and outside of the heritage system work.

Citizens' Boosted Cultural Confidence? Fragmentation in State-Society Relations

It would be mistaken if we think of the public as passive acceptors of the AHD merely based on the fact that their LHDs were excluded from the Project. Looking at how the public perceives the political dimension of the AHD of CSHD, we can see that despite the local government's political propaganda on cultural confidence and branding of the Project, the public has their own understanding of cultural confidence and the relationship between cultural confidence and the Project. In other words, ideological education and re-centralisation through heritage are perhaps less effective than what the central and local governments publicly claim. Although the public's interpretation of cultural confidence does not directly feed into the decision-making and implementation of the Project, it demonstrates the existence of fragmentation in state-society relations, which may undermine the central government's effort of ideological re-centralisation.

In the report of the 20th National Congress, President Xi (2022) claimed that "The young generation is more positive; the Party, the nation, and all the ethnic groups have acquired noticeably stronger cultural confidence". However, my conversations with the citizens in Anyang regarding the CSHD Project showed a slightly different conclusion. Whether the citizens felt more culturally confident and whether they supported the CSHD Project were closely linked. Among the citizens that I interviewed, including original residents of CSHD, original and new businesses in CSHD, and tourists to CSHD, their attitudes toward the Project and the cultural confidence discourse were relatively divided.

Many people expressed their support for the Project, and these people were mostly tourists. For instance, a female tourist's answer to my question was a good generalisation of many of my interviewees' responses. This tourist expressed excitedly:

> This [CSHD] is a good window to showcase Anyang. I think it's good. The government has put a lot of effort into promoting the area. Before [the Project], people from outside the city didn't know much about us. So this [CSHD] is good to raise our reputation. After all, we are one of the Eight Ancient Capitals. But compared to Luoyang and Kaifeng [two other Ancient Capitals in Henan Province], we are less developed. So we need to make more historic districts and streets as the highlights of the city to develop tourism……. I used to take my child to travel in other cities, and they all have internet-popular streets or something like that. If tourism is well done, it's very good for increasing the citizens' income (Tourist Interview – TR11).

Her husband similarly excitedly added "We feel more cultural confidence. The level of happiness of the ordinary people is increasing. And we have more recreational spaces now" (Tourist Interview – TR12). Some original residents expressed similar feelings. A resident who uses the front building of her family houses to run a small shop said cheerfully, "I agree with the cultural confidence, and I think preserving the street is very good. Now I end up living in a tourist attraction and historical and cultural street. I feel so proud [of my home]" (Business Interview – OB01).

Not surprisingly, people who have benefited or will benefit from the Project tend to support the Project and feel prouder about the Project, the hometown, and the cultural heritage in general. The benefit includes the original residents' houses being refurbished, the area and the pond becoming cleaner, the tourists having more public spaces to visit, and the businesspeople having more opportunities to make profits (Business Interviews; Resident Interviews; Tourist Interviews).

Different from the above group of people, some people were more critical and had their own understanding of cultural confidence and heritage conservation, usually people with a higher educational background. For example, a business owner quite calmly commented:

> [I feel] a little bit of cultural confidence. But it's not thorough enough. It [cultural confidence] hasn't entered the lives of ordinary people. If you ask around, you will see…… It's ultimately a residential area. So if you want to develop it well, you need to bring the residents together. You need to call for the residents' participation (Business Interview – OB04).

A tourist also provided a thoughtful answer that took her a long time to phrase and rephrase, which is an interesting interpretation of cultural confidence:

> Confidence is something that is hard to tell when you are alone, but more of something you acquire when you deal with other people. When they approve of you, you feel confident. Like I mostly live in another city. When I introduce myself and say I'm from Anyang, they will say oh I know the city and I know Yin Xu. So that makes me culturally confident because my hometown has a prosperous culture. But if they've never heard of Cangxiang Street, then this place doesn't mean much to me (Tourist Interview – TR18).

Lastly, there were a few people who were quite harsh or cynical about the Project and the cultural confidence discourse. They used the Chinese word "*laominshangcai* (*劳民伤财*)" to describe the Project. This word literally means "labouring the people and wasting money", which is often used to describe expensive and unnecessary government-led projects and may imply corruption sometimes. These people believed that the Project was for the local officials' personal political achievements. A business owner commented with strong doubts:

> You spend so much money on the street. But most of the houses are fake, not real historic buildings…… I used to work for the Puyang government [another city in Henan Province, right next to Anyang] after I graduated from college, so I understand how local governments work….. It's unnecessary. It's all a gesture. I don't think this Project has anything to do with Xi Jinping's cultural confidence and cultural revitalisation. Do you [think so]? (Business Interview – NB04).

These diverse responses reflect the delicate state-society relations or what I term fragmentation in state-society relations, which supports previous scholars' arguments. Lieberthal (1995) contends that since the Opening and Reform, the state-society relations in China have witnessed a dramatic change. In the Mao era, "society does not see itself apart from the state, or as having any means to make significant demands on it" (Lieberthal, 1995,

p. 289). Whereas since the 1980s, it has become a more "mobile and differentiated society" where "Chinese citizens have learned that they must take the initiative to define and pursue their interests" and have become "better informed, more self aware, and more active" (Lieberthal, 1995, p. 289). More recently, regarding urban development, Fulong Wu (2022) argues that the authoritarian state in stark contrast with a weak society inaccurately generalises China's state-society relations. During urbanisation and marketisation, "the state has been 'forced' out of its embedded position in a totalised society" (Wu, 2022, p. 169). And citizens are increasingly empowered with more bargaining power to intervene in urban development (Li et al., 2021).

Additionally, the delicate state-society relations in my case study induce two more reflections. First, culture promotion and ideological control are the central state's current attempts to reestablish control at the local level. Yet the effectiveness is hard to tell, not only because of the less cooperative local government as we have seen in the previous section whose embrace of the central strategy is rather tokenistic. Equally important, it is because the Chinese citizens are growingly informed and active and thus less penetrable.

