

DRIVERS OF GATED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENTS IN THE UNITED KINGDOM (CASE STUDY: LONDON)

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ABSTRACT

Gated communities continue to proliferate in cities across the world. Like other countries, the United Kingdom has seen growth in the development and demand for gated communities since the early 2000s and is one of the countries with many gated community developments.

The paper explores drivers for gated community developments in the UK using London as a case study by identifying the factors influencing residents to move into gated neighbourhoods. The results of this study are expected to augment literature and influence urban housing policy decisions toward developing sustainable urban housing typologies.

Data was collected from selected gated communities through an online survey of residents. The residents were asked to rank particular selected drivers, which were derived from an extensive literature review. Security, facilities and services, property values, location, and prestige, were ranked as the main drivers of gated communities. Community-living and land title security were identified as minor drivers.

Keywords: Gated community, Developments, Drivers, Housing, London, United Kingdom

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Gated communities (GCs), since the 1990s, have seen tremendous growth in the UK. Defended buildings, either individual or collective, is not new in the UK, as they have been in existence since the enactment of the first enclosure Act and various guarded residences of Kings and royalty. However, contemporary gated communities take different forms and typologies compared to the earlier ones. Contemporary gated communities mostly include amenities such as tennis clubs, swimming complexes, and even polo grounds that differentiate them from the earlier gated communities, which were mainly built to protect soldiers and royalty from rebellious followers. These new form of GC continues to proliferate various cities in UK, as they are noticeable in various housing adverts carried in all forms of marketing media.

Gated communities have been prevalent in the housing sector and discussions globally, both in research and policies since the late 1980s. The heightened interest has led to various studies geniting diverse views and debates on the gated community phenomenon. Several scholars have study GCs in the UK shedding light on various issues, including a historical perspective of gated communities in England and what they reveal about defended collective housing (Blandy, 2006), the understanding of gated communities and the numerical and social significance of GCs in the UK context (Atkinson et al., 2004), profiling the location and characteristics of gated developments in England and the policy impacts of gating; the spatial revolt of the elites and time-space trajectories of segregation (Atkinson and Flint, 2004), social ties amongst the residents, in the presence of a legal framework and a structure for resident management of gated developments (Blandy and Lister,

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2005). Blandy (2018) reviewed developments over a 10-year period (2007-2017) which had led to the spread and increase in the architectural and technological defensiveness of both individual homes and neighbourhoods. Despite the valuable insights of previous studies, there is limited and dated literature on the drivers of gated communities in the UK.

This study seeks to answer the question: what are the drivers of gated community developments in the UK, using London as a case study? The objective is to establish the drivers of gated communities from the residents' perspective and identify the future trend of gated community demand in London.

The paper first proceeds to present an overview of the extant literature on the topic globally and the developments in the UK. Then progresses to describe the methodology used in the research. Results are discussed together with findings, and the paper concludes. Overall, the study results will go a long way in influencing urban housing policy decisions, clearly demonstrating the underlying reasons for the continuous growth of Gated community developments from the resident's perspective to develop sustainable urban housing policies. It will also augment the gated community literature in the UK.

2.0 GATED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENTS: OVERVIEW OF LITERATURE

In the extant literature, there have been efforts by scholars to define gated communities. This has resulted in several definitions and terms for gated communities. In some cases, terms used interchangeably with gated communities include enclosed neighbourhoods, urban fortress, suburban enclaves, and security villages in South Africa (Landman, 2000), fortified neighbourhoods in the UK (Atkinson and Blandy, 2005), fortified enclaves and closed condominiums in Brazil (Caldeira, 2000). In India, similarly, protected communities are referred to as colonies (Xavier, 2008). These stated terms are mostly geographically and structurally influenced. Mahgoub and Khalfani (2012) also suggested that residential compounds and housing compounds or complexes could be used to refer to gated communities in the real estate market.

