



URBAN FORTRESSES

Gated communities as a reaction to crime

KARINA LANDMAN & MARTIN SCHÖNTEICH

One of the consequences of the state's inability to protect the life and property of all its citizens—especially in developing countries—is the formation of private alternatives to crime prevention and control. Gated communities, or enclosed neighbourhoods, are one such popular alternative. This article compares the phenomenon of gated communities in two developing countries: South Africa and Brazil. Both countries are plagued by violent crime and share key human development indicators. The article also explores key issues that have been raised around gated communities in both countries. Gated communities can contribute to spatial fragmentation in urban areas, and reflect increased polarisation, fragmentation and diminished solidarity within society. By excluding other urban residents and people from surrounding neighbourhoods, gated communities can contribute to social exclusion, inhibiting the construction of social networks that form the basis of social and economic activities.

Introduction

Gated and walled cities are almost as old as human urban settlement. With the development of nation states, public police forces and air power, walled cities became redundant as fortresses to keep foreign invaders and marauding criminal gangs out.

A relatively new trend as an architectural concept is that of the gated community. Gated communities are a generic term that includes enclosed neighbourhoods that have controlled access through gates or booms across existing roads, and security villages and complexes, including lifestyle communities which provide their enclosed

residents with a range of non-residential amenities such as schools, offices, shops and golf courses.

Since the early 1990s gated communities have experienced phenomenal growth in South Africa, especially in the metropolitan areas of Gauteng. In South Africa gated communities have become popular primarily as a response to high levels of crime and the fear of crime.

Gated communities raise interesting questions and have resulted in widespread debate around their likely future impact on urban life in South Africa. Do gated communities reduce crime? If so, should they be promoted as a legal mechanism to

Table 1: Selected human development indicators for South Africa and Brazil

	<i>South Africa</i>	<i>Brazil</i>
GDP per capita (US\$ 2000)	9,401	7,625
Income of poorest 10% as proportion of total income	1.1%	0.7%
Income of richest 10% as a proportion of total income	46%	48%
Gini index	59.3	60.7
Adult literacy rate	85%	85%
Proportion of population under 15 years	32%	29%
Total fertility rate per woman	3.1	2.3
Proportion of population urbanised	57%	81%

Source: UN Human Development Report, 2002

combat crime, and regardless of their potential long-term impact on urban development?

This article compares the phenomenon of gated communities in two developing countries: South Africa and Brazil. Both countries are plagued by high crime levels and share key human development indicators (Table 1).

Significantly both countries have a high Gini index indicating high levels of inequality.¹ In fact, of the 173 countries listed in the 2002 United Nations Human Development Report only four countries have higher levels of inequality than South Africa or Brazil.

Brazil has a more urbanised population than South Africa. This is partly the result of the latter's rigid influx control policies until the mid 1980s, which prohibited the free movement of black people into the cities. Between 2000 and 2015 the proportion of urbanised people is expected to grow at a greater rate in South Africa (18%) than Brazil (8%).

Both countries have experienced similar urban development patterns with the formation of large informal settlements or slums on the periphery of most urban centres. Both countries also have a history of authoritarian rule and political repression. The transition from authoritarian rule to democracy came almost a decade earlier in Brazil (1985) than in South Africa (1994).

i The Gini index measures inequality over the entire distribution of income or consumption. A value of 0 represents perfect equality, and a value of 100 perfect inequality.

Defining gated communities

Gated communities are a global phenomenon. They occur in various forms in many countries including Argentina, Brazil, India, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, Spain, the United Kingdom and the United States. While there are many similarities between gated communities throughout the world, there are a number of important differences between gated communities in developed countries and those in developing countries.

There is no common agreement on a definition or meaning of gated communities. It is accepted that there are different types of gated communities in different countries, resulting in a multitude of interpretations regarding types and meta-types.

These differences are also apparent in South Africa and Brazil. In Brazil, enclosed developments are often referred to as 'gated communities'.¹ Others refer to 'closed condominiums', 'fortified enclaves' or simply to 'fenced-up areas'.² Some authors talk of gated communities as only one part of a larger phenomenon of enclosed areas including shopping malls and fenced-in housing estates.³ Yet others interpret the term gated community or fortified enclave to refer to all fenced-in areas or controlled access spaces or, in other words, as the collective name for such urban developments.⁴

Teresa Caldeira, who has done extensive research on gated communities in Brazil, refers to enclosed areas as 'fortified enclaves'.⁵ They include office complexes, shopping centres and increasingly other

amenities that have been adopted to this model: schools, hospitals and entertainment centres. The residential component of fortified enclaves is the closed condominium. These can be vertical (luxury apartments) or horizontal (enclosed security suburbs).⁶

In South Africa some writers use the term 'gated community'.⁷ A number of other terms are also used, such as 'suburban enclave', 'urban fortress',⁸ 'security-park',⁹ 'security village'¹⁰ and 'enclosed neighbourhood'.¹¹ The policies of some local authorities refer simply to 'road closures', which is only a component of an enclosed neighbourhood or gated community. There is not always a consensus on the hierarchical structure or interpretation of these terms.

In South Africa it is possible to broadly distinguish between security villages and enclosed neighbourhoods. Security villages include different types of private developments with various uses, ranging from small enclosed apartment buildings and townhouse complexes to large office parks, shopping malls and luxury estates. Security villages are physically walled or fenced off and usually have a controlled access point with a security guard. Roads in security villages are privately owned, and the management and maintenance of such roads is usually carried out by a private management body.

Enclosed neighbourhoods are existing neighbourhoods that are closed off through road closures, and the erection of fences or walls around the entire neighbourhood. The roads within enclosed neighbourhoods generally remain public property. The local council usually remains responsible for the provision of public services, such as electricity, water and garbage collection, to communities living within enclosed neighbourhoods.¹²

Crime in South Africa and Brazil

Crime and transition

In South Africa and Brazil gated communities are often a response to high crime rates and the fear of crime. Crime

tends to increase during periods of political transition coupled with instability and violence. This occurred in many Latin American countries, including Brazil, and Eastern Europe states during their transition to democracy. A significant increase in crime was also experienced in Namibia just before and after independence and South Africa from the mid 1980s onwards.

