The changes in the circumstances and cultural adaptation of the indigenous people in the suburbs of Beijing during the process of urban expansion-Multidimensional Analysis Based on Online ethnography

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Abstract: This study focuses on the marginalization of indigenous people in the suburbs of Beijing during the process of urban expansion and uses ecological anthropology theory and online ethnographic methods to analyze the relevant content on online platforms such as Douyin and Xiaohongshu. The study found that the ring line hierarchy led to the absence of spatial justice, and demolition compensation ignored multiple losses of indigenous people. The mainstream economic rational discourse in the digital age suppresses the emotional demands of indigenous people, and although indigenous people try to resist digitally, it is difficult to reverse the disadvantage. Cultural identity dies in social transformation, and indigenous people face social adaptation difficulties. This study reveals the underlying mechanisms of indigenous marginalization and provides a theoretical reference for urban renewal policy-making in order to promote a balance between urban development and the protection of indigenous rights.

1. Introduction

"Marginalization of indigenous peoples" refers to the social phenomenon in which indigenous groups are gradually excluded from the mainstream social system in the course of social development, and their rights to survival, discourse, and cultural identity are severely challenged. It is characterized by a relative decline in social status, damage to economic interests, and accelerated loss of cultural traditions, which in turn leads to a chain of problems such as poverty, unemployment and a cultural identity crisis. The causes of this phenomenon are complex and diverse. Land encroachment due to urban expansion, resource plundering in tourism development, and the imperfection of relevant policies are all important contributors. China's urbanization process has been particularly rapid amid the global wave of urbanization. Against this backdrop, a large amount of farmers' land has been expropriated, urban and rural areas are undergoing profound spatial reconstruction and social transformation, the lifestyle and social patterns of indigenous people have been completely changed, and the problem of "marginalization of indigenous people" has become increasingly prominent and a focus of attention for human geographers. Over the past decade, empirical studies have mostly focused on specific indigenous groups and specific regions, delving deeply into the process and underlying mechanisms of indigenous marginalization.

On the one hand, some scholars, by analyzing the marginalization process of indigenous groups, have called on society to pay attention to the survival predicament and interests of indigenous people. Research shows that indigenous people passively endure the experience of marginalization, which further prompts them to actively alienate themselves in terms of identity and emotional cognition, and sever the emotional connection with their original land. For example, Deng Xiuqin in her doctoral dissertation "A Study on Local Attachment in the Process of Urbanization of Rural Migrant Population: "Influencing factors and empirical evidence" points out that the vast rural areas of China are undergoing drastic changes in the mode of economic and social development. The traditional agricultural society is gradually transforming into a modern urban society, a large number of traditional villages are disappearing, the interpersonal relationships characteristic of "rural China" are gradually fading, and people's sense of local belonging is severely impacted[1] by the huge changes brought about by urbanization. In "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native" by Patrick Wolfe in the Journal of Genocide Research (2006), the theoretical framework of "settled colonialism" provides important theoretical support for understanding the marginalization of indigenous people during the process of their land being occupied.[2] On the other hand, some scholars have focused on the integration process of landless indigenous people after they enter cities, revealing the real situation and operational logic of their participation in urban activities. The study found that landless residents face many difficulties in urban participation, such as the tendency of participation motivation to be more personal interest-

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oriented, the utilitarianism tendency of the government in participation empowerment, the imbalance of participation subjects, the disorder of participation methods, etc. These problems seriously hinder the urban integration of landless farmers and make them marginalized groups in the city.

The "Beijing suburban natives" in this study specifically refer to those who have settled for a long time in the suburban areas within the administrative jurisdiction of Beijing (including traditional suburban rural areas, urban villages and old suburban communities) before the urban expansion of Beijing since the 1990s (especially the accelerated urbanization of the suburbs outside the Fifth Ring Road). Those who have made the area their main place of production and living and have local household registration (including both the original rural household registration and the early non-agricultural household registration in the suburbs). The core characteristics of this group include: First, a deep connection to the land, with some members having relied mainly on agricultural production and suburban services for their livelihood. Second, a stable community network and local cultural identity were formed before urban expansion, and their lifestyle, social patterns and local memory were closely attached to the space of their original place of residence. Third, they have not experienced cross-city migration and are a group that has been "passively left behind" in the process of urban spatial reconstruction and faces changes in their living conditions, distinct from the migrant population and the native residents of the urban core.

