# Chapter 7
## Residents' Class Status and Social Political Attitude: Two Cases of Middle-Class Community in Beijing

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## Abstract
According to the data in two type of middle class community, this paper finds out that differences on residents' objective class status exist, so does subjective class status. The type of the community, occupation, and annual household income influences residents' subjective class status. This paper also compares people's social political attitude in two types of communities. People value some social political issues according to their subjective class status.

**Key words:** new commercial housing community, unit community, class status, social and political attitude.

## 1. Background and method
### 1.1 The background and research problem
The process of choosing house spawns the phenomenon of community stratification. City community stratus is a concept about city social space, which means dual processes of urban social space reconstruction and population displacement. The accelerating speed of urbanization and the growth of urban middle class, give birth to the middle class community stratification. The middle class community stratification is not only a positive urban development strategy, but also the basis of improving the quality of urban living space.[1]

Literally understanding, the community in which the middle class group lives can be called middle-class community. But the middle class category is much broader, they not only have an intermediate level of income, but also attain a certain degree of social status. Social status can be reflected by the level of education, occupation, ideal and political views so on.[2] Today the main definition of the middle class is divided mainly from income, education and occupation in the three dimensions. For individuals, if three indicators are all in

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1) He Pingli, et al. Middle class and social development —— problems and challenges under china model [M].Beijing : Social Sciences Academic Press, 2015, 139.

2) Man Yanyun. China's housing reform and the rising middle class [C]// Li Cheng. China's emerging middle class. Shanghai: Shanghai translation publishing house, 2013: 168.

line with the standards of the middle class, they are defined as "the core of the middle class"; if the two indicators are in line with the standards of the middle class, they are defined as "half core middle class"; if one indicator is are in line with the standards of the middle class, they are defined as "marginal middle class".[3] For example, according to the specific situation in China, some scholars defined the group who receives "the secondary and university undergraduate diploma and higher education" as "middle class of education", in accordance with this standard, in China, mid-level education class accounted for 12.7%. [4]

According to this definition, the rising new middle classes in new industries and cities are tipically representative. They generally have a higher education, engage in the professional management, technical, financial work, and get higher income. As to the living form, they generally choose to settle or have a rental residence in the new business district, although some people find it difficult to obtain hukou in large cities, but the regular job ensures that the men with regular jobs can be incorporated into the urban social security system, and the schooling of their children can also be resolved smoothly.

However, China has experienced more than 30 years of reform, which is a process from a planning system to market process gradually. During the period, not only the economic operation mechanism is changing, so is the social system. During planned economy era, in China's urban communities, "unit system" or "work organization" is the basic system of distributing social resources, as well as the basic access to obtain social resources for individual. Staffs of units were the main component element of the middle class, and once known as the "The Public Nobility." With the advance of reform, their status gradually declines in general, but do they fall into the bottom of the society?

This paper argues that the problem requires considering the urban development level of cities. Take Beijing for example, firstly, with new types of industries emerging, people with low level of education, laid-off at middle-aged, and old-age fear to be at a disadvantage in a new round of competition; but the fact is, since they had got job in units in metropolis at early stage, the problem of hukou had been solved. Before unit disintegration, the majority can solve the housing problem by the means of welfare housing. Make a contrast between the new white collar and the old workers out of units, some of white collar are so eager to settle down in Beijing permanently, which is full of hardships. As to the units' workers, although the welfare under the old system had been

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3) Li Peilin, Zhang Yi. The scopes, identity, and social attitudes of the middle class in China [J]. Society, 2008, (2): 2.

4) Li Peilin, Zhang Yi. The scopes, identity, and social attitudes of the middle class in China [J]. Society, 2008, (2): 6.

weakened, but they have no pressure to purchase real estate, and the non-agricultural hukou ensures that the residents can be included in a comprehensive social security system. The situation of the later may be better than that of the former, we can't make a decision that the later have dropped to the bottom even if they encounter unit reform or unemployment.

Secondly, also from research conclusions of the mainstream scholars, the old workers still belong to the middle class. According to the related studies, the middle class society is divided into four groups. The first group is the most typical middle class, which includes cadres and intellectuals; the second group is the so-called "new middle class", the basic characteristics of the second group consist of younger age, higher education, knowing a foreign language, familiarity with computer. A large number of this group are working in foreign-funded enterprises, new industries, such as finance, securities, information and other high-tech fields, and usually live in large cities. The third group consists of employees of state-owned enterprises, joint-stock enterprises and other types of units, which have better efficiency; the fourth group consists of a large number of private owners.[5]

The transformation of status from the old middle class to the newly coming middle class also means that men with the old privileged no longer have a higher position and higher income in the time of the planned economy, so only from the perspective of income, some of them may fall into the bottom of society. But the resources to be gained from the planned economy period still play an important role in their current life, especially in several ways such as hukou, real estate, social security, and children schooling. In comparison with the floating population without fixed housing, city residence, and stable job, even though the overall status of old-workers is declining, but it is just falling into the lower middle class from the upper middle class.

So, as for people living in big cities, if one owns the local hukou, or owns a typical middle-class career, or lives in a community of good condition, or is included in good social security system, can be labeled as the middle class. The difference is that someone can be labeled as the middle class only in one of these dimensions, while the other can be labeled as the middle class in several dimensions.

Thus, once combining the concept of community stratification with the analysis of the middle class together, then the commercial district holding most of the new middle class can be called "new middle class community". In terms of career and education, people meet the definition of typical middle class in quantitative framework, but some people might not get Beijing hukou. During

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5）Li Qiang. The middle class theory and current situation [J]. Society, 2005, (1) : 40.

planned economy era, the unit system is basic form of the social organization and the integration system is fundamental in the urban society.[6] With state-owned enterprises reform and other reasons, the longitudinal position may vary, and because of the restricted education conditions in their early age, most of them engaged in non-agricultural technology work before retirement, but they may not meet the emerging job demand for specialists and professionals, in other words, they are placed in disadvantaged position in the job markets now. On the other hand, residents of units system have a stable residence and hukou in Beijing, the workers of state-owned enterprises still belong to the typical middle class. So the community accommodating the large number of workers from state-owned enterprises units is another type of middle-class community, we call it "old middle class community".

As long as we have not finished the reform from planned system to market system, new housing community and the traditional community will always exist at the same time. This article tries to answer the following questions: what are the specific differences as to objective social status in these two types of communities? Are there absolute underclass in the two communities? How do they value their subjective class status? Belonging to the middle class communities, do people have the same social and political attitude? In terms of subjective and objective class position, which has more significant influence on social and political attitude of resident.

