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ID 1680 | THE (IN)CONSISTENT COMMUNITY BOUNDARIES: TEMPORALITY IN MULTIPLE SOCIAL-SPATIAL INTERACTIONS

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ABSTRACT: Boundaries are temporal. The perception of a boundary is an interactive process in relation to specific social contexts. This article investigates the temporality of community boundaries, focusing on their social-spatial interactions through performatives, which contribute to both the inconsistency and consistency of the perceived boundaries, and analyzes the dynamic community boundaries in time with empirical evidences from two typical Beijing neighborhoods. Building on an analogy with theater performances, the article brings forward a conceptual framework for the understanding and analysis of community boundaries in urban space, with a focus on the stimulators of spatial-temporal transformations. The temporality of boundaries can be understood in two perspectives, situational and representational. While the former promotes inconsistency of boundaries with ruptures and shifts, the latter brings consistency to boundaries through bring diachronic, repeating perceptions to the contemporary spaces. The temporality of community boundaries implies a connection of the neighborhood and surrounding urban areas. The more a community is integrated, the more changes and shifts take place to the boundaries, which hence become flexible, tolerant, and porous with publicness.

KEYWORDS: boundary, temporality, social-spatial interactions, urban Beijing

1 INTRODUCTION

A community boundary indicates a transition from private or communal territories to open and anonymous city spaces. The demarcation of a community, as well as the distinction of self from otherness, is expressed in the definition of community boundaries. In mornings, people travelling from home to a city street, transitions of territories are marked by joints of streets, changes of openness and noises. During the day, senior citizens move through different places in a neighborhood, social thresholds are delineated by individual definition of identities, according to the relation between herself and other people. In summer, spaces are lively and crowded, the experience of boundaries become various and ambiguous, and more tolerance are given to strangers and foreign behaviors. In winter, there is little activity. Physical environment is more influential in the perception of boundaries. The variation in the perception of boundaries suggests that physical materials are not the only indicator of boundaries. Boundaries are perceived socially, individually and in interactions. Boundaries are in dynamic. This article investigates the dynamic boundaries in temporality, through which a facet of the social-spatial connections in urban neighborhoods can be revealed.

This article answers the question "what is the community boundary at this moment?" investigates how boundaries occur and change in time, and highlights the importance of understanding community boundaries dynamically in urban design and research. We analyzes the seasonal, daily and temporary changes of community boundaries in two typical neighborhoods in Beijing, point out the two perspectives of understanding the temporality of boundaries, and bring forward a conceptual framework for the understanding and analysis of community boundaries in urban space, based on theater theories on performatives. The research draws on a long term qualitative field research during 2013-2016 at the neighborhood Xinyuanli and the Ocean Express in Beijing (Figure 1). Each neighborhood is examined through original methods as well as notes, photos, participatory observations, in-depth interviews, mental maps, etc. Building on an analogy with theater performances, the article brings forward a conceptual framework for the understanding and analysis of community boundaries in urban space, with a focus on the stimulators of spatial-temporal transformations.



Figure 1 – Location and masterplans of the two neighborhoods, left, location; middle, Xinyuanli; right, the Ocean Express

Xinyuanli is a typical "neighborhood unit" in urban Beijing, which was built between about 1965 and the late 1970s. After it was completed the units were distributed to different danweis . After the economic reform of 1978 , Xinyuanli went into the free immobile market, and slowly changed its social structure and close social relations due to the occupational connection from the danwei period. The Ocean Express is a typical commercial neighborhood and gated community which were built in 2004. The apartments were directly sold on the market and some are rented afterwards. The two neighborhoods locate near to each other, near the Sanyuanqiao Business District, which raises the average rents in both neighborhoods. While the Xinyuanli still accommodates some original residents from the Danwei time (senior citizens), as well as low-income workers in its basement and informal extensions, the Ocean Express with a higher price for management, is attractive to foreigners. The two neighborhoods can be representatives of "old" and "new" communities in Beijing.

Our perception of boundaries is both synchronic and diachronic. Merleau-Ponty (1945/2012) and the situationists focus on the first aspect by emphasizing the body in the perception of spaces. A space emerges only when bodily movements are seen and endowed with meanings for the spectator's understanding. Boundaries are "still here but already there" (Wolfrum & Janson, 2016, p. 87). Their own belongings, however, are ambiguous and to be defined, which requires understanding and interpretation in spatial situations. The second aspect is emphasized in the hermeneutics of Hans-Georg Gadamer (1975/2004) and Paul Ricoeur (1986/1991), where understanding and interpreting bring a text from one

context to another over time. At boundaries, bodily movements are understood and interpreted in each spectator's own context. This turns the perceptions of boundaries into an event of dialogs between various contexts (Zhu, 2017).

