

# Research on Community Culture Construction in the Process of “Village Transformation”

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## Abstract

“Village transformed into Community (referred to as ‘Village Transformation’)” is a new way to build a new socialist countryside that some places explore in recent years. The formation of new communities requires community culture to bond and integrate. However, the cultural construction of the new community is faced with many problems, such as the loss of traditional values and the weak civic consciousness of the community residents. Therefore, we must explore the cause from the political, economic, cultural and other aspects and find a way out, in order to promote the whole “village transformation” project as well as the socialist new rural construction to advance smoothly. Based on this, this paper first studies the difficulties faced by the cultural construction of new residents community in the process of “village transformation”. Then, this paper analyzes the causes of the difficulties in cultural construction of new residents communities, at last puts forward the paths of promoting the cultural construction of new residents community, hoping to provide useful reference in improving the level of rural community cultural construction.

## Keywords

Village Transformation, Rural Community, Cultural Construction, Difficulties

## 1. Introduction

From December 2005, the fifth plenary session of the 16<sup>th</sup> Central Committee of the Communist Party of China put forward the major historical task of building a new socialist countryside with “development of production, comfortable living, civilized local customs, clean village appearance and democratic management” (Li, 2019). The construction of a new socialist countryside began from the stage of propaganda, mobilization and state support, and gradually deepened and

rooted in the actual rural life, and many places began to actively seek effective ways to promote the construction of new countryside (Zhao, 2017).

Rural community construction is the base point, platform and starting point of socialist new rural construction (Li & Ge, 2012). The innovation of rural grass-roots management system through rural community construction can not only provide a new system and organization platform for the construction of new socialist countryside, but also provide an effective way and system guarantee for the construction of new countryside. Based on this, many places regard rural community construction as the breakthrough and effective way to promote new rural construction. Community cultural identity refers to the residents' knowledge, compliance and heartfelt recognition of their community identity, community behavior rules, community behavior conventions, community daily life practices and even community cultural customs. Therefore, in the process of promoting the construction of rural community, it is an important path to take effective measures to promote the new residents to understand, be familiar with, abide by and finally form the identity of the new culture.

## **2. Difficulties Faced by Cultural Construction of New Residents Community in the Process of "Village Transformation"**

Due to the special geographical conditions, population status and organization status of rural communities, the cultural quality, psychological state, thinking mode, living habits and value system of its residents are obviously different from those of urban communities. Especially in China's traditional agricultural villages, people pay attention to the relationship between family and neighborhood, blood and clan, and have exclusive and conservative psychological, emotional and behavioral patterns. The continuation of this kind of village culture makes new residents in rural communities face a series of challenges in the formation of cultural identity. Mr. Fei Xiaotong thinks that traditional Chinese society is an acquaintance society. It is characterized by the existence of a personal relationship between people, through which people are connected to form a network of relationships.

### **2.1. The Difficult Transition from Acquaintance Society to Semi-Acquaintance Society, and from Rule of Man to Rule of Law**

Traditional Chinese society is an acquaintance society, which is characterized by a personal relationship between people, through which people are connected to form a network of relationships. It is only in modern society, that people become strangers as a result of social change in an ever larger social space, that law becomes necessary. Only when a society becomes a "stranger society", can the development of the society rely on contracts and institutions, and the relationship and trust between people can be established through institutions and rules. In the process of new rural community construction, the villagers who are not familiar with each other in several nearby villages are unified planned into a resi-

dential area to form a new rural community (Li & Ge, 2012). The acquaintance society under the original village rapidly evolves into the semi-acquaintance society in the new community, and the social network formed by various personal relationships also tends to break down.

## **2.2. The Decline of Farmers' Traditional Values and the Loss of Modern Values**

The ontological value of human beings is the reflection on the meaning of human life and the ultimate value concern of life. The core issue it cares about is the limited problem of life and how can the limited life be transformed into the infinite meaning problem. Once we can't find the infinite meaning of finite life, or once we think that the end of individual life is the end of all meaning; then we can't really deal effectively with death and with the present life. In traditional closed villages in China, most villagers adhere to the life pursuit of "goose leaves a voice behind, people leave a name behind", and devote their whole life to guarding their reputation among people around them (Li, 2007). That is to say, village public opinion and honor view have a strong constraint on villagers, restricting their behavior and forming a natural moral bottom line. In the community environment, the new communal life breaks the original boundary of the village and forms a semi-acquaintance society. The binding force of public opinion and the concept of honor decreases rapidly, while the modern spirit of contract and the consciousness of the rule of law have not been formed, which forms a vacuum period of external supervision and binding force. Coupled with the impact of materialism and money worship under the market economy, it accelerates the distortion and decline of the basic social values in the countryside. What is more terrible is that the indecency of rural values is more prominent among young people. They pursue money and enjoyment and lack a basic moral bottom line; and they are more prone to deviation and doing extreme things, which has caused potential harm to the cultural construction of rural communities and even the construction of the whole new countryside.

