Democratic Deliberation in Urban Village Regeneration: integrated village committee and villagers into urban society

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Abstract:

China has been experiencing profound and massive social and urban transitions following the capitalist expansion of the last 30 years. One aspect of those transitions is a concerted program of urban regeneration in many cities. However, the standard practice of the land-centered "demolish and rebuild" urban village regeneration has proven to be controversial. To treat the problems and balance the uneven development between urban and rural society, the Chinese government has implemented a so-called "human-oriented" urbanization policy since 2014 which emphasizes the integration of villagers into the city rather than physical site developments. Under that context, democratic deliberation became a key instrument for Chinese local government to address the problems around urban village regeneration. The main objectives of this research are to explore the role of democratic deliberation as a tool of governance both during and after the urban village regeneration process. It looks at both the Chinese government's changing governing discourses (from land-centered urbanization to human-oriented urbanization) and daily practices in the regeneration process and regenerated communities governance, as well as the citizens' reactions to these governance technologies. In this paper, I will provide an in-depth investigation of how different actors negotiate with each other through the deliberation institution, and the results of the process of the urban village regeneration program in the context of the New Type Urbanization Plan. One in-depth case studies of Zhengzhou urban village regeneration programs was carried out. Interpretive policy analysis was used to describe and analyze how different actors negotiate with each other through the traditional rural deliberation institution, within the context of the New Type Urbanization Plan.

Introduction:

This paper will discuss the process of integrating the villager and village committee into the urban society, in particularly, focuses how village advocating their rights and opinions through the democratic deliberation under the setting of authoritarian China. In recent China, the democratic deliberations are adopted by local government, with the pursers of limiting the social unrest, petitioning, and corruption, the state encourages a small number of institutional changes to 'give voice to ordinary citizens without jeopardizing the CCP's monopoly on political decision making (He and Thogersen, 2010: 675). Enlightened by the concepts of authoritarian deliberation (He and Warren, 2011), this paper address how different stockholders proceed democratic deliberation in the integration of social, economic, and cultural fabrics through China's urban village regeneration program. In particular, this paper will mainly address the challenges from the improving villagers' livelihood, and civilizing offensives.

China has been experiencing a profound and massive social and urban transition accompanied by the urban regeneration and capitalist expansion. As a consequent of these transitions, a special type of urban neighborhood had been formed, which is named as "urban village" (Liu et al., 2009; Lin and Ho, 2005, Ho 2003). This kind of neighborhood is aggregated with informal housing, and criticized as "slum-like areas". The practice of urban village regeneration has proven to be controversial. It rapidly caused more social problems, such as social exclusion, injustice, and uneven development between rural and urban society. To treat these problems and balance the uneven development between urban and rural society, the "human-oriented New-type Urbanization Policy" has been implemented by the Chinese government since 2014. This new policy sets two primary goal of the urban village regeneration: the development of the site of the urban village and the integration of the various groups of urban villagers into urban society. In particular, it emphasizes on integrating rural migrants into the city rather than physical site developments. The regeneration programs immediately generate the conflicts between public and government. Including: protests, petitioning, and collective resistance. These conflicts have been challenging the illegitimate of local governments' decision and policy implementation. They aggregate through the land acquisition, compensation, and villagers' reallocation. This is because the residents in urban village (both native villagers and migrants) experience a series of 'transition pains' during the integration process, as they should adapt changing social, cultural, and economic status.

As a controversial topic, there is a series of literature focusing on the mechanisms of urban village regeneration through urban planning, land economics, urban sprawl and industrialization, the land administration system (e.g. Wu 2013; 2014; Zhang et al, 2003; Smart and Tan, 2005; He et al, 2009; Liu et al, 2010; Zhang, 2011; Hao et al, 2011; Xu et al, 2011; Lin and De Meulder, 2012; Song and Zenou, 2012; Zhou, 2014). Instead to focus the physical developmental and economical outcome of urban village regeneration, this research is designed to investigate the mechanisms of integrating of

native urban villagers and migrants into the city; and in particular to focus on the deliberative nature of negotiations between various actors involved in this process. This research was designed to investigate the mechanisms of integrating of native urban villagers and migrants into the city; and in particular to focus on the deliberative nature of negotiations between various actors involved in this process. During the investigation of the regeneration program, this study tends to focus on the results of the deliberation process: to interpret the experience of the participants, and measure their preference and opinions change during the deliberation process.

The main objectives of this research are to explore the role of democratic deliberation as a tool of governance both during and after the urban village regeneration process. It looks at both the Chinese government's changing governing discourses (from land-centered urbanization to human-oriented urbanization) and daily practices in the regeneration process and regenerated community's governance, as well as the citizens' reactions to these governance technologies. The research will answer this three questions: *1) How democratic deliberation will be used by local regime to facility planning agenda. 2) How traditional rural deliberation institution will be changed and integrated into the urban community governance system according to the New-Type Urbanization Planning (2014-2020). 3) To what extent does the democratic deliberation contribute the grassroots participation in local governance*. This research will adopt a mix-methods design, with an emphasis on a qualitative research strategy. Two in-depth case studies of Zhengzhou urban village regeneration programs were carried out. The interpretation of these stories on implementing democratic deliberation in urban village regeneration could provide a lens to discover *how different deliberative practices can and should be organized in China's urban governance under the Changing policy context*. The data will be collected according to qualitative methods including document analysis, interview and participant observation. This research will adopt a combination of deductive and inductive data analysis strategy, therefore, the thematic analysis method (Boyatzis, 1998) and Grounded theory method (Charmaz, 2006) are selected to analyze the data. Before the inductive interpretation, a comprehensive deductive analysis of the deliberative process will be conducted using the conceptual scheme. It will be used to assess the process and result of democratic deliberation in urban village regeneration.