## 1.2 Research methods

Based on the above issues, in June, 2015, Tsinghua University Qinghe experimental group had chosen two middle-class communities (xiangshuwan community and maofangnan community) in Haidian district, Beijing, to carry out an investigation. The investigation completed a total of 632 questionnaires (317 cases in xiangshuwan, 315 cases in maofangnan) on social stratification and community governance using a random sampling method. Maofangnan community is a typical united community, the residents were workers in factories which produced mills and woolen, they can be called old middle class.[7] Xiangshuwan community is mainly composed by white collar, not all of the residents have Beijing hukou, but most of them own higher income, higher education and better occupations. It is a new middle-class community. Two communities are adjacent to each other, the land of factories related to maofangnan community was used as the land of housing in xiangshuwan

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6) Li Youmei. From dispersion to order - Social Changes under 'System and life' vision in China [M]. Beijing : Encyclopedia of China Publishing House, 2011, 131.

7) Li Qiang. The middle class theory and current situation [J]. Society, 2005, (1) : 40.

community, which was began to be developed ten years ago.

This article focuses on the issue of social stratification. Firstly, the article describes the differences about class status of the two communities, then compares residents' social and political attitude. For narrative simplicity, xiangshuwan community is also abbreviated as X community, while maofangnan community is abbreviated as M community. It is denoted firstly that the following charts and tables are based on this survey and produced by the author.

## 2. Comparative analysis of class status

With respect of class status, the article mainly analyzes the objective class status and subjective class status.

Traditionally, education, income and occupation are important factors that can be used to measure people's objective class status. For China today, real estate has been the most important economic goal, partly because it symbolizes wealth and social status. This is an excellent angle of viewpoint to analyze middle class's features in China.[8] Regarding to strict household registration system in Metropolis, moreover, both social security and schooling system are closely related to hukou, so Beijing hukou's value is relatively high, one can enjoy the resources and benefits attached to hukou if he owns it. For these reasons, the article chooses education, income, occupation, real estate and hukou as indexes to value objective class status.

As to subjective class status, the questionnaire asks the respondents to choose a number from 1 to 10 after referring to his surroundings, 1 stands for the lowest, while 10 stands for the highest.

### 2.1  Objective class status
### 2.1.1  Education

The education in one community differs from the other. According to Figure1, X community's residents have higher education, more than three quarters have college degree or above, which is 2.42 times of M community. 14.2% of the
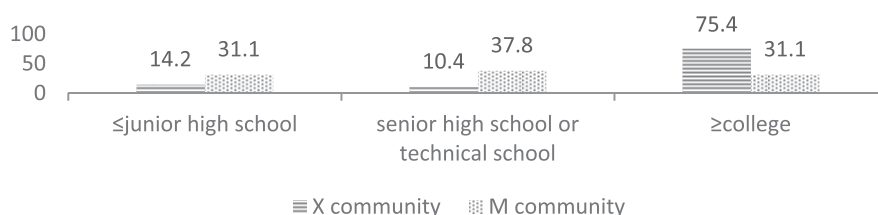


Figure 1.  Education level between X and M community（%, 632）

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8）Man Yanyun. China's housing reform and the rising middle class[C]// LI Cheng. China's emerging middle class. Shanghai: Shanghai translation publishing house, 2013: 168.

residents have a degree of middle school and below. As a new commercial
housing community, most people had got better education. As for unit
community, residents' education level in M community shows a more balanced
distribution, 40% own a high school, technical school or technical secondary
school. The residents are mainly old unit workers, they are relatively older.
They began working very early under the influence of social policy in 1960s
and 1970s.

### 2.1.2  Annual household income

Figure 2 shows that, in X community, only 15 percent family's annual
household income is no more than 100, 000 yuan, while nearly 70 percent
family's is between 100, 000-500, 000 yuan. On the contrary, in M community,
there are nearly seventy percent of household's annual income are more than
100,000yuan, more than 20 percents of household's annual income is between
100,000 and 200,000 yuan, less than seven percent of household's annual income
is 200,000-300,000 yuan, only 3.3% of household's annual income are more than
300,000 yuan. X's household's annual income is higher than M's. But both two
communities have low-income groups, for M community, nearly 30% of families
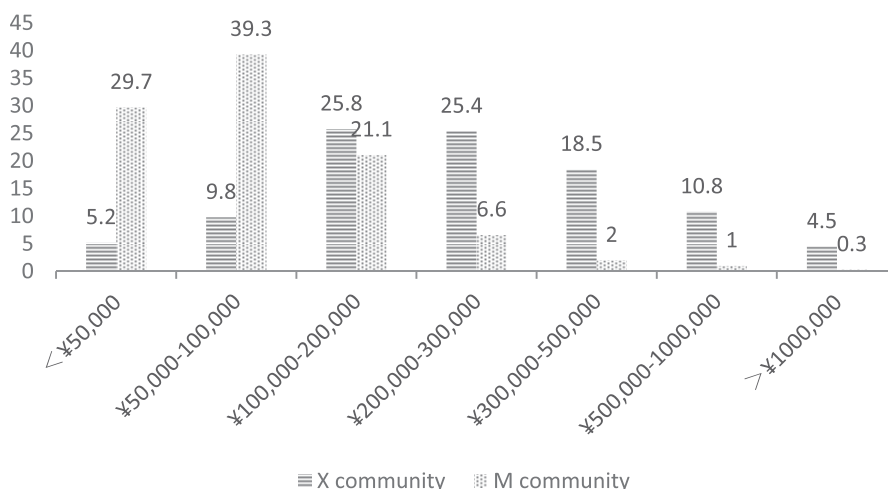have not got annual income of 50,000 yuan.



Figure 2. Annual household income between X and M community （%, X: 287, M: 303）

### 2.1.3  Occupation

This part focuses on labor force's current job and the retirees' last job. The
article reports information from three aspects: the current employment situation,
the property of organization, occupation category.

### 2.1.3.1  The current employment situation

Table 1 The current employment situation

|  | X community（317） | M community（315） |
|---|---|---|
| Never worked | 5.40% | 1.60% |
| Currently working | 55.80% | 35.90% |
| Currently not working | 12.00% | 9.50% |
| Continue to work after retirement | 0.90% | 4.10% |
| No longer work after retirement | 25.90% | 48.90% |

According to Table1, in X community, the rate of currently working is nearly to 56%, more than one quarter belong to no longer work after retirement, they help to take care of grandsons and granddaughters in Beijing. The rate of "currently not working" is 12%.

