Understanding Communities in China and Europe: Similarities, Differences and Consequences for Socially Integrative Cities

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Abstract: One large challenge we face in achieving integrative and sustainable cities in China and Europe is to understand what is making people "stick together" and care for their local communities. Only when we understand local communities better will it be possible to make improvements. In this paper we start by reviewing the way in which communities and community building have been understood in Europe and China respectively. The paper then goes on to assess the similarities and differences between China and Europe with respect to the role of communities and provides an overview of potential barriers and opportunities for achieving socially integrative cities through local community building and public engagement.

Socially integrative cities are identified as a mix of social groups, daily life interaction and a sense of belonging. With the increase of cultural diversity and social segregation, building socially integrative cities becomes an urgent issue for policymakers and researchers. China, with its fast urbanization, has been threatened by a rapid decline in social trust (Hazelzet and Wissink, 2012). Europe has experienced similar challenge since the late 19th century (Boyer, 1983; Buruma, 2006). As community is considered an important base to facilitate social cohesion (Forrest & Kearns, 2001), this study will seek to explore how socially integrative cities can be achieved from community building. Communities exist wherever there are humans. The way in which human groups organize themselves can be said to be the defining characteristic of achieving welfare and social integration for the group as a whole. This study will try to answer two research questions: 1) How does community function for a socially integrative city in the evolving history? 2) What are the similarities and differences between Chinese and European communities?

This paper therefore will take on a relatively large task: Comparing and contrasting communities and community building traditions in Europe and China. As we cannot in any way achieve a thorough explanation of all communities in both China and Europe, the aim of this paper is to start initial work to sort out some similarities and differences between communities in both places, and discuss the impact it might have on achieving socially integrative cities through local community building and public engagement. The paper begins with a literature review of community and community building in Europe and China, and then it goes into more detail to discuss the following specifics in each place: 1) main types and functions of urban and rural communities in historic development process, 2) a community's status and organization structure in contemporary urban-rural society, and 3) a community's functions in the urban-rural economy, society and culture. Finally, the last section discusses similarities and

differences, and concludes the paper.

1. Literature review

Understandings of and practices within communities and their historical development vary widely both in Europe and China. Their role depends on how community is defined, which will naturally vary with time, place, scale and type of community studied. The concept of community often starts with Tönnies' discussion on the distinction between Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft. The two concepts describe two types of human association by which humans are tied together: Gemeinschaft, i.e., community, stresses personal social interactions, and the roles, values, and beliefs based on such interactions; Gesellschaft, i.e., society, stresses indirect interactions, impersonal roles, formal values, and beliefs based on such interactions (Tönnies, 1887). Thereby, we can see that community typically is considered as originating and occurring through local and personal experiences. According to Weber these experiences can be affectual or traditional. Gesellschaft, on the other hand, is thought to be more consent-based through rational agreement (Waters and Waters, 2015). Importantly, this distinction is not thought to be strict, but is constantly changing, overlapping and the two are mutually influencing each other. In this paper, we consider community as a group of people who share a common identity or interest within a common geographical neighbourhood. This can also be called *local* communities. Community functions as a basic unit of socio-spatial system by which local people are organized and integrated to form the whole society.

With the change of society, community has transformed dramatically. There has been much debate on whether community is still maintaining social connections. Wellman (1979) categorized theories of community into three types, i.e., "lost", "saved", and "liberated" community. "Lost" community refers to the idea that suburbanization lead to increasing alienation in the population and changing social ties. For example, in his famous book *Bowling Alone*, Putman (2000) pointed out that community life is disappearing with the loss of social capital in American suburb community. The "Saved" argument challenges the "Lost" view arguing that communal solidarity persists (Lupi and Musterd, 2006). As for the view of "Transformed" community, Fisher (1982) indicated that social ties exist, but outside the boundary of community. One of the key concerns in the community question is whether social cohesion is built on physical proximity within a community or on a wider social network beyond a community.

Although social cohesion can be achieved through a broad social network, a well-functioning community may help to facilitate social integration. Kearns and Forrest (2000) proposed five dimensions of social cohesion: 1) common values and a civic culture, 2) social order and social control, 3) social solidarity and reductions in wealth disparities, 4) social networks and social capital, and 5) place attachment and identity. These dimensions can be applied in different scales of space including community. As for the key factors of community building, Chen and Li (2008) indicated that there are three structures embedded in a geographic community, i.e., institution, resource, and identity. Institution means political, social and economic settings and policies implemented in a community; resource includes physical environment, facilities and services in a community; identity means residents' sense of belonging to a community. Woodcraft and Dixon (2013) proposed a framework including three dimensions in building "socially sustainable" neighborhoods based on experiences from London: 1) amenities and infrastructure 2) social and cultural life, and 3) possibilities for influence.

