

Gated Developments in Aotearoa/New Zealand: Fashion, Fortification or the Future?

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Abstract:

This paper reports on key findings from a pilot study of gated developments in North Shore City in the Auckland region. To date there has been little research in New Zealand on the growing phenomenon of what is loosely termed 'gated communities'. While no systematic data is collected on their location or their rate of construction, they are currently being built in both inner city, suburban and peri-urban areas, as well as in rural and coastal locations. Typically these developments comprise stand-alone housing or a mixture of medium density units and single houses that are walled and gated. North Shore City is the site of a number of these developments as well as some that are pseudo-gated, as the City provides a significant source of greenfield land for residential development in the Auckland region.

The purpose of the pilot study was twofold. First, a mapping exercise of North Shore gated developments was undertaken to gauge the incidence, size, age and type of dwelling that comprise these developments. Second, interviews with residents, developers and local authority staff explored a range of perspectives and opinions on gated developments held by these various stakeholders.

This paper presents some of the interview data gathered for this study and reflects on the extent to which the growing phenomenon of gated developments represents a current fashion in urban development, or a deeper held demand on the part of residents to fortify themselves in a context of perceived heightened risk. It draws on Zygmunt Bauman's concept of derivative fear to explore the issue of why residents, who claim gates were not an attraction or consideration when they moved into a gated development, nevertheless claim they would definitely choose a gated development if they were to move house in the future.

Introduction:

Over the past few years in New Zealand there has been a seemingly rapid increase in the construction of what is loosely termed 'gated communities'. As is the case in a number of other countries, no data are kept on their location. They are, however, being constructed on the edge of main cities as well as in more rural and coastal locations, along with apartment blocks on re-developed sites in both inner city and suburban areas. So far these developments comprise mainly single housing or a mixture of medium density units and single housing that are typically walled and gated. To date in New Zealand, the trend towards gatedness is occurring by default and in an ad-hoc way (Dixon, Dupuis and Lysnar, 2004) and is associated with rapid urban intensification in the Auckland region (Auckland Regional Growth Forum, 1999). The potential implications of increasing gatedness have not yet been identified systematically by local government and while the growth of gated developments has received limited coverage in the popular press it has not necessarily been perceived as a major issue by local communities. Further, there has been no major empirical research undertaken that explores the reasons for this phenomenon.

To some extent there has always been 'gatedness' in Auckland (Dixon, Dupuis and Lysnar, 2004). Like other New Zealand cities, a feature of suburban design in Auckland has been the fences that wall off one detached house from another and the gates that act as a barrier between the footpath and the path or driveway that connects to the house. The form of gatedness that encompasses multiple dwellings, whether these are single homes or medium and higher density developments is, however, a new phenomenon.

Our study of gated developments in Auckland is an extension of previous research into the growth of medium density housing in the Auckland region (Dixon and Dupuis, 2003; Dupuis and Dixon 2002; Dixon, Dupuis and Lysnar, 2001), a major platform of the Region's urban growth strategy (Auckland Regional Growth Forum, 1999). A problem of intensified living identified in our earlier research was that of the governance of multi-unit developments: the legal processes and entities associated with these developments and the lived experiences of residents within intensive housing with respect to governance issues. In many respects the issues of governance that pertain to multi-unit developments generally are similarly evident in gated developments.

This paper brings together findings from interviews with residents of gated developments, developers of these entities and representatives from the local territorial authority. The following section describes in more detail the nature of the interviews and areas canvassed. The three subsequent sections provide summaries of the key findings from the interviews. The subsequent discussion reflects on the extent to which this phenomenon represents a current fashion in urban design and development practices, or a deeper held demand on the part of residents to fortify themselves in a context of perceived heightened risk. It draws on Zygmunt Bauman's concept of derivative fear to explore the issue of why residents, who claim gates were not an attraction or consideration when they moved into their gated development,

nevertheless claim they would definitely choose a gated development if they were to move house in the future.

