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RESEARCH ARTICLE

**THE POSITIVE FUNCTION OF URBAN VILLAGE IN MODERN CHINA: A CASE  
STUDY OF SHISICUN VILLAGE IN PEARL RIVER DELTA**

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**ABSTRACT**

Urban village is a significant phenomenon in modern urbanization process of China. Previous researches about urban village pay much attention about the cleaning up of urban village in that urban village causes many social problems. However, previous researches have not recognized generally the positive aspects of urban village. This research set out to analyze the positive aspects of urban village. Results showed that urban village is the necessary composition part of urbanization of China, and it also keeps the economic prosperity and solid social stability. The findings can contribute to a better understanding of the function and status of urban village in urbanization of China.

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**INTRODUCTION**

Urban village phenomenal in modern China urbanization. Urban village in China does not confirm to the western concept of that, which refers to a village style neighborhood in the urban context. (Yuting Liu, 2010) In China media, the negative report about urban village is predominant. 32% of the urban village report is about that urban village is the target of the government administration and constriction, and 26% of that is that the urban village is the cause of the public problems such as the problem of hygiene, fire hazard, illegal building and security problem. 15% of the report is about the commercial opportunities and 15% is about the living space. (Yuan Yan.2007) From the report, it would find that the urban village is not welcome in urbanization.

Some previous research about China urban village also regarded the poor urban village formed an obvious contrast with the official residents and global economic system, which developed in advance. (Fan,C.C. 1996) Literature in English on urban village in China is also rare. (Yeh, A.G.O., 2005) From the report and research about the urban village, it would find that the negative aspect of urban village is the focus. In other words, urban village causes many problems and is needed to be reformed, remove or eliminated. (Jiang Zefeng, 2008; Ruan Chenxue, 2013 ; Tan Suling, 2013.)

Urban village has a pivotal role in urbanization of China. The expansion of city and urban circle with the need for land to develop the industry included the previous villages. In the process, the agricultural land became the industrial land, and the farmers lost their lands for their traditional livelihood. That compelled them to seek the new ways to earn money. Some of them rent out their estates to the peasant-workers

from other under-developed areas, or engaged in business trade, or they would become the peasant-worker in the cities. Numerous peasant-workers from other under-developed areas would also live in the urban villages because of the much cheaper rental compared to the rental in urban areas. The urban village became congested in this condition, so the social problems were obvious. On the other hand, urban village has the ambivalent identity in the sense of economic policy, because the farmers of the urban village have no the property rights of their estates they built, so they can not sell their estates. In the sense, the estates in urban village are not urban, however, the urban village has the urban function which engages in the urbanization. The commodity price and the rental are much cheaper in urban village and the population is congested, so the trade and consumption in urban village are also more active than the urban area.

Questions have been raised about the identity, function and social problems of urban villages. The media report and some previous research about urban village have been criticized urban village for much of confusion it caused. However, the urban village not only provides the necessary livelihood for the previous farmers and provides the living space for the peasant-workers, but also provides the necessary lands for the industries. In the sense, the urban village is the foundation of the prosperity of city.

Up to now, far too little attention has been paid to the positive aspect of urban village. The economy of urban village has little interference from government, but it kept prosperous in recent years. The farmers in urban village do not earn less than the citizens who have the regular job and live in urban area. The peasant-workers live in urban village would also be content because of the much cheaper price. On the other hand,

the industry get well developed in because of the lands easily attained. In this article, I argue that the urban village has the positive meanings for China urbanization and offer the reference for the economic policy. This research provides new insights into the urban village in China.

