Collectivism, Political Control and Neighborhood Enclosure in Urban China:

A Comparative Analysis of Gated Communities in U.S. and Chinese Cities

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Introduction

With the phenomenal growth of gated communities in the United States and the rest of the world, scholars have been trying to understand its underlying patterns and urban dynamics. In spite of the ideological debate on market efficiency and social equity of gated communities (e.g. Foldvary 1994; Davis 1990), two main discourses -- the club realm of services and the discourse of fear -- have been developed to interpret the gating phenomenon mostly in the West. Scholars also observe the emergence of gated communities in developing countries such as China, Mexico and Brazil, and they often attribute it to globalization, the break down of the state and similar factors as those identified in the West (e.g. Giroir 2004; Miao 2003).

Yet, gated and walled communities have always existed in Chinese cities (Knapp 2000). While the dominant discourses can partly explain the emergence of newly built upscale gated communities in Chinese cities, they fail to explain the spatial ubiquity, long history and temporal continuity of the gating phenomenon in China. First, instead of choosing between regular open-street neighborhoods and gated communities as is the case in the United States, there is not such a choice in Chinese cities as virtually every neighborhood or housing estate is enclosed one way or another. In other words, neighborhood enclosure is ubiquitous in China. Thus the decision is not about whether to live in a gated community or not, but about which enclosed neighborhood to live. Second, neighborhood enclosure existed in Chinese cities even when neighborhood security and property rights -- the two foci in existing literature -- were not major concerns in housing and neighborhood decision-making. For example, in the socialist era, the crime rate was extremely low, private property was minimal and virtually all services were provided by the

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state. Yet, almost all housing developments, called "work unit compounds," were walled and guarded. Based on these observed differences, an alternative conceptual approach is needed to better understand neighborhood enclosure in the urban Chinese case.

To provide a broader conceptualization of gating, we suggest a cultural and historical perspective and argue that collectivism-oriented culture and tight political control explain neighborhood enclosure in Chinese cities as well as its omnipresence and continuity. As political control may have different meanings in each socio-historical period, collectivism is a fluid concept in that what constitutes the "collective" changes over time. This emphasis on collectivism and political control in China, in contrast to individualism, privatization, and the withdrawal of the state in the West, illustrates how the built form of gated housing may look quite similar, yet evolve from distinct historical and cultural as well as architectural traditions. Understanding these distinct contexts generates new interpretations, both symbolic and political economic, of the growth and spread of gated residential communities.

To summarize our argument, in traditional Chinese cities, the *jiefang* system in urban planning and housing development dominated by enclosed courtyard house complexes for extended families or clans divided residential area into smaller wards surrounded by walls and guarded entrances. Walls were built not only to delineate private property but also to differentiate "family/clan members" from others. Thus the collective was defined based on family line or clan membership, where interactions between its members were expected to be different from that with "outsiders". At the same time, the *xiangli* (later *baojia*) system in administration grouped households into territorial units to facilitate political control. In the socialist era, work-unit (*danwei*) compounds were constructed, with surrounding walls, gates and often security guards, to shelter state employees. In this politico-historical period, the collective

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was redefined based on work-unit affiliation, as the so called "large family" with workers in the same work-unit and their families. While work units are organized in a hierarchical system along industry for political control through the vertical system (*tiaotiao*), Residents' Committees served as the new form of neighborhood governance, monitoring and controlling residents through the territorial system (*kuaikuai*). Thus despite new forms of housing development and urban governance, collectivism and political control remained the underlying forces for neighborhood enclosure in this period. Since the housing reform launched in 1988, however, newly built private housing estates have mushroomed, with not only conventional walls and gates but also high-tech security infrastructure such as intercom, surveillance camera, and automatic door closure and electronic card identity systems. The theoretical concepts of the club realm and the discourse of fear borrowed from the U. S.-based literature help to explain the emergence of these gated communities because of the provision of services by professional property management companies and higher crime rates reported than before. Yet these discourses cannot explain the choice of a specific gated community or the spatial differentiation of urban Chinese households. We argue that collectivism and political control continue to underlying the gating phenomenon in the reform era. Instead of family or work unit connection as before, the collective is now redefined again, but through similar socio-economic status, similar interests in property and life style. Despite the intrusion of private forces in these "collectives" and profound changes in the society, the government has refused to loose its grip over its population. In addition to monitor and control the development and role of the supposedly grassroots self-organized Homeowners' Associations, the government launched a campaign of "community building" with Community Committees and Community Service Centers established to better serve the public. But in reality they function like Residents'

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Committees in controlling the population. Thus, in contrast to individualism and the retreat of the state in public service provision underlying the emergence of gated communities in the West, collectivism and greater political control explain the prevalence of enclosed neighborhood in Chinese cities.

This approach, emphasizing collectivism-oriented culture and political control, is not intended to replace the club realm and the discourse of fear in explaining gated communities. In fact, these approaches do not have to be mutually exclusive, as the club realm and the discourse of fear can also help to understand gated communities especially private housing estates in recent decades. But we need a better and more contextual conceptualization of gated residential communities to accommodate the empirical data from China. We are suggesting that different conceptual frameworks may be necessary to explain the gating phenomenon in China and other parts of the developing and more collectively organized world -- frameworks that draw upon the cultural and historical backgrounds of the peoples, societies, and nation/states involved. To accomplish this task, we need more studies of gated communities in places other than the United States, and to enlarge the number of comparative studies.

This chapter begins our search for a conceptual framework that accommodates both the collectivism and political control of the Chinese case and the discourse of fear and privatization/ club realm analyses of United States examples. To accomplish this task, we first introduce the phenomenon of gated communities in the United States and China. Then we will briefly review literatures on gated communities, followed by development of a cultural and historical approach to explain gated communities in urban China. The discussion section considers how a cultural/historical approach reconfigures the theoretical arguments about gating by comparing the gating phenomenon in the U.S. and China. We argue that a layered model provides a more

nuanced understanding of gating in different cultural environments. We conclude by suggesting

new directions for comparative urban gating research.

Background

Definition of the Gated Community

For the purposes of this chapter, a "gated community" in the United States is a residential

development surrounded by walls, fences or earth banks covered with bushes and shrubs, with a

secured entrance. In some cases, protection is provided by inaccessible land such as a nature

reserve and in a few cases, by a guarded bridge. The houses, streets, sidewalks, and other

amenities are physically enclosed by these barriers and entrance gates operated by a guard, key

or electronic identity card. Inside the development there is often a neighborhood watch

organization or professional security personnel who patrol on foot or by automobile. Gated

communities restrict access not just to residents' homes, but also to the use of public spaces and

services – roads, parks, facilities, and open space -- contained within the enclosure.

Communities vary in size from a few homes in very wealthy areas to as many as 21,000 homes

in Leisure World in Orange County, California–with the number of residents indexed to the level

of amenities and services. Many include golf courses, tennis courts, fitness centers, swimming

pools, lakes or unspoiled landscape as part of their appeal, while commercial or public facilities

are rare.

