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Social Exclusion of Chengzhongcun Villagers in an  
Ecological District: A Case Study of Reconstructed  
Xianghuwan Village

(生態圏型都市開発における城中村と社会的疎外：香  
湖湾の再開発を事例に)

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## **Abstract**

Since the 2000s, a new type of urban development zone in China's big cities has emerged, called Ecological District. This district aims to achieve multiple goals such as ecosystem restoration, public services improvement and cultural tourism branding. One example, Xi'an Chanba Ecological District (CBE in short), was established under this background. During its construction, a large number of Chengzhongcun villages inside that district were demolished, providing more space for green amenity redevelopment. Chengzhongcun villagers could move into the reconstructed community that was built by the local government after a 3-8 years transition period. However, they are not the intended group to enjoy most localized benefits brought by Ecological District. What is more, the reconstruction process has made them even more vulnerable to social exclusion than before, having become the subject of social exclusion inside the district.

Gentrification as a concept is found worldwide in diverse geographic and socio-cultural contexts, seen as renovating deteriorated urban neighborhoods through an influx of more affluent residents (Lees et al, 2008). CBE is experiencing the gentrification process, through a green approach. As Gould and Lewis (2012) point out, green gentrification highlights the fact that new or restored environmental goods tend to be accompanied by rising property values, which in turn attracts wealthier groups. An effect of this is the creation of a greater gap with poorer neighborhoods, which results in displacement. The gentrification occurring in CBE is not equivalent to a classical context because the reconstructed Chengzhongcun villagers were not forced out of the physical displacement caused by exorbitant house prices or rent gap. Instead, they maintain their own residences. However, as recent gentrification research has demonstrated, the displacements caused by gentrification go far beyond physical displacement from a neighborhood (Curran, Winifred, 2018). A similar gentrification process has been taking place in CBE. The localized benefits that green amenity construction and new zone development brought are not enjoyed by every group inside CBE and even force the certain low-income group experience a set of non-physical displacements.

This study addresses the non-physical displacement from the perspective of social exclusion, aims to explain how gentrification has happened in CBE, and how it influenced reconstructed Chengzhongcun villagers. I aim to exam the results of green gentrification with a comprehensive perspective rather than a single aspect, which extend the boundary of green gentrification by providing the empirical evidence.

In conclusion, in agreement with recent research (de Oliver, 2016; Shaw and Hagemans, 2015; Curran, 2007), gentrification would not only cause the physical displacement of the old neighborhood, but also produce non-physical displacement. Besides, this study revealed the non-physical displacement of an old neighborhood that has not yet been influenced by physical displacement due to the ‘reconstruction at original site’ policy of the local government. The lack of the option to leave and the on-going green gentrification process together result in the non-physical displacement of the reconstructed Chengzhongcun community, expressed as the social exclusion that reconstructed Chengzhongcun villagers are facing currently. This study examined the results of green gentrification with a comprehensive perspective, which extend the boundary of green gentrification by providing empirical evidence. That is, gentrification does not necessarily lead to physical displacement of the old neighborhood inhabitants, especially when the gentrification process relates to local policies. However, non-physical displacement also negatively influences the old or inferior neighborhoods, and it is more likely to render its residents socially excluded from the gentrified area.

**Keywords:** Chengzhongcun Village; Social Exclusion; Green Gentrification; Ecological District

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background of the study

China is experiencing the rapid expansion of its urban areas. Since China's "Reform and Open-up", local governments have started to acquire take back the farmland around cities. As a result of this, only rural residential areas and small parts of collective-owned land<sup>1</sup> are left to villages. These villages have gradually been surrounded by urban built-up areas, known as Chengzhongcun villages<sup>2</sup>. In the beginning of 1990s, the disorder of Chengzhongcun village was seriously affecting urban development. Hence, major cities started to launch the reconstruction of Chengzhongcun villages. Different reconstruction approaches were introduced based on various types of urban development (Ding et al, 2014).

When it comes to the 21<sup>st</sup> century, a new type of urban development zone was introduced by Xi'an government, called Ecological District. This sort of development zone aims to achieve ecosystem restoration, public services improvement and cultural tourism brand built, etc. (CBE Committee, 2010). Xi'an Chanba Ecological District (CBE in short) was established under this background, and it is the first development zone to obtain the title of national-class ecological district. Along with its construction, the whole former district needs to be renewed to provide more spaces for green amenity and urban infrastructures: A large amount of Chengzhongcun villages inside

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<sup>1</sup> After the foundation of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949, following millennia of feudalism, the new socialist regime gradually established a dual system of land ownership within a planned economy, with rural land being owned by village collectives and urban land owned by the state (Lee, 2007).

<sup>2</sup> In Chinese is 城中村, Some Chinese scholars prefer to translate it as urban village, However, Euro-American model urban villages in developed country and Chengzhongcun villages in China refer to two completely different concepts. In this research, here use "Chengzhongcun village" to avoid confusion.

that district have been demolished. Although after a 3-8 years transition period Chengzhongcun villagers can move into the reconstructed community built by the government, they are not the group that can enjoy most localized benefits brought by the new built development zone (Fu&Gao, 2007). What is more, there are signs showing that after the reconstruction process the Chengzhongcun villagers are even more vulnerable than before, being constantly marginalized.

Urban renewal has been well researched in urban planning and sociology studies. However, seldom researchers hold a perspective of gentrification. Qiu (2002) points that gentrification has already happened in some big cities' urban renewal process. The renewed community is made up of the group of people that hold totally different demographic characteristics from the former residents. Likewise, a similar process has been taking place in CBE. The living conditions of neighborhoods are notably improved and this has led to more high-income outside groups replacing the low-income one- with the latter experiencing the potential pressure to move out.

Gentrification as a concept is found worldwide in diverse geographic and socio-cultural contexts, seen as renovating deteriorated urban neighborhoods through an influx of more affluent residents (Lees et al.,2008). CBE is experiencing the gentrification process, through a green approach. As Gould and Lewis (2012) point out, green gentrification highlights the fact that new or restored environmental goods tend to be accompanied by rising property values, which in turn attracts wealthier groups. An effect of this is the creation of a greater gap with poorer neighborhoods, which results in displacement. The gentrification occurring in CBE is not equivalent to a classical context because the reconstructed Chengzhongcun villagers were not forced out of the physical displacement caused by exorbitant house prices or rent gap. Instead, they maintain their own residences. However, as recent gentrification research has demonstrated, the displacements caused by gentrification go far beyond

physical displacement from a neighborhood (Winifred Curran,2018). Much of the experience of displacement from gentrification is non-physical, like the loss of culture (de Oliver, 2016), public space (Langegger, 2016; Rahder and McLean, 2013), cultural capital, social networks (Manzo et al., 2008; Shaw and Hagemans, 2015), and job opportunities (Curran, 2004, 2007). A similar gentrification process has been taking place in CBE. The localized benefits that green amenity construction and new zone development brought are not enjoyed by every group inside CBE and even force the certain low-income group experience a set of non-physical displacements. Moreover, some Chengzhongcun villagers who risk vulnerability are unable to realize in what situation they find themselves in and the fact that they are at risk. The low-level risks awareness results in more potential risks and next generation vulnerability.

This study addresses the non-physical displacement from the perspective of social exclusion, aims to explain how gentrification has happened in CBE, and how it influenced reconstructed Chengzhongcun villagers. I aim to exam the results of green gentrification with a comprehensive perspective rather than a single aspect, which extend the boundary of green gentrification by providing the empirical evidence.

## **1.2 Problem statement**

The gentrification which is happening in CBE is not completely the same with the western context, the Chengzhongcun villagers are not moving out of the neighborhood due to exorbitant house price. Instead of that, they get their own houses provided by government inside the district through a centralization relocation way. However, the houses they own do not have the “House Property Ownership Certification”. They cannot sell the house and move to other neighborhoods, hence they do not have the option to leave the neighborhood. However, the potential pressure caused by the lack of choice and non-physical displacement influences every aspect of reconstructed Chengzhongcun villagers’ well-being and development.

### **1.3 Objectives of the study**

The purpose of this study is to address the non-physical displacement from the perspective of social exclusion, to explain how gentrification has happened in CBE, and how it influenced reconstructed Chengzhongcun villagers.

- a. To explore and explain the aspects of social exclusion towards reconstructed Chengzhongcun villagers associated with gentrification in CBE development.
- b. To dig further into the dynamics that generate the social exclusion in terms of the process of gentrification and how it influenced the inequitable distribution of localized benefits.
- c. To conclude whether the ecological district development policies are likely to engender gentrification.

In following chapters, I first review the related literature. After that I show the methodology of this research. Then I contextualize this research so as to situate the green gentrification process within local urban development, especially ecological district development contexts. Next, I present the major findings about current social exclusion of reconstructed related with green gentrification in CBE. After that, I discuss on the on-going gentrification process and its future influences. And last, I summarize and review the arguments of this study in the concluding chapter.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Ecological Development**

In the last few decades, sustainable patterns of urban development have become a worldwide research topic. In attempting to achieve a sustainable pattern of urban development, it is important to define what a sustainable city is. Girardet (2004) has provided one of the most widely accepted definitions. He suggests that a sustainable

city is a city that works so that all its citizens are able to meet their own needs without endangering the well-being of the natural world or the living conditions of other people, now or in the future. Increasing environmental problems and the negative impacts of urban activities have gained more widespread attention on prevention of environmental problems and sustainable development, has enforced the concerns into national and local policies.

For built-up urban areas, many countries have already practiced urban renewal and got impressive results. Such examples are the “Urban Regeneration” in United Kingdom, the “Slum Upgrading” in Brazil and “Saemaul Undong” in Korea. These attempts aim to ensure that all residents (whether new or living in established residential communities) can live in safe, healthy and dignified conditions (UN,1996).

As for new urban development areas, to achieve sustainable urban development, some cities have started to accept an ecological approach to form a balance between human beings and natural environment. In Euro-American contexts, one of the important strategies according to the principle of sustainable development is ‘eco-planning’. Williams (2000) defines eco-planning as "strategies and techniques that combine urbanism and nature to create healthy, civilizing, and enriching places to live". Dizdaroglu et al (2010) suggest that eco-planning provides specific benefits for long-term sustainability by ameliorating the environmental degradation of cities in terms of: improvement of air, water and soil quality, energy saving, reduction of storms, water runoff and urban heat island effect, aesthetic improvement of the city and enrichment of urban biodiversity. With all these benefits, Girardet (2004) suggests that attempting sustainability in city planning should include balance sheets that can track inputs, outputs and throughputs with regard to city resources. So it requires systematic collection of data, and sophisticated knowledge management systems to track this data over time. In many developed countries, which have the advanced technology and comprehensive political-economic system, cities adopt eco-planning more

quickly based on precise measurement of environmental factors. Dizdaroglu et al (2010) present Berlin's biotope strategy as an international best practice of eco-planning, emphasizing the tool that is used to measure the ecologically effective land area of a development.

In contrast, the first batch of development zones were established in the coastal area of China in 1984. So far, 215 development zones are distributed throughout the country. As Feng (2006) suggests, the urban development zone has already changed from a simple industrial development zone to a multi-functional development zone. Under the background of urbanization, Wang (2011) argue that the multi-functional development zones are formed rapidly. Alongside industrial production, newly built development zones also possess residential, commercial, cultural and other functions. Along with rapid urbanization occurring in China, the extensive economic growth has also caused severe domestic environmental pollution and driven a huge consumption of resources. As a result, economic development has been restricted by environmental capacity, and people's health and well-being have been severely impacted. The Chinese government has to face the challenge of finding a new economic growth model and overcoming domestic environmental resource restraints, in order to achieve economic transformation and sustainable development. For this reason, in 2007, the concept of 'eco-civilization' was first presented at the 17th Communist Party of China (CPC) National Congress. The former chairman of the CPC, Hu (2007)<sup>3</sup> provides the following interpretation about building 'eco-civilization': "The essence of the construction of ecological civilization is building a resource-saving and environment-friendly society based on the environmental carrying capacity of resources, the laws of nature and sustainable development". From then, the establishment of new urban development zone gradually has also followed the principle of connecting the dots of economy and ecology. According to Yu and Wang

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<sup>3</sup> Hu Jintao's speech at the Seminar on Studying and Carrying Out the achievements of CPC's 17th National Congress.

(2012), since the 1990s, many urban development zones around the central areas of major cities in China have emerged. As the important part for future population expansion and industrial transformation, every development zone is related with the overall development of its city. When planning a new development zone, the local government should take land-use form, resource distribution and environmental capacity into concern. Zhu et al (2017) provides the data for ecological development zones along China's coast in order to confirm that the ecological development zone has significant positive impacts on local economy and at the same time some environmental problems are solved. Wu (2001) suggests that the most important value of an ecological zone is the ecological culture, including all relationships between human and nature in this development process. The development speed and quality of ecological zone is determined by the mature level of ecological culture. Ecological tourism zone is also a type of ecological zone which appears in nature-rich places. However, Quan (2004) presents the problematic facts of ecological tourism zones. The over-development of tourism leads to further damage in the local ecological system, such as water pollution and soil pollution. It completely violates the principle of ecological development.

Briefly, in China, although the ecological civilization and economic growth build up a new relationship, they result in the appearance of ecological development zones. These zones are treated differently in policy implementation. The development process of ecological development zone indeed involves environmental factors and provides an effort on environmental prevention. However, the evaluation system of local government still emphasizes the economic outcomes much more than ecological achievements. Also, a lack of comprehensive measurement becomes another obstacle in achieving ecological civilization in urban development.

## 2.2 Gentrification

I will discuss western concepts of gentrification first. In 1964, sociologist Glass coined the term 'gentrification' in her book *London : Aspect of Change*. She mentioned "One by one, many of the working-class quarters have been invaded by the middle class - upper and lower ... Once this process of 'gentrification ' starts in a district it goes on rapidly until all or most of the working-class occupiers are displaced and the whole social character of the district is changed". Glass introduced the concept of gentrification to refer to the process whereby a new urban 'gentry' transformed working-class quarters in London. Glass then perfected the definition in 1973. She proposed that gentrification is a complex process including residential renewal, housing ownership change (from rent to private), rise of housing prices and displacement of 'working-class'. As Glass intended, "gentrification" simply but powerfully captures the class inequalities and injustice created by urban land markets and policies. Another definition of gentrification is not sensitive to specific class, and it stated by Neil Smith (1979): "Gentrification is the reinvestment of capital at the urban center, which is designed to produce space for a more affluent class of people than occupies that space."

Over the years, there have been numerous researches on gentrification studied by various disciplines such as sociology, urban planning, urban geography and political science. The process first occurred in a few major advanced capitalist cities such as London, New York, Paris and Sydney. As the process got more attention in mid-1970s, research on the issue started to flourish. The denotation and connotation of gentrification itself have become complex and diverse. Among them, there is a new strain of gentrification known today as 'new build' gentrification. Mills (1988) has conducted one of the most in-depth researches in Vancouver: she saw developers, architects, and marketing agents create a newly built landscape of gentrification through the development of townhouses and condominiums, which demonstrated

processes of capital reinvestment, social upgrading, and middle-class colonization. Also, Mills' research was concerned with the specifics of cultural issues in the gentrification process. In addition, the diffusion of the effects of gentrification has expanded from urban to rural areas, a process called rural gentrification. Parsons (1980) first proposed this concept in his study on the class composition of rural residents in the United Kingdom. He described rural gentrification as a transition process through which the middle class moves to rural settlements for greater comfort and more leisure space, a process which changes the economic, population and socio-cultural structure of the rural communities. Darren Smith (2002) defined the term 'studentification', to refer to 'contradictory social, cultural, economic and physical changes resulting from an influx of students within privately-rented accommodation in particular neighborhoods'. Gotham (2005) introduces 'tourism gentrification' to explain the transformation of a middle-class neighborhood into a relatively affluent and exclusive enclave marked by a proliferation of corporate entertainment and tourism venues. The gentrification process follows different patterns, based on the way it is initiated, how it proceeds and culminates in many different cities around the world. It is a global phenomenon with local particularities (Uzun, 2001). This diversity makes the study of the concept of gentrification so complex. Davidson and Lees (2005) use the gentrification indicators, namely the four characteristics of gentrification "(1) the (re)investment of capital; (2) the social upgrading of locating by incoming high-income groups; (3) landscape change; (4) direct or indirect displacement of low-income groups". According to these features, gentrification is considered to require coincidence of them, a point which is largely accepted.

### **2.3 Green gentrification and urban redevelopment**

Most recently, creating or improving green amenities has been widely considered as a strategic approach to urban renewal or redevelopment. It is quite clear that green spaces contribute to improved physical health by encouraging active lifestyles and creating localized conditions that reduce rates of disease associated with air pollution and noise. From a development perspective, high quality and abundant urban spaces contribute to social and economic benefits. They could strengthen the identity of an area as an attractive and desirable place to work, live and visit and also lead to a stronger social connection among area residents and organizations (Isabelle Anguelovski, 2018).

However, green gentrification highlights the fact that new or restored environmental goods tend to be accompanied by rising property values, which in turn attract wealthier groups, while creating greater gap with poorer neighborhoods (Gould and Lewis 2012). The distribution of green amenities seems uneven in the city. The green amenity approach is questioned for regarding green spaces as tools to address the need for social reform or poor public health and to promote economic development (Dooling 2009). The contribution of green amenities creates a better neighborhood with better conditions. Yet, part of the process leads to the disproportionate access to green space, fresh food, healthy housing, play grounds, and waste management services from which upper income classes benefit while excluding more marginalized groups (Park and Pellow 2011). Sometimes, these actions even make historically disadvantaged residents vulnerable to displacement (Pearsall, 2012).

### **2.4 Social exclusion as consequence**

Since the French scholar Rene Lenoir first proposed the concept of social exclusion in the 1960s, scholars from all over the world have not yet reached a consensus on the

clear meaning of the concept. The British Social Exclusion Unit (SEU) (2001) believes that social exclusion is what can happen when people or areas suffer from a combination of linked problems such as unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime, poor health and family breakdown.

Social exclusion is an important attempt to re-conceptualize vulnerable groups. As its application fields continue expanding, Chinese scholars have cited this concept to study vulnerable groups such as disabled people, migrant workers, and land-losing farmers and to analyze social issues such as poverty, employment, and education housing. Li, B. (2002) summarized the causes of social exclusion: self-caused, social structure-caused, labor process-caused, social policy-caused, ideology recognition and social mobility reaction. Tang believes that social exclusion is caused by the rules of social organization. All the rules of the game are double-edged swords, which make some people “winners” and others “losers”. Social policy research aims to modify the rules of the game so that it can benefit every member of society as fair as possible. Li B. (2002) pointed out that conducting social exclusion theory studies is to study how socially disadvantaged groups are excluded from mainstream society in the labor market and social security system, and how such exclusion is accumulated through generations.

As for the research related to the Chengzhongcun, most social exclusion studies pay attention to the group of land-lost farmers. Some scholars have analyzed a series of problems encountered by land-losing farmers in the process of survival and development from the perspective of social exclusion and then have given some solutions. Chen Shiwei (2007) argues that economic exclusion, institutional exclusion and social network exclusion are the main causes of unemployment of land-lost farmer. Bao et al. (2002) believe that ‘compensatory training’ can eliminate the lack of practical skills and the employment assistance of land-lost farmers and enable them

to obtain sustainable living security and merge into society. Song et al. (2013) believe that land-lost farmers experiencing political exclusion, economic exclusion, culture exclusion and social insurance system exclusion, also provide a solution as “collective-oriented community development strategy”<sup>4</sup>, in order to eliminate social exclusion and accelerate the transformation of the status of land-lost farmers to eliminate the urban-rural dual structure in China.

