

INFLUENCE OF MIGRANTS' TWO-DIRECTION LINKAGE ON URBAN VILLAGES IN CHINA

THE CASE OF SHIGEZHUANG VILLAGE IN BEIJING

Shiyu Yang¹

Affiliation1

shiyu.yang@si.uni-stuttgart.de

ABSTRACT (Max. 300 words):

China's urban villages have been widely studied and identified by many scholars as migrant enclaves, recognizing their crucial role in providing affordable housing for migrant population. Due to the rapid urbanization and reform of the registration system, Chinese big cities have witnessed a huge inflow of rural migrant workers since late 1980s. Whereas they contribute a lot to the urban development, government fails to address formal housing provision for this group. In this case, urban villages grow informally, and with their prime location and low living cost, become ideal destination for migrant population. Despite extensive studies on development and redevelopment processes of urban villages, few have addressed impacts of migrants' activities on these villages' transformation. In contrast to a widely accepted perception that most migrants are eager to transit to the established city, a considerable population who are reluctant to permanently stay are identified in this paper. Besides the urban destination, migrants also relate constantly to their rural origins. The objective of this study is to explore and describe the space production by this specific group of migrants and the influence of the two-direction constant linkage on the housing conditions in urban villages. Qualitative research methods including participant observations and semi-structured interviews were adopted in the field research on Beijing's urban villages. A case study approach was used to allow a close investigation into one of the most representative urban villages in Beijing, Shigezhuang Village.

KEY WORDS

Urban village; Migrant; Housing; Linkage; Rural origin

INTRODUCTION

China's urbanization can be understood as an in situ process, where rural area gradually changes into the urban (Zhu, 1999). This process is characterized by the informal growth of urban villages in the periphery of large cities and huge inflow of rural migrant workers into cities for a better chance of working opportunities (Hao et al., 2011; Liu et al., 2010; Zheng et al., 2009). Under the dual urban-rural land system, indigenous villagers are allowed to extend houses on their own housing plots and rent rooms to migrant population. Due to the low living cost and prime location, urban villages are preferred spots for migrants to settle down in the destination cities. In certain urban villages in metropolitan cities like Beijing, the number of migrants can be more than ten times of that of indigenous villagers (Feng, 2010). As such, urban villages have been identified as migrant enclaves (Friedmann, 2005; He et al., 2010; Lin et al., 2011; Liu et al., 2017; Liu et al., 2018; Wu et al., 2013; Wu, 2016). Much literature has described urban villages as "chaotic", "unplanned", "congested" and "substandard" settlements (Chung, 2010; Tian, 2008) and argued that this situation is attributed to informal development of land mechanisms and rational rent-seeking decisions of villagers to maximize profit from assigned housing plots (Ma, 2006; Wu et al., 2013). Negotiation processes among villagers, governments and developers concerning development and redevelopment of urban villages have been analysed, leaving migrants aside (Herrle et al., 2014), who are the largest group and are supposed to be a key stakeholder. There is also some literature focusing on migrants' housing conditions and inequalities in the housing market (He et al., 2010; Zheng et al., 2009) but most of it is mainly from a bird-view perspective with an institutional interpretation. Migrants are often seen as only passively adopting the space and what remains unclear is the impacts of their decision making and activities on housing conditions in urban villages.

Many studies have proved that blood bonds (*xueyuan*) and place bonds (*diyuan*) play a central role in people's decision making in traditional Chinese society and migrants coming from the same rural origin (*tongxiang*) tend to agglomerate spatially close in the new urban destination (Fei, 1985; Zhang, 2001). Socio-spatial pattern of migrants' networks and their attachment to and engagement with both rural origin and urban destination have been investigated (Fan, 2002; Fan et al., 2011; Liu et al., 2012; Liu et al., 2018; Saunders, 2011). This paper looks into migrants' decision making processes and activities concerning this two-direction linkage and allow an insight into the conceptualization of temporary migrants by examining factors including migration time, distance from origin provinces and family size. The aim of this paper is to critically analyse the effects of social network and neighborhood attachment among migrants from the same origin and contribute to a better understanding of housing conditions for migrants in urban villages by highlighting their bipolar relationship with both the rural origin and the urban destination. Due to informal reality of migrant population in China and lack of quantitative data about their everyday activities, this research uses qualitative content analysis mainly based on interviews and investigate the village of Shigezhuang in Beijing as case study.

