

Development of Social Life Circumstance of Urban Fringe Settlements in China Central Region

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Supporting issues:

1. 湖北省自然科学基金一般项目 Hubei Province Natural Science General Fund Project“城乡交错带聚落自发景观研究(Studies on the Urban Interleaving with Self-circumstance of Settlement)”, 课题号 Issue No.: 2009CDB352

2. 湖北省教育厅科学技术研究计划优秀中青年人才项目 Hubei Provincial Department of Education Science and Technology Research Program—Outstanding Youth Talent Project“湖北省通山县传统聚落自发景观形态特征研究(Morphological Characteristics of Self-circumstance of Traditional Settlement in County of Hubei Province)”, 课题号 Issue No. Q20101116

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Received 23 March 2013; accepted 4 June 2013

Abstract

Along with the triumphant advance of urbanization in central China central region and disorderly unwinding of cities, urban fringe settlements are incorporated into urban expansion territory, so that villagers became landless peasants. This paper is based on the comparison and analysis on the social life circumstance of traditional settlements and modern urban fringe settlements, thereby exploring the causes and rules of development of social life circumstance of urban fringe settlements in the urbanization process.

Key words: Urban fringe; Traditional settlements; Social life circumstance

YE Yun, LIU Xingyu (2013). Development of Social Life Circumstance of Urban Fringe Settlements in China Central Region. *Canadian Social Science*, 9(3), 125-129. Available from: <http://www.cscanada.net/index.php/css/article/view/j.css.1923669720130903.3064>
DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3968/j.css.1923669720130903.3064>.

INTRODUCTION

Traditional settlement in China central region is built on the basis of consanguinity and geographic. Traditional settlement is built on a social acquaintance environment, the relationship of this society is due to people altogether recuperated, which is a gemeinschaft. Ritual, ethics, care for the young is the yardstick and internal order of the maintenance of social development, villagers have a self-sufficient life. In a social acquaintance, fraud, banditry and other bad actors are difficult to have a foothold. The control of social affairs in this kind of settlement are in the hands of clans and elders. A settlement is often a production unit and management unit. For the common good, they erected a common God as their common worship and admiration, these are ancestors and other gods such as land god. They help each other, including economic and daily affairs. And the slowdown of social circumstance development resulted in the relatively stable in settlement materials circumstance.

But the past three decades, rapid urbanization process in central China has broken all the original orders, land loss of urban fringe settlements and farmers living in poverty, social acquaintance becomes a heterogeneous society that is both friendly and unfriendly. Traditional ruling order is slowly converted and disappear, a series of social problem arises such as rights expression mechanism defects. Thus, social circumstance presents a “Great Chaos” situation.

1. DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL LIFE CIRCUMSTANCE OF URBAN FRINGE SETTLEMENTS

Along with the triumphant advance of urbanization in central China central region and disorderly unwinding of cities, farmlands and villages under collective ownership which surround the periphery of the city are incorporated

into urban expansion territory. For the purpose of urban development needs and to maximize the performance and economic benefits, governments and developers first cultivated land acquisition. At this point of land nominally belongs to collectively owned by “everyone”, but the collectively “everyone” has no right to speak. Coupled with relevant national policies are not supporting and farmers lack of rights expression. Village lands are expropriated cheaply and completed rapidly, since then the villagers become landless peasants. However, urban expansion brings a lot of business and other opportunities. In order to satisfy the survival needs, villagers pegged to their homestead and private plots. For the future needs of urban planning, city managers strictly control the surrounding survival and competing interests. Each vassal such as the villagers and the government, the villagers and the villagers, the villagers and developers staged a brilliant game theater. Since then, social circumstance of urban fringe settlements has undergone enormous changes.