Research Context and Methodology

In order to investigate the growing phenomenon of gated developments in Auckland in a more systematic way, a pilot study was undertaken in one territorial authority district in the Auckland region – North Shore City. Until this research, explanations for the emergence of gated developments in Auckland had been largely based on supposition and conjecture which drew on international literature. The intention of the pilot study therefore, was to provide some solid, locally-derived data regarding the incidence of gated developments in a specific area and the views of people who were involved in these developments in various capacities. This paper reports and reflects on the findings from this pilot study.

North Shore City, one of the four main cities in the Auckland region, was chosen as the location of the pilot study as it provides a significant source of greenfield land for residential development in the Auckland region and is attracting a number of these developments. The population of North Shore City stands at 184,820 and accounts for 16 percent of the population of the Auckland region; it is the fourth largest city in New Zealand by population size (North Shore City website, 2006).

The pilot study had two components. The first was a mapping exercise aimed at ascertaining the location of all the gated developments on Auckland's North Shore. The second comprised interviews with a number of residents living in gated developments, developers and North Shore City Council staff.

As no records of gated developments were held by the North Shore City Council, their location was identified in a number of ways. Information on some sites came from existing knowledge bases, like statutory planning maps, while information on other sites was elicited from real estate agents. Sites were also visited to ascertain that they fitted the study's definition of a gated development:

housing developments which have a gate or other barrier across a primary access. The developments may also be surrounded by fences, walls or other natural or erected barriers that can further limit access.

A total of 17 gated developments were located and all were photographed. The largest development comprised 180 units while the smallest had four units. The oldest gated development was built in 1993, but the majority were constructed from the period 1997 onwards. Seven developments were located on sites subject to redevelopment, while 10 were on sites that were previously undeveloped; seven of these were greenfield developments.

The Interviews: Residents

Seventeen interviews were held with residents of gated developments on Auckland's North Shore in the latter part of 2006. Eight of the interviews were with married couples, which brought the total number of residents interviewed to 25. Residents ranged in age from early forties to early eighties. More than half of the interviewees were retired and only 4 were single. All but two were Pakeha, or people of European origin but born in New Zealand. Twelve males were interviewed and 13 females. The combined household income ranged from below \$30,000 to over \$180,000 per annum. All but one of the residents interviewed owned the dwelling in which they resided. Four of the residents interviewed had children (the eldest being teenagers) who lived with them (either part-time or full-time). All interviews took place in the participants' own dwelling.

All the gated developments visited for the interviews had vehicle entry gates that required a sensor of some type (e.g. remote, keypad, intercom) to allow the gate to be opened. Some, but not all of the developments also had pedestrian gates with security sensors. Other developments had pedestrian gates that were not secure, or had no pedestrian gate at all. Some developments had apartments/units fronting on to the road with their own (secured) individual front gate.

Interviews were held in 10 different gated community developments which ranged in size from seven to 150 units; the age of the developments ranged in age from 18 months to 14 years, and included low-medium (2), medium (2) and medium-high (6) quality range developments. Eight of the developments were low-rise, two to three level units and/or free-standing homes within the development, and two developments were higher rise apartment style blocks. Two of the developments had been notified as having 'leaky building syndrome' and the bodies corporate concerned were in the process of addressing this issue. Half of the gated developments were located in one of the North Shore's main centres where a number of amenities exist.

The interviews were qualitative in style with open-ended questions and discussion around a number of issues including: reasons for living in a gated development; previous experience of gated living; expectations around gated living; issues and problems; co-operation and decision-making among residents; relationships with the wider neighbourhood; living again in a gated development; and perceptions around exclusivity.

Key findings

1. Initially at least, gates don't rate

Most interviewees reported that the presence of gates had no bearing on their reason for choosing to live in their gated development. Instead they had based their decision to move to their gated development on such factors as location (including proximity to amenities, arterial routes or family members), design and low maintenance. What the residents enjoyed or liked most about where they lived was the convenience that living in an apartment or unit provided them with. This included not having to mow

lawns or carry out other external maintenance duties such as gardening, pool cleaning and house-painting. In at least four instances (in four separate developments) residents had bought their home off the plans and did not realise that gates would be present.

