

# Gated communities in South Africa: Tensions between the planning ideal and practice

Karina Landman

Peer reviewed and revised

## Abstract

Gated communities are considered by many South Africans as a necessity – a place to stay in a safer environment in the context of high crime rates. At the same time, these developments can also challenge planning and development goals towards greater integration and accessibility. This article considers the views of planning masters' students related to gated communities and the inherent tensions and presence of inconsistent attitudes prevailing within the students. This reflects the growing dichotomy between the planning ideal and practice in South Africa and raises a number of questions for planning education. With reference to the different roles of planning theory, the discussion explores different ways to read and interpret these tensions and attitudes and redirect planning education not only to reflect this, but also to effectively utilise it in an attempt to bridge the gap between normative visions and contextual realities.

## GESLOTE GEMEENSAPPE IN SUID-AFRIKA: SPANNING TUSSEN DIE BEPLANNING-IDEAAL EN DIE PRAKTYK

Geslote gemeenskappe word deur baie Suid-Afrikaners as nodig bestempel – 'n woonplek in 'n veiliger omgewing gesien in die konteks van die hoë misdaadrekords. Terselfdertyd, kan hierdie ontwikkelings 'n uitdaging bied vir beplanning- en ontwikkelingsdoelwitte van groter integrasie en toegang. Hierdie artikel ondersoek die standpunte van meestersgraad-beplanningstudente oor geslote gemeenskappe en die inherente spanning en teenwoordigheid van niekonstante houdings algemeen onder studente. Dit reflekteer die toenemende tweeledigheid tussen die beplanningsideaal en die praktyk in Suid-Afrika en lig 'n aantal vrae vir beplanningsonderrig. Met verwysing na die verskillende rolle van beplanningsteorie, verwys die bespreking na verskeie maniere om die spanning en houdings te lees en te interpreteer en rig beplanningsonderrig nie net om dit te reflekteer nie, maar ook om dit te gebruik in 'n poging om die gaping tussen normatiewe beskouings en kontekstuele realiteite te oorbrug.

## METSE E KOETSOENG HARA AFRIKA BORO: BOTHATA MAHARENG A MERERO EA MERALO LE HO PHETHAHATSA SE REROENG

Ma Afrika Boroa a mangata a bona metse e koetsoeng e le ntho e bohlokoa ebile e hlokahala ka ha e fana ka sebaka se sereletsehileng sa ho dula le ho phela hara boshodu bo bongata ka hara naha. Ka nako e le ngoe, tswelopele tsena di bontsha diphephetso tse etsang hore meralo le dintlha tsa tswelopele di se ke tsa fihla phihlelong tse phahameng. Atekele ena e bontsha dichebisano tsa baithuti ba mangolo a phahameng (Masters) a meralo. Dichebisano tsena ke tsa metse e koalletsoeng le hohlano tse tebileng le maikutlo a fapaneng ka taba ena mahareng a baithuti bana. Sena se bontsha ho hanyetsana hoo matla mahareng a merero ea meralo le phethahatso ea se roeng ka hare ho naha ea Afrika Boroa, ebile e phahamisa dipotso ka thuto ea meralo. Ho ipapisitsoe le dikarolo tsa tsebo ea meralo, mosebetsi ona o sheba mekhoe e fapaneng ea ho bala le ho utloisisa dikohlano le maikutlo ana, ebe mekhoe ena e kenyelletsa dithutong tsa meralo, hore e se ka tsebahala fela, empa e be e sebeletse hore e mpe e leke ho koala phahla e mahareng a pono tse tloaelehileng le nnete e bonahalang.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Gated communities transform urban space from open space to enclosed space where access is restricted and entrance is controlled. This is facilitated by means of walls and fences with controlled access gates. This process is closely linked to,

and influenced by numerous socio-political processes in practice, which has resulted in many lively and often contentious debates. These debates range from academic discussions in multidisciplinary journals to everyday practice that directly influence the lives of people (for example, in public hearings). Through the transformation of space, gated communities represent a re-ordering of micro-society and of space, as well as a reorganisation of rules, norms and customs that affect the allocation of shared goods and services (Roitman, Webster & Landman, 2009: 13). Therefore, whether in academia or in practice and as a result of and depending on the interpretation of this process of reorganisation, the development of gated communities has elicited a varied and opposing debate presenting different sides to the issue of whether gated communities are a solution to current problems of increased alienation and insecurity in cities worldwide or a new form of development that fosters exclusion and segregation.

This is especially pertinent in South Africa where the debate is taking place within a broader socio-political context that adds fuel to both sides of the argument. In practice, gated communities in South Africa are regarded and justified as a way to prevent crime and relieve the fear of crime in the country (Lipman & Harris, 1999; Landman & Schönteich, 2002; Lemanski, 2004; Jüergens & Landman, 2005; Landman, 2007; Durrington, 2006; Fabiyi, 2006; Harrison & Mabin, 2006; Kruger & Landman, 2008). Many people in South African cities consider fortified enclaves or so-called gated communities as their only option towards a safer living place. This admits growing fear and insecurity in the context of high levels of crime and violence (Mistry, 2004; Roberts, 2008).