The overall structure of the paper takes the form of five chapters. The following chapter gives a brief view of literature on China's internal rural-urban migration and migrants perceptions and activities concerning their rural origins. In the third chapter, empirical methodology of the research is explained and the case village of Shigezhuang is introduced with data collected in the field research. The fourth chapter allows a close insight into migrants' current housing conditions and backgrounds and their

considerations of decision making, by analysing demographic profiles and interview transcript. Discussions are interwoven into the data analyses. Concluding remarks are drawn in the final chapter.

MIGRANTS' LINKAGE TO THEIR RURAL ORIGINS

China has witnessed an influx of internal rural-urban migration since the late 1980s (Hao et al., 2011) and those workers coming from rural area or small cities to large cities are called migrant population. Research into urban villages with migrants from the same origins has a long history. Extreme cases are those urban villages with majority of the migrants coming from the same province and are given the name of that province, such as Zhejiang Village and Xinjiang Village (Chung, 2010; Friedmann, 2005; Zhang, 2001). However, it should not be overlooked that many urban villages accommodate heterogeneous migrants and there are not necessarily strong community ties among residents (Chung, 2010). A shared finding is that migrants cluster in particular locations within the city based on their shared sense of identity (Ma and Xiang, 1998). This sense of identity is based on kinship and geographic relations to their space of origin rather than their space of arrival. These migrants with the same place bonds (*diyuan*) call each other *tongxiang* and this place of origin can be flexibly and differently defined according to contexts, varying from a village, a township, a city to a province (Zhang, 2001). For migrant workers, *tongxiang* is the main source of labor market information (Fan, 2002). Although new-generation migrants probably rely more on “non-territorial” networks, “the hometown-based bonds” still play a key role in their social networks (Liu et al., 2012).

Besides the fact that *tongxiang* communities are informally formed because of the linkage to hometowns, migrants as individuals and members of families also have constant linkage to their rural origins. Split households are identified as a strategy of migrant workers to benefit the most from working in cities (Fan et al., 2011). A split-household family refers to the situation ‘where family members who under normal circumstances would be living in the same place are in actuality living in separate place’ (ibid.: p.2166). Migrant workers straddle the city and the countryside as circulators and send money back to hometowns as major source of living cost for the left-behind family members and also as family savings (Fan, 2002; Fan et al., 2011; Yang, 2000). However, the study is limited by categorizing split households into forms of sole migration, couple migration and family migration, overlooking the traditional Chinese culture of taking three generations into family conceptualization.

There is a debate on migrants' perception of urban villages and intention of settling down in the established city. Some scholars argued that most migrants consider urban villages as temporary arrival place and are eager to transit into the city and to be a permanent resident (Saunders, 2011). In contrast, other findings indicate that migrants are unlikely to have long-term plans in settling down in the city (Fan, 2002; Yang, 2000). Migrants merely view the destination as a place of work instead of a place of life and do not have intention to stay. Determinants including the time period of working in a certain city and the family size have been examined and are proved to have little influence on migrants' interpretation and decision making. Another argument is that it is better to focus on migrants' “attachment to and engagement with the origin and destination” rather than interpreting them in either side of the “go or no-go” dichotomy (Kaufmann, 2007). The system of classifying “temporary migrants” and “permanent migrants” was adopted when differentiating migrant workers from those migrants who have high educational level and benefit from institutional welfares (Fan, 2002). There are two explanations accounting for this unsettled situation. The first and most widely discussed reason is concerning with the *hukou* system in China which prevent migrants from access to many

public services in the city, including health care, education, housing and other social benefits (Lin et al., 2011). Another one is that migrants are more likely to invest money into their rural hometowns out of a sense of social and economic security and a sense of belonging (Fan et al., 2011; Liu et al., 2018).

