

From Closed District to Open District: Urban Space Reorganization and Governance Innovation

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Abstract: In recent years, the governance model of closed urban districts has gradually revealed various problems, such as the isolation of social space, the shortage of public space and traffic congestion. Based on this, urban spatial reorganization and social governance innovation behind open blocks have been proposed and accepted by more and more people. The transition from a closed community to an open block is not just a question of “demolition of the wall” or “no wall construction”, but should be seen behind the hidden urban spatial restructuring and grassroots governance innovation. At the same time, in the process of promoting the open block mode, it is necessary to solve the key problems of security, property rights and autonomy hidden behind it, and realize the transformation from closed management to block management through the opening of space.

1. Introduction

Urban community, as the basic unit of social grass-roots governance, is an important carrier and main grasp of national governance, social management and people's lives. It has been a long time since the founding of the PRC. The construction of urban communities in China follows the design and operation mode of closed communities, and plays an important role in the effective governance of the country, the long-term stability of the society, and people's living and working in peace and contentment. With the continuous development of society, in recent years, the governance model of urban closed community has gradually revealed various problems, such as the isolation of social space, the shortage of public space and traffic congestion. The incompatibility and inadaptability between the closed community model and the current social development in the new era and the new situation make more and more people begin to examine the advantages and disadvantages of the traditional closed community. Based on this, the open block and the hidden urban space reorganization and social governance innovation behind it are proposed and accepted by more people. Closed communities and open blocks, these two different urban community governance models deserve further exploration.

2. The Historical Process of Traditional Closed Residential Areas

Overseas, for the development of closed communities, William Fogg defines closed communities as "products based on privacy, security and prestige considerations".(William Falk 2007) [1]. Scholars Blackley and Snyder argue that it is "the result of the rich seeking to separate themselves from the chaotic industrial city blocks" by "privatizing public space and restricting access to residential areas surrounded by fences and fences".(Blakely & Snyder 1997) [2]. After the 1970s, closed communities gradually “diversified, cross-stratified and universalized“ based on factors such as clan, class, and territory.(Grant & Mittelsteadt 2004; Sanchez,Lang,& Dhavale, 2005; Vesselinov, 2006; Genis 2007).In the 1980s and 1990s, under the interaction of the transformation of the national economic system, the pursuit of interests by developers, and the promotion of the market economy, “more and more are being adopted to meet people’s consideration of a safer living environment. Closed communities of safety facilities are built and enter the market”(Martin Coy, 2006).In the mid-1990s, closed community security and cultural identity were questioned, “it was

privatized by space...causing the fragmentation of urban architectural space and deepening into social psychology, fragmentation and isolation of hierarchical structure“(Martin Coy, 2006) .

In China, since the founding of the People's Republic of China, urban community construction in China has mainly developed from unit-type community under planned economy to commercial housing community under market economy. Closed community has also undergone the stages of unit and de-unit. It has an important impact on the management of the state and society and on the lifestyle of the residents. At the same time, the advantages and disadvantages of different periods are also obvious.

3. Unit-type Closed Community under Planned Economy

After the founding of the People's Republic of China, the development and planning of our cities, the organization and governance of our society, fully considering and relying on the unit system under the planned economic system. For a long time, the closed community is equivalent to the unit compound, and even large-scale, super-large unit-type communities have not only affected the planning and design of the city, but also gradually developed into small and small cities. Until now, there is still such a large unit community.

