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Infrastructuralizing Heritage: Regenerating Historical Quarters in Qingdao, China

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Abstract

This research examines the socio-material process of infrastructuralizing heritage buildings called *Liyuan* in the context of regenerating historical quarters in Qingdao, China. Based on qualitative methods including in-depth interviews, on-site observation, and discourse analysis, it contends that the heritage buildings and other material entities have been utilized purposefully by the government and other actors as infrastructures, while they also show material agencies and serve as infrastructures themselves during the implementation of regeneration projects. This infrastructuralizing process unfolds through selective material practices, including the utilization of dilapidated material state to facilitate displacement of homeowners and tenants as well as the renovation and authentication of buildings that emphasizes certain “valuable elements”. The material process goes along with the immaterial discursive framing, including the construction of historical genuineness and future developmental vision, in which the *Liyuan* building also plays a vital role. Consequently, this process, bolstered by the active involvement of the state, reinforced existing power disparities within an entrepreneurial and authoritarian urban regime. By employing the concept of infrastructuralizing to analyze the socio-material process of urban redevelopment, this research contributes to the literature on urban redevelopment and gentrification by responding to its relative oversight of material agencies and socio-material process.

Keywords: infrastructuralizing, urban infrastructure, authentication, heritage preservation, culture-led urban regeneration

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Chapter 1 Introduction

Along with the slowing down of rapid urbanization process and the “great urban transformation” (Hsing, 2010) in recent years, urban redevelopment in China has witnessed a gradual shift of emphasis from large-scale displacement, demolition, and reconstruction to the so-called “incremental regeneration” that preserves the existing buildings and may not lead to massive displacement (Wang et al., 2022b; Wu et al., 2022), partly due to the stricter policy regulation and depletion of urban land resources. The culture-led regeneration of urban historical quarters is popular in Chinese cities nowadays, in which urban governments utilize cultural resources like historical heritage not only to facilitate new opportunities for economic growth, but also to respond to the rising attention to urban culture and heritage preservation from the central government (Wu et al., 2022). However, different from usually leading role of culture in gentrification process within western contexts (Ley, 1997, 2003; Zukin, 1987), the omnipotent role of the state in China’s urban development determines that the “culture” of urban regeneration is more subject to the state’s domination (Tomba, 2014, 2017), which shows the potential of improving current theories of culture-led regeneration in a different context.

While there has been considerable attention given to the discursive and social aspects of this culture-led urban transformation, such as the creative class (Peck, 2005), discursive construction (Tan & Altroch, 2016), and city branding (Evans, 2003), there is a need to further investigate the material dimensions and their implications which is much less covered by research on culture-led regeneration, urban redevelopment, and gentrification (Quastel, 2009).

This research aims to address this gap by drawing on the literature of infrastructure and examining the socio-material process of infrastructuralizing heritage *Liyuan* buildings and other material elements, within the broader context of regenerating historical quarters in Qingdao, China. The regeneration projects started with displacing local social groups in historical quarters after expropriating their houses, and these heritage houses have been purposefully renovated to accommodate private companies and individuals investing in upscale cultural and leisure industries. The long-term goal of the regeneration is to create cultural leisure quarters to attract visitors, promote consumption and revitalize local economy. In various stages of this process, the *Liyuan* buildings are actively utilized by the state and play a vital role in displacement, authentication and commercial development, revealing the agency of the seemingly ordinary material objects in urban redevelopment.

Based on the case of regeneration projects of historical quarters and the vernacular architectural heritage of *Liyuan* in Qingdao, China, this research tries to answer: how can architectural heritage be utilized and play as infrastructures both materially and immaterially to facilitate the process of displacement, authentication, and gentrification? Several specific questions can be asked to unravel this research question: How is discourse produced around historical buildings to immaterially facilitate authentication? How do the state and other actors

materially infrastructuralize historical buildings for displacement and authentication? What political implication does the state's involvement in infrastructuralizing and authentication have in the gentrification process?

In regeneration projects of Qingdao, the process of infrastructuralizing refers to the transformation of heritage buildings into infrastructures that facilitate displacement, authentication, and gentrification in regeneration projects. This research will first delve into the immaterial infrastructuralizing of discursive construction surrounding these buildings in policy documents and media coverage, which plays a significant role in authentication and informing preservation efforts. Subsequently, the material infrastructuralizing for the purpose of displacement and authentication, such as the selective renovation and demolition practices, will be investigated. The involvement of the state is also crucial in the process of infrastructuralizing, in which the state assumes a dominant role, reinforcing power asymmetries within the entrepreneurial and authoritarian urban regime. By examining the state's active participation and the dynamics of power relations, this research sheds light on the political implications of state-led regeneration initiatives.

The primary objective of this research is to contribute to the existing body of knowledge on the socio-material dynamics of urban regeneration within and beyond the context of China and the global South. By analyzing the infrastructuralizing process of heritage buildings in Qingdao, this study offers insights into the complexities of displacement, authentication, and gentrification within the context of regenerating historical quarters. The findings that *Liyuan* buildings can be utilized and play as infrastructural role in urban regeneration projects will contribute to a deeper understanding of the multifaceted roles played by heritage buildings in shaping socio-material urban landscapes and the power dynamics in state-led regeneration projects. This research might also contribute to urban planning, policymaking, and research efforts focused on heritage preservation, culture-led urban regeneration, and the broader political process of urban (re)development in China.

The organization of this thesis is as follows. Chapter 2 provides a theoretical framework, offering a background on urban (re)development and heritage conservation in China. It also explores the shift from authenticity to authentication as a social process, examines the concepts of infrastructure and infrastructuring, and introduces the analytical concepts that inform this research. Chapter 3 outlines the methodology employed, discussing the research methods used, providing background information on the case study of regeneration projects in Qingdao, and reflecting on research ethics. Chapter 4, 5 and 6 present the results of the research, highlighting the immaterial and material infrastructuralizing processes, as well as the state's involvement and its power implications. Finally, Chapter 7 offers a comprehensive conclusion and theoretical discussion in three directions, reflecting on the process of infrastructuralizing and authentication, the role of material elements, and the political implications of the state's involvement in gentrification processes.

Chapter 2 Theory and Concepts: Urban Regeneration, Authentication and Infrastructuralizing

This chapter introduces the literature, theories, and concepts used by this thesis to analyze empirical data. It is divided into four sections: the first section introduces the literature about urban redevelopment, regeneration, and heritage conservation in China as the background of the case in Qingdao. The second section introduces the concepts of authenticity as a social construction and authentication as a social process. The third section introduces the concepts of infrastructure and infrastructuralizing, which are the core concepts used in this thesis. Finally, the implication of the analytical concepts of this thesis and the reasons to choose them are explained.

2.1 Background: Urban (re)development and urban heritage conservation in China

Over the past two decades, Chinese cities have witnessed a rapid surge of urban (re)development (Hsing, 2010), accompanied by the rising attention to urban heritage conservation (Xie et al., 2020). As Chinese cities face the depletion of available land for development as a result of urban sprawl and rapid urbanization, attention has turned to the inner city for new opportunities for growth and economic advancement. Consequently, the question of how to navigate the intricate relationship between urban (re)development and urban heritage conservation has gained considerable significance. In earlier urban governance practices, historical inner-city quarters with heritage values were often subject to large-scale demolition. However, with the increasing recognition of cultural value as a catalyst for consumption and economic prospects, many cities have begun to emphasize the cultural and historical significance of specific redevelopment projects, urban quarters, and even entire cities (Oakes, 2019). The approach to redevelopment has also shifted from the fierce demolishment and displacement to a relatively moderate form of “regeneration”, “revitalization” or “rehabilitation” that claims to be an integrated approach concerning its social impacts and other urban problems (Roberts, 2017).

After its emergence in UK and western cities (Miles & Paddison, 2005; Vickery, 2007), culture-led regeneration has also been prevalent in China, which can be seen as a combination of both shifts mentioned above. In the context of development-oriented urban regime and inter-city competition for economic growth within China (H. Li & Zhou, 2005; Su & Tao, 2017) and on a globalized stage (Yeoh, 2005), local governments employ and commodify cultural resources like historical heritage or ethnic customs to legitimize and facilitate regeneration projects (Oakes, 2019; Pendlebury & Porfyriou, 2017), which are characterized by initiation or

strong intervention from the state, appropriation of cultural symbols for commercial uses, and limited participation of local communities in decision-making and profit redistribution (González Martínez, 2016; Shin, 2010; Wu et al., 2022), etc. These practices initially emerged from some pilot projects in “first-tier cities”¹, such as Xintiandi in Shanghai (He & Wu, 2005; Ren, 2008), Nanluoguxiang (Shin, 2010) and Guozijian (González Martínez, 2016) in Beijing, and Yongqing Fang/Enning Road in Guangzhou (Tan & Altrock, 2016; Wang et al., 2022a; Wu et al., 2022). Especially after President Xi Jinping’s visit to Yongqing Fang and his speech about urban culture preservation in 2018², the concept of “incremental regeneration”, which preserves the existing buildings and incrementally expropriate and renovate residents’ housing, has gained recognition, become a policy promoted by the central government, and learned by many local states (Wu et al., 2022).

Due to their displacement of disadvantaged residents and attraction of investors and visitors from higher classes, plenty of these regeneration projects can be arguably regarded as a form of state-led gentrification. In former analysis of gentrification within western contexts, cultural factors such as the taste of middle-class gentrifiers and the preservation of historical buildings formed an important stream of explanations (Ley, 1997, 2003; Zukin, 1987). However, these factors are seen by some scholars as less relevant or subordinate to the dominant role of the state in China’s gentrification and urban redevelopment, which is exemplified by specific local processes such as the status, taste, value, and cultural practices of the middle class as a result of the state’s social engineering project (Tomba, 2014, 2017). Consequently, the “culture” of urban regeneration and gentrification in China is not an independent aspect but subject to the state’s domination. Yet the structural central role of the state in an authoritarian context doesn’t preclude the agency of other actors, whose interactions with the state also affect and formulate the power dynamics and conduct of the state (Zhao, 2022). For example, the discourse concerning cultural conservation is frequently utilized by other actors to counteract state-led discourse framing and agenda-setting in regeneration projects (Chen et al., 2020; Smith, 2020; Tan & Altrock, 2016). This process of interaction and negotiation concerning cultural aspects of urban redevelopment is also evident in urban heritage preservation and tourism, particularly through the lens of (socially constructed) authenticity and authentication.

2.2 From authenticity to authentication as a social process

The cultural value of heritage preservation and urban regeneration projects are usually

¹ The “tier” system is a hierarchical classification of Chinese cities based on various economic indicators, created by a Chinese business magazine and widely accepted within the country. “First-tier cities” refer to the four most developed cities in China, including Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, and Shenzhen. For a detailed introduction and analysis of the tier system, see Jin & Zhao (2020).

² Lei Liu, Aihua Luo, Linping He, Shaogang Lv, Gang Li, & Xiaodan Jiang. (2018, Oct 29). Push the Reform and Opening-up Deeper and Deeper with Firm Confidence and Strong Measures—General Secretary Xi Jinping’s important speech on his visit to Guangdong triggers heated reactions. *People’s Daily*.

summarized, evaluated, and advertised through the concept of authenticity, which has also been long discussed in other disciplines. In the field of heritage preservation, the definition of authenticity has shifted from an objective, single criterion of material originality to an increasingly subjective and pluralist layering of values and meanings (Xie et al., 2020; Zhu, 2015). The dynamic social process of the formation, interaction, and potential conflicts between various versions of authenticity (Zhu, 2015) has gained increasing attention in heritage studies.

Nevertheless, compared to this recent transition in heritage studies, it is within the realms of sociology and tourism research that the socially constructed essence of authenticity was first recognized, leading to the development of the notion of authentication. Authenticity has long been seen as constructed in the “back” region of the “stage” of Erving Goffman’s dramaturgical analysis, where individuals perform their social roles in interaction (MacCannell, 1973). This comprehension serves as the foundation for the development of the concept of authentication (Ateljevic & Doorne, 2005; Cohen & Cohen, 2012; Xie, 2010) and has also been embraced by heritage studies (González Martínez, 2019; Zhu, 2015).

According to the definition by Cohen & Cohen (2012), authentication is the performative process in which something is confirmed as original, genuine or other similar expressions of authenticity. They also distinguish “cool” authentication as the single, explicit, formal act done by some identifiable agents and “hot” authentication as the reiterative, implicit, informal act done by anonymous agents, usually visitors themselves.

The issue of power is usually at stake in the discussion around authentication (Cohen & Cohen, 2012; Xie, 2010). In China and many other countries in and beyond the Global South, the state usually controls and even monopolizes the power of defining what is (in)authentic from a usually elitist perspective and facilitates entrepreneurial heritage conservation projects (González Martínez, 2016, 2019), in which market forces are only employed as instruments in state-led projects (Wu, 2018). Authenticity has been frequently claimed by the state in city branding and constructed by renovated blocks and renewed discourse to attract tourists and consumers, while other stakeholders may hold different visions of authenticity, negotiating or suppressed by official definitions (Chen et al., 2020; Zhu, 2015). This dynamic process of authentication and meaning-making is parallel with the mutual counteraction between the central role of the state and the agency of other actors in China’s urban (re)development and urban politics, as discussed in the previous section. However, the process of authentication and operation of power in urban regeneration as well as resultant gentrification is not confined to the discursive or social realms, but also unfolds in material senses that can be elucidated by the concept of infrastructure and infrastructuralizing.

2.3 From infrastructure to infrastructuralizing

While existing literature has analyzed various aspects of urban regeneration and gentrification including political-economic mechanisms, power and social dynamics between

stakeholders, and cultural implications (Ley, 1997, 2003; Zukin, 1987), the materiality of the “things” to be conserved, gentrified, or redeveloped as well as their agency and impacts on gentrification are less covered, except for some discussion of the materiality of nature and ecology (Bryson, 2013; Quastel, 2009). Gentrification always takes the form of renovating, demolishing, and replacing former buildings, infrastructures, and landscapes with newer ones. This material transformation, combined with other social structural transitions, forms new assemblages of diverse social and material elements (Bennett, 2010) based on which the gentrification process is configured and finalized.

The omission of specific roles and agencies attributed to material entities in the gentrification literature (Quastel, 2009) can be complemented by the growing attention towards infrastructure within urban studies. Ontologically, infrastructures assume a dualistic nature, serving as both physical entities and the relational connections between them, functioning as foundational systems that support other entities (Larkin, 2013, p. 329), while in practical terms, infrastructures also acquire political and aesthetic significance that extends beyond their purely functional roles as supportive systems (Larkin, 2013). They possess the capacity to generate and exert political influences on the everyday experiences of citizens, while also being conditioned by lived experiences and perception. As a result, infrastructures are “lived as contingent, power-laden, processes” in the fabrics of urban life and they occur rather than simply exist (Graham & McFarlane, 2015). Adopting such relational thinking, the material “objects” implicated in gentrification—namely the urban built environment, encompassing basic infrastructures, buildings, and landscapes—assume the role of urban “things” with distinctive agencies and affordances (Lieto, 2017).

While the majority infrastructural research predominantly focuses on the technical aspect of conventional material elements like roads, water system, waste management, electricity, and logistics, it is important to recognize that less conventional or immaterial elements can also be included within this framework due to their metaphorical implications as fundamental constituents of interconnected underlying systems (Larkin, 2013). These elements include, among others, the interaction between individuals (Simone, 2004) and the exercise of state power (Chu, 2014). This more comprehensive interpretation of what qualifies as infrastructures aligns with the expanding conceptualization of the term “infrastructure” itself. As summarized by Wiig et al. (2023), infrastructure can be understood as a metaphorical concept, a collective noun encompassing the underlying parts of different projects, and a verb denoting the process of creation, maintenance and utilization of infrastructure (Wiig & Silver, 2019, as cited in Wiig et al., 2023, pp. 7–8). Therefore, the notion of infrastructure can be regarded as both a noun and a verb (Wiig et al., 2023), as both an entity and a dynamic process or “thing-in-motion” (Gupta, 2018, p. 62, as cited in Iossifova et al., 2022), which can be encapsulated by the concept of infrastructuring (Iossifova et al., 2022; Wiig et al., 2023). A similar concept is “infrastructuralizing” or “infrastructuralization” (Chu, 2014; Wang, 2020), which involves the incorporation and categorization (Larkin, 2013) of some atypical and ordinary elements into the infrastructural system. As Larkin (2013, p. 330) points out, talking about infrastructure is a

“categorical act” that determines what aspects are considered and what is disregarded in the “heterogeneous networks” of infrastructure, and it is worthy to analyze the “epistemological and political commitments” in this categorizing process.

