**Beyond Gated Communities**

Samer Bagaeen and Ola Uduku (eds)

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Gated communities have received an increasing amount of attention over the past two decades. This is unsurprising since the rate of urban densification has increased over this timespan. From the outset, it is clear that the focus of gating has shifted over time from earlier discussion of historical gating, conflict, power, law and politics, master planned estates and vertical gating to name a few. Bagaeen and Uduku set the scene by providing a discussion of how gated communities are currently viewed and go on to question what additional forms of gating may occur that affect the longer term consequences of urban living. They advise that to further understand gating the link between what happens in individual enclaves to macro level forces needs to be explored. *Beyond Gated Communities* will interest readers wanting to learn more about the antecedents of gating and how these influence the different forms of gating across jurisdictions and will make a welcome addition to ‘gated’ literature. It will be of interest to scholars of urban studies, sociologists, urban planners and designers, economic theorists, government officials and policy makers.

*Beyond Gated Communities* details the different cultural overlays across a variety of continents, exploring the adaptation of gating to various environments and what this means for the neighbourhoods and society as a whole. Readers are taken on a journey from Thailand and Korea to Chile, Israel and Ireland and England to name a few.

This book challenges the reader to consider important aspects of urban gatingthrough five lenses: new debates; structures and process; new geographies; networks, power and social relation and the future of urban gating. Through these five lenses aspects of psychological behaviour leading to physical gating is explored. In the first chapter, the reader is advised that the term ‘gated’ can be more conceptual or psychological than physical. This view stretches the meaning of gating past traditional conceptions of ‘gating’ and ‘pseudo gating’ and allows a fascinating view of life style choice and power plays. In chapter two, Robinson provides an insightful look at how the ‘Occupy London’ experience demonstrates a revitalised form of enclosure arising out of geopolitical insecurity. A movement viewed from half a world away as a news item was highlighted as a response to macro level injustices designed to shift power imbalances and retake geographical place and space. This complements and contrasts with Acosta’s research presented in the final chapter which views a private mining village through the stages of inception, growth and decline. There are echoes of Wu’s (2005) focus on work environment as a gated enclave, an area that has been significantly downplayed in gated literature to date. In this final chapter, we are made aware of the devastating effects not just of micro level gating issues, but also the macro level landscape that allows environmental degradation to close down a village, disrupt community networks and force residents to relocate to other neighbourhoods.

This relocation and change is a theme that is closely followed throughout the intervening chapters, leading the reader further into a story of how the disjunct between various levels of government have virtually left planning authorities powerless to control what is occurring within their jurisdiction. Kim, in chapter four, provides an excellent example of this. His discussion of how planning authorities envisaged the placement of buildings and pseudo gating combination to provide a walkable city for all inhabitants demonstrates how little control planners have once the owners take control of privatised facilitates. In case study 2 walkways were physically gated to disrupt well established walking patterns of ‘other’ citizens, while in case studies 1 and 2 non gating meant that privately built and maintained facilities were being accessed by those who did not contribute to their upkeep creating an over burden for owners. Contrasted against this user pays system the opposite occurred in Ireland. In McKenna et al.’s research those that hold the privatised power associated with gated communities are encouraged to solve neighbourhood problems of noise and rowdiness by appropriating right of ways adjacent to their properties for private use and physically gating them. Thus established foot travel is disrupted and the rights of individual citizens of Cork city are ignored in a grab for public land. It is this feeling of powerlessness against authorities that ignore citizen’s needs that ultimately leads to mass protests such as ‘Occupy London’. Similarly, as the community share culture of 1970 Kibbutzim diminishes, we note a land grab and increasing need for privacy by existing residents. Placing gatedness in time and societal movements allows the reader to consider whether gating is a root cause of polarisation or a symptom of the way increasing connectedness to the world at large intensifies the longing for privacy increase.

Much of the ‘gating’ research to date has focussed on a deteriorating sense of community with residents of gated communities being seen as separate to the city as a whole. Suwannasang presents a different view through the investigation of Thailand’s gating at three different socioeconomic levels. In Suwannasang’s comparison of gated and non-gated communities, Suwannasang found that it is the socio-economic status of residents rather than gating itself that accounts for differences in sense of community. People can and do live in gated communities while retaining a sense of connectedness to the city as a whole.

In *Beyond Gated Communities,* the crux of ‘gating’ is expressed through themes of: club theory; inclusion and exclusion; power, structure, processes and social relations; and pseudo-gating. First, the concept of urban gating takes the reader away from the usual construct of a gated community. This stretches the boundaries into new territories of mobile movements, modern communication, power networks that influence and jurisdictional compromise. The research identifies how neighbourhoods, whether physically or psychologically gated, can contribute to global networks beyond their own gates. Through consideration of the five proposed lenses, *Beyond Gated Communities* soundly identified and extended the essence of gating allowing the reader to engage with new understandings of the metastasising phenomena of ‘gating’.

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