There is very little research about the social exclusion of villagers from reconstructed Chengzhongcun villages, though these new urban residents still belong to a vulnerable group in current society. The social problems associated with social exclusion towards villagers in reconstructed Chengzhongcun villages should not be ignored and require further research.

## **2.5 Chengzhongcun village**

The studies on Chengzhongcun in China mainly have three aspects: problem statement, reason-analysis, and research on Chengzhongcun reconstruction planning and policies.

Normally, most Chinese scholars define Chengzhongcun as a village located within a built-up urban area, but still maintaining some natural villages’ traditional features. Urban planning scholars describe the phenomenon of Chengzhongcun from the perspective of urban-rural contradictions and land management. For example, Tian (1998) believes that Chengzhongcun is a reflection of urban-rural contradictions. Furthermore, Chengzhongcun reflects the problems of the waste of urban land, the loss of land value, and negative impact on planning management. Jing (1999) believes

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<sup>4</sup>The strategy emphasizes the collective interests in ecological aspect, the collective participation in political aspect and collective security in social aspect.

the Chengzhongcun contrasts quite markedly with surroundings by its spatial pattern and internal function, as well as the dysfunctions of administrative system. Sociologists focus on the community structure and public security issues. Administrative management cannot meet the needs of increasing complexity of community structure. Therefore, public security issues are crucial in Chengzhongcun. Also, former farmers' cultural adaptation problem became an obstacle for them to merging into urban society (Zhou, 1993). Fang et al. (1999) has done the research through investigations in Guangzhou City. He discussed the problems of Chengzhongcun from aspects of landscape, local characteristics, management system, and social issues, and has provided a comprehensive perspective. Zhou (1993) believes that the cultural adaptation problem brought by rapid urbanization is the main cause of social issues in Chengzhongcun. Zhang and Zhao (2007) propose that the local socio-economic environment and policies influenced the Chengzhongcun on its patterns and characteristics.

Shi (2016) summarizes four typical models for reconstruction of Chengzhongcun in current China, including “Zhuhai Model”, “Guangzhou Model”, “Hangzhou Mode” and “Shenzhen Model”. The Zhuhai model can be described as “Government guidance + Real estate company in charge of development + Completely reconstruct”. The Guangzhou model is “Self-reform + Partial reconstruction + Comprehensive management”. The Hangzhou model is a government-led way to achieve “Self-balance” by “Internal regulation”. The Shenzhen model is a model of “Government guidance + Market-led + Multi-agent in charge of development”. Wang (2014) proposes an “inclusive Chengzhongcun reconstruction model”, emphasizing that the interests of migrants and the low skills of local Chengzhongcun villagers should be fully considered. According to Wang, the social security system should be improved to achieve the same treatment for the Chengzhongcun villagers and urban residents.

The study of Chengzhongcun has attracted widespread attention since late 1990s. Scholars from different fields have thoroughly revealed the problems and mechanisms of the Chengzhongcun. However, so far there is very limited comprehensive research across multiple disciplines. Also, the existing studies include many general proposals for the reconstruction of Chengzhongcun, but lack detailed scientific analysis and feasible recommendation. Moreover, the reconstruction of Chengzhongcun has been implemented in many cities for many years, but few are concerned with results evaluation. There is limited work or data about sustainable land use, management of migrants and current situation of Chengzhongcun villagers who have already experienced reconstruction.

## **2.6 Urban village in developed countries**

The concept of urban villages was developed by Gans (1962) in his ethnography of an Italian immigrant neighborhood in central Boston. He identified elements of a coherent local, or 'village-like' social world, including ethnicity, kinship, friendship and values that reflected and bolstered residents' identity and helped maintain it over time. Spatially, this social world is located in a clearly defined urban neighborhood where much of the population has long-standing ties. O'Sullivan in *Urban Economics* (2011) defines the urban village as a sub-center around the modern city. Recently, some American urban planning organizations also introduce this concept into urban planning, Greenbelt Alliance (2015) holds the view that urban villages are walkable, bicycle-friendly, transit-oriented, mixed-use neighborhoods that can provide both housing and jobs, environmental benefits, and quality of life improvements for a city's residents and the surrounding region.

In short, urban villages in the Euro-American context and Chengzhongcun in China refer two completely different concepts, but the studies of developing livable

environment may throw some new light on Chinese Chengzhongcun reconstruction, especially in an ecological district.

### **3. Methodology**

This study aims to understand the gentrification process in a specific ecological district by an indirect displacement way, from a social exclusion perspective. In this regard, I try to explain the aspects of social exclusion towards reconstructed Chengzhongcun villagers associated with gentrification in CBE development. This requires a full understanding of experienced process and current status of reconstructed Chengzhongcun villagers. Furthermore, the study aims to provide a new understanding of the gentrification process and its influences, more specifically referring to indirect displacement. Finally, the study tries to predict the going gentrification process in this area and give recommendations to avoid potential risks of indirect displacement, meanwhile promote the risking-taking abilities of reconstructed Chengzhongcun villagers.

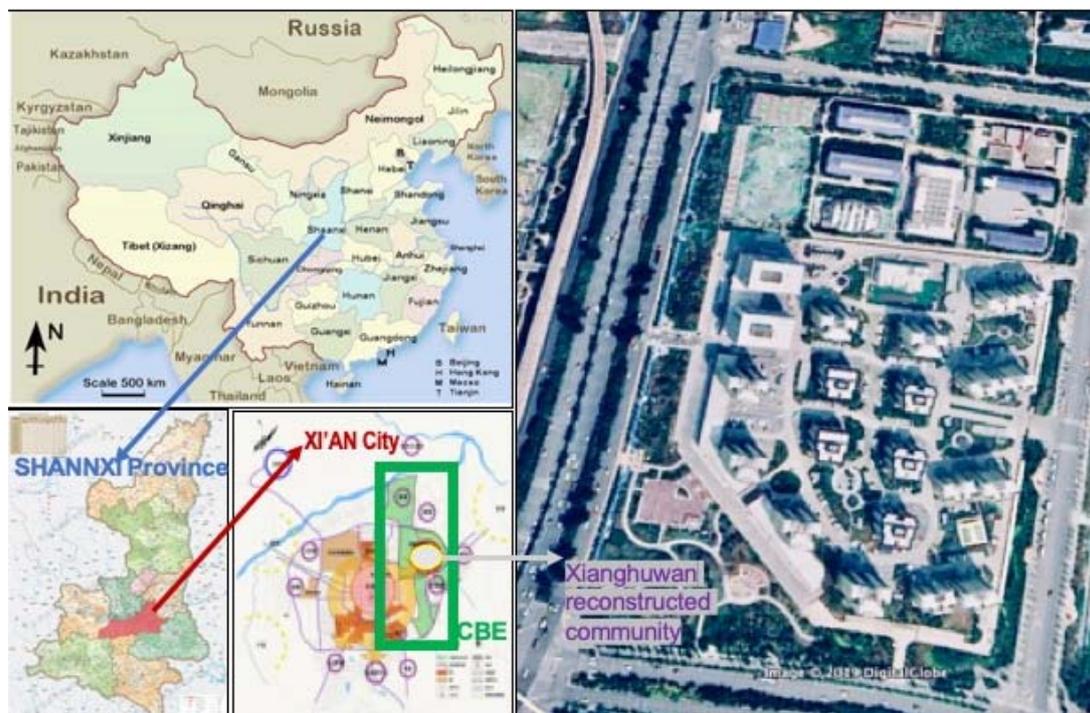
The study employed both quantitative and qualitative methods. The data were collected during field study in September 2017, August 2018 and November 2018. The quantitative method refers to the questionnaire survey held in November 2018. Key informant interviews (KIIs) and participant observation were the main qualitative data collection methods. Local websites and governmental official documents are also included in the data. The questionnaire survey mainly adopted basic descriptive statistics in analyzing and interpreting the living conditions, satisfaction, social network and cultural heritage of the reconstructed Chengzhongcun neighborhood. Qualitative methods were conducted in order to render explicit the gentrification process and interpret the results of the questionnaire survey.

### 3.1 Study site

This study focusses on the residents of a reconstructed Chengzhongcun community in Chanba Ecological District (CBE). CBE was established in 2004, located in the northeast of Xi'an City, with a planned area of 129 square kilometers. Since 2004, it was built on 5 ecological conservation parks within the region, such as Chan-Ba national wetland park, Xi'an EXPO park. Now it has newly added the landscape riverbank of 56 kilometers, wetland of 11.3 square kilometers and woodland of 19.3 square kilometers.

Xianghuwan reconstructed community is located in the center area of the CBE. The former Xianghuwan village was demolished in order to build Xi'an EXPO park. Following the principle of 'reconstruction at original site', now the reconstructed Xianghuwan community is located near the Xi'an EXPO park.

**Fig. 1.** Study area: Xianghuwan Reconstructed Community in CBE, Xi'an City, Shaanxi Province, China



Source: 1. <http://www.sacu.org/provmap.html> 2. <http://ditu.ps123.net/china/2308.html>  
3. <http://www.expo2011.cn/2010/0910/14509.html> 4. Google Map

### 3.2 Quantitative methods

The quantitative method used consisted in the distribution of questionnaire surveys to every household in the reconstructed community (N=623). The number of valid respondents is 416. The Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) Version 20 is used for analysis. The questions of the questionnaire are divided into 5 groups.

#### a. Demographic factors

Demographic factors are quantifiable characteristics of a given population, includes age, sex, education level, income level, marital status, occupation, religion.

#### b. Living conditions

Living conditions include structural features of neighborhoods such as facilities, recreational opportunities, services, urban and traffic environments, and general safety, as well as the quality of housing and the physical environment. The analysis of living conditions helps to clarify the current and predict the potential risks that reconstructed Chengzhongcun villagers are facing.

#### c. Satisfaction analysis

Winifred Curran (2018) argues that gentrification and resistance operate in relationship to each other and that sometimes the success of community resistance helps to mitigate some of the worst effects of gentrification. Being aware of initiating is the major way to control actions. The reconstructed Chengzhongcun villagers will not take any actions with deficiencies in awareness towards potential risks brought by this ongoing gentrification process. The low-level community perception leads to a worse situation of reconstructed Chengzhongcun villagers. It is necessary to measure the reconstructed Chengzhongcun Villagers' satisfaction on reconstruction policies and present circumstances.

#### d. Social networks

Recent gentrification research has demonstrated that gentrification caused not only physical displacement from a neighborhood. Some of the experience of displacement from gentrification is about the loss of social network (Shaw and Hagemans, 2015). In the questionnaire, I set up a series of questions to examine the perception of socio-spatial pattern of reconstructed Chengzhongcun villagers' network, with the focus on interactional differences between before and after reconstruction.

#### e. Cultural heritage

Gentrification also has an effect on the cultural heritage of an area. A city teeming with life and culture, is all of a sudden sanitized and stripped of any authenticity just because of the ongoing gentrification process (Alvarez et al. 2007). Each Chengzhongcun village has its unique history with an agricultural culture extending back to hundreds and thousands years. Its cultural and natural heritage records the formation and development of the villagers living there for generations. However, the gentrification process may break this continuity and lead to the loss of culture.

### **3.3 Qualitative methods**

A questionnaire survey serves as an important tool for data collection, but it also has certain limitations such as difficulties to understand the context of a phenomenon. In order to gain in-depth knowledge of underlying reasons and motivations, qualitative research is conducted, especially for a complex issue. In this study, I employed qualitative methods as well to reveal the historical facts and explain the results gained from the quantitative data.

### 3.3.1 Key informant interviews (KII)

In order to explain and enrich the results of the quantitative method, I employed Key informant interview as the major tool for qualitative methods. The interviews consist of a set of semi-structured questions, since the responses to open-ended questions are more detailed, and variable in content when compared to close-ended questions. As Mikes (2006) demonstrates it allows informants to express their own world, with experiences and meanings in their own terms. Thus, I employed KII as one of the research methods to provide the opportunity that informants can express their feelings, thoughts, perceptions, and ideas in their own terms freely. In this study, the informants are divided into 3 groups. I prepared the separated semi-structured interview questions for each group of informants to gain various aspects information from them. At most interviews, I did not strictly follow the order or the contents of the interview questions. I prefer a chat-like way to conduct the interviews, to make informants relax and open to talk more about the relevant topics.

#### a. Reconstructed Chengzhongcun villagers

The primary focus of this research is villagers of reconstructed Chengzhongcun villages. They provided the first-hand data of their experiences, current situation and perception towards gentrification and its effects. These villagers are divided into two groups depending on whether they hold a position in the Villagers' Committee<sup>5</sup>. Unlike other villagers, the people who have a position in the Villagers' Committee would still have a job with monthly salary after reconstruction, usually offered by the Villagers' Committee directly or indirectly. In addition, the Villagers' Committee is the bridge between the local government and villagers. It played an important role during the reconstruction process, from negotiation to implementation. For this reason,

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<sup>5</sup> Villagers' Committee: A grass-root organization for self-management of rural villages in China. A Villagers' Committee has a responsibility to implement policy and manage village affairs.

I add a few specific questions about the reconstruction process for Villagers' Committee members.

For this study, 7 villagers were interviewed: one person from Villagers' Committee and other 6 interviewees are ordinary villagers. The interviews lasted 50 minutes on average, ranging from 30 minutes to 80 minutes, and were conducted inside the reconstructed community and the Villagers' Committee's office.

b. Government officials

After reconstruction, relevant government departments became more complex. There are 3 departments which have some parts of responsibility to manage the Xianghuwan reconstructed community: CBE Administrative Committee, Baqiao Sub-district Office and Guangyuntan Police Station. These 3 organizations have different functions. However, as for the management of Xianghuwan reconstructed community, sometimes their functions are insufficient. Because of the ambiguity, I regard the interviews with government officials as a necessary part, in order to understand the official position towards the reconstruction process and to identify the historical facts of gentrification.

There were 5 government officials interviewed in this study. The sample included three police officers from Guangyuntan Police Station, one from CBE Administrative Committee and one from Baqiao Sub-district Office.

c. Real estate developers

When an area is planned as a new development zone with a slogan of livable district at the same time, it starts being targeted by real estate developers. The real estate developers develop the area into "luxury" housing for upper and mid-level income people. As a result, the housing price raises and forms the so called 'rent gap'. The

real estate developers profit from the process, as one of the factors to push the gentrification process ahead. In order to explore the role that real estate developers have played and identify the stage of gentrification process, I interviewed 2 people who work in two real estate developer companies.

### **3.3.2 Participant observation**

As the interview can only show what an informant has said, it still has limitations. For example, interview results are the verbal expression of informants' feelings. They do not include the nonverbal expression, such as the interaction between each other and how much time they spend on it (Schmuck, 1997). In order to overcome the limitations, I employed participant observation to extricate rich data. Marshall and Rossman (1995) believe that participant observation helps researchers to check definitions of terms that participants use in interviews through their daily lives, observe events that informants may be unable or unwilling to share because it would be not political correct, impolite, or insensitive.

Participant observation included a residence of 18 days, it happened in August 2018 and November 2018 in Xianghuwan reconstructed community, included participation in a residents' meeting once and entertainment activities, such as 'Square Dance'<sup>6</sup>. The observations were made in public places, such as a bus station, parking places, exercising places, parks, and streets.

### **3.3.3 Secondary data sources**

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<sup>6</sup> Square Dance: An exercise routine performed to music in squares, plazas and parks in the cities. It is popular with middle-aged and retired people.

In this study, secondary data sources were used to examine the authenticity of the findings. Several types of resources were used, such as local websites (for example “Huashang Website”), and the governments’ official documents. Secondary sources of data provided me an insight into a comprehensive timeline of the gentrification process, and it helped me form my research hypothesis. At the same time, secondary sources of data can be used as a supplement for results gained from other given investigation. For example, some socio-economic data of the whole district, like income and education standard can be used to compare with the investigation objects.

However, as Saunderson (2009) suggests, lack of control over data quality should be included into consideration when using secondary data. It is hard to establish how reliable and credible the secondary data is, since the methodology used to collect it was not clearly open to the public. Thus, it is important to evaluate the data’s authenticity.

### **3.3.4 Visual methods**

Xianghuwan Village has experienced a great land use change, so the visual material is mainly aimed to provide visual representation of its changing processes and the current material world. In addition, Visual methods are being used in creative ways to develop new ways of understanding individuals and social relationships, and social science knowledge itself (Pink, 2007). In this study, the visual documents, such as the video recordings and photographs, are gained through participant observation.

### **3.4 Data analysis**

In this study, the qualitative part is regarded as a component of the whole research. The study applied quantitative data analysis by using IBM SPSS Statistics 20 and Microsoft Excel 2019 for quantitative analysis.

### **3.4.1 Qualitative data analysis**

As Zalaghi, H.& Khazaei, M. (2016) suggest, a deductive approach should be used for qualitative data analysis when the qualitative research is not the major design of the inquiry. A deductive approach means using the research question to group the data then look the similarities and differences. Data from the interviews with Reconstructed Chengzhongcun villagers, governmental officials and the developers were analyzed using content analysis method.

### **3.4.2 Quantitative data analysis**

Before analyzing quantitative data, in order to convert raw data into something meaningful and readable, the first stage is data preparation; this includes data validation, data editing and data coding, using IBM SPSS Statistics 20 and Microsoft Excel 2019.

In this study, the data analysis applied both descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. Descriptive analysis is the first level for summarizing the data and finding patterns and it includes some commonly used descriptive statistics: Mean, percentage, frequency and range, etc. In order to explore the relationship between several different variables, rather than describing a single variable, I also employed inferential analysis. There are several types of inferential analysis, such as correlation, regression, analysis of variance and so on (Zhu, 2015). In this study, I only used correlation to describe the relations between two variables.

In statistics, there are four data measurement scales: nominal, ordinal, interval and ratio. The method of correlation depends on what types the variables are. Based on Zhu (2015)'s ideas on correlation analysis methods, I summarized the correlation analysis methods, shown as Table 1. According to Table 1, Independent-Samples T

Test, One-Way ANOVA, Chi-Square Test and Kendall's tau-b Spearman's Rank Correlation (Rs) are mainly selected as correlation test methods.

**Table. 1.** Correlation analysis method

IV DV	Nominal (2 categories)	Nominal (more than 2 categories)	Ordinal	Interval/ratio
Nominal (2 categories)	Chi-Square Test	Chi-Square Test	Linear-by- Linear Association	Binary Logistic regression
Nominal (more than 2 categories)	Pearson's Chi- Square Test	Pearson's Chi- Square Test	Linear-by- Linear Association	Multinomial Logistic regression
Ordinal	Kruskal Wallis Test	Kruskal Wallis Test	Spearman's Correlation or Kendall's tau-b	Ordinal regression
Interval/ratio	Independent- Samples T Test or Linear Regression	One-Way ANOVA or Linear Regression	Spearman's Correlation	Pearson's correlation or Linear Regression

a. Independent-Samples T Test

The Independent samples t-test assumes that the variances of the two groups are equal. This assumption of homogeneity of variance can be tested using Levene's Test of Equality of Variance, which is produced in SPSS Statistics when running the independent t-test procedure. This test for homogeneity of variance provides an *F*-statistic and a significance value (*p*-value). if the significance value is greater than 0.05 (i.e.,  $p > .05$ ), our group variances can be treated as equal. It means we should look at the row of 'equal variances assumed' for following t-test for Equality of Means. However, if  $p < 0.05$ , we have unequal variances and we should accept the results from the row of 'equal variances not assumed'. The t-test for Equality of Means provides the results for the actual Independent Samples t-Test. Only if the significance value(*p*-value) is smaller than 0.05, can we accept that there are

statistically significant differences between means. In the specific case of my analysis, it means we can say there is a correlation between two variables.

b. One-Way ANOVA

From the table of table that shows the output of the ANOVA analysis we can get the significance value(p-value). When the p-value is below 0.05, there is a statistically significant difference between group means and we can say there is a correlation between two variables; otherwise not.

c. Chi-Square Test

Pearson's Chi-square Test shows whether there is a correlation between two variables; it depends on whether the significance value(p-value) is below or over 0.05. The strength of correlation can be got from the table of Symmetric Measures by the values of several correlation statistics.

d. Kendall's tau-b

The results of Kendall's tau-b correlation are presented in a table. The significance value (p-value<0.05 or not) determines that whether there is a correlation between two variables. The value of Kendall's tau-b( $T_b$ ) shows the strength of correlation.

e. Spearman's Correlation

According to this test, the value of the correlation coefficient will range from 0 to 1 to present the strength of correlation between two variables. However, there is a correlation between two variables only when the significance value (p-value) is below 0.05.