During these periods of instability, routine policing activities are diverted towards controlling violence, and crime consequently increases. The social bonds holding society together are loosened, making crime more likely. In South Africa anti-crime campaigns in the townships in the 1980s were often launched by local street committees and civic organisations as their influence grew. The post-1990 negotiation period broke these linkages: not only did state repression weaken, but transition brought intra-community conflict.¹³ Violence also weakened social control, producing marginalised groups reliant on the conflict for a livelihood. This also increased levels of crime as disaffected individuals—primarily township youth—became engaged in it.

In an overview of the crime situation in a number of transitional societies, Shaw argues:

Dramatic, political, economic and social transition may be much more disruptive of the internal social organisation, including that of crime prevention and control, of communities than has often been assumed ... Changes brought about by the dramatic impact of the political transition are exacerbated by longer term processes of industrialisation and urbanisation which have themselves have had a considerable impact on the changing nature of community and social controls.¹⁴

Crime in South Africa

Crime remained more or less constant around 4,000 incidents of recorded crime per 100,000 of the population between 1975 and 1982, but increased from the mid

Table 2: Percentage change in the number of crimes recorded, over four 4-year periods between 1981/82 and 1993¹⁶

	1981/82–1984/85	1984/85–1987	1987–1990	1990–1993
Murder	11%	9%	54%	30%
Rape	4%	13%	12%	33%
All robbery	2%	18%	32%	43%
Assault GBH	3%	-2%	3%	17%
Burglary	20%	41%	-5%	15%

1980s, rising dramatically in the early 1990s (Table 2).¹⁵

During the first four years after South Africa's political transition in 1994, overall crime levels almost stabilised, albeit at very high levels of especially violent crime. Between 1994 and 1997, recorded crime increased at an average of only one per cent per year. Thereafter levels of recorded crime, measured from one year to the next, increased at an escalating rate (Table 3). Overall crime levels increased by almost 5% between 1997–98, 7% in 1998–99, and 7.6% in 1999–2000.¹⁷

The latest available crime statistics at the time of writing are those for the period April 2001–March 2002. During this 12-month period, 5,571 crimes were recorded per 100,000 of the population.¹⁸ At this level the total risk of being a victim of crime per person per year is 5.6%, even before unrecorded crimes are considered.

While murder levels declined after 1994, overall levels of violent crime experienced the greatest increase compared to all other crime categories. Between 1994 and 2000, violent crime increased by 34%, property crime by 23%, violent crime against property (i.e., arson and malicious injury to

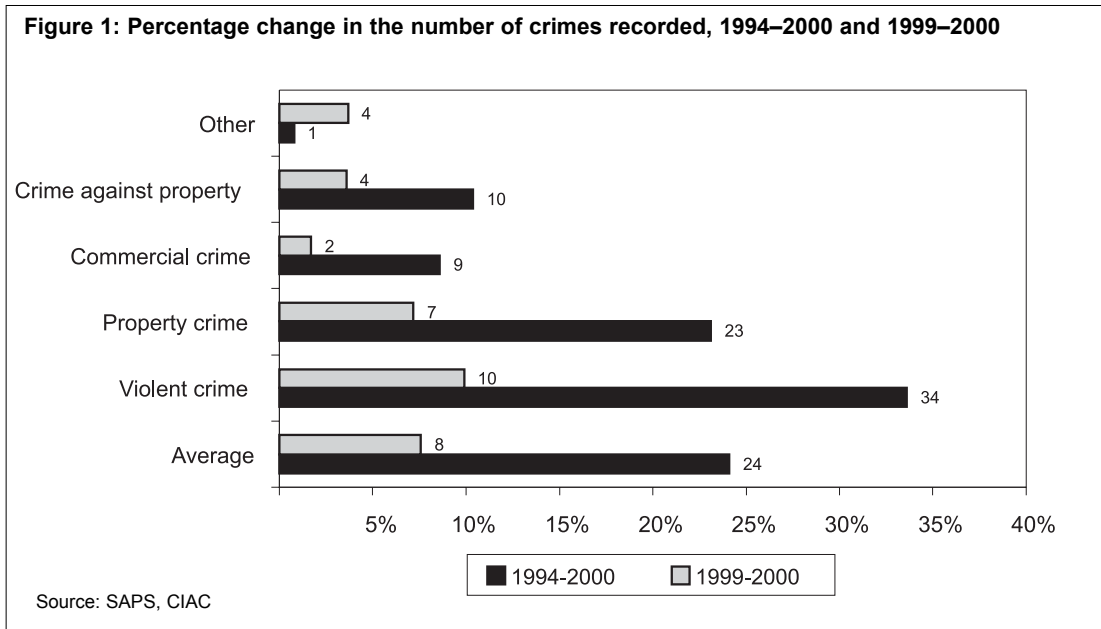
property) by 10%, commercial crime by 9%, and drug- and drunk driving-related offences by 1% (Figure 1).

Crime levels in the country's metropolitan areas tend to be higher than in the country as a whole. Most factors associated with high crime rates characterise cities to a greater extent than small towns. Population density, for example, is thought to be associated with crime, in that greater concentrations of people lead to competition for limited resources, greater stress and increased conflict. Other factors which characterise urbanisation, such as overcrowding and high levels of gang activity, are mainly evident in urban areas and are known to be related to criminal activity.¹⁹

On the basis of 2000 recorded crime figures, levels of crime in large urban centres were considerably higher than the national average (Figure 2). In the Johannesburg police area, for example, the crime rate was over three times the national average. That is, in 2000 the average resident of the Johannesburg police area was over three times more likely of becoming a victim of a recorded crime than the average South African.

