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Determining Factors of Community Safety to Combating Crime in Neighborhood Residential

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Abstract

Gated and guarded communities in Malaysia are commonly identified with a cluster of houses surrounded by fence with controlled access to provide some sense of crime protection for communities. Safety awareness nowadays has become as one of the most fundamental in the residential area issues particularly in the urban area. There are often displayed in the news where crime that involving matters related to the property such as house breaking, vehicle theft, snatch thief, robbery and others. Therefore, this research aims to evaluate the effectiveness of Guarded Neighborhood implementation in Bandar Utama, Petaling Jaya residential area. The objectives of the study (i) to identify the physical characteristics of the concept that are been implemented in the neighborhood residential and (ii) to determine the effectiveness of Guarded Neighborhood Concept. The study applied questionnaire interview of 98 households as main research strategy to address the research objectives. The findings of the study demonstrated that the guarded communities in Bandar Utama residential area is functioning as a one of the approach in make their residents feel save and give them a sense of safety and secure from any of crime threat. The implementation of guarded communities is only act as one of the option in solving crime problem but in this study, it has been proved that there is still a crime incident recorded which happens even after the implementation. This research will help local authorities to review the current guidelines on guarded neighborhood, thus develop more effective strategies to mitigate crime in neighborhood areas.

Keywords: Gated and Guarded Communities, Guarded Elements, Planning Guidelines, Crime Prevention.

Introduction

There are two types of concept commonly used to enhance neighborhood safety, Gated and Guarded Neighborhood concept (Barnes, 2011). In the beginning, these two concepts only been implement in multistory residential building such as condominiums and apartments to permits

sharing of public facilities such as home guards, swimming pool, club house, sports center and recreational facilities. Currently the concept has expanded into the other type of housing developments like landed residential development i.e terraced, semi-detached houses and detached. These types of concepts focus on community safety with limited access and high surveillance are the main elements. These two concepts seems to be addressing similar purpose in different measures. Gated Community is a pre-planned development, conversely, in Guarded Neighborhood concept safety measures are only implemented after the development has completed upon request by the residents.

Through these concepts, safety measures such as guard post, fence, oil drum and automatic gated are installed at residential neighborhoods to reduce and control access, increase surveillance subsequently, reduces crime occurrences. On this note, resident form association to manage and ensure implementation of Guarded Neighborhood measures. As such resident association impose clauses in the residential/ tenant contract that bound all of residents to make monthly or annual monetary commitment upon the safety measures installation. However, there are occurrences whereby a minority portion of the residents who are not paying the commitment, therefore create a sense of unsatisfied among other residents. This mainly due to the minority residents received the same benefits as those paying the commitment. Apart of that, the implementation of GN measures also contributed to other problems such as illegal car parking area, the vandalism of safety measures and also continues crime incidences.

This approach is also identified against the theory proposed by Jane Jacobs (1961) whereas, Guarded Neighborhood is identified to result lack to 'eyes on street'. The theory strongly promoting the importance active human activities as main measures in a neighborhood to reduce hidden areas from the eyes of pedestrian, visitors and community. The theory believes that more active activities will create a more attractive residential areas and increase social engagement, therefore increase public surveillance. Conversely, the GN measures has high tendency to result more unattractive areas that have great potential for crime occurrences. Therefore this raise questions on effectiveness of the guarded and gated neighborhood concept in neighborhood area in Malaysia. This research will be a detail study about how effective the safety measures that are located at the entrance and other accesses in reducing crime incidences. The study area for this study is at Bandar Utama residential area, Petaling Jaya which are among pioneer residential areas that implemented the Guarded Neighborhood Concept. The objectives of this study is expected to provide results on key indicators for the safety community, evaluate the achievement of each concept in reducing the number of crime and to identify the physical characteristics of concept that had been implemented in the neighborhood residential.

Literature review

Guarded Neighborhood

Guarded Neighborhood (GN) is a concept where residents in a residential area agreed to locate safety measures and barriers at residence entrance and other accesses, imposed fence and other safety measures in public roads reserve (JPBD, 2010). The concept also suggest installation barriers and fences in addition to guard post, CCTV, security element to limit access of non-residence or passerby to access the residential areas (Atkinson and Blandly, 2006). To non-

