PRIVATE COMMUNITY?

The Lived Experiences of Privatism and Community in the Development and Management of a Private Residential Estate in Sydney, Australia

Therese Erin Kenna

B. Science (Applied Geography), Hons, UNSW, 2005

Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

School of Social Sciences, University of Western Sydney, Australia

March 2009
STATEMENT OF AUTHENTICATION

The work presented in this thesis is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, original except as acknowledged in the text. I hereby declare that I have not submitted this material, either in full or in part, for a degree at this or any other institution.

_______________________________________
Therese E. Kenna
30th March 2009
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Over the course of this PhD many people have offered assistance, advice, support and mentoring along the way, and a few of those people deserve a special mention. The research presented in this thesis would not have been possible without the generosity of the residents living in Macquarie Links who volunteered their time, invited me into their homes and offered many cups of tea and coffee (and wine!) during the course of some quite lengthy interviews, as well as those who responded to the household questionnaire. My deepest thanks to every one of the residents involved in the study.

I have been fortunate to have two exceptional academics supervise this research: Professors Kevin Dunn and Deborah Stevenson. I am grateful for their commitment and contributions to this research, and many aspects of my academic life. I owe thanks to Kevin for having enough faith to let me loose in suburban Sydney, and patiently sitting back while I figured it all out (mistakes and all), for rolling with the punches, both good and bad, for listening to my rants, and for enduring all the moods that a PhD student can enact! Kevin has been a great mentor and source of wisdom for many years. After a fairly tumultuous few years at UNSW, I am extremely grateful to Kevin for making me part of his transfer to the University of Western Sydney (UWS) in early 2008 where the grass was definitely greener.

Deborah Stevenson is an academic gem! She has been the most wonderful mentor, offered countless insights and intellectual contributions to this thesis, and totally engaged with this research. Deborah gave so generously of her time and I am grateful for all the little things along the way that meant so much – the emails (even those that just checked in on how I was), coffees, hugs, corridor conversations, and especially all the little pep talks! She patiently listened to the mess of thoughts in my head and urged every one of them onto paper, which ultimately helped me make sense of my research and pull this thesis together. Deborah’s belief in the contributions and value of this research was a huge source of motivation. She has also taught me so much about research and the writing process (even if it meant enduring so many of my blank and confused looks!). I am incredibly appreciative of Deborah’s perceptions and enthusiasm as they have wholly enriched this thesis.
After meeting at a geography conference in 2005, I have shared much of this journey with fellow geography PhD student Sarah James who I can’t thank enough for her friendship and collegiality over many years, for sharing all the highs and the lows, the struggles and joys, and for all her advice and good humour along the way. I have had the pleasure of spending time with a fun and entertaining bunch of research students at UWS and I owe a million thank you’s to Ruth, Ashley, Garth, Dallas, Chris, Jacqui, Alanna and Mat, for all the good times, often over much needed drinks at the pub! Thanks also to the research students at the University of NSW, especially Claudette, Karin, Erin, Karen, Danielle, Andrew, Joanne, Alex and Stephen.

I will always remember the generosity of the College of Arts and School of Social Sciences at the University of Western Sydney, with particular thanks to Michael Atherton (Associate Dean Research) for organising a seamless transfer to UWS. The SoSS admin team, in particular Melissa, Kerry, Janice, Ann and Kathie have been a little cheer squad urging me across the line, and offering many hugs and comforting chats for which I am grateful. Many of the academics within the School have been wonderfully supportive and encouraging and I owe special thanks in this regard to Stephen Tomsen, Awais Piracha, Robyn Bushell, Russell Staiff and Greg Martin.

Through attendance at conferences, workshops and seminars and involvement in professional associations I have been fortunate to cross paths with some supportive academics. I am grateful to Donald McNeill, Kurt Iveson, Pauline McGuirk, Ruth Fincher and Gordon Waitt for all their support and encouragement over the past few years. The generosity and collegiality of these academics in supporting both my research and my many crazy ideas, like running reading groups, postgraduate student conferences, conference sessions and study group events, all aided not only my own development as a researcher, but that of others in the postgraduate community, for which I am thankful.

The final thanks is reserved for my wonderful family who have continued to support and encourage my academic pursuits, even though they often wondered what I’ve been doing at uni all this time. They have kept a smile on my face and my feet firmly planted on the ground, and I owe a special thanks to my beautiful sisters Kate and Angela, and my parents Kathy and Kevin, and their partners Glen and Linda.
# CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</th>
<th>iii</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF FIGURES</td>
<td>vii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF TABLES</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABBREVIATIONS</td>
<td>xi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>xii</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Chapter 1: PRIVATE RESIDENTIAL ESTATES: AN INTRODUCTION
- Positioning Macquarie Links
- Understanding private residential estates: research aims
- Thesis outline

## Chapter 2: THE EMERGENCE OF PRIVATE RESIDENTIAL ESTATES
- Introduction
- The transformation of residential governance
- The emergence of private residential estates
    - Different socio-political contexts for emergence
- The residents motivations for living in private residential estates
- Social outcomes of the development of private residential estates
- The financial costs of living in private residential estates
- Conclusion

