Journal of Development and Social Sciences
www.jdss.org.pk

RESEARCH PAPER

Review and Prospect of the Ming Great Wall of China: A Case Study of *Eastern Hebei*

Tang Baicheng

PhD Scholar, Department of History and Pakistan Studies, University of the Punjab, Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan (Co-Cultivation with Northeastern University at Qinhuangdao, China)

*Corresponding Author: 1014757086@qq.com

ABSTRACT

Western scholars' research on the Great Wall of China has experienced the transformation from the theoretical paradigm of the Great Wall Frontier to the post-modern paradigm. The main objective of this research article is to trace out the history of Great wall in 20th century. With using the qualitative research techniques and methods. Although Chinese scholars have made progress in their research, it is not enough to establish the Great Wall Discipline, and also lacks a breakthrough in methodology. At present, introducing the idea of Regional Social History and advocating the research mode of Social History of the Great Wall are effective ways to achieve substantial breakthroughs in the study of the history of the Great Wall. Of course, this requires achieving goals within specific areas. Therefore, we take the Ming Great Wall in Eastern Hebei as a case to illustrate what new breakthroughs can be achieved by practicing this research idea and method. Finally, this paper presents the key finding of the research by using the Ming Great Wall in Eastern Hebei as the investigation area which show that the Great Wall had a great on the social life of the people in 20th century.

Introduction

The construction of the Great Wall originated in the Warring States Period (475-221 B.C.). After the transformation of the Qin Dynasty (221-207 B.C.), the Great Wall became a barrier between the civilization of the *China Central Plain* (中原 The center of ancient China, which generally refers to the middle and lower reaches of the Yellow River Basin) and northern grassland. Over the next two thousand years, the Great Wall was continuously constructed by dynasties. It not only extends from east to west, but also has a long-depth span in the north-south direction, which makes it the world's largest military project in northern China. This had a great relationship with China's historical evolution and had a profound impact on the ecological, economic, political, social and cultural landscape of the northern region. The study of the Great Wall is an important perspective to re-examine the society of northern China and even the history of inland Asia. The Great Wall is a world cultural heritage, a symbol of Chinese history and culture, and is known as the *Eighth Wonder of the World*. Studying the history of the Great Wall is also to explore and explain the value of the Great Wall Culture to the whole world and human civilization.

The study of the Great Wall of China has a history of over 100 years. This paper intends to sort out, review and reflect on the research on Ming Great Wall of China since the 20th century, and propose future research ideas, directions and breakthroughs. In addition, this paper selects the Ming Great Wall in Eastern Hebei Province, China, as a representative to further explain how to apply the research paradigm of *Regional Social History* to the study of the history of the Great Wall.

Literature Review

Prior to this, some scholars have summarized and reflected on the study of the history of Ming Great Wall (M-GW). Their reviews and reflections are helpful for the research

of this article. However, this article requires further reflection on this foundation and proposes future research prospects. The most important research review should be Wang Lijie's *Summary of Studies on the Ming Great Wall Since the Republic of China* (民国以来明代长城研究综述) (Wang, 2014). In this research review, she summarized the path and changes in the study of the Great Wall since the Republic of China, including early textual research and archaeological investigations. She focused on sorting out research achievements since the 1980s. This includes research on the history of the M-GW, monographic studies on the M-GW, and the current status of the compilation of historical materials related to the M-GW. However, her research review did not involve Western scholars, did not summarize and reflect from the perspective of methodology and research paradigm, and did not put forward prospects for future research. So the review of this article is still valuable.

In addition, there are some articles reviewing and reflecting on regional Great Wall research. For example, there is Zhai Yu's *Review and Consideration on the Great Wall Defense System of Xuanfu, Datong and Shanxi Military Regions of the Ming Dynasty* (明代宣大山西三镇长城研究的回顾与思考) (Zhai, 2019). In the article, he reviewed the current situation of the research on the Ming Great Wall in Xuanfu, Datong and Shanxi Military Regions, and pointed out that the research was generally weak and the research should start from the defense system of the Great Wall in the early Ming Dynasty, castles built in the middle and late Ming Dynasty, and folk religion along the Great Wall. However, the reflection of the paper is limited to specific research suggestions, and it fails to put forward new research methods from the height of paradigm.

In recent years, some scholars have begun to propose new research paradigms. In the introduction of the book *Inside and Outside the Great Wall: System, Ethnic Group and Regional Development in the Perspective of Social History* (长城内外：社会史视野下的制度、族群与区域开发) (Zhao, 2016) pointed out that the study of the Great Wall should go towards the *Regional Social History of the Great Wall* in the future. As far as possible, from the people living on both sides of the Great Wall, observe how the institutions and events related to the Great Wall in history affected the lives of these people, and also note how these people's lives together with the above-mentioned institutions and events formed the structure of local society. This methodology has provided great inspiration for this article, but further specific explanations are needed.

