

From 'Imposition' to 'Borrowing'

Zhanjiang Modern Planning Practice and City Space Transformation

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Abstract

In China, western planning and urbanization ideas dominated the urban modernization discourse. Meanwhile, the two characteristics of international planning diffusion, namely 'Imposition' and 'Borrowing,' occurred. First, 'planning imposition,' that is, colonial planning was implanted, and foreign municipal progress filled the gap of the local place before 1945. Second, 'planning borrowing,' China takes the initiative to introduce the Soviet model in response to urbanization and modernization in the mid-20th century. Since the 1970s, the methodology of transnational comparative history has been applied to the study of planning history, including the driving forces, institutional mechanisms, and persistent effect of the interaction of planning communication between cities and regions. This paper sets Zhanjiang planning history as an example. It presents a prism to examine the influence of Western planning and Soviet planning on many Chinese cities in the 20th. This paper investigated the processes, agents, and impacts by drawing on 'international planning diffusion.'

Keywords

urban planning history, international planning diffusion, city space transformation, Soviet planning, kouang-tchéou-wan

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INTRODUCTION

Over the centuries, urban space formed and the organizational structures, planning concepts and technical approaches spread among cities, countries and continents. Historically, different researchers explored the ideal form of the city and changed the planning technology. In the 20th century, relevant exchanges exploded following the occurrence of the discipline of modern urban planning and the development of academic language and tools. The early high-frequency planning activities and the flow of related knowledge in Western Europe and United States have attracted the attention of planning historians. Interest soon globally expanded; and during the complex diffusion of knowledge, specific planning activities expanded within colonial empires. Recent attention has been attracted on the interest of international flows of planning knowledge and practice within the former Soviet world, the West and the former colonial world.

In the category of planning discipline system, the one-way shift of classical theories and ideas from the empire is regarded as the research subject in traditional planning history studies. This study further focuses on the broader forces and specific practical contents of shaping urban space form. Zhanjiang will be studied under the broader theme of the international planning diffusion path and mechanism, and the implementation and localization of planning ideas. The research outcome has a potential academic value; however, very limited investigations are available on this planning. The transformation of Zhanjiang from rural space to two distinct urban spaces was driven by the idea of inevitable 'imposition' and uncritical 'borrowing'; and meanwhile the diffusion mechanism produced adaptability and adjustment with the reality. This paper attempts to explore the formation and development of the planning thought and practice movement and to examine the operation of specific individuals, institutions, group networks and governments in the diffusion mechanism, as well as the possible structural relationship with the world economic pattern.

THE CHARACTERISTICS AND PRINCIPLES OF 'INTERNATIONAL PLANNING DIFFUSION'

A process is often referred to as 'diffusion' by planning historians, which means the spread of planning knowledge within and between countries. How and why this process works is an important topic in the field of planning history. The term is used in the physical sciences to conceptualize the natural dispersal of. Planning historians borrowed it from the innovation-diffusion theories developed around the mid-20th century within the social sciences, particularly economics and anthropology/cultural geography. Some new findings indicated that the international urban planning movement in the early 20th century existed in the broader 'international urban', and some scholars regarded urban planning as part of the theory of world economic globalization and international relations.



Fig. 1. Area of the leased territory of Kouang-tchéou-wan 1899. The red dotted line in the figure was the scope of the leased territory, Chékam was the original town, Fort-Bayard was the planned military port, and Dongying was the planned commercial port (not yet built).

The UN Report on Global Settlement 2009 summarizes a typology of diffusion into two main channels, namely 'imposition' and 'borrowing' (UN-Habitat 2009). Imposition includes the use of authoritarian mechanisms not only to enable the transfer of planning models to foreign countries, but also to facilitate their institutionalization once in those countries. For its part, borrowing has to do with the 'voluntary' acquisition of planning models typically through synthesis, selection or uncritical reception¹.