Second, the citizens' LHDs around cultural confidence have not translated into concrete decision-making changes and policy changes in the CSHD case. Therefore, I agree with Lieberthal (1995) and Oksenberg (2001) that the changes in the state-society relations "do not suggest the formation of a civil society in the classic sense" (Lieberthal, 1995, p. 300). However, the changes still suggest the increasing activeness and flexibility of Chinese citizens which has the potential to bring more fragmentation and policy changes to the system. The citizens who have expressed more doubts and concerns, together with the "recalcitrant" residents that we saw in Chapter Six during the relocation, are possible policy entrepreneurs, as identified by Mertha (2008), who may actively seek to and eventually successfully make their way to the decision-making and implementation circle. In this sense, although the LHDs themselves are less influential, the citizens' different readings of the AHD have largely affected the central and local states' intention with heritage construction, thus contributing to the fragmentation in state-society relations, not necessarily of the political system *per se*.

7.5 Conclusion

This chapter has investigated the divergent heritage discourses of different actors and the local heritage practices, particularly in relation to the central government's cultural confidence discourse. The findings of this chapter can be summarised into two aspects.

From the perspective of critical heritage studies, it is clear that different actors have diverse heritage discourses, which is a point that has been noticed by heritage scholars (e.g. Parkinson et al., 2016; Waterton, 2005). My case study further questions the concept of AHD by providing some different nuances. In the case of CSHD, heritage professionals focused on the non-use value, following the conservation principles and regulations of China and international organisations. In contrast, the local government took the heritage professionals' work as a less important yet unavoidable step due to China's heritage regulations. In the district government's actual implementation, the restoration of historic buildings and redevelopment of CSHD were less informed by the heritage value that the heritage professionals interpreted. Instead, the district government has prioritised the economic value of heritage by commercialising CSHD to extract economic benefits, which has resulted in the Disneyfication of CSHD now.

How the AHD of CSHD was produced and which segments of the AHD were materialised in the Project illustrate the differentiated roles of the local government and the heritage professionals. For one thing, heritage professionals' cultural authority is unable to authorise their heritage discourse. Thus, labelling their heritage discourses as "AHD" may exaggerate the influences of their heritage discourse and then overlook the actual "AHD". For another, the local government's discourse, certainly authorised, is perhaps less "heritage". These two points indicate that who possesses the power to actually authorise the discourse is crucial in heritage practices, particularly when criticising the process of social inequalities and marginalisation. Additionally, AHD itself does not have to be about the Anglophone-originated heritage ideals that are institutionalised in Eurocentric international organisations and other state agencies. It is more of the authorised position of AHD and its competing relationship with other heritage discourses that make AHD problematic.

The second aspect of the findings of this chapter continues the discussion of China's fragmented

authoritarianism. In the CSHD case, we have seen that the local government has actively embraced the central government's cultural confidence discourse in order to legitimise the Project. Looking upward, the local government can thus acquire the approval and recognition of the upper-level governments, which implies the inherent political agenda of the local officials, i.e. building up political achievements to obtain personal promotion. Therefore, this case verifies the two mechanisms through which the central government casts an influence on the local government: grand strategies that point out the direction of local policies, and the personnel evaluation system of government officials that affects the local officials' behaviours (Zhang, 2002b).

However, the central influence in this case has been limited. The centre has been able to influence how the local government has legitimised and propagated the Project, while the essence of the Project and the actual implementation have not changed. This reflects that China's FA can be paradoxical: authoritarianism requires local governments to pursue the central government's agenda, while system fragmentation allows local governments to adjust and justify their decisions strategically and deviate from the central instruction (Zhang et al., 2021). During the implementation of the Project, we can see that system fragmentation can come from vague and general central regulations and guidelines. And policy distortion due to system fragmentation has impacts on the broad picture of authoritarianism. Although the central government is using culture as a mild way to re-centralise its political power, its endeavours are less fruitful than its expectation because of the uncooperative local government (somewhat similar to the stark contrast between the fruitful intellectual property legislation at the central level and the poor law enforcement at the local level, Mertha, 2005).

Looking downward, the cultural confidence discourse can supposedly help the local government acquire wider public understanding and support. However, my conversations with the citizens have shown that the citizens did not passively accept the messages that the local government conveyed but held onto their own interpretation of cultural confidence, heritage, and the Project. What is worth acknowledging is the distrust and critiques that some citizens expressed, as their distrust and critiques suggest fragmentation in state-society relations. Compared to the original residents in Chapter Six who have managed to influence the Project during the implementation of the relocation policy, the citizens in this chapter have not found a way to participate in the Project, particularly the

restoration and redevelopment of CSHD and the propaganda of the Project. Still, the citizens have been more informed, self-aware, flexible, and active in formulating and sustaining their own interpretation of heritage, conservation practices, and the associated political propaganda. The ideological education and re-centralisation perhaps have been less effective at the grassroots level as the citizens are less penetrable now. The fragmentation in state-society relations thus complicates our understanding of contemporary China. Under the current political leadership, the increasing authoritarianism in general may not necessarily result in obedience at the local level. Citizens still have the potential to pursue their own interests through policy bargaining.

Comparing the two aspects of findings, I argue that value judgments are not as evident as power relations in shaping China's heritage projects, as the latter ultimately determines the former's role in heritage projects in some cases. In other words, power relations determine whose value judgements can be materialised in heritage projects and to what extent value judgements can result in different manifestations of heritage dissonance. Since the expression of value judgements is bounded by power struggles within and outside the political system, how the political system operates is more fundamental in shaping heritage practices and determining how heritage dissonance manifests itself. This argument expands the findings of critical heritage studies by recognising that power relations and value judgements are not always equally important or independent from each other. Thus the investigation of power and politics is essential and the application of concepts like FA is of value. The value and contribution of the concept of FA are that it highlights different types and causes of power relations and associated interactions between the actors, which elucidates that heritage decision-making and implementation in China are more fragmented in certain areas at certain political levels while less so in other areas at certain political levels. This is precisely why heritage dissonance takes on different observable forms concerning various issues and actors in certain contexts.

Chapters Five to Seven have presented my empirical analysis and findings. The next chapter will conclude the thesis where the findings will be synthesised and the key arguments and contributions of this thesis will be highlighted.