This research of urban village is based on the investigation into the village Shisicun, a village in Zhongshan city, Guangdong province. Shisicun village is a typical urban village since it became the urban village in the urbanization of Zhongshan and Zhuhai city in Pearl River delta. The first part of this article deals with the introduction of Shisicun village, which includes the history and current condition of shisicun village. The second part deals with the analysis of population in shisicun village, which includes the residents' economic income and jobs. The peasant-workers from other areas and the indigenous farmers are the two main parts of the population being analyzed. The third part of the article deals with the economic and commercial condition in Shisicun village. It indicates that the economic development of Shisicun is fast although there would be some confusion in the process. The fourth part of the article deals with the interpersonal relationship in Shisicun. The interpersonal relationship illuminates unique cultural atmosphere in Shisicun. The fifth part of the article deals with the political situation in Shisicun village. It could say that the political situation in Shisicun is semi-official, because on the one hand, this village has the village committee and the village secretary, which are the lowest level of political administration in China, on the other hand, the village secretary is the head of the villagers autonomy organization, besides, many of the economic process are controlled by the so-called gangdom, which actually is the organization controls or arranges the economic order since some of the economic activities are not well regulated by the government. The so-called gangdom gains the profit through their activities which infringes the law somewhat, but that does not caused the economic dislocation. On the contrary, it improve the economic prosperity of this village. The unique interpersonal relationship in Shisicun village also influence the situation.

### ***The introduction of Shisicun village***

Shisicun village locates in the east of Tanzhou town of Zhongshan city in Guangdong Province. Shisicun means fourteen. The village is composed by fourteen villager groups. East of Shisicun village is Zhuhai city. The division of Shisicun village and Zhuhai city is only a little narrow river. There were two little bridges, which could bear only the pedestrians but not the car, connected Shisicun village and Zhuhai city before 2015. After 2015, the two bridges are replaced by a new bridge that can allow the both the pedestrians and cars to pass.

The building of new bridge is in the background of unification of Zhuhai and Zhongshan. The urbanization results in the more connection between cities, so the policy-maker realized that the more unification of cities could improve the economic progress. However, the old bridges could not bear the cars, besides; the bridges were too little for so many pedestrians. Every morning and afternoon, the bridges were congested by the pedestrians who went to work or went home. Many pedestrians who passed the bridges were generally of the wage-earning class who worked in Zhuhai and lived in Zhongshan.

For the too expensive living cost in Zhuhai, many wage-earning workers choose Zhongshan as the living area and buy the apartments in Tanzhou town of Zhongshan city. Several communities such as Baihuaxiaozhen, Lvyangju and Lantingxu were built in Shisicun village. Besides, there were many buildings built by the villagers. The indigenous people in Shisicun village are only 2,890. Before 2012, there were about 130,000 blue collar workers lived in Shisicun village, because Cuijing industry district of Zhuhai was near Shisicun village. This industry district included many factories. After 2012, the industry district was abandoned and many factories were removed. So the blue collar worker residents in Shisicun village got less. However, because of the inexpensive living consumption in Shisicun village, many blue collar worker residents still lived in this village. There are several regular buses wait in the bus station every morning to carry the workers to a industry district far away from Shisicun village. Besides, the blue collar workers, there were still many white collar workers living in Shisicun village. Different from blue collar workers, who choose the incapacious rooms in the buildings built by the indigenous farmers without good hygiene, they buy the apartments in the communities developed in recent years. Although these apartments in the communities are more expensive than the buildings of the indigenous farmers, these apartments are much cheaper than those in Zhuhai.

The daily expenditure in Shisicun village is less compared to that of Zhuhai. There is a vegetable market in Shisicun village, which is bigger than the nearby vegetable market in Zhuhai. Besides, the pedlars are full of the main street in Shisicun before the end of 2015, when the government decided to drive off the pedlars for the traffic of Shisicun village, because the new bridge building was finished and the traffic from Zhuhai and Zhongshan was blocked by the pedlars. The pedlars sold incredibly cheap petty commodities or provided the snack. For the vegetable and other food materials come from the lands near Shisicun village, so the food materials in Shisicun village vegetable market are much cheaper. Correspondently, the snack is also cheaper. The street pedlars' trading in Shisicun village often do not need to pay tax, so the snack and petty commodities are cheaper. Many residents in Zhuhai often go to Shisicun village especially the vegetable market to buy the food materials for the cheaper price. One concern about snack and petty commodities is about the quality, but for many the residents especially the numerous blue collar workers, the concern can be neglected in terms of the price.