Table 3: Percentage change in the number of crimes recorded, for two 4-year periods between 1994 and 2000

	1994–1997	1997–2000
Murder	-8%	-12%
Rape	23%	1%
Aggravated robbery	-18%	59%
Robbery (common)	63%	66%
Assault GBH	12%	17%
Burglary	7%	17%
20 most serious and prevalent crimes	3%	21%



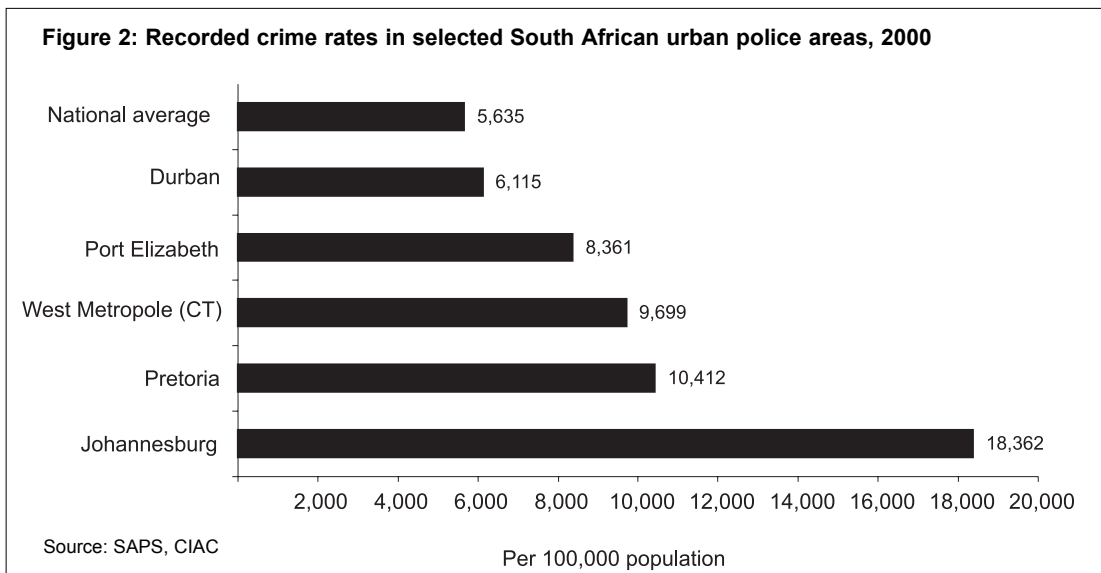
Recorded crime levels vary between cities.²⁰ Johannesburg has significantly higher levels of crime than other large South African cities. For example, in 2000 just over 18,300 crimes were recorded per 100,000 residents of the Johannesburg police area, compared to 8,361 for Port Elizabeth.

Consistently high levels of violent crime—and the extensive media coverage of it—result in significant increase in public feelings of insecurity. For example, annual Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC)

public opinion surveys in South Africa ask a nationally representative sample of respondents about their feelings of personal safety. In 1994, almost three-quarters of respondents said they felt safe. At the end of 2000, respondents were almost equally divided with 44% feeling safe and 45% feeling unsafe.²¹ (The HSRC’s 2001 survey did not include a question on feelings of personal safety.)

Crime in Brazil

In Brazil crime and violence, particularly



murder, increased after the country's transition to democracy in the mid 1980s. The number of violent deaths or deaths resulting from external causes increased from 70,212 in 1980 to 117,603 in 1998 (an increase of 68%). Over the same period the number of deaths resulting from murder or aggression increased from 13,910 to 41,916 (201%). The number of deaths resulting from aggression as a proportion of the total number of violent deaths increased from 20% to 36%.²²

From the available evidence it appears that in Brazil the risk of violent crime is unequally distributed in different geographical areas and social groups. The growth of violent crime is, to a significant extent, concentrated in urban and metropolitan regions. Murder rates are highest at the periphery of large urban areas. It is in these regions that the problems of poverty, unemployment and the lack of adequate housing and basic services, including health, education, transport, security and judicial services, are most acute.²³

Explanations for the growth of crime and violence in Brazil emphasise the contribution of factors undermining society's capability to ensure the rule of law and basic civil, political and social rights for

the majority of the population. Such explanations also focus attention on the long history of authoritarianism, racial discrimination and social inequality in Brazil. Attention is also focused on the limited capacity of democratic governments and civil society organisations to strengthen the rule of law and the institutions and practices necessary for securing citizenship and human rights.²⁴

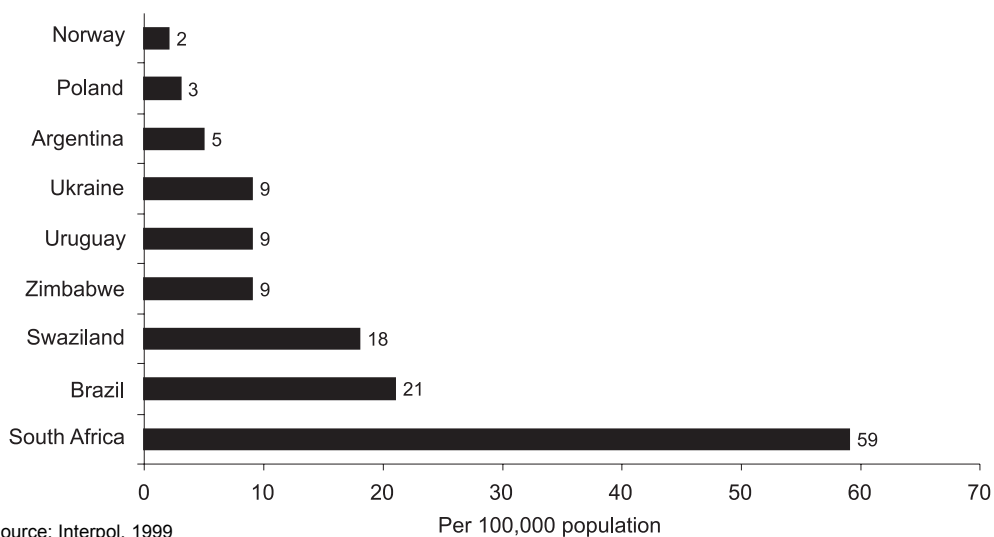
Violent crime

By global standards both South Africa and Brazil have high levels of violent crime.²⁵ Every third crime recorded in South Africa is violent in nature (i.e., involving violence or the threat of violence). In the US, considered to be a relatively violent society, violent crime makes up 15% of all recorded crime. During 1998, 59 murders were recorded in South Africa per 100,000 of the population. In Brazil the rate was 21 per 100,000.²⁶ Other countries in Southern Africa and many parts of Latin America, for which figures are available, have significantly lower murder rates (Figure 3).

