

Chapter 2

Urban Community Planning in the Context of Transition in China: Theory Interpretation and Practice Exploration Based on Relationship Reconstruction

LIU Jiayan

Associate Professor, PhD, Department of Urban Planning,
School of Architecture, Tsinghua University.

Abstract

Along with a full-scale transition in both the urban development pattern and the socio-economic development in China, the planning of urban residential space has experienced a significant transition process from the residential area planning in traditional Danwei system, to the commercial housing estate planning in marketized housing system, then to the springing up of contemporary community planning. On the basis of an analysis of the primary goal, form, and limitations of community planning in recent China, this paper returns to a rethinking and interpretation over the concept of “community,” and holds that in the context of China’s traditional culture and the transitional background, “relationship” should not only be regarded as the center of community, is but also the key to understand many problems appeared in community building and to explore the development route of community planning in China amid the rapid urbanization. The paper states that Chinese society is at an important social transition period that is featured by the reconstruction of the state-society relationship, the transition and reformation of social structure, and the changes in social organization and interaction mode, in which community plays a vital constructive role: as the meso-level bridge between the state-society relationship, as the local incubator of social capital, and as the collective practice of the right of habitation. Moreover, the paper discusses the frontier practice of community planning oriented at relationship reconstruction in “New Qinghe Experiment” in Beijing, as a case study.

Key words: socio-economic transition, urban community, community planning, relationship reconstruction, Beijing

1. Introduction

China’s rapid urbanization till now has been centered on the space urbanization, to which people’s urbanization is far lagged behind, leading to a series of problems of imbalanced social development. Since the Third Plenary Session of the 18th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China held

in 2013, till the Sixth Session in 2016, the idea of developing and innovating social governance has been continuously proposed and emphasized, to promote the joint governance with diversified main bodies, equal negotiation and cooperation, within which urban community should be taken as the focus.¹⁾ Compared with the relatively rapid development of community building and management, the traditional residential area planning and construction pattern has shown various deficiencies, while the transition to community planning is just at the primary stage, to which the support from either theoretical study or related practices is lacked. Considering current requests on promoting community development and upgrading people's life quality, to stimulate the community planning development based on China's special conditions has become an urgent task for the planning field.

Based on an analysis on China's special culture and the background of social transition, this paper regards the "relationship" as one of the centers of community, and proposes that community plays three constructive functions in this transitional period of China. Furthermore, it puts forward certain frontier exploration and thoughts concerning the community planning development at a new era by combining with the practice of community planning in Qinghe area of Beijing.

2. From residential area planning to community planning

When reviewing the history of urban residential space planning in China, we can see that it went through the stage of residential area planning in Danwei system at the period of planned economy, the commercial housing estate planning after the marketization reform of residential housing, and now to the stage when contemporary community planning becomes an increasingly important emerging part.

After the founding of new China in 1949, under the social and economic administration system dominated by planned economy and Danwei system, either the production, the living, or related spatial demands of social members are under highly unified arrangement, showing the characteristics of being extremely homogenized. Plus the social supply pattern guided by equalitarianism, the quantity of residential households basically determined the scale of the residential area, the housing structure, and the allocation of service facilities in related planning.

In the 1980s, the real estate market started a thriving development, and commercial housing estate gradually became the primary form of urban

1) Kangzhi ZHANG. A Study on Social Governance under the Condition of Diversification. *Journal of Renmin University of China*, 2014(2): 2-13.

residential space development. Since the market was divided more meticulously, related planning needed to fulfill many preconditions concerning multi-dimensional socio-economic elements through conducting market investigation, client demand and payment capacity assessment, life style analysis, etc., which resulted in more diversified and refined spatial and landscape forms in the planning. And advertisement and design sketches were used as tools by real estate developers to describe the future life scenes and attract their potential buyers. While the visual effect-oriented planning in advance always mismatched the real needs after the residents settled in, causing much inconvenience and even tensions between the residents, real estate developers, property management agencies and residents committees. On the other hand, in contrast to the pleasant landscape inside the enclosed communities, the quality of public space, such as sidewalks and streets corners, is relatively low with poor construction, maintenance and management.

