

Urban Residents in Construction of Harmonious Society: Actor, Structure and System Pattern

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Introduction

There are the old sayings in China such as “harmony is precious”, “harmony but difference” and “big because of capacity”. Make one and all people satisfied and the society harmonious should be a necessary item on the agenda for construction of a harmonious society and also an important target of building a well-off society in an all-around way. From the perspective of cultural origin, China advocates harmony and looks forward to stability in pursuit of a safe and harmonious society in which the government functions well and the people live in harmony and work in peace and contentment, which is a major component of Chinese culture. In addition, according to international experiences, the stage of GDP per capita between 1000 and 3000 dollars is a golden period of speedup development and also a critical period of various contradictions.

Under such circumstances of system transition and social transformation, as an important aspect of market, society and political administration, the urban residents hold a very outstanding and important status, their motives, behaviors, ideas and changes of value orientation, more or less, decide the future trend of China to certain extent. At present, whether such functioning mode is indirect or direct, separate or collective, we all should pay necessary attention to it and make an analysis from the perspective of overall situation, so that our government can take precautions before it is too late and hold the initiative in making decisions.

The stress of our research and analysis should be put on how to make decisions, for an urban resident as an actor, how to think and weigh in a framework of crossed multiple structures of market, society and culture etc. and how to give his own voices in a rational way to attract attention of the government in the interactive process with the existing system (no matter that this system is related to economy, society, politics or culture) and finally build himself into a qualified interest subject.

Therefore, the social stability against the background of constructing harmonious society should be realized through whole new ideas and measures. And the core of the new ideas and measures just is “human-based”. To really realize organic, sound, continuous and healthy social stability will ultimately depend on persisting in “human-based” and interest sharing instead of others.

In the following, I will make a brief summary of status quo of the life of urban resident and point out the existing problems and try to give some feasible countermeasures and thoughts.

I . Harmonious society and urban removal: Interest appeal of actor

Currently, the largest urbanization movement of rural area in the global history is under way in China, and it will last for a long term. In the process of urbanization, land problem is a major problem. However, in our society, state power has been very strong for thousands of years, and civil right has been very weak. When the land has been expropriated from residents and provided to developer, if is it used for urbanization, if has it really reached the maximum benefit and if is it really for the purpose of public interest at the cost of individual interest of the minority? A further question is, even if it is used for the so-called public interest, if can we follow the will of the

majority to implement removal tyranny to the minority? If the answer of these questions is yes, I think, this zero and game style democracy is far inadequate for resolving the problem of land expropriation and house removal, and we are in urgent need of a balanced mechanism for interest expression, and establishment of this mechanism will need a powerful social entity, which is at least able to equally communicate with government and developer; and in this way, a dialog mechanism that multiple actors participate in can be formed possibly.

The author of the first sample passage has specially emphasized and pointed out that recently the unharmonious problems that have led to strained social relations and sharpened social contradictions are prominently reflected on three aspects. First, social contradiction arisen from land expropriation in rural areas for urban development; secondly, social contradiction arisen from migration for construction of projects; and third, contradiction caused by house removal for urban construction.

In the second sample passage, the report on the transformation project for the dangerous & worn houses of Jiuxianqiao of Beijing is a typical of the phenomenon of right maintenance under such mechanism. The removal voting of Jiuxianqiao has left us the reflection, that is, when urban house removal become a more and more complicated puzzle, how to give equal attention to both efficiency and fairness, more carefully and thoughtfully to implement removal works in a human-based way, research and explore really feasible, scientific, rational and artistic operation method and balance interests and mentality of all parties? In the process of energetically pushing forward democratization of removal, how to avoid blindness and irrational case of the masses' will and control it within the extent reasonable and acceptable for national resources to realize effective communication and interest balance of all parties at the same time of making the masses positively join, fully express their own appeals and use well their own rights as much as possible?

The biggest highlight of the removal project of Jiuxianqiao and the important reason why it has attracted widespread attention from throughout the country is that it has chosen the "democratic voting" mode to decide the schedule of the removal project for the first time in the history of house removal of our country. Not a few viewpoints of affirmative evaluation think that this is a positive and kindly attempt to realize standardization and rationalization of urban removal pattern. In contrast to the past administrative decisions or compulsory orders unilaterally made by government and the simple, rough and even high-handed removal behaviors of developers, its significance of innovation and progress is above suspicion! Although this thing has yet not had a conclusion to this day, the author think that under such a chaotic situation, there is no doubt that a dialog mechanism that multiple interest actors participate in is the best choice to resolve the problem. Here, urban residents begin to voice their own will, and we can almost see the dawn of civil society from that.

