

Chapter 7

The Segregated Residence Under the Market Economy

Abstract This chapter shows that Beijing's housing has been characterized since the mid 1990s by a new phenomenon: residential segregation. It begins with an overview of the housing development that has taken place in Beijing after China transferred to a market economy, and then shows the impacts of gentrification within the traditional neighbourhoods of the old city proper on their original residents, and finally, assesses the main factor causing the residential segregation. It is argued that household income has become the main cause of residential segregation in today's Beijing.

Keywords Segregated residence • Gentrification • “Urban village” • “Hukou system”

In the previous chapter, I pointed out that the “work-unit” compound, a homogeneous type of residence under the planned economy, no longer suits the housing demands after China's transformation to the market economy. In this chapter I shall show that in contrast to these homogeneous residences, Beijing's housing has been characterized since the mid 1990s by a new phenomenon: residential segregation. I shall begin this chapter with an overview of the housing development that has taken place in Beijing after China transferred to a market economy. Then I shall show the impacts of gentrification within the traditional neighbourhoods of the old city proper on their original residents. Finally, I shall assess the main factor causing the residential segregation in Beijing since the mid of 1990s. It will be argued that under the influence of the global economy, social polarization has increased, and differences in household income between rich and poor have thus become the main impetus behind the residential segregation.

The housing reform that has taken place since the early 1990s has boosted Beijing's real estate market, and given rise not only to a large-scale redevelopment of the traditional residential districts in the old city proper (discussed in Part II), but also to rapid housing development outside of the old city proper. In the first section of this chapter I shall begin with a description of new houses in Beijing's suburbs with the purpose of providing the reader a profile of the new housing development in Beijing after China's transformation to a market economy.

Since the mid 1990s the trend towards residential segregation, whether it takes the form of gentrification in the traditional residential districts of the old city proper or the polarization of living conditions between the high-grade villas and the poor “urban villages” in the suburbs, has become increasingly evident in Beijing. In the second section of this chapter I shall analyze the gentrification of the traditional residential districts and its impact on their original residents. In contrast to the previous discussion of Beijing’s Old City in Part II, which focused on the changes that have occurred to courtyard houses, this chapter is concerned with the impact of the redevelopment projects upon the residents, i.e. changes in urban social structure. I shall show that although the living conditions for most of the relocated residents have improved after they moved to the suburbs, the gentrification of the traditional residential districts has a great impact on the lives of the original residents, especially on the low-income families.

Under the influence of the global economy, increasing numbers of high-salaried employees of international enterprises have settled down in Beijing. At the same time, more and more migrant workers from the countryside have come to the city seeking job opportunities. These two groups have widened the gap between rich and poor, and the social polarization has become increasingly serious in recent years. In the final section of this chapter I shall examine the phenomenon of social polarization in Beijing and the residential difficulties experienced by the disadvantaged groups in the “urban villages”. I will show that household income has become the main cause of residential segregation in today’s Beijing.

7.1 New Housing Development Under the Market Economy

7.1.1 Diversification of the New Residential Housing

After experiencing 30 years under a planned economy, China inaugurated its “reform and opening up” policy in 1979, and has gradually moved since then towards a market economy. Many reforms have taken place in the arena of urban housing. The most important one is the closing down of the “Welfare-oriented Housing System” (WHS) and the transformation of housing into a kind of commodity in the market place. Whereas in the past, the “work-unit” compound had been their only choice, in this commodity housing market, residents take their own initiative in choosing their residence according to what they can afford. As a result this new commodity housing has become diversified in both the housing grade as well as the housing type.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, during the period of the planned economy, the fact that housing was distributed by “work unit” as a kind of social welfare provision meant that there was not much difference in quality between one residence and another. The market economy, however, has brought about large differences in housing grade. In 1991, Beijing witnessed the debut of residential

Fig. 7.1 Purple Jade Villas in the northern suburbs of Beijing. *Source* By courtesy of the Reference Room of the School of Architecture, Tsinghua University



districts consisting entirely of villas, such as Yuanmingyuan Garden, with a land area of 750,000 m² and Purple Jade Villas (see Fig. 7.1), with a land area of 600,000 m² (Tan 2002). This is the first time this type of high-grade housing has emerged on a large-scale in Beijing's real estate market since the establishment of the People's Republic of China. According to relevant information (Shen 2003), before the end of 2002, 40 thousand such villas had been built in Beijing, with a total floor space over 10 million square metres. These were distributed in 160 residential districts, of which, 98.3 % were located in the suburbs of the city.

As for differentiation in housing type, under the planned economy the government created a uniform housing construction standard that was followed all over the country and people were unable to make individual, personal demands. When urban housing became commercialized in China, different types of houses started to appear, because residents had different requirements due to their divergent social and cultural backgrounds, occupations, interests, lifestyles and household structures. This diversity in housing type was not only reflected in a divergence in housing grades, but also in the different demands by residents for housing within the same grades.

Although due to one child per family policy the family has become much smaller than before in today's Beijing, this has not necessarily simplified the demands placed on housing. Accompanying the trend towards an ageing society, and the increase in the number of single parent or single-person families, there are now demands for housing that can be adapted to suit elderly families, single parent families and single-person families. In addition, some families purchase houses, not for their own residences, but for other purposes—such as having a holiday villa, or an investment property that can be rented for income. During the planned economy era, this type of demand on housing was practically unheard of and probably would have been banned.

Along with the trend towards diversification, the new types of commodity houses have significantly improved in function. In the past, the “work-unit” compound, as a form of government welfare provision, could only provide the most basic function of housing—providing shelter. Apart from bedroom, sitting room,

Fig. 7.2 Palm Springs Apartment, a high-grade set of flats near western section of the Third Ring Road in Beijing, 2004. *Source* By courtesy of the Reference Room of the School of Architecture, Tsinghua University



kitchen and washroom, there were no rooms provided for other purposes. Some houses even lacked their own separate sitting room, not to mention a dining room or study. After housing became a commodity on the market place, this situation changed. For one thing, residences gradually acquired new functions. For example, dining rooms and studies became basic components of an apartment, and some luxurious houses even had a studio, servants' rooms and a private gymnasium (Fig. 7.2). Furthermore, existing functions were subdivided and improved. A storage room might be added, and the space allocated to washrooms as well as the number of washrooms could be increased. There might even be a dressing room and a laundry.

In addition, as cars have increasingly become the possessions of many families, parking has become an important function for residential districts to perform. According to the requirements of the *Quota for the Construction of the Public Service Facilities in the New or Redeveloped Residential Districts in Beijing*, issued by the municipal government of Beijing in 1994 (revised in 2002), all newly built residential districts are required to build their own parking places or garages. In addition, with the rapid development of technology in recent years, most of residential districts in Beijing are equipped with a computer network for the use of property management and public services.

7.1.2 The Development of Residential Suburbanization

Apart from diversification in the residential housing, another feature of Beijing's new housing under the market economy is the development of residential suburbanization. As mentioned in Chap. 2, since 1979, especially since 1992, Beijing has witnessed a process of rapid urban extension. In 1979, the built-up area of the city was 339 km². This area has grown to 490 km² in 1999 and 604 km² in 2004 (BMBS 2001, 2002–2006).

Beijing's residential suburbanization has been influenced by three main changes: the rapid development of the city's road system and the increased popularity of the

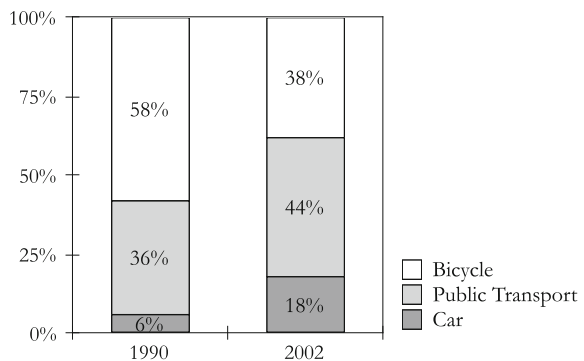
private car, the improvements in living conditions in the suburbs, and the influences from the adjustments that have taken place in the city’s industrial structure.

