

Private Security and Public Space: New Approaches to the Theory and Practice of Gated Communities

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Abstract

This article reviews a range of arguments and some of the evidence on the emergence of gated communities or as they will be described in this article gated residential developments (GRDs). The focus of the article will be the UK context, and it takes issue with the largely negative dominant academic narratives of GRDs, that they are private sector enclaves of high income households. The article argues that interest in GRDs has been limited from both an empirical and theoretical perspective and that this phenomenon requires more complex analysis, situating it within a broader process of 'securitization'. The article considers a case study of a housing development, comprising gated and non-gated properties and including privately owned and socially rented properties, illustrating the desires of residents for increased security. The analysis uses the concept of 'club economics' to consider the critical issues behind the development of 'private neighbourhoods' and considers alternative classifications of gating.

Introduction

There has been a considerable growth of interest in recent years surrounding the emergence of 'gated communities', 'fortified enclaves' and other forms of privatised public space (Atkinson *et. al.*, 2004). This interest has been found in the work of sociologists and anthropologists who have focused on the residents of these developments as well as urban and regional theorists who have linked the emergence of GRDs to wider processes of economic and urban restructuring that have been associated with globalization (Bauman, 2000; Low, 2003).

The term 'gated residential development' is preferred to 'gated community' as it does not carry the same weight of sociological baggage. Gated Residential Developments (GRDs) are generally defined as master planned neighbourhoods that have been constructed with a boundary fence or wall, which separates them from their environs. Right of entry is controlled either by security personnel, operation of gates or by electronic entry systems (Blakeley and Snyder, 1995; van Vliet, 1998). Areas can also be retrofitted where formerly public streets or open housing developments are enclosed behind gates. The term 'temporary' 'faux' or 'pseudo' GRDs is sometimes used in situations where the development has been designed to give the impression that roads have been closed to foot and vehicle traffic (Blakeley *et.al.*1995) or where fake security entry systems have been installed (Lowe, 2003: 229).

The interest in 'gated developments', 'fortified enclaves' and other forms of privatised public space rests on a number of assumptions, all of which are subject to questioning. The first assumption is that the growth of such developments is a relatively recent phenomenon and is representative of a new phase in the evolution of the city, associated with the emergence of mega and global cities (Amin and Thift, 2002; Marcuse and Kempen, 2000; Pick and Butler, 2000; Sassen, 2001). Second, that it is representative of a culture of fear and risk avoidance, which has emerged in the USA, South America and South Africa (Davis, 1990; Glassner, 1999; Garland, 2001). Third, that gating provides security to elite groups, and is limited to high-income households, who are isolating themselves from social problems, located outside the gates (Blakely and Snyder, 1999; Atkinson and Flint, 2004). The final assumption is that these developments are inherently undemocratic and damage wider processes of social participation and social cohesion (Marcuse and Kempen, 2002). All these assumptions consequently carry a strong normative and ideological significance. The significance of gating can be summarised in an overview of the literature which outlines a general set of criticisms. Gating thus provides an:

intellectual intersection at which we can locate a much wider range of social changes and concerns...a broader trend of private decision-making that has wider and public ramifications... [where] locational choices made by affluent households affect outcomes for the poor in terms of city sustainability, security and social segregation...[and] a kind of spatial contract, which if not balanced by public intervention, may lead to a downward spiral of urban social relations (Atkinson and Blandy, 2005: 179).

The argument of this article is that such views are over-simplistic. The article argues for a more subtle conceptualisation of gating.

The Hostility to Gating

The following sections challenge some of the traditional academic orthodoxies relating to gated communities and outline some alternative conceptualisations of the public domain.