Literature Review:

2. Challenges of implementation of New-type Urbanization Plan

Previous urban village regeneration studies: Land-centered urbanization

As a form of informal settlement, urban villages were often criticized as slum-like rural community enclosure by urban areas. Accompanied by the China's fast urban development and modernization, urban villages were not tolerated by government, media, and academia (Zhang et al, 2003; Liu et al., 2010). This is because urban villages always have ramshackle images of poor living conditions, high crime rates, and high density of population; by contrast, urban villages always have preferable geographical advantages than many urban areas (Hao et al., 2011). Before the New-type Urbanization Plan 2014-2020 implemented, in some cases, the local government shifted their enthusiasm in urban village regeneration, mainly through demolition-development approach (Zhang, 2005). That is, within the targeted area, all of building and infrastructures will be totally demolished, and this area will be developed following the new-proposal. The existing cases show that these urban villages will be developed into high quality commercial housing, mix-used shopping mall, or high-tech industry. This could create considerable revenue income, economic growth, active image, and job opportunities to the city. To conduct this approach, the first priority in regeneration agenda should be the properties (e.g. land, houses and infrastructures) acquisition. In pervious practices, in some cases, government encouraged the private sector to involve in regeneration program (Li and Li 2011). It is because the amount of compensation always outweighing the government capacity. In the beginning, private sectors have enthusiasm because the urban villages enjoyed an excellent geographical location, the huge potential profit could be expected, as land has high potential market value (Chung, 2009; Lin and De Meulder, 2012; Li and Li 2011). In some cases, government is capable to compensate for the property acquisition, the government will dominant the whole process. The acquitted land will be sold through public auction. Generally, these urban village regeneration programs were aiming at pursuing economic growth and modernization of city's image, they were named as development-oriented urbanization or land-centered urbanization (Lu et al., 2015).

However, land-centered urbanization is not sustainable. This is because aiming at limiting the resistance by native villagers, local government or the developer always paid huge-amount of compensation to native urban villagers for the properties and land acquisition. Villagers were offered compensation in form of new-build apartments in the reallocation community. Usually, each household was compensated by at least two to three apartment. In some cases, the native village was compensated by tens apartment from developer by organized resistance. The sky-high compensation encouraged the local resistance and obeys the government ideology of seeking social harmony. In addition, abundant spare apartments were built for the demand of compensation, which immediately exacerbate the housing bubbles. This issue also restricts the developers'

willingness of investment, as the space of profits will be very limited. After the New-type urbanization plan was implemented at 2014, the urban village regeneration program has turned from the market-driven into government-led program, aiming at limiting the negative consequences of land-centered urbanization and pursuing the sustainable urban development.

From 'Land-Centered' to 'Human-Oriented' Urbanization Policy

To cope with the challenges generated from the 'land-centered urbanization', the Chinese central government issued a new policy approach to urban development, as set out in the 'National New-type Urbanization Plan (2014–2020)' in March 2014. In this plan, the central committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) and the State Council jointly released a new strategy for urban development. The most significant change put forth in this plan is: the transfer from a **land-centered urbanization to a people-oriented urbanization**. As Long et al., (2015) comments: "This was the first official plan to regard new-type urbanization as a national policy, and it pointed out the problems that had emerged in the previous accelerated urbanization mode; this plan is expected to explore a new path toward sustainable urbanization. The most notable aspect in it is the transition from land-centered urbanization to people-oriented urbanization." (2014: 112). According to Taylor (2015) translations: the 'New-type Urbanisation Plan 2014-2020', the primary objective of urban village regeneration could be summarized as follows: *1) Unblock the internal dual-track system of the city, in terms of social form, property ownership and citizenship. 2)Promote the New-type urbanization strategy, facilitate the integration of 100 million migrant workers into the city. (2015:108)*. Instead seeking for land development, this new national policy is designed with the goal of integrating urban villagers and migrant workers into the city **economically**, **socially**, and **culturally**. It settled up three tiers of targets: 1) improving villagers' livelihood and living consciousness; 2) unblock the dual track system and providing same social welfare and Hukou identity to the villager; and 3) civilizing their behaviors and developing their legal rights consciousness. In this paper, as the words limitation, I will only discuss the challenges from targets 1 and 3.