At the same time, almost all of the urban planning and development policies and legislation<sup>1</sup> of the post-apartheid or democratic period (post-1994) have one strong theme

1 These include the Development Facilitation Act (1995), the Urban Development Framework (1997), and the White Paper on Spatial Planning and Land-Use Management (2001) at national level, and the Municipal Structures Act (1998) and Municipal Systems Act (2000) at local level.

in common, namely that of greater integration. This includes a focus on spatial, social and institutional integration within South African cities. Spatial integration promotes the integration of previously marginalised neighbourhoods with the better-performing areas of the city, the provision of facilities in under-developed areas and infill development to facilitate greater access to socio-economic opportunities. Social integration is concerned with the integration of different age, ethnic and income groups in different urban areas to allow for greater social interaction and diversity; hence, towards a more inclusive city. Institutional integration refers to coordinated efforts between different government spheres and departments and with local communities to ensure more effective provision of services and increased efficiency. Gated communities in South Africa have, however, been criticised for entrenching existing patterns of socio-spatial segregation in cities at the expense of the poor (for example, Jürgens, Gnad & Bhar, 2003; Bremner, 2004; Lemanski, 2004; Durlington, 2006).

Within this context, it is therefore not surprising that the debate has also entered the classroom, raising many questions among planning students regarding the nature, appropriateness and relevance of gated communities, in general, but more specifically within the South African context. The fears are also prevalent within practising planners and students, raising interesting questions regarding the relevance of planning theory, in general, and crime prevention through environmental design, in particular, to guide planning education and the practice of critical thinking among planning students and practitioners. Should planning education and policy development favour normative planning theory to promote value-based guidance, or should it rather justify particular planning responses within certain restrictive and challenging contexts? According to Cambell & Marshall (1998: 118), the complexity of the socio-political world, in which planning practice is embedded, and the actions required from planners suggest that planning theory could offer some guidance. However, they further maintain that this insight is likely to remain limited, unless informed by daily practice and the experience of aspiring and practising planners.

This article is based on a survey distributed to a group of planning masters'

students enrolled for the module "Safer Design" at the University of Pretoria. This postgraduate module is offered as part of a coursework masters' degree presented on a part-time basis to individuals who work in planning-related fields. These individuals vary from young planners who recently graduated to senior practitioners with extensive experience in the public sector. Many of these practising planners also occupy positions of considerable professional and managerial responsibility in various spheres of government. The article explores their views regarding gated communities in South Africa and identifies the prevalence of cognitive dissonance among students and practitioners. The discussion then considers the implications thereof for planning education and the relevance of planning and crime-prevention theories to offer useful guidance in this regard. Although the tensions between the planning ideal and practice, or between normative planning guidance and practical realities have been addressed in the past, this has not been done in terms of the challenges related to the growth of gated communities. The planning and development of South African cities, in particular, raises specific moral questions that need to be considered in relation to past developments and future goals, in terms of both planning education and its implications for planning practice.

## 2. CONTEXTUALISING AND CONCEPTUALISING THE DEBATE

### 2.1 Gated communities as a reflection of a much broader socio-political process

Gated communities in South Africa can broadly be divided into two groups, namely enclosed neighbourhoods and new security developments. Enclosed neighbourhoods refer to existing neighbourhoods that have been fenced off or walled in and where access is controlled or prohibited by means of gates or booms erected across existing roads. The roads within these neighbourhoods were previously, or still are, public property, depending on the model used within different local authorities (Landman, 2003). New security developments are private developments in which 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 or without

a security guard. This type can include large luxury estates, gated townhouse clusters/complexes and gated apartment complexes, which are predominantly residential. New security developments can, however, also include gated office parks and gated mixed use developments (Landman, 2012).

As mentioned earlier, the main driver behind the growth of gated communities in South Africa is insecurity, especially related to crime and the fear of crime. A recent report from the Institute for Security Studies confirmed that the latest release of crime statistics is indeed cause for concern. The statistics for the 2009/10 period released by the South African Police Services show an overall increase in crime at national level, driven by increases in crime in five categories, namely shoplifting, commercial crime, residential and business burglaries, and theft from motor vehicles (Burger, Gould & Newham, 2010: 3). Gated communities offer a physical response to deal with the last three mentioned categories. Therefore, even within the lower middle-income groups and within affordable housing projects, inhabitants are starting to demand gates and fences for security reasons (Landman, 2012; Landman & Badenhorst, 2012).

Insecurity, however, also transcends issues of crime and sometimes relates to financial and other broader socio-political insecurities (Lemanski, 2004; Landman, 2005). Jürgens & Gnad (2002: 339) point out that gated communities in South Africa are a response to the paranoia of personal insecurity and political uncertainty, as well as the development of various construction measures designed to protect citizens in predominantly White cities; thus, in response to the insecurities and changes within the post-apartheid city (Lemanski, 2004). Other writers share this viewpoint. With the fall of apartheid, residents of traditionally White neighbourhoods within the City of Johannesburg felt threatened by the new political system and uncertain about their future and what it may hold. In reaction, many started neighbourhood associations, often combined with physical neighbourhood closures (Fabyli, 2006; Dirsuweit & Wafer, 2006). This ensured that the residents maintained power over their neighbourhoods and resulted in the residents distancing themselves from the "new" political agendas, focusing their energy on creating new identities within the enclosed space (Dirsuweit &

Wafer, 2006). It has also been reported that residents enclose their neighbourhoods in response to local government's inability to supply proper services and safety to the neighbourhoods (Landman, 2006). The same logic occurred in luxury estates, where these neighbourhoods have referred to micro-governance and try to exist autonomously with their own rules and by-laws, resulting in residents becoming impermeable to debates on city planning and restructuring of the city (Hook & Vrdoljak, 2002; Ballard, 2005; Lemanski, Landman & Durrington, 2008). However, in other instances, it may only reflect a search for nostalgia, style and proximity to nature (Bremner, 1999), a place of "rustic escapes" and "a promise of a lifestyle increasingly divorced from reality" (Hook & Vrdoljak 2001: 7). This highlights the different sides of the debate and some of the key arguments that are associated with the spread of gated communities in South Africa.