Gating and urban sociology

Many writers identify a new generation of GRDs that first appeared in the USA during the 1960s as the forerunners of the current developments that are now so popular with developers and residents (for example Low, 2003). Despite the notion that they represent a ‘new enclavism’ (Atkinson and Blandy, 2005), GRDs have been a common feature of urban development for centuries. The growth of the GRD and street barriers was evident in the expansion of 18th and 19th central London (Atkins, 1993) and the creation of gated housing estates managed by Octavia Hill for London’s poor (Darley, 1994); the gated suburb first appeared in Mexico City at the start of the 20th Century (Aguilera, 2004). Sea Gate, New York City’s first GRD was occupied in the inter-war years mainly by middle class Jewish households after being developed as a exclusive development for rich New Yorkers (Rosen, 2003). The more recent developments of the 1960s originated in gated leisure and living complexes in Florida; primarily designed for ‘retirement communities’ (van Vliet, 1998).

Contemporary academic debates about gating have their origin in ‘new urban’ sociological perspectives, which have developed concepts of ‘global city-regions’ (Scott *et al* 2002) the ‘partitioned city’ (Marcus and Kempen, 2000 and 2002) and in Germany the ‘*Zwischenstadt*’ – or cities without cities – (Sieverts, 2003) and ‘splintering urbanism’ (Graham and Marvin, 2001). These theories regard gating as a negative expression of market led global economic growth.

The central problem of our societies is the division among people, and that division is increasingly reflected by walls dividing them, walls whose social weight and impact has increasingly overshadowed their physical might (Marcuse, 1994: 41).

Gating and the culture of fear

The second assumption is that GRDs are associated with a ‘culture of fear’ and risk experienced within city environments. The growth of the fortified enclave is treated as a spatial expression of increasing socio-economic inequalities and urban conflict; it is therefore a reaction to increasing risks engendered in such cities by the mass media reporting of young people, immigrants, drugs, and crime (see Glasser, 1999 and Sandercock, 2002). These fears are seen as particularly relevant within Anglo-Saxon cultures:

The desire for security, orderliness, and control, for the management of risk and the taming of chance is, to be sure, an underlying theme in any culture. But in Britain and America in recent decades that theme has become a more dominant one... (Garland, 2001: 194).

This management of risk was partly reflected in an increasing level of urban ‘white-flight’ as many families fled what they perceived to be the cramped, chaotic and crime-ridden inner cities for the ‘safer’ and controllable suburban environs and newly created subsections of GRDs.

Fear of non-white ethnic households is an undercurrent running through the interviewee narratives in the studies of GRDs by Blakely and Snyder (1997), Low (2003) and to a certain extent Caldeira (2000). Low argues that respondents frequently use euphemistic terms to express fear and mistrust of the dark and potentially dangerous 'other'.

Such writers view these fears as based upon misunderstandings and misapprehensions. According to these arguments, gating does not help to reduce crime; it merely creates a false impression of security: 'crime rates are already low' (Low, 2003: 11). The results are 'cellular and parallel lives lived in, and driven by fear' (Atkinson and Blandy, 2005: 181).

The exclusivity of the GRD

The culture of fear argument is linked to the notion that gated developments are restricted to higher income households. As these households become increasingly aware of disparities in wealth and income they choose to distance and isolate themselves from the wider public. They thus both attract as much as prevent crime, as they themselves become targets for vandalism, burglary and theft (Atkinson *et al.*, 2004). This view is now being challenged by empirical evidence from the 2000 US census (Sanchez and Lang 2002), examples of gated developments of middle and lower income groups in Santiago (Salcedo and Torres, 2004), Sao Paulo (Pasternak and Bogus, 2004), Mexico City (Aguilera, 2004), the black middle class of Johannesburg (Jurgens *et al.*, 2003) or London (Manzi and Smith-Bowers, 2005).

Many people in the US and South Africa live in GRDs with walls only 2.4 metres high and have joined to enjoy leisure facilities (such as golf and tennis) as much as to purchase additional safety and security. There is such a range of gated accommodation that the binary classification into gated and non-gated appears to be less than worthwhile. The substitution of the concept 'fortified enclave' (Caldeira, 2000) includes a wider range of phenomena, such as university campuses, shopping malls and offices. The concepts GRD or retro-gated housing estates are useful ways of identifying residential fortification without suggesting a 'community' behind the walls.

