

Settlement Renewal from the Perspective of Production of Space---- A Case Study of Qiaoxi Historical District in Hangzhou, Zhejiang, PRC

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ABSTRACT. In post-industrial era, space, a built environment, is produced by and turned into capital to gain interests. With the development of time-space compression across the globe, the gap between these two has been broken down. Then capital logic becomes social logic and the world is being transferred towards flat structure and culture towards collage. During the process of space reproduction in settlement renewal, capital-driven con-substantial trend and gentrification of space emerge. Based on the theory of production of space and with Qiaoxi Historical District as research object, this paper explores how the settlement renewal in China gets rid of existing difficulty and realizes win-win cooperation for multiple subjects by following the capital logic in of the Production of Space and using the reconstruction mode of multiple subjects in the context of globalization.

KEYWORDS: Production of Space, Settlement Renewal, Multiple Subjects, Qiaoxi Historical District

1. Introduction

Since the 1960s, the transition of the western world from industrial society to post-industrial one turns the major task of society from production into consumption. The so-called consumer society by J. Baudrillard appears on a large scale and spreads around the globe along with capitals[1]. In this context, the conquest and integration of space increasingly becomes a tool for the pursuit of interest by capital. Time-space Compression speeds up the change of capitalist mode of production from Ford-style mass line production to a small-scale and flexible one. The focus of capital changes from the production of stuff within the space to the production of space itself. Accordingly, it causes changes in society, culture and politics. The rise and optimization of Urban sociology and urban geography research renew our understanding of traditional urban research, namely, a city is the spatial-orientation socialization and the spatialization of social relations [2].

Karl Marx holds that the history of modernization is the urbanization of rural areas [3]. During the rapid development of urbanization in China, many suburb settlements grow into a part of the central urban area, and need renewal and transformation to adapt to the urban development. As the reproduction of space in the process is related to the possession and redistribution of space resources, efforts should be made to balance economic benefit, social justice and cultural inheritance. Against this background, this paper analyzes how the reconstruction mode of multiple subjects realizes win-win cooperation for government, capital and users in the reproduction of space in the case study of Qiaoxi Historical District in Hangzhou from the perspective of the production of space.

2. The Theory of Production of Space

2.1 Concepts of the production of space

In the 1970s, Henri Lefebvre, a French philosopher, originally puts forward the theory of production of space by introducing space into the classic production theory in Marxism. He believes that space, something produced, is a result of politics and economy[4]. So space is a product manufactured with intents and purposes. Just like the manufacturing of any other product, the production of space is of strategy and politics. Therefore, space is neither purely formal, nor rational or abstract. It is neither a materialized utensil nor of nature, but of politics and a result of pursuing

interests. It is the production and reproduction of space that helps capitalism survives till the 20th century. According to Lefebvre, space can be divided into concrete space and abstract space. The former refers to the natural place in original state with use value, while the latter is a particular space occupied by national institutions or commodity-manufacturing sites with social relation and exchange value. And capitalist production nowadays has transformed from the production of stuffs within the space to the production of materialized space. As space has become a means of capital appreciation, the possession, utilization, exchange and consumption of space by nature is the process of creating surplus value. Through an in-depth analysis of the relation among the production of space, capital accumulation and urban development, David Harvey reveals the nature of the production and development of urban space. He points out the purpose of construction and retrofit of urban space is to make capital circulation more efficient. To pursue more surplus value, space should be deconstructed and reconstructed in accordance with the logic of capital[5]. As Edward W. Soja, the post-modern geologist in America holds that space, a product of capital, is controlled by capital and submitted to its logic, and that it is the re-producer of capitalist social relations. In addition, the spacialization of capital reflects the pursuit of interests by capital in the shaping of urban space [6].

2.2 Capital logic in the production of space

With its transformation from means of production to space product, space is endowed with common features of general commodities, namely use value and exchange value, and can be consumed through exchange in markets. As goods or labor products for exchange, space has its inherent law and is reflected in the production, consumption, distribution and exchange (circulation) of currency capital. All these four phases will help the capital to appreciate in value after the transformation from production capital and consumption capital to circulation capital and to finish the circulation of expanded capitalist reproduction. Therefore, apart from following the operation rule of capital, the production of space just like any other commodity should comply with capital logic. It means capital movement aims at appreciation of capital and maximization of interests.