Challenges from livelihood

Within the past two decades, the livelihood of these native villagers had been changed twice since urban village formation. The first time change happened during the urban village formation process, the villagers lost their farmland and rural incomes without the urban welfare system guarantee. Majority of these people could only access to the low-income working opportunity due to their limited working skills (Wu etal., He et al.,). This urged them to seek alternative income sources to make their livelihood. Accompanying with the boom of low-rental accommodation demands, they reconstructed their houses into many poor-conditioned accommodations to get the cheap rental from migrants as the major income sources (Lin and De Meulder, 2012; Liu et al., 2010). Compare to other kinds of low-status job, the housing-rental income is

relatively stable and handsome. As the consequences, instead of improve their working skill, most of them operated a cheap-rental businesses and got a considerable profit (He et al., 2010; Liu et al., 2010). After the New-urbanization Plan 2014-2020 implemented, the regeneration will overturn their rental income. The compensation policy of land acquisition had been transferred into the combination of partly sized ratio apartment and cash compensation. This policy is designed to limit the overall housing bubbles in market by limiting the vacant house in new-built community. Some local governments tried to start limiting the scale of the partly-size ratio apartment compensation before New-type urbanization plan was implemented. This policy leads the native villagers to lose their housing rental income. As the New-type Urbanization Plan was just implemented, more research could be done around the cases that compensated villagers by partly sized ratio apartment and cash compensation. It could provide experiences for the issues around their livelihood and life-style after they moved into the modern apartment under the new policy.

Challenge from Cultural Integration: Civilizing Offensives

Based on former research (De Rooy 1979, Kruithof, and de Regt), Flint et al., (2015) summaries the concept of civilizing offensives: 'middle-class attempts at improving the lot of the lower classes (both within western nation states and of native indigenous population during the projects of imperial colonization) and 'raising them' to a higher, civilized standard of conduct p.1 '. This concept was utilized to explore the interactions between different social groups, especially for a targeted project which embarked by the one (more powerful) group with the aim of 'civilizing' the behavior of another (less powerful) group (De Regt 1984; Mitzman 1987, Verrips 1987; van Ginkel 1996). Most recently, this concept is also used on the pernicious or barbaric effects on popular and minority culture caused by migrants (Mitzman 1987; Van Krieken 1999). This research borrows this concept to describe the actions raised by Chinese local government and authorities with the particular aim to 'civilizing' the behaviors of urban villagers. It should be declared that, in Chinese context, the most significant distinction between social groups is the former household registration: the rural residents are treated as 'peasant', which refers the lower class people than urban residents (He, 2005).

Since the Chinese New-type urbanization policy aiming at integrating villagers and rural migrants into the city, one of the most important tasks is to integrate villagers and migrants culturally. In practice, the villagers and migrants are urged to follow the urban lifestyle. As the traditional rural lifestyle is much different with urban lifestyle, urban villagers and rural migrants are suffered from the transitional pain: they need to change their behaviours into urban style, under the pressures from the local authorities and discriminate from the urban residents. During this process, the local authorities and urban residents always use the term 'uncivilized behaviour' to describe their traditional lifestyle; and the local authorities and urban residents always use the term 'civilize' to take up the moral advantage and legitimacy of their actions. These 'civilizers' often led to stigmatisation and spatial marginalisation, and these actions are more about

disciplining rather than enlightening (Rob Van Ginkel, 1996). Therefore, tensions and conflicts are common in the reallocation communities, if these communities' authority want make efforts on changing behaviours of these 'new urban residents'. However, although others committees' authorities who reluctant to take this response, these communities and their residents are criticized in the internet and public media as 'uncivilized area', and also discriminated by other urban residents as 'peasant'.

3. Formal and Informal Deliberations in China.

The new policy of New-type urbanization significantly promotes "human-oriented" through the political reform: the public participation in planning has been enhanced, aiming at respecting the willingness of local residents as well as limiting the conflict between stakeholders. As the one of the most important participation channel, a series forms of democratic deliberations had been discovered in urban governance practices. The deliberation could facility the human-oriented policy because in the deliberation process, participants make decisions not simply by counting what preferences have greater numerical support, but "by determining which proposals the collective agrees are supported by the best reasons" (Young 2000: 23). During the recent decades, deliberation practices had been implement accompanying the Parties discourse: "power must be supervised by the people and exercised transparently" and called for "enriching democratic forms to show the advantages of China's socialist deliberative democracy." These practices raised a theoretical discussion around deliberation under an authoritarian setting. These existing western research has recognized the function of deliberation in liberal democratic societies, as the democratic deliberation could contribute the equal and inclusive negotiation and discussion between the stakeholders and public could deepens "participants' knowledge of issues, awareness of the interests of others, and the confidence to play an active part in public affairs (Saward, 2000, p.5)." It is because deliberative communication could widen the democratic participation and improve the authenticity of democracy. In addition, the existing research also discuss the deliberative nature of democracy, and argues: "political decision-making should be talk-centric rather than vote-centric" (Elstub & McLaverty, 2014, p.1)". In addition, recently, the western research shows that the deliberative politics experienced a 'discursive turn' and it becomes increasingly inclusive. Dryzek (2009) points out the inclusive and tolerance of 'informal deliberative forum'. In addition, Benhabib (1996) and Habermas (1996) stress the informal public sphere, where deliberation generates public opinion which then ought to influence deliberation in the legislature. The idea of these existing research is pointed out the significance and legitimacy of the deliberation actions in informal setting. They highlight the importance of communicative processes, and inclusive these processes to 'informed, respectful, and competent dialogue' (Tang 2015; Dryzek, 2010). This 'informal' and 'un-structured' deliberation has widened to every taking, internet/media discussion, and civil society. (Dryzek, 1990).

