P01 / Policy, Politics, and Political Regime Around Social Integration of Migrants in Urban China

Topic : POLICY, POLITICS AND POLITICAL REGIME

Chair : PU NIU (institution for China rural studies)

Second Chair : Zhen Lu (University of Sheffield)

GENERAL OBJECTIVES, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND SCIENTIFIC RELEVANCE

Policy, politics, and political regime around social integration of migrants in urban China

Pu Niu, Department of Urban Studies and Planning, University of Sheffield
Zhen Lu, Department of Urban Studies and Planning, University of Sheffield

The objective of this panel is to explore the theoretical understandings of policy practices adopted by Chinese governments to deal with the issue of the integration of migrant populations. Following China's large-scale urbanization in the last 4 decades, more than 230 million rural migrants have moved to cities. This has generated considerable challenges for governments at different scalar levels, in particular local governments, to help them integrate into urban society. To cope with these challenges, governments in China have not only issued numerous national policies/programmes such as urban village regeneration, providing access to public schools for migrant children, and household registration reform; but also implemented political instruments at the micro-level such as public deliberation and consultations, community-level self-governance, and authoritarian discretion during implementation of these projects/policies. These political practices have raised abundant discussion about China's complex urban political-administrative system in terms of policy-making, policy implementation, and policy regimes, and what they mean for the (un-)democratic nature of Chinese governance. It is paramount to reflect upon the grounded experiences around policy making, policy implementation, and other everyday practices adopted by different entities, if we want to grasp the trajectory of urbanisation and integration process of migrant groups in urban China.

Current research has provided some angles to review these political practices, for example, He and Warren (2011) proposed the concept of “authoritarian deliberation” to understand the Chinese democratic process and government strategies. Similarly, democratic theorist John Keane’s concept of “phantom democracy” (2017), an authoritarian “post-democratic” system that allows extensive local democratic practices, must be seen as an attempt to gauge the true nature of China’s poltical system. Empirically Beibei Tang (2015), Tang and Dryzek (2014) and Niu and Wagenaar (2018) researched the deliberative system approach to examine the Chinese urban and rural everyday deliberations at grassroot level; and Fulong Wu suggested institutional analysis and developed concept of “urban entrepreneurialism” to understand the policy practices and programmes around rural-urban integration. Meanwhile, in field of social justice, Hyun Bang Shin suggested building alliance between migrants and urban residents as the forward way for all urban inhabitants to achieve “right to the city” in China. Enlightened and encouraged by this research, we believe that the discussions around the integration of migrant populations will make a significant practical and theoretical contribution to an understanding of the policy process in an authoritarian society. More empirical and theoretical discussions are needed, around how do governments, grassroot level regime, and other entities play their roles in integration process of migrants on different levels? Through revisiting and investigating these practices, we can observe how democratic elements, such as public participation, democratic deliberation, and authoritarian discretion, manifest themselves within a political authoritarian setting, such as public participation, democratic deliberation, and authoritarian discretion. This will not only generate more innovative and just urban development policies, but also expand the current theoretical discussion on policy-making and policy implementation in China. In this panel, we invite empirical studies that reveals complexities and challenges in the field of policy making and implementation around migrants' integration; as well as researches about democracy and democratic governance in China, such as rural village/urban communities self-governance, public participation in migrants' issues, and social justice.

Reference:

He, B. and Warren, M.E., 2011. Authoritarian deliberation: The deliberative turn in Chinese political development. Perspectives on Politics, 9(2), pp.269-289.

Keane, J., 2017. When Trees Fall, Monkeys Scatter: Rethinking Democracy in China. In When Trees Fall, Monkeys Scatter: Rethinking Democracy in China (pp. i-176).

Niu, P. and Wagenaar, H., 2018. The limits of authoritarian rule: Policy making and deliberation in urban village regeneration in China. Japanese Journal of Political Science. Submitted.

Shin, H.B., 2013. The right to the city and critical reflections on China's property rights activism. Antipode, 45(5), pp.1167-1189.

