Spaces of exclusivity or connection? Linkages between a security village and its poorer neighbour in a Cape Town master plan development

Charlotte Lemanski

Dark Roast Occasional Paper Series

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Abstract

This paper considers the impact of urban South Africa's new spatial order on its already fragile social dynamics. It addresses the linkages between privately enclosed residential areas (i.e. security villages) and their most proximate residential neighbours, particularly focusing on new 'master plan' developments in which rich and poor, black and white are often living cheek by jowl, albeit separated by walls and gates. The paper further considers the relationships between residents of a security village and its neighbouring (non-gated) area, addressing both the attitudes and perceptions that exist amongst residents of each area towards the 'other' neighbourhood, as well as the nature of any direct contact between residents. Although such spatial proximity between different racial and economic groups could have a positive impact on social integration in the 'new' South Africa, facilitating friendships that bridge racial and economic divides, in reality this is limited. For while such developments have the potential to radically alter apartheid's spatial segregation at the city-wide level (i.e. blacks residing in former 'white' areas), their use of walls and gates promote such perceptions and experiences of exclusivity for those 'inside' and rejection for those 'outside' that apartheid's socio-economic divides remain entrenched.

The case study for this paper is located in a master plan private development, constructed in 1999 in the heart of Cape Town's wealthy (and predominately white) 'southern suburbs'. The development hosts two vastly different residential areas that despite spatial proximity are socially and functionally isolated. One of these residential areas comprises wealthy (predominately but not exclusively white) families whose large and extravagant houses are contained within a 'security village' with access controlled by electric fences, walls, gates and 24-hour surveillance; and the other residential area houses Black African and Coloured low-income families in small (mostly one-bedroom) houses bounded into a space that is restricted more by socio-economic and spatial controls than physical walls. Despite close physical proximity there are virtually no linkages between the two areas and residents have therefore experienced the deracialisation of *space*, rather than desegregation of *people* (Saff 1998:94-97), leading to rather depressing projections of a future city dominated by social segregation.

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INTRODUCTION

The growth of various forms of gated communities worldwide has sparked an equal growth in literature on the topic, largely focusing on their negative impact on society as a whole. Gated communities are criticised for creating exclusionary spaces, increasing residential segregation, restricting freedom of movement and exacerbating social divides (Blakely and Snyder 1997; Caldeira 1999, 2000; Davis 1992; Low 2003; Marcuse 1997a), and thus creating a "*new urban segregation*" (Caldeira 1999). Such bounded spaces are typically promoted by emphasising total security, playing on potential residents fear of crime in the 'outside' world (Caldeira 1996:55; Judd 1994:162), and thus encouraging a 'not in my back yard' (NIMBY) mentality of exclusion and escapism (Ellin 2001:874) that implies the internal space is 'purified' from 'dirty and dangerous outsiders'. Although residents also express choosing to live in a gated community in order to re-create an old-fashioned upbringing for their children, security remains the salient motive (Low 2003:231). However, enclaves are not simply a response to social difference and fear, but actually create and deepen segregation and polarisation, based on excluding difference and reinforcing fear. By separating oneself from those that are 'different', fears related to the unknown mass of 'other' or 'them' are increased, thus social divides widen and tolerance of, or interaction with, diversity becomes increasingly rare. These exclusionary practices are facilitated by the walls, security gates and surveillance existing to varying degrees in all gated communities. Residents tend to be socially similar and are able to function with limited interaction outside their walls (Caldeira 2000; Davis 1992), thus implying a homogenous lifestyle with no (or very

limited) contact with the 'difference' that exists in the unknown ether of life 'beyond the gate'. Thus, spatial separation becomes intertwined with social exclusion (Rodgers 2004:114). The question addressed by this research is whether this insular attitude alters when 'difference' is located right on the doorstep (or rather, on the perimeter of electric walls) of gated community residents', part of the same development, and thus virtually unavoidable.

A gated community is a spatial zone that is separated from its surroundings by a wall or fence, with access controlled by gates. Such fortified enclaves adopt various guises, but the gated community analysed in this research is a 'total security' residential zone named Silvertree Estate, which forms part of the Westlake master-plan private development in Cape Town, South Africa. Silvertree is secured by an electrified wall with access controlled by a 24-hour-manned gatehouse. Part of the same development and lying adjacent to the gated community is a low-cost state-assisted housing project named Westlake Village. Residents were awarded state housing in 1999 as replacement for their previous homes (informal and formal), which were demolished to make way for the mixed land-use development (residential, business, office and retail space), of which their new homes form a small component.

Although such a mixed-use private development is still relatively new in South Africa (though becoming increasingly popular), such enforced proximity of difference is more common elsewhere. For example, 'inclusionary zoning laws' in the United States require new housing developments to make provision for all income levels in a desire to create more integrated neighbourhoods, and the consequence has been an increase in assisted housing schemes in proximity to wealthier suburbs (Galster *et al* 2003). Although not addressing gated communities per se, this approach does provide an example of intentionally designing housing to mix different income groups, as is the case in the Westlake master-plan development. However, the American experience is somewhat negative in that wealthy suburbs have vehemently opposed the arrival of assisted-housing on their doorstep (Ibid). Addressing gated communities but *not* planned mixed-housing developments, Salcedo and Torres (2004) identify the natural tendency for gated communities in urban Chile to be located adjacent to significantly poorer neighbourhoods. Their empirical research in both gated communities and their poorer neighbours reveals that residents do not identify closely with their neighbours either

within or between the two areas, but that residents in poor communities are grateful to the gated communities for bringing modernity and improvements to the area, while gated community inhabitants have a positive image of their poorer neighbours and are happy to employ them. Thus Salcedo and Torres (2004:40) conclude that not only is functional integration (e.g. employment) facilitated by the proximity of gated communities to poor settlements, but also that such spatial proximity leads to an improved understanding and tolerance of the 'other'. Such findings question the mass of literature indicating that walls preclude social understanding and heighten social tensions between 'difference'.

This research therefore seeks to consider whether the spatial proximity of a gated community and low-cost housing area can overcome significant socio-economic differences to develop functional integration and increased social understanding (as in Salcedo and Torres), or whether in fact walls do prevent mixing or tolerance (as indicated by most other literature). This paper first provides a background to the South African context, and also to the Westlake master-plan development before analysing whether any connections exist between the two neighbourhoods, focusing on perceptions and contact between them. Analysis considers whether the spaces that exist between them are exclusive, in that one fails to "*admit the existence or presence of*" the other, hindering their ability "*to co-exist*"; or are connected in that they are interdependently "*linked together*" in some form, as defined by the Oxford English Dictionary.

SOUTH AFRICA CONTEXT

As already witnessed in America (Davis 1992; Massey and Denton 1993) and Brazil (Caldeira 1999, 2000; Scheper-Hughes and Hoffman 1998), where proximity of difference and fear of crime have encouraged residential enclaves, South Africa is now undergoing similar socio-spatial patterns of urban and social fragmentation (Bremner 2004; Jürgens *et al* 2003; Landman 2000a, 2000b, 2004; McLaughlin and Muncie 1999:117; Saff 2004). According to the 2003 national crime survey (Omar 2004), South Africans now exhibit significantly greater insecurity than in 1998, when the last survey was conducted. Only a quarter of the nation now feel 'very safe' in their daytime residential area (compared to almost two-thirds in 1998), and well over half feel 'very unsafe' in their night-time residential area (whereas only a quarter felt this way in 1998). Thus it is not surprising that those that can afford it have increasingly sought to avoid

crime and mitigate fears by moving into newly-created gated communities or enclosing existing neighbourhoods.

Similar to the literature on gated communities elsewhere in the world, South African commentators emphasise their negative impacts, arguing that erecting walls and restricting access facilitates social exclusion, contributing towards urban fragmentation (Landman 2000a, 2000b). This has an added dimension in South Africa, for such urban trends imitate apartheid's geography of exclusion rather than the post-apartheid goal of urban integration and inclusion. As crime levels have risen in South Africa, stretching into previously-protected white suburbs, fears have escalated and residents have responded by creating territorial enclosures and employing security staff in a desperate attempt to recreate idyllic suburbia. While urban policies are striving to create an integrated and non-racial city, residents are responding independently, creating boundaries and divisions that produce "*a new apartheid*" (Lemanski 2004a). Given that homeowners are attracted to gated communities by a desire to escape the insecurity of the 'difference' (racial and socio-economic) they encounter in the post-apartheid city, it is ironic that for some secure complexes, such as the one analysed in this research, such 'difference' is located less than 500m from their perimeter.