Chapter 8. Conclusions

This research investigated the negotiation and contestation between the state and nonstate actors during the local government-led Regeneration Project of Cangxiang Street Historic District (hereinafter the CSHD Project or the Project) in Anyang, a small to mid-sized city in northern China that has recently turned to heritage conservation as a local development strategy. It aimed to engage with and contribute to the ongoing debates in critical heritage studies and China Studies to understand the complexity and contemporary changes of heritage construction in China as well as assess the mutual influence of heritage construction and the heritage system.

My theoretical framework combines critical heritage studies (CHS) and fragmented authoritarianism (FA). The former constitutes the broad foundation of this thesis in terms of identifying research questions and objects; the latter provides the analytical tool to conceptualise the research findings. Drawing upon the FA framework, I described and analysed a complex decision-making and implementation web of the CSHD Project which was a result of China's FA. Two dimensions of fragmentation, which I defined as system fragmentation and fragmentation in state-society relations, function under the nation's general context of authoritarianism to shape heritage practices.

Then, my central argument is premised on this analysis of the political system, state-society relations, and the decision-making and implementation process. I contended that in the CSHD Project, the value judgements of the actors (referring to how the actors perceive heritage, heritage value, and heritage reuse as well as the broader worldviews and ideologies that underpin heritage perceptions) shaped the CSHD Project to a lesser extent compared to the actors' power relations. The role of value judgements was reliant on the actors' power relations that determined whose heritage discourses could be materialised in the Project. In other words, heritage conservation is not directly shaped by the actors' value judgements *per se* but practised through the power struggles of the actors which determine the role of their value judgements. In China, the power struggles are largely bounded by both the fragmented authoritarian political system and the fragmentation in state-society relations. The latter potentially feeds into the former, particularly system fragmentation, and thus

leads the power struggles to attempt to break through the political system. Where the two dimensions of fragmentation come from and how they work in relation to authoritarianism are associated with a number of factors, such as the characteristics of the political system, the Chinese society, the policy field, and the locality which are in constant change. This argument elicits the call for new research paradigms in CHS that combine or develop other theoretical and analytical lenses to understand how power, power relations, politics, bureaucracies, and the like, function in order to further the research on heritage politics.

This concluding chapter synthesises and extends the findings and arguments of previous chapters. It is structured in the following sections: Section 8.1 summarises the characteristics of the decision-making and implementation process of the Project and the contributions to the concept of FA. Section 8.2, based on the previous section, summarises my central argument around the role of value judgements vis-à-vis power relations in shaping heritage practices. It highlights the contributions to critical heritage studies. Section 8.3 proposes some future research directions.

8.1 Fragmented Authoritarian Decision-making and Implementation

Complex Decision-making and Implementation Web

According to FA, due to the way the Chinese bureaucracy is structured, different levels of the Chinese government make decisions through prolonged bargaining and consensus-building, resulting in policy incoherence (Lieberthal & Oksenberg, 1988). After the economic marketisation since the 1980s, state officials "at the periphery of policy-making" and various nonstate actors have taken the opportunistic structure of the fragmented bureaucracy to increasingly participate in and influence decision-making (Mertha, 2005, 2008). At the same time, authoritarianism remains the general background which has concrete and persisting influences on decision-making in certain policy areas (Edin, 2003; Landry, 2008). Overall, the Chinese political system is evolving through "a cyclical process of decentralisation and re-centralisation as well as continuous central-local interplay" (Tjia, 2023, p. 1), thus the degree and effects of fragmentation in relation to authoritarianism are fluctuating.

Drawing upon this framework, I depicted the decision-making and implementation process of the

CSHD Project as a complex web (Figure 8-1). The three empirical chapters discussed different components of the Project, as shown in the right half of Figure 8-1 (Chapter Five: project initiation, conservation planning, building restoration and refurbishment; Chapter Six: relocation of original residents and project branding and propaganda; Chapter Seven: non-use value interpretation, economic redevelopment, and project branding and propaganda). Within each component of the Project, there were negotiation and contestation between different actors, as shown in the left half of Figure 8-1.

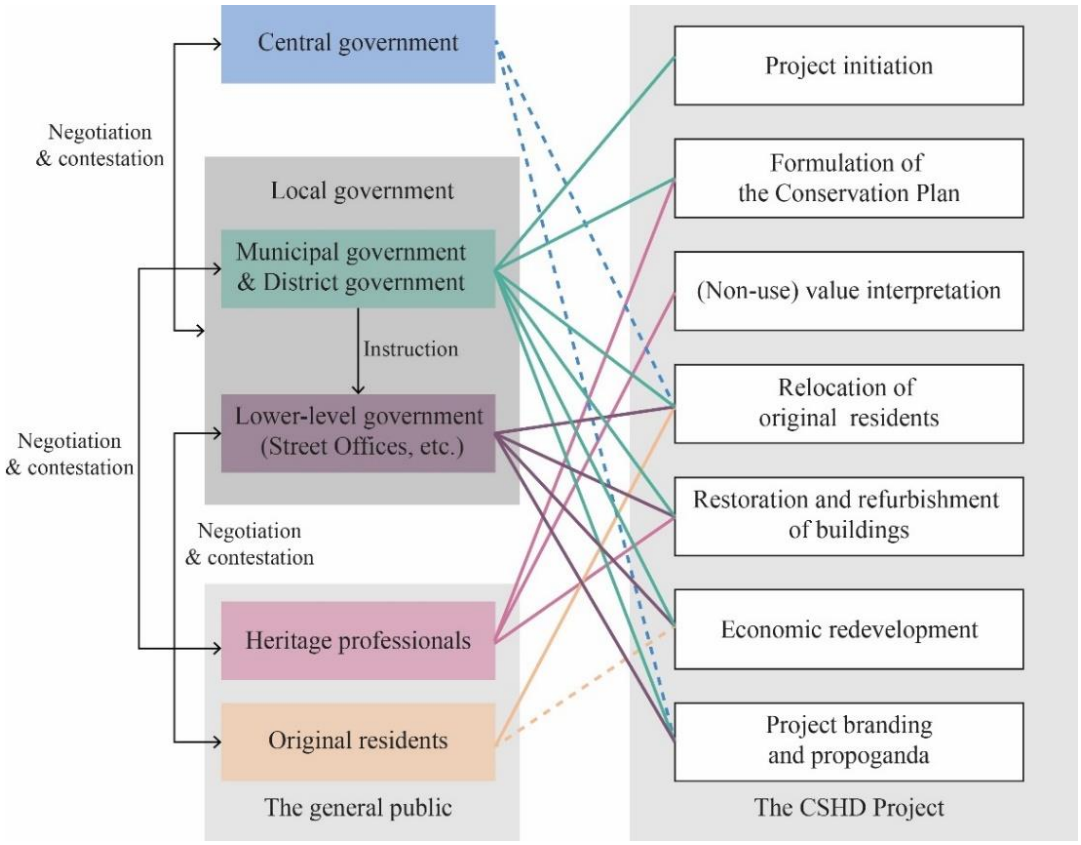

Figure 8-1. The decision-making and implementation web of the Project (*Source: author*)[44].
Note. Between the actors on the left and the Project on the right, solid lines represent direct involvement in the Project; dashed lines represent indirect involvement in the Project.

