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Gated developments: international experiences and the South African context

Gated developments, more commonly known as gated communities, have become a feature of urban living throughout the world. Gated developments in South African cities are an ubiquitous feature of the contemporary urban landscape with many new housing developments in the form of secure estates or fortified town house complexes. A review of international research on gated developments reveals four broad themes into which such research can be placed. South African gated development research is discussed within these themes and it is found that the themes are present in varying degrees in South Africa. This highlights not only global commonalities in gated development research, but also the importance of local or regional conditions in facilitating the increased proliferation of gated developments.

Geslote woonbuurte: internasionale ervaringe en die Suid-Afrikaanse konteks

Stede die wêreld oor word gekenmerk deur die groei van geslote woonbuurte, meer algemeen bekend as geslote gemeenskappe. Geslote woonbuurte is alomteenwoordig in die hedendaagse Suid-Afrikaanse stad met baie nuwe behuisingsontwikkelinge wat as beveiligde landgoede en meenthuiskomplekse gebou word. 'n Oorsig van internasionale navorsing oor geslote gemeenskappe openbaar vier temas waarin sulke navorsing geplaas kan word. Navorsing oor geslote gemeenskappe in Suid-Afrka word binne hierdie temas bespreek. Daar is gevind dat die temas, in 'n mindere of meerdere mate, in Suid-Afrikaanse navorsing teenwoordig is. Dit bring na vore nie net die gemeenskaplike eienskappe van geslote gemeenskappe regoor die wêreld nie, maar ook die belangrikheid van plaaslike- en streeksomstandighede, wat die groei van geslote gemeenskappe vergemaklik.

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Gated developments are recognisable in many countries and regions, and have become a global phenomenon that has been researched by, among others, geographers, sociologists, economists, anthropologists, urban theorists, and political scientists. The gated development phenomenon has been manifested in settlement morphologies, resulting in what Álvarez-Rivadulla (2007: 48) terms a "global trend of privatized urbanization" that has reached even the small mountain state of Nepal (Blakely 2009). While the core themes of gated living, such as security, lifestyle and prestige, are universally present when comparing gated developments the world over, there are differences between gated developments. These differences are influenced by particular factors within the planning, building, social, historical, economic and political environment of each gated development. There may thus be differences between the types of developments in a particular city, region, country or continent.

A considerable body of academic literature has been published about numerous aspects of gated developments. This article investigates four broad themes in which international gated development research may be categorised, and to what degree South African gated development research can be similarly categorised. The broad thematic areas of gated development research are historical factors; economic and political transition; social issues allied to gated developments, as well as institutional and infrastructural issues. The conceptualisation and scholarly review of gated developments will culminate in an understanding of the term in a South African context and would add to the broader understanding of various aspects of gated development research in South Africa.

1. Historical roots of gated development

Walls have been used since time immemorial to create a physical divide between people and others, and between people and animals. The English word "wall" is derived from the Latin word *vallum*, a type of palisade fortification. Thus the word "wall" immediately denotes a structure of fortification, a barrier of

protection. The Romans built walls of protection around their settlements in Italy and in lands that they invaded. One or many gates along the length of the wall would control entry and egress, and legions of soldiers would defend the space inside the walls (*Museo del Mura* 2006). Medieval fortified towns and castles have also been viewed as a precursor to modern-day gated developments. While forts and castles had walls and defensive aspects to its design, they were more self-sufficient and did not display the social homogeneity of contemporary gated developments (Blandy 2006). Similarly, in New Zealand, traditional Maori enclosures developed as competition for land became intense. The *pa* was constructed to protect and defend an area in which people lived and stored their food (Walker 2005).

Historical legacies of numerous countries, regions and cities have had a bearing on the scale and degree to which gated developments have taken root. The potential of the divisive impact of gated developments has added to the foundations of social partitioning within locations where class and other divisions already existed. Falzon's (2004) study of gated developments in Bombay (present Mumbai) starts with the acknowledgement that the city has always been divided along ethnolinguistic and religious lines. There are a vast number of urban poor in Mumbai, with a small historically elite group of wealthy locals and a fast-growing middle class. The growth of socially homogeneous gated developments may divide Mumbai into classist territories.