Although gated communities tend to be located in wealthy areas, there *are* examples in South Africa of them being located adjacent to poor informal settlements, though this is less common in Cape Town than in Johannesburg. One famous example is the luxurious Dainfern security complex in Johannesburg, part of a golf estate, and incorporating a country club and private school alongside the 1,100 houses ranging in price from R2-8 million (www.dainfern.co.za). Adjacent to Dainfern is the Zevenfontein informal settlement, and although the first informal settlers at Zevenfontein preceeded the arrival of Dainfern security complex (Zevenfontein originated in 1990, Dainfern in 1992), there is already a well-documented history of attempts by Dainfern homeowners and private developer, Johnnic Properties, to displace the squatters (Bénit 2002:52; Mabin 1997). For example, Dainfern homeowners have erected road blocks and barriers to enclose Zevenfontein informal settlement, and their outrage has focused on fears of increased crime alongside declines in property values as a consequence of such proximity to an informal settlement. In addition, Johnnic Properties (Dainfern's private developer), who wish to remove Zevenfontein in order to utilise the land, have taken exclusionary

measures such as building a mound to block the view of Zevenfontein from Dainfern and have also fenced in the informal settlement to prevent further growth (Bénit 2002:59).

This NIMBY attitude is common in South Africa (and indeed was previously legislated by apartheid), first identified in the post-apartheid era as a response to the eruption of informal settlements adjacent to middle-class suburbs. Indeed, Grant Saff's (1994; 1998) Cape Town research identified the presence of 'deracialised' (rather than desegregated) space in situations where there was an invasion of *"[black] informal settlements onto the boundaries of, or within, 'white' areas"* (Saff 1998:94-97). The space was considered deracialised because no cross-group social integration occurred and black residents (squatters) were refused access to the suburb's 'white' facilities (e.g. schools, health clinics), with white residents citing health concerns, fear of crime, property values and environmental degradation (rather than race) as the reasons for rejecting 'squatters'. In contrast, desegregated space occurred in middle-class suburbs where there was "*in-migration of blacks of an income status equal to or higher than those [whites] moving out*", and where blacks were accepted into the suburb by whites (Saff 1994:382). Similar discourses have been identified by Richard Ballard (2004:49) as part of his study on white identity in Durban in the late 1990s, where white middle-class residents have vehemently opposed the eruption of informal settlements on land adjacent to their properties, based on its impact on property values and safety, and also on "*residents' sense of place and therefore on their self-perception as western, modern, civilised people*". Thus it is evident that middle-class residential areas in urban South Africa are strongly opposed to the residential proximity of their poorer citizens.

However, the difference in Dainfern and in this research's case-study is that the middle-class suburb is a gated community and thus barricaded away from the poor, which offers a significantly different experience to those living on the edge of middle-class suburbs that are adjacent to informal settlements and thus directly affected (Ballard 2004:53). While middle-class suburbs traditionally oppose informal settlements because they are perceived as diluting the value of their 'elite' area, that is likely to be less of a problem for those barricaded away from their poorer neighbours. Furthermore, in the case-study for this research the 'poor' area is a formal settlement, officially awarded low-cost housing, and thus not an illegal invasion that wealthier residents can object to. Indeed, whilst there has been a plethora of research on the hostile reaction of middle-class

suburbs to the arrival of squatters in urban South Africa (e.g. Ballard 2004; Dixon 1997; Saff 1994, 1998, 2001), there has been less on the relationship between gated communities (rather than middle-class suburbs per se) and adjacent informal settlements (e.g. Bénit 2002) and virtually nothing on the relationship between gated communities and adjacent *formal* (albeit predominately poor and black) low-cost housing areas, largely because such a phenomenon is still relatively rare. This research is therefore relatively ground-breaking in addressing this trend, though it draws on the large body of literature on similar contexts, as demonstrated above.

The phenomenon of locating low-cost housing adjacent to a wealthy suburb and/or gated community is still relatively rare in South Africa, and thus the Westlake development provides an interesting case. Furthermore, given the government's recent housing strategy announcement in favour of locating low-cost housing in wealthier areas, results here could serve as an example for elsewhere. The new housing strategy, unveiled by the national Housing Department in September 2004 revealed that the pace of housing delivery would be speeded up by locating low-cost housing developments in wealthy suburbs in order to integrate rich and poor communities (Boyle and Philp 2004). This led to outrage from homeowners in wealthy suburbs fearing a decline in property values, forcing the Department of Housing to clarify its position and reassure homeowners that the utter extremes of wealth would not be mixed (as reported in the *Mail and Guardian* 06/09/04). Given this new housing strategy there is an obvious need to consider the implications of locating low-cost housing next to wealthy housing (which in South Africa increasingly means 'gated' housing), for which the Westlake development provides a rare example. Indeed, it is an issue that the Dainfern gated community will soon face as permission has finally been granted, despite significant protests from local residents, to construct 'Cosmo City', comprising 15,000 medium and low-cost housing (as well as commercial and industrial zones) just to the west of Dainfern (Abraham 2004). Although this will remove Zevenfontein informal settlement from Dainfern's immediate borders (because Zevenfontein residents will be given priority housing in Cosmo City), it will now place Dainfern permanently close to a low-income (albeit formal) housing area, whereas Zevenfontein was perceived only a *temporary* blight to Dainfern's utopia.

A question raised by Salcedo and Torres (2004) considers whether it is better for wealthy and poor residents of the same city to be close but separated by walls or in distant but

non-gated spaces. Obviously any reply is dependent on for whom the 'better' is considered. Post-apartheid urban planning favours the compact city design approach, seeking to infill empty spaces within pre-existing city limits rather than expanding city edges (Bremner 2000). Following this approach thus entails situating low-cost housing in already-established (and therefore relatively wealthy) residential areas rather than on the city periphery as has previously been the case. The advantage of this for low-cost housing residents is being located in greater proximity to economic opportunities and social facilities. It also prevents urban sprawl and combats the spatial inequalities of the apartheid city, but the consequent flight of citizens in wealthy areas into gated communities (either by moving elsewhere or enclosing existing neighbourhoods), is expected to restrict any social integration. Whether this expectation holds true in reality is addressed through this research.

BACKGROUND TO WESTLAKE VILLAGE AND SILVERTREE ESTATE

The Westlake master-plan development provides a particularly interesting case study for considering the linkages between a security village and its poorer neighbour because both residential areas are part of the same development (rather than one arriving subsequent to the other, as with informal settlements adjacent to middle-class suburbs).[1] Indeed, through this development the government sought to encourage mixed-use land development to meet socio-economic objectives (e.g. integration). Furthermore, it has become a blueprint for future developments elsewhere, with the Western Cape Premier, Ebrahim Rasool, exalting Westlake as "*a sign that we can work together to make our vision – a home for all – a lived reality for all*" (Rasool 2004). The R1billion-plus Westlake master-plan development, launched in March 1999, is designed to transform the previously-neglected public land into a "model mini-town", providing housing for a range of socio-economic groups (Blumenfeld 1999). Approximately 20 hectares of the 95 hectare site were earmarked for state-assisted low-income housing, named Westlake Village, with the 600+ families (a mix of Black African and Coloured)[2] already living

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1 Although the informal settlement existed for almost a decade prior to the development, the formal housing area of Westlake Village was designed at the same time as Silvertree Estate.
2 The apartheid racial classifications of African, coloured (mixed heritage), Indian (Asian descent) and white (European) are used. However, apartheid's 'African' label is updated to 'Black African' in recognition that the other groups are also African ('Black African' is also the term adopted by the 2001 census), and 'black' (lower case) is used to describe all non-whites. The majority of Black Africans in Cape Town are of isiXhosa descent, and this is the meaning intended by use of 'Black African' unless otherwise specified.

informally on the land given home-ownership, but liable for water, electricity, rates and taxes. Luxurious housing was also part of the development, with 180 large plots built in the picturesque Silvertree Estate (an enclosed security village with 24-hour surveillance), adjacent to the newly-built Reddam House private school, attracting high-income families. The development also includes non-residential land use with a business park, office park, retail centre and the (currently under construction) US Consulate office (see Map 1).