However, different with western theory, those Chinese deliberative practices have different political functions and rationales. He and Warren (2011) points out the

rational of the authoritarian regimes such to adopt the deliberation into their governance and provides the functionalism perspective: the deliberation could be used to pursue social stability and governance legitimacy. They argue that deliberative politics could limit conflict, enhance governance capacity, and produce legitimacy in practical governance matter (He and Warren, 2011, Dryzek, 2010). The existing study around participatory and deliberative democracy in China mainly around: rural deliberative practice, government-led deliberative forums, designed deliberation polling, designed democratic roundtable meeting (He, 2006; 2014; He and Warren, 2011, Dryzek, 2010, Tang and Dryzek, 2014, Tang, 2015). These researches explained the dynamics of the implementation of deliberation at local governance practices. However, the existing researches mainly focus the local deliberative practices on designed deliberative democracy experiment, such as deliberative forums, deliberation polling, and democratic roundtables (He, 2014). Clearly, these designed practices are strictly abiding by the designed and structured. Apart from those practices, the 'informal' and 'unstructured' deliberations are widely observed in China's local governance practices. In China, democratic deliberation in urban village regeneration is developed from previous traditional village deliberation practices. This evolution can be seen as early as the village deliberative forums in the 1980s: a village committee would hold deliberation forums where decision-makers (village officials) would come together to discuss village affairs with villagers, and facilitate a give-and-take decision-making process. It should be declared that as the Chinese traditional rural village administration relies on a 'person-network' based on the authority and credibility of village cadre, the deliberation on village affairs always involve lots of informal actions like street talking and door-to-door visiting (Tang, 2015). The role of 'unstructured' and 'informal' deliberation should be equally investigated in urban village regeneration process. It is because these actions could widen citizen participation by involving larger range of interest groups and various channel to exchange opinions.

As this paper focuses on the Chinese case, I will borrow the term 'informal deliberation (Tang, 2015)' to describe the various communicative processes between government officials, experts and publics. The only difference between these actions and 'formal' actions is 'the setting': these actions are always treated as informal by scholar because these deliberations are always happened in informal setting, such as street talking, door-to-door visiting. Based on Dryzek (1996:1), 'the deliberation process should be tolerance, which allow argument, rhetoric, humor, emotion, testimony or storytelling, and gossip. The only condition for authentic deliberation is then the requirement that communication induce reflection upon preferences in non-coercive fashion.p.1'. These informal deliberations should be respected equally with government-led formal deliberations, as the forms of deliberation should be various and flexible. In addition, these actions are also led by government or village/community authority. That is these actions are 'formally' on behalf of the officials' legitimacy, authority and credibility. Therefore, the term 'informal public deliberation' will be used to describe the deliberation beyond institutional process and designed forums. As the informal

deliberation practices is very flexible and difficult to make sense for western scholar if they do not have enough Chinese knowledge, therefore, I will introduce them with the case in later sections. The local government and village/community authority lead these actions, aiming at to widen participation and facilitate negotiation by involving a larger range of grassroots groups and non-elite interest groups to deliver their opinions (Tang, 2015). This could help local government and planners to improve their proposal by inclusive local knowledge. In the following sections, I will introduce how democratic deliberation (both formal and informal actions) has been used as a tool to facility the implementation of New-type Urbanization Plan 2014-2020 through the lens of urban village regeneration.

Case Studies:

Implementation of formal and informal deliberation at local level

One large-scale urban village regeneration program will be discussed. The democratic deliberation in China's urban development is different from Western democratic political systems. Public deliberation and other participations are 'symbolic' methods of labeling and ensuring legitimacy for proposed plan. However, in urban regeneration practice at **Shangjie District**, local government treats the 'public deliberation' more than just providing legitimacy. Instead, aiming at limiting conflict between citizen and government, the public deliberation becomes increasingly important in terms of building a consensus for local planning. Especially, formal and informal democratic deliberations were adapted to facility Shangjie District government to overcome these challenges by solving the conflicts of each challenges.

Tonghang community is a newly-built urban residential community aiming at reallocating the urban villagers from 4 former urban villages. The new Residential Committee was struggling since the new community will administrating the residents from 4 different villages. The committee is organized by the semi-district government, which constituted from key members (director) from 4 former villages and stuffs from semi-district government. The rational is the key member from former village could provide the credibility and authority of newly-hired committee. In addition, these key members could also provide local knowledge to assist the new stuff in routine matters. The leadership of the committee has one director who is pointed by the semi-street government, and 4 deputy directors who are the former director of 4 villages. This arrangement could provide the efficiency in terms of facilitating policy implementation. The director serves as more than the highest leader of community who represent the interest of the whole community, instead, the director also has its supervisory duty represent the semi-district government. Under that arrangement, the leadership groups could be considered as 5 mediators who are on behalf of different interest groups. Based on the investigation of the case, I will briefly introduce each forms of participations first. This will be helpful for western scholar to make sense of following case studies.

The 'formal deliberation' includes:

- *Expert Consultation:* It always happens at plan-making level, the planning system has been greatly open up at China, currently, the government adopts external institutions competitions instead internal local planning bureaus to make the plan. Therefore, the plan-making process has opened the plan-making process to processional organizations. To select the 'best proposal' for local development, the 'expert consultation' becomes increasingly important. The 'expert consultation' served as the 'counselor' to provide suggestion and countermeasure for government, they not only support local government to make a better choice at designing competitions, but also support the selected planning institution to amend their planning proposal. In addition, the 'expert

consultation' is often used to add credibility to the proposed plan and urban policy, instead enhance democratic authenticity.