Gated communities are different from other exclusive suburban developments such as

condominiums, co-operatives, and doorman apartment buildings found throughout the United

States. At the level of the built environment, the walls and gates are visible barriers that have

social and psychological as well as physical effects. In practical terms, gated communities

restrict access to streets and thoroughfares that would otherwise be available for public as well as for private transportation. And in some cases, gated communities limit access to open space and park land donated by the developer to the municipality or town in exchange for building higher density housing than allowed by local zoning. Such land is designated as in the public domain, but is available only to people who live within the development.

Scholars have been using the same term "gated communities" to refer to the upscale housing complexes in Chinese cities, which share many similarities with gated communities in the U.S. (e.g. Giroir, 2004, 2005, Wu and Webler, 2004; Miao, 2003). However, most housing complexes in Chinese cities including those at the low end are walled and gated, one way or another. Thus the socioeconomic connotation attached to gated communities in the U.S. is no longer applicable. In the context of China, "enclosed neighborhood" is used for residential development/complex with surrounding walls, fences or earth banks covered with bushes and shrubs. The entrances may be guarded formally by security personnel or informally by the watchful eyes of senior members in the neighborhood. While some enclosed neighborhoods include amenities such as swimming pools and fitness centers, others may only have a small patch of green land. In other words, the enclosed neighborhood in China is a broader concept than the gated community in the U. S., and gated communities in Chinese context refer to those at the high-end of enclosed neighborhoods.

History of the Gated Community

Contemporary gated communities in the United States first originated for year round living on family estates and in wealthy communities such as Llewellyn Park in Eagle Ridge, New Jersey built during the 1850s, and as resorts exemplified by New York's Tuxedo Park developed as a

hunting and fishing retreat with a barbed wire fence eight feel high and twenty-four miles long in 1886 (Hayden 2003). Another early resort was Sea Gate in Brooklyn established with its own private police force in 1899. The architect and real estate developer Julius Pitman designed the majority of St. Louis's private streets between 1867 and 1905 borrowing from the English private square to create exclusive residential enclaves for the business elite (Beito 2002)

Planned retirement communities such as Leisure World which emerged in the 1960s and 1970s, however, were the first places where middle class Americans walled themselves off. Gates then spread to resort and country club developments, and finally to suburban developments. In the 1980s, real estate speculation accelerated the building of gated communities around golf courses designed for exclusivity, prestige and leisure. Gated communities first appeared in California, Texas, and Arizona, drawing retirees attracted to the weather. Currently, one-third of all new communities in Southern California are gated, and the percentage is similar around Phoenix, Arizona, the suburbs of Washington D. C. and parts of Florida. In areas such as Tampa, Florida, gated communities account for four out of five home sales of $300,000 or more. Since the late 1980s gates have become ubiquitous, and by the1990s common even in the northeastern United States. Gated communities on Long Island, New York were rare in the 1980s, but by the early 1990s almost every condominium development of more than fifty units had a guardhouse.

The number of people estimated to be living in gated communities in the United States increased from four million in 1995, to eight million in 1997 and to sixteen million in 1998. By 1997, there were in excess of twenty thousand gated communities with over three million housing units. In 2001, the U.S. Census Household Survey found that 7 million households, approximately 16 million people or 6% of all households, were living in gated and walled

residential communities.

But it is not just a U.S. phenomenon – gated communities are proliferating in Latin America, China, the Philippines, New Zealand, Australia, post-apartheid South Africa, Indonesia, Germany, France, the former communist countries of Eastern Europe, urbanizing nations of the Arab world such as Egypt, Lebanon and Saudi Arabia, and tourist centers along the Spanish coastline and Côte d''Azur. In each context, gated communities serve different purposes and express distinct cultural meanings. For example, they house expatriate workers in Saudi Arabia, replicate socialist datcha housing in Moscow, provide a secure lifestyle in the face of extreme poverty in Southeast Asia, protect residents from urban violence in South Africa, create exclusive compounds for emerging elites in Bulgaria, and offer exclusive second homes or industry-sponsored housing in Western Europe. Gated communities are found at every income level throughout Latin America and take on various forms including upgraded housing complexes, retrofitted older neighborhoods, upscale center city condominiums, small suburban developments and large scale master planned communities. Thus, gating is a global phenomenon drawing upon United States models, but also evolving from local architecture and socio-historical circumstances, and is always embedded within specific cultural traditions (Low 2003).

Explanations of Why People Move to Gated Communities

Theories of Gating Based on American Examples

There is extensive debate as to why gated communities have become so popular in the United States. Arguments range from supply-side claims that financial benefits to developers, builders, and municipalities drive gating's success, to demand-side proposals that home buyers

preferences and a discourse of fear are the principal motivating factors. From a broad political

economic perspective, the gated community is a response to transformations in the political

economy of late-twentieth century urban America (Low 1997) The increasing mobility of

capital, marginalization of the labor force, and dismantling of the welfare state began with the

change in labor practices and deindustrialization of the 1970s, and accelerated with the

"Reaganomics" of the 1980s. This economic restructuring and relocation of global capital

produced political changes with far reaching social consequences.

The shift to the right during the Reagan years intensified an ideological focus on free

market capitalism. Power, wealth, and income all tilted toward the richest portions of the

population. While the income share of the upper twenty percent of Americans rose from 41.6%

to 44% from 1980 to 1988, the average after-tax income of the lowest ten percent dropped 10.5%

from 1977 to 1987, producing an increasingly bifurcated class system (Phillips 1991). These

economic and political changes intensified already existing inequalities of neighborhood

resources and services, while escalating housing prices left more families homeless and without

health care.

Globalization and economic restructuring also weakened existing social relations and

contributed to the breakdown of traditional ways of maintaining social order. Social control

mechanisms and their associated institutions, such as the police and schools, were no longer seen

as effective (Devine 1995). This breakdown in local control threatened some neighborhood

residents, and the gated residential community became a viable and socially acceptable option.

The creation of gated communities, and the addition of guardhouses, walls, and entrance

gates to established neighborhoods, is an integral part of the building of the fortress city, a social

control technique based on the so-called "militarization" of the city (Davis 1990). In America it

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is a strategy for regulating and patrolling the urban poor comprised predominantly of Latino and Black minorities. Gating is only one example of this new form of social ordering that displaces and regulates people or activities rather then eliminating them. Policing and enclosures create areas where a protected group–for example, the very wealthy--is shielded from others' behavior. A safe environment then excludes all those who are considered dangerous. But while this strategy may work for the privileged few living within the protected area, it has the drawback of diminishing collective responsibility for the safety of society as a whole.

Racism is another major contributor to patterns of urban and suburban separation and exclusion in the United States. Cities continue to experience high levels of residential segregation based on discriminatory real estate practices and mortgage structures designed to insulate Whites from Blacks. Blacks are less likely to move to the suburbs in the first place, and then more likely to return to the city (South and Crowder 1997). Residential proximity to Blacks intensifies Whites' fear of crime, and Blacks who are racially prejudiced are even more fearful.

Residents of middle class and upper middle class neighborhoods also cordon themselves off as a class by building fences, cutting off relationships with neighbors, and moving out in response to problems and conflicts. At the same time governments have expanded their regulatory role through zoning laws, local police patrols, restrictive ordinances for dogs, quiet laws, and laws against domestic and interpersonal violence that narrow the range of accepted behavioral norms. Indirect economic strategies that limit the minimum lot or house size, policing policies that target non-conforming uses of the environment, and social ordinances that enforce middle class rules of civility further segregate family and neighborhood life (Merry 1993: 87). The gated community is an extension of these practices.