In order to carry out comparison between Europe and China, we will emphasize how community building affects cohesion rather than to go deep into an examination of the relationship between different dimensions of cohesion. In the following part, we will examine above elements to explore how a community is operated and social cohesion is achieved.

2. The Experience in Europe

2.1 Main types and functions of urban and rural communities in historic development processes

To paint with a wide brush, local communities in Europe have evolved from largely being organized around religion or/and agricultural production, to increasingly being centred around administrative units. In the Middle Ages in Europe, Christianity played an important role in structuring communities. Many functions that today are performed by the state where organized through the Church. Such as health care, libraries and education. Institutions like monasteries played an important role in transferring and building knowledge about medicine, biology and language. In rural communities across Europe, one can often find the church at the town centres, together with other important functions such as the market (for example in France, see Anthony, Ardagh, Ehrlich, and Daul (2019)). However, although the churches were important for the local community, especially in Southern Europe, they were a part of a much greater power structure headed by the Pope. In this way, local communities were also linked to a much greater European project.

Local communities with a relative high degree of self-governance have been important for the course of European history. Through the Middle Ages many cities in Italy, France, Germany and the Dutch areas managed to gain such a high degree of independence that they could effectively be self-governed. Some of these cities also linked together to secure their independence. Such linkages often crossed present national boundaries such as *Hansaforbundet*, linking among other countries such as Germany, England and Norway. These belts of cities were strong enough to slow down the process of nation building and to decrease the power of the kings. This process was particularly prominent in Germany and Italy (Thorsnæs & Berg, 2018).

The electors of Brandenburg (who from 1701 were the kings of Prussia) were important in building up the autonomy of these city-states. Important foundation for the modern public administration in Europe were then also laid down, and civil servants were appointed by the central government to administer the provinces. Under were the tax councillors who controlled the administration of the municipalities and communes (Mosher, Chapman, & Page, 2019). However, as influence over one's own local community is highly important for people, claims to self-govern grew with the development of democratic states. In turn resulting in the establishment of local democratic bodies (Thorsnæs & Berg, 2018). Though the role of the church was still important to structure local communities throughout the Renaissance, Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution, the bureaucracy and administrative units increased in importance as the state grew bigger. In 1922, Max Weber described the ideal bureaucracy with its clear division of labour, professionalism and detached from personal relations (Waters, 2015). In other words, the *Gesellschaft* was increasingly important for structuring local communities.

Large-scale community-influencing events, such as the formation of the European Union, including the general feeling after the World War II in Europe heavily impacted the developments of local communities in post-1945 Europe. In Norway, for instance, there was a strong and widely shared feeling of working together to rebuild the country. This was likely similar in other countries in Europe, also as witnessed by the efforts that went into economy and trade-related initiatives such as the early-stage European Union. The experiences made during the two world wars themselves also likely influenced the organization and feeling of belonging in local communities of Europe due to the hardships experienced, which made people depend more on one another. As described by for example, Arampatzi (2017) and Seyfang and Haxeltine (2012), large-scale incidents such as the economic crisis, climate change or trade-wars still produce impacts over local communities and the strength of a local community arguably is a determinate factor for how severely people are affected by such macro-scale changes. At the same time, parts of a community that where partly detached can also find new linkages through such hardships.

The cold war and the Iron Curtain left Europe split with two very different forms of official community structures. While work and housing was strictly organized during the Soviet period, on the other side of the Iron Curtain, other social structures characterized the post-war era. With growing cities and car ownership, urban sprawl and suburbanization was the trend in many western countries (Lupi & Musterd, 2006), which later has been the case for post-Soviet countries (Haase et al., 2012). Rather than work and housing being co-located, longer commuting distances was the new norm in many western European cities. These communities have commonly been described through a language of alienation, lack of connection to place – so called *non-places* (Lupi & Musterd, 2006, p. 805), reflecting the idea of community "Lost". Hovever it has proven difficult to obtain a sound empirical base for such claims. Rather, studies have found that suburbanites engage in local social activates, especially around sports, also that there is a high degree of trust and mutual helpfulness among neighbors in some of the homogenous neighborhoods (Lupi & Musterd, 2006), challenging the idea of increased alienation in the suburbs.

