Gated Communities: Institutionalizing Social Stratification

L. Joe Morgan
Physical and Earth Sciences
Jacksonville State University
Jacksonville, Alabama 36265
E-mail: ljmorgan@jsu.edu

The Geographical Bulletin 54: 24-36
©2013 by Gamma Theta Upsilon

ABSTRACT

This paper argues that an increase in gated and separated communities is being perpetuated by social structure and de facto government policies. A review of the contemporary literature indicates the development of “gated communities” has become more pronounced in recent years. This paper demonstrates that the processes of social separation and stratification playing themselves out in these communities result from the extant structure of society at large. “Pro-growth” policies and pushes to preserve property values, both rooted in class differentiation, have become a new mechanism promoting segregation, and have been employed by governments, developers, police, and public policy makers. This is exacerbating social ills by creating pockets of economic, cultural, and social homogeneity and widening the disparity between communities.

Key Words: gated communities, fragmentation, social stigmatization, public housing, crime, institutionalize

INTRODUCTION

Much interest has been generated in recent years concerning “gated communities” and other types of privatized residential spaces. An abundance of theories and evaluations from varied professional perspectives has flourished in these rich soils. While there is a dearth of empirical studies thus far, theories still in development provide a range of perspectives for consideration. The foci for the most recent studies range from an increased concern about metropolitan fragmentation to political incorporation. At one end, socio-economic and demographic segmentation and segregation have been criticized as leading to a further fragmented social structure. I suggest that this process is exacerbating social ills by creating pockets of economic, cultural, and social within-group homogeneity, leading to social,
and structural dissimilarities between communities. Notions of social fragmentation can be better understood in the context of poverty and deprivation, otherness, being a minority member, racial discrimination, and class-based segregation (Altinok and Cengiz 2008). Conversely, others have idealized privatized spaces as public/private utopian partnerships that reduce crime, and increase security while holding down public infrastructural costs, and enhancing tax revenues by increasing property values.

Many communities have privatized civic responsibilities, such as police protection, and communal services, including education, recreation, and, in some cases, entertainment, (Blakely and Snyder 1997b; Le Goix 2006). Though gated communities have been considered by some municipal governments and planners as a form of secession from the larger society (Cashin 2001; Damstra 2001) others have suggested that gated communities are particularly desirable for local governments (McKenzie 1994; Le Goix and Callen 2008). This seems to hold truer in areas where suburbanization, lower densities, the growing costs of infrastructures, and a continued reduction of fiscal resources are part of what McKenzie (1994) has put forth as the pre-eminent urbanization paradigm between developers and local governments. In these cases, the gated communities arguably serve as a benefit for public authority, “whilst the Property Owners Association (POA) is granted certain autonomy in local governance, and especially in financing the maintenance of urban infrastructure” (Le Goix and Callen 2010, 106).

There has recently been a significant increase in the number of gated communities. In the 1970s, there were approximately 2000 gated communities in the U.S. In the early 2000s, this number had increased to over 50,000 developments, with more being built every year (McGoey n.d.). This equates to approximately 6% of national households. “One-third of all new homes built in the United States in recent years are in gated residential developments” (Low 2001, 46). The numbers vary greatly, depending on the source. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, 16 million people, or approximately 7 million households, live in gated communities. This number is two to four times greater than the 4 to 8 million reported in the *Architectural Record* (Diamond 1997).

Much of the research into gated communities thus far has been carried out by sociologists and anthropologists who have focused on the residents of these communities. Urban and regional theorists, meanwhile, have attempted to link the emergence of gated communities to wider processes of economic and urban restructuring associated (in some cases) with globalization (Low 2003). Caldeira proposed that “[t]he Garden City model, modernist design and city planning, and now the fortified enclaves… are part of the repertoire from which different cities around the world are now drawing” (1996, 320) for the new age of urban structure and planning.

**GATED COMMUNITIES DEFINED**

Gated communities have been defined from a variety of perspectives, but most share certain commonalities. These include physical barriers to entry and movement (the creation of boundaries of exclusion), the privatization and communal control of public spaces (if in fact communal public spaces exist), and in some cases, the privatization of public services (or the transferring of certain responsibilities of “communities” away from direct public intervention) (McMullen n.d.; Webster and Frantz 2002). For purposes of this paper, I am employing Atkinson and Flint’s definition of gated communities as “walled and gated residential developments that restrict public access” (Atkinson and Flint 2004, 875).