Research Methodology

This article belongs to the study of academic history, with the aim of reviewing and reflecting on the study of the history of the Great Wall of China. The most appropriate research method is qualitative research. This involves analyzing each article, and then making a conclusion. However, there are thousands of papers studying the Great Wall, and we cannot analyze them all one by one. The best method is to select the most representative research articles from different time periods, and then classify them one by one to summarize which type of research they belong to. In addition, this article does not intend to analyze the research content of each article in detail, but rather focuses on analyzing its methodology and paradigm, and ultimately summarizes the evolution of research paradigms, thereby pointing out the prospects for future research. The CNKI is the most comprehensive academic search engine in China, so this paper mainly uses it as a tool to search for articles through the theme "Ming Great Wall", and select the most representative papers for analysis through the journal level, impact factors, and publication time. In addition, due to my long-term accumulation, many cutting-edge monographs have also been included in the analysis.

The Evolution of the Research Paradigm on the Great Wall in Western Academia

Shortly after the Great Wall was built, it was not only recorded and discussed in China, but also gradually evolved into a public image and a symbol of China in the world. The study of the Great Wall in the 19th century was basically confined to the stage of documentation and preliminary study. The main research means were documentary proof. The object of study also basically concentrated on the basic levels of the origin, construction and function of the Great Wall. Around the 20th century, the study of the Great Wall of China in western academia changed its simple historical narrative. Starting from geopolitics, the Great Wall and the geographical, economic, military, political and other factors of the Asian continent were combined to construct a complete and rich paradigm for the study of the Great Wall. One of the representatives is the theory of *Great Wall Frontier* initiated by Owen Lattimore (Lattimore, 1962). In this period, Chinese scholars inherited the study of the Great Wall from the textual criticism school. Zhang Xiangwen and Wang Guowei respectively initiated the study of the Great Wall in the modern academic sense from the perspectives of historical geography and bamboo slips historical materials. However, on the whole, they focused on the textual research of historical geography, and their vision was still limited to the Great Wall itself.

From the post-World War II to the 1980s, the western theoretical paradigm of *Great Wall Frontier* once flourished. It played a well-deserved leading role in the research methods, the research achievements and the promotion of international Great Wall history research. The western theoretical paradigm of the *Great Wall Frontier* can be basically summarized as placing the Great Wall in the background of the interaction of geography, economy, and ethnic groups, military and political factors under the geopolitical background of the ancient Asian continent. It is believed that the *Great Wall Frontier* was a vast transitional zone represented by a long military project, which had become an important driving force for historical changes in China and even in Asia. However, one of the problems is that the theoretical paradigm has two ideological sources, that is, one is *Frontier Thesis* and the other is *Heartland Theory*. Although effective theoretical explanations have been established with the help of natural and social sciences, like other theories, they all originated from the western historical experience and discourse system. Can they be transported to the eastern foreign countries? For example, as the presupposition, the formation of the *Great Wall Frontier* was the result of the Han nationality's extension. Today, we can find evidence to prove it in the archaeological study of early human society. But after China entered the Great Unified Monarchy, was the Great Wall still the result of the Han nationality's outward expansion? At least not in most cases. In this way, Lattimore's conclusion can only be applied to the early history of China. This research tendency is not confined to Lattimore himself, but is a common problem in the study of the Great Wall in the west. This reflects that the western world, when examining the Great Wall, mostly from the perspective of the outside world, regards the Great Wall as a symbol of Chinese history and culture, and regards the Great Wall of different times as a symbol of unity and homogeneity, thus ignoring its own development and changes.

Another problem of the *Great Wall Frontier* theories is that although they have always emphasized that the formation of the *Great Wall Frontier* was the product of the interaction between geographical environment and human practice, they have always maintained that the long-term existence of the *Great Wall Frontier* was rooted in the dualistic geographical and economic opposition between the north and the south of the Asian continent, and the geographical environment was still the most important factor for the formation of the *Great Wall Frontier*. Because of the constancy of geographical space, it is often easier than historical time to be favored by the historical theorists who are trying to construct a suitable long-term space-time. However, the problem is that this research tendency has a strong effect on explaining the slow change of long-term history, but it is weak in explaining the dynasty changes or historical events in the medium-term and short-term periods, thus making historical research eventually fall into the situation where there

is only geography, no history, only ethnic groups, and no individuals. The historiography not only has lost its own advantages and distinctive narrative tradition, and has become like other social sciences, losing the independence and academic characteristics of its own disciplines, but also worries that due to the differences in research perspectives, there is considerable misunderstanding of historical facts.

