

Alley-gating and neighbourhood gating: are they two sides of the same face?

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Abstract

This paper explores the differences and similarities between so-called *alley-gating* and *neighbourhood gating* in two different localities, the UK and South Africa. It also investigate the impact of these interventions for urban residents and the implications for the city authorities in order to determine whether these should be considered from one perspective (as the same phenomenon) or not, and what such a perspective/s should be and mean. As such, the paper will focus on the spatial manifestation of gating at two scales and explore the impact and implications thereof to highlight possible ways of response.

Key words: Gated communities, alley-gating, neighbourhood gating, spatial transformation and crime, fortress cities.

1. INTRODUCTION

Crime and the fear of crime have been one of *the* issues of the cities of the nineties world-wide. This gave rise to increased responses to crime, including harsher law enforcement, and increased focus on social crime prevention and an international resurgence of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design Approaches. It also gave rise to the gradual establishment of so-called ‘fortress-cities’ where response to crime has led to spatial transformation that has changed cities into protected enclaves and often “no-go areas”, adjacent to each other, that are separated by high walls, gates, electronic surveillance cameras and private security guards monitoring the access into these areas.

This has been the case in both the UK and South Africa. Spatial responses to crime have varied from interventions to buildings (burglar bars, security gates, steel shutters, etc.) and physical protection of properties and street blocks (fencing, alley-gating, etc), to the closing-off of entire neighbourhoods (gated communities). The question is whether these interventions should be viewed from a single perspective or whether they call for a multi-dimensional interpretation, both in terms of spatial manifestation and institutional responses.

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This paper explores the differences and similarities between so-called alley-gating and neighbourhood gating in two different localities, the UK and South Africa. Alley-gating refers to the closure through gates of alleys, for example at the back of terrace housing, to prevent crime. Neighbourhood-gating encompasses a much larger area and involve closing entire existing neighbourhoods to prevent crime. This type of gated community² can be distinguished from security villages or estates that are new private developments built with walls and access controlled entrances from the start. This paper will only focus on alley-gating and neighbourhood gating, and not on new privately built security developments. The paper sets of by introducing the reader to the “fortress city debate” and the proceeds to discuss the phenomena of alley-gating and neighbourhood gating in the UK and South Africa through specific examples. It then compares the differences between these, as well as their likely impact and implications and concludes with a discussion of the question whether these two types of intervention should be considered from one perspective or not, and what such a perspective/s should be and mean.

2. CRIME PREVENION THROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN AND THE “FORTRESS CITY”.

Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) is aimed at reducing the causes of, and the opportunities for, criminal events, as well as addressing the fear of crime, through the application of sound design and management principles to the built environment. In other words, it is based on the idea that certain design and management interventions in the built environment can make a difference in terms of crime prevention by reducing the opportunities for crime and improving the opportunities for policing.

While protagonists such as Jane Jacobs had already pointed to the relationship between crime and the built environment in the early sixties, it was in the 1970 and 80s that CPTED became more well-known through the work of Oscar Newman, Alice Coleman, etc. A number of other theorists and practitioners further developed or adapted the idea of CPTED, including Brantingham and Brantingham (1994), Crowe (1991), Poyner and Webb (1992); Ekblom (1995; 1997), Shaftoe (1996), etc. Many successes on different scales has been documented all across the world, for example the Clason Point Gardens project in New York’s Bronx showed a significant 54% drop in the crime rate during the first year of implementing environmental design measures. In some cases, however, it also contributed to the creation of fortress cities.

Although the creation of contemporary fortress cities can by no means be attributed to the use of CPTED measures alone, it is increasingly playing a role in the proliferation of this phenomenon. Neighbourhoods or precincts are “fortressed” from the rest of the city through walls, gates and high technology surveillance systems, yet sustained through guarded, dedicated highway gates, customised water and energy connections,

² Gated communities refer to a physical area that is fenced or walled off from its surroundings, either prohibiting or controlling access to these areas by means of gates or booms. In many cases the concept can refer to a residential area with restricted access so that normal public spaces are privatised or use is restricted. It does not however, only refer to residential areas, by may also include controlled access villages for work (office parks), commercial (shopping malls, etc) and/or recreational purposes (Landman 2000).

and telecommunication grids, that selectively connect them to the wider urban constellation and the universe beyond (Graham and Marvin 2001:4). This is contributing to a condition that Graham and Marvin (2001) refer to as *Splintering Urbanism*. Across the world, residential neighbourhoods, commercial centres, retail spaces, entertainment districts and office parks are fortified and privatised in this way as a result of actions of private business, large corporations and wealthier citizens and sometimes those of local authorities as well (Flusty 1995, Madanipour 1996; Blakely and Snyder 1997; Ellin 1997; Caldeira 2000; Marcuse 2001; Graham and Marvin 2001). The result is that many urban residents are now living in "... 'fortress cities', brutally divided into 'fortified cells' of affluence and 'places of terror' (Davis 1995:356).