Within this web, the local government is at the centre as it has been involved in almost all components of the Project except for the non-use value interpretation of CSHD. The central government has exerted explicit and implicit influences on the local government with regard to the

44 Non-use value interpretation and discussing the restoration principles were part of the conservation planning process. But to highlight the different roles of the heritage professionals and the local government, I separated them in this diagram and the thesis. Restoration also involved conducting the restoration/refurbishment which was technically after the conservation planning and implemented by the lower-level government.

relocation of the original residents and the propaganda of the Project. The nonstate actors, including the heritage professionals and the original residents in my case study, contested the local government's decisions on certain components of the Project. The heritage professionals were involved in making *The Conservation Plan of Cangxiang Street Historic District* (hereinafter the Conservation Plan), including interpreting the non-use value of CSHD as written in the Conservation Plan and determining the restoration principles of historic buildings. The original residents have been negotiating with and contesting the local government during the residents' relocation.

In the meantime, the local government has an inner hierarchy. The municipal and district governments have been the main power-holders and decision-makers, while the Street Offices and other lower-level government agencies have been the executors. Thus, the lower-level government was not part of the project initiation and conservation planning. Their job during relocating residents, restoring/refurbishing buildings, redeveloping CSHD, and propagating the Project was implementing the decisions of, rather than making decisions with, the municipal and district governments. Due to this inner hierarchy and heritage regulations, the heritage professionals and the original residents interacted with different parts of the local government. The heritage professionals were able to directly meet with the top leaders of the municipal and district governments. The residents have been mainly dealing with lower-level government officials.

Analysing the Web and Amending Fragmented Authoritarianism

To understand how this web came into being and the impacts of this web, I drew on the concept of FA. I argued that this web was a result of China's FA. Yet our understanding of F can be expanded from the political system itself to state-society relations. And the effects of this "FA 3.0" cover a prolonged policy process depending on the presence of *de facto* policy bargaining rather than "formalised" or institutionalised policy changes. Besides, how FA works in my case studies is associated with the features of the policy field and the scale of the locality. Consequently, the interface between nonstate actors and the regulatory regimes produces specific outcomes in decision-making and implementation, which gives us a perspective on the broader picture of contemporary China's (heritage) politics and society. In this subsection, I will elaborate on these arguments and contributions to the framework of FA in more detail.

First, I defined two dimensions of fragmentation. System fragmentation refers to how the Chinese bureaucracy and the overall political system are structured and operated. Fragmentation in state-society relations refers to that the relationship between the state and the Chinese citizens is no longer that the former simply rules or controls the latter, but the citizens now are more active and self-aware to be "disobedient" and "recalcitrant". Previous scholars tend to conceive system fragmentation as the result of overlapping jurisdictions and leaderships between different horizontal and vertical governmental agencies (*tiaokuai* system), which leads to policy bargaining (Li & Liu, 2018; Lieberthal & Oksenberg, 1988). My case study shows that other factors also contribute to policy bargaining, including (1) the heritage and planning regulations and laws in China, (2) the community governance structure, (3) the one veto rule, (4) central regulations that are vague and general, and (5) the loose supervision and monitoring from the centre to the local in small/mid-sized cities. Since these factors are all characteristics of the Chinese political system, I classified them as system fragmentation. Thus, my case study has expanded our understanding of F by identifying other origins of system fragmentation.

Noticeably, the original residents' resistance in the Project has not been purely reliant on system fragmentation. For instance, the strategy of "wait and see" seems quite spontaneous and random. It has actually come from the activeness, flexibility, and tactfulness of the residents, i.e. from fragmentation in state-society relations. This is another type of F, outside of the political system, that contributes to policy bargaining. If we look at other cases of citizen protests and resistance in China over a longer period of time (e.g. Fu, 2017; Li et al., 2021), we can see that fragmentation in state-society relations can push forward system reform and bring more system fragmentation (Chen, 2020). Thus, the two dimensions of F are interrelated. Another feature of the residents' resistance is that they could not participate in the decision-making process but only in the implementation process when the relocation policy was already finalised. During this process, policy changes still happened, even if the changes were not formalised on paper. This indicates that the investigation of China's FA should take into account the full policy process, as long as policy bargaining is visible.

Second, the policy field is important when evaluating FA. The original FA framework was developed in China's energy sector (Lieberthal & Oksenberg, 1988). Many researchers have applied it to other policy areas, including heritage conservation (e.g. Lee, 2016; Zhang, 2013). My research added

some specificities to the policy area of heritage conservation. These specificities informed my distinction between the two dimensions of fragmentation and revealed the up-to-date context of authoritarianism, which further unveiled different kinds of central-local relations and state-society relations. In China's heritage field, system fragmentation partly comes from the planning and heritage regulations which formally grant heritage professionals decision-making power, and partly comes from the current community governance structure that allows citizens to reach the local government and participate in policy bargaining. Comparing the heritage field with the energy sector where FA was first described, the energy sector has higher stakes and involves many powerful individual officials, the departments of the Communist Party of China (CPC), and State Council ministries at the central level. The *tiaokuai* system of the Chinese bureaucracy is thus more influential (Lieberthal & Oksenberg, 1988; Mertha, 2005, 2008). Nevertheless, heritage conservation is usually a local practice. In the CSHD Project as well as many other heritage conservation projects, there is no direct involvement of the CPC or the central government. Instead, the local government, the communities, and the heritage professionals have been more prominent actors. Thus the planning and heritage regulations and the community governance structure within this particular policy area have been more influential.