An important feature of GRDs is that property rights have been apportioned between a freehold covering the residential unit and a different type of agreement covering the common parts of the estate for the purposes of estate and facilities management and finance. This property type is what in America is termed a Common Interest Development (CID) or what in English property law would be called a leasehold agreement (or in the future a commonhold agreement). The purpose and accountability of such management entities has been one reason that GRDs have been criticized as being authoritarian (by enforcing rules about dwelling exteriors) undemocratic (renters don't have a vote normally) and destabilizing of local government structures (McKenzie, 1994 and 2003; van Vliet, 1998). Gated developments are therefore argued to lead to an 'undermining of local and state responsibilities to at least create equity of outcomes between neighbourhoods of different social characteristics and qualities' (Atkinson and Blandy, 2005: 181).

In addition to its physical and environmental attributes, private communal areas, walls, gates and security patrols, the gated development entails the creation of a

'territorial organisation' of the residents 'property rights' (Glasze, 2003; McKenzie, 1994). These can include Home Owners Associations (HOAs) or Common Interest Housing Developments (CIDs) (McKenzie, 2003). In principle, these organisations provide a vehicle of representative governance in the management of resident interests. Both Glasze and McKenzie have questioned how democratic and representative such associations are in practice. However, the additional merit good of being able to directly influence the management of a common residency is one of the key objectives of the UK government's neighbourhood regeneration policy (DETR, 1999). Furthermore, the concept of choice has become an increasingly important aspect of housing service delivery (ODPM, 2000).

Gating and social cohesion

A common perception of gated developments is that they represent a particular form of social exclusion (Atkinson and Blandy, 2005). Based mainly on the US and UK literature, these views see gates as 'symbols of exclusion' and 'unreality' (Low, 2003: 2-3).

Gated Residential Developments are therefore perceived to limit the 'public realm' by encouraging residents to close themselves off from social contact; abandoning the city (Sennett, 2000: 181) and thereby limiting the social capital of neighbourhoods to '*bonding*' formation and because such developments limit outside encounters restricting '*bridging*' social capital formation (Blandy and Lister, 2005). The 'functional interdependence' and mutual economic benefits which have been identified in gated developments and their surrounding environs by Salcedo and Torres (2004) in Chile have not been fully explored by writers hostile to the notion of gating *per se*.

Furthermore, these developments are perceived to intensify social and spatial segregation: black from white; upper class from working class; rich from poor. By limiting the use of public space, they create a privatised environment, which denies access to other residents of the surrounding area. Gating is thus seen as a political act, 'part of a deeper social transformation...a metaphor for the social processes at work in the nation's political and social landscape' (Blakely and Snyder, 1997: vii). Consequently, the debate about gated developments carries a disproportionate weight of significance. Representative of an individualistic culture it is generally presented as an irrational fear of the 'other' and consequently lacking in legitimacy (Amin and Thrift, 2002: 22). This development is representative of a 'dramatic manifestation of a new fortress mentality growing in America' (Blakeley *ibid*: 1-2). At an area level gating is also said to 'contribute to hyper segregation by reducing access and excluding individuals on the basis of social class' (Lang and Danielsen, 1997: 876). This assumption that gating is merely the preserve of a middle-class elite is widespread amongst UK academic commentators. Hence:

Relations with the wider neighbourhood are seen to be adversely affected by the physical form of the GC development. This has far-reaching implications for community cohesion. There is a danger of a 'them and us' attitude developing both amongst residents of the GC and the surrounding neighbourhood (Blandy and Lister, 2005: 300).

