What Gate? Gate what?

About Chinese gated communities: historical evolution and characteristic momentums

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Abstract

Since economic liberalization period, Chinese housing typologies have experienced a dramatical change. From the traditional Siheyuan building type to the current gated communities, which prototype has become the most widespread residential housing type in modern China Cities. At the same time, many negative feedbacks about the city life have been appearing, such as traffic congestion, the loss of street vigor and the one side thousand cities phenomenon, etc, of which gated communities prototype is blamed as one of the causes. It seems that the traditional living habits had been overlooked for purpose of solving the population growth. While through the review of Chinese history changes, we could have a comprehensive understanding of the physical evolution and the social change behind it. The gated communities in contemporary China have their particular socio-political evolution process, which could not be explained directly by Western housing theory. And for the consequence, the unique tradition and the living habit, as well as the characteristic momentums during the developing process have a profound influence on the formation of Chinese gated communities, in both conceptual and materialistic way.

Introduction

Generally, Gated communities are defined as the ‘walled or fenced housing developments, to which public access is restricted, characterized by legal agreements which tie the residents to a common code of conduct and usually collective responsibility for management’ (Atkinson et al., 2004). As the most widespread living type, Gated communities could be found in almost every China city, no matter the development level. Different from the Western countries, this kind of living pattern is targeted not only for middle-upper level people, which means there could be plenty of gated communities are varies in quality. According to the AMAP data statistics in 2015, there are about 300,000 living compounds, and of which 62% the land occupation are over 30,000 square meters, while the average green rate is only 38% (Gaode API, 2016). Recently, the Central Urban Work Conference released a new urban-development regulation declaring that ‘internal roads in private housing estates should “gradually open up” to the public in order to ease traffic congestion. In addition, no new gated communities can be built in the future.’ This guideline is not only aim at relieving the traffic congestion, but also making a better use of land. (Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural development of the PRC, 2016)

However, residents of gated communities themselves have come out strongly against the plan: In an unscientific poll of 20,000 people on the news portal Sina.com, roughly three-quarters said they don’t support China’s new plan. About 65 percent cited personal safety as their main concern. 85 percent said that if their gates are opened to the public, the homeowners should at least get compensated. (CityLab.com, 2016,Sina.com, 2016)

As our urbanists would be in favor of this guidance, seeing the future of better utilization of
road network and the reviving of street vigor. While the strong objection of the citizens calls for a better understanding of the gap between the ideally blueprint and the practical feedback. This paper is to understand the reason why this inhabitation form would get this widely distributed, and to explore if and what degree the historical background would give impaction to the Chinese gated communities from both morphological transformation and the social-cultural and political-economic momentums behind it. And with the help of the understanding, what kind of action could be taken to push forward the process of “opening the gate” also need our consideration.

**What is the gate? Gated communities nowadays in China**

As the most popular inhabitation form, there is not a strict definition of the “gated communities” in China. What is normally called “xiaoqu” is just a collective name. Not only the new master planned communities are designed as “xiaoqu”, but also the inner-city, traditional residential areas also apply it to themselves administratively even though they have quite different physical forms.(Miao pu, 2003) As for the “gate” is more like a relatively obvious physical feature of this form in order to guarantee the right of the residents. In terms of the population scale, there are three levels of this communities. The population scale is between 30000 to 50000 is called “residential district” (juzhuqu); from 10000 to 15000 is called “residential quarters” (xiaoqu); for the population scale which is between 1000 to 3000 is classified into “residential cluster” (zutuan). (Code for Planning and Design on Urban Residential Areas, 1993). As most of these communities in practice would have the gates, in this paper we use gated communities as the collectively name. While there are some distinctions between the western countries “gated communities” and Chinese circumstance. The western cities such as the United States that the gated communities began to appear as luxurious enclaves in the nineteenth century (Wright 1983, Hayden 2003), have usually been regarded as offering a select community a perceived sense of physical and economic safety through class and racial segregation, as well as access to amenities such as landscaping and recreational facilities.(Alexandra, Yu,2014) Partly it also apply for the contemporary China gated communities, while in china, the target residents would include not only upper class, but also middle class, even the working class——which means the gated community prototype is almost the only inhabitation form in urban China cities. Until 2015, there are around 300,000 “xiaoqu” in China, of which over 7200 are in Beijing, over 5700 are in Shenzhen, surprisingly the number of them are over 12000 in Shanghai. (Gaode API, 2016) And also, the Ministry of Construction have the Code for Planning and Design on Urban residential Areas as the guideline for designing and constructing the communities. In general, these communities have such requirements when planning:

- They are defined by the city roads and the natural boundaries, with a clear land character;
- They should provide a fairly completed public service facilities which could meet the demand of material and culture life within the relevant service radius, such as schools, community centers, and commercial services. The scale of the facilities is stipulated by the scale of the communities;
- They have specified stories requirements and the greening rate, the traffic roads inside the communities should also closure for the local residents rather than for all the vehicles;
- They usually have a property management company to take charge of the security, such as monitoring the public space, *which is de facto public for only the local residents*, and maintaining the facilities.
Zaoyuanshangcheng is a typical gated community form located in south part of Beijing. It has south part and north part, which divided by a city road. Covering an area of around 9 hectares, it has physical separational fences around as the boundary, with 5 gates on each side of the road for cars and pedestrian. (Source: http://map.baidu.com/#)

The public spaces inside the community of Zaoyuanshangcheng (Source:https://bj.lianjia.com/xiaoqu/1111027382759/)

The community center of Zaoyuanshangcheng (Source:https://bj.lianjia.com/xiaoqu/1111027382759/)

The road outside the community and the gates for pedestrian and vehicles. The road inside the community is only open for local residents. (Source: http://map.baidu.com/#)
Even there is not a specific requirements that the communities should have gates, while this is the most convenient way to guarantee their privilege, getting rid of the outside noise and the potential dangerous. Based on this idea, China thus had experienced a period that numbers of the local governments issued the regulations of gating the communities in their working schedules in order to control crime, of which we would talk about during the history review.

For the form of the gate, in other words, the boundary that enclosure the communities, there are generally three types' of them: the physical separational walls or fences without functions; the buildings facing outwards; the natural or constructed space for public use. (Miao, 2009) These three types all apply for defining the gated communities, while would give different influence on the street vigor, such as the pedestrian friendly feelings and the facilitations functions supporting for the neighbors.

1 In this discussion about boundaries will not include those like bollards or texture change (change of pavement material, raised platform) which primarily have psychological implication but do not present a physical restriction to prevent trespassing between domains. (Xu maio, 2009)

Although the original intention of the gate is to guarantee the safety and to avoid the outside noise and the potential dangerous of high speed traffic, there are some negative sides started to apparent under this gated community inhabitation lifestyle, of which the way of enclosing the land with building gates is blamed. So in next chapter we will have our sights on these related phenomena and the debate between the new regulation from the government and the disapproval of the residents in order to find out the root of the contradiction.