## 2.2 Cognitive dissonance and its relation to the education system

Cognitive dissonance is a psychological term that refers to "the state of having inconsistent thoughts, beliefs or attitudes" (Stevenson, 1999: 278). It is, therefore, a state that gives rise to an unpleasant inherent tension, due to the presence of two cognitions that are inconsistent or discordant. A cognition is consonant if it supports the other and dissonant if it involves or supports the opposite of the other cognition or thought. In order to restore consonance, a person will then have to modify one of the opposing cognitions (Chabrak & Graig, 2011: 2).

Cognitive dissonance within individuals can lead to differing responses. Individuals can either modify their cognition to cope with new facts, integrate new facts to avoid conflicting thoughts, or select information and change their behaviour according to new facts. The last response gives rise to a reorganisation of values and a new state of consonance. In general, those experiencing cognitive dissonance try to change their personal attitudes in order to restore coherence. The greater the external pressure, the less dissonance is usually present within individuals (Chabrak & Graig, 2011: 3).

The education system can also facilitate or bring about cognitive dissonance.

Students are incorporated and integrated into an education system and specific programme with beliefs and personal attitudes that have been acquired throughout life (Chabrak & Graig, 2011: 4). Yet, education as such also has an important role to play in moulding and shaping beliefs. The education system has a tacit delegation to convey knowledge, skills and qualifications to students within a "social contract". Students are "socially engaged" and implicitly recognise the authority of pedagogic actions conditioning their perception and mental schemes (Bourdieu & Passeron, cited in Chabrak & Graig, 2011: 4).

As long as it is transformative, cognitive dissonance can play a positive role. However, in a situation of extreme discomfort, it can provoke a state of crisis. Therefore, if universities remain fixed on the promotion of "acceptable ways of thinking and speaking ... which rejects heretical remarks as blasphemies" (Bourdieu, 1977: 169) and do not make provision for a variety of expressions and discourses of the world, due to the domination of only one authorised discourse, it is likely to contribute to cognitive dissonance that is not transformative. Given this, the "role of educators is to prevent any ideology from becoming an unquestioned taken-for-granted-truth" (Chabrak & Graig, 2011: 4). Educators should therefore encourage critical discourse and help students escape from any official discourse of ordained curricula or modules that tend to constrain lateral thinking due to educational virtue or purism (Chabrak & Graig, 2011: 4). The next section illustrates the influences of contradictory processes inherent within the South African context and their impact on the development of gated communities as reflected through the presence of cognitive dissonance within planning students/practitioners.

## 3. PERCEPTIONS OF URBAN PLANNING STUDENTS ON GATED COMMUNITIES IN SOUTH AFRICA

### 3.1 Study background

The study is based on two small surveys conducted in October 2010 and 2011 at the University of Pretoria. A short questionnaire, consisting of nine

questions, was distributed to a group of planning masters' students enrolled for the module "Safer Design" in both years. The module is based on the notion that opportunities for crime and violence can be enhanced or reduced by the nature of the built environment, and deals with planning, design and management principles, strategies and specific types of physical interventions aimed at reducing the opportunities for crime and the fear thereof. This includes a discussion of the international theories of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED), Situational Crime Prevention and Place-specific Crime Prevention. The module also highlights the importance of considering CPTED and situational crime-prevention approaches as part of broader crime-prevention strategies and in cooperation with other law enforcement and social crime-prevention initiatives. Finally, it recognises the limitations of CPTED with regard to the prevention of certain types of crime that will have to be addressed by either law enforcement or social crime-prevention initiatives.

After discussing the theory of crime prevention through environmental design and its relation to other crime-prevention initiatives as well as broader planning interventions, numerous studies are presented to highlight the impact and implications of urban fortification internationally and in South Africa. This discussion also highlights the challenges of urban fortification for contemporary planning in South Africa in terms of integration and inclusion. Following these discussions, the planning students were asked to complete a short questionnaire<sup>2</sup> about gated communities to ascertain their views and support thereof in South Africa. Completion of the questionnaire was voluntary, and 22 students responded in each of the two years.

### 3.2 Discussion of findings

The responses included the views of a varied age group, ranging between 25 and 54 years in 2010 and between 23 and 48 in 2011, giving a good representation of the views of different generations of planners on gated communities. It also represents a multiracial class with predominantly Black students (almost 90%) in both years, but also including Coloured, Indian and White

2 The questionnaire only dealt with eight questions, including the age and gender of respondents; their opinion on gated communities and whether they considered them to be necessary in South Africa; whether they currently lived in a gated community and, if so, in which type [4 options were provided], and whether they felt safer living inside these developments. Finally, they were then asked whether they had friends living in a gated community and in which type [the same 4 options were provided].

students. This could imply that the choice of staying in a gated community is not necessarily linked to a specific racial choice or reaction of a specific race group, but rather linked to other influencing factors. It would also question the generalisation of findings by, for example, Dirsuweit (2002) and Ballard (2005) that the "fear of other" and the fear of the poor present in residents from gated communities is often equated with the fear of the "Black". In addition, the responses from the survey also represented a fair gender balance, with just more than 50% being male in 2010 and 63% in 2011.

Of the 22 respondents in 2010, 12 indicated that they did not currently reside in gated communities. One respondent from 2010 mentioned that the community in which he is staying is currently busy with the application process to establish an enclosed neighbourhood. Of the 10 respondents residing in gated communities, only one indicated that he did not feel safer inside the gated community. There were an equal number of respondents staying in large estates and gated townhouse clusters (Figure 1). Compared to 2010, 10 of the 22 respondents in 2011 indicated that they do not live in a gated community, of which only one person did not feel safer inside. Of the 12 respondents staying in a gated community, most were residing in a gated townhouse complex, with one person in each of the other types. This shows that almost half of the respondents from each year group are staying in some type of a gated community and that almost all of them equate that with feeling safer.