In essence, although there are additional influences, the increasing trend towards fortification and privatisation is strongly related to perceptions of fear and insecurity among urban residents. As such, Ellin (1997) argues that "form follows fear" in the contemporary city, resulting in people in perceived high risk areas constructing defensive enclaves of various forms and nature to protect their range of interests. In this sense, the ability to pay is essential in many cases, which also incorporate a second theme, closely related to the first, namely that of "form follows finance" (Ellin 1997).

In fortress cities, gated communities proliferate. Many of these focus on residential land use and reflect responses from citizens to modify their living environments to prevent crime and reduce the fear of crime. Such tendencies is increasingly visible across the world, including the USA, Canada, Brazil, Argentina, the U.K., Portugal, Spain, Malaysia, the Philippines, China, Russia, Australia, India, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, etc. There are also an increasing number of gated communities in African countries, including Egypt, Nigeria, Kenya and South Africa. This paper however only focuses on two types of responses to residential crime in the UK and South Africa, namely alley-gating and neighbourhood gating.

3. REPONSES TO RESIDENTIAL CRIME IN THE U.K. AND SOUTH AFRICA

3.1 Gating in the United Kingdom

Crime or certain types of crime, has generally increased world-wide, especially in urban areas during the later part of the 20th century (Banister and Fyfe 2001). In the U.K, crime has continually increased. Studies indicate a long-term trend, where crime has increased by about 5% per year since the 1920s (Home Office Research Study 187, 1999). However, not all types of crime increase in the same way or place, and often the fear of crime is not related to the actual increase. For example, according to a children's charity Barnado's, statistically, crime against children in the UK has remained static for the past 30 years. What have increased however, are the anxiety levels and media maelstroms surrounding abductions and child murderers (Minton 2002:9). The result is that the society is splitting into more and more exclusive and often gated communities (Minton 2002), especially in the larger urban areas.

Different types of gated communities are re-appearing in the U.K. (Webster 2001; Graham & Marvin 2001; Minton 2002; Blandy and Parsons 2002; 2003; Gooblar 2002). For example, private streets for highly affluent groups have recently re-emerged in Buckinghamshire. In these examples, electronic gates recognise the transponders of resident's cars and burglar alarms. Video entry 'phones monitor all doors and infra-red motion detectors are directly wired to the police station (Thomas 1996 cited in Graham and Marvin 2001). Neighbourhood enclosures are also prevalent in areas with extreme sectarian conflict such as Londonderry (Shaftoe 1999). In Birmingham, the Brindley Place development in the central city closed off their area behind a continuous barrier of walls and access controlled gates (Shaftoe 1999:237). Yet, it is not restricted to these areas.

Recent studies have indicated the occurrence of different types of gated communities across the U.K., including London, Leeds, Manchester, Newcastle upon Tyne, Sheffield, Cardiff, etc. (Minton 2002; Blandy and Parsons 2002; Arnot 2002). Even comparatively small cities have gated communities, for example Derby, where a former nursing home was converted into a collection of luxury apartments and penthouses with what the brochure refers to "remote-controlled entrance gates" (Arnot 2002). However, in other cases, people are responding in less conspicuous ways, through the closure of service alleys.

a) Alley-gating in the U.K: the case of Liverpool

"Alley-gating" refers to the installation of gates to the alleys at the rear of terraced properties. This has occurred in many UK cities, of which Liverpool³ provides good examples. This type of response has taken place in several neighbourhoods in Liverpool, ranging from more middle-class neighbourhoods such as Kensington to lower- income neighbourhoods such as "The Dingle".

Several alleys were closed in Kensington, of which three blocks were chosen to evaluate the impact of the closure (see map below). The alleys were located behind a continuous row of terrace housing (see Figure 2) and closed by a number of gates. Alley-gating was also done in a lower income neighbourhood, commonly known as "the Dingle". As in Kensington, the alleys behind the terrace housing (Figure 3) were also closed with gates to reduce the opportunities for crime in these areas. In both cases the alley-gating was funded by the council.

³ The "Alley-gating" scheme in Liverpool, as occurring in two specific suburbs, was discussed in more detail with Chris Young and Louise Clare (University of Liverpool), who gave a presentation on it and shared the main findings of their evaluation of this scheme (September 2000). These sites were visited with Shane Johnson, Louise Clare and two members of the Safer Merseyside Partnership "Alley-gating" team and the implementation of gates was observed in practice. Several informal interviews with some of the residents were also conducted to understand the users' opinions of the gates. Generally, the opinions expressed were very positive.