2 THE PERCEPTION OF COMMUNITY BOUNDARIES

The perception of boundaries is originated from the distinction of self from otherness. As Stavos Stavrides (2007) points out, boundaries both divide and bridges between the self and otherness. People encounter otherness, and when they consciously start to set up rules which distinguish themselves from others, boundaries are formed. For example, if someone watches at an open gate to a neighborhood, a strange would not boldly enter this gate, but a community member would do, or even have a small talk with the keeper. The community member does not think about his identity when he does so, while the stranger has to consider who he is and what the relationship between him and the community is at this moment. In this case, the gate is not a boundary to the community member, but a boundary to the stranger.

The perception of boundaries has a depth. As early as 1980s, the Japanese architect Ashihara Yoshinobu (1985) has paid attention to the boundary field where interactions between interior and exterior spaces take place. Kris Scheerlinck (2010) further represents the field into intelligible territorial depth. In different situations, people are allowed to reach the spaces at different depth, until where the boundary appears to them. At boundaries there is an uncertainty about rules. "Thresholds, like rituals, create conditions of intensity, transformation, the elevation of status and the blurring of social categories and rules" (Stevens 2007, P74). Boundaries rather appear in the perception of them, instead of being a law that preexists.

The relation with the surroundings is decisive for the perception of boundaries. Boundaries function as indicators of a territory only in the relationship with their surroundings (Norberg-Schulz, 1980). Keven Lynch (1960/1990) has mentioned the physical features decisive for the continuity of a territory - texture, space, shape, details, symbols, building types, functions, activities, residents, topography, etc. Boundaries are perceived where these features changes. Literatures on neighborhoods and society of China, along with first-hand observations and interviews in the two neighborhoods informed the focus on the followings features in the investigation for the perception of boundaries: physical stimulators, social interactions and management.

3 TEMPORALITY: SEASONAL, DAILY AND TEMPORARY BOUNDARIES IN DYNAMIC

3.1 SEASONAL BOUNDARIES

The boundaries of the two neighborhoods changes most significantly between winters and the other seasons, under the influence of the temperate monsoon climate of Beijing. The winter is cold and dry. The lowest temperature is about minus 10 degree Celsius, and can reach minus 20 degree Celsius occasionally. The air pollution is highest in winter. In 70-80% of the days in winter the PM2.5 index is above 100. Hence there are much less outdoor activities in winters. The springs and autumns are short in Beijing, and the summers are hot with rains sometimes.

3.1.1 SEASONAL BOUNDARIES OF XINYUANLI

The Xinyuanli neighborhood is surrounded by big city streets, and is further divided into several units by small inner streets with car lanes. Each unit consists of several yards with one or two residential building, and spaces between them. The yards were fenced and gated in the past, but today most of the gates are unwatched and open to everyone. Privatization is common at the spaces in front of building, which are further divided, occupied or fenced into parking spaces, extensions or front gardens.

Physical stimulators dominate the perception of boundaries in winters due to the reduction of outdoor activities. Spaces in front of buildings are understood as private territories as long as any object occurs there. Pavement or height changes in the yard mark the boundary of these spaces and no pedestrian in

the street transgress. Weather being against strolling strangers in the neighborhood, fences and gates of the yards do not set boundaries to residents who know the neighborhood good enough to shorten their route as possible to avoid the coldness.

Two service areas contribute to the gathering of residents in winter beside the busy vehicular and pedestrian flows at rush hours. One is the food market in a park next to the Airport Highway to the northeast of the neighborhood. Residents encounter each other on the way to it, to be specific, on the pedestrian walk of the city street between a small gate of the neighborhood in the west and the big crossroad where the street meets the Airport Highway. It is the path on daily routine of some of the residents in the west half of the neighborhood. On the side of the pedestrian walk next to the neighborhood, a wall separates the city street from the residential building facing it. The other side is separated from the motor traffic by parked cars. Residents on the way have nowhere else to go - they have to meet in this street, make a small talk, and walk away. The greetings and talks distinguish residents from strangers in the city. The boundary here appears not at the wall, but on the road. The second place is a street with two schools on its ends and retails along one side of the street between the schools. The retails serve both residents and pupils, where owners, residents, pupils and passers-by encounter each other. Their social identities are presented in the mixture of groups and boundaries can be felt due to their behaviors.