Comparing gated communities in South Africa and Brazil

Security in Brazil means fences and walls,

Figure 3: Number of recorded murders per 100,000 population, 1998



24-hour guards, as well as a wide array of technologies such as video monitoring and sensor activated alarms. Security has become a way of life in Brazil or, as Caldeira explains, only with 'total security' is the new concept of housing complete.

Similar sentiments are evident in South Africa. For many urban South Africans security measures in and around their homes is not enough. They want to live in a more secure environment in terms of the larger area surrounding their homes. In this way the idea of 'total security' is becoming increasingly popular. This has led to the increase of security villages and enclosed neighbourhoods in urban areas.

In Brazil fortified enclaves include office complexes, shopping centres and other spaces adapted to conform to this model. The main characteristics of fortified enclaves are that they are:

- private property for collective use;
- physically isolated, either by walls, empty spaces or other design devices;
- turned inwards and not to the street; and
- controlled by armed guards and security systems.²⁷

It is unclear whether Caldeira sees enclosed neighbourhoods (existing neighbourhoods closed off by street closures) as fortified enclaves, although they do occur in Brazil. In South Africa enclosed neighbourhoods are a form of a gated community. The broad characteristics of gated communities in South Africa are therefore similar with the aforementioned ones for Brazil, except that they are not completely privately owned. In most cases the roads within enclosed neighbourhoods remain public property. However, a small number of local authorities permit residents' associations to purchase roads within an enclosed neighbourhood. In such cases the area is considered as private property for the collective use of the residents of the enclosed neighbourhood who are responsible for its maintenance.

As already alluded to, the residential component of fortified enclaves in Brazil are closed condominiums. In Brazil, vertical closed condominiums (usually luxury

apartments) are concentrated in inner city areas, but are also increasingly being built in outlying areas. They are enclosed by walls and tend to have large areas and facilities for common use.

A good example of a closed condominium is *Iha do Sul* (Island of the South). This is a middle-class high-rise complex of six high-rises, each with 80 three-bedroom apartments, located in the western zone of São Paulo.²⁸ Many older apartment blocks in central city areas are also converted to closed condominiums, with a wide array of security features.

Similarly, in South Africa many inner-city apartment buildings are increasingly using similar measures to improve the security of their occupants. Examples include the high-density flatland areas of Hillbrow (Johannesburg), Sunnyside (Pretoria), Green Point (Cape Town), and Albert Park (Durban).

Since the late 1970s horizontal closed condominiums are being built in Brazil, mostly in the outer regions of metropolitan areas. In São Paulo, developers began building living places similar to US 'new towns' or 'edge cities'. These are suburban areas that combine residential developments with office and commercial centres. Some of the most famous of these types of developments in Brazil are Alphaville and Tambore, which are located on the outer periphery of the larger São Paulo metropolitan area.

Alphaville is divided into many walled residential areas (*residencias*), each enclosed by three-and-a-half metre high walls and accessible only by one controlled access point—the main entrance gate. Between the various residential areas there are commercial nodes with smaller neighbourhood shops and restaurants. To the one side of the larger Alphaville there is an office-building complex and a larger commercial hub containing a shopping centre. The Alphaville concept is increasingly spreading to other cities in Brazil, where similar developments have either been built or are in the process of being built. Plans are also on the table to

build Alphavilles in Brasilia, Rio de Janeiro and Porto Alegre.

In South Africa security villages have a variety of uses, ranging from smaller townhouse complexes to larger office parks and luxury estates. The distinguishing factor of security villages is that they are purpose-built by private developers, with security being the crucial design requirement, although lifestyle requirements are also important.

Secure townhouse complexes mainly for residential purposes, and office parks, are located throughout the cities, from central neighbourhoods to higher income neighbourhoods on the urban periphery. Larger security estates (similar to the horizontal condominiums of Alphaville) are mostly located on the urban periphery where bigger portions of land are available, as well as natural elements such as rivers, dams, and patches of trees which can enhance the layout of such estates. These estates offer an entire lifestyle package in a secure environment. Security estates include a range of services (garden services, refuse removal), and a variety of facilities and amenities (golf courses, squash courts, cycle routes, hiking routes, equestrian routes, water activities).

While large South African security estates contain similarities with the character, services and facilities of the horizontal closed condominiums in Brazil, they differ in size. Most of the luxury security estates in South Africa occupy only between ten and 50 hectares. While two ambitious estates occupy larger areas, namely Heritage Park in the Cape Town metropolitan area (200 hectares) and Dainfern in Johannesburg (350 hectares), they are much smaller than those in Brazil. For example, Alphaville occupies 19,000 hectares and houses 35,000 residents. Alphaville alone has more residents than the entire population of many smaller towns in South Africa, such as Port Shepstone (KwaZulu-Natal) and Bloemhof (North-West) which both have a population of 30,000 people.

A 2002 survey conducted by the Centre for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)

Building and Construction Technology revealed that large security villages/estates in South Africa tend to be located in either metropolitan areas (around large cities such as Johannesburg, Pretoria or Cape Town) or in coastal towns (such as Plettenberg Bay, Mossel Bay, Port Elizabeth or Richards Bay). Other areas with a larger conglomeration of security villages include recreational sites or areas close to natural amenities such as Hartebeespoort Dam near Pretoria.