Following the capital logic unavoidably leads to two tendencies. One is improved efficiency, accelerated process of production, consumption, appreciation and reproduction, and maximized benefit within the possible minimized period of capital circulation via scale and standardized design and mode of production. It directly results in the teeming of formularized and con-substantial products of space[7]. Because with the rigid construction and approval period, only by compressing the design period will it be possible to shorten the total time and accelerate the circulation of capital. The awkward situation makes copying and plagiarizing an existing “successful pattern” the only safe choice for designers. The other is to turn unique resources into marvellous spectacles of originality so as to gain monopoly rent. But the direct result is loss of integrity of urban space.

As a whole, space abides by the capital logic in the production of space and adopts the production mode of modern capitalism. In other words, space is used to gain surplus value. Land, aerial space and even rays are included into productivity and products. Urban structure, together with its multiple networks of communication and exchange becomes part of production tools. And cities and all the facilities like ports and railway stations are also part of capital[8]. In the process, capital logic promotes the commercialization of space, and deconstructs the urban space into different phase of production in line with the capitalist production mode.

3. Renewal and transformation mode of multiple subjects

The renewal of urban settlement is an extremely complicated process of reproduction of space. It involves multiple subjects like authorities, developers, professional planners and civic organization, categories by Lefebvre such as representation of space, space of representation and spatial practice and multiple social relations such as power relation, publicity and spatial variation. For one thing, local government puts the land which carries the collective memory created by the mass into the market and treats it as a tool for benefit by using its unique culture and history. Then the commercial development of land brings high economic benefit to promote local development. For another, starting from private capital, developers design and develop the land to meet the needs of the minority. Meanwhile, the emigration of original residents drives civic organizations to resort to higher authorities for help, appeal and even fight for their own interests. It is undeniable that the culture and history of a city is extended by all the designs in the commercialization of settlements. But the renewed settlements are exclusively accessible to a few capital owners as the original residents are absent in the maintenance of the cultural

tradition. Therefore, the reconstruction mode prioritizing the interests of one single subject is not sustainable. While one considering the interests of government, developers, and residents within the block as well as experts and scholars helps to keep a balance in the interests conflict of all parties concerned. Then it is possible to optimize the social and economic benefits within blocks. As a pilot program of the mode, Qiaoxi historical district guarantees the continuity of local characteristics and social justice under authoritarianism in the reproduction of space, and promotes local economy and urban competence by full use of capital logic in the space production.

4. The reproduction of space in Qiaoxi historical district

4.1 The general situation and crisis

4.1.1 General situation

Located in the west bank of the southernmost part of Beijing-Hangzhou Grand Canal, Gongshu District in Hangzhou, Qiaoxi historical district is named after the fact that it is on the west bank of Gongchen bridge. The bridge is firstly built in 1631. Till early 1980s, it remains the only transportation hub connecting both sides across the canal in the north of Desheng bridge. It also marks the entrance into Hangzhou through waterway from the Canal. It is the significance of intersection of waterways and traffic that gives birth to the place of relevantly bustling commerce outside of urban area of Hangzhou.

In 1985, Shijing silk factory was jointly set up in Ruyili Alley. since then, there was an urban civilian residential area in the southern side of Qiaonong street. And most residents here were workers in the cotton mills. What's more, the supporting commercial area between Qiaoxizhijie Street and Qiaotou area served the group of lower and middle class. In 1895 when the Japanese started to build their leased territory, they were satisfied with the geographic position of Gongchen Bridge and located their territory in the east side of the bridge. When the Custom was established, settlements of plenty of Japanese businessmen and emigrants promoted the development of trade centers. Considering the special geographic environment, the area has always been a bustling place for common people. The construction of factories and prosperity of shipping attract tradespeople, owners of small stores, porters, workers in factories and civilians as well as people from other walks of life. This makes Qiaoxi culture diverse. Compared with other historical districts, social structures here is more complex and diversified. And different social classes lead to various constructions. Therefore, construction style also vary.