After entering the new century, community planning sprang up in many cities, with the following background. Firstly, the traditional urbanization mode focusing on economic growth and space expansion has met a bottleneck, the newly increased land supply in many big cities has experienced a large scale cutting down, elements that may lay possible influences over the implementation and appraisal of planning schemes have been more complicated, thus the traditional planning method of “constructing new buildings in a vacant area” and simply focusing on the design of spatial forms comes across major challenges. Secondly, there has been a rising public attention to the quality of environment and daily life. A large number of old residential quarters built decades of years ago have faced a serious dilemma of poor infrastructure, aging pipeline, public facility shortage, disorganized management, and population aging, resulting in more and more difficulties in the adoption of the traditional large scale demolition and resettlement mode. How to realize the stock-based renovation and stimulate the social vitality in the context of complicated property rights and interest gaming has been an urgent topic. Thirdly, when China stepped into the post-Danwei era, communities have been the basic units of urban renovation and urban governance. Thus community planning since the past decade has aimed at “making up the debt in social development and residential environment construction” that has been accumulated in the past economic-centered development process.²⁾ To realize the goal, the primary methods are to collect

2) Jiayan LIU, Xiangyu DENG. Community Planning Based on Socio-spatial Production: Explorations in “New Qinghe Experiment”. *City Planning Review*, 2016, 40 (11) : 9-14.

residents' opinions through forums, questionnaire investigations, or interviews organized by related government departments or organizations, so as to fully understand the local communities and residents' true demands. And the finishing point is laid on improving the public environment and facility construction like renovation of the community space environment, beautification of greening landscape, optimization of walking and parking space, and increasing public service facilities such as library and activity center for the elderly in communities.

Reviewing the above development process, the former two types of planning in the past may be regarded as "producing space" with the fine spatial environment as target product, while the community planning as the "production of space" that is oriented at realizing social goals including equality, healthiness, and poverty amelioration, etc.³⁾ It reflects the goal transformation of contemporary Chinese urban development: from focusing on economic development and quantity increase during the first 30 years after the reform and opening-up, to orienting at promotion of life quality centering on social development.

Nevertheless, certain problems are exposed in the early community planning practice in China, such as overemphasizing physical space construction, dependency on government investment, lack of community involvement, etc. And the root of these problems is the shortcoming in understanding the orientation and function of "community": restricted by the traditional mindset originated from the planned economy time that the society is under the full control of the government and considering community as a basic unit of government management and service from a static and structural perspective, which neglects the significant constructive function and subjectivity of community especially against the background of social transition at the time.

3. Reinterpretation of the concept of community from relationship perspective

Before discussing community planning, we need to define community. In fact the definitions of community is highly complicated and they are numerous from different development phases and under various disciplinary backgrounds. This paper tries to explore the connotation of community in a Chinese context from the angle of etymology.

As an imported idea from the western countries, the word "community", with its original Germany word "Gemeinschaft" put forward by Ferdinand

3) Jiayan LIU, Xiangyu DENG. Community Planning Based on Socio-spatial Production: Explorations in "New Qinghe Experiment". *City Planning Review*, 2016, 40 (11): 9-14.

Tönnies, delivers the connotation of a group of people sharing common norms, culture, values, or identity. In the early 1930s, the concept was introduced into China and translated as “社区” (shequ) that has been used up to now. As a totally whole new word of the combination of two single words, it stresses a compound meaning of and the bond between the “people” (“社”) and the “locality” (“区”). In fact, when we trace back to the ancient definition of the Chinese character “社” (she), we can find its explanation in *Shuowenjiezi* (a classical ancient literature explaining meanings of Chinese characters) that it means the local god of the land, and the locality, date, and ritual to worship the local god of the land. For example, in *Dongjing Menghua Lu·Qiushe*, which is a masterpiece by Meng Yuanlao in Song Dynasty describing the traditional life style at that time, it is recorded that people used to carefully prepare special cakes and wine in the special day in August (“秋社” (qiushe)) to worship the god of land. It shows that the character “社” itself already contains the meaning of close connection between people and place. Thus we may see that the initial comprehension of “community” in Chinese, like “社区”, influenced by the traditional Chinese culture that advocates man as an integral part of nature, inherently contains the meaning of locality and its relationship with human, a bit differing from that in English which mostly emphasizes the ties in social aspect.

