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Discussion on the Maintenance Path of Spatial Perception and Collective Memory in the Context of Community Renewal

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ABSTRACT

The focus of domestic urban construction has shifted to optimizing the spatial quality of existing urban areas. Urban construction no longer aims to create large new areas. The main goal of urban construction is to enhance the living quality of the existing spaces. As a result, the concept of renovating old communities has changed. The past community renovation work mainly dealt with basic hardware issues. Workers would repair community roads, replace old equipment, and clean the community environment. Now, community renovation work is not just about improving hardware facilities. Workers also optimize the living environment and protect the local cultural content of the community. The spatial form and community characteristics formed by long-term residents' living are valuable resources for community construction. Most of the old and elderly communities in China will adopt a unified renovation plan. The unified renovation plan can accelerate the construction progress. Workers can quickly improve community facilities and organize the overall environment of the community. The unified renovation method also has obvious disadvantages. The renovation work will destroy the long-term spatial layout and living scenarios formed by the community. Large-scale unified renovations will erase the unique characteristics of each community. The original living scenarios of the community continue to change. Residents' memories of the past of the community will gradually fade. The activity spaces of community neighbors are randomly modified. The emotional exchanges among residents decrease, and the sense of community belonging of residents continues to decline. Researchers conduct on-site visits and grassroots observations. The research results show that the renovation work of many elderly communities has problems of uneven development. The renovation progress of community hardware facilities is relatively fast. The progress of community cultural protection and cultural continuation work is relatively lagging. This study combines the theory of organic renewal and grassroots governance theory for analysis. The research is in line with the actual characteristics of the natural development and gradual change of old communities. The research has sorted out various problems existing in the community renovation process. The overall style of the community tends to be uniform, the daily life scenarios of residents become scattered, and residents lack channels for participation in community renovation are the main problems. The research retains the original spatial layout of the community, creates a living environment that meets the needs of residents, and builds a management model with multi-party participation. The research thus organizes a refined community renewal method. This renewal method can retain the unique cultural characteristics of the community and continue the cultural development of the community.

KEYWORDS

Community Renewal; Spatial Awareness; Collective Memory; Living Space; Community Revitalization.

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1. INTRODUCTION

After a profound adjustment in the development model of domestic cities, urban construction has completely abandoned the extensive and scale-based expansion approach and has entered a stage of refined renewal based on the exploitation of existing resources. Revitalizing the idle resources in old urban areas and optimizing the living environment of old communities have become the core tasks of current urban governance and spatial quality improvement. The traditional large-scale demolition and reconstruction development model was suitable for the special period of rapid urban expansion, but it is difficult to meet the diverse needs of modern community long-term development and cultural inheritance. The renovation value of old communities has already gone beyond the simple improvement of facilities and facade renovation, and the core lies in safeguarding the original living texture formed over the long-term evolution of the community and continuing the cultural heritage accumulated over many years in the area. Looking at the community renewal practices in various domestic regions, there is a significant value deviation in the industry construction. Most projects pursue uniform spatial style and uniformity, mechanically applying mature standardized landscape design plans, while ignoring the accumulated living scenes and local cultural traits of old communities over the years. This construction situation has led to the continuous weakening of residents' sense of belonging to their homes after completing hardware upgrades and environmental renovations, and the problem of spatial isolation has become increasingly common. Most existing academic research focuses on landscape optimization, facility renovation, and other technical fields, mainly analyzing the quality improvement effect of the renovated space, and rarely from the micro perspective of residents' subjective living experience and the inheritance of community memories, deeply exploring the internal reasons for the decline of community cultural atmosphere, nor can it fully explain the dynamic impact of space renovation on human perception, emotional cognition, and collective memory [1]. The community renewal at the grassroots level generally has a strong utilitarian construction color. Most projects aim to compress construction time and control construction costs, uniformly adopting template-based renovation plans, gradually eliminating the regional identification and spatial characteristics of different communities, ultimately resulting in the industry predicament of similar urban community styles and loss of cultural heritage. Combining the current construction shortcomings and the limitations of existing research perspectives, this paper conducts a systematic study to explore the renewal path of coordinated symbiosis between space improvement and memory inheritance, providing reliable practical basis for the humanistic activation and refined governance of old communities. Compared with the uniform planning and batch construction of new-style commercial housing, the most precious value of old communities does not lie in the regular architectural layout and complete hardware facilities, but in the unique spatial texture formed by the passage of time and the vivid and lively atmosphere rooted in residents' daily lives. After decades of human settlement iteration and life accumulation, the winding and interlaced streets, naturally idle open spaces, freely growing local plants, and scattered recreational areas distributed in the community have jointly formed the unique spatial layout of the old community. These seemingly scattered and messy sites are precisely the important carriers for neighbors' casual chats, rest, and maintaining interpersonal relationships. Residents have lived and moved around in this area for a long time, gradually forming deep emotional bonds, building their own personal spatial cognition and living experience, which is also the core connotation of spatial perception. The life details, exclusive memories, and neighborly warmth of multiple generations intermingle and blend, becoming the unique collective memory of the community. The two elements mutually penetrate and mutually empower, creating the unique cultural temperament of each old community, which is also the deep reason for the obvious differences in community styles and living atmospheres between different communities [2].

