

“PLANNING GOING DOWN TO THE COUNTRYSIDE”: HOW RURAL PLANNING IS INTEGRATING RURAL SOCIETY AND RURAL SPACE IN CHINA FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF STATE-BUILDING

Guosheng Ding¹, Weiqiang Wang², Sheng Jiao¹

¹ College of Architecture, Hunan University, 404097157@qq.com

² College of Architecture and Urban Planning, Tongji University, wwq@tongji.edu.cn

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1. Introduction

Today's China is undergoing practices of rural reconstructions and rural planning at a large scale. This phenomenon has aroused wide attention of scholars and literatures covers issues of rural development, rural land use, rural planning and rural residential design etc. (Van der Ploeg, Ye & Schneider, 2015; Siciliano, 2012; Long, Zou, Pykett & Li, 2011; Long, Heilig, Li & Zhang, 2007). Especially, scholars from planning disciplinary in China has done lots of works to research on how to formulate and implement rural plans (Wang, et al., 2012; Shen, Jiang & Yuan, 2012; Long, Zou & Liu, 2009; Yansui, 2007). Those efforts help us understand what is happening today in rural society of China.

However, majority of literatures consider issues of rural planning practices from the inside perspective, such as describing rural practices phenomenon and discussing how to formulate and implement rural plans etc., while the outside perspective usually is neglected. Obviously, it is very important to examine rural planning practices from the outside perspective if we want to know what role rural planning practices are playing in our society. Regarding this situation, this paper tries to provide an outside angle to examine rural planning practices under the theory of state-building in China. From the perspective of state-building, this paper aims to explore the political meanings of rural planning practices and discuss the role of rural planning practices in the process of state-building. By this approach, we are expected to know essences of rural planning practices in the power layout of the state-building process. Then, we may know how to improve rural planning practices and finally contribute to the sustainable development of rural China.

Following the introduction section, the second section will discuss the perspective of state-building and establish the analytical framework for the whole research. The third section belongs to empirical study part, mainly discussing rural planning practices of "Balancing Urban and Rural Development" and "Socialism New countryside Constructions". Finally, conclusions are obtained and some prospects are discussed for rural planning practices of future in China.

2. Perspective of state-building and analytical framework

2.1 About state-building and state-building of China

Generally, state can be divided into traditional state and modern state. Modern state is a term compared to traditional state. Usually, traditional state can be regarded as a small community composed of clan, family, tribal, ethnic and other small local communities (Xu, 2006). Due to the limited governance capacity, the power of traditional state can't penetrate the traditional rural society completely and the interior of traditional state is separated and scattered (Ding, 2014). In other words, fracture properties can be one obvious symbol of a traditional state. Therefore, state-building can be considered to be a process that one state is reconstructing and integrating itself. The process of state-building is to change fundamentally the fracture properties of the traditional state, and to achieve effective integration of politics, economy, society, culture and space in traditional state and rural areas. Each state has its own state-building process with different characteristics. Since the aim of this paper mainly focuses on Chinese issues of rural planning

practices, the following part will briefly discuss the process of state-building in China and find how state-building can provide us a special perspective for analyzing rural planning practices nowadays.

Starting with the Opium War, China was forced to start the process of modernization and state-building, and the old traditional state had to undergo a long and painful transformation and reconstruction process to adapt itself to the development of all human society (Ding, 2014; Xu, 2006). However, during this process, traditional rural society suffered great damage, causing serious problems of rural development. A nation-wide and sustained decline of Chinese rural society during 1920s-1930s was a good example for such a great damage of rural development in the process of state-building (Ding, 2015). This situation attracts lots of attention from scholars such as Shuming Liang and Yangchu Yan and caused massive rural construction movement, to make the relief of rural society and the revitalization of state come true. At that time, Nanjing national government also launched series of measures such as land system reform and promotion of rural development activities to reconstruct the whole nation and the state-building. However, the Communist Party of China is the one who can reconstruct rural society completely and promote the process of state-building by rural land system reform and class divisions movement (Ding, 2014).

People's Republic of China was founded in 1949, and this event can be treated as an important milestone in the process of state-building. After the founding of New China, the biggest challenges for the state is how to further enhance national capacity and to achieve national prosperity. The central government led by the Communist Party of China finally decide to launch the development strategy of industrialization as a breakthrough for state-building. However, because of the international environment at that time, industrial development and state-building can only rely mainly on rural areas. In this context, the new government launched a new round of rural society integration by implementing the commune system in the vast rural areas to support national and industrial construction. Until the reform and opening up in 1978, the state mainly rely on the commune system and a set of corresponding purchasing and marketing system to achieve resources from rural society to support the primitive accumulation of capital for the country's industrialization and eventually establish a fairly comprehensive preliminary industrial system (Ding, 2015). However, this kind rural development practices caused serious problems for the whole rural society such as rural economic stagnation and many farmers living in poverty. This situation eventually led to the rural reform and set off a wave of reform and opening up nationwide.