For M community, which has a higher rate of old people, the rate of "no longer work after retirement" accounts for nearly half. 36% of residents are currently are working, which is lower than X by 20%.
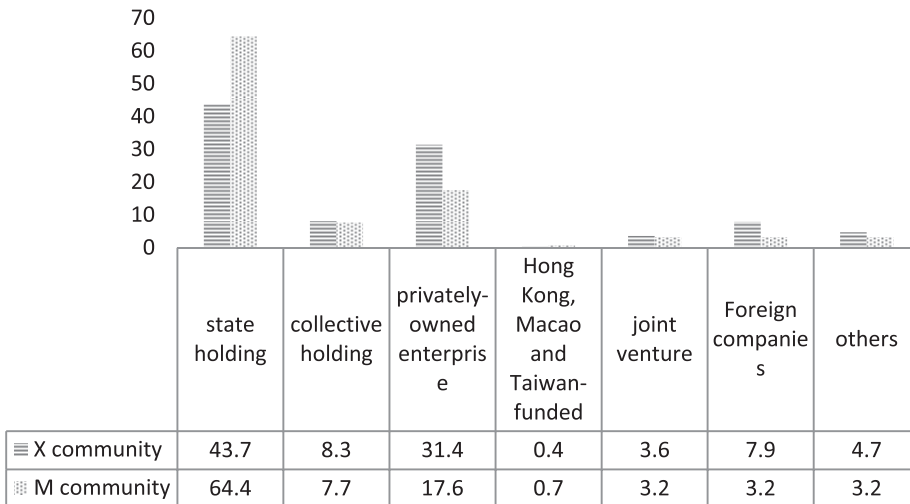
### 2.1.3.2  The property of organization



| | state holding | collective holding | privately-owned enterprise | Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan-funded | joint venture | Foreign companies | others |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| X community | 43.7 | 8.3 | 31.4 | 0.4 | 3.6 | 7.9 | 4.7 |
| M community | 64.4 | 7.7 | 17.6 | 0.7 | 3.2 | 3.2 | 3.2 |

Figure 3.  The property of units（%, X：277；M：284）

In terms of the property of organization, people mostly work in state-owned or state-holding unit, followed by private enterprises. For M community, residents in the state-owned or state-holding unit account for 64.4%, exceeding X community of nearly 21%, mainly because the factories producing mills and woolen belonged to state-owned holding enterprises. For X community, one third of resi-

dents work in private enterprises. There are also 12% of white collars working in foreign companies, which is 2 times by M community.

### 2.1.3.3    Occupation category

Table 2 Residents' occupation category

|  | X community（289） | M community（288） |
|---|---|---|
| Management personnel | 33.60% | 12.80% |
| Professional skill worker | 34.60% | 19.80% |
| Usual staff | 10.00% | 10.80% |
| Service personnel（such as shop assistant and security） | 2.40% | 10.80% |
| Private Owners | 3.50% | 0.70% |
| Self-employed (shop / transport / business / mobile vendors) | 1.00% | 3.10% |
| Traditional manual workers | 5.90% | 37.20% |
| Others | 9.00% | 4.90% |

In the light of Table 2, maofangnan as a community for workers, nearly 40% of them are traditional manual workers. 20% are technological workers. More than 10% are managerial talent, the same to normal office clarks and severants.

On the contrary, in X community, nearly 70% belong to managerial talent or professional technological talent, less than 13% undertake service industry. The occupational structures of two communities are very different.

As unit community, the occupational structure reflects the old industrial structure. Most state-owned enterprises were built in 1950s or 1960s. Government investment was given priority to manufacturing, heavy industry, and the body of the state-owned enterprises which was concentrated on these industries. With the industry transformation, the traditional manufacturing and heavy industry are being washed out gradually, they have been replaced by new and high technology industries.[9]

### 2.1.4 Housing

Housing distribution system reform means, for renters, those who have housing property is "winners" during economic reform period and therefore, the availability of housing property has become an important indicator of class differences and class differentiation during the reform period.[10]  Management elite and professional elite often have a larger, better quality housing. This

 9）Li Qiang. Market Transformation and the intergenerational replacement of middle class in china [J]. Strategy and Management,1999,（3）: 38.

10）Bian Yanjie, Liu Yongli. Social stratification, home ownership, and quality of living : evidence from china's fifth census [J], Sociological Studies, 2005, (3): 85.

paper reports the housing situation from house property and housing area.[11]
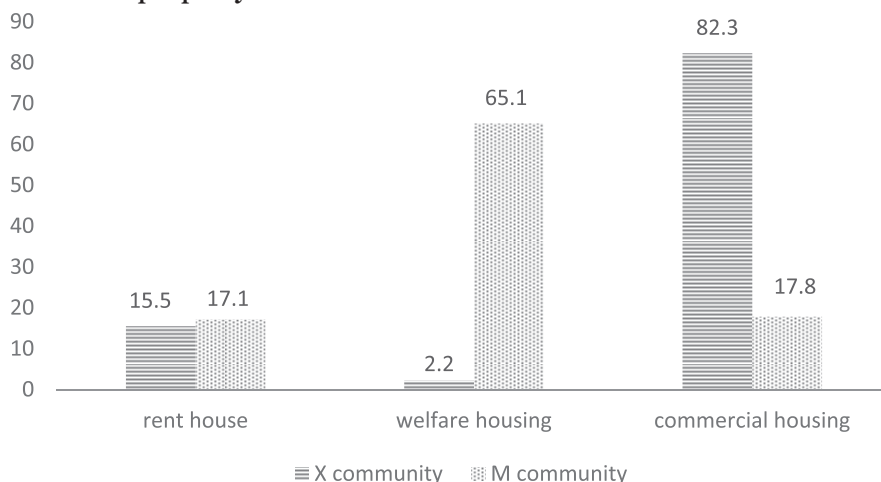
## 2.1.4.1 House property



Figure 4. The property of housing（632, %）

From Figure 4, the houses lived by M community residents mostly are welfare housing and fang gai fang provided by units before the disintegration of the unit, such property accounts for 65.1%. In 2005, before the beginning of the unit reform, considering employees' seniority and job title, the unit sold these houses to employees at below-market prices, most of the families obtained these houses at price of ¥20,000-50,000 yuan. Due to the price discount, over 95% of households paid off the housing fund at one time, as shown in Table 3.

As a new commercial district, in X community 15.5% of families are renting housing here. The majority of people have bought real estate in the district. The first phase house were sold in 2008, the market price is ¥6,000-8,000yuan/ ㎡. The community is close to Tsinghua University, Peking University and other famous colleges. With the process of urbanization, land price has oared greatly. The current price in the region has reached ¥50,000/㎡. In combination with Table 3, since the higher prices, nearly 80% of families belong to a mortgage to buy a house.