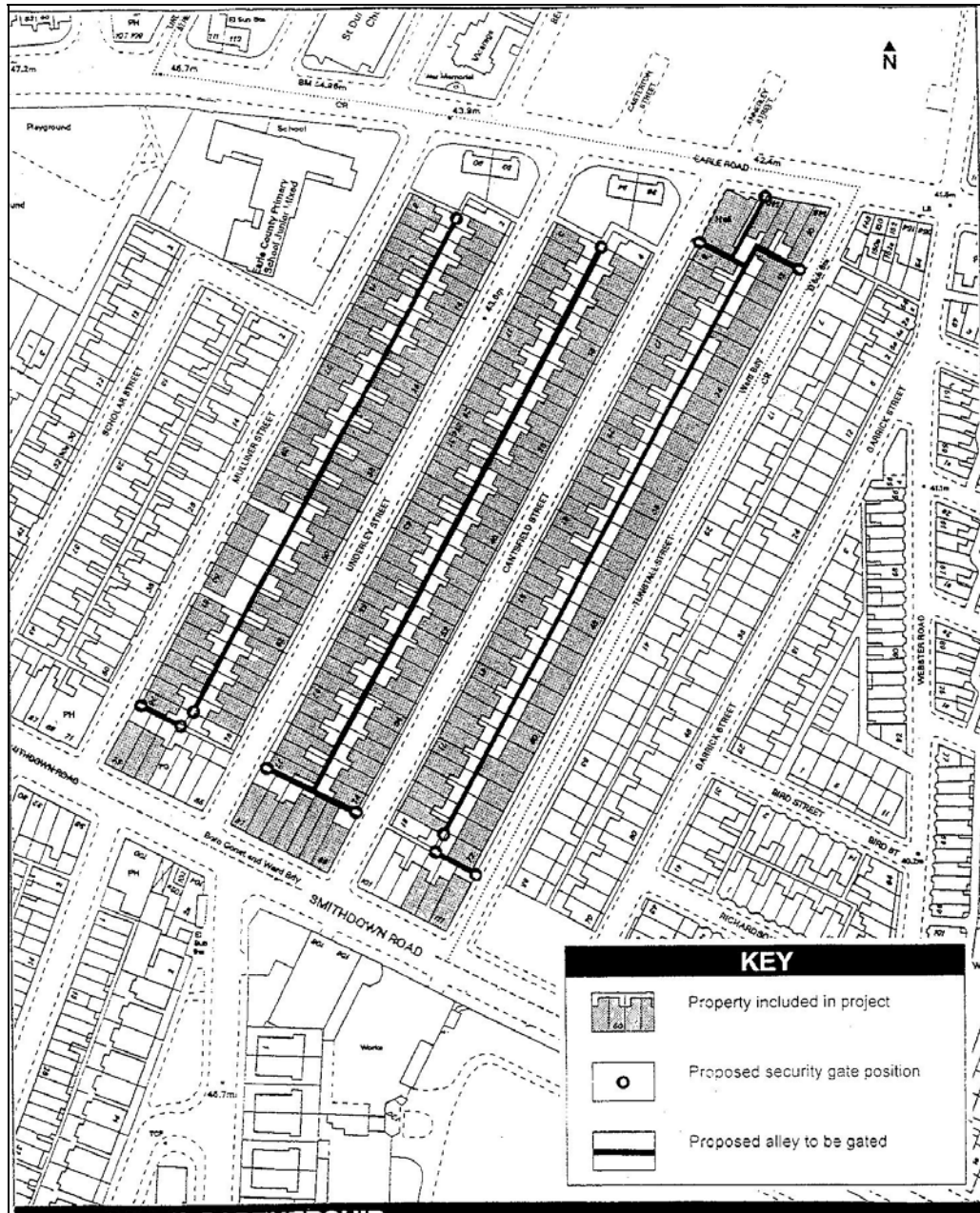


Figure 1: A map showing the closed-off alleys and the position of the gates.



Figure 2: A typical street in Kensington. The closed-off alleys are behind the houses.



Figure 3: A typical street in The Dungle with closed-off alleys behind.

The aim of the gates was to reduce domestic burglary. Domestic burglary is one of the largest recorded crime categories in England and Wales, with over 70% of these perpetrated by burglars gaining access from the rear of the property. A 1998 British Crime Survey also revealed that terraced properties suffer from burglary more than other housing types. Alleys can provide a ‘rat-run’ for ‘undesirables’ and an escape mechanism for criminals. They are also a suitable location for fly-tipping, drug-taking, illicit alcohol consumption and prostitution. Originally, these alleyways that were introduced to terrace housing for access by the coal man, had gates, but most were removed during the Second World War, to allow access by air raid wardens, and were never replaced (Young 1999). Gates were placed at all entry/exit points of the alleys and residents were provided with keys.

The gates are constructed from 40mm square, galvanised box section, with a welded wire mesh, and an anti-climb roller on top (see Figures 5 and 6). The box section accommodates a slimline automatic device, additionally protected by a steel plate. The wire mesh allows for unrestricted views down the alley, and in the event of a cutting instrument being inserted between the mesh, each and every strand would have to be cut separately. The gates are practical, low maintenance, durable, and perform the function for which they were designed (Young 1999).



Figure 4: A typical two-section alley-gate in Kensington. Gates are custom made to cover the entire width of the alley.



Figure 5: A typical one-section gate in The Dingle.