In addition, 20 out of the 22 respondents in 2010 and all 22 respondents in 2011 indicated that they currently have friends residing in gated communities in South Africa. These friends stayed in a variety of types, with many indicating that they have friends residing in more than one type (Figure 2). Most of the respondents mentioned that these friends were residing in gated townhouse clusters/complexes. In spite of the small survey, this starts to indicate that the choice to stay in gated communities is not a limited or exclusive phenomenon, especially among middle- and upper-income residents.

The one open question related to the opinion of respondents on gated communities and whether they considered them to be necessary in South Africa. A few main themes emerged from

these responses, relating to the issue of greater or lesser safety within these developments; the general feeling about gated communities; the implications of gated communities for urban planning, and future or alternative crime-prevention interventions. These themes also start to reveal the strong indications of cognitive dissonance present within the planning students and practitioners. As could be expected, safety and security were the dominant themes. Most of the respondents in both years offered a view on the relation between gated communities and safety and security. For some respondents, gated communities "reduce crime" or "minimise social crime"; contribute to "greater safety inside" and "crime prevention", in general, and "safer communities" and "city safety". Gated communities have also been equated with "making people feel safer". This is directly related to the nature of the gated community, as one respondent stated that "[gated communities] keep intruders and

criminals away. The entrance of people is controlled; thereby controlling the opportunities/causes for crime" (Male respondent, aged 26, 2010).

Many respondents tried to justify the need for gated communities, due to the fact that crime is out of control or severe and that the police and state, in general, cannot or is not doing enough to address the situation. For example, a young male (aged 28) stated "that police are unable to address the issue of house related crimes; as a result, a response to dealing with the problem is gated communities to reduce the chances for perpetrators". Another respondent linked it more to the inability of the state to ensure security:

Given the inability (currently) of central government to control crime, local communities are left to provide for their own safety in the most applicable way. One such strategy is through gated communities (Male respondent, aged 41, 2011).

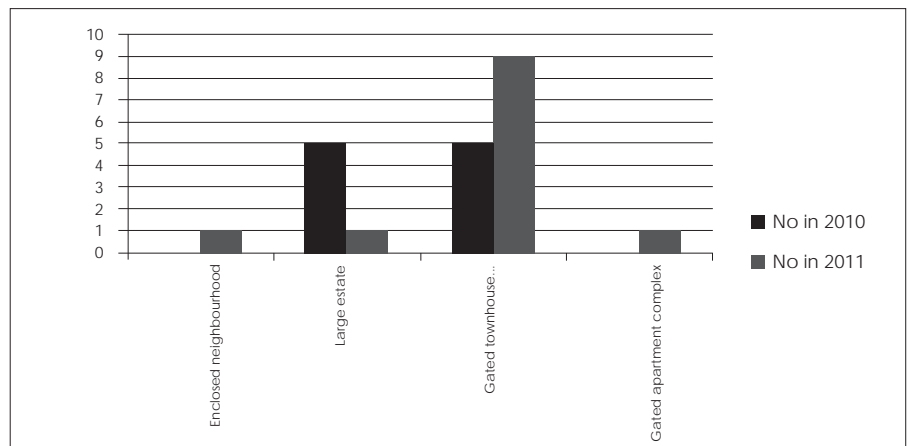


Figure 1: Number of respondents staying in different types of gated communities

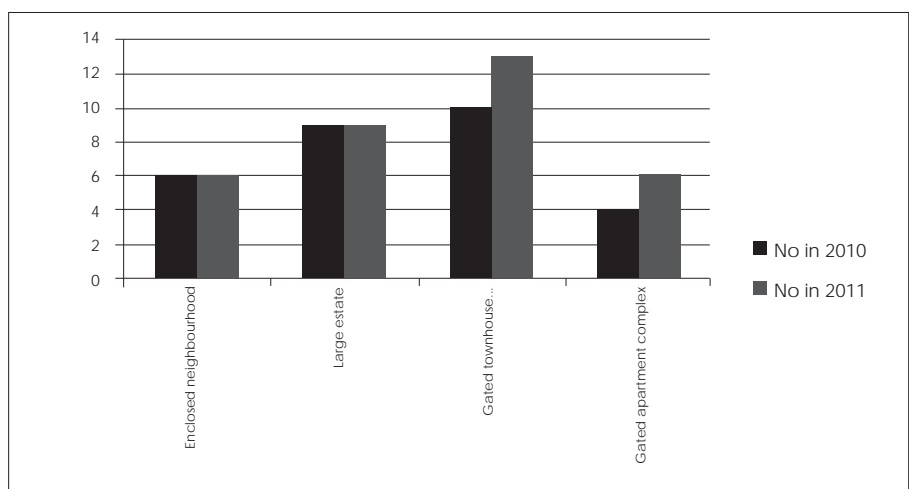


Figure 2: Number of respondents with friends staying in different types of gated communities

This could possibly also be interpreted as a reflection of the failure of the state to provide safety and security to its citizens, as one respondent remarked in terms of the necessity for gated communities:

Yes, [gated communities are necessary] considering the failure of the state to protect people. However, there should be a comprehensive strategy to deal with crime in a long term to do away with gated communities as they shift crime to other places and isolate people (Male respondent, aged 38, 2010).

Consequently, communities need to take initiative themselves: "I think crime in South Africa is so out of hand. We as citizens need to take matters in our hands and therefore gated communities" (Female respondent, aged 32, 2010).

