



Study on the Problem of Community Construction of Northeast Resource-Oriented Cities in the Visual Angle of Field

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Abstract

In recent years, community study especially community construction and community development has been current hot topic. In period of economic system shunt and social transformation, the development of Chinese cities exist huge otherness in climate, economy and degree of social development. Because of its special history and structure, community construction has shown the exigency and significance of resource-oriented cities in Northeast. But, resource-oriented cities have many contravention and conflicts in community construction, this affects embedded development of community construction. So, this text set community conflict as start, try to find the root of community conflict from the visual angle of field and redesign project of community construction.

Key words: Resource-oriented cities; Field; Community construction

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INTRODUCTION

Resource-oriented cities mean the cities that mainly dominated by natural resource exploitation and resource-based industries take hold in the city. "According to the research results of SDPC in 2002, there are 118 resource-

oriented cities in China, making up nearly 18 percent of the country's cities, and there are 30 resource-oriented cities in the northeast" (Ma, Sun, & Ren, 2005). So, the northeast is the most concentrated district of resource-oriented cities in China. Resource-oriented cities exist because of founding resource, be prosperous because of resource exploitation. At the same time of contributing to economic development, these cities also left many "scars" to themselves. A series of social problems emerged such as resource exhaustion, economic recession, environmental deterioration, low income and high unemployment rate etc.. Especially with the progress of restructuring of enterprise, "unit system" was weakened gradually, and laid-off workers transformed from "the unit people" to "the community people", multitudinous social management function returned to the community. So the function of community is bigger than ever before. Community is the basic component of city. It is the basis of existence and development of the city. Solving the problem of community construction of resource-oriented cities will has a significant and profound meaning to promote healthy development in resource-oriented cities and revive the northeast even the whole nation.

1. MAIN PROBLEMS FACING IN COMMUNITY CONSTRUCTION IN NORTHEAST RESOURCE-ORIENTED CITIES

The northeast resource-oriented cities are most concentrated and representative. In these cities, Hegang, Fuxin and Fushun are all super-huge type coal mine in China. Daqing, Liaohe and Jilin these are famous for oil field in China. The northeast district contains abundant forest resources, is one of three forestry bases. In this big field of northeast resource-oriented cities, their

characteristics are different to fields of other cities—non-renewal of natural resources emerged. A lot of resources such as coal, mineral, oil and forest in the field shrunk generally in the field because of the limit of resources. A part of these resources has been exhausted completely, and many coal enterprises and mines have closed and bankrupted. Enterprises in the field are mainly dominated by preliminary working of natural resources and secondary industry occupies the central position that leads to industrial structure ratio imbalance. With the aging, staleness of the equipment gradually and low-level redundant development, these enterprises are lack of competitiveness in the market economic system. Because of the same characteristic, large quantities numbers of people were early retired, laid-off and unemployed. The limit of natural resources needs these cities readjusting the industrial structure without delay. Many enterprises are especially state-owned enterprises to abide by one principle, namely “reduce staff for greater efficiency”. However, the immediate consequence of “reduce staff for greater efficiency” is casing a lot of workers were bought off the service years, early retired even laid-off. These people turned from “the unit people” to “the community people” that lead to a lot of conflicts occurred in the field. The vast majority of conflicts presented through community field. These conflicts are mainly reflected in three aspects.

Firstly, owners of enterprises embezzled state-owned assets in the process of restructuring on the pretext of “reduce staff for greater efficiency” which lead to lots of workers laid-off and unemployed. They were expelled from unit to community that leads to the workers’ dissatisfaction. A part of enterprises embezzled stated-owned assets in virtue of “vacuum of system” in the period of alternation of new and old system. The managers gain benefits by taking advantage of their powers and loophole of management to sell enterprises in low price. The consequence of this behavior initiated many conflicts.

Secondly, improper methods for enterprises solving the problem of laid-off etc. lead to conflicts. Some enterprises couldn’t illuminate the meaning of reform to the workers and delivered the workers to the community when they hadn’t eliminated unhealthy emotions produced from workers. The enterprises forgot the enormous contribution that the workers had made and regarded them as useless “material”. This kind of solution is bound to give rise to bad reverberation, leading to many workers to sue, appeal for help even radical behaviors.

Thirdly, conflicts produced because of local communities didn’t afford their deserved to function after the workers laid-off. Some communities still rest on the ideology of old system, couldn’t help the unemployment, laid-off workers out of dilemma from thought and action,

which intensified the emotional ambivalence to the people.

