

Community Spirit in Backstage: the Research for Two Urban Hui Communities

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Abstract:

Unique community spirit, mainly as collective memories of ancestor, religious beliefs, customs, views about relatives of endogamy, is what the Muslim mainly relied on in today's multicultural society. It is also the long-term mechanism for maintaining the ethnic boundary, enhancing the cohesion and keeping traditional norms. The community spirit restricts individual behavior with ethics and customs, and builds the group atmosphere of neighborhood watch and mutual trust with collective conscience and spiritual care. The community spirit is also an important source for continuing the community vitality. However, the intrusion of modernity has been gradually weakening the community spirit. The developing of city, lifestyle changes, population movements, changing of way of living and transition of values has been dissolving the traditional community connections. And many Muslim communities were facing collapse crisis. The unique community spirit which once appeared directly and distinctly has changed to be demonstrated more secretly. It has also transferred, theoretically, from the foreground of maintaining tradition to the background. This research has selected two communities from the same regional cultural background but belong to different administrative levels as the inspection object. Through a period of fieldwork, this work has researched the historic process of the change of Muslim community spirit, and the thread of the development of the urban Muslim community spirit in central China.

Key words: community spirit; Hui community; background; community identity

The earliest origins of the research into community spirit were the classical sociologists' argument about the comparison between "tradition" and "modernity" in the late 19th century. At that time, industrial civilization seemed to be all the rage in Europe. Meanwhile, series of social type research paradigm began appearing in sociology. Both common wills of people community, which was put forward by Ferdinand Tonnies, and the concept of collective consciousness from Emile Durkheim are different expressions about community spirit. From then on, this concept has been constantly enriched under various contexts of times. The researches of community spirit in China are also based on reflection on social development and change after Chinese economic reform. These researches involve such academic topics, as connotation, function, and signification of community spirit, and the relationship with harmonious society. Theoretically, all studies reflect the appeal of reconstructing

traditional social spirit from social subjects.

Ethnology and related disciplines have always focused on the development of urban minorities and other topics such as the absence of beliefs, traditional culture disintegration, and the change of custom in the modernization process. As a humanistic scientific research, we not only have to make objective descriptions of cultural phenomena and material life about target group, but also, more importantly, compose a text, which can present humanistic spirit in target community. Community spirit becomes increasingly weaker under the influence of modernity. Traditional community connection link became weaker as the result of being affected by urban development, population mobility, the change of lifestyles, living modes and values. In this context, community spirit of Hui ethnic group, once as an important source for continuing the community vitality, enhancing the cohesion and keeping traditional norms, has turned from foreground of culture performance to the background. This paper will describe two communities of hui ethnic group in two cities with different scales in order to investigate the correlation between the weakened degree of community spirit and the level of urban development. I chose two cities in the same province and regional culture to ensure the comparability of this research. Therefore, this paper is a multi-sited ethnography about Hejie mosque Jammāt in Nan yang city, Henan Province and Beida mosque Jammāt in Zhengzhou city, Henan Province.

1. Concept Definition

In practical terms, traditional spirit of urban community of hui ethnic group has some special significance at the side of general urban communities. Unique community spirit, mainly as collective memories of ancestors, religious beliefs, customs, views about relatives of endogamy, is what the Muslim mainly relied on in today's multicultural society. It is also the long-term mechanism for maintaining the ethnic boundary, enhancing the cohesion and keeping traditional norms. The community spirit restricts individual behavior with ethics and customs, and builds the group atmosphere of neighborhood watch and mutual trust with collective conscience and spiritual care. The core problem to understand spirit of urban community of hui ethnic group is that, minority communities built on the basis of culture identity differ from subdistricts of civil administration.

1.1, Subdistrict and Jammāt

Community in China is an administrative concept rather than a local region. Subdistrict is now synonymous with Chinese characteristic urban community.¹In our daily life, people have formed a set of cognition system which differs from academia to comprehend the concept of community by the affection of urban management system and policy propaganda. In management practice, the subdistrict which has already taken the shape of community exercises grassroots social management function. In most cases, subdistrict is not always consistent with community of hui ethnic group. Jammāt, the social organization of hui ethnic group, emerged in Yuan dynasty and was completed in Qing dynasty. The boundary of Jammāt is uncertain. In

¹ Introduction to Community Development, compiled by Yongxiang Xu, ECUST Press, 2001, page55.

the city, Jammāt mainly refers to those streets that Muslim gathered in and diasporas around.¹ In short, the basis for Jammāt is the residential mode of dwelling around mosque. The division of Jammāt's boundary depends on individual identity for the Jammāt that he belongs to. Therefore, the social nature and geographical scope of Jammāt are both not consistent with subdistrict. Although the subdistrict that Muslim belongs to is easily to be changed by administrative interference, the identification will continue so long as residential mode maintains.

1.2, Main Implications

Because of different historical backgrounds, local cultures and sects, Chinese hui communities show multicultural development. But if back to the core of Islam, we can still seize the shared spirit of every traditional community of hui ethnic group.

