Evaluation of implementation and operation mode of conservation planning of historic villages in the Pearl River Delta

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ABSTRACT
The renovation of ancient buildings and roadways as well as the improvement of green landscape and sanitation facilities of historic villages are mainly based on the conservation planning in the Pearl River Delta. The implementation mode of conservation planning is divided into the government leading type, the village committee leading type, the government and the tourism developers combined type, the village committee and the tourism developers combined type as well as the villagers’ self-government type. It finds that the historic villages of government and tourism developers combined type and the village committee and the tourism developers combined type achieve better results including the ancient buildings better repaired and reused and the public infrastructures perfect and the residents have higher satisfaction through field reconnaissance and survey statistics. By comparing the actual effect of the conservation and renewal of the historic villages and the evaluation of the residents’ satisfaction under different conservation planning implementations it hopes to provide a reference for choosing a suitable conservation mode for historic villages in China and even in the world.

1. Introduction

Historic villages are important parts of urban and rural historical and cultural heritage. They have the function of inheriting local national culture. In recent years, China is gradually increasing protecting the historic villages. Since 2003, the Ministry of Construction and the State Administration of Cultural Relics have selected seven batches of 487 national historic villages in China, and the number of traditional Chinese villages has reached 6819. At the end of 2012, China promulgated the Guiding Opinions on Strengthening the Protection and Development of Traditional Villages, which clarified the principles of the protection of traditional villages. The principles emphasize that we should adhere to “planning first, overall guidance, overall protection and development at the same time”. Consequently, it can be seen that conservation planning is of great significance to the protection of traditional villages and historic villages. The renovation of ancient buildings and roadways as well as the improvement of green landscape and sanitation facilities of historic villages are mainly based on the conservation planning in the Pearl River Delta. This paper explores the built environment of historic villages in the Pearl River Delta in Guangdong Province and the residents’ satisfaction evaluation under different implementation and operation mode of conservation planning in order to provide reference for choosing appropriate protection paths for historic villages in China.

Foreign planning evaluations began during the second half of the twentieth century (Shiwen and Yu 2003). Initially, they only evaluated the rationality of planning and its content. After that, with the application of systematic methods, applied economics and policy science was used in urban and rural planning. Therefore, planning evaluations have gradually developed into examinations of a combination of various uncertainties in the planning implementation environment to evaluate the process and effect of planning implementation. They have evolved from using simple technical means to being an important guarantee for planning implementation (Alexander 2006). Such methods have focused on the policy systems and process mechanisms that affect the implementation of a plan. They have also compared the results with the contents of the plan to reflect on the value and rationality of the plan during the implementation evaluation process and the effect of the plan (Friedmann 1987; Alexander and Faludi 1989; Healey 1991; Landis 1992). E. Talen (1996) proposed that planning implementation evaluation can be divided into an evaluation of the plan before implementation, the process of planning practice, an evaluation of policy implementation, and an evaluation of planning implementation results (Talen 1996). Planning implementation evaluations can be divided into three types using different stages that are generally accepted by scholars at home and abroad.
The pre-implementation evaluation of a conservation plan scheme is not only an evaluation of the scheme itself but also the earliest evaluation that attracts attention. The current evaluation system for historical and cultural towns and villages in China was established by Zhao Yong (2008). The system was adopted by the Ministry of Housing and Construction in 2005. It contains two parts: value characteristics and protection measures. Many studies have drawn on this idea and expanded it into different ways of thinking. For example, Shao Yong believes that a comprehensive evaluation system of the entire protection process should be established (2012). A number of scholars have suggested evaluations of the implementation process and the results of protection planning. For example, Xu Honggong and others used Hongcun as an example to reveal the inadequacy in the interpretation of “authenticity” in planning and management documents by means of event process tracking, resident oral historical events, and resident in-depth interviews. This would lead to a one-sided understanding of the executors (2012). Wei Fan uses the historical and cultural blocks of Sanfang and Qixiang as examples to evaluate the conservation and inheritance of conservation elements, the implementation of renovation planning content, and policy formulations (2013). Ren Dong suggested a conservation plan evaluation system based on historical and cultural villages (2012). Liu Lulu used the villages of Daling, Xiaozhou, Songtang, and Xiema as examples to construct an evaluation system of the implementation effect of historical and cultural village conservation from four aspects: the preservation effect, the social effect, the economic effect, and the environmental effect (Lulu, Dawei, and Xiao 2016).