Tang, B., 2015. “Not rural but not urban”: Community governance in China's urban villages. The China Quarterly, 223, pp.724-744.

Tang, B. and Dryzek, J.S., 2014. Introduction: The continuing search for deliberation and participation in China. Journal of Chinese Political Science, 19(2), pp.109-114.

CALL FOR PAPERS

Objective:
The objective of this panel is to explore the theoretical understandings of policy practices adopted by Chinese governments to deal with the issue of the integration of migrant populations. Following China's large-scale urbanization in the last 4 decades, more than 230 million rural migrants have moved to cities. This has generated considerable challenges for governments at different scalar levels, in particular local governments, to help them integrate into urban society. To cope with these challenges, governments in China have not only issued numerous national policies/programmes such as urban village regeneration, providing access to public schools for migrant children, and household registration reform; but also implemented political instruments at the micro-level such as public deliberation and consultations, community-level self-governance, and authoritarian discretion during implementation of these projects/policies. These political practices have raised abundant discussion about China's complex urban political-administrative system in terms of policy-making, policy implementation, and policy regimes, and what they mean for the (un-)democratic nature of Chinese governance. It is paramount to reflect upon the grounded experiences around policy making, policy implementation, and other everyday practices adopted by different entities, if we want to grasp the trajectory of urbanisation and integration process of migrant groups in urban China.

Key question:
This panel focuses on empirical and theoretical studies around

- *What role do governments at different scalar levels and grassroot-level democratic practices, play in the policy process in China, and what do these practices mean for the (un-)democratic quality of the Chinese political system.*

Through revisiting and investigating the existing political practices, we can observe how democratic elements, such as public participation, democratic deliberation, and authoritarian discretion, manifest themselves within a political authoritarian setting. This will not only generate more innovative and just urban development policies, but also expand the current theoretical discussion on policy-making, policy implementation in China and the nature and future of the country’s political system.

Themes and topics:
In this panel, we will focus on empirical studies that reveal complexities and challenges in the field of multi-scalar policy making and implementation. We invite the empirical studies from following themes:
· Urban-rural integration/urban village integration
· Rural migrants
· Education policy
· Urban development
· Village/urban communities self-governance
· Local government and grassroot-level regime
· Public participation in migrants' issues

We also welcome the theoretical papers around post-democracy in China, authoritarian deliberation, democratic governance and social justice in China.

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Session 1First Session

Thursday, June 27th 08:00 to 10:00 (MB 3.255)

Discussants

Zhen Lu (University of Sheffield)

PU NIU (institution for China rural studies)

Transformation of “rural governance system” into regenerated urban village community

PU NIU (institution for China rural studies)

This paper focuses on regenerated community governance that occurred after the urban village regeneration when the villagers were reallocated to a new community. Beyond the physical urbanization of the village, the challenge for the local government is the transformation from the village governance system to an urban community governance system; and the integration of villagers as ordinary citizens. After the urban village regeneration, the governance system transformation includes three types of primary reforms: the administrative institution transformation, the empowerment of village shareholding companies, and the introduction of property management companies. Former village cadres play a significant role through the deliberations to lead villager to get used to the new urban life, such as intervening in the local conflicts, civilizing offensives, and policy implementation. It is paramount to discuss how the villagers experienced transition challenges in their daily lives when they were relocated from their traditional village houses into a modern urban community.

The subject of this paper is the role of deliberation as a political instrument for local government and community authority in the regenerated urban village governance. This paper compared the empirical cases between the urban village and the regenerated urban village community, and highlighted the significances of the transformation of the deliberation system, in particular, the integration of former village cadre into the new governance system. The findings show that the transformation of rural governance system into the regenerated urban village in China is a complex political practice. The complexity is because the urban governance system sits uneasily with village deliberation tradition. On the other hand, the former village cadres build up a platform for villagers and new authority, through their credibility and social network. Besides, one of the fascinating aspects is the way that reveals the significance of “informal deliberation” in routine governance. Finally, this paper will contribute to the theoretical discussions around how does the authoritarian deliberation work in the grassroots level governance? And, what is the role of (village) deliberation in the policy process?