This reflects some reservations, where respondents start to acknowledge that gated communities may not provide the only solution to crime prevention and that there is a need to seek alternative crime-prevention approaches and interventions. In another example, a respondent maintained that "gated communities are not necessarily ensuring safer environment, they only provide target hardening for petty crime such as stealing of garden tools lying around in the yard. But has little or no impact on organised crime" (Male, aged 45, 2011). Others take a much stronger stance and are of the opinion that gated communities are not really addressing the issue of safety, as they often contribute to a false sense of security; place too much emphasis on the role of security guards, and contribute to greater insecurity outside the gated communities. This is reflected in the following excerpts:

It might contribute to safer communities but I feel it is not really necessary. I am of the opinion that it creates the wrong impression, moves crime to the less fortunate and could create a false sense of security. I also do not trust the ... private security sector [that] benefit from crime. We need a mindshift as a country on crime (Male respondent, aged 42, 2010).

To a certain extent it [gated communities] ensures safety within. It makes resident vulnerable outside because of poor relation of the complex with the street. One can be a victim outside the complex because it does not promote

surveillance (Female respondent, aged 25, 2010).

These responses reveal contradictory views within many respondents and present clear patterns of cognitive dissonance. Interestingly, the first of the above respondents is currently staying in an area that has applied to close off the neighbourhood for security purposes, while the second is staying in a large security estate. This illustrates that people staying in gated communities may often feel uneasy about the impact of these developments on the larger city in terms of either crime displacement – "move crime to the less fortunate" – or the increased or perceived vulnerability in open, non-barricaded urban spaces. They, therefore, experience inconsistent thoughts about gated communities. In another instance, the respondent, who stays in a gated townhouse cluster/complex, openly acknowledged the presence of incoherent attitudes:

I have both opinions. They are a safer environment in Gauteng due to the high crime rate and a densified city, create minimal crime. Also they attract more aggressive and violent crime because criminal events aggressive when opportuned to access (Male respondent, aged 30, 2010).

Other feelings of incongruance relates to the impact of gated communities on the form and function of the city. Given the nature of the gated community – physically separated from its surroundings – and the exclusive use of well-developed facilities, the development of these types of housing areas also starts to raise questions about some of the planning and development goals that promote integration and accessibility in South Africa. This dilemma has also been recognised by some of the planners who respondend:

Gated communities conflict the planning principles and complement constitutional principle of a safe environment. Until such a time that crime is reduced and prevented the response will be YES and NO – generating unending debate (Male respondent, aged 29, 2010).

Gated communities will always have a place in SA – this will never go away!! Even with some problems it creates, it is still the lesser of the two evils, safety at the cost of access (Male, aged 26, 2011).

As in the previous cases, these excerpts clearly illustrate the inconsistent thoughts within the respondents

regarding the necessity for gated communities in the country. It also clearly highlights the contradiction between the need for greater safety and security and the need for integration and accessibility. It, therefore, remains an "unending debate", due to the seemingly irreconcilable cognitions present within many respondents, and possibly also within other members of the public, although one cannot generalise from such a small survey.

These feelings of cognitive dissonance are also exacerbated by strong reactions from fellow students during class debates. Some of these students are much more explicit about the possible negative impact of gated communities, not only with regard to the effect on crime reduction and feelings of safety, but also with regard to the consequences for the city as a whole. This relates to issues of urban segregation and exclusion, for example:

No, [gated communities are not necessary], instead they will contribute towards disintegration of society (Male respondent, aged 45, 2011)

They [gated communities] are a contradiction of the ethos of inclusive community and very elitist. I can understand their presence in the current face of crime in South Africa, but would argue that they contribute to new ways of committing property crime (Male respondent, aged 25, 2010).

One respondent even went so far as to equate gated communities with apartheid planning and the exclusion of certain groups from using certain facilities, as reflected in the following excerpt:

The principle of gated communities is not different from the whole ideal of apartheid planning as it creates a buffer on its edges and also restrict[s] people from using shared facilities such as open space, etc. (Male respondent, aged 27, 2010).

Given these concerns, many questions are raised regarding the future of gated communities. Should one type of need (for example, safety) be considered above another essential need such as accessibility? Or should gated communities be actively promoted as a legitimate way to address the present challenges related to high levels of crime or be phased out, due to the negative impact that many types may have on the larger city and society as a whole? A few respondents raised this

issue, highlighting that, although gated developments may be necessary at present – only as a “temporary measure” – there is a need to consider the type of gated community, as not all are appropriate, as well as the longer term impact and look for alternative crime-prevention strategies.

I think from a long term viewpoint, I'm against it – mostly due to economic and social segregation. It may be a short term (2-5 years) solution till the policy and legislation against gated communities is in place. Meanwhile government should work towards increasing education, cohesion ... (Male respondent, aged 27, 2011).

I detest gated complexes. I feel like in a prison in my complex. I wake up and look out of the window and see electrical fences and barbed wire - but they are needed in this point of South Africa's development. I understand them totally as a temporary measure until South African society stabilises economically. Then we may enjoy living in REAL urban communities (Male respondent, aged 26, 2010).

Again, both these respondents indicated that they currently reside within a gated community as a matter of necessity and one even longed for “real urban communities”, although it is not clear what is meant by this. This, therefore, clearly illustrates the inconsistencies present within many planning students and practitioners. The question is whether these patterns of cognitive dissonance could be considered transformative or whether they are likely to provoke a state of crisis and to what extent planning education should start to address or facilitate these emergent dissonances.

#### **4. RELEVANCE AND IMPLICATIONS FOR PLANNING EDUCATION**

##### **4.1 Cognitive dissonance, planning education and the relevance of planning theory to offer guidance**

The discussion has revealed the views of a number of city planning students/practitioners on gated communities in South Africa, indicating a lack of agreement as to whether they address safety and security. While many maintained that gated communities contribute to increased safety and are playing an important role in the context of high crime rates and the inability of the police to

provide adequate protection, others maintained that these developments can contribute to a false sense of security inside and greater insecurity outside these developments. As a result, they may contribute to crime displacement and hamper initiatives towards more inclusive and integrated communities in South Africa where different social groups can share public space. These opposing views were not only restricted to two groups of respondents, but were often present within the same person.