2. THE INTRINSIC LOGICAL CONNECTION BETWEEN SPATIAL PERCEPTION AND COLLECTIVE MEMORY IN COMMUNITY RENEWAL

The sense of belonging of residents to the community has no direct correlation with external indicators such as the sophistication of the landscape and the modernization level of the buildings. It is more related to the spatial familiarity accumulated over a long period of residence and the subtle psychological identification that gradually forms. Residents walk, rest, and interact with neighbors within the community all year round, gradually familiarizing themselves with the layout of the streets, the distribution of the areas, and the spatial scale. They gradually establish a stable and exclusive perception of the site. This subjective perception formed through real living experiences is the core content of spatial perception. Collective memory is the aggregation of communal emotions, covering the living customs passed down through generations in the community, regional characteristic culture, and stable neighborhood interaction patterns. It can maintain harmonious community relations and a rich community atmosphere, and is also a key identifier to distinguish the cultural temperament of different communities [3].

Spatial perception and collective memory have a close internal connection. The physical space of the community is the material support for the long-term retention and continuation of collective memory. Abstract human elements such as the warm scenes of neighborhood interaction, residents' past life experiences, and unique local customs and cultures all need to be physically retained and passed down through generations through street walkways, leisure squares, convenient areas, and local green plants. At the same time, collective memory gives modern urban spaces that tend to be homogeneous a unique humanistic warmth and spiritual core. Although the construction forms of urban communities are increasingly similar nowadays, residents' living experiences and emotional identification are completely different. The core reason lies in that the collective memory accumulated in each community is unique and cannot be replicated.

Living scenarios are important carriers for the intergenerational transmission of collective memory. This feature is particularly prominent in the development process of old communities [4]. The spatial planning of new residential areas is regular and rigid, with clearly defined functional zones, and the overall living scenarios are monotonous and highly similar. The spatial utilization mode of old communities is more flexible and relaxed, better fitting the casual and natural daily living habits of residents. The bustling convenience stores with a strong local flavor, the perennial local vegetation, the winding narrow alleys between buildings, and the leisure areas spontaneously formed by residents all record the development and changes of the community over decades, preserving the fragmented interaction trajectories among neighbors, and being the most vivid and precious dynamic resources for maintaining community collective memory.

The core problem lies in the deviation of the core focus of renovation construction. Many renovation projects pursue uniform appearance and uniformity of the community's overall style, completely ignoring the long-term formed living habits and regular spatial usage needs of residents. The renovated community is neat and exquisite, with complete facilities, but the standardized landscape design removes the original lively and real atmosphere, and is seriously disconnected from the residents' real living experience. The absence of living scenes and the discontinuity of collective memory have left the community with only basic living functions, failing to evoke the deep emotional identification of the residents. This is the main reason why the transformation of different old communities has varying degrees of success and significant differences in reputation [5].

3. THE CURRENT REALITY OF THE COMMUNITY UPDATE INVOLVING THE LOSS OF SPATIAL AWARENESS AND COLLECTIVE MEMORY.

3.1. The Homogenization of Spatial Texture Reduces The Distinctiveness of the Space

The grassroots community renovation has long had a construction shortcoming of emphasizing external appearance packaging while neglecting the shaping of the inner content. Infrastructure projects such as road renovation, exterior wall painting, and greening arrangement, which have the advantages of short construction period and obvious visual effects, have always been the main content of community renovations. Standardized construction can quickly optimize the overall appearance of the community, and therefore is chosen as the preferred solution by most renovation projects. The original spatial texture of old communities is an organic whole formed naturally through long-term human interaction by residents, carrying unique regional imprints and the memories of several generations of residents. It has irreplaceable cultural value and research significance [6].