Migrants' relying on social networks and uncertain feelings about the arrival city can be understood best when reviewing recent massive demolition of urban villages and eviction of migrant workers. For the city government, urban villages are, blamed for their inefficient and chaotic land use that hampers the process of "modernization" (Wu, 2009). This negative characterization of urban villages is used to justify large scale demolition through urban development. There is a growing body of literature arguing that migrant workers as the tenant class in urban villages have an inferior status and are often neglected by municipality and academia (Liu et al., 2018; Wang et al., 2009). Migrant workers are treated as "a means of production" rather than "a social asset which contributes to the identity and culture of the city" (Hao et al., 2011). Without any property right and legal protection by law, migrants have no discourse right in rental price bargaining and are not compensated facing displacement. When being evicted from their original enclaves, migrants tend to make short-distance moves dependent on social ties because of lack of information of and access to other neighborhoods. Besides physical evictions, economic displacement of migrants was also investigated (Liu et al., 2018). Whereas direct economic displacement means that migrant renters are priced out by the rising housing costs and are forced to relocate to other urban villages, the indirect one can be understood as displacement in situ where residents tend to remain in the same neighborhood and have to accept the unreasonable rise in rent because of fairness of other loss such as loss in social ties.

METHODOLOGY AND DATA

Historically, Beijing's periphery was dotted with hundreds of villages communities (Jeong, 2011) but there are almost no urban villages left within the fourth ring road because of large-scale urban regeneration in recent years. The village of Shigezhuang locates to the east of the Central Business District and right beyond the fifth ring road. Shigezhuang is one of the most centrally located villages among the remained ones in Beijing, which means it has existed for a long time as the form of urban villages.¹ Besides, it holds a high migrant-to-native ratio of around eight and there is an obvious percentage of migrants coming from the same province of Sichuan. Therefore, it is chosen as a case village of the field research based on the needs of investigating migrants' activities and decision making processes related to their rural origin.

There are various sources of data collected during the field research, including interviews, questionnaire survey, field observations, photographs and mapping. The field research was conducted from September to October 2017. Due to the fact that urban villages are considered as informal settlements and migrants are usually not included formally into the urban economy, information about demographics of migrants is not officially and publicly available. The same dilemma was faced by another similar research on migrants in urban villages by Liu et al. (2018). Therefore, the analysis was based on the conceptual framework proposed by Liu et al. (2018). The aim of this research is not to enroll a representative sample of migrants, but to examine the individualized experiences and choices of housing linked to their two-direction linkage.

¹ The statement at the beginning of this chapter is based on an early round of overall field research on urban villages in Beijing. Besides, the paper of Fan et al. (2011) is also an important reference..

| Demographics of Dwellers | | | | | Dwelling Profiles | | | |
|--------------------------|--------|-----|----------|---------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|----------------|
| No. | Gender | Age | Hukou | Occupation | Size(m ²) | Number of dwellers | Average(m ²) | In-room toilet |
| 1 | Male | 33 | Sichuan | Construction worker | 9 | 3 | 3 | No |
| 2 | Male | 40 | Shanxi | Self-employment | 12 | 3 | 4 | No |
| 3 | Female | 43 | Sichuan | Construction worker | 8.5 | 2 | 4 | No |
| 4 | Female | 21 | Sichuan | Unemployed | 8 | 1 | 8 | No |
| 5 | Male | 50 | Sichuan | Construction worker | 8.5 | 2 | 4 | No |
| 6 | Female | 43 | Sichuan | Decoration worker | 6 | 2 | 3 | No |
| 7 | Female | 23 | Hubei | Salesperson | 8.5 | 4 | 2 | No |
| 8.1 | Male | 55 | Henan | Self-employment | 7.5 | 2 | 4 | No |
| 8.2 | Female | 55 | Henan | Self-employment | 7.5 | 2 | 4 | No |
| 9 | Male | 55 | Henan | Self-employment | 7.5 | 2 | 4 | No |
| 10 | Female | 49 | Sichuan | Cleaner | 9 | 2 | 4.5 | No |
| 11.1 | Female | 43 | Sichuan | Cleaner | 7 | 2 | 3.5 | No |
| 11.2 | Male | 45 | Sichuan | Electronic worker | 7 | 2 | 3.5 | No |
| 12.1 | Male | 16 | Shandong | High school student | 8.5 | 3 | 3 | No |
| 12.2 | Male | 40 | Shandong | Self-employment | 8.5 | 3 | 3 | No |
| 12.3 | Female | 40 | Shandong | Self-employment | 8.5 | 3 | 3 | No |
| 13 | Female | 45 | Henan | Self-employment | 9 | 2 | 4.5 | No |
| 14.1 | Female | 60 | Sichuan | Visit | 70 | 3 | 23 | Yes |
| 14.2 | Male | 60 | Sichuan | Visit | 70 | 3 | 23 | Yes |
| 14.3 | Male | 20 | Sichuan | University student | 70 | 3 | 23 | Yes |
| 15 | Female | 55 | Sichuan | Cleaner | 8.5 | 2 | 4 | No |
| 16 | Female | 35 | Hubei | Hour laborer | 8.5 | 2 | 4 | No |
| 17 | Male | 26 | Gansu | Driver | 30 | 8 | 4 | Yes |
| 18 | Female | 45 | Sichuan | Hour laborer | 14 | 3 | 4.5 | Yes |
| 19 | Male | 65 | Sichuan | Hour laborer | 7.5 | 1 | 7.5 | No |
| 20.1 | Male | 22 | Sichuan | University student | 14 | 2 | 7 | Yes |
| 20.2 | Male | 45 | Sichuan | Construction worker | 14 | 2 | 7 | Yes |
| 20.3 | Female | 45 | Sichuan | Decoration worker | 14 | 2 | 7 | Yes |
| 21 | Male | 65 | Sichuan | Visit | 4 | 1 | 4 | No |