Gating and Urban Policy in the UK

The combination of these powerful assumptions in academic commentary, media coverage and policy discourse is that gated developments need to be restricted in the United Kingdom. If these extremes of social polarisation are to be avoided, then the spread of gating needs to be discouraged. As seen above, the claim is that these developments detrimentally affect the public domain; residents are encouraged to minimise social contact with each other, which further limits the possibility of enhancing the social capital of neighbourhoods (Blandy and Lister, 2005). Gating therefore results in a 'conflict with personal politics and wider ideals often enshrined in planning frameworks as well as attempts at achieving social justice and balance in the neighbourhood context' (Atkinson and Blandy, 2005: 185).

There is a strong normative element to these debates, carrying paternalistic assumptions about how residential areas should evolve (namely in an organic and spontaneous fashion, or under the watchful eye of neighbourhood managers). Gating is presented as an unnatural attempt at social engineering, for example representing 'a spatial revolt of the elites'; gated developments thus 'solidify social boundaries' and are part of a 'wider ratcheting down of social relations' (Atkinson and Flint, 2004).

Gating is thus seen as a 'voluntary exclusion of the elites' which 'enhances the highly complex processes leading to "involuntary exclusion" by undermining local government and local democracy and heightening polarisation' (Minton, 2002: 32). Other views as mentioned earlier consider gating to be highly detrimental to social cohesion and advocate more stringent planning controls to limit their proliferation (Gooblar, 2001).

However, such views may conflict with empirical evidence about resident preferences. Crime surveys consistently show that fear of neighbourhood crime in large part is based on outsiders entering housing estates and other neighbourhoods. Surveys indicate that gating is vastly preferable to the urban young in particular. Evidence from a study commissioned by the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) shows that 65% of 18-25 year olds stated that gated communities were a good thing compared to 44% of over 60 year olds (Minton, 2002). Nevertheless, the reporting of this evidence takes highly judgmental forms. The same report states that 'gated communities are a symptom of an increasingly socially divided society and a move towards the kind of polarisation found in the US where 15% of the population live in gated communities while a smaller number are trapped in ghettos' (*ibid.*).

Given that much of the housing policy debate in the UK is driven by concerns about increasing consumer 'choice' (see for example ODPM, 2000) it is significant that such choices are restricted to certain initiatives. The most recent guidance from the ODPM and Home Office while clearly stating the benefits of gating for private and public sector housing developments still suggests such options should not simply be a matter of residents' choice:

Gated communities may increase the sustainability and social mix of an area by making housing more attractive where problems of crime and image could otherwise lead to the development's failure. The Government believes, however, that it is normally preferable for new development to be integrated

into the wider community and that the gating of developments should only be considered as a last resort (ODPM and the Home Office, 2004: 31).

Gated Residential Developments and Consumption Sharing

Standard economic taxonomies of private and public goods do not provide a useful starting point for the discussion of GRDs. The GRD shares features of a private good as it is the result of individual market transactions; however it also has some features of a public good in that it is subject to administrative control which determines what is provided and how it is managed for a given population, who do not have individual exclusive rights. GRDs are entities where individuals combine property rights to maximize utility, and hire agents to oversee the management and use of the entity (see Webster and Wai-Chung Lai, 2003: 54).

A useful way to understand why individuals combine property rights to live in a GRD is by identifying the benefits of the 'club goods' of which they are an example. The theory of club goods was developed by Buchanan (1965 and 1968) to explain collective consumption. Buchanan offered a new perspective on the economics of 'consumption sharing' (see Cullis and Jones, 1992). Buchanan examines how a 'given' population working in an 'existing' system of property rights will maximize benefits and minimize costs with reference to a range of goods either as private consumers, public consumers or via membership of a 'club' providing a good. A key feature of any good is its 'divisibility' or 'indivisibility' when it is provided and consumed. When a good is divisible the benefits and the costs can be enjoyed by a single person (or household) as in the case of renting a house. The act of renting the house prevents others from renting therefore the pricing is the result of rivalry between potential consumers who signal their preference for the good via the pricing mechanism. When a good is 'indivisible' it cannot be priced in this way and the benefit cannot be limited to those that pay, however the benefit can be enjoyed by individuals in the given population without reducing the benefit to any other population member. Such goods are defined as public goods and have the attribute of non-rivalry; goods such as national defence, the law of contract and legal tender can be placed in the category of a public good.