Therefore, relationship plays a vital role for understanding “community”: apart from the necessary elements of specific geographic space and a certain size of population, the common culture and lifestyle as the “people-people relationship” and the sense of place as the “people-land relationship” are also indispensable. Moreover, when reviewing the rapid urbanization process in contemporary China, we may find that many community problems are caused by the break and collapse of the aforementioned relationships. For example, with high-speed socio-economic development, people require for higher life quality, but the development of neighborhood living space is lagged behind in comparison to the mass regional infrastructure construction; under the background of large-scale social mobility, there usually emerges a recognition crisis to the new settlement among the new comers and the feeling of nostalgia appears, which reflects the disconnection between social groups and their living space; and as more and more city construction reaches the stage of stock-based renovation, the public shows strong awareness in expressing their benefit demands and is eager to participate in the renovation process, but in a great amount of reconstruction processes, from topic set to plan making and implementation, the participation of the stakeholders who are really living and working on the site are usually in fact missing... therefore, a major task for contemporary community planning is to

facilitate the reconstruction of the relationships between people and land as well as between people and people.

4. Three constructive functions of community in the context of transition

Community is undoubtedly important no matter to the theoretical study or to the practical construction of city, because it creates a middle platform between the macro social structure and the micro individual, and builds up a key bridge for the macro and abstract sociological theory narration to interfere into practical social actions, and thus realizes its vital function in relationship construction.

China now is at an important social transition period that is represented by the restructuring of state-society relationship, the reformation of social structure, and the change of social organization and interaction modes. Community plays a vital constructive role in all of these transitions, particularly in the following three aspects:

(1) Community as the meso-level bridge in the state-society relationship

China has gone through the stages from the traditional “countryside China,” to “Danwei China,” and now toward “community China”.⁴⁾ And the key bond between the state and individuals has transited from village/clan in agricultural society, to Danwei/People’s Commune in planned economy system, and now with the collapse of Danwei system, community becomes an important platform connecting the superior administration power and the grass-root society.

It is a bidirectional constructive procedure. On one hand, community is a basic platform for society individuals and organizations to realize their self-management and service. In the *Organic Law of the Urban Residents Committee of the People’s Republic of China* that was promulgated in 1989, it is stated that “An urban residents committee shall be a mass organization for self government at the grassroots level, in which the residents manage their own affairs, educate themselves, and serve their own needs. ... The chairman, vice-chairman (vice-chairmen) and members of a residents committee shall be elected by all the residents of a residential area who have the right to elect or by the representatives from all the households.” It clarifies the foundation of existence of the community residents committee as a self-governance organization. On the other hand, community acts also as the fundamental unit for administrative management. According to the *Opinions by the Ministry of*

4) Jianjun LIU. Communal China: Enhancing the Foundation of State Governance Through Communities. *Journal of Shanghai University (Social Science Edition)*, 2016(6): 73-85.

Civil Affairs on Facilitating Nationwide Urban Community Construction that was issued in 2000, “the scope of an urban community generally refers to the jurisdiction area of a residents committee after the scale adjustment in the reform of community system.” The seamless division of community units in urban area guarantees a full coverage of the grass-root administration and service by the government.