2.2 Community's status and organization structure in contemporary urban-rural society

During the last decades in Europe, several macro-changes have produced considerable impact on communities, including industrialization of agriculture, urbanization, improved living conditions especially in Eastern and Southern Europe, economic crisis and increasingly larger social disparity that has particularly manifested in the cities. While the organizational structure of the state grew (at least until the 1970s), many countries experienced increased liberalization starting in the 1980s, including the privatization of spaces that were formerly publicly owned. For example in Eastern Europe, in the post-Soviet period, the large scale transfer of state-owned housing to private actors considerably changed the structure of the housing markets in the cities (Haase et al., 2012).

A direct comparison between the administrative structures of China and Europe is beyond the scope of this paper due to the diversification of European administrative structures. Yet, similar to China, many countries have three or four administrative levels, a structure that originated from Prussia. In Norway for example, there are two

main administrative units under the state; county and municipality. In addition, in larger cities, districts also hold politically elected representatives. Poland in turn is divided into three administrative levels under the state: provinces, counties, and town or rural communes (Smogorzewski et al., 2019); and the German federal states (*bundesländer*) have varying levels of subdivision (see Table 1). In several European countries, the largest cities are divided into smaller administrative units. Paris, for example is divided into 20 *arrondissements* or municipal districts, with their own Mayor and town hall (Anthony et al., 2019). These are in turn divided into cantons. However, these are rather a territorial division than a genuine unit of local government; it is only a convenient administrative subdivision for purposes such as elections and tax collection (Britannica, 2008).

Table 1 Administrative division in Europe (Unit: number of population)

	Spatial level	Administration level	Example
1	Union of member states	Supranational and intergovernmental	The European Union 512,600,000
2	Member state	Central government	Germany 82,790,000
3	Provinces	Regional / provincial government	Bavaria 12,843,514
4	Administrative districts	District / county government	Upper Bavaria 4,649,534
5	City	Municipal government / City council	Munich 1,456,039
6	District / Borough	Councillor in City council	Altstadt Lehel 20.926
7	Neighbourhood	Residents' organization (autonomous)	-

The state in Eueope plays a central role in structuring communities through different administrative levels, such as communes, municipalities, or districts. For many European countries the lowest administrative level (the municipality) has a linguistic connotation to the word "community" and often referred to as communes. The word originates from medieval Latin, *communia,* which in turn derives from *communis,* meaning belonging or available for several people (De Caprona, 2013). The word is used in France and Switzerland (*commune*), Italy (*comuni*), Norway, Denmark (*kommune).* In Europe, therefore, the right to belong to a place, having some level of self-governance, access to state services organized by the lowest administrative level, but also paying taxes, are closely intertwined.

The word "community" does not bear solely positive connotations across Europe. By comparing the notion between France and England, Moussaoui (2011) shows that the term bears quite different meanings. In England, the term connotes a sense of collective belonging. In France, the translation of the English word (*communauté* in French) bears

two distinct meanings. First, in political discourse it is regarded as an unwanted remain of a traditional society. Its persistence is seen to discard the responsibility the state *vis-a-vis* population, pushing responsibility over to individuals and organizations – contrary to the republican contract. In academia, French sociology thus constructed the concept of "community" in opposition to the concept of "society" and this prevented it from seeing "communities within society" (Sainsaulieu et al, 2010, translated in and by: Moussaoui, 2011, p. 8). Further, in everyday French it connotates with the English term "communitarianism", often referring to religious or anti-establishment movement, i.e., the hippie collective movement. That being said, with the increasing Anglo-Saxon influence in French academia, there also seem to be changes in the way the term is understood. In France, the terms of local initiatives, or grassroots initiatives are preferred (see for example by Yalçın-Riollet, Garabuau-Moussaoui, & Szuba, 2014). So, while in the UK, Woodcraft and Dixon (2013) note that there has been "strong historical traditions of 'social town planning' in the UK, (…) which placed a strong emphasis on people and jobs, and providing housing for them in an attractive environment," this does not necessarily contrast political targets in France, as this emphasis here surely includes the state as a responsible for the welfare of the population. Such linguistic differences underpin the need to go beyond the term itself and rather look at the meaning of the word. At the same time, this difference goes further than being "lost in translation" – it also reflects a political sentiment, historical or still present – towards non-state actors normatively not responsible for the making of places.