residence, access is limited and controlled by the appointed security personals. Entrance only permitted after legitimate identification card is hand over and names are recorded. As, such, residential association play the most important roles to manage and monitor the implementation on the concept. In a Guideline of Gated and Guarded Community Planning Concept by *'Jabatan Perancang Bandar dan Desa'* (JPBD, 2010) the definition of Guarded neighborhood (GN) is a scheme that provides with or without guard security services. In terms of the law, it cannot have physical barriers on public streets and enforce any entry and exit restrictions to the residents and the public. *"The presence of GN is not based on the provisions of any law or regulation. It only exists on an 'ad-hoc' basis with the agreement of residents in a neighborhood to make their neighborhood a guarded area"* (JPBD, 2010). The GN concept is identified to have same objectives and measures with Gated Community (GC) concept. However, the GN concept is normally applied for existing residential areas whereas agreement of at least 80 percent is required. Though, GN are widely applied, GN is identified not bounded with any development law or by law to guide residents who want to apply it at their area. This circumstances have resulted unstandardized safety measures installed in areas that embedded the concept. The following section will give detail explanation on the safety measures that can be found.

Main Access Restriction

Basically, this type of safety measures will be located at the main entrance to the area. Particularly, the main access will be located with guard house and automatic gate. There also a Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) with 24 hours control by the appointed security agency. Other than that, many of other access such as service road, collector road and back lane which can give an opportunity for crime to happen will be closed by fence, gated, brick wall, oil drum, barriers and boom gate either from the automatic or manually control. The area before the implementation of GN would have more than one entrance and exit but after the implementation of GN, there are only one or two entrances allowable in the area.

Intercom System

This system is allowing connection between all the houses in the area directly with the guard posts. The objective of this system is to give an immediate report to the security guard if there are any curious things happen in the area. All houses will be able to communicate directly to the guard post by the electronic alarm button installed in each house. During the emergency, any of the alarm that activate will be detected directly to that house and there will be a quick action taken by the security guard to control the situation.

Closed Circuit Television

This type of safety feature is a new technology electronic tool which is very popular recently to be used at many of housing area. Basically, CCTV will be used for the individual purpose where the owner of the house will have their own CCTV. There is also a CCTV that is used for general purpose which covers the whole residential area. There are many types of CCTV with various functions and modes that can be located at any places to have a good angle for the better and quality of view of one of the area. In GN area, basically the location of CCTV will be located at the main entrance and can be located at the area that had been detected as a hot spot area for crime to happen.

Security Guard Patrol

Security agency that had been appointed by the residents' association will be responsible to increase the safety level at the area. They need to take care and control the use of safety measures and barriers that had been located at the area. Besides that, they should create the patrol schedule and the guard duty to make sure that the area in 24 hours under their control and there should be enough security guards who are always ready at the area in case of emergency. For that purposes, there is a security guard patrolling in that area around 10 – 15 minutes to the whole area.

Guarded Neighborhood Guideline

Department of Town and Country Planning Peninsular Malaysia (JPBD) is one of the responsible agencies to look at the planning and implementation of the GC and GN concept. For that purpose, this agency had agreed to produce the guideline to be used as a reference for all who intend to implement this type of concept in their area. This is according to the current situation in many urban areas in Malaysia which faced many of issues and problem that existed from the implementation of it. It also functions as standard guide for any residents' association that wants to apply this concept in their area. It also as a guide for the developer to look at the requirement when they are about to propose a new housing development especially landed and strata. This includes the requirement of parking provision, green area, and any other information that are related with the development that has been proposed.

The issues that occurred from the implementation of GN need to be wisely controlled and there is also a need of specific review in avoiding many of the conflicts among the local authority, developers, residents and the home buyers who are the users. To give a best solution for this type of new housing concept, JPBD had provided their guideline on Gated Community and Guarded Neighborhood Concept Planning which is had been approved by Government and Ministry of Housing and Local Government in 2010. The guideline had also been presented to State Planning Committee (SPC) and to the State Government. Now it had been used in all local authorities in Peninsular Malaysia for as a guide for any application of this concept within their administration area. The content of this guideline is to explain in detail and give very salient information about the regulation and how to control the application on this type of concept. Any of the illegal implementation of the GN in any one of the area can be reported and further action will be taken as a warning to the resident association to remove any of barriers and obstruction that had been used in the area.

