



The residential resettlement in suburbs of Chinese cities: A case study of Changsha



Ying Xu^a, Xiaoling Zhang^{b,*}

^a Department of Public Administration, Hunan University, China

^b Department of Public Policy, City University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong, China; Shenzhen Research Institute, City University of Hong Kong, Shenzhen, PRC

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Chinese cities
Residential resettlement
Spatial mismatch
Suburban areas

ABSTRACT

Since the late 1990s, Chinese cities have been experiencing significant suburbanization with massive numbers of people moving out of city centers. Facing this background, this paper aims to identify the typology of residential resettlements in suburban areas, and analyze the mechanisms of each residential resettlement via archive studies, census tracks and field research instead of the traditional macro-demographic approach. Five types of resettlement are identified, comprising public housing districts for poor people with housing difficulties, low-end private housing districts for lower socio-economic people, multiple housing districts (containing public housing and low-end private housing) for displaced shantytown residents, and villa areas for the wealthy. This suburban residential resettlement pattern is generally different from that in Western cities, which is largely attributed to the Chinese governments' monopoly of land supply and public service provision. It is also concluded that the state power, capitalist actors (e.g., developers and private enterprises), and other professionals (e.g., planners and architects) have become the Chinese characterized 'pushing' factors and actors in driving the typology of suburban resettlement housing in the context of urbanization era of China. Besides, the five typology of resettlement housing has brought about socio-spatial consequences including a spatial mismatch for lower socio-economic groups in suburban areas, which may lead to the formation of poverty belts around Chinese cities. This may provide important implication for understanding the residential resettlement in other developing countries with similar context.

1. Introduction

Since the economic reforms in the 1980s, China has been moving from a centrally-planned to market-oriented economy. During the transitional period, Chinese cities have experienced a massive influx of rural population, rapid expansion of industrial production and significant improvement in urban infrastructure (Li, Long and Liu, 2015; Li, Long, Liu and Tu, 2015). To meet expanding urban functions, such as more housing and increasing industrial production, Chinese cities have extended their urban boundaries far beyond their previous perimeters and out into suburban areas (Xu, Tang, & Chan, 2011; Long, Zou, Pykett, & Li, 2011; Li, Long and Liu, 2015; Li, Long, Liu and Tu, 2015). For example, the developed areas of Chinese cities grew at an astonishing rate from 30,406.2 km² to 45,565.76 km² between 2004 and 2012 (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2005, 2013).

As a result, a large number of people have moved out of city centers into suburban areas in Chinese cities. Several studies have verified this suburbanization trend in Beijing, Shanghai, Hangzhou and other Chinese cities (Zhou, Ma, & J. C., 2000; Feng & Zhou, 2005; Feng,

Zhou, & Wu, 2008). However, these all employ macro-demographic analysis to examine the change of population distribution in city centers and suburbs. As yet, the resettlement of people in suburban areas is still substantially under-investigated (Liu, Lu, & Chen, 2013; Li, Chen, Wang, & Liu, 2014; Liu et al., 2016; Long, Tu, Ge, Li, & Liu, 2016; Tian, Guo, & Zheng, 2016), i.e. who are they? What are their group characteristics (race, household registration status, income level, etc.)? What are their neighborhoods? Why do they move into suburbs? These issues are only briefly mentioned in a few case studies (e.g. Ma & Zhang, 2006; Xia & Zhu, 2015; Feng & Zhou, 2004), lacking a systematic and holistic interpretation.

In addition, as mentioned above, the development of suburban residential resettlements is accompanied by the process of suburbanization. However, it is widely believed that the suburbanization pattern in Chinese cities is different from that in American cities. For example, Zhou et al. (2000) maintained that, in complete contrast with China, suburbanization in America involved middle-class residential relocation driven by the private car. Zhou and Logan (2008) stated "suburbanization in China could not be based primarily on lifestyle choices

* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: xiaoling.zhang@cityu.edu.hk (X. Zhang).

by more affluent people [in the US]". So, are suburban residential re-settlements in today's transitional China still different to the Western experience? If so, what are the significant differences between them now?

To address these research issues, this paper identifies the typology of suburban residential resettlements in Chinese cities and analyzes the mechanism involved for each type. China is now in a transitional period with co-existing planned and market economies, in which the state and the market both affect suburban development. Given the uniqueness of this transitional period and the difference in patterns of suburbanization between Chinese and Western cities, the research findings will provide a significant contribution to the understanding of suburban development in China today.

2. Overview of suburban residential development

2.1. Suburban residential development in Western cities

Suburbanization has been the prominent urban development process since World War. With the continuous development of city centers, a mass of high-income groups and upper (and middle) classes escaped from the city centers to their outskirts to elude air pollution, traffic jams, etc., and find a better living environment. This population shift to suburbs has profoundly transformed Western cities in spatial, social, economic and other aspects (Berry, 1973; Vesselinov & Goix, 2012). With this background, suburban residential development has long been at the top of the research agenda of urban planners, geographers and sociologists (Short, Hanlon, & Vicino, 2007).