2.3 Community's functions in urban-rural economy, society and culture

The lowest level of administrative units in Europe are often communes, city districts or municipal districts. In some countries with a decentralized government structure, such as the Nordic Countries, these lower administrative units play a quite important role in government services. The centres of the communes thereby play an important role in distribution of welfare benefits, elderly care, tax collection, primary education and also in the democratic structure. In earlier Soviet states, the commune is still an important provider of apartments (Haase et al., 2012). As a result, much of the social life and feeling of belonging to a place is therefore connected to these administrative units. This was visible for example in the opposition to merging communes in Norway, which not only rooted in people's fear of losing employment opportunities, but also was connected to people identification with administrative area (Frisvoll & Almås, 2014).

Outside of the government structure, there are also organizations that serve important community functions. Especially in suburban Europe, team sports have played an important role in bringing a community together, not only for the children but also parents contributing in volunteer activities to raise money for the sports team and keep facilities in shape (Lupi & Musterd, 2006). Volunteer activities are generally important "glue" in holding local communities together, it is also an important aspect of many elderly people's life. Especially in Northern Europe, about 20 percent of the elderly population engage in such activities (Erlinghagen & Hank, 2006), not only bringing benefits to their own life but also bringing the community closer for example by providing language training or teaching assistance. Some cities with high degrees of self-owned housing, have strong neighbourhood associations who not only make contribution in small scale upgrading and decorations, but also can organize social activities and address local social issues such as crime and vandalism. Such

neighbourhood associations also serve as intermediate spaces where people start doing other types of volunteer work, which have proven important for individual's well-being as well as the community at large, and participating in political processes (Dekker & Van den Broek, 1998). Neighbourhood grassroots associations also played an important role in dialogues between public institutions and citizens in post-dictatorial politics (Degen & García, 2012). Thereby, the roles of the local democratic bodies and administrative units, and the civil spheres of society feed into each other and can be mutually dependent.

3. The Experience in China

3.1 Main types and functions of urban and rural communities in historical development process

Although "community" was literally translated into Chinese (*shequ*) in the 1930s by Fei Xiaotong, the concept of community has a long history in China. It can be traced back to the basic organization form of collective production (well-field system in the Shang and Zhou Dynasties). In ancient times, an ideal community was characterized by good neighbouring and collective consciousness built through daily interaction, agricultural production and risk prevention (Wu, 2014: 442). From the perspective of governance, community, the lowest level of China's great administrative system, has important functions of population management, education, tax collection and safety protection (Zhao, 1998).

While the form of urban community transformed along with the evolvement of the institution and pattern of city building (such as Li-Fang in the Tang and Song Dynasties), that of rural community was relatively stable. The typical community in traditional rural China is a clan built on kinship. Local gentry who is always an elderly with high reputation or a retired officer takes a leader role in community affairs (Fei, 1939). The forms of clan community vary across the country as they are affected by the organization pattern of agricultural production and geographic environment. Yet there is always a public building such as temple and stage, and a plaza located in the centre of the community for religious, educational and cultural function. As rural communities are a society of acquaintance, villagers enjoy a quite high level of social integration (Fei, 1939).

Since the founding of the PRC in 1949, China adopted a planned economy and imported the state-owned work unit (Danwei) system from the Soviet Union to promote industrialization. Work unit compounds thus functioned as the container of urban community life. It was built and managed by work units: Housing was allocated to the staff as a kind of welfare; public service such as educational, cultural and recreational facilities were provided by work unit within the compound. The work unit compound is characterized by mixed use of workplaces, housing, and public facilities, which facilitates an ideal setting for jobs-housing balance. As all the staff and their families worked or lived together in this enclosed space, they have a strong sense of community belonging (Huang, 2006).

Since the late 1970s, China has experienced a series of reforms, such as economic institutions that reformed from a planned economy to a market economy and a housing system that transformed from welfare allocation to market production. With the collapse of work unit system, commodity housing built by private real estate developers

has become the dominant form of urban community. Most of commodity housing has the attributes of homogeneous residential use, gated community, and high-rise buildings. Housing commodification has resulted in residential segregation at city level due to the sorting process of market-based allocation (Wang & Murie, 2000; Wu, 2005; Li & Wu, 2008). In this modern community form, residents seldom interact, and their social connection is weak (Forrest & Yip, 2007).