Map 1: Aerial profile of Westlake Estate (Rabcav 2003)

The Westlake development is situated in the leafy Constantia valley of Cape Town's (previously white) wealthy suburbs, bordered by golf estates, a wine farm, a nature reserve, as well as (unusually for a wealthy area) Pollsmoor prison to its immediate north. In terms of access (for those with cars and also for taxis) the busy M3 highway leading directly to Cape Town's CBD flanks Westlake on its eastern side.

Prior to the development Westlake was virtually derelict but was occupied by three major groups: firstly, those renting dilapidated formal housing originally let to local hospital and prison staff, but overrun with illegal occupants by the late-1990s (predominately Coloured); secondly, those 'squatting' in the non-serviced informal settlement ('Die Bos' or 'the bush'), originating in 1991 as a convenient housing location for those working informally at nearby wealthy suburbs, farms and golf estates (Coloured and Black African); and thirdly, those residing at the 'Ark City of Refuge', a Christian welfare organisation housing homeless people (CMC 1997:18-19). In 1997 the Cape Metropolitan Council (CMC) estimated approximately 2,000 people living in Westlake, comprising 800 people in formal structures, and at least 318 structures (approximately 1,200 people) in the informal settlement, with no figures for the Ark (CMC 1997:19). In the mid-1990s RabCav developers won the tender to upgrade the area, with permission to develop using cross-subsidisation from profits of sales in the business park, office park, retail outlet and upmarket homes to provide low-cost housing for the formal and informal 'squatters', which were also supplemented by government housing subsidies (the Ark City of Refuge was relocated).

In late-1999 Westlake villagers moved from their previous informal shacks or formal rented structures, witnessing their destruction, into their new formal and self-owned houses. Westlake Village houses are standard 'Reconstruction and Development Programme' (RDP) one-bedroomed government structures with piped water, electricity and space on the plot to expand the house if desired. Approximately one-sixth of residents paid an additional R5,000 in order to receive a three-bedroomed RDP house of the same quality. Houses in Westlake Village are valued at between R40, 000 and R60, 000[3] depending on the size and whether changes have been made. Figure 1 shows a picture of a typical street with semi-detached one-bedroomed houses in Westlake Village.

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[3] Approximately £3,500 - £5,400 UK sterling at November 2004 exchange rates.

Figure 1. Photograph of a typical street in Westlake Village (taken by author, 11 March 2004)

At the same time, land was being cleared to make way for the Silvertree Estate and the first owners/developers began building their houses in late-2000, though most did not begin to move in until 2002 (the deadline for all houses to be completed is December 2004). The area is now almost fully-occupied. Houses in the Silvertree Estate are lavish, as depicted in Figure 2, and sell for between R3 to 5 million.[4] The plots are all large (average plot size is 750m^2) and most houses are of modern design, with open plan layouts, grand entrance lobbies and/or entertainment areas, 3+ en-suite bedrooms, swimming pools and spacious gardens.[5]

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[4] Approximately £260,000 - £450,000 UK sterling at November 2004 exchange rates. Pricing according to the Property Pages of the *Weekend Argus* (a local newspaper) of 07/02/04.
[5] See *Tokai/Silvertree Estate: Invest in your Future*, Cape Peninsula: Chas Everitt International Property Group 2003 [http://www.cei.co.za/8c.htm].

Figure 2. Photograph of a typical house in Silvertree Estate (taken by author, 17 March 2004)

Property adverts in the *Weekend Argus* (07/02/04) use phrases such as: "*an exclusive family home*", "*exquisite executive residence*", "*for the discerning family*" and an "*entertainers dream*", all indicating their emphasis on the wealthy family aspect of the property market. The secure nature of the estate is also used to attract this type of buyer. To enter Silvertree Estate one must have a security pass as access is restricted by an electrified gatehouse staffed 24-hours-a-day by security guards. Visitors must report to this gatehouse and upon informing the security guard of whom they intend to visit, the Silvertree Estate resident is telephoned to confirm the visitors credentials. In addition, visitors must sign an 'entrance sheet' confirming their personal details. Silvertree Estate is therefore a space reserved exclusively for residents and their appointed visitors, with no possibility of uninvited persons straying into their "private citadel" (Marcuse 1997b).

This "privatopia" (McKenzie 1994) is further facilitated by the limited and separate access points in the development. There are three entrances/exits to the development: one through Steenberg Lifestyle Centre (on the west of the of development) and along Reddam Avenue past a security checkpoint, giving access to the US consulate, Reddam House school and pedestrian access to Silvertree; the second through Steenberg Boulevard (on the south of the development) and past a security checkpoint, giving access to Silvertree and the office park; and the third via Westlake Drive (on the east of

the development) through the business park, giving access to Westlake village (see Map 1). None of these three access points meet and, in a fashion reminiscent of apartheid's township planning, Westlake village has only one access point, which involves passing through the business park (see Map 1). In other words, Westlake Village and Silvertree Estate residents have no direct access between each other despite their proximity. In fact, Westlake Village residents have no access to other parts of the development (other than the business park), without first exiting, travelling along a major road, and re-entering the development elsewhere, whereas Silvertree Estate residents have pedestrian access to Reddam House, the US Consulate and the shops at Steenberg Lifestyle Centre. The exclusionary intentions of this design are confirmed by an interview with the developers:

> It is a very unique land use geography. It works because there are separate components although in geographical proximity. This country will never have rich and poor mixing. The trick to this development is there are three separate entrances that don't link. It was intentional from a land-use point of view and traffic. If they linked, one or more entrances would have dominated, causing traffic blocks. Traffic required it, but it is also a land-issue ... Because of the crime in this country, security estates have become very popular: single entry, electrified walls – a residents-only environment … It was designed to be four separate stand-alone sections [Westlake village, Silvertree, business and office park, and retail] [C.G.15/04/04][6]

Indeed, Westlake development is a very diverse mix, as recognised by a Silvertree resident:

> You've got some of the most expensive houses and school, a squatter area, a prison – if you looked from above, from a helicopter it shouldn't have happened [G.K.28/04/04]

Despite its oddity the Westlake development as a whole has been an enormous *commercial* success, with estate agents attributing a significant rise in residential property sales in nearby areas to the new Westlake mixed-use development (Rode 2000a). Furthermore, since 2002 there have been no available plots remaining in either Silvertree

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[6] In order to protect the identity of interviewees their names are initialled, alongside the date of the interview.

Estate or in the retail sector (Rabie 2002). The office and business space has been so popular that many high-profile big businesses have relocated from Cape Town's CBD, causing the Westlake business park to become the premier office node (after long-established Claremont) in the southern suburbs (Rode 2001; 2000b). In the words of the developers, Westlake has been transformed from a "*derelict tract of overgrown state-owned land ... into a thriving commercial, industrial and residential node ... a model of sensitive development taking into consideration all of today's social and economic factors*", citing as evidence the abundance of housing for previously disadvantaged groups, the popularity of the new Reddam House School and the recent decision by the American Consulate to locate their new building within the development (Rabie 2003).

In terms of its *social* success, the developers have received two prestigious awards in recognition of their housing contribution. The South African Property Owners' Association (Sapao) awarded Westlake development the 'Green Spiral Award' in June 2003, for its contribution to the upliftment of society (*Business Day* 11/06/03). According to Sapao the development has successfully transformed a neglected area, previously home to 700 squatter families, into a mixed-used estate with both business and residential areas, the latter ranging from "*multimillion rand homes to two- and three-bedroom houses that are part of a social housing project*" (*Business Day* 11/06/03). In addition, the developers travelled to Texas in June 2004 to receive the international 'FIABCI Rene Frank Habitat Award' for their role in improving the quality of life for those living in squatter settlements and were awarded a cheque for $15,000 to be distributed amongst community groups in Westlake Village.[7]

According to the 2001 Census, Westlake Village comprises 2,596 residents, just over half (57%) of whom are Black African and just under half (42%) are Coloured, in addition to a handful of Indian and white residents (Ngetu 2003). Although the population has grown significantly since 2001, with anecdotal evidence suggesting 'newcomers' are predominately Black African, it remains a mixed area in which no single race dominates. In contrast, Silvertree Estate is predominately (but not exclusively) populated by white families. There are a total of 180 plots in the security estate, with an estimated population

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[7] As reported in the local newspaper, the *Weekend Argus* of 05/06/04 ("International Award for Westlake Development"). This process of financial distribution is ongoing: the developers have received proposals for funds from various Westlake community groups, but have not yet allocated the funds.

total of 600 people (the Census 2001 is inadequate for analysing Silvertree because the majority of residents had not moved into their houses at that stage), and although the vast majority are owned by whites, there are a handful of Black African and Coloured families, as well as a few foreign families (Taiwanese, Japanese, Americans, British, French and German). Although the Silvertree estate manager estimates the security block as 90% white (P.B. 06/04/04), my research indicates that it is closer to 95% white (though perhaps only 90% *South African* white). Furthermore, unlike other security villages, which tend to be dominated by elderly retirees seeking peace and quiet, Silvertree Estate residents are predominately young families with children attending Reddam House School. As a result, the security village is largely empty during the day (with both parents working and children at school) but slightly more noisy than other security villages during weekends.[8] In contrast, Westlake Village has a much more even spread of ages, with no particular age-group dominating my research sample, and severe unemployment[9] ensures the village is a hive of activity during the day as well as on the weekends.