After the reform and opening up in 1978, the Household Contract System become the basic economic system in rural society. The labour enthusiasm of farmers were released by the implementation of the Household Contract System and those reforms promoted the rapid development of rural areas, increased farmers' income and improved rural living environment in rural society. While series of intuitional reforms based on the Household Contract System promoted rural development, the loyalty and identity of farmers to the modern state was highly enhanced and the modern state could further integrate the rural society. However, after the start of urban reforms during the mid-1990s, rural development entered a slow and lag stage, and then the gap between urban and rural areas was growing. All those finally caused serious problems for the whole society, namely "Three Issues Concerning Agriculture, Farmers and Rural areas". In order to combat with serious problems of rural development, get rid of urban-rural dual structure, reduce rural conflict, and integrate urban and rural development, the modern state launched a series of new programs and practices in rural society, including Balancing Urban and Rural Development, Agriculture Tax Reforms, Public Finance Reforms in Rural Areas and Socialism New countryside Constructions etc..

2.2 State-building as a perspective and its analytical framework

Based on the above, we can clearly concluded that the state-building of China is highly related with rural development and rural planning practices. As we know, China is a old country with a long traditional civilization. Therefore, the state-building of China has to transform and reconstruct

traditional rural society, and to some extent the process of reconstructing traditional rural society can be regarded as the state-building itself. Therefore, state-building can provide an important perspective to examine rural development and rural planning practices. Actually, lots of literatures which researches on rural politics, rural governance, and rural society shows that the state-building does provide an new and important perspective for examine the phenomenon of rural development and rural planning practices.

As a perspective for analyzing rural development and rural planning, state-building mainly focuses on practices and by those practices concludes how modern state is integrating rural society and rural space. In other words, the following section of this paper mainly investigates series of important rural development and rural planning practices to show how the modern state integrate or reconstruct the rural society nowadays. Considering the current situation of rural development and rural planning practices, this paper mainly discusses practices of "Balancing Urban and Rural Development" and " Socialism New countryside Constructions".

3. "Balancing Urban and Rural Development " and "Socialism New countryside Constructions"

3.1 "Balancing Urban and Rural Development " and its case of Chengdu City

In 2002, the central government of China launched "Balancing Urban and Rural Development" to promote the modern agriculture, develop the rural economy and increase farmers' income. As a fundamental national strategy, "Balancing Urban and Rural Development" aims to reverse our long-term urban-rural dual structure and treat the urban-rural relations as a whole and complementary relationship to keep resources free-flowing across the urban and rural areas, such as labor, land, capital and other resources, etc.. Under this strategy, different kinds of practices of rural-urban integration occurred. The following paragraph will take practices of rural-urban integration of Chengdu City as an example to show how modern state is integrating rural society and rural space in local places and examine how those practices influences the development of local rural society.

The City of Chengdu is located in southwest of China, with an area of 12,390 square kilometres, and enjoy the reputation of "Land of Abundance" in China. The City of Chengdu is a large city with large rural areas when the total population is 10.28 million in 2002 and the rural population accounts for 60% (Ye & Jiao,2014). After that the central government launched "Balancing Urban and Rural Development", the local government of Chengdu also started a program of "Balancing Urban and Rural Development" to solve "the three issues concerning agriculture, framers and rural areas". Since 2003, the City of Chengdu had made many reforms in rural areas to promote the sustainable development.

According to Ye and Jiao(2014) a, those reforms mainly includes the following seven aspects. The first one is the transformation of government functions to build a service-oriented government, including the decentralization of economic and social management functions for the local government, the pilot town to expand its powers and the implementation of grass-roots democratic reforms. The second one is that the local government keep planning a leading position and make master plans of urban-rural integration with the content including zoning, spatial structure, rural planning, and rural development planning management, etc.. Third, the local government promotes the integration of urban and rural basic public services, including the financial transfer payment system and an equalization of public services. Fourth, the local government tries to cultivate new industries, promote new industrialization and make more employment opportunities. Fifth, the government of Chengdu tries to build a new market to promote resources free-flowing such as labour, land and capital, etc.. Chengdu Public Resources Trading and Service Center is a good example for the unified market for the trading of land and other resources between urban and rural areas. Sixth, the local government launched lots of reforms on rural grassroots democratic governance, such as the construction of village council, the Executive committee, and other economic organizations. The last one is that the local government tries to promote the modernization of agriculture and rural development, reform the rural property rights system, build

the new democratic governance, change the management of public services supply system and promote the comprehensive improvement of rural land and other infrastructure projects.