The existence of unit community has a profound impact on the way of life of residents. From the perspective of community security, unit communities mostly use entity courtyard walls to isolate community space from social space. Non-unit personnel or foreign visitors generally need to go through registration, claim and other ways to enter the community, which provides security for the residents of the community. From the perspective of psychological affiliation, the residents in the unit community mostly use the relationship of colleagues as the basic connection link, and they get along in the closed limited space for a long time, which makes the residents have more opportunities for objective communication, and mutual recognition is accumulated. Units and sense of belonging to the community continue to increase. From the perspective of grassroots governance, the existence of units and unit communities has stabilized the space of public society, the provision of public services has been guaranteed, and the channels of public communication have been smoothed. This provides a major focus and effective path for grassroots governance in China's cities. But at the same time it also brings the disadvantages of different units and different compartments, which is not conducive to more efficient exchanges at the city level. From the perspective of urban planning, considering the limited nature of land resources and public service resources in the same city, and the differences in the demand for various types of resources in different cities in the same city, it often causes inconsistencies and differences between urban development and development of unit communities. The conflicts between the interests of the unit community and the conflicts between the demands of various unit communities in different periods are a huge challenge for the overall planning of the city. From the perspective of urban mobility, the existence and development of unit communities often cause the separation of the overall space of the city, especially the existence of physical courtyard walls, which to some extent has caused the phenomenon of “city in the city“ and “zone in the district“. Not conducive to the overall planning and effective communication of the city. From the perspective of urban traffic operation, the existence of closed communities will inevitably have an important impact on the traffic micro-circulation. Even the construction of some large and medium-sized unit communities will limit the traffic efficiency of the entire city.

3.1 Closed Commodity Housing Community under Market Economy

With the gradual transformation of planned economy to market economy, the unit system has gradually withdrawn from the historical stage, the operation mode of the unit community occupational-residential integration and independent honeycomb has gradually collapsed, and the original unit housing has gradually been privatized. New urban residents began to buy commercial housing from developers and promote the continuous development of the commercial housing community.

From the point of view of living environment, the commercial housing community in the future

is often better than the traditional unit community in overall planning and convenient design, which makes a large number of residents enjoy a higher quality of life. From the point of view of identity attributes, using housing prices to distinguish the residents of residential areas and the mode of commercial residential areas with income level as the main screening factor has a great impact on the identity attributes of residents. Traditional life styles such as unit courtyards and close neighborhoods have been seriously affected, and the residential space represented by unit identity basically no longer exists. From the perspective of closedness of the community, compared with the traditional unit community, the physical courtyard wall of the commercial housing community has been loosened, and many large and medium-sized unit communities have been broken down into smaller communities. Many newly built commercial housing communities can obey the service at the beginning of establishment. Planning and construction of the city. However, due to the monopoly appeal for the use of community space, commercial housing communities mostly adopt physical wall, access control system, greening isolation and other means, so that the space of the community is still in isolation or semi-isolation, which is for the city as a whole. The promotion of liquidity and the development of overall planning still have certain negative effects.

3.2 An Analysis of the Advantages and Disadvantages of Traditional Closed Residential Areas

Analyzing different types of closed residential areas in different historical stages, we can easily find that they have many similarities in pros and cons.

3.2.1 Advantages of Closed Community

First, basic security needs can be met. Whether it is the strong control of traditional units or the entrance guard system of commercial housing communities, it plays an important role in the basic security of residents in residential areas. Especially in the contemporary era, facing various problems brought about by the transformation and development, including large population mobility, complex composition of social personnel, and sharp increase in crime rate, the closed community system is an important guarantee for many residents to meet their security needs. Second, the basic quality of living can be guaranteed. The current residents' pursuit of greening, tranquility, privacy and other factors in the living environment makes the closed community system still have a large market. With the continuous enhancement of citizens' individual consciousness, many residential areas, especially the residents in middle and high-grade residential areas, have increased their voices for the closed mode of residential areas. Thirdly, the boundary of public services can be divided. With the help of the division of closed communities, the private property of residents and communities can be effectively distinguished from the public property of cities and society. At the same time, it also provides operating space for personalized and efficient services within the communities. Fourth, the pursuit of personal identity can be realized. The differences in housing prices, geographical location, and appreciation potential of different communities reflect the differences in income levels, social status, and even social identity of community residents. The community has gradually evolved into a tool to demonstrate the personality of residents. Its existence can meet the pursuit of individual identity by different community residents to a certain extent.

Generally speaking, scholars who support closed communities consider it to be a positive form of social space organization, because it causes the homogenization of internal communities, reduces internal conflicts due to internal identification, eliminates external conflicts due to external isolation, and avoids violent crimes and potential dangers from open urban space. (Wilson 2000) [3]. At the same time, it plays a role in the integration of external integration of the community, creating opportunities for the coexistence of different levels of residential areas, which in turn allows for social integration at a higher level. (Manzi T 2005; Asiedu 2009) [4].