The alley-gating project illustrated the positive impact of local crime prevention initiatives, as part of local crime prevention partnership. In an evaluation of the project done by the University of Liverpool’s Department of Civic Design (Young 1999), it was found that burglaries in the enclosed areas fell by more than 55%, in the

same year as a 10% increase occurred in all Liverpool Police Districts (except City and Kirkdale, which was excluded from the study). There has been also an increase in crime reporting. However, burglary and other crimes were not completely eliminated and the enclosed alleys still fall within a burglary “hotspot”. Crime displacement was also evident and high levels of deprivation still remains (Hirschfield and Young 2000). However, in this specific context, given the type of housing, the design of the areas and the general support of the residents, the alley-gating scheme is proving successful.

b) Neighbourhood gating in the U.K: the case of London

London hosts a number of different types of gated communities, ranging from closed condominiums (Zukin 1982) and larger security estates (Webster 2001), to existing neighbourhoods that have been closed-off for security purposes (Gooblar 2002). The redevelopment of inner city sites for secure, upscale, condominium-style housing in central London is increasing. This is fuelled by a rampant housing market and a cultural shift amongst urban professionals towards central-city ‘loft-living’ (Zukin 1982 cited in Graham and Marvin 2001). A typical example of neighbourhood gating in London can be found in Dartmouth Park, Hampstead, called Holly Lodge Estate. The Estate comprises one enclosed neighbourhood that is predominantly focussed around three streets, namely Oakeshott Avenue, Makepeace Avenue and Langbourne Avenue, but also includes Hillway and Bromwich Avenue (Figure 6).

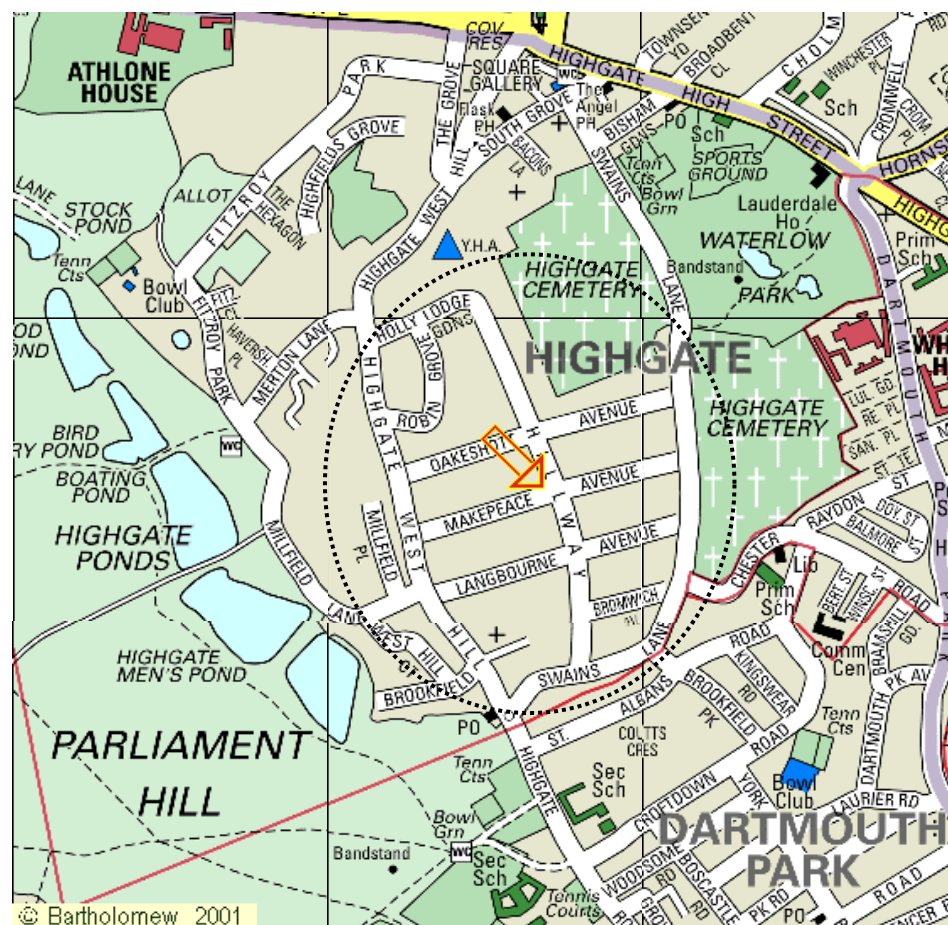


Figure 6: Location of Holly Lodge Estate, Dartmouth Park, Hampstead, London.

Hillway Avenue South is the main entrance into the enclosed area and the only one allowing access to vehicles. All the other gates are only available for emergency access. The roads in Holly Lodge Estate are closed-off by a series of different gates and booms. Langbourn, Makepeace and Bromwich Avenues (Figures 7 - 9) are closed-off by medium-height steel fences and a gate with small gate-posts, whereas the Hillway South (Figure 10) entrance have lower gates, imposing gate posts and no side fencing, thus allowing access to both pedestrians and motor vehicles.



Figure 7: Langbourn Avenue (west)



Figure 8: Makepeace Avenue (east)



Figure 9: Bromwich (east)



Figure 10: Hillway (south)

The roads are therefore closed off to restrict access into the neighbourhood. The purpose of the access restriction is to prevent crime and other forms of disturbance, such as children damaging plants in the area, throwing rubbish in the ponds, etc. The area is located on a broad grid network between a large cemetery on the one side (east) and the Highgate ponds a bit further to the west. In 2001, a number of residents from within the area came together to establish the Holly Lodge Tenants' and Leaseholders' Association to assist with a number of issues regarding the general management and maintenance of the area (<http://hollylodgelondon.com/hltla/>).