The property management in the neighborhood is run by the Residents' Committee, and covers merely the necessities, thus garbage collection, maintenance of public facilities and some of the parking spaces. The general management does not influence the boundaries much. However, there are autonomous yards that are closed and gated, and with better management. These yards have clear boundaries which do not change. In summer, various activities challenge the boundaries defined by physical indicators. At spaces in front of buildings, acquaintances of owners are invited into the gardens to sit and chat. Children play in the open spaces left next to buildings and on the steps. Crowds gather at shops and restaurants at yard gates. Their sitting, staying and dining outside turn the spaces at gates into lively places. Strangers hesitate to pass the gate under the watch of the crowd. The boundary space defined by a gate on the one hand spreads between territories as a place on its own, and on the other hand emphasized to strangers.

Boundaries based on social interactions vary in summer as well. While the situation at the pedestrian walk with the wall remains similar, the street with schools is much livelier. Shop owners extend spaces of their shops by carrying out living activities in the street. The boundaries are pushed to the middle of the street. Pupils crowd into the street and shops. Their movements connect the spaces in and outside the shops together, including care lanes. The range of the lively street turns bigger too. Pupils walk in groups into streets in the neighborhood, and play while walking. The playing continues in yards and in front of building. The whole neighborhood is connected into a continuous playing space. Its boundaries are pushed to the surrounding city streets. Beside those two places, spaces with mixing identities appear in the community park and at the service center with offices, event rooms and shops, which attract outsiders to come. Activities of senior citizens such as group dancing, Taiji, Pingpang, or simply sitting and chatting keep these two places busy the whole day. The yards nearby become more open thanks to the frequently passing residents and outsiders (Figure 2).



Figure 2 – Seasonal boundaries of Xinyuanli, upper row, summer; lower row, winter.

3.1.2 SEASONAL BOUNDARIES OF THE OCEAN EXPRESS

The Ocean Express is closed by annexes and fences. A guarded gate and a side gate in the east with digital lock are the only entrances to the neighborhood. In front of the main gate there is a plaza with old trees, which is visually connected to the inner garden, but is divided by fences from the latter. The street circling the neighborhood serves only two neighborhoods and some business towers. The north part of the street is separated from other nearby neighborhoods with walls, and the south part is accessible from the nearby old neighborhoods and a shanty area, in and around which there are many retails supplying the whole area with meals. Especially the restaurants along the south part of the circling street are very popular and the pedestrian road is fully occupied by outdoor seats and dinners. In 2012, the government built a wall between the pedestrian walk and the car lanes of this part and made the road into an inner restaurant street.

Similar seasonal contrast to Xinyuanli takes place in the Ocean Express as well. There are significantly more activities in the garden, on the plaza outside, along the pedestrian road of the south streets next to the retails from the Ocean Express, as well as in the restaurant street. Even in the north part of the circling street, which aims to serve cars only, there are resting deliverers and walking residents or employees from the business towers in summer. However, the contrast in the amount of activities does not bring many changes to the perceived boundaries. The functional divisions in the area are strict, and the using of spaces is similar in summer and winter. For example, in the first fenced, and then walled restaurant street, the dynamic of boundaries only moves from eating indoor to eating outdoor between winter and summer. The influence of activities to the perception of boundaries does not exceed the wall.

The Ocean Express has a close relation with the nearby areas, although it is gated. It takes services such as dining, shopping, home service, baby sitting from the outside, and at the same time shares the plaza and its garden with outsiders. One of the towers in the neighborhood is designed into SOHOs. Due to the business visiting required by this tower, there is not much difficulty to enter the neighborhood. The employee shares the crowded rush hours with employees in business towers, activities after lunch and apartment buildings. Beside those, shops in the annex can open doors to both the pedestrian walk and the inner streets. Some residents use shops as a short cut. According to a shop owner, "people walk through my shop. Some of them are my customers who support the business at times. They are welcomed. Some ask for the favor and appreciate it. They are welcomed as well. However some others who I do not know walk through buying and saying nothing, which is really a bad behavior." Yet all these connections beyond the gates of the neighborhood are necessary all the year round, and do not change the boundaries from season to season.

Same as Xinyuanli, the boundaries set up by property management of the Ocean Express do not change seasonally. The neighborhood hires a professional team, and it regulates behaviors in the neighborhood strongly. Technically outsiders are not allow to access the neighborhood, but actually strictly controlled entries are those of leaflet distributors, homeless, strollers, cameras, street sellers, etc. these regulations are normally invisible, and maintaining the regulations need quite a lot work - the entire open spaces are under the surveillance of cameras. These regulations do not change with seasons or hours, so are the boundaries caused by them (Figure 3).



Figure 3 – Seasonal boundaries of the Ocean Express, upper row, summer; lower row, winter.

In both neighborhoods the physical indicators have stronger influences on the perception of boundaries in winter. As the amount of activities rises in summer, social interactions start to vibrate the fixed physical indicators. There are unshakable societal boundaries, such as management regulations.