Table 3 The way of housing payment

|  | Welfare housing(202) | Commercial housing(309) |
|---|---|---|
| Pay off at one time | 95.50% | 22.30% |
| Mortgage, paid off loan | 4.50% | 32.70% |
| Mortgage, paying off loan | 0.00% | 45.00% |

11）Bian Yanjie, Liu Yongli. Social stratification, home ownership, and quality of living : evidence from china's fifth census [J], Sociological Studies, 2005, (3): 82.
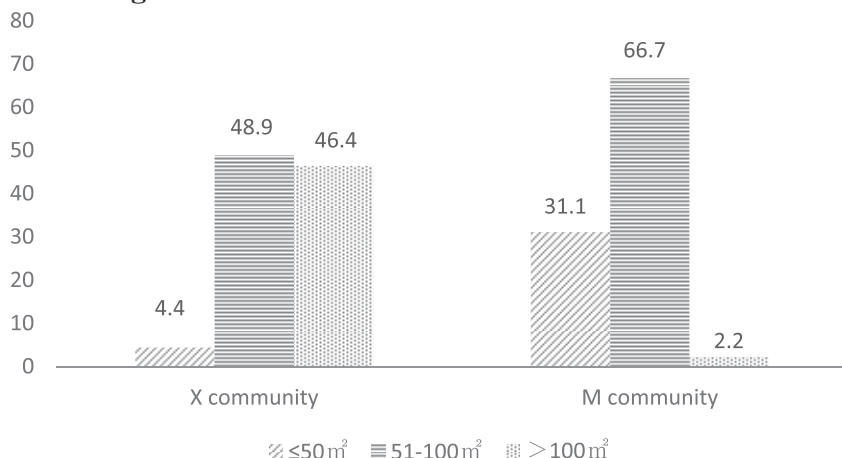
## 2.1.4.2    Housing area



≋ ≤50㎡    ≡ 51-100㎡    ▦ ＞100㎡
**Figure 5.    Housing area between X and M community （%, X：315；M：315）**

According to the calculation, the average area of X is 112.8㎡, while the M is 56.77㎡. In X community, less than 5% families' housing are smaller than 50㎡, nearly half of the family's housing area are between 51-100㎡, this ratio is slightly higher than the proportion of the family housing area of over 100㎡. In M community, about 70% of the family's housing area are between 51-100㎡, slightly more than 30% of households have housing area of 50㎡ or less. The ratio of more than 100㎡ is very small, almost can be negligible. According to field research, the oldest building was built in the early 1950s. Nearly half were built in the 1970s-1980s. In the period of the system of units, the units provided benefits for their employees under the guidance of fairness doctrine; there are no obvious differences among families as to housing area. The housing market reform means that people can buy a larger house if they have much money. To some extent, changes in the area of the house are the results of market-oriented reforms and individual purchasing power.

In modern society, as real estate, house is an important variable to measure the family property. Differentiation of housing benefit has become the most important symbol of economic interest differentiation for the inhabitants. Whether having a house in Beijing or not and how many sets of houses are distinctive symbols of economic status, according to Table 4, in X community, there are 12.3% of people belonging to renting house, there are more than 60 percent of people owning a house in Beijing, there are nearly 25% people having at least two houses in Beijing.

As to M community, more than three-quarters of households owned a house in Beijing, as mentioned above, mainly are former welfare housing. Only 7.6% people have two houses in Beijing, the proportion is far lower than X community residents.

Table 4  The sets of house in Beijing

|  | X community（317） | M community（315） |
|---|---|---|
| None | 12.30% | 14.90% |
| One sets | 62.80% | 77.50% |
| Two or more sets | 24.90% | 7.60% |

### 2.1.5  Hukou

Table 5 shows that most residents in M community are old Beijing citizens, X community is an immigrant community, more than 46% people do not get Beijing hukou.

Table 5 Owning Beijing hukou or not

|  | X community（316） | M community（315） |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 53.80% | 87.60% |
| No | 46.20% | 12.40% |

### 2.1.6  The absolute underclass

From five indicators, in both communities, there are some residents with low education, low annual household income, relatively lower occupational status, no real estate in Beijing, or absence of Beijing hukou. But are they staying in weak situations in all five dimensions, that is to say, do the two communities have absolute underclass ?

Table 6  Annual household income under different education level（frequency：590）

| Annual household income | Education level | | |
|---|---|---|---|
|  | ≤junior high school | Senior high school or technical school | ≥college |
| ＜¥50,000 | 40 | 46 | 19 |
| ¥50,000-100,000 | 48 | 49 | 50 |
| ¥100,000-200,000 | 27 | 29 | 82 |
| ¥200,000-300,000 | 10 | 8 | 75 |
| ¥300,000-500,000 | 5 | 5 | 49 |
| ¥500,000-1000,000 | 2 | 4 | 28 |
| ＞¥1000,000 | 0 | 0 | 14 |

In Table 6, about 31% ([40+46+48+49]/590= 0.31) of people are in a lower position both in education and income. But because housing prices is so high in Beijing, so is Beijing hukou, whether they are at absolute bottom or not also depends on whether they have fixed homeownership in Beijing as well as whether one has a Beijing hukou. Look at the sets of real estate and hukou condition after choosing the group whose education level are lower than college education and whose annual household income is less than 100,000 yuan. Table

7 indicates that in Beijing, neither buying house nor attaining Beijing hukou accounts for 5.5%.

Table 7  The cross-table of Beijing hukou and the number of houses in Beijing（total：183）

| Number of houses | Beijing hukou | | No Beijing hukou | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Frequency | Rate | Frequency | Rate |
| None | 17 | 9.30% | 10 | 5.50% |
| One set | 139 | 76.00% | 8 | 4.40% |
| Two or more sets | 9 | 4.90% | 0 | 0.00% |

For these who neither buying houses in Beijing nor having Beijing hukou, what are their jobs? Table 8 shows that they are engaged in management, technical services and so on. So even though there are differences in education, income, employment, housing, hukou for residents from two types of communities. Overall, there are few residents occupying a disadvantageous position in all five dimensions. That is to say, the middle-class communities have no absolute underclass.

Table 8  Classification of occupations

| Classification of Occupations | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Management personnel | 1 | 10% |
| Professional skill worker | 2 | 20% |
| Usual staff | 2 | 20% |
| Service personnel（such as shop assistant and security） | 4 | 40% |
| Missing | 1 | 10% |
| Total | 10 | 100% |

## 2.2  Subjective class status
### 2.2.1  Longitudinal comparison of subjective class status
Subjective class position is an academic concept, questionnaire respondents were asked, "which level do you think you were in ten years ago?", "which level do you think you are in now?", "which level do you think you will be in five years later?" Answers range from 1 to 10, 1 stands for the lowest point, 10 stands for the highest point. Figure 6 lists the mean value of subjective position in three time points of two communities.

According to Figure 6, as time changes from 2005 to 2015 and then to 2020, the status of people's own subjective evaluation has been rising. And, at every stage, X residents' subjective evaluation is higher than M' residents.