Since the 1990s, the social scientization of historiography has been deconstructed and contested. It advocates that by using the method of social science, an overall and systematic historical explanation system has been constructed. Postmodernists fundamentally doubt the rationality of this kind of thinking, arguing that different times and regions have different historical contexts, and that history itself is full of differences, contradictions, ruptures and unknowns. The social scientization of historiography analyzes and constructs the complex history of different times and regions with the social sciences originating from modern western experience. On the surface, it seems that has constructed a magnificent and systematic interpretation system to gain an overall understanding of world history. In fact, it is only the result of simplifying the history of other regions and incorporating them into the framework of western history. The so-called interpretation system is only a *Theoretical Utopia* built up by a series of modern concepts, which does not help to explain the true face of history, but conceals the diversity and complexity of history itself.

The most concentrated work on criticizing the *Great Wall Frontier* from the perspective of post-modernism is the book written by Arthur Waldrun, *The Great Wall of China: From History to Myth* (Waldron, 1990). According to the author Arthur Waldrun, the study of the Great Wall by western scholars is even just a mythological imagination. The border walls or city walls built by various dynasties in ancient China were only a series of military defense projects built according to different defense needs in different times and under different backgrounds, and they did not follow a certain path to connect them into a unified '*Great Wall*'. Most of the border Walls before the Ming Dynasty have disappeared. The Great Wall pointed out by western scholars is only the Great Wall of the Ming Dynasty. We cannot take the Ming Great Wall as the general representative of the Great Wall of China, especially the Qin Dynasty. Therefore, we can only study the *'Border Walls' or 'City Walls'* of different dynasties, periods and locations and strategic levels separately, but cannot connect them to form a unique *'Great Wall'* and conduct an integrated or holistic study. Arthur Waldrun's research has criticized the western theories of the *Great Wall Frontier* and revealed the complexity, diversity and variability of the construction process of the Great Wall.

After 1990's, after consulting the consciousness of post-modernism and critical standpoint, through integration and adjustment, the paradigm transformation gradually began. From the perspective of anthropology and other disciplines, they changed the previous emphasis on theoretical construction and their neglect of the historical context of the Great Wall, and began to discuss the changes and diversity of roles of the Great Wall from multiple perspectives and in detail. Although this transformation makes the study of Great Wall closer to historical details, it also leads to the decline of theoretical integration and interpretation function. In addition, the study of the Great Wall in the west mainly focused on the Great Wall before the Qin and Han Dynasties, and closely linked it with the origin of China and foreign policy. The study and literature utilization of the Great Wall in later dynasties were particularly weak, so it no longer held the leading position in the study of history of the Great Wall in the world.

The Evolution of Chinese Academic Research on the Great Wall since the 20th Century

At the beginning of the 20th century, under the influence of geography, the research on the the Ming Great Wall was mostly based on the textual research on the historical evolution, and there were also a few field investigations. At this time, a hot topic emerged in

the study of the Great Wall. When the existing Great Wall was built? Such as Zhang Xiangwen's *A study of the Great Wall* (长城考) and Su Xin's *Textual Research on Ming border wall* (明边墙证古) (Zhang, 1914). These studies distinguished the difference between the the Ming Great Wall and the Great Wall of the previous dynasty. In 1931, Wang Guoliang published <*The examination of the evolution of the Great Wall of China* (中国长城沿革考), which was the first book to systematically study the Great Wall (Wang, 1935). The book discussed the reasons and process of the construction of the Ming Great Wall (Su, 1915).

After the founding of the people's Republic of China, the field investigation and archaeology of the Great Wall deserved the most attention. The archaeological investigation was generally carried out by domestic scholars. The distribution, trend and structural characteristics of the Great Wall of Yan, Qin and Han Dynasties in Hebei, Inner Mongolia and Liaoning provinces were systematically investigated. For example, Luo Zhewen and other scholars were responsible for the restoration of the Great Wall in Badaling, Beijing, and published *The Great Wall: Juyongguan, Badaling* (万里长城：居庸关、八达岭) But in general, the research on the Great Wall in the 1950s and 1970s was slow, especially in the period of the Cultural Revolution.

Since the 1980s, the research on the Great Wall of Ming Dynasty has made all-round progress, and the research tends to be diversified and comprehensive. Up to now, it can be divided into three categories (Luo, 1957).