Within the process of infrastructuring and/or infrastructuralizing, different infrastructures may bear various material or immaterial characteristics, interacting with and shaping each other. For instance, Wang (2020) looks into the conflictual infrastructuring of architectural heritage and roads due to their obdurate materialities in the context of heritage preservation. This embedded perspective of infrastructuralizing may enable us to analyze the complicated and power-laden interaction between social and material objects in urban settings and identify possible potentialities to contest urban inequality (McFarlane, 2011).

2.4 Analytical concepts

Several terms mentioned in the literature review above serve as the analytical concepts in this thesis. The term of infrastructuralizing, instead of similar terms of infrastructuring or “use something as infrastructure”, was adopted as the core concept to summarize two processes simultaneously: firstly, the active employment of material elements and condition as infrastructures to fulfil certain objectives by the government or other actors (which is meant by “use something as infrastructure”) and secondly, the spontaneous, unexpected effects of material elements and condition themselves on regeneration process that are not the result of deliberate act of human actors but the material agency of urban “things” (Lieto, 2017).

Compared with the verbalized term of infrastructuring that encompasses a broader range of dynamic processes concerning infrastructures, infrastructuralizing, a transitive verb that carries a causative undertone, more specifically denote the process of making or categorizing (Larkin, 2013) something as infrastructures. While the making or categorizing of infrastructure is not the only infrastructural dynamic at work in regeneration project and it is hard to clearly distinguish between different infrastructural processes, this thesis seeks to highlight how heritage buildings, which are not conventionally perceived as infrastructures, undergo a transformation into infrastructures through the efforts of the government and within certain socio-material contexts. Therefore, the term infrastructuralizing predominates throughout this thesis. In addition, although the nominalized form of infrastructuralization is also used in literature (Chu, 2014; Wang, 2020), this thesis prefers the gerund form of infrastructuralizing to emphasize its dynamic nature.

Another core concept, authentication, describes the process in which the authenticity of the renovated *Liyuan* buildings and regenerated historical quarters were produced and made convincing by the government and other actors. Compared with similar concepts like genuineness, originality, and historicity, authenticity is adopted for its multiple meanings: it has double dimensions of subjective experiential authenticity and objective authenticity of historical genuineness in the context of regenerating historical buildings and quarters. Selwyn (1996, as cited in Cohen & Cohen, 2012) summarizes “cool” authenticity that is a “scientific”,

“etic” or object version as well as “hot” authenticity that is a “social”, “emic” or subject version, based on which the distinction between “hot” and “cool” authentication is developed (Cohen & Cohen, 2012). In the field of heritage preservation, authenticity still retains its objective dimension for there are always external standards to judge the historicity of heritage, especially for tangible heritage like architecture. Due to the specific time range and social groups covered by this thesis, the “cool” versions of authenticity and authentication—the historical genuineness of regeneration and the official efforts to construct it—will be the main subject of analysis.

Finally, a few words on the terms that describe various factual processes involved in this thesis. To ensure clarity, this thesis uses the term regeneration to describe the general redevelopment program of the historical quarters in Qingdao, as this term is frequently used in a “culture-led” context (Miles, 2005) and doesn’t involve the material demolition of existing constructions, although several similar terms have been adopted in urban studies to describe the material, economic and social “redevelopment” of older urban areas, including regeneration (Roberts et al., 2017; Wu et al., 2022), revitalization (Xie & Heath, 2017), renewal, redevelopment, renovation, rehabilitation (Steinberg, 1996; Wang et al., 2022a), etc. The term renovation is used when mentioning the material improvement of historical buildings, including appearance embellishment and facility upgrading.

Chapter 3 Methodology

3.1 Research methods and data collection

This thesis adopts a qualitative research approach, encompassing two distinct components: an investigation of the socio-material process during regeneration through field research, and a critical discourse analysis of policy documents and media coverage.

The field research methods comprise interviews in both in-depth and casual forms, participatory observation, and collection of archival and other supplementary materials. It is adopted to explore the dynamics of socio-material dimension of the infrastructuralizing process to answer how architectural heritage is utilized and play as infrastructures materially in displacement, authentication, and gentrification process. Specifically, it aims to answer the second and third sub-research questions mentioned in Chapter 1: How do the state and other actors materially infrastructuralize historical buildings? What political implication does the state's involvement have in the gentrification process?

Specific efforts were made to enrich the data collection process and render the fieldwork akin to ethnographic techniques. Ethnographic methods are deemed appropriate given the subject matter and the complexity of the data at hand, which may not be fully accessible through quantitative methodologies or mere linguistic analysis (Watson & Till, 2010). The infrastructuralizing process is a complex and intricate process that surpasses the scope of quantitative approaches, while the material dimension of the process requires on-site observation beyond mere language. Those efforts entailed dedicating substantial periods (four weeks) to the field site during two rounds of fieldwork in 2022 and employing comprehensive methods beyond mere interviews.

The first round of fieldwork lasted nearly two weeks during January and February 2022, in which a few experts participating in regeneration projects were contacted through personal relationship and interviewed to get an overview of the renovation progress. I also familiarized myself with the major regeneration site—the *Dabaodao* neighborhood—and several other renovation projects in Qingdao through on-site observation and interviewed a few local shopkeepers in *Dabaodao* in an in-depth (semi-structured and recorded, usually longer than ten minutes) or casual (unstructured and not recorded, similar to casual conversation, and shorter than ten minutes) manner. These shopkeepers were contacted during on-site observation and personal interaction on the streets within the regenerated quarters.

The major period for data collection was during the second round of fieldwork, which lasted two weeks in August 2022. Nearly twenty respondents from local shopkeepers and new investors were found and contacted through direct visit to their shops and were interviewed in an in-depth manner in their shop space immediately or at a scheduled time later. This method of recruiting respondents can be seen as convenience sampling, which has inherent bias as a

sampling method, such as the possible selectivity of easy-going or extrovert people and the respondents feeling positive about regeneration. In addition, due to previous displacement efforts, there were very few residents remaining in *Dabaodao* and other neighborhoods to be renovated who could provide direct testimony about their experience with displacement. Those that remain have become increasingly vigilant, making contact difficult, if not impossible; similarly, some shopkeepers have also moved out without access points for interviews. This situation presents a challenge for the representativeness of the respondents and the quality of collected data, since displaced residents had richest experiences of the displacement process as the major witnesses and most influenced group. However, during the period of data collection, the information about displacement can only be accessed indirectly through remaining shopkeepers.

In the second round of fieldwork, I also contacted a government official and was admitted to work as an intern in a government department participating in renovation projects for 1.5 weeks, which allows participatory observation of the internal mechanisms of the government and the collection of internal policy document. A government official was interviewed during the internship, and two members of construction teams were contacted through government officials and interviewed. The combination of data from the regenerated quarters and the government offices provides both external and internal perspective of the state's act of regeneration and infrastructuralizing.

The table below (Table 1) provides an overview of the formal interviews conducted during fieldwork. The duration of these interviews ranges from 10 to 90 minutes. All formal interviews were recorded and transcribed into texts in Chinese, then imported to a qualitative data analysis software, ATLAS.ti, for coding and analysis.

Given the diverse groups of respondents and various topics covered in interviews, the coding process adopted respondent-specific codes instead of a unified code tree for all interviews. The coding process used more descriptive codes than analytical codes (Cope, 2021). Most codes were extracted from transcripts and slightly abstracted to summarize the meaning conveyed by respondents. Respondents were classified into different categories as shown in Table 1, and the codes from the interviews of respondents of the same category were pooled together for comparative analysis. This entailed a process of code merging and summarization, whereby similar codes originating from interviews with respondents of the same category were unified to identify overarching themes. However, codes from different respondent categories were not merged, for respondents belonging to distinct social backgrounds may utilize the same terminology but within different contexts, imbuing the terms with unique meanings. Consequently, the preservation of separate codes for different respondent categories allowed for the preservation of contextual nuances in data analysis.

Table 1: Overview of formal interviews

Category	Pseudonym	Respondent description	Date
Experts participating in renovation projects	Wei	Associate professor at the planning department of a university in Qingdao	Jan 26, 2022
	Lei	Chief architect at a local architecture design office	Feb 11, 2022
	Weijie	Staff member at the municipal archive	Feb 13, 2022
Local shopkeepers in unrenovated buildings	Fengwei	Shopkeeper of a dumpling restaurant	Jan 24, 2022
	Hua	Shopkeeper of a seafood store, with a passerby resident participating	Aug 11, 2022
	Yanhua	Shopkeeper of another seafood store	Aug 11, 2022
	Taojun	Shopkeeper of a restaurant	Aug 15, 2022
	Jianguo	Shopkeeper of a food store, also a resident in the neighborhood	Aug 15, 2022
	Yue & Haochen	A couple that used to be greengrocers	Aug 17, 2022
	Xinyang	Shopkeeper of a hardware store	Aug 20, 2022
	Yanyan	Shopkeeper of a tea store	Aug 20, 2022
Investors and participants of new businesses after renovation	Xue	Shopkeeper of a restaurant	Aug 23, 2022
	Qian	Staff member of a pop-up toy crafting store	Aug 9, 2022
	Yujie	Investor of a vintage store	Aug 9, 2022
	Jingyi	Investor of a clothing store	Aug 10, 2022
	Ningning	Investor of another clothing store	Aug 10, 2022
	Bo	Manager of a bubble tea café	Aug 22, 2022
	Long	Staff member of a wine store	Aug 22, 2022
	Yifan	Staff member of an animation toy store	Aug 22, 2022
	Kaifeng	Manager of a restaurant with bar	Aug 23, 2022
Government official	Haoran	Staff member of a toy and souvenir store	Aug 23, 2022
		Staff member of a clothing store with café	Aug 23, 2022
Construction team members		A government official of the municipal department of housing and urban-rural development	Aug 19, 2022
	Boxun	Member of a construction team in charge of some projects in Shibei District	Aug 22, 2022
	Jie	Member of a construction team in charge of some projects in Shinan District	Aug 23, 2022

The second component of research methods is the critical discourse analysis of media articles and policy documents related to renovation projects (see Appendix 1 and 2). It was adopted to examine the immaterial or discursive dimension of the infrastructuralizing process and answer the first sub-research question of how was discourse produced around historical buildings to immaterially facilitate authentication. Critical discourse analysis sees discourse as the core mechanism of producing social reality, and it aims to understand the role of discourse in (re)producing social inequality (Weninger, 2008). In specific, the discourse analysis in this thesis followed a Foucauldian pattern or “Foucauldian discourse analysis” that particularly emphasizes the power-knowledge nexus and why specific discourse is taken for granted as

knowledge or truths (Cheek, 2008; Waite, 2021).

The media articles from several local newspapers and online media since 2019 were widely collected based on key word searching on general search engine like Google and newspaper database in CNKI. The keywords included “urban regeneration”, “historical quarters”, “Dabaodao”, “Liyuan”, etc. The policy documents being analyzed included those posted online, posted at the renovation or housing expropriation sites, and collected during internship within the government. These materials were also imported to ATLAS.ti for coding and analysis. Since these texts may cover diverse topics beyond the regeneration project and infrastructuralizing process, only those paragraphs related to the topics explored in this thesis were selected for analysis. To adhere to Foucauldian discourse analysis, which involves uncovering power relations within specific contexts underlying the apparent meaning of texts, coding of news articles and policy documents followed a similar approach to that of interview transcripts: descriptive codes specific to articles were employed instead of a unified code tree, and relevant codes from articles addressing similar topics were merged.

3.2 Background information of the case

The case that this paper focuses on is the current regeneration of historical quarters at the inner city of Qingdao since 2019, especially the *Dabaodao* neighborhood. The historical, social, and political economic contexts of the renovated quarters set the backdrop of and have specific influence on the trajectory of the regeneration projects.

Qingdao is a prefecture-level city in Shandong Province of eastern China (see Figure 1). Despite the history of only one century and three decades, the city has a special colonial trajectory, including four times of regime transition, which shapes the architecture and urban fabrics of its historical quarters in inner city. Germany colonized Qingdao from 1897 to 1914, when the city was established and named “Tsingtao”, regarded as Germany’s fortress in East Asia and planned as a “model colony”. Japan colonized Qingdao from 1914 to 1922 and from 1938 to 1945, when urban planning and construction was continued. The colonial history brought special urban fabric and architecture styles as a mixture of Chinese and foreign traditions, marking the characteristics of Qingdao’s historical quarters and serving as cultural resources in urban branding.

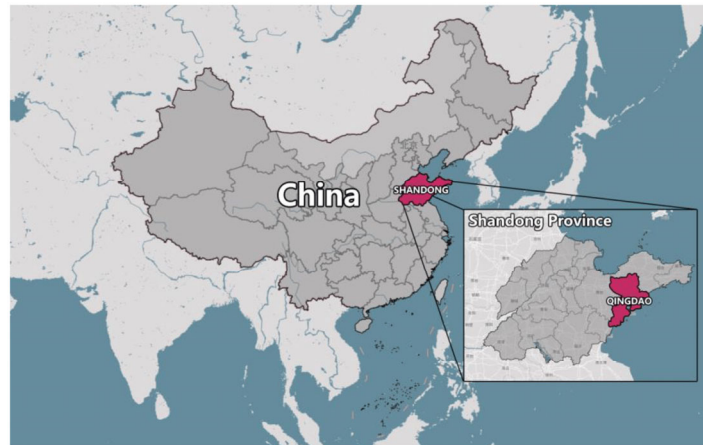


Figure 1: The location of Qingdao in Shandong Province and China. Source: Cong et al. (2022)

According to the current municipal urban preservation plan³, there are fifteen historical quarters in Qingdao, mostly located in Shinan District and Shibe District and built during the colonial and Republican periods before 1949. The current social condition of historical quarters has been more influenced by trends of recent urban development and regeneration efforts. The historical quarters used to be the urban core, but as the city expanded and the urban core moved eastward since the 1990s, they gradually declined, facing problems like population and business decline. Most residents were living in poor condition. The municipal and district government have planned to redevelop some quarters since the early 2010s but failed in previous attempts due to the conflicting views from local government, residents, heritage conservationists, and other actors. Demgenski (2015) analyzes this process based on his fieldwork in Qingdao, highlighting the paradox that a quest for more “humane” urban (re)development ended up in stagnation and dilemma.

However, since 2019, more detailed plans of redevelopment have been brought up and implemented in some historical quarters, especially the *Dabaodao* (大鲍岛, “large abalone island”) neighborhood. This thesis chooses *Dabaodao* as the main case for analysis for two reasons. First, *Dabaodao* is one of the quarters with most historical values, served as the Chinatown during the colonial period and commercial center during republican times, and is characterized by the well-preserved vernacular architecture called *Liyuan* (里院, “neighborhood courtyard”). A *Liyuan* building consists of a large courtyard in the middle and the two-to-four-story building surrounding it. It is alleged to be invented by a German entrepreneur in the colonial period and reformed by Chinese entrepreneurs in following incremental constructions during the republican period, combining the style of traditional *Siheyuan* architecture in northern China and western architecture, though its actual developmental trajectory is more complicated (Demgenski, 2015). The historical significance of *Dabaodao* also makes it one of the core projects within the state’s regeneration efforts. After

³ Qingdao Municipal Bureau of Housing and Urban-rural Development. (2022, May 27). *Announcement on the Public Consultation on the Regulations on the Preservation and Utilization of Historical Buildings and Traditional Style Buildings in Qingdao (Exposure Draft)*. http://sjw.qingdao.gov.cn/cxjsj1/cxjsj35/202205/t20220527_6079320.shtml

the buildings were evacuated, construction teams entered the neighborhood and buildings to implement renovation of *Liyuan*. The government would then attract investors to start culture- and leisure-related business in the renovated buildings and hold various activities to attract visitors and make *Dabaodao* as a “culture and leisure quarter”.

Second, in all historical quarters, *Dabaodao* stands out as one of the few neighborhoods where a significant number of residents still reside prior to the regeneration efforts. This situation amplifies the potential conflicts of interest between the residents and the state, as well as underscores the existing power disparities. The initial phase of the *Dabaodao* regeneration project, which commenced in 2019, involved the displacement and relocation of these remaining residents. Virtually all homeowners in *Dabaodao* were requested to sign the expropriation contract and vacate the neighborhood, receiving either monetary compensation or alternative housing arrangements. Conversely, tenants were compelled to leave without any form of compensation. In the subsequent chapters, it will be argued that *Liyuan* buildings assume a pivotal role as alternative infrastructure throughout the various stages of renovation, place branding, and displacement.