The creation of "common interest developments" provided a legal framework for the

consolidation of suburban residential segregation. "Common interest development" describes "a community in which the residents own or control common areas or shared amenities," and that "carries with it reciprocal rights and obligations enforced by a private governing body." (Judd 1995: 155) Specialized "covenants, contracts, and deed restrictions" (CC&Rs) that extend forms of collective private land tenure and the notion of private government were adapted by the lawyer and planner Charles Stern Ascher to create the modern institution of the homeowner association in 1928 (McKenzie 1994).

The evolution of "pod", "enclave", and "cul-de-sac" suburban designs further refined the ability of land use planners and designers to develop suburban subdivisions where people of different income groups would have little to no contact with one another. Regulated resident behavior, house type and "taste culture" are more subtle means of control. Even landscape aesthetics function as a suburban politics of exclusion, often referred to as making everything "nice." The number of legal proceedings in California courts has grown as some residents attempt to deregulate their rigidly controlled environments, but litigants have not been successful. Instead, common interest developments guarantee a "bundle of goods" including security, exclusiveness, and an extraordinary level of amenities, and this promise is "nestled at the center of all advertisements for the new walled cities" (Judd 1995:160).

Another question about privatization is whether municipal governments or proprietary developments--shopping malls, industrial parks as well as gated communities--are the most efficient institution for the provision of basic goods and services. In these discussions, modern gated communities are evaluated as "new spatially defined markets in which innovative neighborhood products are supplied by a new style of service producer." (Webster 2001). For the people living inside gated communities it is an efficient solution because of the legal requirement

to pay fees, homogeneity of community needs and desires, and because residents can choose

their package of communal goods according to their personal preferences. Rather than being

"taxpayers" who pay for public goods and services that are not always available, they become

"club members" who pay fees for private services shared only by members of community. Thus,

for some, the gated community is seen as an opportunity to experiment with new solutions for

the provision of goods and services that distribute those goods more efficiently and equitably,

albeit restrictively, than current governmental strategies.

Supply-side economic factors also figure prominently in understanding the widespread

expansion of these communities. Developers want to maximize their profits by building more

houses on less land, and incentive zoning packages for common interest development housing

allow them to cluster units and achieve this higher density within otherwise low density

residential zoning areas. California and states that have experienced a property tax revolt find

CID housing particularly attractive because it transfers the debt liability, building of

infrastructure, and provision of services to private corporations, while at the same time the

municipality collects property taxes from residents (McKenzie 1998).

Walls can provide a refuge from people who are deviant or unusual, but they require

patrolling the border to be sure no one gets in. The resulting vigilance necessary to maintain

these "purified communities" actually heightens residents' anxiety and sense of isolation, rather

than making them feel safer (Flusty 1997). In some cases, the micro-politics of exclusion is

about distinguishing oneself from the family who used to live next door. Status anxiety about

downward mobility due to declining male wages and family incomes, shrinking job markets, and

periodic economic recessions has increased concern that children will not be able to sustain a

middle class lifestyle. Middle class status anxiety also takes the form of symbolic separation

from other families who have fallen on hard times, families who share many of the same values and aspirations, but who for some reason "did not make it." The "exclusivity" and "status" advertised by new gated communities is being marketed to an already anxious audience created by the economic turbulence of the 1980s. Assurances that walls and gates maintain home values and provide some kind of "class" or "distinction" is heard by prospective buyers as a partial solution to upholding their middle or upper middle class position.

And the psychological lure of defended space and "purified communities" becomes even more enticing with increased media coverage and national hysteria about urban crime. News stories chronicle daily murders, rapes, drive-by shootings, drug busts, and child kidnapping – often with excessive and extended media coverage. An ever growing proportion of people fear that they will be victimized. Not surprisingly, then, fear of crime has increased since the mid-1960s, even though there has been a decline in all violent crime since 1990 (Brennan and Zelinka 1997).

Crime and the fear of crime also have been connected to the design of the built environment. Jane Jacobs first pointed out that keeping "eyes on the street" is an important solution for creating safer streets and neighborhoods. Oscar Newman, who uses the term "defensible space" for this idea, argues that high-rise buildings are dangerous because the people who live in them cannot defend -- see, own or identify -- their territory. He proposes that gating city streets can promote greater safety and higher home values as long as the percentage of minority residents is kept within strict limits

These diverse approaches depict the United States as a place with increasing reliance on urban fortification, policing, and segregation to maintain social order. A number of legal strategies such as common interest developments, rules and regulations (CC&Rs), and

homeowners associations, as well as suburban design and planning laid the groundwork for the development of gated communities. Architectural solutions such as "defensible space" contributed to an understanding of how environmental design can play a role in crime prevention. And evaluating gated communities based on their economic efficiency and supply side incentives may explain why proprietary communities are growing in popularity.

Gated Communities in the United States: Empirical Studies

Theories, however, need to be examined in real life, particularly in communities facing the intricacies of individual actions and fluctuating social relations. Observers of gated communities in the United States have provided a few descriptions of the types of gated communities that exist and their importance for residents.

Based on a national survey and regional focus groups, Edward Blakely and Mary Gail Synder (1997), identify three kinds of gated communities-- lifestyle, elite, and security zone-- each categorized by income level, amenities, aesthetic control and location in the region. Lifestyle gated communities include retirement communities and golf and country club developments, while elite communities emphasizing status and prestige include enclaves for the wealthy and "executive community" developments. Security zone gated communities are most often retrofitted with gates or barricades and include the "city perch"– a defensive, often chain-link, fencing of a threatened neighborhood in the center of the city, the "suburban perch"– the fencing of an existing inner suburban neighborhood surrounded by deteriorating conditions, and the "barricade perch"–where concrete barricades are used to partially close off the streets. All security zone strategies are used to block street access to reduce crime.

These categories reflect differences in social values and motivations. For example, the

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lifestyle community is primarily about privatization and the provision of services. The elite

community, on the other hand, is primarily about stability and a need for homogeneity. For

security zone communities, exclusion and separation from the rest of society is the most

important. Blakely and Synder (1997) also found that residents identified security as a very

important reason for their move to a gated community. Only eight percent of the residents

surveyed characterized their community as "neighborly and tight-knit," while another 28 percent

indicated that their developments were "distant or private" in feeling.

In a regional survey of 641 gated communities in the Phoenix, Arizona area, Klaus Frantz

found residents said they moved to feel safer and because of their fear of crime. They take

advantage of gating to stabilize their housing values and to guarantee service provision.

Residents believed they have the power to control the physical and social quality of their

neighborhood: "They feel that this is a way to guarantee that the community that they have

bought...will not change drastically in the course of time" (Frantz 2000-2001). He also reported a

range of communities types: thirteen percent were upper class enclaves, forty-nine percent were

middle class, and two percent were lower middle class.

Setha Low's (2003) ethnographic study of gated communities in New York City,

suburban Long Island, New York, San Antonio, Texas, and Mexico City found that residents

moved for safety, security, community, and "niceness," as well as wanting to live near people

like themselves because of a fear of "others" and of crime. She argues that the emergence of a

fortress mentality and its phenomenal success is surprising in the United States here the majority

of people live in open and unguarded neighborhoods. One explanation for the gated

community's popularity is that it materially and metaphorically incorporates otherwise

conflicting, and in some cases polarized, social values that make up middle class life. For

example, it reflects urban and suburban tensions in the United States regarding social class, race and ethnicity and, at the same time, represents the perennial concern with creating community.