Research on the body of the Great Wall (walls and various facilities)

This kind of research still continues the field investigation and literature demonstration since the Republic of China. Hua Xiazi's *The Textual Research of Ming Great Wall* (明长城考实), published in 1988, is the first book to study the Ming Great Wall. Based on the introduction of the general situation of the Great Wall of the past dynasties, the background and construction of the the Ming Great Wall Great Wall, the book records the situation of the Ming Great Wall in detail and faithfully according to their order of their fieldwork, leaving the first-hand materials for the study of the Ming Great Wall (Hua, 1988).

Monographic study on the Ming Great Wall

The Great Wall and political and military issues.

The study mainly focuses on the frontier situation, military towns and defense system, such as Wu Jihua's *The border inward movement and the construction of the Ming Great Wall* (论明代边防内移与长城修筑) (Wu, 1981).

The Great Wall and economic life issues.

For example, Hu Yingze's *The defense of the nine frontier and living water in the Ming Dynasty* (明代九边守战与生活用水) studied the living water for soldiers and horses and their solutions, and believed that the exploration, control and competition for water resources were an extremely important aspect of border management.

The Great Wall and ethnic communication

For example, Li Yiyun's *The mutual market between Mongolia and Han at the foot of the Great Wall in Ming Dynasty* (明代长城脚下的蒙汉互市) discussed the form, exchange content and influence of the mutual market (Hu, 2009).

Environmental problems along the Great Wall.

For example, Liang Sibao's *The problem of soil and water loss caused by the cultivation of nine frontier in the Ming Dynasty* (明代九边屯田引起的水土流失问题) discussed the problem of soil and water loss aggravation caused by the cultivation of wastelands along the Great Wall and its south (Liang, 1992).

The Great Wall and regional culture.

Yu Tongyuan's *The formation and evolution of the Great Wall Cultural belt in Ming Dynasty* (明代长城文化带的形成与演变) discussed the rise and development of the Great Wall Cultural belt from the perspectives of production, consumption and exchange (Shaanxi Archaeological Research Institute, 2015).

Investigation report, data collection and research of Ming Great Wall

The achievements in this field include: *Investigation report on the resources of the Great Wall of Shaanxi Province* (陕西省明长城资源调查报告) prepared by Shaanxi Archaeological Research Institute, *Investigation report on the resources of the Ming Great Wall of Shanxi Province* (山西省明长城资源调查报告) compiled by Shanxi Provincial Bureau of cultural relics and so on, which will not be listed anymore. (Shanxi Provincial Bureau of cultural relics, 2019).

Since the 1980s, the study of the Great Wall has evolved from a general description of different times to a separate and specific study of different times. It has expanded from the wall itself to the phenomena of castles, beacon towers and even surrounding ecology, economy, society and culture. In addition, Chinese scholars have begun to draw lessons from western social science theories and expand their research contents, many viewpoints have emerged, including the *Great Wall Boundary Theory*, *Great Wall Transition Theory*, *Great Wall Cultural Belt*, *Great Wall Economic Belt* and many other terms, and even started to construct a subject with the Great Wall as the main body, the *Great Wall Discipline* (长城学).

However, on the other hand, there are some serious problems. A large number of studies are simply repeated at a low level. As far as research methods are concerned, influenced by the fault of academic era and the overall academic level, Chinese scholars lack the accumulation of tradition and the reference of different methods. Although some of the theoretical concepts of the Great Wall have been put forward, most of them focus on expanding the research content of the Great Wall, rather than on the level of research methods. They are still in a state of independent research in different disciplines, and so far, comprehensive interdisciplinary research has not been realized. Although the proposal of *Great Wall Discipline* is of great significance, the current research level of the Great Wall is not enough to support the birth of the discipline based on the Great Wall.

Proposal of the Research Model of *Social History of the Great Wall*

At present, the study of the Great Wall in the west is facing the dilemma of weakening theory and lacking historical materials. However, the study in China has not been able to put forward operable methods for the study of the Great Wall. A large number of historical materials are limited by the research horizon and cannot be fully utilized. Where should the study of Great Wall history go in the future? The progress of historical research is nothing more than historical materials and theory. For Chinese scholars, the most important thing at present is to draw lessons from various theories and methods available in the west, to maximize the use of handed-down documents and archaeological results, and to carry out field surveys, to study the different historical context of the Great Wall in different times and regions, and to fully reveal its original historical appearance. As an effective way to achieve this goal, regional social history is an important research method.