Facilitating Public Participation in Contemporary China: Understanding the Roles of Media and Local Governments in Community Self-Governance

Xiao Liu (The University of Tokyo)

While the large-scale and unprecedented urbanization is taking place in China, the Chinese society is experiencing a fundamental transformation, and the Chinese governments are confronted by, and struggling to deal with piles of complex challenges. This paper focus on the Chinese local governments’ attempt/effort to improve the declining evaluations, and to push forward civil engagement in rural/urban community self-governance.

Using data from China Family Panel Studies (CFPS), this paper tries to empirically answer the following

research question, what is relationship between Chinese citizens' media use and their participation in community self-governance? Furthermore, this paper also probes other related questions, (1)does different media make a difference on people's evaluation about the performance of local governments? (2) do positive evaluations of local governments performance promote participation in community self-governance?

Analysis suggests that people who use the Internet more often tend to step away from community self-governance (turnout in committee election as an example), while people who consume news from the television tend to participate. Besides, positive evaluations about the performance of local governments, trust in local government officials, along with the experience of being unfairly treated by local officials seem to facilitate public participation in community self-governance. These results have strong implications for the operation of local governments and grassroots-level political regime in an authoritarian society, by illustrating that public participation can work for both the society and the government/state.

Research on a typical agricultural county urbanization and the trend of Population Mobility——A Case Study of Huaxian, one large agricultural county in China

Shaonan Li (School of Economics, Henan University;Academy of Hinterland Development, Henan University)

Sen Chai (School of Economics, Henan University;Academy of Hinterland Development, Henan University)

Mingzhai Geng (School of Economics, Henan University;Academy of Hinterland Development, Henan University)

Abstract?The typical agricultural area is the result of evolution on the basis of traditional agricultural areas. This area is far away from the central city and is weakly driven by the central city. This area relied on the agricultural production, which would not be impacted with the urbanization in future, meanwhile, its agricultural regional characteristics would be increasingly prominent. Nowadays, it becomes the main arena for accelerating the integration of rural population into the city under the current urbanization process in China. Therefore, taking the agricultural county Huaxian as an example, this paper wants to adopt the combing investigation to analyze the current situation, the trend of rural population movement, and the choice of destination cities when rural migrants in typical agricultural areas achieve "complete urbanization". After that, this paper will provide the suggestion of urbanization development in Typical Agricultural Areas. Through combing analysis, we find out that the trend of "home-returning" of the floating population in typical agricultural districts is obvious. the proportion of "home-returning" is increasing gradually with the increase the age of migrant workers. The migrant workers spend most parts of their money on buying house, the children's education fees, etc., in their county seats. The county town of a typical agricultural area is the ideal destination for migrant workers who own certain wealth and certain economic strength to achieve urbanization. Based on this, the author believes that to promote the development of urbanization in typical agricultural areas, it is necessary to develop more service industries in common agricultural areas, provide stable employment opportunities and income sources for more "home-returning" workers, and strengthen the flow of rural migrants. Meanwhile, several efforts are needed, include providing vocational skills training to improve the stability of migrant workers' employment; introducing of high-quality public service resources such as education, medical care, and culture in the county to gather in the county, and improving the quality of public infrastructure in the county.

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Session 2Second Session

Thursday, June 27th 10:30 to 12:30 (MB 3.255)

Discussants

PU NIU (institution for China rural studies)

Zhen Lu (University of Sheffield)

Taobao villages in Henan Province: how digital economy influence the rural life

Yu Qie (institut of geography?Université Paris I - Panthéon Sorbonne)

The digital economy is nowadays highly participated in Chinese people's life even in the rural area. As a well-known phenomenon for those villages inserted in the e-commerce, Taobao villages, especially those located In Chinese seashore provinces, had been studied since 2010. This research is aims to show the precise influence of the digital economy on rural life in four Taobao villages of Henan Province which are in the centre China. They have been tightly connected to the logistics network and the internet, which accelerate the information transformation between the urban area and rural area. Meanwhile, this connection also contributes to overcome the geographical limitation. In lane with this development, targeting at better living conditions farmers develop their non-agriculture skill to take employment with non-agricultural sectors. Agriculture is no longer their main resource and public services had been created inside the villages, the villages started to have more urban functions. The development changed the life rhythm and the lifestyle of residents from an agricultural pattern to a modern pattern.