## 4. Context

#### 4.1 Terms clarification

The legal Hukou identity<sup>7</sup> transition occurred simultaneously with the reconstruction of Chengzhongcun. This kind of urban-rural dual structure is China's characteristic system. In order to avoid the confusion of word choice, I will clarify the relevant terms in the Chinese context at the beginning.

English	Chinese	Japanese
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Citizen	公民	国民
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公民：指具有一个国家的国籍,根据该国的法律规范享有权利和承担义务的自然  
人

Citizen: A legally recognized subject or national of a state or commonwealth, either  
native or naturalized.

国民：国家を構成する者のことで，その国の国籍を有する者。

Urban resident	市民
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城镇居民)	都市居住者
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市民：又称城市居民，通常是指具有城市有效户籍和常住城镇区域的合法公民。  
(the legal citizens who hold a valid non-agricultural Hukou and often live in urban  
areas)

Urban resident / 都市居住者：literal meaning, the people who live in urban areas.

Farmer	农民(农村居民)	農民
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农民：长时期从事农业生产的人。农民又称农村居民，指具有农业户口的合法  
公民。(A person engaged in agriculture for a long time, also known as rural resident,  
refers to the citizens who hold a valid agriculture Hukou)

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<sup>7</sup> Hukou is a system of household registration in China. Each person is classified in an agricultural or non-agricultural Hukou (commonly referred to as rural or urban).

Farmer: A person engaged in agriculture, raising living organisms for food or raw materials.

農民:農業生産に従事する人。

Villager                      村民                      村民

村民: 居住在村一级行政区划的公民。(Citizens who live in village-level administrative subdivisions)

Village-level administrative subdivisions: Rural areas are organized into village committees. A "village" in this case can either be a natural village, one that spontaneously and naturally exists, or a virtual village, which is a bureaucratic entity.

Villager: A person from a village. (Village refers to a clustered human settlement or community, often located in rural areas)

村民: むらの住民

Chengzhongcun villager      城中村村民              城中村村民

Chengzhongcun villager: Villager of a Chengzhongcun. Before reconstruction, they hold agricultural Hukou, and their identity is farmer. After reconstruction, their household registration type changes to non-agricultural Hukou, and they legally become urban residents, but socially they cannot completely merge into urban society and become truly urban residents especially in terms of self-identity.

## **4.2 Chengzhongcun in Xi'an City**

Chengzhongcun villages in Xi'an City has experienced mainly three stages.

### **4.2.1 The formation of Chengzhongcun in Xi'an City**

Like other big cities in China, Xi'an City is also experiencing a rapid expansion of its urban area. For this reason, the farmland of villages is requisitioned and used for urban development. In the 1990s, the local governments introduced various policies to take back the farmland around the city. Leaving only rural residential areas and small parts of collective's land for village development, gradually surrounded by urban built-up areas. At that time, several barriers meant that the local government could not completely requisition all lands including the residential areas and this led to the formation of Chengzhongcun.

First, the value of the farmland is the value of agricultural output which is much lower than the value of construction land. according to Land Management Law, the compensation for a land is based on the value of land itself and the attachments on it. The vast farmland with low compensation fees was the government's only choice.

Second, requisition of only farmland is more efficient for local government. In China, the urban land belongs to the nation, and the land in rural areas belongs to farmers' collectives, is operated and managed by the village agricultural production cooperatives or Villager's Committees. Thus, the requisition of farmland is irrelevant to the villagers' private property. Local governments only need to negotiate with the Village Committees. The Party Branch <sup>8</sup>of the Villager's Committee could just make this negotiation process as easy and smooth as they want. Requisitioning the land selectively is a method to save both human and material resources of government.

In addition, at that time, the urban expansion mostly provided space for industrial outreach and constructing new industrial facilities. Those factories were comparable

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<sup>8</sup>Party Branch: Party branches are the basic organizations of the Communist Party of China (CPC). They are equipped from high level government to grassroots government department to grassroot autonomous organizations. Party branches are responsible for directly guiding, managing, and overseeing Party members and for organizing, communicating with, uniting, and serving the people.

far from the center of the city and did not have an adequate transport system. This kind of working environment was unattractive to the labor-force from cities. But the villagers from surrounding villages could provide labor.

Finally, local governments were incapable of facilitating the livelihood of homeless villagers. If the building lands were also requisitioned, the villagers would face a hard situation of no income and no place to live. Such a hardship for such a large amount of people may lead to social instability. It is the most undesirable thing for any local government to allow social instability.

#### **4.2.2 The maturity of Chengzhongcun in Xi'an City**

The speed of urbanization in Xi'an City is astonishing. Due to the opportunities in cities, the low market price of crops, and progress in agricultural technology, rural population rushed into cities. For the whole nation, the urban population increased to 771 million in 2015 from 301 million in 1990 (NBSC, 2016). Massive migration created a huge demand for inexpensive and convenient houses in urban areas, which led to a rise in the land value in Chengzhongcun areas. The Chengzhongcun villagers built more houses to rent out them to the people who could not afford a house in the formal places of the city, like migrant workers from rural areas. Along with the development of the city, most Chengzhongcun have been included into an adequate transport system, plus the abundant, cheap house resources led to the appearance of a flourishing low-income housing market. The developing process of Chengzhongcun villages' maturity mainly includes three types of stakeholders:

##### **a. Villagers (Indigenous residents)**

The huge rental market makes villagers build and enlarge houses endlessly, causing a high building density in Chengzhongcun. Single or two-story buildings were getting

higher and higher, changed to four or five-story buildings. The owners of the houses sometimes divide one floor into several small bedrooms in order to minimize the unit rental fee and attract more tenants. Even sometimes, an ordinary 2-bedroom space(20m<sup>2</sup>) could be put into 8 separated beds then rented to 8 individual tenants.

b. Tenant

Because of its convenience and cheap rent fee, the Chengzhongcun became the best choice for mass migrants from rural areas when they come to Xi'an City. Some of them work outside the urban village, doing manual work. Some of them try to start small business, to meet the huge daily demand of the residents. It is for this reason that various types of small shops and restaurants scatter everywhere inside Chengzhongcun. Due to the cheap rental market and the good location near working areas, the Chengzhongcun have also become a temporarily transitional living space for a group of people which have high educational background, such as newly graduated students, new white-collar workers and sometimes artists. They have good jobs and income but still cannot afford to buy a house in formal housing market. These residents in Chengzhongcun created the demand for new housing while meeting the needs at the same time. Together with the Villagers (Indigenous residents), they made the Chengzhongcun become a closed, full-functional community.

c. The local government

In fact, inside most Chengzhongcun in Xi'an City, a large number of buildings are illegal. According to the Land Management Law, Chengzhongcun villagers are prohibited from constructing houses that have more than three floors. In addition, any rebuild or expansion of a house requires an approval from the local government department. The houses in Chengzhongcun rarely experienced the application procedure for approval. Also, in Chengzhongcun, the rental market is a grey area on

tax. The Chengzhongcun villagers usually do not pay tax for their rental income. However, the local government just turns a blind eye to these illegal acts and even gives up their interests (the tax), to avoid the social responsibility and regulatory costs towards a large amount of Chengzhongcun inside the city. As the rental income tax, the composition of the population in Chengzhongcun is complex and flexible. It is difficult for government to supervise all the rental behavior in Chengzhongcun.

Moreover, since the government failed to provide all available housing resources for all the mass migrants, Chengzhongcun somehow solved this critical problem by providing rent houses with a cheap price. This mass migrant labor is indispensable in city development, because this kind of labor is cheap and flexibility. The local government cannot deprive their cheapest choice of rent house in this city.

The noninterference of government became one of the reasons that the urban areas could not digest or assimilate such functional spots for a long time.

#### **4.2.3 The current situation of Chengzhongcun in Xi'an City: Risks and Rewards**

Low quality and irrational layout of the houses and streets makes the appearance of the Chengzhongcun all in a mess. It directly leads to an unsatisfying living condition, as people there have to live in a stuffy, crowded and gloomy space. Also, most informal houses are not designed by professionals, they have an unreasonable room layout, they lack basic functions and fire hazards cause a comparable high risk of accidents. Because of the inadequate community management and service, as well as poor public health awareness of the residents, sanitary conditions are very bad. Moreover, most trees inside the areas were cut down to squeeze more space for

building construction. All these reasons together produce a poor appearance of Chengzhongcun.

**Fig. 2.** Undesirable appearance of Yuhua Village, located in CBD of Xi'an City, 2017



Source: <http://k.sina.com.cn>

The Chengzhongcun gathers a large number of low-income inhabitants. Inside the Chengzhongcun, unlicensed business operations, gambling, drugs abuse and other illegal acts are common, since the temporary residents' registration and the administrative management are hard to conduct. The poor social security of urban villages is undesirable for both government and the people who live in surrounding areas.

Tax evasion that occurs in Chengzhongcun also raises a lot of complaints from other parts of the City. The Chengzhongcun has benefitted from the public facilities and urban transport system invested by governments. Meanwhile, the indigenous residents rely on the house rent or primary small business, such as small restaurant, fruit and vegetable retail. Most income from these need to be taxed. It is not hard to imagine

the complaints that indigenous residents make little financial contribution to public finances.

In addition, the indigenous Chengzhongcun villagers 's livelihood mainly relies on the house rent, dividend of collective assets. Many of them are not willing to work as they already have enough money to live in that "small society". However, inside this small society, some Chengzhongcun villagers have become "the Leisure Class"<sup>9</sup>. Since the income from renting houses can sustain their lives, so they spend daily lives with full of entertainment, like playing mahjong, watching TV and as recently, playing with smart phones. These jobless people wandering all the time, also has become the one of the factors of social instability.

Not only is dissatisfaction expressed by the surrounding residents, but the value of the surrounding land has also been influenced. Recently, the real estate industry has developed quickly in urban areas and brought considerable tax revenue. More and more people pursue a high-quality living condition in a livable surrounding environment. The location is very important for a commercial residential district. For example, if one new residential district construction program was located besides a Chengzhongcun, its unit price would definitely be lower than other residential districts of the same level, even it is located in the city's center. Thus, this kind of unequal development pattern also generates strong political pressure on the local government.

**Fig. 3.** A fire accident due to the dangerous wiring in Dingjia Village, Xi'an City, 2019

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<sup>9</sup> The Leisure Class: Refers to the people who can afford their living without working. Their lives are full of entertainments.



Source: <http://news.hsw.cn/system/2019/0123/1058476.shtml>

On the other hand, every Chengzhongcun owns its special and unique culture – some of them already lasted for several hundred years. Besides its own village culture, which is deeply related with agriculture. Some Chengzhongcun still keep some traditional customs completely, such as marriage custom. Also, during the Spring Festival, Chengzhongcun is always the most cheerful place among the whole city.

Last but not least, the phenomenon of Chengzhongcun itself has generated a new food culture for the city. Despite of the function of providing living spaces, the various kinds of restaurants and stores perfectly meet the surrounding residents' daily consumer demands. Although the sanitary condition of these restaurant sometimes is below the standard, there is no denying of their diversity and good taste. Many residents state that the most "Xi'an-style" restaurants are scattered in some Chengzhongcun. Moreover, Chengzhongcun has perfectly satisfied some Chinese

habits. Many Chinese are used to buying breakfast outside and have late-night snacks outside, and they can find the things they want inside Chengzhongcun at any time. Also, this kind of gathering for eating in Chengzhongcun has become a social way especially among the young people. No matter which group of people, Chengzhongcun are constantly providing a variety of food for them to choose. Chengzhongcun became a place that is not only for tasty food, but also for socializing.

**Fig. 4.** The night market in Xujiazhuang village, Xi'an City, 2014



Source: <http://www.55df.com/c/37069.shtml>

#### **4.2.4 Timeline of Chengzhongcun in Xi'an City**

Since China's "Reform and Open-up", Xi'an, as an important city of northwest China, has been selected as one of the 'Inland Open Cities' in 1992. After then, the urban built-up area expanded rapidly. Along with urban expansion, lots of farmlands were requisitioned for commercial, industrial and transportation purposes. Thus, many villages were surrounded by urban built-up area completely and a Chengzhongcun had formed. This has resulted in a huge economic development. According to the

statistical data of rural area in Xi'an, the secondary and tertiary industry developed very rapidly. For example, in 1994, the total output value of secondary and tertiary industry reached to 11.1 billion Chinese yuan from 7 billion Chinese yuan of the previous year (Shi, 2016).

According to the third urban overall planning of Xi'an city, During this period, the development principle is “中心集团，外围组团，轴向布点，带状发展”，which means “Center-gathering, multi-spot in peripheral areas, stationing as an axial way, developing in a banded way”(XUPB, 1994). Following the principle, Xi'an city has experienced a rapid urban expansion.

After 2000, The local government realized that problems emerged in the Chengzhongcun and started the reconstruction of the Chengzhongcun. However, at the same time when more multi-center development plans have been carried out, a batch of new Chengzhongcuns were formed. The speed of reconstruction is much lower than the formation of Chengzhongcuns.

**Table. 2.** Chronology of urban expansion and Chengzhongcun reconstruction in Xi'an City

<b>Year</b>	<b>Activity</b>
<b>1991</b>	Xi'an Xianyang International Airport was built, which is located in the northwestern suburb.
<b>1992</b>	Xi'an High-tech Industries Development Zone (national level) was established, located in the southern suburb.
<b>1993</b>	Xi'an Economic & Technological Development Zone (national level) was established, located in the northern suburb.
<b>2002</b>	The model reconstruction project of 14 Chengzhongcuns started.
<b>2004</b>	Xi'an Chan-Ba Ecological District (CBE) was established, located in the northeastern suburb.
<b>2004-2006</b>	62 Chengzhongcun had been reconstructed.
<b>2007</b>	The project of Daming Palace National Heritage Park started, locates in northeastern suburb.
<b>2007-2011</b>	143 Chengzhongcun had been reconstructed.
<b>2014-2017</b>	The plan of Xi Xian New Area (national level) began to be

	implemented, included a vest of area, located in the northwestern suburb.
<b>2011-2015</b>	149 Chengzhongcuns had been reconstructed.
<b>2017-2019</b>	83 Chengzhongcuns are included in the reconstructed plan list.

### **4.3 CBE: A green approach to development**

Xi'an Chan-Ba Ecological District (CBE in short) was established in September 2004, locates in the northeast of Xi'an City, with a planned area of 129 square kilometers, 10km away from the center of the Xi'an City. After years of efforts, CBE has transformed from an area full of ecological degradation to a new urban development area suitable for living and business. In the "2004-2020 City Plan of Xi'an City", CBE was elected to have the priority on the whole city's development. It was clarified that CBE has the responsibility for the governance of Chanhe River & Bahe River and their watershed, also the relevant area development. There are four main tasks of the CBE (XUPB, 2001):

1. Achievement of Ecological restoration. It aims to assist the recovery of the ecosystem of the Chan-Ba area that has been degraded and damaged in Recent years.
2. Culture inheritance and development.
3. Building a livable district to meet the demand of decentralization of population from the old town. Facing the situation of limited capacity of the old town and the increasing population, government accepted urban expansion and population decentralization as the response solutions. The establishment of CBE became an important part of the whole strategy.
4. Developing the district's service sector to perfect the urban functions and improve the capacity of Xi'an city. In order to build a desirable development zone for business.

### 4.3.1 Topographic features of Chan-Ba areas

Bahe River is 107.3 kilometers long, flows northwest, roots from the Qinling Mountain, is the biggest branch of Wei-he River, which the biggest branch of Yellow River. Ba-he River 's discharge affected greatly by precipitation, has an uneven distribution during the whole year. The flood season is July and August, and the low-water period is December to February of next year. Since Bahe River has so many branches from the nearby Huangtu Yuan<sup>10</sup>, so the sediment content is high.

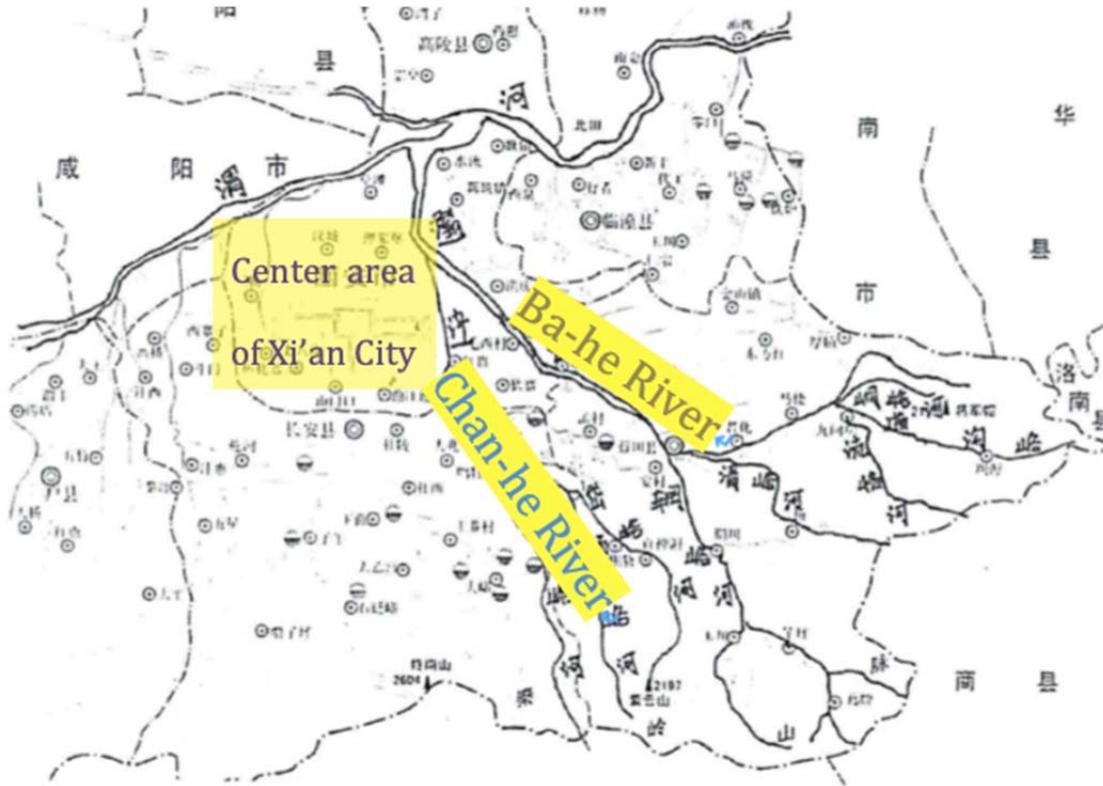
Chanhe River is 63.9 kilometers long, flows northwest, roots from the Qinling Mountain, and is the biggest branch of the Bahe River. The flood season is same as Ba-he River. The Chan-he River's discharge is lower than Ba-he River, and most branches are root from Qinling Mountain rather than Huangtu Yuan, so Chanhe River has a lower sediment content than Bahe River.