| Demographics of Dwellers | | | | | Dwelling Profiles | | | |
|--------------------------|--------|-----|----------|---------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|----------------|
| No. | Gender | Age | Hukou | Occupation | Size(m ²) | Number of dwellers | Average(m ²) | In-room toilet |
| 22 | Male | 40 | Sichuan | Construction worker | 4 | 2 | 2 | No |
| 23 | Female | 43 | Sichuan | Cleaner | 4 | 2 | 2 | No |
| 24 | Female | 60 | Sichuan | Visit | 5 | 3 | 1.5 | No |
| 25 | Female | 24 | Sichuan | Company staff | 30 | 4 | 7.5 | Yes |
| 26 | Female | 45 | Sichuan | Cleaner | 5 | 2 | 2.5 | No |
| 27 | Female | 35 | Hebei | Company staff | - | - | - | - |
| 28 | Female | 45 | Jiangsu | - | - | - | - | - |
| 29 | Male | 37 | Sichuan | Hour laborer | 5.5 | 3 | 2 | No |
| 30 | Female | 63 | Beijing | Retired | 75 | 4 | 19 | Yes |
| 31 | Male | 60 | Sichuan | Hour laborer | 7.5 | 3 | 2.5 | No |
| 32 | Female | 32 | Shanxi | Self-employment | 10 | 2 | 5 | No |
| 33 | Male | 35 | Henan | Cook | 7.5 | 2 | 4 | No |
| 34 | Female | 30 | Sichuan | Self-employment | - | - | - | - |
| 35.1 | Female | 30 | Hebei | Housewife | 10 | 2 | 5 | No |
| 35.2 | Male | 32 | Hebei | Decoration worker | 10 | 2 | 5 | No |
| 36.1 | Female | 32 | Sichuan | Housewife | 8.5 | 4 | 2 | No |
| 36.2 | Male | 34 | Sichuan | Construction worker | 8.5 | 4 | 2 | No |
| 37 | Female | 78 | Beijing | Retired | 90 | 5 | 18 | Yes |
| 38 | Male | 38 | Shandong | Self-employment | 7.5 | 2 | 4 | No |
| 39 | Male | 55 | Sichuan | Decoration worker | 3.5 | 1 | 3.5 | No |
| 40 | Female | 45 | Henan | Unemployed | - | - | - | - |
| 41 | Male | 37 | Henan | Company staff | 9.5 | 3 | 3 | No |
| 42 | Female | 60 | Beijing | Retired | 120 | 4 | 30 | Yes |
| 43 | Male | 43 | Henan | Driver | 5.5 | 1 | 5.5 | No |
| 44 | Male | 60 | Beijing | Retired | 85 | 4 | 21 | Yes |
| 45 | Female | 60 | Hubei | Cleaner | 7.5 | 3 | 2.5 | No |
| 46 | Female | 65 | Beijing | Retired | 175 | 8 | 22 | Yes |
| 47 | Female | 43 | Sichuan | Cleaner | 8 | 3 | 2.5 | No |
| 48 | Male | 57 | Sichuan | Construction worker | 9 | 2 | 4.5 | No |