The rapid development of the road system around Beijing has promoted the process of residential suburbanization. Since the mid 1990s, the ring road and radial road systems of the city have taken shape rapidly and the metro and light-rail transit systems have also been extended to the suburbs. According to one report (Sun and Yu 2005), the length of metro and light-rail in Beijing reached 114 km by 2003, which was an increase of 115 % over 1999. By 2004, the length of the roads within the city proper and inner suburbs reached 4064 km, an increase of 23 % over 1999. By 2005, the number of buses reached 19,000, an increase of 89 % over 1999. All these developments have brought great improvements in the urban road system and public transport facilities and have in turn helped to promote residential suburbanization. As a result, suburban housing has spread outwards along the main transport lines of the city.

The increased popularity of the private car has also played an important role in residential suburbanization. The ownership of private cars was not common among Chinese families until 1990. However, it has grown exponentially since then. As of July 2002, 12 % of families in Beijing own their own car, totalling almost 1.1 million cars (Jiang 2004). In 2005, the number of cars in Beijing increased dramatically by nearly 1000 additional cars per day. As of July 2005, the number of private cars has surpassed 1.65 million (Zhou 2005). Moreover, the proportion of people travelling by private cars has also been increasing rapidly. In 1990, the automobile supplied only 6 % of the total number of passenger trips in the city. Public transport accounted for 35 % and bicycles for 58 %. In 2002, however, the proportion of passengers travelling by car reached 18 %, three times that in 1990, while public transport accounted for 44 % and bicycles for only 38 % (see Fig. 7.3). This development has changed the life-style of wealthier families and made it possible for them to move to the suburbs.

In addition, improved living conditions in the suburbs has made moving to the suburbs more attractive than before. Case studies in Sect. 7.5 presents an investigation I conducted in 2004 on the living conditions of the traditional residential

Fig. 7.3 A comparison of the traffic flow in Beijing between 1990 and 2002. *Source* Drawn by author based on data from Jiang (2004)



districts within Beijing's old city proper. My studies show that during the last two decades, although the real estate industry has been developing very fast in Beijing, the living conditions within the traditional residential districts have not significantly improved. Moreover, with the substantial increase in the population of Beijing, the old city proper became increasingly crowded. As mentioned in Chap. 1, the population density of the old city proper is much higher than in the suburbs—normally it is more than eight times higher. In some of the most crowded districts of the old city proper, the population density is nearly 20 times that of the suburbs. By contrast, living conditions in the suburbs have improved significantly since the 1990s. In addition to dwelling houses, services and facilities in the suburbs have also been upgraded to a certain degree. Many supermarkets have been built in the suburbs in recent years. Compared with the old city proper, the suburbs are characterized by more spacious living areas and superior environmental conditions.

Finally, the adjustment in Beijing's industrial structure has promoted residential suburbanization of the city. Since China has changed to the market economy, particularly since 1992, when the urban land market came into being, economic competition has brought competition for urban land resources. New transport facilities have shortened travel times and, as transport costs are much cheaper than land costs, some enterprises have been pressured to move out of the old city proper or to set themselves up in the suburbs. The expensive central areas of the city are now reserved for business and the service industry. According to statistics (Yu 1999), during the 12 years from 1985 to 1997, a total of 91 of Beijing's industrial enterprises were displaced, and 78 of these moved out of the old city proper, vacating 41.78 ha of land. The vacated land was mostly transformed for commercial land use. When the factories moved out into suburban areas, their employees needed to find new residences there. Also when the industries serving the commercial and financial sectors became concentrated in the central areas and replaced land for residential use by land for tertiary industrial use, there was an immediate impulse to residential space to expand into the suburbs.

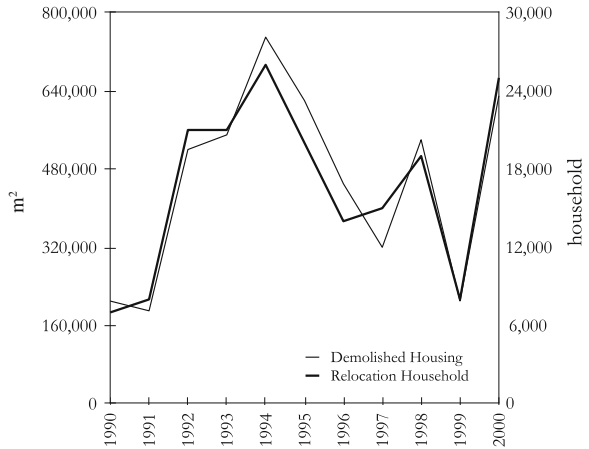
7.2 The Trend Towards Gentrification

7.2.1 Gentrification of the Old Residential Districts

Along with the trend towards residential suburbanization, came a trend towards gentrification in Beijing's old city proper. These two trends are mutually related. A considerable proportion of the residents in the suburbs were formerly residents of the old city proper who were compelled to leave their original neighbourhoods because of the redevelopment projects within the old city proper.

In Chap. 3 the basic characteristics of gentrification in Western cities were defined. Generally speaking, gentrification often occurs when an old residential

Fig. 7.4 Relocation households and demolished housing in the ODHRP during 1990–2000. *Source* Drawn by author based on data from BMBS (2001)



district is redeveloped. In the process of gentrification, lower rent housing is upgraded to higher rent housing, which results in the displacement of lower-income residents by higher-income residents. Since the 1990s, Beijing’s old city proper has been witnessing a process of gentrification similar to that in Western cities. Due to the “Old and Dilapidated Housing Redevelopment Project” (ODHPR), a large number of the original residents were forced out of the old city proper. As Fig. 7.4 shows, from 1990 to 2000 altogether 4.99 million square metres of the “Old and Dilapidated Houses” (ODH) were pulled down, and 184,000 families had to move out of their original communities. The figures for the relocation of households show that the largest scale residential relocation owing to the redevelopment of the old city proper took place after 1992 when the urban land market was open in China. The rate fell to a low point in 1999, but rose again dramatically in 2000, approaching the earlier peak reached in 1994.

Among the households that were relocated, only a small proportion was able to be rehoused in their former residential districts after redevelopment. A large proportion was forced to move to the suburbs, because of the persistent rise in housing prices in the old city proper. Taking Dongcheng District, one of the districts in the old city proper, as an example, from 1991 onwards, nearly 4000 households (about 12,000 persons) had to be relocated every year. Among those, at least two-thirds had to move out of the old city proper (Wei 1998). Although the municipal government of Beijing has set a return rate for residential districts after redevelopment at around 20 %, in cases like that of Beiheyan in Dongcheng District, the rate has not even reached 10 % after redevelopment (Wei 1997). In some cases, formerly residential blocks were developed into office buildings or commercial entertainment centres. This resulted in a return rate of zero.

7.2.2 The Impact of Residential Relocation on the Original Residents

The question of the impact of residential relocation on the original residents of the old city proper has been controversial for many years in Beijing. The opinions of government officials and scholars frequently contradicted each other. While officials took pride in the positive impact of residential relocation on the original residents, many of the scholars emphasized the negative results (see Ye and Go 2003). There were also different views among the residents.

In 2004, I investigated the opinions of the residents on the residential relocation caused by redevelopment projects (see Sect. 7.5 Case Studies). It can be seen that, at first, residents of the old city proper hoped that the ODHRP would improve their living conditions. However, after their houses were demolished and new houses were built, they realized that they could not afford the high prices of the new houses and could therefore not return to their original communities. Under such circumstances, the opinions of the residents clearly differed. The families who can afford the houses prices after the redevelopment or who prefer new houses in the suburbs normally support the redevelopment projects. The families who cannot afford the suburban houses with the support of relocation compensation, or who make a living which is greatly reliant upon the old city proper, generally oppose the projects. However, one thing is clear. In comparison with the situation before the 1990s, more residents at present wish that they could have returned to their old neighbourhoods after these had been redeveloped (see Sect. 7.5 Case Studies).

Although residents' living conditions were relatively improved after they moved out into the suburbs, I would like to point out here that the residential relocation still had a negative impact on former residents, especially to disadvantaged groups and low-income families. The negative impact mainly manifested in that their opportunities for livelihood have disappeared as well as their original social network has collapsed.