**What is it gating? The circumstance around the gate**

It might receive the sympathy that if you walk along a street of a typical residential area, you would have the similar feeling: you walk on a tile-paved sidewalks, besides those the densely located mid or high-rise apartment buildings along the street have rarely differences and they all rise out of the fences more than 2 meters high, which most of them are rimmed by trim hedges. Sometimes the walls keep going on and on, there is even no shade along a 400 meters or even longer street, without a retail store or a bench. Occasionally they are punctured by a gaudy gate, decorated in European style with one or two private guards dressed like polices. And also, you may hardly meet anybody when walking, except the morning and night rush hours. That feeling could be one of the phenomenon after the rapid commercial residential building trend during these 30 years since the reform and opening-up period. In this chapter the discussion is about some disappointments of the current urban life and their connections to the gated communities, as well as the contradictions between the government’s regulation and the residents’ objections.

**The Under-Used Sidewalk**

Because of the high density and the rapid pace of life in urban China cities, it would be the most efficient way for communication happening along the daily routines, which usually means the way to and back from work. And as the theories mentioned about that when there are many people is necessary for the prosperous of the social activities. (Whyte, 1980) The frequent pedestrian is the advantages as the large populations would provide. While a lively street also need some other requirements. The enough access is one of them. "The best streets have about them a quality of transparency at their edges", as Allan Jacobs described one of the necessary qualities for what he called ‘great streets’. In his observation "the best streets are replete with entryways, as little as 12 feet (about 4 meters) apart" (Jacobs, 1993). Along with the entryways,
the intersection is another element for the succession of a street. “Frequent streets and short
blocks are valuable because of the fabric of intricate cross-use that they permit among the users
of a city neighborhood” (Jacobs, 1961). Allan Jacobs suggested one intersection every 90 meters,
as he observed in many successful historic streets, with even closer spacing at busier streets.
His survey of major cities in the world shows that most traditional city centers have a distance
of about 60-100 meters between street intersections (Jacobs, 1993).

On the contrast, the form of gated communities make it difficult to meet the demand of these
requirements. Normally as the large size of a residential community, the length between two
gates on one street could be 150-250 meters. And because the pedestrians cannot enter the
private streets, each gated community poses an obstacle to them, causing long detours (Liu,
2001). Furthermore, along these never-ending boundaries, the sidewalks are lack of facilities.
Most of the time there are no commercials, no enough shades, even not a bench. (插图) And that
cause the vicious circle that no attractions leads to few pedestrian and insufficient passenger
flow leads to the low survival possibilities for the attractions. This is the reason that except for
a few sections with markets and bus stops, most parts of public streets surrounding a gated
community often exhibit deserted sidewalks as described at the beginning of this part, while
the markets and other public places always experience overcrowding.

These empty sidewalks could be seen as wasted resources and lost opportunities. Because the
high density in Chinese cities, along with Chinese residents’ traditional dependence upon streets
as public space that we would discuss about in later chapters could easily support more social
facilities on these currently under-used sidewalks, which would provide a variety of meeting
points for residents from different communities.

**The increasing traffic tension**

Along with the increasing number of the population and the prosperous of the economy, the
rate of vehicles ownership had also been speeding up during recent twenty years. According
to the national traffic administration bureau, from 2012 to 2016, the number of the private
vehicles had been grown from 72,220,000 to 146,430,000. While six years before 2012, the
amount of private vehicles in 2006 is only 49,850,000. This rapid increase would lead to a series
of problems, and the consequence shows obviously in Beijing. By July 10, 2016, the city had 5.53
5,530,000 million cars, an increase of 330,000 vehicles from end of 2015, according to official
statistics. (*south china morning post, Zhang Hong, 2013*) Although the road network had also been
expanding in order to release the traffic pressure, the road construction speed could not catch
up with the growth of cars. From 2006 to 2016, the length of the city road in Beijing risen from
4073.0km to 6423.3km. (*Beijing Transport Institute annual report, 2006, 2016*) As the data analysis
indicated that the extra travel time in Beijing is 47 minutes per day in average. During the
morning and evening peak, the increase of time comparing with the free flow would be 72% to
84%. (*Tomtom’s 2016 database*). And there are plenty interviews about the driving experience in
Beijing, what they complain most except the quantity of cars on the road is the long detour
distance. Thinking of the past, one driver said, “When I bought my first car in 1997, it wasn’t as
crowded on the roads as it is now. There were traffic jams in only a few places. Now, the 2nd,
and the west 3rd Ring Road are banked up all day long.” Another said, “There are too many cars
and inexperienced drivers. Some sections of the roads are not designed properly. There are not
enough exits on the 3rd Ring Road. Today I drove from the military museum to the airport. I
went via the south 3rd ring road, traffic was bumper-to-bumper there. I chose the 4th ring road,
the same. I had to go by the 5th ring road! ” (China Central Television, 2007) Let along the main ring road, the density of the minor roads also get much complications. “Take the office district where I work for example, if I drive from the west gate to the east gate it's about 1 km, but it is necessary for you to work there. Otherwise you have to drive around the district and that would longer than 2 km. Similarly, if I could drive through some residential communities during my way to work, maybe I could save half an hour in the morning, while now I have to drive around those communities and normally get stuck with other cars on the that several main roads.”

Currently, the government has released some regulations such as license plate restrictions and high parking fees to control the traffic, and at the same time, the efficiency of the minor roads also in demand of attention.

Besides those two aspects, there are still lots of debate related to gated communities, such as the social segregations and homogenization trend in China cities. There are some surveys about the social segregation conditions in urban China cities. Different from the consideration of racial and the income level segregations, in China it is more about the contact, both inside the gate and outside the gate. There is a questionnaire survey conducted in three gated communities in Chongqing, China. One of the findings was after moving into the gated communities, many homeowners’ contact with other people decreases. It was also found that homeowners’ participation in local public affairs decreases. They supported the view that gated community aggravates residential segregation. However, many homeowners felt the income differences among the neighbors increase and the changes of several types of external activities don’t show a consistent pattern. (Feng Deng, Geo Journal, 2017) Also, another survey about the feelings living in three different Guangzhou gated communities showed that to the local residents, the gate is more like a protection from the potential danger and the noise rather than refusing the people they don’t like. As the gated form is the most general residential living type in China, there are not much debate about the superiority feelings. (Deng Dan, Werner Breitung, 2015). As to the homogenization trend in China cities, the design of similar facades of the buildings in each community about the residential buildings field is more blamed comparing with the appearance of the boundaries.

The purpose and the conflict

In order to improve these situations, there are amount of suggestions under discussions and had been carrying out. One of the idea is to learn from the Europe perimeter block planning method. They have moderately size and could be able to accommodating in various usages. At the same time, it could provide a well accessible street network and the separate the private space from the outside.