The buildings of Shisicun village can be divided into three kinds. The first kind is the buildings built by the real estate developers, such as Baihuaxiaozhen community. The second kind is the buildings built by the villagers. The third kind of the building is the temporary buildings built by some individuals or organization for rent to get profit, which is often illegal. For the expensive expenditure of rent or buying of apartment, many citizens choose to live in the building of Shisicun village.(Wu Jin. 2013) The cheaper expenditure of living space in Shisicun village is caused by two factors. The first one is the division resulted from the inconvenient traffic. For the inconvenient traffic, the price of the apartment in Shisicun village to accommodate to attract the buyers. The second one is because of *Hukou* (registered permanent residence). If the citizens of Zhuhai, who have Zhuhai Hukou,

buy the apartments in Zhongshan but not in Zhuhai, they would not enjoy the qualification for their children to study in schools of Zhuhai. So the apartments in Shisicun village are cheaper. The building built by the villagers would also be cheaper because of the additional factors that the living space is not as qualified as the apartments built by the estate developers and that the investments of the buildings are still much cheaper. As for the illegal temporary building built by the individuals or organizations, they do not need to pay the tax, so the rental of them is still cheaper. Generally, the price of the apartment in Zhongshan is much cheaper than that in Zhuhai. Because Shisicun village is in the border of Zhongshan, so the price of the apartment in Shisicun village is still much cheaper. Because of the cheaper price, many citizens of Zhuhai or the workers in Zhuhai choose Shisicun village to live in, so Shisicun village has a nickname as *the back garden of Zhuhai city*. It helps the residents enjoy the profit brought by the fast urban development of Zhuhai, and avoid the challenge from expensive expenditure.

The change of Zhuhai situation is critical to the condition of Shisicun village. Before 2003, the visitors from other city to Zhuhai had to show their passports to Zhuhai. At that time, Zhuhai is regarded as the special economic zone no one should get into without the passport. The land border of Zhuhai was inclosed by the iron fence. What divided Zhuhai and Shisicun village are both the iron fence and a little river. The pedestrians could pass the little bridges to go to Zhuhai but had to show their passport. After 2003, the restriction of passing was abolished, so Shisicun village became the prior choice of many Zhuhai citizens and workers to live in.

In recent years, Zhuhai and Zhongshan's urbanization cause the government to unify the two cities for the more economic progress.(Chen Zaiqi, 2015) One location called Shangchong connected Zhuhai and Zhongshan got prosperous quickly because of the unification of the two cities. Shisicun village is also the location connected Zhuhai and Zhongshan, so it also got prosperous. However, before the end of 2015, there is only two little bridges which could only bear the weight of pedestrians connect Zhongshan and Zhuhai. For many workers living in Shisicun village, especially the workers who had automobiles, it was very inconvenient. The accomplishment of a new bridge building finished the inconvenience at the end of 2015.

Now Shisicun village is faced with another situation. With the eager requirement of traffic, the government began to drive off the pedlars in Shisicun village. So the from January 24<sup>th</sup>, the noise, somewhat chaotic and dirty *street market* disappeared. The traffic became more smooth with the driving off the pedlars, however, it would find that the pedlars' profit and activities of trading are curbed.

### ***The population in Shisicun village***

The population in Shisicun village can be divided into three kind. The first kind is the migrant workers (peasant-workers). The second kind is the indigenous farmers. The third kind is the workers who have official jobs, which means they have the decent and more-earning jobs. The population of the peasant-workers in Shisicun village occupies the biggest part. They can be divided into the different parts according to which province they come from. The major part of is those came from Sichuan province and Chongqing city. Other parts