Architectural symbols such as gates and walls also provide a rationale for the moral inconsistencies of everyday life. For instance, many residents want to feel safe in their homes and argue that walls and gates help keep out criminals; but gated communities are not safer than non-gated suburban neighborhoods where crime rates are already low. Instead, the logic of the symbolism satisfies conventional middle class understandings of the nature of criminal activity-- "it makes it harder for them to get in"-- as well as justifies their choice in terms of its moral and physical consequences– "look at my friends who were randomly robbed living in a non-gated development."

Living in a gated community, Low suggests, temporarily suppresses and masks the inherent anxieties and conflicting social values of modern urban and suburban life. It transforms Americans' dilemma of how to protect themselves, their children and families from danger, crime, and unknown others and still perpetuate open, friendly neighborhoods and comfortable, safe homes. It reinforces the norms of a middle class lifestyle in an historical period in which everyday events and news media exacerbate fears of violence and terrorism. Thus, residents cite their "need" of gated communities to provide a safe and secure home in the face of a lack of other societal alternatives.

Gated residential communities, however, intensify social segregation, racism and exclusionary land use practices already in place in most of the United States, and raise a number of values conflicts for residents. For instance, residents acknowledge their misgivings about the possible false security provided by the gates and guards, but at the same time, it satisfies their desire for emotional security associated with childhood and neighborhoods where they grew up.

Living in a gated development contributes to residents' sense of well-being, but comes at the price of maintaining private guards and gates as well as conforming to extensive homeowner association rules and regulations. Individual freedom and ease of access for residents must be limited to achieve greater privacy and social control for the community as a whole.

Unfortunately, there is no evidence that homes in gated communities maintain their value better than those in non-gated ones in comparable suburban areas (Blakely and Synder 1997). Nor is there evidence that gated communities are safer, although in Southern California they are associated with perceptions of greater safety among the upper middle class (Wilson 2000). What these and other studies do identify, though, is a desire for security and safety even in the face of low crime rates in suburban areas in the United States. What emerges from these empirical studies is an emphasis on a discourse of fear that legitimates and rationalizes the desire to live behind gates, and the use of privatization to maintain greater social control and a redistribution of public goods. These two discourses of fear and privatization or the club realm emerge as the dominant explanations for the rapid and extensive spread of residential gating throughout the United States. Unfortunately, these explanations do not adequate describe, much less explain the Chinese neighborhood enclosure example.

Collectivism, Political Control and Neighborhood Enclosure in Urban China – A Cultural and Historical Perspective

While scholars argue that gated communities in urban China and other developing countries is a result of rapid globalization and increasing social inequality and segregation (Giroir, 2004, 2005; Wu and Webber, 2004; Miao 2003), enclosed neighborhoods have been a widespread phenomenon in Chinese cities since the beginning of urban history. Walls and gates

have always been essential and integral components of urban construction in China, such that the same word, *cheng*, is used for both walls and cities (Knapp, 2000). "Walls indeed are a particularly Chinese preoccupation" (Knapp, 2000). While walls serve multiple purposes, such as defense, protection from harsh weather, markers for private property, and tools demonstrating imperial authority and Chinese cosmology, they are also "symbolic markers separating inside and outside, family and stranger" (Knapp, 2000). In a collectivism-oriented society such as China, walls are used to define "collectives", which have always been more important than individuals. Furthermore, the code of conduct for members within the collective is expected to be different from that for those outside of the collective. For example, mutual help and resource sharing are often expected between members within the collective. Thus a collective identity is developed for members within, which distinguishes them from the rest of the society – the outsiders. Despite various profound socio-economic transformations in Chinese history, collectivism has remained central to Chinese culture, and physical walls have also maintained their symbolic value to define collectives among other functions, although the concept of collectives has changed over time.

Collectivism is a double-edge sword in China. For the public, collectivism allows them to identify themselves with a larger group other than their immediate nuclear families, whose protection and help can be essential especially in bad times. In contrast to individualism and the desire for privacy and independency in the West, Chinese yearn for collective identification and group recognition. For the government, a society organized with collectives, instead of individuals, is easier to control and govern. With collective leaders serving as the nerve tip of the government, government policies can be easily passed down to collectives and then individuals, and individual information can be easily collected and passed upward to facilitate

control. Thus, Chinese government has always actively promoted neighborhood enclosure, from the construction of *fang* in imperial China (Zhang 2002; Knapp, 2000), to the construction of work-unit compounds in the socialist era, and to recent campaign of "community building" (*shequ jianshe*) in privatized housing estates. On top of these enclosed territories, administrative agencies such as the "three seniors" under the *baojia* system and Residents' Committees function as the basic unit of the government. This is in sharp contrast to neighborhoods in Western cities, most of which are loosely defined and are governed by grass-roots self-organizations. While there is a phenomenal growth of gated communities in the West, there is also a certain degree of public outcry against the gating, as it is perceived to strengthen neighborhood segregation and social polarization, and to end public space and public services (e.g. Davis 1990; Caldeira 1996; Mitchell 1995). With a completely different sentiment towards gating from both the public and the government in China, a scrutiny on neighborhood enclosure in urban China is needed to enrich our understanding of gated communities.

A historical approach will be adopted in the following section to examine neighborhood enclosure in Chinese context. With more than five thousand years of urban history in China, it might be simplistic to divide the history into three periods: the pre-socialist, the socialist and the reform era. Yet, despite the long history and political turmoil, the physical form of cities and the philosophy of urban planning and construction have remained unchanged for the most part of Chinese history (Skinner, 1977; Knapp, 2000; Zhang, 2002). Even during the socialist era when the socialist government was determined to break away from the feudal Chinese cities, many elements of urban planning and neighborhood management were inherited. Today, with unprecedented globalization and recent institutional transition toward a market economy, Chinese cities have experienced profound transformation; yet the "traditional Chinese cities" are

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still visible not only because the durability of urban forms but also the continuity in the philosophy of urban planning and urban culture. Thus the three-stage division is mainly to depict historical changes, as well as continuities, in neighborhood enclosure in Chinese cities.

The pre-socialist era

With a long history of urban development and civilization, there were thousands of cities throughout China's dynastic history, some of which were grandeur and magnificent cosmopolitans. Yet, the central principles of urban planning had remained very much the same across dynasties and regions, and between small towns and large capitals, such as the site preference linked to *fengshui*, the rectangular urban form surrounded with moats, walls and gates, the grid-like road system, and the symmetric internal layout centered around government buildings (Zhang, 2002; Knapp, 2000; Sit, 1995). In terms of residential pattern, the *jiefang* system composed of courtyard houses had stood the test of the time. It emerged around the Shang (1700 – 1027 B. C.) and Zhou dynasty (1027 – 771 B. C.), and since then it had been widely implemented in Chinese cities till the end of imperial China (the Ming (A. D. 1368-1644) and Qing (A.D. 1644-1911) dynasty) (Zhang, 2002).