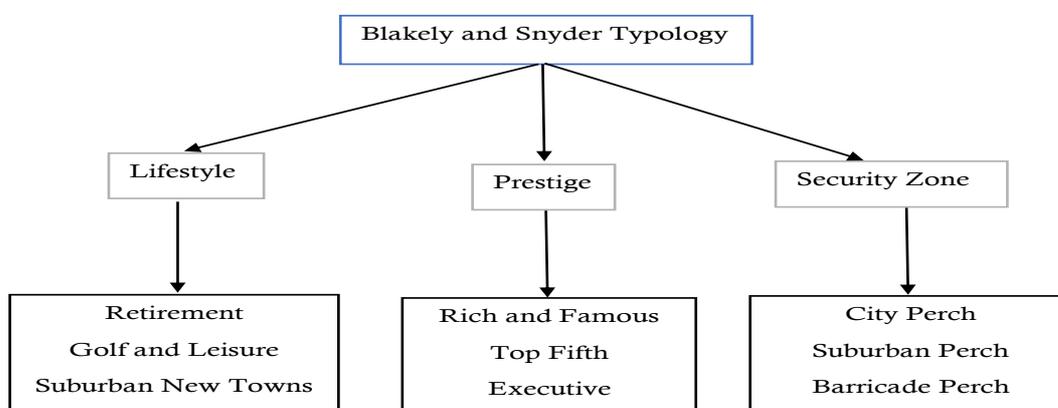
Atkinson and Blandy (2005) defined gated communities as walled or fenced housing developments to which public access is restricted, characterised by legal agreements which tie residents to a shared code of conduct and usually collective responsibility for management. This definition considers the physical elements of gated communities and emphasises the legal agreements and collective management characteristic of gated communities. Atkinson and Blandy (2005) highlight the legal agreements in gated communities which ties residents to a shared code of conduct and confer responsibilities such as collective management. Other authors define gated communities with an emphasis on the physical elements, socioeconomic status of residents, type of housing and the voluntary aspect of living in gated communities (see Blakely and Snyder, 1997; Roitman, 2010; Mahgoub and Khalfani, 2012; Rafiemanzelat, 2016). The myriad definitions lead to situations where researchers disagree on what a gated community is, thus stressing the complexities faced in the absence of a standard description.

Gated communities have increased across the USA and the globe over the last few decades. In 2001, the US Census Household Survey found that 7 million households, approximately 16 million people, or 6% of all

households, were living in gated and walled residential communities (Sanchez & Lang 2002; Sanchez, Lang & Dhavale, 2005) and by 2003, this number had reached 32 million (Smets, 2005). More recent estimates than these are challenging to obtain. Given the strong consumer demand for homes in gated communities and lucrative potential for residential developers, there is little doubt that the current number of GCs has increased considerably from earlier estimates (Branic and Kubrin, 2018). Gated communities have gained popularity in other regions such as the United Kingdom (Atkinson and Flint, 2004), Middle East (Glasze and Alkhayyal, 2002), South Africa (Breetzke and Cohn, 2013; Durlington, 2006) and Central and South America (Landman and Schonteich, 2002; Caldiera, 2000). Though in Europe, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, the development of gated communities is not so widespread, almost every country has some examples (Blandy et al., 2003). Apart from some developed countries, gated communities are also growing in cities of developing countries, such as Egypt and Saudi Arabia (see Metwally and Abdalla, 2013; Salah and Ayad, 2018).