This paper stems from research undertaken in Westlake Village and Silvertree Estate from January to May 2004. Qualitative semi-structured interviews were conducted with a broad diversity of residents seeking to understand everyday lives as well as attitudes and perceptions regarding life in both Westlake Village and Silvertree Estate independently, as well as in relation to each other.[10] In particular, analysis addresses the extent of social understanding and social contact between two vastly different socio-economic groups living in spatial proximity within the confines of a single development. Several residents were interviewed more than once in order to gain a long-term holistic view of neighbourhood life. In addition, time was spent simply chatting to residents and walking through the streets and local shops/cafes to ensure an adequate overview of each suburb. Furthermore, I attended several local meetings (organised by internal and external groups) and interviewed a broad range of non-residents with an interest and activity in the area, for example council officials, political representatives, local businessmen, charity workers and those that had been involved in the development process.

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[8] The majority of respondents in this research sample were aged 31-40 (62% of respondents), with only a handful over 60 (7%).

[9] According to the 2001 census, 37% of Westlake Village adults are unemployed (Ngetu 2003:13), which is confirmed by this research's findings that 39% of respondents (19 out of 49) are unemployed.

[10] 49 residents were interviewed in Westlake Village and 13 in the Silvertree Estate.

ATTITUDES TOWARDS AND PERCEPTIONS OF EACH OTHER

In order to consider the linkages between the Silvertree Estate security village and its neighbouring suburb of Westlake Village, the perceptions demonstrated by residents of each neighbourhood towards the other are considered. It is worth noting not only that Westlake Village's physical existence in the area pre-dates Silvertree Estate's (Westlake Village was already formalised and residents in their houses approximately six months before the first Silvertree Estate residents moved in), but also that Westlake Village residents as individuals have a significantly longer tenure in the area than their Silvertree Estate counterparts, with the informal settlement having originated in 1991, and some formal settlement inhabitants claiming residence since 1980.[11] Thus, one would expect, if anything, for Westlake Village residents to possess the stronger claim to ownership of the area given their strong historical tenure. However, despite their relative brevity in the area, Silvertree Estate exerts dominance in the area, with Westlake Village residents feeling rejected by their new neighbours and, in fact, neither suburb feels as though they are 'neighbours' with the other.

Spaces of exclusivity: Westlake Village feels unwanted by its 'superior' neighbour

Despite Westlake villagers' long origins in the area (compared to the relatively short local tenure of Silvertree residents), Westlake villagers feel 'unwanted' in the very area that for many of them has been 'home' for a decade or more. Although the development has provided formalisation of their previously precarious and informal status, it has eroded rather than strengthened residents' sense of belonging to the area.

> They only gave us houses here because they had to, so they could get the money from this land. [W.C. 11/02/04]

> This is a rich mans land … they regret putting the people here because they can't get us off the land now, though they want to, because government law says we can be here. [C.L. 01/02/04]

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[11] 22 out of 49 interviewees in Westlake Village claimed to have been resident in Westlake for ten years or more, and 34 out of 49 claimed they had lived in Westlake for at least six years.

Although these negative feelings are directed at the development as a whole, rather than Silvertree Estate residents in particular, these perceptions are rooted in a feeling that Westlake Village is considered lesser *in comparison* with its wealthy and more powerful neighbours, and thus antipathy is partly directed towards Silvertree Estate residents. These perceptions of being unwanted are caused by three major spaces of exclusivity in the master-plan development. Firstly, Westlake is hidden in the middle of the master-plan development, with few people even aware of its existence.

> Did you find my house okay? [Yes, I looked it up on a map]. Really? Someone told me that this place isn't on the map. It is very isolated here. We're cut off from things [B.T. 28/01/04]
>
> Some people, when I say I'm from Westlake they say "where is that?" They don't know that we exist [V.M.14/04/04]
>
> If you come here [to the business park] you would never think that lots of people stay just further down there. But we have to pass through this area in order to get out of Westlake, we fought with them for better access in and out, but they don't listen to us [V.M. 04/02/04]

While Silvertree Estate has become a sought-after address, with property values far exceeding original hopes, Westlake Village has become the forgotten part of the development and is barely visible even from within the development, let alone from the surrounding roads and neighbourhoods. In fact, this 'invisibility' was part of the original master-plan design, as shown by Figure 3.

Figure 3. Land-design planning for hidden eye-line from Silvertree to Westlake (Rabie *et al*, 1998)

As Figure 3 – an extract from the concept note submitted by the developers to the City Council – demonstrates, there was always the intention that Silvertree Estate residents (on the left-hand side of the picture) would be unable to view the "social housing" (Westlake Village, on the right-hand side of the picture). However, in reality the division between the two residential areas has not been created in such an aesthetically-pleasing or natural fashion. Instead of using trees and landscaping as a division, the developers chose to use Reddam House School[12] as a buffer (see Map 1), in addition to erecting a high concrete electrified wall to surround both the school and Silvertree Estate. This ultimately serves to exclude Westlake Village from this secure zone, indicating that the Westlake development was designed to discourage contact between these neighbouring suburbs, as confirmed by the developers:

> You've got a buffer zone between the wealthy and poor area – i.e. Reddam House – but it's done sensitively, in a way that is socially acceptable - having a

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[12] Reddam House School was not part of the Westlake master-plan design at the time of this concept note. The school requested entry to the development at a later stage. Once the land was re-zoned it served as a useful buffer-strip, as well as attracting more high-income families to Silvertree Estate.

> different land use between the two residential areas. There's a wall separating the school and a wall around Silvertree. [C.G.15/04/04]

These high walls and electric fences comprise the second space of exclusivity identified by Westlake villagers as contributing to their feelings of rejection within their residential area.

> They put us in the middle and built factories around us. They didn't tell us about that. Then they build high walls like Jericho. They don't want to see us. People don't even know we live here … I like this place but when you think of all the money [spent on the surrounding areas] you must get very angry [E.T. 11/03/04]

> They built a wall between us here … and Reddam School … the segregation is like the old days. Not to be race-ical [sic.], but why put a wall between us different groups? That is not development. [P.B. 14/04/04]

There is a large body of empirical literature addressing the role of walls in facilitating exclusion and rejection for those 'outside' the privileged space (e.g. Caldeira 1999:115, Massey and Denton 1993:iix), but suffice it to comment that Westlake villagers' *emotional* perceptions that neighbours are rejecting their presence are confirmed by the *physical* presence of walls. In addition, these walls facilitate the third space of exclusivity experienced by Westlake villagers, namely their limited access in and out of their suburb, and in particular the lack of official access to the local Pick 'n Pay supermarket (part of the master-plan development and housed in the Steenberg Lifestyle Centre). Despite its proximity to Westlake Village, the land-planning design restricts access from Westlake Village to the retail centre, forcing villagers to travel almost 3km to reach shops that lie less than 100m away (see Map 1). However, villagers have created their own access by forging a path through the wetlands and breaking a hole in the fence that separates Westlake Village from the shops.