3.2 Gating in South Africa

Crime is an everyday reality in South Africa and a major concern of the majority of South Africans. Overall crime levels increased by almost 5% between 1997-98, 7% in 1998-99, and 7.6% in 1999-2000 (Shönteich 2002). Many people are reaching out to find additional ways to prevent crime. One such a response is gating communities. Different types of gated communities are appearing across South Africa. These range from enclosed neighbourhoods to security villages⁴.

Recent studies have indicated that these types occur across the country, for example larger numbers of enclosed neighbourhoods are present in Johannesburg, Pretoria, Cape Town, Mossel Bay, etc, while large numbers of security estates were prevalent in Johannesburg, Vanderbijl Park, Vereniging, Cape Town, Hartebeespoort Dam, Plettenberg Bay, Knysna, etc. (Landman 2003a).

In Johannesburg, for example, many neighbourhoods are closing roads to reduce opportunities for crime. A recent survey (conducted by the City of Johannesburg early in 2003) indicated that there were 49 legal neighbourhood closures and 37 that expired since approval. In addition, there are an estimated 188 illegal closures and 265 pending applications (Security Access Restriction Policy for the City of Johannesburg 2003). However, in other cases, people are responding in less dramatic ways, through the closure of side and back alleys.

a) Alley-gating in the South Africa: the case of Johannesburg

Compared to the UK, there are very few cases of terrace housing in South Africa. There are a few examples in Cape Town in older neighbourhoods such as Mowbray and Observatory and a few blocks in Johannesburg, for example in Bertrams, Yeoville and Brixton. In addition many of these housing blocks are very run-down and in a bad state due to limited maintenance. In a number of these, alleys have been closed to prevent crime, for example one block in Bertrams and one in Yeoville in Johannesburg. Both Bertrams and Yeoville have experienced an increase in crime and the fear of crime since the late 1990s. They are also close to notorious crime hot spots such as Hillbrow. In response to crime and the fear thereof, residents have reverted to additional ways to protect their living environments.

For example, in Yeoville, the alley was closed by a steel gate with wire-mesh and additional burglar bars and wiring at the top (Figure 11). In this case, the alley had become a place where rubbish is dumped, detracting from the more positive image of

⁴ Security Villages in South Africa refer to private developments where the entire area is developed by a private developer. These areas/buildings are physically walled or fenced off and usually have a security gate or controlled access point with/without a security guard. The roads in these developments are private, and in most of the cases, the management and maintenance is carried out by a private management body. Security villages do not only include residential areas (such as townhouse complexes, high-rise apartment blocks), but also controlled access villages for business purposes (office blocks) and mixed-use developments such as large security estates. Although many of these are predominantly residential, a growing percentage of other land uses are found within these developments, included commercial (golf shops, post offices or boxes, estates agents, etc) and/or recreational (golf courses, squash courts, tennis courts, equestrian routes, etc.) uses (Landman 2003a).

the rest of the block and terrace houses in particular (Figures 12 and 13). The gates did, however, serve to restrict access into the alley and areas beyond.



Figure 11: Alley-gating in Hunter Street Yeoville



Figures 12: Terrace Housing in Yeoville with alley-gate to the left of the first house.



Figure 13: View of terrace housing down the road (bottom).

b) Neighbourhood gating in South Africa: the case of Pretoria

Another example of residents' response to crime in the built environment is gated communities. As already mentioned, gated communities in South Africa can be divided into enclosed neighbourhoods and security villages. *Enclosed Neighbourhoods* (neighbourhood gating) refer to existing neighbourhoods that have controlled access through gates or booms across existing roads. Many are fenced or walled off as well, with limited number of controlled entrances/exits and security guards at these points in some cases. The roads within these neighbourhoods were previously, or still is public property, depending on the model used within different local authorities (Landman 2000; 2003a). In 2002, the City of Tshwane⁵ had received 81 applications for neighbourhood enclosures of which most of these were located in the south eastern parts of Pretoria (Landman 2003a). At that stage only 47 have been considered and approved, due to a backlog created by a moratorium on the approval

⁵ The City of Tshwane is a large metropolitan municipality north of the City of Johannesburg in the Gauteng Province. Although the municipal area includes Pretoria, the municipal boundaries stretch much further than those of the former Greater Pretoria Metropolitan Council. The City of Tshwane is responsible for considering all applications for neighbourhood closures in its municipal area.

of neighbourhood enclosures. This was due to the fact the old policy was in the process of being redrafted for the entire City of Tshwane.

An example of a typical gated neighbourhood is Strubenkop, located in Pretoria East. The case study area comprises one enclosed neighbourhood with a total of 122 plots that are accessed from inside the enclosed area. Three roads are closed-off to restrict access into the neighbourhood (indicated by black arrows on the layout map – Figure 14). The result is that those plots facing inwards are located inside the enclosed area, while those facing outwards fall outside the security neighbourhood. A fence has been erected along the northern border to keep criminals out, as many of the incidents occurred in this area. The roads are laid out on a closed-road-network system with a collection of interacting curvilinear roads (Landman 2003b).

