

Article

# OLD city space from the perspective of multi community—Take a floating population community in H city as an example

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**Abstract:** Taking the specific practice of an old city space as an example, this paper distinguishes the positions and practices of three actors in the space: Urban planners, managers and ordinary citizens hold an extreme modernist position, firm-ly believing that the old urban space needs to be removed and transformed into a new urban order; Citizens living in the old city space hold a more complex and contradictory position. As the bottom group of the city, they pay attention to the exchange value of community space, but it is difficult to change their living conditions, while maintaining the exclusion of the old city space and the floating population; The floating population builds the old urban space into a space for production and life, making it a “settled community” entering the city. Finally, the diverse position and practice of the old city space show its significance of urbanization and its important role in the construction of urban diversity.

**Keywords:** extreme modernism; social space; multi community; settled community; urban diversity

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## 1. Introduction

According to UN Habitat, more than half of the world’s population already lives in cities, and more than 60% will live in cities in the next 20 years [1]. However, with the rapid urban growth in developing countries, the space of slums, shantytowns and urban villages has not decreased, but is surprisingly densely distributed on the earth [1]. Urbanization has brought a series of problems, including how to view the status and role of old city space in the city. The removal of old urban space from the standpoint of extreme modernism does not establish a “City without Slums” [2], but has a follow-up effect of space [3]. Obviously, the attitude and treatment of extreme modernism in urban planning towards the old urban space is too simple and rough. In this context, it will be of great theoretical and practical significance to go beyond the planning concept of extreme modernism and look at the diversified value and practice of old urban space from the perspective of diversified community theory.

## 2. Theoretical basis and case selection

### 2.1. Theoretical perspective of multi community

In the classical sociologists such as Tennessee, the community is constantly being replaced by a “rational” social relationship in the process of rational modern development. Community theorists in the 20th century put forward a new concept, that is, the community is changing from an existence as a type of social solidarity to an

individualized “personal community” [4]. This “private community” refers to “an important, informal social network of ‘community ties’ defined from an individual perspective” [4]. Based on the decreasing trend of westerners’ ties in the community in the second half of the 20th century, later scholars also tend to hold this individualized understanding of the current situation of community development. Generally speaking, whether due to the influence of new information media or social factors such as industrialization and urbanization, many western scholars generally believe that collective unity is giving way to the construction of individual social networks. However, the development of community in the process of modernization is not a linear process, nor is it a simple process of globalization and identity. Some scholars pointed out that from the perspective of community practice, based on the embedded position, different social systems and structures will have a substantial impact on the community structure. Therefore, China’s community development is not the destination of a westernized “private community”, on the contrary, it must be a structure and trend of pluralistic community [5]. The multi community position first emphasizes that based on China’s social structure and history, the types of community development are diversified. These types include traditional communities, village to residence communities caused by rapid urbanization, commercialized communities formed based on the market, and unit communities generated by path dependence in the process of unit system social transformation. Another meaning of multi community position refers to the diversity of community practice and community interests in the same community. Some scholars have divided the multi community practice in this sense into three types: Embedding, de embedding and offside [5,6]. Embedded community practice shows that the life of community members outside work is basically embedded in the physical community. The practice of off embedding community is a tendency of community individualization, which reflects the “off domain” of the community. This kind of community life practice does not rely on physical and local communities, but on personal social networks. Offside practice is a kind of community life across boundaries, which includes the boundaries of flowing space in physical sense and virtual space. People outside the boundaries of local communities also participate in the lives of local communities.

The latter meaning of pluralistic community, especially the proposal of offside practice, shows that the practice subject of community is not limited to the residents in the “community area”. This leads us to pay attention to the community practice of the floating population who are also not “residents in the jurisdiction” in the sense of management [1]. The research of some scholars shows that in the communities where the floating population live in compact communities, the floating population is often excluded from the practice subject as the “Fourth Party group” other than the government, developers and urban residents [7]. In such a community, the floating population is a real space user, but they are not endowed with citizen status, do not have the “right qualification and legitimacy” contained in citizen status, and are not as good as citizens can “enjoy more political and social rights” [8]. They are regarded as “outsiders” of urban development [9], and are deliberately excluded from the picture of urban development [10]. From the standpoint of multi community theory, we pay attention to the subject status of floating population’s spatial practice. As for the communities inhabited by floating population analyzed in this paper, we believe that