The migrant population and their attitudes towards social policy in Urban China: Empirical evidence from coastal Guangdong Province

Alex Jingwei He (The Education University of Hong Kong)

Despite the shrinking population of rural-to-urban migrant workers in China in recent years, due to industrial restructuring and rising labor cost, approximately 285 million of them still work in Chinese cities, according to official statistics. In the past two decades, the stark contrast of their tremendous contribution to China's rapid economic growth and underprivileged welfare status has been the subject of intensive scholarly debates and international criticism. Yet, the past decade has witnessed some commendable policy progress towards more inclusive social protection. The migrant population has been gradually brought into the existing social security system. Political will in terms of harmonizing the significant gap of welfare entitlement between urban and rural areas has been repeatedly underscored by the party-state. Some local governments have embarked on policy reforms aimed at promoting further social integration of the migrant population. Against this backdrop, the satisfaction and welfare attitudes of migrant workers and the local urban population warrant close empirical investigation.

As the hub of the "world's factory", Guangdong Province has been one of the key engines of China's rapid economic growth. In the meantime, its large labor-intensive manufacturing industries in the past decades were frequently described as sheer sweatshops (He and Huang 2015). Interestingly, Guangdong is also one of the regions where major progressive efforts were made to include the marginalized migrant population into the urban social security system, with the city of Dongguan being a widely known exemplar. The sizable migrant population and the notable divergence of local governments' approaches to their social integration make Guangdong an ideal lab to observe and compare how migrant workers perceive their wellbeing and the legitimacy of local welfare system as a whole, as opposed to the local population.

This study uses primary data collected from an original telephone survey conducted in Guangdong Province in 2017 and 2018. We intentionally selected five representative cities, including Guangzhou, the provincial capital, Shenzhen and Shantou, two special economic zones with high policy autonomy but varying economic status, Dongguan, a famous industrial city but an exemplar of migrant social inclusion, and Shaoguan in representation of the vast less-developed region of this rich province. The survey probed welfare attitudes, satisfaction with social security and services, and perceptions regarding social policy reforms of both the migrant population and their local counterpart. The analysis in particular examined the discernable attitudinal differences among respondents across these five cities, and attempts to provide an explanation.

Education Inequality and Integration of Migrants in Urban China

Zhen Lu (University of Sheffield)

During the past three decades, more than 200 million rural migrant workers (nonminggong) have migrated to cities for a living (NBS, 2012). However, rural migrant workers have found that settling down and assimilating to the cities can be very challenging for them (Zhu, 2007). Among all the social problems that have been brought by the internal migration in China, difficulties they have encountered in their integration process, the education problems of their children are becoming increasingly noticeable (Luo, 2005). Problems on the education issue, such as the difficulty of enrolling into public schools experienced by rural migrant children in urban China, have undermined migrant workers' chances of integration, especially for those who expect to settle down in cities with their families including children. This paper answers three questions: why there is educational inequality? What role does it play in the integration process of migrants in urban China? And how do governments on different levels deal with this problem? To answer these questions, I will examine the roots of educational inequality from several correlated aspects around education system, followed by an investigation on how students get enrolled into schools in Changsha city, and who/what influence that enrollment process. To sum up, the education system in Changsha city is partly taken over by financialisation and private actors such as real estate developers. Specifically, because of the dual system (public and paid) in Changsha's education 'market', educational resources have gone beyond a basic social service that could be delivered/distributed by local government in equality. On the contrary, they have become financialised "products" that parents acquire through a competition of other related resources (hukou status and accommodation status).