In the meantime, the differences between the heritage field and other policy areas are relevant to the nonstate actors' objectives of participating in policy bargaining. In the energy sector and other policy areas where the stakes are higher, the actors actively seek concrete policy changes (e.g. Lieberthal & Oksenberg, 1988; Mertha, 2005, 2008). Whereas in heritage conservation, for the local governments and the communities, completely changing the central policies or the local policies is sometimes not necessary. As Chapters Five and Six presented, what the local government of Anyang and the communities sought to achieve was using the existing policies and projects for their benefit. As a result, the degrees of policy incoherence that they bring to the political system are different from those in other policy areas.

However, the formal space for policy bargaining in China's heritage field is under closing down pressures alongside the increasing authoritarianism of the entire nation, considering the current international geopolitics. President Xi's (2022; see also Li, 2023) speeches have constantly emphasised the volatile, complicated, and even hostile international environment and diplomatic

relations that China faces now. It is against this backdrop that the central state has initiated the culture promotion strategy and cultural confidence discourse. The objective is to re-centralise its power and sustain authoritarianism through ideology in order to ensure domestic stability and national security. Such ideology control draws less on Marxism, socialism, and communism under some circumstances, but more on traditional Chinese culture, including heritage. To keep in line with the central state agenda, local states are increasingly using heritage as a governing tool to conduct patriotic education and local governance (Zhu & González Martínez, 2022). Even a small to mid-sized inland city like Anyang which is farther from the frontier of international geopolitics compared to Beijing and other coastal regions has been witnessing a growth of political propaganda through heritage. This change suggests that for the framework of FA, the role of authoritarianism cannot be taken for granted. To what extent the two dimensions of fragmentation can influence decision-making and implementation is fundamentally bounded by authoritarianism. Furthermore, China's political system is dynamic and evolving, as various actors and forces from within and outside the system are disturbing the existing FA system. In the next section, I will come back to this change in heritage policy bargaining to give a more holistic evaluation of its impacts on local heritage practices.

Third, the scale of the locality matters. The original framework of FA was developed in political science. In this research, from a geography and urban planning perspective, I argued that it is necessary to consider locality, particularly the specificities of small and mid-sized cities, as a factor that helps explain system fragmentation and the role of authoritarianism. As demonstrated in my case study, in comparison to major cities, small and mid-sized cities may receive less central supervision and monitoring, leaving them more space to develop their own policies and projects. The local governments therefore become the *de facto* most powerful state actors to bargain with nonstate actors. This relatively remote central-local distance in small and mid-sized cities, different from that in major cities, contributes to system fragmentation.

One of the downsides of the remote central-local distance in small and mid-sized cities, however, is that in these cities, decision-making and implementation may arguably become more arbitrary and thus more detrimental to social development. The intervention in the planners' work from Mr G, Anyang's former top leader, and the failed South Street Project in Anyang exemplify these problems.

In other words, the development dilemmas in Anyang are partly because of its position on the urban hierarchy and the central-local distance, which represent the common challenges faced by many small and mid-sized cities around the world (e.g. Brake, 2023; Dovaa et al., 2022; Liu et al., 2012). Thus, it is necessary to continue and expand the studies on cities off the world-city map (Robinson, 2002).

The local specificities of Anyang also explain why the Project has been economic development-oriented and imply the authoritarian nature of the political system. Considering the recent economic downturn in the city, it has been imperative for the local government to revitalise the local economy. Meanwhile, maintaining constant economic development is a top-down concern from the central government, considering the current nationwide economic stagnation in China (Kennedy et al., 2023) as well as the argument that the Party-state's legitimacy partly rests on its ability to deliver high-speed and constant economic advancement (Nathan, 2003). The CSHD Project at this point has become a pivotal step for the local government. At the local state level, the Project is crucial for revitalising the local economy and ensuring sufficient local revenue; at the local officials' personal level, the Project is crucial for them to demonstrate their competence and political conformity to the upper-level governments. In this sense, initiating the Project from the very beginning was a result of the authoritarianism of the political system. Here, we see again the concrete effects of authoritarianism on decision-making and implementation.

Finally, by combining the roles of the two dimensions of fragmentation and authoritarianism in relation to the policy field and locality, we can see that the interactions between certain nonstate actors and regulatory regimes yield particular and sometimes even unforeseeable outcomes in decision-making and implementation. For instance, between the local government and the original residents in CSHD, the latter was able to constrain the former during relocation due to the central government's one veto rule within the personnel evaluation system of Chinese government officials. This rule requires the local governments in China to maintain social stability and harmony, thus determining that the local government of Anyang could only peacefully persuade the residents to relocate without violence or coercion during the CSHD Project. The local government could not afford the risk of provoking the residents, as any social disturbances could bury the local officials' political careers. The top-down requirement to maintain social stability thus has granted the

residents, who do not have official power or positions in the political system, a degree of power to resist the relocation policy. Differently, between the local government and the heritage professionals, the latter who has formal power as written in China's heritage laws and regulations was actually constrained by the former. Although the heritage professionals had the opportunities to negotiate with and even confront the local officials, policy changes that the heritage professionals could bring to the Project were limited. The comparison between these two examples indicates that there is a gap between official power and real power. Heritage professionals who have official power can hardly exert power in reality; residents who do not have official power can be actually powerful.

The above discussion directs us to the broader picture of China's FA. That is, China's fragmentation exists in both the political system and state-society relations for various reasons and with various impacts on decision-making and implementation. Because of the interrelationship between system fragmentation and fragmentation in state-society relations, and because of the powerfully functioning authoritarianism, China's political system is evolving with the ever-changing state-society relations as well as central-local relations. Regarding the original framework of FA, Oksenberg (2001) acknowledges that FA was brought up in the 1980s and was static, thus is probably not enough to capture the contemporary changes in China. My case study largely amended the framework of FA and demonstrated its applicability in current China if we expand the interpretation of F, extend the timeline for investigating policy bargaining, and incorporate the dynamics within the Party-state and the Chinese society into the FA framework.