1.2.1, the Origin of Community and Ancestral Memories

Back in the Tang and Song Dynasties, a number of oversea Muslims crossed into China to trade, and some of them settled in coastland, even formed families. Foreign Muslim residents were considered as ancestors of hui ethnic group. To the Yuan Dynasty, a great many of Muslims that came from central Asia made up Hui communities at any place by engaging in trade and having garrison troops. Especially, because of tradition of being good at making business, many Muslim settlements have been consistent with family business activities. Stories of family migration history around are the important part of folk culture of hui ethnic group. Ancestral memories, which have the function of arousing collective sentiment, continue to be strengthened in the process of these recurring stories. Shared ancestral memories are essential mental strength to maintain communities and strengthen group identification.

1.2.2, Shared Religion and Ummah

Until hui ethnic group was asserted to be one nationality by government, it existed as a belief community. Most hui people judged self-otherness by religious identity. Over the long history, Islamic belief was effective for maintaining group boundary and reflecting culture identity. Islam is not only a private perception, in Muslim's consciousness, but also represents the whole life. Besides, it values external level and concerns about social development, economic and political life in public sphere. Ummah(الامة) which was made up of brotherhood means the entire Muslim community, and includes each member in the Islamic world.²In the Ummah world, Muslims treat the relationship on the basis of religious identity rather than kinship and common language.

1.2.3, Endogamy and Affinity Connection

The prerequisite of Muslim marriage is the common religious belief. Hui ethnic group have always insisted on the principle of endogamy. Even though the phenomenon of ethnic intermarriage occasionally appears, non-Muslim should

¹ Introduction to Islamic Religion Institution of Chinese Hui Ethnic Group, compiled by Weilin Mian, Ningxia people's publishing house, 1999, page 199.

² Our religion: Islam, compiled by Said Hussein Nasr, Xinyuan Press, 2009, page 16.

convert to Islam and unconditionally abide by Islamic customs. Meanwhile, ethnic intermarriage can only be allowed between male Muslims and female non-Muslims. Although cases of female Muslims marrying non-Muslim occur by accident, the family members will be under huge pressure from public opinion. Endogamy was implemented strictly in this way in order to keep pure lineage, maintain the boundary of group and sustain persistent ethnic identity. Human communication and interaction network are restricted by region to some extent. Besides, hui ethnic groups insist on endogamy, so that most hui people within a certain region more or less are related to others. From here we see that traditional community of hui ethnic group is the group connected with three-stage emotional bonds of kinship, geographic relationship and belief.

1.2.4, Halal Mode of Life

In the course of individual communication, the first measure to judge self-others by hui ethnic group is halal mode of life. Halal(حلال), a religious word, does not only mean the diet which conforms to Sharia, but also includes important principle in life and knowledge system that are guided by Iman. Shahada (ر سول محمد الا ل ل لا اله الا الله), the most essential presentation of halal knowledge system, has demonstrated the primal faith of no God but Allah and ensured ideological purity. Mosques are significant places for Muslim to maintain halal mode of life and participate in the ritual which was based on identification of halal. Spotless personal life is consistent with pure faith; meanwhile, both of them have evidenced extreme devotion. In hui communities, whether the mode of life is halal or not has become the moral standards in the group, the distinction with others and the power to enhance ethnic identity.

1.2.5, Jammāt and Community Organization

Jammāt has double meanings of society and religion. On the one hand, it means a belief community; on the other hand, it refers to the living space at the center of Mosque. Chinese hui communities are based on on Jammāt and have the function of social organization independent of the government. In any specific community, the Xianglao stratum within prestige type of power and Imams within divine rights have become two essential groups to deal with community's daily routines. Neighborhood committees, as the extension of state power in grass-roots society, also have played a role in governance of urban communities. Faiths that have been organized are beyond general social organization, sustain group solidarity within cohesion, and maintain certain social distance with others.

2. Community Spirit of Hui Ethnic Group in Medium-sized City:

Here and Faraway

Nanyang city, in the border between Henan and Hubei province, is the central city in southwest of Henan Province. There are 1.07million residents in

the city, including 158 thousand Hui people. Hejie mosque Jammāt is a natural community of Hui ethnic group outside the old city, which belongs to Wancheng district of Nanyang city now. In the south, there is the Bai river beside the community, which flows to Han River, and finally into Yangtze River. Because of convenient water transportation, most Muslims who lived to the south of mosque once worked as porters, while other hui people who lived to the north of mosque engaged in traditional catering industry. Hejie mosque Jammāt is formed by residents of hui ethnic group that live in two south-north streets called He street and Xinsheng street, besides one east-west street called Jingmu street. In this Jammāt, 98percent of the total permanent population of 4280 are hui ethnic groups. Those residents with the family name of Ding, Bai, Mai, Ma and wang, are the main members of the community. Although Hejie mosque Jammāt has maintained the complete entity of the community according to organization principle of traditional community of Hui ethnic group, traditional community spirit trend to be discrete under the destruction of community members that almost espouse the principle of individualization. The expression of collective spirit leads by community-protection awareness and personal modernity.

