

**Exploring a New Dimension of Residential Differentiation in Urban
China under Market Transition: A Study of Suburban Residential Enclaves**

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Abstract

Along with the penetration of market mechanism in urban housing provision, the traditional residential space in urban China is under fundamental reconstructing. The housing market has become a major force reshaping the urban residential pattern. The study seeks to analyze the implications of real estate development on the urban periphery for residential restructuring and assess to what extent it has resulted in a new dimension of residential differentiation, using Panyu, Guangzhou as a case study.

The housing reform has released enormously suppressed housing demand, exerting great pressure on urban housing provision. The commodity housing building boom on the urban periphery has engendered large-scale population reshuffling from the inner city to suburban communities. There emerges many “suburban residential enclaves” on former rural land. Residential enclaves are setting themselves off from the surrounding urban matrix through control of access. They are geographically distant from the city center, but closely tied to it economically. Leapfrog growth has burdened public infrastructure. The homebuyers cannot enjoy urban public services in the enclaves like normal urban residents unless they pay higher price. The conflict between the fast market-driven development and the lag in urban political and institutional reforms contribute to the formation of the suburban residential enclaves.