Barcelona is famous for its octagonal shaped perimeter block, it provide a natural transition from the outside urban atmosphere and the tranquil insider atmosphere, at same time keep the efficiency of traffic. (Source: https://www.failedarchitecture.com/behind-four-walls-barcelonas-lost-utopia/)
Seeing the possibilities for the “narrower road but denser road networks” of improving the heavy traffic problem and the renaissance of the street vigor, the Central Urban Work Conference released a new urban development regulation declaring that “internal roads in private housing estates should “gradually open up” to the public in order to ease traffic congestion. In addition, no new gated communities can be built in the future.’ This guideline is not only aim at relieving the traffic congestion, but also making a better use of land. (Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural development of the PRC,2016) While this regulation had received a lot of negative feedback. Sohu made an online questionnaire if the citizens would like to support this regulation. 175,648 readers joined with 56.23% people against that, 34.62% people in favor of that and 9% people thought that was hard to decide. There are some of the main viewpoint that opposite “opening the gate” regulation. The major concern is about the security. The gate reassured them from the unknow rapidly changing world. They paid price to close the gate and keep themselves in a piece of quiet. At the same time, to provide a safe space for the children to play is also the significant consideration of parents. As the driving accident rate is still high in China urban city and the “driver priority” is de facto situation, avoiding the strangers and the potential car accidents are the main reason those people holding the opposite idea. “Unless our security is fully guaranteed,
I see no reason to support this regulation. Nobody wants to raise their risk of break-ins, right?” There are also many messages doubting about the aim of relieve the traffic congestion. The street inside the communities, generally were designed for private use and are usually narrow and sprawling, which means driving through those street could not help with the traffic jam in residents’ view, on the contrary it would only break their tranquil world. Let alone the tension of parking space as the rate of private vehicle owning, if the parking space along those streets are also open to everyone, unexpected chaos would happen. “Look at how cars park along both sides of our road, how can the roads this narrow ease traffic jams?” (Laura Zhou, South China Morning Post, 2016) Besides, the residents argued that at least they should get compensation. The economists pointed out that according to the Property Law of the People’s Republic of China Article 73, “The roads within the building zone (or community) shall be commonly owned by the owners, except the public roads of cities and towns. The green lands within the building area shall be commonly owned by all the owners, except the public green lands of cities and towns or those which are expressly ascribed to individuals. The other public places, common facilities and houses used for real property services within the building zone shall be commonly owned by all the owners. ” (Property Law of the People’s Republic of China Article 73) That means the roads inside the community also belongs to those residents, they have the right to decide how to use them. After discussing those phenomenon related to gated communities and the gap between the ideal and the practice, it could be a method that looking backward to the history, and try to understand the context which is the deep ingrain of gated communities archetype, with enclosed physical forms and organizational patterns in the Chinese history of city design. In next chapter we will review the vicissitudes of organizations of Chinese residential buildings together with the analyzing of social and culture, political and economic changing trend. After this comprehension we could understand the root of the gate and how did it grow form not only around people’s home, but also in their mind.

Where did the gate come from? The history review

When speaking of the Chinese famous traditional architecture or constructions, from the national scale to residential scale, such as the Great Wall, the Forbidden City Palace, the Siheyuan building types and the Lingnan Gardens, the elements of walls could always be found, no matter the specific form they are. This chapter is the attempt to review the history of China’s city design vicissitudes, and interpret the prototypes of enclosed physical forms and organizational patterns from city planning to the residential communities. At the same time, the influence of the political economy background should also be concerned. Known as the materialization of space as urban form is not arbitrary, and that the whole discourse of urban design should be built on spatial political economy (Cuthbert, 2005), we could have an understanding about the characteristic background that impact on the spatial forms.

Following the basic chronological order we could classify them into three categories: the two thousand years pre-1949 feudal monarchy, during which the enclosed organization archetypes with the application of wall elements were formed and sustained; the 30 years before the reform and opening process, when the unit compounds were introduced and dominated the urban pattern; and the taking-off period since the reform process, during which the gated communities had gradually becoming the overwhelming residential organization form in the commodity housing market.
The two thousand years pre-1949 feudal monarchy

Strict centralized city, Introverted courtyard prototype and walled collective living tradition

There is a conclusion of typical traditional Chinese city planning morphology, of which the five points are walled enclosure, axially, north-south orientation, symmetrical layout and closed courtyard (Wu, 1993; Gu, 2001; Dong, 2004). Two of those characteristics are connected with walls, “walled enclosure” is about the city planning scale guideline while “closed courtyard” could be regard as describing the dwelling scale typology. This kind of introverted organizational archetypes had almost two thousand years traditions, the background of the long feudal monarchy showed a major influence.

Before the Song dynasty (960-1279AD), China cities were under a strict centralized rule and the social structure were highly hierarchical. At that time, the commercial activities were also stringently suppressed. Tang Chang’an, showed a typical urban form with the well-developed pattern form.

![Tang Chang'an City Map](image)

Apart from the aristocrats and government dignitaries, the commoners of Chang'an who lived in the wards were forbidden to create private gates in the ward walls and have direct access to the external streets (Heng, 1999). The residential quarters were uniformly walled with the enclosure size of 600*600m ~ 900*900m. At the same time, residential and commercial functional areas were divided into separate zones. (Source: compiled from various cartographic sources)

The “li fang” street shape revealed the stringent social hierarchy by confining populations rigidly in their respective ward(Xu, Zheng, 2009). The divisions of commercial functions and the residential area were also aimed to supervise the residents. While during the latter half of the Tang Dynasty this stringent rule declined, the commercial activities became more dynamic and the walled residential wards were not that strict.

During the Song Dynasty, the population experienced a rapid growth and the commercial activities also prospered as the trade requirements leaded to the demolish of the institution as well as the physical barriers. The strict centralized rule were gradually dominated by the bureaucrats and they made the charge for demolishing the ward walls, which means there were
possibilities for connections. (Heng, 1999)

Hence the outward urban structure was officially abandoned by the institution and reflected in the physical patterns. Later the fang xiang with more free movement and appropriate mixed land-use became the domination and lasted about two thousand years till recent days. Fang was usually to describe a long rectangular residential site naturally divided by a main road and branching streets. And Xiang (or called Hutong in northern China) is the sub streets connecting the residential units. Then the liner space along these street become the public space for them and provide a strong sense of community for the locals. Sometimes when the door with a nameplate was made at the gateway of xiang the sense of belongings and territorial could be more stable. The commercial activities happen around the gateway, offering the daily needs of the local inhabitants within the convenient distance (Dong, 2004). Generally all these street, no matter wide or narrow, main streets or sub streets, are open for all the passengers. While most of the street were still continuously confronted by high blank walls of dwelling units, even in some lively commercial areas. Therefor although the ward walls no longer played the role, the wall still remained as an elementary component in the urban patterns. The walls faced out the street, dividing the quiet and private family space and the outside chaotic environment.