- **Public Consultation:** The public consultation is a method for government to public their proposed local policy, plan, and particular decision to ordinary people, and it is also a channel to collected the public opinion. Sometimes, it will be taken place through the media, such as internet, news papers, and TV program. The government uses the media to public the detail information about their proposal and call for feedback from the public. However, it becomes more procedural rather than substantial at urban regeneration practices. This is because the regeneration program is dominated by the stakeholders, especially who owned the resources, such as landlords and developers.

- **Villagers Congress:** Villagers' congress is a branch of The People's congress in the rural-governance system. It is the lowest level in the hierarchical electoral system in China, it directly elects the leadership by electors. It is also the highest decision making institution in the village, every most important decision is made through the directly vote at Villagers' Congress. According to He (2005): 'village meeting is an important institution that gives villagers an opportunity to voice their opinions before major decision are made. According to the Organic Law of Village Committee, village meetings should involve all villagers aged 18 or above. The meeting should have a minimum quorum of half of those eligible to attend or, alternatively, two thirds of the household representatives of the village. The meeting reviews the committee's work at least once a year. It is called by the village committee, but can also be summoned if demanded by at least one tenth of villagers. p.209'

- **Villagers' Representatives Conference:** It should be noticed that the villagers' representative conference is different with the household representatives congress in villagers' congress. Villagers' representatives are elected by and from the household representatives in different villager groups. In each villager groups, there were numbers of representatives to represent a numbers of households. Villagers' Representative Conference is central to obtaining public participation in urban village regeneration. It is a crucial element in promoting interaction with the native villagers. This conference is always happened as a pre-conference to villagers' congress. The leadership of the village will use this institution to collect the first round opinion from the villagers' reps. It will also ask villagers' reps to collect villagers' opinion and bring these opinions back to the conference as a second round opinions collections. It could help the decision maker to amend their proposal and agenda.

- **Coordination Meeting:** It is a kind of democratic roundtable meeting holed by small groups of people to negotiates some proposal or agenda. The process of the meeting is always confidential; only direct stakeholder could participate it. The direct stakeholder means some specific issues in the program only affect a small numbers of stakeholders; this small group of is direct stakeholder. Normally, in an urban regeneration project, there were a series coordination meetings holed by different people. It is an informal technic for the participants to persuade others. It is a kind of home visit. It is particularly useful for the government or the

leader of village to solve the individual opponent or small groups of opponents.

- **Residents' Congress:** It directly elects the leadership of the community. Different from the villagers' congress, the electors in the urban community Do Not have the right to nominate the electoral candidates. The electoral candidates must be worked out through "discussion and consultation" the upper level of government. In addition, the decision making function of the residents' congress is also limited and symbolic. The most important decision will be made by the upper level of peoples' congress and local government; the decision will be 'informed' instead 'consulted'.

The 'informal deliberation' includes:

- **Door-to-Door Visiting:** It is an informal technic for the participants to persuade others. It is a kind of home visit. It is particularly useful for the government or the leader of village to solve the individual opponent or small groups of opponents.

- **Stakeholders' Directly Participate:** It is not formal way for the decision maker to directly collect the opinions and demands from the most important stakeholders. It might involve a series forms such as through telephones, street-talking, and roundtable discussion. The most important character is the communications between the participants are always confidential, and exclusive from outsiders. It always happened before the formal coordination meeting.

- **Street talking:** different with the other kinds of participation. The street talking is mainly used as a pilot for community level regime to collect opinions for some issues. In sometimes, the regime might use this method to generate some social pressure via dispersing gossip.

The domains and forms of participations were summarized as the table below. In this table the following acronyms will be used: 'EC' = Expert Consultation, 'PC' = Public Consultation, 'CM' = Coordination Meeting, 'VC' = Villagers Congress, 'VRC' = Villagers Representative Conference, 'DV' = Door-to-Door Visiting, 'SDP' = Stakeholders' Directly Participate, 'RC' = Residents' Congress. These forms of participations include both formal deliberation and informal deliberations.

Domains of Participations	Tonnghang Community	Niezhai Community
Master plan of district level	EC	EC
Planning of semi-district level	EC, CM	EC, CM
Planning of reallocation community,	EC, CM, VC, VRC	EC, CM, VC, VRC
Details of architectural design	EC, CM, VC, VRC	EC, CM, VC, VRC

proposal		
Demolishment agenda	CM, VC, VRC, DV	CM, VC, VRC, DV
Details of compensation	CM, VC, VRC, DV	CM, VC, VRC, DV
Reallocation agenda	CM, VC, VRC, DV	CM, VC, VRC, DV
Election of the new community	VC, RC, SDP	VC, RC, SDP
Routine governance in new community	RC, SDP	RC, SDP
Planning of government acquired land	EC, CM	EC, CM
Collective property and economy management before redevelopment	VC	VC
Collective property and economy management after redevelopment	VC	SDP