For X residents, the mean value of subjective position was 4.18 ten years ago, now it is 5.09, by increase of 0.91 point, five years later it will be 5.80. At every stage, the evaluation is respectively higher than the mean of M residents, the gap is 0.68, 1.25 and 1.29 at three time points. It also can be seen that from 2005 to 2020, with the changing of time, the social status of people's subjective sense

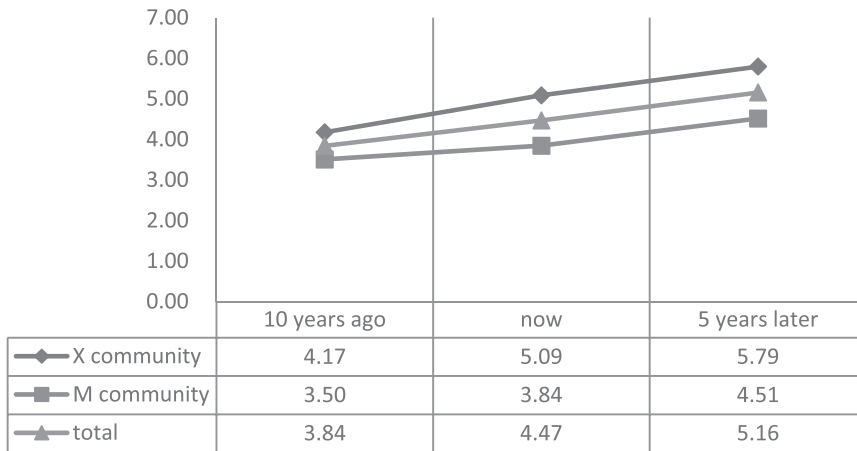| | 10 years ago | now | 5 years later |
|---|---|---|---|
| X community | 4.17 | 5.09 | 5.79 |
| M community | 3.50 | 3.84 | 4.51 |
| total | 3.84 | 4.47 | 5.16 |

Figure 6.  Trend of subjective class status

of the gap is widening, rather than reducing. This can be partly explained by the system change from in 2007. The workers had a stable salary and welfare system, once unemployed, their level of education and age restrictions do not comply with demand for talent in emerging industries, because their human capital is so weak, the previous skill can not meet the current market, so from 2005 to 2015, their subjective evaluation of the status has only increased 0.34. As for the future development, X residents think their subjective status has already exceeded 5.00, five years later, they believe that their social status will continue to improve. Although X residents think that their social status will increase further, but still will not up to 5 points in 2020.

### 2.2.2 Stratum identification in three dimensions

We recode these answers. If people choose answers of 1, 2 or 3, we think people have an identity of underclass; If people choose answers of 4, 5 or 6, we think people have an identity of middle class; If people choose answers of 7, 8, 9 or 10, we think people have an identity of upper class. Table 9 shows the results.

Table 9  Stratum identification

| | | 2005 | 2015 | 2020 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| X community | Identity of underclass | 36.1% | 17.7% | 11.0% |
| | Identity of middle class | 54.0% | 63.7% | 53.3% |
| | Identity of upper class | 9.9% | 18.6% | 35.6% |
| M community | Identity of underclass | 52.9% | 44.1% | 35.2% |
| | Identity of middle class | 41.4% | 49.5% | 47.0% |
| | Identity of upper class | 5.7% | 6.3% | 17.8% |

In terms of X community, no matter which stage, most residents have an

identity of middle class, from 54% 10 years ago to 64% now and then to 53% five years later. Proportion of middle-level recognition is reducing from 2015-2020 because of the proportion of the upper identity is rising, which will be 35.6% five years later. The rate of underclass identify is dropping, from 36% in 2005 to 11% in 2020. It seems that the residents have high income and good education, but there are still 17.7% think they belong to the underclass.

As to M community, ten years ago, more than half of them had a preference of underclass identify, nearly half of the people agreed with the middle class preference now, but only 5.4 percentage points higher than the underclass identity, after five years, the proportion of middle class and underclass identity will decline. Accordingly, the proportion of upper class identify is on the rise, from the current 6.3% to 17.8% after five years, an increase of nearly 3 times.

### 2.2.3 Characteristics of groups who have underclass identification

We describe two different types of community as middle class communities, if they think their subjective status are in middle position, it just shows the status of subjective and objective are consistent, but it is not. In M community, more than 44% of people think they belong to the underclass, the rate is 2.5 times of X community. Other surveys also show that in some big cities in China, 14.6% of the population consider themselves as one of the underclass.[12] How to explain this phenomenon? The paper further analyzes the characteristics of the groups who have underclass identity preference in two communities. The results are shown in Table 10.

Based on Table10, in two communities, mostly are women, mostly are the aged, and mostly are at the age of 51-69. Although they have higher education, there are some people think they are the bottom groups, the proportion in X community is 57.1%, in M community is 22.3%. As to the numbers of real estate, if people have more houses, it means that they are in a high economic level, they may not agree that he is belonging to the underclass. But the data shows that, even owing at least two houses, 10% of X residents think they belong to the bottom population, the proportion in M is 5.8%. In X community, among residents who have underclass identity preferences, there are more than 14% having an annual household income of ¥300, 000 yuan or more.

On this contradictory phenomenon, there are three explanations. One is the relationship between the subjective and the objective should be explored further, they are not necessarily positively correlated, people who have high-income, high education, buying house in Beijing do not necessarily consider that their social status are higher. It needs to be further explored either they are not satisfied with

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12) Li Peilin. Social conflict and class consciousness [J]. Society, 2005, (1)：20.

Table 10  Characteristics of groups who have underclass identification（%）

| Variable | Category | X community（56） | M community（139） |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Gender** | Female | 55.4 | 61.9 |
| | Male | 44.6 | 38.1 |
| **Age** | 18-35 years old | 33.9 | 12.2 |
| | 36-50 years old | 19.6 | 23 |
| | 51-69 years old | 39.3 | 54.7 |
| | 70-86 years old | 7.1 | 10.1 |
| **Education level** | ≤junior high school | 26.8 | 32.4 |
| | Senior high school or technical school | 16.1 | 45.3 |
| | ≥college | 57.1 | 22.3 |
| **Sets of houses** | None | 10.7 | 18.7 |
| | One set | 78.6 | 75.5 |
| | Two sets or more | 10.7 | 5.8 |
| **Annual household income** | ＜¥50,000 | 16.1 | 40.3 |
| | ¥50,000-100,000 | 17.9 | 38.1 |
| | ¥100,000-200,000 | 23.2 | 12.9 |
| | ¥200,000-300,000 | 12.5 | 2.9 |
| | ¥300,000-500,000 | 8.9 | 2.9 |
| | ¥500,000-1000,000 | 1.8 | 0.7 |
| | ＞¥1000,000 | 3.6 | 0 |
| | Missing | 16.1 | 2.2 |

their "low status" or just think that he is actually in a low position. Secondly, people's modesty make them think his subjective social status is lower than the objective class. Out of the safety of property, they do not want to show their "high status." Third, the reference standards are not the same when people value their subjective status, some residents refer to their neighborhood in one community, some residents refer to friends in other community. These factors may lead to people that make inconsistent evaluation with their objective social status.