Another type of gated community—a type of fortified enclave—are enclosed neighbourhoods. These are existing neighbourhoods to which access is controlled through road closures or the monitoring of access points into and out of the neighbourhood, thereby allowing access to be controlled. A number of Brazilian cities have responded to high crime levels through enclosed neighbourhoods—especially neighbourhoods in high-income areas. In São Paulo, for example, the city government is increasingly granting permission to neighbourhoods who want to control access into their areas. In Rio de Janeiro enclosed neighbourhoods tend to occur in areas that are located next to lower-income areas (*favelas*ⁱⁱ).

It is interesting to note that enclosed neighbourhoods are concentrated in the larger cities in Brazil, which also have the highest crime rates. However, as crime and violence spreads to medium sized and smaller cities, fortification, both of buildings and neighbourhoods, is becoming increasingly widespread. This can be seen in the burgeoning of Alphavilles across Brazil, as well as the enclosure of neighbourhoods in smaller cities such as Curitiba.

Neighbourhoods in South Africa are

-
- ii A *favela* generally refers to a set of shacks built on seized land. Although people own their shacks, they do not in most cases own the land but occupy it illegally. The Brazilian government is, however, beginning to allow people to acquire land in *favelas* legally. *Favelas* usually have limited or no access to infrastructure such as sewage facilities and piped water. Generally *favela* residents obtain electricity by illegally tapping into existing electricity lines.

closed off through road closures, usually in combination with the construction of fences or walls around such neighbourhoods. Roads are closed either temporarily by gates or booms spanning the road, or permanently by fences. Access into these neighbourhoods is restricted and controlled by a few access control points, either in the form of remote controlled gates or security manned gates or booms. The size of enclosed neighbourhoods varies from small cul-de-sacs with fewer than ten houses to large neighbourhoods with up to 4,000 houses. Residents must apply for the right to restrict access to their local municipality and can only do so for security reasons.

Not all local municipalities in South Africa allow road closures. A CSIR survey conducted in early 2002 of 117 municipalities that responded in South Africa established that more municipalities (37) had received applications for road closures than those who had given their approval (23). Thus, despite the demand not all applications are approved. Some local authorities refuse permission for road closures because of anticipated problems related to traffic control, urban management, accessibility and discrimination. Despite this, and given the growing demand, it is likely that enclosed neighbourhoods will continue to grow, both in number and in size.

While the number of applications for neighbourhood enclosures and the development security estates continue to grow, local authorities are often unprepared. The CSIR survey indicated that while 37 of the 117 municipalities that responded to the survey had received applications for road closures, only 12 had an actual policy on road closures. Moreover, only one province (Gauteng) makes legal provision for road closures for security purposes at a provincial level. There is no national policy to guide decision making on gated communities in the country.

The CSIR survey has shown that most road closures occur in metropolitan areas, such as Johannesburg, Pretoria and Cape Town. At the time of writing there were an

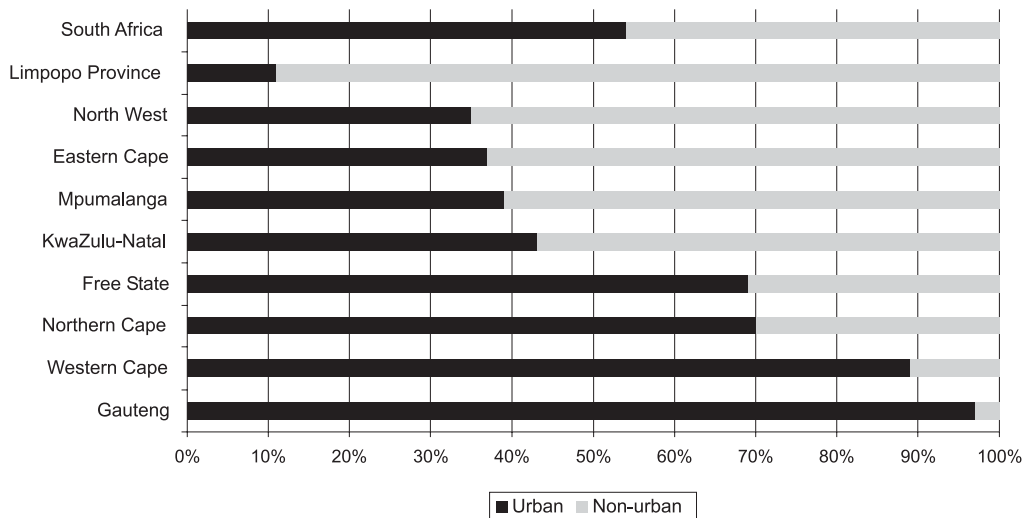
estimated 300 legal road closures in the city of Johannesburg. Only 79 neighbourhoods had gone through the formal application process and only 23 had been officially approved by the new City of Johannesburg Municipality (established in December 2001). It is estimated that there are currently more than 500 illegal road closures. Although Pretoria has fewer road closures, the demand has increased dramatically over the past two years. The metropolitan area of Tshwane (which officially came into existence in December 2001, and which includes Pretoria) has received 81 applications for neighbourhood enclosures, of which 47 had been approved at the time of writing.

Gauteng is the province with the highest number of municipalities that have received applications for neighbourhood enclosures. This can be partly explained by the fact that Gauteng is the most urbanised province (97%) in South Africa, and that neighbourhood enclosures are an urban phenomenon (Figure 4, over page).