This, therefore, highlights the inherent tensions within many planners between their personal needs for greater security and the goals of national planning policies and legislation for greater integration. While it ultimately remains the personal decision of each planner where s/he would like to stay, it does raise issues regarding the issue of the professional responsibility of city planners and the planning profession, in general, regarding the promotion of the public good, as well as the implementation of current national and local planning policies and legislation. It also questions the role of planning education to deal with these tensions and emerging cognitive dissonance within planners. The presence of cognitive dissonance has, for example, been noted among nursing students with relation to the habits and health effects of smoking (Pericas, Gonzalez, Bennisar, De Pedro, Aguilo & Bauza, 2009), and accounting students in terms of wholeheartedly having to embrace the capitalistic system and its quest for profits (Charbrak & Graig, 2011). Similarly, it is important to consider the implications thereof within planning students and the role of planning education in this regard.

One way to start framing these tensions and their implications for planning education is by turning to the roles of planning theory. Neuman (2005) identifies four roles for city planning theory, namely explanatory, predictive, justificatory and normative. The explanatory use of planning theory is aimed at describing and interpreting what planners do in practice, while the predictive use, closely linked to the previous role, seeks to describe why they do this in practice. The justificatory use of planning theory tries to motivate why planners should plan or, in a broader sense, the need for planning in general, while the normative use of city planning theory unravels how planners should plan (Neuman, 2005). Therefore, while the first two uses are more reflective

of planning practice (describing the ‘what is’), the second tends to be more philosophically orientated (debating the ‘what should be’).

All of these roles were reflected in the views of the planning students, albeit to a greater or lesser extent. The proliferation of gated communities was explained in the light of growing levels of crime and insecurity. Closely related to this, was the notion that, due to the inability of the state and agents of the state (for example, the police) to sufficiently address this challenge, many planners were of the opinion that gated communities are necessary and likely to be around for some time to come. This reflects the state of practice and why this is so, while simultaneously starting to give some indication of future practices; hence, incorporating both explanatory and predictive uses of planning theory.

On the other hand, there were some notions of why we should plan and strong views of what this should entail. Although perhaps not stated directly, it was implied that planning should also consider the city as a whole and the public interest and, hence, the impact of specific types of urban development, such as gated communities, on the function and daily use patterns of residents. This is directly in line with planning policy which promotes planning for the public good. However, for some urban planners, this creates an inherent inconsistency, posing a dilemma in terms of how to reconcile personal preferences with public interest; in other words, a matter of how do they justify planning for the public good if many planners stay within gated communities and, at the same time, gated communities are considered by many, including some of the planners staying in gated communities, as a negation of the public good? This is also closely related to the normative use of planning theory and the nature of the built environment to which planners should aim to contribute. Many of the current policy documents give direction on this, including principles such as integration, accessibility, equity, and sustainability. Depending on the type, size and operation of the gated community, many may, in fact, challenge the achievement of these principles within the broader city (Lemanski, 2004; Landman, 2006, 2007; Landman & Du Plessis, 2007).

What does this mean for planning education? According to Neuman (2005), urban planning theory of, for example,

what would constitute a well-functioning and sustainable city can and should play an important role in preparing planners to engage sufficiently with the realities of practice. This includes both normative city-planning theory and explanatory theory. Normative city-planning theory is useful for practitioners as a guide to good practice. However, it is not sufficient to be able to describe and explain practice as explanatory theory does well. Explanatory theory, especially when critical, may highlight certain practice-related hazards or context-specific challenges. Yet it does not point out what ethical practice is according to social, legal, or other norms, or typically 'what should be'. It, therefore, does not mention whether the aim was good or bad. Explanatory theory does, however, measure performance and can, therefore, indicate how effective or appropriate practice is and how to enhance its effectiveness or relevance (Neuman, 2005: 137).

The discussion highlights the dilemma for planning education in South Africa in terms of, first, the acknowledgement of context-specific realities such as very high levels of crime and violence, even in people's homes and, secondly, the responsibility to evaluate current development practices in the light of what should be implemented to ensure well-functioning and sustainable cities in South Africa. In this instance, reference to all four roles of planning, including both normative and explanatory theory, can start to provide a foundation for practising planners and planning students to understand and work with the inherent contradictions and cognitive dissonance facing them.

It may also start to outline a way forward for planning educators in terms of dealing with difficult issues such as the development of gated communities in high-crime areas and to bridge the gap between the theoretical knowledge of the planning academic and the practical realities facing planning practitioners in South Africa. According to Edwards & Bates (2011: 172), the tension between the planning practitioner and the planning academic is apparent in the discussion of what knowledge, skills, and methods are essential in planning education. Planning practitioners define the scope of practice based on their everyday experiences in confronting planning challenges (Edwards & Bates, 2011: 172), such as the need to create safer environments and knowledge based on those experiences. For

example, one way is through the development of gated communities. Planning faculties, on the other hand, must meet their pedagogic responsibilities to provide a foundation of knowledge (Edwards & Bates, 2011: 172), for example, theories of what would constitute inclusive and sustainable urban environments and how certain types of developments may influence this in practice. This should also include an elaboration of the different streams of CPTED in practice, namely those initiatives that support interventions that emphasise the strengthening of physical boundaries and the separation of areas in the urban environment to reduce opportunities for conflict and/or friction, including gated communities and those interventions that support the establishment of an open, incorporating and assimilating urban environment to reduce conflict through association and cooperation (Landman, 2009). Exposing students to these different approaches will simultaneously link CPTED theories to the broader roles of planning theory, in the sense that it will explain the growth of developments such as gated communities and offer alternative normative principles to guide intervention towards more integrated environments. This could then offer an opportunity to practising planners to, first, transform and resolve their own cognitive dissonance and, secondly, establish a platform to evaluate existing developments and guide responsible decision-making regarding planning applications and the development of different types of gated communities.

