

SATISFACTION OF RESIDENTS WITH GATED COMMUNITY LIFESTYLE: THE CASE OF NAIROBI COUNTY; KENYA

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ABSTRACT

The residents in gated communities (GC) in Nairobi, Kenya have been promised elusive life with high expectations of convenient lifestyle without knowing the high cost of maintenance of the shared facilities. The prospective buyers have remained ignorant of existence of any guidelines and policies that operate in the gated housing development. This has led to developers having an upper hand whenever disputes arise. This study investigates how the residents of gated community rate the level of satisfaction of GC lifestyle the existing challenges. The recent popularity and phenomenal growth of gated communities in Kenya raises interesting questions such as; what are the needs of residents that want to live in GC? Are these needs fulfilled and satisfied by this lifestyle? If so how is this being done? Again this paper looks at the challenges faced by residents here. In general this paper tends to look at the level of satisfaction among the current gated community residents in the social, physical and economic environment. During research data was collected from 8 GC using cross-sectional survey research method. The data on the level of residents' satisfaction was based on the respondents' perceptions and researchers' observations. Up to 67% of the residents identified lack of clear guidelines of how the gated communities were managed as major challenge. Almost, 56% of homeowners and tenants complained about high service charges. 74% of the residents living in gated communities were satisfied with this type of housing development because of improved standard and quality of life and has enhanced security especially of children; it is vibrant, harmonious and inclusive in comparison to none-gated houses. Other reasons depicting satisfaction were; privacy, high sense of belonging to the place and proximity to social facilities. The study recommended mainstreaming of Homeowners Associations (HOAs) in the urban management structure and clear property conveyance contracts that defines the ownership rights of the shared facilities and amenities.

KEYWORDS: Gated Community, Perceptions, Satisfaction, Residents