A more appropriate explanation for the high number of gated communities in Gauteng, is the high level of crime and the fear of crime in the province. In 2000, Gauteng was the province with the highest rates of robbery, theft of motor vehicle and commercial crime. By contrast Limpopo Province had the lowest rates in 13 out of the 15 serious and prevalent crimes recorded by the police.²⁹ A national HSRC survey conducted in late 2000 found that almost two-thirds (62%) of Limpopo Province residents felt safe, compared to only 34% in Gauteng. According to the survey, residents in Gauteng were the least likely to feel safe compared to residents of the other provinces.³⁰

Spatial fragmentation and separation

A number of leading authors on gated communities highlight the potential gated communities have to contribute to spatial fragmentation in urban areas. It is argued that gated communities reflect an increasing polarisation, fragmentation and diminished

Figure 4: Proportion of people living in urban and non-urban areas in South Africa, 1996

solidarity within urban society.³¹ In Istanbul, fortified spaces successfully serve to segregate the growing middle class from the surrounding landscapes of self-constructed squatter settlements.³² Manila is being reconstructed as a “decentralised spatial system resembling an archipelago whose islands are interconnected by bridges”.³³ The ‘islands’ are “the exclusive, walled-in neighbourhoods where the upper strata are ensconced”.³⁴ The result is summarised by Allen:

When differences are negotiated negatively in the city in this manner [through a hard spatial boundary], the outcome is a form of segregation and exclusion which reinforce existing social and economic inequalities.³⁵

Many writers argue that gated communities in Brazil are exacerbating an existing pattern of urban segregation.³⁶ Spatially, gated communities are exacerbating urban sprawl and segregation by creating physical boundaries and barriers all over the city. Gated communities can also lead to the privatisation of public space or the reservation of certain spaces for exclusive use by certain homogeneous social groups. In addition, it is changing the nature of the existing public spaces. Most people living in

enclosed areas no longer make use of the streets, and public spaces are no longer used and shared by all urban residents. These spaces are now abandoned to the poor, the homeless and street children, who are left vulnerable to violence and abuse by various control groups, including criminals and the security forces.

There are some indications that South Africa is heading in a similar direction as Brazil. Certain types of gated communities in South Africa, due to their nature, size and location, are starting to contribute to urban sprawl, fragmentation and separation. They are creating physical barriers in many South African cities. As gated communities increase (both in numbers and size), so is their impact. The consequences for cities and large metropolitan areas in South Africa could be divisive. As Bremner points out:

Those dynamics are producing an increasingly disparate, separate city. The gaps between the townships, the inner city and the suburb are widening. The chances that people of this city will develop a sense of shared space, of shared destiny, grow slimmer by the day.³⁷

Spatial separation caused by gated communities in South Africa often give rise

to practical problems regarding efficient urban management and functioning. By its nature a gated community physically separates a specific area from its environment and creates zones or pockets of restricted access within the urban fabric. This forces motorists and pedestrians to take alternative routes, which are often longer. Enclosed neighbourhoods therefore impact on the daily activity patterns of people, as well as the urban form and its functioning. They also have the potential to influence residents' lifestyles and use-patterns. There have been cases in Johannesburg and Pretoria where public facilities such as schools, libraries, parks and postal facilities have been enclosed, forcing non-residents to negotiate controlled access points when they wish to make use of these facilities as part of their daily activities.

Social exclusion and polarisation

By contributing to spatial segregation gated communities also result in social and economic segregation. Enclosed neighbourhoods exclude other urban residents, casual passers-by and people from surrounding neighbourhoods. This can lead to social exclusion, creating a barrier to interaction among people of different races, cultures and classes, thereby inhibiting the construction of social networks that form the basis of social and economic activities.

Although law-enforcement experts debate the efficiency of such systems in foiling professional criminals, there is no doubt that they are brilliantly successful in deterring unintentional trespassers. Anyone who has tried to take a stroll at dusk through a neighbourhood patrolled by armed security guards and signposted with death threats quickly realises how merely notional, if not utterly obsolete, is the old idea of freedom of the city.³⁸

This is also the case in Brazil where gated communities have created a greater distance between different social groups. Already high levels of inequality are exacerbated by spatially enforcing certain restrictions in

terms of the use of urban space. Consequently residents' daily interactions with people from other social groups diminish substantially, and for many people public encounters occur only within protected and homogeneous groups. The impact is substantial, as Caldeira explains:

In the materiality of segregated spaces, in people's everyday trajectories ... in their appropriations of streets and parks, and in their constructions of walls and defensive facades, social boundaries are rigidly constructed. Their crossing is under surveillance. When boundaries are crossed in this type of city, there is aggression, fear and a feeling of unprotectedness, in a word; there is suspicion and danger. Residents of all social groups have a sense of exclusion and restriction. For some, the feeling of exclusion is obvious, as they are denied access to various areas and are restricted to others. Affluent people who inhabit exclusive enclaves also feel restricted; their feelings of fear keep them away from regions and people that their mental maps of the city identify as dangerous.³⁹

Apart from increasing social exclusion and distance between various groups this form of spatial segregation can complement urban violence. On the one hand, the fear of crime is used to justify almost any form of security and violence. On the other hand, the proliferation of reports of crime in everyday conversation becomes the context in which residents create stereotypes, as they automatically label different social groups as dangerous, to be avoided and to be targeted by the police and private security officers.⁴⁰

Spatial separation could therefore have important social repercussions in South Africa. Certainly in Brazil fortified enclaves contribute to higher levels of inequality, fear, suspicion and feelings of vulnerability in those 'outside' the boundaries. Fortified enclaves in Brazil also contribute to the transformation of urban spaces. Some public spaces are privatised (and so prohibit access), while others are neglected,

abandoned and relinquished to violence and illegal forms of control.

Legal implications

At the time of writing there was no national policy to guide decision makers on gated communities in the country. As has been alluded to above, presently only one South African province makes provision for road closures for security purposes at a provincial level.⁴¹

The Gauteng Provincial Legislature passed the Rationalisation of Local Government Affairs Act in 1998.⁴² The Act permits municipal councils in Gauteng to impose a restriction on access to any public place, under certain conditions, “for the purposes of enhancing safety and security”.⁴³ This can be done at the initiative of a municipal council, or at the request of individuals or private organisations.