There have been extensive studies of the driving forces of suburban residential development in Western cities. For example, Mieszkowski and Mills (1993) developed their natural-evolution theory and flight-from-blight theory to explain the process. Harvey's (1985) insight, from the perspective of political economy, into the origin of suburbanization in Western countries through the law of capital circulation, from which the development of suburban housing, a huge investment in the 'built environment', is seen as the "secondary circuit" of capitalist accumulation. In this way, one of the remarkable elements of US suburbanization, for instance, is the interstate highways and intercity highways that have greatly contributed to the decentralization of urban dwellers to low-density suburban areas (Zhang, Liu, Wang, & Chen, 2016).

The impact of specific factors on suburban residential development are also analyzed, which can be grouped as pull factors (transportation innovations, preference for single-family detached housing, rising income, telecommuting, mass production of suburban housing and reduction in housing prices, automobile subsidization, etc.) and push factors (fiscal and social problems of inner cities, such as congestion and overcrowding, pollution, racial tensions, crime, high taxes, low quality public schools and other government services) (Kunstler, 1993; Rusk, 2000; Peiser, 2001; Sridhar & Sridhar, 2003).

From the social and economic perspectives, on one hand, these newly emerging suburban neighborhoods were mostly white, middle or upper class communities (Vesselinov & Goix, 2012). As a result, the social and economic structure of central urban areas collapsed with a soaring crime rate and reduction in local government revenues. On the other hand, the sustained rapid growth of suburban traffic has brought about a long lasting heavy load on local land and forest resources as well as the ecological environment. In addition, the suburban districts became more affluent and racially homogeneous, while city centers were economically deprived with high minority concentrations. This spatial differentiation between ethnic groups resulted in a high residential segregation, social stratum differentiation and racial discrimination (Zhang & Hu, 2016).

In the context of resettlement of minority groups and increasing ethnic diversity in suburbs, gated communities have been adopted to ensure neighborhood homogeneity. Just as the suburbs in the 1950s,

where there was a predominantly white, affluent population, it seems that gated communities are producing a similar pattern of racial and economic homogeneity. Although after World War II, the outskirts were observably middle-class, white and white middle class some studies also show that the main population in the outskirts before World War II was working-class (Harris, 1985; Gardner, 2001). After World War II, most successfully transitioned their status to middle-class in the process of suburbanization, while a small number remained in the lower socio-economic bracket (Wang & Wang, 2016). At the same time, some minority groups relocated into the suburbs along with suburbanization, urban renewal and gentrification in city centers. The gating process, therefore, initially boomed with the beginning of suburban racial diversification, and intensified with the second wave of suburban diversification (Vesselinov, Cazessus, & Falk, 2007; Vesselinov & Goix, 2012). Moreover, not only white Caucasians but also minority groups live in gated communities in suburban districts to maintain homogeneity (Lang & Danielsen, 1997; Grant & Mittelsteadt, 2004).

2.2. Suburban residential development in Chinese cities

Before the 1980s, Chinese cities were a centralized development around a city center, and the suburbs were used as a production space to accommodate the government's industrial development strategy. Although the country's 1978 'reform and opening up' policy has released the shackles of urbanization in China and opened China's suburbanization process in big cities, suburbanization in the 1980s was just a passive movement (Zhou and Ma) that was mainly based on government-led enterprise relocation (mainly state-owned enterprises) and the construction of industry parks (Chen, Liu, & He, 2012). However, since the 1990s, the population in China's big cities has taken the initiative in pushing towards the suburbs (Shen & Wu, 2013), due to a large number of industrial enterprises being relocated from the city center to the suburbs, the deterioration in the living environment in central city areas, and the construction of new towns in the suburbs attracting a large number of people out of the city center. In addition, since the mid-1990s, with the deepening of China's economic system reform, and the reform of the urban housing distribution system and land use system, the movement towards real estate development-oriented city-building occurred in almost every big city in China (He & Liu, 2008), promoting the development of suburbanization in the country. Thus, since the late 1990s, Chinese cities have experienced a significant suburbanization process, with people moving out of city centers (Cervero & Day, 2008; Lo, Xue, & Wang, 2016; Qin & Liao, 2016).

Some studies have addressed this trend by examining population redistribution. For example, Zhou et al. (2000) describe the population distribution in the suburbanization of Beijing, Shanghai, Shenyang and Dalian; Feng and Zhou (2005), using national population census data, identify the occurrence and period of acceleration of suburbanization in Hangzhou; while Feng et al. (2008) verify the suburbanization of Beijing by analyzing its changing population density and distribution.

These studies all involve the verification of suburbanization with different cities as case studies. They employ macro-demographic analysis identifying the changes of population distribution in city centers and suburbs to verify the suburbanization involved. However, there is scant research into the details of population relocation in suburban areas, which means that little is known of the profiles of the people resettled in the suburbs of Chinese cities.

2.2.1. Main types and characteristics of suburban resettlement housing in China

There are two main reasons for the emergence of suburban resettlement housing in China: the reconstruction of old cities, such as the reconstruction of shantytowns, *danwei* unit old houses, dilapidated houses and squatter settlements, and rural industrialization or urbanization that is mainly manifested as a result of a large amount of rural

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/5108024>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/5108024>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)