Of particular importance is the idea of institutionalizing private space and creating separated communities. This occurs when communities use barriers to separate themselves from the larger community and then implement policies allowing members of that
community exclusivity. More specifically, these policies restrict non-community members from access to and use of features like sidewalks and streets, which have typically been seen as public domain in the traditional urban setting (Blakely and Snyder 1997a).

Some researchers have classified or categorized gated communities into different types (Blakely and Snyder 1997b; Luymes 1997; Burke 2001; Le Goix 2004; Grant and Mittelsteadt 2004). Typologies are typically based on the reasons behind the gating. Three generally agreed-upon categories of motivations emerge from the literature: “security,” “status,” and “lifestyle” motivations (Blakely and Snyder 1997b; Low 2003; Baycan-Levent and Güllümser 2007).

These community types are similar to each other in that all separate a homogeneous group from the larger society, creating a “between-group” distinction. They are also characteristically similar in that they are internally homogeneous based generally on demographics and social status. This within-group similarity and between-group dissimilarity tends to increase effective spatial distance between the groups inside and outside the gates; though they may be geographically close to each other, the cultural distance between them is often profound.

Communities that fall within particular classes are not identical to each other. For example, lifestyle communities could be focused on pursuits as varied as golfing, yachting, or general retirement, thus representing various types of social activity. Prestige communities, unlike lifestyle communities, are specifically designed for members of the upper class. These communities serve as enclaves for households within specific financial brackets. Security zones can be further divided on a number of variables such as religion, income, race or ethnicity.

GATING / FENCING

The term gated community often conjures up images of affluent people living in expensive homes in exclusive neighborhoods and enclaves, but such is not always the case. Though secured and gated communities were historically built in the United States for the protection of estates and in some cases to contain the leisure world of retirees, urban and suburban gated developments now target a much broader market (Guterson 1992; Loftland 1998; Johnson 2007). For example, by the year 2000, of the 219 gated enclaves identified in the greater Los Angeles metropolitan area, only half were located in the wealthiest areas, a third were in middle-income white suburbs, and another fifth were in middle- and low-income Hispanic or Asian neighborhoods (Low 2003). As Blakely and Snyder have observed:

Since the late 1980s, gates have become ubiquitous in many areas of the country, and now new towns are routinely built with gated villages while entire incorporated cities feature guarded entrances. While early gated communities were restricted to retirement villages and the compounds of the super rich, the majority found today are middle to upper-middle class. Higher end tracts within planned communities are now commonly gated. They seem to be more common in larger tracts, as there are more units over which to spread the cost of walling, gating, and constructing and staffing guardhouses. For similar reasons, they also are common in multifamily and higher-density developments, where unit costs are often low enough to place gates within the reach of the middle class (Blakely and Snyder 1997c).

The desire for security and safety and an effort to exclude the outside world seem equally desirable by most demographic groups. This is evidenced by the social diffusion of this phenomenon. One California study estimated that “20% of the gated communities surveyed are located within average- and lower-income Asian or Hispanic neighborhoods, especially in the northern portions of Orange County.
and the San Fernando Valley” (Le Goix 2004, 9). It is now evident that gated enclaves have spread across not only the upper and middle class but over time there has been a noted growing acceptance or acquiescence by some minority and public housing residents.

Generally, people do not think about the multi-family, high-density dwellings of lower-income residents as gated communities (El Nasser 2002). It is also true that we tend not to think of subsidized housing projects, low income neighborhoods, Jewish ghettos, or Japanese internment camps as gated communities. Many of these facilities have historically been established and designed for the purposes of control. While much of the literature has indicated that the designs were for security and privacy generally associated with the wealthier populations, gates and barricades are becoming commonplace even in public housing projects in many cities.

Such areas are often fenced by government agencies, ostensibly for crime prevention or as a mechanism for crime control. This, in many cases, is being accomplished, in theory, by gating or walloing of the low-income, subsidized housing projects in cities around the world (Newman 1995; Sanchez, Lang and Dhavale, 2005; Grant 2008). Such developments in some cases serve purposes similar to those of upper-middle and high-income individuals. They are “walled-off” and they do have “controlled access” and this does create the “illusion of protection and security.” However, a notable resistance to fencing gated communities exists. There is growing debate both within and between communities as to the efficacy of fencing of public housing.

When builders of many gated communities tout crime and security as major reasons for gating, they usually suggest that gating is intended to keep crime out. However, the gating of public housing is often seen as reversing the usual pattern, serving to gate residents in instead of keeping outsiders out. It could best be thought of as a reactive approach to crime rather than proactive as can be found in the more exclusive communities. In most instances gating is done not by residents of public housing for greater security, but by government authorities in efforts to control high crime areas.