There are also cities where gated developments are viewed as a natural progression of urban division that stemmed from its specific colonialist urban history. Large rubber estates in Malaysia were guarded by security detachments during British colonial rule. It was not only the crop, but also those within the borders of the estate that would be secure – a type of feudalistic arrangement where everything and everyone within the borders of the estate would be subject to the secure confines of the estate. Thus, contemporary gated developments are regarded as a progression from the colonial days, with gated developments

in Malaysia having been built with the main purpose of providing safer and secure living areas (Sufian 2005). Similarly, Mexico City has a historical colonial legacy of urban spatial inequality which has resulted in poorly planned contemporary urban space. This historical legacy is also used to explain the modern gated developments that are built to meet the needs of the affluent classes in the city. The development of areas of fortification, as presented by gated developments, mirrors the development of fortified spaces for the affluent during the colonial period (Sheinbaum 2008).

South Africa can also trace an historical root with regard to walls and barricades. The Khoisan inhabitants of South Africa did not build permanent walls and barricades, mainly because they were a nomadic people. However, as cattle-owning peoples migrated into present-day South Africa, establishing more permanent settlements, the need for a measure of protection arose. The *kraal* is an enclosed area within the homestead area of Nguni-speaking people that protects livestock from attacks by predators.

Jan van Riebeeck constructed a clay and timber fort for defensive purposes, named *Redout Duijnhoop* in 1652 after the arrival of Dutch colonialists (Flintham [*s a*]). In 1659 the colonialists built a wooden fence and watchtowers. Part of this defensive barrier was a hedge (Mountain 2003) and the Liesbeeck River was also used as a barrier (*cf* Figure 1). The fence, hedge and watercourse were used to create a defensive barrier to protect colonial livestock (SANBI 2009). Modern gated developments in South Africa were first constructed in 1987 in the northern part of Johannesburg, with a 2.4m-high walled perimeter with electric fencing encircling 913 plots (Jürgens & Gnad 2002).

2. Political and economic transition as a driver of gated developments

Countries in the former Communist bloc did not have residential gated developments under Communist rule, although Russia and the Ukraine (in the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) have had a long tradition of the wealthy elite's secluded retreats away from the *hoi polloi*. Similar to the Russian and Ukrainian tradition, the Communist elites in Bulgaria had private dachas and leisure homes in resort areas. Gated developments in former Communist countries emerged as a way of residential living some years after the break-up of the Communist bloc and the move to free market economies.
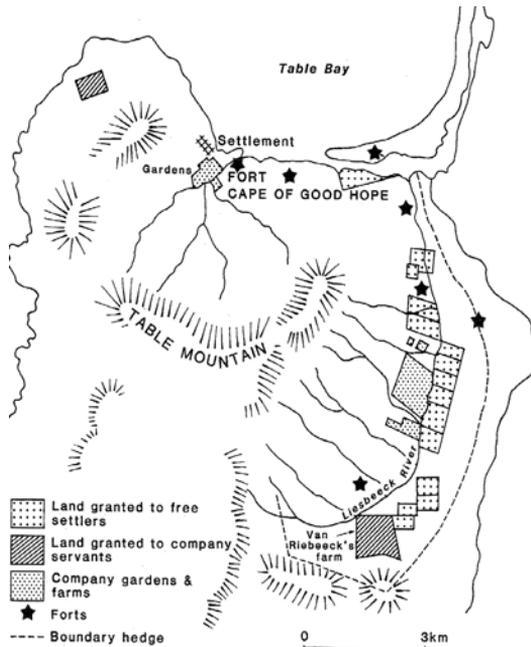

Figure 1: Security measures at the first colonial settlement

(Source: Christopher 2001)

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During this period of political, economic and social transition, a new elite, moneyed class was established and wanted to sample the trappings of "Western" lifestyle, including exclusive gated development living. Blinnikov *et al* (2006) cite the politico-economic transition period as crucial in the production of elite space in the core and suburban areas of Moscow. In addition, the increased use of private vehicles facilitated suburban gated living.