China's household registration system, as a basic social institutional arrangement, uses household registration as an important basis for resource allocation and benefit distribution, and has a structural impact on social stratification, mobility and group rights through the dual household registration division between urban and rural areas and administrative control of household registration migration between cities.[3] In the process of urbanization, the "strong stickiness" of the household registration system has closely linked the changes in the situation of indigenous people in the suburbs of Beijing to their household registration status and migration experience. The process of their land being expropriated and their communities being restructured is accompanied by the transformation of household registration nature (such as "rural to urban") and the redistribution of access to resources.

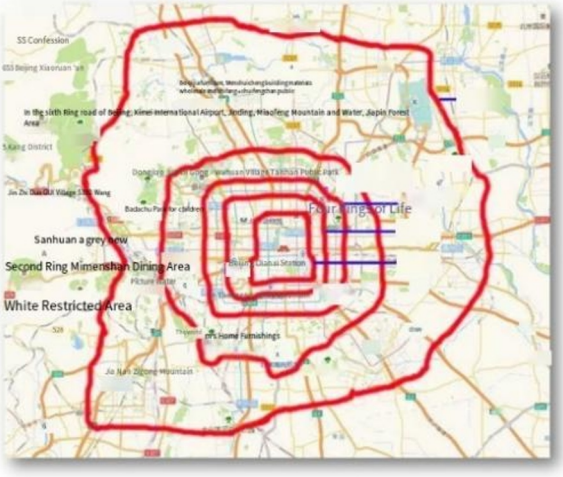

Figure 1. Map of Beijing's urban ring Road and suburban areas[4]

2. Data sources and research methods

Through Internet social platforms such as Douyin, Xiaohongshu and Bilibili, this study collected and analyzed text, images and video materials posted by suburban indigenous residents in short videos, forum posts, comment sections and other media between 2022 and 2025, revealing the triple challenges of land acquisition, ecological disruption and identity reconstruction faced by suburban indigenous residents around Beijing. To explore the process by which indigenous people express their experiences of losing land, ecological memory and cultural anxiety in cyberspace, and then construct an online memory field, as well as the impact of these online discourses on the shaping of group marginality consciousness and ecological identity. This study aims to provide a cultural perspective for understanding "ecological extinction" in the process of urbanization, promote the digital preservation of local ecological memory, and raise deeper public awareness of the cultural and spatial rights of the "urbanized".

2.1. Data sources

The data for this study mainly came from Chinese Internet platforms such as Douyin, Xiaohongshu and Bilibili, which have a large user base and a wide coverage of people. These platforms have the advantage of lower entry barriers, users of different age groups, and a rich variety of content forms including short videos, text notes, community interactions, etc., which can fully capture the diverse expressions of indigenous people. Researchers used keywords such as "Beijing demolition", "Beijing relocation", "Beijing conversion of rural to urban", and "Beijing urban village renovation" to screen out indigenous content related to Beijing's urban functional space reorganization and suburban expansion policies released between 2022 and 2025 on these platforms. A total of more than 20 posts, over 30 videos and more than 50 images were collected to build the basic database for this study. All the data were strictly screened to ensure a high degree of relevance to the research topic and to accurately reflect the real experiences and attitudes of indigenous people in the suburbs of Beijing in the context of urban expansion.

2.2. Research methods

Web ethnography is a participatory observational research method based on online fieldwork, through deep engagement in online community activities to gain an in-depth understanding and description of specific cultural or community phenomena.[5] To fully observe the content production process of the online network community, researchers registered as field investigators and entered relevant discussion communities on platforms such as Douyin, Xiaohongshu, and Bilibili from July to August 2025, participated in the daily discussions and interactions of users, and recorded in real time the content posted by indigenous people, the interactions in the comment sections, and the public opinion trends within the community. The collected effective information was classified and organized to form a systematic database, providing rich empirical materials for

subsequent analysis.