Figure 4 - daily boundaries of Xinyuanli

3.2 DAILY BOUNDARIES

3.2.1 DAILY BOUNDARIES IN XINYUANLI

Except in winter, Xinyuanli is full of activities all day round. In early mornings, senior citizens doing their morning exercises or going to the morning market dominate the space. They greet each other when they on the way, and walk together in groups to the park next to the highway or to the neighborhood park. They stay in parks until after 10am, when the rush hour is finished. Their daily rituals have turned the related spaces into an inseparable part of the community space. During the rush hours, people leave their buildings and pass the yard gate, and the gate of the neighborhood. They experience boundaries at different hierarchy levels until they join the busy traffic in the main streets, when they realize they are leaving the neighborhood. In mornings and afternoons, senior citizens and the self-employed stroll and sit around in the neighborhood. With their moving, chatting, and visiting each other, divisions among different yards and units are dissolved. The street in the north of the neighborhood is favored by taxi drivers for gathering in the break. They sit and chat along a plaza next to the street. Their appearance at an inner place of the neighborhood changes the hierarchical arrangement of spaces. During the lunch time, there is few activity outdoors. Physical indicators define boundaries again. In last afternoons after the school is finished, pupils occupy all the spaces in the street, challenging physical definitions of boundaries with their game playing. In evenings, shops at gates and along the main streets lighten up these spaces where resident take a walk after dinner. The parks are lively with dancing and other sports. In the late afternoon and evenings, the mixture of people turns the streets into boundaries with spaces of their own. In the night, the streets turn dark. Some open gates are closed voluntarily by residents. Some groups continue talking in yards, which a separated like islands (Figure 4).

The perception of a boundary means to set up a certain rule, which separate one group from another. The changes of boundaries in a day challenge the rules and making new rules. In such situations physical indicators are rather chances for interactions between different territories and groups than barriers. In this way each individual present on the spot influences the process of rulemaking.

3.2.2 DAILY BOUNDARIES IN THE OCEAN EXPRESS

Closed by fences, the Ocean Express has significant physical boundaries. Yet an access through the main gate is possible. The neighborhood is functionally closely connected to the surrounding area. During a day, different relations to these areas are constructed.

The morning starts in rush hours. The flow in streets consists of not only residents leaving for work, but also employees arriving from the subway. In the streets between the neighborhood and the subway station, temporary street sellers offer simple breakfast to the flow. Senior citizens, who are the minority among all residents, come out especially at this time for take-aways. Different flows encounter in the several alternative routes, which are the boundaries at this moment of the day. In mornings and afternoons, nannies with children stroll in the garden and the plaza where senior citizens from nearby neighborhoods take a walk as well. The boundaries of the neighborhood are set back to the building entrances with digital locks. At noon, employees in the business towers crowd into restaurants in the shanty areas, while the restaurants in the annexes of the neighborhood are not as popular. After lunch, people gather at the plaza in shadows, and some of the employees enter the neighborhood into the garden. They stay in the middle where the seats are, and do not go deep into small paths. Some people like to walk circling the neighborhood. With lively movements the entire area tends to be open. The boundaries are pushed to the big city roads in front of the business buildings. In evenings, the restaurant streets turn busy - the residents in the Ocean Express are averagely young, who prefer to eat out than cook for themselves. Compared to the lunch time, people can go to restaurants in bigger distance for dinner. The spaces in between are boundaries for them. Most of the restaurants close late in the night, and in the area there are also a few bars. People do not like to walk long for the fourth meal. In the night, the garden, the plaza and streets around the neighborhood are dark. In contrast the restaurant streets are bright and noisy, which become the center of the area. People returning home in the night prefer to take the shortcut through shops. Thus the boundary at one side of the neighborhood is penetrated (Figure 5).

