

Expansion and Retreat: Development and Changes of Cultural Psychology in communities during Urbanization

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Abstract: Urbanization is an inevitable development process in modern industrial society. Nowadays, many places in China are undergoing the process of urbanization, with which come various problems that cannot be ignored. It is easier for individuals to pay attention on dominant changes of economy and environment. However, we may fail to realize the cultural psychological changes in urban communities. During the urbanization of communities in villages and towns, the minute division of labor and cluster of industries create new cultural psychological features. These features fall and rise, shaping a unique community picture in the process of expansion and retreat.

Key words: urbanization, Taizhou, expansion and retreat

Urbanization is a common issue all over the world in a time of industrial era, while the process of urbanization is also a very important process in the economic and social development in all countries. As every part in the world links closer and closer with each other, Chinese government has realized the necessity and significance of urbanization during the process of city construction. In 1949, China's urbanization rate was only 10.6%, which has roared to 17.92% in 1978. Since China's reform and opening up, the trend of urbanization has quickened, which reached 36.09% in 2000, an increase of 18.17% during the 22 years. [1]We can see from this set of statistics that as a developing country, China has experienced a quick and strong urbanization under the help of reform and opening up although it has begun relatively later.

In fact, it is a mild and gradual process to turn from traditional rural community to urban community, which needs the push of a series of social powers like competitions, conflicts, coordination and assimilations, thus a new balance can be reached among politics, economy, culture and personality. There has been huge gap of developing pace between theory and reality so that changes of community members' psychology have become hard to realize. Park, a scholar of Chicago School, thinks that labor division in urban community put residents into different industries while cultural factors promote the formation of every "moral areas". It is this kind of cultural psychology changes that bring interactions to community members in the workplace and families, build up new interaction mode and form special common life styles of sub-groups. In this paper, Taizhou in Zhejiang province is taken as an example. From their culturally psychological expansion and retreat in changing from village communities to urban communities, it is going to be discussed the inducements and real challenges in transitions of contemporary community in cultural and psychological aspects.

1. Retreat of central plain's culture and expansion of fisherman culture

Taizhou is surrounded by mountains in three sides, and by ocean in another side. The geographic environment, traffic inconvenience, political marginalization and lack of cultural celebrities all pointing to its cultural uniqueness and self-adaptation. Inside the fishing village community, the complex landscape cut off communications and exchanges among villagers in space, thus each community has produced different folk cultures. Besides, another important factor, population has showed its special power here - Multi-source and multi-stream population in Taizhou has a long history. In history, the population in Taizhou has changed several times and the

residents settled down in Taizhou came “from far and near, some from central plain and some from Fujian and Guangdong Province”. [2]Population from central plain has brought the “special firm Taizhou manner”, which was concluded by Lu Xun. Meanwhile, historical heritage of the Buddhist and Taoism religion culture has strengthened the independence and rigid spirit of them so that development can be long and lasting. Population from Fujian and Guangdong, because of their special life environment, has a strong fisherman culture, which was obviously different from culture of central plain but won at last, becoming the mainstream ideology in Taizhou’s industrial age. Reasons are as follows: firstly, fishermen in Taizhou adore Goddess Matsu of the Sea. Contrasted with farmers in central plains, they were struggling for life to nature that was much harder than the earth so that their faith was more sincere and stronger, i.e., the power and root of their traditional culture is much stronger. Secondly, Wenzhou people, who have had strong business culture tradition created a developing mode that can be used even today, which has little deep impacts on Wenzhou culture but great influence on Taizhou. That is to make sensible choice when directly facing reality besides self-adaptation. This kind of choice seriously stroke former mode in this area. When facing strikes, it is obvious that fisherman culture be slightly superior to others. Their ancestors fought for living in the crazy and horrible seas and they were get used to environment of many changes within a short time so that their life faith contained brave spirit of “facing directly to challenges”. At last, the severe environment on the sea required all fishermen united together to defeat great swell. As a result, posterity of fishermen tends to seek for economic increase and social development and progress from the angle of a group and community.

Therefore, when confronting with culture from central plain, fisherman culture embraced straightforward and simple style of central plain culture as a winner, thus forming special culture of Tiantai Mountain, i.e., the doughty folkway, the seek for practical benefit and independence. This “grass-root” culture can be summarized in one sentence: “when dealing with relationship between subject and object, it shows as autonomous and independent. In value orientation, it shows as lively utility inclination of survival coming first. In behavior manner, it shows as firm and smart.”[2] Under the influence of Tiantai Mountain, Taizhou culture is able to adjust and develop in the premise of undertaking other cultures. As Simmel Georg said, local original culture “unites inside the community for the sake of resisting outside threats, so that former internal contradictories have been solved.”[3] Only culture in Taizhou combines in a way of distinguishing between the primary and the secondary, having a clear order.

2. The retreat of community and expansion of modern

Seen from the whole, during the process of urbanization, the operational mode of villages and towns and the interpersonal relationships have experienced changes. Especially families, functioning as cells of society, their existing condition and operational mode have great transition. As people accept more and more life styles under the background of commodity economy in modern industrial society, relationships among neighborhoods, villages, towns and different levels all have corresponding changes in different levels.