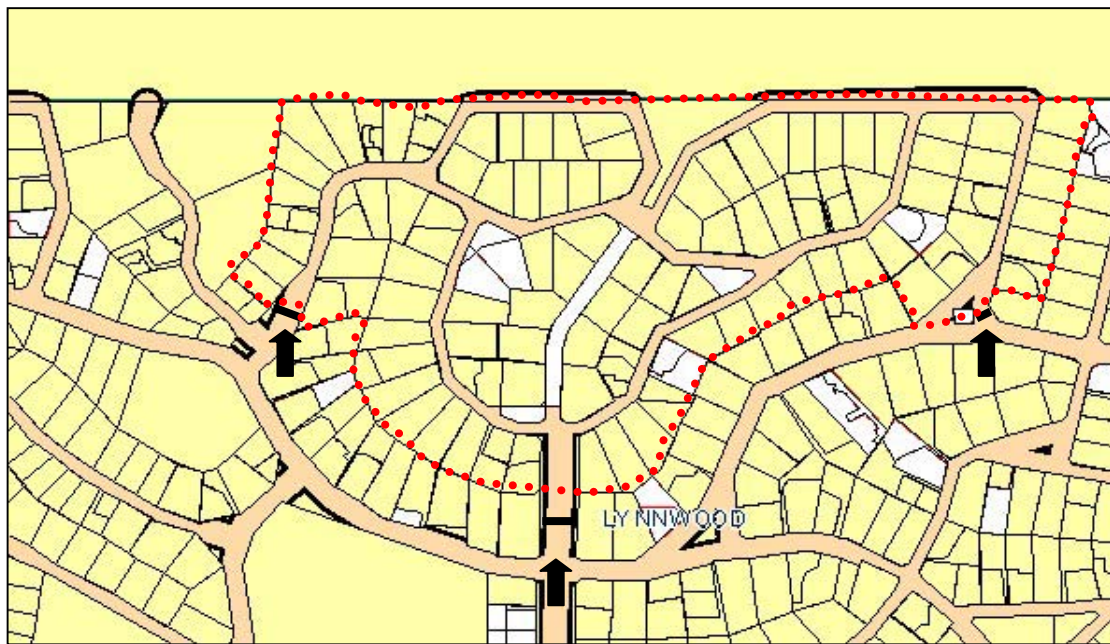


Figure 14: Layout plan of Strubenkop enclosed neighbourhood.

At present, two of the three entrances are closed-off by electronic gates (Strubenkop and Protea Avenue), while one of the roads have a controlled access point through the use of booms and gates across the roads (Elizabeth Grove-middle entrance), manned by private security officers. The two side gates can be electronically operated by a remote control, although there is currently a move to lock these permanently and thus prohibit entry/exit at these points. There are no pedestrian gates next to these gates and pedestrians are therefore required to use the main entrance at Elizabeth Grove Avenue (Figure 17). This entrance provides two entrance gates; one for residents who can enter with a special disc and one for visitors who are required to complete a visitors' register provided by the private security officers.



Figure 15: Strubenkop Road entrance



Figure 16: Sign at the gate of Strubenko entrance.

A number of issues emerged during interviews with the residents of this neighbourhood, reflecting the motivations of the residents behind the neighbourhood enclosure. These included safety and security, economic gain and control and efficiency and effectiveness. The most important reason for the closure was safety and security. This is also the only ground that may be used to apply for road closures according to the local council policy. A number of residents came together in 2001 to establish the Strubenkop Home Owners Association who were not only responsible for the application to close-off the neighbourhood, but are also concerned with many of the daily management and maintenance issues.



Figure 17: Main entrance into Strubenkop security neighbourhood.

The neighbourhood closure had a significant impact on the neighbourhood, both in terms of physical and social transformation, as well as with regards to the daily use patterns of residents and their quality of life. The impact of the neighbourhood however does not stop at the gates. Closing off the neighbourhood also had an impact

on the surrounding environment and in this sense has institutional implications as well. Although the neighbourhood closure did not completely prevent crime, both the local police and the residents agreed that crime was reduced significantly in the year and a half that the area has been closed-off.

4. DIFFERENCES AND SIMILARITIES BETWEEN ALLEY-GATING AND NEIGHBOURHOOD GATING

There are many similarities and differences between alley-gating and neighbourhood gating. Both are a response to crime and the fear of crime, although there may be additional motivations as well. They also both make use of physical measures such as gates and fences to restrict access into areas beyond. In this sense, both types of interventions employ target-hardening measures to reduce crime and as such can be considered as a form of CPTED. However, the scale of these interventions differs substantially. In the case of alley-gating only the alleys to the side and back of the properties are closed-off. The entrances to the houses are still ‘open’ and therefore publicly accessible. Therefore, in essence, they are no different from terrace housing with gardens at the back extending to the garden fence shared with the neighbours.