As the political system lasted a long period and the economic development was always based on agriculture, the urban structure had rarely changed. Until 1840s the western capitalistic forces encroached upon Chinese territory, together with the modern industries technology and the different living habits. There were 30 treaty ports were allowed along the coastline and the Yangtze River, as the 27 leased territories were open for foreign settlements. Li long was the transformation type that the western characters grafted onto the traditional patterns and gradually became the dominant residential form for the bourgeois citizens in the treaty port cities. Normally the spatial form and the settlement organizations of Li long are similar with fang xiang type, while Li long showed a more multi-layered condition, such as: the low-rise courtyard houses were transformed into higher density of 3-to-4-storey terraced houses with smaller courtyards at the back; most of the units facing the outer streets, especially the ground floor, were more open in form and often transformed into commercial or other uses; on each residential site, there were several clusters which were organized by a main alley and a series of branching ones in cul-de-sac style. Those multiple levels of the alleys arranged semipublic spaces, funneling the pedestrian flow. It could be conclude that even the traditional residential form were modified to relate more neighbors, the introverted tradition insistently retained.

The typical residential Siheyuan, Beijing (Source: http://mmbiz.apic.cn/mmbiz/LiaZ7rFibLEwb95px5nVmmV3oY8QEpziBk6Ai/bkwonhmlibOfRbdDRRHfdaabdthfzickVvOmNliaTZjafG5EQmp7THg/640)
One character existed ubiquitously in traditional urban form and residential patterns is enclosed open space. No matter from the diverse climate conditions, the scale of the area, this morphology would always be the symbolic characteristic. This enclosed open space result in the distinct difference in the relationships of building-space between western and Chinese tradition styles. In terms of the openness and accessibility of a typical western house standing in a yard or a garden, the Chinese tradition used to internalize the open space with walls and buildings around it. This inward looking open space in a housing compound is named courtyard or quadrangular-yard (siheyuan) in northern China, and sky well (tianjing) in the south. (Xu, Zheng, 2009) This prototype of introverted spatial organization was found from the very early history and had changed little compared with the Siheyuan buildings built hundred years before now. In addition, not only the residential compound, this prototype also could be found ubiquitously in palaces, temples, gardens and other types of built environment in ancient China.

Actually this prototype also reflected Daoist geomantic principles and Confucian ritual rules, which are recognized as the two main sets of tenets shaping traditional Chinese cities (Gu, 2001; Dong, 2004). In the philosophy of Daoism, everything should resemble the integrated world composed by the positive (yang) and negative (yin) substances. Then the buildings as entities, form the positive structures, and the courtyard, the open space enclosed by buildings and walls, stands for the void, which complements the negative part in composing an integrated house. Thus the enclosed open space is the indispensable component of the house. It was regarded as the means to realize a harmonious relationship between the human and nature in the housing Compound. Also, this organizational pattern accord with the patrilineal line lifestyle. The
proverb ‘four generations under one roof’ describes precisely the collective living tradition of the big Chinese family. (Huang, 2006) The ingrained Confucian ritual believes that the best spatial organization of a house should properly respect or exhibit not only the kinship relationships between household members, but also the spatial transition between private individual spaces, the communal spaces shared by the whole family, reception spaces for guests and the outer public world. In this regard, the housing layout with a sequential series of courtyards fits in perfectly with the desired spatial hierarchies.(Xu, Zheng, 2009) At the same time, this prototype is like a unit that is adaptable of replication for extending the family. With three or more generations living together in multiple courtyards, the housing compound for one big family is actually like a small walled city. ‘Walls with walls and, behind those walls, more walls’ (Dutton, 1998).

**Renewed Walled City of Work Units in the Socialist Era, 1949–1978**

A fundamental and irreversible impact on the contemporary Chinese urban landscape

During these thirty years, the new founded PRC was dominated by a socialist political framework following the example of Soviet model, in whose the ideological rationale about urban planning was that industrial production was the priority of cities, and the consumption as a bourgeois lifestyle should be despised., the necessities of live should be supplied by the welfare system. Therefore the work-unit (danweidayuan) as a spatial and social form had taken up in China. With the idea that “Production first, livelihood second’, cities were transformed into engines of production. While the planning principles of these work units such as state-owned enterprises, education institutions and administrations, were influenced significantly by the Soviet Union, the Chinese work-unit compound during the process was actually a distinctive invention. The neighborhood unit was conceived of as a comprehensive physical planning tool, to be utilized for designing self-contained residential neighborhoods which promoted a community centric lifestyle(Perry, C. 1998, The Neighborhood Unit), away from the "noise of the trains, and out of sight of the smoke and ugliness of industrial plants" emblematic of an industrializing New York City in the early 1900s.(Vidyarthi, 2010) Basic on the neighborhood unit concept the Soviet model developed a planning concept that the living system is of self-contained, compact centers located around industry, of a fixed population of approximately 50,000 people (Bater, 1980, Macel,1989) Comparing with adopting the Soviet model in which residential districts were spatially separate from the workplace, allowing for up to a 40-min commute on public transportation (Bater, 1980), Chinese work-unit attempted to combine working space and living space in the same area, integrating housing, workplace and the service facilities. Because of the privilege of work units in the socialist economic structure that spatial model rapidly spread in China. Those compounds usually shared several same features: they would have a high level of social facilities with a self-contained management; most of the residents would work and live in the same area so that there would be a close social mixing as well as the patriarchal authority, as Dutton described “feudalism in a period of industrialization”; another visible feature is that the walls and guarded gated were built along the boundaries of most, if not all, work-unit compounds. Thus, the multifunctional compound built by work units in socialist China became a miniature city within its own walls, 'somewhat reminiscent of the walled wards of the early traditional Chinese cities' (Gaubatz, 1995).
Many work units started to build permanent walls in the 1960s to protect their land and other resources from encroachment due to uneven development (Lu, 2006) between not only work units and external urban areas, but also between different work units (Gong and Chen, 1994). Unit walls gradually became the norm and were often the first structure to be built when establishing a new work unit. Eventually almost every work unit was a walled enclosure or a cluster of several walled enclosures (Lu, 2006). The walls, in most cases made of brick, set the work unit physically apart from its surroundings, opening up several entrances with a small doorman’s room at each one. As for pedestrians wayleave, the regulation of accessibility varied from unit to unit and often changed according to the social conditions of the time. Basically, the work unit had the right to enquire about or exclude anyone who was not a regular resident in it in order to guarantee the exclusive use. Through traffic was not allowed at any time.

The site planning of a work unit was originally carried out by the local Urban Planning Office. It mostly focused on location and scale, leaving the detailed layout to the work unit’s own Infrastructure Engineering Department. Because of the wall, there was no need for the spatial structure of the work unit to respect the surrounding context. So, rather than integrating with the outer urban structure, the walled compounds generally formed a system of their own with a flexible pattern to fit geographical and functional needs. As a result, China’s socialist cities became dominated and demarcated by walled work units, and this urban structure had a fundamental and irreversible impact on the contemporary Chinese urban landscape. (Xu, 2009)

First, because of the walls, many inaccessible super-blocks (around 800 x800m) came into being. Actually, during the early 1950s, the ‘super-block and wide-avenue’ concept of street-block pattern was introduced from Soviet planning. It was quite easy for this pattern to be transplanted to China because most of the pre-1949 Chinese cities were still based on the traditional urban structure, which itself is a ‘super-block and wide-avenue’s pattern. Besides, this traditional urban structure, which continued in the feudal ages when the commercial activities were restrained, suited exactly the ideology of the socialist society where consumption was despised.