When the Bahe River and Chanhe River leave the Qinling Mountain area, on both sides of rivers formed relatively flat valley plain. The valley plain of Bahe river is broad, its width is 4-6 kilometers. The width of Chanhe river is 2.5-3 kilometers.

**Fig. 5.** Drainage map of the Chan-Ba area (Edited)

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<sup>10</sup> The Huangtu Yuan is a special landform of Shaanxi Province. the attitude of Huangtu yuan is about 450-750 meters. The top is flat, connecting with valley plain by steep cliffs. There are three main Huangtu Yuans in the south of Chan-Ba area. These three Yuans play an important role in influencing the level of sediment content of Bahe River and Chanhe River.



Source: 西安市水利志(Record of water conservancy of Xi'an City)

#### 4.3.2 The environmental issues in Chan-Ba area in pre-CBE era

The environmental issues in Chan-Ba area are mainly related with the Chanhe and Bahe Rivers. As the result of over sand mining, irregular sewage disposal and other human activities, water quality and other river issues became serious problems in the Chan-Ba area.

The turbidity of water body should be less than 30NTU, however, the water turbidity of Chan-he River is over 150NTU<sup>11</sup>, much higher than the standard of the urban landscape water, which is 30NTU. The Bahe River has become a “sewage channel” of Xi'an City, with an annual discharge of nearly 50 million tons of sewage; 5 million m<sup>3</sup> of garbage has turned more than 10 location along the riverside into garbage

<sup>11</sup> The units of turbidity from a calibrated nephelometer are called Nephelometric Turbidity Units (NTU)

mountains; excessive dredging caused severe downcutting of the riverbed (6m depth). The ecological degradations there are so serious that they have even caused the collapse of the Weihe Bridge and the interruption of the Bohai Sea Train Line (Feng and Fan, 2014)

**Fig. 6.** The ‘garbage mountain’ along Bahe River, 2006



Source: [http://www.xiancn.com/gb/news/2006-03/22/content\\_822423.htm](http://www.xiancn.com/gb/news/2006-03/22/content_822423.htm)

Wetlands play an important role in maintaining ecological service functions. However, wetlands in Chan-Ba area are suffering from serious degradation or loss as affected by wetland pollution, wetland reclamation, land use changes, and so forth. Wetland degradation has potential influence on human health, biodiversity and regional climate. The abundant bird species used to be the symbol of the Chan-Ba area. However, the wetland degradation has resulted in the habitat loss of these birds directly and has negative effects on biodiversity.

#### **4.3.3 Chan-Ba area today**

#### 4.3.3.1 Physical environment

As the result of CBE projects and several years of effort, Chan-Ba area has totally changed in all aspects. The environmental conditions have improved dramatically. Inside CBE, the water area is about 8 km<sup>2</sup> and the green space ratio is about 48.5%. Moreover, 5 ecological conservation parks were built inside the region, such as Chan-Ba national wetland park and Xi'an EXPO Park. Now it has a newly formed wetland of 11.3 km<sup>2</sup>, a forest of 19.3 km<sup>2</sup>, and an increase in bird species to 206 from 63. (Feng and Fan, 2014)

The length of new constructed road is nearly 100 km. At the same time, the length of new constructed pipelines is more than 300 km mainly for sewer system, electricity, communications and other purposes. The Chan-Ba area has changed into an environmentally friendly and fully functional district, attracting more and more residents and business investment.

**Fig. 7.** Chan-Ba area today



Source: [http://news.hsw.cn/system/2016/0914/471248\\_9.shtml?rand=IvIWVlaY](http://news.hsw.cn/system/2016/0914/471248_9.shtml?rand=IvIWVlaY)

#### 4.3.3.2. Culture development

The ecological restoration is the fundamental goal of CBE's development. Another principle is culture inheritance and development. The local government regards

culture development as an important part of the urban development, focusing on two main aspects.

a. Build international brand culture

Xi'an is the starting point of the 'ancient Silk Road'. It has a traditional culture of foreign trade since ancient time. The Euro-Asia Economic Forum has its permanent site in CBE, which express Xi'an's important role in the 'New Silk Road'. Thus, CBE is planned to fully combine the foreign trade culture with the culture of the 'Silk Road' to build its own international foreign trade brand culture, in order to inherit the 'Silk Road' culture and promote the foreign trade development.

b. Restore the historical relic

Chan-Ba area was rich natural beauties from the ancient time. Many famous poets in the Tang Dynasty express their feeling about the greatness of the Bahe River and the Ancient Bahe Bridge was the earliest, most magnificent arch stone bridge in China. Since the Ancient Bahe Bridge is the only way which must be passed to go to the Central Plain and the Jiangnan(lower reaches area of the Yangtze River), there were always many parting scenes there so it is called Bridge of heartbreaking. Also, one of the 'Eight Views of Changan'<sup>12</sup>, Baliu Fengxue(灞柳风雪)also happens in Chan-Ba area. It describes a scenery about the willows on the riverbank of Bahe River, when spring is coming, and the willows' catkins are fluttering in the wind as if the snow is falling.

History has left a rich cultural relic for the Chan-Ba area, but some relics have gradually lost their original appearance along with the modern city's development.

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<sup>12</sup> 'Eight Views of Changan' is the collective name for various collections of the eight most famous tourist attractions in Changan. Changan is the ancient name of Xi'an City.

CBE has constantly combined its own nature elements with cultural elements to enrich the historical context and regional culture of Xi'an City and promote tourism.

**Fig. 8.** Painting of Baliu Fengxue (Zhu jiyi, Qin Dynasty)



Sources: <https://kknews.cc/zh-sg/culture/moa2156.html>

#### **4.3.3.3 Economic development model**

The economic development of CBE is based on a sustainable development principle, refers to a ‘Three-Two-One’ strategy that local government is taking in CBE, referring to the absolute priority of the tertiary sector in CBE’s economic development, in order to avoid the environmental damages caused by the secondary sector, like manufacturing industries. The tertiary sector involves the provision of services to other businesses as well as final consumers. Those industries, like retailing, transport, real estate property development and tourism have a relatively less negative impact on physical environment than manufacturing industries. The growing dominance of tertiary industries in CBE aims to create an approach to maintain a desirable carrying capacity, given continued economic and cultural evolution.

However, over-reliance on real estate development has raised some problems in CBE. Indeed, government revenues from real estate-related contributions have been consistently high, the ratio of land-transferring fees to total revenues of local governments of Xi'an City is about 40% in 2017 (Xie 2019). Over-reliance on real estate had put society in a high-risk level and did little to contribute to the development of the economy.

#### 4.4 Xianghuwan Village's reconstruction: The formation of reconstructed Chengzhongcun community

Like other Chengzhongcun villages inside the CBE, Xianghuwan Village had to be reconstructed to provide more spaces for green amenity and other urban infrastructures. Following the principle 'rebuilding at the original place', these Chengzhongcun villages experienced the same process and finally formed several reconstructed communities scattered inside the CBE.

**Table. 3.** Chronology of Xianghuwan village's reconstruction

Time	Activity
2010.05	The announcement about land acquisition & house demolition released by Xi'an Municipal Government: <i>“Organizations and individuals within the scope of land acquisition and house demolition should pay attention to the interests of the whole, should support the construction of priority projects, make sure the compensation agreement is signed within the required time. All the organizations and individuals should move away from the site and clear the land within the required time. Otherwise, the relevant department shall dismantle according to law, the consequences should be taken by the owner and user on their own.”</i>
2010.06	Establishment of House Demolition and Relocation Office. The office aims to organizing villagers to sign the agreement of displacement.
2010-2017	80% of villagers (total amount of households is 608) lived in the nearby (within 5 kilometers) commercial residential areas by renting a house. Every household can receive the subsidy from government during the transition

	period.
2017.05	About 500 households moved back to the new constructed community, named 'Xianghuwan Community'.

**Fig. 9.** Xianghuwan Village's changes after reconstruction



Source: Google map, video documents from Baqiao Sub-district Office, taken by writer.

#### 4.5 Gentrification in CBE

The green gentrification highlights the fact that new or restored environmental goods tend to be accompanied by rising property values, which in turn attract wealthier groups, while creating a greater gap with poorer neighborhoods (Gould and Lewis 2012).

Since the establishment of CBE, the municipal government of Xi'an City decided to prioritize increasing the number of wetland parks and waterfront parks through the implementation of new development zone plans. In 2007, when Xi'an City was awarded the International Horticultural Exposition 2011, a large scale of park construction started. The EXPO park was a representative project at that time. The Xi'an EXPO park was designed as the exhibition place for the International Horticultural Exposition 2011 and the park is built up in 3 years. The whole area of Xi'an EXPO park is 4.18 km<sup>2</sup>, includes 1.88 km<sup>2</sup> of water area. Meanwhile, other parks and green amenity was also built rapidly in CBE. So far, there are 6 parks inside CBE, one of them has been confirmed as national wetland park. Along Chanhe River and Bahe River, there are dozens of waterfront spots for people to relax and enjoy nature.

**Table. 4.** Basic information of CBE's parks

<b>Built up Time</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Whole Area (km<sup>2</sup>)</b>	<b>Water Area (km<sup>2</sup>)</b>
<b>2011</b>	Xi'an EXPO Park	1.56	0.6
<b>2012</b>	Baqiao Wetland Park	4.18	1.88
<b>2013</b>	Chanba National Wetland Park	4.7	2
<b>2014</b>	Taohuatan Park	2.75	1.9
<b>2015</b>	Chanba Zishui Park	0.7	0.4
<b>2016</b>	Yanminghu Wetland Park	0.6	0.42

Near these main public parks, some large-scale residential projects. were introduced by real estate developers, including some luxury ones. Hengda, Wanke and Biguiyuan, as Chinese most famous luxury residential district developers, one after another set their new projects in CBE, especially use the easy access to the parks as their marketing tool. The improvement of CBE's living conditions results in rising house prices over the whole district. The unit housing price of Xi'an City was 1,500RMB (about 25,000JPY)/m<sup>2</sup> in 2004, and now is 12,200RMB (about 190,000JPY)/m<sup>2</sup> in 2019. The unit housing price of CBE has been raised even more rapidly, the unit

housing price is 15360RMB (240,000JPY)/m<sup>2</sup> now, much higher than the average level of Xi'an city. Moreover, CBE has the largest amount of new real estate development projects among the whole City.

Besides the real estate development, the CBE also provides a perfect environment for business. For example, Shazhichuan Outlets shopping center was opened in 2015, with many famous brands. It is the first Super Outlets shopping center in Xi'an City, even in Shaanxi Province. Since CBE always holds an open attitude for investment, especially for investment in the land sector, many shopping centers are built to meet the demand of increasing population. Meanwhile, local government has introduced the plan of building a finance center in CBE and announced the news in 2017. CBE is on the way to become the new central business district of Xi'an City.

However, the construction of green amenities, residential districts and urban infrastructure requires land provided by the former residents of Chan-Ba area-referring to the Chengzhongcun villagers. Their villages are completely demolished for building parks, roads, shopping malls and so on. Although after several years, they moved back to the new houses provided by the government, the great gap between the wealthier group and them is already formed. They live together with the wealthier group in CBE, but with different level of incomes. Moreover, from the very beginning of its establishment, the social resources were distributed unequally in CBE. For example, the new schools and hospitals were designed to meet the demand of private real estate developers' demand rather than to meet the demand of all residents inside CBE. Reconstructed Chengzhongcun villagers have sacrificed their own interests for construction of CBE, but the benefits brought by CBE's development seem to be enjoyed by the new comers. Also, the planning approaches of local government conceiving green spaces as tools to address the need for social reform or ecological restoration and to promote economic development. The lack of consideration for

social equity results in a growing gap in life quality and development chances between wealthier group and reconstructed Chengzhongcun villagers.

In addition, the gentrification which occurs in CBE is not only about the physical environment. As recent gentrification research has demonstrated, the displacements caused by gentrification go far beyond physical displacement from a neighborhood. Although the Chengzhongcun communities do not face the physical displacement now, they already had much of the experience of non-physical displacement from gentrification, like the loss of culture (de Oliver, 2016), cultural capital and social networks (Shaw and Hagemans, 2015) and job opportunities (Curran, 2007). The reconstruction resulted in the loss of culture of Chengzhongcun villages, since the common places they owned was completely changed. For example, we can no longer find the traditional wedding ceremony in reconstructed Chengzhongcun community since there is no enough space for it. Meanwhile, the reconstructed Chengzhongcun villagers have difficulties to merge into the new culture that CBE is pursuing. For instance, Xi'an City now is building the "City of Books" (书香之城) to help all citizens grow the habit of reading. The CBE responded to it immediately by setting high quality bookstores and more book corners in schools. It is fair to say CBE has become the forerunner of the policy among all the districts of Xi'an City. However, the reconstructed Chengzhongcun communities are not included in this prevalent culture building since their life style is totally different from the wealthier group's.

Along with the rapid development of CBE, the on-going gentrification process constantly brings negative effects on reconstructed Chengzhongcun communities through an indirectly way, resulting in non-physical displacement.

## 5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this chapter, I will present the results of the study gained from the key informant interviews and the field survey. The results and discussion are aiming to achieve the research objectives. That is, the aspects of social exclusion towards reconstructed Chengzhongcun villagers associated with gentrification process; how the gentrification process influenced the inequitable distribution of localized benefits; whether the local development policies are likely to engender gentrification.

### 5.1 Basic information

#### 5.1.1 Basic information of interviewees

**Table. 5.** The list of the interviewees

No.	Name	Age	Identity
1	Mr. A	Mid-50s	Chairman of Xianghuwan Villagers Committee
2	Mr. C	38 years	Ordinary
3	Mrs. D	Mid-50s	Ordinary
4	Miss E	27 years	Ordinary
5	Mrs. F	33 years	Ordinary
6	Miss G	28 years	Ordinary
7	Mr. H	50 years	Villager, also security staff of Xianghuwan community
8	Mr. I	40 years	Vice-chairman of Baqiao Sub-district Office
9	Mr. J	34 years	Engineer of Chengzhongcun Reconstruction Office of CBE administrative Committee
10	Mr. K	29 years	Police officer of Guangyuntan police station
11	Mr. L	Mid-50s	Police officer of Guangyuntan police station
12	Mr. M	Mid-40s	Police officer of Guangyuntan police station
13	Miss N	29 years	Employee of real estate company A
14	Miss O	25 years	Employee of real estate company B

### 5.1.2 Basic information of questionnaire survey respondents.

This section includes the demographic characteristics of the questionnaire survey respondents in Xianghuwan community, CBE. Table 6 presented the demographic characteristics of the population.

**Table. 6.** Demographic characteristics of the respondents

<b>Demographic characteristics</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Ownership</b>		
Tenant	25	6.0
Owner	389	93.3
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	204	49.0
Female	212	51.0
<b>Age Distribution</b>		
20 or less	16	3.8
21-30	46	11.1
31-40	96	23.1
41-50	94	22.6
51-60	92	22.1
Over 60	72	17.3
<b>Level of Education</b>		
Less than primary school	6	1.4
Primary school	53	12.7
Secondary School	223	53.6
High school or equivalent	123	29.6
University or higher	11	2.6
<b>Political status</b>		
Chinese Communist Party Member	19	4.6
Qunzhong (means the mass)	382	92.0
Others	24	3.6
<b>Work status</b>		
Employed for wages	118	28.4
Self-employed	53	12.8
Out of work and looking for work	81	19.5
Out of work but not currently looking for work	124	29.9
A student	7	1.7

Retired	12	2.9
Unable to work	20	4.8
<b>Job type</b>		
Do not have a job with salary yet	245	59.0
company employee	20	4.8
Industry worker	47	11.3
Service worker	49	11.8
Self-employed	51	12.5
Others	1	0.2
<b>Monthly income (RMB)</b>		
Less than 1500	256	61.4
From 1500 to 2000	110	26.4
From 2000 to 2500	41	9.9
From 2500 to 3000	6	1.4
More than 3000	3	0.7

Most (93.3%) respondents are owners of their house. Thus, most respondents are the reconstructed Xianghuwan villagers. Only 6% are tenants, a term which refers to the people who are not former Xianghuwan villagers. These tenants are mostly from other nearby Chengzhongcun village whose houses have already been demolished but had not yet moved back to the new reconstructed community. They have to rent a house for living during the transition period. They are also reconstructed Chengzhongcun villagers. Among respondents, 51% are women and 49% are men. The age of respondents ranges from less than 20 to over 60s, and the majority are aged 31-40 (23.6%). In terms of educational level, about half respondents are secondary school graduates (53.6%); 29.6% are high school or equivalent technical school graduates; only 2.6% have obtained a bachelor's degree. Most (92%) of respondents are Qunzhong (means the mass), only 4.6% in Xianghuwan community are Chinese Communist Party members. Except the student group, the retired group and other groups which are unable to work, a larger amount of people (49.4%) in Xianghuwan community are out of work at present, about three in ten respondents are out of work

but do not currently want to find a job. For the respondents that have jobs with wage, they usually work as industry (11.3%) or service workers (11.8%); a few respondents (12.5%) have their own business to make a living. Most respondents (61.4%) have a monthly income of less than RMB1,500 (about JPY23,400); only 0.7% respondents' monthly income is over RMB3,000 (JPY46,800). The monthly income is relatively lower than average level of Xi'an City. In 2019, the minimum wage of Xi'an City is over RMB1,700 (about JPY26,500), and the average wage of Xi'an City is over RMB4100(about 64,000)

## **5.2 Social exclusion: a growing gap produced by gentrification**

This paper follows in the wake of previous studies of vulnerable groups in China (Li, 2004; Jiang and Li, 2017) and has analyzed social exclusion in five dimensions, considered to be the fundamental aspects of social exclusion. These are: economic aspects, local governance and public services aspects, social network aspects, cultural aspects and spatial exclusion. I will analyze each in turn in the following sections.

### **5.2.1 Economic exclusion: exclusion from both production and consumption**

Economic exclusion is the most important consideration for social exclusion. The economic level of exclusion includes both production and consumption. Thus, the first problem concerns the position of reconstructed Chengzhongcun villagers in the labor market and the quality of integration into the labor market. Unemployment and job instability are at the foundation of how the social exclusion is understood (Fukuhara 2007).