In Britain, Webster (2001; 2002) has applied the theory of club good economics to GRD and this work provides a robust way of understanding the attractiveness, efficiency and effectiveness of gated developments for their residents. Webster's work stands in stark contrast to the sociological classification and descriptions offered by Blakeley and Synder (1997); the ethnographic stories of Low (2003); the empirical studies found in the work undertaken by Blandy *et al* (2003 and 2004) and the normative judgments of Minton (2003).

Webster (2002) argues that cities 'naturally fragment into many small *publics*, each of which may be thought of as a collective consumption club' (p.397, emphasis in original). He contends that 'most public realms serve *particular* publics and are better conceived of as *club* realms' (p.398, emphasis in original). The function of gating is therefore twofold: firstly it creates goods that members seek such as increased security, preventing or reducing unwanted encounters with unfamiliar persons, reducing queuing time and crowding when using facilities such as tennis courts, swimming pools and other amenities. Secondly the gates secure the limited

divisibility of the goods to members and their guests. Without the gates the benefit of the good would disappear through the impact of free riding and overcrowding. The gated fence and proof of membership or right to consume is a recognised solution to these collective consumption problems.

The purpose of the club is to capture and maximize the utility function for its members; it does not create a direct utility for the wider society beyond the gates (which is the same as for other types of residential units). This has led many commentators to be concerned (without much evidence either way) that GRDs will produce 'negative externalities' for the wider society. In our view this has not been proven, and remains an empirical question, not a given. It is similar to any development or change of use that a landowner wants to make; planners therefore have to make a judgement in terms of its impact on the 'public interest'. In much the same way, authors have argued that mixed tenure developments will have benefits for the wider society (with little evidence of such to date). Our argument is that a specific GRD in a particular location can be neutral in its operation or can provide 'positive externalities' through generating work opportunities or attracting new retail development into the locality.

The concept of the club good is therefore helpful in explaining the reasons households seek out membership of such residential forms. It offers a less emotive explanation than the fortress mentality arguments of Davis (1990), the unreasonable fears suggested by Low (2003) or the breakdown of civil society and the emergence of a new order in the partitioned city arguments found in Scott (2002), Marcus and Kempen (2000), or isolationist or separatist arguments of Blakely and Snyder (1997) and Sieverts (2003).

Gatedness not gates

What we also want to suggest is that the concept of the GRD, as a private sector homeowner, common interest entity, peopled by high-income households, as originally proposed by Blakeley and Snyder (1997) is too restrictive. We propose a new formulation to situate the GRD within a wider spectrum of gating and securitization. This typology partly draws upon an earlier classification developed by McKenzie (2003: 212). The typology is not income specific; does not require development to be located in the private sector and covers a broad spectrum of facilities in the residential and non-residential sectors. The core features of the new classification are the measure of openness or 'gatedness' of the facility in terms of its outer and inner boundaries; its permeability by society or openness to the public realm, and the measure of democratic control and accountability it offers its membership.

One possible way to conceptualise gating is therefore not as a simple dichotomy between the public and private domains, but rather as a continuum of gating whereby a number of different categories of gating can be identified. Figure 1 provides a representation of the various models of the GRDs.

In this typology the residence is represented on the vertical axis with reference to the dwellings 'openness' or 'gatedness' in relationship to other types of dwelling and public space. On the horizontal axis the home is represented again with reference to its openness and gatedness with reference to civil society. It should be noted that

many aspects of the relationship to civil society are not of a built or spatial form. In this article we do not seek to represent the forms of ownership and empowerment residents' experience with reference to management control and democratic accountability. The typology and the examples have been given a number, which is used to discuss the GRDs below.