the multiple subjects of community space practice include not only community residents (direct members of the scope of administrative management), but also urban and community managers, residents of adjacent communities, social members related in economic and social sense, and urban floating population living in the community but not having citizenship. The multiple subjects of community practice show the complexity of community. For example, Naicang Jingzi's research on an overseas Chinese community suggests that we often dualize the overseas Chinese community and local (or external) residents. In fact, the overseas Chinese community has the complexity and diversity of group identity far beyond the imagination of outsiders. Overseas Chinese farm "is a compound multicultural system organized by multiple groups. Each group exists independently and maintains boundaries with each other". Similarly, we emphasize that the diversified practice of this community is reflected in the complex positions and practices of different community actors on the old urban space. This paper specifically studies the diversified positions and practices of three different actors in the old urban space, including urban planners and citizens living in local communities, as well as the floating population as the main users and occupiers of community space.

## **2.2. Case selection**

The research results obtained in this paper are based on the participation observation and in-depth interview of the research group in the "Prosperous Community" of H city. During the field investigation for one and a half years, the research group interviewed a large number of floating population living in this community, community residents, urban residents of adjacent communities, neighborhood committee officers, demolition office staff, and the former "floating population" who realized upward mobility by living in this community. "Prosperous Community" is located in the core area of the city and is composed of two narrow Yangtze River Deltas distributed on the edge of perennial polluted rivers. "Prosperous Community" is a dense bungalow area. At first, it was a residential area for employees of several units. Later, residents continued to expand illegally in response to population growth. Because it is located within the inland river red line stipulated by H City, its area is narrow, the ownership of land and houses is complex, and it lacks the value of overall development. It has been out of the vision of urban renewal, planning and commercial development for a long time. In the context of housing commercialization and the deregulation of population mobility policies, most of the original residents with economic ability have successively moved to other urban areas and rented the "Prosperous Community" to the floating population. The "Prosperous Community" has gradually formed a relatively stable and low-cost housing rental market, and the floating population has replaced the original residents to become the real users of the community and live together with a very small number of local citizens stranded here. These floating population account for 95% of the total population of the "Prosperous Community", and the longest living life in this community is 20 years, usually between 5 and 10 years, as well as new immigrants arriving one after another. The floating population is mainly from Anhui, Henan, Shandong and other provinces. Most of them are engaged in waste recycling industry,

and have established a relatively mature low-end waste recycling market. They select, distinguish and further process the recycled items, so this is also their production site. Since the 1990s, the floating population and their families have finally built the “Prosperous Community” into a space for the integration of life and production.

### **3. Position and practice of different subjects in space**

The spatial subjects in the “Prosperous Community” mainly include urban planners and managers, citizens (including citizens in adjacent communities and citizens living in local communities) and floating population. In short, urban planners, managers and citizens of nearby communities hold the position of extreme modernism, and generally believe that the old urban space needs to be removed and transformed into a manageable urban space; Citizens living in local communities have contradictory positions; The floating population living in their own community takes the position of life practice.

#### **3.1. Position and practice of city managers and planners**

The center of “extreme modernism” is “the continuous linear progress, the development of scientific and technological knowledge, the expansion of production, the rational design of social order, the continuous satisfaction of human needs and the growing super confidence in controlling nature (including human nature) corresponding to the scientific understanding of natural laws” [11]. Harvey further believes that this view has become the “art and practice of the system” of the whole society, which is widely reflected in various social fields such as art, architecture and literature, and “occupies a dominant position as a political economic dominance”. [12] as a typical representative of extreme modernist urban design, kubusier emphasizes “huge planning” in urban design, and this planning is “completely self-centered. New urban landscape” [11]. It emphasizes order and beauty, “without reference to the history and tradition of the city”, “can’t stand visual chaos” [11]. It is a “neutral” planning of urban space that excludes “people”. Urban space from the perspective of extreme modernism is in line with the aesthetic order, like a “highly self-discipline art” [13]; the population living in it should also be clear, easy to manage and control.

In the view of the government and management departments, “Prosperous Community” is a thorn in the eye and a thorn in the flesh. In terms of space, there are a large number of illegally expanded houses in the “Prosperous Community”, and the streets lack standardization and effective management. As a fuzzy, chaotic and difficult to manage or control space, it presents the complexity that managers can’t bear. From Scott’s “national perspective” of “simplification” and “clarity” [11], it is a dilapidated community, lack of house number, difficult to identify, unable to be clearly reflected on maps or other texts, and it is difficult to grasp all the details even if you spend a lot of effort to find out. The nature of its land and housing is also very complex. The different forms of property rights left by the unit system in different historical periods can not be fully reflected in the national text. Its fuzziness and complexity increase the management cost. It is a community that needs urban renewal urgently.

