



Community-based rural residential land consolidation and allocation can help to revitalize hollowed villages in traditional agricultural areas of China: Evidence from Dancheng County, Henan Province



Yurui Li ^{a,b,*}, Yansui Liu ^{a,b}, Hualou Long ^{a,b}, Weiguo Cui ^a

^a Institute of Geographic Sciences and Natural Resources Research, Chinese Academy of Sciences, Beijing 100101, China

^b Key Laboratory of Degraded and Unused Land Consolidation Engineering, The Ministry of Land and Resources of China, Beijing 100101, China

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 5 June 2013

Received in revised form 11 February 2014

Accepted 15 February 2014

Keywords:

Rural residential land consolidation

Rural land use allocation

Community-based development

Hollowed villages revitalization

Traditional agricultural areas

China

ABSTRACT

The accelerated rural hollowing driven by vast and increasing out-migration of rural labors under urban–rural dual-track system has imposed huge obstacles on improving land use efficiency and coordinating urban–rural development in China. Taking Dancheng County in Henan Province as an example, this paper analyzes the status quo of rural hollowing and discusses two typical rural residential land consolidation and allocation (RRLCA) practices in traditional agricultural areas (TAAs) of China. The results show that, Dancheng experienced rapid rural hollowing characterized as the hollowing of rural industries, infrastructure, and residential population and settlements. However, Dancheng has considerable potential and the necessity of RRLCA, for the model-based estimation shows that the potential of increasing farmland by carrying out RRLCA was about 5649 ha. The two community-based RRLCA practices show positive effects on the improvement of local living conditions, increment of farmland area and development of rural industries. Their experiences, including self-organized rural planning, democratic decision-making, and endogenous institutional innovation may benefit future RRLCA. Overall, it indicates that promoting community-based RRLCA scientifically according to local conditions could provide an integrated platform for increasing farmland area, developing modern agriculture, promoting new countryside construction, and thus revitalize hollowed villages. On considering the limitations and obstacles of current initiatives, suggestions for future RRLCA in rural China have been put forward.

© 2014 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

Introduction

Rural China has experienced a rapid and far-reaching transition in the past three decades since 1978. A large number of rural labor forces migrated to cities and towns to earn a living, and thus has left many dwellings in the inner village unoccupied either seasonally or permanently. The rapid depopulation caused massive outflow of rural investment and industries and further created a phenomenon known as “hollowed village”, and as for the vast rural areas, it is called “rural hollowing” (Liu et al., 2010). The process of rural hollowing has obviously caused a series of problems, such as low efficiency of rural residential land use, and lateral expansion of rural dwellings at the expense of farmland loss, decrease in the ability of rural inner development, and deterioration of rural

residential environment (Liu and Liu, 2010; Wang et al., 2010). As such, rural hollowing is a holistic degradation of rural functions, and becomes a major problem facing China’s agriculture and rural development (Long et al., 2012). Therefore, rural residential land consolidation and allocation (hereafter RRLCA) may be an integrated approach to coordinate the numeric change of rural population and residential land, protect farmland, add quota of construction land, build new countryside and balance urban–rural development (Liu et al., 2010; Long et al., 2010; Gao et al., 2011; Wang et al., 2012a,b).

The central government of China has attached great importance to the issue of rural hollowing. In 2005, the Ministry of Land and Resources of China proposed an innovative land management policy, known as the ‘increasing vs. decreasing balance’ land-use policy. The key objective of this policy was to achieve an equilibrium in the supply of land in China by balancing increases in urban construction land (driven by urbanization) with decreases in rural construction land (facilitated by out-migration) (Long et al., 2012). RRLCA has been widely carried out throughout China since then, and investigations showed that significant progress has been

* Corresponding author at: Institute of Geographic Sciences and Natural Resources Research, Chinese Academy of Sciences, Beijing 100101, China.

Tel.: +86 10 64889034.

E-mail address: lyr2008@163.com (Y. Li).

made on the intensive utilization of rural residential land, and newly increased construction land quota met the demand of urban expansion largely (Wang et al., 2011; Liu, 2011). However, there are also some dissonances from the grassroots in the process of implementing this innovative land management policy. In particular, due to neglect of villagers' will, events of forced evictions often happened and many farmers lost their housing land and were forced to live in a high-rise building and thus caused resentment and hindered local socio-economic development in the long run (Tu, 2010). Then, the State Council of PRC issued a policy in late 2010 to standardize and regulate local practices, especially prohibit over construction and violating farmers' rights and interests.¹ Obviously, there is an urgent need for a new paradigm of RRLCA for dealing with rural hollowing combining with the national strategic needs, local realities and willingness of villagers. We can, to some extent, learn from local practices concerning on community-based rural development both in and abroad China (Long and Woods, 2011).

