Discussion: Gated communities: definitions, causes and consequences

Sonia Roitman PhD

Formerly University College London, London, UK

Jonathan Scopes MSc, CEng, MICE, MStructE, CMIOH, FAPS

Civil engineer – special projects, Az'Zaha Services and Building Contractors LLC, Al-Khuwair, Sultanate of Oman

Contribution by J. Scopes

In the paper by Roitman (2010), there seemed to be very little review of historical communities, which while perhaps not formally 'gated' nevertheless may have functioned in similar ways: for example mining streets and villages, Cadbury's Bournville, Kowloon walled city, 'estates' in some towns, and even 'ghettos' immediately come to mind.

Author's reply

Segregation is a feature that can be found in most cities, nearly since their foundation. Individuals and groups locate in the urban space influenced by several factors, for example access to land, financial resources, individual interests, preferences and values, social class and status, to mention a few. Likewise, enclosure (and confinement) has also been a present feature in many cities, justified by arguments related to safety, political control and the need to establish clear boundaries and social belonging. Medieval

walled cities are just one example of this. Industrial estates for particular groups have also been common in several cities since the eighteenth century. What seems to be new with current worldwide gated communities is (a) their development and impact on the urban landscape owing to their great expansion, (b) their visibility in the city and the use of security devices (previously they used to be in not-so-visible areas, and the use of security devices was more subtle), and finally (c) the process of enclosure and privatisation related to gated communities is closely connected to the withdrawal of the public sphere by many gated community residents, which leads to secession and the lack of interest in public issues and governance.

REFERENCE

Roitman S (2010) Gated communities: definitions, causes and consequences. *Proceedings of the Institution of Civil Engineers, Urban Design and Planning* **163**(2): 31–38.

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