Very often public housing is perceived as having higher crime rates on average. According to the National Institute of Justice, “this reputation is well deserved,” (NIJ Journal 2004). Fencing these areas may be seen as a containment of crime rather than crime prevention. Fences, while not opposed in every case, often meet with resistance in the communities. “In many major cities security fences have been placed around public housing units to the outrage of the inhabitants…. [T]hese fences and gates are perceived by many as containment and prison environments and not protection” (Blakeley and Sanchez 2007, 115). Residents of Mar Vista Gardens in Los Angeles, for example, suggested that the purpose of fences and gates was to keep them from getting out. As stated by Leeza Alfonzia, a resident of Mar Vista Gardens, “[t]his is not a prison, we shouldn’t be caged in here” (Corwin 1992). Or, as Danielsen-Lang put it, “some public housing residents protest the gate as a means of fencing in the poor or that it produces a feeling of being caged or that they feel like criminals themselves” (Danielsen-Lang 2008, 14).

There have been numerous cases where public housing projects have been gated without sanction and in the face of stringent opposition by residents. This is evidenced by the development of Potomac Gardens in Washington D.C., Cooper Homes in Anniston, Alabama, and various public housing structures in San Juan, Puerto Rico and many others. As an anti-crime measure, the Puerto Rican government decided to “gate” many public housing areas:

The fortressing of the city of San Juan was forcibly brought to the projects. Through a series of police and quasi-military operations, the police and National Guard occupied 82 housing projects around the island and retrofitted them with gates and fences (Garcia-Ellin 2009, 364).
Gates and fences, the separation of communities (at all levels of the socio-economic continuum), along with “residents only” restrictions on public parks, policies to control the homeless, land use restrictions, large-lot zoning, and other planning tools – are part of a trend to restrict, limit, or control access to and use of residential, commercial, and public areas in the name of zoning, code enforcement, and urban planning. This has also expanded to include crime control measures in low-income, high-crime neighborhoods. Arguments supporting gated communities for all segments of the socio-economic spectrum and the motivation to locate within the communities are similar. Most seem to indicate that protection and security are important reasons for developing and residing in gated areas. Some reports allow that the illusion of security is sufficient as a motivating factor, regardless of the actual level of security they offer (Blakely and Snyder 1998; Low 2003; Blandy and Lister 2005).

These policies and practices further represent a retreat of various segments of the population from the public realm and a continued segregation of society based on culture, income, and other demographic considerations. This fragmentation or spatial segregation has been criticized as troubling (Greenstein et al. 2000) and a continuation of many of the historically discriminatory social policies of the past such as racial and socio-economic segregation, redlining and discrimination (Mingione 1996; Blakely and Snyder 1997b; Blandy and Lister 2005). Gated communities are a manifestation of the fortress mentality that has gained momentum in America and is spreading to other countries of the world (Blakely and Snyder 1997b). It is relatively easy to argue that safety and security are important issues. It is also not difficult to suspect that with the increased popularity of gated communities at all economic stations, urban inequality in society is likely to grow (Vesselinov et al. 2007). It is decidedly more difficult to appreciate the potential long-term consequences of a continued social fragmentation of society.

**INEQUALITY**

The concept of household or spatial inequality generally references basic demographics in terms of race, class, or social status. Recent trends show that there has been a widening of the use of gated communities, both in terms of class and of ethnicity, and the expansion of gating has been most prevalent in middle-class communities in recent years. This would seem to indicate not only a disparity between the wealthy and the poor but a widening of social (maybe psychological) and spatial structure within the urban environment at a more minute or micro scale. In this sense, groups define the character of space. Those who are similarly employed or appointed may well reside in similar neighborhoods, and this homogeneity defines the character of place. Gates and fences (as well as other physical or psychological barriers) tend to enhance the separation even if the locations are in close relative proximity.

This spatial construction of gated communities not only perpetuates the social stratification of class and demographic groups, it institutionalizes this already extant stratification. Gated communities have by default become the de facto mechanism of planning in many arenas. While there obviously has to be some agreement on the part of planners and developers, some of the control has been deferred outright to developers and designers. Many of the urban planning strategies have adopted (or adapted) urban designs and policies that conform to the new structures. In some cases developments are proceeding without planning authority and rules and regulations are being created after the fact, if at all (Thuillier 2005). The result is that gated communities are promoting the same outcomes as the policies of the 1950s and earlier, using a spatially defined mechanism to make the process of segregation legal, and as a result, socially acceptable to some. Urban planning and development, separated, fenced or walled-off communities, buffered and otherwise separated neighborhoods are continuing to perpetuate and even increase.
segregation and separateness in urban structure.