In the year of 1957, XiZhaosi compound was built in Beijing under the direction of Soviet Union’s concept. Covering 15.3 hectares, with 5000 residents and self-efficient living facilities, it was one of the early examples of gated communities. (Source: [http://www.abbs.com.cn/media/zhuqu/0905/P020.pdf](http://www.abbs.com.cn/media/zhuqu/0905/P020.pdf))
Secondly, on account of the walls, the wide public streets defined by such blank boundaries were dull in image and monotonous in uses as the provisions within the wall fulfilled most of the needs from people who lived a highly homogeneous lifestyle.

Therefore, the major function of the public streets beyond the walls in everyday life was for the transport vehicles. This arrangement also matched the concept of modernist planning in specializing roads for traffic, and also promulgated throughout other countries by planning experts of that time in favor of vehicle speed and traffic efficiency. However, the economic shortage during the recovery period made even public buses and bicycles infrequent, not to mention private cars. In this regard, the street was lack of vigor and the street space was severely neglected by urban design.

Lastly, because of the wall, there was little need for the work unit to respect the surrounding context on spatial structure. Rather than integrating with the outer urban structure, the walled compounds generally formed a system of their own with a flexible pattern to fit geographical and functional needs. As a result, China’s socialist cities dominated by walled work units became inward-looking and inaccessible large-scale urban blocks with underused streets and other public spaces connecting them.

Together with the ‘super-block and wide-avenue’ concept, the perimeter block, which is a typical component of many European cities, was also introduced from Soviet planning practice. As a perimeter block is built up on all sides of an urban plot surrounding a central semi private space, the buildings face directly to the streets. This is in great contrast to the Chinese tradition.

Although the perimeter block layout could benefit to spatial integration and street activities, its potential conflict with the climate, environmental conditions and living traditions was soon found to be problematic by both users and professionals. One of the two criticisms of perimeter block layout was that it generated a large number of houses whose living room and major bedrooms were facing east or west. These buildings could not make full use of southward sunlight and natural ventilation and therefore were not energy efficient. The other factor was that street-facing units suffered inevitably from noise and air pollution of traffic on the streets. It was argued that the practical need for good living environments should not be sacrificed to formalistic concerns. The supporters of perimeter block layout however, insisted that its efficient use of land and the organic function of each neighborhood unit expressed exactly the spirit and order of socialist society (Wang, 1956).

The perimeter block practice gradually disappeared when the political refer to the pattern of ‘super-block and wide-avenue’ was heavily weakened after the Soviet leader Joseph Stalin, the radical advocator of “Superblock”, died in 1953 (Lu, 2006). The perimeter block layout was abandoned while the parallel south-north oriented row-housing layout was revived and sustained to be the dominant unitary form in residential planning since then. Even the apartment residential buildings along the main street often chose to face the streets with their ends. Therefore, perimeter block as the basic unit of urban form, although responding actively to surrounding streets and functioning well in the western cities, had been tried but hardly accepted by common citizens.

**Hybrid gated settlements in transitional urban China, 1978 - present**

**The emergence of gated community**

Because of the shortages of investment on housing constructions during the first thirty years of the new P. R. China and the crush ten years of the Cultural Revolution, there was an
overwhelming housing shortage and poor living conditions in China at the end of the 1970s, with the national population had grew from around 542,000,000 to 936,000,000 from the year 1949 to 1978 while the total residential building construction were only 5,300,000m². And the urban housing relying on work unit welfare and municipal housing offices became a heavy burden to improve the quality of the housing. When the economic reforms toward a socialist market economy were officially announced in 1980, the Chinese government launched a series of housing reform programs to tackle this pressing housing deficiency (Fong, 1989; The World Bank, 1992; Wang and Murie, 1996; Yeh and Wu, 1999). The major change in the reform was that the housing benefits were offered with cash wages instead of material compensation. Due to this there was a wide range of development in commodity housing. The duty of the urban facilities and the maintenance of housing was used to be by work units. After the reform the local Department of Housing Office should take over this huge investment pressure.

**The Commodification of urban housing**

As the estate management of some of the state-owned work units was transferred to local government during enterprise reform (Wu, 2002) and a large amount of commodity housing projects were completed, the requirements of housing management rose a lot. However, the local government could not afford that huge financial expenditure. In this urgent challenge, a type of property management appeared to fit the existing economic institutional structure. In the mid-1980s, the first array of property management companies following the model in Hong Kong were established in Shenzhen (Xie, 2006). They collected service fees directly from residents and provided estate management in return. The residents accepted this method and it was spread rapidly into other cities with the legitimacy of property management services in the ‘Measure for the Management of Newly Constructed Residential Areas in Cities’ issuing in 1994. Concerning about the prevention of the potential harm to residents’ own property rights and the worrying about the unquiet social order, as well as the most cost-effective measure for the property management companies, demarcating the area to make clear the responsibilities of management could be the most convenient way. As a result, enclosed residential developments managed by specialized agencies, called estate management companies, represented the exclusive feature of the previous work units prototype and this form of ‘gated community’ become one of the most distinctive situation in the world’s urban patterns.

No matter the income level, the gated community has become the major residential building type in the commodity housing market. Even most of initially built gated communities were located in the newly developed suburb areas, more and more had been integrating into the center part because of the rapid urbanization speed of China cities. At the same time, the brownfield in center part would also be redeveloped as gated communities. This prototype showed strong adaptive capability not only in urban landscape but also in social and economic field. Its characteristics could be summarized from the perspective of both spatial organization and social connections.

**The development responsibility and the management methods**

The territorial and social scales are varied of different projects, from a group of two or three apartment buildings in a small scale plot to a large residential district covering over 100 hectares. The stories, the facilities provided inside the communities could vary depending on the income levels. Large enclosure sizes were more common in the initial stages when the commodity housing developments began, and the previous ‘super-block and wide-avenue’ urban
structure framed in socialist era were mostly intact. (Xu, 2009) Besides, the property developers of the gated communities, especially in newly built district, are mostly responsible for the infrastructures around them because the local government could not afford to provide them. That resulted in that while inside the communities the provisions could be self-sustained, outside the community boundaries there were mostly the minimal infrastructures, which also because of the insufficient regulation from the urban planning administrations which are lack of experience in such rapid commodity housing developing speed.

In terms of the control of pedestrian and vehicles different communities would also have their own rules seeing the surrounding environments. The form of the boundaries could also be vary from solid walls, fences to mixed-use commercial buildings facing the street.