## **2.3. Cultural Activities Lack Innovation**

At the present stage, the most popular activities held by rural communities are government-led cultural, scientific and sanitary activities to the countryside, which are mainly art performances and movie shows with monotonous contents and old-fashioned forms, and residents generally have little interest in participating in the activities. Today, with the highly developed Internet and the widespread use of smart phones, villagers can browse their favorite cultural products on the Internet at home, and are naturally reluctant to participate in stereotyped cultural activities. In fact, in the rural traditional folk activities, there are some activities that the villagers like, such as dragon and lion dance, flower activities, etc., but most of these activities will only be carried out during festivals. And under the impact of the Internet emerging culture, the heat of traditional cultural activities decreases (Fei, 2005). As time passes, the unique local customs in

rural areas are gradually falling apart, and the cultural construction of rural communities has lost the root of local culture, which is bound to fall into a difficult situation.

### **3. Probing into the Difficulties of Cultural Construction in New Resident Community**

#### **3.1. Economic Foundation is a Prerequisite for the Development of Superstructure**

A series of problems in the cultural identity of new residents community are firstly determined by the relatively backward level of economic development in rural areas.

The backward level of economic development and the primitive mode of social production not only restrict the investment of individuals and families in culture and education economically, but also affect the change of rural residents' ideology and hinder the formation of modern living habits and consumption concepts in rural communities. More seriously, the shortage of the material lead to a result that rural people pay too much attention to money and pursuit, some of them even devote themselves to the creation and pursuit of material wealth, thus they do not have too much time and energy to pursue the construction of spiritual civilization and political civilization, and pursue their own comprehensive development, or even they are subjectively unwilling to pursue it (He, 2008). As a result, rural community residents are lost in the pursuit of value. Taking Zhucheng city in Shandong province as an example, there is a big gap between zhucheng's rural economic development level and the urban level. Farmers' disposable income is relatively low, which leads to the serious deficiencies in the cultural construction and investment in basic education in rural areas of Zhucheng, which are related to the development of community residents' cultural quality.

#### **3.2. The Influence of Traditional Political and Cultural Thought**

Chinese traditional political culture is greatly influenced by Confucianism, and Confucianism mainly advocates the rule of man. Regarding politics as the extension and externalization of morality is the theoretical basis of the rule of man. However, in the historical movement, if morality is placed above politics, while, for the most part, it will drag politics toward conservatism. Politics is fluid, new facts are constantly emerging, and ethics are generally the affirmation and stipulation of a fait done. Under the influence of history and culture, traditional rural residents have no strong concept of democracy and rule of law, lack equality and contract spirit, and lack the awareness of maintaining their rights and fulfilling their civic obligations. In addition, the traditional rural conservative ideology formed under the long-term influence of small-scale peasant production mode is strongly repellent to modern political and cultural concepts, and it is difficult to accept and internalize modern ideas in a short period of time. Therefore, in the

process of transforming into new residents in the community, new residents feel helpless and hesitated in the face of a series of democratic behaviors reflecting modern citizens' rights that require their own careful thinking and independent choice in the unfamiliar civil social environment and the transformation from identity to contract. Thus, it is impossible to identify with the modern community democratic cultural model of self-management, self-service, self-education and self-supervision in community life, and further restricts the cultural construction of rural communities.

### 3.3. The Realistic Influence of Cultural Inertia

The development of culture is the result of various factors, but it is undeniable that culture has certain inertia. In the construction of new rural communities, some old cultural forms that do not adapt to the social development are still widely practiced, and the new community culture has suffered great resistance in the process of promotion. Most of the time, it is not because the farmers are backward and ignorant that they cannot realize the harm of backward and unscientific social customs, but it is because that the cultural inertia encourages people to continue to move forward on the traditional road. For example, in rural areas, there is a widespread extravagance and waste in red and white affairs, especially in funerals, that some areas even perform happy songs and dances or even striptease at funerals. The ignorance and harmfulness of these behaviors are obvious. However, it is because of the objective existence of cultural inertia that these bad cultural customs are difficult to change rapidly in a short time. The change of bad habits requires the government to have new ideas and new measures in the aspect of publicity and guidance, and requires a comprehensive and effective cultural construction project to break the restriction of cultural inertia (Maine, 1984).