Typically three major concerns have been evident in historical studies of diffusion²: (1) The mechanisms of diffusion—for example, key personalities, reformist or professional milieux, intergovernmental actions, etc. (2) The extent to which ideas and practices are changed in their diffusion. How they are applied in specific national settings and why differences are apparent. (3) The fundamental causation of diffusion. For example, how much does it mirror the larger economic, political or cultural contexts of international relations? Thus, a complete list of channels or conduits that have historically been employed to diffuse planning models must include

the following four (UN-Habitat 2009): Government, Educational and scientific research institutions, Professional associations and journals, and International development agencies³.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Zhanjiang, formerly known as Kouang-tchéou-wan, a prefecture-level city under the jurisdiction of Guangdong province, locates on the Lei Zhou Peninsula in the southernmost part of mainland China. According to the unearthed cultural relic research, Zhanjiang city has been inhabited as far back as the late Neolithic age (about 4,000 years ago between the Xia and the Shang dynasty). In November 1899, the Sino-French Treaty of Mutual Agreement on the Leased Territory of Kouang-tchéou-wan was signed, which included the land under the prefecture of Lei Zhou and Gao Zhou respectively, and some islands and the bay (Figure 1). In August 1945, China and France signed the convention on the Settlement of the Leased Territory of Kouang-tchéou-wan. It was set to a city established as one of the administrative divisions of the state, officially renamed Zhanjiang.

At the end of the 19th century, the leased territory of Kouang-tchéou-wan was the outcome of the western empire's competition for space power in China. At this time, with the emergence of the world economy and the development of capitalism in the 19th century, the city was not regarded as a public utility, but as a private business venture. Because of the need of export market required by the huge industrial capacity of the industrial revolution and the demand for raw materials and the expansion, the state machine joined the competition of the western society. The empire formed a global network of cities in the world economy through colonial activities. Kouang-tchéou-wan was the type of economic non-immigrant port city in this process. In the mid-19th century, the Indochina Federation was established by France on the Indo-china Peninsula in Southeast Asia. Half a century later, in an Attempt to gain further control of Southeast China, Indochina's governor, Paul Doumer, included the leased territory of kouang-tchéou-wan in the regional network of military ports. Geographically not bordering Indochina and not large enough to be a province, Kouang-tchéou-wan was brought under the jurisdiction of Tonkin and had its own subordinate civil administration unit.

After the founding of new China, A new path for national development was urgently needed. Faced with a domestic environment ravaged by wars for a hundred years since the opium war, and the diplomatic dilemma that most western countries refused to recognize the new socialist regime, a 'one-sided' national strategy was selected resolutely: 'take the Soviet Union as the teacher', learn from the successful experience of Soviet socialist construction, and rebuild the new China. The policy, 'construction of key cities in co-ordination with the national economic development programme' and 'establishment of an urban planning structure to strengthen city development', was promulgated at a conference on urban development held by the Central Finance and Economic Commission in September 1952. This policy had an important influence on China's urban planning during the First Five-Year Plan (1953-58).