There are other examples of the increase in gated development living in former Communist countries. Stoyanov & Frantz (2006) note the rise in contemporary gated developments that may guide future residential living in Bulgaria, particularly on the urban periphery of the capital city, Sofia. Hirt (2006) notes that 80% of new developments in a specific area of the capital city, Sofia, are walled off. In Hungary, the pace of the construction of gated developments has also increased with approximately 70 gated residential parks, comprising approximately 14 000 dwellings, constructed in Budapest over a five-year period between 2002 and 2007 (Cséfalvay 2007). There are, however, instances where gated developments started during Communist rule and expanded dramatically after the adoption of free-market principles and the increasing economic impact of the globalised world.

It is important to note that the growth of gated developments due to politico-economic change has not been the sole preserve of countries that experienced communist rule. For example, the growth of gated developments in Turkey, in particular in Istanbul, was facilitated in the 1980s with the advent of new legislation for mass housing coupled with political and economic change (Baycan-Levent & Gülümser 2004). Similarly, Raposo (2006) traces the rise of gated developments in Lisbon from 1985, with a particular strong growth phase from 1998 that targeted the middle- and upper-class housing target market. The economic growth of Portugal, its inclusion in the European Union and the subsequent rise of the affluent classes mirror the growth of gated developments. It is not only a country's politico-economic change that may

influence the rise of gated developments, but a city's correct political and economic conditions also facilitates growth in gated developments. Pírez (2002) ascribes the growth of gated developments in Buenos Aires to conditions that prevailed in the 1990s. These conditions saw the changes in political structures in the city and the economic changes brought about by the penetration of global capital.

Economic transition, but not specifically political transition, within countries also stimulates the growth of gated developments. The discovery and exploitation of oil in Saudi Arabia in the 1930s has had a profound impact on Saudi society. The growth of the capital city, Riyadh, led to an unprecedented demand for housing. The influx of foreign oil workers created a further demand for housing in the form of guarded gated residential areas. Saudi nationals are not permitted to reside in these residential areas. The gated developments create a space for the foreign workers and their families to lead a "Westernised" lifestyle, without the cultural restrictions outside the gates (Glasze 2006). The privatised world of the gated development has, in this instance, created a space that is meant to be separate from the traditional Saudi cultural and social milieu.

While there are countries, regions or cities that have witnessed an increase in the number of gated developments due to economic boom, there is evidence that the opposite also holds true. Mycoo (2006) points out that the slow economic growth in the 1990s had a profound effect on the growth of gated developments in the Caribbean. The lack of economic growth fuelled increasing social divisions which, in turn, led to a boom in the number of gated developments in Kingston (Jamaica), Puerto Rico, Port-au-Prince (Haiti) and Port of Spain (Trinidad and Tobago), in particular between 2002 and 2004, supported by marketing campaigns by real-estate developers.

The gated development phenomenon and the privatisation of urban public space has taken root in South African cities, in particular with the repeal of race laws and after the transition

to a new political dispensation in 1994 (Jürgens & Gnad 2002; *cf* Spocter 2007). The dismantling of apartheid and the establish-ment of a majority-elected government introduced an era of political, social and economic change in South Africa. Politically, the government was elected by all the people of South Africa; economically, South Africa saw the end of an international disinvestment campaign and, socially, racial legislation that segregated everyday life according to specific race groups was repealed. These changes increased the level of fear among those who were segregated for many years. Many whites[1] emigrated after 1994 which suggests that they withdrew from the "obligations of citizenship" in post-apartheid South Africa as they perceived themselves as second-class citizens (Barrell 2000, Landman 2002). A manifestation of this citizen withdrawal away from government has been residential relocation or semigration from Johannesburg to Cape Town and the retreat to gated developments.[2] Semigration is a hybridisation of "emigration" and "segregation" – people emigrate to gated developments in order to self-contain or segregate themselves from others (Ballard 2004).