Many residents of the old city proper are the disadvantaged groups of the city, who are trying to survive on a low income and whose livelihood depends on the environment of the old blocks to a great extent (see Sect. 7.5 Case Studies). Taking Guozijian, an old neighbourhood in the old city proper, as an example, there was a balance between the employed residents of the block and the work opportunities offered by the retail and service trades within the block. About 70 % of the employed people who lived in this block were engaged in the retail and service trades. Moreover, about 80 % of the employees who worked in the retail and service trades in this block lived in the same block (Huang and Wang 2004). The socioeconomic network that had gradually formed over the years in the old city proper was the foundation on which the low-income residents were able to make a living. The small stores and workshops scattered along the hutongs (alleys) or on the corners probably provided the main source of livelihood for some families in the

community. When the old blocks became gentrified and were upgraded to high-grade ones and these small stores were upgraded to supermarkets, the environment on which those low-income dwellers had formerly depended for existence disappeared.

As for those who have already moved to the suburbs, the greatest difficulty they face is transport. The long distance away from their main area of activity or work causes them to spend much more time and energy on commuting between their homes and offices or schools than before. According to an investigation undertaken on Yongtaiyuan (Tan 1998) (Table 7.1), a new residential district in the northern suburbs of Beijing, where most of the residents have moved out of the old city proper due to the ODHRP, each of the 200 employees and students living there spend an average of one additional hour on transport every day. Moreover, the increase in transport fares also increases the economic burden on their families to varying degrees. Some former residents of the old city proper perceive this displacement as nothing more than a change from one difficulty to another.

This residential relocation has not only resulted in the disappearance of residents' opportunities for livelihood, but also in the collapse of their original social network. My investigation in 2004 (see Sect. 7.5 Case Studies) shows that many of the dwellers of the old city proper had lived there for quite a long time and had built-up a social network there. When they fell on hard times they could get help from relatives and friends lived nearby. In other words, they had a social support network within their neighbourhoods. This network of localized social relations gave them a strong sense of belonging and connected them firmly to their neighbourhoods. Residential relocation, however, will marginalise the relocated residents and has a profoundly negative effect on the social network of them. Furthermore, it will increase the costs necessary to enable these relocated residents to use public facilities and services in the city centre (see Sect. 7.5 Case Studies).

Therefore, it can be seen from the above discussion, the residential relocation has caused serious difficulties for some original residents of the old city proper, especially those disadvantaged groups and low-income families. They have suffered unfortunate consequences from the involuntary relocation and the effect on them has been much more negative than what the government believed. Since the new century, this brutal relocation has been triggering much more social unrest, as witnessed frequently on media reports by the persistent existence of "nail houses" on demolition sites where original residents are resisting relocation (Wang 2008).

Table 7.1 The increase in housing expenditures and transport fares due to displacement in Yongtaiyuan

| Increase in living expenditures due to displacement/household income (%) | 1-10 | 11-20 | 21-30 | >30 |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|-------|-------|-----|
| Household (%) | 29 | 44 | 18 | 9 |

Source Made by author based on data from Tan (1998)

7.3 Social Polarization and the Trend Towards Residential Segregation

7.3.1 “Hukou” System and the Migrant Population

Before discussing the newly emerging phenomenon of residential segregation after China shifted to market economy, I would like firstly to examine the “hukou” system, which, to a certain extent, play an important role to promote the social polarization and cause the social inequity.

The “hukou” system, also known as the household registration system, has been around in one form or another for more than 2000 years in China. In addition to the basic functions it executed in the population registration and its management, it has also been a means for social control, in that the system facilitated tax collection and military recruitment by the rulers (Wang 2015).

After the People’s Republic of China was founded, the urban–rural dual “hukou” systems came into being in 1958, during the planned economy. Under this system, the “hukou” is basically divided into rural and urban “hukou” and every citizen inherits their parents’ “hukou” status at birth. The “hukou” system was further categorized into rural and urban areas on the basis of the original division by regions, with the purpose of curbing the inflow of rural people into cities. The rural people were confined to the land and commune, in order to assure the rural grain harvests at the same time as achieving industrial development and the creation of city jobs (Wang 2015). Furthermore, by means of this strict system, the cities avoided the adverse outcomes of rapid urbanization and massive migrant population—namely sharp economic divisions, dramatic housing shortages and a high level of informal settlements and businesses (Broudehoux 2004: 179).

Under the planned economy, the systems worked well for controlling the inflow of rural people, since in cities necessities such as grains were available only to people with urban “hukous”. Such tight restrictions on rural migration by the “hukou” system lasted until the mid-1980s. It has resulted in an arbitrary separation between urban and rural societies in China.

China’s “reform and opening up” policy since 1979 has greatly increased the efficiency of agriculture production and created a large amount of surplus labours in rural areas. At the same time, with China’s transition to a market economy, booming joint enterprises, private businesses and service industries, especially in the big cities, created constant demand for labours and had to offer the job opportunities to people with no urban “hukous” status. These people have become the city’s migrant population or migrant workers—they do not have urban “hukou” status in places of destination, normally do not own permanent residences and move around frequently while looking for jobs. Since the early 1980s, there has been a major increase in migrant population. Data from censuses and survey show that the migrant population (cross-county) has increased from about 22 million in 1990 and by 1995 it has more than doubled (Liang et al. 2008: 212).

According to “hukou” status, labourers in China are differentiated into three types: urban “hukou” holders as native residents, migrants relocated through formal channels to possess the urban “hukou” as elite residents and migrants normally from rural areas with no urban “hukou” as “outsiders” (White et al. 2008). Normally the first two of them are considered as the permanent residents of the cities. Although the rural migrant labours (the third type) no longer need to obtain urban “hukou” status to live and work in cities, it doesn’t mean they got the same entitlements to welfare benefits enjoyed by permanent residents (Zhang 2001). Due to the obstacle of limited urban capacity, they have to suffer the social inequality in public services, employment opportunities and salary levels.

7.3.2 The Phenomenon of Social Polarization

Since China’s transformation to a market economy, both the private economy and the foreign-funded economy have developed rapidly. These two, along with the state-owned economy, make up the three main types of ownership in China’s economic system today: private ownership, foreign ownership, and state ownership. Meanwhile, a large number of new social classes, such as private entrepreneurs and high-salaried employees of foreign-owned enterprises, have gradually come into being. Their appearance is shaping a new social structure for the city. The social structure based on the “work-unit” system under the planned economy has gradually become polarized. Socioeconomic status based on income has become a determining feature of the new social structure and strongly influenced families’ choice of their residential locations.

The rural migrant population is another element that is intensifying the social polarization of Beijing. From 1982 to 2000, many big Chinese cities, such as Beijing, are experiencing a great population influx from rural areas. The size of the migrant population in Beijing has increased from 160 thousand to 2.5 million, an annual increase of about 16 % (see Fig. 7.5). The ceaseless influx of such a large migrant population has aggravated the degree of social polarization in the city.

Fig. 7.5 The migrant population in Beijing in 1982, 1990, and 2000. *Source* Drawn by author based on data from Feng and Zhou (2003)

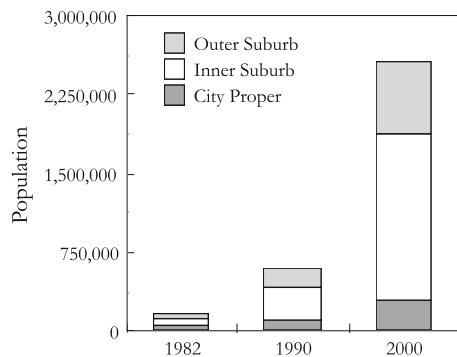


Table 7.2 Annual household incomes of Beijing's families, 1996–2004 (unit: Yuan)

| Item | Low income 20 % | Medium–low income 20 % | Medium income 20 % | Medium–high income 20 % | High income 20 % |
|------|--------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|
| 1996 | 4682 | 6170 | 7392 | 9125 | 12,915 |
| 1998 | 5450 | 7498 | 9490 | 11,970 | 17,726 |
| 2000 | 7884 | 9040 | 11,699 | 13,964 | 22,622 |
| 2002 | 6821 | 9667 | 12,030 | 15,028 | 24,295 |
| 2003 | 8102 | 11,291 | 13,911 | 17,262 | 26,224 |
| 2004 | 8241 | 12,140 | 15,614 | 20,022 | 32,258 |

Source Made by author based on data from BMBS (2001) and BMBS (2002–2006)

The municipal government's statistical yearbooks (BMBS 2001, 2002–2006) provide solid evidence of the widening income gap of the different social groups in the last one or two decade. Table 7.2 shows that since the mid 1990s the income of the urban residents in Beijing has increased dramatically, but the income gap between rich and poor has also enlarged. Taking 2003 as an example, the household income per capita of the top 20 % of the urban families was near 26,224 Yuan/year, while that of the bottom 20 % was about 8102 Yuan/year. The former is about 3.2 times the latter. Comparing the household income per capita for the top 5 % of the families with that of the bottom 5 %, the former was nearly 34,000 Yuan/year and the latter was only 5211 Yuan/year, with former being 6.5 times the latter.