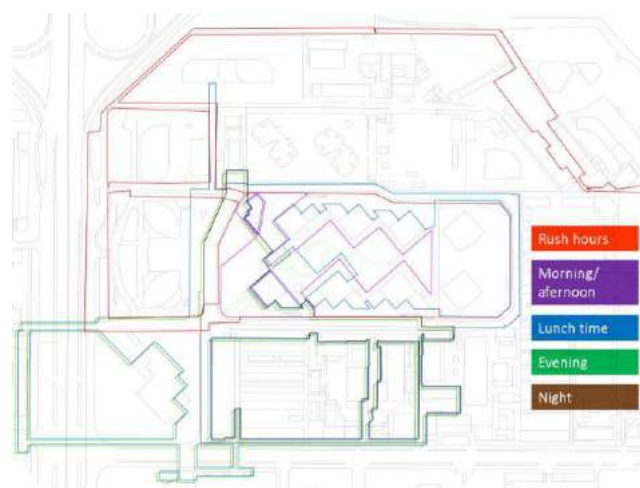


Figure 5 – Daily boundaries of the Ocean Express

The daily dynamic of boundaries in the Ocean Express is not as various as that of Xinyuanli. Connections built between community territories and the nearby areas are limited to the main gates and informal passages through shops, due to the strictly kept rules under a "good" management. Even so, there is a mixture between people of different income, educational and class backgrounds at boundaries - the residents from the Ocean Express have higher income than those in the shanty areas. However they have meals next to each other, sits in the same garden, and stroll in the same streets. both neighborhoods, the boundaries suggested by physical indicators are modified by daily activities. It is the freedom of people present at boundaries to follow the rules or challenge them. For example, knowing that the Ocean Express is gated, some employees from business towers choose to stay in the plaza outside, but some others can go in even through shops. The choices depend on the definition of the relation between oneself and the community of each individual. The management maintains rules in the neighborhood, and anchors boundaries to fixed places, despite that it can be against the will of residents themselves (If there were no fence between the annexes, people would not use the shops as shortcuts).

3.3 TEMPORARY BOUNDARIES

Except for the annual and daily dynamic, boundaries are also changed occasionally by temporal behaviors or constructions. When a temporal boundary is reassured by repeated behaviors, it also may become a pattern of long term boundaries and enters the annual or daily dynamic.

In Xinyuanli, the most typical temporary boundary which has turned durable is that at open spaces in front of buildings. Residents from some buildings oppose to government's benefiting from collectively share spaces. As a protest, they put out private objects like flower pots, furniture or even professional parking locks to occupy or reserve their own parking spaces. "the spaces in the neighborhood belong to all the residents, the government has no right to take it away". A resident says so. The action of putting out private objects aims only to mark parking spaces, not to block the pedestrians, but they perceive a boundary out of the objects and do not enter the spaces any more. Despite the temporary look and movability of these objects, they bring changes to the boundary. Another example is about the green areas in the neighborhood that are in bad condition due to the lack of maintenance funds. A local governor Mr. Ding promoted a project to allow residents who are interested in gardening to voluntarily take responsibility for a plot of green area. Unfortunately the project was rejected by the upper municipality, and the boundaries designated to the volunteers do not exist anymore. In contracts, some residents from the ground floor have already planted their gardens in the green area in front of their windows illegally. They managed to redefine long term boundaries without being controlled (Figure 6).



Figure 6 – places where temporary boundaries occurred in Xinyuanli

Such temporary boundaries are rarely seen in the Ocean Express. The seasonal and daily dynamic of boundaries is stable without transformations.

4 PERFORMATIVITY: PRESENTATIONAL AND REPRESENTATIONAL BOUNDARIES IN PERCEPTION

The perception of community boundaries related to activities and behaviors of people can be understood as an event of emergence, which is a result of performative actions.

The term “performative” stems from philosophy of language. John Austin (1962) creates the word to indicate the situation when the utterance of specific words is itself an action. The term was introduced to the field of architecture by Sophie Wolfrum (2010/2015) in the book *Performative Urbanism* to describe the understanding of architectonic space as a situation of emergence, when space appears through the perception of and interactions with it. As an example of understanding movements in urban space as an analog of theater performance, Peter Brook writes “[a] man walks across this empty space whilst someone else is watching him, and this is all that is needed for an act of theatre to be engaged” (Brook, 1968/1996; P7).

Performatives produce meaning, which is not brought in by a plan or the intension of the actor, but brought up with the aesthetic act of an individual. The performative action is “event-ness” (Fischer-Lichte, 2004a). In other words, through performative actions individual “searching for meaning” and collective spirits shape each other and evolve together. The trigger of the event is the perception of a juxtaposition of “the order of presence” (based on individual corporal experience) and “the order of representation”(based on social norms) (Fischer-Lichte, 2004b, P. 10). The spectator perceives herself as a perceiving subject, as well as

her body as a carrier, presenter, or challenger of rituals. As one of the participants in spatial situations, the individual transforms social norms through staging her movement, and hence partially forms the emerging space. The perception of boundaries as rules distinguishing self and otherness is a consciousness of in-between states between the two orders. Van Gennep (1909/1960) has introduced "liminality" to explain the phase in between two conditions in the rites of passage. Draw on theater theories of Erika Fischer-Lichte, we apply two perspectives of investigating dynamic community boundaries - the boundaries of presentation and the boundaries of representation.