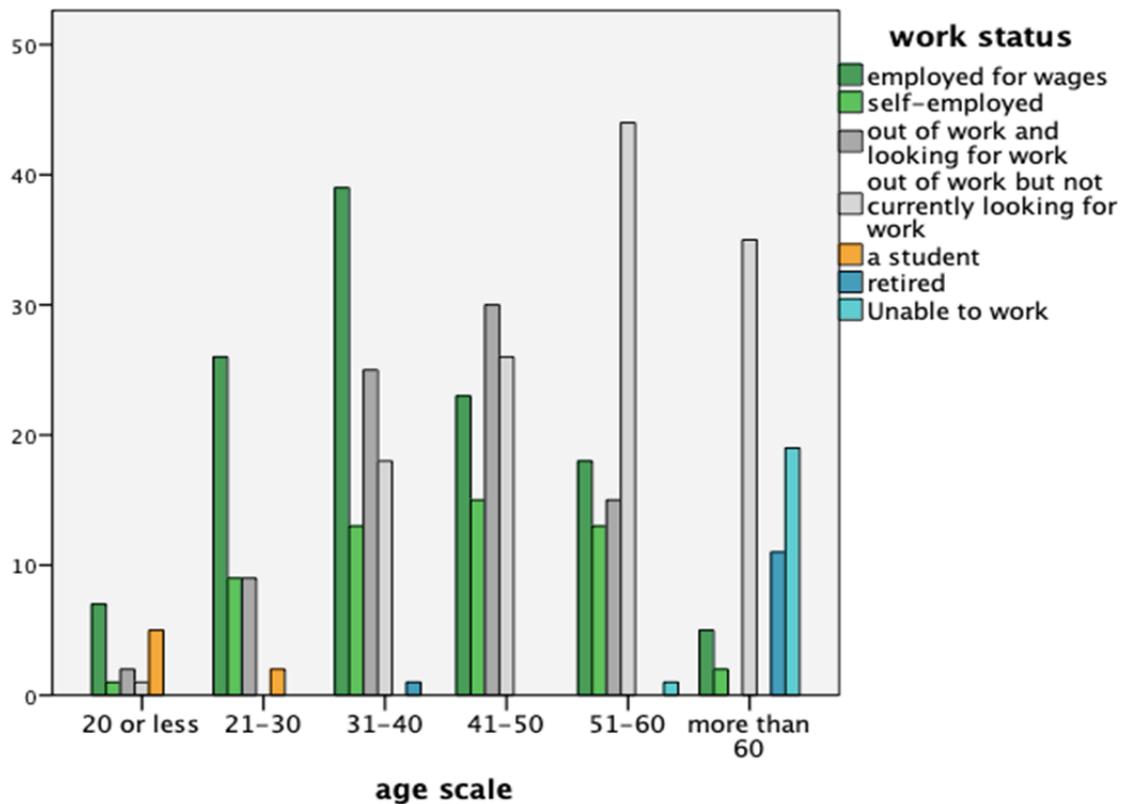
The inability to sustain a livelihood in their specific environment has resulted in a gradual exclusion from the consumer market. Long-term unemployment or unstable

employment will inevitably lead to inferior family relations, social networks and social participation, and gradually become the excluded or abandoned ones.

After reconstruction, reconstructed Xianghuwan villagers are facing pressure from the labor market and high-level consumption.

### 5.2.1.1 Pressure from the labor market

Fig. 10. Work status by age group



A look at the work status reveals the high rate of unemployment and the unwillingness towards working of Chengzhongcun villagers. In China, the labor aged population is defined as the people between 16 and 60 years of age. In this study, we set the 21-30, 31-40, 41-50, 51-60 age groups as the labor aged groups. There are 56.5% of 20-30s employed for wages, 19.6% of them make a living through self-employment, 19.6% are currently out of work but they continue looking for a job. As for the 31-40s, 44.4% of them neither have a job or working for themselves, 18.8% do

not have a job and even do not want to find a job. The situation is more serious when take a look as 41-50 and 51-60 these two groups. Over half of 41-50 (59.6%) and 51-60 (64.9%) are unemployment nor self-employed. 27.7% of 41-50 are out of work and do not want to find a job yet; 48.4% of 51-60 have the same situation and attitude with them. As for the over 60s, only 15.3% of them are formally retired from the job market.

The unemployment is serious among the reconstructed Chengzhongcun villagers. Moreover, the job instability increases the risks of economic exclusion towards those people currently have a job.

**Fig. 11.** Job types of the people who are currently working

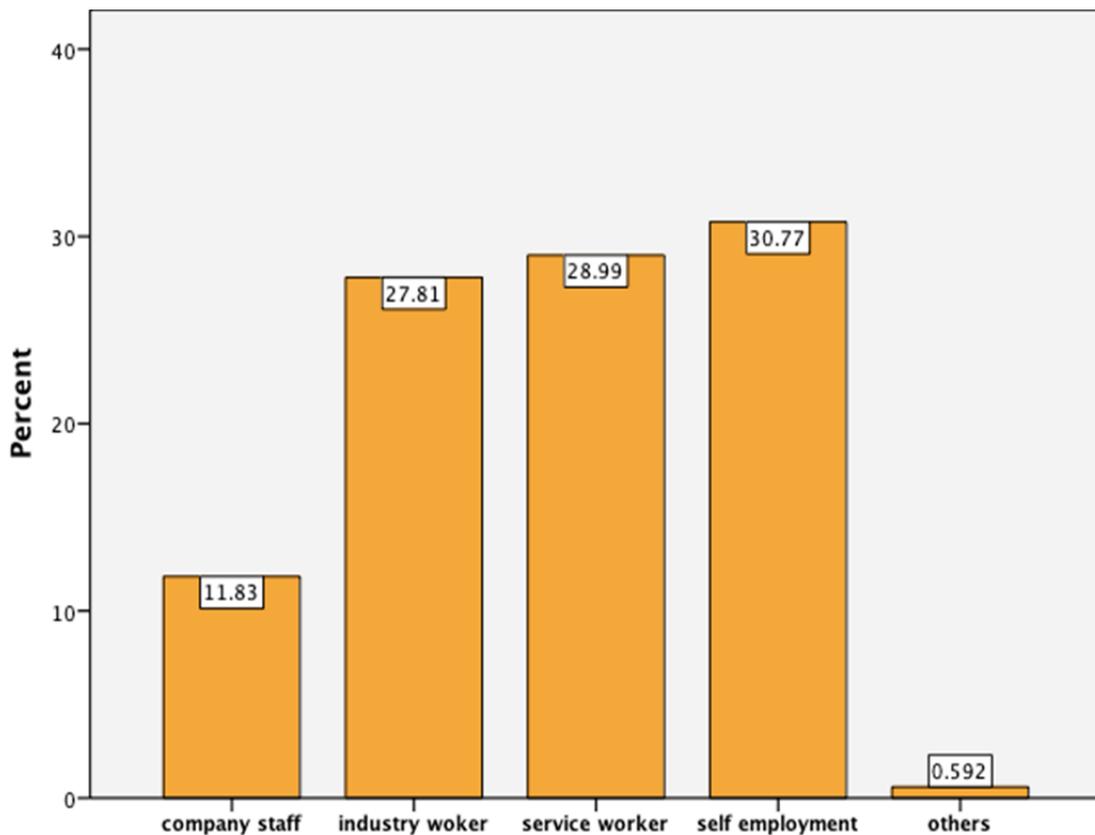


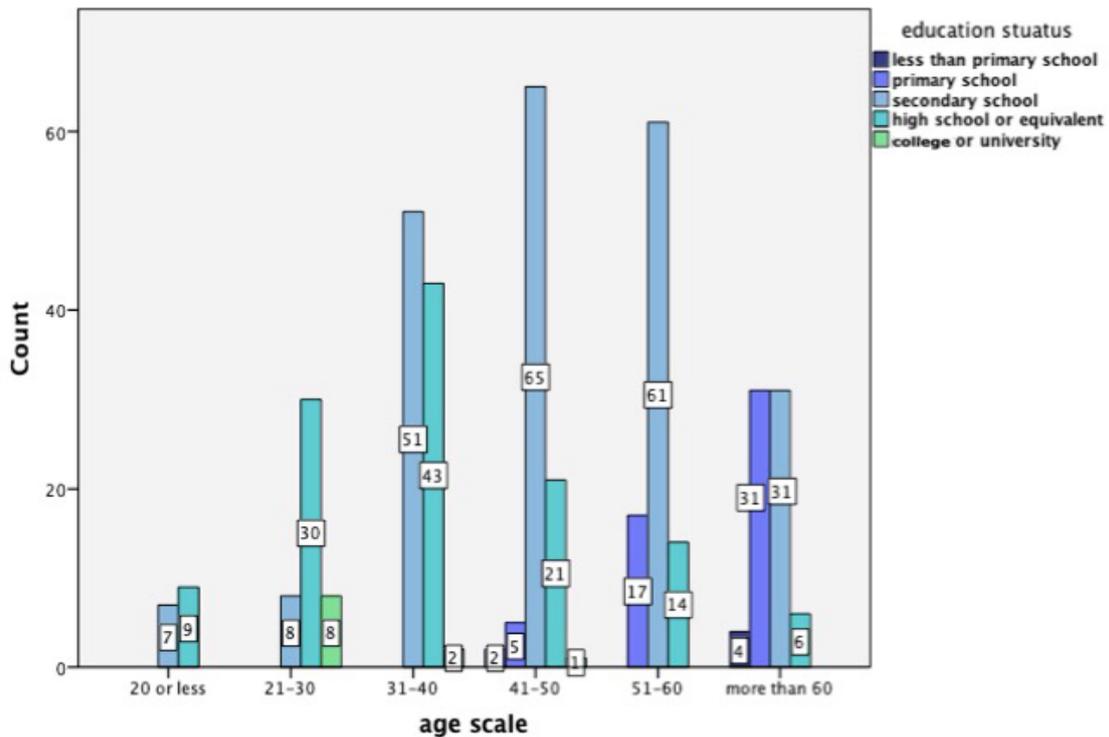
Figure 11 represents that among the 61 respondents who are currently working, 30.77% of them are self-employed, usually doing some small business. For example, some of them have their vans used for freight transporting, some of them have small shops

along the street for retailing; while only 11.83% are employed formally by companies; 27.81% of them are working as manual workers, usually doing some construction work; 28.99% are service workers, such as working as waiters or waitresses in restaurants or salespersons in shops.

From the results shown by Fig.10 and Fig.11, the situation of unemployment and job instability of reconstructed Chengzhongcun villagers is less than ideal. Before reconstruction, many of them used to plant fruit trees or rent out houses for living. However, the houses that they could use for rent were demolished, the places that they could plant were changed into parks and roads. Although some households still have extra apartments or rooms, but the demand for rental housing are decreasing. Since most tenants in has moved to other more suburb Chengzhongcun for a lower living cost. Thus, the rental income of has declined dramatically.

Besides the willingness to work, the relatively low educational status becomes a barrier to employment. Table 6 shows that about half the respondents are secondary school graduates (53.6%); 1.4% did not finish the primary school; 12.7% are primary school graduate; 29.6% are high school or equivalent technical school graduates; only 2.6% have obtained a bachelor's degree. Fig.12 and Table 7 represent the education level by age groups. Over half (53.1%) of 31-40 are not graduated from high schools or equivalent technical schools; over seven in ten of 41-50 (76.7%) and 84.8% of 51-60s have the same education level. It means they are lacking the basic knowledge or technics for working in the city.

**Fig. 12.** Education status by age groups



**Table. 7.** Education status \* age scale Crosstabulation

		age scale						
		20 or less	21-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	more than 60	Total
education status	less than primary school	0	0	0	2	0	4	6
		0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.1%	0.0%	5.6%	1.4%
	primary school	0	0	0	5	17	31	53
		0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	5.3%	18.5%	43.1%	12.7%
	secondary school	7	8	51	65	61	31	223
		43.8%	17.4%	53.1%	69.1%	66.3%	43.1%	53.6%
high school or equivalent	9	30	43	21	14	6	123	
	56.2%	65.2%	44.8%	22.3%	15.2%	8.3%	29.6%	
collage or university	0	8	2	1	0	0	11	
	0.0%	17.4%	2.1%	1.1%	0.0%	0.0%	2.6%	
Total		16	46	96	94	92	72	416

The correlation between age scale and education status are tested through Kendall's tau-b correlation. Table 8 presents the results, their significance value and the sample size that the calculation was based on. we can see that Kendall's tau-b correlation coefficient,  $T_b$ , is -0.489, and that this is statistically significant ( $p < 0.001$ ). There is a clear correlation between age and education level. It means that among the reconstructed Chengzhongcun villages, certain groups are more vulnerable in the job market.

**Table 8.** Correlations of age scale and education status

		Correlations	
		age scale	education stuatus
Kendall's tau_b	age scale	Correlation	1.000
		Coefficient	-.489**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
		N	416
education stuatus	age scale	Correlation	-.489**
		Coefficient	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
		N	416

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

In addition, some young people who belong to Xianghuwan reconstructed community, already have worked in the city before reconstruction. At that time, they were called rural migrant workers and they usually did some manual works in the city. They have little relationship with agricultural work. Thus, after reconstruction, many young people do not have to change their ways for earning lives. People who are over 60 years old have less pressure both physically and mentally. However, the villagers who are elder than 40 but younger than 60 spend most of their life together with farming, and their lives rely on the land. They can hardly find a job after they lose their land, since they know little but agricultural work.

The police officer from Guangyuntan Police Station, describe the people who are in their 40s or 50s as follow:

*“After the reconstruction, villagers no longer need to do agricultural work, they have less labor intensity. As for the young people, younger than 40, they are not influenced a lot by the reconstruction. The people who are a bit older, they still have energy to work and willing to do something to earn money. However, due to their limited knowledge and the difficulties to learn new things, the situation for those villagers is much more serious. Especially, among those villagers, some people did not use the compensation fee properly, such as gambling and entertainment, they are more easily*

*unsatisfied with the current situation and become the hidden danger to community security.”*

And Mr. I, the Vice-chairman of Baqiao Sub-district Office Committee also expressed his concern on these people, he calls them ‘the sacrifice group’:

*“Merging into the urban life is most difficult for the people who are no longer young. As the saying going one person is not able to learn skills over his thirties(人过三十不学艺). The people who are over 40 always are not willing to learn new knowledge or technical skills. It has become a nationwide problem on the reconstruction of urban villages. The government does not distribute extra subsidies for this kind of people, on the contrary, the imperfection of the welfare system brings more pressure for those people’s medical treatment and future elderly life. They are the “sacrificed” group of the urban village reconstruction.”*

Mr. A, the vice chairman of Xianghuwan Villagers is the person who knows best about the situation of this group; he also recognized the problem:

*“The people without enough skills, can hardly find a job outside and become a significant problem of our village. Although we provide some jobs for our villagers in the property management company, such as cleaning work, security work and so on. However, the amount of jobs is very limited, about 20 or so. It cannot solve the problem completely. The government has provided some skills trainings, like housekeeping, electrical work, but the content and training time are limited. A ten days training has little help on finding a job in this city, especially for those people who are not young anymore.”*

Such a vulnerable group exists in the reconstructed community. In Xianghuwan reconstructed community, the size of ‘the sacrificed group’ is not small. Working in the city is supposed to be the bond between reconstructed Chengzhongcun villagers

with the new surroundings, but the unemployment and job instability make it impossible.

**5.2.1.2 Pressure from high-level consumption.**

Also, the reconstructed Chengzhongcun villagers are facing the exclusion from the consumption market. The CBE is designed as a livable development zone with a large scale of green amenity, which is perfect for meeting the middle and wealth class’s needs, since they have already been tired of the crowd and noisy living conditions in the center of the city. Many luxury commercial residential projects in CBE were carried out by real estate developers, with the population of CBE having reached to 60 thousand in 2019. Along with population growth, many shopping centers are built to meet the demand of consumption. However, these new built shopping centers’ target consumers are the new comers, usually the wealthy group. For example, Shazhichuan Outlets shopping center was opened up in 2015; it has many famous brands. For example, the price (around RMB2000) of a VERSACE’s wallet is much higher than the monthly income of most reconstructed Xianghuwan villagers.

The living cost is much higher after reconstruction. The old vegetables and fruit markets which surrounded the Xianghuwan village were demolished at the same time. Inside CBE, some chain supermarkets and convenient stores appeared, often located in the commercial residential communities. However, the prices of the supermarket are much higher than the old market. Thus, the reconstructed Xianghuwan villagers still choose to purchase vegetables, fruits and groceries in the market of other unreconstructed Chengzhongcun villages, such as Wuzhuang Village market, even if the distance is further than the supermarkets.

**Table. 9.** The differences of prices between a Chengzhongcun market and a supermarket.  
(2019.04.27)

Market	Wuzhuang Villager market	Renrenle chain supermarket
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Price: RMB/kg		
<b>Pork belly</b>	26	35.76
<b>Beef tenderloin</b>	89	102.4
<b>Egg</b>	9.2	9.6
<b>Potato</b>	6.4	7
<b>Broccoli</b>	7.6	11.76
<b>Apple</b>	8.5	10.3
<b>Strawberry</b>	50	70

P.S. RMB1= JPY16.12(2019.04.27)

Fortunately, there are still some unreconstructed Chengzhongcun villages which still have small markets that Xianghuwan residents can do their daily shopping. But along with the development process, every inch of CBE will be gentrified. At some time in the future, all the Chengzhongcun villages and the markets inside them will disappear, while the prices at the CBE will continue rising.

Due to the on-going gentrification in CBE, it is predictable that the dual exclusion from the job market and the rising prices will constantly influence and even have more negative effects on reconstructed Xianghuwan villagers in the future.

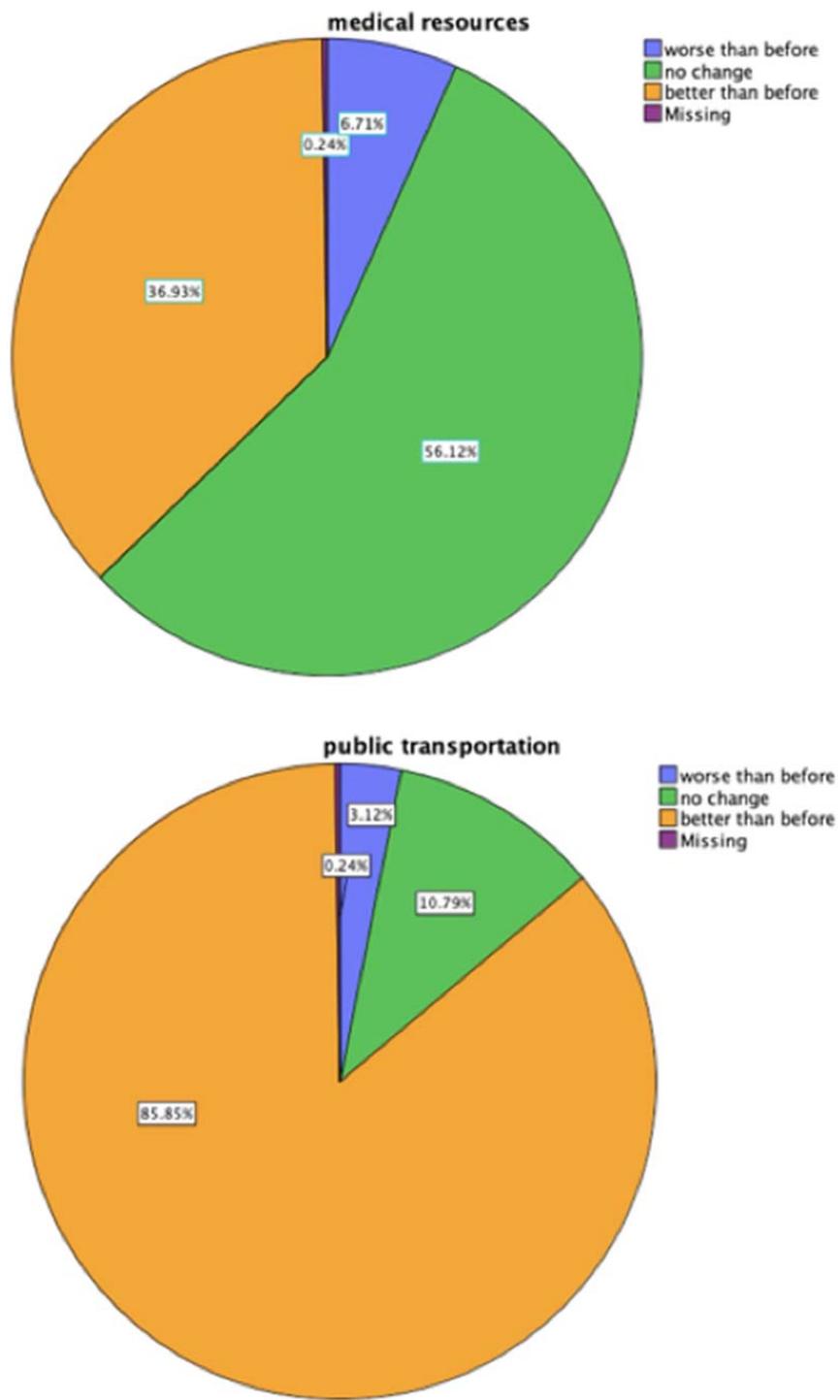
## **5.2.2 Public services and local governance aspect**