The attitude of the government and management towards shantytowns is the same as that of Western reformers. Slums were once considered to be “characterized by a

mixture of dilapidated housing, overcrowding, disease, poverty and evil” [14]. The “Prosperous Community” is only the old city community included in the urban renewal plan, which is no different from hundreds of other old city communities included in the shantytown reconstruction plan in H city. This means that from the perspective of government planners, such old urban spaces are not different, can not be repaired and must be removed. Due to its “imminent relocation”, in the daily management, the management department has a serious lack of social services for this old urban community, and even continues to become the object of power rent-seeking or illegal demand, breeding corruption. In the community “grid” management, such old city space is insignificant. The blueprint for the future development of this old urban space by urban managers and planners does not include the real residents living in this old urban space - those backward, difficult to flow upward and those who need to be removed, or the “Fourth Party group” [7]. For urban planners and managers, the only destination of this community space is to be cleared, and then it can be “urbanized” and “civilized”. In this position, foreign immigrants living in this space are absent.

Director s of the neighborhood committee of “Prosperous Community” believes that: “The migrant population is unstable and the personnel are difficult to master. We don’t know where they come from. He left today and came in tomorrow. I don’t know. It must have an impact on management. Secretary y of the neighborhood committee hates these waste collectors and thinks they have caused a very bad impact: Migrant workers can come in and live in buildings. But we don’t like these raggickers staying here. Where do they throw things! We chased and scolded them. Day by day, so much garbage is thrown everywhere. It’s polluted. Listen more! If they don’t have a good place to live, they can live here and there. She said more bluntly that from the perspective of social management, these floating people should not come to H city. “If you want to drive them away, we’re almost done here.” The urban management department also believes that in the process of shantytowns transformation, there is no need to consider the resettlement of migrant population.

Secretary y of the neighborhood committee replied disdainfully: “What’s the arrangement? They pick up junk and use us to settle it! We don’t care at all if it’s demolished, they’ll go. It’s not better to go!”

Of course, many times, urban planners and managers will build it into urban public space out of the logic of “improvement”, such as urban green space and street corner Park, and use various strategies to restructure urban space and urban population according to their own will, so as to reduce the cost of urbanization. As Scott emphasized, many social projects are not evil in themselves. On the contrary, they often focus on “improving” the living conditions of human society, which he called the logic of “improvement”. [11] of course, the ultimate purpose of this logic is “control”. Those “unimproved” social life is “unclear”, which can not be controlled and managed, and then can not provide effective public services. Therefore, based on this logic, it is necessary to “simplify” the original and unclear reality (nature and society, including urban space). This is also the process of giving order or “clarity” to the world, which is what Bauman [15] called the “horticultural culture” of modernity and the “horticultural state”. The practical result of this “improvement” logic is that the city deprives the urban bottom group of the “right to the city” through various policies, so as to systematically exclude the urban bottom group from the city.

Lefebvre repeatedly repeated the political nature of space, precisely because he saw the history of deprivation, differentiation and exclusion produced by many cities while providing opportunities, so he put forward “urban rights” [16] in this context and regarded it as a basic part of Urban Citizenship. One of the strategies of depriving urban bottom groups of “urban rights” [10] is that the government establishes and improves relevant policies on land and housing ownership, establishes a text list of houses, compares this list with the actual houses in the old urban community, screens out those houses that have not been registered in the text, and deprives the owners of these houses of their ownership of houses from the system, Make such houses “illegal construction”, so as to eliminate them at a very low cost (even zero cost). The second strategy is to occupy the voice of urban planning based on the logic of “improvement”, and then force such community residents to participate in urban renewal in the way of “relocation”. The third strategy is to eliminate the complexity of such social space and make it clear and easy to control through the cleaning and transformation of old urban communities.

## **3.2. Complex position and practice of citizens**

### **3.2.1. Position and practice of citizens in nearby communities**

After the floating population poured into the “Prosperous Community” and formed a stable waste recycling market, citizens in nearby communities have made a lot of convenience in waste recycling. However, for the people living in the old city, they have a more complex position for the space and people in the old city.