3.3 Research ethics

When considering the ethical implications of this research, it is essential to reflect on the researcher's positionality, as social science research inherently lacks pure objectivity. The overarching stance of this study is characterized by a critical perspective on the actions and power dynamics of the state and capital, while simultaneously seeking to amplify the voices and advocate for the interests of marginalized communities and local social groups. However, this critique of the state and capital does not rest solely on superficial opposition. Rather, its primary objective is to scrutinize the underlying rationale behind state actions by employing an internal perspective and the concept of infrastructuralizing.

This thesis demonstrates adherence to some foundational ethical requirements, including the utilization of pseudonyms to ensure the anonymity of participants, as well as the appropriate and confidential handling of personal data, encompassing interview recordings, transcripts, and internal documents.

Nonetheless, the primary ethical challenge confronting this research pertains to the sensitive and potentially conflict-laden nature of issues surrounding regeneration projects, particularly those related to housing expropriation, compensation, and the displacement of homeowners and tenants. As previously discussed in the opening section of this chapter, remaining residents in the neighborhoods included in the regeneration plan approached these matters with vigilance and mistrust towards the local government due to prior disturbances caused by the government and other relevant actors during previous displacement attempts. Amidst the fieldwork period, endeavors were made to engage with these residents through door-to-door visits and interview requests. However, these efforts were met with refusals or non-responsiveness, resulting in minor disruptions that did not entail further harm.

In contrast, some tenants who were shopkeepers in these neighborhoods exhibited a somewhat lower level of vigilance. However, they still experienced disruptions to their businesses and daily lives as a result of the regeneration process, and these issues remained sensitive in nature. Adopting a formal approach, such as presenting paper consent forms and conveying the research purpose or data usage regulations in a ceremonious manner, could potentially lead to suspicion among the shopkeepers, causing them to decline interview requests or refrain from expressing negative opinions towards the government during interviews. Consequently, I opted for an informal approach to briefly introduce my research purpose prior to conducting interviews with the shopkeepers and other respondents. This approach involved utilizing simple language and employing more positive expressions rather than critical ones.

From an ethical standpoint, it is also important to consider the researcher's internship within the government department, given the sensitivity and significance of regeneration projects in this context. During the internship, I communicated the purpose of collecting materials for research before entering the office. Furthermore, I obtained verbal consent from the department leader that granted permission to access and gather internal documents from various offices within the department. All these documents were stored and handled confidentially.

Chapter 4 Immaterial infrastructuralizing: discursive practice for authentication

To answer the first specific research question of how discourse is produced to immaterially facilitate authentication, this chapter focuses on the discourse framing of regeneration projects, especially around heritage buildings, with the method of critical discourse analysis that mostly follows a Foucauldian pattern (Cheek, 2008; Waitt, 2021). In policy documents of the government and the coverage of government-affiliated media, several types of discourse around historical buildings and regeneration projects are used, which influence and become part of the public perception of regeneration projects. The heritage buildings are immaterially constructed and utilized as the “infrastructure” in discourse framing, functioning as the basis on which other discourse about preservation practices, historical imagination, and development vision can be anchored. Altogether, the discourse authenticates regeneration of historical quarters as successful projects with historical values and genuineness, cultural attractiveness, as well as economic vitality and profitability.

Nevertheless, the discourse of authentication also encompasses a concealment of information. The selective practices employed in renovation fail to achieve the degree of historical genuineness as purported by the discourse. Moreover, the discourse in media coverage highlights and prioritizes the interests of specific groups, such as middle-class consumers and tourists, over others. The voice of residents is sometimes featured, described as being taken into consideration and satisfied in order to legitimize the state-led regeneration. However, their collective living conditions and demands, significantly impacted by these projects, are often overlooked.

4.1 Discourse around *Liyuan* buildings: preservation, authenticity, and selectivity

This section looks into the discourse framing around *Liyuan* architecture as well as its preservation and authenticity. As the central subject of the regeneration projects, heritage *Liyuan* buildings play as the core in relevant media coverage because they represent the core cultural value and the main source of authenticity of regeneration. In official discourse, the authenticity of *Liyuan* buildings comes from its preserved historical material condition and the recent “preservative renovation” or “preservation and utilization” of its material elements that are carried out under the slogan of “repair the old as old”. However, the slogan represents a tricky concept with several different implications beyond its literal sense, and the scope of preservation and repair in practice is largely restricted to certain “valuable elements” as well as building techniques, which renders the claimed historical originality that underpins the

constructed authenticity questionable.

Many newspaper articles about the regeneration projects start with a brief introduction to the historical value of the *Dabaodao* neighborhood and *Liyuan* buildings, which date back to German colonialism and the republican period in the early 20th century. The description of historical values focuses on the uniqueness and scarcity of *Liyuan*'s mixed architectural style in China, which are represented by general structural layout and specific material element, as this quote from a media article shows:

*[...] the southern courtyard [...] is a highly distinctive L-shape Liyuan building, and the northern courtyard [...] is a traditional dual-square shape Liyuan building. The house was built in German occupation period with one to three stories and four stories in some parts. The building has mostly granite foundation, with walls plastered with mortar and sloped roof. Part of the cornice of the building has multiple layers with decorated parapet. The overall style of the building is simple and practical.*⁴

By depicting in detail the materials, structures, and historical period of this building in an objective tone that provides a lot of facts and is hard to refute, this quote proves the specific “value” of this building that lies in its unique or typical structures and materials, which legitimizes the efforts made for preservation and renovation. However, this seemingly objective description of the past usually omits the regeneration practices characterized by selectivity, which exists in both immaterial and material infrastructuralizing of heritage.

One aspect of selectivity in regeneration—the selective preservation, renovation and demolition of different historical buildings—is realized through immaterial categorization of different historical buildings into a hierarchy of preservation. Within the current heritage preservation system in China, *Liyuan* and other historical buildings are categorized into heritage at different levels based on their construction time and historical values (e.g. uniqueness or representativeness), including “historical and cultural protection sites” (*Wenwu Baohu Danwei*, 文物保护单位), “normal immovable cultural relics” (*Yiban Buke Yidong Wenwu*, 一般不可移动文物), “historical buildings” (*Lishi Jianzhu*, 历史建筑), as well as “traditional style buildings” (*Chuantong Fengmao Jianzhu*, 传统风貌建筑) from top to bottom. Most *Liyuan* buildings are categorized as “historical buildings” or “traditional style buildings” at lower levels of preservation hierarchy, and some buildings haven't been categorized into this system, which means that they are not officially recognized as heritage.

As shown in Figure 3, *Dabaodao* before renovation is a mixture of buildings from various eras. Besides original *Liyuan* buildings, some buildings were added during the Maoist times, and older buildings on some blocks have been demolished and replaced with high-rising modern buildings during the reform period since 1978. In addition, during Maoist and reform

⁴ Liping Wang. (2021, October 13). *Qingdao's largest courtyard complex began renovation, Weixian Road No. 19 will be transformed into a trendy hitting hot spot*. Bando News. <http://news.bandao.cn/a/556382.html>, accessed on Dec 7, 2021.

periods, many residents spontaneously built informal rough shanties and cabins in the courtyard as additional storage and living space without permit. However, only those *Liyuan* buildings built before 1949 were recognized as architecture heritage, while all self-built cabins and certain formal structures erected after 1949 were demolished in renovation projects, despite their long-standing existence within the historical quarters and potential historical significance. For instance, several buildings have been demolished to make way for public square, such as a building constructed after 1949 and demolished in 2022 for the restoration of former “water tap square” (see Figure 2), which significantly altered the neighborhood fabric.

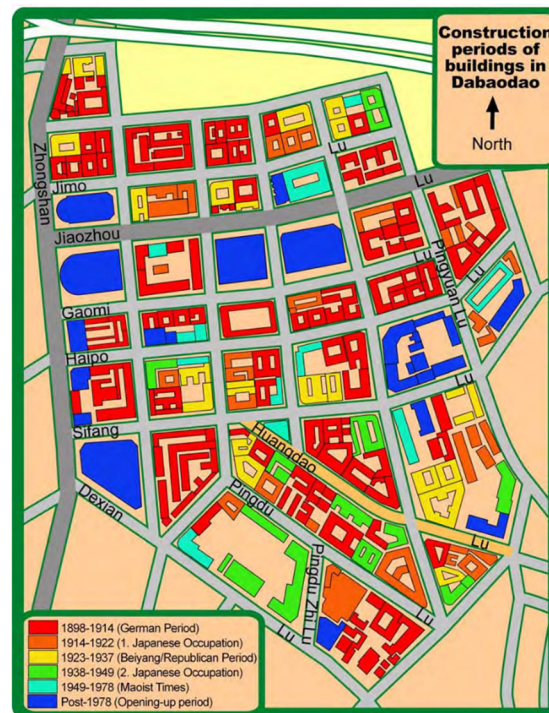


Figure 3: The construction periods of buildings in *Dabaodao*. Source: Demgenski (2015)



Figure 2: the building demolished in 2022 (left) and the new “water tap square” opened at the same location in 2023 (right). Source: shot by Wang Shuai (left);

<http://news.bandao.cn/a/1705035.html> (right).

However, this operation of preservation hierarchy and selectivity was omitted in media coverage and not widely known to the public. For example, media articles about the new “water tap square” spent most of their paragraphs on the prosperous folk history of the old public water tap, the new sculpture on the square, and its current attractiveness for tourists, with little or no

mention of the fact that the square was built on the ruins of a former building.⁵ The media discourse selectively presented the regeneration process to avoid possible conflicts with the narrative of authenticity claimed in the general discourse of the media and government.

Besides the selection of demolition or preservation of specific old buildings as heritage, selectivity is also evident within the hierarchical preservation system, in which heritage at lower levels has more flexibility regarding preservation standards, intervention, and integrating modern functions. The municipal urban preservation plan regulates that “the repair of buildings at lower level has less restrictions on the material, appearance and techniques, and necessary facilities like heating, kitchen and toilet can be added without changing the structure and façade”.⁶ A newer regulation stipulates the principle of “classified preservation”: the first- and second-class preservation requires the protection of main structure, layout plan, building appearance, etc., while the third-class preservation only regulates the protection of “valuable elements”.⁷ According to Lei, an expert in a local architecture design office, there is a grading process to classify the buildings based on their current condition and soundness as well as their artistic, historical, humanistic and practical values. First-class preservation requires less intervention in the preserved buildings that might serve as the reserve for higher-level heritage, while third-class preservation only requires the preservation of valuable elements such as a single wall and allows more intervention in other parts of the building (Interview with Lei, Feb 11, 2022). Therefore, the selective discourse in policy documents prescribing preservation classification and standards has allowed for more flexibility for intervention in buildings at lower preservation levels to “utilize” them without explicitly mentioning utilization. The *Liyuan* buildings at lower preservation levels have been implicitly transformed into infrastructures, or infrastructuralized, for potential intervention and commercial development in the future within the preserved historical quarters.

Besides the preservation and demolition of different buildings, selectivity is also shown in the renovation of each individual building by the specific attention to the “valuable elements” that play a central role in both discourse and practices of renovation. According to *The Standardized Catalog of the Construction Site in Preservation and Utilization Projects of Historical Urban Areas of Qingdao*⁸ (hereinafter referred to as *The Standardized Catalog*), a quasi-policy document drafted in 2022 by two construction companies under the direction of the government, valuable elements are defined as “some of the constitutive elements of

⁵ Meng Wang. (2023, May 31). ‘Bursting’ with vitality, the historical quarters ‘widely’ accept new business. *Qingdao Daily*. https://epaper.guanhai.com.cn/conpaper/qdrb/html/2023-05/31/content_18546_7761964.htm

Qimeng Sun. (2023, Mar 30). *The “water tap” returns to Dabaodao, and the bustle is back!* Retrieved May 3, 2023, from https://www.dailyqd.com/guanhai/245964_1.html

⁶ Qingdao Municipal Planning Bureau. (2015). *Preservation Plan of the Famous Historical and Cultural City of Qingdao (2011-2020)*. Retried Feb 14, 2022, from <http://cmsdept.qingdao.gov.cn:8081/n28356038/upload/170904171219928640/170904172326951787.pdf>.

⁷ Qingdao Municipal Bureau of Housing and Urban-rural Development. (2022, May 27). *Announcement on the Public Consultation on the Regulations on the Preservation and Utilization of Historical Buildings and Traditional Style Buildings in Qingdao (Exposure Draft)*. http://sjw.qingdao.gov.cn/cxjsj1/cxjsj35/202205/t20220527_6079320.shtml

⁸ Internal electric document collected during internship in the government.

historical architecture that can concentratively reflect the value characteristics”, including the architectural facades, plane layouts, characteristic parts, decorations, structures, materials, etc. (see Table 2). Confirmed valuable elements should not be changed in terms of shape, material, color, position, structure, etc. and must not be destroyed.

Table 2: List of valuable elements. Source: translated from *The Standardized Catalog*

Parts		Number	Elements	Parts		Number	Elements	
General Elements		1	Overall pattern	Indoor Elements	Staircase	22	Indoor staircase	
		2	Floor plan		Floor	23	Floor	
		3	Main structure		Door & window	24	Door & window	
		4	Main facade		Decoration		25	Ceiling
Façade Elements	Wall making methods	5	Plain brick wall				26	Wainscot
		6	Plastered brick wall				27	Molding
		7	Stone wall				28	Light fixture
	Cornice	8	Parapet		Decorative Elements	Handrail	29	Handrail
		9	Pediment	Ironwork		30	Ironwork	
		10	Cornice	Plaster mold		31	Plaster mold	
	Door & window	11	Wooden door & window	Wood carving		32	Wood carving	
	Veranda	12	Veranda	Stone carving		33	Stone carving	
	Balcony	13	Balcony	Brick carving			34	Brick carving
	Column & vault	14	Western style column & vault			Paving	35	Paving
Exterior stairs	15	Characteristic stairs	Wall & gate			36	Wall & gate	
Tower	16	Tower	Site elements	Tread	37	Tread		
Downspout	17	Downspout		Structure	38	Structure		
Roof Elements	Roof and tile	18		Roof style	Ancient trees	39	Ancient trees	
		19		Historical tiles				
	Dormer	20		Western style dormer				
Chimney	21	Historical Chimney						

In media discourse, valuable elements often serve as the proof of the historical genuineness and thus the authenticity of *Liyuan* buildings and their renovation. Various ways to document, repair, and exhibit valuable elements are introduced in media articles to show different actors' careful attitudes towards valuable elements, including the booklet of valuable elements made by the construction company⁹. Another example is the retention of an old blackboard:

Although the age erodes the texture of buildings, it also gives the old buildings unique charm. Those functional facilities and decorations that can reveal the traces of time are tried to be retained in renovation.

“There is a quite old blackboard on the wall of the entrance corridor of Pingkang East Neighborhood, and we cleaned up messy advertisement stickers on it and intactly preserved it. And after the demolition of the illegal construction, the north wall of Pingkang East Neighborhood showed a red brick wall with lime ‘patches’, which had a strong sense of historical vicissitudes, and we decided to fully preserve its present form.” A staff

⁹ Meng Wang. (2021, November 30). “Dabaodao is coming back”. *Qingdao Daily*.

https://epaper.guanhai.com.cn/conpaper/qdrb/html/2021-11/30/content_18545_5370373.htm, accessed on Dec 8, 2021.

*member [...] of Decai Group told the reporter.*¹⁰

The same article also mentions the “model room” built by a construction company, which exhibits the results of renovation with original valuable elements retained in renovated buildings and some other elements and objects not able to be kept in buildings but well preserved separately for their historical values.¹¹ By describing how valuable elements are carefully retained in renovation, the narrative in media shapes an impression that both important material elements and the “unique charm” of the buildings are well preserved, proving the authenticity of renovated quarters.