However in reality, the administration property of community is far more dominant than its self-governance property. Though the *Organic Law of the Urban Residents Committee of the People’s Republic of China* requires that “a residents committee shall be composed of 5-9 members, and shall generally be established for an area inhabited by 100-700 households,” the actual population size of a community usually exceeds the standard to a significant extent. For example in Beijing, the population size of nearly 40% communities is over 2,000 households. Due to the giant population base and the overloaded routine affairs, many problems are exposed in the work of community residents committee like “confusion between administrative agency and social organization,” etc. As a result, the actual time spent on facilitating residents’ self-service and self-governance by the residents committee is squeezed to the least, and most of the time, the residents committees act as agencies for the elementary agency of the municipal government (sub-district offices). According to the field survey conducted by the research team, most members of residents committees in the area are not local residents from the communities, which inevitably restricts the significance of self-governance. During the early process of community planning when the research team went to communities and conducted surveys on residents’ demands, they found that a central problem was the lack of an efficient communication and connection channel between local residents and the government. As a result, in many occasions, the government puts great efforts both in human force and in finance into communities, but fails to meet residents’ true demands.

(2) Community as a local incubator of social capital

For a long period of time, the study on community, especially community planning, has adopted a social structural perspective that focuses on social group with similar social property characteristics, and tacitly approves the assumption that people from the same social group naturally gather together and frequently interact with each other. In response to the present reality that community development has broken the geographical determinism, we may use the social network perspective to face and study the real interactions and diversified connections among social individuals and organizations.^{5) 6) 7)} Under the impact of “information and technology expressway” development, people’s

social capital constantly breaks the geographical restriction. Related studies show that the higher income and education level of a social group, the bigger proportion of their social capital crosses the neighborhood.^{8) 9)} At the same time, a large number of unprivileged groups like the low income group, the elderly, the disabled, and women and children are usually excluded from this “high-speed train,” and community may be a key place for them to repair their social capital. In 2016, the aged population over 60 years old in China has accounted for 16.7% of the total population,¹⁰⁾ and the total amount of the aged group has already been the largest one all over the world. The huge amount of the aged population brings serious challenges to community development, especially considering the increasing demands for public service in contrast to the supply shortage in reality. But, on the other hand, the elderly often are active members in community planning activities, and they could rediscover their social value and self-recognition through participating in community activities.

As the community is closely connected with everyone’s daily life, it is an important platform for dialogue, negotiation and eventually reaching consensus between diversified main bodies. Regarding the forms of community activities in present China, most are “self-profitable” activities such as the cultural and sports activities and collective rights protection activities organized by property owners; in contrast, the high-level community activities that lay more emphasis on self-responsibility and the common benefit are rather few. It proves that relationship bond plays a major role in current neighborhood network, whereas the senses of responsibility- and participation-based collectivism are comparatively lacked. Nowadays in many big cities’ urban planning, it is highly stressed to establish the 15-minute daily life circle for a more convenience and high quality neighborhood life, even being guaranteed for implementation through setting up rigid index in their master plans.¹¹⁾ However, besides the construction of hardware facilities,

5) B.Wellman, B.Leighton. Networks, neighborhoods, and communities: approaches to the study of the community question. *Urban Affairs Review*, 1979, vol.14, No.3, 363-390.

6) B.Wellman. Community: from neighborhood to network. *Communications of the ACM*, 2005, vol.48, No.10, 53-55.

7) Jiayan LIU. Relationship, Network, and Neighborhood: Review On Urban Community Social Network Analysis and Its Prospect. *City Planning Review*, 2014(2): 91-96.

8) Albert Hunter. The Urban Neighborhood: Its Analytical and Social Contexts. *Urban Affairs Review*, 1979, vol.14, No.3: 267-288.

9) Karen E. Campbell and Barrett A. Lee. 1992. Sources of Personal Neighbor Networks: Social Integration, Need, or Time? *Social Forces* 70 (4) : 1077-1100.

10) National Bureau of Statistics of the People’s Republic of China. Statistical Bulletin of the People’s Republic of China on the 2016 National Economic and Social Development. http://www.stats.gov.cn/tjsj/zxfb/201702/t20170228_1467424.html.

11) See also “Shanghai 2040” (“Shanghai City Master Plan (2016-2040)” (draft)), and “Beijing City Master Plan (2016-2030)” (draft).

efforts should also be put into exploring how to motivate community interaction and stimulate social capital based on the physical public space, so as to further promote the senses of responsibility and participation in community.