Neighbourhood gating on the other hand reflects many differences. Although they both involve measures of target-hardening and modification of the built environment to reduce the opportunities for crime, the scale of the intervention and financial investment are very different. Alley-gating does not physically create a closed-off ‘community’ within gates, since only the alleys to the back are enclosed. It may in fact be that people from terrace houses on opposite sides of the road form more of a community than those sharing the same urban block or alley at the back of their properties. Neighbourhood gating however immediately creates an ‘inside’ and ‘outside’: those inside the fences, booms and gates and those outside, for example Hampstead and Strubenkop. In addition, enclosed neighbourhoods may include very large areas of several urban blocks and closed-off streets, for example some enclosed neighbourhoods in Johannesburg include more than 2 000 households or 24 closed-off roads. In such cases, physical separation and fragmentation immediately becomes evident.

Some of the differences are summarised in the Table below:

Table 1: Differences between gated alleys and gated communities	
Gated alleys	Gated neighbourhoods
Enclosed areas include only the alleys at the back of the terrace houses and do not stretch beyond the urban block.	Enclosed areas include entire neighbourhood with various land uses (mostly residential, but sometimes commercial or recreational areas as well).
Entrances to the individual houses are outside the enclosed area.	Entrances to the individual houses, etc. are inside the enclosed area.
Enclosures do not have any impact on traffic patterns, including those of vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians.	Neighbourhood enclosures change traffic patterns and lead to increased traffic congestion in many cases, especially in cities where there are high numbers of road closures.

Enclosures do not negatively influence urban maintenance.	Neighbourhood enclosures can hinder urban maintenance and restrict access to these areas.
Although some alleys are used by pedestrians, their closure does not necessarily force pedestrians to take longer routes, since all the roads are still open and accessible.	Neighbourhood enclosures force pedestrians and cyclist to make use of major traffic arterials resulting in longer distances and increased travel time. It also often exposes them to high-speed traffic on these major arterials.
Enclosures do not restrict access to public roads and facilities.	In many cases neighbourhood enclosures restrict access to public roads and facilities, for example public parks, schools, etc.
The alley-gates are sponsored by the local council in the UK and residents therefore have no further financial obligations. This is however not the case in SA, since there are so few examples of terrace housing in the country and this is therefore not considered a very general response.	Residents are responsible for the gates or booms controlling access into neighbourhoods, as well as surrounding perimeter fences. In cases, where private security are employed, residents are also responsible to bear these costs. This leads to many internal disagreements and conflicts in many neighbourhoods.
The original design/layout of the area incorporated gates. Therefore the implications of these areas being enclosed were taken into account.	The original design or layout of the areas did not consider enclosure and the implications of enclosing them were therefore not taken into account.

From this comparison it is therefore evident that the scale of enclosure differs and this has an influence on the impact of the different approaches on urban management and maintenance in general, as well as the management of the enclosed area.

5. IMPACT AND IMPLICATIONS OF DIFFERENT TYPES OF GATING

Given the previous discussion and the nature of alley-gating, it is likely to have very little or no impact on urban use patterns and urban management and maintenance, since all roads are still accessible and local authorities and emergency services has access to alleys for refuse removal and emergencies such as fire, etc. Neighbourhood-gating however presents a different story. As mentioned, spatial fragmentation and segregation immediately becomes evident due to the scale of intervention. It also starts to exclude potential users from previously or current public open spaces or facilities. In this case, although they may contribute to safer environments, these types of gated communities often contribute to social division in many cities.

In addition, they often cause a number of problems in terms of traditional urban management and maintenance, especially in areas where there are large numbers of bigger enclosed neighbourhoods. For example, while Strubenkop on its own will not contribute to major problems, the cumulative impact of enclosed neighbourhoods presents a different scenario. Although the closure did not have any significant impact on traffic, the situation changes considerably if one takes a larger view. The case study area is only one of many approved and proposed neighbourhood closures in the immediate vicinity (Figure 21). The cumulative impact of these is considerably more significant. Firstly, it limits access to only a few through routes, displacing traffic and

contributing to traffic congestion. Secondly, it changes the urban fabric from a fine grain to a very coarse grain made up of a number of super-blocks connected by a series of through routes. This could have a significant impact on urban management and maintenance, regarding accessibility to pedestrians, motorists, emergency services, police, etc.

Therefore the main impact of enclosed neighbourhoods is not contained within one neighbourhood, but in the multiplication thereof across cities. In such a way they do not only create problems for local councils, police, etc. regarding urban management and maintenance, but also start to completely change the nature of contemporary cities.