### 3.4. Crisis of Faith in Social Transition

Inevitably, in the current social transition period, we have an unprecedented crisis of faith. The so-called faith crisis refers to people's abandonment of value goals. In the current rural areas of China, the rupture of traditional Confucian ethical culture, the unreachable communist ideal and the drastic changes of social life style brought by the tide of market economy have led to the loss of faith of some people. After the lack of faith, people will have no heart of awe, and people will have no moral bottom line when they do things without awe. So now in the countryside, many undesirable phenomena such as the abandon of integrity, the pursuit of interests, the refusal of supporting the elderly people and so on. As mentioned above, the more terrible thing is that on the one hand, under the conditions of the new rural community, the function of rural public opinion to maintain social morality is weakened, which intensifies the crisis of rural value, and on the other hand, this lack of faith affects the new generation of young people in the countryside to a greater extent (Liu, 1987). On the one hand, they

began to discard social virtues such as justice, honesty, morality and simplicity, and they began to focus on money. On the other hand, as the main force of the new generation of migrant workers, they are gradually lost and depressed in the new and unfamiliar environment, and even to the point of self-destruction and harm the society, which poses a severe challenge to the cultural construction of our rural communities.

#### **4. The Paths of Promoting the Cultural Construction of New Resident Community**

As mentioned above, the problems existing in the cultural construction of new residents communities in the process of “village transformation” pose severe challenges to the overall and healthy development of our rural communities and the promotion of socialist new rural construction. And it will greatly affect the normal life of individual residents in rural communities, and the healthy development of individual communities and even the stability and harmony of the whole rural society (Chen, 2008).

##### **4.1. Promoting the Construction of “Agglomeration” Community and Forming a New “Acquaintance Society”**

Many problems in the cultural construction of rural communities can be attributed to the traditional acquaintance society in rural areas. This kind of social form makes the communication between people not based on laws and contracts, but on various relations formed by long-term interaction between people. Therefore, in the new community construction, we must find an effective way to break the status quo of the traditional acquaintance society, so as to provide a mass foundation platform for the construction of a modern society ruled by law and the promotion of democratic political development. But on the other hand, the acquaintance society in rural areas has brought some natural conveniences to the life of rural village residents. Therefore, on the basis of contract and rule of law, it is necessary to construct a new social model of acquaintances by means of the common mode of production, way of life and the change of ideas and systems in the new environment, and replace the traditional acquaintance society. This positive change has laid a solid foundation for the cultural construction of community life among the new residents of our rural communities.

##### **4.2. Create New Forms of Cultural Activities**

We should change the traditional and stereotyped way of carrying out cultural activities, carry out some cultural projects welcomed by villagers in accordance with local folk customs and residents’ wishes, and raise villagers’ attention to community cultural construction. For example, a harvest festival could be held to encourage villagers to express the joy of agricultural harvest. Or the yangko dance and lion dance performances held during the festival can be recorded and shown in the cultural activity center to stimulate villagers’ cultural confidence

and pride. Besides, activities with the theme of “Caring for left-behind Families and Warming lonely Hearts” could be carried out to offer the warmth of “big family” to left-behind elderly people, women and children.

### 4.3. Improve the Social Security System and Promote the Penetration of Community Welfare

Perfecting the social security system in the construction of new rural communities and creating the material security foundation for community residents is conducive to enhancing the sense of security and happiness of community residents in the market economy, so as to pursue and form correct values of life. The new residents in the community have enhanced their further support and recognition of the rural community, and at the same time they began to actively participate in the cultural construction of the new rural community (Xiang, 2009).

## 5. Conclusion

In this paper, the difficulties faced by the cultural construction of new residents communities in the process of “village transformation” are studied. Then, the reasons are analyzed from the political, economic, cultural and other aspects. Thus, a conclusion is drawn that forming a new “acquaintance society”, creating new forms of cultural activities and improving the social security system can help to solve the difficulties faced by the cultural construction of new residents’ communities.

## Founding

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## Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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