Before entering the online field, I first clarified my dual identity positioning: on the one hand, I am an "outsider researcher" who needs to maintain academic objectivity and avoid over-intervention in the community; on the other hand, I am a "quasi-insider" who needs to establish trust with indigenous users to obtain in-depth information. To balance this duality, I adopted a "gradual participation" strategy when registering accounts on Douyin, Xiaohongshu, and Bilibili from July to August 2025. In the early stage (the first 2 weeks), I set the accounts to "private" and only conducted content browsing and data recording without any interactive behavior (such as likes, comments, or follows). This stage was mainly to observe the "natural state" of the community, including the daily discussion topics of indigenous users, the interactive norms between users (such as the use of Beijing dialect slang, the frequency of emotional expressions), and the sensitive topics that are avoided (such as direct criticism of specific government departments).

In the later stage (Weeks 3 - 6), I switched the accounts to "public" and implemented "low-intensity participation". I only made neutral, topic-related comments (such as "I also heard that some neighbors encountered similar situations when moving") or asked open-ended questions (such as "Can you tell me more about the changes in the neighborhood before and after the relocation?") instead of expressing subjective evaluations or guiding the direction of the discussion. During this period, I made a key reflexive observation: when my account was marked with a "student" profile (set to reduce the sense of distance), some elderly users would take the initiative to share more details about their life memories (such as the layout of old hutongs, the way of mutual help between neighbors), while young users were more willing to discuss the practical problems of relocation compensation with me as a "student" (such as the calculation method of compensation fees). This shows that my identity cues directly affect the depth and direction of user expression.

In addition, I also established a "reflexive log" to record my emotional changes and role conflicts during the fieldwork. For example, when a young user complained that "the elderly are too stubborn and refuse to move to a new house with better conditions", I initially agreed with this view emotionally, but later found in the data sorting that the elderly's resistance was due to the loss of cultural identity rather than "stubbornness". This emotional fluctuation reminds me to always maintain the "critical reflection" of academic research and not equate my personal experience with the research object's experience.

Thematic analysis is one of the core methods in literature research and qualitative analysis. It refers to the process of carefully studying the original text, extracting the core thematic concepts, and then screening, classifying and analyzing these thematic concepts. The specific steps include: First, repeatedly review the original text of the collected short video script, graphic and text content, comment section messages, etc., to fully grasp the core information and emotional tendencies of the text. Secondly, extract key information related to the research topic from the text, such as the attitude of indigenous people towards demolition compensation, adaptation to the new living environment, perception of cultural identity, etc., to initially distill potential thematic concepts. Finally, select and integrate the initial extracted thematic concepts, group the contents expressing similar attitudes, views or experiences under the same core keyword to form representative thematic categories, and select typical quotations as empirical support to lay the foundation for an in-depth analysis of the marginalization mechanism of indigenous people in the suburbs of Beijing.

3. Compensate for the contradiction between logic and survival strategy

In urban expansion, there is a significant tension between the official logic of demolition compensation, and the survival needs of indigenous people. This contradiction is not only reflected in the imbalance of values in spatial exchange but also extends to the transformation of the social relationship model and the strategic game among different groups. The following analysis will be conducted from the three dimensions of space, society, and groups.

3.1. Value inequality in spatial exchange

In contemporary Beijing, urban loops have gone beyond mere transportation and geographical functions and evolved into a complex system of social stratification symbols. The Second Ring Road, as a modern remnant of the Ming and Qing city walls of Beijing, carries a profound historical and cultural heritage and becomes a spatial symbol of "orthodox Beijing". Online ethnographic survey results show that in discussions on platforms such as Douyin and Xiaohongshu, users generally view the living experience within the Second Ring Road as a core symbol of "authentic Beijinger" identity. For example, in the comment section of a video on Douyin about the relocation of the old Xicheng district, a user suggested, "Those living outside the Second Ring Road are almost country people," a statement that, though exaggerated in Internet discourse, truly reflects the social hierarchy formed based on spatial distance. This kind of spatial discourse has obvious social exclusivity: by tagging specific geographical areas, it delineates a binary social boundary of "core-periphery", endowing Spaces within the second ring Road with "orthodox" and "high-end" cultural values and social status, while placing Spaces outside the Second Ring Road in a relatively secondary position. This sense of spatial hierarchy profoundly influences the identity perception and life choices of indigenous people, especially in the process of demolition and resettlement, becoming an important factor causing conflicts.