From the above studies, it is not difficult to see that the evaluation of the implementation of conservation planning for historic villages in China is still in its infancy. The existing research results focus on case studies and the evaluation of the implementation effect of conservation planning. It pays less attention to the operation of implementation in the conservation planning. However, in the implementation process of conservation planning, different implementation organizations, relevant policies, capital investment, management level and public participation all affect the implementation effect. It is incomplete to pay attention to the effect of implementation and neglect the influence of operation mode. Therefore, it is necessary to evaluate the operation mode of conservation planning for historic villages.

2. Implementation mode of conservation planning for historic villages in the Pearl River Delta

The compilation of conservation planning for historic villages is accompanied by the selection system of national historic villages in China. In the Law of the Protection of Cultural Relics promulgated by the People’s Republic of China in 2002, for the first time, it proposes that the local people’s governments in historic and cultural cities, historic and cultural blocks, historic villages and towns shall organize the special conservation planning of the cultural heritage and the conservation planning shall be incorporated into the overall urban planning. In 2003, the Ministry of Construction and the State Administration of Cultural Relics began the selection of national historic towns and villages in China which marks the formal establishment of the protection system of historic towns and villages in China (Yubin 2010). Many ancient villages and towns in the Pearl River Delta began to set up protection groups and management committees to organize and prepare conservation plans in order to meet the requirements of declaration (Table 1). There are 13 national historic villages in the Pearl River Delta and all of them have been formulated conservation planning. The principal units of conservation planning are mainly the government and some are village committees. After the compilation of conservation planning, most of the ancient villages can be implemented in accordance with the conservation planning content, but the degree of implementation is different. Most historic villages have only implemented some short-term goals by the end of the planning period. Some of the reasons are the problems existing in the compilation of conservation planning, such as the lack of consideration of capital budget and practical difficulties, the lack of implementation rules and guidance, etc. Some of them are due to insufficient organization and implementation, insufficient leadership attention, lack of technical managers, lack of policy support, lack of funds and other reasons.

The implementation mode of conservation planning is divided into the government leading type, the village committee leading type, the government and the tourism developers combined type, the village committee and the tourism developers combined type as well as the villagers’ self-government type. Taking the 13 national historic villages in the Pearl River Delta as an example, there are four villages belong to the government leading type in the implementation mode of conservation planning, two villages belong to the village committee leading type, three villages belong to the government and the tourism developers combined type, two villages belong to the village committee and the tourism developers combined type and two villages belong to the villagers’ self-government type. Different implementation organizations have different understandings of conservation planning and different implementation effects. We selected five historic villages to represent the five types, respectively, in Shenzhen, Guangzhou, Dongguan and Foshan city because these cities are all economically developed and located in the central position in the Pearl River Delta.
Table 1. Types of organization for the implementation of conservation planning for some historic villages in the Pearl River Delta.

| Name of village                     | Implementation organization | Implementation time | Source of renovation funds | Support policy | Client               | Source of renovation funds | fiat amount | Additional note |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------|---------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|--------------|-----------------|
| Daqitou Village, Sanshui            | Visitors                     | December 2004       | None Villagers               | Yes           | Government and tourism developers combined | Government support funds + Government support funds | 1 million 500 thousand yuan | None Villagers fi nancing + |
| Pengcheng Village in Shenzhen      | Mass Tourism                 | October 2005        | Government support funds    | Yes           | No                   | Government support funds    | 100 million yuan | None Villagers fi nancing |
| Daling Village, Shilou Town, Guangzhou | Committee and tourists       | September 2007      | Government support funds    | Yes           | No                   | Government support funds    | 69 million 350 thousand yuan | None Villagers fi nancing |
| Tangwei Village, Shipai Town, Dongguan | Committee and tourists       | July 2003           | Government support funds    | Yes           | No                   | Government support funds    | 23 million 40 thousand yuan  | None Villagers fi nancing |
| Nanse Village, Chashan Town, Dongguan | Committee                    | September 2007      | Government support funds    | Yes           | No                   | Government support funds    | 35 million yuan | None Villagers fi nancing |
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3. Implementation effect evaluation of conservation planning of historic villages in the Pearl River Delta