of the population most come from Henan province, Hunan province and Guangxi province and Jiangxi province. It would find that the peasant-workers mostly come from the underdeveloped provinces. The jobs of the peasant-workers are diversified. According to the age, the jobs can be divided into 1)the service job, which the people aged 18-25 engage in; 2)the manufacturing job, which is often the job of manufacturing the electronic component, the engaged people's is about 15-23; 3) the business, which is often engaged by the people aged more than 25. The service job is often about selling and catering. The manufacturing job is often about the electronic component. The work is on the assembly line, and simple. So the age of the people would not need to be old enough. The service job and the many job are of low salary. The motivation of the youth to engage in the job is to see the outside of their hometown and to earn money. They would not make the living with this kind of job for a life. After 22 years old, they would change their job. The business is often about the catering and retailing. The earning from the business would be considerable profitable compared to the jobs mentioned above. The business would be often low investment, for example the tricycle to carry the passengers, the snack stand. However, all the jobs would not bring substantial income compared to the job of the indigenous farmers and the jobs of most of the Zhuhai citizens who live here. According to the investigation conducted by author, the ratios of the jobs of individual management, working in the industry and other occupy 90%, 8% and 2% respectively.

The second kind of population is the indigenous farmer. Most of the indigenous farmers would not get well educated. The jobs they engaged in is often the job which does not require the high technique, or they would do some business or rent their houses for profit. Much part of their income comes from the dividend from the lending out the land for industry in their villages. So their income would be higher than those of the peasant-workers and citizens of Zhuhai who live this village. However, the population in this village is the lowest, which only amounts to 2,890. According to the investigation conducted by author, 63% of the indigenous farmers' jobs is individual management, and the jobs in the industry and others occupy 20% and 19% respectively.

The third kind of the population is the citizens who have the decent jobs in Zhuhai. Most of them buy the apartments in this village, which developed by the estate developers. From 2008 to 2015, the price of the apartment in this village doubled; however, the price of these apartments is still much lower than that in Zhuhai city. The income of this group is stable. However, because of their monthly repayment to their loan from the bank, their income would be impaired a lot every month.

Apart from the three kinds of population mentioned above, there are minor people come from Macau buy apartments. However, many of them would not live in the apartments they buy because their jobs are in Macau. It is inconvenient for them to travel from Macau and Shisicun village everyday. According to the investigation and statistics conducted by author, the youth and the prime age people engaged in jobs in this village amounts to 90% of the whole population in the migrant workers. However, the youth engaged in jobs in this village is rare, because most of them do not work here mostly for business and education reason. The prime age people, who

aged from 30-45, of the indigenous farmers and the migrant peasant-workers are more than the people aged 45-60 in both of the groups. The people aged more than 60 occupy the minor part. This investigation result shows that the prime age people occupies the most part of Shisicun village. The economy in Shisicun is significantly active.

The people taking part in individual management in the migrants and indigenous farmers occupy 90% and 63%. The population of the migrants is more than 30 times of the indigenous people. So the individual management in Shisicun village is the most prosperous business. In the condition that most of the individual management need not pay the tax and the investment and materials are cheap, it is not doubt that the individual management business is more prosperous in Shisicun village than that in the other places.

In the sense of job, the citizens who work in Zhuhai and live in Shisicun village contribute little to the situation of this village. They go to work in the morning from the village and go back in afternoon. Additionally, their population occupies only 6% of the whole population in village. So their vocation will not quite influence Shisicun village's situation.

#### ***The economic and commercial condition in Shisicun Village***

The informal economy is typical for the economic mode in Shisicun village. According to the investigation conducted by author, the informal economy occupies 95% of the whole economic activities in this village. The informal economic activities can be divided into three kind: 1) the selling of the petty commodities and the snack stands; 2) the little inns; 3) the shops beside the small road; 4) the tricycle, motorcycle and car as taxi. All those types' economic activities are not regulated well by government. However, the economic activities are significant dynamic and create huge profit.

The less regulation from government is because of the special land using. The informal activity in Shisicun village informal economic activities is based on the relatively free land-using. First, the houses in the village are belonged to the indigenous farmers, and most of the houses do not have the estate certification, so the farmers would rent out their houses and do not register in government because the house is without estate certification. The peddlers, the owner of the snack stand and tricycle, motorcycle and car for taxi will not register in the government, because their activities are regarded as illegal by government in that they use the illegal space to operate. Most of their operate space is the public street, especially the main street in Shisicun village. Although the little inn would register in the government, their economic activities would not regulated by the government in the most of the time, because on the one hand, the customers of the Inns are most of the low-incoming group, so the profit is little in every deal. On the other hand, the inns generally are developed based on the indigenous farmers' houses, which do not have the estate certification, so in the sense, the inns would not have adequate qualification to operation, therefore the owner would be reluctant to register in the government and avoid the regulation as possible. Such phenomenon is common in urban village of China. (Yan Yuntao. & Liu Zichuan, 2008. )