Taizhou in the fishing village time was a typical [gated](#) community, the common life of which “was based on blood relations, emotions and ethical unity”, [3] and relied on relatives, neighborhood and friendship, thus they lived together around some central areas and had a homogeneity of population. Ferdinand Tnnies concluded the nature of this kind of community as: limited, highly aggregated and intensive. Life style that centered on farm made interactions between community residents very frequent, and they knew each other quite well. Besides, the

idea of “tribe” in traditional society rooted deeply in their mind, so family space has spread to a quite large range and supported each other, thus their stability reached a high degree. However, under the influence of modern industrial society, the life style of fishermen “watching and caring for each other” has changed greatly. The homogeneity inside the community decreased. “With the development of labor division, common sense of community has decreased gradually and differences among individuals increase”. [4] Take families in Taizhou as an example, we can feel that, when fishermen went to the “sea of business” instead of the sea for fish and got successful, the concept of “family” has shown a tendency of further and further from land. The original idea of “hating to leave one's native land” was influenced deeply by present new lifestyles and network life, and their residency changed more and more often with their business relations. Changes in occupations made the necessary connection between families and seas uncertain. The awareness of feminism and divorce rates remaining high have shown that the control and influence of families are less powerful than before.

Large-scale mechanized industry needs great numbers of labor force getting together to work, resulting in population flowing from villages to cities and industry and commerce. Centralization of industrial forces needs a certain number of service facilities. Meanwhile, great numbers of products of large-scale industry need storage, transportation, sales, wholesale and retail markets. This was also the premise of urbanization, which would rule the human history in a long term. So, how to measure a city's modernization level? Wirth has mentioned in his masterpiece “the Urbanism as a Lifestyle that the three variables to analyze and compare cities of different types are heterogeneity individuals, large-scale and high-density permanent tribes. The best condition for these three variables is more and more population and hyper-differential population. Increasing population density brings more complex social structure and complexity of social stratification result in heterogeneity, while heterogeneity leads to social mobility. [5] Social mobility makes it possible for new organization system, which can better fit for the high-efficiency requirements of modern society. When we see community in this way, it also works. Easy and frequent mobility of population has lead to hysteresis quality and inelasticity of former operational mode. Well, interpersonal relationships that have been constructed before naturally retreat. From the changes and retreat of families, we can see the retreat of communities, the tendency of city modernity expansion and also the prospect.

3. The retreat of interpersonal relationships and expansion of labor division specialization

Under the premise of wide introducing of modern enterprise system, changes in economic life style also brought great reforms to interpersonal relationships and way of labor division. Bureaucracy, the hierarchical power matrix relationship on the premise of rationality by Max Weber, has the greatest influence. Weber said: “instrumental bureaucracy development lead community relationships supports to contracting and narrower transaction relationship.” [6] The results are: interaction among people becomes narrower and direct interaction and connection decrease, which are replaced by limited interaction between people and social wills. Contract, is the most common carrier that intervene social wills. Various contracts fill individual life. Their expansion and consolidation reinforce the image of society intervening individual daily life.

In Taizhou, the lifestyle that has deeply influenced daily life is the social will based on commercial contracts, especially industry cluster. This cluster is based on shared location, industry

communication, industry technology chain and other factors. According to professional labor division and cooperation, they gain common advantages in competitions and teamwork. Industrial chain of bureaucracy limits other possibility of group development, and specific labor division combines more individuals mechanically. Their association activity is very narrow, usually limited in production and business deals while contract relationship form leading relationship of many individuals. The unity of development and management ignore personal value and features to some extent. The whole personal activity shows as people are losing their special status. Relationships among people are replacing by that among tools, so their interpersonal relationships are not effective approach for employees to realize their own values. Besides, hard-and-fast rules make it not essential for internal interactions in a team. It seems that strictly following orders is worldly-wide way for self-preservation: extra work may lead to mistakes. So except the work given, one will never do more, which is the logical result of interpersonal relationship retreat and expansion of labor division specification during urbanization of traditional communities.

4. “Bottleneck” problems during transitions from rural communities to urban communities

In general, from the urbanization conditions of various parts in China, we can see there is a trend of over-urbanization in China. The urbanization level is invented so high that economic and social development cannot follow the level of urbanization. If these problems cannot be well solved, larger problems will appear. Difficult employment situation and wider gaps in income differential are both adverse factors for regional development in urbanization.

As urban economy develops fast in China, many rural communities are attracted to change into town and urban communities. But wholes speaking, average income of these farmers cannot compare to urban average level, and different policies of separately treating different household registers have already admitted such unfairness: they part rural population from urban population and put rural population in the edge to undertake unfair treatment. Such policies have widened income gaps between villages and cities and made farmers lose confidence in urbanization. Therefore, it is a good idea to raise life standards from transition of rural communities. But there is one premise that it is needed to design a reachable goal in short, middle and long term for rural communities, thus farmers can realize the real situation of dualism in regard to urban and rural difference and how rural development can realize “rural modernization” in specific aspects and degrees: when to realize technology modernization? When to realize particular sale mode modernization in villages? When to realize modernization in voting mode of committees to enterprises? Cities should have regurgitation-feed villages and farmers should have known real gaps between rural and urban areas. It is better to make citizens smarter than stupider. A wise and clever society is not one that silly believes it has solved those problems, but is one that provides two keys of advanced technologies and systems in the premise of farmers’ knowing and let them catch up quickly. This is the advantage of “some people rich earlier” and a reasonable choice of “common wealth” in socialist system.

Therefore, when facing changes of retreat and expansion during transitions from village communities to urban communities, people should be calm. When we are facing the wind of urbanization, we will inevitably remember what family was like, which was a addicted habit and a intimate relationship that was hard to detach. It is “a dependent individual habit of finding self-identity from actions or needs of others”, [7] which can never be easy to be forgot or to be

ignored. During the process of urbanization of traditional communities, only by appropriately dealing and balancing relationships among expansions and retreats can we ensure steady progress of community urbanization.

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