In the repairing and renovation of valuable elements and whole buildings, an important principle is “repair the old as old”. It is a widely mentioned principle in the repair of traditional Chinese architecture proposed by the famous architect Liang Sicheng (Lai et al., 2004; Xie et al., 2020) but hasn't been clearly elaborated for long (Li, 2006). Three similar but different expressions and practices of this principle have been adopted by construction teams based on different understanding of what is “old”: (1) retain the original undamaged parts of structures, facades, etc. as much as possible and only replace the damaged parts (*Xiujiu Rugu*, 修旧如故, “repair the old as it has been”); (2) replace the whole part with the original materials and crafts (*Xiujiu Ruchu*, 修旧如初, “repair the old as original”); (3) replace the whole part with new materials and crafts and use some techniques to make it look antique (*Xiujiu Rujiu*, 修旧如旧, “repair the old as antique”). (Interview with Jie, Aug 23, 2022)

As a principle with complicated implications, it is predictable that “repair the old as old” can lead to multiple practices according to different situation of buildings. However, in media articles, the three different expressions of this principle are used interchangeably and confusingly that general audience cannot tell their difference but only understand from literal meanings that the “old” is retained in renovation. Therefore, the meaning of “repair the old as old” is reinterpreted to create more space for selective renovation practices: even the repair uses completely new materials that only look antique and produces “fake antiques”, it can be interpreted as “old” and authentic under the discourse of “repair the old as old”.

For instance, all three expressions are mentioned in the following quote from a media article about the preservative renovation of Weixian Road No.19, without implying there is any distinction between them or what does the “old” or “original” exactly mean here, while general readers cannot tell these distinction and implications. This quote only conveys that the building has been carefully renovated, with respect for an abstract and unexplained “history”:

Following the principle of “repair the old as original” (Xiujiu Ruchu, 修旧如初) in historical building renovation, the project comprehensively grasps the historical context and urban cultural background. In the repair of exterior walls, the wall color was adjusted according to the actual situation

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

to ensure there is no color difference between the renovated and the original walls. In roof repair, red tiles were replaced according to the original appearance of the old building, in order to restore the original appearance, respect history, repair the old as old (Xiujiu Rujiu, 修旧如旧), and repair the old as it has been (Xiujiu Rugu, 修旧如故).¹²

However, while media coverage particularly emphasizes the preservation of material elements, the standard principles, and respectful attitudes towards history in renovation projects to demonstrate its authenticity, the actual results of renovation have not been as good as expected by some actors involved in renovation and those who believe heritage buildings should be preserved as much as possible. This gap between the claimed and actual effects of renovation renders the alleged historical genuineness and authenticity that is based on careful treatment of heritage and preservation of material elements questionable.

Still taking the instance of Weixian Road No.19, which has aroused criticism from other participants of renovation projects and some nearby residents. A local shopkeeper who was also living in the neighborhood complained:

The Eighth Engineering Division of China Construction¹³ said, “This is the photo we take from the municipal archive, and this is what the original architectural drawing looks like”. Aren’t you lying to the common people? The drawing that others find from the archive is different from this [...] Why does it become this in your words? Why are you building this extra story? [...] The two-story building with an attic now becomes a four-story one, what does that mean? Are you really “repairing the old as old”? (Interview with Jianguo, Aug 15, 2022)

Although it was hard to distinguish from onsite observation whether the renovation really added an extra story, the similar claim and discontent is shared by other participants of renovation projects. An expert in a local architecture design institute said:

I feel that project [Weixian Road No.19] was dismantled too much. [...] Some renovation projects are not successful, they are a bit too low-level, very coarsely done. In principle it should be the original ones, and the former roof structure in Liyuan buildings are wooden. But it would be costly to recover the wooden one, and I have seen some projects even use steel structure. (Interview with Lei, Feb 11, 2022)

He didn't directly indicate that it is Weixian Road No.19 that replace wooden roof structure with steel one (although with possible hint), but it can be proven from on-site pictures

¹² Liping Wang. (2021, October 13). *Qingdao's largest courtyard complex began renovation, Weixian Road No. 19 will be transformed into a trendy hitting hot spot.* Bandao News. <http://news.bandao.cn/a/556382.html>

¹³ The construction team in charge of the renovation of Weixian Road No.19.

(see Figure 4) that the newly built concrete and steel structures didn't correspond with the former wooden roofs, implying that original roofs were fully demolished and replaced. However, this structural change and demolition of the “valuable element”, which goes against the preservation methods claimed by the discourse in news and policy documents again, didn't appear in any media reports.



Figure 4: Weixian Road No.19 under renovation. Source: fieldwork photo by the author, February 16, 2022.

In summary, this section examines how the renovation of *Liyuan* buildings is wrapped into the discourse that every element of *Liyuan* is meticulously treated and well preserved with authenticity. However, the categorizing system, the designation of “valuable elements”, and the discourse of “repair the old as old” reveal the selective nature of this discourse framing. The gap between the claimed and real effects of renovation has aroused controversy and questioned the historical genuineness constructed through this discourse. Nevertheless, the local state's control over the media and its ability to shape public discourse in order to suppress dissent have resulted in the absence of any media coverage or public awareness of these contentious renovation practices and criticisms. As a result, the authenticity constructed through the discursive process remains persuasive to the general public.

4.2 Discourse of history and regeneration

In addition to addressing the buildings themselves and their renovation in technical terms, media articles also touch upon more abstract aspects such as history and future vision of regeneration. The historical atmosphere of the regenerated quarters is produced by selectively emphasizing the commercial prosperity and folk culture in history and omitting other historical facts. This historical narration is also connected to the current regeneration with new facilities and industries, which is constructed as the only way to deal with recent dilapidation. Although the words of residents are sometimes quoted in this grand historical narrative, they are generally complimentary, serving as the justification of regeneration on behalf of all residents and omitting the downsides of regeneration for them.

The presence of historical buildings and other material elements within the quarters to be regenerated helps to generate an atmosphere of history, connected with the historical narratives around *Liyuan* buildings in media articles, which emphasize certain aspects such as the former commercial prosperity in the republican period before 1949 and the urban folk culture. This historical narrative around *Liyuan* adds to the sense of authenticity of the regeneration projects. The following quote appears at the beginning of a general introductory article of the *Dabaodao* neighborhood in regeneration, presenting a lyrical description of the “historical memory” in general and the prosperous commercial history conveyed by *Dabaodao*:

*When you walk through the crisscrossed old streets and listening to the echo of footsteps on the stone slabs, it inspires an inexplicable sense of longing. An old street is a history, narrating the stories of several generations, and after the baptism of time, it still preserves the city's exclusive memories. Each house, brick and stone here carry irreproducible historical information and records the glittering old dreams of the past times. [...] As the earliest commercial center after the modernization of Qingdao, Dabaodao is the “cradle” of Qingdao's prosperous trade industry and has written a 130-year history of Qingdao's local Chinese entrepreneurs. Over the past century, the area has been well connected with material flows, prosperous business and wealth.*¹⁴

Another aspect of the historical narrative is the urban folk culture that persisted until the recent large-scale displacement. The central location in Qingdao's inner city and the dual functions of commerce and residence make *Liyuan* buildings a generator of folk culture among common people from lower classes. In addition, the status of commercial center has shaped the collective experience and memory of common people. For example, a popular traditional nursery rhyme goes:

*One two one, Shang Jieli (上街里, “go to street-neighborhood”).
Buy school bags, buy pencils.
Go to school and rank first in exams, rank first in exams.*¹⁵

Jieli refers to Zhongshan Road—the arterial road of inner city—and its surrounding area, which largely overlaps with the *Dabaodao* neighborhood. Hence, this nursery rhyme depicting the everyday life of residents in “old Qingdao” is intricately connected with the current regeneration. The rhyme is frequently referenced in media coverage and promotion of regeneration. In fact, it has been adopted to name regeneration projects themselves:

¹⁴ Qimeng Sun & Wenchao Liu. (2021, December 13). *Creating a trendy and entertaining neighborhood for shopping, leisure, culture and tourism, Dabaodao will “burst” new vitality*. Qingdao News. https://house.qingdaonews.com/content/2021-12/13/content_23006952.htm

¹⁵ Dong Liu. (2022, May 13). *The old streets of Qingdao in the nursery rhyme, turned into the new wanghong check-in spot*. Qingdao Daily Net. https://www.dailyqd.com/guanhai/178787_1.html

transformed from a verb to a noun, *Shang Jieli* has become the overarching brand name for all initiatives in Shinan District and appeared in various place-branding activities. This utilization of historical narrative and discourse highlights the powerful promotional value of connecting current initiatives with the past and facilitates the commercialized authentication of regeneration projects.

Simultaneously, in the discourse of “regeneration” or “revitalization”, the former prosperity is connected with the development vision of the near future, which constructs a historical continuity to justify the current redevelopment:

*From the former commercial center to the current historical and cultural district, time passes, but it remains unchanged that the commercial and cultural symbols belonging to Qingdao have always been engraved here. [...] Although the vicissitudes of old days are long gone, this place always shines brightly in people's memory. The glory of the past is still fresh in our minds, and now Dabaodao has opened a new chapter. The reporter learned that since last year, the city has started the renovation of more than 10 buildings in Dabaodao area [...] and also started to attract investment for the second floor.*¹⁶

As shown here, the history of *Dabaodao* is usually described as a successive progress of development, although this neighborhood has experienced gradual decline since 1949, especially during the past decade (Demgenski, 2015, 2019). Some articles mention the decline and dilapidation before the start of regeneration, but mainly as the justification for regeneration without exploring the reason of decline, such as the urban development policy in the Maoist and reform era (Demgenski, 2015, 2019). In such discourse, the declining *Dabaodao* can only be saved by physical renovation and introduction of new facilities, functions, industries, and “vitality” thereof:

*As time passes, these Liyuan buildings have fallen into disrepair with their structures and facades severely damaged and the blocks' roads and landscapes deteriorating. In this round of preservation and renovation of Qingdao's historical quarters, an important mission is to improve supporting infrastructures and introduce new industries by repairing the Liyuan buildings, so that the Dabaodao area can be revitalized.*¹⁷

The description of the past and future of regenerated quarters usually features grand narrative without mentioning many individuals, especially the local residents that are the most affected group by regeneration projects. But some exceptions also exist, in which residents

¹⁶ Qimeng Sun & Wenchao Liu. (2021, December 13). *Creating a trendy and entertaining neighborhood for shopping, leisure, culture and tourism, Dabaodao will “burst” new vitality*. Qingdao News. https://house.qingdaonews.com/content/2021-12/13/content_23006952.htm

¹⁷ Ibid.

express their praise of regeneration:

“Today I’m coming back to have a look at my home, what a big change. The hovel of my family has become a ‘fashionable parlor’ now.” The 76-year-old citizen Wu Jinxia, who used to be a former resident of Guangxingli, told the reporter. [...]

“I’m reluctant to say farewell, and some of my old neighbors have moved out. But I’m also very looking forward [to the regeneration], I hope that the old city can take on a new look and develop better.” The seafood dealer Gong Fangpeng has been living on Weixian Road for more than 10 years [...] He looked at Weixian Road No. 19 under renovation with expectations, “The Liyuan of Weixian Road No. 19 has long been in disrepair, and I hope it will come to life again after the renovation.”¹⁸

The words of these “representatives” of former residents selected in media articles serve as the testimony that the change brought by regeneration are appreciated and expected by them, and implies that regeneration is beneficial to these common people. Although it is not explained whether the interviewed residents have experienced the process of signing expropriation contracts and displaced with compensation, which is necessary procedure that almost all residents have to go through, they are treated as “spokespeople” representing all of their neighbors with satisfied attitude towards regeneration. Clearly, the interest conflict, loss of benefits and inconvenience in daily life (see Chapter 5) are ignored in this narrative of satisfaction and expectation. From a Foucauldian perspective, the selection of speakers, which is also part of discourse framing, is imbued with unequal power relations that certain groups whose interests are harmed are silenced and excluded from the discourse around regeneration.

In conclusion, this chapter demonstrates the discursive practices at work in the authentication of the historical *Liyuan* buildings and the whole regeneration project. Certain aspects, such as the valuable material elements of *Liyuan* buildings and the neighborhood’s historical context, are activated to shape a coherent narrative that the historical traces of the quarter have been carefully retained and will be revitalized with new industries. Given the official and state-owned nature major public media in China, this process can be regarded as a top-down “cool” authentication process that features an identifiable authorized agent and relatively formal criteria (Cohen & Cohen, 2012). However, it also has characteristics different from the definition of “cool” authentication by Cohen & Cohen (2012). The authentication of *Liyuan* buildings and the regeneration is not fully based on scientific knowledge and objective criteria, but involves various subjective and even arbitrary narratives, including the emphasis of certain periods of history and concealment of information about renovation practices. It is also a dynamic discursive process instead of a single static act.

However, this narrative framework also excludes certain aspects including the demolition

¹⁸ Ibid.

practices in renovation, the reasons for recent decline of the neighborhood, as well as the interest conflicts and benefit loss in displacement. While the authentication discourse works for the general public, these excluded aspects question its coherence and disclose the unequal power relations between the government and residents behind the discursive process, which will be further elaborated in the Chapter 6.

Chapter 5 Material infrastructuralizing: material practice for displacement and authentication

This chapter delves into the material infrastructuralizing process involving the heritage *Liyuan* buildings and other material elements within historical quarters. The process can be delineated into two sequential phases. During the initial phase, the dilapidated state of the buildings and other physical inconveniences were deliberately activated to expedite the progress of displacement prior to the initiation of building renovations. In the subsequent phase, during different stages of renovation, construction teams and business investors made specific modifications to the physical condition of buildings to enhance the authenticity of the space. The following two sections will elaborate the two phases respectively.

While these two phases followed a logical sequence, it is noteworthy that they often occurred concurrently within the same quarter due to the varying progress of individual buildings. Each phase of infrastructuralizing presented distinct material condition, and the amalgamation of diverse material states across different sections of the *Dabaodao* neighborhood gave rise to unique socio-material landscapes during the physical renovation process.

5.1 Material infrastructuralizing for displacement

This section delves into the process in which the material condition of *Liyuan* buildings functioned as infrastructure and was also actively used as infrastructures for housing expropriation in different stages. It is divided into two parts: the displacement of residents, who are either homeowners or tenants, and the displacement of local shopkeepers, who are also tenants of the neighborhoods but may not reside there. Though both groups are among the greatly affected social groups in displacement process, it is important to make this distinction due to their differentiated situation during displacement. First, residents with ownership of their houses could get considerable compensation when signing housing expropriation contract, while tenants, many of whom are shopkeepers, didn't received any form of compensation. This fact played a significant role in influencing the two groups' opinions towards displacement and evaluating their condition. Second, the displacement of residents started a few years earlier than that of shopkeepers, and after most residents had been moved out, remaining shopkeepers experienced more unpleasant material condition caused by renovation projects.

5.1.1 For residents: infrastructure of housing expropriation

Before the large-scale renovation, the dilapidation of buildings and possible vision of "ghost streets" made most residents eager for expropriation, and the government categorized

these buildings into “shantytowns” with unfavorable living condition to justify and finance the expropriation. After the general renovation, those remaining residents or “nail households”¹⁹ faced severer material condition, and the government utilized the “unsafe” condition to restrict the rental capacity of the building, both of which further persuaded the residents into moving out and the property owners into signing the expropriation contract.

Most *Liyuan* buildings in *Dabaodao* were built more than eight decades ago (from the 1900s to 1930s) with only minimal maintenance in the past few decades. Each building consists of a central courtyard surrounded by two to four-story constructions that were partitioned into rooms measuring 10-20 m². A single room usually housed a household, accommodating as many as six individuals, resulting in cramped living conditions and a scarcity of private space. Moreover, these rooms lack individual kitchen and toilet facilities, necessitating the sharing of communal facilities located within the courtyard. Consequently, during peak periods such as in the morning, residents are compelled to wait in queues for access to the shared toilet. Additionally, numerous residents constructed rudimentary cabins within the courtyards in previous decades, serving as unauthorized storage spaces. Although these constructions were considered illegal, government intervention was infrequent prior to the regeneration, resulting in crowded and disorderly courtyard spaces (Demgenski, 2015).

The unfavorable living conditions in *Liyuan* before regeneration prompted some individuals with sufficient financial means to voluntarily relocate. Others who chose to remain in the buildings before expropriation typically belonged to lower socioeconomic strata but aspired to enhance their living standards. Consequently, the majority of these residents eagerly anticipated the housing expropriation prior to the regeneration, as it would provide them with compensation to purchase new homes and “it is impossible to make you lose benefits” (Interview with Haoran, a government official, Aug 19, 2022; Demgenski, 2015). In contrast, some others tended to stay because of local advantages, such as schools, hospitals and markets in the vicinity (Interview with Haoran, Aug 19, 2022; Interview with Yanyan, a local shopkeeper, Aug 20, 2022), more pleasant coastal climate, and the perceived future development potential of the area (Interview with Yanhua, a local shopkeeper, Aug 11, 2022).