Resident X: We've always had big houses - big gardens - that sort of thing - but now we're enjoying the convenience - you can pull your car right up to the door - two metres to carry the groceries and things ... it is really really convenient - if you want to go away for the weekend - just lock the door and away you go...

Interviewer: Why did you choose to live here?

Resident Y: ...primarily it runs across probably three or four issues - one is location - just the physical location - close to [a main centre] - secondly it's secure - so because we travel a lot security was an issue - it's low maintenance from an owners perspective so there's a collective maintenance of the premises and in our case there's no lawns to mow or gardens as such and then probably just the style of it ... both our unit and the physical environment fits our lifestyle - so it's strongly for lifestyle and location consideration.....this was a choice that supported our lifestyle rather than prima-facie security as such

Resident Z: ...when we decided to come here.....we didn't know there was going to be gates ...we didn't even think about it...it was more that we were downsizing and the curtains needed changing...

2. *Familiarity breeds attachment*

All residents commented on the strong likelihood that if they moved from their current dwelling they would live in a gated development again. The response demonstrated a strong preference for gates. The major advantage of gates that residents commented on was the sense of security that gates offered. Another lesser benefit was the lack of door to door salespeople.

Interviewer: Why did you choose to live here?

Resident Y: Because of the location and the view

Interviewer: If you had had a wish list [when you bought] would the gated feature have been in the first five or ten on your list?

Resident Y: No

Interviewer: How about now that you are here - is it important to you?

Resident Y: I think we'd definitely look for it again - we'd certainly look at - for a private dwelling - putting gates inI spend a few weeks away from home on work and [my wife] really appreciates the security of it ...she still doesn't like me going away - but feels a lot more comfortable here than in previous places we've lived at..

Interviewer: Would you do it all again? Would you live in another place like this?

Resident Z: Oh yeah - definitely

Interviewer: And if you had to move, how far up on your list would gates be?

Resident Z: *Higher when they were when we came here - we didn't realize the benefits so much until we came into the community here - it's all very well to think you are going to have gates and how nice that's going to be - you don't have a sense of just how important it is until you've got them - it's quite lovely.....we do have individual burglar alarms...so there is that two-phase security.....I think in the changing world of today where it's become a lot more violent - there seems to be a lot*

more burglaries - we - I certainly have a greater sense of security here and I would certainly like to think that that's what we'll do in the future if we do build another house or we do move from here - it'll be really important to me to have that sense of security...

Resident X: ...truthfully it wasn't a factor [the gates] when we bought because we didn't even really think about it - and having got it - we are more comfortable with it than we would be without it

3. *Propinquity does not automatically lead to community*

Interview data prompted the conclusion that gates *per se* neither create nor increase a sense of community within gated developments. The presence of gates may however, increase the likelihood of residents getting to know each other, as it is often the case that joint decisions are required regarding the repair and maintenance of gates. Other aspects of living in intensive developments such as the close proximity of neighbours, group working bees for communally owned garden areas and annual Christmas parties may also result in neighbours getting to know one another better. Nevertheless, to take the leap from increased interaction to community formation is entirely problematic. Any of the above activities may equally bring about a rise in tension within among residents, if there are opposing views about how such things should be managed. Though it was evident a small number of the gated developments had developed a sense of community, this was not the case for most of the gated developments where interviews were conducted.

4. *Gates and Security*

Despite residents' comments regarding the increased sense of security as a consequence of gates, there was widespread agreement that gates and walls only acted as a deterrent against intruders. The maxim of 'where there's a will there's a way' was clear to residents, while at the same time there was a view that under most circumstances intruders would choose to enter a non-gated property rather than a gated one.