> Although we now have a path to the Pick 'n Pay, they want to close it and the owner there doesn't want us to shop there. If there was another shop we would use it, but there isn't [B.T. 28/01/04]

> They don't want us to go to those places. Like when we go to Pick 'n Pay we had to cut the steel fencing because we were surrounded by fencing and its dirty and wet there - there is no bridge. And the manager at Pick n Pay says he doesn't care whether there's a bridge or not, whether we go there or not he doesn't care [V.X. 14/04/04]

Clearly planners sought to encourage deracialised (rather than desegregated) space by discouraging Westlakers from using such facilities that were to be the preserve of those from Silvertree Estate, who (unlike Westlake Village residents) have official direct pedestrian access to the shops through Reddam House School. As noted earlier, deracialised space allows poor blacks to reside in 'white' spaces and thus dramatically alter the racial dynamics of *space*, but refuses them access to local 'white' facilities (e.g. schools, shops) thus leaving them *socially* and "*functionally*" segregated (Saff 1998:102-104). In this sense, the limited access of Westlake Village to its most immediate 'white' facilities indicates a lack of desire by the planners to encourage any meaningful desegregation in the Westlake master-plan development.

The two main reasons cited by Westlake Village residents as an explanation for why they believe their new neighbours choose to reject them are because Silvertree Estate residents (and other neighbouring facilities) perceive that Westlake Village lowers the standard of the area, in particular in decreasing property prices and increasing crime.

> They get lots of complaints about Westlake – like robberies at Reddam House [school] and at Pick 'n Pay [supermarket] - they are scared that we bring the property value in nearby areas down, but they don't come and work in the community, they just complain. [C.L. 01/02/04]

> If you say you're from Westlake, people don't want to give you a job because it has a bad reputation. The Pick 'n Pay got robbed twice and the people [i.e. the thieves] came running into Westlake so they think its Westlake people. [I.C. 12/02/04].

Such criticisms are common amongst middle-class suburbs opposing informal settlements that have erupted adjacent to the suburbs (e.g. Saff 1998:107; 2001), but the contrast in

this case is twofold. Firstly, Westlake Village is *not* an informal settlement; it is a formal suburb with as much legal right to occupy the land as Silvertree Estate. Secondly, Westlake Village was already in existence when Silvertree Estate residents bought their plots/houses. Furthermore, there is no crime in Silvertree Estate and property prices have escalated rather than fallen, thus disproving such fears. These negative perceptions expressed by Westlake Village residents are matched by Silvertree Estate residents' perceptions of superiority towards Westlake Village and its inhabitants.

> They [Westlake villagers] got formal houses and sold them for R30,000 – so now they're all squatting again! It hasn't really been an upgrade apart from the houses. There's social decay … People from Westlake are not motivated. [G.K. 28/04/04]

> Down there [in Westlake] there's virtually no attempt to do a garden or make it nice. Within a year it will look like a shanty town. [A.J. 24/03/04]

Silvertree Estate residents frequently described Westlake Village to me as an "informal" or "squatter" area that is riddled with crime and unsafe to enter, as well as describing Westlake residents as "lazy" people who should be eternally grateful for their free houses, not complaining about lack of jobs or inadequate location. Whilst not directly rejecting Westlake Village's right to exist in the area, such responses reveal an ignorance and negative perception of their neighbours as well as confirming their own perceptions of superiority, thus implying almost a rejection of Westlake's existence from a Silvertree Estate perspective.

These spaces of exclusivity based on perceptions of each other are not surprising, given that the spatial design of Westlake's master-plan development positioned two spaces with different aims adjacent to one another. For whilst the developers sought to create in Silvertree Estate an exclusive space (i.e. aiming to keep people out), in Westlake Village they desired to create a hidden space (i.e. aiming to limit awareness of its existence). Thus it is somewhat axiomatic that the two suburbs perceive themselves as two separate neighbourhoods rather than one development. However, this spatial separation does not necessarily prevent a feeling of being neighbours with the other, which is the focus of the next section.

Spaces of exclusivity: "Don't *feel* like neighbours"

Thus far analysis has considered primarily Westlake villagers' perceptions of Silvertree Estate rather than vice versa. In this section, the attitudes of both suburbs in relation to each other as 'neighbours' are considered. Furthermore, the different understandings of what being a 'neighbour' entails for residents of the two different suburbs is used as an explanation for the absence of neighbourly relations between the two areas.

When asked their opinion of the Silvertree Estate, Westlake villagers repeatedly commented very emotively that they do not *feel* like neighbours with their adjacent neighbourhood.

> I have no contact with the people there [in Silvertree] … I don't feel like [they're] my neighbours because I never met them [P.X.30/04/04]
>
> The Silvertree people, their kids go to Reddam School. We don't feel like neighbours. You're not allowed to go in there unless you know somebody there. [A.T 11/02/04]
>
> I don't feel we're neighbours – they're the elite, we're not. [T.F 07/04/04]

These feelings of non-neighbourly relations are based on criticisms that residents of Westlake Village and Silvertree Estate do not know each other (partly a consequence of restricted access to Silvertree Estate) and have access to differing quality facilities. Thus, their daily lives and movement patterns do not intersect despite residential proximity. Such limited social and spatial intersections are obviously a hindrance to connections between residents, especially in light of research elsewhere indicating that diverse groups are most likely to integrate where three criteria exist: firstly, a common livelihood (e.g. professionals *or* manual labourers); secondly, sharing neighbourhood resources (e.g. schools); and thirdly, for both groups to perceive benefits from relationships (Bakewell 2002).[13] Of these three factors, the first two are clearly not evident in the Silvertree-Westlake interface, for whilst Silvertree Estate is predominately composed of

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[13] Bakewell's research analyses the factors that facilitate the "self-integration" of Angolan refugees into Zambian villages (rather than residing in refugee camps), based on stable friendships and significant social mixing.

professionals whose children attend the private Reddam House School, Westlake villagers are either unemployed or work in manual labour, sending their children to state schools in nearby 'Coloured' areas (cheaper than schools in the more proximate 'white' areas – see Lemanski 2004b). However, with respect to Bakewell's third factor, although any linkages would be likely to benefit Westlake Village more than Silvertree Estate, there is some level of mutual benefit as demonstrated in section 5.2.

This feeling of being non-neighbours is equally expressed by Silvertree Estate residents, though in less emotive language. Rather than expressing directly that they "don't feel like neighbours", Silvertree Estate residents demonstrate sufficient lack of interest (e.g. they believe Westlake Village is an informal squatter settlement, rather than a formal neighbourhood) and lack of awareness of Westlake Village (e.g. they were unaware of its existence when purchasing in Silvertree Estate) to demonstrate an absence of neighbourly feeling.

> There's so much wealth here right next to an informal settlement ... it's totally informal … I didn't realise how close Westlake was to us when we bought. Only when we moved in [L.H. 22/04/04]

> You've got some of the most expensive houses and school, a squatter area, a prison [G.K.28/04/04]

> As far as we're concerned they're not even there [A.K. 28/04/04]

> Most of the time I forget it's there [vnK 05/05/04]

> I wasn't aware of them when we bought. We knew there were squatters but we didn't know where they'd moved to. [M.J. 06/05/04]

Although such sentiments also demonstrate a lack of *desire* for neighbourly relations (unlike Westlake villagers' obvious desire for linkages), the paradox is that most Silvertree Estate residents do express a desire that "someone ought to be doing something down there", as analysed in section 5.1. Such lack of interest in one's immediate neighbours is not surprising given that adverts for housing in Silvertree Estate fail to

mention Westlake Village and, as demonstrated above, many residents were unaware of Westlake Village's existence when they purchased their home/plot. Silvertree Estate has always been marketed as part of nearby Constantia (which hosts some of the most sought after residences in Cape Town and is located in one of Cape Town's most beautiful valleys, home to a number of wine farms) rather than Westlake. In fact, not a single property agent lists Silvertree Estate properties under a Westlake heading; rather, these are advertised in the Constantia area listings and the original adverts for Silvertree Estate, released when it was first developed, emphasise it as being in "Constantia Valley" (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Advertisement for Silvertree Estate in *Constantiaberg Bulletin* 09/1100)

This refusal to acknowledge proximity to Westlake Village is based on the reputation of Westlake Village as hosting primarily a low-cost housing area, with which its wealthier neighbours do not wish to be associated. Indeed, if property agents wish to continue advertising Silvertree Estate as a "*prestigious address*" (as reflected in the property section of the *Weekend Argus* of 07/02/04), and charge the prices associated with such a label, they recognise the need to keep Westlake Village out of the address, and to create a public perception of Silvertree Estate that is entirely divorced from Westlake Village.