8.2 Power Relations versus Value Judgements

The Roles of Power Relations and Value Judgements

One may wonder what the above analysis around FA has to do with CHS, heritage construction, and heritage politics. In this section, I will explain the relevance of the above analysis and draw the most important lesson for CHS from it.

In my case study, we have witnessed a range of negotiation and contestation. Recalling the spectrum of social responses to China's AHD generalised by Zhu and Maags (2020), including active embrace, passive acceptance, reframing, and resistance, we can see that the negotiation and contestation in this

case study by and large fit into this spectrum. The heritage professionals started with resistance and ended with making some major compromises. Among the general public, some have actively embraced the Project and the local government's AHD, some have passively accepted them, while others have attempted to resist the local government. At the same time, some characteristics distinguish this case study from the previous ones. In terms of the processes of resistance, the heritage professionals' resistance was mainly through formal work meetings and communications. The original residents' resistance has been individual-based and mild. The general public's resistance has been manifested as their distrust attitude towards the local government without translating into any real actions. All three types of resistance were non-violent without wide-scale public attention and support. In terms of the outcomes of resistance, there have been limited policy changes. The local government's AHD and the delivery of the Project have not been substantially affected. Such processes and results are different from previous studies that have illustrated communities' collaborations with media and NGOs, mobilisation of neighbours and sympathetic local officials, etc., and eventually altering the approaches or directions of the heritage projects to a large extent or managing to sustain their own heritage practices (e.g. Liang, 2013; Xia, 2020; Zhou, 2015; Zhu, 2015).

Comparing these various empirical cases, there appears one question that CHS has been unable to fully answer: why under different circumstances, negotiation and contestation involve different actors and strategies with different outcomes? More simply speaking, why sometimes the subalterns can successfully resist the authorities, whereas at other times not? In my case study, we see that the heritage discourses of the local citizens and some of the heritage discourses of the heritage professionals did not materialise in the Project. What CSHD looked like after the first-stage restoration/refurbishment and redevelopment was more consistent with the AHD of the local government. Why is that?

To answer these questions, I argued that it is useful to return to the decision-making and implementation process. Fundamentally, China's political system is authoritarian, despite the fragmentation feature. In local practices, the local governments remain the most powerful actors who make the key and final decisions. During the CSHD Project, the local government of Anyang did not provide meaningful channels for the general public to participate in the decision-making and

implementation regarding how to redevelop CSHD. After long disputes with the heritage professionals, the local government eventually decided not to adopt the principles suggested by the heritage professionals to restore historic buildings and ignored the heritage professionals' non-use value interpretation of CSHD. The original residents' negotiation and contestation were only limited to the implementation of relocation, not other components of the Project and not even the formulation of relocation policy. Consequently, certain heritage discourses of the general public and heritage professionals did not have the chance to influence local decision-making and materialise in the Project. Since the local government delimits the decision-making circle, it is unsurprising to notice that some nonstate actors did not join in policy bargaining or even never appeared in the Project. Tourists and original business owners (who are not property owners) were those that were recognised by the local government, but not included in the Project. Tenants were those that were neither recognised nor included in the Project by the local government.

The selective inclusion and exclusion of certain nonstate actors and their heritage discourses indicate that in the CSHD Project, the local government has pre-determined which nonstate actors can enter the decision-making and implementation circle and how they can enter this circle. The authoritarian nature of the heritage system persists and has resulted in what I observed in CSHD: value judgements of different actors are not as important as power relations in shaping heritage practices, and power relations have determined the role of value judgements.

The contributions of this argument lie in the following two aspects. First, CHS has recognised that value judgements are relevant to why heritage is intrinsically dissonant but fails to clarify why heritage dissonance is manifested in diverse ways involving certain groups under different circumstances. The concept of AHD encapsulates the gist of the value judgements of certain elite groups, state agencies, and international organisations and criticises their hegemonic role (Smith, 2006, 2009), but obscures what makes their heritage discourse "authorised" and "hegemonic". My argument demonstrated that the disagreements over heritage conservation are mainly derived from the diverse value judgements of different actors in terms of how they understand heritage and heritage value, what their visions and demands for heritage projects are, and so forth. However, whether the disagreements translate into intense confrontation, mild negotiation, collaboration, or anything else is more determined by the power relations of these actors, as power relations determine

who can participate in which parts of the heritage projects in which ways. Therefore, my argument has started to respond to the above-raised questions that current CHS theories and concepts have failed to address.

Second, for the convenience of writing and to keep consistent with the original conception in CHS, I combined the heritage discourses of the local government and the heritage professionals as the "AHDs" for CSHD. However, we can see that the label of AHD is questionable here. On the one hand, heritage professionals' discourse is not "authorised" in the sense that it has been largely excluded from the Project, due to a lack of political authority. Even though their discourse is informed by international organisations and charters that CHS seeks to criticise, their discourse can hardly be considered "AHD". On the other hand, the local government's heritage discourse is very much (politically) authorised and thus powerful in shaping the Project, it is nevertheless not so "heritage", considering the local government's rationales and motives for the Project. However, I argued that this discourse is still AHD because it is still centred around heritage and generally conforms to the process of the heritage industry (Hewison, 1987; Tunbridge & Ashworth, 1996). It is more of the "values" that the local government has ascribed to CSHD and exploited that are heavily economic and political, thus seemingly somewhat unconventional. In fact, I argued that the local government's perception and use of heritage precisely point out that the original conception of AHD may be too reduced to the Anglophone heritage ideals that have been widely legitimised by international organisations and state agencies. Therefore, when we scrutinise and evaluate AHD, we should pay attention to various narratives of and approaches to heritage that are influenced by particular socio-political contexts, and put more emphasis on how these heritage discourses are authorised by whom. It is more of the authorised position of AHD and its marginalisation or elimination of other heritage discourses that make it hegemonic and problematic, not necessarily the contents of AHD. If managed appropriately, an AHD can be beneficial for heritage conservation.