5. *Mechanism malfunctions*

A common experience to residents in all development was that of gates breaking down. In most instances the gates could be manually opened, and were left open until the gate had been repaired. Often the breakdowns were due to mechanical failure, although power cuts also prevented most of the gates from operating. In one case though, a vehicle became wedged between the gates while they were closing, causing the gates to buckle. The number of times gates broke down was surprisingly high. For example, in one of the higher quality developments the gates had broken down six times in one year. It was also reported that gates could take some time to be repaired, with a resident in one development noting that the gates had not been operating for a number of months.

6. *Diversity across gated developments*

While the gated developments in the study exhibited a number of common features, there were also a number of differences in terms of both the gated developments themselves and the views held by the residents with respect to their experiences of gated development living. As previously mentioned, different types and levels of security existed in the developments visited. While some required authorized access at both the outside gate and at the entrance to the apartment block, others were freely accessible via the pedestrian gate (which was left unlocked or had no lock). While most homes had home security alarms, in a small number of cases residents also reported that panic buttons were installed in their home.

One development visited had a separate emergency keypad located at its entrance, installed in consultation with emergency ambulance and fire services which these services to enter the development without requiring a swipe card or remote control. The disadvantage of this system however, was that swipe cards were stored at each emergency station and were therefore less efficient in an emergency than a pin number for a keypad. Possibly emergency keypads will become mandatory in the future, required as a condition of consent by local territory authorities, particularly in larger developments.

Another difference noted was the tendency for men to state that it was the privacy and seclusion that they liked most about living in a gated development, rather than the personal security it afforded. They also enjoyed the property protection aspect, especially if they were away for business or on holiday. While women also enjoyed this aspect they were more likely to state that they liked the personal safety aspect, especially in cases where their husband spent time away from home on business.

7. *Exclusivity?*

In response to the question on the possible perceptions that outsiders might hold that their development was exclusive some residents responded that it had never occurred to them that living in such an environment could be viewed in such a way. Others responded that they could see how outsiders might view it as exclusive, but that they did not personally view it as such. Some mentioned that their present home was no more exclusive or any different from previous homes they had lived in which were not part of gated development. Others commented that they regarded particular suburbs in Auckland as more exclusive than the gated development they lived in. It appeared that some residents understood the term 'exclusivity' more in the sense of being excluded and separate rather than as elitist. In these instances the residents responded that they did not feel isolated or cut off from the community at large.

The Interviews: Developers

Interviews with developers focused on such questions as: why they choose to build gated development; why purchasers like gates; the future for gated developments; their experiences of building gated developments; issues for residents, neighbours and local authorities; governance arrangements; governance arrangements.

It appeared that the attraction for developers in providing gates was their perception that gates provide a sense of security and therefore a valuable marketing tool which, in turn, increases sales. It was clear that developers were of the view that gates were only suitable for some types of developments, that each site had to be assessed in its own terms and that not many small sites could be gated economically. Developers reported a wide variety of experiences of gated developments, both overseas and in New Zealand. They were also aware of the debates surrounding gatedness generally through the various publications they read.

The conditions where gates would be suitable included: sites with just one point for vehicles to enter; apartment buildings where both lobbies and car parks require security doors and /or gates; residential developments in or around business zones; and areas where for some or other reason there is a buyer expectancy for gates. There was a general agreement that although security was becoming more important in the minds of many purchasers, in most instances gates were not provided. They were not considered necessary for standard residential subdivisions in residential zones

Developers put forward a variety of views on whether gated developments would become more common in the future. Again their views were based on the value of gates in terms of providing security, their importance as a selling point, their utility in high density developments, especially apartment buildings and their car parks where there is no passive surveillance, and their suitability in special types of developments like retirement homes. Alternative views were also put forward. These included the notion that changes to the local authority city plan could stymie the growth in gated developments and that gates would be unsuitable for low cost housing areas as residents in such areas would be unlikely to either want or afford gates.