After the adjacent communities have successively completed the urban renewal and become modern buildings, the “Prosperous Community” is still a “slum” full of old bungalows with great potential safety hazards and serious shortage of infrastructure and services. Since most of the houses in the community are rented to the floating population engaged in waste recycling, the community accumulates a large amount of waste, especially wood, paper shell and other inflammables, which brings serious fire hazards to the “Prosperous Community” and surrounding communities. At the same time, the floating population produces great noise pollution when processing waste products. In addition, due to the proximity of heavily polluted urban inland rivers and the untimely cleaning of domestic waste, local residents in nearby communities are unwilling to be adjacent to them, let alone set foot here. For citizens in nearby communities, “Prosperous Community” is a dilapidated, dangerous and disgusting space.

More importantly, due to differences in living habits, customs and languages, many urban citizens in the survey have an aversion and discriminatory attitude towards migrant families. In the eyes of urban residents, they are “all rag collectors” and “all have the same surname”. It is inevitable that they have some “petty theft” behavior. In the eyes of citizens, those living here are the bottom of society, forming an “overall” and stereotyped impression of the latter.

Several old ladies living in neighboring communities often get together to chat. Although the building they live in is only separated by a wall from the “Prosperous Community”, they never step into it and have no communication with these floating population. They are quite dissatisfied with the floating population:

“(living nearby) why not be affected?! They don’t sleep at night and scream in the middle of the night. It’s hot in the room! They quarrel and chat. Sometimes they fight and do everything.” (Interview with local citizens adjacent to “Prosperous Community”, No. 20120821g FM)

“There’s a house in the back that caught fire a few years ago. Collect rags, go out during the day, and the electric mattress is on fire. We’re all afraid to live here. They ran away when they got into trouble. It’s a mess of people.” (Interview with local citizens of “Prosperous Community”, No. 20120821ch FM)

In the eyes of urban residents, the occupational level of the floating population is very low. They complain that the floating population brings them many problems and injuries when collecting waste products. They believe that the “banging sound” made by waste buyers knocking on plastic barrels is very “diaphragmatic”, and they hate that they have damaged the environment of the community and brought environmental pollution, noise pollution and other problems.

“The government should not let these outsiders come. Did you see the drummer? That guy, knock the mountain! I started knocking at five or six in the morning. In summer, I always open the window to sleep. Didn’t I wake up at once?” (Interview with local citizens adjacent to “Prosperous Community”, No. 20120822i FM)

“Look at my door. Big pieces of paper are scraping here. Whoever is next to them is unlucky. No way. I’m sick and tired of it. Can you manage it? Look at the whole place. Can you manage it? The neighborhood committee doesn’t care what people do.” (Interview with local citizens adjacent to “Prosperous Community”, No. 20120301yo FM)

The floating population does use some improper “tricks” to increase their income when collecting waste products. These tricks include deliberately devaluing the value of goods when purchasing waste products, pretending not to know the goods and lowering the price, pretending to forget to pay, shorting weight, etc., which have caused a negative impression on Urban Citizens. Due to the lack of private communication, urban residents have only this negative stereotype of the floating population in the community, resulting in stigmatization and moral indifference. Although they have no real evidence, they slander the image of the floating population through rumors and other means, believing that the “rag collector” is a “thief” on the surface and a “thief” in private.

“They pushed a car alone. I asked them if your car was transported by plane from Anhui. They said no and bought it here. I thought to myself, those things are not only stolen, but also cheated. What to buy! Can he afford it? A car costs 200 yuan and a license. You can buy it as soon as you come here? He doesn’t have the money to buy it. They are stealing and touching. If you don’t pay attention, he will take anything of value as soon as he walks here. There’s a pot outside, it’s gone. It’s too small to see. When they first came, they had nothing, no dishes and chopsticks, not to mention the pot! They do everything. But you can’t talk to them like that! If you say so, people will try to harm you if they don’t steal you. “(adjacent)”

Interview with local residents of “Prosperous Community”, No. 20120822i (m).

“They are not very good, you can say so. I look at collecting junk during the day and steal it at night. What do you talk to them about and let them know about your family? Guard against him.” (Interview with local citizens adjacent to “Prosperous

Community”, No. 20120313zh FM)

Another attitude is that migrant people occupy the resources and opportunities that should belong to citizens. For example, although urban residents refuse to engage in waste purchase in order to face up, they still secretly accuse these floating people of stealing urban jobs and enjoying both urban and rural interests.