2. SOURCE PRODUCED IN THE NORTHEAST RESOURCE-ORIENTED URBAN COMMUNITY FROM FIELD PERSPECTIVES

Many scholars have tried to study community using field theory. Kart Levin did his utmost to emphasize the concept of the field in his works. Kaufman took the social field as a site or stage for community competence. Irwin T. Sanders added again the discussion of social field pattern in his works *The Community: An Introduction to a Social System*. “The pattern thinks that community is a field of social action and social interaction and each component influences mutually. Social field is limitless and dynamic. The field is fruit of its all components’ interaction.” (Fan, 2001) In fact, Pierre Bourdieu has had penetrating discussion on field theory. He thought that “one field can be defined as a network or a configuration of objective relationship existed in all kinds of location”. (Bourdieu, 1998, p.124) Firstly, field is social field contacted by all kinds of social relationships. The nature of the field is these components’ relationship, namely “social network” although there were some factors such as social members, institutions and rules existed. Secondly, in this social network, every knot in this “net” is “position”, namely “position” that organization and social members take up in the net. “Position” is objective existence, at the same time changes unceasing because it has social resource or power. Thirdly, “configuration” explains activity of field. That is to say field doesn’t exist passively. It not only affords space of social interaction not only for social members but also obtains special structure and order for itself through adjusting function of every factor.

2.1 Northeast Industrial District in the Unit Field

Although unit fields formed in the period of planned economy have a degree of universality nationwide, but planned economic system carries out the most thoroughly and lasts longest because of its special historical background. Relevantly, this system produced northeast unit community field. “Chinese unit community based on the unity system is special mode of community in Chinese society.” (Ren, 2005) Strictly speaking, it can’t be called community, but field formed according to the district or organization in which people work. In the field, unit has absolute power of controlling where unit members to get from because unit occupies the limit resources distributed from the country. Yet unit members in the field are in subordinated position and the capital they have is also limit. So, they depend on the unit almost in politics, economy, culture etc.. The country

reaches the goal of controlling social members by controlling all kinds of resources, and paly the function of social integration. At the same time of unit members depending on unit, they also generate value identification to their unit and form relative fixed relationship network among members.

The characteristics occurred in the stage of planned economy are all generated from unit system essentially. Unity system makes resources distributed from nation to every enterprise, and then from enterprises to workers. In the process of distribution, unit and workers formed a series of dependence on the nation. To enterprises, they depend on planned economic system because they have to obtain resources. At the same time the enterprises are restricted by the nation because all of the things such as what they should product, how many they should produce and who they should sell to are all decided by the nation. This kind of dilemma relation also exits between enterprises and workers. On the one hand, the workers enjoy all kinds of welfares from enterprises. On the other hand, unit workers' identities are not allowed to change because of constraint of status once they come into the enterprises. At the same time, although the unit community is called community, but it just accessory to the enterprises, becoming lower management organization of the government. All the resources of community need to obtain from unit as well.

Unit consciousness produced because unit system goes deep into all social aspects, enterprises, workers and unit communities are all surrounded. Unit consciousness is field consciousness, dependence on the unit formed in the field of community in the period of unity system. With the transformation from planned economic system to market economic system in the late 1980s, unit consciousness of enterprises and workers didn't change relevantly because this system reform proceeds top-down. So, unit consciousness of the enterprises and workers hasn't changed relevantly. On the contrary, the unit consciousness strengthened because the enterprises and workers lack of competition in market economic. They lost the "protection" of the nation and became vulnerable groups of society. This conflict of consciousness leads to conflict of action, mainly reflected on community conflicts.

2.2 Community Dilemma of Unit System in Transitional Period

In the late 1980s, social structure transformed when planned economic system turned to market economic system. Ministry of Civil Affairs introduced some concepts such as "community", "community construction" in order to impel reform of urban social welfare work through "community service". However, development and study of community presents difference from other types of cities because of particularity of resource-oriented cities.

One outstanding feature of resource-oriented cities is that its pillar industries are resource-based industries which usually select and preliminary working of the resources. And the cities' main function is to offer minerals and its preliminary products to the society. Urban economy depends on non-renewable natural resource highly and their economic basis weak relatively. (Jin & Li, 2005)

Most enterprises in the resource-oriented cities are state-owned enterprises. In the period of social transformation, a high percentage of state-owned enterprises became private enterprises through reorganization and restructuring. One result is a lot of workers were laid-off. Although these enterprises hadn't occupied social resources, but social capital that enterprises had in the field still occupied advantageous position. However, the relationship between workers and these enterprises had changed in nature. In period of unit system, the workers enjoy welfare that other types of enterprises' workers couldn't have because of status system. In the period of post-unit system, the relationship between workers and enterprises turned to employment relationship. Unit didn't offer welfare to the workers any more. Workers in the field lost protection of "status system" and had little social capital that leads to them in bad position. Yet to those laid-off and unemployed workers, their situations are even more awkward. They lost not only all kinds of welfare in unit system period, but also chance of getting payment through working. So, these laid-off and unemployed workers are more likely cause conflicts.