3.2 Community's status and organization structure in contemporary urban-rural society

Chinese community constructions are often more government-based than in Western countries. Chinese contemporary administrative structure includes five levels, i.e., central government, provincial government, municipal government, district/county government, and sub-district office/town government. Under the guidance of sub-district office/town government is resident/villager committee (see Table 2). Although resident/villager committee is legally an autonomous organization of residents/villagers, it undertakes a large number of governmental functions. Since the 1990s, Chinese government has continuously emphasized community building, so as to implement governance in response to the declination of work unit system and the growth of migration. As Bray (2006: 546) argues, "'community building' in urban China presents a hybrid combination of strategies for community governance; it combines some fairly direct modes of governmental intervention, with a well-developed system of voluntary service and a commitment to the efficacy of community as an agent for moral improvement."

Table 2 Administrative division in China (unit: number of population)

	Spatial level	Administration level	Example
1	State	Central government	China 1,382,710,000
2	Province	Provincial government	-
3	City	Municipal government	Beijing municipality 21,729,000
4	District/county	District/ county government	Haidian district 3,593,000
5	Subdistrict/town	Subdistrict office/ Township government	Qinghe subdistrict 170,000
6	Residential community/village	Resident/ Villager committee (autonomous)	Yangguang residential community 5,000
7	Residential unit/ natural village		Yangguangnanli residential unit 1,200

3.3 Community's functions in urban-rural economy, society and culture

With the inception of the market economy, the housing system in China has transformed from a kind of welfare allocated by work units to a product provided by private real-estate developers. The infrastructure supply of communities thus has been carried out from single player to multiple players. Under the context of commodity housing community, there are mainly three key roles in community building: 1) residents' committee, which is in charge of public affairs related to community; 2) homeowner committee, which is responsible to collect and express local residents' opinions and to supervise the operation of the property, and 3) property service company, which is recruited by the homeowner assembly to provide service to the community.

The organization of the residents' committee was established under the *Regulations on the Organization of Chinese Urban Residents' Committees* in 1954 and was further legalized under the *Organization Act of Chinese Urban Residents' Committee* in 1989. According to the law, residents' committee is a bottom-level autonomous organization of residents' self-management, self-education, and self-service. Its tasks include: 1) to handle public affairs and public welfare of local residents; 2) to mediate civil disputes; 3) to assist the maintenance of public order; 4) to assist the government or its branch agencies to work on affairs that are related to residents' interests, such as public health, reproduction planning, social relief, and youth education; and 5) to convey residents' opinions, requests and suggestions to superior government or its branch agencies.

Besides the above three players, grassroots are also emerging and showing their power and contribution in community building. There are now three main kinds of social forces that have been engaged in urban and rural community building: 1) social organizations, some of which have transformed their main functions from traditional social service provision and personal support to community capacity building, named by themselves as "developmental social organization", such as "IYOUshe" that mainly carried their work in Chengdu; 2) university teachers and students, with the main majors including urban-rural planning, architecture, landscape, artistic design, sociology, social work, public management, etc., such as Tsinghua University's interdisciplinary team in the "New Qinghe Experiment" in Beijing (Liu & Deng, 2016; Li & Wang, 2017); 3)planning institutions, such as the Beijing Tsinghua Tongheng Urban Planning & Design Institute and Beijing Municipal Institute of City Planning & Design, devoting into participatory community renewal and community planning in Beijing (Zhao, 2017; Liu & Wang, 2018).

As China adopts urban-rural dual system, the basic autonomous organizations in rural and urban areas are named differently, i.e., villagers' committee and residents' committee. In the Chinese land system, rural land is collectively owned by villagers and operated by a villagers' committee; differently, urban land is state-owned and urban residents do not have any collective assets such as land. This distinction leads to the different functions of two committees: While villagers' committee has a very strong economic connection with local villagers, residents' committee's task are limited to social affairs (see Table 3).

The villagers' committee evolved from the concept of a "production team" which was proposed in the *Draft Amendment to the Rural People's Commune Work Regulations* in 1962. The concept of the villagers' committee was legalized in 1988 by the

Organization Act of the Villagers' Committee which was revised in 2010. According to related law, villagers' committee is a bottom-level autonomous organization of villagers' self-management, self-education and self-service. It implements democratic elections, democratic decision-making, democratic management and democratic supervision. Its major duties include: 1) to handle public affairs and public welfare of the village; 2) to mediate civil disputes; 3) to help maintain public order; and 4) to convey villagers' opinions, requests and suggestions to the government.