II . Structural transition: From harmonious removal to mechanism design

Democratic removal can be a new word in recent years, but its connotation is not as simple as a new word absolutely, instead, it can be understood that urban residents' rational thought in house removal and urban plan has give an opportunity for the government to reflect mechanism design. This is an age in which interest and property ideas are aroused, which is also a problem repeatedly encountered by the government in the process of exploring their way forward, under such circumstances, it would rather take the initiative to launch an attack than fight fire around, positively reflect and explore new possibilities of mechanism design to provide a legal and advisable system environment for interest appeal of residents.

To great extent, house removal problem frequently reported by media is just an epitome of widespread social ethos, and the sticking point of the problem only can be understood through a

bigger social background. Among numerous social backgrounds, the most important is the polarization of wealth allocation and the great disparity between the rich and the poor. The wealth is concentrated in the hands of the minority of people, so the developers as main house suppliers are certainly inclined to high-level consumers and reduce construction of low-level houses. The real estate market has reflected the state of income allocation, and the structure of real estate industry cannot still be changed if the income allocation is unchanged.

Therefore, the author of the fifth sample passage points out that in an imbalanced society, the resources distributed in all corners of the society will be accumulated to the limited number of large cities at an extremely fast speed. So, the deformed real estate industry and market in such large cities as Beijing and Shanghai have shown a process of resource accumulation to such cities in an imbalanced society. Further, there is a question: Will there be a normal real estate industry in an imbalanced society? Current problems in real estate industry are not related to individual enterprise but to the whole industry, being a morbidity of the whole industry, and the morbidity is also linked together with imbalance of the whole society.

We would rather say this passage has shown a scholar's deep concern about the future orientation of this society than this passage has recovered the root of the problem. If there still exists a kind of old bestowed thinking mode and if elite consciousness is substituted for thoughts and appeal right of common people, the silent majority would become a stumbling block to impede progress of the society. Just aware of this point, the author of the fourth sample passage appeals, "Only the masses are the major roles in saving Taihu Lake!" An important reason why pollution of Taihu Lake is an incurable chronic illness is "conceit" of the government, for it has excluded the ordinary people living in drainage area of Taihu Lake from the project for pollution treatment. In all reports on environmental pollution, the masses are the passive sufferers, and the governments are the major roles. However, under the existing system, major local officials are constantly transferred at a relatively fast speed, but the overwhelming majority of the masses will live here from age to age. So, the interest appeals of the governmental officials are not all equal to the preferences of the masses. The officials are inclined to short-term action and often obtain good-looking political performances at the cost of ecology and environment. In this case, if the masses want to lead a life of welfare, they must stand out to make a public decision between rapid development of economy and a good ecological environment. Here, the author has put his hope on ordinary people and thought that awakening of a part of citizens has the key significance. Provided that there is a group to launch public debate and arouse widespread attention of the masses, a public domain about the destiny of Taihu Lake can be formed, which can urge the decision maker to utilize existing resources to treat Taihu Lake. If the masses cannot make a definite and wise choice by themselves and can only rely on the government, it would be never possible to find out an ideal imbalance point between wealth creation and ecological quality.

III. Between macro and micro: Participation of the major roles in social treatment

For many social interest relations exist exclusiveness to some extent, any government cannot be on behalf of the interests of all people, but at least, it should be able to keep proper balance between interest relations of social strata. To keep such balance, the first thing is to make various interest appeals able to be expressed through normal channels. From the perspective of social treatment, it means to endow ordinary people with the right to participation, implementation, supervision and evaluation of decisions and policies in the whole course. And the third, fourth and eighth sample passage have well embodied this idea.

By comparison between Guangzhou and Hong Kong for the patterns of old city transformation, the author find out the biggest difference that the former is the government takes on everything by

itself, and the latter more rely on the participation of social workers, markets and enterprises. Obviously, the author prefers to the pattern of Hong Kong and thinks the latter is worthy of our reference and study. From my point of view, only such social treatment can be a more open, stable and harmonious pattern, indeed, which should be referred for our future orientation.