(3) Community as a collective practice for right of habitation

In the UN “Habitat III” convention held in 2016, an important concept; “right to the city” was highlighted, after half a century when it was particularly discussed by Henri Lefebvre, the famous French philosopher and sociologist. It means that everyone has the right not only to come into city and get the access to urban resources, but also, as what David Harvey explained, to change ourselves through changing the city.¹²⁾ There involve two different but relevant concepts: one is “property right”, and the other is “right of habitation”. Nowadays most of the community activities are based on the legal authorization of the property ownership in the community, such as the status of housing owners, which is exclusive and effective to limited owners. In contrast, the concept of right of habitation advocates the right for everyone living in the community to participate in decision-making for community development. And with the community life as the center, it highlights the collective and the joint construction. Community provides a collective space for the all the residents to practice their “right to the city.” Therefore, not only the threshold but also the basis of right supporting community development should expand from “property ownership” to “right of habitation” to realize broader participation.

An increasing number of researches on stock-based community planning show that many contradictions are not caused by planning techniques, but by institutional obstacles especially the unclear right boundary in certain public space (such as passageway space in apartment and space outside each household door in Hutongs) due to some historical reasons. It leads to difficulties in defining the jurisdiction scope of these space in related planning, construction, and administration. Community planning activities inevitably involve game between diversified stakeholders including residents, government institutions, residents committee, social organizations, business runners, etc., and a series of questions will emerge: how to define the responsibilities, rights, and benefits of each party? Who cares? Who is benefited? Who is satisfied? Who pays the bill?... There was a case in an old city renovation project of Beijing that a designer spent his own money on setting creative street furniture in the public space of Hutong after getting

12) David Harvey. *Rebel Cities*. Qimao YE trans. Beijing: the Commercial Press, 2014.

consent from the sub-district office, but received complaints from residents in the Hutong about infringing their usage of the front door space. Therefore, we need to consider how to establish good relationship and clear borders of rights between various main bodies, which is usually neglected by the urban planning and construction management system in the past under the traditional development pattern and requires for trans-disciplinary exploration.

5. Community planning oriented at relationship reconstruction: based on exploration in “New Qinghe Experiment”

With the above analysis, the author of the paper led a research team carrying out a series of community planning work in Qinghe Jiedao of Haidian District, Beijing, which is a part of the “New Qinghe Experiment.” In 1928, several distinguished Chinese sociologists including Yang Kaidao and Xu Shilian carried out countryside building as a sociological experiment in Qinghe Town (the predecessor of Qinghe Jiedao), which is called “Qinghe Experiment.”¹³⁾ They tried to push forward the economic, social, and sanitation development from the grass-root level, but were broken off in 1937 by the war. In 2014, headed by School of Social Sciences of Tsinghua University, in collaboration with School of Architecture of Tsinghua University, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, etc., the “New Qinghe Experiment” was initiated in order to integrate academic powers from sociology, urban planning, and architecture fields to stimulate community vitality, promote public participation, and explore an effective way for the positive interaction between government governance, self-adjustment of society, and residents’ self-governance.¹⁴⁾ One of the important tasks of the experiment is to explore the new-type community planning from an integral perspective combining social governance with spatial planning.

Qinghe is located outside the fifth ring-road in Haidian District of Beijing. The area has stood as an important military town on the northwest side of the old Beijing city for thousands of years, and later acted as a regional commercial center since Ming Dynasty till now. Along with the rapid expansion of urban construction since the end of the last century, Qinghe has changed quickly from an original countryside town to a peripheral cluster to the central Beijing. Qinghe Jiedao (a sub-district administration unit) occupies

13) Cato Young, Leonard S. Hsu, etc. *Ching Ho: A Sociological Analysis*. Beijing: Yenching University Press, 1930.