Culture of Fear

Basically, the fear of crime had been categorized as a new culture. Culture of fear can be defined as the culture which is due to the sense of fear on any of threat that occur to the crime to happen. This culture is existing due to the news on crime that are reported every day by mass media. This has contributed to a 'culture of fear' where the public are beginning to think about the risk on their area where crime might happen. Other than that, culture of fear can be defined as a desire or a demand to have a safety and security element to control their area from have any of threat of crime. Previously it is only be a minority in a part of community but recently, it had become as a majority needed in community. Here is an example where human will start to think to have a

great and better safety environment in their housing area with the improvement in security element. In an objective to reduce number of crime and the feeling of fear about the crime that happen at the area, people are more willing to have gated and guarded community concept as a new trend in any of housing development. It was not only implement in the high-density housing area, but also at the low-density area. These believe and feelings had haunted many of people from think about the reality and the disadvantages behind the use of this type of concept. To full fill this requirement, there will be a lot of changes which is many of public streets will be closed to be reach by only the residents who live there and also, we can see the separation between socio economic group. Is it effective by using this type of concept in reducing crime? Is it a best solution in avoiding crime?

Eyes on Street

In the eyes on street theory, the main function of streets is for public use (Jane Jacobs, 1961). It is totally belonging to public. The best and safety for streets is the streets that can be seen by many of eyes. The safety street also should be able to be seen from its starting points until the end of it. It should be unobstructed by any of obstacles or barriers to make sure that the people will see what will appear in front of them along the journey on that streets. Not only that, the streets also need to face the building windows and door.

This can contribute to the various sides seeing of eyes that can reach through to the streets and through inside the building (Grant, 2000). Not only that, this idea was realistic with the human life where everyday people will make a movement from one to another places and area. They might be uses streets as one of the access to the area that they want to go. By that along the journey, they might see various types of cases and incidents. Unfortunately, they will be as one of the natural surveillance for their surrounding environment and to give a feel of safety along their journey because they believed that there are any of eyes who are always watching their movement. The other solution and suggestion about streets is on the pedestrian walkways. In this situation, the effective streets should have Continuous Pedestrian Walkways which connect pedestrian who are use it from one area to another places. By the addition of various types of land uses that had been connected by the pedestrian walkways, the use of it will be more frequent by various type of public with a different purpose, different time and with a different schedule. In the addition of good accessibility that had been provided, public will more able to use pedestrian walkways. This can help the area and the streets to be more often to be use. It is also can be as one of the natural surveillance element to the surrounding area environment.

Many of urban area now are having the open spaces location which is far away from the streets. This is from the Jane Jacobs critics on her urban area situation where she thinks that it might be contribute too many opportunities for crime to happen if there is no eye that can reach to the street. Here it can be concluded that that "*eyes on the street*" are the best approach that can be used to protect public from any of threat of crime. Gated and Guarded Community Concept is the concept where there will be a separation between the gated residents with the surrounding area. The area will be surrounding by gated and will be covered by wall or fence. Many of public spaces will turn to become private spaces and there will be too many access that will be restrict from the outsiders.

This is already creating a separation among the uses at the area. Not only that the streets that normally can be used by many of people will be limited to be used only by the residents who lived at the area. Private streets are one of the factors that can contribute to the crime to be happening. It is because the limited users of it which is only can be used by the curtain people at only one time. This can make crime to become often and easy to be accomplished. Privatization also had makes the streets to become more quiet and no users will use it at any of time. If we related it with a current situation now, there are many of streets that had been turning to private streets permanently as one of the options characteristics of gated community (Moudon, 1983).

Research Method

The research applies quantitative research approach during the instrument development and design, data collection and analyses. In stage one, goals and objectives and scope of the issues and problems were established from preliminary data collection and literature review. Following this, in stage two of the study, data collection process through observation and survey research method were conducted. Using the observation survey, total number of safety located in every section in Bandar Utama residential area were observed. The data also look at the most widely used types of safety measures in the area. In stage three, data collected from the earlier stage were statically analyzed to determine the effectiveness of guarded neighborhood concept in reducing the number of crime.

Using data from observation, characteristic of guarded neighborhood were recorded and been analyzed by doing a comparisons analysis on the statistic data of crime incident before and after the implementation of guarded neighborhood. Each safety measures location were marked on the base map using symbols that represent each of safety measures. The symbol that had been created also will give an overall view on the use of safety measures in each of the area. There should be different within each of the area and it also might be a reason on why they choose to have certain type of safety measures to be located in their area.

In stage four, the findings of the study will give a statistical fact which represent the effectiveness of guarded neighborhood implementation in Bandar Utama residential area. It seems like the result of the study shown that the crime rate in the residential area is still remain the same. There is no huge changes. From here, it can be concluded that there is a need of another option beside the placement of safety measures in reducing the number of crime at one of the area.