1.1 Villagers Morality - At Loose Ends

The grassroots structure of Chinese rural society is a so-called “differential pattern”, which is a kind of grids composed of every personal contacts. It is a network that composed of one or more factors. Each network has a center, those networks are crossing each other. The center may be a family’s prestige, the authority of a person or a conventional contract, etc. As opposed to “groups pattern”, the meaning of “groups pattern” refers to everyone like a bundle of sticks individual, and groups is a prerequisite of life. In contrast, everyone in Chinese rural society are self-reliant in their own land, they only require partners to join at very occasional or temporary status, thereby gradually formed the individual-based “differential pattern”. This difference in the pattern of social structure will form different moral contract. In “groups pattern”, the basic moral relationship is built on the top of the relationship between groups and individual, the relationship of each molecule and the group is equal. In contrast, the moral standards of each personal contacts in “differential pattern”, which is introduced from the “self”, the introducing path includes relatives, parents, siblings of “filial piety”, the “faithfulness” between friends, “cultivation of moral before cultivating oneself”, “governance of country is imperative to Govern their home” and other ethical standards. And the Chinese traditional laws and standards often use different ways to treat due to the relationships between objects. For instance, others do bad things, you will scold them; Families do bad things, you won’t scold them but praise them, etc.

In the developing period of traditional settlement, family is the basic building block. Due to its closed consanguinity, geographic and the characteristic of autarky, it can get their own living space on the basis of care for the young, faithfulness and other moral foundations. Community interest of maintaining moral

order exists, so ethical standards that sustain private interests also exist and being complied. But after all being broken in turmoil, the word “moral” may be simply forgotten and disorderly subverted. People may be built on the basic concept of “differential pattern”, but they disregard of traditional moral values and use extraordinary measures to maintain and fight for their own interests. For the needs of survival interests, they always think that, “Can traditional moral bring wealth to me?”. Therefore, they always struggle between traditional ethics and anti-traditional ethics.

In the period of traditional settlement is gradually urbanized in China central region, some “ruthless people” appears in the settlement. This “ruthless” means in the face of government or enterprises and units for government use all the formal and non-formal means to insist on their own vested interests. This “ruthless” helps “ruthless people” earned a reputation, thus contributing to the increase of his “soft” strength and set a “prestige” invisibly. This prestige provides him the power to resolve the dispute between themselves and others, which provides the protection for their accumulation of wealth. However, this “ruthless” held in contempt by the moral values of Chinese traditional society. In traditional moral values, such approaches are considered as “Shameless”, “rogue” and “riffraff”. The emphasis on traditional moral values is Care for the young and courtesy, which is rigorous Confucian order and unreasonable to this kind of “ruthless”, they don’t agree with the unscrupulous behaviors for benefits. But this kind of “ruthless” can indeed win for their own interests and reputation in today’s society. Also, it sets a moral “model” for villagers in this particular historical period, because this model is for themselves and others, which help this representatives of vulnerable groups to win benefits, but the traditional moral can’t do that. Wealth and the role brought from traditional moral is indeed not as good as unscrupulous people, compliance with the constraints of traditional ethics functions becomes weaker and weaker. Therefore, exemplary role in model of traditional ethics seems about to disappear, people are struggling between traditional and non-traditional.

1.2 Life Attitude of Villagers - Gradually Helplessness

Land is the survival foundation of farmers, farmers are just like losing mother at loose ends. The reality is cruel. On the one hand, their career is facing transition and compete in the fierce commercial market. On the other hand, they lack of high-level labor skills and cannot engage in technical work. Losing land, they are very easy to become vulnerable groups. They try, they resist, they are also struggling, they always want to grab a rope to climb over the shore. However, either the rope is too fragile or the strength of the rope is not large. For the people living in impoverished, when the effect of asking for “others-help”

is not significant, they can only rely on “self-help”. When the effect of “self-help” is not significant too, perhaps the only remaining is “helplessness” and other negative attitudes and measures against their life.