## 2.3  The analyses of factors on subjective class status
From descriptive statistics, we learn the differences about the subjective and the objective status between two communities. Then, the paper tries to explain the influence of the objective status on the subjective status. From the statistical significance, we use the indexes of objective status such as education, occupation, income, real estate as independent variables, use gender, age, party membership as control variables, then built OLS model, the results as table 11 shows.

According to Table 11, community factors are significant in three models, indicating that the type of community; new housing communities and unit community do have an impact on the subjective status of people. And people living in X tend to make higher social status evaluation. Market transition

Chapter 7 Residents' Class Status and Social Political Attitude: Two Cases of Middle-Class Community
in Beijing

Table 11 The OLS model of subjective social class

| Variables | Model 1 | Model 2 | Model 3 |
|---|---|---|---|
| **X community** | 1.128（0.309）*** | 0.965（0.29）*** | 0.582（0.159）* |
| **Control variables** | | | |
| Male | 0.17（0.046） | 0.053（0.018） | 0.068（0.019） |
| Age | 0.018（0.15）** | 0.021（0.184）** | 0.025(0.205)*** |
| Member of Communist Party of China | -0.22（-0.055） | -0.204（-0.079） | -0.302（-0.075） |
| Beijing hukou | 0.013（0.003） | -0.022（0.02） | 0.096(0.024) |
| **Education（reference group：≤junior high school）** | | | |
| Senior high school or technical school | 0.004（0.001） | -0.17 | -0.125 （-0.029） |
| ≥college | 0.915（0.249）*** | 0.616（0.162）* | 0.418 （0.114） |
| **Occupation（reference group：others）** | | | |
| State-owned or collective units | | 0（-0.011） | -0.037 （-0.01） |
| Management personnel | | 0.994（0.204）* | 0.744 （0.171）* |
| Professional skill worker | | 0.832（0.192）* | 0.742 （0.182）* |
| Usual staff | | 0.43（0.055） | 0.416 （0.072） |
| Service personnel（such as shop assistant and security） | | 0.419（0.051） | 0.599 （0.081） |
| Private Owners | | 0.076（0.014） | -0.150 （-0.012） |
| Self-employed (shop / transport / business / mobile vendors) | | 1.524（0.104）* | 1.220 （0.096）* |
| Traditional manual workers | | 0.091（-0.029） | -0.130 （-0.03） |
| Family members suffered laid-off | | 0.109（0.013） | 0.028 （0.007） |
| **Family property** | | | |
| Housing area | | | 0.002 （0.05） |
| Purchase of commercial housing | | | 0.772 （0.212） |
| Purchase of welfare housing | | | 0.957 （0.249）* |
| A set of house | | | -0.763 （-0.192） |
| Two sets or more | | | -0.691 （-0.139） |
| Annual household income | | | 0.338 （0.287）*** |
| **Constant** | 2.493 | 2.085 | 1.051 |
| **N** | 528 | | |
| **R²** | 0.188 | 0.226 | 0.282 |

Note：*P<0.05, **P<0.01, ***P<0.001, each cell contains standardized coefficients in parentheses.

theory describes the reform as a process of changing the way of allocating resources, from the original national redistribution system to a market-oriented economic system; thus, reducing the interests of "redistributors", increasing the interests of the "direct producers". In other words, the effectiveness of administrative power is declining, and replaced by an increase in human capital and entrepreneurship.[13)]

The first model introduces some variables about the individual human

capital. The results show that party membership has little effect on subjective evaluation. Age and education play significant effects on subjective class status. In general, as the age grows, people are accumulating experience and knowledge, the older people think that their own social status is higher than younger people. The factor of age is more significant in all three models.

In terms of education level, when compared with primary school and junior high school people, people who have got higher education are more inclined to give high scores about their subjective social status, and after introducing career-related variables, education continues to make an influence, but the absolute coefficient value is reducing. There is no big difference between the group of "senior high school or technical school" and the group of "junior high school or primary school". But after introduction of housing, income and other factors, the influence of education becomes insignificant.

The second model mainly studies occupational factors. Three indicators are: whether work in state-owned and collective units or not, detailed occupational category, whether family members have had lay-off experience or not. The results show that the property of their work units does not significantly affect the subjective class status. But different occupational categories significantly affect people's subjective evaluation of social status, in particular, compared with several other occupational categories, management personnel, professional and technical staff and self-employed tend to think their own social status are higher. After the introduction of real estate and income factors, the results remain significant. Despite unemployment will reduce people's objective social status, from the middle class to the bottom class.[14] But the decline on objective position does not mean that they indeed believe they have fallen into the underclass.

In terms of the third model, when introducing factors about real estate and annual household income, which are usually used to measure the family property, the influence of education is not significant. Housing area and the number of real estate have no significant effect, too. Compared with people who renting houses, the residents who buy the welfare house think their social status are higher, which shows that the residents out of units of community have better self-identity. There are no significant differences between people who buy commercial real estate and people who rent house. The effect of annual family income is very significant, when income increases by one level, people increases their status evaluation by 0.338 points. The findings do not show a huge difference with previous studies.

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13) Bian Yanjie, Liu Yongli. Social stratification, home ownership, and quality of living : evidence from china's fifth census [J], Sociological Studies, 2005, (3): 83.

14) Li Qiang. The middle class theory and current situation [J]. Society, 2005, (1): 38.

In terms of the three models, after introducing different types of variables, the explanatory power increases. After adding occupational factors, the explanatory power increases by nearly 4%, then adding factors of real estate and annual household income which are used as family property, the explanatory power increases by nearly 6%. The explanatory forces of all these factors can reach 28.2%. When measuring people's subjective social class status, it can cut down the errors by 28.2%.

## 3. Class status and social and political attitude

In this section, the paper focuses on people's social and political attitude in two types of community.

As to social and political attitude, the questionnaire asks 18 questions, as table 14 shows. All of the answers of these questions are set by five dimensions, a score of 1-5 points. For the first 7 questions, 1 point stands for "very unsafe", 2 stands for "somewhat unsafe", 3 stands for "moderate", 4 stands for "somewhat safe", 5 stands for "very safe". For questions 8-13, 1-5 points are described as "very serious", "somewhat serious", "moderate", "somewhat unserious", "not very unserious". For questions 14-18, the answers of 1-5 points mean "very disagree", "somewhat disagree", "neutral", "somewhat agree", "very agree".

### 3.1 Differences of social political attitude between communities

The paper calculates mean value of two communities of all 18 questions, as shows in Table 12.