Table 3 Comparison of residents' committee & villagers' committee

	Residents' committee	Villagers' committee
Area	Urban area	Rural area
Main function	Public service provision	Economic development
Land ownership	State owned; residents do not own any collective assets such as land	Collectively owned by villagers; operated and managed by villagers' committee
Economy function	No economic connection with local residents	Strong economic connection with local villagers

4. Discussion and conclusions

The way in which citizens are organized on the local level shows both similarities and differences between China and Europe. Similarities mostly refer to tasks necessary to be taken care of in communities, which may be rather universal. Differences are related to the legal status and level of voluntary participation in the various modes of organization. In China, bottom-up organization of residents' and villagers' committees is regulated by law, and defines tasks like self-management, self-education and self-service. Although characterized as an autonomous organization, its duties and election processes are more formalized. A formal European counterpart of the Chinese villagers' committee is more rare, but local organized groups do perform similar tasks: ensuring safety and welfare on the level of the local neighborhood including its public spaces, especially where municipalities do not have necessary resources. On the smallest scale, similar observations appear to be valid when comparing the Chinese homeowners or proprietors committee with the European "equivalent", i.e. the Norwegian *borettslag*, which has a legal status just like in China, and similar tasks, such as securing safety in housing blocks and dealing with contracts with various service and maintenance providers. However, European housing organizations usually are autonomous and do not necessarily resort under a higher-level organization. Participation may also be on a more voluntarily level, although engaging with such organizations may be voluntary on paper, but subject to peer pressure in practice. In this sense, officially organized forms of participation as well as peer-pressured ones can potentially serve as equally strong mechanisms to secure citizen engagement, especially in homogeneous societies and communities.

There are also some similarities in organization connected to the influence of the Soviet Union in Eastern Europe. The collectivization of agriculture started already in 1929 in the Soviet Union, and the peasantry was forced to give up their individual farms and join large collective farms, or *kolkhozy*. In both China and Russia, these events are seen

as the most important historic agricultural events of the post-revolutionary time (Nolan, 1976). Similarly, in urban areas, the work-units (*danwei*) is a planning concept imported from Soviet to China, organizing work and housing (Wu, 2005). In other words, due to ideological similarities, organization structures had important similarities (Nolan, 1976). Some traces of this type of organization can still be found in Eastern Europe, in former Soviet-bloc countries, but as we have shown several of these countries have undergone large changes in community organization.

Differences are related to how communities emerged (e.g., to revitalize and protect historically and culturally significant neighbourhoods, or in response to political, economic, environmental and urbanisation-related crises), where the initiative came from, and to what extent they are part of or work to build national and international neighborhoods and city networks. Both Chinese and European cases demonstrate collaboration between stakeholders across public and private sectors, academia and civil society. Table 4 compares and contrasts communities in China and Europe with respect to economic, social and cultural categories. Generally speaking, contemporary communities in European countries are characterized by a relatively higher degree of self-governance and more diversified organizations, while those in China are more administration-based. The commodification of housing in China has brought about a new pattern of community relationship which is market-based, along with the risk of residential segregation and social stratification.

Table 4 Comparison of the functions of European and Chinese communities

	Europe	China	
		Urban	Rural
Economic	Tax, cooperatives/guilds, sharing-economy initiatives	Maintenance of property	Collective production (rural cooperative), benefits from collective economy
Social	Sports teams, neighbourhood associations, local public house (pub)	Resident committee, homeowner committee, local public space (green space, tea house)	Villagers' committee, local public space (temple and plaza)
Cultural	Volunteering, community building, a common cause, i.e., climate change or local environmental issues, religion/church	Interest groups, community centre	Clan ritual, village regulation

To conclude, we can say that the differences in the ways communities are either understood or organized differently in Europe and China have major consequences for achieving socially integrative cities. It is clear from this paper that a direct transfer of

the concept of "community" from Europe to China would lead to major misunderstandings with respect to what type of policy could be suggested to achieve socially integrative cities. The paper has also shown that even internally in Europe there are large differences in the way community is understood and practiced, due to historical and cultural differences. Thus, we would argue that a local understanding and basis should be developed for each city in question to understand local challenges, local cultures and practices in order to successfully implement policies that co-create the intended targets wanted by local communities and governments alike. This study stands as a preliminary attempt to explore the varieties of communities across China and Europe. Further studies are warranted to systematically examine the typologies of communities and their relationship in building socially integrative cities.

Edited by Qian Fang
Proofread by Tang Yan

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