With large avenues and narrow lanes, the *jiefang* system divided the residential area into smaller wards, called *fang*, whose size varied from 400x400 meter to 800x800 meter. Each *fang* was wrapped with tamped-earth walls, whose access was guarded with gates and sentries (Knapp, 2000; Zhang, 2002). In some cities, gates were closed during the night and curfew was implemented to insure social stability (Zhang, 2002). There were 108 *fang* in Tang-era (A. D. 618-907) Chang'an, 120 *fang* in Northern Song-era (A. D. 960-1279) Dongjing, and numerous *fang* in Ming and Qing-era Beijing (Zhang 2002). The physical form of the *jiefang* system made

it harder for "outsiders" to access thus discourage interactions between "insiders" and "outsiders", while at the same time, fostered a sense of community for members within. Thus the *jiefang* system created a cell-like system of internal division within the walled cities in China. People living in the same or nearby *fang* were often engaged in similar occupations, forming enclosed neighborhoods with occupational homogeneity but with personal-wealth heterogeneity, such as the merchant and gentry nuclei in late imperial Beijing (Belsky, 2000; Skinner, 1977).

Within each *fang,* courtyard houses (*siheyuan*) further divided the space into enclosed units often based on family/clan ties. Courtyard house was a traditional, rectangular housing complex in China, with multiple bungalows surrounding a courtyard in the center, which were further surrounded by walls (Knapp, 1999) (Photo 1). Access to a courtyard house complex was possible through the only gate. The walls and gates not only delineated private properties, but also provided seclusion to the extended families living inside. Yet, there were both public and private space within the courtyard house complex. In a simplest courtyard house complex, the initial building and the courtyard were the most public space, often containing kitchens, storage and rooms for servants (Knapp 2000). The south-facing building was for the senior members of the family, while the east and west quarters were for the families of married sons. Access to these buildings was more or less restricted.

While there are still many courtyard house complexes in Chinese cities, it is worth to mention some of the most magnificent and well preserved courtyard house complexes, such as Wang Family Manor (*zhuangyuan* or *daoyuan*), Qiao Family Manor, Qu Family Manor and Chang Family Manor in Shanxi province, and Kang Family Manor in Henan (Knapp, 1999, 2000, 2005; http://www.cnchang.com/web/zyjs.htm; http://www.gotosx.com/xxcl/qu.htm). The Qiao Family

Manor in Pingyao is well known as it is featured in the film *Raise the Red Lantern* directed by

Zhang Yimou.   Pingyao is considered the living fossil of ancient Chinese cities because it has

preserved the traditional form of cities despite the drastic sociopolitical changes and thus urban

destruction in history (Knapp, 2000). In a low-rise cityscape of old buildings surrounded by

fully preserved brick walls, the Qiao Family Manor stands out with six major courtyard

compounds and twenty some smaller courtyards that cover an area of 87,000 square meters,

sheltering a large extended household (Knapp, 2000). While the internal walls may divide the

extended household into smaller units, the external walls clearly define the Qiao family as a

powerful and prosperous collective. While conflicts within the extended household are

inevitable, the family name and the surrounding walls consolidate family members when they

deal with "outsiders". The Forbidden City in Beijing was basically a large courtyard house

complex but for the emperor and his families. The surrounding walls were not only to

demonstrate the emperor's authority and legitimacy to rule, but also to define a collective

different from and superior than the rest (both socially and ethnically).

Although the *jiefang* system was an urban phenomenon, enclosed neighborhoods or

settlements were also visible in rural China. An exterior gate was one of the first characteristics

of villages in the traditional Chinese rural civilization (Knapp, 1986), which defined the village,

usually composed of households with same family name, as a collective. The century-old

settlement of Hakka ("*tulou*"), a Han Chinese ethnic sub-group, was an extreme example of

enclosed settlement. Because of their clannishness and ethnic isolation, the Hakka lived in a

fortified multi-story complex, with a public center courtyard, a hall for guests and ceremonial

purpose, a shared kitchen, storage and livestock space at the lower floor, and private space for

sleeping at the upper stories (Knapp 2000). Many of these settlements are still visible in

southern China. Another example is enclosed villages ("*weicun*"), such as the Jiqingwei in

Jingtian (Hong Kong) which has been well preserved and is now a popular tourist site. The

village was built in the 16th century in rectangle shape, with only one entrance, 7-meter high

brick walls surrounding the village and four corner towers guarding the village. With houses

densely lined up inside the village, only members of the Deng extended family can live in this

fortified village. While defense and protection were obvious purposes in both Hakka settlement

and enclosed villages, gates and walls helped to define a collective identity and provided a

psychological heaven for those inside to separate themselves from the "outsiders".

Thus, in traditional Chinese cities, behind the walls encircling the city territory, there

were walled neighborhoods under the *jiefang* system, which were further divided into enclosed

housing complexes often based on family/clan lineages. As Knapp (2000, p.38) says it well, "a

nested hierarch of elements – walls within walls – can be identified in each city." Ironically,

these spatial division and separation was intended to foster extremely close ties within mainly

extended households or clans, forming family/clan-based collectives. There were high

expectations for members inside to help each other and fulfill family/clan obligations, while

interactions with people outside were considered secondary.

On top of the physically enclosed neighborhoods, an administrative system, called

xiangli system, or later *baojia* system, emerged as early as in Qin Dynasty (221-207 B.C.) (Zhao,

2002), and persisted throughout the Chinese feudal history till the Chinese Communist Party

(CCP) took power in 1949. The goal of the *xiangli* system was to divide the society into small

units under a hierarchical system for population registration, tax collection, policy

implementation, and generally political control. Instead of using individual as unit as often is the

case in the West, the *xiangli* system used household (include extended household) as the basic

unit for organization, in consistency with the collectivism-oriented culture. For example, in the Han Dynasty (206 B. C. – 220 A.D.), ten households organized into a *wu* with a leader called *wu zhang*, ten *wu* formed a *li* headed by a *li zhang*, and ten *li* formed a *xiang* headed by a *xiang zhang*. These three leaders were usually respectable seniors, often called "three seniors", who were either informally elected by the community or assigned by local governments. Starting from the Song Dynasty (960 - 1279 A.D.), the *xiangli* system began to evolve into the *baojia* system that emphasized the integration of military and civilian services. In the Republic of China era (1911-1949), the *baojia* system was actively utilized by the government to collect tax, draft and train military personnel, and to campaign against the emerging CCP (Lin 1995), and the system is still functioning in Taiwan today. Thus the *baojia* system served more as part of the state machinery than a neighborhood/ community organization.

In summary, from the beginning of China's urban history to the late 1940s, Chinese cities had been characterized by enclosed neighborhoods because of the *jiefang* system in urban planning and traditional courtyard houses. While the spatial division and enclosure seem to fragmentize the society as argued by scholars who are against gated communities in the West, it in fact was a result of the collectivism-oriented culture based on family/clan to strengthen intra-collective connections. Furthermore, the *xiangli* (or *baojia*) system organized households into groups. While it to some degree broke the physical "barrier" imposed by walls and gates, it created larger "collectives" to facilitate political control. Thus, in pre-socialist China, neighborhood enclosure was, on the one hand, a result of family/clan-based collectivism deeply embedded in Chinese culture, on the other hand, a result of political control actively pursued by the government given constant political turmoil and dynasty changes. Despite spatial division, socio-economic disparity between enclosed neighborhoods was not obvious.