[table 1] Interviewees' demographics and dwelling profiles

Interviewees were selected randomly from different parts of the villages so that they were relatively spatially evenly distributed. There were eventually 58 residents interviewed, whose demographics and dwelling profiles are presented in table 1. A number with suffix means that these people are interviewed together as one household. For example, 11.1 and 11.2 were couple and were interviewed in one time. Detailed interview content will be revealed in the next chapter in combination with discussions. Although the sample is not big enough for a reliable quantitative research, 'the saturation was reached' (Liu et al., 2018) after 58 interviews; that is, 'no new information could be obtained' concerning the main aspects of migrants' activities and decision making related to the rural origins.

MIGRANTS IN THE CASE OF SHIGEZHUANG

As shown in table 1, there are five residents with Beijing hukou and 53 migrants. Among the 53 migrants, 58% are from the province of Sichuan, 15% from Henan, 7% from Shandong, 6% from Hubei, 6% from Hebei and 8% from other provinces including Shanxi, Gansu, Jiangsu. Excluding 11 migrants who do not work (including housewife, student, unemployed, and visiting), all the men from Sichuan work as laborer workers that have something to do with construction, while only one woman from Sichuan is not cleaner². Interestingly, when it comes to migrants from province other than Sichuan, only one man is decoration worker and two women are cleaner. This situation will be further explained by detailed discussion based on interviews with migrants especially those from Sichuan in the following paragraphs.

As for dwelling profiles, the average living space per person of Beijing residents is 21.8 square meter, while that of migrants is 5.1. However, there is one family of three migrants who do not come to Beijing for work, that is 14.1, 14.2 and 14.3. When they are excluded, the average living space per person of the migrant workers is 3.6 square meter and only three of the rest 50 migrants have toilet in their own rooms. A majority of these migrants have to use public toilets which are substandard, and have to bath in the outdoor sheltered by a temporarily set-up plastic tent. The rent for these rooms without toilets is around 80 yuan (10 Euro) per square meter per month. For example, 9-square-meter room costs the family of interviewee 10 around 750 yuan, and the 4-square-meter room of interviewee 4 costs the family 300 yuan.

During the interview, some interviewees were invited to answer a hypothetical question:

I know there is a room in the nearby urban village of the same size as you have now but it has a toilet, but the rent is 200 yuan higher. Are you willing to move to that room (author, September 2017)?

² In interviews, the detail working task of each person was asked. Occupations such as construction worker, electronic worker and decoration worker are just different categories of jobs on construction site. Hour laborer for men often refers to those workers who do not specialize in a certain type of work but mainly work on a construction site, as put by interviewee 19: "I can do cleaning, can decorate rooms, can transport materials, and can construct buildings. I can do anything". Hour laborer for women is often of difference from the occupation of cleaner.

The answer of interviewee 5 represents most answers:

There is already enough space within our room for my family to live. Why would I pay extra money for the rent? We don't need an in-room toilet (interviewee 5, September 2017).

This was a surprising answer to the interviewer because these migrants have a pretty high salary compared to their rent. Taking interviewee 5 as an example, he and his wife had worked in Beijing for more than 15 years and had lived in Shigezhuang for more than 10 years until 2017. He is working as a construction worker and his salary is 500 yuan per day. When he works for an average time of 22 days per month, his monthly income 11000 yuan. His wife works as a cleaner and her salary per month is around 4000 yuan. In this case, if this family work 11 months a year in Beijing, their yearly income is 165000, higher than the 2017 yearly income per capital of residents in Beijing 57230 yuan³. In this case, their 8.5-square-meter room with a monthly rent of only takes up 5% of their income. Besides unwillingness in spending money on rent, more evidence of considering city only as a place for work can be seen:

I know there is a fancy shopping mall within ten minutes' walk and I have never been there. That is not for us. Why would we go there (interviewee 5, September 2017)?