4.1 BOUNDARIES OF PRESENTATION

The presence of a boundary is dependent on the corporal movements in the spatial temporality. Bodies occupy space, and are always defining the boundaries between self and other, which is not at the outline of the body, but in the spaces it influences. Other people's proximity in this space is dependent with his intimacy to me. Therefore my appearance in an open space already defines a boundary. However, only through conscious perception my corporal movements can become performative, and changes in behaviors can be symbolic or even paradigmatic. When we recognize a boundary from our own bodily movement, the boundary comes into being. For example, in the street between two schools in Xinyuanli, shops owners carry out living activities in front their shops in the day. Pedestrians walk in the car lane and do not move between the furniture of the shop owner. A boundary is presented due to the behaviors of both the shop owners and pedestrian.

Boundaries of presentation enhance or challenge physical indicators. In front of the gates of both neighborhoods, a stranger hesitates whether he is allowed to enter. If he watches many other entering without being questioned, he might be encouraged to make a try. On the contrary, if he sees from a distance already that other people are stopped by a guard, he might not even approach to the gate at all. Other people's behaviors are performative that presents us boundaries for them. These are referential hints on the rules for the stranger. As Kafka's parable "Before the Law" (<http://www.kafka-online.info/before-the-law.html>: Apr 2017) implies, a human constructs laws for herself, and only through the violation of them, he can see them. The boundaries presents to an individual when he hits them.

Therefore a boundary is a temporal presentation. It does not pre-exist in physical materials nor can be pre-defined by them. It is stimulated by them. Hence fences are not a sufficient condition for boundaries. It is because we perceived a boundary out of a fence that the fence becomes a symbol for boundaries. And this happening is temporal. A child perceives a climbing game on a fence. In this case no boundary is presented. The presentation of boundaries is also a presentation of territories. When this presence is challenged, so is the territory of a community. It is to be noticed that, the consistent boundaries in our perception consists of inconsistent events that "by chance" enhance the same presentation. There is the potential and possibility that the boundaries are changed in the next presentation.

The boundaries present in temporality, yet our perception is real. We don't experience reality in an empty physical space. Our perception of architectural reality is "far beyond its objective or visual features" (Wolfrum, 2010/2015, p. 13). Instead we experience it in process, in which all our senses, knowledge, and interpretations of other human beings, objects and their relations are involved. Our perception of a boundary endows its temporal presence with meaning. Thus it becomes our reality.

4.2 BOUNDARIES OF REPRESENTATION

Boundaries of representation reside in our interpretation of things out of convention. Gadamer (1975/2004) uses "ritual" to address actions, thoughts and speeches restricted by social norms, morals and customs. Human activities are always conformed like rituals consciously or unconsciously. As social creatures we have already been cultivated with rules of our societies. We unconsciously follow rules in most of our interactions with physical spaces. We avoid eye-contact in a crowded elevator, entering a building through doors instead of windows, and go to bathrooms to use a toilet. Yet differentiated interpretations can appear to a same thing. When it happens, we will be shocked, surprised, and be more conscious of the conventions that shape us. This is very important to the publicness of a space.

Economic activities influence the representations of boundaries. In Xinyuanli and the Ocean Express, retailers stimulate our perception of a boundary. That is because, a mixture of people can bring more customers to the shop, and the gathering of shops can attract more people to come. The accessibility of the people is important, so that the shops prefer a location convenient for both residents and outsiders. Finally, a reaction chain is built in our minds - shops-mixture of people-boundaries. Xinyuanli has a loose management and dynamic boundaries. That is because; it was built into neighborhood units which were dissolved after the economic reform. When it was built, the ideology encouraged this typology under the influence of the Soviet Union. The typology fulfills the urgent need for housing in the post-war reconstruction. This constructs another chain of representation in our minds: old neighborhood-neighborhood units-open community. A similar chain suits the Ocean Express: new neighborhood-commercial compound-gated community. The two neighborhoods are very typical. When we see from afar the towers like those in the Ocean Express, we believe a gated and unshakable boundary. When we have to pass through an old neighborhood with 6-7 floor buildings, we do not expect a guarded gate await us at the boundary.

We endow meaning to things perceived and they come into being. Where is the meaning from? They come from all the events we have experienced in the part. The experiences form our cultural and social backgrounds. When we give meanings to a temporal event, we overlap past ones onto it. If we were stopped once by a guard at a gate, we do not try again at the same place. Our experience tells us a guarded gate normally does not welcome stranger. We would not try in the first place. These are examples when we overlap meanings from the past event onto the current. However they do not match in all cases and this is the precondition that boundaries of presentation can appear.