3.2.2 Disadvantages in Closed Residential Areas

First, the overall mobility of the city is limited, and the isolation between units, districts and groups brought about by closed districts makes the mobility of the city insufficient, and also causes various potential contradictions. Secondly, the social space is artificially isolated. Residents can not

fully communicate and interact not only in living space, but also in the way of daily life. The barriers between different income classes are solidifying day by day, and the path of communication and understanding is narrowing. Third, the public activities are gradually decreasing. Especially after the commercial housing closed community gradually replaces the closed community, the strangeness, preparedness and alienation between the neighborhoods gradually replace the trust, mutual assistance and intimacy of the past. The residents' psychological belongings are declining and empty nests. Psychological problems such as illness and hollow disease are endless. Fourth, it is a constraint on urban planning, especially the negative impact on urban traffic problems, and restrictions on urban micro-circulation roads. Closed communities have made the road network construction a huge challenge, causing inconvenience to the daily travel of urban residents.

Generally speaking, many contemporary scholars believe that closed communities will lead to privatization of urban space and social isolation, and may cause a series of serious social problems, including "residential isolation". (Mike Davis 1990; Falk 2007) ,"Urban fragmentation" (including spatial fragmentation)(Davis 1992) Fragmentation of culture and psychology (Vesslinov et al. 2007, etc.) [5], "Social Inequality" (Madanipour 2006), etc.

4. Advantages and Disadvantages of Open Streets

Based on the full weighing of the advantages and disadvantages of the traditional closed community and the prudent judgment of the social and economic development situation in the new era, the open block model has been put forward and practiced by more and more people. It emphasizes the mode of residential district surrounded and crossed by urban public roads, eliminating the physical courtyard walls as far as possible, and reasonably opening and sharing. On February 6, 2016, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council issued "Several Opinions on Further Strengthening the Management of Urban Planning and Construction", which clearly pointed out that "the structure of block road network should be optimized. Strengthen the planning and construction of neighborhoods, clarify the area of new neighborhoods step by step, and promote the development of open, convenient, appropriate scale, complete supporting and harmonious neighborhood living blocks. At the same time, the opinion further pointed out that "new residential buildings should promote the block system. In principle, closed residential quarters will no longer be built. The completed residential quarters and unit complexes should be gradually opened to realize internal road publicization, solve the problem of traffic road network layout, and promote Land conservation and utilization." Behind the planning and layout of "narrow roads, dense road networks, open blocks, and space publicity", more problems are reflected in the reorganization and governance innovation of urban space.

4.1 Advantages of Open Block

First, the convenience of urban transportation, especially the sharing of roads within the community, will greatly improve the improvement of urban road network and the smooth flow of road microcirculation. Especially for large and medium-sized cities with high degree of traffic congestion, the traffic convenience brought by open blocks is particularly obvious. Second, the sharing and sharing of public facilities, such as parks, courtyards, recreational facilities, green landscapes, fitness equipment, recreational facilities and so on, can achieve greater efficiency in the open block mode and avoid waste of resources. The third is the promotion of daily communication among residents, especially the space and platform for communication between different income classes and different social groups, which plays a positive role in reducing social friction and harmonious social relations. At the same time, the full exchange of residents between different open blocks and the vigorous development of various activities are also beneficial to the improvement of the relationship between neighbors and the relief of the psychological pressure of urban residents.

4.2 Disadvantages of Open Streets

First, the original private space of the community has been broken, and the quiet and private space has gradually disappeared. Especially for the residents of the middle and high-grade

community, the quality of life has been forced to decline. Secondly, security has been weakened. Considering the increasing complexity of the social stratum and the rising crime rate, after the opening of the closed community, all kinds of people can enter and leave the community at will, including many idle and illegal personnel, and all kinds of social vehicles can drive freely on the roads inside the community, which will bring potential threats to the security of residents in the community. Thirdly, public facilities are occupied. The original vegetation, courts, parking spaces, fitness equipment and recreational facilities in the community are likely to be occupied by outside personnel. Considering the insufficiency of public goods in the current society as a whole, this problem may not be solved in the short term, which makes many residential areas, especially middle and high-grade residential owners feel unfair. Fourth, in terms of property rights, public space, public services, and public benefits in many communities were originally shared by community owners. When more and more outsiders enter the community and enjoy relevant public services, it is undoubtedly the unpaid enjoyment of the property rights of the community.