Some researchers (see Blakely and Snyder, 1997; Grant and Mittelsteadt, 2004; Blandy, 2006; Aalbers, 2001) have developed typologies of GCs based on their research interests and the urban patterns of the case studies. One of the popular classifications of gated communities is defined by Blakely and Snyder (1997), who developed a typology based on the social characteristics of gated communities in the USA. In this typology, Blakely and Snyder (1997) identified three types of gated communities: lifestyle, prestige, and security zone communities. They further categorised the three main types into nine. Lifestyle communities focus on leisure activities with recreational facilities, shared amenities, and shared services, including retirement villages, golf communities, or suburban new towns. Prestige communities operate as symbols of wealth and status for image-conscious residents who focus on the exclusivity of the neighbourhood. Prestige communities include the rich and famous communities, top fifth communities, and executive communities for the middle class. Finally, security zone communities reflect a fear of outsiders. It is formed not by developers but by their inhabitants because of the fear of crime and outsiders. This category includes the city, the suburban, and the barricade perch. These are ‘perch’ because the gates are built by residents rather than by developers. Figure 1 below presents the typology.

Figure 1: Blakely and Snyder Typology of Gated communities



Source: Blakely and Snyder (1997)

Many researchers have studied the reasons for the proliferation of gated communities across the globe. Security, privacy and exclusivity, prestige, land title security, lifestyle, facilities, and amenities are some of the drivers identified for the rise and patronage of gated communities in various countries (see Otchere, 2022a; Otchere, 2022b, La Grange, 2018; Salah and Ayad, 2018; Blandy and Lister, 2005; Muiga and Rukwaro, 2017; Giglia, 2008; Atkinson and Flint, 2004; Aydın-Yönet and Yirmibeşoğlu, 2009; Hapsariniaty, Sidi and Nurdini, 2013; El-Ekhteyar and Furlan, 2016).

2.1 Gated Community Developments in the UK

Blandy's (2006) study of the historical perspective and developments of gated communities in England, suggested that defended buildings, individual or collective, were not new to the UK. Relating how enclosures were created through land use legislations. The first enclosure Act relating to urban land, which a group of leaseholders proposed, was passed in 1726 to 'enable the residents of St. James Square to restrict access to the square and to levy a rate on themselves for its improvement and maintenance' (Report of the Royal Commission on London Squares, 1928, cited in Lawrence, 1993, p. 97). The Saint James' Square: Rates Acts of 1726 enabled the entrances to St. James Square to be gated retrospectively. More enclosure acts to gate and privatise other London squares, and developments in England followed. The squares' closure in London meant they were 'transformed from public piazzas into private parks' (Lawrence, 1993, p. 106). The old common rights of access were extinguished, and residents could legally form associations with a collective responsibility to maintain the squares. In addition to the pre-existing restrictive covenants, covenants requiring contributions for maintenance costs were now inserted into leases. These were the first actual gated communities. Many developers used the same legislative provisions to gate new residential estates, both immediately before and during Victoria's reign (1837–1901), in the capital and elsewhere (Blandy, 2006). By the end of the 19th century, most of the earlier gated communities had disappeared, not in terms of their legal framework, which continued, but because they were no longer gated. Atkins (1993) portrays removing the barriers as the end of a struggle and debate about the privatised space and a shift from exclusive to inclusive.

In the last decades of the 20th century, gated housing developments began to appear in English towns, cities, and the countryside. By enclosing spaces that would usually be publicly accessible, these gated developments take a noticeable physical form. This prompted a study to ascertain the number and scale of gated communities in the country (Atkinson et al., 2004). This study revealed more than a thousand gated communities in England (Blandy and Lister, 2005). The GCs were primarily small-scale developments, with a majority of the gated communities having up to 50 dwellings and a few with between 50 and 150 houses (Atkinson et al., 2004). Most of the gated communities have been built by private developers.

There have been various typology of gated communities developed for other contexts. Blandy (2006) identified differences in built form, type of housing and location between GCs in the USA and the UK. Thus, postulated a typology of gated communities in the UK context. Blandy (2006) identified three types of GCs: infill communities, heritage conversion communities and village communities.

Infill communities are the typical types of GCs in England. They were built on small parcels of land made available through demolition. Such communities are in towns and cities and comprise a small group of new dwellings set back from the street frontage and entered through a gate or an archway. Though some of this type is available for the affluent, more frequently, they are further down the scale in terms of value.