In this regard, the Center for Historical Anthropology of Chinese University of Hong Kong and Sun Yat-sen University played a very good role as a platform. In the project *Historic Anthropology of Chinese Society* sponsored by David Faure, Area of Excellence in Hong Kong, there are two teams involved in the study of northern China, one is the study of regional society along the canal across the north and south of the Yangtze River, and the other is the study of regional society along the Great Wall across the east and west. The two vertical and horizontal historical and cultural landscapes, the former with a thousand years of history and the latter with two thousand years of history, had largely shaped the social structure of northern China. At the same time, they are the product of the will of the state and play a great role in the process of how diverse regional cultural traditions coexist in a unified framework.

Regional social history opposes the holistic and homogeneous study of history, which can avoid the drawbacks of social scientization of historiography that overemphasizes theoretical construction and neglects the diversity of historical context. Regional social history emphasizes taking a region which can become an independent region as the research object. From the perspective of integral history, we can grasp the overall picture of the historical development of this region. At the same time, we can make up for the deficiency of the Great Wall History from the perspective of anthropology, which relatively emphasizes social and economic life and neglects the state. It provides space for a variety of social sciences, even natural science theories and methods.

If we introduce the concept of regional social history into the study of Great Wall history, we can take a part of the society radiated by the Great Wall as an independent object of study. From the perspective of *Total History*, we can examine the relationship between the Great Wall and the geographical, economic, social, military, political, cultural and other aspects of the region. On the basis of history, the middle-level theory of the overall picture of the Great Wall is constructed by maximizing the use of various disciplines, especially the theoretical methods of social sciences. This research model can be called *Social History of the Great Wall.*

The *Social History of the Great Wall* contains two connotations. On the one hand, the study of the Great Wall is no longer limited to the relationship between the Great Wall itself and the military, political and economic of the state, but also to the study of the surrounding society. On the other hand, it is also more important. The *Social History of the Great Wall* emphasizes the research concept of *Total History*. The *Total History* is not to write an all-inclusive history, but to explore specific historical issues within the framework of the analysis of *Total History*. The so-called *Total* refers to the holistic understanding and cross domain comprehensive understanding of one thing, rather than the comprehensive narration and compilation of history in the dimensions of time and space, not a narrative of history that contains all the details, but emphasizes the relationship between different research fields. With the method of social history, we should examine and study the phenomena and problems related to the Great Wall as far as possible. Of course, it is possible to operate in a specific space-time region. The *Social History of the Great Wall* not only solves the dilemma of the lack of historical materials in the study of the Great Wall in the west, but also the dilemma of the lack of theoretical methods in China. Therefore, relying on the traditional advantages of Chinese history and combining the western scientific concepts and methods, the theory and method system of the history of the Great Wall in China can be constructed, so as to truly promote the breakthrough and development of the Great Wall history research.

Research Background of Ming Great Wall in *Eastern Hebei*

As mentioned earlier, the *Social History of the Great Wall* must be carried out in a specific region. We take Ming Great Wall in the Eastern Hebei Province as an example, and use the research concept of the *Social History of the Great Wall* to see what new ideas can be

put forward. So first, we need to introduce the research background of Ming Great Wall in *Eastern Hebei*.

The *Eastern Hebei* mainly include*s Qinhuangdao City* and *Tangshan City*. In the Ming Dynasty, it mainly belonged to *Yongping Prefecture* and the eastern part of *Shuntian Prefecture*. In the military defense area, it belonged to the eastern and central part of *Ji-Town*, the *Jizhou Military Region* (one of the military area command in the Ming Dynasty). The investigation and research of the Great Wall in *Eastern Hebei* by Chinese academia began in the 1980s, which can be divided into three aspects. The first aspect is the archaeological and field investigation, historical and geographic textual research of the Ming Great Wall in *Eastern Hebei*; the second aspect is the historical research on the background, manpower, process, function of the construction and garrison of the Ming Great Wall in *Eastern Hebei*; the third aspect is the Ming Great Wall in *Eastern Hebei* from the perspective of settlement geography and architecture.

Archaeological survey, Field Investigation and Historical Geography Textual Research

From 1981 to 1987, the Great Wall investigation team of Hebei province carried out a comprehensive archaeological survey of the Ming Great Wall in *Jizhou Military Region*. The length of the main walls and the side walls of the Great Wall was 736374.2m, and 2097 battle platforms (defensive towers) were surveyed, including 20 non hollow defense towers, 471 battle platforms, 138 platforms attached to the walls, 213 piers, 174 beacon towers, 183 batteries (gun carriages), 41 platform foundations, 256 abdominal doors, 341 house foundations, 15 watergate caves (small gates), 216 passes (gates), 201 castle sites, 4 sentry buildings, 160 steles. There were also cliff carvings, brick carvings, campsites, lime kilns and various cultural relics specimens, all of which had obtained first-hand sources. In 2013, *The Great Wall of Ji-Town in the Ming Dynasty: Archaeological report 1981-1987* was published (Zheng, 2014).