Online ethnographic observations have found that the elderly generally show strong resistance to moving beyond the Sixth Ring Road on online platforms. This resistance is mainly concentrated in two dimensions: one is practical concerns, namely the inconvenience of medical care and transportation, believing that the public service facilities outside the Sixth Ring Road cannot meet their daily needs; The second is symbolic anxiety, that is, "moving to the Sixth Ring Road is a bit of a loss", fearing that the relocation will lead to a decline in social status. The root cause of this resistance lies in the implicit protest against the deprivation of spatial rights. "Although the government has a more reasonable plan for the facilities outside the sixth ring Road, it's just a plan. When they are built in ten years, the elderly

will all be dead," an elderly user commented. This statement precisely points to the structural exclusion of long-distance residents from the centralized distribution of urban public service resources - there is a huge time lag between the government's planning commitments and the limited life cycle of the elderly, making it difficult for them to enjoy the benefits of planning.

The maintenance of the ring line identity hierarchy depends on the spatialization process of cultural identity. In online discussions, users generally believe that living within the Second Ring Road not only means a geographical advantage but also represents an inheritance of the "pure" Beijing culture. The traditional architectural forms such as hutongs and quadrangle courtyards within the Second Ring Road are regarded as the material carriers of Beijing's culture, and living in them is endowed with the symbolic meaning of inheriting local culture. This close binding of cultural identity to spatial location creates a fundamental contradiction between the logic of demolition compensation and the emotional attachment of residents - while economic compensation can alleviate material loss to some extent, it cannot make up for the loss of spatial rights and the breakage of cultural identity. In a Douyin video titled "The Woes of a Beijing Demolition Household", the user complained, "My home is gone, but I still miss my childhood memories, the land where I grew up, I like bungalows, and I don't recognize each other in buildings." This statement profoundly reflects the irreplaceability of the historical and cultural values carried by a particular geographical location, as well as the reality that social networks formed based on geographical proximity are difficult to replicate in a new environment.

3.2. The contradiction of the transition between the familiar society and the contractual society

Fei Xiaotong, in his 1947 book Rural China, proposed the sociological theory of "differential order pattern" to describe the interpersonal relationship structure of rural society in China. The theory, using the ripples of water as a metaphor, points out that the social relations of the Chinese people are self-centered, forming a network of concentric circles that extend layer by layer based on blood ties, kinship and geography, and have the characteristics of closeness and distance, dynamic expansion and contraction. The close-knit physical nature of traditional living spaces has given rise to "quasi-kinship" neighborhood relations. In Fei Xiaotong's "differential pattern", neighbors are not simply "geographical neighbors", but "extended relatives" embedded in the family network. "Delivering a bowl of freshly cooked dumplings today and looking after a sick child for half a night tomorrow" forms a kind of "non-contractual" mutual aid ethic. The daily life details of neighborhood relations build trust and emotional depth, which is the operating mechanism of a familiar society.

The physical estrangement of modern living spaces has led to the rise of "functional socializing" and the decline of "emotional connection". "Neighbors don't know each other," "I help you, what do you get in return," constitutes the way urbanites get along. These interactions have a distinct "instrumental" nature: either to solve specific problems (borrowing keys, picking up packages) or to complete social etiquette (holiday greetings, community notifications), but rarely touch upon emotional exchanges in the private domain. More crucially, the "mobility" of urban life undermines the "stability" of traditional communities - rising rental rates, frequent job mobility, residents changing homes on average every 3 to 5 years, and neighbors moving out before they even get familiar with each other. This "short contractual society" model leaves neighborhood relations at a "shallow connection", making it difficult to form the "community identity" of traditional communities.