2.1, Traditional Community Space and Community Identity

Traditional community space is the extending of dimensions of material basis and social network which are used to measure the community spirit. It consists of two levels: the space for living and the space for communication. The living space of traditional community is the context in which community spirits could take their shape. It means the entity of community which had been shaped from long-term production practice. And the communication space of traditional community is a kind of maintenance mechanism of the community spirit, which is the interpersonal network of an acquaintance society. To specific to a Hui community, the existence of the jammāt cored with the mosque, and the life experience of Muslim guided by the faith of Islam, could be considered as the living space of traditional community where the Hui community spirit had formed up. And the spiritual connection of common belief, the relative notion of marriage within religion, interpersonal networks based on emotional bond of neighborhood, all of these had provided an environment for discourse passing and resources sharing, and strengthened the community identity and group emotions in high-density interpersonal courses.

2.1.1, Life in Traditional Neighborhood Space

Lifestyle of traditional neighborhood space has been retained in the Hejie mosque jammāt, which is a good model with traditional cultural characteristics of a Hui community in a middle China city. Hejie mosque jammāt is the famous Islamic beef and mutton market in Nanyang, which consists of Xinsheng Street, He Street and Jingmu Street. There is a piece of land in the blocks where a couple of beef and mutton stalls trade during the day and become the big food stalls at night. In 50 meters from the streets corner, various Muslim shops line up along the roadsides, most of which are beef and mutton stalls. A beef and mutton business is usually a

family business, doing both wholesale and retail. Every early morning, after imamshad those animals slaughtered in Islamic way, businessmen would then deal with meat, furs, offal and haggis. Later, large customers like supermarkets and hotels, would come to check and accept those products. After a little break, those businessmen start their retails, selling the rest of fresh beef and lamb. He Street Muslim beef and lamb market has the morning market and the noon market. 9 or 10 o'clock in the morning is usually the busy time. Some customers would like to buy a whole living lamb, so businessmen may invite imams to come again and slaughter those lambs. Afternoon is usually the leisure time, and some businessmen stewed sheep's head and hooves for sale after 5 p.m.

Except few households of Han people living in the north of Xinsheng Street, all of residents in Hejie mosque Jammāt are Hui people. Houses in community vary in styles, but most of them are three-storey houses. Each house is separate, with scripture carved on lintel. The Hui people in Jammāt are living densely with houses closely spaced. Most of residents are joint families. Except those brothers who can get themselves new houses by their economic capacity, all of the sons are living with their parents regardless married or not. Community identity and group emotions first of all come from experiences of living together. After migrated here, the Hui people of Hejie living here for generations. In hundreds of years, group emotions based on living together have become part of collective memory etched in consciousness of community residents deeply. By repeated deductive to their elders' life of individuals, this collective memory internalized and became habitus, the value criteria and ethics code to guiding their practice of life. Even by facing today's high level of population movements and social mobility, people in community still cling to their jammāt, keeping the living tradition of big families, and continuing the intimate relationship between the neighborhoods from their elders.

The preservation of the traditional way of life has been also benefited from the continuing operations of family business and national traditional industry. Most of the community member ran the catering business for generations. He Street now has been known as the biggest Muslim meat market in Nanyang. The halal food production process and the Islamic way of slaughtering are not only traditional folk and community culture, but also the process of living heritage of social group's life tradition, by integrating traditional culture into life practice. So, compared with many today's Muslims, especially those young people living in cities, Hejie people show more Islamic tradition in their everyday life. For example, in Jammāt people's attitudes to halal food are more rigorous. In a sense, He Street halal food market is not only a geographical indication of Hejie mosque jammāt, but also a symbol of the community spirit. It enhanced the cultural atmosphere of the Hui community objectively, keeping the life traditions of the social group being sustained effectively.

2.1.2, Community Vitality and Relationships Networks of Acquaintance

From the sensory part, this Jammāt shows the spiritual vitality of a Hui community every minute. In the early morning, Hui businessmen of Beijiekou started their work. The whole market was very crowded, showing vividly a picture of the

scene of the economic life of community members. Every time when the Bunker from the mosque came, old men packing their toiletries went to the morning worship wearing their whitecaps. That's the miniature of their devout religious life. Because of doing business as their job, they got more free time for their own. Maybe it's also because that their life space is too crowded, community members liked to spend their leisure time on chatting or playing chess and poker with neighbors sitting around their houses. The community atmosphere was so leisured and light-hearted. Those spirit vitality were embodied in those social interaction processes, as the cooperation of economic life, the daily communication of neighborhood, collective participation of religious activities. And the group emotions relying on the society of acquaintance could be maintained.

People in Hejie mosque Jammāt not only, as most usual Hui communities, kept the relative notion of marriage within religion, the spiritual connection of common belief, the interpersonal networks based on emotional bond of neighborhood, but also jointed a connection of vocations based on consanguinity and geopolitical. Members of community are at the same time church members, relatives, neighbors, business partners and so on. Interpersonal networks of different nature superimposed on each other, greatly increasing the group interaction density in community, enhanced the relationships of acquaintances which had already developed. The Hui people in community trust on each other, because their emotion connection is different from so called the others. Even nowadays the relationships between community members had been in transition quietly under the individual modernity, they still preserved strong identity and sense of belonging.