Challenges from villagers' livelihood: Seeking alternative income sources

The democratic deliberations were mainly used to solve the internal conflicts within the village. This is due to the local government did not allow any negotiate in terms of the amount and ratio of compensation. As the compensation ratio is stable, the village committee could trigger the regeneration program if they can got the supports rate more than 70%. The urban village regeneration in Shangjie District was started since the end of 2006, which is much later than most megacity in China as well as other districts in Zhengzhou City. The district governments organized a series survey on the existing cases. Aming at limiting the public resistant and decrease the financial pressure, the government decided to limit the scale of apartment compensation in a constant partly-size ratio: the scale of apartment compensation should be limited within 1.7 times of the authorized legal rural homestead size (rural homestead: land for rural residents constructing their own house). After 2011, according to the mean and mode of legal rural homestead size, the district government decided the scale of apartment compensation is 258 square meter per homestead. In principle, their compensation apartments will be built at their original location. Therefore, the local government scarcely to directly negotiate with the local residents, instead, they encourage the village committee to promote the agenda. Although the compensation policy affects the native villagers' rental income, the amount of compensation is still attractive to most of the villagers, in particular, those who did not rely on the rental income. Therefore, as I state before, the villagers in Tonghang community came from 4 different villages, the

situation was much different between the villages within this case. For example, villagers from Xiaowa Village held advantage of geographical location, where is close enough to the core area of Industrial Development Zone in Shangjie District. This advantage enabled their households to establish rental businesses. Different with Xiaowa Village, the other three villages within Tonghang community were located at the edge of the Industrial Development Zone. Although the households also established their rental businesses, their rental income were much lower than Xiaowa Village. Generally speaking, although the amount of the compensation is settled, it is still attractive from majority of villagers. These villagers supported village community to promote the regeneration. However, the number of opponents were considerable, as their livelihood are mainly based on the rental income. The regeneration program terrified these villagers, especially for these households who do not took formal jobs. During the era of the urban village, some of them felt needless of the employment as the rental income is enough to maintain their livelihood.

Before the village committee brought the regeneration proposal at the village congress to discuss, the village committee organised a villagers' representative meetings and asked these reps to collect all of villagers' willingness for the regeneration program. It soon boosted a sharp conflict between two groups of villagers: both supporters and opponents holds too strong attitude to compromise. This is because the renting business was stable income, but the accommodation compensation were also attractive. After the first round of opinion collections, the village committee believe that their supporters were holding the majority, but not enough to dominate the voting in villagers' congress. The Household A was a very typical family of supporter: they had a job and only treat the rental income like a basic life security, the accommodation compensation became very attractive.

Household A: this family of 7 lived in Dongbaishe Village, a village located at the edge of New-Industry Development District, which is too far from the core area to attract rental business and collective real estate income. In 2012, they receive 3 apartments, one of 3 bedrooms' apartment and two of 2 bedrooms' apartment in Tonghang Community. The family members include the paternal grandparents, father, mother, and two elder daughters in primary school and a son. The father made 5000 yuan a month for a taxi-driver, others are jobless, they also get 1000 yuan monthly by rental housing. The regeneration program does not impact their income significantly.

> Villager A: We can get 700 from the housing rental, my house cannot rent a considerable price in the past. Now, we still keep 2 modern apartments to live, which is much better than my previous house.

In addition, the villagers calculated the gaps between rental income and accommodation compensation:

> Villager B: My rental income cannot allow me to own an urban property. I want own a modern accommodation, because it is more valuable and much easier to

sale. If I sale one of the 3 compensation accommodations, I can get at least 250,000 yuan income, equal with more than 80 months rental.

Different with the supporters, the rental is crucial for opponents. Since these villagers lost their farmland, some of them gave up working and relied on their rental income. As the regeneration program had significantly impacted the housing rental income, they were frightening of the future. The situation of Household C is typical of the opponent:

Household C: This family live in Xiaowa Village, which is the one of the most popular rental village in Shangjie District. There are 6 people living in this family: paternal grandparents, father, mother, and twins. They had built 15 rental room and they will receive more than 5000 yuan monthly from the housing rental. As this village has a strong collective economy, each adult in this family could get 5000-6000 yuan welfare per year. The father and mother also ran a street food to sale the breakfast and dinner to the migrant workers, at beginning, they earned 3000 yuan monthly, but after 2010, they rented this shop out to a retailer and receive 2500 yuan monthly. The regeneration in 2012 let them lost both accommodation rental and shop rental income. Instead, they got 3 apartments compensation plus additional 90000 yuan cash.

> Villager C: We have nothing now, only one accommodation can be rent out. This is far from enough for us to live. We had to find a job. We lost our leisure life.

After the first round opinion collection, the internal conflicts were significant between different groups of villagers, and village committee. Being concerns about the social stability, and the time limited to formally response to the local government, the village committee decides to hold series forums to discuss the issues around the regeneration. Villager committee invited all of villagers' representatives, local government officials, and some former cadres of other regenerated village into forums, the aims of the forums were providing information and explain the policy to the villagers' representatives as detail as possible. Both supporters and opponents could directly question government officials and other people who experienced regeneration. According to the Direct of Village Committee:

> The outcome of the forum was quite surprised at the beginning, it seems that both supporters and opponents had lots of bias of our policy. It seems they had problems to understand our policy, they can't make clear argument.

Because of the reasons above, the forums were extended to three days. The aims of this forums had changed a little bit. According to the Direct of Village Committee:

> After the first day of the forum, we decided to change the forum. They only know some gossips… we decided to spent another 2 days to introduce the policy in detail. After that, we selected some well-knowledge villagers' representatives and some government stuff as the propaganda teams to explain the policy to villagers door to door.