I drive my car from Sichuan to here for more convenient transportation to work place. I know cars without Beijing license are not allowed inside of the 5th ring road. But most of the construction sites are in the outskirts. Sometimes, I need to drive even 1 hour to more peri-urban area for work. I don't need to drive my car to city center (interviewee 1, September 2017).

I will go back home when I can't work anymore. We peasants don't have rent insurance. The living cost here in a city is much higher than that of our countryside. I don't think we can afford this when we are old (interviewee 48).

My son is a young soldier in the army now. I don't need to give him money every month like in his university times, but we need to save money from now on to help him buy an apartment when he gets married in the future (interviewee 5, September 2017).

This indicates that destination city only means better opportunity of a well-paid job and city life has nothing to do with these migrants. They seldom consider the established city as their home or intend to settle down later. The term “temporary migrants” mentioned in the literature review does not refer to time, but refer to their “floating” situation and intention of going back to the rural countryside. That is, both interviewee 5 and interviewee 48 are in their 50s and are certain about their plan to settle down in their rural origin. More than 10 years' working in the city does not influence their intention or plan. Besides, the idea of saving money in case of emergent situation or for a better future of children is also a traditional thought deeply rooted in Chinese rural peasants' mind. In this case, indigenous villagers

³ This statistic is obtained from the website of Beijing Municipal Bureau of Statistics accessed in on 21 September 2018: <http://www.bjstats.gov.cn/tjsj/yjdsj/jmsz/2018.htm>.

also prefer to build rooms only satisfying basic sheltering needs when they develop their housing for renting out, because rooms with more decent conditions like a toilet do not receive more attention in this specific rental market.

Prior studies have categorized migration forms into sole migration, couple migration and family migration as introduced in previous chapter. Compared to these stereotypes, a new type of family migration with three generations is identified in the field research. As reported by interviewees 9, 24, 25, 26 and 45, each of their families have five or six members in Shigezhuang, that is a couple of old migrants, their son or daughter with his or her spouse and one or two little kid. In this case, the family rent two rooms close to each other. Both man and woman from the young couple work during the daytime, while at least one of the old couple stay at home to take care of the kids. Instead of leaving kids behind in the rural origin, parents and kids can see each other daily and the young couple can take care of the old couple when needed. Therefore, when economic conditions allow, it is a preferable mode of temporary migration by most families with kids younger than 6 years old. However, having more family members in the arrival village does not mean willingness to invest more for a better living condition. The average living space per person of the mentioned four families is only 2.5 square meter. The choice of this type of family migration can be seen as a compromise between saving the most from urban working and enjoying the best from family life.

When kids reach the school age of 6 years old, most parents send them back to their rural origins because migrant kids do not have access to public education. In most cases, both the mother and the father of the kids continue working in the city and let grandparents take care of them in their hometown. As such, an annually bidirectional circulation is described by interviewees. Parents visit kids during winter time and celebrate spring festival in the countryside, while kids visit parents during summer vacation in Beijing.

As presented in table 1, there were in total 31 migrants from Sichuan interviewed in the field research, and most of them introduced more about life of other *tongxiang*. Some of them were invited by an acquaintance who was a precedent migrant worker living in Beijing, while some moved to Shigezhuang by chance after coming to Beijing. These *tongxiang* do not necessarily have blood bonds or know each other before coming to Beijing, but they tend to form a strong community once they settle down in Shigezhuang because of similar accent and life style. As the majority of these migrants do not have steady jobs, they need to keep searching for new job opportunities. In such fields as construct workers or cleaners, little information is available online or via a formal platform and migrants need to rely on kinship and social networks in their job-search processes:

When a familiar construction team leader calls me and tells me that they need four or five construction workers on their sites for a week, I will say I can help him to find all these people. Then I often call my relatives or go to knock at the doors of my neighbors and ask if they have time for that one-week work. We will also drive a car together to the construction site. This is very common and other people will also do so. The man with much job information is highly respected (interviewee 5, September 2017).

Sometimes I am busy when the household that I often work for asks me to do the cleaning. I will recommend my friends from the villages and

guarantee the household that they can do the cleaning as well as I do (interviewee 11.1, September 2017).