2.2, shifting Relations: Familiar Strangers

In Hejie mosque Jammāt, the process of individualization is mainly displayed by the transformation of community member's own properties. It concretely means major members in once high homogeneity community become more and more dissimilar under the influence of diverse forms of life, social classes, educational backgrounds, economic foundations and values. The relationships among members were changed from original intimate and interdependent emotion to the familiar strangers' relation. Acquaintance is described as the social distance among members who have maintained living place of acquaintance community and already known exactly family background and living situation of each other. Strangeness refers to the psychological distance produced by individuation. Community members have paid more attention to the pursuit of individual advantage than community development and other members. All these changes have caused emotional alienation even contradictions in community.

2.2.1, Individuation of Believers

Devout believers are at a small percentage of head count in the community, and almost all of them are aged people. The religious consciousness of Hui ethnic group in Hejie mosque Jammāt is not as strong as imagined. Population of those people who stick to daily worship is only forty to fifty. According to the

survey results of questionnaire, 12.8% of the community members chose “daily worship”, 17.4% chose “weekly worship”, 57.6% chose “worship at religious holidays”, the rest 12.2% chose “few worship”. The answers of “why don’t you go to mosque and worship”, 76.3% of people chose “busy”.

Those aged believers put a high value on their own religious practices, but have ignored to participate in public affairs and reconstruct community religious atmosphere. No effective channels to publicize religious knowledge have been found by believers, and what’s worse, division on ideology between devout believers and other members has already arisen. Contradiction caused by division makes the prestige of aged people lower. The Xianglao stratum within prestige type of power steadily lost domination in terms of community governance and public affairs. Believers who are cut off from community development, have no choice but to stick with the narrow network of friendship contacted by belief. It’s harmful for community culture heritage. Furthermore, there are some bifurcations caused by arguments about the details of religious affairs within believers.

Case:

Name: Fuxia Ma, Gender: female, Age: 82

I worship at home because of my age and health. My son’s wife always quarrell with me in Ramadan(رمضان). I got up early to do washes and worship every day. But she requires me not to make any noise in the early morning. She also complains how hard to cook for the whole family every day, but I haven’t eaten anything because of Sharia. She pushed me so hard that I had to cry to the Imam. Although the Imam comforted me and promised that he would talk to my son, in fact, he knew it would be helpless and never met my son.

2.2.2, the Lack of Trust among Community Members

Industrial civilization has promoted social development, improved living standard of people, and also brought several secondary risks such as the decay of Islam belief discontinued cultural heritage and moral anomie. In Hejie mosque Jammāt, group emotion and community development give way to personal interests. Community space which once was used to nurture community spirit became the location to pursue personal fame and wealth. Contradictions which are brought by the competition for public resource and community governance will widen the psychological distance among community members who always show their nostalgia of old friendly and interdependent group atmosphere.

Case:

Name: Hongbing Ma, Gender: male, Age: 53

In the nineteen eighties, there were six residents groups in community. Leaders of each group were enthusiastic about public affairs and willing to help those poor families. At that time, every member seemed like living Lei Feng. We were so proud of living in this community. Nowadays, no one cares about other families’ living situation, let alone support them. Last month, I begged well-connected neighbors to find a job for me. Some of them politely refused my request; others agreed on the

surface but had no intention of helping, even with no response.

Neighborhood committee is practical subject of community governance; while mosque management committee takes charge of Jammāt's religious affairs. Theoretically, cadres of neighborhood committee and members of mosque management committee should volunteer to serve the community. In fact, some of them do not contribute to the community; instead, they even make a profit in their terms. Common Muslims are often embroiled in disputes with members of mosque management committee in order to request for publishing the income and expenditure details of mosque.

Community spirit, on the basis of homogeneity, was undermined by psychological "strangeness". The weaker traditional emotional link among members is preserved as the part of many social connections which belongs to main actors with multinational social attributes. Community, as a survival context, is not whole heartedly inputted object of members any more, but just one of many life opportunities. The atmosphere of reciprocity and interdependence is increasingly vanishing as the result of lacking restriction by strong community spirit.

2.2.3, Local Powers and Group Deviant Behavior

Local powers have existed since ancient times in China's rural society. This concept means those civil non-governmental organizations including patriarchal clan organizes, local associations and religious group, which have gained certain control of local society. In a sense, Xianglao stratum within prestige type of power in traditional community of hui ethnic group was one of local powers. Xianglao stratum, the most important religious group in Jammāt, was formed by Muslims' spontaneous organizing. The group's power derived from community credibility that was shaped by group members' prestige and good character. Generally speaking, the mosque management committee, capability manager of Jamaat, should be composed of Xianglao who is voted by all Muslims. But, in fact, some Jammats do not adherence to traditional customs. This folk saying, "The living condition of Iman relies on the religiosity of mosque management committee's chief", has described the separation between practical realm and religious system level. In Hejie mosque Jammāt, this separation means, family force, another local power, has completely invaded managements of community and religious affairs.