Because it is quite common in China for high-income families to have “grey incomes”—that is, incomes that are not precisely stated in the statistical yearbook—and also because the municipal government's statistical yearbook normally does not take the data on migrant population into consideration, the gap between the household incomes of rich and poor families is probably larger than that shown by government data.

In summary, the phenomenon of social polarization has become the most prominent characteristic of Beijing's social structure at present. The poor, migrant population from the rural areas, on the one hand, and the magnates, tycoons and high-salaried employees of foreign-owned enterprises and joint ventures on the other hand, have formed the two extremes. In Chap. 3 we discussed the influence of the global economy on labour distribution. In fact, the emergence of these two contrasting groups in Beijing corresponds to a new tendency in global labour distribution in recent years: there has been both an increase in skilled and high-salary working positions, and an increase in informal and low-salary working positions.

This dramatic increase in social polarization in recent years has occurred all over the country. We can see this from the changes in China's Gini coefficient¹ over the past thirty years. In 1982, the early stages of China's market economy, its Gini

¹Gini coefficient: invented by the Italian statistician Corado Gini, is often used to measure income inequality. Here, 0 corresponds to perfect income equality (i.e. everyone has the same income) and

coefficient was 0.30. However, according to the 2004 Human Development Report by United Nations (UN), this value for China increased to 0.447 in 2001. Among the 131 countries in the updated survey by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), only 31 countries have the coefficients which are larger than that of China (UN 2004). A considerable accumulation of studies have shown that urban size and growth is associate with higher levels of intra-urban inequality, such as what found in the US's cities: the Gini coefficient of total income inequality rises with city size and growth during the 1970s (White et al. 2008). Measuring against the internationally accepted standards (Weston 2005), when the Gini coefficient for any country exceeds 0.40, the gap between rich and poor is excessively wide and this country might become unstable. However, in China not only has the figure of 0.40 been surpassed, but it is continuing to grow.

7.3.3 Residential Difficulties Experienced by Disadvantaged Groups

The widening of the income gap between rich and poor has made residential segregation in Beijing a reality. In this section, I shall not discuss improvements in living conditions for rich groups, but shall focus on the residential difficulties that the disadvantaged groups have experienced against the background of social polarization. In present-day Beijing, the disadvantaged groups consist mainly of unemployed persons, workers in enterprises receiving poor economic benefits, retired people on low pensions, low-income or no-income people with disability or chronic illness, elderly people without relatives or social insurance, and the migrant population (Wang 2003). These groups live in difficult circumstances: their per capita living space is much less than the city's average and they are unable to afford, either by purchasing or renting, housing with basic modern facilities. The houses they rent are normally in poor conditions: without private kitchens or private bathrooms, and sometimes even without heating or drainage system. Of these disadvantaged groups, those living in "urban villages" deserve special attention. Their living conditions aggravate the problem of residential segregation in the city.

The "urban villages" of Beijing are usually remnants of the rural communities of the past. While the surrounding farmland which was formerly used to grow grain or vegetables has been gradually swallowed up by the rapidly expanding urban sprawl and replaced by the increasingly high-density buildings in the past few decades, the communities have been left untouched and receive no improvements in living conditions or community facilities. The previous farmers who have lost their farmland made use of vacant lots in their communities to build unlicensed housing

(Footnote 1 continued)

1 corresponds to perfect income inequality (i.e. one person has all the income, while everyone else has zero income).

compounds to accommodate incoming migrants. Constructed of bricks with cement tile roofs, these compounds were normally made up of many bunkhouses built in a row one by one to maximize the use of spaces between original buildings. As migrants' demand for housing was normally for simple dormitories only, or rooms with simple functions, and living space for as many persons as possible, each of the rooms in these bunkhouses typically accommodated a group of tenants, from four to six, or even up to eight. Cooking, eating and sleeping, all took place within the crowded space. After a large number of migrant workers swarmed into Beijing, these "urban villages" have become the main residential districts for them. Moreover, these "urban villages", with community facilities of very poor quality and mostly in serious danger of fire, are often districts with the high numbers of criminal offences as well. They are described as the "forgotten corners" of the city by their residents and form a sharp contrast to the surrounding cityscape. These "urban villages", by their invisible locations and their poor conditions, were concrete examples of the marginal and liminal status of the migrant workers in the city.

The migrant workers in Beijing were mostly young single men and women, though there were also some families. Longed for security and local protection, members of the migrant population who came from the same regions of the country were inclined to live together. For example, "Zhejiang village", the largest migrant settlement in Beijing, located in the southern part of the city, has a concentration of people from Zhejiang province; similarly, "Xinjiang village", located in the west of the city, has many people from Xinjiang autonomous region living there. These so-called "villages" are actually not the administratively defined villages, but the large migrant congregating zones embedded in a number of pre-existing communities. In these newly formed communities, the migrant population accounted for a considerable proportion or even the majority of the residents. Therefore, the communities had a certain regional quality. In terms of "Zhejiang village", as the majority of migrants came from rural Wenzhou, Zhejiang Province, this migrant settlement was named by Beijing local residents after these migrants' provincial origin to demarcate a perceived "alien" social body from the established Beijing local communities (Zhang 2001).

The arrival of massive migrant population in Beijing posed new challenges to urban order and drained already scarce urban resources. The mobility of the migrants and their substandard living condition created both real and imagined threats to the local residents (Lu 2006: 154). In particular, the "urban villages" were viewed as problematic places that need to be eliminated or tightly controlled by government officials due to migrants' relatively autonomous or frequently illegal socioeconomic practices in these newly formed communities. A report by government officials delineated "Zhejiang Village" as a place that was dirty, chaotic, and miserable: "Although the migrants have some positive influences on enlivening markets and making local residents' lives more convenient, they have created a series of problems, including overpopulation, traffic jams, poor hygiene, disorder, crime and other law breaking activities. All of these problems have seriously damaged the orderly regulation of the local government" (BMG 1995). In November 1995, an order was issued by Beijing's municipal government to "clean

Table 7.3 Annual household incomes in a block of “Zhejiang Village” in 2003

| Household income (Yuan/year) | <6000 | 6000–12,000 | 12,000–24,000 | >24,000 |
|------------------------------|-------|-------------|---------------|---------|
| Household (%) | 25 | 21 | 33 | 21 |

Source Made by author based on investigation

up and bring order back to” “Zhejiang Village”, and about forty-eight housing compounds created by the migrants were demolished (Zhang 2001).

In reality, “Zhejiang Village” did not disappear. Many migrants eventually trickled back to the village only three months after the demolition. A number of compounds had reappeared, and so did the status of dirty, chaotic, and miserable. In 2004, I made an inquiry in a block of “Zhejiang village”. In the block I investigated, there were 210 one-storey bunkhouses, placed in rows, with a total living space of about 7200 m². There were more than 600 residents in this block, of which nearly 500 were migrant workers. The average per capita living space was about 12 m², 40 % of which was less than 10 m², and 23 % of which was even less than 5 m². The facilities in these houses were also in poor condition: 27 % of them had no kitchen, 44 % had no toilet and 65 % had no bathroom. Although the conditions were poor, these “urban villages” were the only option that migrant population had, because of their very low income. In the previous section, it was mentioned that in 2003 the household per capita income for the bottom 5 % of Beijing’s families was 5211 Yuan/year. Given an average family size of about 3.1, the household income translated into nearly 16,200 Yuan/year. In the “urban village” I investigated, at least 46 % of the families had incomes of less than 12,000 Yuan/year in 2003 (see Table 7.3). This ratio was much more than that of the entire city. As to why these pockets of land were left behind during the urban development, I inquired of the Planning Division of Xinsong Real Estate Company in Beijing, which argued that because of the poor infrastructure and high density of construction and population, developers had to pay high costs for improving public utilities and relocating original residents. Normally it would be difficult for developers to make profits from the development projects within this kind of site.