While economic segregation has been extensively discussed, other aspects of segregation have not received as much attention. Gating also creates communities segregated on other bases such as religion, nationality, race, or common interests depending on the nature or purpose of specific communities. Such segregation is not new, certainly. In the U.S., numerous communities (such as Chinatowns, Little Italys, and Little Havanas) are identified with specific nationalities or ethnicities. The continued development of communities separated behind walls is another mechanism for society to segregate itself. It is of little consequence whether the action was intentional; the results are the same. The individual communities tend to divide on some type of characteristic. As noted these can vary but generally the easiest to recognize are socio-economic status, race and/or ethnicity, or lifestyle choices.

Growth in gated communities represents a culture of fear and risk avoidance (Davis 1990; Glassner 1999; Garland 2001). The illusion of security is sufficient as a motivating factor, regardless of the actual level of security they offer (Blakely and Snyder 1998; Low 2003; Blandy and Lister 2005). It appears that the threats perceived by residents of many lower-income and inner-city neighborhoods are closer and more visible than those in more affluent communities. Some have suggested that gating exemplifies the penetration of the broader culture by ideologies of fear and security, ideologies supported by political and economic actors (Davis 1998; Flusty 1994; Marcuse 1997; Le Goix 2004). Though segregation exists without gates, gating a community at any socio-economic level offers a dimension of security by means of excluding others. It also offers a synthetic way of controlling those who reside within these communities by virtue of bylaws, regulations and restrictive covenants.

The first step to security is the exclusion of others or at the very least making their presence more transparent. This fear of crime that has been primarily perpetuated by the media has led to a more enhanced psychological lure of “defensible” space (Newman 1995; Flusty 1997; Judd 1995). This seems especially true for the “Security Zone Communities,” where the residents retrofit their neighborhoods with gates and barricades to fend off outside threats and regain control of their residential areas (Blakely and Snyder 1997b).

**EXCLUSION**

A primary focus of gated communities is the right to exclude others, not only from the private property of the individual but from public or communal property as well. From a legal perspective, important questions concerning community rights have surfaced: “Is there such a thing as communal ownership” (Phillips 2007)? Does a community (as an entity) have the same rights as individual property owners? What, if anything, legitimizes a community’s right of exclusion? Bringing these concerns to contemporary constructs of gated public housing another question of legality must be considered. How does one evaluate the authority of public housing projects that have been fenced off, ostensibly creating a private space where outsiders can be excluded?

U.S. property law has defined individual property rights as a ‘bundle of rights’ in property. Among other rights in this ‘bundle’ the individual has the right of exclusion, e.g. the right to prohibit others from trespass (Freidman 2000). This has been recognized by the Supreme Court of the United States as “one of the most essential sticks in the bundle of rights that are commonly characterized as individual property [rights]” (Nollan v. California Coastal Commission 1987). These rights are limited to property delineated by the legal property description and are classified as individual rights in that property. This is black letter law, indicating that it has been codified and accepted in the U.S. legal system as well-established case law. What is not so clear, however, is how, or if, these rights would transfer from individuals to
communities. “In the modern age, new forms of property ownership had to be created to coordinate private economic activity within large organizations—first, private business corporations more than 100 years ago, and now, private residential neighborhood associations (Nelson 2005, xiii). Does the individual have the right to exclude others from property held in common with others in the group either as an owner or leaseholder?

Assuming that this can be done, where then does a “community” draw authority to exclude others from the public spaces and facilities within the confines of its gates? Regardless of whether the gates were pre-planned or post-construction additions, the basic premise of control remains. The area is privatized; streets and other internal amenities are taken from public use. The residents generally pay for maintenance of these amenities through association dues. After privatization and by virtue of the fact that the common areas (such as streets, park, pools, and greenways) have become commodified as part of the private community, the residents can exclude others because they own these areas in common or as a collective.

Civic, communal, or municipal boundaries are by their very nature politically defined. Facilities such as gated communities exist at the pleasure of public laws and statutes. It would seem improbable that a community, as such, could hold a possessory interest in property unless it was a legal corporation and all property within the community was designated as private property—in this case, communal private property. The laws that do exist are generally under the management of homeowners’ associations and are inconsistently applied across jurisdictions.