Heritage conversion communities account for most of the 41% of gated communities converted brownfield sites (previously used) as reported by planning authorities (Atkinson et al., 2004). They are common in England but seem not to have a real equivalent in the USA. Developers create them out of existing buildings, many of which are architecturally distinguished, recognised, and protected through an English Heritage listing. Most of these buildings were initially not residential; examples include former garrisons, Victorian lunatic asylums, prisons, schools, factories, and hospitals in various locations from entirely rural to the inner city. Their previous purposes usually required a surrounding wall to provide security from outsiders or to keep the inmates secured or imprisoned.

The village gated communities are rare in England. They are the closest English equivalent to the American ‘Lifestyle community’ identified by Blakely and Snyder (1997). Publicity material tends to stress rural location, privacy, and exclusivity. A few developments of this type have been built specifically for the second home market.

Few studies have probed the drivers for the continuous growth of gated community developments in the UK property market, and most of them dated about 15 years ago. Security, Privacy, and Property values have been identified as the reasons for residents’ patronage of gated communities.

Blandy (2006) indicated that purchasers’ motivation for gated communities in the UK was under-researched. A telephone survey in Blandy et al. (2003, pp. 9–10), a small sample of residents moving into a newly completed gated in Sheffield (Blandy and Lister, 2005) and interviews with residents mainly on the board of the residents’ management company or residents’ association, in the national study on GCs (Atkinson et al., 2004), are the few attempts made to study this aspect of gated communities in England. In this review, it is evident that, as indicated by Blandy (2006), the motivation of purchasers of properties in gated communities in the UK is still under-researched since most of the studies are dated between 2004 and 2007; with most of the studies using data from the national study by Atkinson et al. (2004).

This paper seeks to augment the literature on the drivers of gated community development in the UK by considering London, with most of the gated community developments.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

The research adopted the case study design, making it possible to investigate contextual conditions relevant to a phenomenon (Yin, 2003). Residents of gated communities constituted the specific unit of analysis, while London was the geographical scope from which the gated communities for the study were sampled. We selected London because it hosts a significant presence of GCs in the UK (Atkinson et al., 2004). London is one of the world’s most important global cities, impacting commerce, education, entertainment, healthcare, finance,

research and development, tourism, and transportation (Dearden, 2014; Forbes, 2014). It is essential to UK's economic activities, including the real estate market.

We used a mixed methods methodology by combining qualitative and quantitative research techniques, concepts, and data (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Creswell, 2014). Primary data was collected using an online survey of residents living in gated communities.

The UK does not have a national database for gated community developments like other nations. Thus, the information was sourced from the websites of the gated communities. Gated communities were selected in London based on two criteria. The first criterion was that the gated community should have been completed for more than three years. This criterion was to avoid uncompleted GCs with residents yet to move in. Since the research sought to gather the residents' lived experiences, the three-year minimum of the gated community would have allowed residents time to gather enough experiences to share. The second criterion was getting permission from the estate management team to conduct the research. This criterion was crucial because, without permission, it would have been practically challenging to research those gated communities. Also, accompanying the permission, the managers/developers of the communities were required to indicate their willingness to help get the survey questionnaire (online survey link) to the residents. Due to covid-19 related restrictions, the survey in London was conducted online using Qualtrics software. GCs that were available and responded to the call to be involved in the study were used, not considering their location as the researcher could not reach most of the gated communities in the desired locations online.

An online survey link was generated and administered to residents by the managers and developers who agreed to be part of the study. Residents who accepted and filled out the online survey had their responses collected via the Qualtrics software. The online survey was active for three months (February 2021 to April 2021) before it was closed. A total of 53 online surveys were completed. The response rate was difficult to calculate due to the nature of an online survey.

We collected data through phone calls and teleconference interviews with developers, managers, and academics. Secondary data came from journal articles, websites, and gated community brochures.