3. The influence of social aspects on the growth of gated developments

Blakely & Snyder (1997) published the first comprehensive analysis on gated developments in the US. Their fundamental question was how gated developments were an indication of com-munity and citizenship in the US with increasing numbers of people believing that they needed gates and walls for security

1 This article uses the terms "white" and "black" as entrenched in the apart-heid legislation.
2 It must be stated that whites are not the only residents in gated developments (*cf* Jürgens & Gnad 2002, Taleb 2005) – the criterion is capital, not race. However, average white incomes are higher than for any other group of persons and therefore they have a larger buying power with which to purchase property in a gated development. The literature also suggests that whites are the largest   race group in gated developments.

and protection. In documenting a panel discussion on gated develop-ments, Lang & Danielsen (1997) noted that gated communities in the US were becoming popular as a tool to solve perceived social problems. This has an impact on civic engagement as there is more civic engagement and participation within the walls and less with those persons and institutions beyond the walls. By contrast, communities impose regulations on themselves, but do not want regulations to be imposed on them by government institutions. Thus, it appears that the closing of the community ranks facilitates integration on the community level, but simultaneously increases segregation on a broader scale as the gated developments tend to exclude on the basis of social class. This, in turn, stoked the fires of fear for what was beyond the walls.

Viewed from a slightly different perspective, gated develop-ments are considered bastions against a chaotic urban environ-ment, and provide security and privacy from "undesirables" (Miliàn & Guenet 2007, Pow 2007a). The notion that public disorder was increasing has been fuelled by the perception that the police forces could not control crime and social disobedience and that gates and walls offered a private security solution without dependence on a public police force. In Britain, the perception of an ineffective police force coupled with a perceived increase in crime levels and the need for security has led to an increasing demand for gated living (Atkinson & Flint 2004). Similarly, in Trinidad and Tobago, the upper- and middle-classes reside in multi-ethnic gated developments as a direct response to the government's inability to provide law and order against an increasing crime rate (Mycoo 2006). In other parts of the world, problems with urban governance and service delivery resulted in an increase in urban violence, thus spawning the rise in demand for secure living en-vironments (Coy 2006).

However, it would appear that secure living environments do not fully address the issue of safety and security. Blandy (2007) concludes that gated developments do not address

issues of crime and social disorder. In a related finding it was established that retro-fitted gated social housing estates did not reduce social disorder and that social problems emanated from within the estate rather than from outside. Thus, crime within the gated developments was cause for concern, with one study indicating that a quarter of its respondents reported thefts within the developments (Miliàn & Guenet 2007). Residents of gated developments also expressed the need to closely monitor the activities of workers and non-residents inside gated complexes (Falzon 2004). The quest to exclude the criminal threat has not taken into account the possibility of the threat coming from within the developments.

It appears that safety and security command the most attention from both a research and a marketing perspective. Studies have investigated the link between existing social divisions, crime and gated developments. Blandy (2001) found that the foremost reason for privatised housing development was the increasing economic distance between the wealthy and the poorest segment of the population. Even in countries such as Portugal, with low socio-ethnic segregation levels, the specific targeting, based on class, of potential residents for gated developments appears to increase low segregation patterns (Raposo 2006). Gated develop-ments are also considered to be one of a number of ways in which segregation is manifested in the built form. Alaily-Mattar (2008) found evidence of this in Beirut. While Beirut may not have many gated developments, the increasing affluence of the middle class after the civil war has led to a segregated spatiality of which gated developments are but one component. Similarly, a trend toward increased privatisation and gating in Canada has been identified where the older parts of the city were dominated by "public" neighbourhoods and surrounded by newer "private" ones, which were not overtly gated, but implicitly segregated (Townshend 2006).