In this regard, a China-specific reflection is whether heritage professionals with more cultural authority but less or even no political authority are barriers to bottom-up heritage approaches and "enemies" of communities. According to CHS, heritage professionals may need to step back so that communities can more thoroughly express their heritage discourses (Smith, 2006; Smith, L., 2009; Waterton & Smith, 2010). However, in China, considering the role of heritage professionals vis-à-vis

the local governments in heritage projects, as well as the challenges to public participation (Ding & Ruan, 2016), I believe that sometimes communities may actually need heritage professionals to take the lead. It may be more of the local governments and less of the heritage professionals that confine the communities' expression of their lay heritage discourses. In the CSHD Project, the prestigious heritage expert from Beijing who firmly refused to publicly endorse the local government of Anyang, as well as the whole planning team, actually performed as the guardian of local heritage and assisted the communities in preserving local heritage when the communities were largely excluded by the local government.

Heritage Politics in Contemporary China: Politically Bounded Heritage

Comparing the roles of power relations and value judgements, I ultimately argued that heritage is politically bounded. This idea offers us a perspective on heritage politics in contemporary China. First, the AHD of the CPC and the Chinese government involve an important political dimension. At the current stage, this political dimension is more centred around using heritage as a governance tool to educate the citizens and unify their ideology in order to enhance their "cultural confidence", realise "Chinese modernisation", and cope with the fluctuating domestic and international (geo)politics.

Second, because of the central state's ideological re-centralisation through culture and heritage, as well as the generally increasingly centralised decision-making under President Xi, the space for contestation in heritage construction is changing. What my case study has shown is that this space is contingent upon the specific policy issues and the political levels at which the issues are discussed. China's heritage decision-making and implementation is more fragmented regarding certain issues at certain political levels, while more authoritarian regarding other issues at certain political levels. The latter usually concerns politically and economically sensitive topics, such as state propaganda and attracting investment. Looking into the future, broadly speaking, we can anticipate a closer relationship between the central and local states in terms of tightened regulations and monitoring of local officials and the like, which may overcome the system fragmentation in small and mid-sized cities due to the current remote central-local distance. Because of the pressure from the central state, the local states may then close down existing channels for the public to participate in policy

bargaining and take on a firmer stand in policy-making and implementation. However, considering the fragmentation in state-society relations and the even better-informed younger generations, as well as the diversity of existing heritage practices (personal communication with heritage experts in China), whether the citizens can create other opportunities to bargain with or resist the local states may be difficult to predict. A smaller "formal" space for contestation allowed by the central and local states may not necessarily result in less bargaining and resistance. And the "formal" space for contestation is not shrinking consistently across different policy areas. Yet the public's bargaining and resistance may indeed become less successful and more risky.

The idea that heritage is politically bounded, then, calls for new research paradigms for CHS. In addition to the political dimension of heritage discourses, the political essence of heritage also lies in the fact that heritage conservation is practised through the power struggles of state and nonstate actors. The power struggles not only impact heritage conservation but also the wider society. The power struggles are largely confined by the pre-existing political system, and also actively or passively, and intentionally or unintentionally seek to break through the system to establish new orders. In this sense, heritage conservation is not just about preserving the past but can become an effective approach to pursuing social inclusion and justice (Waterton, 2010).

The mechanisms and causes of power struggles in heritage construction have been less discussed in CHS (Smith et al., 2024; Su, X., 2010). The reason for this research gap is that CHS, especially the large number of empirical studies, is premised on illustrating the formation and competition of different heritage discourses (see Chapter Two). The current research framework is unable to analyse how power and bureaucracy work. One way of solving this issue is bringing in concepts from political science, political sociology, political economy and the like to closely examine the operation of the pre-existing heritage system and political system in order to further understand heritage politics.

The new research paradigms are practically valuable as well. To continue with the pursuit of revolutionising and democratising heritage conservation, as advocated by CHS (e.g. Smith, 2009; Waterton et al., 2006; Witcomb & Buckley, 2013), it is necessary to know in which way nonstate actors' power struggles can actually break through the existing heritage system, what kinds of new

orders may be established, and whether the new orders are more advanced. This again requires an understanding of how the existing heritage system and political system operate in the first place.

8.3 Potential Future Research

Based on the findings and arguments of this thesis, in this section, I will present four aspects of research puzzles that future research may continue to look into.

The first is concerned with the wider investigation of fragmentation and how to further understand the power dynamics in heritage construction. Comparative studies may be beneficial here. In China, for instance, comparisons between different small/mid-sized cities as well as comparisons between major cities and small/mid-sized cities will bring different contextual factors, such as certain regional policies, level of administrative capacity, level of economic development, and the involvement of private developers into the picture. Comparisons between different types of heritage, such as traditional towns and villages, urban historic districts, intangible heritage, archaeological parks/sites, museums, monumental buildings and structures, may shed light on how different conservation approaches work and how different actors interact. The more general applicability of the framework of FA in China can be tested as well.

Worldwide, some scholars have noticed similar “fragmented” policy-making in urban development of different countries, such as Han and Go’s (2019) research on greenbelt policies in the UK, Canada, Australia, the US, and South Korea and Storper’s (2014) research on metropolitan governance across the world. Indeed, any political system is fragmented. The difference is more about the degree and causes of fragmentation and how fragmentation plays into decision-making and implementation (e.g. see Zhang, 2013 for a comparison between the fragmented heritage policy-making in Beijing, Chicago, and Paris). In China’s heritage field, the uniqueness may lie in the particularities of system fragmentation. Despite the differences, whether there are some parallels between China and other countries can be explored through comparative studies. These inquiries can then shed light on what contextual factors need to be taken into consideration.

The second is concerned with the role of international actors in China’s heritage field where the influence of international organisations, particularly UNESCO, ICOMOS, and IUCN, has been

prominent. Their influence is not only on the World Heritage in China (Yan, 2018), but also on the conservation principles adopted by the local governments and heritage professionals, and how the public perceives heritage. The latter two aspects are already observed in my case study. From the perspective of FA, previous scholars have observed that international actors are sometimes part of China's FA in certain policy areas (e.g. Mertha, 2005 on the legislation of intellectual property; Duckett, 2019 on the medical insurance schemes). In the heritage field, what role these international organisations play in relation to China's FA is worth exploring. From the perspective of CHS, the role of international organisations and their heritage discourse as well as their relationship with domestic actors may further problematise the concept of AHD. For instance, if their heritage discourse only has cultural authority without political authority, or if their heritage discourse is widely and actively embraced by the general public, is it still reasonable or useful to label it an "AHD"?