3.1. Built environment evaluation

Conservation planning for historic villages in the Pearl River Delta is generally divided into short-term and long-term objectives. The contents of conservation planning mainly focus on four aspects: renovation of ancient buildings, maintenance of roadways, transformation of greening landscapes and improvement of basic sanitation facilities. Therefore, we choose these four aspects in historic villages as the indicators of the built environment evaluation according to the conservation planning. In addition, we consider the activation and utilization of ancient buildings after renovation. The original functions will change to meet the needs of modern life. So the coordination degree of overall style and features after renovation is also one of the evaluation indicators.

We carried out an on-site survey in historic villages in the Pearl River Delta, such as Daqitou Village in Foshan, Pengcheng Village in Shenzhen, Daling Village in Guangzhou, Nanse Village in Dongguan and Tangwei Village in Dongguan, etc., in 2015–2018. We held several discussions with some village committees and governments, and conducted random interviews with villagers and tourists during those years. A total of 530 questionnaires were distributed with an effective recovery rate of 98.68%. Through on-site investigation, we find that
ancient buildings of historic villages in the Pearl River Delta have been repaired to some extent under the guidance of conservation planning and some of the functions of ancient buildings have been replaced according to the actual needs. Organization for implementation of conservation planning for some historic villages are the government and the tourism developers combined as well as the village committee and the tourism developers combined. The main participants in the renovation for some historic villages are the government and tourism developers or village committees and tourism developers renovate the ancient buildings and roadways in villages with a high utilization rate, accompanied by a certain degree of commercial development. The public and infrastructure facilities are relatively perfect. There are greatly changed between the renovated villages and the original villages (Table 2). For example, Pengcheng village in Shenzhen is renovated and managed by Pengcheng Museum as a government agency. According to the conservation planning of Pengcheng village, a total of 21 ancient buildings with high value has been renovated and maintained (Figure 2). For general ancient dwellings, the Guidelines for Renovation of Residential Buildings in Pengcheng village have been issued for reference to renovate. The old dwelling houses are renovated and the original cement pavement of the roadway is replaced by strip-stone pavement. In 2015, Pengcheng Seaport Tourism Service Company in Shenzhen began to take full responsibility for the rental of property in Pengcheng village (Figure 3). There are 967 collective rental houses in Pengcheng village and 610 of them have been rented in 2015 with a contracting rate of 63%. According to the statistics, in 2016, there were more than 250,000 visitors in Dapeng village with an increasing number of 100,000 compared with last year (Yuanming and Kewu 2017).

There is another example in Nanshe village in Dongguan. The Nanshe management department of the ancient buildings is mainly responsible for the daily renovation and management of Nanshe village. At the same time, Nanshe Creative Culture Tourism Development Company is responsible for the tourism development of Nanshe village. According to the conservation planning of Nanshe Village, 16 important ancient buildings in the village have been renovated and some of them have been transformed into a comprehensive complex of catering and accommodation (Figures 4 and 5). The ancestral temples in Nanshe village have held a series of cultural exhibitions, such as calligraphy and painting exhibition, marriage customs experience exhibition, Guanxiang cultural exhibition and so on. According to the statistics of Nanshe Village Committee, the annual number of visitors in Nanshe village has been on the rise since 2007. By 2014, the total number of tourists has reached 1.09 million.