A body of literature exists on Latin American gated develop-ments, with a differing of opinion as to the broader

social effects of gated developments. Escarria (2007) highlights the shift away from the Latin American importance of the use of public spaces such as plazas to enclosed and protected residential spaces with a concomitant societal tendency towards division, fragmentation and privatisation. A study by Roitman (2005) indicates that a municipal decision to locate gated developments within poorer parts of Mendoza, an intermediate city in Argentina, has had the social effect of deepening fragmentation of classes within the local sphere as those inside the development were better off than those outside it. Borsdorf *et al* (2007) found that a number of gated developments for the wealthy in Santiago, Chile are located next to poor neighbourhoods; this has led to increased social fragmentation. Santiago is said to become more fragmented than ever as new cities for the rich are being built on the periphery (Borsdorf & Hidalgo 2008). The economic and social fragmentation of Chinese society as well as the growth of its middle class lead to a new urban experience of insecurity as the divisions between people become more pronounced (Pow 2007). This, in turn, has led to an increasing demand for gated development living.

However, the view that gated developments increase social fragmentation has been challenged. Álvarez-Rivadulla (2007) contends that families residing in gated developments in Montevideo, Uruguay, were already segregated from the poorer class before moving to such developments. Research conducted by Sabatini & Salcedo (2007) indicates that rather than facilitating social fragmentation, the location of gated developments close to poor neighbourhoods in fact fosters a functional integration between rich and poor. Those in the poor communities have wel-comed the arrival of the gated developments from the perspective of employment, municipal service delivery and small business. However, social and communal integration has not occurred as social contact is limited to public spaces outside the gated developments – there is thus a lack of complete integration. A more functional rather than social integration

occurs between gated developments and the world beyond the walls and the gates. The social divisions remain.

Although apartheid policies have been abolished in South Africa, processes of fortification, barricading, securitisation and various panopticon surveillance methods are manifested in con-temporary post-apartheid urban space. These processes may reflect new manifestations of increasing class and social differences among the population. The desire for self-containment is driven by the fear of others. The fear existed that the ordered apartheid South African city would degenerate into a third-world city, fuelling what Ballard (2005) calls the "privatised fear". The gated development would be the bastion against the crime-ridden, informal, uncontrolled and chaotic city (Ballard 2002).

Although gated developments prevail in Gauteng, surveys have reflected its dispersion throughout settlements in South Africa (Landman 2003a). This is symptomatic of post-apartheid urban space being privatised. This not only reflects the growing disparity between the classes (Maharaj & Narsiah 2002), but also the increasing fear of crime throughout South Africa (Dirsuweit 2002). Societies in transition display a tendency for increasing violence and crime (Landman 2003b). An increasing crime rate and racial tensions did little to allay peoples' fears about the future prospects for South Africa. Overall crime rates showed an annual increase from 1997 until 2000, with a decrease thereafter (Schönteich 2002). However, despite the latter, people perceive that crime levels are increasing and showing no signs of abating, thus creating a climate of fear (Mistry 2004).

This fear of crime, coupled with a perception that the govern-ment cannot protect its citizens has contributed to the rise of gated development living in South Africa (Jürgens & Gnad 2002, Landman 2003b & 2007). South Africans believe that one way to protect themselves against crime and violence is to live in, or to enclose neighbourhoods, thereby controlling access and thus increasing personal and property safety (Landman 2000). Gated development living becomes part of a

range of strategies that citizens employ to protect themselves. These strategies in-clude the hiring of private armed response companies, closed circuit television surveillance, fortification of living space and the privatisation of public space. People do not reside in gated developments in order to enjoy a communal atmosphere, but rather to protect themselves from the unsafe and chaotic city (Ballard 2005).

The lack of trust from citizenry is not only directed at the police services' failure to combat crime but also at local govern-ment's perceived failure in effective urban governance. Not only is government blamed for inadequate security, but its lack of adequate service delivery to the poor does not help to narrow the gap between rich and poor; poverty and unemployment persist. Both the rich and the poor believe that inadequate service delivery of various needs constraints opportunities for the poor and safety for the rich. Those who live in gated developments retreat behind the walls and gates, and the city becomes a vast landscape of micro-cities, each controlled by its own governance structures, thereby fragmenting urban governance structures to beyond local government level. The fragmentation of the city affects the broader social relations between those behind the walls and those beyond them (Hook & Vrdoljak 2002).