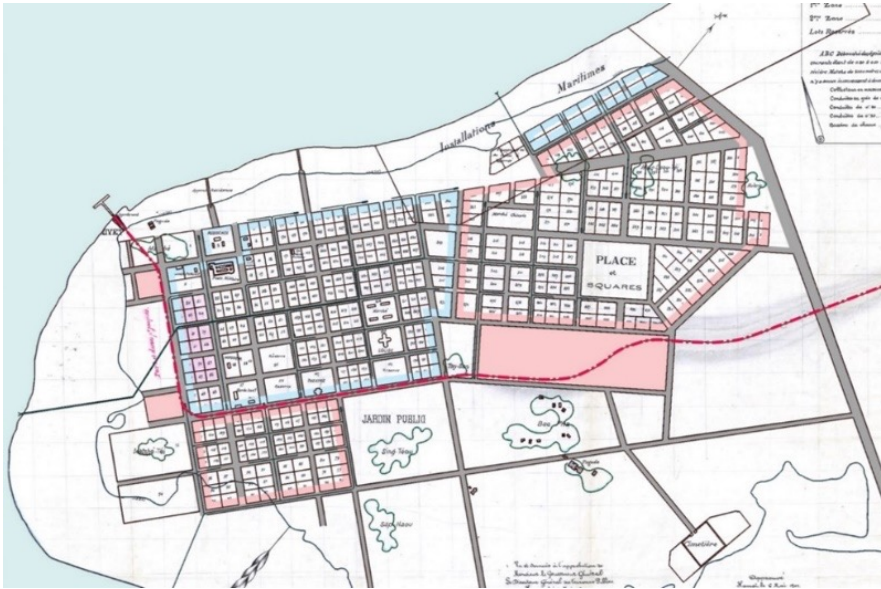


Fig. 2. Plan de Lotissement de Quang Tchêu 1901. In the figure, the land was divided into two areas, marked in red and blue respectively, and sold at two prices. The figure clearly showed the subdivision of the land, as well as the location of public space and administrative and military buildings.

THE PERIOD OF COLONIAL PLANNING (1898-1945)

In 1898, Indochina planned to lease Kouang-tchéou-wan, and in 1911, the governor of France issued a decree to reorganize the administration of Kouang-tchéou-wan. During this period there was a shift from military control to civilian administration: Beaumont, the major general of the French navy, organized the survey and military management of the leased territory, and military engineers gave the layout of the town (plan d'alignement and d'allotissement) up to the implementation of civil political autonomy. On May 6, 1899, Paul Doumer, the governor of Indochina, proposed a decision on the new Kouang-tchéou-wan naval base construction at a meeting of the Indochina Defense Committee, the status of which was equal to that of Saigon port, and to reduce Haiphong port to a second-class base. On January 27, 1901, Paul Doumer decided to appoint a committee to determine the city limits and boundaries of Fort-Bayard which was originally served as a military base, and planned for subdivision and alignment of land (plan d'alignement and d'allotissement) within this area. In the same year, the subdivision of land for the commercial port of Dong Ying which was on the other side of the Maxie River was completed (Figure 2). The master plan for Fort-Bayard finished in 1911 (Figure 3). Global geographic survey and urban cadastral project launched. In the whole region, military engineers carried out the planning and construction of civil infrastructure such as docks and highways. Road planning and administrative and military construction projects in newly-built cities came into operation, following the urban renovation and related facilities construction of local old cities.

In 1919, the Grand Paris Competition was held to find a good path for the post-war urban reconstruction in France. Taking this event as an opportunity, the plan for the Expansion, Renovation and Improvement of Towns (Projets D'extension D'aménagement et D'embellissement des Villes), also known as Loi Dite Cornudet, was promulgated, and this city planning law was extended to Indochina the following year. At this time, Albert Sarraut, governor of Indochina, proposed a comprehensive economic development plan for Indochina in 1921, and embarked on the reform of Indochina's public works sector (Travaux publics) and established the urban planning research group (Travaux D'urbanisme). Later, in the work records of the Indochina committee on Kouang-tchéou-wan, French planning terms such as D'extension D'aménagement et D'embellissement des Villes began to be recorded. Urban expansion and new area development in the old city came into effect under this background. After 1939, in the shadow of the Second World War, Kouang-tchéou-wan became a major International relief routes, with the rapidly increasing of population and the urbanisation. In 1945, the government of the republic of China recovered Kouang-tchéou-wan and then established Zhanjiang.

THE INTERNATIONAL PLANNING DIFFUSION IN 1898-1945

THE MAIN BODY AND KEY FIGURES IN PLANNING DIFFUSION.

The art and knowledge was used to annotation the French permanent ideology by the colonial authorities. The economic development of the colony was called value development (mise en valeur), in which the colonial government played a key role. Such as Paul Doumer, governor of Indochina, put his plans to invest heavily in infrastructure into practice, and Albert Sarraut took his efforts to promote his master plan for economic modernisation in the French colonial sphere. The metropolitan powers also promoted planning diffusion, for example, Gaston Doumergue, president of France decreed in 1928 to expand and improve Indochinese cities and towns.