“I don’t think (floating population) should come to H city. It is occupied here, and the land itself is also occupied for employment here. They don’t want to leave their Hukou in H city. If they move their hukou, the land will be gone.” (Interview with the staff of the neighborhood committee of “Prosperous Community”, No. 20130510m FM)

“Now the children of foreign households are better enrolled than the children of citizens in this city. It’s hard for people in this city to go to a good school. You also have to hold a real estate certificate and a birth certificate, which proves that it’s a local hukou. If a foreigner rents a house here, he has the right to enter the school no matter where he comes from. We feel that the citizens are not as popular as outsiders. Citizens have not enjoyed the treatment of the government, and they are not as good as foreign residents.” (Interview with ordinary citizens in H City, No. 20120823b m)

For the citizens adjacent to the “Prosperous Community”, although they also recognize that the old city community provides the convenience for the recycling of waste materials and promotes the recycling of resources for the adjacent community, the floating population has always been the “other” in the eyes of urban residents and will not form any private communication with it, and the old city space “hinders the appearance of the city”, which is the space they do not want to set foot in.

### **3.2.2. Community citizens in the cracks**

The local residents stranded in the “Prosperous Community” belong to the urban poor, which makes them have a deep sense of frustration. They resent the declining community and the serious lack of social services and public facilities. “Relocation” is their ardent hope. This topic has been appearing in their lives for 40 years, but it has never been put on the substantive agenda. Moreover, this long-term turbulence makes the “Prosperous Community” always in a state of deregulation.

In the grid management mode of neighborhood committees, it has become a grid ignored by neighborhood committees, and its public health and infrastructure (including drinking water and public heating) are not guaranteed. However, their position on this community is more complex. Like the citizens who have successively moved out of the “Prosperous Community”, they look forward to the demolition to improve their living conditions, but they also foresee that it is difficult to obtain more benefits from the demolition due to the complex house ownership and narrow living area, so they cannot change their living state; For example, they can enjoy the convenience of the large-scale city center, which can reduce the cost of their daily life. If they did not live in this old city community, it would be difficult for them to survive in the modern city. At the same time, this group often suffers from aging, illness, lack of work skills and ability, and lack of sufficient economic support from social networks. They “have fallen far behind rural immigrants and become an isolated, self-supporting and angry lower class” [17].

Because it is difficult to rent houses to other citizens, they have to rent them to



the floating population engaged in the waste purchase industry and the trading of old doors and windows. The relatively mature housing rental market constructed by the old urban space has a certain stability and has always attracted a large number of floating population. Citizens can rent part of their houses to outsiders, so rent has also become an important source of income in their daily life. Despite some deprivation in physical space and social services, it is still the only opportunity for the urban poor to approach “space equity”.

Citizens in the community have complex positions and practices on space. They want to leave, but they have no choice and can't leave the old city space. In this space, they are also in a “sandwich” state, stigmatized and ignored by urban residents, discriminated against by the floating population, and finally dwarfed themselves, becoming a truly isolated, self-supporting and angry bottom group. On the one hand, local residents in the community are stigmatized and ignored by urban residents. After the “Prosperous Community” has gradually become the residential area of the floating population, the population structure has undergone significant changes, and the floating population accounts for the vast majority of the population. This makes the citizens outside the community form a typed view on the occupation and identity of the residents of the “Prosperous Community”, believing that it is the “Anhui Tun” inhabited by the “rag king”. This view also covers local residents stranded in the community. It can be said that in the eyes of urban residents, there are only floating population here, but no landlords. Local residents are submerged in the floating population and passively suffer from stigmatization and indifference. On the other hand, local residents in the community suffer discrimination from the floating population. Sometimes, the floating population will gather together to openly and undisguised despise the local citizens stranded in their community, attribute this dilemma to their laziness, and even call them “slag quenching”.