Through the archaeological and field investigation of the Great Wall, Hebei Great Wall Investigation Team and other individual scholars have basically got the current situation of the preservation of the Ming Great Wall. These field investigations provides a solid foundation for the study of the Great Wall, but it is not a real academic study of the history of Great Wall.

The research on the Great Wall construction of background, manpower, process, function and garrison of the Great Wall

The study of the Ming Great Wall in Eastern Hebe began in the late 1990s.

The construction of the Great Wall

For example, Zhang Dianren briefly introduced the process and background of the construction of the Ming Great Wall in Tangshan (Zhang, 1998). Hu Fan discussed the rectification measures of Muzong Emperor of Ming on the northern border, including the construction of hollow defense towers on the Great Wall in *Ji-Town* (Hu, 1998) Xiao Yuanping made a simple sketch of the construction of the Ming Great Wall in *Yongping Prefecture*, and so on (Xiao, 2015).

The building manpower of the Great Wall

Peng Yong pointed out that *the Ban Army* in the Ming Dynasty were one of the important forces in building the Great Wall (Peng, 2000). Zhang Jinlong listed the names and positions of some generals in *Yiwu* who garrisoned the border and built the Great Wall in the late Ming Dynasty (Zhang, 2008).

The function of the Great Wall

The second chapter of Zhang Shanshan's *Early warning of the Ming Great Wall in Ji-Town* discussed the early warning facilities of the Great Wall in *Ji-Town*, including hollow defense towers and beacon towers, and analyzed them from four aspects: shape, geographical location, contents and quantity. The third chapter studied the early warning personnel of the Great Wall in *Ji-Town* in Ming Dynasty. The main source of the soldiers at beacon towers was the army of *Wei-Suo*, who were punished for crimes to guard the Great Wall. Intelligence officers could be divided into bright and dark whistles. The Chapter four discussed the early warning mechanism of Ming Great Wall in *Ji-Town*, which involved the transmission of early warning information, the method of transmitting beacons and orders, and the mechanism of responding to assistance (Zhang, 2013),

The defensive force of the Great Wall

According to Xin Deyong's <*Southern soldier who defended the Great Wall in the Ming Dynasty*>, Qi Jiguang, as the commander in chief of the *Ji-Town*, gradually mobilized some soldiers in *Zhejiang Province* to defend the Great Wall in the north. Lu Jie made a textual research on the composition and amount of the garrison of the Great Wall in *Tangshan City*. He pointed out that the garrison consisted of the local soldiers and guest soldiers of *Wei-suo* (卫所), the militia and the recruited soldiers. He estimated that the number of garrison of the Great Wall in *Tangshan* was about 20,000 (Lu, 2005). Li Jianli studied the establishment and reform of the *Dusi* and *Wei-Suo System* (都司-卫所体制) along the Ming Great Wall in *Hebei Province* and the establishment of the *Military Region System*, and pointed out that there were more than 300,000 troops stationed (Li, 2008)

Study of the Great Wall in *Eastern Hebei* from the Perspective of Settlement Geography and Architecture

Settlement geography is a discipline that studies the formation, development and distribution of settlements. Architecture is a discipline that studies architecture and its surroundings. Architectural scholars of Tianjin University have systematically studied military settlements along the Ming Great Wall from the perspectives of settlement geography and architecture for more than ten years, involving many achievements in *Hebei*. For example, Miao Miao's *The research of the settlements for castles in passes along the Ming Great Wall in Ji-Town area* (明蓟镇长城沿线关城聚落研究) chose the castles in passes, which is well preserved and representative, as the research focus. She classified the castles from the point of site selection, summarized their basic characteristics, focused on the ecological and defensive characteristics of castles in passes, and discussed the protection, development and utilization of traditional castles

On the basis of a large number of previous studies (Miao, 2004). Wang Linfeng, Zhang Yukun and Wei Yanyan jointly published the book, *The defense system and military settlements of the Ming Great Wall in Ji-Town* (明长城蓟镇防御体系与军事聚落), which combed the military establishment evolution, strategic position transformation, defense scope evolution and other issues of *Ji-Town* from an overall perspective. This book revealed the structure and function of *Ji-Town* defense system, drew the spatial distribution map of military settlements in the Ming Great Wall in *Ji-Town*, studied the spatial distribution and change rule of military settlements, and summarized the structural characteristics and influencing factors of military settlements (Wang et al, 2018).

Since Settlement geography and architecture do not belong to the category of history, these studies do not take the history of the Great Wall as the theme and ultimate goal, but interpret the related issues of settlement geography and architecture. Therefore, this article will not list other research results in detail.