During the specific implementation of the renovation, most construction teams lack the awareness of detailed resource investigation and the thinking of protecting unique spaces. To unify the overall style of the area, reduce construction costs and shorten the construction period, construction units mostly abandon the original spatial layout of the community, demolishing the characteristic streets, idle sites and convenience facilities that carry residents' memories, and replacing the original spaces full of the aroma of life with standardized modern landscapes. Homogenized renovations smooth out the differentiated spatial characteristics of different communities, significantly weaken the spatial recognition of the community, break the stable environmental cognition that residents have long adapted to, and continuously weaken residents' spatial perception ability. Residents' inherent living patterns are forcibly changed, their sense of belonging to the home gradually disappears, and the collective memories accumulated by generations of residents in the community gradually fade away in the repetitive and template-like transformation [7].

3.2. The Narrative of the Scene is Fragmented, Severing the Chain of Collective Memory

The spatial texture serves as the fundamental framework for carrying the community's humanistic memories, and the coherent and vivid life-like scenes are the core thread for the continuous transmission of collective memories from generation to generation. Currently, there are prominent problems in community renewal work, such as the absence of life scenes and the deterioration of the humanistic atmosphere [8]. Many projects overly pursue the refinement and visual appeal of the landscape, blindly follow the trend to build standardized landscape facilities, and one-sidedly optimize the external form of the space, while sacrificing the life-like scenes that residents frequently use and that carry deep emotions among neighbors.

After the renovation of old communities is completed, the open spaces where residents chat and rest are mostly replaced by regular lawns, the convenient small spaces are completely cleared, and the convenient narrow alleys for neighbors' passage are widened and hardened. The fragmented renovation model disrupts the stable living rhythm of residents, interrupts the continuous life experience of the community, and directly causes the break in the transmission thread of collective memories [9]. At the same time, the soft humanistic construction such as the inheritance of folk culture and the cultivation of neighborhood atmosphere has been in a state of absence for a long time [10]. The renovated community only has the regular hardware shell, lacking the core humanistic core and the carrier of memories, resulting in the continuous loss and gradual depletion of the overall humanistic of the community.

3.3. Insufficient Participation of Residents and Absence of a Memory-Keeping Entity

Residents are the core users of community spaces and the main bearers of life experiences and collective memories. The continuation and revitalization of the community's cultural atmosphere cannot be achieved without the active participation and daily maintenance of the residents. Currently, there is a significant imbalance in the community renewal model. The entire process of project planning, scheme design, and construction implementation is led and promoted by government departments, professional design teams, and construction units.

4. PRACTICAL APPROACHES FOR MAINTAINING SPATIAL AWARENESS AND COLLECTIVE MEMORY IN COMMUNITY RENEWAL

4.1. Adhere to the Concept of Minor Updates, and Protectively Preserve the Original Spatial Texture

The original spatial texture serves as the core material carrier for the collective memory of a community, and is also an important foundation for the community to break through the homogenization predicament and shape its regional characteristics. Compared with the traditional large-scale demolition and reconstruction development model, organic micro-updating adheres to the core principle of "minimum intervention and maximum retention", which can retain the original spatial form of the community to the greatest extent, reduce the loss of community humanistic traits caused by the renovation project, effectively safeguard the unique humanistic temperament of the community, and stabilize the sense of belonging of residents to their homes.

The renovation of old communities needs to completely abandon the fixed construction thinking of templateization and homogeneity, based on the original spatial foundation of the community and the actual living conditions of residents, carry out refined and differentiated quality improvement work. In the early stage of renovation, it is necessary to complete the investigation and mapping of all spatial resources, systematically sort out the characteristic streets, local vegetation, old convenience facilities, idle special sites and other spatial resources with memory value, establish a special protection list, and prevent destructive construction behaviors such as blind demolition and random renovation [11]. The renovation work focuses on local restoration, functional improvement, and hazard rectification, maximally retain the original street layout, spatial scale and living style of the community, only optimally optimize the damaged and lagging facilities functions, stabilize the long-term spatial cognition of residents, and continuously safeguard the sense of home for residents.

4.2. Deepen the Creation of Scenarios, and Activate The Humanistic Connotations of Collective Memory

Simply preserving the original spatial form can only retain the static appearance of the site, but it cannot achieve the dynamic activation and long-term inheritance of collective memory. To continue the local cultural heritage and the warmth of the neighborhood, it is necessary to rely on the existing space resources to create immersive and life-oriented cultural scenarios, converting abstract community memories, human emotions, and regional culture into daily living contents that residents can perceive, participate in, and experience. This can solve the development problems of fragmented and hollow community memories.