The survey data was analysed using descriptive statistical techniques. The data was analysed by using the Qualtrics software. Microsoft Excel and Microsoft Word software were used to generate graphs, diagrams, and tables. For confidentiality, all information was reported as a whole, and no information on individual gated communities was revealed.

4.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Drivers of gated communities

To determine the drivers of gated communities from the residents' perspective, we used an online survey questionnaire and residents were expected to rank these motivating factors from the "extremely important" to the "least important". Table 1 below presents a summary of their responses.

Table 1: Summary of motivating factors for residents of gated communities

Motivations	Extremely Important	Very Important	Total of Extremely and Very Important	Important	Indifferent	Least Important
Security	25	7	32	5	4	5
Land title security	10	5	15	7	11	3
Location	11	12	23	7	6	7
Facilities and Services	14	14	28	9	4	5
Community Living	11	10	21	11	8	6
Property Values	11	15	26	7	12	2
Prestige	10	13	23	9	8	4

NB: The total number for various motivations differs because some participants did not rank all the factors

Source: Author's Fieldwork, 2021

In Table 1 above, security and facilities were noted as significant factors, with 25 and 14 participants, respectively, stating them as the extremely important factors, while only 10 respondents rated Land title security and prestige as extremely important.

The survey results of residents in gated communities suggest security, facilities and services, property values, location and prestige as primary factors considered by residents who live in gated communities (see Table 1). Other factors, such as community living and land title security, were minor. Residents in GCs in the survey were asked to rank these factors from 'extremely important' to 'least important'. Factors with their highest frequency in either 'extremely important' or 'very important' rank are deemed significant, while those with their highest frequency in any other rank are considered minor. For example, the land title security factor has its highest frequency in the 'indifferent' rank and thus was characterised as minor (see Table 1). The major drivers are further discussed below.

4.1.1 Security

The results from the survey suggest that security is a crucial factor that motivates gated community residents. In Table 1, a total of 32 residents of the survey ranked security as the extremely important or very important factor that influenced their decision to move into a gated community. Additionally, five participants considered security as an important factor. Security as an important driver in residents' choice of living in gated communities, as identified in Table 1, is corroborated by the findings from the interview respondents. A developer in the quote below suggested that the search for a secured community influences the demand for gated communities:

“Well, the private ones were very often requested purely because of the security aspect, and they would like to have the poster there with the concierge and helping with the parking and things like that. It tends to be desirable, but that’s a personal preference. I guess very often people feel a bit safer if it’s gated”. (Developer 4 UK, 02/2021)

It is observed that residents primarily move into gated communities considering security for their lives and properties. From Table 1, security is a major motivating factor for residents who move into gated communities. This result is consistent with similar studies on gated community residents in the UK. Atkinson et al. (2004), who studied gated communities in the UK, suggested security as an essential factor influencing people to move into gated communities. Additionally, in the study by Blandy (2006), it was observed that security for properties and vehicles was crucial to the residents of GCs. Blandy and Lister (2005), who studied a gated community in Sheffield, UK, posited security as one reason people move into GCs. However, it was not the main factor, as suggested in this research. Atkinson and Flint (2004), who studied Fortress UK gated communities, the spatial revolt of the elites and time-space trajectories of segregation, similarly found security to be a significant reason people moved into gated communities.

Furthermore, 19% of the participants in the survey indicated a history of security challenges in their previous communities, while 81% had no history of security problems. The 19% noted that theft, traffic, noise and invasion of privacy were the main security issues they faced in their previous community.

This research suggests that property and community security are crucial factors influencing people living in gated communities. The search for secured communities has led to developers building gated communities generally perceived as safer due to their physical characteristics of walls and enclosed entry and exit. The security characteristic of GCs is mainly highlighted in most marketing materials and adverts. Even though some gated communities experience security breaches, residents and people believe they provide a more secure environment than non-gated communities. Thus, residents do not just acquire properties but seek to buy into a secured community.