The village committee organize above ten little teams to held the street talking and door-to-door visiting to access the villagers. Within a teams, there were one government stuff working as a policy interpreter, and one villager' representatives who working as a mediator. After the interpreting policy, each villager got a basic sense of what they lose and what they got.

> Villager D: I was misled by the gossip from other villagers, I think I will lose everything. the government stuff made me clear, and I became to support the regeneration. It was not a bad deal, I had moved into this community for two years, I still think so.
> Villager E: At the beginning, I read some new and I believe I can become super rich by the compensation, but the ratio of compensation was settled as far from my expectation, I think I could get more, so I became an opponent to organize a massive defense.

These door-to-door visiting helped the local government to amend their proposal. After the opinion collections, they were aware of villagers were worrying about their livelihood after they lost their rental income. The government organized the round table meeting around the enterprises nearby, and ask them to provide lists of employment demands and conditions. These enterprises were happy to provide priority to these villagers as they did not have provide accommodation to these villagers nearby. After these efforts, the supporting rate was increased to almost 85% in villagers' congress. The regeneration proposal was legally passed. The former village director commented:

> Finally, it solved at that stages. It was too hard to persuade the villagers… I cannot do more for them because the government won't give me any chance. I believed in the existing cases, every village tried to argue something, but I haven't seen any successful cases. The compensation policy never changed.

In this case, these deliberations provided channels for public to express their voice to the decision maker and got some outcome. However, it is clear that the legitimacy of deliberations was based on government endorsement, especially in terms of the scope of issues. This is because under the authoritarian context, the government only adopt the deliberation to facility their policy implementation, rather than deliver the democracy to the public.

Challenges from cultural integration: distinguish traditional lifestyle and offensives

Different with other urban community, Residents' Committee not only takes the public service duty and but also push the former villagers to integrate into urban life. It affected almost 10 thousand urban villagers and rapidly caused a conflict between former villagers and Residents' Committee. The Committee list a lots of 'uncivilized' behaviors includes: feeding fowls in public area, cultivating in public green spaces, high-altitude through about, occupying public spaces, and etc. These actions also caused mass defensive as the villagers complained that the Residential Community bullied

them as they discriminate 'traditional rural lifestyle' as 'offensives'. The complaining raised a debate about how to distinguish 'traditional lifestyle' and 'uncivilized offensives', as well as how to 'civilize offensives'. The controversy between 'uncivilized behaviors' and 'discriminate' had been raised before the residential committee settled. As soon as the regeneration project started, the carders from 4 former village organized a temporary council to manage the issues around the reallocations. The temporary council put the 'uncivilized behaviors' as the most important task because these behaviors not only negatively impacted the public image, but also caused the risks for public safety. After a short discuss, these 4 former village committees formed a temporary leadership groups: the 4 former directors of village constituted as standing committee. Every decision about the whole community will be firstly discussed at the standing committee, and they will separate the tasks village by village. That is, former villagers within this community were still governed by their former village committee. The temporary council of the committee laid out a list of prohibit behaviors: they visited several reallocated villages to learn their experience. Based on their experience, a draft of prohibit behaviors was coming out, and processed to the opinions collections. According the Deputy community directors:

> We were anxious that our community had risk to turn back into urban village image, if we do not stop it. ...We only prohibit very limited behaviors that might affect public security and public interest. However, when you talk it to the villagers, they won't take these behaviors as a serious matter. But it has very significant risk if we put these into this community. We need to involve some strike and force action to prohibit it. The starting point of these rules is fewer than now. We modify it accompanying with routine administration.

As soon as they got a draft, the temporary council organized a series lectures and forums to persuade the villagers to following 'civilized lifestyle'. However, the actions around the civilization were questioned as 'official discriminate'. Some villagers criticized them as the local government bullied them by unequal social structure, education level, and personal skill.

> Village G: They invited an expert to introduce the 'goodness (Meide in Chinese)' and 'civilization (Wenminig)' for us. I still remember that feeling. The expert think he was standing high above us. I can only feel the discriminations and pressures... How can I make a debate? He is the expert. I just expressed my dissatisfactions but I can't make an argument.

> Village H: The council just want us to follow their rules. They want follow the local government. Because they want keeping their position of leadership. We don't believe the expert, but I can't express my opinions.

It should be noticed that, in terms of the skill of express opinions, the village H and G are better than many villagers. During the interview, I found lots of villagers had the difficulty to express their experience and opinions. Because they are not good at talking, they can't deliver their voice to the decision makers through the deliberations. The

forums and lectures were failed and it generate tension between villagers and temporary council. To reduce the tension and pressure, these village carders started to discuss the issues around 'civilized lifestyle' through street talking. The council need to reduce the tension because the they need to ensure that they got enough supporters to handle the public issues. For example, after these villagers moved into the Tonghang community, some of villagers cultivate the vegetables in the public green space. Although the temporary council made the decision to punish these behaviors, they still collected the public opinions. According to the Deputy community directors:

> We need public supporting us, we need to explain something to them. But a residents' congress is not a good idea because street talking and door-to-door visiting can made them relax. We didn't need authorized by we wanted more supporter. This is crucial that we could get support from majority residents.