In this case, migrants tend to remain in Shigezhuang even when the housing price is steadily increasing and the housing conditions are not ideal taking into account their possible loss in working opportunities. As mentioned in the literature review, dependence on this social network with place bonds leads to indirect economic displacement of migrants.

However, despite the strong neighborhood attachment in sharing information and undertaking everyday activities such as cooking, playing cards and taking care of each other, it is important to point out that this established social network among *tongxiang* is not of help in negotiation with indigenous villagers. During the field research, conflicts between migrants and indigenous villager are reported by several interviewees and the main concern is rent:

You want to interview my landlord (the villager who rent room to the interviewee)? I know his family live in that courtyard house, but I have never been inside. They keep a fierce guard dog and it will bite us. You could go for a try. Maybe the landlord will be more friendly to a university student (interviewee 47).

They (indigenous villagers) are all very bad. They keep raising our rent unreasonably, especially after government's demolishing the nearby villages. If we don't agree to the high rent, they will force us to move out. There are plenty of people waiting to rent their house (interviewee 1, September 2017).

Despite being dominant in number, migrants are still in a vulnerable position when an agreement needs to be reached with indigenous villagers. It is not only because of the informality of the rental market, but also because of the lack of resource in the negotiation. Although some scholars such as Zhang (2003) did suggest that in some urban villages there are leaders among migrants who obtain discourse right through their wealth and represent *tongxiang* in the negotiation process, what happens in Shigezhuang is more common in most urban villages. The migrants' group hold little back-up resources in fight for discourse right with low social status and education level. Besides, the established *tongxiang* community support each other in everyday life but few people are willing to represent their common interest:

Last month the villagers decided collectively to raise our rent by an average of 200 yuan. We are so angry because they just raised the rent once at the beginning of this year. We had a big fight with them. However, the village committee leaders who were supposed to administer justice always stood by the villagers' side. The rent still rose despite the fight (interviewee 48, September 2017).

Of course there is no leader of our tongxiang community. Nobody dares to be the leader. Leaders are always the first to suffer. Those villagers can at any time kick us out of their room (interviewee 5, September 2017).

All the migrants know their primary reason of staying in the city is to earn money and few people would like to bear the possible loss when taking responsibility for this “temporary” community. Therefore, the inferior status is not changed by more *tongxiang* in one urban village as long as they are all migrant workers with little resources in such informality. Indigenous villagers always dominate the negotiation with their resources in legal tenancy and discourse right backed up by the village agency.

CONCLUSION

Urban villages have been identified as migrant enclaves and migrant workers make up the largest but most inferior group in urban villages. This study has examined the impacts of migrants' bipolar linkage with both urban destination and rural origin on their housing conditions in urban villages. The village of Shigezhuang was chosen as case study and 58 interviews with residents were conducted during the field research. There are three major findings. Firstly, temporary migrants as circulators consider the city as a place for work instead of a place of life, thus being reluctant to invest money in their living in the city and only demanding substandard housing. This perception is regardless of the period of time of working in the city or the number of family members living in the city. Migrants' decision making on housing choice and indigenous villagers' decision making on developing housing for rental market have bidirectional impacts on each other. Secondly, migrants' limited access to job information in the city makes them rely on social networks based on place bonds. Besides physical displacement caused by evictions or direct economic displacement, this dependence on informal access to working information may lead to indirect economic displacement and migrants have to endure high price and the inequality in rental market. Thirdly, although the neighborhood attachment among *tongxiang* is strong in the sense of sharing information or taking care of each other, without a strong community leadership, it is of little help in the negotiation process with other stakeholder groups in the city. To conclude, this study argues that migrant workers' constant linkage to their rural origin and the social network based on place bonds may contribute to more working opportunities, a better sense of belongingness and strong neighborhood attachment, but deepen their inferior and vulnerable status in the urban destination.

REFERENCES

- Chung, H. (2010). Building an image of villages-in-the-city: a clarification of China's distinct urban spaces. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 34(2), 421-437.
- Fan, C. C. (2002). The elite, the natives, and the outsiders: Migration and labor market segmentation in urban China. *Annals of the association of American geographers*, 92(1), 103-124.
- Fan, C. C., Sun, M., & Zheng, S. (2011). Migration and split households: a comparison of sole, couple, and family migrants in Beijing, China. *Environment and Planning A*, 43(9), 2164-2185.
- Feng, X. (2010). Transformation of "urban village" and cooperative governance of the floating population concentrated communities in Beijing. *Population Research* (06): 55-66.
- Fei, X. (1985). *Xiang Tu Zhong Guo [Earthbound China]*. Beijing: San-Lian Publisher.