How to Use Regional Social History in the Study of Ming Great Wall in *Eastern Hebei*

Generally speaking, compared with the Ming Great Wall in *Liaoning, Northern Shanxi* and *Shaanxi*, the academic research of the Ming Great Wall in *Eastern Hebei*, which is based on history, is still in a backward situation. At present, it mainly focuses on the most basic questions, such as its background, personnel, process, function, and garrison, which is far from enough.

For a long time, the history of the Great Wall has been studied within the basic framework of political-military history and ethnic relations history. However, the border areas of the Great Wall were not a military state where all the people were soldiers at all times, but rather most border people, like historical actors under the administrative system of the hinterland, had their own daily lives. During the Ming Dynasty, the *Eastern Hebei* was both the hinterland of the capital and a key border defense area. The Ming government built the Great Wall on a large scale here, almost throughout the entire dynasty, and had a profound impact on the social changes in the *Eastern Hebei*. It was also a microcosm of the historical changes in the Ming Dynasty, Northeast Asia, and Inner Asia from the 14th to the 17th century.

Therefore, in a methodological sense, the study of the history of the Great Wall in *Eastern Hebei* can introduce the research idea of *Regional Social History*. Based on the concept of *Integral History*, the perspective of *Social History of the Great Wall*, and specific time and space, we can reveal as much as possible the multi-level relationships related to the construction of the Great Wall in *Eastern Hebei*, including geography, politics, military, economy, society, ethnic groups, and culture, so as to reveal the interaction between the Great Wall and the Ming and Mongolia, the interaction between the Great Wall and the surrounding regional society, so as to build a comprehensive three-dimensional historical picture around the Ming Great Wall in *Eastern Hebei* and finally participate in the academic discussion of the general historical issues such as the social changes of northern frontiers in the Ming Dynasty, the Great Wall System as the military defense system of the Ming, and the interaction between the state and the local society.

Specifically, breakthroughs can also be made in the following aspects, or it can be called the new orientation of the study of the Ming Great Wall in *Eastern Hebei*.

Launch the historical analysis of specific space-time scenes

The existing research pays great much attention to the discussion of the Great Wall from a macroscopic perspective, but fails to explore it from specific historical context and scenarios. For example, in exploring the reasons for the construction of the Great Wall, more emphasis is placed on the border pressure caused by the Mongolian, but this interpretation model is also applicable to other dynasties and other areas of the Great Wall, thus becoming a general explanation, lacking a further explanation in specific context and situations. The construction of the Great Wall in *Eastern Hebei* involved the trend of Mongolian tribes, the legacy of the Great Wall of the previous generation, the historical situation of the *Eastern Hebei*, including the natural geography and human society, the border situation of the Ming, the thoughts and strategies of central leadership, as well as many internal issues of the Ming, such as finance, personnel, civil strife, etc., which have not been fully revealed.

The historical restoration of the specific architectural process

At present, the diachronic outline of the construction process of the Ming Great Wall in *Eastern Hebei* is relatively simple, especially the construction activities before Emperor Jiajing were rarely described and studied, which leads to the lack of the holistic framework and historical context of the Ming Great Wall in *Eastern Hebei*. The Great Wall defense system was mainly composed of Border Wall, and also included a series of defensive facilities such

as military passes, camp castles, barracks, fortresses, beacons towers, defence towers and trenches. When were they built respectively? What facilities did the Ming focus on at different times? Why was it built here and now? What was the historical situation behind it? What were the aspects of discussions or disputes among ministers, courtiers and scholars-officials about the construction of the Great Wall? What was the motivation behind it? There is still too much room for research on such issues.

The influence of the *Great Wall System* on the *Eastern Hebei* society

The Great Wall is not only a kind of historical building, but also has a set of related political, military and economic systems around it. All of the above can be called the *Great Wall System*. What impact or changes would the intervention of the *Great Wall System* bring to the social appearance of *Eastern Hebei*? What did it mean for the local people? What were the changes in living environment and livelihood choice? In addition, in terms of the folk culture of the Great Wall, although there are many materials to sort out, we can also use the vision and methods of Historical Anthropology to do in-depth research and analysis, such as the historical construction and cultural connotation of the story of the Great Wall, the relationship between temple beliefs and the *Great Wall System*. Of course, the regional landscape of *Eastern Hebei*, including natural geography and human society, will also have a certain impact and constraint on the construction method and process of the Great Wall.