14) Qiang LI. Qinghe Experiment: Research on Social Governance Renovation at Grassroots Level. *China Institutional Reform and Management*, 2015 (8) : 27-28.

an area of 9.37 km², and among the population living in the area, those owning the local registered permanent residence are 74 thousand and the migrant population is 84 thousand. There are 28 communities in the area, including Danwei courtyard, commercial housing estate, urban village, mixed residential area, and other types of inhabitation space. Most of the phenomena occurred in China's rapid urbanization process may be found aggregated in Qinghe area, among which the most serious one is the high-degree differentiation, polarization, and segregation not only of physical environment, but more at socio-economic level due to the urban-rural dual development. The new-type one-stop shopping mall is neighbored to a low-end wholesale market; the high-grade enclosed real estate community at a per m² price of more than 100 thousand yuan stands next to a crowded and chaotic urban village; the public space is full of mess and out of order; various vehicles are randomly parked on streets together with all kinds of wheeled booths... The central problem is the "semi-urbanization" of the area, in other words, a high-degree imbalance exists between the spatial urbanization and the population urbanization. In consequence, the polarization and separation between the rich and the poor is severe, residents' sense of community recognition and belonging is low, so is their sense of participation and public consciousness.

In order to realize the three primary functions of community described above, the community planning in Qinghe mainly focuses on the following three aspects:

(1) With the optimization of community governance structure as the precondition One important precondition of community planning is to improve the community governance structure, which should be established with the benefit-based community as the foundation and with the functional adjustment as the reform direction. The survey conducted by our research team shows that over 70% of the residents are "very willing" and "comparatively willing" to participate in consultations concerning community affairs, and there are more than 15% residents choosing "generally willing." Nevertheless, since an efficient communication platform or official negotiation channel is lacked, the social risks at the grass-root level continuously accumulate and expand, reflected by the intense relationship between residents, property management companies, real estate developers, and residents committees, etc., and even resulting in conflict events in some cities.

The first step for community planning in Qinghe was to set up a grass-root level governance platform. Above all, the system of community public affair discussion committee was established as a beneficial complement to the existing residents committee. The new commissioners were elected from

community residents, with discussion rules and democratic consultation system improved, and the related responsibilities, power, and rights clearly defined. Based on the establishment of multi-participation negotiation and self-governance procedure, a joint meeting attended by the Chinese Communist Party organization at community level, the residents committee (including the public affair discussion commissioners), and the property management agency representatives, is held on a regular base. In addition, related organizations and individuals are invited to participate if needed according the topic of the meeting. With this system, a whole-process negotiation channel starting from raising an issue, negotiation, decision-making, to implementation is opened up. After over two years' development, now the communities have formed their own self-governance organization and rules; moreover, they have gradually moved on from joint meeting toward joint action by putting common efforts into renovating their community environment like reconstruction of bicycle sheds and greening and plants growing. The long existed dilemma of "no action after negotiation" was finally resolved, and in the meantime, residents are pleased to see their power in self-governance and the change of their surrounding environment.

(2) Stimulating residents' subjectivity based on reproduction of public space
The foster of people's subjectivity, which means the understanding and practice of the responsibility, right, and power, is an important premise for the citizenization of people in city. Though China realized an urbanization rate rising from 17.9% (1978) to 56.1% (2015) within less than 40 years after the reform and opening-up,¹⁵⁾ it is mostly spatial urbanization, and people's urbanization is far lagged behind. Living in urban buildings, many residents in Qinghe remain their life habits in traditional countryside, such as littering, conniving pets' defecation in public space, refusing paying fee for property management, etc., all of which show the importance and urgency in promoting people's urbanization. Therefore, one of the central tasks of community planning is to facilitate the social reproduction through the spatial reproduction. In this process, the value choice in traditional urban planning with priority to efficiency by highlighting outcomes and forms should be replaced by centering at the process through creating diversified opportunities for social interaction and cohesion in the spatial planning.

The community planning of Qinghe focuses on the production of "public space." Here the "public space" contains dual connotations: the physical public space and the social public space, which affect and supplement each

15) National Bureau of Statistics of China. China Statistical Yearbook 2016.

other. On one hand, the physical public space like squares and parks is an important medium for stimulating social interaction and formation of sense of belonging; on the other hand, local residents are encouraged to participate in public space planning via the “Architect Experience Workshop”, which provides them a chance to conduct site design with team members besides their families. Through a transpositional thinking, residents learn how to reach a consensus and realize all-win by understanding and compromising with each other (Figure 1). As a result, not only residents’ capacity of participation in community affairs is promoted, but also their concerns and re-recognitions to the neighborhood and the community are awakened. Regarding the problem of how to maintain the renewed site, the residents actively organized the maintenance team, formulated the “community convention,” and wrote down the slogan of “protecting the site like protecting our homes” with their own hands. It can be seen that the public spirit of “community self-governance” has been gradually formed.