Research has found that the problem faced by residents whose houses were demolished in Beijing is precisely the contradiction of the transformation between a society of acquaintances and a society of contracts. Urban renewal forcibly incorporates traditional communities (hutongs, traditional farmlands) into the modern urban governance system, triggering a fundamental change in the way social connections are made. Their original residences (near hutongs and suburban farmlands) generally have the mechanism of a familiar society, that is, close neighborhood relations. But the demolition of his native land forced him to move into a building, requiring them to adapt to the new "contractual society," where neighbors do not mean friends and interactions are often purposeful. Such a large gap in social operation makes it difficult for displaced people, especially the elderly, to fit in and adapt to the new way of getting along with each other. In the video "The Woes of a Beijing Demolition Household", users' complaints about "no one in the building knows each other" reveal the pains of the transition from a society of acquaintances to a society of contracts. At the same time, the living spaces in modern communities have weakened the collective identity due to "standardization" and "mobility". Rural societies confine people to one community, and the mechanism of the familiar society forces them to seek their own identity and position. Along with this comes a lot of concern about what people in the circle think of them because rural social relations are self-centered and form a network of concentric circles that extend layer by layer based on blood ties, kinship and geography, where geography plays an important role in the relations. The views of neighbors are extremely important to a person. Previously they were clear about their identity and sense of belonging (like: I'm from 'so-and-so alley'), but under the mechanism of a contractual society, they didn't know where to look for their new identity. Displaced people often feel lonely as they adapt to the operating mechanism of the new apartment building, which does not stem from physical solitude but from the "lack of emotional connection".

3.3. The survival strategy game of the group

In the context of urban expansion and demolition resettlement, different groups have developed differentiated survival strategies based on their own interests and needs, and these differences are essentially a collision and trade-off between economic rationality and emotional value.

(1) The elderly Group

The elderly tend to focus more on emotional value and life stability in demolition decisions. Due to their limited remaining life cycle, they have a lower level of trust in future planning and are more inclined to maintain their current living

environment and social relationships. A 78-year-old man on Douyin emphasized in a video, "I won't be here in ten years when the facilities are completed." This statement points directly to the contradiction between the life cycle of the elderly and the development cycle of the city - they cannot wait for the improvement of planned public service facilities with their limited lives, and therefore are generally resistant to distant resettlement plans such as moving outside the sixth ring Road. At the same time, the elderly have a deep emotional attachment to traditional culture and local memory. The hutongs and bungalows within the second ring Road are not only living Spaces but also carriers of their identity and life memory. Relocation means a separation from the past life, and this emotional loss is difficult to make up for with economic compensation.

(2) Young people

Unlike the elderly, the youth are more utilitarian and functionalist in their assessment of the pros and cons of demolition and resettlement and have a lower degree of identification with the "centrality" of the Second Ring Road and traditional identity symbols. In online discussions, some young users suggested that "Changping County Town is no worse than Xidan Wangfujing." "I live in Longze. Jishuitan Hospital is 500 meters away and it takes 25 minutes to drive to Peking University Third Hospital. The child goes to school in Haidian. It takes 15 minutes to drive to the school." By emphasizing the convenience of the suburbs in terms of commercial facilities, medical resources, educational resources, etc., the central advantage of the second ring Road is mitigated. This attitude reflects the challenge of postmodern urbanism to the traditional sense of spatial hierarchy - young people are more concerned with the practical functions and cost-effectiveness of life rather than identity labels based on geographical location, and thus have a relatively higher acceptance of demolition and resettlement and are more likely to adapt to the new living environment.

(3) Rural to urban conversion groups

As a special group in urban expansion, the survival strategy of the rural-to-urban group shows a distinct pragmatic tendency, prioritizing basic survival security over cultural identity. A 76-year-old woman on Douyin said in a video, "When farmers are exhausted, they are content to return." Another 78-year-old man also said, "The demolition was done, and I came to the city. I don't have to worry about food, clothing or medical care. (If it were in the countryside, who would care? I'm old and can't move anymore. I still have to make a living in the fields. Now it's all on a minimum living allowance, 40% for farmers. I did three surgeries for free.)" These statements clearly show the core demands of the rural conversion group: to get rid of heavy physical labor in rural areas through demolition and conversion, and to obtain stable living security and complete medical services. For them, the improvement of economic conditions and the reduction of survival risks are the primary goals, while the transformation of cultural identity and the reconstruction of social relations are secondary. Therefore, they have a higher acceptance of the demolition and resettlement plan.