Highlight the awareness of comparative research

When analyzing some specific problems of the Ming Great Wall in *Eastern Hebei*, we can compare it with problems of the Ming Great Wall in the rest of the northern frontiers, seek common points and differences, and analyze the reasons, so as to deepen the cognition and understanding of relevant historical problems, or highlight the unique historical meaning of the Ming Great Wall in *Eastern Hebei*.

Conclusion

The research on the Great Wall of China is not only the concern of Chinese scholars, but also the concern of scholars around the world. This paper has sorted out the evolution of the paradigm of Western scholars and Chinese scholars studying the Great Wall, and then put forward the dilemma of the current study of the history of the Great Wall and the fact that it is difficult to really break through. Finally, this paper advocates the introduction of the research thinking of *Regional Social History* (also known as *Historical Anthropology* in China), and the establishment of the research model of the *Social History of the Great Wall*, hoping to provide methodological ideas and reference for the academic community. Finally, this paper specifically takes Ming Great Wall in *Eastern Hebei* as the analysis area, and puts forward the breakthrough point of the study.

References

Bai, Y., Arabadzhyan, A., & Li, Y. (2022). The legacy of the Great Wall. *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization*, *196*, 120-147.

Hu Fan (1998). "On the rectification of northern frontiers defense by Muzong in Ming Dynasty," *China's Borderland History and Geography Studies*, No.2 (June 1): 45-53.

Hu Yingze, (2009). The defense of the nine frontier and living water in the Ming Dynasty," *Historical Review*, No.5 (October) :110-118.

Hua Xiazi, (1988). *The Textual Research of Ming Great Wall* (Beijing: Archives Publishing House,).

Lattimore, O. (1962). *Inner Asian Frontiers of China* (No. 21). Beacon Press.

Li Jianli, (2008). "Military management system and force allocation of the Ming Great Wall in Hebei," *Spring and Autumn Annals of Cultural Relics*, No.6 (December 8): 25-32.

Liang Sibao (1992), The problem of soil and water loss caused by the cultivation of nine frontier in the Ming Dynasty," *Journal of Shanxi University*, No.3(September): 63-65.

Luo Zhewen, (1957). *The Great Wall: Juyongguan, Badaling* (Beijing: Cultural Relics Press,).

Peng Yong (2006). The army of Ban: an important power in building the Great Wall in the Ming Dynasty - also on the interpretation of the Word 'Ban' in cultural relics along the Great Wall," *The Great Wall Museum of China,* No.3.

Shaanxi Archaeological Research Institute 2015, *Investigation report on the resources of the Great Wall of Shaanxi Province* (Beijing: Cultural Relics Press,).

Shanxi Provincial Bureau of cultural relics (2019). *Investigation report on the resources of the Ming Great Wall of Shanxi Province* (Beijing: Cultural Relics Press,).

Su Xin (1915) Textual Research on Ming border wall,"*Journal of Geoscience*s, No.6 (May), 1-20.

Waldron, A. (1990). *The Great Wall of China: from history to myth*. (London: Cambridge University Press,).

Wang Guoliang (1935). *The examination of the evolution of the Great Wall of China* (Beijing: Commercial Press,).

Wang Linfeng, Zhang Yukun, Wei Yanyan, (2018). *The defense system and military settlements of the Ming Great Wall in Ji-Town* (Beijing: China Construction Industry Press,).

Wu Jihua, (1981). The border inward movement and the construction of the Great Wall in Ming Dynasty," *Journal of history of Donghai University*, No.4(August).

Xiao Yuanping (2015). "The construction of the Great Wall in Yongping prefecture in Ming Dynasty," *History of Heilongjiang*, No. 9 (May): 91.

Yu Tongyuan (1990). "The formation and evolution of the Great Wall Cultural belt in Ming Dynasty, Journal of Yantai University, No.3 (October): 42-50.

Zhang Dianren (1998). The Great Wall of the Ming Dynasty in Tangshan, *Spring and Autumn Annals of Cultural Relics,* No. 2 (June): 10-12.

Zhang Jinlong (2008). "Generals of Yiwu army who garrisoned the order to build the Great Wall in the late Ming Dynasty," *Journal of the Great Wall*, No.3 (September): 55-56.

Zhang Xiangwen, (1914). A study of the Great Wall, *Journal of Geoscience*s, No.9 (September).

Zhao, S., Yang, D., & Gao, C. (2023). Identifying Landscape Character for Large Linear Heritage: A Case Study of the Ming Great Wall in Ji-Town, China. *Sustainability*, issue *15*(3), 2615.

Zheng Shaozong (2014). "Major Achievements of Archaeological Investigation of the Great Wall of ji -Town in the Ming Dynasty from 1981 to 1987," *Spring and Autumn Annals of Cultural Relics,* No. 4 (August): 10-16.