(3) Recreating the public realm in the reconstruction of rights relationship

In many community planning projects, as well as most community activities organized by the house owners committee, only the property owners are included and a great number of tenants are excluded from these events, while in fact the latter concern about the living environment and residence quality of the community no less than the former. When the public space (or semi-public space) in the community is considered as the primary target in the community planning, it may not totally be covered by the private property ownership, but is an important carrier influencing the community life quality and also a vital incubation platform for public participation.¹⁶⁾

Therefore, related discussion returns back to community, which involves the reconstruction of rights relationship. In the process of community planning, only when we fully clarify who should be involved and what are their respective responsibilities, power, and rights in each link of the planning including the formation and confirmation of a theme, the goal setting, the scheme design, the implementation and construction, and the operation and management, rational, efficient, and operable community planning themes can be formed.

Though at a peripheral area between the urban and rural area, the inhabitation density and plot ratio in Qinghe are quite high, forming a concrete jungle with tall buildings. The population size of a community

16) Jianjun LIU. Communal China: Enhancing the Foundation of State Governance Through Communities. *Journal of Shanghai University (Social Science Edition)*, 2016 (6) : 73-85.

reaches several or even nearly ten thousands, so how to attract as more community members as possible becomes a major challenge for the participation-based planning. What's more, there is also a significant disparity between the growing right-protection awareness by individuals and their backward sense of social responsibility. For example, people will question the legitimacy of the public space renovation for not having their consent, but they will take it for granted that the property management agency or residents committee should pay for the renewal of the apartment stair gates which has no clear regulation yet in the old neighborhood.

Along with the progress of community planning, our concerns gradually shift from how to motivate community participation to how to recreate the life-based community in the reconstruction of rights relationship. Considering that the communities in Qinghe are mainly in the form of collective residential housing, we initiated the building modification activity, with the renovation of public and semi-public space (like passageway and lobby) out of the coverage of private property ownership as carrier. In unit of a building or a building cell, the renovation schemes were totally completed by the residents from proposing, designing, to implementation, which were under the fund and technical support by the sub-district office, the local organizations, the property management agencies, and the research team. All residents participated no matter they are property owners or tenants, or old or young, who together renewed their originally dilapidated passageway and made decorations with diversified unique characteristics (Figure 2). What's more important, the formation of close-knit building-based communities is effectively facilitated, and the originally intense relationship between various stakeholders in the community is also improved. At the end of the first phase of the modification project, the residents actively formulated and publicized the convention of their building units, and volunteered to monitor and maintain the public sanitation of their building. And some residents even actively required to further improve the work at their own expense. The residents' attitude has changed from "making us do it" to "we want to do it." And the long-time existed dispute of whether the government or the property management agency should pay for installing new building gates was also solved after negotiation: a small part of the fund raised by residents, proportionately supplemented by subsidies from the government.

6. Conclusion

China is now experiencing huge social transition not only on the macro state-society relationship and social structure, but also on the micro social organization and interaction mode. As an important meso-level platform, the

urban community on one hand bears and reflects all these macro transitions, with concentrated explosion of various social problems and conflicts, on the other hand, community planning is endowed with unprecedented sense of mission and showing new vitality. This paper uses “relationship” as a key cutting point for understanding community. And on the basis of the community planning practice of “New Qinghe Experiment” in Beijing, it discusses how to realize the coordinated development between spatial and social reproduction through the means of combing social governance with spatial planning, in order to reach the core of new-type urbanization, that is, being human-oriented.



Figure 1 Residents co-designed public space in “Architect Experience Workshop”



Figure 2 Residents renovated passageways and lobbies in their residential departments by themselves