In present-day Beijing, these “urban villages” are distributed all over the sub-urban fringe areas of the city (Fig. 7.6 left). It was reported (Yang 2005) that until 2005 there were 343 such “urban villages” in Beijing, of which, 231 were located within the built-up area of the city with land areas of 11 km² and floor areas of 2.7 million square metres. The other 112 were located outside the built-up area of the city but within the programmed scope of city planning (see Table 1.1 in Chap. 1), with land areas of 180 km² and floor areas of 72 million square metres (see Fig. 7.7).

The “urban villages” phenomenon has presented a social and planning challenge to the authorities in the control of the population, which has been primarily based on the “hukou” system. “Urban villages” have frequently become the terrain for a vast confrontation, whenever any of them was considered by the government a place that was “dirty, chaotic, and miserable”, and need to be relocated to make way for new developments. The confrontations however mainly come from the conflict

Fig. 7.6 Distribution of some “urban villages” in Beijing, 2004. *Source* Drawn by author based on investigation

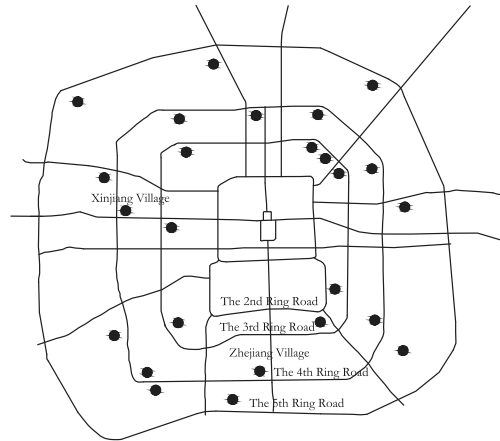


Fig. 7.7 “Zhejiang Village” in the south of the city, 2004. *Source* Taken by author



between the drive to remove migrant bunkhouses and gentrify old districts and the need to accommodate migrant workers that inhabit the city without “hukou” status and are not therefore eligible for social welfare benefits and public housing.

7.3.4 The Main Cause of Residential Segregation in Beijing

As discussed in Chap. 3, the phenomenon of residential segregation has long been found in Western cities, particularly in most of the big cities in America. Although the classic Western literature on urban inequality focused on three major sources of neighbourhood differentiation: social status, family status and ethnic status (White et al. 2008) this highly visible phenomenon in Western cities, has largely arisen because of racial segregation, which is both an essential feature and a leading cause.

There it mainly manifested itself in the segregation of residential areas into white area and those of black or people of colour. The situation in Beijing since the late 1990s, however, is different from that in the Western cities. For the underlying cause of residential segregation here we have to look elsewhere.

Residential segregation is not a new phenomenon in Beijing. In fact it can be traced back to 1564, during the Ming dynasty (1368–1644), when an outer city was built-up on the southern side of the Old City. This was when Beijing took on the nature of a dual city, with an inner city and an outer city. At this time the residents of the two cities differed mainly in social class and wealth, rather than race. When the Manchus conquered the Ming regime and established the Qing dynasty (1644–1911), keeping Beijing as their capital, they began to implement a residential segregation policy that completely separated the Manchus from the Han people. At this time they urged the former Han residents of the inner city to move to the outer city. As a result, the inner city became a centralized residential district for the Manchus, called the Inner or Tartar City, and the outer city became a residential district for Han people, called the Outer or Chinese City. This situation did not change until the end of the Qing period (Liu 2001; Dray-Novoy 1993).

After the establishment of the Republic of China in 1911, this residential segregation according to racial factors broke down. Especially during the period of the planned economy under the People's Republic of China after 1949, because of the "Welfare-oriented Housing System" (WHS), most differentiation between residences was lost, and homogeneity replaced segregation as the dominant characteristic of the city. Since the mid 1990s after China transformed into a market economy, the phenomenon of residential segregation has reappeared in Beijing. Although it is new to most urban residents of today, yet it is increasingly visible through such manifestations as the exclusive luxury estates and the very poor state of "urban villages". However, if one compares the reasons for residential segregation in this decade with those either in the Beijing's past or in Western cities, it is clear that they are different.

The segregation of the rich and poor is becoming one of the "hottest" issues in China at the moment (White et al. 2008). In today's Beijing, differences in household income have become the leading cause of residential segregation. There is no evidence that this residential segregation is caused by ethnic attributes. Beijing's minority population, including the Manchus, tend to be scattered throughout the city. Only the Muslims have their own residential district, Niujie, located in the southern part of the Old City. However, this so-called Muslim-centred residential district is actually inhabited by many other nationalities as well. Most of the Muslim people in Beijing in fact live elsewhere. According to the statistics for 1990, the Muslim population accounts for 23 % of the total number of residents of Niujie, but Niujie accounts for only 6 % of the total Muslim population in Beijing [BEW]. It is clear that due to the increasingly serious social polarization under the market economy, slowly but surely a new urban residential structure based on economic affordability is emerging in Beijing. In other words, polarization in income has become the main cause of residential segregation of the city.

In addition to economic affordability, migrant discrimination, more precisely, the discrimination against migrant workers is some evolving evidence of the other cause of residential segregation. This cause, with inherited Chinese characteristics, different from, or even seldom documented in, the experimental studies in Western cities, has been the unique feature of the urban inequality in Chinese big cities as well as in Beijing since 1990s.

As mentioned in the previous sections, China's transformation from planned economy to market economy has instigated the mass rural migrant population to cities seeking work and higher wages. In big cities, swelling migrant workers form an itinerant urban population and economy all of their own. As the human force behind the urbanization process they are its powerhouse, as well as its essential side effect (Liauw 2008).

Due to the scarcity of urban resources, the institutional legacies left from the former planned economy system continued to limit the capacity of migrant workers without gaining hukou status in the cities that they live in. In terms of Beijing, the municipal government put restrictions on the jobs that migrants can hold, barring them from about two hundred occupations (Broudehoux 2004: 179). The migrant workers are largely employed in the manufacturing and construction industries, but seldom in government offices and state companies. Furthermore, without hukou, they were denied the access to perquisites such as free compulsory education for their children.

While migrant workers felt that they were the victims of unfair treatment by the government policies, the city dwellers, however, generally perceived migrant workers and their "urban villages" as the source of urban disorder. Many of the local urban residents were astute in identifying the differences between themselves and migrant workers, not by their jobs only, even by their accent, gestures, clothes and above all, their dispositions. The social inequality, or the lack of social opportunity thrust most rural migrants to the bottom of a ladder with little hope of climbing up. The controversial Hukou system reduced the chances of urban integration for migrant workers, thereby increasing their marginalization, perpetuating their condition as second-class citizens and enlarging the residential segregation of the city in the urban structure.

7.4 Conclusion

China's transformation from a planned economy to a market economy has produced tremendous changes in Beijing's housing development. With regard to the urban residential structure of the city, the most important change that has occurred is that the homogeneous residential type, which lasted for decades during the planned economy period, has been replaced by a residential type characterized by segregation.

In present-day Beijing, the residential segregation is manifested in the trend towards gentrification in the traditional residential districts in the old city proper and the polarization of living conditions between the high-grad houses and the poor

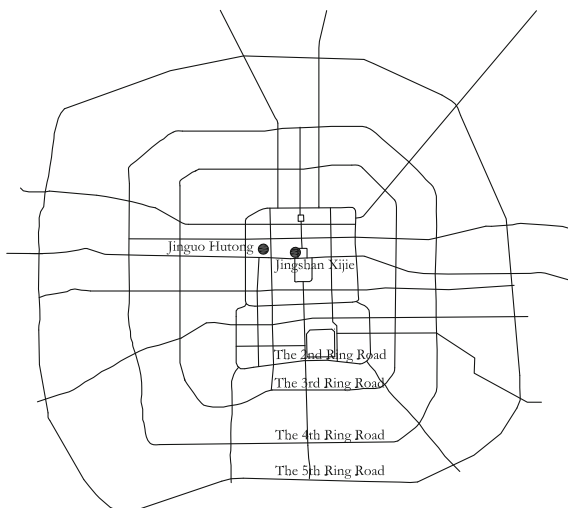
“urban villages” in the suburbs. Although the government believed that the living conditions were improved after the original residents of the Old City moved out into the suburbs, my analysis has shown that the residential relocation still had a large negative impact on the disadvantaged groups. The old city proper consisted of a large number of families trying to survive on a low income. After being compelled to leave their original neighbourhood due to urban redevelopment, they lost their opportunities to earn their livelihood because the environment on which they relied upon disappeared. In addition to the impact on their household incomes, my analysis has also shown that the relocation resulted in the collapse of their original social network.