Landless villagers can only build houses on the remaining odd bits of land in the village, or retrofitting on the old houses and scramble to build houses. Look forward to demolition once more on this basis, as if to grab the last straw and earn back the possible money at the final. Their houses building is like to fight a guerrilla war. The enemy advances, we retreat; the enemy gone, we chase. Just an unguarded moment and they can build a house at one night. They are gambling with government and developers, bet on patience, perseverance and strategies. Of course they win, but the matters are win more or less. In some people this may be a gang of “trouble-making”, every day they won’t do other things but wondering the house building, it seems much lazy and make farmers losing their nature completely. However, the lazy of villagers this time mainly should be “forced to be lazy”, which is more suitable. It is worth thinking about that, this result does not exclude the dictates of imperfect policies and implementation of policy distortions. The airstrike on the urban fringe settlements, just like the air raiding vultures scared the neatly flock, they has broken the country peace of the past.

1.3 Social Characteristics of Traditional Settlements - Gradually Disappear

With urban sprawl, land disappeared, the transformation of work and life hardship, the function of clan and family shelters from traditional settlements is also weakened. Shelters refer to the places where are acknowledged and relatively free within the system of power. Shelter is a concept of institutional, which does not necessarily say that settlements or building should be built as much more closed. Shelters and prisons is a relative field. Former is the place where prepared for the escape from the power system, while latter is a closed place where set by the power system. Speaking from a certain intersection, all settlements are shelters, it’s only a difference in degree. For example, surnamed Y of L village in whole township has four branches, known as the Y Four which is an amazing unity. Formerly they had disputed of lake issues with M village and occurred many times of conflict and even large-scale armed fighting. Eventually played the prestige, so outsiders are afraid of the villagers of Y Four so much, villagers are also proud of the surnamed Y. When there is festivals, activities of lion and dragon dance are always held in massive, sometimes there will sing opera 7days and 7nights continuously. This is perhaps the demonstration of the strong power and the united hearts to outsiders. It is also precisely because settlements have such a powerful sanctuary features, so that the community can be continued. But over the past two decades years, the lion and dragon dance in Chinese New Year, the elderly in village called for many times but nobody concerned.

Different family names rushed into village and beat the young people of the village, their crying for help is also unanswered. Thief can brazenly burgle one by one. Due to the conflicts of land acquisition, developers send people to attack nail households at night and no one speak out too. The people of Y Four is no longer proud of the surnamed Y. Its shelter capacity has been weakened to a family as a unit, in residential as a unit.

In the period of traditional settlements, elderly has the supremacy, their authority is unchallengeable. It is because their wisdom and life experience is sufficient to deal with the relatively stable of settlements life pattern. And in recent years, the life of traditional settlements are being affected and damaged. The reason is the openness of settlement outward increased significantly, and the lifestyle changed a lot. The wisdom and life experience of elderly are often neglected, the ordered life of care for the young is also been disrupted. At the same time, due to various reasons, people by all means to pursue interests is intensified. Therefore, in front of the interests, family, morality, care for the young, and so the traditional social characteristics can only take the second place.

In the period of traditional settlements, The entire settlement of villagers basically are all related to each other. houses and houses form different families and clan alliances according to the proximity relationship of consanguinity. When there is son and daughter wedding, death of the elderly or other ceremonial occasions, and building a house or children graduation or other bid events, villagers will donate whatever they can, no matter money or efforts. Usually, women will help in cooking, cleaning, greeting guests and other housekeeping matters, while men will engage on the beam, masonry and other foreign affairs matters, and they all are not talking about any compensations. Simply after the event, the host family will properly give some drinks, fish, meat or other items that symbolically expressed appreciation. The advantage thus obtained is that, between clans can concentrate on doing a big event, while incorporating a mutual feeling and affection. Of course, such form of mutual assistance is essentially different from the currency as standard of western capitalism. Western solidarity may be built on the basis of relative fair, but the solidarity value of Chinese rural clan has no uniform standard. These two solidarity value is not necessarily equal, but it forms a good atmosphere of harmony in traditional settlements. At the same time, from one side it laid the foundation for building Confucian order and family of settlements, it also confirms the Chinese traditional *savoir-faire* ideology, the philosophy of “tolerance come with charms”. But now, because of conflicts of interest, the blood relationship and closeness of closed network in settlement is increasingly hollowing and fracturing. More importantly, the balancing system of slow changes on stabilize settlement is broken, and so have a major impact on the traditional social characteristics of settlements.