Indeed, the photograph in Figure 5 highlights the original advertisement strategy of the developers, seeking to utterly ignore the estate's proximity to Westlake's low-cost housing area, instead choosing to promote only upper-class status symbols such as its proximity to an exclusive private school, as well as two highly esteemed golf courses. Thus, the 'indifference' shown by Silvertree Estate residents towards Westlake Village is understandable, and in fact is a common response to proximity with difference (Blokland 2003:19).

One explanation for the lack of neighbourly relations between the two areas could be the difference in what being 'neighbours' means to a Silvertree Estate resident as opposed to what it means to a Westlake villager. In Westlake Village, neighbours are constantly in and out of one another's houses, front doors are permanently open, children play together in the streets, with many households obviously reliant on one another for social and economic support.

> The people I'm closest to is my neighbours, like if I go away the neighbours will look after my house [A.T. 11/02/04]

> I like it here because you always have friends. If you're hungry you can go to your neighbour and eat there. You'll never be lonely in Westlake, but in Kenilworth where I used to stay [a former 'white' suburb] everyone is busy minding their own business, you never talk to people [B.T. 01/02/04]

Indeed, in the five months of conducting research, residents extended friendship towards me, and as I walked the streets I would greet and be greeted. In contrast, 'being neighbours' within Silvertree Estate involves respecting each other's privacy, restricting noise levels and offering a polite greeting in the street when passing one another. Front doors are locked, houses have walls surrounding them (see Figure 2) and apart from children walking to and from school I rarely saw children (or adults) playing or walking outside, other than to and from their car.[14]

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[14] Although an exception to this limited neighbourhood socialising is facilitated by Reddam House, as many parents of children at the school socialise with other Silvertree Estate residents because their children are in the same class. In general Silvertree Estate exhibits quiet and privacy, with most socialising occurring outside the neighbourhood.

> We socialise outside [of Silvertree] almost exclusively … I think everyone [in Silvertree] is pretty much private because it's still new and we've got high walls. People don't want to disturb the neighbours, people pretty much keep themselves to themselves. [L.M. 16/04/04]

> There's not much socialising here [in Silvertree] – they very much keep to themselves. It gets quite claustrophobic here because everyone is very cocooned, yes, that's the best word for it. I don't work so I have no idea what is happening outside … People here just say 'hello' … [it] can be very cliquey. [L.H. 22/04/04]

> Most [of our] socialising is [with] old established friends, not in Silvertree. We have acquaintances in Silvertree – chatting over the fence … We don't live in each others' houses because we live in such proximity we don't socialise much. [GdK 03/05/04]

> I've never been into anybody's house here. It's just that we come and go often that there's not much time … I think people here have their own social circles [G.M. 05/05/04)

To be honest I haven't met that many people here … We're just getting to know the people next door [and have been in Silvertree for 18 months]. It's nice that everyone waves, smiles and says hello but [people] aren't that friendly [vnK 05/05/04]

In the context of these differing styles of 'being neighbours' it would appear that Silvertree Estate residents are responding to Westlake Village in the passive style that they associate with neighbourly relations; that of quiet lack of interest. In contrast, Westlake villagers are seeking the more active form of neighbourly relations that they experience everyday in their immediate surroundings. Thus any interface is destined to fail, or at least encounter sufficient cultural differences that given the additional context of vast socio-economic differences do not create an environment conducive to linkages between Silvertree Estate and Westlake Village. This 'indifference' based on different cultural norms is clearly linked to different socio-economics, as well as the prominence of

non-local networks for those in Silvertree Estate. Indeed, 'indifference' (towards one's neighbours) in middle-class suburbs has been identified as most prevalent amongst residents with strong social networks and responsibilities *outside* the geographical locality of the neighbourhood (Blokland 2003). Elsewhere, a key foundation of the British government's 'neighbourhood renewal' strategy is that a sense of belonging to, participating in, and socialising with residents in one's neighbourhood is more dominant amongst residents in deprived areas, whilst those in affluent areas rely on non-local amenities and social networks (Parkes *et al* 2002:2413). This is theoretically linked to Tönnies' belief that friendship and neighbourhood are of prime importance to the lower classes ("*common people*"), whereas the upper classes ("*the educated*") are more likely to distance themselves from their neighbours and peers, instead relying on family and non-local contacts and "*interest groups*" (Tönnies 1887:193). This is clearly evident in Silvertree-Westlake, where the former has limited internal mixing compared to the internal vibrancy of the latter. The consequence of this for linkages between the two neighbourhoods is a stalemate – for those with the socio-economic and spatial resources to initiate contact (i.e. Silvertree Estate) prefer to lead their daily lives outside of the residential zone, while those desiring linkages (i.e. Westlake Village) have limited resources to initiate this. Analysis thus far has considered the perceptions between Silvertree Estate and Westlake Village rather than actual *contact*, which forms the focus of the next section.

NATURE OF CONTACT WITH EACH OTHER

Despite the physical proximity of Westlake Village and Silvertree Estate, direct contact between residents is limited by the spatial design (see Map 1), which precludes the need for daily lives to overlap, for example in accessing their respective neighbourhoods. Furthermore, Westlake villagers are physically prevented from accessing Silvertree Estate by security guards, gates and walls which separate the two areas and monitor Silvertree Estate's entrances.

Spaces of connection or exclusivity? One-sided visits and handouts

Any spaces of contact between the two neighbourhoods tend to be very one-sided, invariably initiated by Silvertree Estate, if at all. Although the vast majority of Westlake villagers have never visited Silvertree Estate due to the restricted access, Silvertree Estate

residents are free to visit their neighbours. Approximately half of my Silvertree Estate sample had never visited Westlake Village despite its proximity.

> [I've] never been down there. I wouldn't. I'm not a snob, but there's no reason to go there. Most of the time I forget it's there. [vnK 05/05/04]

Of the Silvertree Estate's residents who had visited Westlake Village, varying reasons and experiences were registered. Some visited just to browse, others to look for staff, and others in order to register to vote in the 2004 Presidential elections.

> [Before we moved here] we first drove around Westlake Village to see how it is and what has been done. I want to see the Westlake houses – out of sight out of mind is ridiculous ... So I said we'd get a maid from the village. My kids can have friends there, though they can't go to school together. [Do your children have friends in Westlake?] My children don't know anyone at Westlake, but they come in the car with me and Caroline's [my maid] children come up here to play. They get on fine and play together. [M. J-P 09/03/04]

> [Did you go to Westlake to vote?] [Yes, but that was] not the first time [I was] in Westlake, [the] first time was to register, but I don't know anyone there so wouldn't visit ... People tend to think if you live near black people it will be bad. But it's not like that in Westlake, … I have never heard of crime or anything … it's not that sort of place. [L.M. 16/04/04]

> [Do you have any links with Westlake village?] No. The only contact was to vote and I refused to register there. When we drove into Westlake they told us it was in the business park but then we ended up in the taxis and funny men looking at us and I didn't feel safe so we just left …we had the children and I was scared. It's like chalk and cheese. [M.J. 06/05/04]

Of those Silvertree Estate residents who have visited Westlake Village, there is clearly a divergence in opinion regarding the safety of the area. Although approximately half of Silvertree Estate has paid a visit to Westlake Village, Westlake villagers are unable to return this, and thus this potential space of contact is very one-sided. Despite Silvertree

Estate residents' reticence in visiting Westlake Village, most agree that "*someone* ought to be doing something down there".

> There is not as much interaction [between Silvertree Estate and Westlake Village] as it should be maybe. But in the last six months it's got better as we're trying to get involved. But for the previous three years there was nothing, except for people going there to find a worker. We've recently become more aware of their issues – taxis, transport and access [P.B. 06/04/04]

> I invited people from the Westlake Trust to talk to us [at the Silvertree homeowners association] ... I was embarrassed at that meeting because the [Silvertree] men all sat there and said nothing when he was making his plea. This is an informal settlement that affects all of us, whether good or bad, it's on our doorstep. I don't really know what happened since [but] I really do think that we should get involved [in Westlake] ... [Do you have any involvement in Westlake?] No. But I'm so new here [been here 9 months], also I travel a lot … it's very difficult to get involved when you're away so much. [L.H. 22/04/04]

> I think everyone would like to see more discipline in Westlake. Especially the shebeens, that is not part of a residential area. [G.K. 28/04/04]

> I'd like to help my neighbours – but it's not safe to enter the area. [GdK 03/05/04]

> [I've] never been down there. I wouldn't. I'm not a snob, but there's no reason to go there. It's terrible – they're very poor and we're living in luxury. In fact, they moved off this land for us. [vnK 05/05/04]

Such discourses encourage a one-way relationship, with Silvertree Estate residents 'helping' Westlake villagers to become 'better' (i.e. more like 'us', and therefore more acceptable to Silvertree Estate). This not only fails to view Westlake villagers as equals, but also involves no reciprocity as Silvertree Estate residents do not seek help in return. This attitude is clearly summarised by a resident of an adjacent gated community.