4. The struggle for a voice in the digital space

As the Internet becomes an important arena for indigenous people to express their demands, the digital space has gradually evolved into a key battleground for discourse power: mainstream economic and rational discourse suppresses emotional demands, marginalized groups resist through digital practices, and generational and class differences emerge in the process.

4.1. Suppression of emotional demands by the logic of the market economy

In discussions about Beijing demolition on platforms such as Douyin and Xiaohongshu, a mainstream discourse centered on economic rationality dominates, significantly suppressing the emotional demands of indigenous people. The data shows that about 80 percent of the comments accused the displaced households of being "unsatisfied", arguing that "such compensation is good enough, giving the displaced households a choice." Or praise the act of "issuing an announcement in the morning, I sign in the morning and move out at noon" as a "rational" and "wise" choice.[13] This discourse simplifies the rationality of demolition compensation to purely economic calculation, considers the emotional attachment of indigenous people to their living environment and cultural memory as "irrational" and "hindering urban development" factors, and denies the legitimacy of emotional value.

The formation of this mainstream discourse is essentially the result of the deepening of developmentalist ideology. Under the dominance of the notions that "urban expansion is progress" and "economic development first", urban renewal is regarded as an inevitable process that must be subject to capital appreciation and efficiency improvement, and any opposition based on emotion and culture is labeled as "conservative" and "backward". This discourse hegemony not only ignores the individual experience and cultural rights of the indigenous people, but also reinterprets the unequal distribution of power and resources in real society - developers and governments hold the dominance of urban development, and the economic rational discourse they advocate spreads widely through online platforms, becoming the standard for defining "reasonable" and "unreasonable", while the emotional demands of the indigenous people are marginalized. It is difficult to gain widespread recognition.

4.2. Digital resistance practices of marginalized groups

In the face of the suppression of mainstream discourse, the indigenous people in the suburbs of Beijing have not been completely silent. Instead, they have opened up a unique space for resistance through digital media practices, expressing their demands and predicaments in a weak but firm voice. This digital resistance is mainly manifested in the form of short videos, text notes, etc., telling personal experiences and emotional experiences, constructing "marginal narratives" belonging to indigenous people, and countering

the mainstream discourse's denial of their emotional demands.

In a video on Douyin titled "The Woes of a Beijing Demolition Resident", the user directly stated, "My home has been demolished, but I still miss my childhood memories, the land where I grew up. I like bungalows, but I don't recognize anyone in the apartment buildings." "By sharing nostalgia for the homeland and discomfort with the new living environment, it directly challenges the mainstream discourse's single narrative of "demolition as welfare". In addition, indigenous people have captured images of old hutongs and old houses to document vanishing local cultural landscapes, creating a "digital memory field" in cyberspace to raise public awareness of local history and culture. Although these digital practices did not create a massive wave of public opinion, they provided a platform for indigenous people to express themselves, allowing their marginal voices to be heard by some people, breaking the monopoly of mainstream discourse and laying the groundwork for the fight for cultural and spatial rights.

4.3. Intergenerational and class divisions in the digital space

There are significant generational and class divisions in the digital discussions about demolition in Beijing, with distinct differences in the discourse positions and expressions of different groups, reflecting their different interests and social statuses in urban expansion.

From an intergenerational perspective, as mentioned earlier, the discourse of the elderly group mostly revolves around emotional attachment and life stability, emphasizing issues such as "inconvenient medical care", "broken social relations", "lost identity", and often carries anxiety and helplessness in the tone; The discourse of the younger generation, on the other hand, is more focused on functionalism and rational analysis, and tends to evaluate resettlement plans based on criteria such as cost-effectiveness and resource matching, with a relatively objective and even positive attitude; Middle-aged people, on the other hand, often find themselves in a dilemma, having to consider their parents' emotional needs and elderly care, as well as their children's educational resources and their own work convenience. Their words are often full of contradictions and entanglements.