According to Table12, the absolute mean values about the social and political issues fluctuate around 3 points, which shows that the residents are neither especially radical nor especially active. Further analysis would be more meaningful by comparing with the population living in other communities, such as rural communities or villages in big city.

Regarding to two types of community, residents show different attitudes on 7 of these issues, just like "property safety", "personal security", "personal information and privacy safety", "conflict between officials and the public", "people like me, have no right to evaluate the government behavior", "I understand big political problems facing china well", "I can also do leadership jobs". Specifically, compared with the residents of M community, residents of X community believe that the property safety and personal safety is slightly satisfactory, but they think personal information and privacy safety is facing challenges. X community is a closed community, people feel safe on property because of the management from property company, but private information can be diffused through virtual internet, the geographic distribution can't protect it. The residents from X community believe that the conflict between

Table 12 Mean value of evaluation on social political issues by community

| | Mean in total | Mean of X community | Mean of X community | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Property safety | 3.33 | 3.46 | 3.21 | 0.000 |
| 2. Personal safety | 3.5 | 3.58 | 3.43 | 0.034 |
| 3. Traffic safety | 3.08 | 3.13 | 3.04 | 0.275 |
| 4. Medical safety | 3.19 | 3.18 | 3.2 | 0.779 |
| 5. Food safety | 2.33 | 2.3 | 2.37 | 0.427 |
| 6. Labor safety | 3.38 | 3.4 | 3.36 | 0.614 |
| 7. Personal information and privacy safety | 2.61 | 2.47 | 2.74 | 0.004 |
| 8. Conflict between poor and rich | 2.62 | 2.58 | 2.66 | 0.345 |
| 9.Conflict between workers and white-collars | 3.12 | 3.18 | 3.05 | 0.074 |
| 10. Conflict between officials and the public | 2.46 | 2.37 | 2.55 | 0.031 |
| 11. Conflict between boss and staff | 3 | 3.05 | 2.96 | 0.192 |
| 12. Conflict between urban and rural | 3.08 | 3.09 | 2.96 | 0.902 |
| 13. Conflict between locals and immigrants | 2.96 | 2.99 | 2.93 | 0.447 |
| 14. People like me, have no right to evaluate the government behavior | 2.56 | 2.31 | 2.8 | 0.000 |
| 15. Government officials don't care much about my opinions | 3.25 | 3.23 | 3.28 | 0.582 |
| 16. I understand big political problems facing china well | 2.91 | 3 | 2.82 | 0.017 |
| 17. I can also do leadership jobs | 2.73 | 2.86 | 2.61 | 0.004 |
| 18.Politics is too complicated, not such a man as I can understand it. | 3.19 | 3.19 | 3.18 | 0.958 |

officials and the public is weaker than M community, however, the overall mean value is still close to "more serious". X community residents do not agree the saying of "people like me, have no right to evaluate the government behavior", while the other community hold neutral viewpoint. In terms of "I understand big political problems facing china well" and "I can also do leadership jobs", the residents of X community are a little bit more confident than that of M community.

## 3.2 Factors influencing social and political attitude

Can these findings above get further inference? First, the paper uses principal component analysis method to do exploratory factor analysis, KMO=0.819, Bartlett's test of sphericity is significant, indicating that we can use the method of factor analysis. As Table 13 shows, there are four factors, whose eigenvalues all have exceeded 1, the cumulative variance's explanation rate attain 55.768%. So it is possible to extract four factors to analyze the social and political attitude.

According to the factor coefficients on Table 14, we can rename the extracted four factors as sense of social security, sense of group conflict, political participation force, political attitude, which constitute the four dimensions to

Table 13 Indicators on social political attitude and factor extracted

| Indicators | Initial Eigenvalues | | | Explain variance of Each factor after rotation | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Eigenvalue | Explained variance（%） | Cumulative variance（%） | Eigenvalue | Explained variance（%） | Cumulative variance（%） |
| 1 | 4.539 | 25.217 | 25.217 | 3.72 | 20.665 | 20.665 |
| 2 | 2.459 | 13.662 | 38.879 | 3.263 | 18.129 | 38.794 |
| 3 | 1.774 | 9.854 | 48.733 | 1.58 | 8.78 | 47.574 |
| 4 | 1.266 | 7.035 | 55.768 | 1.475 | 8.194 | 55.768 |
| 5 | 0.97 | 5.389 | 61.158 | | | |
| 6 | 0.914 | 5.079 | 66.237 | | | |
| 7 | 0.76 | 4.224 | 70.461 | | | |
| 8 | 0.686 | 3.81 | 74.271 | | | |
| 9 | 0.67 | 3.72 | 77.991 | | | |
| 10 | 0.636 | 3.532 | 81.523 | | | |
| 11 | 0.58 | 3.221 | 84.744 | | | |
| 12 | 0.537 | 2.982 | 87.725 | | | |
| 13 | 0.468 | 2.6 | 90.325 | | | |
| 14 | 0.44 | 2.442 | 92.767 | | | |
| 15 | 0.402 | 2.234 | 95.001 | | | |
| 16 | 0.331 | 1.84 | 96.841 | | | |
| 17 | 0.299 | 1.664 | 98.505 | | | |
| 18 | 0.269 | 1.495 | 100 | | | |

measure social and political attitude. Four factors constitute four normal distributions, for every distribution, the mean value is 0 and its standard deviation is 1. For the first three common factors, the higher the score, the more positive of the social and political attitude. For the fourth common factor, the lower the score, the more positive or confident of political attitudes.

A model is developed by the method of multiple regression analysis. This model takes four common factors as the dependent variables, takes community type as control variable, and take some indexes of objective class position including occupation, real estate, and indexes of subjective social status as independent variables, the results are shown in table 15.

Although the nature of communities shows impact on subjective class position, but it does not show significant influence on specific socio-political attitude, in other words, there is no big difference regarding to socio-political attitude between new commercial housing community and unit community.

In all 4 models, the variables of occupation and housing property, which are used to measure objective social status are not significant, have no obvious impact on socio-political attitude.

The third model indicates that the education can influence people's political participation force. Compared with the group whose education are senior high

Table 14  Factor coefficients after varimax rotation

| Questions about Social and political issues | Extracted factors | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Factor1 Sense of social security | Factor 2 Sense of group conflict | Factor 3 political participation force | Factor 4 Political attitude |
| 1. Property safety | 0.713 | | | |
| 2. Personal safety | 0.747 | | | |
| 3. Traffic safety | 0.78 | | | |
| 4. Medical safety | 0.741 | | | |
| 5. Food safety | 0.723 | | | |
| 6. Labor safety | 0.638 | | | |
| 7. Personal information and privacy safety | 0.666 | | | |
| 8. Conflict between poor and rich | | 0.731 | | |
| 9. Conflict between workers and white-collars | | 0.767 | | |
| 10. Conflict between officials and the public | | 0.662 | | |
| 11. Conflict between boss and staff | | 0.713 | | |
| 12. Conflict between urban and rural | | 0.765 | | |
| 13. Conflict between locals and immigrants | | 0.718 | | |
| 14. People like me, have no right to evaluate the government behavior | | | | 0.57 |
| 15.Government officials don't care much about my opinions | | | | 0.806 |
| 16.I understand big political problems facing china well | | | 0.692 | |
| 17. I also can do leadership jobs | | | 0.687 | |
| 18. Politics is too complicated, not such a man as I can understand it. | | | | 0.571 |

school or less, the people who get college education think they have more capacity of political participation force to some extent. For example, they believe they learn more about major political issues facing China and feel that they are capable to do some leadership things.