By series of reforms, the City of Chengdu achieved a rapid economic and social development and win a reputation of "a city where once you are, you never want to leave", with a effective mechanism of urban and rural integration and a high urban competitiveness capacity(Ye & Jiao,2014; Ye &LeGates,2013). The survey shows that more than 89% of the population hold a satisfaction attitude to the reforms of urban and rural integration strategy(Ye & Jiao, 2014). More observations from the macro level also shows that the strategy of urban and rural integration had a very positive impact on the local rural society. Land Comprehensive Improvement Project of Zhanqi village in Chengdu is a good example. Zhanqi village is located in the Tangcang town of Pi country, 30km far away from the downtown area of Chengdu and covers an area of 2.1 square kilometers, with nine villagers groups and the population of 1700. Land Comprehensive Improvement Project of Zhanqi village in Chengdu was launched after the strategy of urban and rural integration was implemented in Chengdu City. The procedures of Land Comprehensive Improvement Project of Zhanqi village is the following: (1) the formulation of rural planning ;(2) a new company which raised 98 million Yuan from the Urban Investment Company was set up for the implementation of land improvement and community construction project; (3) by the implementation of Land Comprehensive Improvement Project, Land indicators of 208 Mu was saved and they were transacted with those of urban areas and earns 130 million yuan (625000 yuan/mu); (4)finally, those earnings can be used to pay financing and its interest and to support the modern agriculture and its infrastructures. By the implementation of Land Comprehensive Improvement Project of Zhanqi village, farmers could live in a new rural community, and the property of the collective and the income of farmers was highly improved. Besides, the built environment of rural areas, the infrastructure and public services, the protection of rural environment and the development of modern agriculture were highly improved.

We can learn from the case of Chengdu City that " Balancing Urban and Rural Development " of the central government can be transformed into local rural planning practices by the operationb of the local government. Hence, we can treat " Balancing Urban and Rural Development " and rural planning practices as an art of how the modern state is integrating rural space and rural society.

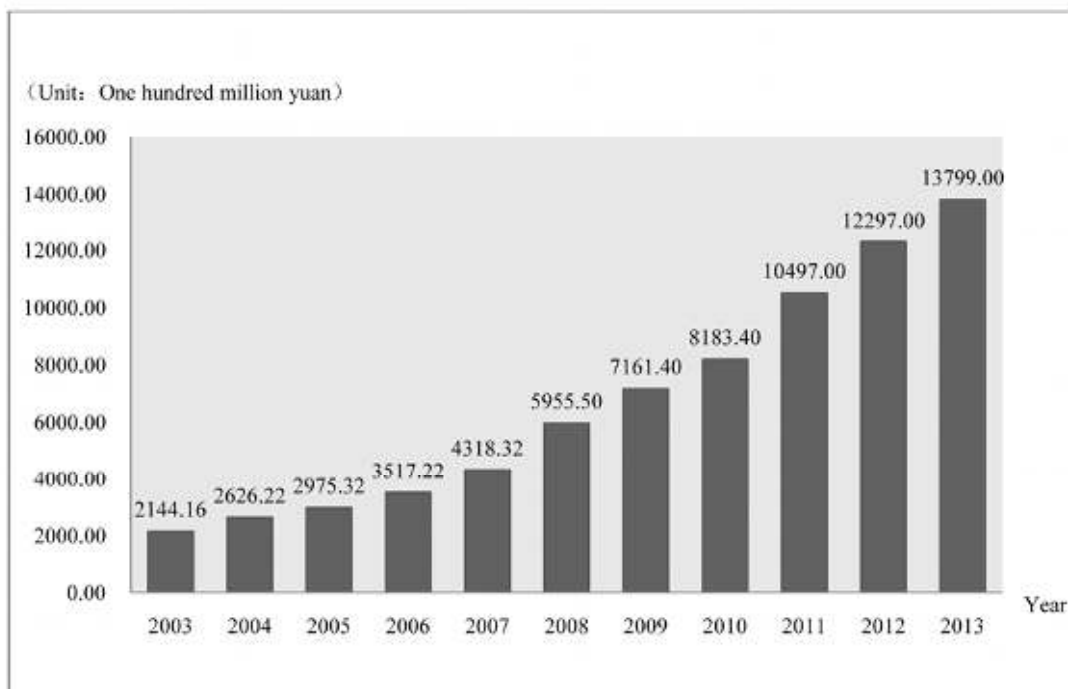
3.2 "Socialism New countryside Constructions" and its case of Jiangsu Province