The Socialist Urban China (1949-1987)

Since the CCP took power in 1949, the socialist government was determined to break away from the feudal Chinese cities, and build new socialist cities. While the urban transformation was profound and multifaceted, two aspects were related to neighborhood enclosure: the massive construction of public housing in the form of work-unit (*danwei*) compounds, and the creation of Residents' Committees to replace the *baojia* system. Yet, as we will show in this section, despite the "new" forms of neighborhoods and "new" types of neighborhood governance, the central theme of collectivism and political control persisted.

After decades of wars in the first half of the 20th century, Chinese cities were in despair with severe housing problems such as housing shortage, lack of maintenance, and unequal distribution (Zhang, 1998; Wang and Murie, 1999). To align with its ideology that housing was part of social welfares, the newborn socialist government launched the Socialist Transformation of private housing, and invested heavily in the construction of public housing. The Socialist Transformation was to convert most existing private housing into public domain through various methods, and then allocate it among households with nominal rents (Zhang, 1998). The courtyard house complexes that were occupied by extended families, now were often shared by several unrelated families. Because of poor housing conditions, households often had to share private space such as kitchens and bathrooms in addition to public space such as the courtyard. With intensive daily interactions, households in these courtyards often developed a strong sense of connection with each other and a pseudo-family/clan relationship (e.g. seniors taking care of the neighbor's children and the young helping the senior with labor) despite the lack of actual family/clan ties and occasional interest conflicts.

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At the same time, new apartment buildings were built mostly in suburbs to meet growing housing needs. As combining work and living space together was one of the principles in socialist urban planning, public housing complexes were often built next to large employment centers such as factories and government agencies, forming so-called work-unit (*danwei*) compounds (Sit, 1995; Ma, 1981). These compounds were mostly enclosed territories with surrounding walls, and they provide not only housing but also public services such as clinics, schools, grocery stores, canteens and public bathhouse exclusively to their own members, such that they were often called the "mini-society" (Bian et al. 1997; Bray, 2005; Lu et al., 1997) (Photo 2). There were also guarded, some formally with guards in uniform standing next to gates monitoring every visitor, and others informally with vigilant senior residents volunteering at the entrances or nearby convenience stores. People living in these compounds are not only colleagues with intensive interactions at the workplace but also neighbors with close contacts at home as they all lived in the same complex if not the same building, went to the same canteen, bathhouse and the grocery store. Neighborhood disputes and household incidents were often brought to and resolved by the leaders of the work-unit instead of external professionals. Thus households living in these enclosed communities shared the same and strong attachment to their work-unit, which define them as members of the "large family". A collective identity was formed and a unique micro-culture often emerged among people living in work-unit compounds, especially large compounds for government ministries and departments in Beijing, the so called "big compound culture" *(dayuan wenhua)*. The work-unit compounds could be considered large and complex courtyard house complexes, where the common link was work-unit attachment instead of family/clan lineage. In addition to enclosing free urban land allocated to work units, the surrounding walls of work-unit compounds also served as tools to define collectives. Thus

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work-unit compounds created enclosed residential and social spaces based on occupation and industry.

Work-unit compounds were not only the basic economic and housing unit, but also the basic unit for political control. Work-units were organized in a hierarchical system along industry, such as the mechanical factory — the city bureau of mechanical industry— the provincial department of mechanical industry— the ministry of mechanical industry, the so-called vertical system (*tiaotiao*) (Wu, 2002). Policies were often passed down and information was passed up the hierarchy. Furthermore, each work-unit had a party branch, overseeing the work-unit's daily operation and stamping for its employees regarding almost every aspect of their lives including marriage and job change. By integrating economic institutions with political institutions, the system of work units was one of the basic mechanisms on the "road to serfdom" (Hayek, 1944).

While walled work-unit compounds replaced the *fang* and courtyard house complex as the basic residential form, Residents' Committees were created to replace the *baojia* system as the grassroots of the government for political control. For the socialist government, the *baojia* system was the basic tool for the feudal governments to control the people. Thus, replacing the *baojia* system with something new was considered to be a symbol to destroy the feudal system from the lowest level of the urban society. Yet, instead of voluntary self-governance organization, Residents' Committees served as the building block of the territorial administrative hierarchy (*kuaikuai*): residents' committees (*jumin weiyuan hui*)— street offices (*jiedao bangongshi*) — districts (*qu*)— municipalities (*shi*). A Residents' Committee governed an average of 100 to 700 households, while a Street Office administered a population of about 30,000 to 60,000 residents. For example, there are 1848 Residents' Committees, 103 Street

Offices and 8 Districts in Beijing (BBCA, 2003). The jurisdiction of one Residents' Committee may include one to several work-unit compounds, or a dozen courtyard house complexes. In the former case, Residents' Committees reported to not only the Street Office but also work units (Read, 2000). Staffs in Residents' Committees were paid government employees.

Headed by seniors and activists from the community, Residents' Committees served, and monitored and controlled residents at the same time. On the one hand, Residents' Committees organized social and civic activities for residents, delivered welfare benefits, helped the needy households, and solved disputes within the neighborhood. On the other hand, Residents' Committees carried out a number of administrative tasks such as family planning implementation and household registration. They also served as the local informants of the police and the government, which helped to maintain neighborhood security but also made it easier for political control (Read, 2000). Residents' Committees were especially important to households living in old housing districts where there was no equivalence of work-unit compounds. Thus, while work-unit compounds defined collectives through physical walls and common work-unit affiliations, Residents' Committees served and controlled their constituents, not very differently from the previous *baojia* system.

In summary, work-unit compounds added a new layer of neighborhood enclosure to the already walled Chinese cities. While it was a new residential pattern under the principles of socialist urban planning, the collectivism-oriented culture was still an underlying mechanism for walled work-unit compounds, with work-unit attachment serving to define the collective. In addition, by incorporating economic, social and political functions together, the system of work-unit compound facilitated political control through the vertical system. At the same time, Residents' Committees served as the "nerve tips" of the territorial administrative system, further

monitoring and controlling residents under their jurisdiction. Thus, despite new forms of

housing development and new forms of neighborhood governance, collectivism and political

control remained the underlying forces for neighborhood enclosure in the socialist era.

Chinese Cities Under Housing Reform (1988-)

Since the late 1970s, China has launched a series of profound reforms to transform the

country toward a market-oriented economy. One of the most important reforms is the housing

reform, launched in 1988, which aims to privatize the welfare-oriented housing system and

introduce market mechanisms into the system. While existing public housing is sold with heavy

subsidies, new private housing ("commodity housing") provided by developers has mushroomed

(Huang and Clark, 2002). Ranging from the low-end affordable housing to high-end villa

complexes, private housing estates are equipped with not only traditional walls, gates and

guards, but also sophisticated security and monitoring system such as intercom, surveillance

camera, infrared alarm systems, and card activated entrances (Photo 3, 4, 5). Furthermore,

public services in these private communities, such as street cleaning, garbage disposal and

security that were provided by the government or work-units, are now provided by developers or

professional Property Management Companies (*wuye guanli gongsi*), and residents have to pay

monthly/yearly fees for these services. Thus scholars have identified these private housing

estates as "gated communities", or "enclosed residential quarters" (*fengbi shi zhuzhai xiaoqu*) as

they are called in China, and attribute them to similar factors such as security concerns due to

higher crime rates reported than in previous decades and private provision of public services as

is the case in the States (Miao, 2003; Giroir, 2004, Wu, 2004). Although globalization and the

two Western-based discourses -- the discourse of fear and the club realm of services – can partly

explain the gating of these private housing estates, they fail to explain the choice of a specific

gated community or the spatial differentiation of urban Chinese households. Instead, we argue

that collectivism and political control still underlie this new wave of neighborhood enclosure in

Chinese cities.