The economic activity in Shisicun village has the character of fragmentation just like the numerous little mosaics covers this village. Most of the economic activities are lowcost and serve the less well-off customers. For example, the peddlers and

snack stand were full of the Wangbin road, the main street of Shisicun village, when the government did not drive off them for traffic reason before the end of 2015. The inns in Shisicun village are numerous beside the Main Street and alley. Most of inns are small. The rooms are transformed from the rooms in ordinary civil houses. The inns are smaller than the inns in the urban area, and most of the rooms in the inns are simple and crude. Correspondently, the cost to live in the inns is much less that in the inns of urban area. The shops are full of the both sides of the street. The shops beside the river are in the makeshift shacks, which are illegal and not registered in government. Before the shacks were established, there were many peddlers. Then some migrants built the shacks and rented them to the peddlers. The transaction was not regulated by the government certainly. The shacks bring considerable profit for the lessors, so the shacks are full of the village side of the river.

Although the economic activities are lowcost, fragmented, and serve the low-incoming groups, the profit is huge, or even it can be said that the profit is explosive. The vitality of the economic activities come from the different reasons. The first reason is that the governments collect no tax in the area generally in that the land using in this area is confusing. The second reason is that the congestion of the consumers. Although the consumers are generally of the low-incoming groups, the times of the consumption are much more than that in urban area. So the transaction in Shisicun village is significantly active. Many urban citizens choose to consume in Shisicun village because of the low cost. The aggregation of the consumer groups attract many renowned shops to be established in the area, such as the Yishion and adidas. The price in these brand stores is commonly low with regard of the consumers' economic status. The profit would be considerable even though the price is low because the consumption times are much more frequent than that in urban area.

However, what is unfortunate is that the informal activities are much curbed in the end of 2015, when the government drove off the peddlers for traffic reason. Driving off the peddlers resulted in not only the lose of the previous incoming of the peddlers, but although the low price of the consumption. The government's action was reasonable in that the traffic should be smooth and many citizens anticipate the peddlers should be driven off and dirty street caused by the numerous peddlers should be cleared. Those seemed like the solid argument to drive off the peddlers, however, the action damaged the vitality of economy in this village actually on the other hand.

#### ***The interpersonal relationship in Shisicun village***

It can be said that the interpersonal relationship in Shisicun village has both the characters of tradition and modernization. In order to analyze the interpersonal relationship, the research divided the interpersonal relationships in Shisicun village into several types. According to the investigation conducted by author, the interpersonal relationship in Shisicun village can be divided into three types. The first type is the indigenous people's relationship; the second type is the migrants' relationship; the third type is some other relationship modes. The first type of interpersonal relationship in this village is the indigenous people's relationship. This type of relationship is conducted by the traditional interpersonal relationship more

than two other types of relationships mentioned above. The number of indigenous people in this area is small, although these people's income would be on the top of the groups in Shisicun village. They are generally known to each other for generations. Almost all of them have the relatives in this village. In the festivals or celebrations, those people would gather in one street to have supper. The preparation for the supper would continue for almost the whole day, which is from morning to evening. The food is extraordinary sumptuous although where they eat seems shabby.

The banquet is noisy and congested and continues from 6pm to 9pm often. Almost all the pleasant events would be celebrated by the feast. These events include the finishing of a house building, the wedding, and even the getting of bonus for the whole. In China villages, the relationship of acquaintance is most pronounced phenomenon. (Li Jinlan, 2013) Besides, the cooperation between southern China is more frequent than that in northern China. (Tahelm, T. 2014) Shisicun village is in Guangdong, a typical southern province in China. So the interpersonal relationship is typical in the acquaintance relationship and cooperation.