Community renewal not only includes the repair and upgrade of hardware facilities, but also encompasses the in-depth exploration and reactivation of humanistic value. Communities can revitalize idle corners, old walls, abandoned stairwells, and other inefficient small spaces [12]. By combining the community's development history, neighborhood life details, and local folk customs,

they can create distinctive cultural scenarios such as memory display walls, old object exhibition areas, and cultural corridors. During the renovation process, avoid the problem of excessive landscape and formalization of public spaces. Prioritize preserving the living functions and neighborhood social attributes of the site. Regularly organize community activities such as neighborhood gatherings, nostalgic exhibitions, and folk experience to allow residents to continue their traditional way of life and inherit the local cultural heritage in daily interactions and scene experiences, achieving the organic unity of physical space protection and the continuation of humanistic memories.

4.3. Establish a Diversified Governance System and Activate The Core Entities for Memory Transmission

Residents are the core subjects of community memory transmission. Without the participation of residents and deviation from the needs of the people, the renovation projects will eventually lose the most genuine life color and humanistic warmth of the community. To fundamentally solve the problem of community humanistic loss, it is necessary to break away from the single engineering and administrative renovation model, and build a long-term mechanism of multi-party collaboration and public participation, fully activating the subjective initiative of residents, and consolidating the popular foundation for the inheritance of community humanism [13].

In practical implementation, a four-party co-governance model of government coordination, professional empowerment, community collaboration, and resident participation can be constructed. The channels for public participation in the entire process of project planning, design, construction, and operation can be opened. A regular mechanism of early-stage public opinion consultation, mid-process supervision, and post-stage joint construction and sharing can be established [14]. Through various forms such as discussions and exchanges, drawing community memory maps, and collecting residents' life stories, the demands for humanistic development and the willingness to protect memory of the people can be comprehensively collected, and the deep integration of humanistic development needs into renovation decisions can be achieved. At the same time, local resident self-governance teams and volunteer forces should be actively cultivated, and residents should be guided to participate in daily work such as space maintenance, scene preservation, and cultural activity planning. The sense of home and self-identity of residents should be continuously strengthened, so that community renovation can meet the needs of people's living and retain the local cultural heritage [15].

5. CONCLUSION

Urban community renewal work continues to be carried out. The renovation actions will destroy the original humanistic features and spatial characteristics of the community, causing the loss of collective memory of the residents. The absence of humanistic elements is a common problem in current community renovations. This article focuses on spatial perception and collective memory as the research priorities, analyzing the correlation and interaction relationship between them. At present, there are obvious problems in community renewal, mainly including the tendency of spatial renovation to become homogeneous, the disintegration of daily life scenes, and the insufficiently perfect channels for residents to participate in community construction. These problems will weaken the community's humanistic heritage, reduce spatial characteristics, and decrease residents' sense of belonging, resulting in the loss of community humanistic resources. This article combines on-site research of old communities and actual cases to establish a community micro-renewal model that includes spatial texture protection, humanistic scene creation, and multi-party collaborative governance, improving the problem that community renewal places emphasis on hardware construction while neglecting humanistic construction. The original spatial form, daily living scenes, and residents' participation behaviors of the community can retain the community's humanistic characteristics, continue local culture, and ensure the continuous inheritance of local culture. The research results of this article can provide references for improving the community living

environment, preserving residents' collective memories, and protecting the community's humanistic environment.

This research has certain limitations. This article mainly analyzes the common humanistic problems in urban community renewal, summarizes the general renovation rules, and the research perspective is relatively macroscopic. The research did not conduct classified studies based on regional development conditions, geographical locations, population structure, and characteristics of the resident population, nor did it distinguish specific causes and corresponding renovation methods for the decline of humanistic elements in different communities. This research mainly relied on qualitative analysis and concluded based on on-site research and case analysis, without conducting quantitative research using data statistics and model analysis. The accuracy and applicability of the research conclusions are limited. Future research can improve the community classification standards, compare and analyze the renewal situations of different types of communities, establish quantifiable community humanistic renewal evaluation standards, and supplement quantitative research content. Relevant research can continuously optimize and tailor community refined renewal methods to meet the needs of residents and serve urban community humanistic construction and grassroots governance.

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