People's subjective class identification has a significant impact on social and political attitude, which is consistent with other scholars' conclusion. But referring to this paper, it only affects two dimensions of socio-political attitude, which are social security sense and political attitude. Compared to the underclass identification, the group who hold middle and upper classes identify have stronger sense of social security, and have more positive political attitude. In model 1 and 4, as for the absolute value of Influence coefficient, the value of middle class identity is bigger than that of upper-class identity（0.227>0.109,

Table 15   The factor analysis on social and political attitude

| | Model 1: Sense of social security | Model 2: Sense of group conflict | Model 3: Political participation force | Model 4:Political attitude |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| X community | 0.045（0.022） | 0.057（0.028） | -0.051（-0.025） | 0.147（0.072） |
| **Education（reference group：≤junior high school）** | | | | |
| Senior high school or technical school | -0.171（-0.075） | 0.028（0.012） | 0.026（0.011） | -0.058（-0.025） |
| ≥college | -0.283（-0.142） | -0.125（-0.062） | 0.438（0.221）** | -0.05（-0.024） |
| **Occupation（reference group：others）** | | | | |
| State-owned or collective units | 0.082（0.033） | 0.072（0.029） | 0.199（0.081） | -0.123（-0.049） |
| Management personnel | -0.022（-0.01） | -0.032（-0.014） | -0.056（-0.025） | -0.124（-0.054） |
| Professional skill worker | 0.233（0.075） | -0.083（-0.027） | -0.347（-0.113） | -0.185（-0.059） |
| Usual staff | 0.035（0.009） | 0.151（0.037） | -0.122（-0.031） | -0.057（-0.014） |
| Service personnel（such as shop assistant and security） | -0.365（-0.052） | 0.413（0.058） | 0.484（0.07） | 0.073（0.01） |
| Private Owners | 0.69（0.103） | -0.101（-0.015） | 0.275（0.042） | 0.623（0.092） |
| Traditional manual workers | -0.005（-0.002） | 0.047（0.02） | -0.136（-0.058） | 0.056（0.023） |
| **Housing（reference group：rent houses）** | | | | |
| Housing area | -0.102（-0.067） | 0.114（0.074） | 0.046（0.031） | -0.042（-0.027） |
| Purchase of commercial housing | 0.185（0.092） | 0.102（0.051） | 0.093（0.047） | -0.067（-0.033） |
| Purchase of welfare housing | 0.16（0.077） | 0.009（0.004） | 0.019（0.009） | -0.075（-0.035） |
| **Identification of subjective class（reference group：underclass identification）** | | | | |
| Middle class identification | 0.458（0.227）*** | 0.016（0.008） | 0.189（0.094） | -0.267（-0.13）* |
| Upper class identification | 0.546（0.109）* | -0.049（-0.01） | 0.065（0.013） | -0.593（-0.116）* |
| **Constant** | -0.118 | -0.274 | -0.455 | 0.38 |
| **N** | 436 | | | |
| **R²** | 0.077 | 0.02 | 0.142 | 0.043 |

Note：*P<0.05, **P<0.01, ***P<0.001, each cell contains standardized coefficients in parentheses；

The annual household income is insignificant in all four models, after adjustment, these models don't conclude the factor of annual household income.

0.13>0.116). Overall, these findings reveal that the people who have a preference of middle class identity are prone to make positive evaluations on social-political issues, they play a role of social stabilizer in daily life.

The residents in new-born commercial community and unit community don't exist divergence when valuing the group conflicts. Combine two communities

together, the mean score is 2.87 when calculating the values in 6 questions measuring the group conflicts. The sense of group conflicts means "moderate" level, which becomes more conciliatory than in previous years.

## 4. Discussion and conclusion

In general, this article describes the emerging business community and the old unit community as the two different kinds of the middle-class community. It finds that even belonging to the middle class community, because of different types, there are differences in objective and subjective class positions. When exploring the factors influencing people's socio-political attitude, the objective class position, especially the education as well as subjective class position, significantly affects people's socio-political attitude, the influence of the community properties is not obvious.

### 4.1 Definition of middle class need more diversified indexes

This article first uses the perspective of contrast, makes comparison of the differences between the two communities in the objective social status, finds that because they were built in different policy background and economic development stage, residents show big differences in age structure, hukou structure, education structure and income situation. As the further development of social division of labor system, the new community shows a new occupational category with the old community. Of course, due to the different mechanisms to obtain housing, people's housing property and area are also very different. Overall, the objective social status of residents in the emerging business community is better than that of community under system of the unit.

Although X community and M community belong to the typical middle-class community, from the traditional quantitative indicators, there are absolute underclass from a single indicator of education or the income level. But after the introduction of housing property rights and hukou, almost no inhabitants belong to the underclass in the absolute sense, those groups not belonging to the traditional middle class either buy house in Beijing, or have hukou in Beijing. In metropolis, land price soars and the public welfare is sane, so the real estate are carrying huge economic benefits while the hukou brings better social security benefits. When we define the middle class, one method is by standard of residential community, the other is by the traditional indicators of education, occupation and income, the two results are not completely overlap, the key reason is that we can't ignore the house value and hukou system in metropolitan. Under the progress of transition in China, how to define objective middle group? It is necessary to find out more diversified indicators which can

objectively reflect the actual situation.

## 4.2  Income and career influence subjective class status

Residents in the middle class community have not produced consistent subjective class identity, just as most of the findings, it prompts us to explore the determinants of subjective class position further. Household income and education are not only important indicators of objective class status, but also influence the subjective class identification. This phenomenon shows that for residents of large cities, people's subjective evaluation standard increasingly narrows; the evaluation of a person's social status is more concentrated to the economic level. In this survey, education does not play a significant role. The impact of occupational categories is significant. with the restructuring and adjustment of industrial structure, our society needs more number of managers, professionals, private businessmen, the improvement of these occupations' prestige will encourage people to participate actively in these professional fields owning highly technology, strong competition, and more flexibility, which can make big contribution to the industrial adjustment and job performance structure.