While there is a public outcry against gated communities in the West (e.g. Davis 1992),

both the government and the public have embraced this new wave of gating in Chinese cities.

For the government, gating becomes a simple tool to control crimes and thus achieve social

stability and political control (Miao, 2003). With increasing inequality and unprecedented crime

rates during the market transition, the government considers maintaining social stability as its

topmost political concern. Thus, "enclosed residential quarters" are sanctioned by national

planning codes and it becomes the basic unit in planning and developing residential construction

(Miao, 2003). Even in old housing areas, government-sponsored urban renewal often closes

minor streets to create gated communities (Miao, 2003). Gating is also considered one of the

critical measures in evaluating the performances of local governments by the Ministry of Public

Security and CCP Central Committee on Comprehensive Management of Public Security

(Zhong, 1998). In Beijing, three bureaus of the municipal government including the Bureau of

Public Security jointly issued an order in 2000, requiring that all residential quarters fit to be

gated should be so to ensure safety (www.cmen.net, 2002). While there is a debate on whether

gating actually reduces crime in Chinese cities (Su, 2000; Wang et al., 2001; Miao, 2003), it is

clear that the government has adopted gating as a new means to achieve social stability and thus

political control.

In addition to the physical design of residential development, the government tries to

maintain its tight control over its population through administrative (re-)organization. Since

Residents' Committees function well with close personal contacts and detailed local knowledge, they can no longer serve the government and the community in newly built private housing estates. The physical design of new housing estates, with surrounding walls, card activated entrances, high-rise apartment buildings and detached villas, discourages social interactions especially between "insiders" and "outsiders". This makes it difficult for the staff of Residents' Committees, who may not live in these estates, to work for and communicate with residents who are also less accessible than before because of modern life style. In addition, private housing has been developed so quickly especially in suburbs that Residents' Committees have not been set up yet in many neighborhoods. Thus there is a "vacuum" in urban governance in these new housing areas (Wu, 2002).

Since 1994, Homeowners' Associations (*yezhu weiyuanhui*) have been encouraged by the Ministry of Construction[1] in new housing estates. They are grassroots self-govern organizations with their members from their communities and elected by residents, and they are expected to represent residents' interests and have the right to choose property management companies. While they perform some of the functions of Residents' Committees, they are not part of the administrative apparatus and they do not perform administrative tasks such as family planning enforcement and household registration. Yet, the government does not want Homeowners' Associations to be "pure" self-govern neighborhood organizations. There are many restrictions on the establishment and roles of Homeowners' Associations. According to the State Council (2003), the formation of a Homeowners' Association has to be "under the direction of the district, county government and housing administrative agencies" (p.5) and it has to "inform its

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1 In 1994, the Ministry of Construction issued a document (No. 33) titled "Methods for Managing New Urban Residential Neighborhoods".

decisions to relevant Residents' Committee, and sincerely listen to and take Residents'

Committee's suggestions" (p. 9). Furthermore, Homeowners' Associations have to work with

the public security agencies and Residents' Committees to maintain social security in its

jurisdiction (State Council, 2003). Having witnessed the ability of Homeowners' Associations to

mobilize its residents, the Ministry of Construction becomes less enthusiastic and the

government has limited the role of Homeowners' Associations further.

Despite the government's monitoring and control over Homeowners' Associations, they

cannot fill the "vacuum" in urban governance. Thus a new campaign of "community building"

(*shequ jianshe*) was launched in 2000. The concept of "community" (*shequ)* and "community

service" (*shequ fuwu*) was originally raised by the Ministry of Civil Affairs in 1986. After years

of debate, design and testing, the Ministry of Civil Affairs raised the target from community

service to community building, and promoted nationwide community building in 2000[2]. The

goal is to better serve the public in a new environment characterized by the demise of work-

units, influx of migrants, and higher unemployment and crime rates. Thus Community

Committees (*shequ weiyuanhui*) and Community Service Centers are set up, often at the spatial

level equivalent to Residents' Committees or combination of Residents' Committees (Huang,

2002; Ministry of Civil Affair, 2004). Thus it is not uncommon to see Residents' Committees

wearing multiple hats. While claimed to be self-governance organizations, Community

Committees serve similar administrative functions as those by Residents' Committees (old wine

in a new bottle) in addition to diverse, some new, social services. Furthermore, a party branch is

set up in each community, overseeing community building (Guo, 2004); and there are multiple

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2 In 2000, the Ministry of Civil Affair published "A Suggestion on Promoting Nationwide Community Building",
which was approved by the State Council in the same year (No. 23).

branches of government agencies in Community Service Centers (photo 6). Thus Community

Committees and Community Service Centers, although appealing, are still part of the

administrative apparatus to facilitate political control in a changing environment. As Wu (2002)

said well, the vacuum in urban governance is filled by extension of government functions into

the base level rather than by self-organized local governance.

While gating together with new urban institutions facilitates the government to exercise

political control, it is also embraced by the public, ironically. In addition to obvious desire for

safety[3] and exclusive access to neighborhood amenities[4], walls and gates are again tools to

define collectives. While family/clan lineage and common work unit affiliation are no longer

significant, socio-economic status and life style have become the key to form collectives and

collective identity. With the emergence of a housing market, a socio-spatial sorting is clearly

taking place in Chinese cities (Huang, 2005). Instead of only for the rich and middle class as is

the case in the West, an enclosed neighborhood is the housing form for the overwhelmingly

majority of Chinese urban residents, including migrants in dilapidated enclaves (Zhang, 2001).

In addition to housing price that sorts households into different types of gated communities,

developers often have to define a unique collective identity attached to their estates to attract

households who are choosing from many gated communities with similar prices. Socioeconomic

status, architectural design, life style, and exclusive amenities are often used to promote

collective identities. For example, SOHO China, one of the most influential developers in

China, developed several estates in Beijing such as SOHO New Town which stands out among

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3 The increasingly high crime rate resulted from the market transition has forced households to create safe homes.
In addition to safety door and safety windows, surrounding walls and guarded gates at the neighborhood level offer
another layer of protection at least psychologically, as there is a debate on whether gating actually reduces crimes
(e.g. Miao, 2003; Su, 2000).
4 For example, swimming pools and playgrounds are common in gated communities. Some even have tennis

numerous estates with colorful high-rise apartment buildings, artistic interior design, brand-name stores and art shops, fully equipped club house and proximity to the CBD (http://www.sohochina.com). It promotes an American urban lifestyle for the emerging young professionals in Beijing by creating neighborhoods similar to the SoHo area in Manhattan (New York City). One of its high-end housing complexes with avant-garde architecture, later turned into a hotel complex, is called "Commune by the Great Wall", which ironically uses the highest degree of collectivism to sell the most private space. Thus, the collective is redefined again, but through similar socio-economic status, similar interests in property and life style, instead of family or work unit connection as is the case before.