1.4 Neighborhood Relationships - Increasing the Level of Tension

The closed economic environment of village self-sufficiency and the most fundamental economic base is broken. Villagers can only outreach to strive for improving their economic conditions. Part of the villagers get rich first, while the other part of villagers are living below the poverty line. The originally interpersonal relationships of equal exchanges is broken, from both sides become more sensitive and suspicious, thereby increasing the difficulty of communication. Villagers are supposed to love each other and help each other, but they may lead to conflicts or even a fight because of a trifle. Houses and houses are getting closer, but the relationship between people is farther and farther. The harmonious relations between neighbors also seemed never returned.

1.5 Village Security - Gradually Insecurity

In the period of traditional settlements, basically it doesn't need to close the door at night and completely peaceful and prosperous. If villagers pick up something, they will return them. Because it is a social acquaintance, doing so can get a good reputation, but it can also bring them own benefit. There will be a set of precise conduct rules for everyone to comply with. Those who break the rules will be reviled and despised by the whole village. Therefore, petty theft is very rare within the village. Because of social acquaintance, everyone have maintained a considerable vigilance on outsiders, so the settlement is relatively safe. But now, petty theft is too much in the village, especially for those real estate development or relatively wealthy people. Once or twice or several times to be "patronized", it is very off guard.

From "the door doesn't need to close at night" and "completely peaceful and prosperous" of traditional settlements developed into a pattern of everyone tremble with fear and every household were stolen, a settlement developed from social acquaintance into a stranger society, which is the root cause of villages insecurity. Social acquaintance has an overall vigilance and defense capabilities against stranger. Acquaintances is homogeneous, while stranger is heterogeneous. When few strangers broke into a homogeneous society, they will encounter consistent resistance. Therefore, the period of traditional settlement is relatively safe, people are very familiar with the surrounding environment. Thus, according to the traditional way of life doesn't have much variables. Therefore, people's mood is also relatively relaxed, their sense of security is also strong. Overall poverty and wealth inequality of traditional settlement is the second reason of villages insecurity. Because of overall poverty, they will think about unconventional thoughts; because of wealth inequality, they will attack the wealthy and help the poor. At the same time, it creates an unique acquired condition for crimes of burglar.

1.6 Entertainment - Gradually Simplification (That is Gambling)

In the village settlements of these urban fringe. Because of the villagers with nothing to do and no affluent public space to organize large-scale mass entertainments, gambling serves most of the people in the village as their basic entertainment activities. Apart from students, the unemployed basically stays on the gaming tables every day, The elderly who has some little pocket money will spent on the gaming tables too. Those bosses who earn a lot of money also enjoy the gaming tables, even the villagers who work outside also play at the gaming tables when they have nothing to do. Basically, it is whole community gambling, "rich make large bet, poor make small bet."

In the period of traditional settlements, there is not without gambling. There is gambling phenomenon since ancient times, but the scope and intensity is not so big until now. First, farmers have the basic means of production, they have to work at the day time and rest at the night time, no time for them to gamble; Second, farmers believe that people who are interested in gambling are spendthrift, they believe that this habit and "pays for doing nothing" is not desirable in the moral values. In the period of traditional settlements, entertainment and ritual activities are often closely linked. For singing opera during worship, worshipping kitchen, grand festival and lantern festival or other activities, on the one hand it united tribe, but also demonstrated the power against different family names. Settlement members improved the communication frequency and opportunity for interaction through different recreational activities. At the same time, contacts and relations also formed between people and god. People paid tribute to god and proposed demands, the god gave the answers and blessing, and the god is the symbol of collective. And up to the large group of commune period, some entertainments are usually organized by a public authority, such as inter-village soccer matches. But along with the disappearance of public space and land, the first priority for people to earn a living which resulted in homogenization and emptiness of entertainment, also the narrowing of entertaining space.