“We southerners are different from those in Northeast China. We think about the future, children and work hard. They eat all day long, no matter whether they have children or not They have no money and can't afford a house. Can the capable still live in this broken house? I've already lived in a building. If city people want to live in this broken house, they are not the scum of society?” (Interview with floating population living in “Prosperous Community”, No. 20120826h m)

Our survey shows that the relationship between the local residents who move out of the community and the floating population living here is only between the landlord and the tenant, and there is no private relationship, while the position and practice of the residents who stay in the community on the floating population are more complex. Based on the degree of acceptance and involvement in the life of floating population, these citizens can be divided into three types: excluded, adapted and accepted. The position taken by the excluded is similar to that of ordinary citizens, that is, rejection, indifference and stigma; The adaptation is manifested in the recognition that they have similar social status with the floating population, and can face the fact of sharing time and space community calmly, but may not further intervene in each other's life world; The receiver is the “we relationship” that forms a community close to sharing “time” and “space” with the floating population [18], more involved in the life of the floating population, form private relationships and produce social support behavior.

The excluded occupy the majority. They hold an attitude of exclusion and disgust

towards the floating population, maintain almost absolute isolation from the floating population, and finally hope that the floating population will withdraw from the community or even from the city. They even blame the current situation of “Prosperous Community” on the floating population and its industries. Although the waste industry is not willing to be involved by the urban poor, the prosperity of the floating population is very different from their situation of deep poverty, which makes them more exclusive of the floating population. They do not want to live in a community or even a city with the floating population.

Driven by their strong desire to improve shantytowns and get compensation, they did not include the floating population in urban renewal; They are unable to resist the influence of urban renewal on their fate, but they have never thought of taking the floating population as a community member with the same fate and suffering from poverty deprivation.

### **3.3. Position and practice of floating population**

From the previous research, the “Prosperous Community” has been abandoned by the government for a long time to a large extent, and can not get sufficient social services and security. However, it is not as chaotic as outsiders and city managers think. On the contrary, the floating population spontaneously forms and maintains a good self-organizing order in the settlement. Within the old city community we studied, the floating population established the order and organization of production and life in the community based on the ties of hometown and industrial relationship, and formed an emotional and instrumental support network.

Social network provides information and channels for new immigrants to migrate, and promotes the settlement of floating population in “Prosperous Community”; The settlement strengthens the social network between the floating population. Based on the relationship of kinship, township and industry, the floating population transforms the old urban community into a “acquaintance society” and provides mutual help in life. The floating population not only has the free flow of means of life and production to provide the necessary information of urban life, but also forms a non fixed mutual aid group to look after, educate and supervise their children in the community. This kind of watch and help reduces the living cost of the floating population in the city and reduces the total investment of the floating population in family time. Social network provides supervision and restraint for the production and life of floating population. Based on social network and acquaintance society, the floating population in “Prosperous Community” has formed obvious and good moral self-discipline. Although the floating population has the behavior of “petty theft” and “hand in hand” in the eyes of urban residents, there has never been the loss of waste products or stealing other people’s goods in the “Prosperous Community”. A large number of waste products are placed in each house, including those that need to be reprocessed or resold when prices rise. The old doors and windows for sale are placed outside each house.

This strong moral restriction is also reflected in their economic life, which restricts speculation and unfair competition to a great extent. Lao Wu said: “These villagers know each other and won’t rob other’s business. Although we accept waste

products, we are all loyal and can't buy them. We deliberately bid high prices and pry others into buying and selling. If you violate this restriction, you will be rejected by the "hometown circle" and cause dissatisfaction and complaints about the behavior of "betraying your own people". In short, this self-organizing order and social support network provide a security guarantee for the survival and development of the floating population. Residents are mutually beneficial, cooperative and self-management. They use social networks to transform a desperate and declining old city community into a vibrant and dynamic social space.