Boundaries of representation form another reality with have a span in time. The reality of presentation is a short one. When the action or perception stops, the reality ceases to exist as well. Representation is a way to endow events with a consistence in time. Through understanding and interpreting, representation put influence of the past to the present. "A narrative is an account of events occurring over time" (Bruner, 1991, p. 6). Representation connects the inconsistent boundaries into meaningful and consistent experience in the dimension of diachronicity.

4.3 THE TWO BOUNDARIES IN THE TWO NEIGHBORHOODS

The difference in changes of boundaries in the two neighborhoods can be understood with the two kinds of boundaries. In an old community like Xinyuanli, boundaries of representation have been slowly transformed by boundaries of presentation. The latter diverge from the former and bring vibrations in the community. The instability, temporality, and big amplitude are the features of boundaries of presentation. The new community is dominated by boundaries of representation, which tolerate smaller vibrations under the control of rules.

The seasonal changes of boundaries are smaller in the Ocean Express dominated by boundaries of representation, and bigger in Xinyuanli, dominated by boundaries of presentation. The seasonal changes of boundaries synchronize the atmosphere with nature. This can be perceived by resident, and are call in Beijing dialect "connection to the earth", a quality appreciated as healthy for one's life. The Ocean Express is often described with "fashion" and "quality", which we think, indicate that the stability of boundaries.

The daily changes of boundaries in Xinyuanli show a feature of penetration. The space of the neighborhood is porous, and the connection between residents and outsider take place in the major street between residential buildings. The changes of boundaries of the Ocean Express take place in the surrounding areas where the perception of boundaries is not restricted strictly by rules. The connection between inner and outer space of the neighborhood happens only at the guarded gate. The regulations at this gate are decisive for the daily changes of boundaries at this neighborhood. The daily dynamic of boundaries reveals the community's capacity of interaction inside and outside it general territories.

Temporal changes of boundaries take place only in the Xinyuanli, where boundaries of presentation may appear at any location of the neighborhood. The presence of temporal boundaries can be a public event that influences the social of the community, such as the participatory negotiation of parking places in Xinyuanli (now there are three parking modes, governmental management, spontaneous occupied, and

self-organized). To limit the possibility of temporal is to kill a possibility for publicness in community spaces.

Finally, both the two neighborhood have a stable boundary in both presentation and representation, thus, the walls.

5 FRAMEWORK: ANALYZING DYNAMIC COMMUNITY BOUNDARIES

Inspired by the observations and analysis of the temporality of boundaries in the two neighborhoods, and as a basis for new forms of analysis and discourses, this article proposes a framework of the most significant elements in the perception of boundaries changing in time.

Drawing upon the analog between theater and urban theories on performative actions, the text above has discussed the two different but interrelated perspectives of the perception of boundaries theoretically and abstractly. In combination with the discourses in the first part of specific changes of boundaries in time, we will provide practical and specific elements that influence the perception in four categories: physical stimulators, movements, regulation-participation, and interests-symbols.

- Physical stimulators: The stimulation of physical indicators is a result of both presentations and representations. There are significant physical stimulators, such as walls, gate, fences etc. are representation of social norms. Many stimulators are insignificant. They function in the interactions with humans. These stimulators include tables and chairs, flower pots, height differences and so on. The miss-use of some objects may change boundaries as well. For example, hanging clothes on fences, use flower beds as benches, accommodate or open shops in gate house, etc.
- Bodily Movements: Bodily movement influences boundaries of presentation. Some movements are temporal, such as pupils play with barriers in the middle of a street, residents play cards under a big overpass, people gather at a gate and chat, etc. some movements are durable, and may have impacts on physical spaces, such as building extensions or front gardens, regular street shops, etc. Some other movements repeat, but do not change physical spaces, such as traffic flow in rush hours, parents waiting to pick up children at the school gate, etc. These movements set up invisible boundaries at other times of a day, yet community members know them well.
- Regulation-participation: Regulations mainly influence boundaries of representation, and participation challenges or enhance regulations through presentation. Some regulations do not allow questioning, such as a door with a digital lock. Some regulations are presented through movements, such as private parking places without a mark. Only with agreement and support from the neighbors can it run good. Some regulations limit only specific behaviors, such as distributing leaflets, taking photos, etc.
- Interests-symbols: Interests-symbols support the formations of boundaries of representation. Economic interest drives the management in neighborhoods, and decides whether the boundaries are penetrable in different situations. Symbols in spaces or symbolic spaces are promoted by the drive for more benefits. Symbols are visualized desires for interests. In neighborhoods, symbols take the forms of splendid gates, slogans, uniforms etc. they enhance the distinguishing of self-other, and emphasize the exclusiveness of boundaries.