In summary, gated communities have become more popular and widespread since the housing reform. The increasing concerns for security and the privatized provision of public services are undoubted factors. Yet, enclosed neighborhoods have also been actively promoted by the government to maintain social stability and to facilitate political control. The government's control over Homeowners' Associations and its campaign of community building further demonstrate the government's attempt to control its population in a new environment. At the same time, the public embraces enclosed neighborhoods because of not only safety concerns but also collective identities and life styles defined by developers. With the demise of work-unit and the dominance of nuclear family, socio-economic status and life style have become the main factors for people to live together behind walls. In other words, despite dramatic changes in the housing system and neighborhood governance, collectivism and political control remain the underlying forces for neighborhood enclosure in the reform era.

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courts, gyms, and lakes.

Conclusions and Discussion

Using a historical and cultural perspective, we have demonstrated that collectivism - oriented culture deeply embedded in the Chinese society and tight political control actively pursed by the government are the underlying factors for the ubiquity and continuity of gating in Chinese cities. The *jiefang* system with courtyard houses in traditional Chinese cities, the work-unit compounds with uniform apartment buildings in the socialist era, and now private housing estates with various architecture designs are all enclosed neighborhoods with surrounding walls and restrict access, one way or another. The physical form of enclosed neighborhoods help to define and foster collectives, although based on different criterion over time, such as family/clan lineage in pre-socialist era, same work unit affiliation during the socialist era, and now similar socioeconomic status and life style. With a collectivism-oriented culture, Chinese have always lived in enclosed neighborhoods without hesitation, while the government actively promotes gating to maintain social stability and political control. In addition, the lowest level of the territorial administrative system, from "three seniors" in the *baojia* system, to Residents' Committees and Community Committees, often corresponds with enclosed neighborhoods, which further facilitates political control. The government's restriction and control of Homeowners' Associations, a supposedly self-governance organization, is another example of political control in private gated communities. In China, gating itself does not necessarily means privacy and withdrawal of the state.

It is clear from our findings that the cultural and political meaning of residential enclosure in China differs both in social production and social construction from gated communities in the United States based on profound differences in the architectural and cultural history. But this comparison has enabled us to question the two dominant discourses explaining

gating -- the economic efficiency model and fear of crime and others. These theories do not adequately explain the cultural, political, and historical differences in we have observed in the respective socio-spatial and governance patterns. For example, gated and walled communities have always existed China, but not in the United States, yet both regions exhibit similar patterns of urban development. Further, the expansion of private communities is supported by Chinese cities where state control of housing is still strong and not supported in the United States where state support of housing is rapidly deteriorating. These inconsistencies suggest a new approach to the available data is necessary.

Utilizing the data from our previous discussion, we suggest that a series of dimensions should be compared and contrasted to understand the differences in these two contexts and to search for another way to discuss the gating phenomena. The following chart arrays our preliminary analyzes of the two patterns of gating/enclosure:

Comparison of China enclosure and US gated communities

Dimensions	US	China
Cultural traditions of housing	Open residential landscape especially in suburbia, gating is a new architectural and planning form	Long history of all residential enclosed by walls and gates, not a significant change
Role of the state	Ambivalent. Growing cities and towns encourage gated communities as a means of expanding their infrastructure and tax base. Some governments and citizens fight these developments as exclusionary.	Encourages building of enclosed residential compounds as a strategy to maintain stability and control crime. Allows expansion of housing with tie and political control of the state
Citizenship	Gated communities seen as "succession" from the rest of the region.	Reinforces citizenship

Cultural meaning and identity	Creates a new definition of community in which a wall defines who is inside and who is out. Increases privacy and individualism to some extent, but also generates homeowners associations, a collective structure, but which does not work to increase community solidarity	Reinforces collective identity – the specific meaning of the collectivity changes with historical context
Governance	Homeowners associations is based on private contract law; shift to private governance for all public goods and services	The *baojia* system and Residents Associations served as expansion of the state. Homeowners Associations are not true grassroots organizations, and are under tight control of local governments. Its impact is yet to be seen.
Discourse of the private or club realm (provision of urban goods and services)	Particularly in rapidly growing regions and states where taxes have been restricted by legislation, residents	Does not seem relevant in China until recently. But issues of provision of public goods might be a good area to look for differences in these housing forms.
Moral minimalism	Many residents want to live in a situation where they can avoid contact with other residents over conflicts	Family/clan leaders, the "three seniors", Resident's Associations or Homeowners Associations often handle conflicts between households
Access to public space	One negative outcome of gating is reduced access to valued public space	Since housing was always enclosed, access to "public space" is less an issue
Niceness	Residents are looking for a "nice community" where they will live with others like themselves	Gating itself does not ensure niceness.
Discourse of fear	Major reason for why move to a gated community even though crime rate is low	Unclear how much of a factor, but certainly a factor for the government. Increasing crime rates are important from the point of view of residents.

What this comparison analysis suggests is that for any study of gating/enclosure, a number of dimensions must be considered and evaluated. The result would produce what in our introduction we called a "layered" model of gating which would go beyond the simplistic discourses of economics and fear, and include the role of the state, cultural context and meaning, and historical development in understanding the phenomena. For example each of the following elements would have to be considered to explain the differences we have observed in gating/enclosure:

1. **Historical context and meaning of emergence of gated housing**: In the US gating is only residential option for the rich and usually luxury or hunting retreats, while in China it is a standard house form.

2. **Cultural context and meaning**: Exclusivity and security in US versus collective identity in China.

3. **Role of the State**: Gating is discouraged in US while encouraged in China.

4. **Economic drivers**: Developers and local governments join together for "cash cow" of gating, while in China it is unclear although some are privately financed.

5. **Degree of public/private provision of services**: Privatization in US and both public and private provision in China.

6. **Emotional and social drivers**: discourse of fear of crime and others in US and some discourse of fear in China.

This multidimensional analysis–what we have called a layered model of gating–provides a more nuanced understanding of the culturally distinct nature of what might look on the surface to be similar residential housing changes. In fact, we argue that these walled residential communities are not necessarily the same phenomena and emerged from very different cultural,

historical and political contexts. This is important when evaluating our chapter in terms of the themes of this book, in fact, gating in China is more local in meaning and production and not an example of globalization. At the very least, enclosed residential communities in China–if influenced by globalization at all–are fundamentally Chinese in creation and meaning.

Photo 1 A recently renovated courtyard house in downtown Beijing

Photo 2 Guarded entrance of a work-unit compound in Shenzhen

Photo 3 Guarded entrance of Purple Jade Villa, an upscale gated community in Beijing

Photo 4 Guarded entrance of an affordable housing estate for low-medium income
households in Beijing

Photo 5 Code protected entrance to a building in an enclosed neighborhood for mostly university faculty and staff in Beijing

Photo 6 Multiple government agencies in a Community Service Center in Wuxi (The labels above the door indicate that the center is also the site for the community police office, the property management company, the Residents' Committee, community party branch, and the red-cross volunteers association)

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