Case: name: Xiufeng Sha(iImam), age:44

You must be careful. There are some villains in this street who come from the biggest household. You can't imagine that bullies of Han ethnic group around are even afraid of them. Shortly before, undercover police's leg was interrupted by them because that his real identity was exposed in the course of investigating underground casinos. Last week, several young children of that family were died of traffic accident. Other families seemingly were sad for them; in fact, they thought that this was one kind of retribution.

Case: name: Xiangqian Xu, age: 49

In theory, chiefs of neighborhood committee and mosque management

committee should offer to those competent, responsible and prestigious people rather than members of great house. Villains utilize financial power to make profits. They seized 147square meter Jammats public land, built the house, and then sold to Muslims from other place. Finally, they won 470 thousands yuan.

Some community members under the protection of clan force have already done some bad things against traditional community spirit. Group deviant behaviors such as running underground casino always occur. On the one hand, local government put best effort to suppress black evil force in here, but on the other it also complies with community situation and appoint those fierce residents to maintain community order. Group deviant behaviors constantly impact on traditional moral system and values.

Umma which is formed on the basis of brotherhood has fallen apart by under the influence of economic interest and political right conflict. In the seemingly traditional Jammats, primordial attachment and community spirit discrete day by day.

2.3, Community Spirit in Backstage

Being in backstage is a concept from the drama theory¹ referring to actors have left the front stage and stopped their uninterrupted acting while still maintaining the same relationship in backstage. When all of the members are confronting a common challenge, acting will be continued. The community spirit of Hejie mosque jammats is expressed in two different ways. Although relationships between members have changed a lot because of the modernity and contradictions of interests, while confronting the outside pressure like community disintegration, the group awareness and community identity, as the main connotation, are highlighted from the joint actions.

The bogging down of the government's plan of rebuilding of old city about Hejie community is one of the examples. In 2008, the Nanyang government had called up persons in charge of relevant departments and 5 resident representatives of Hejie, to discuss the rebuilding plan of Hejie community. The residents refused firmly to living in apartments of tall buildings. They were very worried about their business and religious life in the mosque. Because of the tough stance of residents, the meeting hastily ended. Government officials believed that it might lead the ethnic conflicts to force to implement the rebuilding, so they suspended the plan till now. Although the relationship between members of Hejie has been alienated gradually today, the destruction of traditional community living space is breaking the bottom line of group will in backstage. They consciously rejected to be separated, cared much about the mosque life. That is the sign of awareness to protect their own community.

Given that the awareness of maintaining of community is still observed, the process of going into the backstage implies that traditional repertoire which has been continued played on has been close to the curtain call. Actors have prepared for the disintegration of the crew, having no time and no will to continue the traditional plays.

¹ The Presentation of self in Everyday Life, compiled by Erving Goffman, Peking University Press, 2008.

Hejie Muslims have the idea that with the tide of the urban development, traditional living space of community will be unrecognizable eventually. They are sure to know that the rebuilding will come sooner or later. If the plan was able to provide them chances for life and enough money, they will choose to move at last. However, before the member getting themselves ready, they still have a wish that the crew could be maintained. That's why they devoted themselves to the resistance to those threaten to the crew (community). And if this process of maintaining was not able to develop a reversal of reflective, such as the remodeling of social group emotions and arousing of the religious consciousness, the crew and its collective spirit will inevitably perish, leaving only historical complex of actors to their traditional repertoire.

The Hejie mosque jammāt has showed a part of charming spiritual vitality with the following of the traditional community space and the high-density social interactions in acquaintancesociety. But when it was impacted by the individual modernity and the following conflicts of interest, the community of close love and mutual trust and mutual assistance, gradually transformed into a group of familiar strangers. And then, the community spirit also transformed from dominant expression of persistent traditions to hidden performance when resisting the external forces. All in all, the Hejie mosque jammāt had experienced fractures of some crucial traditional community relationships, but through the old way of identity, it maintained the secular consociation. The spirit of community was sometimes strong and sometimes weak, comparing with the spiritual essence of a traditional Hui community, showing an ambiguous scene to us.

3. Community Spirit of Hui Ethnic group in Great City: Fade away

Zhengzhou, capital of Henan Province is located in the Chinese hinterland. There are 8.62million residents in the city, including 910 thousand Hui people. Besides, there are more than 30 thousand residents of Hui ethnic group in Guangcheng Hui district. Ancient city of Zhengzhou is fully included in today's Guangcheng Hui district. The ancient city walls stretch south to the junction of Nanda Street and Chengnan Street, north to the Beida mosque, east to the Town's God Temple. Beida mosque Jammāt is the earliest Hui autonomous region inside ancient city. As the capital of Henan Province, Zhengzhou city spreads to the west on the basis of Guangcheng Hui district since the founding of the People's Republic of China. The urban area constantly expanded to the east in the last dozen years. Nowadays, Beida mosque Jammāt which is located in the centre of the new city has emitted intense feel of modernity. The destruction of traditional community Living space and model has direct relation with the recombination of community. The access of heterogeneous group is one reason of weakened emotional connection among neighbors. The individualization of community members does not any mean community residents are continuing to move out, and also directly manifests as the change of action orientation. A part of community spirit that is closely connected with traditional community space could hardly appear in Beida mosque Jammāt. The

whole group is maintained by internal spirit such as ethnic memories, subconscious religious identity and desalinating ethnic culture signs.

