



Senior Living: Insights from the Comparison of Three Full-age Retirement Community

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ABSTRACT

The AFCC policy framework advocates for communities that not only remove barriers to accommodate the elderly but also foster inclusivity across all age groups, thereby avoiding the pitfalls of discrimination and community vitality deficiency. The full-age retirement community goal is to create communities that are open, diverse, vibrant, and inclusive for individuals of all ages. In this context, this paper delves into the distinctive features of three full-age retirement community models: Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORCs), Continuing Care Retirement Communities (CCRCs), and Age-Friendly Community Renovations through conducting a comparative analysis to assess the inclusivity of these community types across four critical dimensions: age, living mode, service mode, and residential scale. The study analyzes examples of these three community models in China: The Longevity Village (LV), Continuing Care Retirement Communities (CCRCs), and Regional Elderly Service Consortiums (RESC) informed by the aforementioned analytical framework. It is essential for the sustainable and inclusive development of retirement communities that can effectively respond to the multifaceted challenges of an aging demographic. This research through analysis of diverse communities emphasizes the need for policymakers, project developers, and builders to propose strategies that are sensitive to the varying economic conditions, demographic profiles, and geographical characteristics of different regions.

Keywords: Age-friendly community renovations, continuing care retirement communities (CCRCs), full-age retirement communities, longevity villages (LVs), naturally occurring retirement communities (NORCs)

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INTRODUCTION

The super-aging is becoming apparent. This raises several timely issues related to aging housing. The inherent inclusiveness of full-age retirement communities in China necessitates a dynamic and evolving approach to their construction. Specifically, three types of full-age retirement

communities: Continuing Care Retirement Communities(CCRC), Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORCs) and Age-Friendly Community Renovations have been the focus of research respectively and there have been affluent studies on this scheme from diverse angles. (Ayalon, 2020; Ayalon & Avidor, 2021)

Continuing Care Retirement Community (CCRC)

A CCRC typically includes apartment or cottage living units (independent living), assisted living units, and skilled nursing care in a campus-style setting. As care and services for older adults continue to evolve, CCRCs have been adding additional components, such as memory support and wellness programs, to their services mix. The key point for this type is that even if the residents' medical and supervision demands change as they grow older, they also can avoid moving to another site, but remain in the original understanding and trust the community to receive the necessary health care (Zarem, 2010). CCRCs have been adapted to the Chinese context over a decade, with a series of projects taking root, particularly in the coastal regions of southeast China, and gradually spreading nationwide.

Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORCs)

Naturally occurring retirement communities (NORCs) are neighborhoods or buildings in which a significant portion of the population is composed of older persons. Unlike traditional retirement communities, NORCs were not designed specifically for the needs of older persons; they simply evolved, often as a result of older people aging in places where they have lived for many years (Enguidanos et al., 2010). Longevity Villages is the most vivid manifestation of NORC in China. It is seen as the work of "Nature's masterpiece" and corresponds to the Chinese long tradition of emphasizing a culture of health preservation. In 2019, the China Association of Gerontology and Gerontology developed a set of Chinese standards for the identification of the Longevity Village (LV).

Age-friendly Community Renovations

Renovations have two paths: Create or reorganize existing resources. Industry insiders pointed out that in China, integration and upgrading of existing scattered resources are more effective solutions than new construction when confronted with the national conditions that the nearest problem is the shortage of pension resources and unbalanced elderly industry development levels. The Regional Elderly Service Consortiums (RESC) integration of community care centers, elderly care stations, and other fragmented endowment service resources can form a service joint force based on the community and radiate to aging in the home. Therefore, the optimal development path in China is to construct Regional Elderly Service Consortiums (RESC). At present, several towns and villages in Beijing have established regional elderly service consortiums. Among them, the earliest one is the

Chaoyang Men Street district elderly service consortiums. By 2021, the consortium has integrated more than 200 service projects, including three community endowment service stations, a home care center, nine community centers between the party and the masses, the jurisdiction of Banks, supermarkets, property management, etc. (Guan, 2022).

This article is a comparative study of three full-age retirement community models. Its principal objective is to introduce examples of the three full-age retirement communities and analyze respectively their characteristics in China.

METHODS

The aging community’s form is the direct reflection of various residential life patterns within diverse residential physical conditions and sociodemographic characteristics. (Yao, 2005) systematically analyzed the types of residential buildings for the elderly at home and abroad according to the four frame factors: elderly’s age, living mode, service content, and residential scale. The research adopts the method of focus group discussion, through the description and induction of the three typical cases of Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORCs), Continuing Care Retirement Communities (CCRCs), and Age-Friendly Community Renovations according to Table 1 criteria from diverse value evaluation dimensions, and obtains the characteristics profiles of three kinds of inclusive aging care communities.