4.1.2 Facilities and Services

After security, facilities and services were the most noted motivating factor for residents living in gated communities. In Table 1, 28 residents identified facilities and services as the important factor influencing their

decision to live in a gated community. Additionally, seven (7) participants noted it was an important factor, while nine (4) participants ranked it as an indifferent and less important factor in their decision-making.

The result of facilities and services in GCs as a significant driver for gated community developments is consistent with past studies in the UK and other contexts. In the study of Blandy and Lister (2005), they found that leisure facilities were a significant reason residents consider when moving into gated communities. Similarly, Atkinson and Flint (2004) found that the quality of leisure facilities and services in GCs and the fact that they could be accessed 'on-site' was an important motivation for residents who resided in them. Blandy (2006) also found that the presence of work and schools locally in GCs was an important factor in why people moved into GCs. Identifying facilities and amenities as a significant factor considered by those who move into gated communities supports studies conducted in other countries (see Almatarneh, 2013; Glasze and Alkhayyal, 2002; Aydın-Yönet and Yirmibesoglu, 2009; Salah and Ayad, 2018). These studies also establish facilities and amenities as an important motivating factor for people who move into gated communities.

The availability of leisure and recreational facilities attracts people to gated communities. Blandy (2006) noted that residents considered buying into a gated community as a package. This package includes access to facilities such as swimming pools, playgrounds, restricted access golf courses and services provided by estate management and concierge services which may not be nonexistent in a non-gated community. The facilities and services available in gated communities are advertised on their websites.

4.1.3 Property value

The property value factor from Table 1 is one of the main drivers of gated communities. A total of 26 survey participants suggested property value as a key motivating factor in their decision to live in a gated community. However, 14 participants considered it indifferent and less important in their decision-making.

This finding is consistent with previous studies on some gated communities in the UK. Blandy and Lister (2005), in their study (ne)gating community development with a small sample in a gated community in Sheffield, indicated that the leading reason for purchasers to move into gated community development was property values, with GCs suggested to being more robust and insulated from negative factors. Also, Atkinson and Flint (2004) note that the value for money for properties in gated communities is an important factor that drives demand for GCs. Blandy (2006) also found maintenance of property values as a proxy motivation for a combination of different reasons.

The location of some gated communities in affluent and sought-after residential locations and their potential as longer-term investments, given the expected resale prices (Atkinson and Flint, 2004), makes them attractive to residents who seek to maintain and grow their property value. As has been noted by some studies (see Radetskiy et al., 2015; Bible and Hsieh, 2001; Scheller, 2015), gating of properties tend to have a positive impact on property values, either through community standards that are enforced by HOAs (McKenzie, 2005) or exclusivity. Properties in gated communities tend to carry a premium and mostly value more than those outside. These factors attract residents seeking to buy properties for investment purposes.

4.1.4 Location

The location of a gated community, from Table 1, is one of the main drivers of gated communities. A total of 23 survey participants ranked the location factor as extremely and very important, and an additional seven (7) suggested this driver as important.

It may be established that the proximity of gated communities to social amenities, namely, transportation (airports, train stations) and education facilities, is essential to residents. This research finding is not consistent with any study on gated communities in the UK, but it is consistent with Muiga and Rukwaro's (2017) study on GCs in Kenya. They found that location was the third important driver for the residents of gated communities. The proximity of a gated community to essential services and facilities is crucial to people who move into them. Thus, the websites and magazines of gated communities highlight the location of the GC to these services and facilities.

As noted by Blandy (2006) in the classification of gated communities in the UK, the location of gated communities served different purposes to different target markets. Gated communities in rural areas may attract city dwellers who want to move away from the rigours of city living, while others may prefer gated communities close to city centres for other reasons. Therefore, as noted in the survey, the location of gated communities influences the decisions of residents on the type of gated community to inhabit.