One thing that also makes the Chinese gated community shows its distinct feature is the shared open spaces within the communities. As the high density being a common situation in China cities, the green space or the public space such as private garden is not available. Normally a gated community would cover 12-20 hectare and 2000-3000 households inside. (more super block communities?) Thus the shared open space is viewed as an indispensable part of housing quality and property value. While this quality could be difficult to definite and the developers would minimize the cost except the residential buildings, there are some standards, such as the level of greening rate and the rate of the public space, included in the 'Code of Urban Residential Areas Planning and Design', the first official guidance on residential planning, issued by the Ministry of Construction in 1993 (revised in 2002). With this design principles, which was basic on the neighborhood unit concept, the inward looking and the self-sustaining supplying system, the gated community prototype was widely implemented. While based on the neighborhood unit concept, it is originally more appropriate for a suburban developing project which has little urban context to be respected and integrated with, though most these suburban area in China cities would turn to be the urban area within ten years.

(Summary)
From this history review above, it could be concluded that the form of gated communities in China cities has experiencing a long transition, form the far-reaching influenced introverted tradition to the fast developing commodity housing market nowadays, the prototype of the gated communities has been adapting the distinctive characteristics in the aspects of the social, economic and political. It has playing the strengths during the evolution, and become the major form of the residential building form in China. At the same time, the strategies of land developing and managing system in China cities as well as the housing standard difference from the western cities could also be discussed in the next chapter to see if there is also a motivation in terms of Chinese characteristic momentums that lead to this situation.

What is it behind the gate? The Chinese characteristic momentums

Sunlight regulation: facing south
When concerning about purchasing an accommodation, there is a de facto word called “facing south” became one of the most essential standards measuring an apartment. This habit could be traced back to the traditional Chinese building organization patterns. Facing south is one of the planning principles of the palace area as well as the residential dwellings from centuries. This criteria could be explained in the aspect of climate. Most of the land is above the tropic of cancer, which means the south could receive more sunlight and facing south could also avoid the cold winter wind from the north. At the same time, the cloudy weather in east Asia countries
is less than the same latitude of European countries, which means Chinese people could have more advantages in using the sunlight. Besides, the demand of facing south in China also have the influence of geomancy omen that facing south could help with saving fortune and avoiding the bad luck, while the idea is still more to improve the indoor environment conditions. In addition that the urban land shortage as well as the rising population density, releasing the regulation according to the different area is necessary as well in order to ensure the indoor sunlight duration.

In brief, the regulation requires at least one room in each apartment receive a minimum of one hour of sunshine on the day of the winter solstice, December 21. This rule could be summed up to a simple mathematical formula: distance d between buildings is determined by the height of building h multiplied by the tangent of the angle α of the sun on the winter solstice at 11:30 in the morning using solar time. And based on this rule, the distance between apartment buildings depended on this city’s latitude.

The area of land consumed by each unit of floor space was the same—whether a building was located in the center of the city or in a suburb, in a large city or in a small one. (Alan, 2014) This means the waste of the land resource and also, this cause the obstructive of creating a prolong street form defined by the buildings because of this regulation. And this could explain the reason why the residential buildings in China are planned in parallel rows with a certain distance.

**Land development system**

Since the economic reform from the early 1980s, China has developed a unique urban-rural land system, in which the government distinguishes urban land owned by the state from rural land owned by village collectives in order to keep the fundamental features of the socialist society. While China has moved toward a system in which market forces shape the process of urbanization and among the most influential of these changes are the establishment of land use rights, the commercialization of housing, and a restructuring of the urban development process. Before the PRC was founded in 1949, land could be privately owned and legally transferred through mutual agreement, and property taxes were a key source of local public finance at that
time. However, since the period of communist revolution, property use rights were radically transformed. All the rural area land owned by private were confiscated to the poor farmer collectives. Even now most of the rural land are still owned by them. And through land confiscation, strict controls on rent and major investments in public housing, state dominance in urban land and housing markets grew. Before the end of the Cultural Revolution in 1976, the private property virtually all confiscated and land transactions were forbidden. In the absence of private housing markets, shelter became part of the social wage provided by the state. Housing was not provided directly by the government but through the work unit or danwei as we have discussed before in the history view, a state-owned enterprise that serves as a vehicle for structuring economic activity and social organization. A danwei worker acquires housing “according to his work,” a fundamental socialist allocation principle. In this system the allocation of housing is determined by social status and length of employment, not prices and incomes. For that period the housing was all provided by the work unit which means the heavy financial burden on the state and that leaded to the poor quality of housing management and maintenance.

Therefore, when the need for both residential and commercial space has grown rapidly since the economic reform in early 1980s, market forces were introduced into the housing policy arena. From the amendment to the Constitution of the People’s Republic of China released in 1988, private investors may obtain land use rights from the government and the holder can retransfer these land use rights to a third party subject to certain conditions. This land development right unlocks the process of land redevelopment in the city. While the Urban Real Estate Law requires that a contract for granting land use rights specify a maximum number of years for use of the land, as for the residential purposes is seventy years.

In order to get the right for development, the State Land Administration Bureau is the unescapable regulatory authority during the process, which responsible for overall administration of the State’s land. All the land has to be registered and recorded by it. In turn, the Bureau issues a land registration certificate for entitlement of any specific use. No rights can be acquired from the primary market or further traded on the secondary market unless the site has been granted such a certificate. To obtain these rights, land users need to apply to the Bureau for approval. Thus the Bureau plays the most significant role in regulating land use activity in both the primary and secondary market.

For applying for the using right, the upfront payments should be paid as land use fees. The fees are determined by the location, type and density of the proposed development. This separation of land ownership and use rights allows the trading of land use rights while maintaining state ownership of land. For the Chinese government, this separation offered unignorable advantages that market mechanisms could help guide the allocation of land resources and the land use fees would provide local government with a new source of revenues.

Despite its advantages, the system created many new challenges. One of these is the land scale of application. The government officials are tempted to lease as much land as possible for their own short-term gain. Since revenues from the sale of land use rights account for 25 to 75 percent of some local government budgets, future losses of revenue are inevitable as land becomes increasingly scarce. That means the State Land Administration Bureau and the property developers would like to transfer larger plots in this process. For the government, besides the fund of land use fees, they can also let the developer take the responsibility for the
infrastructure facilities belonging to the land, such as the construction of the road and the municipal pipeline. This could release more financial burden and the administrative costs for the government. For the property developers, they would also like to apply for larger plots at the cost of taking charge of the infrastructure facilities, for they could monopolize a part of the area and defeat other rivals to take the excess earnings; on the other hand they could build the gated communities to ensure the living environment qualities within the communities, as the infrastructures are also provided by the developers and the inhabitants also paid to get that comfort. There for the large scale of land development for residential buildings appeared a lot.

According to the AMAP data statistics in 2015, there are about 300,000 living compounds, and of which 62% the land occupation are over 30,000 square meters.