The first phase of housing expropriation started around 2015, covering some of the buildings within the area. Since then, some residents whose housing was not included in the expropriation plan have been more eager for expropriation. A resident expressed his yearn for expropriation and dissatisfaction of the expropriation plan in the online mailbox of Shinan District government in 2015, referring to expropriation as “what the common people really want”:

*Why are some courtyards on Huangdao Road expropriated and some not?
Courtyards on Huangdao Road are in the same condition, almost all of which*

¹⁹ Translation of “Dingzihu” (钉子户), a common term used in China to describe those homeowners who refuse to sign the house expropriation contracts and vacate their properties in state-led demolition and urban development. See, for example, (2017) and Li et al. (2021).

*are dilapidated with an age of nearly a century and really unsuitable for living. If expropriation is implemented within the range reported by the media, what about our courtyard that is not expropriated? After other courtyards are expropriated and people leave the building empty, we the residents who live in courtyards not expropriated will be like living on ghost streets. I hope the government should do things clearly and quickly, don't procrastinate, do what the common people really want, and don't let the people be disappointed in the government again and again!*²⁰

Although this individual expression cannot represent the will of all residents, it captures the reason why some people are eager to leave the neighborhood due to material condition that plays as “infrastructures of expulsion”. Apart from the desire for better living condition and the sense of inequality, the current dilapidated material condition of housing and the possible atmosphere of “ghost streets” also play a role in residents' appeal for expropriation. Living on “ghost streets” means the loss of *renqi* (“human atmosphere”) that contributes to the familiarity and livability of a place, as mentioned by Chu (2014) in analyzing another case of urban redevelopment and displacement in China.

The expropriation continued for several rounds. The most recent round started in November 2021, which almost covers all the remaining housing within renovated area.²¹ In the government document declaring the expropriation decision, several aims of the decision are mentioned:

*In order to promote national economy, social development, and other public interests, promote the revitalization of the western old city, effectively improve the living conditions of shantytown residents in the main urban areas, and enhance the urban quality [...]*²²

“Shantytown” is a common term in China to describe the agglomeration of rough and/or dilapidated houses, and the redevelopment of shantytown have been an important task for Chinese urban governments in recent years (He, 2019). According to a government press release²³ and the interview with a government official (Interview with Haoran, Aug 19, 2022),

²⁰ Translated from a letter from a resident on Huangdao Road in the online mail box of Shinan District government, March 30, 2015. <http://govmail.qingdao.gov.cn/sngovernment/GovWebSite/ViewReplyInfos.aspx?type=1&guid={d9e9f845-f40a-4c79-998d-68fadd7c75a0}>, accessed on April 10, 2022.

²¹ People's Government of Shinan District, Qingdao City. (2021, Nov 08). *Decision of the People's Government of Shinan District, Qingdao City on the implementation of housing expropriation in the shantytown area of Zhongshan Road Historical and Cultural Quarters, Shinan District (No. 36 Huangdao Road and other buildings and courtyards)*. Online government document.

<http://www.qdsn.gov.cn/n16/n31281138/n31281142/n31281143/n31281147/n31282781/211129100429628886.html>, accessed on April 10, 2022.

²² Ibid.

²³ Municipal Government of Qingdao. (2022). *Basically completed 20,000 sets! Qingdao exceeded the 2022 shantytown redevelopment task*. Website of municipal government of Qingdao.

http://www.qingdao.gov.cn/zwgk/zdgg/zdlyzt/jsly/tdzf/wfgz/202212/t20221202_6543006.shtml, accessed on 10 May, 2022.

implementing regeneration under the name of shantytown redevelopment can finance regeneration projects through special-purpose bonds, subsidy from central government, loans from national level policy banks, etc. This is parallel with the “variegated financialisation of housing” (Aalbers, 2017, as cited in He, 2019) reflected in large-scale shantytown redevelopment schemes mentioned by He (2019) as the third wave of state-led gentrification in China. Therefore, although most *Liyuan* buildings were carefully built with regular materials such as brick and stone, its current dilapidation and poor living conditions was emphasized to render them qualify as “shantytown” in order to justify and finance the expropriation and regeneration projects.

Following the general expropriation, individuals who refrained from signing the expropriation contract and continued to reside on “ghost streets” encountered heightened constraints imposed by both the physical environment and the government. Firstly, the material conditions deteriorated with increased untidiness and disarray as fewer people assumed responsibility for maintaining the cleanliness of public spaces. The roads in the neighborhood frequently suffered from blockages or became uneven due to ongoing infrastructural construction activities such as pipeline installation. Furthermore, many local grocery and food stores moved out as their landlord signed the expropriation contract or due to the road blockage, making the life on “ghost streets” more inconvenient (Interview with Hua, Aug 11, 2022).

Simultaneously, the government imposed more stringent regulations of dilapidated buildings, as elucidated in a policy document posted within an almost empty courtyard:

[...] This expropriated building is a class D dangerous building. Its load-bearing capacity can no longer meet the requirements of normal use, and the building is in an overall dangerous condition. To avoid safety issues, the property owner cannot rent the housing to others. Otherwise, any safety issue will be the responsibility of the owners and users of the housing.²⁴

In the name of safety, this restriction on the renting capacity of the housing acts as an additional impetus for remaining homeowners and tenants to relocate. Moreover, this measure could induce other homeowners to enter into an expropriation agreement with the government. Certain homeowners might opt to retain their housing units due to their potential for rental and profitability, while such aspirations became unattainable given the rental restrictions, prompting them to ultimately acquiesce to the expropriation contract. Although the buildings might have been unsafe to some extent, it would not necessarily expel tenants or urge homeowners to sign the contract; in other words, it is the government decision that utilized the dilapidated material condition and make it not only “unsafe”, but also untenable.

In summary, during the expropriation and renovation stage of the regeneration projects, the deteriorated material condition of *Liyuan* buildings and surrounding environments have been strategically activated by the government, functioning as infrastructures to propel the

²⁴ The housing watcher group at the expropriation office of Zhongshan Road. (2021, Oct 12). *A letter to the residents in courtyards in which housing has been expropriated*. Government document posted in site.

progress of housing expropriation. Unlike conventional infrastructures that serve as supportive systems to deliver tangible services, *Liyuan* buildings are utilized as the infrastructure of government power. Their decay and disrepair are exactly what the government infrastructuralizes, which is partly related to but also goes beyond the argument of Star (1999, p. 382) that infrastructure “becomes visible upon breakdown”. In fact, *Liyuan* buildings themselves are highly visible objects within the regenerated quarters, but their infrastructural characteristics become most pronounced during breakdown and maintenance. This process can be viewed as an infrastructuralizing way alternative to many other objects with infrastructural potentials.

5.1.2 For shopkeepers: the “side effects” of infrastructure construction

This segment examines the experiences of local shopkeepers who were also tenants and participants of the local society of *Dabaodao*, although most of them didn't reside within this neighborhood. Their livelihoods rely on their business in *Dabaodao*. When most residents had been displaced, local shopkeepers were initially not mandated to immediately relocate from the neighborhood. However, as the renovation stage approached, the intensification of construction activities, including physical infrastructure maintenance, introduced unfavorable conditions that exerted detrimental “side effects” on their businesses and livelihoods. Consequently, these circumstances have prompted many shopkeepers to relocate from *Dabaodao*.

There were many shops along the streets in *Dabaodao* area, with Huangdao Road serving as a prominent local business hub. Before the renovation, this street was an outdoor market with over forty shops and restaurants on the ground floor of *Liyuan* buildings along the street, selling vegetables, fruit, seafood and other groceries. Following the housing expropriation and the displacement of residents, shopkeepers experienced a gradual erosion of their consumer base but still barely maintained their businesses.

However, these shops were further challenged by the combined impact of Covid-19 lockdown and infrastructure maintenance. From November 2021 to April 2022, the western part of Huangdao Road was almost fully blocked, with all vehicle lanes and part of sidewalks occupied by the infrastructure upgrading project before the renovation of buildings. The 10-meter-wide road, which used to provide space for shopkeepers to set up outdoor stalls, was excavated in the middle and only 2-meter-wide space was left on each side of the road. The excavated part was blocked by 2-meter-high metal plates, which further restricted the sight from the remaining part of the street (see Figure 5).



Figure 5: The excavated and blocked part of the street (left) and the remaining unblocked part (right).

Source: fieldwork photo by the author, Jan 21, 2022.

Besides Huangdao Road, other nearby roads like Zhifu Road and Pingdu Road also underwent similar blockage for infrastructure construction. These streets became almost inaccessible with much less people visiting and consuming, and it was very hard for shopkeepers to transport goods to the stores without vehicles. A shopkeeper on Zhifu Road complained:

There is certainly a big impact. You see, neither car nor people can come in. [...] Look at the road blocked like this for several months. We businesspeople are most afraid that people are blocked from entering the shop. Besides, life is also inconvenient, look at the blockage there. If it's you, you don't want to come in either, right? It's shabby here and unstable for walking. (Interview with Yanyan, Aug 20, 2022)

For most shopkeepers, the infrastructure construction and blockage of roads was something they have to accept obediently as “side effects” of renovation projects, and they never received any compensation for the income loss caused by road blockage (Interview with Yanyan, local shopkeeper, Aug 20, 2022; Interview with Jianguo, local shopkeeper, Aug 15, 2022; Interview with Taojun, local shopkeeper, Aug 15, 2022). However, some of them had a stronger sense of injustice due to the unexpectedly prolonged period and low efficiency of the construction work:

They just blocked the roads without repairing it. They just came digging a bit every ten or fifteen days. If you are seriously repairing, such little work will only take one or two months [...] Now they blocked us like this, should there be compensation for us merchants? You say it's a government action, and we can comply with you if you want to do this. But relatively speaking, for us merchants there have already been the pandemic, but there isn't any

reduction of the rent from you. Then you demolished it like this, and you didn't give us any compensation either. [...] But even we comply with them, they don't comply with us. They notified us that they would finish within two months, while they have done for half a year. (Interview with Yanyan, Aug 20, 2022)

For another shopkeeper, the extended working period was “not about the construction, but an issue of coordination within the government”: the outsourced construction units could not coordinate well with departments responsible for water, electricity supply, etc. at one time and had to dig the road repeatedly for several times (Interview with Jianguo, Aug 15, 2022), which caused prolonged material disturbance and more inconvenience for shopkeepers and residents. Although the government and construction team might not intentionally prolong the construction period, the infrastructure construction projects did cause great disturbance to local shopkeepers and their livelihoods, while the government didn't compensate their loss. The changed material condition led to considerable “side effects” in the neighborhood, which reveals the material agency and the infrastructural role of the road system in the running of local business and commercial vitality.

Finally, the combined effects of road blockage, the pandemic, and harder techniques to persuade shopkeepers (which will be explained in Chapter 6) made most shopkeepers relocate to other places. In August 2022, there were only around six shops or restaurants still open on Huangdao Road, and all shopkeepers have moved out at present with the renovation of buildings fully implemented. The former commercial atmosphere or *renqi* (“human atmosphere”, see Chu, 2014) in the market and streets have disappeared and the streets are turned into construction sites during building renovation with no residents, shopkeepers, and consumers on the street.

5.2 Material infrastructuralizing for authentication

Throughout the renovation and further utilization of *Liyuan* buildings, various actors play distinctive roles in the material infrastructuralizing for authentication, including several government departments, the construction teams, and the investing businesspersons. Among these actors, the government assumes a leading and central position, while others also exhibit agency.

Two distinct phases of the material change can be delineated in the renovation and utilization process: the comprehensive renovation of whole buildings by construction teams and the specific embellishment of individual shop spaces by private investors (Interview with Lei, expert at an architecture design office, Feb 11, 2022). The initial phase starts from a thorough investigation of the current condition and historical records of a certain building after its expropriation and evacuation, such as historical photos and drawings from the municipal archive. The government departments responsible for planning and architecture collaborate to

formulate a repair and construction plan. Subsequently, multiple construction companies submit bids for the implementation of the plan. Upon selection, the chosen construction company executes the construction plan under the supervision of the government.

Meanwhile, the government will start to attract investors to rent space (ranging from a shop facade to the whole courtyard with surrounding buildings) and open businesses. After the renovation by construction teams is accepted by the government, the investors can enter the rented space and further decorate it before opening businesses, marking the second phase of material change.

The following two segments of this section will elucidate the respective role of the government, construction teams, and investors in renovation, which the government generally assumes supervision of both phases but has greater control over the initial phase. In the initial phase, the government oversees the work of construction teams by formulating standardized process and “valuable elements” to ensure the historical genuineness and authenticity of renovation projects. In the second phase, private investors of new business further embellish and modify their shop spaces to align with their specific requirements, thereby creating an environment that offers visitors an authentic experience.

5.2.1 The first phase: construction teams

This segment introduces the infrastructuralizing practices in the renovation efforts implemented by the construction teams from construction companies, under the supervision of the government.

One of the tools that the government uses to control the general process and details of renovation is a series of standardized procedures. *The Standardized Catalog* mentioned in the last chapter is a document prescribing the standard construction processes during renovation, the list of “valuable elements” to be preserved, and the respective repairing and renovating techniques. As elaborated in the last chapter, the “valuable elements” play a central role in renovation practices. *The Standardized Catalog* mainly prescribes the principles for recognizing valuable elements, while for each individual building, valuable elements need to be confirmed by a group of experts in history and architecture preservation²⁵.

Besides the general standardized procedures, the government also control the construction teams' renovation of each specific buildings by ex-ante prescription of renovation plans, ex-durante supervision, and ex-post submission of as-built drawings. Several government departments participate in these processes, e.g., supervise the renovation and impose a fine for practices violating the plans and principles (Interview with Boxun, member of a construction team, Aug 22, 2022), but usually the state-owned platform companies of two districts play as the direct contact and contractor with construction teams with emphasis on building quality and preservation (Interview with Jie, member of a construction team, Aug 23, 2022).

²⁵ *The Standardized Catalog*.

Construction teams employ specific procedures and techniques to satisfy the demands of building renovation, incorporating modern functions, and preserving valuable elements. An example lies in the meticulous approach claimed to be adopted when dealing with roofs of *Liyuan* buildings. As part of the process, the roofs are carefully dismantled by hand and stored to protect the integrity of the roof tiles. Following this, a waterproof and thermal insulating layer is applied, and the tiles are repositioned. In cases where certain tiles are damaged, they are replaced with new tiles that closely resemble the original in terms of color and material. The construction team purposefully procures these replacement tiles at a higher cost to retain the original roof appearances (Interview with Jie, Aug 23, 2022).

Another example is the techniques of renovating wall surface (see Figure 6). Construction teams use infrared detectors to detect and remove the deteriorated parts in the wall such as hollows. To recreate the semblance of the original surface, the team drills samples from the original walls and analyzes them in a laboratory to ascertain the composition and proportion of the original materials. A new formula for reproducing the wall surface is then tested in the lab, aiming to replicate the appearance of the old surface. Once an approved template is created and endorsed by overseeing entities, including the platform company and design institute, the formula is implemented in large-scale construction. (Interview with Jie, Aug 23, 2022) ²⁶.

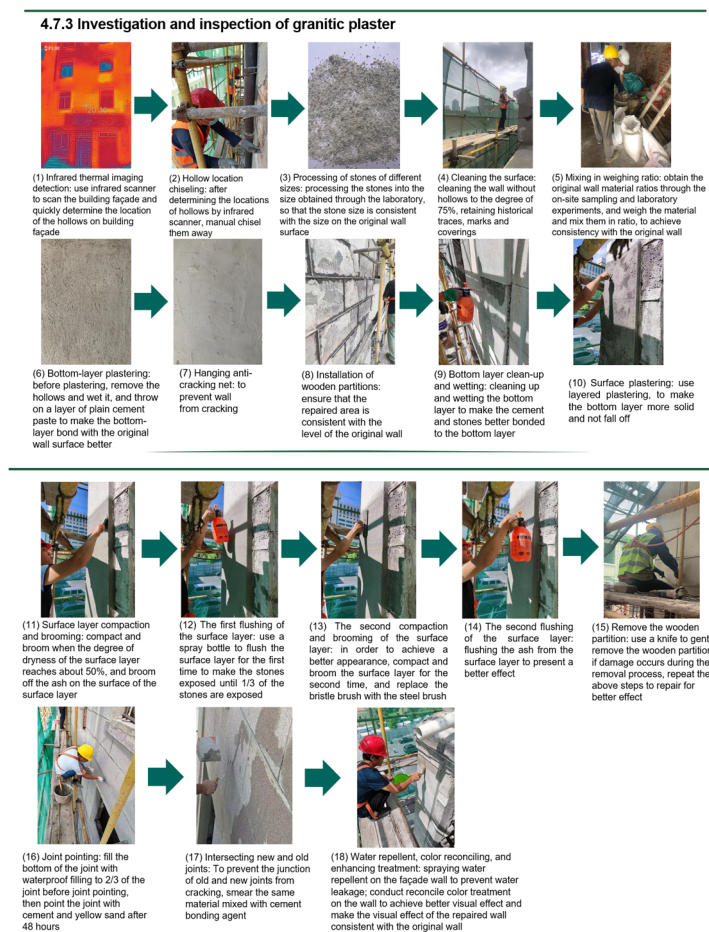


Figure 6: the standard procedure of renovating granitic plastered wall surface. Source: translated form

The Standardized Catalog.