"Socialism New countryside Constructions" can be treat the counterpart of " Balancing Urban and Rural Development " since the new century. In 2005, the central government planned to launch "Socialism New countryside Constructions" to promote the development of modern agriculture, deepen rural reforms, improve rural public services and increase income of farmers. The key of "Socialism New countryside Constructions" are "growth of production, well-to-do life ,civilized rural atmosphere, neat rural face, democratic administration". The policy of giving more , taking less and loosening control is the central measure of "Socialism New countryside Constructions". we can see from figure 1 that the central government had spend total 7.35 trillion Yuan from 2003 to 2013 for rural development concerning "agriculture, rural areas and farmers"(Ding,2014). Meanwhile, the central government tried to reduce the burden of farmers and reform the fiscal and taxation system. Besides, the central government reformed institutions and policies, gave farmers more autonomy and encouraged farmers to start their own entrepreneurship to increase their incomes(Ding,2015). In one word, the central government aimed to solve serious issues concerning agriculture, farmers and rural areas since the new century.

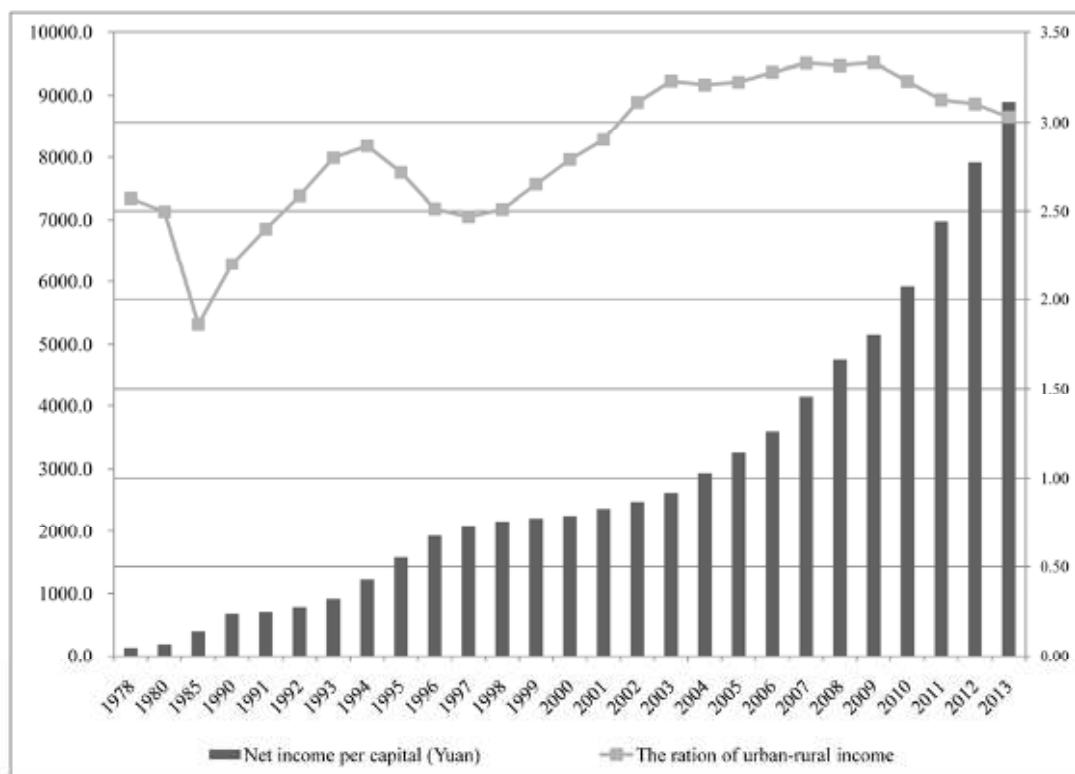
"Village environment comprehensive improvement action plans" of Jiangsu Province was a good example to show how "Socialism New countryside Constructions" was operated in local rural areas. As one of the most developed provinces in China, Jiangsu province has achieved many positive results and posted itself as one of the most low level of the gap between urban and rural areas. However, the gap between urban and rural areas in infrastructure and public services was still large. Therefore, at the background of "Socialism New countryside Constructions", Jiangsu province launched a program named "Village environment comprehensive improvement action