Phillips made two decisive arguments concerning the rights of the community. One is premised on the “expectation of privacy” whereby a gated community has been held to establish this “expectation of privacy” through physical barriers, private streets and deed restrictions (Phillips 2007). It has been confirmed by the courts, that a community can in fact prohibit entire classes of the public from entry (Laguna Publishing v. Golden Rain Foundation 1982). This enhances the concept of privacy or the residents’ expectation of privacy, providing there are no violations of equal protection or fair housing. While the legal right of the individual allows them to exclude others from their property, the streets and other common areas are held in common by all residents and are, in essence, private. Kennedy noted,

[t]he ability of residential associations to carry out any type of exclusion, moreover, demonstrates that more is at issue here than segregation by income. It might be argued that residential associations simply embody in design what high-priced suburbs achieve in practice (Kennedy 1995, 771).

Historically there have been few direct policies concerning gated communities and the development of fenced enclaves in the urban environment. Any rules or polices that exist have developed mostly through policy inaction. This inaction as led to de facto policy in many cases reacting to designs and programs presented by developers. Not only has a precedent been set for continued development, in many cases urban planners negotiate for certain concessions in dealing with developers. Negotiating tends to add another level of legitimacy to the de facto policy.

This supports the second argument, the fact that more than 7 million people in the United States live year-round in gated communities adds somewhat of a critical mass. With such large numbers claiming this right, it is significantly more difficult to deny the right to separate communities using gates and fences or to deny a communal expectation of privacy.

While this creates legal gray areas, the question is not whether they may exist, but how, given that they do exist, they should be managed? It is certainly not that policies cannot be altered or laws changed. History shows us that grave social injustices have
been legally corrected and social changes on a large scale have been affected. With greater acceptance and wider use of gating, however, the task of changing policy grows ever more difficult. As in so many non-action policy decisions, subsequent change requires an after-the-fact dealing with consequences, intended or unintended.

Limited access to gated communities is generally accepted and supported by developers, municipalities, and by segments of the population that wish to reside in such communities for a variety of reasons. Barriers, even minimal barriers also serve to deter others from crossing into certain areas. By virtue of their location within the gated communities, streets are also legally considered private. Limiting access to public streets (or what were considered public streets) is a bit more controversial. There are, however, streets within municipalities that may be dedicated and maintained by the municipality but are also considered private. Of particular note are public streets that have been conveyed to public housing projects. Streets that are constructed and maintained by the municipal government that are taken out of use by the general public due to fencing or barricading become exclusionary to others that do not reside in area.

**PUBLIC HOUSING AND GATES**

Policies allowing the retrofitting of urban spaces with gates and fences are not new. Some suggest that this practice dates to the Middle Ages where royalty provided gated enclaves for their families and loyal subjects (Drew and McGuigan n.d). More recently, a number of municipalities have allowed, and in some cases encouraged, retrofitting neighborhoods with security structures such as barricades, fences, and road closures (Garcia-Ellin 2009).

For the most part, in middle- and lower-income neighborhoods the dual fears of crime and the potential criminal encroachment from adjacent neighborhoods are major driving forces behind gating. According to Blakely and Snyder, a large percentage of the increase in gating has been in existing communities rather than new developments (1997b). While middle- and lower-middle-income areas are using gates to mitigate potential crime and its associated ills, poorer inner-city neighborhoods and many public housing projects are being gated or fenced by government agencies as a measure against actual crime—in an attempt to regain control of the collective space. This is most often an effort to reduce crime.

Gating in this context tends to impact various communities differently. Barricades have not only defined (or redefined) social interaction and social distance between neighborhoods, they have tended to increase stigma and prestige at opposite ends of the scale. “Prestige Communities” tend to imply even more prestige than similar socio-economic communities without fences or walls. On the other hand, the further separation of marginalized or lower-income communities appears to increase the social stigma of those who reside in public housing. This tends to create an ever increasing social distance between groups. Gating “initiates an inverse and dual process of stigmatization for public housing communities and increased prestige for private communities” (Dinzey-Flores 2006, 5). Those areas representative of high socio-economic status have been reported in many cases as maintaining or increasing property values and social prestige. Areas defined as militarized public housing became a “version of the already stigmatized… public housing” (Dinzey-Flores 2006).