Tiantong Unit is known as the "largest apartment complexes in Asia" in northern Beijing Changping district, covering 48 hectares, with over 400,000 residents, including three commercial centers, three subway stations. (Source: http://bj.house.163.com/photonew/10Q0007/144739.html#p=9OE8I9UF10Q0007)

While the government also realized the trend of large scale land transformation and the potential abuse, the Circular of the Ministry of Land and Resources and the National Development and Reform Commission have released promulgating and implementing the Catalogue of Restricted Uses of Land (2012 Version) and Catalogue of Prohibited Uses of Land (2012 Version), that the transferred plots should not over 7 hectares in small scale cities, 14 hectares in medium scale cities and 20 hectares in metropolis. (Guo Zi Fa [2012] No. 98)

Even seeing this regulation, the upper limit as 20 hectares for metropolis is still an improper size, of which the length of the plot could be 400 meters to 500 meters, much over the cognitive range of the neighborhood which should not exceed 274m (Alexander, 1964).

Comparing with the diversified land ownership in Western countries, they have the integrated management systems including all the stakeholders, such as Land Administration Bureau and the related authorities country to each city, the developers and the inhabitants. With the detailed zoning regulations and the transaction management and the different landownership systems there are not much large scale residential area development in Western metropolis.

**Vehicles priority**

One situation in China which implicitly associated with the confliction of opening the gate is the traffic safety issue. There were 58,316 traffic fatalities in China in 2013, 78 percent more than 32,719 in the US. But in comparison there were 154 million vehicles in the mainland, much
less than 240 million in America at that time. Road injuries have become the third leading cause of death in China according to The Lancet medical journal in 2015. (Hinsbergh, 2015) The two leading causes of accidents cited were drivers not obeying traffic lights and not letting pedestrians pass. According to the Law of the People’s Republic of China on Road Traffic Safety, indeed pedestrians have priority right-of-way over vehicles, especially at intersections. (Law of the People’s Republic of China on Road Traffic Safety (Order of the President No.8), Article 44 When passing a road crossing, motor vehicle drivers shall follow the traffic signal lights, traffic signs and traffic line markings, or the direction of traffic police; and when passing a road crossing where there are no traffic signal lights, traffic signs, traffic line markings or direction of traffic police, they shall slow down and let pedestrians and the vehicles enjoying priority pass first. Article 47 When passing a pedestrian crosswalk, the driver shall reduce speed; and when pedestrians are passing the crosswalk, the driver shall stop to give way to the pedestrians. When pedestrians are crossing a road where there are no traffic signals, the driver shall make way.)

While in China, the condition is more like “Theoretically every driver knows this, yet it is seldom enforced on the road.” Currently the “big fish eat little fish” mentality dominated most of Chinese drivers. Let alone the “race” between vehicles, the challenges between pedestrian and drivers should be stuck out. For example, Pedestrian crossings are not observed by vehicles usually, with pedestrians often left standing on a crossing with vehicles weaving round them. Even when the green light shows it is sometimes not safe to cross as often the traffic lights have been programmed to allow vehicles (particularly those turning left) to cross while the green walking man shows. However, it always take two to make a quarrel, the large flow of the crowd that keep crossing even during the red light and the sudden appearance of one that cross the road without zebra crossing which lead to inefficient time for reaction also happen in China cities every day. Behind this ignorance of the traffic rules, maybe it should also be blamed that the undetailed classification of urban street, which means the maximum driving speed could be too fast for some branch way. According to the CRTS, the maximum driving speed for urban road is 30km/h (without road axis) and 50km/h (roads that one lane for one side). For some branch ways such as the back streets connecting the residential area, this driving speed could be too fast if the residents would like to cross the street if the drivers have no conscious to slow down for the pedestrian. So more or less it is understandable that people would see the urban road as the symbol of danger and noise.

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Despite there could be much more characteristic momentums that push the development of gated community further in the commodity housing market, these three aspects of factors could be seen as the most typical momentums that bring advantages of meeting the demand of large housing requirements and the Chinese living habit, while those weakness that appearing as burdens of the further progress could also blame on those momentums.

Why there is anxious about opening the gate?

The perceive of crime

As the original intention of setting the boundaries around the residential communities is to prevent the potential crime and guarantee the security of the living environment. As for this measure indeed could put obstacles on the way of burglary effectively. And the government would also in favor of this method and encourage the communities to add boundaries. In their view it could reduce crime without further burdening the police force. A number of cities or
communities claimed that their annual numbers of robbery and burglary cases dropped by as much as 45-85% after installing gates and other safety measures (Su, 2000; Zhou, 2000; Hou, 2001; Xiao, 2002). At that time, most of the residents also support this decision for it not only increases the sense of security but also eliminates the street peddlers, the noise of traffic, the unwanted salespersons and the tramps (Ni, 2000; Jia, Wang, 2001). A survey in 1996 US showed that the more security measures a community had, the more its residents believed that their community was secure (Blakely & Snyder, 1997), given that the estate developers would emphasize the exist of the gates, describing '24-hour professional protection' on the advertisement as the attract point.

However, there are also voice of the residents complaining that the gates only provide the image of a safe environment. They offered no guarantee to real safety itself. For example, the Xicheng District of Beijing started gating its residential quarters in 1997, but in 1998 there were still 228 robberies and burglaries inside the apartments of those gated communities (Na, 2001). If we go into this seriously, it could be noticed that the gated communities which had reduced crimes always employed measures other than gates, such as effective human surveillance and patrol. While the expense of a security service are not affordable for every residents, especially for the ones whose salary level is under the average, and thus security problems would also happen in those gated communities. It was stated that until year 2001, 95% of gated communities in Beijing could not afford 24-hour guards and patrols. Many older communities had been retrofitted with “gates” by reducing the number of entrances from the street to the interior open spaces (Miao 2003). Despite gates, however, many communities remain fully accessible, evoking the feeling of security and “quality of life” without the management investing in features or personnel that would truly protect the residents inside (Yip 2012).

Even with strict control at the entries, gated communities are still vulnerable. A 1.8m height wall or fences cannot hold back the professional criminals who could easily climb several stories high. It should also be mentioned that many of the walls were porous. As soon as a criminal jumped into a gated community this boundary actually protected the offender from being detected by people on public streets and in neighboring buildings. Given the enormous size of a typical Chinese residential community, however, it is impossible to have human patrols at all places at the same moment, aside from the issue of the community’s ability to pay for such services.