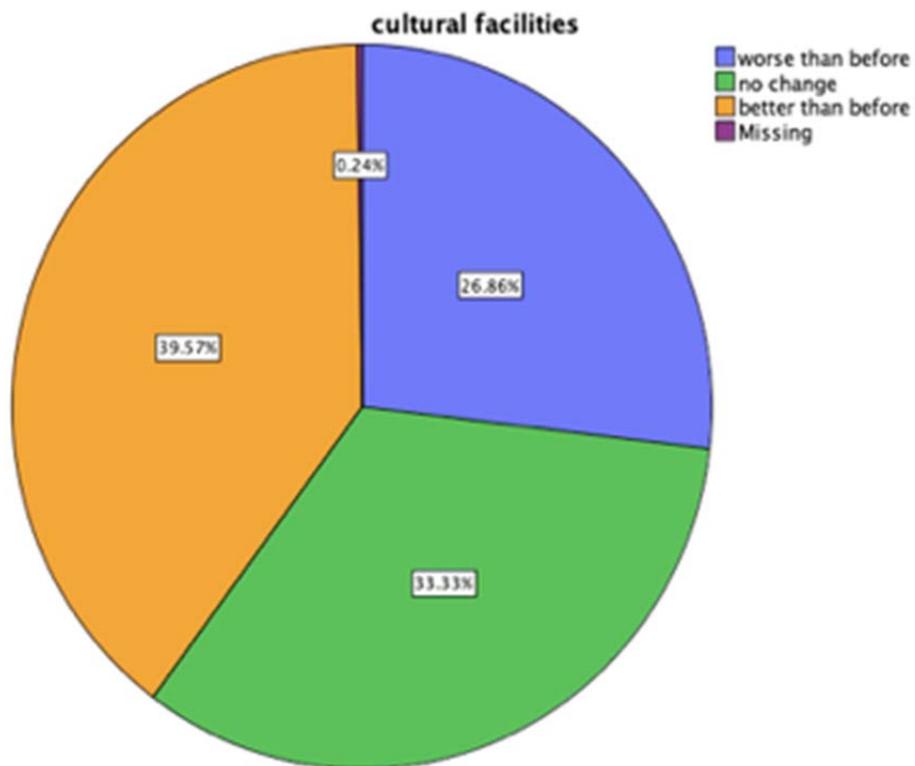
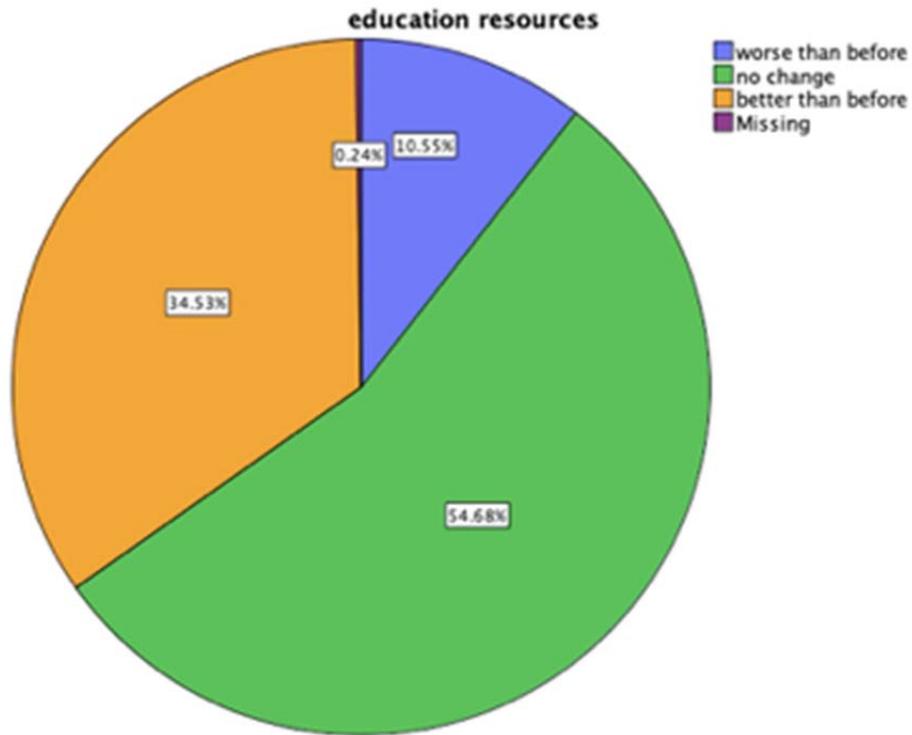
Lack of access to system and services was listed as an important dimension by many researchers (Chen, 2007). This section shows the phenomena of public service and local governance pressure with a focus on medical facilities and voting aspects.

### **5.2.2.1 Public services**

Figure 13 shows the results of reconstructed Chengzhongcun villagers' attitudes towards various services before and after reconstruction; it includes public transportation, medical resources, education resources and cultural facilities.

Fig. 13. Attitude towards various services before and after reconstruction





P.s. Missing means 'did not respond'

Over half (85.85%) reconstructed Xianghuwan villagers feel the public transportation condition is better than before. However, only 36.53% villagers feel the education resources are better than before; around half (54.68%) think there is no change with

education resources after reconstruction; 10.55% feel they are worse than before. As for medical resources, 36.93% villagers feel that they are better than before; 56.12% feel there is no change for them; and 6.71% feel that medical resources are worse than before. Three in ten villagers (26.86%) feel that after reconstruction, cultural facilities are worse than before; 39.57% feel that they are better than before, and 33.33% villagers feel there is no change in cultural facilities after reconstruction.

The local government aims to build CBE as a livable district. Not only the green amenity construction, basic urban infrastructures, various resources are already kept up in recent years, to perfect the urban functions and improve the capacity. This area has experienced a dramatic change since CBE's establishment. Many real estate developers and middle-class people are attracted by CBE because of its various resources, such as new-built high quality schools and 3A grade hospitals<sup>13</sup>. So far, CBE has built 31 new primary schools and 5 middle schools. The number of 3A grade hospitals inside CBE is three, and both of them were built after CBE's establishment. However, these local benefits brought by CBE's development, seem not to be enjoyed by the reconstructed Xianghuwan villagers. The new built schools are always related with the luxury real estate projects, providing education resources to the children who are from these commercial residential communities. As for 3A grade hospitals, they have relatively higher prices and are located far from Xianghuwan reconstructed community. The villagers are not willing to choose these 3A grade hospital except in emergency situations. Indeed, many other residents of CBE usually do not go to 3A grade hospitals for common illnesses in order to save time. The average time of lining up for registration of 3A grade hospital is 34.4 minutes, and average staying time is over 3 hours. Seldom people are willing to waste 3 hours just for some cold medicine. Instead of that, they visit a community clinic when they are feeling sick. The

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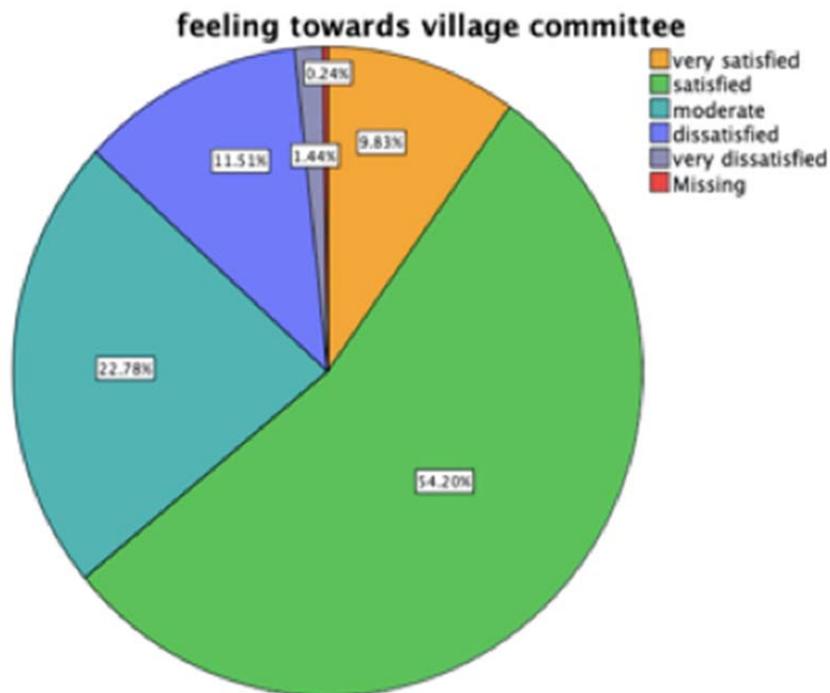
<sup>13</sup>A 3A Grade Hospital (Third-level A Grade Hospital) is graded in accordance with the grading method defined by the current rules of the government of China. As the top level, 3A grade hospital provide high quality medical service to people.

community clinic is convenient and less crowded. An own or near community clinic has become a necessity for a new commercial residential project. But not for Xianghuwan reconstructed villagers; they do not have their own community clinic, they usually go to the Wuxi Village Clinic, a nearby Chengzhongcun village’s clinic which has not yet been demolished. There is a big gap of medical service between Chengzhongcun village’s clinic and new built community clinic, from doctor’s professionalism to the equipment. For example, there is only one professional doctor works in Wuxi Village Clinic, while every Qiangsen community hospital<sup>14</sup> is equipped with at least 12 professional doctors and basic medical equipment.

### 5.2.2.2 local governance

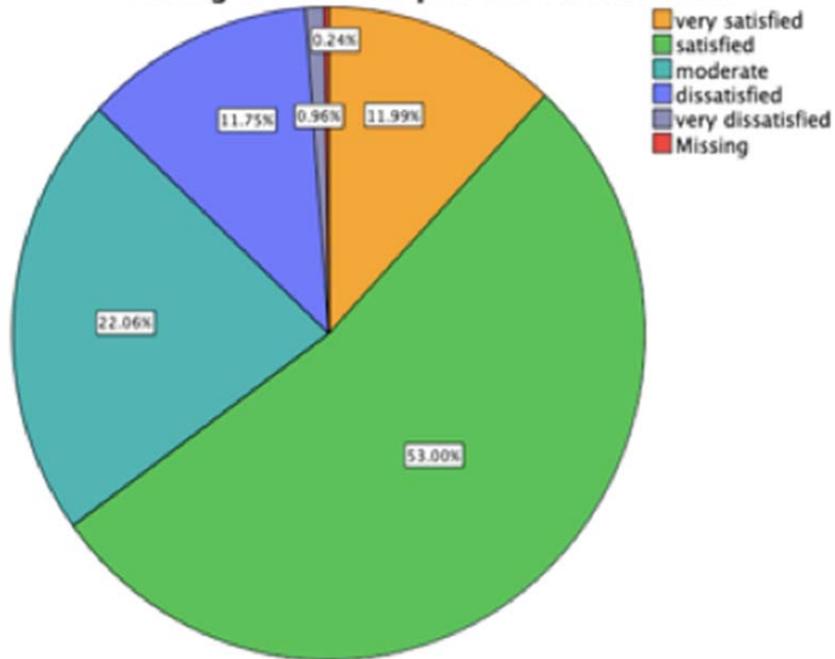
Figure 15 shows the satisfaction of residents of Xianghuwan reconstructed community towards related departments of the institutional system. It seems most residents are satisfied by the institutional system.

Fig. 14. Satisfaction by the institutional system

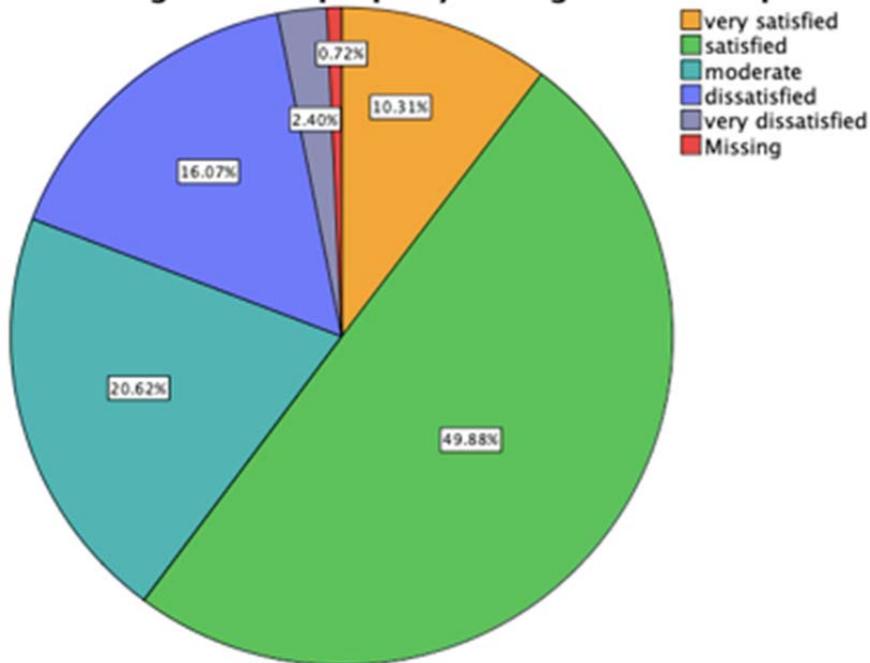


<sup>14</sup> Qiangsen community hospital is a chain brand of community medical service, is popular among commercial residential community inside CBE.

**feeling towards Baqiao subdistrict office**



**feeling towards property management enterprise**



However, we cannot ignore the voices from those people who feel dissatisfied by the institutional system. Moreover, there are similar voices are gathered from the interviews. For example, the property management fee caused tensions between residents and the institution system. After villagers moved into the new community,

they are required to pay the property management fee to property management enterprise, with the price of RMB0.45/m<sup>2</sup>/month. It is a normal thing in urban residential areas, but some villagers are not willing to pay the fee and even doubt the legitimacy of the property management enterprise.

About property management fee, villager H, also the person responsible for security in the community, has said below:

*“The fee here is higher than other place<sup>15</sup>. Besides the property management fee, we are also charged for collection of rubbish. We pay much more than other residential communities around us. The company makes a lot of money here. They just use a small amount of money to pay our salary. Also, the CBE Administrative Committee gave us RMB1.5 million to establish this property management enterprise. We also do not know how the money is spent. Moreover, the people who belong to the Villagers Committee, they control our collective property. At the same time, they receive the salary from the government, imagine their richness. My current situation is far from their rich lives!”*

And the villager D expressed his concerns of institutional system directly:

*“After the reconstruction of our village, we are within the jurisdiction of the Sub-district Office. Most community affairs are managed by Baqiao Sub-district Office. However, there still over 30 members of Villagers Committee, who basically receive a salary for doing nothing. Moreover, the property management enterprise was established for managing the community. Some Village Committee members also have a seat in property management enterprise, and they can get double wages. Recently we are arguing about the use of those two buildings. They are our collective property and we have a right to decide the use of them together. Our villagers want a market to*

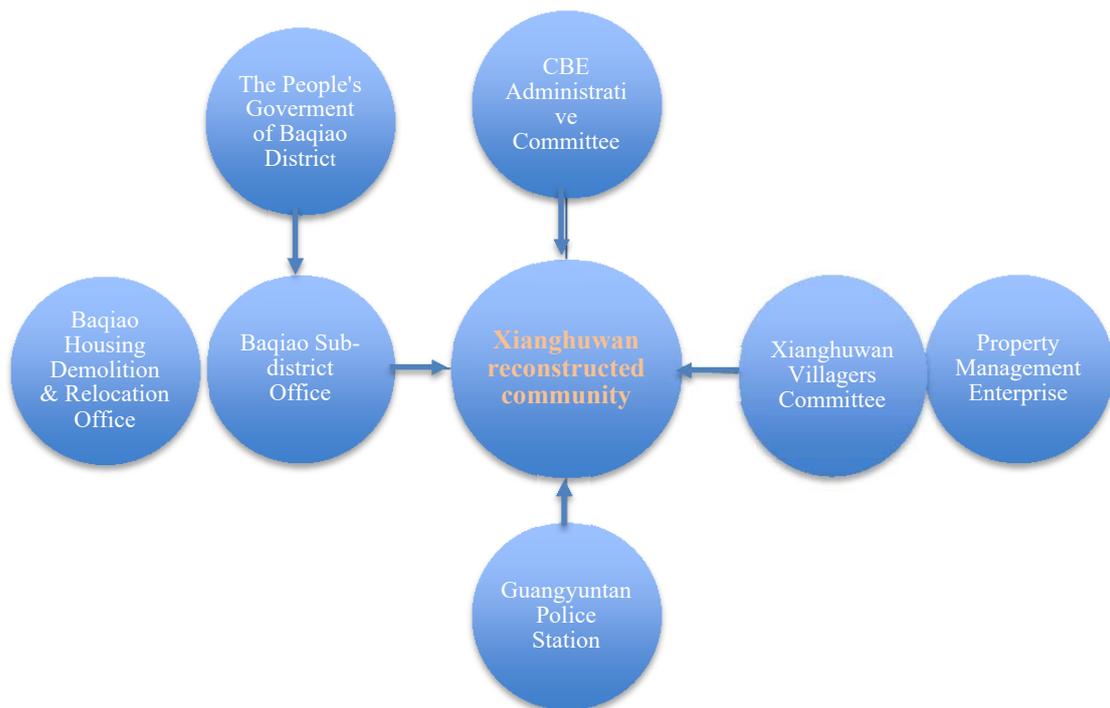
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<sup>15</sup> In Xi'an, there are 4 levels of property management fee, 1yuan/m<sup>2</sup>/month, 0.75yuan/m<sup>2</sup>/month, 0.5yuan/m<sup>2</sup>/month, 0.35yuan/m<sup>2</sup>/month. The price depends on area and quality of service.”

*reduce the inconvenience of shopping. But I've heard the buildings will become office buildings or hotel. Nobody knows how it was decided. I think they may get some kickbacks."*

Since the collective property and establishment of property management enterprise are sensitive issues, I did not get the chance to dig further about this topic. However, there are indeed some defects existing in reconstructed Chengzhongcun community's institution system. For example, relevant institutional departments are much more complex than before, resulted in insufficient management. Figure 15 shows the relations of institutional departments related with Xianghuwan reconstructed community.

**Fig. 15.** Relations of institutional departments



Each department has its own functions, but still sometimes their functions are insufficient. Table 8 presents the main functions of each department.