Particular issues were mentioned by developers in relation to gatedness which were categorised as both social and planning issues. With respect to social issues questions were raised about the value of having enclosed communities within communities and the effect of gated developments on the wider community, about the presence of gates leading to segregation and the question of what the presence of gates says about the nature of the wider society in which gated developments are located. Planning issues were largely restricted to questions of traffic flow and restrictions, both within the complex and at the point of entry.

Developers generally felt there were few problems around governance matters. They mainly used unit titles and bodies corporate as their preferred structure of governance in order to guarantee long-term maintenance and to set in place a suitable vehicle through which agreements could be made around issues of common concern.

Generally, developers thought that residents preferred gates because: investors like gates because they help protect their investment; gates ensure that such recreational facilities as swimming pools and play areas are for residents use only; space is becoming more of an issue and therefore security and privacy are guaranteed; private parking can no longer be taken for granted and gates stop illegal parking; they provide both privacy and the ability to keep children and pets safe.

The main points from the interviews with developers can be summarised as:

- The responses and comments were not strongly in favour or strongly against gated developments;
- A view that there are certain situations where gates are preferable;
- An awareness of the implications of the proposed changes to the local authority city plan regarding intensive residential developments and the subsequent impact on gatedness;
- A generally sound understanding of the issues around gated developments;
- A view that gates increase sales. This was perhaps the most significant finding in that it is counter to what residents of gated developments said, which was that the existence of gates did not influence their decision to purchase in a gated development;
- A view that residents prefer gates.

The Interviews: Council Officials

Interviews were conducted with two officials from the North Shore City Council (NSCC), focussing on such issues as: their general views of gated developments; gatedness and environmental sustainability; the implications for local government of increasing private governance issues and service provision and associated concerns such as traffic flows.

During the interviews it became clear that the NSCC, while not having an explicit policy regarding gated developments, has had more power to restrict their incidence with recent changes to the city plan. One clause of the plan change has made intensive housing developments of more than 10 units a non-complying activity. However, this new provision has yet to be tested as approval had not been sought for a large-scale gated development.

Despite there being no explicit NSCC view on gated developments one Council officer noted that: if half of the housing stock was behind gates it would be “a fairly horrific situation – they often turn their backs on the public realm - on streets and parks...because they don’t really want to interact” nevertheless “we certainly haven’t gone out there to try and influence whether or not gates should or shouldn’t be on developments - definitely not at that smaller scale”. Overall though, it appeared that the concerns over gated developments were technical in origin, rather than social. Saying that, one interviewee commented that “...it’s very easy for people involved in marketing in real estate and developers to over-emphasise crime and the sense of security people will feel living within that development – so that’s a bit of a concern – they’ll hype it up...” The one exception to this statement concerned the views relating to retirement villages. It appears that the gating of retirement villages is approved of by the Council.

The interviews indicated Council concerns regarding the servicing of gated developments. For example, it was reported that some contractors will not enter private sites when collecting refuse and recycling bins. Moreover it is expected that

when the city plan is next reviewed public versus private issues around stormwater, roading and waste management will take on greater urgency.

A further point remarked on was that with the change of legislation under the recently passed Local Government Act, a policy was set in place regarding developer contributions which minimised some of the past difficulties over this issues between the Council and developers.

A number of negative aspects of gated developments were discussed by the council officials during their interviews. These included: the look of 'sameness' to the housing; the lack of neighbourhood permeability in terms of public roads and access to reserves, especially pertaining to large gated developments; traffic and parking with the developments themselves; and the fact that larger, and especially greenfield sites ensured residents were very car reliant.

Issues around public/private provision are still matters for discussion and debate between developers and the Council. In terms of more recent developments the issues of public versus private roading etc are being worked out at an earlier stage; however it was stated that "I think there is a growing concern ...sometimes I feel the local authorities are on the back foot ... the developer wishes to provide a lot of those community facilities and sort of says – well look – all my residents do their recreation on-site – why am I paying for the local reserve or anything else...it can be quite a persuasive argument". In terms of reserve contributions and financial contributions there is an argument by developers that because they are making these payments they are exempt from what the rest of society is doing. There is also debate around issues of public/private wetland areas and the concern of council that if they aren't managed property by a private body then long term problems will result.