plans" and treated it as one of the most important part of national rural development strategy. The goal of "Village environment comprehensive improvement action plans" of Jiangsu province is to improve the environment comprehensively in 3-5 years. In order to promote the project of "Village environment comprehensive improvement action plans", 18 leading groups were set up and the ratio of village environment improvement was treated as one of key indicators for the cadre promotion. Totally, nearly 5 billion Yuan were invested by the government to promoted "Socialism New countryside Constructions" of Jiangsu province(Zhou, 2014). The government of Jiangsu province mainly focused on rural infrastructure improvement including village garbage treatment, clean water supply, rural road improvement and rural river clean, etc. to completely improve the rural built environment. After the implementation of this program for more than three years, many positive results are achieved, including the following: (1) this program were implemented in two-thirds of villages and the built environment were generally improved; (2) more than 20 million of farmers were directly benefited; (3)more than 87.3% of residents of Jiangsu province showed their satisfaction to "Village environment comprehensive improvement action plans", ranking the number one of all other programs(Zhou, 2014).

Actually, like the program of "Village environment comprehensive improvement action plans" in Jiangsu province, practices of "Socialism New countryside Constructions" in other local places also had achieved great success that can be shown by many development indictors. On the production of agriculture, the main crop production remained a situation of steady rise, and grain output reached 601.94 million tons in 2013, with an increase of approximately 31.70% compared to 2002(Ding,2015) . On the income of farmers, the trend of the large gap between urban and rural areas was stopped and reversed. Figure 2 shows that the income gap between urban and rural residents begun to narrow steadily, declining from 3.33 times in 2009 to 3.03 times 2013(Ding,2015). Besides , the supply of rural public services and rural infrastructure such as roads, water and energy, rural education, rural culture and rural medical services were highly improved.



Figures1. The expenditures for "three issues concerning agriculture, farmers and rural areas" by the central government of China from 2003 to 2013



Figures 2. The diagram of changes of the net income of family in rural areas and the ration of urban-rural income from 1978 to 2013

4. Conclusions

From cases of "Balancing Urban and Rural Development" in Chengdu City and "Village environment comprehensive improvement action plans" in Jiangsu province, we can see measures, process and impacts of how the modern state is integrating rural space and rural society. Since the new century, the modern state launched "Balancing Urban and Rural Development" and "Socialism New countryside Constructions" and those policies or strategies were finally transformed into local rural development and rural planning practices by the operation of the local government, related institutions renovations and the large scale investment, posing an very positive influences on local farmers and reshaping and integrating rural space and rural society.

"Balancing Urban and Rural Development" by the modern state was aimed to change the urban-rural dual structure and eliminate the gap between urban and rural areas for the goal of the integration of urban and rural areas. Case of "Balancing Urban and Rural Development" in Chengdu City shows that by the operation of the local government and series of institutions renovation, the national development strategy of urban-rural integration really promoted the free-flowing of resources like labour, land and capital across urban and rural areas, and improved the integration development of urban and rural areas and have a very positive impact on the urban and rural dual structure. In the process of implantations of this national strategy, rural society and rural space was totally reconstructed and regenerated, the competitiveness of urban and rural development was highly improved, and of course the modern state was in a great progress.

"Socialism New countryside Constructions" by the modern state was aimed to solve three issues concerning agriculture, farmers and rural areas, increase incomes of farmers, narrow the gap between urban and rural areas, and finally promote the progress of rural society. Case of "Village environment comprehensive improvement action plans" in Jiangsu province illustrated how the

modern state is integrating rural space and rural society. In this process, rural space and rural society were reshaped and reconstructed, the rural built environment was improved, and the rural social welfare was increased. Also, the urban and rural dual structure was integrated, and the identity and loyalty of farmers to the modern state were highly promoted.

Hence, from the perspective of state-building, we can treat rural development and rural planning practices as important arts of the modern state integrating rural space and rural society from cases of "Balancing Urban and Rural Development" in Chengdu City and "Village environment comprehensive improvement action plans" in Jiangsu province. Those practices will transform the traditional rural society into the modern agriculture and then realize the modernization of rural development. We also can see that the process of state-building is one the most important factors influencing the development of rural space and rural society. As we know, since China is a state with a long history of farming, the process of the modern stating integrating rural space and rural society can be regarded as the growing-up of the modern state and those practices finally realize the modernization of state. In other words, practices of state-building actually produce rural planning and rural development practices, and those practices can be described as "planning going down to the countryside". In the whole process, the modern state is enlarged and the capacity of the modern state is highly improved by integrating rural society and rural space.

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