**Table. 10.** Main functions of each department

Department	Main functions
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<b>Baqiao Sub-district Office</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Livelihood</li> <li>b. Maintaining stability</li> <li>c. Housing demolition and relocation</li> </ul>
<b>Baqiao Housing Demolition &amp; Relocation Office</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Implementing demolition and relocation polices</li> </ul>
<b>The Peoples' Government of Baqiao District</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Policy making</li> <li>b. Task distribution</li> </ul>
<b>CBE Administrative Committee</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Planning</li> <li>b. Development</li> <li>c. Invitation to invest</li> </ul>
<b>Xianghuwan Villagers Committee</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Implementing polices</li> <li>b. Managing village affairs</li> </ul>
<b>Xianghuwan Property Management Enterprise</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Providing property services for residents, like security, cleaning work</li> <li>b. Management of the collective property</li> </ul>
<b>Guangyuntan Police Station</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Household registration</li> <li>b. Maintaining public order.</li> </ul>

Among these organizations, The Housing Demolition & Relocation Office is established for the reconstruction process. The Xianghuwan Property Management Enterprise is established by Xianghuwan Villagers Committee and shares the same leader with the villagers committee, the chairman. The Xianghuwan Property Management Enterprise collects the property management fee and provide services for residents and their real estate property. Also, the collective properties are also under Xianghuwan Property Management Enterprise's management. Before reconstruction, villagers can express their attitudes by voting their chairmen of Xianghuwan Villagers Committee; also their voices can be heard through participating in villagers' meetings. However, now there is no way for ordinary residents to participate in the decision-making process. Moreover, the relation between the Xianghuwan Villagers Committee and the Xianghuwan Property Management Enterprise is constantly doubted by the residents.

According to Organic Law of the Villagers Committees of the People's Republic of China (1998), the term of office for a villagers' committee is three years; a new committee shall be elected by all villagers at the expiration of the three years without delay. It means rural representatives and village leaders are elected from the candidates nominated by all villagers. In this way, there is a formal channel to transmit the villagers' voices to the higher authorities. In recent years, this kind of grass-root level election is, to a greater degree than the urban election system, able to reflect local interests at the local level. Usually, the municipal and district or county civil affairs departments are responsible for organizing the election of the villagers' committee. However, due to an unclear distribution of governmental responsibilities, neither CBE Administrative Committee nor the Government of Baqiao District has a responsibility towards it. Thus, after the election in 2007, there is no department that has organized the re-election of Xianghuwan Villagers Committee. It means the members of Xianghuwan Villagers Committee have not changed since 2007.

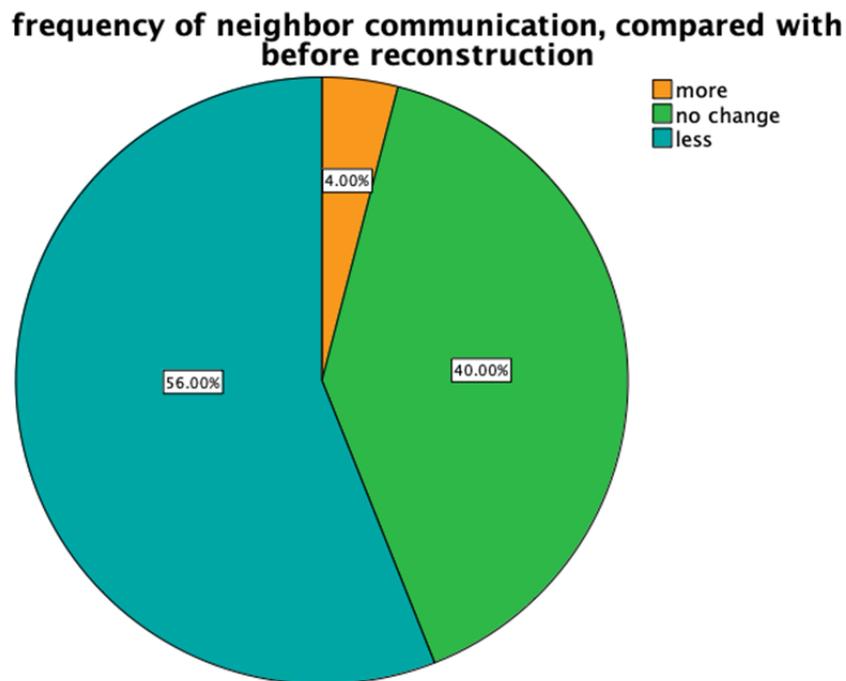
Xianghuwan village did not hold the re-election of the villagers' committee since the reconstruction started. It still can be explained by the difficulties to gather the villagers until the new reconstructed Chengzhongcun community was built. However, things are not changed after reconstruction and the villagers all moved into the community. After the reconstruction, the villagers' committee should change to a residents' committee (XAGOV, 2007). The chairman, vice-chairman and members of the residents' committee shall be elected by all the residents of a residential area who have the right to elect or by the representatives from all the households. The residents' committee should organize the residents to decide community affairs together. Until now, the Xianghuwan Villagers' Committee still has not transited into Xianghuwan Community Committee and the election has not been held neither. The way that the country has been designed for ordinary residents to participate in public issues is

blocked here. The reconstructed Chengzhongcun villagers are excluded from the institution system and lost their access to participation.

### 5.2.3 Social network aspect

Social network in this research was examined by the frequency of communication with neighbors and acquaintances and attachment to personal network of family and friends. The survey examined the difference of frequency of interaction with neighbors before and after reconstruction. The results are shown as figure 16.

Fig. 16. Frequency changes of interaction with neighbors



Over half (56%) reconstructed Chengzhongcun villagers feel that their communication with neighbors are less than before; 40% felt that there is no change and only 4% of them fell the communication with neighbors is higher than before reconstruction.

The most typical characteristic of rural society is the ‘acquaintance society’<sup>16</sup>. The norms are also based on the ‘acquaintance society’. Fei (1947) gave the concept of Acquaintance Society, he pointed out that the Chinese traditional society is a society of acquaintances which is based on small-scale peasant economy, people take self as center and link through geographical relation and kinship to set up difference communication pattern. However, the urban community is oriented to an urban communication pattern that obeyed the principle of urban society, which are linked by social organization, engages in people with common interests and needs. There are some difficulties for reconstructed Chengzhongcun villagers to understand and accept it in a short time. The old social relations related with neighbors and acquaintances were broken down after reconstruction. Moreover, the public places of urban community are also designed based on urban communication patterns, the surrounding layouts are completely changed after reconstruction. Thus, the reconstructed Chengzhongcun villagers can no longer build their new social relations through their familiar way.

#### **5.2.4 Cultural aspects**

After reconstruction, the Xianghuwan villagers came in to a new cultural environment. The dominant culture in CBE refers to a modern, elegant and environment friendly culture, which is totally different from the farming culture or the Chengzhongcun culture.

At the same time, more and more reconstructed Chengzhongcun villages are gradually losing their own cultural identity. Cultural identity is the identity or feeling of belonging to a group. It is part of a person's self-conception and self-perception and is related to nationality, ethnicity, religion, social class, generation, locality or any kind

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<sup>16</sup> Acquaintance society refers to a phenomenon that when people do any social activities, they rely on acquaintances rather than strangers.

of social group that has its own distinct culture. Cultural identity is important for people's sense of self and how they relate to others. A strong cultural identity can contribute to people's overall well-being (EPO, 2013).

The appearance of Xianghuwan village can be traced back to the Ming Dynasty (the 14th century). Since there were craftsmen who earned lives by making Xiang (the incense), and their family name is Hu, so the Village got its name, Xianghuwan. With the development of village, due to the historical background and geographical location, Xianghuwan Village must have formed some characteristic habitus<sup>17</sup> that other villages or residential areas do not have. These characteristics are the habitus that was shared by the whole village and accepted by most villagers. The vice chairman of Baqiao sub-district office has expressed his expectation as follow:

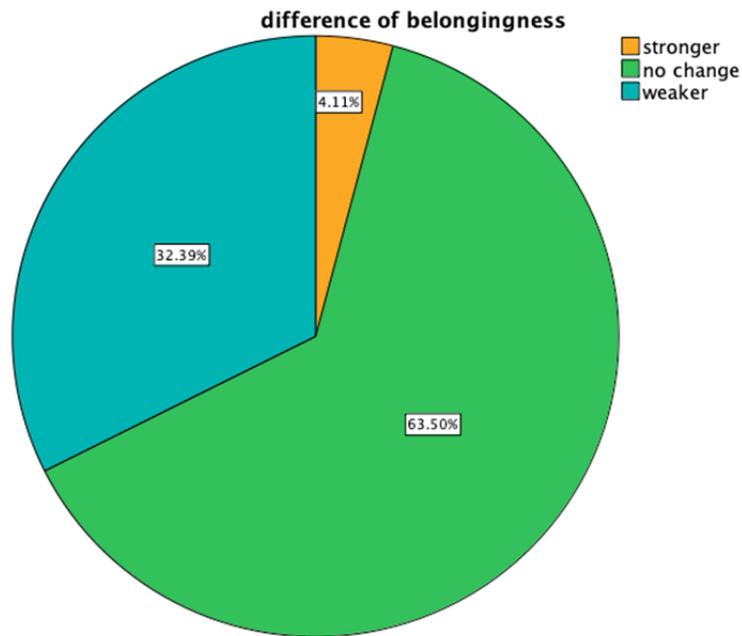
*“I want every Chengzhongcun village to keep its special thing, to show, to commercialize, or just as a memory. The reconstruction is not only the simple demolition and built, it is more about how to develop the community. The villagers from a same village share the same value system and memories. If we do not collect and record them now, a few years after reconstruction, the characteristics would be forgotten. All reconstructed Chengzhongcun communities become the same, they are just a pile of concrete construction.”*

However, the reconstruction seems to have a great negative impact on reconstructed Xianghuwan villagers' sense of belonging toward Xianghuwan Village. Figure 17 presents the result of difference of belonging towards Xianghuwan Village after reconstruction. Over half (63.50%) feel that their belonging towards Xianghuwan community is no change compared with before reconstruction; but 32.39% feel their belonging are weaker than before; 4.3% of them feel that belonging is stronger.

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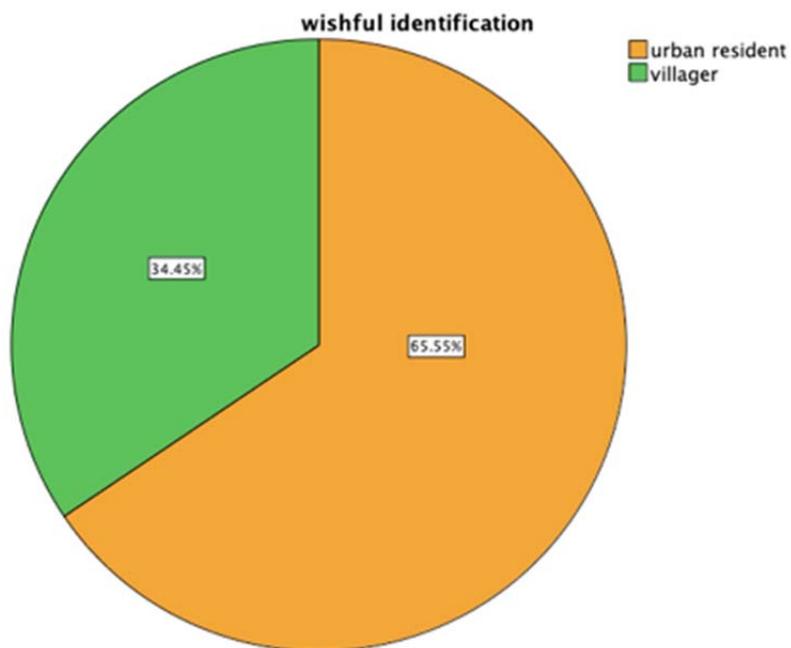
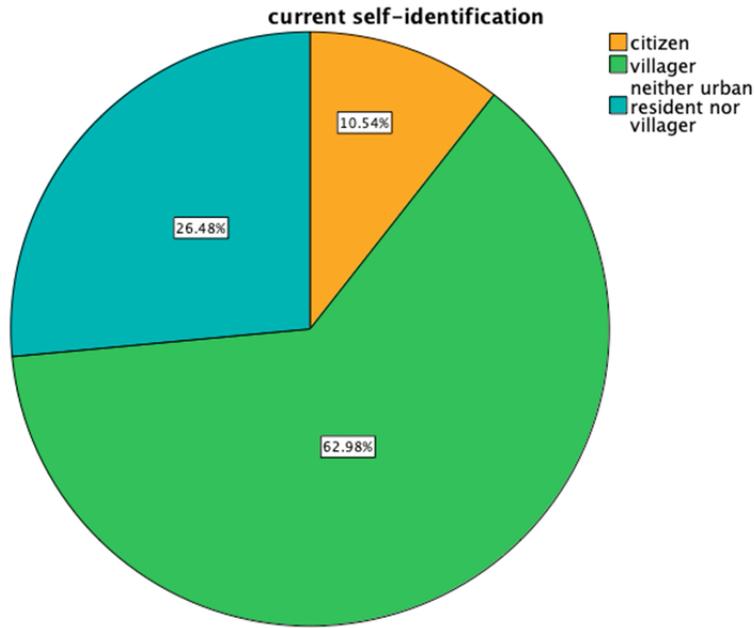
<sup>17</sup> Habitus is ingrained habits, skills and dispositions. It is the way that individuals perceive the social world around them and react to it. These dispositions are usually shared by people with similar backgrounds (Bourdieu, 1977)

**Fig. 17.** Difference of belonging towards Xianghuwan Village



The survey also examined the cultural identity through comparison of current self-identification with wishful identification. And the results are shown as figure 18. Currently, most (62.98%) reconstructed Chengzhongcun villagers still regard themselves as villagers; a large number (26.46%) of them felt that they are neither urban residents nor villagers; 10.54% of reconstructed Chengzhongcun villagers feel that they become urban residents now. As for wishful identification, most (65.55%) reconstructed Chengzhongcun villagers have the desires to become urban residents; 34.45% of them want to retain the villager identity.

**Fig. 18.** Current self-identification and wishful identification



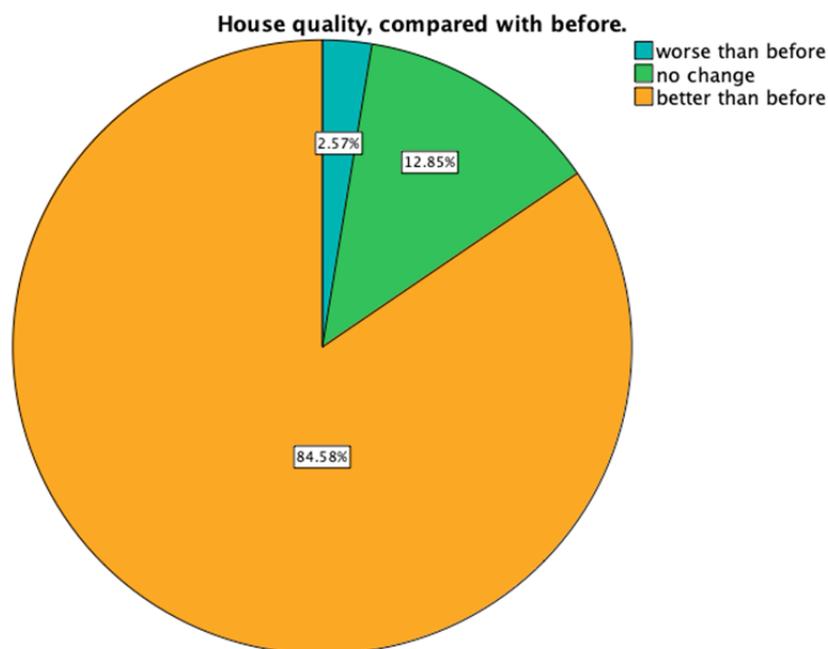
After reconstruction, the reconstructed Chengzhongcun villagers' household registration type change from agricultural Hukou to non-agricultural Hukou, and they legally become urban residents, but socially many of them are failed to build the urban resident identity. Since it is difficult for them to merge into urban society culture especially in a new development zone, like CBE.

### 5.2.5 Spatial exclusion

The spatial exclusion means that the vulnerable groups spontaneously live or are forced to live in an area with poor living conditions, something which results in the discrimination against these people.

Figure 19 shows reconstructed Xianghuwan villagers' attitude towards house quality, compared with before reconstruction. Most (84.58%) of them think the house quality is better than before, 12.85% feel there is no difference with the house quality, compared with before reconstruction, 2.57% feel the house quality is worse than before.

**Fig. 19.** Attitude towards differences of house quality



Indeed, the house quality of reconstructed Chengzhongcun community is basically better than the house quality of old Chengzhongcun. However, due to the insufficient supervision and improper house inspection procedure, many villagers have raised concerns for house quality. As Mrs. D has said:

*"I have repaired the leaking of windows for two rooms, but you would never know which window will leak next. Because of the heavy rain last Saturday, you can still see the traces of water on my bathroom's wall. Not to mention the people who live in the*

*top floor. Some houses even have cracks in wall from the very beginning. I heard that our residential buildings are built by different construction companies. One is state-owned, another is a private company. Buildings that were built by the private company are more likely to have problems. We just moved here for one year, after a few years, we may need to face more troubles of the house.”*

After reconstruction, the Xianghuwan villagers were relocated in the original place inside CBE, the Xianghuwan Community was formed. The living condition for reconstructed Xianghuwan villagers has undergone great changes, from urban infrastructure to green places. However, some deficiencies of condition in Xianghuwan Community still exist. Many residents are worried about the quality of their houses, which is the most important element of living conditions. They only moved back for only 1 year (till 2018), but issues in the quality of construction have appeared several times.

The construction progress of relocation residential buildings for Xianghuwan Village lasted for seven years. During this period, there is no access for villagers to the process schedule nor any other related information. Most of them did not know which construction company is in charge for their future houses. When Xianghuwan Community was constructed, just a small group of villagers were invited to participate in the house inspection procedure. They just walked inside the houses and saw around, rather than inspect carefully with the reference documents<sup>18</sup>. In other words, reference documents would normally be distributed before the house inspection. Without reference documents, the inspection procedure is more likely just completed as a formality, since the quality assurance organization has already admitted the house

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<sup>18</sup> The certificates that should have been distributed before house inspection include ‘a Form of Filing of As-built Inspection of Project’, ‘a Report on the As-built Inspection of Project’, ‘quality assurance certificate’ and ‘the House Usage Instruction Manual’.

quality. There is no place for villagers to express their concerns towards the house quality.

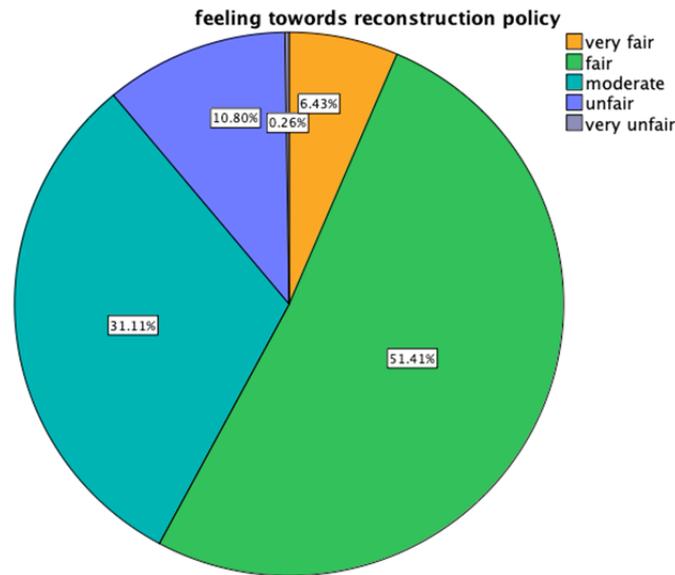
Chengzhongcun villages had already experienced special aspect once since the they were formed at the very beginning. At that time, Chengzhongcun villages were surrounded by urban constructions and separated from formal urban areas, with undesirable appearance. After reconstruction, the appearance of reconstructed communities became similar with other neighborhoods in CBE. However, from the house quality, to the way the reconstructed Chengzhongcun villagers are treated, the reconstructed Chengzhongcun community is still regarded differently by other residents inside CBE. Now they are excluded spatially twice due to this gentrification process.