In the early planning of Kouang-tchéou-wan, the governor, geographic surveyor, cadastral planner and civil engineer jointly determined the overall space form of the city, and urban planning proved to be an important tool to consolidate regional political power (Figure 4). Geographic surveyors rapidly and effectively developed the basis for large-scale plans, especially regional cadastral plans, including Land planning, cadastral planning, plot planning(plans fonciers, plans cadastraux, and plans parcellaires), after upgrading Indochina's military aerial photography. Cadastral planners developed cadastral plans as tools to impose a new economic and spatial order on the territory. Land surveyors were explorers, resource appraisers, urban planners, delineators of routeway, and shapers of urban and rural landscapes. In the 19th century, the civil engineers of Ponts-et-Chaussees became the backbone of public works management in France which primarily responsible for the design of bridges and roads in the early years, and expanded into territorial planning schemes in the 20th century



Fig. 3. Figure 3 – Plan de Fort-Bayard 1911. The political center of Dong Ying port was moved here to form a comprehensive function of politics, military and commerce. In the end, only the construction of the political and military area was realized.

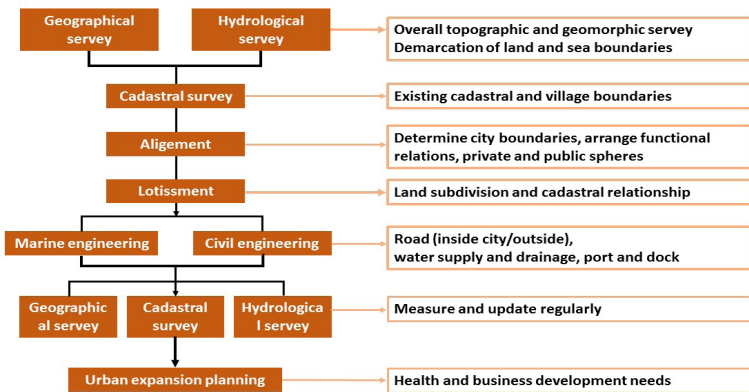


Fig. 4. The whole stage planning process diagram in colonial planning 1898-1945. Multiple technical departments were involved in the planning, and the nature of the planning was different in the early stage and the later stage under the influence of the international planning diffusion.

Early important colonial ports and towns were laid out by military engineers. French architects and city planners were responsible for the development and expansion of city planning in big cities. Under the technical guidance of engineers in the Public works institution of the colonial empire, local public works departments were responsible for carrying out these plans. Ernest Hebrard played an important role in the socialist garden city planning program and continued as chief planner for Thessalonika and Indochina.

ELEMENTS AND VEHICLES THAT FACILITATE THE PLANNING DIFFUSION.

Since the beginning of the 20th century, the relevant professional institutions and departments in Indochina have been gradually established and improved. In 1899, The Indochina Geography Office came into existence, and then Service Géographique de l'Indochine and Service du Cadastre et de la Topographie were set up. The Service des Bantiments Civils de l'Indochine was founded in the early years, and Service Central des Bâtiments Civils was established by decree in 1923, while the Organisation de l'inspection Générale et des Circonscriptions de Travaux Publics was reformed.

The curriculum and pedagogy of the teaching system in French and colony was one of the main channels for the dissemination of the western planning model. In the early days, following the French absolutist tradition, learning the technical, architectural design course at the École Polytechnique, French military engineers were part of a separate division. Later, engineers and architects mainly graduated from École des Ponts-et-Chaussees and France's École des Beaux Arts. The colonized natives received higher education training and public education services. Following French or Eurocentric concepts of spatial order on urban design and layout skills, École des Travaux Publics carried out local public engineering teaching and training.