6 CONCLUSIONS

This article views community boundaries dynamically. The perception of boundaries is derived from the distinction of oneself and others. The seasonal, daily and temporal changes of boundaries in two typical neighborhoods in Beijing show that boundaries are results of both presentational and representational understandings. Based on theater and urban theories on performative, the article has argued, the differences in the boundary changes between old and new communities origins from the difference in the dominant type of boundaries. The presentational boundary dominated neighborhood tends to have intricate connections to the outsiders while the representational boundary dominated neighborhood has the connection outside in the surrounding area. The analyzing of dynamic boundaries in neighborhood

should consider the four aspects: physical stimulators, bodily movements, regulation-participation, and interests-symbols.

1. Evaluation of the temporality of community boundaries: Our observation in the two neighborhoods has shown: the more dynamic in time the boundaries are, the livelier the community is. Senior citizens make exercises, children play games, and employees take breaks - different groups of people in age and class encounter in boundary spaces. The tolerance to changes of boundaries promotes social interactions, which are positive aspects of urban life, and the urban development that Chinese government promotes.
2. The Chinese tasks: The dynamic of boundaries is relevant to the openness of the community. Hence an open community brings positive aspects to urban life. Closed neighborhoods were invented in China under the planned economy system. The strict function division segregates living, recreation, service, etc. Such arrangement cannot fulfill today's requirement on variety in life. On condition that there are still grate amount of gated communities in China, opening boundaries has a profound meaning in the basic demand for communication and participation of the contemporary urban life. The Chinese government has already recognized the importance and urgent need of openness in communities. In February 2016, the Chinese government published the CCCPC's "Opinions on further reinforce city planning, construction and management work", which points out "urban blocks should be promoted in the new built residential neighborhoods and closed Small Residential Districts (SRD) should be in principle avoided. The already built SRDs and Danwei Compounds should be opened gradually. ...", open communities will be the main stream for housing in the future.
3. Duality and balancing: closed neighborhoods with boundaries of representation have stronger feelings of territory, which is better for security and maintenance. Open neighborhoods with presentational boundaries can promote interactions, liveliness and social coherence. In actual practices we should balance between the two types of boundaries and taking human activities into consideration.
4. Future works: Residents in China have the requirement of sense of security. This is the difficulty that open communities have to face. The future works should investigate design methods combining physical space and the behavior patterns of different groups of people at different times. Security and management methods of open communities, boundaries which promote social connections and coherence, and methods of opening existing closed neighborhoods should be developed in the future.

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ID 1695 | THE ROLE OF PUBLIC SPACE IN THE RECENT TRANSFORMATIONS OF MEXICO CITY. FROM PROTAGONIST TO FORGOTTEN ACTOR

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1 THE SENSE OF PUBLIC SPACE IN THE CITY

In recent years, the topic of public space has taken a lot of force, leading to discussion with different perspectives in forums of international importance and intertwining it with issues of urban planning, culture, economy, politics, disasters or morphology to name a few. Its recent relevance is not only because of its new consideration as a subject of study, but mainly because of its importance in practice, that is, due to its use, function and design with the main focus of caring for the human being in his daily life in the city.

In the 21st century, the public space is known in different ways, it can vary according to culture and territory (different practices in each city), as well as in the form: parks, squares, gardens, streets or public institutional spaces. The complexity of its study does not depend on its approach, but on the integration of several approaches to address the reality of the city. In this sense, the urban processes that transform the society also impose new trends for the public space, that is, the economic, political, technological and cultural transformations are captured in the public space as a reflection of a changing society with demands that go at great speed.

With the assumption that it is essential for urban studies to include different approaches, and to pay attention to the processes that transform the city, three views are taken into account for the understanding and analysis of the public space: 1. The social vision in the human sense of habitability, i.e. the human condition of public space, 2. The inclusive vision regarding physical and social aspects of the public space and 3. Finally a vision in the globalized sense of the trends reflected in the space.

The social vision in the human sense of habitability for the public space. New forms of life have been generated in the city from the advent of modern technologies and economies that produce different needs to those of other times, such as: WIFI connections to enter an alternate public space, individual electrical connections, if they are used as a place of work, stations to recharge electric cars, bicycle stations, to mention some of the recent elements in public spaces, however, there are dynamics in them that cross the barriers of time and that are part of the daily life to live the city, such as: places of rest, recreation, encounter and sociability. Currently new public spaces are being created that reinvent the city, making it more livable and of course more desirable.

When we talk about desirable public spaces, it could be seen as something subjective. Each human being thinks differently and according to their cultural characteristics, and to that extent, needs could vary. But even in the same country the geographical or economic situation of each family would imply different demands. Something is very certain, however, and that is that we all have the need to co-inhabit. Each