Positives aspects of gated developments commented on included the comprehensive design advantages, the opportunity for good design outcomes in terms of privacy, indoor/outdoor flow etc and the shared facilities that individual homeowners could not otherwise afford. The ability to address solar power, re-use of water, dual plumbing etc in terms of the comprehensive catchment areas available in such developments and cheaper overall installation and set-up costs were all issues that NSCC was trying to push. It was also noted that gates avoided confusion as to whether communal facilities were public rather than private, and that in main streets, in close proximity to bars and cafes, gates were a bonus in terms of the increased property security they provided by clearly demarcating public and private areas.

An interesting point that emerged in the interviews was the perception that high-rise developments, and their attendant gated perimeters, were less likely to inhibit both traffic flows of both cars and pedestrians.

Discussion

A number of questions arise from the interview data reported on in this paper. A catalyst for the pilot project in the first instance however, was the question of how to

understand the growing phenomenon of gatedness in Auckland. The 'orthodox' explanations of security, lifestyle and elitism (Blakely and Snyder, 1995) and the concern over class-based urban segregation and exclusion strategies (Low, 2003), while perhaps of partial value, still left many questions unanswered, or at least the kinds of questions we were interested in answering. Our concern was that the types of explanations put forward in much of the literature on 'gated communities' were still firmly rooted within a modernist paradigm and strongly anchored in an individualistic psychologically oriented perspective or a technocratic planning approach to the urban, or a concern with the development of both class and ethnicity based urban enclaves (Marcuse, 1997a, 1997b). We were more interested in a sociologically focused viewpoint, which embraced issues around fear and risk that have emanated from work that has better appreciated the late modern nature of contemporary society and the issues and concerns concomitant to this epoch.

In writing the abstract for this paper and in the first phase of data gathering, we put forward the possibility that gated developments in Auckland might represent either a new fashion in urban living that was being copied from overseas or, as observed elsewhere too, an example of the forting up practices that appear now to be commonplace in an ever-widening array of activities in urban environments (Blandy, Lister, Atkinson and Flint, 2003).

At one level, we cannot discount that gatedness may be nothing more than the latest urban fad to hit New Zealand. Fashion provides a logical explanation too, in that it could explain why gated developments are becoming more common on Auckland's North Shore, a generally high socio-economic area, whose inhabitants tend to be well travelled and knowledgeable about international trends such as gated developments (see Glasze, Webster and Frantz, 2006). Moreover, the interview material with developers confirmed that take on board many of the features observed elsewhere in their own work in New Zealand, particularly of the various versions of gated communities that proliferate in Australia's Gold Coast area of Queensland.

Let us turn now to the question of security, or as the title of this paper signals - fortification. Both residents and developers in their interviews commented on gates providing greater security. However, it is necessary to examine more closely the meaning of security in the context of Auckland's North Shore. What does security mean to the residents who live in these gated developments? More importantly why is security even deemed to be an issue in an area like the North Shore? The North Shore has low crime rates, its population has high levels of skills, education and income. North Shore City has the highest proportion of decile 10 schools of any urban area in New Zealand and it enjoys a higher than average rate of home ownership (Enterprise North Shore n.d). Statistically, North Shore City is a very safe place to live.

Given the nature of the city, the line of argument we are pursuing in this section is one that attempts to understand that security in the context of the North Shore has very different connotations from, for example, security in Johannesburg. In a well argued piece on gated communities in South Africa, Jurgens and Landman (2006) argue that the transformation of the apartheid city to the post-apartheid city has contributed to an increased sense of insecurity, one response to which has been the proliferation of

‘walled-in communities’. Their chapter then examines the physical, social, political and planning consequences of these developments and includes a section on why people live in South Africa’s gated communities and list a myriad of reasons. The first reason proffered, and expectedly so, is that of safety and security and fear of crime. These two features go together. But the current nature of South African society is such that ‘without doubt, therefore, the fear of crime plays a significant role in the drive for neighbourhood closure’ (Jurgens and Landman, 2006: 118).