3.1, Diaspora of Traditional Community Space

In Beida mosque Jammāt, transformation of membership accompanies diaspora of traditional community space. This Jammāt is formed by Hui residents living in Mosque Street, Beida Street and Beiguan Street which is heading north from Beida Street. Beida mosque Jammāt, in the centre of old city, looks slightly shabby as a result of neglectful of urban construction. In order to improve city's appearance and alleviate traffic jams municipal government decided to build Zijingshan Road on the basis of Beida Street and Beiguan Street in 1994. The dismantlement plan of Beida mosque Jammāt was confirmed as: Firstly, most of Hui residents in Beida Street moved into newly-built small modern Muslim residential area (Xingyue community) beside mosque. Secondly, the residents including Han people of Beiguan Street and the rest Hui people of Beida Street moved into Jingziyiyuan community which was located on the other side of Zijingshan Road. Once coherent Jammāt was divided roughly into such three sections as most Muslim residents living around mosque, nearly one thousand Hui residents in Jingziyiyuan community and hundreds of Hui people scattered living in the small part of remaining Beida Street.

Reconstruction of community has changed traditional living model of Jammāt, disrupted community orders and weakened group emotions that base on common living experiences. According to the crashed network of friends and acquaintances, density of interpersonal communication in community has reduced obviously. Hidden group identity and consciousness can't resist development of individual modernity. Both transformations of membership and emigration of community members appear frequently in reconstructive community.

3.1.1, Instrumental Reason and Emigration

Instrumental reason, which comes from Marx Webber's "rationality idea" means that actors confirm the usefulness of instrument on the way of practice. Action orientation has changed from believing in pure values to pursuing the maximum of the benefits. The synergistic effect between value reason and instrumental reason will construct the active spirit. But individual actions express more instrumental reason in modern society.

Nowadays, Xingyue community is not any longer been the completely Muslim community as just been built. More and more strangers and Han people move in the community. I have investigated housing conditions of unit 1-8, building 9 in this community. There are 28 migrant families in the whole 112 families. Building 9 has 83 Han residents- about 23.3 percent of its population. The same problem also occurs in Jinziyiyuan community.

Beida mosque Jammāt is located in the central business district of Zhengzhou. Numerous office buildings, superstores and well-known companies

are around Jiamat. Countless migrant workers are eager for renting an apartment around their companies. The fact of housing in short supply makes faster increases in house and land prices of Beida mosque Jiamat. Many community members were attracted to sell out their old house and settled down in the suburbs by appreciable economic profits. In recent years, many community residents rent their houses instead of selling out.

Case: Name: Xiuyun Lin (Han people), Age: 37

I moved in this community because of my husband's business in 1999. Several years ago, if you want to buy second-hand house in this district have prepare 350 thousands yuan. The most population of old residents moved out Xingyue community in 2002 to 2005. recently, no one want to sell his house because we all know that it is more cost-effective for renting.

Those Hui people who have moved out the community are driven by economic interest. Such emigration is complete disengagement from Jiamat with not any symbolic left. Frequent emigrations have demonstrated reductions of community cohesion to some extent. Besides, immigration of Beida mosque Jiamat is in both directions. The access of heterogeneous group dilutes languishing community cultural atmosphere and group emotions.

3.1.2, Modern Community and Transformation of Membership

Although Beida mosque Jiamat is the oldest Hui autonomous region, even more than ninety-year-old men can hardly tell the origin of their families. Muslims in this Jiamat value linear family rather than the big family. Therefore, neighborhood emotion which bases on the common living experience is essential to whole community in the context of slack blood ties.

Before the demolition, each bungalow with a yard belonged to one joint family in the Jiamat. Various Muslim shops lined up along the roadsides, most of which were beef and mutton stalls. During that time, the relationships among community members were close. Fraternal and interdependent group atmosphere was dispersed in the whole community space. But the reconstruction of community not only changes the traditional living space but also break the formed familiar network.

Case: name: Guangyuan Ma, age: 71

We are the old residents of Beida Street. We all knew population, job, income level and other information of each family. When a family was in trouble, many neighbors would come for help. Such daily routine as borrowing living goods and taking care of other's children occurred frequently. We live in buildings now, but we mostly never dropped in because that we have no idea of our neighbors.