Development planning has ventured beyond the technical expert model and includes a focus on the collaborative process skills where development planners are joining the larger professional tide towards the model of reflective practitioner (Wilson, 1997: 750). Therefore, just as it is argued that there is a changing role for development professionals regarding a necessary focus on promoting stakeholder participation (Wilson, 1997: 750), it is argued that planning educators should also reconsider more traditional methods of teaching to facilitate action-based learning and student participation. In this way, students can engage with both normative and explanatory theory (also enriched by their own personal experience) and use this to refine their own approach towards enhancing quality, effectiveness and sustainability of urban development within a challenging

context, such as is presented by South African cities.

## 4.2 Implications for planning practice and ethics

This article only focused on the views of planning students regarding gated communities and in relation to where they stay. It has not yet engaged with the issue of planning ethics and morals. The present discussion revealed deep-seated patterns of cognitive dissonance within the planning students/practitioners which could potentially influence decisions regarding future developments of gated communities. It is, therefore, important that future research should take this further and specifically probe to what extent these opposing notions and contradictions are likely to influence the assessment of planning applications and the development of spatial planning policies. One should then be able to assess to what extent the development of gated communities in South Africa would pose a moral dilemma for planners. Finally, it is important that such an investigation related to planning ethics would need to consider the issue in terms of both a potential conflict of interests and a conflict of principles (Cambell & Marshall, 1998: 2), which again would relate it back to the different roles of planning theory.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Gated communities represent a re-ordering of micro-society, as well as neighbourhood and city space. They also lead to a reconsideration and often perhaps a disagreement of the norms, values and rules that affect or should affect the organisation of urban space and the distribution of facilities and services within the city. As a result, the outcome of these developments gives rise to the presence of cognitive dissonance within many planners in terms of contradictory thoughts regarding the need for safety and the need for greater integration in South African cities. It also leads to inconsistent thoughts regarding planning for public interest, which could potentially include both of these needs.

The discussion also raised a number of issues for planning education and practising planners in terms of having to deal with these contradictions in the lecture hall and in local authorities. It raised questions as to whether planning education and professional

decision-making should favour normative planning theory to promote value-based guidance, linked to, and concretised in the current planning and development policy in the country, or whether it should rather focus on justifying particular planning responses and the role of planners in practice based on current contextual realities? One way to start addressing this dilemma is to include both an understanding of what is happening in practice and why, through explanatory and predictive planning theory, and a reconsideration of why and how we should plan, by focusing on justificatory and normative planning. Exploratory and predictive theory can, for example, guide an investigation into the effectiveness of gated communities in addressing crime, while justificatory and normative planning theory can guide the relevance of gated communities in relation to goals and principles highlighted in the current planning and development policies. This should be able to highlight the tensions between the context-specific realities in practice and vision for the ideal city and thus facilitate positive transformation towards greater cognitive resonance among planners. Taking this further, education should highlight alternative views and approaches to balance the specific demands of a large part of society, including many urban planning students, with the ethical considerations towards more inclusive cities facilitated by planning for the public interest. This would be further enhanced by incorporating action-based teaching and learning, as well as student participation based on their own experience and personal dilemmas, and continuous professional feedback. It is also important that future research should delve deeper into the matter and determine to what extent these contradictions are likely to influence planning practitioners and decision-making with regard to planning ethics. This would reveal if and to what extent gated communities are likely to pose a significant moral dilemma for practising planners and the planning profession in general.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A much shorter and less developed paper was presented at the World Planning Conference in Australia in 2011. The author would also like to acknowledge discussions with Dr Jacques du Toit from the University of Pretoria and his contributions relating to suggestions for improvement of this article.