The traditional modes of celebrations in this village, it can be said that the indigenous people of Shisicun village still are belonged to the acquaintance society. Accordingly, the interpersonal relationship rules would be stable in this sense. Their rules of the interpersonal relationship is still restricted by the traditional morality and rules in China villages. The morality and rules would strict all the villagers including the cadres of the villagers. So some economic and administrative activities would also be restricted by those.

The second type of relationship in this village is the relationship among the migrants. The interpersonal relationship among the migrants' workers is often based on the blood relationship, genetic relationship and geographic relationship. Short time after the migrants workers move into other province to work, they will replicate their previous relationships, which is blood relationship, genetic relationship and geographic relationship. (Xu Bingkui, 2007) In Shisicun village, the migrants workers come from Shichuan province and Chongqing city are the most.

Many of them do the business of carrying by tricycle. In the street, it would find a long line of tricycles waiting for the clients. For the peasant-workers, they can not earn adequate incoming from the factories, so many of them join into the tricycle carrying with the help from their acquaintances come from the same area. Most of the drivers of tricycles are the people come from Sichuan province and Chongqing city. So group is enlarged by the joining of the people come from the same area. Migrants come from north-east China is obvious in southern China (Duane Chengrong; Lv Lidan; Qin Min.2013), and that is also obvious in Shisicun village.

In Shisicun village, the migrants come from North-east China often do the business of snack, for example, the boiled dumpling. Many of them learn from the knowledge and experience from each other for the snack food. So the circle is formed and most of them engage in the snack business. The migrants from same area would communicate with each other in QQ groups or wechat groups. The information and emotional support is transferred in the groups. It is not needed to mention the blood and genetic relationships among the

migrants because those are the almost instinctive relationship among the migrants and they will find the supports from these relationships naturally. What this article here emphasizes is the interpersonal relationship among the migrants from the same area. It would find that the migrants get the information and emotional support more in the beginning of their business.

The third type of the interpersonal relationship is the relationship among the different groups of immigrants and indigenous people. In the beginning of the migrants' living in Shisicun village, they would resort to the townsmen or the persons who have genetic or blood relationship with them. However, after they are familiar with the environment, they would communicate more with other groups of migrants and the indigenous people.

This communication would bring more information and opportunities for them because those people they communicate with is the among the circles different from theirs. For the migrants in urban village, they would depend on the blood, genetic and geographic relationships less in the job opportunities and more in the emotional supporting. (Li Zhigang, Liu Ye. 2016) That is more obvious when the migrants are familiar with the environment because they have more acquaintances now. In this stage, the migrants' interpersonal relationship becomes more diversified. What is interesting is that the migrants would live randomly in Shisicun village. That is different from the old generation migrants in China. In ancient China, the migrants were despised and persecuted by the indigenous people generally. (Li Wenjun. 2010) So the ancient migrant's people would live in the adjacent areas. Although the migrants workers would communicate more with the indigenous people and the more diversified interpersonal relationship, they would not actually be integrate into the indigenous people. More of them would construct the relationship with the friends or workmates outside of Shisicun village.

It can be concluded that the interpersonal relationship in Shisicun village is diversified and have both traditional and modernized characters. For the indigenous residents, the interpersonal relationship is more traditional. For the migrant's workers, the main part of the population in Shisicun village, they would have the diversified interpersonal relationships. So they would not only depend on the genetic, blood or geographic relationships, and would not be confined in the village, therefore their choice and opportunities would be more. That is less obvious in the beginning of their living in Shisicun village and more obvious in when they are familiar with the environment. So it can be said that Shisicun village keeps the traditional interpersonal relationship for the indigenous people and provides for the migrants workers with smooth transition from the unfamiliar beginning to the later familiarity.

#### ***The political situation in Shisicun village***

The political mechanism in Shisicun village has two contradictory characters. On the one hand, it can be said as informal, because the power operates in the informal ways. On the other hand, it has the formal structure of the local administration.

Most of the power in Shisicun village operate in the informal way. That is embodied in the economic process obviously.