- Friedmann, J. (2005). *China's urban transition*. U of Minnesota Press.
- Hao, P., Sliuzas, R., & Geertman, S. (2011). The development and redevelopment of urban villages in Shenzhen. *Habitat International*, 35(2), 214-224.
- He, S., Liu, Y., Wu, F., & Webster, C. (2010). Social groups and housing differentiation in China's urban villages: An institutional interpretation. *Housing Studies*, 25(5), 671-691.
- Herrle, P., Fokdal, J., & Ipsen, D. (2014). *Beyond Urbanism: Urban (izing) Villages and the Mega-urban Landscape in the Pearl River Delta in China* (Vol. 20). LIT Verlag Münster.
- Jeong, J. H. (2011) From illegal migrant settlements to central business and residential districts: Restructuring of urban space in Beijing's migrant enclaves. *Habitat International*, 35(3), 508-513.
- Kaufmann, F. (2007). *Emigrant or sojourner? Migration intensity and its determinants*. Political Economy Research Institute, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA.
- Lin, Y., De Meulder, B., & Wang, S. (2011). Understanding the 'village in the city' in Guangzhou: Economic integration and development issue and their implications for the urban migrant. *Urban Studies*, 48(16), 3583-3598.
- Liu, Y., Geertman, S., van Oort, F., & Lin, Y. (2018). Making the 'Invisible' Visible: Redevelopment-induced Displacement of Migrants in Shenzhen, China. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 42(3), 483-499.
- Liu, Y., He, S., Wu, F., & Webster, C. (2010). Urban villages under China's rapid urbanization: Unregulated assets and transitional neighbourhoods. *Habitat International*, 34(2), 135-144.
- Liu, Y., Li, Z., & Breitung, W. (2012). The social networks of new-generation migrants in China's urbanized villages: A case study of Guangzhou. *Habitat International*, 36(1), 192-200.
- Liu, Y., Tang, S., Geertman, S., Lin, Y., & van Oort, F. (2017). The chain effects of property-led redevelopment in Shenzhen: Price-shadowing and indirect displacement. *Cities*, 67, 31-42.
- Ma, H. (2006). "Villages" in Shenzhen-Persistence and Transformation of an Old Social System in an Emerging Megacity. Doctor thesis. Bauhaus-Universität Weimar.
- Ma, L. J., & Xiang, B. (1998). Native place, migration and the emergence of peasant enclaves in Beijing. *The China Quarterly*, 155, 546-581.
- Saunders, D. (2011). *Arrival city: How the largest migration in history is reshaping our world*. Vintage.
- Tian, L. I. (2008). The chengzhongcun land market in China: Boon or bane? — A perspective on property rights. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 32(2), 282-304.

- Wang, Y. P., Wang, Y., & Wu, J. (2009). Urbanization and informal development in China: urban villages in Shenzhen. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 33(4), 957-973.
- Wu, F. (2009). Land development, inequality and urban villages in China. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 33(4), 885-889.
- Wu, F. (2016). Housing in Chinese urban villages: The dwellers, conditions and tenancy informality. *Housing Studies*, 31(7), 852-870.
- Wu, F., Zhang, F., & Webster, C. (2013). Informality and the development and demolition of urban villages in the Chinese peri-urban area. *Urban Studies*, 50(10), 1919-1934.
- Yang, X. (2000). Determinants of migration intentions in Hubei province, China: individual versus family migration. *Environment and Planning A*, 32(5), 769-787.
- Zhang, L. (2001). *Strangers in the city: Reconfigurations of space, power, and social networks within China's floating population*. Stanford University Press.
- Zheng, S., Long, F., Fan, C. C., & Gu, Y. (2009). Urban villages in China: A 2008 survey of migrant settlements in Beijing. *Eurasian Geography and Economics*, 50(4), 425-446.
- Zhu, Y. (1999). *New paths to urbanization in China: Seeking more balanced patterns*. Nova Publishers.