There are instances in South Africa where gated developments are located alongside poorer developments (Hook & Vrdoljak 2002, Lemanski 2006), allowing for the investigation of frag-mentary relations. Lemanski (2006) explored this phenomenon in her study of the spatial proximity of a gated development in Cape Town, named Silvertee, to a poorer neighbourhood of Westlake. Fragmentation between the two areas has been a source of ill-feeling towards the Silvertree development from the Westlake residents as they have problems with access. This is an indication that the planners sought to keep separate spaces for the two communities. There is nothing neighbourly between the two communities and this is indicative of the continued separate existence based on class

and facilitated by walls, guards and access control. The linkages between the two seem to be one of patronage with Silvertree residents providing some employment opportunities in the form of domestic workers to Westlake residents. Durington's (2006) ethnological study mentions how domestic workers and gardeners, who were employed inside a gated development in Durban, had to swipe access cards each day in order to enter the development. In addition, if the employees were not out of the gated development by a certain time in the evening, the security personnel would find out why they had not left the complex. This process is similar to the pass laws of apartheid South Africa. Research seems to confirm the viewpoint that gated developments strengthen boundaries between neigh-bourhoods and can lead to increased social polarisation.

4. Institutional and infrastructural aspects of gated developments

Gated developments were initially thought of as secessionist in nature as such developments did not want regulatory instruments being imposed upon them by local governments, but that has changed. Local authorities view gated developments as a valuable source of revenue because the costs of new suburb development and its infrastructure maintenance are borne by the developers and the homebuyers (Grant 2005). In addition, gated develop-ments increase the value of property within its walls as well as the property tax basis. In California, the positive financial gain for local authorities is facilitated by the specific statutes in Californian law where the "developer substitutes the public government in planning and building roads, access and utility lines" (Le Goix 2005: 329). While there exists a monetary benefit for local authorities, Le Goix argues that gated developments are located in homogeneous ethnic buffer zones, which by design were exclusionary in nature, diverted crime and increased personal property values. In fact, local authorities can exclude people, divert crime out of their jurisdiction, and

increase revenue by allowing gated developments within its boundaries.

Some local authorities have limited or no planning regulations, especially since neo-liberal policies in the 1990s saw an increasing move to privatise many urban service functions that were previously the responsibility of metropolitan governments.[3] In South America, the private sector became important players in shaping the built environment of the city which has impacted on urban morphology as residents attempt to wall themselves off from crime. This was mainly due to the absence or lack of national planning regulations and controls that could be applied in guiding gated development growth within cities (Thuillier 2005, De Souza e Silva 2007). The absence of planning regulations, coupled with a lack of democratic municipal governance, meant that each private development was considered a "city" in its own right where different norms and standards applied (Pírez 2002). The result is that the lack of democratic governance, together with the absence of planning regulations, further erodes the conditions of trust and security of the citizenry (Escarria 2007). In the absence of land-use guidelines, local authorities have tended to accede to the requests of those private developers from whom they would derive the most financial and political benefit. In Argentine cities that had regulations, local planning regulations were tailored to developers' requests in a successful attempt to lure them to invest in the poorer municipalities (De Duren 2006 & 2007a). This resulted in a situation of land-use manipulation whereby the populace was comfortable with the local municipal authorities' liberal attitude regarding the location and construction of gated developments (De Duren 2007b). The lack of planning controls has meant that gated developments are constructed in agricultural and nature areas, without intervention from government (Glasze & Alkhayyal 2002). The lack of planning controls and poor governance structures were overlooked as gated developments were viewed

3   *Cf* Coy 2006, Borsdorf & Hidalgo 2008, Fahmi & Sutton 2008.

as sites of employment and a way of increasing the land values around each development.

Researchers call for the need to learn from other countries' ex-periences of gated developments in order to develop appropriate local planning regulations and controls (Dixon & Dupuis 2003, Walker 2005). Giglia (2008: 82) maintains that "in these places new forms of living and thinking [in] the city are already being born". This could be a call for local authorities to accept gated developments as inevitable and put policies in place to govern their continued existence. The alternative is an unsustainable pattern of gated developments within a local authority area with a negative impact on the broader social, economic and morpho-logical landscape.