4.1.2 Heritage resources

Categories of historical resources in Qiaoxi historical and cultural district(Fig 1):



Figure. 1 Plan of Qiaoxi historical district

Housing of lower and middle class in different historic periods: the maintained civilian residences in the southern side of Qiaonong street include houses along the canal, traditional dwellings in the river wharf, traditional dwellings with a courtyard, Lane buildings during the era of Republic of China from 1911 to 1949, the simple collective housing in the 1950s to 1960s, and tube-shaped apartments in the 1980s. All these reflect life of lower and middle class residents in different periods.

Traditional business: there used to be many famous stores with a long history within the district. For instance, in the western side of Qiaoxizhi street were Tongfu soy sauce shop, Xiajinyu grocery store, Yuchangshou Barber shop, Fanayuan rice shop, Yuandayu Rice shop, Dadetang Pharmacy, Maohongcheng Coal shop, Wangdingxing Copper shop, Jiaying Pawnshop, Tongchunlou Tea shop. While by the eastern side of the street, from the north to the south stood the Wangbaoquan tea house, Liushan's store for sesame seed cake and deep-fried dough sticks, Fengchangqing Tea shop, Xiehexiang Grocery store, Xiemeixiang Grocery store. But now all these have become a history.

Traditional buildings for folk worship and religious activities: As most residents living around Gongchen Bridge are from the lower and middle class, they have their own unique folk customs and beliefs. There is the Zhang Daxian temple exclusively built for a Taoist priest Zhang Shenggui to offer sacrifices as he treats diseases for the poor local people. And the Temple of Wealth in Tongheli is for the visitors and businessmen to pray for a good fortune. Besides, there are temporary shelters for passing boatmen, and a town hall of the charity organization Zhongxinji to provide free tea and other supplies to the public.

4.1.3 Problems facing the district

Qiaoxi historical district is faced with two great challenges in the rapid development of urbanization. One is Gongchen Bridge area transforms from the suburb to part of the central urban area in Hangzhou because of the expansion of the urban area. So it has to deal with the radiation and competition from city center. The other is the weakening transportation status of Gongchen Bridge causes the collapsing geographic benefit. The reason is the development of modern urban traffic network, cross-canal

highway bridges like Dengyun Bridge, Daguan Bridge and Qingfang Bridge makes it no longer an important part in the network.

4.2 Policy guidance: pre-production authoritarianism

Against the backdrop of time-space compression, neo-liberalism gradually becomes an important trend in global politics when compared with the collapsing governmental trade barriers. It advocates completely free competition and individualism putting self-interests over altruism. It also proposes the privatization of resources and opposes state intervention. While authoritarianism prefers that individual freedom should be based on the interests of the community and that social order and political stability are much more important than individual's rights and democracy. Moreover, democracy should serve the maintenance of social order and advancement of economic and social benefits. Meanwhile, it holds that market economy is beneficial to economic growth. The significance of game between authoritarianism and neo-liberalism is the public nature of characteristic resources like historical relics, natural resources and local culture can be maintained effectively and ensure social fairness to some extent.

In 1998, local government in Gongshu district, Hangzhou firstly put forward the strategy of protecting the Grand Canal Culture. Symposium on the Grand Canal Culture Hangzhou China was jointly convened by Zhejiang University and Gongshu District people's government on November 2, 2001 to discuss the exploitation and protection of the culture. On the instruction letter to Mao Zhaoxi, member of the standing committee of National People's Congress, Wang Guoping, then secretary of Hangzhou municipal party committee, pointed out on December 7, 2001 that the application for World Cultural Heritage and the development and exploitation of the Canal culture should be on account of the protection and promotion of the culture. Later, efforts were made for the comprehensive improvement, protection and development of the Beijing-Hangzhou Grand Canal and this was included into the strategy of Westward Movement of Tourism in Hangzhou the same year. In 2002, over ten key old city reconstruction projects were started. This included the square and museum along the canal within Gongchen bridge area. Simultaneously, the western side of the bridge was a relatively complete historical district along the canal in the urban area of Hangzhou, so its protection was put on the agenda officially and Gongchen bridge area old city renovation project headquarter, a subordinate urban construction department of Gongshu district people's government, entrusted Zhejiang Province Institute of Architectural Design and Research (ZIAD) to make the protection plan.

