

SUMMARY

BEHIND THE WALLS

GATED COMMUNITIES IN POLAND - A DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

The crucial objective of the book is an analysis of the gated communities (GC) phenomenon in the context of the middle class formation and assigning socio-cultural meanings of these housing estates in Poland, in the perspective of our knowledge about similar housing estates existing in the United States of America. Specific aims, among the others, are:

- to understand how these estates function, not only as physical objects in terms of the role of architects, planners, and developers, but also as social-cultural constructs for scientists, inhabitants and neighbours;
- to locate actors involved in building housing estates of the GC type and explore how the meanings of housing estates of the GC type are established for the social-cultural landscape of Poland, and most of all the role of those estates in the forming of the middle class including the motivations that drive actors (i.e. the role of prestige and anxiety);
- to make a comparative analysis of the conception and social-cultural meaning of the GC settlement type on the local and global level (in comparison with the American context).

It is necessary to underline that the purpose of the book is not to describe gated and guarded housing estates as such, but to present their image on the basis of the press discourse.

The book consists of four chapters. The starting point for the research on gated and guarded housing estates is the role of culture in the contemporary urban research. In the first chapter the author examines different research attempts at understanding the city, and he analyses cultural and economic motifs which are co-occurring or competing in the urban sociology from times of the Chicago School to the times of Los Angeles School. It is also a kind of the demand - to connect perspectives from the sociology and anthropology of the city. Pointing out this necessity is a crucial objective of this part of the work of syntheses: of the two subdisciplines (sociology and anthropology) and the two attitudes (economic and culturalistic one) which are crucial for analyses of urban planning in post- or in late modernity. This connection is important for the research on guarded and gated housing estates and makes a deeper analysis possible thanks to the interdisciplinary character of searches. This chapter also brings issues of the social class in the metropolitan context. It analyses matters and problems of the consumption of the housing environment, and the role of the symbolic economy in shaping it.

Chapter two has a methodological character. It is an attempt to adapt the critical discourse analysis (CAD) for inspections of the contemporary urban environment. This type of research programme, relatively new, is enjoying the growing popularity, especially

because of the inspiring results. The allocation is presenting both theoretical assumptions of this approach and practical CAD manners of use in the study of urban planning by those who are trained in the sociology of the city and in human geography. This approach, as author is trying to point out, can turn out to be extremely fruitful in analysing gated and guarded housing estates as not only the spatial but also as a cultural and structural phenomenon. It also ties together abstract spaces shaped by the policy and capital with the everyday specific experiences of people in the city space. The use of CAD seems beneficial also in the analysis of areas of research that are hard to be gathered, as gated housing estates undoubtedly can be inaccessible.

The main task of the third chapter is to draw the wide context which enabled the creation of the estates of the gated community type. The competing argumentation deals primarily with motives of fear or of prestige that can be treated as elements of class identity complementing each other. This broad context is influenced by Neil Brenner and Nik Theodore's concept of the *actually existing neoliberalism* (Brenner and Theodore 2002) which is taking place exactly in the space of the city. As a part of examining the context, the author is:

- Analysing two spatial-public processes: suburbanisation and gentrification, which, even though analytically different (or simply oppositional) are running parallel in the Polish conditions and are creating different, often contradictory patterns and ways of settling which are being carried out in gated communities.

- Deciphering the important cultural, determined phenomenon called the 'culture of the control' (Garland 2001) and the consequences which it is bringing for the urban environment and housing. I am thinking here about the entire spectrum of solutions connected with programmes "zero tolerance," concepts of antisocial behaviour and the privatization of the "safety."

This wide context allows to see the Polish specificities while recognising the global and local scale. The latter, local frame is introduced in the fourth chapter. The author applies the division used by the Norman Fairclough concerning three types of the value: experiential, relational and expressive. The author describes the reality of Polish gated communities using discourse analysis of the press (fundamentally from the *Gazeta Wyborcza*), and includes rich interviews with inhabitants of those estates. The chapter concentrates on the ways of understanding and inserting housing estates in everyday reality, their social and cultural landscape, as well as relations observed in them.

The conclusion returns to the global context and seeks resemblances and differences between discourses concerning housing estates of the type of gated communities in Poland, the United States and Great Britain. The end of the book recapitulates the findings and allows the reader to look once again at the global and local motives and to draw their own conclusions.