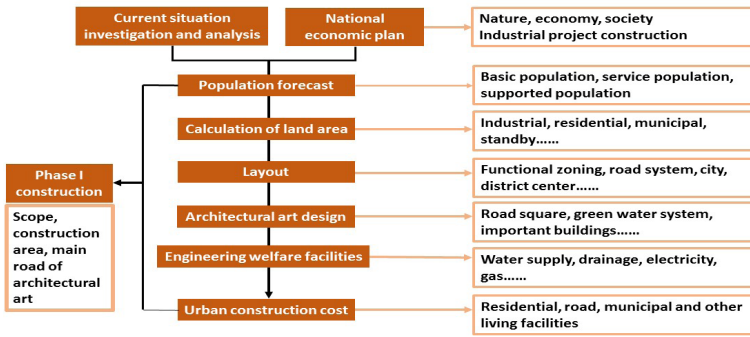


Fig. 5. Classical planning process in Soviet planning 1949-1975. The content fully reflect that the city was regarded as the factory and the planning was the embodiment of the national economic construction.

THE POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL FACTORS IN COLONIAL URBAN SPACE.

The French believed that their notion of civilization was or ought to be universal. In Indochina, French architects and spatial designers proceeded to design plans requiring adherence to a strictly Eurocentric moral order for all urban residents. Modernizing built space was an avowed aim of the French colonial project in Indochina. As a concept of centrality in Western ethos, modernization was inextricably intertwined with industrialization and the sociological process of rationalization. For Kouang-tchéou-wan, in order to determine the financial content and the allocation of resources, the colonial regime's economic system was a salient feature in addition to the space design criteria. In China, with rural settlements as strongholds, the systematic expansion of agriculture into undeveloped areas was an important means to enter and control the expansion of the field. The continuous transition from village to city was interrupted by colonialism. In the equilibrium network of human settlement activities, the concept of market economy was introduced, and land was transformed into a commodity that could be bought and sold on the market. At the same time the knowledge of cadastral and land was introduced systematically.

"Plan D'alignement and D'allotissement" are the means of spatial planning in Kouang-tchéou-wan. In order to meet the needs of aesthetics, health, safety, transportation and other aspects, matching the location of buildings and public areas was the historical feature of "Plan D'alignement" in France. To determine the boundary between the public domain and adjacent property, and to modernize and broaden public roads for the government, the administrative authority promulgates relevant laws. As a spatial manifestation of the urban land expansion of Paris, 'Lotissement' seems to be from the mid-19th century, but had been used a lot since the middle ages. For the purpose of construction, the bare land was divided and multiple adjacent real estate units with ownership or use rights were formatted. Through the above planning means, the space presents an open grid dominated by colonization and with the basic characteristics of capitalist economy.

THE PERIOD OF SOVIET PLANNING (1949-1975)

In 1954, Zhanjiang planning team by China Central City Construction Bureau and Zhanjiang City Construction Committee of the People's Government of a joint venture, formulated the total 3 edition in urban planning. Four expert meetings were held with experts from the Soviet (eg. Д·Д·Balajin ДМИТРИЙ ДМИТРИЕВИЧ БАРАГИН), and the Central Ministry of Urban Construction to discuss the theory of port urban planning, the economic and practical nature of the plan, the relationship between urban space and the details of urban design. The specification and drawings of the Preliminary Urban Planning of Zhanjiang (1955-1975) were finally completed in 1955. During this period, City planners played an active role in site selection of factories, functional division of urban land use, and design of residential districts (Figure 5).

THE INTERNATIONAL PLANNING DIFFUSION IN 1949-1975

THE MAIN BODY AND KEY FIGURES IN PLANNING DIFFUSION.