When Xingyue community was built, district government decided to assign the houses according to area of old houses. The area of one house in Xingyue community is 68 to 90 square meters. And the area of each old house is above 120 square meters. Theoretically, every family can get two or three new houses. By-products brought by demolition directly lead family structure from joint family to nuclear family, and indirectly cause the relative alienation of emotions

among family members. The old neighborhood emotions are weakened as the result of reduced frequency of traditional human interactions.

Traditional community not only bases on members gathered in physical space, but also relies on the network of genetic relationship. When a community member mentions “somebody in some family”, it has directly shows his community identity, and insinuates both relative locations in the network of genetic relationship. At this point, community, as one field, includes the identification and confirmation of community members’ identity relationship which bases on affinity and kinship. The process of reproducing community members will never include the socialization of membership any more. As an anecdote, identification of relationship is grasped by aged community members. Accompanying with the reduction of community identity, the image of realistic field named community becomes obscure.

3.2, Culture Signs and Centripetal Force

Ethnicity communities, distinctive cultural islands, scattered in cities. Although they generally originate from individual and familial migration, increasing formed ethnic culture atmosphere which is the key source of power to maintain integrity and independence of ethnicity community can attract more homogeneous group to move in. Therefore, centripetal force of community naturally comes from culture signs. In the real scene of Hui communities, culture signs not any mean such specific cultural affairs as the belief of Islam and Halal mode of life, but also include mark and physical symbols as mosques and scholastic language. To the left old members in Beida mosque Jamma, more culture affairs and signs have been changed besides the community as living environment.

3.2.1, Stratification of Convictional Group

Beida mosque Jamma, the chief Hui community of Zhengzhou, is one of the most religious communities of Henan Province. There are almost hundred female Muslims insist on worship every day. The worship hall of Beida mosque with 400 sites is filling by male Muslims in Jumah. But we can’t measure religious atmosphere on prayers because that a large part of them are not the community members. These itinerant Muslims just work around here, and have no connections with this Jamma except worshipping in Jumah.

As the same of Hejie mosque Jamma, aged Muslims constitute a large percentage of devoutly believers in this Jamma. Religious activities, the main practice of personal belief, are important part of bare social activities during their daily life. Although middle-aged Hui people belittle daily worship, their lives show religious elements incessantly. Some of middle-aged Hui people not any mater basic religious knowledge, but also like to talk about topic of religious development. Although young people of Hui ethnic group maintain general identity of religion, belief has been transformed from knowledge system to decoration in their daily lives. They didn’t show any awe as their grandparents or passions as their parents when they talk about religions.

Muslims' religious lives are centered in the mosque. Accompanying with religious worship, aged people want to maintain community interaction on basis of mosque; Middle-aged group hope to regain the identity of religion from here; but to young Jammāt members, mosque is one part of community memories. The children grew up in the neighborhoods living space. In the memory of these young Jammāt members, the mosque not only the worship space of adult, but is also a place for children to play around. Community renovation, as an intense attacking mode of modernity, has completely interrupted traditional way of life. Eventually, playing and running children do not enter into mosque like their parents. All sorts of stories about mosque become distant memories in the corner of lives that belong to future independent and indifference residents.

3.2.2, Multicultural Dietary Standard

The special diet habits are the most important culture tradition for Muslims to distinguish others and strengthen internal unity in isolated urban ethnic community. "Hangtag", as the everyday word of Hui ethnic group, means that those merchants should hang up the Halal food license which is issued by local Islamic association. It's the major sign of identifying Halal food.

With the increase of minorities scattered settlement and intergroup contact in cities, some residents of Hui ethnic group no longer stick to strict limits on food. Even in Beida mosque Jammāt, the most population-concentrated Hui community with a long history, community members abide by multicultural dietary standard. This diversification not any means the dietary standard does change with social interactive sections, but also includes the group differences of conforming to Halal diet in one Jammāt.

Generally speaking, the extent of personal adherence on Halal diet presents the trend of gradually decreasing outward from mosque. Most Hui residents living in Xingyue Community and Mosque Street strictly follow the rules of diet. Outsiders are afraid to violate the traditional rules of Halal when they operate Muslim restaurants. But both in Jinziyiyuan community and preserved Beida Street, some Halal food stalls and restaurants are managed by Han people after obtaining the Halal food license under the help of some Hui residents. Hui community members haven't reached an agreement on how to solve the problem. Only a few Hui people are pinning their hopes on Imam. What's worse, a large part of Hui residents in preserved Beida Street, no matter aged or young, only abide by dietary standard of no pork.

According to the analysis of different age groups, Aged and middle-age Hui people in Beida mosque Jammāt have the special comprehension on Halal food. They value whether the food is Halal more than Halal food license. They trust those Halal beef and mutton stalls are opened by old Hui Jammāt members, no matter whether they have Halal food license more than large Muslim beef and mutton markets. Although most young Hui people are strictly followed dietary rules at home, they only abide by the rules of no pork when they have dinner with schoolmates, colleagues and friends of Han people outside. The

change of dietary mode has indirectly reflected that dominant power of religion is losing ground of Jammāt members' life. Recently, It becomes to local living matters which is chosen by personal life.