It is clear that the social capital that workers have in the field is little than before. This situation must strengthen their dependence on the community. In fact, except for the above objective factor, there is another factor—"habitus". Although a part of social function that unit had afforded returned to community in planned economic period, but community didn't seem to afford relevant this part of function. The reason is that the existence of "habitus". "Habitus" is a concept from Pierre Bourdieu. "It is a system composed of consciousness, evaluation and action. It has certain stability and can be replaced. It is from social system and lives in the body (or to say biological individual)." (Bourdieu, 1998, p.171) It is a kind of socialized subjectivity. Firstly, the resources' non-renewable and social developmental trend leads to resource-oriented cities' economy backward. Most members in the community are workers of state-owned enterprise in planned economic. They haven't been able to obtain more resource by breaking existed field. Secondly, communities of resource-oriented cities haven't afforded their function because of various reasons. Thirdly, members in the community have formed their own contact network in fixed field through decades even several decades. Although social structure has transformed, but the internalized "habitus" still promotes them to reserve primary modes of behavior and

characteristic of contact etc.. This means that community study and community construction in northeast resource-oriented cities need to take its special history and complexity into consideration.

3. COUNTERMEASURE AND SUGGESTION TO BUILD NORTHEAST RESOURCE-ORIENTED URBAN COMMUNITY

Firstly, we should tighten up the legal system from the law and put an end to loss of state assets through national law's specification and governmental supervision. This can reduce the number of laid-off workers as well as relieve the burden produced by conflicts for communities solving problems of mediating laid-off workers and retired workers.

Secondly, there is need to have a correct acquaintance to the function of community. With unity community tending to marginalization in urban social life, people's living space transfers from unit community to public space outside of unit community gradually. However, marginalization of unit community doesn't mean disruption entirely. At the same time of government transfer power to a lower level to support community, it also should be to give full play to enthusiasm of enterprises. The government should divide reasonably responsibility and limits of authority of the community as well as let capable enterprises take part in community construction, making each factor in the community field play its function sufficiently and harmoniously.

Thirdly, members of traditional industrial community get rid of dependence on unit community gradually. Field theory thought that the field provides for its members not only space of interaction activities, members and organizations in the field produce all kinds of communication relationship through occupying the position and having resources. Social members are restrained by the field, they shape the field constantly. And the field has its own activity, isn't affected by all kinds of relationship in the field. So, on the one hand, habitus that the members of the unit community formed in the field made them depend on all kinds of welfare brought by the unit system. On the other hand, the configuration function of field also explained that the old field wouldn't disappear immediately with the changing of economic system and its function wouldn't die out immediately. This needs the government, members of community and society deal with all kinds of relationship in it. The government should let the reformed state-owned enterprises afford its deserved duty. At the same time it should deal with the work of transforming part of function of unit. The members of community should realize the inevitability and advancement of historical

development. At the same time it should remove the mentality of "be left" and follow up construction pace of new community timely. The more important is they should realize the urgency of obtaining valid resources again by increasing capital and occupy position in the new field. The society should strengthen the function of guidance of public opinion, understand the difference of community construction between resource-oriented cities and developed cities. It should guide people to form correct opinion and attitude to community construction of resource-oriented cities.

Lastly, we should improve quality of community staff. Community work team is bearer of community management and provider of community service. Various kinds of work need to be executed by the community staff. They take on weighty responsibility at many aspects such as coordinating interests, resolving conflict, serving resident etc. So, improving quality of community staff is the key link of community work. In addition, we should strengthen team construction of community volunteer, promoting institutionalization of volunteer service activities. At the same time, we should redeploy positivity of residents through strengthening democratic participation and provide good space of development to members of the community field.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the special history and construction of community in resource-oriented city lead to unceasing conflicts of community construction. This article tries to discuss the question from one kind of type of community conflicts by using field theory. This analytical insight enriched research perspective of studying community construction. Community construction in resource-oriented city needs various endeavours and make a different treatment according to type of conflicts. We should realize the arduousness, complexity and chronicity. Only in this way that we can propel the construction and development of the community as a whole and construct harmonious community and improve social stabilization and development.

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