> I feel that [white] people have distanced themselves more. The attitude [of whites] has definitely changed – we are the great saviours, we hand out to you but don't come into my territory. [D.L.23/04/04]

Spaces of Connection: of mutual benefit?

Despite rhetoric from Silvertree Estate residents about not being personally involved in Westlake Village but feeling that someone ought to be, there *are* spaces of connection between the two suburbs, manifest in two forms: firstly, employment, and secondly, through the local NGOs that work in the area. Westlake villagers perceive that their neighbours do not employ from the village.

> We have no interaction with our neighbours. Only a few people here work at Westlake Business Park, but they're outsiders. They don't want Westlake people to work there because they think we will steal [W.C. 11/03/04]

However, a number of Silvertree Estate residents as well as businesses in the Westlake business park do have employees from Westlake Village. Of those businesses and factories in the Westlake business park that are accessible to all (i.e. not those enclosed with access restricted by security check-points), and likely to employ unskilled and semi-skilled workers (i.e. not those in the 'Westlake Square' which are predominately tiny skilled offices such as insurance brokers, lawyers), over half employ staff from Westlake village (nine of the 17 accessible and employable businesses).[15] However, of the nine businesses that do employ from Westlake Village, only six had actively sought local staff, rather than bringing staff with them who subsequently moved into Westlake village in order to be close to work. Of the five businesses that do not employ Westlake villagers (and that agreed to participate in this research), the two main reasons cited for this were: firstly, that they were a small company and thus had few workers, and secondly that their original staff had remained when the business relocated to Westlake. It is worth noting that reasons for not employing Westlakers were *not* based on negative perceptions of villagers (as perceived by Westlake villagers themselves), but on a lack of need for staff. In addition, a handful of Silvertree Estate residents hire Westlake villagers as labourers or

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[15] These figures are based on telephone interviews with managers in the Westlake business area in May 2004. However, only 14 of the 17 accessible and employable businesses agreed to speak to me, the other three refused to answer my questions and are thus assumed as *not* having staff from Westlake Village.

domestic staff. Although this does provide spaces of connection between Westlake Village and their neighbours (both the business park and Silvertree Estate), the number of Westlake villagers affected by these connections is very small (as most Silvertree Estate residents brought domestic staff with them from elsewhere). Such connections are also very one-sided, with Westlakers being the subordinate party.

> [Silvertree resident] The only link [between Silvertree Estate and Westlake Village] could be master-servant relationships [G.M. 05/05/04]

The second space of Silvertree-Westlake connection is facilitated by the two most prominent NGOs working in Westlake. The 'Westlake United Church Trust' (WUCT) is a non-profit organisation established in 2002 by various local churches from the surrounding areas, many of which had already been working in Westlake for several years prior to the development. Although it does not have representation from Silvertree Estate specifically, its members are from other neighbouring non-gated suburbs. The 'Westlake Neighbourhood Trust' (WENT) is a public-benefit organisation established in 2002 and initiated by a Reddam House School staff member in conjunction with representatives from the American Consulate (who are no longer involved), the Rotary Club in an adjacent non-gated suburb and a resident of the adjacent 'Steenberg golf estate' (a gated community, see Map 1). Since early-2004 the trust has also had a Silvertree Estate resident on its board. WENT was established in order to fulfil a clause in Reddam House School's land re-zoning acceptance stating:

> The applicant [i.e. Reddam House School] shall undertake an outreach programme (as part of the social upliftment scheme already in place) for the social housing residents [i.e. Westlake Village] which shall be to the approval of the Executive Director: Urban and Environmental Services of the SPM. [Document approving the establishment of Reddam House School – shown to the author by the City of Cape Town Town-planning Department, 06/05/04]

Although Reddam House School was forced to establish some form of outreach to Westlake Village, WENT's vision is far wider, encouraging all 'neighbours' of Westlake to get involved in supporting the village, as revealed by the locally-representative nature of its board. Such an attitude encourages spaces of connection between Westlake Village

and its immediate neighbours, although connections have again suffered from one-sidedness. Although to be expected in the implementation stage, amongst both WUCT and WENT this one-sidedness is also evident in the conceptualisation of '*helping*' Westlake Village rather than working *together* to improve the area (i.e. Westlake Village *and* Silvertree Estate) as a whole. WUCT operates from a base in the village and runs various community programmes such as a day-care centre, an AIDS support group and a vegetable garden (in conjunction with WENT). WENTs original ventures into Westlake Village were purely liberal handouts that failed due to their naivety (as subsequently recognised by WENT). WENT now operates as a bridging organisation, willing to unite Westlake Village's needs with its neighbours' resources [S.F. 06/05/04] as well as financing a 'domestic training' course and vegetable garden in Westlake Village.

Although WUCT does employ two local residents to operate its community office, the board of WUCT is entirely composed of non-Westlake residents and decisions are very top-down with no input from Westlake villagers. For example, only one of the nine churches in the group is a Westlake-based church (despite there being at least four active churches in the village), WUCT meetings have no participation from Westlake Village residents, and WUCT staff are accused of "talking down" and being "patronising" towards Westlake Village residents both in their language and attitude (A.T. 11/02/04; S.D. 18/10/04). In contrast, WENTs approach is admirable in encouraging neighbourhood involvement. However, its one-sided nature ultimately thwarts its success (e.g. despite being a 'neighbour-based' group, there is no resident of Westlake Village on WENTs board). That is not to imply Westlake villagers as the innocent and Silvertree Estate, WUCT and WENT as the tyrant, for Westlake villagers attitudes also encourage this hand-out mentality as they are reticent to initiate connections or work together to benefit the area as a whole. Although this desire for Silvertree-Westlake connections to be based on 'working together' sounds very naive, this does not have be based on altruism. Rather, it is more likely to be successful if based on mutual benefit rather than one-sided (or dual-sided) philanthropy. This 'mutual benefit' is confirmed by the third factor that Bakewell identified as facilitating integration between diverse groups, as discussed earlier. While spaces of employment connection *do* provide mutual benefit to the employed and employee, the employer is obviously in a position of greater power and few Westlake villagers are affected by this, although such spaces of connection *are* a good starting point in creating a symbiotic relationship between Silvertree Estate and Westlake Village.

At present though, even such employment contracts are not truly symbiotic because whilst the Westlake villager is reliant on the Silvertree Estate employer for its livelihood, the latter can easily replace such unskilled and temporary employees. Thus, this reliance is not inter-dependent or symbiotic. In contrast, WUCT and WENT provide spaces of connection that affect far more people in Westlake, but are not based on mutual benefit. Or are they?

Whilst this may seem a somewhat perverse form of mutual benefit, WENT's strategy for encouraging Silvertree Estate's involvement did not focus on benevolence but sought to sell financial participation as a form of communal indemnity.