For example, there is line of shed shops beside the river. According to the governmental rules, the shed shops are illegal. The government prohibits the building of the shed shops beside the rivers. However, one migrant come from North-east China built the shed shops beside the river and rent them out. That is easy to be found by the government, however, there seems no serious punishment for his action. The shops still operates well. In this sense, it can be said that the action is acquiesced by the government. Actually, the shops are not detrimental to anything but provides the convenient service to the citizens. The peddlers in the street are also belonged to the same situation.

To some extent, those economic forms can be said as the gangdom economy. The gangdom is not the groups that is vicious and violent. It is the group that pursuit for the profit. Commonly, they would not conflict with others violently. It can be found that in every business which is informal there would be the interference of the groups.

The rationality of this gangdom economy deserves adequate consideration. For many peddlers and owners of the shops or snack stands, the competition is free in the ideal condition. However, it is totally different in reality. If the small merchants really compete with each other, the business environment would be in total confusion. Everyone can do business in this village, so there would be random and different business condition in this village because everyone has anything reason does his or her business in anywhere in this village. The lack of the central power would result in that situation in the condition that the government does not regulate well in this village. The gangdom rises up, so the central power is formed. The dealers in this area would resort to the gangdom to protect their rights. So the trading environment in this area would be balanced. In the sense, the existence of the gangdom economy is necessary.

The gangdom economy does not conflict with the official power and the folk. First, the development of such business in this area is rational, because lots of areas in this village would be in the situation of waste if they are not used, although officially, the business use of such areas is illegal. Second, such business in this village is flexible and can be temporary. The scale of the business is often little. The dealers can abandon their business without the devastating influence on t their lives. So when the government decides to change the economic situation in this village for some reasons such as traffic, the dealers would abandon their business without the substantive influence on their living. Third, the gangdom would not inflict the normal living of the citizens. The so-called gangdom heads is commonly the ordinary people who are easily lived with. Most of them are kind and follow the traditional morality.

The formal power in Shisicun village is the community residents committee, which embodies the formal official power. This type of official organization is the lowest administrative unit in China. In the specific business, especially in the informal business in Shisicun village, the community residents committee has no direct influence, because most of the business in Shisicun village are informal, which means to some extent, the business has somewhat infringement on the law. Some researchers notice that the community residents committee has little function in the daily life of the residents: "When the villagers meet problems, they

would resort to the companies in the village. The company's power resource of security, administration of renting houses, sanitation and birth controlling is its basis and precondition to perform its power. As for the non-indigenous people, they would resort to the community residents committee. However, the problems they want to resolve is often about certification." (Lu Junxiu.2013) Shisicun village has the same condition with the village mentioned above.

So it can be said that the political situation in Shisicun village is both informal and official, and in the most cases, the power function in this village is informal. However, the informal power function is the necessary complement for the official function. Because of the flexibility and small scale of the informal power, the government can easily control or restrict such power. The function of this informal power is most obvious in the economic activities.

## **CONCLUSION**

This article has argued that the urban village is meaningful for the economic development and social stability in the process of urbanization. This research has shown that the urban village is not the land which is in the total chaos and the tumour of the society. On the contrary, the urban village provides for the migrants a useful land to make a living and shows its explosive economic prosperity. It also shows the solid social stability, which is on the contrary to the opinion that the urban village is the cause of many social violence. The economic prosperity in urban village is derived from the tax-free use of the land, the dense population and the low price of the commodities. The social stability is the result of the autonomy of the residents, the traditional interpersonal relationship rural rules, the benign interpersonal relationship of the migrants. However, the main media would almost always reports urban village negatively, and the local government would tend to reform the condition of urban village.

The findings of this research suggest that the urban village should be kept and improved. If the dealership in Shisicun village had not be driven off, this area would become the famous business center in 5 years. So it can be said that the urban village is not only the necessary composition part of urbanization, but also the origin of economic prosperity and social stability. This study has provided a deeper insight into the urban village phenomenon. Although the current research is based on one single village investigation, the findings are generalized in terms of the facts that Shisicun village is typical in the urbanization of Pearl River Delta. A limitation of this research is that it rarely analyzes the relationship between the autonomy of the residents and the government in the condition that the such collected materials and information is little. A further research investigating the relationship between the residents autonomy and government would be interesting.

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