## REFERENCES LIST

- BALLARD, R. 2005. When in Rome: Claiming the right to define neighbourhood character in South Africa's suburbs. *Transformation*, 57, pp. 64-87.
- BOURDIEU, P. 1977. *Outline of a theory of practice*. UK, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- BREMNER, L. 1998. Crime and the emerging landscape of post-apartheid Johannesburg. In: Juden, H. & Vladislavic, I. (eds.). *Blank: Architecture, apartheid and after*. Cape Town: David Philip, pp. 48-63.
- BREMNER, L. 2004. Bounded spaces: Demographic anxieties in post-apartheid Johannesburg. *Social Identities*, 10(4), pp. 455-468.
- BURGER, J., GOULD, C. & NEWHAM, G. 2010. The state of crime in South Africa: Analyses of the SAPS crime statistics for 2009/10. *South African Crime Quarterly*, 34, pp. 3-12.
- CAMBELL, H. & MARSHALL, R. 1998. Acting on principle: Dilemmas in planning practice. *Planning Practice and Research*, 13(2), pp. 117-128.
- CHABRAK, N. & GRAIG, R. 2012. Student imaginings, cognitive dissonance and critical thinking. *Critical Perspectives on Accounting*. In Press. [online.]. Available from: <<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1045235411001572>> [Accessed: 7 June 2012].
- DIRSUWEIT, T. 2002. Johannesburg: Fearful city? *Urban Forum*, 13(3), pp. 4-19.
- DIRSUWEIT, T. & WAFER, A. 2006. Scale, governance and the maintenance of privileged control: The case of road closures in Johannesburg's northern suburb. *Urban Forum*, 17(4), pp. 327-352.
- DURINGTON, M. 2006. Race, space and place in suburban Durban: An ethnographic assessment of gated community environments and residents. *GeoJournal*, 66(1), pp. 147-160.
- EDWARDS, M.M. & BATES, L.K. 2011. Planning's core curriculum: Knowledge, practice and implementation. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, 31(2), pp. 172-183.
- FABIYI, O.O. 2006. Neighbourhood enclosure Security initiatives and the partitioning of urban spatial governance in Ibadan and Johannesburg. *Urban Forum*, 17(4), pp. 380-397.
- HARRISON, P. & MABIN, A. 2006. Security and space: Managing contradictions of access restriction in Johannesburg. *Environment and Planning B: Planning and Design*, 33(1), pp. 3-20.
- HOOK, D. & VRDOLJAK, M. 2002. Gated communities, heterotopia and a 'rights' of privilege: A 'heterotopology' of the South African security park. *Geoforum* 33(2), pp. 195-219.
- JÜRGENS, U. & GNAD, M. 2002. Gated communities in South Africa – Experiences from Johannesburg. *Environment and Planning B: Planning and Design*, 29(3), pp. 337-353.
- JÜRGENS, U., GNAD, M. & BHAR, J. 2003. New forms of class and racial segregation: Ghettos or ethnic enclaves. In: Tomlinson, R., Beauregard, R.A., Bremner, L. & Mangcu, X. (eds.). *Emerging Johannesburg: Perspectives on the postapartheid city*. New York: Routledge, pp. 56-70.
- JÜRGENS, U. & LANDMAN, K. 2005. Gated communities in South Africa. In: Glasze, G. Webster, C. & Frantz, K. (eds.). *Private cities: Global and local perspectives*. London: Routledge, pp.142-152.
- KRUGER, T. & LANDMAN, K. 2008. Crime and the physical environment in South Africa: Contextualising international crime prevention experiences. *Built Environment*, 34(1), pp. 75-87.
- LANDMAN, K. 2003. A national survey of gated communities in South Africa. CSIR Report. BOU/I 252.
- LANDMAN, K. 2004. Gated communities in South Africa: Comparison of four case studies in Gauteng. Pretoria, CSIR Report. BOU/I 347.
- LANDMAN, K. 2005. Op zoek naar veiligheid in Tshwane: Gated communities veranderen het aanzicht van Zuid-Afrikaanse steden. *Agora*, 21(5), pp. 35-37.
- LANDMAN, K. 2006. Who owns the roads? Privatising public space in South African cities through neighbourhood closures. *GeoJournal*, 66(1-2), pp. 133-146.
- LANDMAN, K. 2007. The storm that rocks the boat: The systemic impact of gated developments on urban sustainability. *Cybergeo*. [online.]. Available from: <<http://cybergeo.revues.org/11133#quotation>> [Accessed: 7 June 2012].
- LANDMAN, K. 2009. Boundaries, bars and barricades: Reconsidering two approaches to crime prevention in the built environment. *Journal of Architectural and Planning Research*, 26(3), pp. 213-227.



- LANDMAN, K. 2012. Reconsidering crime and urban fortification in South Africa. In: Cecatto, V. (ed.). *Urban fabric of crime and fear*. London: Springer, pp. 239-264.
- LANDMAN, K. & BADENHORST, W. 2012. *Gated communities and spatial transformation in the greater Johannesburg*. WITS Publication.
- LANDMAN, K. & DU PLESSIS, C. 2007. The impact of gated communities on urban sustainability: A difference of opinion or a matter of concern? *South African Town and Regional Planning*, 51, pp. 16-25.
- LANDMAN, K. & SCHÖNTEICH, M. 2002. Urban fortresses: Gated communities as a reaction to crime. *The African Security Review*, 11(4), pp. 71-84.
- LEMANSKI, C. 2004. A new apartheid? The spatial implications of fear of crime in Cape Town, South Africa. *Environment and Urbanization*, 16(2), pp. 101-112.
- LEMANSKI, C., LANDMAN, K. & DURRINGTON, M. 2008. Divergent and similar experiences of 'gating' in South Africa: Johannesburg, Durban and Cape Town. *Urban Forum*, 19(2), pp. 133-158.
- LIPMAN, A. & HARRIS, H. 1999. Fortress Johannesburg. *Environment and Planning B: Planning and Design*, 26(5), pp. 727-740.
- MISTRY, D. 2004. Falling crime, rising fear – 2003: National victims of crime survey. *South Africa Crime Quarterly*, 8, pp. 17-24.
- NEUMAN, M. 2005. Notes on the uses and scope of city planning theory. *Planning Theory* 4(2), pp. 123-145.
- PERICAS, J., GONZALEZ, S., BENNASAR, M., DE PEDRO, J., AGUILO, A. & BAUZA, L. 2009. Cognitive dissonance towards the smoking habit among nursing and physiotherapy students at the University of Balearic Islands in Spain. *International Nursing Review*, 56(1), pp. 95-101.
- ROBERTS, B. 2008. Age of hope or anxiety? Dynamics of the fear of crime in South Africa. *HSRC Review*, 6(2), pp. 9-10.
- ROITMAN, S., WEBSTER, C. & LANDMAN, K. 2010. Methodological frameworks and interdisciplinary research on gated communities. *International Planning Studies*, 15(1), pp. 3-23.
- STEVENSON, A. 1999. *The Concise Oxford Dictionary*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- WILSON, P.A. 1997. Building social capital: A learning agenda for the twenty-first century. *Urban Studies*, 34(5-6), pp. 745-760.