²⁶ Ibid.

Another consideration of the construction teams is satisfying modern demands. On-site observation in the buildings under or after renovation shows that besides the structural reinforcement and the adding of insulating layer, other modern facilities and functions such as indoor toilets (see Figure 7), sewage system, and fire-fighting equipment are also added in renovation. It is also an important issue for the renovation-related government departments to make sure the renovated buildings meet the fire protection requirement, and several departments have worked together to draft a guiding document²⁷ for related procedures.



Figure 7: the indoor toilets inside a building after renovation. Source: fieldwork photo by the author, Aug 23, 2022.

As an expert in a local architecture office mentioned, a principle in this process of adding facilities is reversibility—added functional facilities should be able to be removed in the future without influencing the original status of the building (Interview with Lei, Feb 11, 2022). However, this principle, along with two other principles of architecture preservation mentioned by this expert, namely “authenticity” (as objective standards instead of subjective social constructions, similar to genuineness) and identifiability (Interview with Lei, Feb 11, 2022), seems to remain abstract without detailed operational regulations and is usually ignored and violated in real practice of the construction teams and private investors. For example, regarding reversibility, some private investors can demolish the partition wall between rooms to make a larger shop space, which is not reversible (to be elaborated in the next segment). A more apparent violation of the reversibility principle is the renovation of Weixian Road No. 19 mentioned in Chapter 4, which demolished the original roof and replace it with concrete and steel structure. Concerning identifiability, the technique of “repair the old as antique” as a

²⁷ Headquarters of preservation and regeneration of the historical quarters in Qingdao. (2021). *The Work Plan on Strengthening Fire Management of The Preservation and Regeneration Projects of Qingdao's Historical Quarters*. Internal government document.

practical version of the principle of “repair the old as the old” mentioned in Chapter 4 can serve as an example of going against with the principle. This technique involves replacing the old elements with new materials and crafts and use specific methods such as water flushing to achieve an antique appearance, which might present challenges in discerning the demarcation between the original and replacement elements.

For the whole redevelopment project of Qingdao's historical quarters, the renovation of *Liyuan* buildings is the core step and can be seen as the infrastructure for further development. By selectively preserving the valuable elements and transforming other material elements to satisfy the contemporary demands, construction teams transform deteriorated “shanty” into modernized buildings while preserving historical values. Despite the potential contradiction between modernization and the preservation of historical values, this strategy effectively authenticates the entire regeneration project that asserts itself as a proper endeavor in the preservation and utilization of *Liyuan* buildings. This can be seen as a detailed process of the top-down “cool authentication” (Cohen & Cohen, 2012). However, due to this selective process, the standardized procedures, and the lack of operational regulations of the principle in heritage architecture preservation, the renovation also risks becoming an assembly line of “modern historical buildings”, undermining the claimed historical genuineness upon which authenticity is constructed.

5.2.2 The second phase: investors

This segment introduces the second phase of material intervention in renovation process, which is mainly implemented by private investors renting space in *Liyuan* buildings after the general renovation by construction teams. Investors decorate their shop space, usually with certain aesthetic styles, according to their demands of attracting visitors and providing authentic experiences. Some investors renting a whole building with the courtyard can even make changes to the structure of the building. Despite the potential conflict with the principles of heritage preservation, these types of modifications appear to have received tacit approval from the government. In my interviews with investors, there was no mention of government intervention in their renovation practices after the approval of renovation plans (interview with Bo, manager of a bubble tea café, Aug 22, 2022), while these renovated shops have obtained significant attention from the government, frequently featuring in media articles²⁸ and receiving visits led by local officials. If the government were to strictly prohibit such structural changes, they would not remain oblivious to the renovation practices employed by new investors. Hence, it can be inferred that the government generally adopts a selective approach, turning a blind eye to these practices and indicating its stance towards facilitating commercial development.

As a prerequisite for opening business, it's almost necessary for investors to carry out

²⁸ To keep the anonymity of interview respondents, specific media articles are not cited here.

further decoration of the rented space to adapt it to their demands and create certain atmosphere, even though the space might have already been simply decorated. Decorations for smaller shops like clothing shop are simpler and may only cost less than two months (Interview with Ningning, Aug 10, 2022), but cost longer time for larger shops like a beverage shop with dining area (Interview with Bo, Aug 22, 2022).

It's a common practice for investors to embellish their shop space with certain aesthetic styles and symbols that align with the characteristics of *Liyuan* buildings, the renovated quarters and the culture of Qingdao in general. For example, a large restaurant with a beer bar, which has two stories and different functional areas such as private dining rooms, tea rooms, and the dining hall, has adopted several aesthetic styles in decoration, including "old Qingdao" style, "industrial style", and "fashionable" style related to beer with some cultural and historical symbols. According to the manager of this restaurant, many people have come to drink beer and "experience the cultural atmosphere" during the first month of operation (Interview with Kaifeng, Aug 23, 2022).

Some investors who rent a whole courtyard with its surrounding buildings can have the power to alter building structure according to their needs. For instance, a bubble tea café occupies a whole courtyard at a street corner. Due to the sloping street, the north facade of the courtyard was originally composed of four shops on different levels separated by walls. To create a wider shop space, the investor decided to demolish the separating walls, level the four shops and merge it into one shop facade (Interview with Bo, Aug 22, 2022), which greatly suits the investor's demand to have a large dining area to accommodate consumers. Though this change to the building structure is very likely to go against the general preservation principles of the historical architecture, such as the reversibility principle, and the specific preservation plan of this building, it seems to receive acquiescence from the government. It is not clear whether the government has formally approved this change to satisfy the investor's demands and facilitate the business operation, or didn't pay enough attention to and ignored such "details" of decoration. Nevertheless, no matter how the government have treated this change, it reveals again the selectivity in the government's attitude towards the preservation and utilization of *Liyuan* buildings. The first stage of renovation has been closely supervised to ensure the relative historical genuineness and constructed authenticity, while the second stage has received much less attention, possibly due to its less influence on the general genuineness of the buildings and its facilitative role in business operation, which is related to the profitability of the whole regeneration project.

Another example of one investor occupying the whole courtyard is the Yu Hotel invested by Shimao Group, a property development giant from Shanghai. The structure of hotel demands more change to the original building structure, such as creating a large space for the main lobby and extra facilities for firefighting equipments, and the investor was allowed to redesign the renovation plan and change the building structure, while only preserving valuable elements (Interview with Lei, Feb 11, 2022).

In summary, the decoration of the investors forms the final step of the material

authentication process, which makes the renovated space and commercial activities fit each other, adding to a constructed sense of authenticity. Based on the standardly renovated “modernized buildings with historical values”, investors can further customize their space to their specific needs, and this process is usually less supervised by the government and other actors, which shows the selective attitudes of the government towards preservation.

Concluding this chapter, various material condition of *Liyuan* buildings has been infrastructuralized in the displacement and authentication process. In the displacement prior to building renovation, the deteriorated living condition and business environment was infrastructuralized to restrict the potentials of housing inside *Liyuan* and propel residents and shopkeepers into relocating. In the renovation process, the government, construction teams and private investors alter the buildings' material condition to produce authenticity, but in different directions: the government tries to retain the historical genuineness of the renovated buildings by formulating standardized procedures and list of “valuable elements” to direct the work of construction teams, while the private investors made alterations to the roughly renovated space according to their needs, which might be contradictory with the government's practice but selectively ignored by the government.

The various material condition and practices involved in different stage of regeneration have brought distinct socio-material landscapes to different areas and streets within the historical quarters, even in the same neighborhood, which will be further described in Chapter 6. The unreconciled condition was mainly determined by the divided administration of the *Dabaodao* neighborhood: it belongs to two urban districts that progressed differently in regeneration. The dominant role of the government and the power relations inside and around it emerged to greatly influence the regeneration projects, as already proved by the selectivity in building renovation. This process will be examined in Chapter 6.

Chapter 6 State's involvement and its power implications

This chapter examines the internal and external relations concerning the local state, the dominant actor, and other actors of the gentrifying regeneration projects and its implications on power relationships. The gentrifying regeneration is a coercive and violent process, forcibly replacing local community of residents and shopkeepers with upgraded industries and social groups, which reinforced the inequalities and development issues under an authoritarian urban regime.

Given its attempts to attract industries, consumers, and talents to revitalize the local economy in regeneration programs, the government also plays an entrepreneurial role in promoting urban (re)development. However, besides this classic critique of entrepreneurialism in urban governance from David Harvey (1989), more detailed political economic mechanisms and unequal power relations can be found in regeneration of heritage buildings and historical quarters in Qingdao. On the one hand, new mechanisms of governing and promoting regeneration projects were developed within the government to deal with challenges like administrative and departmental division and low efficiency. On the other hand, the accumulative nature of regeneration projects implies the government's neglect of the wellbeing of local residents, who are usually dispossessed in housing expropriation and following development.

In this process, the *Liyuan* buildings still play a decisive role, showing their specific affordances as they become relational urban "things" (Lieto, 2017). Its heritage status demands more preservation and restricts the possibility of large-scale demolition and construction to realize potential land value, thus defining the less violent form of housing expropriation; but it also serves as basis for culture-led regeneration and gentrification as a novel mode of accumulation. Within the governing system, it also plays as the focus for debating and implementing different mechanisms and institutions concerning regeneration.

6.1 The relegation of power and responsibility to district governments

In Qingdao, the historical quarters being or to be renovated are all located in the two central districts: Shinan (市南, "city-south") District and Shibe (市北, "city-north") District, which almost equally divide the historical quarters. Since 2017, the power and responsibility of housing expropriation, building renovation, and subsequent development such as attracting investment and organizing events have been relegated from the municipal level government to the district level.

According to a municipal-level government official, the decision to relegate was the result of prior governmental endeavors to explore various approaches. Before the relegation, the

housing expropriation was controlled by the municipality, which was responsible for loan application and repayment and held the property rights of buildings. Meanwhile, district-level governments were only tasked with executing the expropriation orders. However, due to intractable and negotiating nature of housing expropriation, it was difficult for district governments to fully carry out the order without any policy flexibility and autonomy. Therefore, the decision was made to relegate the responsibility and give more autonomy to district governments, including the responsibility of loan application and repayment, the housing property rights, as well as future plans of development and attracting investments (Interview with Haoran, government official, Aug 19, 2022).

The relegation has incurred different progress within the renovated quarters, especially in the *Dabaodao* neighborhood, the major section of regeneration projects. As shown in the map (see Figure 3 in Chapter 3), *Dabaodao* is divided into two halves by Sifang Road, the boundary between Shinan District and Shibei District. The neighborhood used to be an organic whole in terms of economy, society, landscape, material condition of buildings, etc. (Demgenski, 2019), but discordance between its northern and southern halves in these aspects have gradually emerged since the relegation in 2017 and varying policies and progress among the two districts thereafter. In general, Shibei District has been progressing ahead of Shinan District in terms of housing expropriation, building renovation, and attracting investments. When the first renovated *Liyuan* building, *Guangxingli* in Shibei District, opened as “Qingdao International Design Center” in May 2020, most buildings in Shinan District haven't been fully expropriated, not to mention building renovation.

During most of the time in 2021 and 2022, the difference of regeneration progress between two districts have become more apparent, resulting in distinct socio-material landscapes. In the northern part where the renovation was finished, private investors gradually entered the neighborhood and opened business, attracting an increasing number of visitors. The renovated buildings and other updated infrastructures including newly paved pedestrian streets, plants, illumination, etc., together with the attractive symbols, installation arts and the flow of visitors brought a convivial atmosphere on the renovated streets.

Simultaneously, in the southern part where the renovation has not been fully implemented, a ruin-like atmosphere and landscape dominated even during the day, especially in comparison with its former liveliness (see Figure 8). Many roads were fully or partly blocked due to infrastructure construction with building materials disorderedly stacked on side of unblocked streets, most residents and local shopkeepers have moved out, visitors to the northern part seldom came to the southern part, empty *Liyuan* buildings looked like deserted ruins before renovation, and the “ghost streets” after resident displacement previously expected by residents have been temporarily realized. The socio-material condition of the southern part and the resultant landscape stood in stark contrast with the fancy and convivial ones of the northern part.

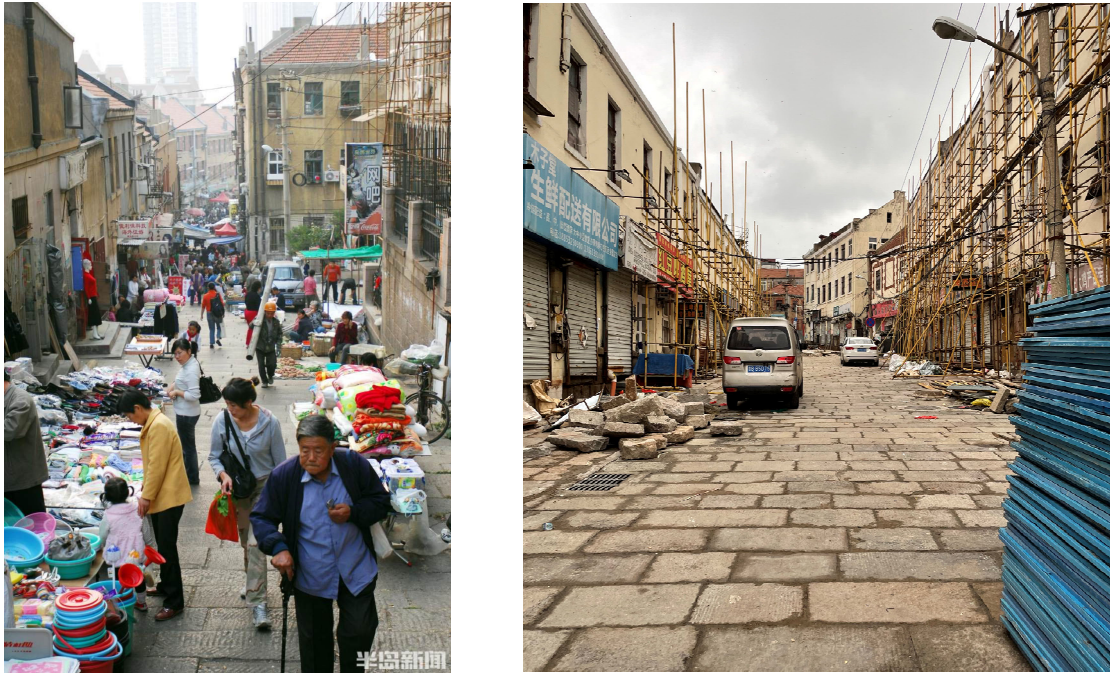


Figure 8: the streetscape of Huangdao Road on October 15, 2008 (left) and August 9, 2022 (right). Source: <http://news.bandao.cn/a/505209.html> (left); fieldwork photo by the author (right).

In summary, different atmosphere along with policies and present social groups formed contrasting socio-material landscapes in northern and southern parts of *Dabaodao* along the administrative boundary of the two districts. The combination and interaction of different material elements, such as brightness, visual effects, accessibility of roads, social composition of pedestrians, etc. in the spatiotemporal context of the neighborhood under regeneration might generate specific material agencies and exert influence on the social process of regeneration— attracting visitors or pushing residents out. From such perspective, the neighborhood under regeneration can be regarded as specific assemblages of material things (Bennett, 2010; McFarlane, 2011). The contrasting landscapes or assemblages stemmed from the administrative division and different policy practices of the two districts, including infrastructuralizing some aspects of assemblages to attract visitors or displace residents, but have exerted socio-material influences beyond this institutional dimension. Therefore, the concept of assemblage helps us to trace the power relations (Lieto, 2017) around the state's involvement and the material implication of government practices in regeneration.