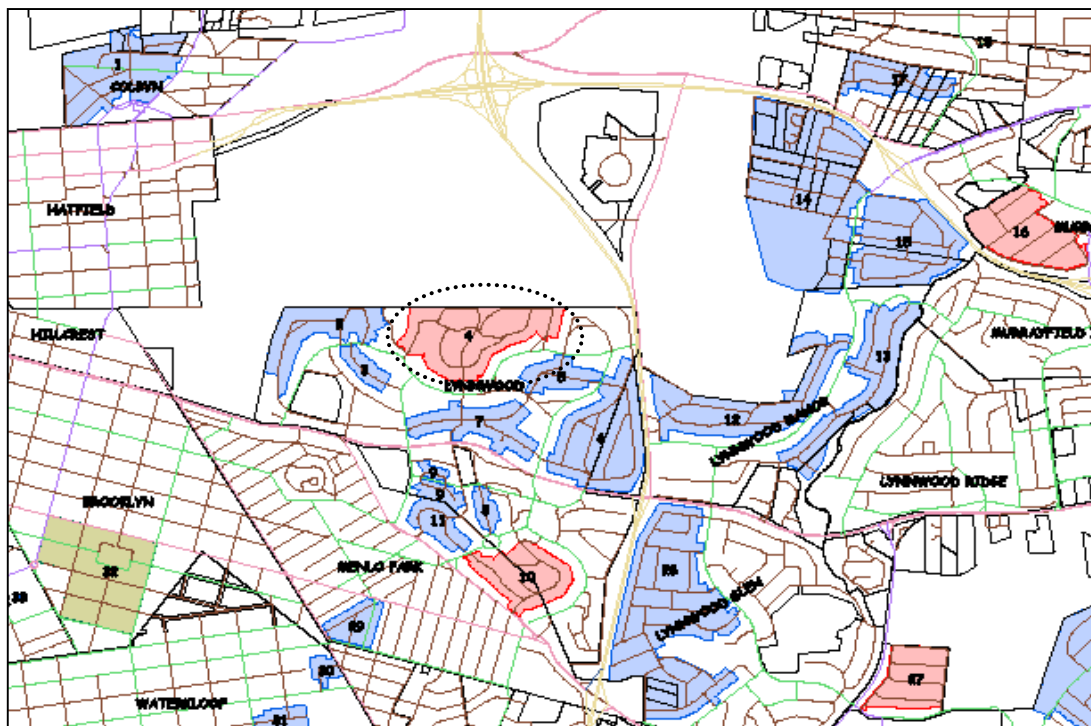


Figure 18: Approved (red) and proposed (blue) neighbourhood closures in the vicinity of the case study area (within dotted circle).

Therefore, despite its many successes internationally, a growing number of commentators have expressed concerns related to the impact of certain CPTED measures, of which gated communities is one example. Eklom points out that design against crime can lead to extensive fortification: “Beyond the technical and economic aspects, common anxieties about situational crime prevention have focussed on the creation of a ‘fortress society’ in which ugly and fear-inducing security shutters and bars spoil the environment and reduce social interaction even further” (Eklom 1995:122). Although advocating the benefits of crime prevention through urban design, Shaftoe (1996:182) expresses similar concerns: “Creating fortified environments (such as high boundary walls and solid metal shutters) may reduce the opportunities for crime but may raise levels of fear.” He continues to caution designers: “Planners and designers should resist the creation of a divided society wherein the better-off (and allegedly law-abiding) exclude the less privileged (and so-called ‘criminal classes’) from large tracts of the environment by privatising what were formally public spaces. Quite apart from the social ethics of such an approach

this polarisation of space can raise levels of fear and mutual suspicion.” (Shaftoe 1996:187).

6. CONCLUSION: TOWARDS A SINGLE OR MULTI-DIMENSIONAL PERSPECTIVE?

This paper has shown that although alley- and neighbourhood-gating make use of the same physical measures (gates, fences, etc) to reduce opportunities for crime and address the fear of crime in the built environment, their physical manifestation and nature (area of enclosure, etc.), as well as potential impact and implications can be very different. Given this, they cannot be considered from a single perspective, but call for a multi-dimensional interpretation, both in terms of spatial manifestation and institutional responses. Alley-gating has little impact and is therefore no real concern for the larger environment. It does not affect the use patterns and daily activities of residents in any significant way. Neighbourhood-gating on the other hand can have a major impact and have many implications for both residents (users of public space in cities) and local authorities (institutional implications).

In this sense, alley-gating, although some would argue that it is technically a form of gated community, cannot be considered in the same light as neighbourhood gating. The paper showed that alley-gating only closes alleys behind properties and do not separate the community involved from their surrounding environment. It leaves the streetscape more or less undisturbed and the gates are often barely visible from the street, thereby not adding to a ‘fortress-like’ environment or contributing to the fear of crime from this point of view.

As such, it is not the same as gated communities⁶, and more specifically neighbourhood-gating in this case, where the entire physical area and community within are closed off from their immediate surroundings and where the use of common space is restricted through gates and fences across existing roads. These gates are often very imposing and reinforce the image of the fortress city. It also starts to contribute to a fragmented urban environment where super-blocks of protected enclaves are juxtaposed with poor ghettos and ‘no-go areas’ or ‘places of terror’. In this way, although they may contribute to safer communities for those within, they are also contributing to spatial segregation and social division within cities. This in turn may contribute to the fear of crime outside protected areas and over the long term contribute to more dangerous cities.

In this light, alley-gating and neighbourhood gating cannot be considered from one perspective. It needs to be emphasised that they are in fact quite different interventions with a different meaning (impact and implications). It would therefore be inappropriate to refer to these two types of gating as gated communities in the broad sense, implying that the same policies and responses from local councils would

⁶ Limitations of this paper: it did not consider large security estates, but only focussed on neighbourhood gating. Large security estates also raise a number of questions in addition that could be further explored in the future.

be necessary. While alley-gating may serve to assist a few residents with no significant impact, neighbourhood gating on a large scale may in fact signify the return to a new era of medieval fortification where castle/neighbourhood forts become ominous islands in increasingly divided fortress cities.

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