Individuals or private organisations that apply to a municipal council for authorisation to restrict access to a public place must:

- submit in writing a description of the circumstances giving rise to the application, and the estimated number of people—and the category of people—that may be affected by a restriction of access;
- furnish proof that at least two-thirds of the persons affected by the circumstances giving rise to the application approve of the proposed restriction; and
- pay a non-refundable administration fee as determined by the municipal council.⁴⁴

After receiving an application a municipal council must meet with the applicants and the South African Police Service to enable the municipal council to determine the merits of the application and the terms and conditions for granting the authorisation. Before imposing a restriction a municipal council must announce its intention to do so in the Provincial Gazette and a local newspaper circulating in the area concerned. Members of the public must be invited to comment on a proposed restriction, and their comments must be considered by a municipal council before imposing a restriction.⁴⁵

Once a municipal council consents to a restriction, it is valid for two years only. This period may, however, be extended provided certain administrative procedures are met.⁴⁶

Anyone who restricts access to a public place without having obtained authorisation in terms of the Act is guilty of an offence and is liable, on conviction, to a fine or imprisonment for a period not exceeding five years, or both a fine and imprisonment.⁴⁷

It can be argued that restricting access to public places in South Africa may be in conflict with the general tenor of the Development Facilitation Act of 1995. The Act promotes efficient and integrated land development through a set of general principles as the basis for future land development.⁴⁸ These principles include the rejection of low density, segregated, fragmented and mono-functional development in favour of integrated and mixed-use settlements. In terms of the Act, ‘planning’ should meet the objectives of equity, efficiency, protecting the public good and the environment, and ensuring the good use of scarce resources.

According to an official resource document on the Act, all parts and elements of a settlement should reinforce and complement each other, and integration is understood as being:

- between rural and urban landscapes;
- between different elements of spatial structure and land uses; and
- different classes.⁴⁹

In South Africa restricting access to public spaces may also be vulnerable to constitutional challenge. According to the constitutionally entrenched South African Bill of Rights, “everyone has the right to freedom of movement”.⁵⁰ This right—as all other rights contained in the Bill of Rights—applies to all law and binds all organs of state.⁵¹

Rights in the Bill of Rights may be limited “only in terms of law of general application to the extent that the limitation is reasonable and justifiable in an open and democratic society based on human dignity, equality and freedom”, taking into account such

factors as the nature of the right, the importance of the purpose, nature and extent of the limitation, and less restrictive means to achieve the purpose of the limitation.⁵²

Conclusion

Evidence in South Africa and other countries show that the increase in urban crime, which has taken place for the past 30 to 40 years, cannot be reversed by more or better policing. In fact, over the past few decades high urban crime rates have become a normal social fact in many societies.

This perceived normality of high crime rates, together with the widely acknowledged limitations of the criminal justice system, have begun to “erode one of the foundational myths of modern societies: namely, the myth that the sovereign state is capable of providing security, law and order, and crime control”.⁵³ One of the consequences of the recognition that the state cannot protect the life and property of all citizens—especially in developing high-crime societies—has been the development of private alternatives to crime prevention and control. Gated communities are one such popular alternative.

Yet, despite the limitations on what the state can do in terms of crime prevention, it still has a responsibility towards collective action where applicable. Dealing with urban spaces is one such affair in need of collective action, rather than allowing a laissez-faire approach where all (including the private sector) are left alone to do what they please. Many social problems, such as social exclusion and spatial segregation, which will not be solved on their own can be exploited by societies’ powerful. Experience from Brazil suggests that a lack of intervention from local governments, and the uncontrolled growth of gated communities, can exacerbate existing patterns of spatial segregation and social exclusion. This, in turn, undermines democratic consolidation in a country that is still recovering from years of authoritarian rule.

Gated communities are generally

favoured by those who can afford them. The fact that property values usually increase after an area is enclosed, and becomes a gated community, shows that home owners allocate a positive economic value to the perceived protection such enclosures afford. So far no comprehensive empirical data exists to show conclusively whether gated communities experience a sustained reduction in crime, or whether such communities contribute to the overall reduction in crime in a city. This is an important area for future research, especially in a country such as South Africa where the critical voices opposed to the poorly regulated growth in gated communities appears to be on the increase. It may ultimately come down to balancing the need for efficiency (in terms of crime reduction) with that of equity (in terms of a more democratic society).

Notes

- 1 C do Lago, Socio-spatial structuring in Greater Metropolitan Rio de Janeiro: A reproduction or transformation of conditions in the (lack of) access to urban space? International seminar on segregation in the city, Lincoln Institute, Washington, 2001.
- 2 Barbadosa, Urban spatial segregation and social differentiation: Foundation for a typological analysis, International seminar on segregation in the city, Lincoln Institute, Washington, 2001.
- 3 C do Lago, op cit.
- 4 P R Caldeira, Building up walls: The new pattern of spatial segregation in São Paulo, in *UNESCO Report ISSJ 147/1996*, Blackwell Publishers, 1996a, pp 55-66; P R Caldeira, Fortified enclaves: The new urban segregation, *Public Culture* 8, 1996b, pp 303-328; P R Caldeira, *City of walls: crime, segregation and citizenship in São Paulo*, University of California Press, 2000.
- 5 P R Caldeira, Building up walls: The new pattern of spatial segregation in São Paulo, op cit, pp 55-66; P R Caldeira, Fortified enclaves: The new urban segregation, op cit, pp 303-328; P R Caldeira, *City of walls: crime, segregation and citizenship in São Paulo*. Villaça, Segregation in the Brazilian metropolis, International seminar on segregation in the city, Lincoln Institute, Washington, 1998; and V G de Araujo and S Ribeiro, Interference of urban and environmental norms in urban spatial segregation: The case of Brazilian federal legislation, International seminar on segregation