In contrast, the major participants are the government or village committees and villagers without the involvement of tourism developers in the process of implementation of conservation planning in historic villages usually maintain the original traditional features.
Table 2. Comparison of built environment of some historic villages in the Pearl River Delta under different organizations for the implementation of conservation planning.

| Name of village                        | Major participants      | Conservation planning implementation degree | Renovation of ancient buildings                                      | Functional replacement                                                                 | Roadway maintenance                                                                 | Landscape construction       | Basic sanitation facilities | Features coordination |
|----------------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| Daqitou village, Sanshui district, Foshan | Local villagers         | Partial implemented                         | Three cultural relics buildings are repaired, while the rest are not repaired. | A small number of residential buildings are transformed into cultural exhibition buildings. | The roadway basically maintains its original condition.                             | Entrance plaza adds landscape facilities. | Lack                      | Coordinated             |
| Pengcheng village, Longgang district, Shenzhen | Local government and tourism developers | Near and medium term implemented and long term partial implemented | Daling village, Shilou town, Guangzhou                               | Twenty-one buildings are repaired, while the rest are renovated in accordance with the decoration guidelines for residential buildings. | The original residential buildings are transformed into commercial, tourist and cultural exhibition buildings. | The original cement pavements are all replaced by slab pavement. | Green square are added. Some | | |
| Perfect                               | Uncoordinated           |                                             |                                                                       | Local government                                                                       | Near and long term partial implemented                                              |                                |                           |                         |
|                                        |                         |                                             |                                                                       |                                                                       |                                                                      |                                |                           |                         |
| Nanshe village, Chashan town, Dongguan | Local village committee and tourism developers | Near and medium term partial implemented, long term unimplemented |                                                                   | Sixteen key buildings are repaired, while the rest are partially repaired or not repaired. | Ancestral hall buildings are transformed into cultural exhibition buildings, and some residential buildings are transformed into catering residential buildings. | Most of the roadways are well repaired in stone pavement, and a small number of roadways are not repaired. | The pond is purified, the ancient trees are preserved, and recreational seats are added. |                         |
| Partly perfect                         | Coordinated             |                                             |                                                                       | Three key buildings are repaired and eleven key buildings are partially repaired, while the rest are not repaired. | A small number of ancestral temple buildings are transformed into cultural exhibition buildings, and some residential buildings are transformed into tourist centers. | The “seven vertical and four horizontal” roadways are well preserved with red sandstone and flagstone pavement. | The pond is purified, the ancient trees are preserved, and recreational seats are added. |                         |
| Tangwei village, Shipai town, Dongguan | Coordinated             |                                             |                                                                       |                                                                       |                                                                      |                                |                           |                         |

The main roadways are paved with slab pavement, and the inner roadways are partly paved with long strips of flagstone. The pond is purified and the ancient trees are preserved.
Old buildings in villages are rarely exploited and utilized, and only a small number of ancient buildings can be replaced and reused. But beyond that, there is a lack of basic sanitation facilities in the historic villages. For example, Daqitou village in Foshan city was selected as the first batch of national historic villages in 2003.

**Figure 2.** Evaluation of ancient buildings renovations in Pengcheng historic village.

**Figure 3.** Ancient buildings in Pengcheng village are transformed into tourist buildings. Old buildings in villages are rarely exploited and utilized, and only a small number of ancient buildings can be replaced and reused. But beyond that, there is a lack of basic sanitation facilities in the historic villages. For example, Daqitou village in Foshan city was selected as the first batch of national historic villages in 2003.
retained a more complete and unique wattle and daub ancient building complex (Figure 6). However, these ancient buildings in the village had not been properly renovated and utilized. The distinctive ancient buildings such as the general Jianwei’s palace and Shangshu’s palace are closed. The villagers wanted to develop tourism and set up ticket sales outlets at the entrance of the village. However, there are not even toilets, catering and other basic facilities in the village. There are few people in the ancient village, and most of the ancient buildings are dilapidated. The reason is that the conservation planning of Daqitou village has not been implemented.
because it has not been passed by the examination and approval. Only three ancient buildings in the village have been repaired by the government (Figure 7). The rest of the ancient buildings is renovated by the local villagers spontaneously. The repair funds are insufficient and the repair efforts are weak.