In the suburbs of the city, the numerous “urban villages” manifested the residential difficulty that the disadvantaged groups experienced. Under the influence of the global economy, a polarization between rich and poor has become one of the most prominent characteristics of Beijing’s social structure. Within this structure, private entrepreneurs or high-salaried employees of international enterprises and migrant workers from the countryside have formed two opposite extremes. Accordingly, the high-grade villas and the poor “urban villages” represent these two opposites in urban residential structure, and at the same time exacerbate the problem of residential segregation in the city. As for the cause for the residential segregation of Beijing, my analysis has shown that, different from racial segregation, which was an essential feature and a leading cause in Western cities as well as in the historical Beijing, household income has become the main factor that caused Beijing’s residential segregation today. A residential structure based on economic affordability is coming into being.

7.5 Case Studies: An Investigation of the Living Conditions Within the Traditional Residential Districts in Beijing’s Old City Proper

The case studies summary the two surveys which I conducted in 1987 and 2004 in order to investigate living conditions within the traditional residential areas in Beijing’s old city proper. Two typical traditional residential districts, Jingshan Xijie and Jinguo Hutong, were selected as the subjects for this inquiry (Fig. 7.8). The Jingshan Xijie district is located at the centre of Beijing’s old city proper and has been listed as one of the “Historic and Cultural Conservation Districts” (HCCD) by the municipal government. In contrast, Jinguo Hutong, which is located in the western part of the old city proper, has not been listed as a HCCD. The problems experienced by the Jingshan Xijie and Jinguo Hutong districts are common ones that many traditional residential districts in Beijing’s Old City currently have to face: namely, due to the increasingly keen competition for land in the old city proper, both these neighbourhoods are under great stress to be redeveloped. As an undergraduate student, I participated in a questionnaire-based survey in Jinshan

Fig. 7.8 Locations of Jingshan Xijie district and Jinguo Hutong district.
Source Drawn by author based on investigation



Xijie district 1987. I shall compare this latter investigation with the more recent survey which I conducted in 2004.

From March to July 2004, with the help of the local residents' committees, I made an on-site survey of these two districts. I distributed 500 questionnaires to the residents (250 for each district) and retrieved 222 of them (85 from Jingshan Xijie and 137 from Jinguo Hutong). The questions were concerned mainly with the status of the local residents, the living conditions within the courtyard houses and the opinions of the residents on their potential residential relocation. In addition, I interviewed 40 families (20 for each district) in person. As most of the courtyard houses are shared by many families and the living conditions of each family could be somewhat different, I carefully selected those families which would best represent the average living conditions of the courtyard houses.

7.5.1 Status of the Residents

The Jingshan Xijie district is a well-known traditional residential district in Beijing. Located in the centre of the old city proper, it borders the three most important historic sites of the city: Forbidden City, Baihai Park and Jingshan Park. Because this area once housed a large number of high officials and aristocrats from the Yuan Dynasty, many large-sized courtyard houses and magnificent temples can still be found there. Since the founding of the People's Republic of China, it has gradually become a neighbourhood for the common people.

The Jingshan Xijie district has a land area of 12.6 ha. The largest proportion of this land (48 %) is devoted to residential housing; the second largest proportion (26 %) is occupied by historic sites; and the rest is used for roads, green space and

service facilities. With the exception of several multi-storey buildings, which were embedded in the old neighbourhood during the Great Cultural Revolution (1966–1976), Jingshan Xijie still maintains the characteristics of a traditional residential district.

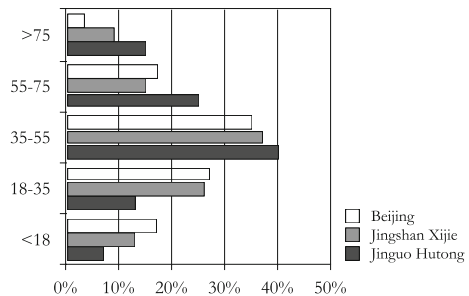
The Jinguo Hutong district is located in the western part of Beijing’s old city proper. The area to be investigated in this study is about 7.8 ha, its boundaries being Zhaodenyu Road to the east, Yuyou Hutong to the west, Dajue Hutong to the north and Pinganli West Street to the south. The present-day Jinguo Hutong district is a traditional residential district. In former times, this area also encompassed several historic sites, such as the Temple of Puan and the Temple of Yijiao, but these were destroyed before the twentieth century began. With the reconstruction of Pinganli West Street during the end of the 1990s, the traffic conditions of this district have greatly improved, and the neighbourhood has therefore attracted the special interest of real estate developers during recent years.

There are 2977 permanent residents in the Jingshan Xijie district, which make up 1210 families. (Taking into consideration the fact that 8 % of the houses in this district are let to the migrant population, the residents who actually live here should number about 3200.) In the 1987 survey, the population of this district was 4300 and the number of families was 1240. Thus, during the 17 years between 1987 and 2004, the number of families in this area has remained almost the same: the population decrease is due, rather, to a reduction in household size from 4.9 persons in 1987 to 2.5 persons in 2004. In 2004, the total number of families within the Jinguo Hutong district was 1075. Permanent residents accounted for 2950 persons, and the migrant population numbered nearly 500. The average number per family was therefore about 2.75.

These two districts share a similar population composition. In comparison with the figure for the city as a whole, they house more elderly people (see Fig. 7.9). Although the city has a tendency towards a smaller household size, there are still considerable numbers of families comprising several generations in the traditional residential districts (Fig. 7.10).

Residents in both these districts are disadvantaged in obtaining education (Fig. 7.11) and employment. Before 1995, when Beijing embarked on an adjustment of its urban industrial structure, most of the residents were employed by state-owned enterprises. After 1995, along with the difficulties which many

Fig. 7.9 Age composition of the residents of Jingshan Xijie, Jinguo Hutong districts and the city of Beijing. *Source* Drawn by author based on investigation



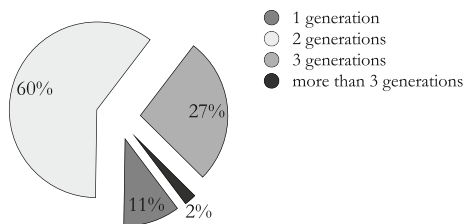


Fig. 7.10 Generation of the families of Jingshan Xijie district. *Source* Drawn by author based on investigation

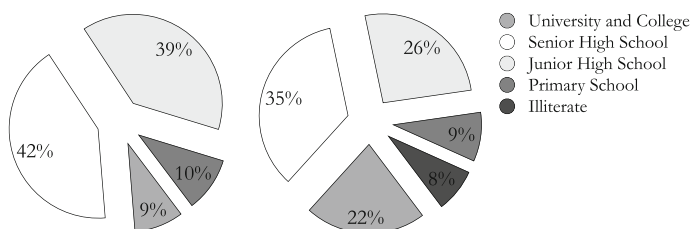


Fig. 7.11 Education of the residents of Jingshan Xijie district (*left*) and Jinguo Hutong district (*right*). *Source* Drawn by author based on investigation

state-owned enterprises underwent in their operations, many residents lost their jobs due to their more advanced age, lower education and poor techniques and consequently lived on the minimum living allowance issued by the municipal government. Even though some of them found jobs again, those jobs were normally temporary or of low salary. Taking the case of Jinguo Hutong: in 2004, families whose annual household income was below 2000 Yuan accounted for more than half of all the families who lived there, and those whose income was above 5000 Yuan accounted for only 5 % (Fig. 7.12). According to the definition put forward by the municipal government of Beijing in its statistical yearbook for 2004 (BMBS 2005), families with an annual household income below 8241 Yuan were classified as low-income families. Thus, most of the families in these two districts can be referred to as the low-income families of the city.