Figure 1: The openness and gatedness of the home and public space

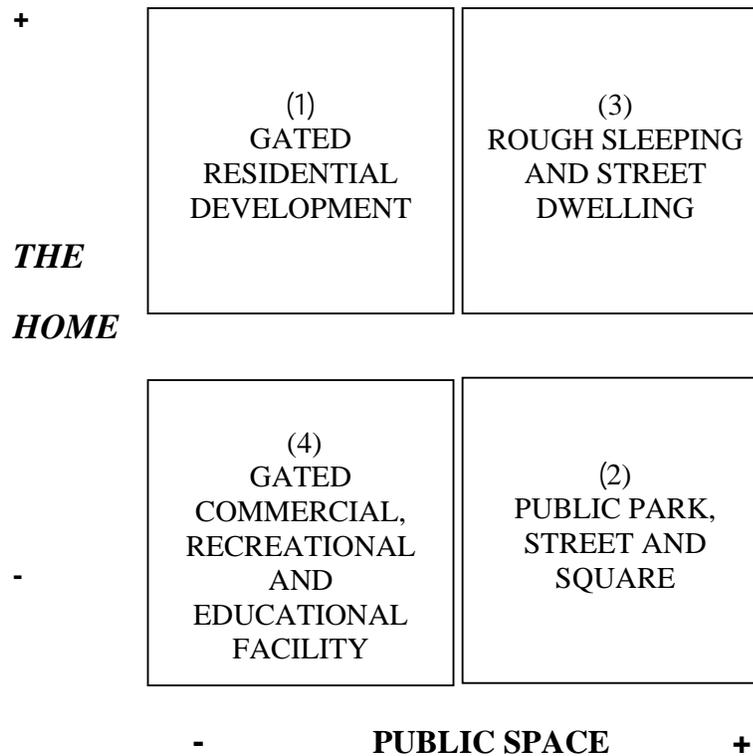


Figure one delineates four types of urban space with reference to residential and non-residential usages. GRDs (box1) lie at the top left side of the figure. These developments represent the focal point of almost all research that goes under the title 'gated communities'. Their diametrical opposite (box 2) represents public space, typified by parks, streets and squares in which there are normally no barriers to entry. Many of the critics of GRDs formulate their concerns both by what takes place within these developments as well as their repercussions and negative externalities for public space (box 2). The core of these criticisms can be encapsulated in the view that gating is a physical manifestation of exclusionary practices, representing a direct challenge to public space and an institutional arrangement which undermines democratic control and communitarian obligations to the public realm.

Box 3 is included to demonstrate that the public domain can also become a place of residence in which there are no physical barriers to exclude others. This dimension has recently become significant with the growth of Business Improvement Districts in the US and Europe which seek to remove such informal settlements from the public domain (see for example, Eick, 2005).

Box 4 includes a range of facilities which due to security concerns in recent years have become gated. These are known as ‘fortified enclaves’ (Caldeira, 2000) of which GRDs are the residential representation. The growth of shopping malls and resulting privatization of connecting streets has received attention in the work of Davis (1990) and Kohn (2004) who also identify this trend towards fortified enclaves in urban areas. In contrast, little or no attention appears to have been focused on the ‘forting up’ of schools and college campuses that has occurred in the last three or four years in the UK. The college campus which in practical terms was a relatively open environment has become increasingly restricted. For example students, staff and visitors are required to carry identification and to use security cards to access and exit buildings.

The academic debate on gating has chosen to focus on a few representations of gatedness and fortified enclaves. In particular discussion has tended to focus on the thesis of residential ‘havens of social withdrawal’ (for example in the work of Atkinson and Flint, 2005, represented by box 1). In contrast, debate has neglected other forms of gating (for example those highlighted in box 4). The above typology illustrates an alternative classification to promote a richer understanding of the prevalence of gating (and securitization).