> I went to the Silvertree body corporate … we tried to sell it to them as social insurance: if you give now you're less likely to have problems in the future. There were three ways to sell is: one, there's gonna be a riot next door until you do something; two, buy a favour [to deter crime from people in WL]; and three, because you genuinely want to help [and I went for the former two] [S.F.06/05/04]

In other words, there is a mutual benefit in WENT's spaces of connection in that Westlake villagers receive some form of social upliftment and Silvertree Estate residents are not concerned that their neighbours are lowering the standard of the area and thus affecting crime and property prices. These spaces of connection therefore meet Bakewell's criteria of 'mutual benefit' whilst providing some level of symbiotic functional integration. Although they are also involved in improving the area as a whole, they are not spaces in which Westlake villagers meet on an equal footing with their wealthier neighbours in order to *jointly* improve the area. Although WENT have admirably avoided acting as the self-appointed spokesperson of Westlake Village (instead they speak only for WENT), the trust is hindered by its lack of Westlake Village participation, for example, there is no Westlake villager on WENT's board. Although WENT's recent (late-2004) invitation for the chairperson of the recently created 'Westlake Development Forum' to list the needs of Westlake Village at one of their meetings is laudable and certainly preferably to WENT "guessing" the communities needs (as was the case prior to the existence of a unified Westlake forum) (M. J-P 04/12/04), it is not to be conflated with real neighbourhood participation. By this I mean,

all local communities working together to improve the area as a whole (which would necessitate representatives of all communities on WENT's board, i.e. Westlake Village), rather than some community representatives seeking to '*help*' a poorer group, with the implicit assumption that poverty is a problem and wealth is a solution (whereas as Ballard's (2004:56) research has shown, wealth is also a problem in such contexts). Although it is recognised that selecting an individual to represent Westlake Village on WENT's board would be difficult in terms of offending other groups within Westlake Village, and also that working through Westlake Village's local organisations has been hindered by the prior absence of a unified community voice (Lemanski 2004b), WENT's failure to meet Westlake villagers on an equal footing (e.g. represented on their board) hampers the potentially symbiotic spaces of connection that they provide .

Impact of racism

While earlier analysis mentioned the impact of cultural and socio-economic difference in hindering Silvertree-Westlake connections, given the history of South Africa it is also important to note the impact of racial difference. While Silvertree Estate is predominately composed of the race considered superior under apartheid, and also the race that has benefited most from education and opportunity, Westlake Village is almost entirely composed of Coloured and Black Africans that were considered inferior under apartheid and as a consequence have suffered from a historical lack of education and opportunity. With this in mind it is not surprising that whites who have experienced such conditioning in childhood find any notion of equal discussion with blacks virtually impossible. The consequence of this for connections is twofold. Firstly, most Silvertree Estate residents have been brought up 'knowing' their superiority over Westlake-type people, which is sufficiently engrained to effect modern connections despite efforts to avoid this. Secondly, any direct Silvertree-Westlake connections would not be between people with equal education or cultural upbringing and thus misunderstandings are likely to arise.

Indeed, even Black Africans residing in Silvertree Estate, who therefore share similar socio-economic and educational background to their white Silvertree Estate counterparts, have encountered misunderstandings.

> [Have you faced race problems in Silvertree?] People stare, they wonder how can you afford to be here? We have a joke that the whites think if you're black and

have a nice house you must sell drugs. But mostly people are very friendly and they greet, but still stare, like you're in the zoo or something. We have no problems with our friends here – in fact, we have no problems at all, the staring is not nasty [L.M. 16/04/04]

Interestingly though, race also opens another Silvertree-Westlake space of connection as this same Black African Silvertree Estate resident[16] daily greets black workers that she passes in the estate, although very few are likely to be Westlake villagers.

With everyone walking in [to Silvertree, for work], you [a white person] can ignore them, but I [a black person] must greet every black person that I pass walking out of here, and so does my daughter. It's part of our culture. I must greet ... The people come to me when they lose their jobs because they're no longer needed. Greeting everyday you kind of feel you know each other by the end. [L.M. 16/04/04]

Thus, although race is expected to compound Silvertree-Westlake connections because of cultural differences, in the space of cultural affinity it has allowed a small space of connection to flourish.

CONCLUSION

The Silvertree-Westlake interface is complex in that it hosts both spaces of exclusivity and connection. The former are manifest spatially in terms of the hidden and inaccessible design of Westlake Village in comparison to the visibility and desirability of Silvertree Estate, resulting in Westlake villagers feeling excluded and rejected from the benefits of the much-heralded Westlake master- plan development. Furthermore, the walls and inaccessibility of Silvertree Estate produce a space of exclusivity, not just for those in Westlake Village, but felt most keenly by them, partly due to their proximity, but also because the high walls erected are a constant reminder of their neighbour's rejection of its poorer neighbour. Neither Westlake Village nor Silvertree Estate residents demonstrate any 'neighbourly' feelings towards one another. Although the former indicate a desire for

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[16] This family were the only Black African family living in Silvertree Estate at this time of this research. Although two other Black African families had purchased plots, they had not yet finished building their houses and were thus not resident in Silvertree Estate at that time.

some level of interface, the latter exhibit attitudes of 'indifference' and negativity towards their neighbouring village and its inhabitants, perceived as inferior. All these spaces of exclusion are in some part a consequence of the spatial design of the development as a whole, creating areas that are totally focused on exclusivity (e.g. Silvertree Estate, Reddam House School) alongside a housing area that will struggle to survive without local interaction. Whilst easy to criticise the spatial design for creating such an Silvertree-Westlake impasse, the depth of social indifference and negativity demonstrated by the former towards the latter suggests that even with a more inclusive spatial design, interactions would have been limited. However, evidence from gated communities adjacent to poor settlements in Chile indicate that both functional integration and positive images of one another *are* possible (Salcedo and Torres 2004), and thus future mixed-land use developments incorporating low and high income housing in South Africa should be encouraged to design more inclusive spaces.

Despite this exclusive spatial design, small spaces of connection have managed to occur, for example through the marketplace, with a handful of Westlake villagers employed in Silvertree Estate or in the Westlake business park, thus creating functional integration between the two. However, this connection not only affects very few in either Westlake Village or Silvertree Estate, but is also not symbiotic because neither area provides something necessary for the other's continued existence. Such symbiotic functional integration should be a set objective in future mixed-income developments.

No friendships exist between Silvertree Estate and Westlake Village residents and the spatial inaccessibility of Silvertree Estate renders visiting a one-sided experience. Thus, a potential space of connection is diluted by its lack of reciprocity. The perception among Silvertree Estate residents of Westlake Village as a 'problem' requiring solutions offers a very one-dimensional understanding of inequality in the Westlake development, with the former blaming Westlake villager's poverty for their problems, yet failing to consider *their* relative wealth as an equal part of the problem. This was also identified by Ballard (2004:56) in Durban where he noticed that white residents problematised only the poverty of squatters, perceiving their relative affluence as "*normative and unproblematic*". This also hinders the spaces of connection created by WENT, though their aim to encourage Westlake villager's neighbours to get involved is noble.

Unlike Salcedo and Torres' (2004) experience in Chile, in the Westlake development it appears that spatial proximity has not eased social interaction between neighbours of differing socio-economics. Although the spatial design per se has been criticised for its role in hindering this, the fact that Silvertree Estate is a gated community rather than an open middle-class suburb also plays a role. Indeed, residents in non-gated suburbs in proximity to Westlake tend to be much more affected by the presence of low-cost housing in their neighbourhood, and also much more willing to support their poorer neighbours.

> People of Tokai we are bothered by people from Westlake knocking on doors and begging – we never had that before [the development] [Y.W.14/05/04]

> It doesn't affect us [in Silvertree, but] it will affect those in Tokai, who don't live in compounds [L.H. 22/04/04]

Furthermore, for residents of Silvertree Estate the only reason they are willing to reside in such proximity to a low-cost housing area is because the walls and gates they have erected create a perception of safety and exclusion from their undesirable neighbours.

> The low-cost houses [were] not an issue because it [Silvertree Estate] is gated … I'm not surprised that such wealth is beside such poverty because its like east and west Berlin, there's a wall … if we take the walls down we can integrate, but then I wouldn't want to live there. [A.K. 28/04/04]

Thus the dominant academic perspective on gated communities as rejecting those outside as unsavoury is confirmed even in a case in which this 'difference' exists less than 500m from the perimeter wall, is part of the same development, and has facilitated the creation of Silvertree Estate by agreeing to demolish their squatter camp in return for housing. Even with social conditions so conducive to some positive reciprocity, virtually none exists, leading to dire predictions for urban society and space in the new era of mixed housing plans. Indeed, while such plans successfully alter the *spatial* dynamics of the apartheid city by mixing race in residential space and overcoming inherited spatial inequalities of the city, by erecting walls and creating exclusionary spatial design such plans serve only to replace spatial apartheid with *social* apartheid, as different groups may live in spatial proximity but continue to operate in separate social and functional

spheres. As mentioned earlier, two key recommendations are thus offered for future mixed-land use developments, now heavily promoted by the government: firstly, to ensure a more inclusive design for the housing development as a whole (for example, more accessibility between different land uses); and secondly, to strive towards creating symbiotic functional integration between residential zones of differing income.

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