Table 1
Different aging community categories in four dimensions

Dimensions			Types		
Age type	Non-age-target	Age-target	Age-restrict	--	--
Living mode	Non-restrict family	Multi-generation family	Single-generation family	Non-family	Mixed-family
Service mode	Non-service	Basic-service	Amenity service	Informal care	
Residential scale	Large scale-family	Small scale-family	Large scale -nonfamily	Small scale -non family	

Note. The classification of the above dimensions and types is the result of Dr. Yao’s literature review and classification of the elderly residential programs in seven regions, including the United Kingdom, the United States, Sweden, Singapore, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Japan, from the origin aging housing project to the modern aging housing planning

Age Dimension

In LV, Residents and surroundings grow together naturally. So, it belongs to non- age-target. In RESC, different age people are concentrated purposely indicating it belongs to non- age-target categorization; Age-restricted is mainly aimed at satisfying the normal and diverse needs of the elderly. Since CCRC is developed by developers to serve specific customers, it pertains to the age-restricted type.

Living Mode Dimension

CCRC belongs to the single-generation family and non-family for it always divides under the service function unit, like assistant living units and independent living units. LV pertains to the multi-generation family in the traditional sense. However, under the influence of the modern one-child policy, couples' need for privacy in their living space, and other ideas, it gradually evolved into a single-generation family type. RESC just belongs to the mixed family type that concludes both the single-generation family and multi-generation family.

Service Mode Dimension

CCRC provides all the above services including medical services, since it includes apartment or cabin living units with care and services for the elderly continue to evolve (Zarem, 2010). For LV, As for RESC, it equips high-quality amenities and facilities services for recreation and relaxation through integrated district service facilities resources. Although rural infrastructure conditions have improved in recent years with the support of policies, it is still in the basic stage compared with the professional service facilities of CCRC and the all-inclusive entertainment and leisure facilities of RESC.

Residential Scale Dimension

CCRC is a large-scale family type for it always reaches the number of 1000 or above. LV may not be the same traits for most residents still observe the traditional value of a big family, but its scale is different. So, it belongs to the small-scale-family type and large-scale scale-family type. RESC is geographically large scale, but not in family units.

RESULTS

After the above four dimensions of factors analysis, A comparative table describing the differences among these three types of aging communities' performances in four dimensions is shown in the table below (Table 2). The black dots indicate that all cases belong to this dimension index, and the circles indicate that some cases belong to this dimension index. The multiple sign indicate that no cases belong to this dimension index. The short horizontal line indicates that this dimension indicator is not suitable for discussion in this case context.

DISCUSSION

The analysis framework of the above three models has its limitations for its statics and binary opposition characteristics. Aging types are experiencing evolution and development with the change in the external environment. For instance, Multi-generation family living has been an overwhelming phenomenon in the previous decades in LV. But the

rate of single-generation family cases has increased these years with more and more youngers leaving for the urban to pursue better job chances. Additionally for LV, it may be classified as having no service type for the service mode dimension since most of them are located in rural areas and lack basic infrastructure from the previous decades. However, with the rural development, the quality of community services has been improved, gradually adding basic services. In other words, it can be classified into basic service modes. So, (Lewis & Buffel, 2020) (Hill & Farrell, 2022) also propose to consider the need for dynamic research community development and issues of the times. More importantly, the dynamic and evolving ideology is just the full-age retirement communities' inherent inclusiveness prosperity, one that can embrace regional diversity and integrate the strengths of various models, thereafter, getting a steady stream of vitality and sustainability.

CONCLUSION

In a nutshell, the comparative analysis reveals that each of these community models has its own set of strengths and weaknesses. For instance, the long investment cycle and large scale of the full-age retirement community obstacle the CCRC to become the main aging housing type in China, but its social bonding deserves study. The aging village cannot be realized in most urban in China, but its aging core ideology and value practice method are most precious. To conclude, these three types of aging solutions are tailored to the diverse development phases and regions of an aging society for their advantages and disadvantages respectively.

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Table 2
Three types of aging communities' performances in four dimensions

Types	CCRC	RESC	LV
Dimension	Age		
Age-target	X	X	X
Age-restrict	●	X	X
Non-age-target	X	●	●
Dimension	Living mode		
Non-restrict family	--	--	●
Single-generation family	●	○	--
Multi-generation family	X	○	--
Non-family	●	--	X
Mixed-family	○	○	--
Dimension	Service mode		
Non-service	--	--	●
Basic service	●	●	○
Amenity service	●	●	X
Informal care	●	●	X
Dimension	Residential scale		
Large scale-family	●	X	●
Small scale-family	X	X	●
Large scale - nonfamily	●	●	X
Small scale - nonfamily	X	X	X

Note. ●- Complete; ○- Partial; X-None; --Null

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