The Gated Residential Development: a Case Study

The argument in this paper can be illustrated by a case study of a gated residential development in outer London. The aim of the research was to analyse the experience of residents and to examine the responses of key stakeholders to both gated and non-gated communities. The case study drew upon a survey of residents and included interviews with resident representatives, housing managers, development officers and local authority staff as well as observation of forum events and community meetings. This research originated in a wider research project on an outer London estate into neighbourhood profiling and neighbourhood renewal.

The development is a mixed tenure estate in outer London built in the early 1990s. The estate, which comprises one third of the ward population, is located in a neighbourhood ranked 634 out of 8414 on the index of deprivation (DETR 2000). The estate is divided into a number of sub sections. A wall with two electric gates to permit and restrict entry to residents and their guests separates the owners from the wider estate. This gated part of the development houses around 200 owner-occupiers. The remainder of the estate is situated outside the gated area and is semi enclosed within walled grounds (but without gates). In this part of the estate about 600 units of social housing, shared ownership and privately rented accommodation are located in different sub developments.

The walls and gates were considered a key problem within this development in that the social housing estate is physically separated from the privately owned and gated community. One local authority officer expressed the difficulty in the following terms:

You put them in houses and put a wall around them. It conspires with a subliminal message... Walled cities in ancient times were fortresses to keep people in and out. The physical fabric is testimony to separateness (Interview).

The estate was the largest housing association or registered social landlord (RSL) consortium development in the UK of the early 1990's and probably the only one to contain within its boundary a gated community. From its start the estate brought together many contemporary features of housing development, private ownership and leasing, shared ownership and social renting, RSL consortium development and a gated community (only local authority housing is absent from the landlord mix). In one sense the estate was a leading example of a mixed community development, in that it brings a range of income groups together in one neighbourhood rather than being segregated into different residential neighbourhoods.

However the practicality of mixing diverse social groups was to prove problematic. The development was not planned as a social housing scheme and much of the infrastructure planned did not materialise (Interview data). In addition, from the beginning there was a strong feeling of segregation between social housing residents on the one side and private owners and leaseholders on the other. As one private resident commented: 'there was a real "us and them" scenario' (Interview). This meant that owners and leaseholders did not see themselves as benefiting from the community facilities:

I very rarely go to the ... shop. They can tell you by the car you drive or the way that you dress... that you are not from the housing association flats. It is aggressive (Interview).

Considerable conflict was generated between the different social groups on the estates. This was expressed in the following way by a leaseholder in one of the flats which was located on the estate but not within the gated community: 'there is definitely a bad feeling towards the people living in these flats because we are owners. There is a definite class divide I think' (Interview). What became clear was that there was a high level of segregation between private and social rented tenants; however the segregation took the most extreme form between residents who were not physically separated by the walls and it was here that private residents felt most under threat.

The owner-occupiers within the gated community also felt removed from much of the day to day activities on the estate. As they did not share the experience of the majority of residents in the neighbourhood the scale of the social problems reported by other residents surprised them. For example one owner occupier commented:

I have been to a few of the resident meetings. We were absolutely horrified to hear what they were saying about prostitution and drug abuse. Residents said that they knew who was perpetrating these crimes but that they did not dare come forward to report them due to the fear of reprisals. I also heard that some of the neighbours did not come to the meeting as they were watching who was attending. It was felt that it was a 'grassing' situation (Interview).

In addition, the gated residents saw themselves as having to be very careful about their behaviour towards social housing residents. Owners were aware of the class distinctions between those within and outside of the walled community and acknowledged that a high level of diplomacy was called for in making contributions to collective management.

I am the only one who has gone to the ... meetings. I am very careful about what I say. I know that a lot of them are on income support. For example if I talk about kids damaging our cars, I need to be diplomatic. You only have to compare the cars inside and outside (Interview).

Despite the disparities in income and wealth, there appeared to be some cooperation between residents; in particular they felt they shared common goals in terms of improving their neighbourhood. Nevertheless, residents felt that the gated development felt was essential in preserving a sense of security and protection from the varied social problems occurring on the estate.