3.2.3, Religious Desacralization Rituals of Life

Religious charm is to infect congregation by the mental field full of mysterious which based on the collective participation of ritual, to establish them the faith of sanctity, and to affect the basic spiritual characteristics of individuals. Along with the desalination of religious consciousness of Hui people in modern society, the Islamic spirit is losing its charm to people. In daily life, it reflected in the fewer participation of religious activities, and the religious desacralization in rituals of life.

To those we may call them the general Hui people who rarely participate in the religious activities, to do the religious rituals of the most important events of life is the only connection between the mosque and their daily lives. In funeral customs of Hui, the main rituals from taking care of body to burying are usually performed by imams. And most of youth of Hui perform the religious ceremonies before their formal marriage. However, there are some who keep these ceremonies are not due to their belief consciousness, but take it simply as the cultural traditions to follow. The event rituals of life lacking of religious connotation are easily changed under the objective restrictions and the subjective construction of practice subjects.

Before the reorganization of the community, the marriage and funeral ceremonies of residents of Beida mosque jammāt were hold in their own houses by inviting imams to come. After the residents moved to tall buildings and lived in apartments, those ceremonies were moved in mosque. Most of works around those ceremonies were also done by the mosque instead of by family. Take the funeral custom for example, after a Beida mosque jammāt old man died, his children carried the body to the mosque. After that, works like taking care of body, issuing the Muslim certificate, contacting the cemetery, arranging the funeral vehicles and holding the funeral, all could be done by the mosque. The family only needs to pay the cost, to choose the tombs and to contact with relatives to invite them come to the funeral. Such way of funeral holding had saved Beida Muslim a lot of money and energy, but had made them lose the chances to know about the ritual details and the religious connotation. So it is also against the community traditional cultural heritage. When the weddings were hold in home, neighbors would come to witness the religious ritual of marrying word. This kind of religious collective activities about individual's important events of life should be an important social activity for feeling sustaining between the community members. The meaning of interpersonal activities is not only the effect of party at that time, but also a way to be the insider to each other by participating in witness. Today, the religious wedding of youth in community is just the new couples going to the mosque, hearing imam reciting the Nikah, and the ritual is over. The festive and lively atmosphere of religious wedding hold in family courtyard will never happen again. Some youth want to save the trouble of going to the mosque, even make the religious ceremony combined with the civil marriage which is now more popular and getting more attention. They invited imam reciting the marrying word

right before the wedding, and then make their so called ceremony.

Same to the Muslim diet, the daily ritual reflected in the Muslim wedding, again became an option of secular life. As the religious ritual part penetrated in the noisy civil marriage, in the quickly secularized life of community members, it now has been considered as a local characteristic from the tradition. And when the religious ritual which originally took sanctity as the core, has been moved into a scene of a secular hotel, whatever people named it, its properties thoroughly changed. It is just like many other religious ceremonies desacralizing, they have lose their meaning and functions, becoming the ornament of the secular life.

4. Disappearing Community Spirit: as remains of daily attitude in context

As mentioned above, as a collective consciousness, community spirit becomes more and more intangible because its extrinsic objective facts are dispelled gradually. Community spirit increasingly can not affect community members' action selection, life style and relation structure. So if we don't admit the academic construction of this concept, we can draw a conclusion that traditional spirit of Hui community which bases on Jammāt will face swift extinction. In order to highlight the process of this culture change, I chose two urban Muslim communities in different scale cities but under the same regional culture. Therefore, I can present a more macroscopic synchronic study during the minor time span. If we admit the fact, including community spirit, the process of culture change has the linear characteristic, that the intervention relationship between target community and modernity is the indispensable measurement to judge this process. If we use a word to describe the community spirit in Hejie mosque Jammāt, that is "precarious". The weakened partial community spirit in backstage is the only spiritual strength to maintain the group. The word, "sunshine after rain", can correctly describe the spirit community of Beida mosque Jammāt. It means modern citizen consciousness become new dominate spirit strength instead of community's cultural tradition. However, is the change of community spirit really an irreversible extinction process? By the look of its traditional clear and powerful feature, the answer is yes. To the function of community spirit in successional cultural structure of communities, above answer is not true. Although manifestation made, obviousness and influence of community spirit are different in this two communities, but they are not completely rupture with traditional spirit. As the part of living worlds, community spirit depends on the subjective experience of community members. As the concept of shelved nature attitude from Alfred Schutz, this subjectivity is anonymous. Community spirit, can't be decided by individual actions, and it is the natural fact to every community members. People believe that they share one practical experience. In two Jammāt, these two words "predecessor" and "old resident" are often used to express the

community identity. “Predecessor” means that Hui people in Hejie mosque Jammāt value the ethnic memory on the basis of family. “old resident” means that Hui people in Beida mosque Jammāt emphasize the living experience of individuality and nuclear family. Thus, we can grasp the change process of community spirit from members’ utterance in these two communities that presents as remain of daily attitude in context. In this process, the history prospect shows that modernity is continually washing the traditional culture imprinting in Jammāt, has already been presented.

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