4.3 Social Justice: in-production settlement policy

The Relocation of Settlements released by the district government on September 30, 2007 declared that the relocation and reconstruction of Qiaoxi historical district would be officially launched from October 5, 2007. It would be mainly in the form of property right exchange and partly monetary settlement, and relocation of the original segments. And people who move out first would be relocated first and basically need to find a temporary residency on their own. Relocation compensation alone reached 120 million Yuan to cover the 22,897 square meters public house, 12,268 square meters private house and over 2,800 square meters illicit house.

Since August 2010, residents began to move back to the district. According to the resettlement number they got when they chose to move back before moving out, they can choose from the 343 settlement housing units in the district. Unlike the tradition mode of selection by the floor plan, a on-site visit to the settlement building lot helped them to choose in accordance with the different types of dwelling, floor area, orientation and structure. Great changes have taken place within the district after a three-year reconstruction and left slums merely a past. And the returned original residents and visitors have injected new impetus to the development of the district.

The renovation of the district, a rare land by the Grand Canal, pursued not the maximization of commercial value of the land but the increase of public place and open space for residents and the improvement of people's living surroundings. Because it relocated most original residents in other places and only a small proportion within the district to lower the population density here. After the moving back, area per household reached 66.27 square meters, about 3 times the size before the renewal. Under the circumstance, each household has its own kitchen and bathroom as well as exclusive courtyard. And great improvements have been made in communication, municipal administration, facilities for cultural activities and sports. Apart from demolition of illicit and

ramshackle buildings, the original texture of the district is restored to increase public space for people to exercise. Besides, residents within the district also gain tangible benefits due to the appreciation of house price.

4.4 Capital Logic: after-production spillover effect

As Qiaoxi historical district is located in the first-class core area of the Canal, its renewal has greatly promoted the development of real estate industry in Qiaoxi area. The residential house price prior to the reconstruction ranges from 4,000 Yuan to 5,000 Yuan per square meter, and this makes it a weak price point in the land market of Hangzhou. From the beginning of the relocation and reconstruction of the district in October 2007 to its reopening during the National Day holiday in 2009, the average floor price of residential housing reaches 10,000 Yuan per square meter and the peak is about 13,906 Yuan. Houses here used to show no attraction to people, but now become the rage at the market. It helps to make the house price the fastest growing one over the past several years in the city. The booming land market benefit the heavily land-taxation-dependent local government a lot. The massive land sale revenue and tax pay back the huge investment in the reconstruction program in the district by the government in another way.

The storage buildings, industrial factories are protected, reconstructed and reused after renewal of their functions. Sites of industrial heritage like Hangzhou No.1 Cotton Mill and Warehouse of Local Specialty of Qiaoxi District are turned into China Knives, Scissors and Swords Museum, China Fan Museum and China Umbrella Museum. Then the three newly established museums emphasize the protection and development of uniqueness of the district. The harmony and unity between the external appearance of the museums and the historical district make them a vivid display for the combination of industrial heritage and intangible cultural heritage. Museums not only offer a glimpse of historic and cultural development in Qiaoxi area, but also a major place to inherit, carry forward, and popularize intangible cultural heritage. They have also become an important part of Canal tourism and injected new vigor into urban advancement. In its renewal and reconstruction, Qiaoxi Historical Preservation District makes full use of application for heritage list of the Canal and the concept of Grand Canal Culture, and effectively improves its status in Hangzhou through re-development of land and industrial restructuring.

5. Conclusion

From the theory of production of space, this paper discusses how the settlement renewal in China uses the transformation mode of multiple subjects to resolve problems and pursue win-win development under urbanization across the world. Firstly, pre-production authoritarianism efficiently ensures the equal accessibility to special resources for the public and maintains social justice to some extent. Secondly, moving back policy for original residents within the district in production process extends the original urban life. Finally, after-production spillover effect does make full use of the payback of capital logic in the production of space. All through the reproduction of space, the joint participation of government, developers and the public adopt the transformation mode of multiple subjects to deliver win-win results.

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