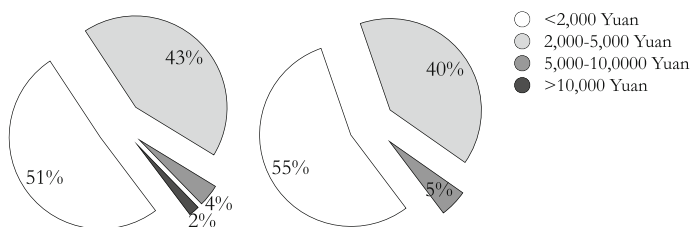


Fig. 7.12 Annual household incomes of families of Jingshan Xijie (*left*) and Jinguo Hutong (*right*) districts. *Source* Drawn by author based on investigation

7.5.2 Living Conditions Within the Traditional Residential Districts

The living conditions which exist within the Jingshan Xijie and Jinguo Hutong districts share common characteristics. Due to their good accessibility to the city centre, parks (Beihai Park and Jingshan Park) or activity centres (China National Children’s Activity Centre), these two districts are both advantaged as regards public facilities, especially in respect of their public transport and playgrounds. However, due to the shortage of living space and the ageing and disrepair of the courtyard houses, both districts are also filled with shanties, which were built by the residents themselves and deteriorated the living conditions of the neighbourhoods.

Convenient public transport is one of the most important advantages of the traditional residential districts in Beijing’s old city proper. Taking Jingshan Xijie as an example, this district’s residents commute to work mainly by bicycle or bus, which means that travel time for most of the residents is below 33 min, and sometimes even less than 15 min (Fig. 7.13). This forms a sharp contrast with the situation in the city as a whole, where traffic jams have become increasingly serious and most people have to spend 1 or 2 h on their trips to work.

My investigation of the Jingshan Xijie district in 2004 suggests that 70 % of the residents were satisfied with the transport facilities of their neighbourhood. Moreover, 95 % of the residents were also satisfied with the playground and sports facilities within that neighbourhood or nearby. In comparison with the 1987 survey, the proportion of residents who were satisfied with the public facilities had increased from 19 % in 1987 to 47 % in 2004 (Fig. 7.14).

However, while being satisfied with the public facilities, many residents were disappointed with the living conditions of their courtyard houses. In the survey of Jingshan Xijie district in 2004, when I enquired about the improvement of the living conditions during the past three years, 65 % of the residents answered that the living conditions of their courtyard houses were the same as before, 30 % of them thought the living conditions were better than before, 2 % thought them much better and 3 % thought them much worse. This concern was also manifested with regard to the facilities of the courtyard houses in the Jingshan Xijie district in 1987 and 2004 (Table 7.4).

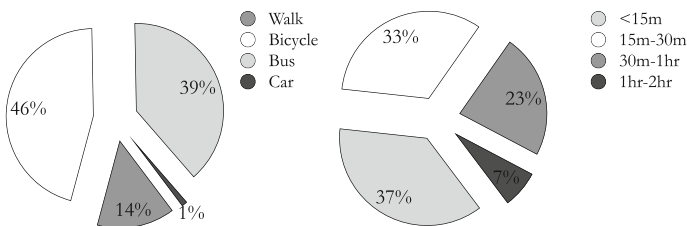


Fig. 7.13 The transport mode to work (left) and the time spend on the commute (right), Jingshan Xijie district. Source Drawn by author based on investigation

Fig. 7.14 Opinions of the residents of Jingshan Xijie district on the state of public facilities within their neighbourhood in 1987 and 2004. *Source* Drawn by author based on investigation

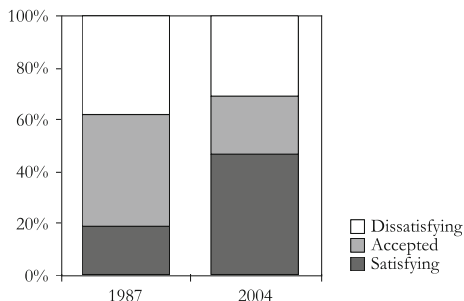


Table 7.4 The facilities of courtyard houses in the Jingshan Xijie district in 1987 and 2004

| | | 1987 (%) | 2004 (%) |
|-------------------------|---------|----------|----------|
| Kitchen | Private | 86 | 86 |
| | Mutual | 14 | 10 |
| | None | | 4 |
| Toilet | Private | 10 | 29 |
| | Mutual | 90 | 67 |
| | None | | 4 |
| Bath room | Yes | 10 | 36 |
| | No | 90 | 64 |
| Tap water | Yes | 86 | 98 |
| | No | 14 | 2 |
| Sewer | Yes | 67 | 93 |
| | No | 33 | 7 |
| Central heating | Yes | 10 | 61 |
| | No | 90 | 39 |
| Gas-jar (1987) | Yes | 62 | 7 |
| Natural gas pipe (2004) | No | 38 | 93 |

Source Made by author based on investigation

In addition to their poor facilities, the shortage of living space is another reason which has resulted in the deterioration of these traditional residential districts. The Jingshan Xijie district consists of 103 courtyard houses of various sizes. More than 1210 families lived in these 103 courtyard houses, that is, 12 families per courtyard house on average. In the largest courtyard house (once an accommodation of an aristocrat family of Qing) in the neighbourhood, the families who lived there include about ninety families in total. The average living space per family for the district was about 33 m², that is, about 13 m² per capita. The situation in Jinguo Hutong district was even worse, the average living space per capita being less than 10 m². This figure for both of the two districts was much lower than the average living space per capita for the city as a whole, which amounted to 19.1 m² in 2004.

Out of the families I surveyed in Jingshan Xijie, 18 had been living there for more than 20 years. Their opinions can best represent the changes in the living

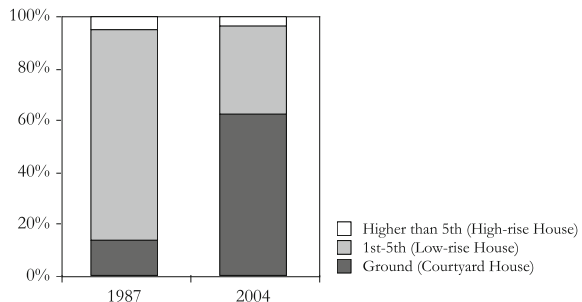
conditions which have taken place in that neighbourhood during that time. The problem about which these residents complained most strongly was that of the toilets: those used by most of the families who lived there were still very sub-standard, and this was particularly noticeable when compared with the rapid development of real estate industry during the past decades. Modern facilities have now become the basic installations of newly built houses in Beijing: in comparison, the facilities of these old courtyard houses are indeed very old-fashioned.

7.5.3 Opinions of the Residents on Residential Relocation

From the end of the 1980s, and especially since 1992, the redevelopment of traditional residential districts has resulted in many residents of the old city proper being relocated to the suburbs. This can be seen if one compares the results of the two investigations made, respectively, in 1987 and 2004. In 1987, when the redevelopment projects were not yet fully operational, most residents wished to be relocated into multi-storey houses equipped with modern facilities. However, in 2004, after the redevelopment projects had been operated on a large-scale and many former residents had been pushed out of the old city proper, many residents changed their minds and preferred to remain in their original neighbourhoods (Fig. 7.15).

Underlying this analysis, one may discern a distinct contrast of attitudes between low-income and higher-income families. Generally, the higher-income families support the redevelopment projects more strongly than the lower-income families. Although some realize that they will be unable to return to their original neighbourhoods, they will be able to purchase new houses near the old city proper with the help of the financial support resulting from the compensation for relocation. Nevertheless, not all higher-income families share this attitude. Those whose courtyard houses are currently in good condition mostly object to the redevelopment projects, which will destroy the old houses and replace them with multi-storey blocks or even high-rise buildings. (On the whole, developers do not wish to maintain these courtyard houses, since they want to make profits by building more

Fig. 7.15 The housing preferences of the residents in Jingshan Xijie in 1987 and 2004. *Source* Drawn by author based on investigation



living space for sale.) The lower-income families also wish that their living conditions could be improved by the redevelopment projects. But when they find that they cannot return to their neighbourhoods because of the high house prices which have resulted from this redevelopment, their opinions will be diversified. The families who can afford to buy suburban houses with the support of compensation for relocation may still accept the redevelopment projects. However, the families who cannot afford the suburban houses even with the financial support for relocation—especially those lower-income families, who have to make a living on the environment of the old city proper—will oppose the redevelopment projects.

Residential relocation will also marginalise the relocated residents. In particular, it will reduce the employment opportunities for these people, and will increase the costs necessary to enable these relocated residents to use public facilities and services in the city centre. As mentioned above, many residents of the traditional neighbourhoods are already disadvantaged and fall within the lower-income groups. Relocation to the suburbs will reduce opportunities for them to make a living in the city centre. Some of the concerns voiced during my 2004 survey are listed here.