In the face of social discrimination, security threats, lack of social resources and other problems, the floating population does not seek help from the formal forces of the state, but through adaptation to avoid harm and solve difficulties. The floating population provides protection to each other through spatial settlement, reducing the probability of being "black money" by local ruffians (occasionally film police and urban management). This was once an important function in the period of poor public security in H city. As working capital is needed for the purchase of waste products and the sale of old doors and windows, the floating population also lacks the habit of depositing money in the bank, and theft has occurred many times in the community. In the absence of street and community public services, the floating population in the community spontaneously organized and set up patrols to take care of each other's waste products placed outdoors and old doors and windows for sale, so as to maintain each other's property safety. Here, the floating population has formed a business chain of waste recycling (including ordinary waste and old doors and windows). Taking the ordinary waste recycling chain as an example, it is composed of hundreds of waste recycling personnel and purchase stations with clear division of labor. Due to the differences in labor tools, waste knowledge, interpersonal resources and capital investment ability, these waste recycling personnel show pyramid internal differentiation in terms of economic income and economic status. However, as an informal economy, the entry threshold of waste recycling industry is relatively low. Under the leadership of relatives and villagers, new immigrants can soon be embedded in this chain and obtain informal employment opportunities. The teaching of job skills and the dissemination of information about job opportunities take place both in the private sphere and in public space. Chatting in public spaces such as ditch side and purchase station is also an opportunity to observe others' work and exchange work skills. Although, "how many times have we lived in this house now. When you have money after living, people buy a house and go away. Let's rent it out here and try again. However, when the "economic talents" left the old urban community where they originally lived, they did not cut off their relationship with the floating population. Many floating people have completed the original accumulation by engaging in the waste industry and the business of dismantling doors and windows. They have purchased houses and cars in the city or set up acquisition stations and plastic steel window factories. For example, some interviewees said: "My brothers are here. Big dry anti-theft doors and small dry plastic steel factories have bought houses and cars in H city and developed in the city." As Zhou Min's research on Chinatown in the United States shows, obtaining a high socio-economic status (for some people in the immigrant community) does not necessarily lead to the decline and abandonment of the original ethnic gathering areas. Most importantly, these emigrated compatriots did

not abandon their communities. [19] our research on the old city community also shows that when some immigrants complete the accumulation of funds and purchase houses and cars outside the residential area, even if they no longer live in the “Prosperous Community”, they will still engage in work related to the original industry, and make their fate closely connected with the residential area by introducing jobs or direct employment to the new immigrants.

The floating population clearly recognizes the importance of such old urban communities to their production and life. Only the bungalows and community space of “Prosperous Community” can allow them to meet the dual needs of life and production at the same time. Due to the particularity of their industry, their choice of space has certain limitations, or they have a certain dependence on this kind of old city space [10]. They occupy and use the space of the old city to the greatest extent, hoarding waste products in every corner - the space for placement extends from the inside to the open space and roof outside the house. They believe that “we come to the city to collect waste products. We can only live in such a place”. Compared with low rent, they don’t mind living conditions. Although “(the house is) small, it is temporarily acceptable and cheap”. Their specific living conditions: “You can sleep with a bed and cook with a pot. We can live anywhere, even on the garbage”.

Through the survey, we believe that the disregard of the floating population for their own rights and interests is not “collective unconsciousness” [7]. Because they do not own real estate and do not involve or participate in relocation disputes, they appear to be “indifferent” to relocation. But in fact, although they are not worried about interest compensation, they are quite worried about the fact that “life in the city is interrupted”. They vaguely feel that they are excluded from demolition, which shows a kind of dissatisfaction and despair. Although the floating population did not regard the government’s urban transformation as depriving them of their own “urban rights”, they clearly recognized the government’s exclusion and questioned: “If the government wants to tear us down now, does it think we are too messy here? Does the government not allow us? Does it not allow us farmers to go out. What does it mean to kick out our outsiders?” In addition, they put forward their expectations for urban transformation. They hope to continue to live in the prosperous community and jointly invest with the government to repair the houses here and improve the appearance of the community. “Stop tearing down bungalows. We can’t afford to live in the city. Let’s put things in order and let’s live. We have also benefited the people, haven’t we?”

In short, contrary to the understanding of most citizens and urban managers, this is a space to meet the multiple needs of the floating population in production and life, and a place to carry their hope of changing their destiny. In the absence of urban public services, they have formed a community order and social support network, and are willing to participate in urban construction and integrate into the overall development of the city with the permission and acceptance of the government. However, although most of the floating population have lived in cities for many years, urban renewal and planning make them always in a state of mobility and floating. Under the pressure of urban renewal, most of them have been forced to move many times. This is a forced migration, not an active flow in pursuit of a better life [10]. This floating and floating state has changed their design for the future to a certain extent, resulting in the

confusion of the floating population about their future life.