6.2 The cooperation within municipal government

The regeneration of historical quarters is a comprehensive project involving different government departments. For example, the renovation and commercial development of buildings concerns changing the land use planning in advance, which is the responsibility of planning department. The detailed renovation plans of certain buildings need to meet requirements of safety, fire protection, and heritage preservation, which are respectively under charge of housing and construction department and cultural and tourism department. The

subsequent commercial development is the responsibility of cultural and tourism department and other more economy-oriented departments. The administrative division between Shinan and Shibe District further adds to this complicated division of responsibility.

To facilitate the cooperation between different government departments at different levels, the government set up some new institutions and mechanisms. One example is the “headquarters of preservation and regeneration of the historical quarters” at municipal and district levels since 2021. The municipal headquarters has a head office and four sub-headquarters in charge of Shinan District, Shibe District, the cruise port area, and the application for the UNESCO world heritage site. The head office is a temporary coordinating institution running relatively independently, divided into five branches responsible for general coordination, land planning, preservation and renovation, history and archive, as well as tourism. Its personnel are temporarily transferred from other government departments and companies.²⁹ The headquarters has an on-site office near the renovated area in which the personnel from the head office and the sub-headquarters of Shinan District work. Under the “three-year campaign of urban renewal and construction” since 2022, more political priority has been attached to urban renewal, especially of the historical quarters, on the municipal level. The mechanism of headquarters provides the municipality a tool to better coordinate different parties and control the progress.

Under the direction of the headquarters, the cooperation of different functional departments within the municipal government on regeneration-related issues have been facilitated. Some innovative mechanisms have been adopted, such as the joint approval of building renovation plans: instead of the former linear and bureaucratic sequence of approval that goes from one department to another one, departments responsible for planning, historical preservation, as well as housing and construction can communicate about their demands and approve the plans together (Interview with Haoran, government official, Aug 19, 2022).

At district level, another important mechanism is the state-owned “platform companies”. The governments of Shinan District and Shibe District have both set up their platform companies—Qingdao Haiming City Development Co., Ltd. and Shibe branch of Qingdao City Construction Investment Co., Ltd.—to deal with various affairs, including signing contracts with construction teams and different service providers, organizing festival events, financing regeneration projects, etc. They are the delegate of district governments in many situations. Without some restrictions within the government, platform companies can implement the policy with larger free space.

In the urban (re)development in China, state-owned local financing platforms (LFP) has been a common practice to finance the projects of local government through various financing instruments (He, 2019). However, the regeneration of historical quarters in Qingdao faces less challenges of financing with large amount of government investments, and the two district-level platform companies play a role more like a comprehensive implementor instead of a mere

²⁹ (2022). *Report on the institutional mechanism of the preservation and regeneration of Qingdao's historic quarters*. Internal government document collected during internship.

financing platform. Therefore, it is more appropriate to treat the platform companies as an innovation of government mechanism and to distinguish them from other financing platforms in China's urban development.

In summary, the municipal government of Qingdao has set up various new institutions and mechanisms as “institutional fix”³⁰ to facilitate the regeneration progress, including the headquarters, the joint approval mechanism, and the platform companies at the district level. These efforts show the government's determination to implement the regeneration projects and its tough attitudes towards the interest conflicts with residents and other actors, which will be introduced in the next section.

6.3 The interaction between government and society

With its entrepreneurial aims, the nature of the whole regeneration project of historical quarters of Qingdao is to revitalize local economy and generate more income by gentrifying the inner city with upscale industries and social groups. The coercive nature of the project can be shown from this broader political economy perspective of accumulation and dispossession.

Similar to what classical western gentrification theories describe, the historical inner city of Qingdao has been in decline in the past few decades, producing the rent gap between actual and potential rent. Different from these classical western gentrification cases that are “natural” results of the housing market, the (culture-led) regeneration of declining urban areas has been a state act with certain purposes, which also the most visible characteristic of Qingdao's case. Preceding unsuccessful attempts and the current initiative to regenerate the inner city can be regarded as the purposeful exploitation of the rent gap by the local state, in which the state acquires the land and housing at low costs through expropriation and rents them out at higher prices during subsequent commercial development. Nevertheless, for the case in Qingdao, it is not an easy process to intentionally direct the market to invest in inner city properties, and the local state has to initiate a lot of investment by itself first, without knowing whether it can successfully attract private investment. In the current round of redevelopment, the investment attracting was very difficult as first; only after the large-scale renovation of buildings had been implemented did more investors started to have confidence and contact the government about investment (Interview with Haoran, government official, Aug 19, 2022).

The rising attention to cultural preservation in China from the general public and central government (Wang et al., 2022b; Wu et al., 2022) has also influenced the gentrification and redevelopment process in Qingdao's inner city. During the time there were unclear consciousness of the value of *Liyuan* buildings, the government could choose to redevelop in a relatively easy and low-cost way of demolishing old buildings and sell the land to property developers. However, the recently increasing demand for heritage preservation restricts such

³⁰ Here the word “fix” is used as the metaphor referring solution to crisis brought by capitalist over-accumulation in a Marxist sense, such as in “spatial fix” or “scalar fix” (see Bok, 2019).

potential, while providing another way of capital accumulation for urban governments—culture-led gentrification by renovating buildings and creating a cultural and tourist quarter. Although the housing expropriation and renovation requires large amount of front-end investment, it seems the best way to stimulate the economy and generate incomes, and the heritage buildings become the infrastructure in process of generating economic values from cultural values. Here, in changing social and cultural contexts, *Liyuan* buildings show their multiple affordances or capabilities as material things (Lieto, 2017), unexpectedly transitioning from a deteriorated constructions in declining quarters to valuable cultural resources that can generate income and revitalize local economy in a certain way.

Nevertheless, this growth-oriented redevelopment mode is still detrimental to the local community. Although the government has claimed that the expropriation is the “project for people’s livelihood” and has already invested a lot in compensating expropriation (Interview with Haoran, Aug 19, 2022), it is still coercively imposing the will of some people on all residents. The material benefits of less empowered actors within the society, such as local shopkeepers and some residents unwilling to move out, are usually sacrificed and dispossessed in expropriation and following regeneration. For example, the monetary recompense offered to property owners through expropriation contracts with the government often proves insufficient to buy a new house in the city center or to be divided within the family of property owners:

You can't afford to buy a house in the local area. Around here, even if you buy a second-hand house, you need two million yuan. Like she said, if you are only given 1.5 or 1.6 million yuan, you will still be in debt, right? And you also need to decorate it. (Interview with Hua, local shopkeeper, Aug 11, 2022)

Alternatively, opting for property as compensation, instead of monetary equivalents, often entails relocating to suburbs that lack convenient access to the multitude of amenities, such as quality medical and educational resources, as well as local social networks and the pleasant climate in the city center (Interview with Hua, Aug 11, 2022; Interview with Haoran, Aug 19, 2022). Besides, tenants, such as those residing in *Liyuan* and local shopkeepers, are fully excluded from the decision and compensation process of the expropriation: once their landlords sign the expropriation contracts, they have to relocate to other places and undertake all extra costs. (Interview with Yanhua, local shopkeeper, Aug 11, 2022). In addition, all property owners and tenants have no right to share the benefits from future development of the neighborhood.

As a manifestation of this coercive process, the government uses different power techniques in housing expropriation and displacement of local residents and shopkeepers. For example, in the summer of 2022, shopkeepers on Huangdao Road were persuaded or forced to moved out by officials from different government departments through checking the business license and rental contract.

As common people, though you might earn much money [...] you have to

obey, even it sounds unpleasant [...] Why haven't I moved out? I already paid rent for a whole year that doesn't expire until March 8 next year, and I have complete business license, I have a complete set of all kinds of documents. Others have moved out; they dare not continue the business. They don't have business license. [...] Even so government officials still wanted me to move away quickly. (Interview with Yanhua, Aug 11, 2022)

Now the bureau of industry and commerce as well as the food and drug administration has come to inspect them [other local shopkeepers] [...] if you don't listen to them you'll be fined. Why? At first, we were all at the building of Sanjucheng Food shop [...] On the business licenses that we applied for at that time, our address is the address of Sanjucheng, No.73. After that building was demolished [...] we moved to the opposite of it. But they didn't change the address on business license for you. Materials such as business license were frozen due to the renovation and they didn't handle them for you, so the address couldn't be changed. And now the bureau of industry and commerce says they [the registered and real address] don't match. (Interview with Hua, Aug 11, 2022)

As a response to their powerlessness state, many shopkeepers and residents refer to themselves as “(little) common people” [(小)老百姓], showing their unwilling resignedness to the government. In the authoritarian institutional contexts of China, most of these unprivileged social groups don't possess enough political capacity to organize collective resistant actions and thus pose little threat to the legitimacy of the government. As a result, they become the silent victims of the dispossession initiated by the entrepreneurial local state. It is very likely that this coercive process in face of the authority, along with the loss of social connection and place attachment in the displacement process, influences the mental wellness of residents and non-residing tenants.

In conclusion, the regeneration project is driven by entrepreneurial aims, seeking to revitalize the local economy and attract upscale industries and social groups through gentrification. From a political economy perspective, the project exhibits a coercive nature characterized by processes of accumulation and dispossession. While the culture-led approach stimulates the economy and capitalizes on the cultural value of heritage buildings, it often overlooks the interests of the local community. Coercive practices disproportionately impact less empowered actors, including local shopkeepers and residents who are unwilling to move. The government's use of power techniques and the limited political capacity of affected groups further contribute to their status of disempowerment and dispossession. In an authoritarian urban regime, the unprivileged social groups have become silent victims, unable to organize collective resistance against the actions of the entrepreneurial local state.

Chapter 7 Conclusion and Discussion

In this research, it is argued that the heritage *Liyuan* buildings as material objects, together with other physical elements within the historical quarters of Qingdao, are infrastructuralized and employed by the state and other actors for specific purposes of displacement and authentication in the regeneration process. In material terms, the dilapidated material state and unfavorable living condition of *Liyuan* buildings and surrounding environment are first utilized in displacement of residents and local shopkeepers within the renovated quarters. Thereafter, the buildings are carefully renovated and altered respectively by construction teams and private investors, which is characterized by the selective emphasis of certain material elements and supervision from the government. Through this material transformation, the buildings are infrastructuralized in the authentication process, utilized to construct historical genuineness and authentic experiences for visitors.

At the same time, the process of infrastructuralizing for authentication is not restricted to the material sphere: it is also immaterially constructed by discursive practices in policy document and media coverage by emphasizing the historical genuineness, cultural context, and future vision as revitalized trendy hot spots. Nevertheless, the historical genuineness and resultant authenticity constructed by this discursive framing process have been questioned by the actual selective renovation practices, and the discourse framework usually omitted the disturbance to and benefit loss of residents and shopkeepers caused by the regeneration.

Due to the administrative division between the two districts and the resultant unreconciled progress inside the regenerated quarters, divided landscapes and atmosphere have emerged, indicating the material agency of the *Liyuan* buildings and other physical objects. Yet the infrastructuralizing and regeneration process is still dominated by the involvement of the state power. On the one hand, several modifications of institutions and mechanisms have been adopted at different government levels, such as the local platform companies and joint approval mechanism, to facilitate cooperation and operation concerning regeneration and following development. On the other hand, the interaction between the government and the local society has been unequal and coercive, in which residents can only accept the official discourse and policy with little right to bargain and resist. Under an entrepreneurial and authoritarian urban regime, the livelihoods and benefits of lower class “common people” have to give way to official development agenda of gentrifying regeneration.

This research contributes to the existing literature on urban redevelopment and heritage preservation by incorporating the theory of infrastructure and material agency. By doing so, it sheds light on the complex roles material objects play and the diverse dimensions through which state power influences urban redevelopment. Furthermore, this research advocates for a fairer approach to the planning and implementation of urban regeneration projects that takes into account the losses experienced by both former homeowners and tenants.

The following sections will further discuss some theoretical implications of empirical

findings and possible insights they provide for future research.

7.1 Process of authentication

The authentication process presented in the case of Qingdao mainly belongs to “cool” authentication (Cohen & Cohen, 2012) which, although claimed to be based on scientific knowledge and evidence, is actually “largely vague and devoid of firm institutional or legal basis” and “open to manipulation and contestation” (Cohen & Cohen, 2012, pp. 1299–1300). This argument is shown by the case of Qingdao that the government has the power to set up and implement the standards of categorizing and preserving “authentic” buildings, and although this authentication process is doubted by other participants of regeneration projects and residents, it has remained largely unchallenged.

Due to the limited research scope and time for data collection, this thesis doesn't explore the experiences of visitors in the authenticated and regenerated quarters, thus lacking enough evidence to draw a conclusion about the “hot” side of authentication shaped by tourists' experiences and subjective perceptions. However, the emergence of *wanghong* (网红, online celebrity) urbanism in China and its deliberate utilization by the government of Qingdao in regeneration projects may offer insights into the “hot” authentication. *Wanghong* urbanism generally refers to the “digitally mediated production and consumption of urban spaces and spectacles” in China, in which plenty of visitors flock to popular attractions to capture photographs or videos and share them on social media. It has also become a governmental policy objective to create such landscapes and foster *wanghong* economy (Zhang et al., 2022). Following some forerunners, the government in Qingdao has incorporated the goal of creating “*wanghong* streets” and “photography spots” within historical quarters in its policy documents³¹. The discourse surrounding *wanghong* has also frequently appeared in media articles as both a target and an achievement of the regeneration program. The concept of *wanghong* urbanism, wherein the appeal of specific landscapes was authenticated by visitors' act of photographing and sharing on social media, aligns with the “hot” mode of authentication, where the performativity in tourism blurs the boundary between the stage and audience (Cohen & Cohen, 2012) in an era of platform urbanism (Sadowski, 2020). In theory, the hot authentication mode can collaborate with the cool mode and coproduce authenticity or subvert the cool authentication process (Cohen & Cohen, 2012), while in the case of Qingdao, the potential hot authentication by tourists through spontaneous social media posting seems to be guided by the official agenda of creating *wanghong* objects. Therefore, exploring how *wanghong* urbanism can further evolve as a state-led authentication process based on previous authentication efforts with spontaneity from individual visitors, can be a promising direction of further investigation into the case of Qingdao and the politics of authentication in China's

³¹ Qingdao Municipal Government. (2019, Dec 11). *Operation plan of urban quality improvement in Qingdao (2019-2022)*, online government document. http://www.qingdao.gov.cn/zwgk/zdgg/xzql/yhyshj/zmsx/202010/t20201019_500255.shtml, accessed on Jan 13, 2022.

culture-led urban regeneration.

7.2 Role of material elements and agency

The role of material elements in the infrastructuralizing and authentication is another core concern of this thesis. The material condition of *Liyuan* buildings and surrounding environments can not only be utilized as infrastructures by the state, but also exert its own agency and unexpected effects.

First, the material condition of historical buildings has shown different agencies in various period of regeneration. Initially, the material obduracy or immovability of historical buildings rendered it impossible to preserve off-site as movable relics, and their physical situatedness in inner city determines the unfeasibility to divert economic activities away from this central location and turn historical quarters into “urban museums” in vacuum. Therefore, the redevelopment plan of historical buildings had to consider their social and economic contexts. The material form of low-rising *Liyuan* buildings used to be seen as a barrier to large-scale development and in danger of demolition and replacement to make space for high-rising property development. However, when the cultural values of *Liyuan*'s material existence were widely recognized in an immaterial way (through discourse and public communication concerning heritage preservation) and precluded the possibility of demolition, the material forms of historical buildings presented its capacity of accommodating cultural and leisure industries. Therefore, it was the material condition of historical buildings that determined the culture-led regeneration as the strategy of redeveloping historical quarters, which plans to preserved the material existence of *Liyuan* at the original site and attract culture-related industries that can be accommodated inside *Liyuan* buildings. Here, the buildings have borne multiple affordances, namely the properties determining how things can be used, and resembled both the enabling and the constraining potential of materiality in relation with its social functions (Lieto, 2017).