The third research direction is concerned with other potential theoretical lenses to understand political decision-making and power struggles under different socio-political contexts, beyond the concept of FA. Considering my call for new paradigms, the questions can be whether there are other viable theories, how to combine these theories with CHS, and the generalisability of these theories. Given the fact that China's authoritarianism is quite particular and even unique, many other countries will require other theoretical lenses to interpret their specific political contexts.

More practically, the final research direction is concerned with public participation in heritage practices which will contribute to the broader goal of heritage democratisation and power redistribution advocated by CHS. How to realise public participation has been a long-lasting question in CHS (Waterton & Smith, 2010). To contribute to the solutions, on the one hand, the debate on what roles heritage professionals and different levels of government can or should play can be continued. In China, at the current stage, it may more refer to the role of heritage professionals vis-à-vis the local governments. Worldwide, it may be necessary to further discuss the concept of AHD by clearing up who has the "authority" to "authorise" whose heritage discourses and how "authoritative" they are in relation to the communities. Ultimately, the goal is perhaps to develop a "model of collaborative governance" (Baek & Zhang, 2022, p. 332). On the other hand, scholars may learn more from the wisdom of the communities, such as the active, flexible, and

tactful residents in CSHD that we saw in Chapter Six, as well as investigate the dynamics and inconsistencies within the communities to unpack the complexity of and challenges for public participation. Besides, there can be assessments of the experiences and applicability of certain successful and failed public participation attempts in heritage projects in order to understand how current theories may or may not fit into reality, and what theories are needed in the future. However, we do need to be cautious about what counts as “success” and “failure” in heritage conservation and not inflate some experiences as one-size-fits-all tricks.

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Appendix: Summary of Literature Review

Table AP-1. Authorised heritage discourse(s) of the Communist Party of China and the Chinese central government and local governments.

The CPC and different levels of government	Categories	Authorised heritage discourse(s)	Sources
The CPC and the central government	Internal	Seeking self-legitimacy	e.g. Sigley (2013); Wang & Kroon (2017)
		Boosting economic development and modernisation	e.g. Li et al. (2010); Nitzky (2012)
		Resistance against Westernisation	e.g. Ai (2011); Zhu & Maags (2020)
	External	Showcasing cultural power	e.g. Silverman & Blumenfield (2013); Zhang (2017)
		Integrating into the international community	e.g. Swain (2013); Zhang & Lenzer (2020)
		Heritage diplomacy	e.g. Chan (2018); Winter (2018)
		Legitimising territory claim	e.g. Cooke (2018); Hevia (2001)
Local governments	—	Developing local economy	e.g. Chan (2005, 2018); Zhou (2013)
		Place branding	e.g. Cui (2018); Wai (2006)
		Legitimising local governance	e.g. Oakes (2000, 2006); Yan (2015)

Table AP-2. The Chinese government's strategies for heritage construction.

Categories	Strategies	Sources
Broad strategies	Developing tourism	e.g. Cooke (2018); Wang & Bramwell (2012); Zhang (2018)
	Nominating World Heritage	e.g. Yan (2015); Zhang & Lenzer (2020)
	Selectively designating, preserving, and interpreting heritage for certain purposes	e.g. Hung (2018); Shepherd & Yu (2013)
Specific actions	Demolishing dilapidated buildings and relocating original residents and businesses	e.g. Bideau & Yan (2018); Cui (2018)
	Reconstructing heritage sites	e.g. Cui (2018); Zhu (2018)
	Demarcating heritage sites and interpreting heritage value to cater to international concepts and standards	e.g. Zhang (2017); Zhang & Lenzer (2020
	Exploiting community organisations and activities to legitimise local government's plan	e.g. Cai (2019); Svensson (2016)
	Regulations leaning towards certain communities to promote their heritage practices	e.g. Su (2013a, 2013b)

Table AP-3. Political, social, and cultural effects of China's government-led heritage construction.

Categories	Effects	Sources
Political effects	Split attitudes towards political propaganda	e.g. Gao & Guo (2017); Zou et al. (2017)
	Mixed international responses	e.g. Chan (2018); Winter (2016)
Social effects	Displacement and gentrification	e.g. Bideau & Yan (2018); Peters (2013)
	Loss of community cohesion and local identity	e.g. Oakes (2006); Yan (2015)
	Conflicts between original residents and new-comers	e.g. Su (2013a, 2013b); Zhu & Maags (2020)
Cultural effects	Fossilisation, museumification, and Disneyfication of heritage sites	e.g. Liu (2013); Nitzky (2012)
	Over-commercialisation of heritage sites	e.g. Peters (2013); Zhang & Lenzer (2020)
	Authenticity debate	e.g. Chan (2011); Wall & Zhao (2017)
	Conflicting interpretations of heritage	e.g. Ai (2011); Zhang & Wu (2016)
	"Right to heritage" (who has the right to access and use heritage)	e.g. Harrell (2013); Zhu (2015)
	Insufficient presentation of heritage value	e.g. Laukkanen (2018); Zhang & Lenzer (2020)

Table AP-4. Conflicts between the actors in China's heritage construction.

Actors	**Conflicts**	**Sources**
The central government vs. the local governments	Priority of political agenda	e.g. Cui (2018); Li & Hu (2008)
The local government vs. the communities	Heritage interpretation	e.g. Cooke (2018); Su (2011)
	Power imbalance	e.g. Oakes (2000); Zhao (2013)
	Profit distribution	e.g. Oakes (2006); Yan (2015)
Original residents vs. new-comers	Ideology differences	e.g. Bideau & Yan (2018); Su (2013a, 2013b)
Within local communities	Profit distribution	e.g. Chan (2011); Zhu & Li (2013)
	Distrust of community organisations due to their connection to the government	e.g. Cai (2019)
Han vs. ethnic minorities	Han's cultural assimilation and perceived superiority over ethnic minorities	e.g. Cooke (2018); Nitzky (2012)
The Chinese government vs. the international organisations	Different conservation standards and heritage concepts	e.g. Wei & Wang (2022); Zhang & Brown (2022)