During the period of "comprehensive study of the Soviet union", the translation of Soviet planning works and periodicals was introduced to a great extent. The professionals in China and Soviet Union maintained communication intimately. A great deal of Soviet experts came to China for technical assistance, meanwhile Chinese personnel were selected to visit or study in the Soviet Union. From 1952 to 1959, the ministry of construction (the ministry of urban construction) invited А·С·Muxin (А.С.МУХИН), Д·Д·Balajin (ДМИТРИЙ ДМИТРИЕВИЧ БАРАГИН) and Я·Т·Salisafu (ЯковТерентьевичКравчук) to guide the work as the leaders of the Soviet Union's urban planning advisory group. With the experience of chief engineer of Leningrad (now St. Petersburg) Urban Design Institute, as the second group of experts to China for construction, Balajin had extensively and deeply guided the planning of various regions and cities in China. His technical assistance covered almost every major urban planning in the period of "the first five years".

ELEMENTS AND VEHICLES THAT FACILITATE THE PLANNING DIFFUSION.

Under the background of "comprehensive study of the Soviet Union", the State Planning Agency System was established. The competent agency, multi-ministry co-management in the national planning and implementation was manifested in the urban planning and construction management and design institutions in various regions and cities and the planning and design institutions with highly concentrated technical strength. At the same time, according to the Soviet Union's planning system, the provisional measures for the compilation of urban planning was promulgated in 1956, which was the first urban planning guidelines of new China. In 1952, based on the experience of the Soviet Union, the major of "Urban Architecture and Management" was established. At this time, the system of comprehensive universities were decomposed and colleges specialized in engineering were set up to emphasize the engineering attributes in urban planning.

THE POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL FACTORS IN SOVIET PLANNING.

Urban planning was a form of “central planning”. Thus, it was an instrument for implementing the nation’s economic development programme. Hence, it was taken for granted that urban planning should serve the purpose of the country’s socialist industrialization, production and the welfare of the working population. Urban planning, especially neighbourhood or district planning, should promote the principle of self-reliance or self-containment. Larger enterprises or factories had complete sets of living facilities; eg shops, stores, theatres, recreational places, restaurants, hotels, hospitals, kindergardens, primary schools, middle schools, and even colleges. They became, in effect, self-sufficient subcities. “National form plus socialist content” was as the design concept advocated by the Soviet Union, with the characteristics of “realism under socialist conditions”. The Soviet-style planning was characterized by an emphasis on formalistic street patterns and grand designs for public buildings and monuments which were built around huge public squares (Figure 6).



Fig. 6. The Preliminary Urban Planning of Zhanjiang 1955-1975. The red dotted line in the figure was the scope of the original Fort-Bayard. The figure can clearly reflect the characteristics of the Soviet planning: the functional core and the radioactive axis with public functions.

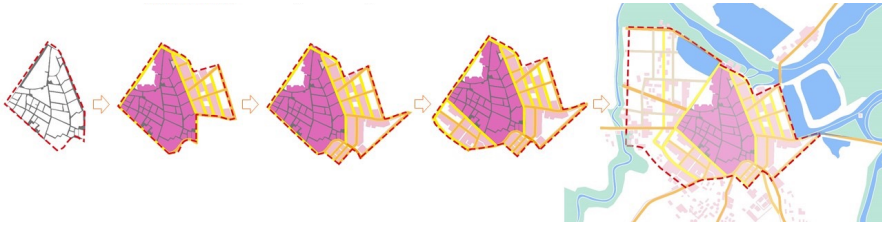


Fig. 7. The evolution of urban space expansion in Chékam 1898-1945. Firstly, the main road skeleton was planned in the periphery of the natural texture, and then the reclamation was made to form the commercial space of the wharf to connect with the original spatial texture, and then the new area was planned inland along the northern river to expand the commercial scope.