Study Area

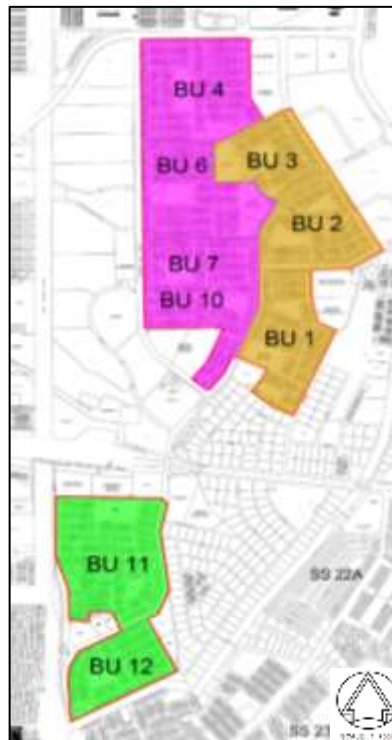
Bandar Utama, Petaling Jaya is an area located within Damansara in the district of Petaling which is divide as PJU 6 area in all of the sections. It is an area which is primary develops by residential area and also had been known as a famous area with the existence of One Utama Shopping Complex and surrounded by many others commercial area like The Curve, IKEA and many more. Bandar Utama is under the administration of Majlis Bandaraya Petaling Jaya (MBPJ). Bandar Utama area now is cover in about 5,484.01 hectares (54.84 km²) which is functioning as a commercial centre for Petaling Jaya districts in Urban Hierarchy. For the hierarchy in "*Dasar Pembangunan Negara (DPN)*", it is functioning as a Central Growth Conurbation for Malaysia while in the hierarchy in Selangor Structure Plan, (RSN), is as Central Settlement District. In 1991,

Bandar Utama area is only an area with an agriculture land use which is full with palm oil estate. In early of 1995, there are a beginning of urbanization in this area with the additional of many new developments with such as the located of Sri Pentas Bandar Utama and also with the new development of commercial area like One Utama had already turn this area rapidly to become a develop area. For accessibility to reach at this area, there are so many access that can be used to reach at this area.

For the purpose of this study, the boundary of this area had been determined. This study was only focused on the residential area which had been identified as a housing area that implemented the Guarded Neighborhood concept since 2005. There are 9 residential areas that had been identified and the areas are BU1, BU2, BU3, BU4, BU6, BU7, BU10, BU11 and BU12. This area covered in about 215 acres area which covered all 9 sections of residential area in Bandar Utama. All of these areas can be access through Lebuhraya Bandar Utama which is a main road to connect each of the area. Except for the area of BU11 and BU12 which is separated by a bridge of Sprint Highway. All of the study areas are from one type of housing scheme which is terraced. The estimation housing units that consists in all of the study area is around 5,000 to 6,000 units with the estimated population is around 30,000 populations.

Bandar Utama residential has implemented GN system since the early of 2005. It was based on the agreement among the residents to implement the system due to the increasing crime rates in the area. The process of GN implementation in this area are been done in three phases. First phase was begun on 2005, second phases was in the middle of 2005 while the third phases are being implemented in the end of 2005 (Figure 4.1).

Analysis and Findings



All of the areas are developed by several types of housing scheme such as terraced which surrounded by detached house, semidetached, commercial area and others. The purpose of Physical Analysis here is to find and determine the type of safety measures located in the study area. The technique of this analysis is by recording all safety measures that were installed in the study area on the base map. Then it will give the overall view on the implementation of GN in the study area. There are nine areas that had been studied which include all the section of residential area in Bandar Utama. Each of the area has different types of safety measures with different number (Table 5.1). As mentioned in the previous section, measures installation is determined by needs of the residents. Each safety measures location were marked on the base map using symbols that represent each of safety measures.

Comparison on type of safety measures in all section in Bandar Utama is summarized in the Table 4.1. From the table, it can be concluded that BU 11 has the highest number of safety measures or 51 and the lowest is BU 10 with only 27 number of safety measures . Further analyses were conducted by comparing area size with number of units and safety measures. The study identified BU 11 have more numbers of safety measures, mainly located at the main access and roads that connected the residential with the surrounding areas. BU 3 is the smallest area with only 415 units of houses were identified with lowest number of safety measures (2 units of guard post, 7 units of manual boom gate and 24 units of fences). The observation data also shows preferences of safety measures in the study area. For the most popular type of safety measures that are used in each sections in Bandar Utama residential area are fences. Each section uses fences as a barriers to close limit access to their back lane and avoids any attempt of crime which might come from there. The lowest use in types of safety measures in this area is Close Circuit Television (CCTV). BU 4 was the only area that installed that type of safety measures.