From a class perspective, the urban natives within the Second Ring Road (especially those living in hutongs and quadrangle courtyards) often have an identification and pride in "orthodox Beijing culture" in their words, are more sensitive to the loss of cultural identity caused by demolition, and are more inclined to express dissatisfaction with the compensation plan and nostalgia for their homeland. In contrast, the rural residents in the suburbs and the residents in the urban villages are more concerned with the improvement of economic conditions and the acquisition of survival security, have a relatively higher acceptance of demolition resettlement, and pay less attention to cultural identity. This class division is essentially a reflection of the differences in the gains and losses of different groups in urban expansion - the indigenous people within the Second Ring Road have lost space of high symbolic and economic value, while the rural conversion group has gained an identity leap from rural to urban and improved living conditions, and thus their discourse positions are completely different.

5. Conclusion

In the digital age, Internet social platforms have become the main channel for indigenous people to express their experiences and emotions. Based on this, this study, with the background of "Beijing's second urbanization" (i.e., the re-agglomeration of urban core functions), focuses on indigenous people in the suburbs of Beijing and combines ecological anthropology with online ethnographic methods. To explore the reconstruction and expression path of ecological knowledge and cultural identity of landless residents in the digital age, and to deeply analyze the marginalization mechanism of indigenous people in the context of urban expansion, the following main conclusions are drawn:

First, the ring line hierarchy and the absence of spatial justice. The boundaries of "inside and outside the Second ring Road" in Beijing's urban renewal are no longer just physical divisions of space, but rather a symbolic construction of social identity and rights. This sense of spatial hierarchy has led to obvious flaws in the demolition compensation mechanism - focusing only on compensating for economic losses, but ignoring the added value of the land (such as good school districts, medical resources), social capital (such as neighborhood relationship networks) and cultural values (such as local memory, identity) lost by the original residents due to relocation, resulting in value inequality in spatial exchange. This further exacerbates the marginalization of indigenous people.

Second, the struggle for dual discourse power is in the digital age. In online platforms such as Douyin and Xiaohongshu, there is a confrontation between mainstream discourse and marginal discourse around Beijing demolition: the mainstream discourse centered on economic rationality (market and government-led) dominates, suppressing the emotional demands of the indigenous people. The indigenous people, through digital resistance practices, have constructed "marginal narratives" in an attempt to seize the right to speak. This struggle for discourse power in the digital space is essentially a reproduction of the inequality of power in real society. The marginal voices of indigenous people can spread to some extent, but it is difficult to shake the hegemonic position of mainstream discourse.

Third, the disappearance of cultural identity and the dilemma of social adaptation. Demolition is not just the relocation of living space, but the reconstruction of social relationship patterns and cultural identities. The transition from a "familiar society" to a "contractual society" poses serious social adaptation barriers for indigenous people, especially the elderly. The fragmentation of local memory caused by spatial migration has led to an identity loss of "neither belonging to the original place nor being able to integrate into the new environment". The disappearance of this cultural identity is a deep-seated manifestation of the marginalization of indigenous people and is the most easily overlooked issue in the process of urban renewal.

Urban expansion should not be pursued at the expense of indigenous communities' cultural rights and quality of life, but rather must balance economic development with humanistic

considerations. Local governments can support the preservation of indigenous social capital by establishing community communication platforms and safeguarding key cultural elements in new residential planning—such as traditional architectural styles, local festival customs, mutual aid norms within close-knit communities, and native language practices. In public space design, planners should deeply embed the ethnic cultural characteristics of Beijing's suburban indigenous populations, integrating ecologically and culturally significant landscapes—like rice field parks—that reflect regional ecological memory into the cultural identity of emerging neighborhoods. Furthermore, the government and broader society must refine the demolition compensation framework to go beyond mere economic redress, actively addressing emotional and psychosocial needs. This includes facilitating the reconstruction of social networks and cultural identities, thereby enabling genuine integration into urban life and fostering a synergistic relationship between urban advancement and the protection of indigenous rights.

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