### **5.3 On-going gentrification and its future influence**

#### **5.3.1 Low awareness of vulnerability**

The survey examined the feeling towards the overall reconstruction policy, to find out their perception towards current situation; the results are shown as Figure 20. Most of reconstructed Chengzhongcun villagers feel the reconstruction policy is fair (51.41%), or very fair (6.43%) to them; 31.11% of them feel the policy is moderate; only 10.80% feel that it is unfair; and a small amount of them (0.26%) feel very unfair.

**Fig. 20.** Feeling towards overall reconstruction policy



The reconstructed Chengzhongcun villagers are facing all dimensions of social exclusion. However, their satisfaction is higher than assumed. They are satisfied with new build houses, convenient transportation, better living conditions, better security, the compensation fee and so on. As Mr. C has said:

*“If there is no reconstruction, we are still living in bad conditions. The sanitary condition is much better than before, the roads inside the community are cleaned up by cleaners. Also, besides the residence, we have the compensation fee that the government provided to us. The money is not so much but it is definitely better than nothing.”*

However, some of them neglected the negative effects that this process has brought and will constantly bring to them even at a higher level. The compensation fee can be used to maintain their daily lives for a while, but the day will inevitable come when the reconstructed Chengzhongcun villagers spend out the compensation money. The lost livelihood has already happened in reconstructed community, especially for elders. Figure 10 has shown the work status by age group. Over half of people aged 51-60 (64.9%) are unemployment nor self-employed; 48.4% of 51-60 have the same situation and attitude with them. over 60s, After reconstruction, the proportion of self-

sufficient elders (over 60) decreased from 92% to 34%. Most of them do not have any income resource including social endowment insurance. So far, they can still maintain their lives by the financial compensation provide by government. However, this kind of one-time money compensation will be spent someday with the consideration of high living cost in CBE. Currently, the social endowment insurance for over 60s residents of reconstructed community provided by local government is RMB230/month for a man, RMB170/month for a woman. The price of RMB230 just equals a six bag of flour(5kg), and RMB170 equals three bags of rice (5kg). The current social insurance provided for reconstructed Chengzhongcun villagers is insufficient to maintain their livelihood.

However, there is no obvious differences of unfair feeling towards overall reconstruction policy between elders and other age groups. Table 9 presents the results of feeling towards reconstruction policy by age group. Among all the people who feel unfair towards reconstruction policy, there are 21.4% from over 60s. The proportion is same with group 31-40, 41-50, even smaller than group 51-60.

**Table. 11.** Feeling towards reconstruction policy by age group

		age scale * feeling towards reconstruction policy					
		feeling toward reconstruction policies					
age scale		very fair	fair	moderate	unfair	very unfair	Total
20 or less	Count	0	8	4	1	0	13
	%	0.0%	4.0%	3.3%	2.4%	0.0%	3.3%
21-30	Count	2	28	13	1	0	44
	%	8.0%	14.0%	10.7%	2.4%	0.0%	11.3%
31-40	Count	8	53	22	9	1	93
	%	32.0%	26.5%	18.2%	21.4%	100.0%	23.9%
41-50	Count	5	47	26	9	0	87
	%	20.0%	23.5%	21.5%	21.4%	0.0%	22.4%
51-60	Count	7	38	27	13	0	85
	%	28.0%	19.0%	22.3%	31.0%	0.0%	21.9%
more than 60	Count	3	26	29	9	0	67
	%	12.0%	13.0%	24.0%	21.4%	0.0%	17.2%
Total	Count	25	200	121	42	1	389
	%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

In this case, the people who risk vulnerability more, refers to the elders, are unable to realize what situation they find themselves in and the fact that they are at risk. The

low-level awareness towards vulnerability are more likely to cause more potential risks to elders.

### **5.3.2 Gentrification on next generation**

Before reconstruction, ‘a better education’ was used to attract villagers to assign the reconstruction agreement. The Government propaganda said that the quality of basic education inside the district was going to be improved (Baqiao Sub-street Office, 2010). It had become one temptation that made villagers more willing to leave their home. It is obvious that the Chengzhongcun villagers have high expectations toward education.

Indeed, several high-quality schools have built up inside the district, but due to the unevenness distribution, the fact has failed to meet Chengzhongcun villagers’ expectations.

Figure 13 shows there are 62.83% reconstructed Xianghuwan villagers think education resources have not changed or are worse than before reconstruction. The uneven distribution of educational resources is mainly caused by two results: 1. There are difficulties in entering school for the children from reconstructed Chengzhongcun community. 2. The children from reconstructed Chengzhongcun community do not have access to high-quality education resources.

**Fig. 21.** Distribution of new-built schools inside Chanba Ecological District



Source: Google map (edited by writer)

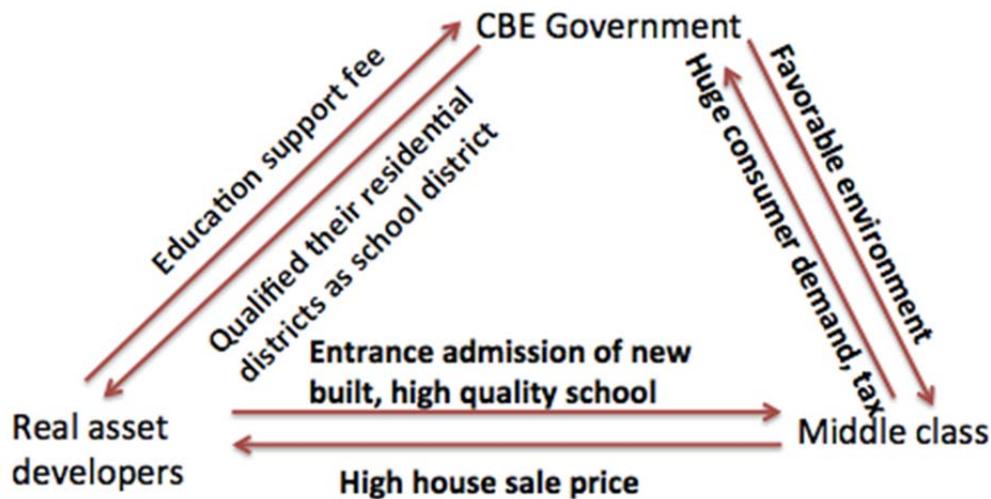
In figure 21, green marks represent newly built schools, after the establishment of Chanba Ecological District. Red marks represent old schools, and reconstructed Xianghuwan community locates in that red circle. Almost all new built school facilities are allocated on the west side of the Bahe river, which are affluent neighborhoods. The only one new built school that near Xianghuwan Community is a Tibetan middle school<sup>19</sup> only for Tibetan students. Regardless of neighborhood, the whole district is facing the problem of too many primary-age students. New built schools, however, are located primarily in rich neighborhoods and allow students from these areas to enter. Children based in reconstructed communities lose an opportunity for better funded, higher-quality education from the very beginning.

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<sup>19</sup>Tibetan is one of China's minority nationalities (少数民族, often also translated as "ethnic minorities"). There are many assistance policies towards Tibetan people, Tibetan school is one of them.

From a spatial perspective, it is true that the allocation of newly built schools is near the center area of Xi'an City, and cannot be considered an issue. It is simply related with the speed and plan of urban expanding. Upon further review, however, it is not so simple. Transportation networks inside the Ecological district are comparably convenient. The reason primary-age students from reconstructed communities cannot enter new-built, high-quality schools, is not about the physical distance, because these students are rejected by these schools. The root cause of this issue is the comparable steady relationship between stakeholders of the school construction process, shown as figure 22. At that time, there are large amount new schools was planned to build in CBE. The construction required huge financial expenditure beyond the local government's means, so the real estate developers paid education support fee to help the school construction. In return, the new built school would locate near their residential projects, and the owners of their residential districts have the priority to enter those new, high-quality schools. As for real estate developers, they can use the near high-quality education as sales point to set a higher house price. The wealthier people are able to pay to real estate developers a higher house price to ensure that they have the access to surrounding high quality education; while reconstructed villagers are unable to pay to receive this benefit. The relations of stakeholders and their interaction patterns have become comparable steady. There is no relation with reconstructed Chengzhongcun villager.

**Fig. 22.** Relationship between stakeholders of school construction process



On the other hand, existing basic education resources that reconstructed villagers can access cannot provide enough support for the students to go to higher education. For the middle schools that receive the reconstructed community's children, the proportion of students who cannot continue to higher education after graduation is up to 50%, much higher than the Xi'an City average of 34%, and of the average of the new-built middle school inside Chanba Ecological district, only 6.6%.

After reconstruction, Chengzhongcun villagers changed their status from farmers to urban residents. However, Chengzhongcun Villagers have no access to the education improvement that happened in district where they legally belong to. Uneven education resources distribution has been exacerbating the consequences of social exclusion, resulted in negative effects on next generation.

## 6. Conclusion

The purpose of this study is to address the non-physical displacement from the perspective of social exclusion, to explain how gentrification has happened in CBE, and how it influenced reconstructed Chengzhongcun villagers. Research objectives were discussed along with the presentation of results.

The first research objective was discussed in chapter four; the objective was to dig further into the dynamics that generate the social exclusion in terms of the process of green gentrification in CBE. As a conclusion, the new or restored environmental goods tend to be accompanied by the attraction of wealthier groups, while creating a greater gap with poorer neighborhoods. Since the establishment of CBE, the municipal government of Xi'an City decided to prioritize increasing the number of wetland parks and waterfront parks through the implementation of new development zone plans. Near these main public parks, some large-scale residential projects were introduced by real estate developers, including some luxury ones. Besides the real estate development, the CBE also provides a perfect environment for business, attracting more and more high-income people to work and live here. On the other hand, the reconstructed Chengzhongcun villagers have moved back to the new houses provided by the government, and live together with the wealthier group in CBE, but with different level of income. At that moment, the great gap between the wealthier group and them is already formed. Moreover, from the very beginning of its establishment, the social resources were distributed unequally in CBE, such as the healthcare facilities and basic education facilities. The wealthier communities have a high-quality, full-equipped community hospital, while the reconstructed Chengzhongcun communities do not have one; the wealthier people are able to pay to real estate developers a higher house price to ensure that they have the access to surrounding high quality education; while reconstructed villagers are unable to pay to receive this benefit. Not only the physical environment has been gentrified, the non-physical factors inside CBE have also been gentrified: the reconstruction resulted in the loss of culture of Chengzhongcun villages, since the common places they owned were completely changed. Meanwhile, reconstructed Chengzhongcun communities are not included in the prevalent culture buildings since their life style is totally different from the wealthier group's.

The second research objective was discussed in chapter five along with the presentation of the results. It is shown that reconstructed Chengzhongcun villagers are facing five fundamental aspects of pressure of exclusion caused by reconstruction. (1) The economic aspect: The high unemployment rate and job instability of Chengzhongcun villagers have resulted in the inability to sustain a livelihood especially in a high-level consumption district. (2) The public service and local governance aspect: There is a big gap of medical service between Chengzhongcun village's clinic and the newly-built community clinic, from the doctors' professionalism to the equipment. Moreover, due to the insufficient functions of related government institutions, until now, the Xianghuwan Villagers' Committee has still not transited into the Xianghuwan Community Committee and the election of the committee has not been held neither. The reconstructed Chengzhongcun villagers are excluded from the institution system and have lost their access to participation. (3) The social network aspect: The old social relations with neighbors and acquaintances of reconstructed Chengzhongcun villagers were broken down after reconstruction. In addition, the public places of reconstructed community are designed based on urban communication patterns, the reconstructed Chengzhongcun villagers can no longer build their new social relations through their familiar way with the completely changed surrounding layouts. (4) The cultural aspect: After reconstruction, the reconstructed Chengzhongcun villagers' household registration type changed from agricultural Hukou to non-agricultural Hukou, and they have legally become urban residents, but socially many of them have failed to build the urban resident identity; this is because the dominant culture in CBE refers to a modern, elegant and environment-friendly culture, which is totally different from the farming culture or the Chengzhongcun culture. (5) The spatial aspect: Chengzhongcun villages had already experienced the spatial aspect once since the Chengzhongcun villages were formed at the very beginning. They were surrounded by urban constructions and separated from formal urban areas. After reconstruction, the appearance of the reconstructed

communities became similar with other neighborhoods in CBE. However, from the house quality, to the way the reconstructed Chengzhongcun villagers are treated, the reconstructed Chengzhongcun community is still regarded differently by other residents inside CBE. Now they are excluded spatially twice due to this gentrification process. Then, chapter five also discussed the future influences of this on-going gentrification in CBE. In this case, the people who risk vulnerability more, the elders, are unable to realize what situation they find themselves in and the fact that they are at risk. The low-level awareness towards vulnerability is more likely to cause more potential risks to elders. Furthermore, Chengzhongcun villagers are excluded from the steady relationship between the stakeholders of school construction process, something which has resulted in an uneven distribution of education resources. This unevenness on education has been exacerbating the consequences of social exclusion, constantly bringing negative effects on the next generation.

In conclusion, in agreement with recent research (de Oliver, 2016; Langegger, 2016; Rahder and McLean, 2013; Manzo et al., 2008; Shaw and Hagemans, 2015; Curran, 2007), gentrification would not only cause the physical displacement of the old neighborhood, but also produce non-physical displacement. Besides, this study revealed the non-physical displacement of an old neighborhood that has not yet been influenced by physical displacement due to the ‘original reconstruction’ policy of the local government. The lack of the option to leave and the on-going green gentrification process together result in the non-physical displacement of the reconstructed Chengzhongcun community, expressed as the social exclusion that reconstructed Chengzhongcun villagers are facing currently. This study examined the results of green gentrification with a comprehensive perspective, which extend the boundary of green gentrification by providing empirical evidence. That is, gentrification does not necessarily lead to physical displacement of the old neighborhood inhabitants, especially when the gentrification process relates to local

policies. However, non-physical displacement also negatively influences the old or inferior neighborhoods, and it is more likely to render its residents socially excluded from the gentrified area.

## Appendix A.

### The questionnaire of culture changes in reconstructed Xianghuwan community.

**1. What identity are you?**

A. Residential owner B. Residential tenant

**2. What sex are you?**

A. Male B. Female

**3. What is your political status?**

A. Chinese Communist Party member B. Qunzhong (means general public)  
C. Others

**4. What is your age?**

A. Less than 20 B. 21-30 C. 31-40 D. 41-50 E. 51-60 F. 61or over

**5. What is your marital status?**

A. Married B. Single. Never married C. Separated or Divorced D. Widowed

**6. Are you currently...?**

A. Employed for wages B. Self-employed C. Out of work and looking for work D.  
Out of work but not currently looking for work E. A student. F. Retired G.  
Unable to work

**7. If you have a work, salary of your work.**

A. Less than 1500 B.1500-2000 C.2000-2500 D. 2500-3000 E. More than 3000  
F. I don't have a work yet.

**8. What is the highest grade or level of schooling/education that you have completed?**

A. Less than primary school B. Primary school C. Secondary school D. High school  
or equivalent  College or university

**9. After reconstruction, how do you evaluate the follow things in your community?**

Contents	Worse than before	No change	Better than before
Public transportation (such as bus, subway)			

<b>Access to internet (Such as broadband use and Internet- capable mobile phone)</b>			
<b>Heating facilities</b>			
<b>Education resources</b>			
<b>Medical resources</b>			
<b>Financial services (such as bank, and credit association)</b>			
<b>Buildings</b>			
<b>Exercising Areas</b>			
<b>Parking places</b>			
<b>Cultural facilities (such as library room, multi-function activity room)</b>			

**10. How are you feeling about the villagers committee?**

- A. Very satisfied B. Satisfied C. Moderate D. Dissatisfied  
E. Very dissatisfied

**11. How are you feeling about the Baqiao Sub-district Office?**

- A. Very satisfied B. Satisfied C. Moderate D. Dissatisfied  
E. Very dissatisfied

**12. How are you feeling about the property management enterprise?**

- A. Very satisfied B. Satisfied C. Moderate D. Dissatisfied  
E. Very dissatisfied

**13. How are you feeling about the medical insurance?**

- A. Very satisfied B. Satisfied C. Moderate D. Dissatisfied  
E. Very dissatisfied

**14. How are you feeling about the endowment insurance?**

- A. Very satisfied B. Satisfied C. Moderate D. Dissatisfied  
E. Very dissatisfied

**15. After reconstruction, how do you evaluate the follow things in your community?**

<b>Contents</b>	<b>Very good</b>	<b>Moderate</b>	<b>Not good</b>
<b>Social security</b>			

<b>Property Management (such as cleaning work, repairment)</b>			
<b>Management of collective property.</b>			
<b>Dealing with conflicts between Neighbors</b>			

**16. Before reconstruction, what is the major source of income of your family?**

- A. Farming B. Salary C. Rent D. Investment E. Bonus

**17. After reconstruction, what is the major source of income of your family?**

- A. Farming B. Salary C. Rent D. Investment E. Bonus

**18. Before reconstruction, what is your major recreation way?**

- A. Sing or dance B. Play with smartphone C. Play Mahjong D. Read books  
E. Watch TV F. Walking F. Others \_\_\_\_\_

**19. After reconstruction, what is your major recreation way?**

- A. Sing or dance B. Play with smartphone C. Play Mahjong D. Read books  
E. Watch TV F. Walking F. Others \_\_\_\_\_

**20. Before reconstruction, how are you feeling about the traditional activities (such as harvest Festival in September) held in your community?**

- A. Very necessary B. Necessary C. Moderate D. Unnecessary E. Very unnecessary

**21. After reconstruction, how are you feeling about the traditional activities (such as harvest Festival in September) held in your community?**

- A. Very necessary B. Necessary C. Moderate D. Unnecessary E. Very unnecessary

**22. At present, How are you feeling about the amount of community activities ?**

- A. Little B. Moderate C. Lot

**23. How do you define your present identity?**

- A. Citizen B. Villager C. Neither Citizen nor Villager

**24. Which identity would you like to be?**

- A. Citizen B. Villager

**25. Before reconstruction, how do you evaluate your belongingness of Xianghuwan Village?**

- A. Very strong B. Strong C. Moderate D. Weak E. Very weak

**26. After reconstruction, how do you evaluate your belongingness of Xianghuwan Community?**

A. Very strong B. Strong C. Moderate D. Weak E. Very weak

**27. What do you value most in a community?**

A. Infrastructure (e.g., buildings, parking places, exercising areas, etc.) B. Institutions of management C. Community activities D. Shared value (includes common memories, norms customs, and so on) E. Others \_\_\_\_\_

**28. How are you feeling about the ‘One village, one thing’(一村一品) ?**

A. Very necessary B. Necessary C. Moderate D. Unnecessary E. Very unnecessary

**28. Before reconstruction, whom can you rely on when you seek help?**

A. Intimate partner (e.g., girlfriend, boyfriend, husband wife, etc.) B. Friend  
C. Parents D. Other relative/family member E. Neighbor F. Children  
G. I would not seek help from anyone

**30. After reconstruction, whom can you rely on when you seek help?**

A. Intimate partner (e.g., girlfriend, boyfriend, husband wife, etc.) B. Friend  
C. Parents D. Other relative/family member E. Neighbor F. Children  
G. I would not seek help from anyone

**31. Before reconstruction, the frequency of neighbor communication?**

A. Very frequent B. Frequent C. Moderate E. Not Frequent F. Seldom

**32. After reconstruction, the frequency of neighbor communication?**

A. Very frequent B. Frequent C. Moderate E. Not Frequent F. Seldom

**31. Are you living together with your child who is under 18s?**

A. Yes B. No C. I don't have any children who is under 18s.

**31. Are you living together with your children who are under 18s?**

A. Yes B. No C. I don't have any children who is under 18s.

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