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The Impact of Gated and Guarded Development Concept from the Social Aspect: Non resident perspective

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Abstract

Gated and Guarded Development Concept (GACOS) offers competent security and maintenance besides ensuring an exclusive and private lifestyle. Despite the rise in the number of GACOS developments, they are mired in various issues and controversies specifically negative social connotations. These developments are perceived to denote 'social apartheid' within a residential neighbourhood. Hence, an empirical study has been conducted to investigate the social effects arising from GACOS development with the Ipoh Conurbation area as the case study. Findings from this empirical study indicated that there exists a social gap between residents within a GACOS development and those within the surrounding areas.

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Keywords: Gated and guarded; social apartheid; development; non resident; residential

1. Introduction

This study is an expansion of an empirical study conducted earlier on factors influencing residents' decision to reside in GACOS areas in the case study area of Ipoh, Perak. Findings of the study indicated that there are five (5) factors influencing residents' choice to stay in GACOS areas namely security, improved environmental control and maintenance, privacy, exclusive lifestyle and community ties (Thuraiya, Noraini, Rohaya, 2014). Conversely, there are views that personal needs contradict

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neighbourhood concepts thus creating social gaps or social apartheid and individualistic leanings. A more in depth study was thus carried out on the non residents of GACOS areas in the case study area to glean their perceptions on the social impact of GACOS developments. Thus, an empirical study has been conducted to investigate the social effects arising from GACOS development with the Ipoh Conurbation area as a case study.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Horizontal GACOS concept development

One of the earliest gated and guarded community (GACOS) concept study by Kelling (1987) and Bayley (1988) defined horizontal GACOS concept development as a community with their own security guards. Kelling (1987) wrote that gated or horizontally walled community was initially created in communist Eastern European regions as holiday retreats for the elites. Since the fall of communism in the late 1980s and early 1990s, new gated community-based markets mushroomed in these countries modelled on the residential developments in the United States.

Blakely and Snyder (1997) defined GACOS as gated community residences with strict security controls. Hendrick et. al (2000) posed that the gated community is a place where the residents took it upon themselves to control their social environment and create a neighbourhood comprising residents within similar age groups, employment types, religious and ethnic groups. In other words, these groups of people want to live within the community with the same status as themselves. Bjarnason (2000) iterated that the GACOS concept stops the entry of non residents using a physical barrier such as fencing or walls. The facilities are privatised for use by residents in the community only whereby the privatisation encompasses repair works and service monitoring such as roads, security, water services and sewerage. Most earlier studies by Goobler (2002), Webster, et al. (2002), Sethia (2003), Clarke (2004), Gurjit Singh (2005), and Nik Mohd Zain (2006) described GACOS as gated community areas in various forms where access and exit are controlled using security systems.

In general, the public is attracted to these gated community areas and is willing to pay to be able to stay in these areas mainly for the guaranteed security, improved environmental control and maintenance, privacy, an exclusive lifestyle and close community ties offered by these communities. Residents in gated community concept areas are inclined to form a closed community environment which deters trespassers and elements of crime due to controlled access and exits. All these lead to a higher quality lifestyle which is an attractive sales feature. Most residents perceive a gated community residence as perfect, no fear of crime, kidnappings or trespass (Clarke, 2004). Such selection factors impact negatively socially; the main one being the existence of social gaps or social apartheid and individualistic leanings (Morshidi, 2004; Mak, 2004 and Ting, 2009).

2.2. Negative social impact of gated community concept developments

2.2.1. Social gap or social apartheid

The main negative effect debated was the destruction of the rights of other members of society to enjoy their community rights in terms of the use of open spaces and the integration of various cultures, ethnic groups and socio-economic backgrounds. Blakely and Snyder (1997) found that GACOS concept housing developments have deprived residential community social ties through the lack of communications among neighbours. Nether Edge and Sheffield (1997) reported that GACOS concept housing developments led to residents within these areas not knowing neighbours in their environments; living in isolation from other communities.

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