Gated developments tend to portray various patterns, depen-ding on the existing settlement morphology. In some cities they tend to cluster along a linear route in a particular sought-after part of the city whereas gated development growth on the peri-urban fringe is common and contributes to increased urban sprawl.[4] It has been demonstrated in Moscow that the environmental impacts from the construction of gated developments between 1991 and 2001 have been such that approximately 22% of forested land in a 30km radius around the city has been lost. As a result, the city's air and water quality have been affected – this against the background of the marketing strategies that advertise these developments as clean and green. The negative impact on the environment is exacerbated by the lack of environmental controls at the local authority level as well as dubious practices by officials. In addition, the developments do not have environmental management plans that would mitigate environmental impacts while the development is in operation (Blinnikov *et al* 2006).

Focusing on South African cities, Beall (2002) is of the opinion that the neo-liberal policies adopted by local authorities

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4   *Cf* Baycan-Levent & Gülümser 2004, Dowling & McGuirk 2005, Baycan-Levent & Gülümser 2007, McGuirk & Dowling 2007.

in an attempt to position Johannesburg as a competitive global city have facilitated exclusionary practices. Similarly, Robins (2002) states that the poorer parts of Cape Town are becoming increasingly disconnected from the affluent areas as the city management tries to pitch Cape Town as a globally competitive city. The drive to become globally competitive has seen historically affluent areas becoming increasingly securitised through surveillance, policing strategies and gated developments. However, the urban design strategies employed within cities influence the socio-spatial pro-cesses that occur in that space (Murray 2004). Although the city has initiated public strategies to desegregate the city, one finds similar private initiatives whereby the affluent seek to spatially exclude the poorer city.

Gated developments in Cape Town materialised later than those in Gauteng, with a particular preponderance of security estates. However, a large number of new developments, in particular in areas along the urban edge, have been gated developments, with 80% of high-income developments and 30% of middle- to lower income groups being gated. Each of these developments would either have a homeowners' association or a specific management company that would be responsible for the daily management of the development. The strict management of these developments tends to assure owners that a structured and ordered environment where everyone abides by the rules is guaranteed, but it would not necessarily foster a sense of community (Landman 2000). There are diverse experiences and manifestations of gated developments in different parts of South Africa, due in part to the existence, or absence, of policies for gated developments.

There is no national policy for gated developments. Municipal policy responses to gated developments in South Africa have lagged behind the growth of the phenomenon. The relative absence of gated development policies on all three tiers of governance complicates the broader understanding of the phenomenon by the authorities (Jürgens & Landman 2006). The

City of Johannesburg has developed a policy on the erection of boom gates and road closures. The City of Cape Town (2007) has specifically developed a policy for gated developments. On a provincial level, the Western Cape Provincial government has recognised that while gated developments, in particular in the guise of golf and polo field estates, have had positive economic and infrastructural effects, these have also contributed to a host of negative effects including the depletion of natural and agricultural resources, increased division between communities, and hindered public access to amenities and resources (Western Cape Provincial Government 2005).

5.   Conclusion

The global dispersion of gated developments has been noted in international literature – a truly worldwide phenomenon. Specific local conditions are important in plotting the traject-ory of the growth of gated developments within a particular city, region or country. It is the locale-specific social, cultural, economic and policy factors that impact on the development, morphology, governance and size of gated developments. However, broad global themes can be identified in terms of his-torical background, politico-economic transition, social aspects, as well as institutional and infrastructural aspects. These themes can also be identified in research on South African gated developments.

The influence of these broad themes are found in varying degrees in South Africa, with the foremost being the political transformation, the perception of rampant crime and a perception that the police service cannot protect the citizens of the country. However, since the construction of a permanent colonial settle-ment in South Africa there has been an attempt to separate from the "other". Contemporary South Africa experiences high levels of inequality between rich and poor, and gated developments can be viewed as an attempt to exclude based on class. There are varying municipal responses to gated developments: road closures abound in Johannesburg, but not

in Cape Town. There exists the need for a national policy on gated developments and, drawing from international research, it needs to be debated whether gated developments are a boon or a bane for South Africa.

Acknowledgements

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