THE CHARACTERISTICS AND INFLUENCE OF PLANNING IN ZHANJIANG

Neither according to the actual situation of reality, nor based on the actual population and the environment present situation of the planning content, the feature of international planning diffusion manifested the urban planning as an instrument of regime and the urban space served the ideology and discourse power of the political subject in Zhanjiang. During the colonial planning period, aiming at serving the colonial politics, the urban reflect the characteristics of capitalist market economy. The urban space was the superposition of three spatial elements: the port space point and the infrastructure space network serving economic exploitation, the colonial political space and the local space driven by the market economy. The socialist planned economy was the main content of the socialist planning period, in which the construction indicators were uniformly distributed by the state. To understand the city from the perspective of the carrier function of production, the consumption space was extremely compressed, completely ignoring the centuries-old port commercial culture of Lei Zhou Peninsula and the commercial development foundation of the French colonial period.

The general principles of planning have been adapted locally to a certain degree. For example, when faced with Chékam, the old city of Zhanjiang, France adopted a completely different planning method from that of the medina of Tlemcen in the mid-19th century, such as the direct overlapped of the colonial planning grid with the local urban fabric in Tlemcen, and unified and integrated urban spatial structure in Chékam old city and new expansion area (Figure 7). The applicability of the typical model of Soviet industrial cities and the “collectivism” of enclosed housing was reconsidered by Soviet experts in Zhanjiang seaport city to cope with the hot climate in the southernmost part of the Chinese mainland and the hurricane environment in the seaport city. The urban space in both periods was the product of the international political and economic environment, which was manifested in the institutional structure of the combination of the fluid expert group and the local department, and the large-scale infrastructure investment strategy served the overall intention.

The international planning diffusion have a far-reaching impact, which first leads to the occurrence of a new generation of class and the first batch of planners; and to a certain extent, the planning system and spatial elements continue. The local administrative and military officials, and architects and contractors in Kouang-tchéou-wan played important roles in promoting the expansion of space construction and combining the ancient commercial port

culture with French architectural culture in architectural form; and during this time, they learned western engineering techniques and planning methods. The unique “Chinese model” urban planning system under the planned economy system from 1961 to 1977 absorbed and strengthened the “socialist” elements in the Soviet model. Furthermore, The Soviet planning deeply affected the Chinese urban planning methodology and became the kernel of the national teaching system. Urban planning emphasized the objectives and controlled the requirements with quotas broken down into indicative content, the planning arrangement of urban land and facilities allocation, the unified and precise expression of the intention and ultimate state of urban land use. Finally, Zhanjiang, as the core of city’s historical space bore the contradiction of protection and development. Due to the lack of attention and understanding, the historical relics of Soviet socialist planning were not considered in the planning and research of urban historical protection, while the spatial elements of ancient commercial port culture and French style have been emphatically interpreted.

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DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

The authors claim no conflicts of interest.

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IMAGE SOURCES

- Fig. 1 The author draws from historical data
Fig. 2 National Library of France, Digital Archive
Fig. 3 Zhanjiang Urban Construction Archives, Digital Archive
Fig. 4 The author draws from historical data
Fig. 5 The author draws from historical data
Fig. 6 Zhanjiang Urban Construction Archives, Digital Archive
Fig. 7 The author draws from historical data

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- Earlier see S.V. Ward's study, and he has a comprehensive understanding of planning diffusion¹.
- Ambe J. Njoh used the same research framework² in the study of French urbanization abroad, in terms of transmission routes, including the mechanisms of diffusion, the extent, and the fundamental causation of diffusion.
- Ambe J. Njoh went deep into the mechanisms of diffusion including Government, Educational and scientific research institutions, Professional associations and journals, and International development agencies.
- 'The Soviet model' as documented by Yichun Xie and Frank J. Costa⁴, the planning mode of colonial period was completely negated and imitated Soviet planning. Its actual influence on urban space and planning system needs to be further explored.
- The Fort Bayard Plan as documented by Antoine Vanniere⁵. Guangzhouwan play the core role in the whole IndoChina.
- According to government documents of IndoChina⁶, Paul Doumer formed a planning committee under the general minister of Guangzhouwan.
- Hélène Vacher found that France's early colonial planning was dominated by military engineers⁷, which also happened in Guangzhouwan.
- Socialist planning in Zhanjiang also had comprehensive urban functions, according to the urban planning text⁹.