Table 5.1: Comparison on the Types of Safety Features Used in Each Area Area

Section	Year of GN Implementation (2005)	Guard Posts		Manual Boom Gate		Automatic Boom Gate		Fence		Restrict		CCTV		Oil Drum		TOTAL	
		No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
BU 1	Early 2005	2	4.9	2	4.9	2	4.9	35	85.4	0	-	0	-	0	-	41	100
BU 2	Early 2005	3	7.9	1	2.6	2	5.3	28	73.9	1	2.6	0	-	3	7.9	38	100
BU 3	Early 2005	2	66.7	7	21.2	0	-	24	72.7	0	-	0	-	0	-	33	100
BU 4	Middle 2005	2	6.7	2	6.7	0	-	20	66.7	2	6.7	2	6.7	2	6.7	30	100
BU 6	Middle 2005	2	5.8	4	11.8	2	5.9	26	76.5	0	-	0	-	0	-	34	100
BU 7	Middle 2005	1	3.4	1	3.4	1	3.4	25	86.2	1	3.4	0	-	0	-	29	100
BU 10	Middle 2005	2	7.4	0	-	2	7.4	21	77.7	2	7.4	0	-	0	-	27	100
BU 11	End of 2005	3	5.9	3	5.9	2	3.9	42	82.4	0	-	0	-	1	1.1	51	100
BU 12	End of 2005	1	3.2	1	3.2	1	3.2	27	87	1	3.2	0	-	0	-	31	100

Summary of Findings

i) Numbers of measures

The total number of safety measures installed in each section were influenced by many of factors. It cannot be directly relate and concluded that the highest number of safety measures at that area is the safest area. Total number of safety measures in one of the section here was totally depends on the size of the area and its lay out design. It also can be related with the phase of GN system that starts to be implementing in one of the area. If the size at one of the area is large, there are more streets and access that exists in the area. But it was totally depends on the lay out design of the area. It might be because of the demand and the request from the residents who lived in that area to have various types of safety measures at their residential area. It also can be related with the phase of guarded neighborhood implementation. There must be a reason on why the residents request to add more types of safety measures in their area. The possibility is because of the crime rate incidents in the area is still remain the same even there is a lot of changes and placement of safety measures been done in reducing it.

ii) Preferred Measures

The use of fences to close many of access road, back lane is the most widely used measures in the study area. It is functioning as a restriction to any movement or any random use in those area. Residents believe that this approach will help in reducing the number of crime in their area. While CCTV is the lowest use of safety measures in the study area. This might be because of CCTV is still a new technology in safety measures and the cost of its installment is quit high. It is required a lot of expenses that need to be collected from the residents. This is also depends on the willingness of the resident to pay more for their area to give them a "peace of mind" as a positive sign in their objective in reducing the crime rate. Residents also believe that by having more various types of safety measures in their area, the area are safer and more secure. But the result in this study cannot be determine and be measured due to the limitation of the study. The study just based on the total number of safety measures that had been used in this area.

Conclusion and Recommendation

This study has shown the result and findings which is been obtained from the analysis that had been done. In the beginning of this study, its purpose is to evaluate the effectiveness of Guarded Neighborhood implementation in residential area. There three main objectives established in the early beginning of the study which is to identify the physical characteristics of concept that had been implemented in the neighborhood residential. The research applies the quantitative research approach during the instrument development and design, data collection and analyses in 4 research stages. Bandar Utama, Petaling jaya was selected as the case study for this research considering long implementation of Guarded Neighborhood concept. During the study, nine areas in Bandar Utama were observed for installation of safety measures using observation research method. Analyzed observation data identified that three main important findings. First, the implementation of guarded neighborhood in the residential area is not the best solution in reducing the number of crime. Secondly, the implementation of guarded neighborhood has contribute many of public area becoming as a private area which mean there is less of social

activity happen in one of the area. Social relationship, connection among the communities within the area is not applicable and this might cause a lot of problem in future and thirdly, the study identified that numbers of measures in the study areas are positively correlate with number of years GN implemented to the area. As such, safety measures are more in number in older residential areas compared to the new areas. Although, the research have identified some key findings on the implementation of GN concept, however there are a lot of areas for improvement. Therefore it is recommended for future research to focuses on elements of social in the study. It will look at the relationship among the residents and there is also a study on the agreement of residents in the implementation of guarded neighborhood in the area.

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