

ABSTRACT SUBMISSION FORM

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Overview of Presentation

This paper characterizes and quantifies the urban form of the Chinese "work unit" city. There is a strong organizational basis for Chinese cities which aims to reduce transport energy input and assure active access of all inhabitants to the workplace. The work unit (Danwei), is not only the critical place for employment, but also the social organization and the basic cell structure for urban form and accessibility to other activities. During the long period after 1949, the development pattern of factory-based community was pervasive in nearly every Chinese city such as Daqing (oil city), Datong (coal city) and Anshan (steel city). The work unit structure is 'small and all-inclusive', with all kinds of facilities and social services within walkable distance of all living areas. Access to the workplace, school, hospital, park, supermarket is 5-10 minutes by walking or cycling from every house in the work unit. There are few roads crossing the community that connect to main transport networks outside the work unit. The percentage of private car ownership in some rich communities is no more than 30% because of the convenience of the structure. For some remote communities, the majority of people spend their lifetime living in the work unit with only rare trips to the city center. The risk of work unit is its high dependence on the presence of one factory, in fact, with the massive collapse of state-owned enterprises in the 1990s, the function of the work unit started to diminish in the course of economic reform. Yet its efficient spatial form and stable social structure still provide possibilities for designing organic urban form in the future.