2. THE REASONS OF DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL LIFE CIRCUMSTANCE OF URBAN FRINGE SETTLEMENTS

A. It dictates from the starting point and macroeconomic policy designed by the top of the state. Since the founding, in order to support the strategic approach of the development of heavy industry with national priorities to set up a highly centralized commune system, which serves the urbanization strategy of industrialization. In order to reduce the social capital of urbanization, these national strategies concentrate

as much money for urban construction and industrial development. Therefore, it absorbs huge capital from the land that belongs to peasants' collective for urban construction. Centering on this top-level design, series of systems is the direct agent. For example, national land acquisition policy precisely is the mandatory deprivation against the collective land ownership from the state. It can clearly be seen that, expropriation process of rural collective land is entirely a process of mighty deprivation against farmers' land from the state. The consideration of compensation standards is about the agricultural output value of the land itself, but without considering the commercial value, which is unreasonable. While "agriculture household" and "non-agricultural household" these two categories of urban-rural dual structure and household barriers, it has cured the state power inequality between urban and rural and been inertial developing. Resulting after the interests in land of farmers deprived by the state and other related supporting systems have not been able to perfectly transfigure. The government obtains most of the value of the land, and thus give the priority to developing cities. Around this theme, it created a series of policy to cause farmers stepping into poverty institutional. Around the institutionalized poverty, in order to satisfy the survival needs, the competition for remaining resources from villagers and the village collective has developed into a "richly colorful" pattern of social scene.

B. Ecological functions of sheltering and self-operated disappear in the development process from traditional unity of consanguinity and geographic to village community in settlement. The long feudal society in China will be restricted by natural conditions and technical conditions to form the peasant economy characteristics of self-sufficient. This civilization is built on the agricultural economy which depends on land and lack of liquidity, it is on the basis of long-term "selecting sites for living". In this way can form the family community based on blood relationship, and the neighboring community based on geographic relationship. For the social economy, it can form a good inner loop. For the governance, it can combine the legal system on behalf of the national will with the maintenance of neighbors emotional relationships, where norms of villagers conduct in daily life more is a etiquette. In case of insufficient national resources, it usually uses gentry class to combine state structures with the underlying population, to form a stable social structure with balanced order.

Since reform and opening, the village community has taken shape under the auspices of the state's power, rich and powerful in the name of "restructuring" to "rob" the enterprises and natural resources of community, which caused the collapse of the collective economy. The introduction of "Land Management Law" in 1988, the land system develops in the direction of "state ownership and farmers permanent tenancy". Vast majority of village community (village collective organization)

cannot share the non-farm income of land, which caused gradual disappearance of village community (village collective organization). The gradual disappearance from consanguinity and geographic unity of traditional settlement to village community (village collective organization) is not conducive to food production security and social stability, common prosperity of farmers and community building and governance. It is needless to say that the impact of national power politics on the role of barriers and shelters to protect interests of the villagers from the traditional settlement and village community.

C. Peasant society and personal characteristics. In the period of traditional settlement, because of peasant economy to tie the farmers into the small plots of land, which caused them blindly ignorance in politics, indifference on the state of the world, and even not to propose any social improvement programs. Due to the long term concept of restraining commerce in the economy, they lack of business minds. In short, they are economically backward, behavioral conserved. Although with the process of industrialization and urbanization, there is some changes on economic philosophy, entertainment and value concept, but most of the farmers are still between the character of traditional farmers and semi-modern farmers, who features both traditional and modern characteristics. Therefore, it is basically impossible for farmers to protest outside for the group interests, as they are independent and decentralized. Therefore, most of them are usually in their own areas of individuals and families to gain life and subsistence. Additionally, few modern farmers outreach for survival needs, and they use both formal and non-formal means to obtain their own interests.

CONCLUSION

In the process of rapid urbanization, the provincialism, blood relationship, geo-cluster and combined etiquette of traditional settlement, size of the traditional combination of traditional settlement characteristics are not necessarily to be eliminated. In contrast, the traditional maintaining and reconstruction is closely related to socio-economic development. At the same time, folk traditions are conducive to the development of social harmony. In this way, we can understand that urbanization is not only a socio-economic transformation process, it is a process that includes culture, traditions and other internal orders.

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