The protection and renovation work of Tangwei village in Dongguan city in recent 10 years is mainly based on the conservation planning of Tangwei village. The village committee is responsible for the daily renovation and management work. Fourteen key ancient buildings in the village have been repaired (Figure 8). But there are still a large number of ancient buildings that have not been repaired or even damaged due to prolonged disrepair. Although there is a tourist center in Tangwei village, the ticket
3.2. Evaluation of resident satisfaction

We interviewed with some local village committees and governments as well as villagers and tourists in these villages in 2015–2018. We distributed a total of 530 questionnaires with an effective recovery rate of 98.68%. According to the questionnaire statistics of these five historic villages, we find that peoples’ satisfaction are relatively higher when the major participants are the government and tourism developers’ union as well as the village committee and tourism developers’ union in the implementation of conservation planning. While the village dwellings are completely renovated and maintained by the government and the village committees as well as villagers without the involvement of tourism developers the peoples’ satisfaction are relatively lower. Among the five historic villages, 49% of the respondents thought that the ancient buildings in Pengcheng village in Shenzhen were “well protected” and had the highest degree of satisfaction, while the other four villages had the highest proportion of “getting basic repairs and maintenance” (Figure 10). In the evaluation of the five villages’ roadway repair, the statistical results are similar to the conclusion of the ancient buildings’ evaluation. The Pengcheng village in Shenzhen also has the highest satisfaction. Fifty-four percent of the respondents expressed “satisfied” with the roadway repair of Pengcheng Village in Shenzhen, while the other four villages have the largest proportion of “general satisfied” (Figure 11). In the evaluation of the five villages’ green landscape, 61% of the respondents expressed...
“satisfied” with Nanshe Village in Dongguan and 51% of the respondents expressed “satisfied” with Pengcheng Village in Shenzhen. The remaining three villages received less than half of the “satisfied” evaluations (Figure 12). Residents fill the most satisfied with Pengcheng village in the evaluation of sanitation facilities among the five villages. Sixty-nine percent of the respondents expressed “satisfied” with the

Figure 9. Evaluation of ancient buildings renovations in Daling historic village.

Figure 10. Respondents to the evaluation of conservation of ancient buildings in historic villages.
environmental sanitation facilities in Pengcheng village. Fifty-two percent and 51% of the respondents were, respectively, satisfied with the sanitation facilities in Daling village in Guangzhou and Nanshe village in Dongguan. The remaining two villages received less than half of the “satisfied” evaluations (Figure 13).

4. Reflections on evaluation results

4.1. Establishment of evaluation mode for implementation and operation of conservation planning for historic villages

The different major participants in the implementation of conservation planning of historic villages have an important impact on the implementation effect, which includes the built environment and implementation benefits. The built environment of historic villages mainly includes ancient buildings, roadways, green landscapes and Basic sanitation facilities. From these four aspects, we can judge the coordination degree of the overall features of historic villages. Implementation benefits include economic benefits and social benefits. Economic benefit refers to the difference between the input renovation funds and output of the economic benefits. The output of the economic benefits includes tourism income, the price rises income of the surrounding house because of the cultural value of historic villages and the rent rises income of the surrounding factory buildings and so on, but this part of the income is difficult to determine. Social benefits include the improvement of residents’ awareness of protection, residents’ satisfaction and sense of belonging, etc. (Figure 14). Through the evaluation of

Figure 11. Respondents to the evaluation of roadway repair in historic villages.

Figure 12. Respondents to the evaluation of green landscape in historic villages.
planning implementation, the results and process of planning implementation can be considered comprehensively. It also can test and supervise effectively the implementation process and effect of established planning. On this basis, the feedback of relevant information can be formed. Suggestions for revision and adjustment can be put forward as the content and policy design of planning operation system, so that the operation process of urban planning can operate smoothly.