4.1.5 Prestige

From the survey results in Table 1, prestige is an important factor for residents of gated communities. Twenty-three (23) survey participants ranked prestige as 'extremely important' and 'very important' motivation factor for their decision to reside in a gated community, while nine (9) also considered it as 'important'. However, 12 participants ranked it as an 'indifferent' and 'least important' factor.

The prestige associated with living in an affluent community motivates some people to move into gated communities. This finding is new to the UK literature on drivers of gated community development. La Grange (2018) noted that developers attempt to portray a prestigious lifestyle in gated communities. Therefore, residents of gated communities in this research rank the prestigious and members-only lifestyle associated with gated community living as crucial. Other studies (see Leisch, 2002; Jurgens and Gnad, 2002) support the findings that prestige is an important factor that residents in gated communities consider.

4.2 The Satisfaction of Residents and Possible Future Implications

This part of the study sought to identify how satisfied residents in gated communities are based on their motivating factors. We asked residents to rate their living experience in the communities from satisfied to dissatisfied.

Table 2 How would you rate your living experience in the gated community based on your expectations?

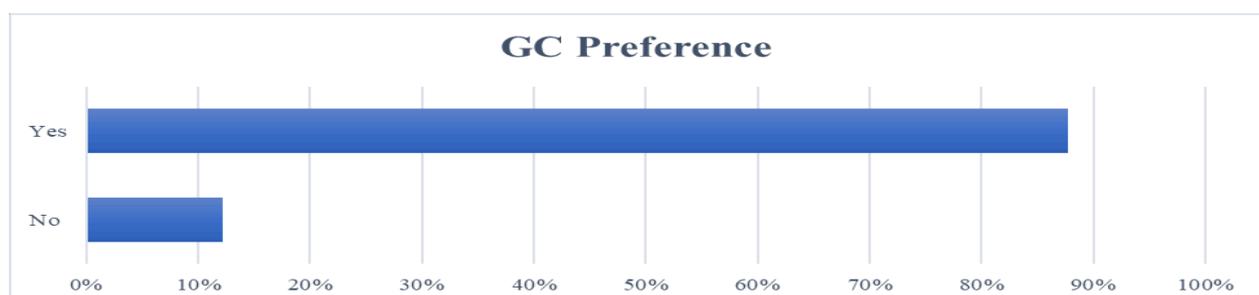
Motivating Factors	Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Total of Satisfied	Neutral	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied
Security	28	9	37	5	1	0
Facilities and Services	16	18	34	7	0	0
Prestige	13	14	27	14	0	0
Property values	15	15	30	11	1	0
Community Living	18	14	32	8	1	0
Location	23	9	31	9	0	0
Land title security	20	5	25	15	0	0

Source: Author’s Fieldwork, 2021

The summary of responses in Table 2 shows that most respondents considered their expectations and motivations for moving into the gated community met. Most of the respondents, about 37, expressed their fulfilment with the security provided by the gated community. However, 5 and 1 respondents remained neutral and disappointed, respectively. The facilities and services in the gated community follow security as the motivating factor residents expressed as being most satisfied. Also, 31, 30 and 27 respondents were pleased with the motivations for location, property values and prestige provided in their gated community, respectively.

Based on the overwhelming satisfaction rate expressed by the residents of the gated communities, we asked respondents about the possibility of moving into another gated development if they move out of their current neighbourhood.