- in the city, Lincoln Institute, Washington, 2001.
- 6 P R Caldeira, *City of walls: crime, segregation and citizenship in São Paulo*, op.cit.
 - 7 D Hook and M Vrdoljak, Gated communities, heterotopia and a 'rights' of privilege: A 'heterotopology' of the South African security-park. WITS Housing Seminar, 17 May 2001; K Landman, *An overview of enclosed neighbourhoods in South Africa*, CSIR Publication, Pretoria, 2000.
 - 8 A Lipman and H Harris, *Fortress Johannesburg, environment and planning B: Planning and design* 26, 1999, pp 727-240.
 - 9 D Hook and M Vrdoljak, From power to power: Strydom Square and the security park. Urban futures conference, Johannesburg, 10-14 July 2000; and D Hook and M Vrdoljak, Gated communities, heterotopia and a 'rights' of privilege: A 'heterotopology' of the South African security-park, op cit.
 - 10 L Bremner, Crime and the emerging landscape of post-apartheid Johannesburg, in H Judin and I Vladislavic, *Blanc architecture, apartheid and after*, Nai Publishers, Rotterdam, 2000 and K Landman, *An overview of enclosed neighbourhoods in South Africa*, op cit.
 - 11 K Landman, *An overview of enclosed neighbourhoods in South Africa*, op cit.
 - 12 Ibid.
 - 13 See M Shaw, *Partners in crime? Crime, political transition and changing forms of policing control*, Research report no. 39, June 1995, Centre for Policy Studies, Johannesburg, pp 9-28.
 - 14 M Shaw, Crime and policing in transitional societies—conference summary and overview, in, *Crime and policing in transitional societies*, Seminar Report 8, 2001, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, pp 10-11.
 - 15 L Glanz, The not so long arm of the law, *Indicator Crime and Conflict* 5, Autumn 1996, p 10.
 - 16 E Sidiropoulos et al, *South Africa Survey 1997/98*, South African Institute of Race Relations, Johannesburg, 1998, pp 29-30.
 - 17 *Provincial crime specific statistics for the period January to December 1994 to 2000*, Crime Information Analysis Centre, Pretoria, 2001, <http://saps.org.za/8_crimeinfo/bulletin/942000/index.htm>.
 - 18 Annual report of the national commissioner of the South African Police Service, 1 April 2001 to 31 March 2002, Pretoria, 2002, pp 24-25.
 - 19 L Glanz, South African cities under siege, *Indicator Crime and Conflict* 2, Winter 1995, p 17.
 - 20 Because the boundaries of city governments do not match those of the SAPS, the city analysis in this article is based on a selection of 'police areas' that best represent the cities discussed.
 - 21 Human Sciences Research Council, *Attitudes to national issues in South Africa*, Pretoria, 1994 and 2000.
 - 22 P de Mesquita Neto, Crime, violence and political uncertainty in Brazil, in *Crime and policing in transitional societies*, Seminar Report 8, 2001, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, p 78.
 - 23 Ibid, pp 77-79.
 - 24 Ibid, p 80.
 - 25 S Masuku, South Africa: World crime capital?, *Nedbank ISS Crime Index* 5(1), January–February 2001, pp 16-21.
 - 26 International crime statistics:1998, INTERPOL, Lyons, 1999.
 - 27 P R Caldeira, Fortified enclaves: The new urban segregation, op cit, p 314.
 - 28 P R Caldeira, *City of walls: crime, segregation and citizenship in São Paulo*, op cit, pp 257-8, 260.
 - 29 Specific crimes per 100 000 of the population for the provinces during the period January to December 2000, Crime Information Analysis Centre, Pretoria, 2001, <http://www.saps.org.za/8_crimeinfo/bulletin/200106/jd2000.htm>.
 - 30 M Schönteich, Sleeping soundly. Feelings of safety: Based on perception or reality, *Nedbank ISS Crime Index* 5(2), March–April 2001, pp. 2-3.
 - 31 K Frantz, Gated communities in US-American cities. Conference on gated communities as a global phenomenon. Hamburg, 1999.
 - 32 Aksoy & Robins 1997 cited in S Graham and S Marvin, *Splintering urbanism: Network infrastructures, technological mobilities and the urban condition*, Routledge, London, 2001.
 - 33 Connell, Beyond Manila: Walls, malls, and private spaces, *Environment and Planning* 31, 1999, pp 415-439.
 - 34 N X M Tadiar as cited in Connell, op cit, p 435.
 - 35 J Allen, Worlds within cities, in Massey, Allen & Pile (eds), *City worlds*, Routledge, London, 1997, p 90.
 - 36 P R Caldeira 2000, *City of walls: crime, segregation and citizenship in São Paulo*, op. cit.; L Kowarick, Urban spoliation, social struggles and citizenship: Aspects of our recent history. Paper of the University of São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil, 2001; and C do Lago, Socio-spatial structuring in Greater Metropolitan Rio de Janeiro: A reproduction or transformation of conditions in the (lack of) access to urban space?, op cit.
 - 37 L Bremner, op cit, p 10.
 - 38 M Davies, Fortress Los Angeles: The militarisation of urban space, in M Sorkin (ed.), *Variations on a theme park: Scenes from the New American city and the end of public space*, Hill and Wang Publishers, New York, 1992, p 174.
 - 39 P R Caldeira, Fortified enclaves: The new urban segregation, op cit, p 324.
 - 40 Ibid.
 - 41 C Spinks, A new apartheid? Urban spatiality, (fear of) crime, and segregation in Cape Town, South Africa, *Working Paper Series* 1(20), 2001, Development Studies Institute, p 26.
 - 42 Rationalisation of Local Government Affairs Act

- no. 10 of 1998. The Act came into operation on 19 March 1999.
- 43 Section 43, Rationalisation of Local Government Affairs Act no. 10 of 1998.
- 44 The Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality charged an administration fee of R2,500.
- 45 Section 44(1), Rationalisation of Local Government Affairs Act no. 10 of 1998.
- 46 Section 46, Rationalisation of Local Government Affairs Act no. 10 of 1998.
- 47 Sections 47 and 53, Rationalisation of Local Government Affairs Act no. 10 of 1998.
- 48 Development Facilitation Act no. 67 of 1995.
- 49 *Resource document and manual on chapter 1: Principles of the Development Facilitation Act of 1995*, National Development and Planning Commission, Pretoria, 1999, p 14.
- 50 Section 21(1), Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act, no. 108 of 1996.
- 51 Section 8(1), Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act, no. 108 of 1996.
- 52 Section 36(1), Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act, no. 108 of 1996.
- 53 D Garland, The limits of the sovereign state, *The British Journal of Criminology* 36(4), Autumn 1996, p 448.