The North Shore of Auckland is world’s away from that of South Africa, not just in terms of distance, but also in the very real likelihood of being the victim of a violent crime. On the North Shore security is not about putting up barrier after barrier in order to keep out predators and the very real threat they signify to persons and to property. It is not about weapons, barbed wire and broken glass on floodlit, two metre high walls. The fear that prompts talk of security on the North Shore has altogether a different genesis. It might certainly be underpinned by an awareness of the types of crimes that are an everyday occurrence in Johannesburg, but armed thugs ready to rob and commit violent crimes are not a reality for North Shore-ites. Why then did our research show that while residents said initially at least, that gates didn’t rate, they all noted they would choose to live in a gated development again should they move house and commented on the increased sense of security. Security from what? What prompted that response? It certainly was not to do with any rise in crime on the North Shore. In our view it is not the daily reality of crime they are reacting to but a more pervasive sense of fear that has come to be associated with urban living in late modernity.

The concept we have drawn on in our attempt to explain the conundrum discussed above, is that of ‘derivative fear’ which comes from Zygmunt Bauman’s 2006 text, *Liquid Fear*. In his explanation of the concept Bauman describes derivative fear as a ‘sort of ‘second degree’ fear, a fear, so to speak, socially and culturally ‘recycled’’ (Bauman, 2006: 3). Derivative fear, he continues, guides human behaviour ‘whether or not a menace is immediately present’ (ibid). It is a ‘steady frame of mind’ depicted as ‘the sentiment of being *susceptible* to danger; a feeling of insecurity ... and vulnerability’ (ibid). Bauman then goes on to discuss a key idea that has been well documented in criminology, as well as studies of perception of safety, namely, the perception of ‘the world out there’, in an amorphous sense, as dangerous, most especially at night.

Bauman goes on to explain that the derivative fears aroused by dangers are of three kinds: those that threaten the body and possessions; others of a more general nature that threaten the social order, such as insecurity over employment or income, or old age or disability; and those that threaten ‘one’s place in the world’ – one’s identity for example. For the purposes of this discussion the derivative fears most apt are of the first kind - those that threaten the body and possessions. A key point that Bauman then makes is that of the ‘decoupling’ of derivative fear from the dangers that may cause it (Bauman, 2006: 3-4). Derivative fear, in this sense, can then be experienced and, as a consequence, shifted across any range of possible concerns that may, or may not, have a rational basis or a statistical likelihood of occurring. Bauman then is most evocative in describing the way derivative fear operates. He writes:

Most fearsome is the ubiquity of fears; they may leak out of any nook or cranny of our homes and our planet. From dark streets and from brightly lit television screens. From our bedrooms and our kitchens. From our workplaces and from the underground train we take to get there and back. From people we meet and people whom we failed to notice. ... (Bauman, 2006: 4).

It is here that Bauman makes an important move in his argument, when he claims that despite the ubiquity of fear we do not live in constant fear all day, every day. This is because we have 'more than enough shrewd stratagems ... supported with all sorts of clever gadgets obligingly offered by the shops' to ensure we do not live in a constant state of fear (Bauman, 2006: 5). Here we argue that gates could be one of Bauman's 'clever gadgets' that are employed in order to allay the amorphous fears of late modernity.

This still leaves the question of what it is that effects the change to people with respect to their attitude to gates after they have lived behind them for some time. While it might simply be that familiarity breeds not contempt but attachment, it is not the attachment we might have to an old but comfortable pair of shoes for example. It is one that is bred in the waters of the social currents of late modernity and links to the deep unease, disquietude and insecurities that are intrinsic to our times. The question of the way we think and act to alleviate our fears is one we are still considering as the present project unfolds.

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