#### **4. Multiple values of old city space**

Based on the theoretical standpoint of pluralistic community, through the study of this old city space, we find that the position and practice of community actors are pluralistic. Urban managers and planners who hold the urban concept of “extreme modernism” see the dilapidated space of the old city, the backwardness and despair of residents. They cannot tolerate the complexity of the old urban space, and hope to reorganize the social space and urban population through a variety of strategies, so as to regain the right to manage the social space and urban population. For the neighboring citizens who are outsiders, they are incompatible with the floating population and regard it as an unwelcome “other”. Although these floating people provide convenience for them in waste recycling, they also have a lot of discrimination and stigma against the floating population. For citizens who still live in the old urban space, their position on the community is more complex: On the one hand, they transfer their frustration of living here to the floating population, hoping that the floating population will withdraw from the community or even the city; On the other hand, they rely on the housing rental market formed by the floating population to obtain the opportunity of “space equity”. As the real residents of the old city community, the floating population takes it as an important space for production and life, lives a self-organized life here, and obtains considerable income - they show a thriving and prosperous scene in this declining old city space.

If we can go beyond the concept of extreme modernist urban planning, we can realize that we should not only understand urban space from the perspective of “visual aesthetics” and market value, but also analyze the use value of urban space from the perspective of life practice and bottom society. The multiple values of old city space are mainly reflected in the following two aspects:

First of all, the old city space is a settled community, which has important urbanization significance. In the settled City, Sanders describes that there are a large number of urban spaces formed by foreign farmers on the edge of many big cities around the world. He calls these seemingly dilapidated urban spaces “settled cities”, that is, the place where farmers enter the city. For China’s urban development, the more common may not be the new urban space spontaneously formed by farmers on the edge of the city, but farmers looking for habitat in every corner of the city. We can call this kind of urban space “settled community” [20,21]. Such space usually becomes an enclave of urban development due to the lack of economic value and potential of overall development in the process of large-scale urban transformation.

Due to the old buildings and lack of public services, the rent of this community space is usually very low, which has become the easiest urban space for migrant workers and their families to enter the city. Although the settled community looks dilapidated, it is not the losers eliminated by the city who live here, but the key factor for the rebirth and vitality of the city [17]. They only suffer from poverty in the dimension of housing [22]. They still have the possibility of upward mobility by using social networks, real estate market, personal management and other means. In fact, as found in the survey, many economic talents have been born in this old city space.

Based on the opportunity to enter the city provided by this “settled community”, a considerable part of the floating population buy houses, open purchase stations or plastic steel window factories in the city. With the further liberalization of the education policy for migrant children, they expect that the next generation can become urban citizens through education and work. Many floating people also have the will to continue to live and live in cities. In short, the old city space is a transitional space, which can better provide the path and practical opportunities for farmers’ urbanization.

Secondly, for the city itself, this old city space also has important value, that is, the value of urban diversity as Jacobs said. Jacobs stressed that diversity is the real source of urban vitality and internal order, including the diversity of urban space, the diversity of urban space uses and the diversity of population. Perhaps from the perspective of modernist urban planning, the old buildings of different ages are the expression of dilapidated and non modernity, but they can provide different rental living spaces for different classes of the city. This also allows different groups of people to find their own living space in the city. [13] the old urban space of Chinese cities also has this value. The study found that renting rooms in this space includes not only a large number of migrant workers’ families, but also a small number of local citizens. They are not only engaged in the recycling of waste materials in groups, but also a large part of them are engaged in service work in construction sites, schools and urban environmental sanitation. The operation and order of the city depend on the service of this group. Low house rent is very attractive to these people with heavy family burden and relatively low wage level, which also makes them have the ability and opportunity to live and work in the city and even the core area of the city. As an important part of the city, the urban bottom groups (including the floating population) need to make use of the old city space to obtain their opportunities to survive in the city. In a sense, such community space protects and realizes the “urban right” of urban bottom groups. In this sense, these old urban spaces are also the basic components of the normal operation of the city, carrying important urban functions. In short, community practice has multiple subjects, and the subject status and spatial practice of floating population in urban communities are often (deliberately) ignored by urban managers and planners. In the process of urbanization, especially in the process of urban renewal, we should not only pay attention to the positions and practices of government managers and planners, citizens of adjacent communities and house owners, but also respect and face up to the positions and practices of floating population (an important part of urban population), and further pay attention to the urbanization significance of old urban space for floating population and its diversified value for urban development. Simply clearing the old urban space is only a response to the narrow and autocratic concept of modernist urban planning, and may not be the most beneficial measure for urban development. Based on the understanding of this diversified trend and structure, we need to go beyond the preference of extreme modernism for urban order aesthetics, tolerate and respect the multi space practice and value of urban development, so as to realize the shared development of multiple subjects.

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