Longgang is a “city” built by industrialists and businessmen with the identity of “peasant”, in the process of its urbanization, these social individuals separated from original village community have no unit community to rely like citizens in other cities of China, therefore, a community organization on behalf of their interests is gradually formed in the process of social game for the purpose of common benefit. In recent years, on the basis of further growth of civilian social strength of Longgang, national behaviors are also more inclined to rationalization, and she has gradually decreased intervention in concrete social affairs, while she continues to strengthen control over collective actions of the society to reduce abnormal social friction cost

On the major problem of “getting old before getting rich” obsessing officials, the great hope or expectation is placed on the “aged at home” pattern of Haishu district of Ningbo, and its cost is only one quarter of traditional old-age institutions. Aging service is not the unilateral responsibility of government any longer, instead, the third party will be responsible for providing product and service at the expense of government, the three parties including the traditional aging at home are integrated together having jointly established a low-cost and effective pattern for aging service. Here, although the system still exists many reflections of government, but “the government authorities ‘unrelated to numerous social influences in a wide scope’ and ‘alone’ has disappeared forever”.

It is often said that “small government and big society”, which means no more than that government should reduce its own burden and set limitation, in other words, government should let go of the thing that can be resolved by market and society and let the masses do it by themselves, being only in charge of necessary public administration for which call in meeting and set game rules to provide people dispute arbitration procedures as the basis. So, residents can have a kind of host spirit to be more positively devoted to social treatment. In such a society, it is not necessary for mobilizing to provide public product at all, and the masses will be spontaneously organized together to finish the social project that cannot be finished by individual.

IV. A harmonious family leads to all the prosperities: Construction of a harmonious society of harmony but difference

In contrast to traditional society, the “differences” of current society are indeed increased, with different value ideas, different behavior modes and different interest appeal etc. Facing such so many differences, a lot of social managers cannot be adapted temporarily to the extent that they have a mentality of being scared, and this mentality makes them either feel as if faced with a formidable enemy or impose uniformity on all cases. In fact, it is unnecessary. “Difference” and “multi-culture” of the society just is a symbol of development and progress of modern society, there is a saying that “harmony create new things, but difference is not good”. A harmonious society is of just “harmony but difference”. The causes making the society unstable are not related to the masses, instead, which are related to the developing gap between the people’s increasingly physical and cultural requirements and their realizable level, and the improvement of the people’s actual living standards relatively behind the development level of the whole society and so on.

If the above analysis is accurate, the residual sample passages can be taken as a typical epitome of family, which is the basic component unit, of the future harmonious society to certain extent. This

kind of family is different from traditional pattern to some extent but more human-based, putting more emphasis on individuals. Family's functions are more embodied in the form of economic community instead of a cognation network and primary living circle that inherit cultural tradition. With appearance of such whole new family structure, they are reshuffled in a whole new way in terms of household financing and investment, life goal and plan and social interpersonal relation because the complete set of social game rules has already been changed.

This part of passage has intensively reflected the attention paid by media to individuals, and some unimaginable phenomenon in the past can be publicly discussed at present. That the parents find marriage partners for their children is a good example. The discussion of the passage is finally concluded that: The key is to rely on oneself. In other words, the things will be finally decided by the offspring themselves, and the parents are only to build the bridge. On the other hand, the passage has reflected that the present young people has a very huge working pressure without the time and energy to consider their own marriage, and in the end, their parents have to be bothered and fatigued. And we cannot but reflect on this case.

However, social transition, system recombination and structural evolution etc. will necessarily bring about some changes in idea and behavior orientation. Under such background, how to deal with the relation between tradition and modern and how to face polarization to reintegrate values, all of which are the problems in urgent need of solution.

Conclusion

In recent years, China's central economic work conference annually emphasizes to "stick to the human-based, do well all works related to the masses' interests and maintain stability of the society" and "stick to the human-based to work hard to construct socialist harmonious society", and repeatedly points out the "human-based", which means to respect human, that is, respect the masses' rights, legal interests and reasonable requirements. From the viewpoint of the author, it covers the following three aspects:

First of all, establish a corresponding interest appeal mechanism and multilateral dialog mechanism that multiple interest actors participate in, which is an important link for construction of a harmonious society. Next, persist in the masses' status as major roles, fully play the masses' enthusiasm, initiative and creativity and make they participate in the process of social treatment. Last, be conscious of that due to the high-level polarization in market economy, interest appeal is legal. Over more than 20 years in the past, the polarization of China's social structure is increasingly deepened, which first means multi-element interest subject and that different strata and social groups begin hold different interests. Therefore, the disputes on interest appeal and ideology should be differentiated to make discussion on problems based on a rational, fair and constructive platform.

Only such an institutional framework of high-level compatibility can contain interest appeal of high-level polarization and integrate increasingly multi-element idea orientation so that realize a harmonious society in which harmonious but different people live and work in peace and contentment!

(End)

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