Massive studies have been engaged on China's rural human–land relationship transition and RRLCA in recent years. Changing patterns of rural population and residential land at macro and micro level were revealed (Wang et al., 2010; Li et al., 2010). The definition, characteristics, influencing factors, inner mechanism and effects of rural hollowing as well as the theoretical model about how to regulate this process were discussed (Liu et al., 2010; Chen et al., 2010; Long et al., 2012; Wang et al., 2012a,b). In terms of RRLCA, many studies have analyzed the investigation technique and assessment method on potential of converting rural residential land to farmland (Chen et al., 2008; Zhu et al., 2010; Song et al., 2010). Some researchers have discussed the theoretical models of RRLCA in typical areas of China (Jiang et al., 2008; Sun et al., 2011). Some studies have also discussed the interest distribution and measured the change of rural household's well-being induced by RRLCA (Tang et al., 2012; Jia et al., 2009). However, few studies have revealed the detailed local practice of RRLCA (Cui, 2010; Qi and Lu, 2010; Long et al., 2012). As such, our knowledge on detailed local process of RRLCA is still rare. The aim of this study is to explore the status quo of rural hollowing in traditional agricultural areas (hereafter TAAs) of China and gain valuable implications for future RRLCA by analyzing the process, effects, experiences, adaptabilities and limitations of current typical practices.

This paper begins by discussing the theoretical and practical background for rural land consolidation and community revitalization under rapid rural depopulation and hollowing. Then Section 'Methodology' provides detailed information of study area, research method and data source. Section 'The status quo of rural hollowing in Dancheng' introduces the basic characteristics of rural hollowing and calculates the potential of rural residential land consolidation in Dancheng County. Section 'Rural residential land consolidation and allocation praxes in typical villages' provides detailed biographies of the RRLCA initiatives and their effects on local community development in two typical villages of Dancheng County. Section 'Discussion' evaluates adaptabilities and limitations of recent RRLCA initiatives in TAAs of China and considers the lessons, from which could be learned by the community development actors and RRLCA practitioners. The pivotal roles played by local actors in the two cases are of particular importance. Lessons

concerning the social, economic and ecological sustainability of such initiatives are drawn and policy recommendations are outlined.

Land consolidation and rural community revitalization under rapid rural hollowing

Many rural areas in Europe, North Americas, Australia, Japan and other developed countries and regions have experienced a rapid demographic changes and socio-economic transition during the process of accelerated industrialization and urbanization especially after the World War II. Massive rural people migrated to urban areas for off farm work and urban living and thus caused a rapid decline of population in rural areas (Clout, 1972; Cloke, 1979; Walser and Anderlik, 2004; Alston, 2004; Bjorna and Aarsaether, 2009; Stead, 2011; McGreevy, 2012). The attractiveness of the countryside decreased fast and further lead to insufficient supply of public infrastructure and other services in rural areas. The loss of farmland to urban encroachment, the depopulation of rural communities, rural poverty, inefficient agricultural production and abandoned and substandard housing were widespread in these rural areas in the decades following the World War II (MacDonald et al., 2000; Bjorna and Aarsaether, 2009; Long and Woods, 2011; McGreevy, 2012). In response to this hollowing situation and revitalize the countryside, many countries and regions have introduced corresponding policies mainly to diversifying the economy, stimulating enterprise and modernizing the infrastructure in rural areas (van der Ploeg et al., 2000; Bjorna and Aarsaether, 2009; Natsuda et al., 2012). In particular, under the guidance of growth pole theory, central place theory, threshold theory and other related theories, the UK, Belgium, Israel, Romania, the former Soviet Union, the USA and other countries or regions had also carried out key settlement construction or settlement rationalization projects with ambitious scheme to restructure the traditionally dispersed rural settlement pattern around a number of growth centers (Clawson, 1966; Clout, 1972; Cloke, 1979; Williams, 1985; Daniels and Lapping, 1987; Palmer, 1988; Cullingworth and Nadin, 2002; Randolph, 2004; Wegren, 2006; Mason, 2008; Cullingworth and Caves, 2009; Woods, 2010). However, the majorities of these countermeasures were through top-down policy, planning and investment initiatives and thus produced mixed results (Daniels and Lapping, 1987; Abrams and Gosnell, 2012; Berke et al., 2013; Cabanillas et al., 2013; Pasakarnis et al., 2013; van Assche and Djanibekov, 2012). The ambitions for infrastructure development and settlement rationalization had proved effective in part of these areas, but economic development achieved more success (Sillince, 1986; Daniels and Lapping, 1987; Palmer, 1988; Long and Woods, 2011).

Based on the lessons learned from the past practices, participatory development, which seeks to engage local populations in development projects, specifically, to encourage the participation of local residential people in analyzing their problems and opportunities, and finding out solutions to solve their problems, has been introduced as an important approach to development since it emerged in the 1970s. Been considered as an alternative to mainstream "top-down" development, participatory rural development has become an increasingly accepted method of rural development initiatives especially since 1980s (Chambers, 1994). Land consolidation, which has proven effective in specific situations in creating better conditions of life in rural and urban areas and improving the sustainable use of resources and public facilities, has been employed as a particular kind of rural development instrument (Miranda et al., 2006). Participatory rural land consolidation and community development initiatives achieved much success, and even made a positive contribution to slowing rural depopulation (Vitikainen, 2004; Miranda et al., 2006; Pašakarnis and Maliene,

¹ The State Council of the People's Republic of China, Number 47 document, 2010: "Guowuyuan guanyu yange guifan chengxiang jianshe yongdi zengjian guagou shidian qieshi zuohao nongcun tudi zhengzhi gongzuo de tongzhi" [to strictly standardize the implementation of linking up increased urban construction land with decreased rural construction land at selected test points and practically carry out rural land consolidation].

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/6548609>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/6548609>

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