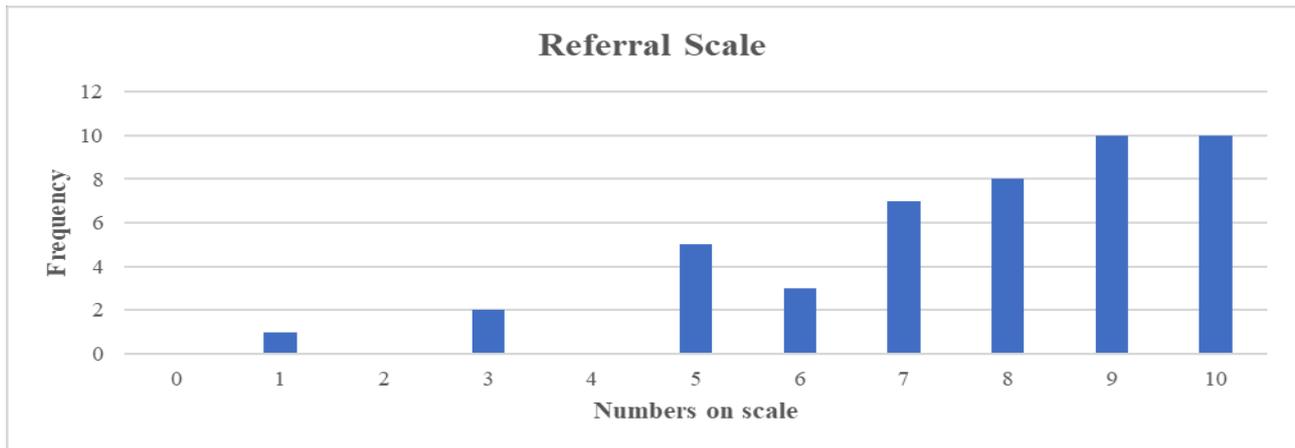
Figure 1 Questionnaire Responses: Will you prefer to live in a gated community if you move out of this community?



From Figure 1, 88% of the survey participants noted that they would prefer to move into another GC if they were to move out of their current GC.

We further asked the respondents to rank the possibility of referring and recommending a gated community living to another person, using a scale of 0-10, with 0 being not likely to 10 highly likely.

Figure 2: Using 0-10, how likely are you to recommend gated community living to a friend, where 0 is Not at all to 10 Highly likely?



From Figure 2 above, the mode of the distribution was ranked 9 and 10, as 20 (10 each) out of 46 residents representing 44%, indicated they are highly likely to recommend GC living to others. In Figure 2, about 94% (From choice 5-10 on the scale) are likely to refer others to gated community living. Only 6% are likely not to refer others to gated community living.

The managers of the gated communities indicated that the most used and effective way of getting new residents was through referrals by residents and old residents. The presentation in Figure 1 thus supports the opinion that the residents of gated communities are satisfied with most of the services provided and their expectations; therefore, they would recommend it to others. Additionally, As media reports on security problems in the world continue to stream into our homes (Atkinson and Blandy, 2017), individuals would continue to seek housing that may effectively provide security for lives and property. From the surveys, it is evident that gated communities effectively provide some solutions to these challenges to residents, leading to a high approval and referral rate from the residents. That may translate into increasing demand and attracting residents into these gated communities.

5.0 CONCLUSION

Blandy (2018) indicated that considering developments in the decade, the forces that create conditions for increased home security and the spread of gated communities have the upper hand. Gated community developments have been on the increase in the UK since 2004, when Atkinson et al. (2004) identified about 1000 gated communities in England.

The study explored the gated community phenomenon in the UK and specifically looked at the drivers pushing for the continuous growth and spread of gated communities from the perspective of the main stakeholders, residents. The study has provided empirical insight from residents of various GCs, focusing on the major

motivations, the satisfaction of residents' living experiences and the possible trend of gated communities through potential referrals by residents. We identified the main drivers of GCs in London in this study, namely, Security, Facilities and Services, Property Value, Location and Prestige.

The paper identified that security for lives and property were the significant drivers considered by residents of GCs in London. Gated communities in the literature have been known as secure havens for residents, and we confirmed that in this study. Most of the residents believed that due to boundaries and regulations in the gated community, they felt more secure than they would in the non-gated community.

The paper also found out that the satisfaction levels of the residents in the gated communities are high. Thus, residents do not plan to move into a non-gated community. The residents were also willing to refer others to the gated community living. The high satisfaction and referral potential indicate that gated communities are not likely to go out of existence anytime soon but instead continue to see a rise in the number of gated communities and their residents.

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