“After my husband was out of work, he made money, about 400 Yuan/month, for the family by riding pedicab for tourists. If we moved to the suburbs, we would lose even this opportunity” (Mrs. Zhang of Jinguo Hutong district).

“My Mom moved to a new district outside of the Fifth Ring Road. There is no opportunity to make money over there because there are not many residents around. My Mom warned me not to move there” (Ms. Lin of Jingshan Xijie district).

“It is not a bad idea to improve the conditions of the old neighbourhoods. However, it is bad that many residents will be pushed out into the area outside the Fifth Ring Road. It is too far away for children to go to school, and the fare is expensive” (Mr. Yuan of Jinguo Hutong district).

“We have a disabled member of the family; we need government help to enable us to care for him. If we were relocated to the outer suburbs, it would be difficult for us to visit doctors. The quality of the hospitals in the suburbs is not good yet. We still need to return to the city centre for treatment” (Mrs. Niu of Jinguo Hutong district).

7.5.4 Conclusion

During the last two decades, although the real estate industry has been developing very fast in Beijing, the living conditions of the traditional residential districts have not improved accordingly. Many residents of these traditional neighbourhoods are the disadvantaged groups of the city. Relocation to the suburbs will marginalize the relocated residents and will impact negatively upon their lives. The opinions of the residents on the matter of residential relocation, as expressed in my surveys, clearly differ. The families who can afford the houses prices after the redevelopment or who prefer new houses in the suburbs normally prefer the redevelopment projects. The families which cannot afford the suburban houses with the support of relocation

compensation, or who make a living which is greatly reliant upon the old city proper, generally oppose the projects. However, one thing is clear that, in comparison with the situation before the 1990s, more residents at present wish that they could have returned to their old neighbourhoods after these had been redeveloped.

References

- BMBS (Beijing Municipal Bureau of Statistics) (ed) (2001) Beijing Jianchengqu Mianji Shuju Tongji, 1991–2000 [Beijing statistical data on construction areas, 1991–2000]. Available at: <http://jsw.bjstats.gov.cn/>
- BMBS (Beijing Municipal Bureau of Statistics) (ed) (2002–2006) Beijing Tongji Nianjian 2001 (2002, 2003, 2004, 2005) [Beijing statistical yearbook 2001 (2002, 2003, 2004, 2005)]. Zhongguo Tongji Chubanshe [China Statistics Press], Beijing
- BMG (Beijing Municipal Government) (1995) Notice on cleaning up and rectifying the Dahongmen area of Fengtai District. *Beijing Wanbao* [Beijing Evening Daily], Nov 13, 1995
- Broudehoux AM (2004) The making and selling of past-Mao Beijing. Routledge, New York and London
- Dray-Novoy A (1993) Spatial order and police in imperial Beijing. *J Asian Stud* 52(4):883–922
- Feng J, Zhou Y (2003) Beijing Dushiqu Shehui Kongjian Jiegou Jiqi Yanbian (1982–2000) [The social spatial structure of Beijing's metropolitan area and its evolution (1982–2000)]. *Dili Yanjiu* [Geograph Res] 22(4):465–483
- Huang Y, Wang M (2004) Jiucheng Gengxin Zhongdi Shouru Jumin Liyi de Weihu [Safeguarding the interests of low-income inhabitants in urban renewal]. *Chengshi Wenti* [City Probl] 2:42–45
- Jiang G (2004) Beijing Juzhu Jiaohua de Dongli Jizhi [The mechanism of residential suburbanization in Beijing]. *Beijing Guihua Janshe* [Beijing Plan Rev] 6:172–173
- Liang Z et al (2008) Urbanization in China in the 1990s: patterns and regional variations. In: Logan JR (ed) *Urban China in translation*. Blackwell Publishing Ltd., Malden
- Liau L (2008) Leaping forward, getting rich gloriously, and letting a hundred cities bloom. In: Liau L (ed) *New Urban China*. John Wiley and Sons, London
- Liu F (2001) Mingqing Chengshi de Jiefang yu Shequ: Jianlun Chuantong Wenhua zai Chengshi Kongjian de Zheshe [Lanes, blocks and communities in ming and qing dynasty: with a concurrent discussion on reflection of traditional culture on urban space]. *Zhongguo Renmin Daxue Xuebao* [J Renmin Univ China] 2:111–117
- Lu D (2006) *Remarking Chinese urban form: modernity, scarcity and space, 1949–2005*. Routledge, London and New York
- Shen G (2003) 2003 Nian Bieshu [Villas in 2003]. *Jianzhu Shibao* [Construction Times], Apr 23
- Sun W, Yu, Z (2005) Beijing Daolu de Kuaisu Fazhan [The rapid development of roads in Beijing]. *Beijing News Net*. Available at: <http://beijing.qianlong.com/3825/2005/12/21/1640@2935209.htm>
- Tan Y (1998) You Jumin Banqian Wenti Yinfa de Dui Beijing Weigai Fangshi de Tantaoyan [A research for the method of the innovation of the dilapidated housing in Beijing: due to the problems caused by residential relocation]. *Jianzhu Xuebao* [Archit J] 2:44–47
- Tan L (2002) Jiefanghou Beijing Chengshi Zhuzhai de Guihua yu Jianshe [The planning and construction of urban housing in Beijing after liberation]. *Dangdai Zhongguo Shi Yanjiu* [Contemp Chin Hist Stud] 19(6):101–108
- UN (United Nations) (2004) Human development report 2004. Available at: <http://hdr.undp.org/reports/global/2004/>

- Wang X (2003) Jiucheng Shequ Ruoshi Juzhu Qunti yu Juzhu Zhiliang Gaishan Yanjiu [a study of the disadvantaged group in the old city and the improvement of their living quality]. *Chengshi Guihua* [City Plan Rev] 27(12):24–34
- Wang J (2008) The people's city. In: Liauw L (ed) *New urban China*. Wiley, London
- Wang L (2015) Approach to and suggestions for further reform of hukou system. In: Pan J, Wei H (eds) *Annual report on urban development of China 2013*. Springer, New York
- Wei K (1997) Beijing Weijiufang Gaizao de Wenti yu Jianyi: Yi Dongchengqu Weijiufang Gaizao Weili [The problems of and suggestions to the old and dilapidated housing redevelopment in Beijing: the case of Dongcheng District]. *Beijing Guihua Jianshe* [Beijing Plan Rev] 5:49–52
- Wei K (1998) Ren, Hutong, Siheyuan, Shangye Gaizao: Beijing Dongchengqu Jiucheng Gaizao Suixiang [Resident, hutong, courtyard houses and commercial redevelopment: thoughts on the urban renewal of Dongcheng District in Beijing]. *Beijing Guihua Jianshe* [Beijing Plan Rev] 6:47–48
- Weston F (2005) China: disparity between rich and poor preparing renewed class struggle (13 Oct). Available at: <http://www.marxist.com/china-income-disparity131005.htm>
- White MJ et al (2008) Urbanization, institutional change, and sociospatial inequality in China, 1990–2001. In: Logan JR (ed) *Urban China in Translation*. Blackwell Publishing Ltd., Malden
- Yang X (2005) Beijing Shanniannei Jiang Chanchu 69 Chu Chengzhongcun [Beijing to obliterate 69 “urban villages” in three years]. *Beijing Qingnian Bao* [Beijing Youth Daily], Feb 24
- Ye Z, Go L (2003) Dui Beijing Jiucheng Juzhuqu Gengxin de Fansi he Tantaoshe [An investigation of the redevelopment of traditional residential districts in Beijing]. *Beijing Jianzhu Gongcheng Xueyuan Xuebao* [J Beijing Inst Civil Eng Archit] 19(1):1–4
- Yu T (1999) Beijing Gongye Jiegou yu Yongdi Buju Tiaozheng zhi Wojian [My opinions on the readjustment of the industrial urban structure as well as land use changes in Beijing]. *Beijing Guihua Jianshe* [Beijing Plan Rev] 3:48–50
- Zhang L (2001) Contesting crime, order, and migrant space in Beijing. In: Chen, Nancy N, et al (eds) *China urban: ethnographies of contemporary cultures*. Duke University Press, Durham and London
- Zhou G (2005) A thousand cars per day: Beijing's private cars soar to 1.65 Million. *Beijing Yule Xinbao* [Beijing Daily Messenger], July 8