Areas of public housing in most societies are already stigmatized due in no small part to the demographic and socio-economic status generally associated with these communities. Add to this generally accepted stereotypes and association with higher crime rates, lower education levels, lower skill levels, and higher unemployment, a stigmatized, marginalized population (neighborhood) becomes psychologically, sociologically, and emotionally further separated from other communities. It takes no great leap to un-
understand the negative perception of public housing and the subsequent transference to its residents. It takes even less imagination to understand how barricaded, gated public housing can be viewed as the ultimate representation of the negative aspects of all public housing (Dinzey-Flores 2006). This can lead ultimately to an ever-widening social distance and eventual institutionalization of a disparate social structure. Gating public housing and in lower-middle-class neighborhoods is a major contributing factor to the perception some neighborhoods as isolated “ghettos” (Wilson 1987; Massey and Denton 1993; Venkatesh 2000; Dinzey-Flores 2006).

I submit that gated (or barricaded) public housing not only perpetuates and widens the spatial separation between communities, it creates a social chasm between the public gated areas and other areas whether they are gated or not. Public housing is usually confronted with a high level of NIMBYism (Not In My Backyard). Many agree that there is a need there is an overarching concern for potential negative impacts on their own communities such as crime (or perception of crime), loss of property values, and aesthetics.

STRATIFICATION

Depending on urban structure, areas of public housing may be located in more- or less-diverse socio-economic neighborhoods. I propose that the level of separation is a product of social stratification. Stratification in society, by definition, suggests that there is a hierarchical structure that demarcates not only social (status-based) segments, but also spatial segments of society. Very often the stratification structure is viewed as socio-economic, but it is much more complex than that. Levels of community power and local prestige as well as social and community stress based on varying factors are important. The hierarchical model of stratification is indicative of levels of power, wealth, and even prestige. But, noticeably, the hierarchical structure exemplifies strata of equality (or inequality). These strata can often be identified by physical and cultural barriers. Though most often they are evident between neighborhoods, intra-community cleavages are also evident. Often these communities have social or even psychological separations at the micro level.

A level of inequality that is physically demarcated by gates and fences is a reproduction, reinforcement or enhancement of this social structure. In many cases this can be identified as an organic process, where areas with social and economic similarity expand over time by seemingly natural processes. In some cases, and to an increasing degree, the expansion or development of physical separations has been planned and expanded by design. Part of the design is perpetuated by developers in an effort to maximize profits, and in part by urban or city planners in a quest for varying types of orderly development.

In these cases, buffer zones, greenways and urban forests may be used as separators. Historically, other features such as major highways and railroad tracks have served that role. Gating or fencing is now serving some of the same purposes—those of creating barriers or structure between social and economic groups.

Based on studies thus far, we can see that the social separation perpetuated by gating communities at multiple levels creates distinct social and economic enclaves, and in the process limits social and economic opportunities. A study evaluating the relationship between social exclusion and social isolation indicated that social exclusion conflicts with equal opportunity because it primarily leads to unequal education and occupations and ultimately unequal representation by political forces (Barry 1998).

Research considering the long-term social implications and consequences of the separation of groups based on economic status brought about by gating of public housing communities is in its nascent stage. Potential effects of gating are widespread and diverse. Class divisions are exacerbated. Governments are strained as their property tax revenues
fall and their authority fades. Greater social fragmentation undermines basic concepts of civitas. Property values increase, resulting in displacement of poorer populations and resulting in even wider economic disparities (Heath n.d.). These problems will ultimately impact all parts of society but the heavier burdens will fall to the poor.

Though segregation and societal fragmentation is nothing new—the use of barricades and gates as crime-fighting tools is likely to be counterproductive in the long term. Certainly, neighborhoods barricades help hold down traffic from the outside but they may allow criminals more opportunities to avoid capture within the community. These setups also make it more difficult for police and other first responders to get into an area should they be needed.

The notion that gated communities and gated public housing were both designed generally for the same purpose, for security and safety seems counterintuitive. While they are similar it may be noted that security and safety for the more affluent is more of a deterrent measure and with public housing it tends to be more of a defensive approach. Living in the more affluent prestige communities does not communicate the same message as living in public housing communities. The stigma of many living in public housing is already problematic and gating will likely worsen that perception. Studies have shown that further stratification of society will serve to widen the gap between the extremes, making it even more difficult for the marginalized to realize opportunities to improve their social status. The structural separation of low income public housing even within communities that are in the same socio-economic classification will further marginalize and stigmatize those residents, making recovery and social mobility virtually impossible.

REFERENCES


Burke, M. 2001. The Pedestrian Behaviour