That confliction between the intention and the practice reminding the ideas of preventing the potential crime. These ideas of preventing crime at the neighborhood scale by means of appropriate environmental design were first suggested by Elizabeth Wood (1961) and Jane Jacobs (1961). Jacobs put forward measures that are more detailed on three major themes: territorial definition and control, surveillance, and activity. Their ideas were further developed by CPTED strategies originated by C. Ray Jeffery (1971) and Oscar Newman in his ‘defensible space’ (1973). From the CPTED strategies, the ‘natural surveillance’, which means residents’ constant observation over the public space of a residential area identified as their own community, could be the most efficient security measures. Meanwhile, as we discussed before, the long enclosed boundary caused the under-used sidewalks, and the lack of people on the public streets outside a gated community makes it much easier for criminals to breach the wall, while the long wall impedes inside residents’ view over the public sidewalk, which otherwise could have helped to prevent crime on the sidewalk.
Let alone the negative effects of physical boundaries, the gate also acted as a psychological barrier from the fear toward the 'outside', which discouraging them from concerning outside the gate. As the Chinese residents would often hold the idea “As soon as you walk outside of the gate, everything changes. Sorry, you are on your own and take charge of yourself.” While this sense of self-protection could be more or less understandable, as the introverted lifestyle tradition has thousand years of history, the consideration of outside world is always not seen as the most necessity. People would tend to focus more on creating a comfortable inside environment instead of showing the responsibility out of the range where they usually do not have the discourse power.

However, comparing with the social structure were highly hierarchical period, modern Chinese people have been starting to require more equal civil right, and at the same time there are more and more conscious of taking the responsibility of the social qualities. Although the crime prevention through environmental design has always been a complicated and controversial issue in residential planning and design. The way of enclosing the communities with fences and gates should be seen as an oversimplified and crude way to ensure the safety, and also the prototype of this gated form is unsustainable not only in terms of the land use capability but also the usage experience of the residents and the passengers.

**The right of the private space**

Besides the demands of security, the residents argued that at least they should get compensation for losing their profit. As we have seen from the Chinese land development process, the developers get the land use rights from the government and could transfer it into corresponding functions. They would offer upfront payments as land use fees or also make conditions with the authority that taking responsibility of the infrastructure facilities of that area. And then they could ask for the charge form residents to build them. Since this process means the residents also spend wealth on the infrastructures, there is specific property law to protect their right. "The roads within the building zone (or community) shall be commonly owned by the owners, except the public roads of cities and towns. The green lands within the building area shall be commonly owned by all the owners, except the public green lands of cities and towns or those which are expressly ascribed to individuals. The other public places, common facilities and houses used for real property services within the building zone shall be commonly owned by all the owners. "(Property Law of the People's Republic of China Article 73) That stands for the public facilities as well as the roads inside the community belong to those residents, who have the right to decide how to use them.

As the increasing vehicle rate in China cities, the scarce of parking space is one thing people prefer to have their own side road as parking space. Meanwhile, as the vehicles priority situation mentioned before, the urban roads are always seen as the threat of safety, the parents argue that the inside roads only for local residents could be easier managed to slow down the driving speed. Another reason that people anxious about opening the gate for others is the break of a peace living environment. Nowadays although the per capita green area of residents living urban cities, which is getting more and more since the founding of PRC, reaching 12.64 m², is still behind the world average level (40 m²). Under this condition, some residents would pay higher price to guarantee a better community environment, but also restricting others to get inside. As a way to keep away the unscrupulous traders, the crowd of "square dance group" and the raucous teenagers, the gate help to ensure their peace away from the outside noise.
Form this discussion, we could comprehend that the demand of security and the right of living environment quality are the major voice reacting to the “gradually open up” guideline. Indeed the requirement of security and the sufficient infrastructures is essential for the living environment, it turns that a simple form of gate is not enough acting as the insurance. A physical fence could not stop the burglary, that the popular community which has active social connections that could pay a better role on surveillance. While the current situation that the inefficient of public facilities and the security need to be concerned. If only there is a comprehensive strategy considering all the process of this problem, simply opening the gate, if not worse, undoubtable would only bring trouble to the residents.

**Conclusion: Where is the future way for the gate?**

In this research we briefly analyzed the features of the Chinese gated communities, which including a fairly completed public service facilities, the specified stories requirements and the greening rate, as well as the closed traffic roads for the local residents, and a property management company taking charge of the security. Then it showed several challenges of current living environments which related to the gated communities, such as the underused sidewalks and the low efficiency of road. In order to get the understanding of the evolution of the gated community form in China and the factors that influence this evolution, we reviewed the history of the forming from both social and economic, political and cultural background, and discussed about the Chinese characteristic momentums. From those we can get to the general conclusion that the unique tradition and the living habit, as well as the characteristic momentums during the developing process have a profound influence on the formation of Chinese gated communities, in both conceptual and materialistic way.

Meanwhile, this living type indeed satisfied the fundamental demand of the living demand and the efficiency requirements of the commodity housing market. However, after 30 years of filling in the majority of demand, the “interest and efficient is first” guiding ideology already have been leading to more and more problems. When the followed functionalism idea during that time, we just tried to find an optimal solution using the shortest time. However, the shortsighted actions may release the current pressure, but would cause endless trouble in the future. Seeing city as the collage of several functional parts ignored the sociality and diversity in this system, simply adding gates and walls around have exposed the hidden problems. The sustainability during the developing process as well as the spiritual needs of the inhabitants should draw attention in future strategies. Instead of merely following pragmatism and functionalism during the planning process, the communication and the collaboration between the decision maker, in Chinese situation which means the government, the designers, no matter the planning and the housing design field, and the clients which means the residents, becoming more significant although it is lack of appropriately consideration currently. This could also be seen as one reason of the conflict about the new regulation of “opening the Gate of the gated communities”.

As for this decision is aimed at helping solving the deficient land usage efficiency as well as the low density of city road network and recovering the vigor of the street, not all the gated communities are the targets of this command. The oversized super-block, which enclosed too much land and others which without a good interaction on the edges are the ones which have the potential and the necessity to open the gate. Behind this action, how can we issue design appropriately in the development process is always under the debate. As urban design, working as public policy (Barnett, 1974) over urban forms, ‘by its very nature’ focuses on ‘social
interaction and communication in the public realm’ (Cuthbert, 2006), pointing out a way of avoiding the negative impacts of gated communities at minimum cost from the very initial stages. The question is about how to obtain a balance, taking full advantage of the benefits of the gated community while minimizing the possible damage to the right of the residents accessing to “their” public spaces and activities. What design features of gated community are decisive in shaping the neighboring public spaces. Three elements as we have discussed before, enclosure size, boundary effect, and shared public spaces and facilities are proposed in this regard. In order to achieve this strategy, it not only calls for the effort of the designers, of whose the social responsibility of providing a sustainable living environment, encouraging the communication and possibilities for the residents, but also the role of the authorities. the government should take charge of the compensation strategies about the damage of the right when opening the gate, help adjusting the zoning regulations and the new management systems of the city infrastructures, as well as keep constantly supervising the future construction of them. Instead of looking for a single solution for this diverse and complicated problem, a long term commitment to public space in the planning system and a policy framework for the design control of the gated communities is necessary. After we have the guideline about the appropriate size of the block, the demand of the boundary effect, and the distribution of right of the facilities, adding up with the effective communication between the governments’ policy and the residents’ requirement, there could be a better solution of balancing the public and private space, which could provide a satisfying as well as efficient living environment.

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