5. Urban spatial reorganization and grassroots governance innovation behind open blocks

It should be further pointed out that the transformation from closed residential area to open residential area is not only a problem of "demolishing the wall" or "not building the wall", but also a hidden problem of urban space reorganization and grass-roots governance innovation. At the same time, in the process of promoting the open block mode, it is necessary to solve the key problems of security, property rights and autonomy hidden behind it, and realize the transformation from closed management to block management through the opening of space [6].

5.1 Conceptual change

It is necessary and inevitable to see the transformation from closed district to open district. This is not only conducive to the realization of public internal roads, optimize the layout of transportation network, promote land conservation and utilization, but also conducive to the modernization of urban space and governance. At the same time, the essence of the closed community to the open block is the transformation and transformation of urban space and grassroots governance. It requires adjustment, reform and innovation of the current urban public service and management system and governance methods. This is an inevitable requirement for urban development and grassroots governance innovation.

In promoting the realization of the concept change, we should pay full attention to the two-way communication of the open block policy, so that residents are fully aware of the process, mode, advantages and disadvantages of the open block, and ensure the feedback channels of their opinions. For residents' doubts, criticisms and puzzles, we should respond promptly and explain them well. As for the security, property rights and public services problems brought about by the opening of blocks, we should make a good plan in advance, through the joint efforts of public security, streets, communities, greening, city appearance and other departments, to eliminate residents' doubts about the opening of blocks. In addition, it is a long-term process to create an atmosphere of understanding and acceptance of the block system in the whole society. It is necessary to continuously increase its propaganda, interpretation, education and guidance during this period. The promotion of the success stories in the neighborhood has enabled more residents to truly accept the open block model.

5.2 Action promotion

At present, the promotion of block system is facing four prominent problems: security worries, contradictions of property rights, autonomous rights and interests, and the effectiveness of compensation. It is also facing the adjustment of laws, systems and policies of urban land development, housing system, property management and urban management. It also involves local and grass-roots financial support and compensation capacity [7]. Therefore, in the next promotion process, the opening of the community and the construction of the block must follow the principles of scientific planning and gradual progress, rational distribution and orderly advancement.

First, we should fully recognize the differences in the actual situation of different communities and communities. In the process of promotion, we should follow the actual situation and adapt to local conditions, and avoid using administrative means to force rapid promotion. We should conduct extensive investigation and evaluation beforehand, and first carry out small-scale and small-scale pilot projects, and gradually spread the successful experience of the pilot projects. Secondly, we should fully understand the different situations among cities, which involve the city's safety and security capacity, road capacity, the number of closed residential areas, the ability to provide public goods, the level of education of the people, etc. All these factors will affect the opening time, level, degree and steps of residential areas, which can only vary from time to place, and can not be popularized in all respects. The third is to speed up the transformation of government functions, increase relevant investment, and vigorously improve the ability to provide public goods. The responsibility for security, vegetation greening, public order, and infrastructure that was originally undertaken by closed communities will be gradually transferred to the relevant departments of the government. And security. In exchange for the increase in the provision and protection of public goods and public services, in exchange for residents' support for the opening of the community. Fourth, further develop relevant legal systems to clarify the property rights common to the residents of the original community. For example, for internal roads, public facilities, parking lots, etc., as soon as possible, the rights and interests that are damaged by the openness can be compensated. Obtaining rights due to openness can be guaranteed.

6. Conclusion

It is imperative to move from a closed community to an open block. The essence of this transformation is the innovation of urban spatial reorganization and grassroots governance, which includes key issues such as security, property rights and autonomy. Only by clarifying the boundaries, essences, countermeasures, and methods of the above-mentioned problems can we truly realize the opening of the community and the implementation of the block system.

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