4.2. Reflections on evaluation results
From the conclusion of the implementation effect of the conservation planning for some historic villages in the Pearl River Delta under different major
participants, we can see that there are two kinds of inconsistencies in the overall features of the renovated historic villages. One is that the excessive renovation efforts of historic villages, especially the excessive commercial renovation in the historic villages which caused the historic villages loses its original style. The second is because of the lack of timely control and guidance in the historic village for a long time, which makes the old and new buildings intersect, and the overall features are not coordinated. Generally speaking, the government plays a leading role in the protection of historic villages in the Pearl River Delta, whether in policy formulation or in the investment of repairing funds. But from the perspective of protection effect, the major participants in the implementation of conservation planning of historic villages are the governments are not ideal. For example, the Pengcheng village in Shenzhen is not coordinated because of excessive commercial development. The main roadway outside the village operates general foreign tourism commodities. The traditional characteristics of the ancient village have not been excavated. However, the Pengcheng village in Shenzhen has better location conditions and is easy to attract a large amount of funds. When tourism developers are involved in the protection, on the one hand, the economic investment will increase, the places for maintenance will inevitably increase, the effect will be more obvious, and the people will easily perceive it; on the other hand, the benefits will become increasingly prominent, such as attracting widespread attention from the society, increasing tourists, driving up the price of surrounding real estate and rent of factory buildings, which is easier to get popular support. Therefore, the government should play a leading and controlling role in the protection of historic villages, actively expand the sources of repair funds, and actively introduce various social resources that can activate and utilize ancient villages, and revitalize the cultural value of ancient villages.

The major participant of conservation planning in Daling village in Guangzhou is also the government. Although there are many original villagers living in the village, they know little about the conservation planning and the large amount of protection funds invested by the government. The original villagers participate little in the protection activity. This is due to the lack of communication between the government and the villagers. Many villagers don’t know how to maintain the ancient buildings and how to transform or build new buildings in the village. They can’t get construction guidance when they spontaneously construct ancient buildings, which result in the uncoordinated features in the historic village. If the original villagers are educated to protect the historic village and renovate of ancient buildings from the beginning, the villages will not be destroyed constructively.

In addition, many historic villages are facing natural damage because of insufficient funds for renovation. Although the traditional features have not changed much, the ancient buildings have not been renovated for a long time and no one lives in the village, which will lead to the decline of historic villages. Therefore, the managers of famous villages, whether the government or the village committee, should put down their posture, take the initiative to negotiate and communicate with the villagers through various channels, and formulate relevant incentive policies to guide the villagers to participate actively in the protection of historic villages. The village committees play an important role in the protection of historic villages. Only when the village committee has certain economic strength can it better protect the village. However, in order to obtain sustained internal motivation, the protection of historic villages can not only invest funds but also produce economic benefits. In the protection of historic villages, the policy force, economic force and social force interact and penetrate each other. Correct protections policies can guide the historic villages to develop sustainable, but policies alone are far from enough. The protection and repair of historic villages need a lot of financial support. After all, government investment is limited, so we should actively absorb protection funds from different social channels. If the village committee with certain economic strength has the guidance of protection policy, it can better balance the relationship between protection and development. In addition, the government should take the initiative to exert the social supervision to ensure the healthy and orderly development of historic villages.

5. Conclusion

Conservation planning plays an important role in guiding and controlling the protection process of historic villages in the Pearl River Delta. Different participants have different understandings and implementation of conservation planning. This paper compares the effect of protection and evaluates the satisfaction of residents by choosing five types of historic villages which can represent the implementation and operation of conservation planning. It finds that if the government or village committees play a leading role in repairing ancient buildings with high value and cooperate with tourism developers in renting and managing the property of common ancient residential buildings, it can better protect and develop the historic village and the residents' satisfaction is also higher. It shows that the protection of historic villages in China is mainly through the implementation of conservation planning by the government or the village committee. Tourism developers can play an active role under the guidance and supervision of the government and the
village committee. The government should strengthen cooperation with tourism developers to give full play to the advantages of property management and solve the problem of insufficient funds for the repair of historic villages. At the same time the government will also be alert to the destruction of historic villages caused by excessive tourism development. Villagers should also take an active part in the protection of historic villages so that the conservation planning can be well implemented. It is hoped that the discussion in this paper can provide a reference for choosing appropriate implementation mode of conservation planning for historic villages in China and even in the world.

Disclosure statement
No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

Funding
This research was financially supported by the Natural Science Foundation of Guangdong Province (Grant No. 2016A030313132) and the Guangdong Provincial Philosophy and Social Science Fund (Grant No. 15CYS04).

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