A couple of people were mugged ... when they were waiting for the gates to open. It was a prime opportunity as they had to get their swipe cards from their wallets. We used to have a code to enter the grounds but [the youths] knew the code. They are not stupid. I dread to think how much we are paying for the gates but they are a necessity. When they were broken (by the kids of course) cars were getting broken into (Interview).

Despite the very serious social problems on the estate, voiced by residents and workers in the neighbourhood, owners generally felt happy and secure in their properties. Securitization is a key service that is provided by gating and is often combined with a number of other club goods (Glasze, Webster & Frantz 2006 page 2).

I bought the flat at a very good price. I have never felt unsafe inside. I have installed a spy hole and extra window locks. For the first two years I lived on my own. The gates have done a lot to help. Personally I have never had problems that I wouldn't find on any London street but I tend not to walk around the estate (Interview).

Such views illustrate how there can be reasonable levels of safety and security despite residents living within an area widely perceived as a high crime neighbourhood. Significantly there appeared to be very different perceptions between those within the gated community (who were largely positive) and those living in leasehold flats that were integrated within the social housing estate. The latter appeared much more negative about their environment and reported much more serious instances of harassment, intimidation, victimisation and crime.

As argued above, the gated community is not normally identified as one of the aspects of a mixed community development in the statements of government and other interested parties. Rather it is commonly viewed as the opposite of a desirable social mix in urban living the government wishes to promote; gated communities challenge these aspirations given their target population of affluent households. However the legal structure means that most are owned and managed collectively by the residents. This represents a further issue of collectivism versus individualism; given that one of the 'solutions' to the sustainable development of the estate was seen as the development of tenant management. Such trends represent what can be termed 'an unusual blend of collectivism combined with a retreat into privatised spaces' (Blandy *et al.*, 2003, p.3). This demonstrates how the phenomenon of gating can be connected to club goods theories to illustrate new approaches to private and public service

provision. As Webster (2001) maintains it is misleading to polarise debate into issues of public versus private institutions.

This case study suggests that the success of mixed tenure developments located in areas of deprivation is contingent upon an acknowledgement of community members concerns for safety and security. One way this can be achieved is by developing gated sub-subsections within the neighbourhood. The case study illustrated that it was not the walls *per se* that created social segregation as reasonable levels of social cohesion were apparent between residents within and outside the walls. The demands of the social housing residents were to construct walls to avoid the area becoming used as a haven for outsiders'; in particular to prevent drug addicts and prostitutes using the neighbourhood for their own purposes. Within the walls, residents felt able to control their own environment, but where there was open access residents felt they were unable to prevent criminal activities and anti-social behaviour. This suggests that the conventional hostility to gating misses an important feature of residents experience and ability to take ownership of their neighbourhoods.

Conclusion

The dominant concept of gating in the academic literature raises a number of questions. What examples are used to define and delineate this concept and how is this phenomenon explained? What is now emerging in many post industrial cities is the capacity and strategy of a number of individuals to combine and purchase 'club' goods such as security services inside a walled housing environment. The case study shows how gated residential developments can indicate the way in which households are choosing to manage risks related to crime and prevention of access to unwanted outsiders. The concept of the club good can be used as a way of understanding the vehicle households have used to manage those risks, namely through gating. GRDs can therefore be viewed as an insurance mechanism to minimise exposure to the dangers of modern urban societies.

Where our analysis differs from the dominant urban sociological perspective on GRDs is that it does not equate them with expressions of seclusion, elitism and social inequality. Gating can be seen as a metaphor for the reconfiguration of urban space in terms of the formalization of security and the control of urban space and place management. Gating can be seen as a general phenomenon, illustrating how individuals and groups can come to terms with a world in which risk is inherent, calculable and, in principle, manageable. Instead of viewing gating as a distinct phenomenon that threatens the public realm it can be viewed as part of a wider process of the formalisation of security which can be applied in any institutional context.

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