Second, the concept of assemblage may be promising for guiding future research, although it is not extensively adopted in this research. The two main connotations of assemblages in critical urban studies, namely as “socio-material transformation” and “urban policy mobilities” (McFarlane, 2011), have both emerged in the regeneration projects. On the one hand, the displacement and renovation process has produced unexpected distinct socio-material landscapes and assemblages within the renovated quarters, as already elaborated in Chapter 4. On the other hand, the “preservative utilization” or “preservation and regeneration” as a specific strategy of redeveloping urban historical quarters in Qingdao has been a result of policy learning and mobility courses. Similar practices started from western countries, were initially implemented in China in first-tier cities from the 2000s, and finally arrived in Qingdao's inner city regeneration, which imitated previous successful cases in China especially Xintiandi in Shanghai (Demgenski, 2015). Like the global travelling of skyscraper as a network effect (Lieto, 2017), the mobility of regenerating historical quarters with some extent of

preservation can be seen as an assemblage, which is not limited in policy sphere but entails certain material aspects due to its intervention in the urban material composition. Both the two connotations stress the relational characteristic and socio-material composition (McFarlane, 2011). A more comprehensive elaboration of this double assemblage process requires a more detailed description and critical analysis of the policy process and the urban transformation during the earlier stages of regeneration, the data for which might be hard to collect. However, due to the emergent and ever-changing characteristics of assemblage, it is promising to keep tracking possible new dynamics emerging from future evolution of the regeneration program.

7.3 Role of the state and its political implications

The role of the state in this thesis can be analyzed on two different levels or scales: the macro political economic contexts of the regeneration projects and the micro power dynamics in infrastructuralizing and authentication process.

The macro level of political economic contexts has been touched upon in Chapter 6. In the context of urban developmentalism inter-city competition, urban governments in China have become entrepreneurial actors, for which new chances of economic growth are one of the highest priorities. Therefore, the regeneration of historical quarters in Qingdao can be regarded as part of the broader developmental strategy of the inner city. The economic significance of regeneration projects also means that for the government, the project implementation outweighs many other considerations, such as the benefits of local social groups—residents and tenant shopkeepers. This prioritization of regeneration and redevelopment has led to multiple coercive and/or persuasive power techniques in displacement of local social groups. However, due to the provision of substantial compensation to property owners through housing expropriation contracts, most of homeowners welcomed the expropriation and displacement at the cost of the minority of property owners along with tenants and shopkeepers who may have their benefits sacrificed and oppose the regeneration. Hence, the regeneration projects can be regarded as a form of “hegemony” in the Gramscian sense, in which the state assumes the dominant and omnipresent role and the official ideology of entrepreneurial redevelopment prevails with the consent of most individuals (Zhao, 2017).

At the micro level, the state's dominant role in infrastructuralizing process also has its political implications and might even change the operational way of the state power. Chu (2014) describes the “infrastructuralization of state power” in her analysis of the displacement of residents in another Chinese urban redevelopment project, in which both the state violence and civil resistance were operated through the disrepair of housing and political infrastructures and led to unexpected political sensibilities. Following her theorization, in the case of Qingdao, how the state, local social groups, and other actors have treated the infrastructuralized *Liyuan* buildings in their daily interactions and performativity of state power (Zhao, 2022) is also worth further examination.

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Appendix 1 List of news articles for discourse analysis

Category	Title	Author	Date	Source	URL
Newspaper articles	"901" has been nicely transformed, go check it out	Xiaoxiao Liu	May 9, 2019	Bandao Metropolis News	http://bddsb.bandao.cn/pc/bddsb/20190509/ArticeIA09002YQ.htm
	Paving stone roads and erecting 5G smart light poles	Chunxiao Fu	May 26, 2020	Qingdao Evening News	https://epaper.qingdaonews.com/qdwb/html/2020-05/26/content_18597_3306937.htm
	Urban regeneration: revitalizing old towns with industries	Kai Wang	May 28, 2020	Qingdao Daily	https://epaper.guanhai.com.cn/conpaper/qdrb/html/2020-05/28/content_18546_3295703.htm
	Old quarter's "application for world heritage" tells the long and beautiful story of Qingdao	Wei Li, Jingyu Mi, Yu Zhang	July 23, 2020	Qingdao Daily	https://www.dailyqd.com/epaper/html/2020-07/24/content_287718.htm
	The renovation of Liyuan: how to gather the "hustle and bustle" again	N/A	August 11, 2021	Qingdao Daily	https://www.dailyqd.com/epaper/html/2021-08/11/content_319464.htm
	Diversified capital invests in Qingdao's urban renewal	Meng Wang	November 1, 2021	Qingdao Daily	https://epaper.guanhai.com.cn/conpaper/qdrb/html/2021-11/01/content_18543_5224561.htm
	Dabaodao is coming back	Meng Wang	November 30, 2021	Qingdao Daily	https://epaper.guanhai.com.cn/conpaper/qdrb/html/2021-11/30/content_18545_5370373.htm
	Wings of "butterfly" are flapping on Zhuzhou Road	Tao Yi	January 11, 2022	Qingdao Daily	https://epaper.guanhai.com.cn/conpaper/qdrb/html/2022-01/11/content_18544_7157607.htm
	Three years of campaign, work out new achievements, good reputation and new atmosphere	Bingjie Wang	February 10, 2022	Qingdao Daily	https://www.dailyqd.com/epaper/html/2022-02/10/content_334541.htm
	The flag is the only goal; once decided, take action; once the action is taken, carry it out to completion and do it well	Bingjie Wang, Dong Liu, Jianliang Zhou et al.	February 10, 2022	Qingdao Daily	https://www.dailyqd.com/epaper/html/2022-02/10/content_334543.htm
The urban regeneration and construction in Qingdao	Bingjie Wang	March 26, 2022	Qingdao Daily	https://epaper.qingdaonews.com/html/q	

	are forming a “grand picture”				drb/20220326/qdrb1450723.html
	Sample section of Hai Po Road in Sifang Road Neighborhood will open at the end of next month	Ruixin Yu	March 26, 2022	Qingdao Daily	https://epaper.qingdaonews.com/html/qdrb/20220326/qdrb1450743.html
	The return of dabaodao: 18 Li and 79 Yuan revives "hustle and bustle"	Ruixin Yu	April 20, 2022	Qingdao Daily	https://epaper.guanhai.com.cn/conpaper/qdrb/html/2022-04/20/content_18546_6026605.htm
	Go to “Jieli” and breathe in the air of art and literature	Wei Li	May 23, 2022	Qingdao Daily	https://epaper.guanhai.com.cn/conpaper/qdrb/html/2022-05/23/content_18549_6168408.htm
	In historic quarters, "new business" is active and "old stories" are heard	Dong Liu	September 13, 2022	Qingdao Daily	https://epaper.guanhai.com.cn/conpaper/qdrb/html/2022-09/13/content_18543_6717733.htm
	The old Street, where the flowers of history are reborn into the splendor of the present.	Yan Cui	February 6, 2023	Qingdao Daily	https://epaper.guanhai.com.cn/conpaper/qdrb/html/2023-02/06/content_18549_7285915.htm
	"Shang Jieli - Stroll in the Spring" Tourism and Art Season is started	Meng Wang	March 17, 2023	Qingdao Daily	https://epaper.guanhai.com.cn/conpaper/qdrb/html/2023-03/17/content_18548_7450677.htm
	“Bursting” with vitality, the historical quarters “widely” accept new business	Meng Wang	May 31, 2023	Qingdao Daily	https://epaper.guanhai.com.cn/conpaper/qdrb/html/2023-05/31/content_18546_7761964.htm
Government's official news articles	Strengthen the conservation and utilization, tell the story of the old city, and enhance the urban quality	N/A	July 10, 2019	Qingdao Government Net	http://www.qingdao.gov.cn/zwgk/xxgk/zygh/gkml/gzxx/202010/t20201018_412802.shtml
	Emphasizing both preservation and utilization, the historical quarters of Shibei District, Qingdao are revitalized	N/A	April 27, 2022	Official social media account of Shibei District Government	https://www.thepaper.cn/newsDetail_forward_17833701
Online news articles	New industry empowers old city revitalization! Opening ceremony of the pilot project for preservation and renewal of qingdao's historic urban areas was held	Xiaoxiao Liu	May 28, 2020	Bandao News	http://news.bandao.cn/a/374033.html

As soon as you leave the train station, you can see the sea! Renovation of Qingdao Bay demolishes of the first "sea view building"!	N/A	February 19, 2021	Bandao News	http://news.bandao.cn/a/466602.html
Number one by one and let each piece of stone accurately "go home"! Qingdao's century-old Huangdao Road has started renovation and a pedestrian street will be built	Lingling Xiao	May 28, 2021	Bandao News	http://news.bandao.cn/a/505209.html
Hualian Mall has been demolished, is the revival of Zhongshan Road still far away?	Meng Wang	August 5, 2021	Qingdao News	https://news.qingdao-news.com/qingdao/2021-08/05/content_22826093.htm
Qingdao's largest courtyard complex began renovation, Weixian Road No. 19 will be transformed into a trendy hitting hot spot	Liping Wang	October 13, 2021	Bandao News	http://news.bandao.cn/a/556382.html
How to revitalize zhongshan road? The "transformation like a butterfly" of liyuan cluster is the first step!	Bohong Song	October 16, 2021	Qingdao News	https://news.qingdao-news.com/qingdao/2021-10/16/content_22927222.htm
Renovating and upgrading 14 roads! This old quarter of Qingdao accelerates its renewal	Jianliang Zhou & Jingyao Wu	November 7, 2021	Qingdao News	https://house.qingdaonews.com/content/2021-11/07/content_22958049.htm
The subway will be opened, the heritage included in the provincial planning ... the regeneration of Zhongshan Road ushered in major opportunities	Bohong Song	December 3, 2021	Qingdao News	https://news.qingdao-news.com/qingdao/2021-12/03/content_22993895.htm
Creating a trendy and entertaining neighborhood for shopping, leisure, culture and tourism, Dabaodao will "burst" new vitality	Qimeng Sun & Wenchao Liu	December 13, 2021	Qingdao News	https://house.qingdaonews.com/content/2021-12/13/content_23006952.htm
[Dialogue with Renewers] Yide Si: How can Qingdao's Urban Renewal solve the "Parking Problem"?	Bei Li & Bin Xu	April 28, 2022	Qingdao News	https://news.qingdao-news.com/qingdao/2022-04/28/content_23184052.htm
The old streets of Qingdao in the nursery rhyme, turned into the new wanghong check-in spot	Dong Liu	May 13, 2022	Qingdao Daily Net	https://www.dailyqd.com/guanhai/178787_1.html

	The “water tap” returns to Dabaodao, and the bustle is back!	Qimeng Sun	March 30, 2023	Qingdao Daily Net	https://www.dailyqd.com/guanhai/245964_1.html
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Appendix 2 List of policy documents for discourse analysis

Category	Title	Authoring department	Date	URL
Online policy documents	Preservation Plan of the Famous Historical and Cultural City of Qingdao (2011-2020)	Qingdao Municipal Government	2015	http://cmsdept.qingdao.gov.cn:8081/n28356038/upload/170904171219928640/170904172326951787.pdf
	Regulations for the Management of the Urban Purple Line	Qingdao Municipal Bureau of Natural Recourses and Planning	April 3, 2019	http://www.qingdao.gov.cn/zwgk/xxgk/zygh/gkml/gwfg/202010/t20201018_427414.shtml
	Operation Plan of Urban Quality Improvement Campaign in Qingdao (2019-2022)	Qingdao Municipal Government	December 11, 2019	http://www.qingdao.gov.cn/zwgk/zdggk/xzql/yhyshj/zmsx/202010/t20201019_500255.shtml
	Management Measures for Building Facades in Qingdao	Qingdao Municipal Government	February 12, 2020	http://www.qingdao.gov.cn/zwgk/zdggk/fgwj/fggz/xxyxgz/202112/t20211212_3984044.shtml
	Report on the work of the Shinan District government in 2021	Shinan District Government	January 22, 2021	http://www.qdsn.gov.cn/n16/n31281138/n31281165/n31281170/210125155644774174.html
	Qingdao Territorial Spatial Master Plan (2020-2035) (Exposure Draft)	Qingdao Municipal Bureau of Natural Recourses and Planning	July 2021	https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/vlicyhqXrnY5h7jWW77FCA
	Preservation Plan of the Famous Historical and Cultural City of Qingdao (2020-2035)	Qingdao Municipal Bureau of Natural Recourses and Planning	July 16, 2021	http://www.qingdao.gov.cn/zwgk/xxgk/zygh/ywfl/ghgl/202107/t20210716_3178815.shtml
	Recruitment Profile of Qingdao Haiming City Development Co., Ltd. and its wholly-owned subsidiaries in 2022	Qingdao Haiming City Development Co., Ltd.	March 9, 2022	http://www.qdsn.gov.cn/n16/n1175/n9964611/n31284028/n31284029/n31284030/220309142540230757.html
	The Team of Experts Assist in The Preservation and Regeneration of Historical Quarters in The City	Qingdao Municipal Bureau of Housing and Urban-rural Development	March 10, 2022	http://sjw.qingdao.gov.cn/exjsj3/exjsj47/202205/t202205146049772.shtml

	Announcement on the Public Consultation on the Regulations on the Preservation and Utilization of Historical Buildings and Traditional Style Buildings in Qingdao (Exposure Draft)	Qingdao Municipal Bureau of Housing and Urban-rural Development	May 27, 2022	http://sjw.qingdao.gov.cn/exjsjl/exjsj35/202205/t202205276079320.shtml
	Notice on the Addition of Members to the Expert Pool for the Conservation and Regeneration of Qingdao's Historical Quarters	Headquarters of Preservation and Regeneration of the Historical Quarters in Qingdao	August 8, 2022	http://zrzygh.qingdao.gov.cn/gggs/ghtg/202208/t202208096303994.shtml
Internal government documents during internship	Report on the Status of Protection and Regeneration of Historical Quarters in Qingdao	Qingdao Municipal Bureau of Housing and Urban-rural Development	August 30, 2021	N/A
	Work Plan on Strengthening Fire Protection in Preservation and Regeneration Projects of Historical District	Headquarters of Preservation and Regeneration of the Historical Quarters in Qingdao, etc.	November 2, 2021	N/A
	Assessment Measures for Qingdao's Urban Regeneration and Urban Construction Campaign in 2022	Headquarters of Preservation and Regeneration of the Historical Quarters in Qingdao	March 11, 2022	N/A
	Report on the mechanism of Protection and Regeneration of Historical Quarters in Qingdao	N/A	August 2022	N/A
	Outline of the Summary of Experiences in the Overall Conservation and Regeneration of Historic Areas for Cities	N/A	August 11, 2022	N/A
Policy documents posted in site	A letter to the residents in courtyards in which housing has been expropriated	The housing watcher group at the expropriation office of Zhongshan Road	October 12, 2021	N/A
	Decision of the People's Government of Shinan District in Qingdao on the Implementation of Housing Expropriation of Shanty Towns (Huangdao Road No. 36 and Other Buildings) in Zhongshan Road Area Historical and Cultural Quarter, Shinan District	Shinan District Government	November 8, 2021	http://www.qdsn.gov.cn/n16/n31281138/n31281142/n31281143/n31281147/n31282781/211129100429628886.html
	Public Notice of the Negotiated Selection of the	Housing Expropriation	November 8, 2021	N/A

	Appraisal Institution for the Shantytown Housing Expropriation Project (Huangdao Road No. 36 and Other Buildings) in Zhongshan Road Historical and Cultural Quarter in Shinan District	and Resettlement Center, Shinan District		
	Public Notice of Assessment of House Expropriation on State-owned Land for Shantytown Renovation Project (Huangdao Road No. 36 and Other Buildings) in Zhongshan Road Area Historical and Cultural Quarters in Shinan District, Qingdao City	Housing Expropriation and Resettlement Center, Shinan District	December 20, 2021	N/A
	Public Notice of the Evaluation Results of the Shantytown Housing Expropriation Project (Huangdao Road No. 36 and Other Buildings) in the Zhongshan Road Area Historical and Cultural Quarter	Housing Expropriation and Resettlement Center, Shinan District	December 20, 2021	N/A
	Public Notice of the Deadline for Signing the Expropriation Compensation Contract for the Shantytown Housing Expropriation Project (Huangdao Road No. 36 and Other Buildings) of Zhongshan Road Area Historical and Cultural Quarter in Shinan District	Housing Expropriation and Resettlement Center, Shinan District	December 20, 2021	N/A
	Measures for Selection and Positioning of Residential/Non-residential Houses for Off-site Resettlement in the Shantytown Housing Expropriation Project (Huangdao Road No. 36 and Other Buildings) of Zhongshan Road Historical and Cultural Quarter in Shinan District	Housing Expropriation and Resettlement Center, Shinan District	December 20, 2021	N/A
	A letter to the expropriated people in the Shantytown Housing Expropriation Project of the Zhongshan Road Historical and Cultural Quarter in Shinan District	Qingdao Simianbafang Housing Demolition and Relocation Engineering Co., Ltd.	December 22, 2021	N/A