It is clear that, the street talking and door-to-door visiting shows strong deliberation nature. Before the temporary council took actions, they adopted these informal actions to set up a channel to communicate with villagers. Compared to hold a villagers' congress, these informal actions are much more effective. However, as these actions were not taken place at a formal setting, sometimes, the conversations might be confidential. These actions were always questioned as 'black room deals' by the opponents.

> Village F: I don't believe what they say. Hundred household planned vegetable… They ask me to follow the massive. I fact, I think what every they want to do, they will tell us this is public opinions.
> Village G: They won't ask my opinions. I have very bad relationship to the director, our representatives never ask me anything. Sometimes, they just inform me some decisions, and sometimes, they won't let me know anything.

According to these two villagers, the fairness of these actions should be questioned. The decision maker might establish obstacles for the opponents by limiting their opportunity. It is because these actions are based on the personal network, the mediators might have bias about the participants.

This generated another issue. The credibility and authority of village committee were labelled on the carders personally. Instead labelled on the 'title of leadership'. Most of the villagers I interviewed expressed that although I respected other members or stuff within their community, emotionally, they prefer to trust their former village directors. This is because the village director always took charge in their village for a very long time, and the villagers always respect that person, rather than that title. However, it brought a big challenge in Tonghang community, as it was made by 4 villages. As soon as they moved in new community, they felt difficult to get credibility and authority to lead the new community as a whole. According to one of deputy director of the Residents' committee:

> there are huge differences between working in the community and village. We

are struggling together to find a right way... as you see, currently, all of stuff in the community works collectively in the same reception. Compare to former village council, this reception is symbolic... Only a title of leadership is nothing, as we don't have any credibility for the residents from other village.

As a result, the local government endorsed the temporary council and integrated it into Residents' Committee. The 4 former village leadership were nominated as 4 deputy directors, and the government designated a director from the street office. In terms of the conflict solving, the former village leader took charge of the issue and made the decision individually if the conflict is raise by their former villagers. According to the Deputy Directors of Residential committee:

Because the village has their individual administration system, the village affairs should be agreed within the village, so I as the former cadre of the A village cannot participates the B village affairs. Commonly, these villagers are habituated to our former institutional arrangement, they want to find their former village cadre to solve their problems or to make a judgement. They don't believe a new authority from other villages as well as local government.

Under that arrangement, their former governance techniques are still valid in practices. It keeps the community governance combining the urban services and rural deliberations. Compared with the urban government officials, the former village cadres not only have more credibility, but also have more local knowledge. Their sympathy, and empathy were also key to maintain the communication as they offer them more in-depth understanding of the issues than local government stuff.

Conclusion:

This research addresses the issues around democratic deliberations in China's urban village regenerations, with the emphasis on the integration of the villagers and village committee. Following the concept of authoritarian deliberation, this research discusses both formal and informal interactions between grassroots and decision-makers through the deliberations. The research found out that the deliberations are effective in terms of opinion collections and conflict solving, and playing significant role in each stage of the urban village regeneration. These deliberations in urban village regeneration were developed from the rural deliberations, which were based on their former village governance network. In particular, it is based on the former village cadres and their credibility and authority within their rural village network. The village committee always play a leading role in organizing the deliberations. As the organizer and mediator, their credibility and authority were labelled on 'person' instead of a 'title of leadership'.

The functions of the rural governance networks have been reserved and continued in to urban community. As the residents' committee in the reallocation community is relying on rural governance network, it could be considered as a transitional institution of village committee. The deliberations still play a crucial role after the reallocation. The local government endorsed the rational rural governance system by formally integrating their leader into the urban governance system. The former village directors still got a position in the leadership groups, and some of former village carders also got positions in the residents' committee. In practice, the local government authorized the autonomy to the village committee and residents' committee. Their decisions and opinions were respected by the local government seriously. Even, sometimes, they were the key decision makers of some issues. From these sense, the deliberation in urban village regeneration could be considered as 'democratic deliberation' in certain degree. As it provides the public a channel to express their voice to the decision maker.

However, the deliberations in urban village regeneration also shows a clear authoritarian characters. The power source and autonomy of the democratic deliberations is from the local government's endorsement. The rational is the village deliberation system could facility local government in terms of conflict solving, agenda setting, and amending proposal. These deliberative actions were taken by local government, village committee, and, residential committee with a top-down ideology. In this case, deliberations are rarely triggered by the grassroots. Instead, the village committee and local government and village committee showed their enthusiasm to adopts the deliberation. It is because the deliberation process could be uneven as they hold lots of advantages than grassroots. For example, the advantages of reputation, education level, and communication skill could significantly impact, even dominate the deliberation result. The deliberations could be shaped by the government and village committee through involving some participants who have some advantages to the villagers. This might generate a new 'injustice', because the disadvantage groups still

face considerable obstacles to fight for their right through the deliberation. In addition, although the informal actions could bring efficiency to the governance, this arrangement brings controversy and risks. It is because these communications are always taken place at an informal setting, like street or home. Due to the luck of supervision, the black rooms deal or corruptions might exist. These communications are always private and confidential, the village committee and the residential committee always hold the dominate position as their personal authority might become the hegemony. The personal relations and bias from the village carders might impact the result and negative impact their opponents' interests.

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