## Chapter 3: UNDERSTANDING URBAN COMMUNITY
- Introduction
- Community lost?
- Understanding urban community: commonalities, social organisation and ideology
- Neighbourhood, mobility and community
- Understanding urban community: complexities and contradictions
- Conclusion
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter 4: APPROACHING MACQUARIE LINKS</th>
<th>67</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approaching urban communities</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The case study approach</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research design</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approaching Macquarie Links Residents</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of ethnographic context</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysing the data</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Considering media representations of Macquarie Links</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewing stakeholders</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research ethics</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A research challenge: young people in urban neighbourhoods</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter 5: CONSTRUCTING MACQUARIE LINKS: A PRIVATE RESIDENTIAL ESTATE</th>
<th>98</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constructing the private residential estate: community schemes legislation</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The diverse demography of Macquarie Links</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social constructions of Macquarie Links: “oh, you can imagine”?</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter 6: COMMUNITY IN MACQUARIE LINKS</th>
<th>134</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community in Macquarie Links</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social interactions: the reality of common values, social organisation, ideology and differences</td>
<td>155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter 7: COMMUNAL TACTICS: THE SECURITY AND PROTECTION OF PRIVATE RESIDENTIAL ESTATES</th>
<th>162</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.1: Location map of Macquarie Links as positioned within the surrounding suburbs and Local Government Areas. As the scale indicates Macquarie Links is located approximately 30km south west of the Sydney CBD.

Figure 1.2: Aerial view of Macquarie Links. The golf course runs through the centre of the houses and extends through to the edge of the estate, in the image. The south western motorway is in the top left of the image and the Campbelltown train line in the bottom right. The red circle indicates the gated entrance (Source: Google Earth, 2009).

Figure 5.1: The number of community schemes registered in NSW since 1990 (Source: UDIA, 2008).

Figure 5.2: Signage at the entrance to Hampton Court, a private residential development in Sydney, Australia, 2008 indicating that the development is private property and for residents and guests only (Source: Therese Kenna).

Figure 5.3: Gated entrance to Macquarie Links with a palm tree as the centre piece. The gates are in the centre of the image, with the gate house behind the palm tree, 2006 (Source: Therese Kenna).

Figure 5.4: Tree-lined streets and hedging along the road into and out of Macquarie Links, 2006 (Source: Therese Kenna).

Figures 5.5: Lifestyle and recreational elements of the Macquarie Links development, the tennis courts, main swimming pool and golf course embedded amongst the houses of the estate, plus estate advertising promoting the idea that ‘life doesn’t get any better than this’, 2006 (Source: Therese Kenna).

Figure 5.6: Large houses, well maintained tree-lined streets in Macquarie Links, 2006 (Source: Therese Kenna).

Figure 5.7: This image captures the diversity of residential dwellings in Macquarie Links, with the free standing homes to the left, the town houses on the right, and the apartment building in the distant centre of the image. The image also captures the landscaped roundabout and its centrepiece, a palm tree (Source: Therese Kenna).

Figure 5.8: Newspaper article from the Macarthur Advertiser, 12th July 2006, showing the entrance way to Macquarie Links, suggesting that the gating of residential space divides the community (Bowie, 2006a).

Figure 5.9: Newspaper article from the Macarthur Advertiser, 19th July 2006, demonstrating the residents’ response to the negative article and commentary on their private form of residential living (Bowie, 2006b).
Figure 6.1: Residents stated attractions to Macquarie Links (Source: Macquarie Links Estate Resident Questionnaire, 2007).

Figure 7.1: Hotspot map for malicious damage to property incidents in Campbelltown LGA (Source: BOCSAR, 2007:33).
LIST OF TABLES

Table 4.1: Description of the research design including specifics of the methods and sample sizes. 75

Table 5.1: Resident’s responses to the importance of features of the Macquarie Links Development in terms of amenities and facilities (Source: Macquarie Links Resident Questionnaire, 2007). 110

Table 5.2: Selected socio-demographic statistics for Macquarie Links, Sydney, NSW, Australia, 2006 (Source: ABS, 2006). 121

Table 6.1: Respondent’s agreement with various statements about the Macquarie Links development (Source: Macquarie Links Resident Questionnaire, 2007). 137

Table 7.1: Number of incidents recorded in the Campbelltown LGA, 24- and 60-month trend change and NSW ranking (2007) for the 17 major criminal offence types (Source: BOCSAR, 2007:11). 173
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABS</td>
<td>Australian Bureau of Statistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LGA</td>
<td>Local Government Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MLE</td>
<td>Macquarie Links Estate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>New South Wales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRE</td>
<td>Private Residential Estate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Private residential estates are becoming a mainstream product in urban residential development in Australia. While this urban residential form has attracted attention because of its possible contribution to processes of segregation in metropolitan regions, there has been little empirical research that has examined social life and community formation within these neighbourhoods. Thus, one of the main aims of this thesis is to understand the nature of social life, interactions and community formation within a private residential estate in Sydney, Australia – Macquarie Links. Of particular interest is the ways in which community is understood by the residents and how this community is managed and negotiated given the private governance structure of the neighbourhood. In this thesis I develop an understanding of the role of the private structure in the formation, negotiation and management of community. With the promise of privatism and community being actively marketed and sold to residents of private residential estates by developers and real estate agents, they appear at once both contradictory and dependent. This thesis argues that community formation relies on the private structure of the neighbourhood with the two being intertwined and co-dependent, rather than contradictory or mutually exclusive as is usually viewed in the urban studies literature.

The thesis argues that the formation of community in Macquarie Links relies on the identification of commonalities and complexities, consent and disagreement, private and community, which in turn allows for a consideration of the ways in which community and privatism are intertwined and sustain each other. Common bonds and disagreements have continually sustained the community of Macquarie Links such as that between owners and renters, adults and young people, the community and the individual. These disagreements, differences and ‘dramas’ within the estate are frequently managed by the community association (through the private structure), which in turn sustains community.

For the residents of Macquarie Links, the structure of the neighbourhood and community relations, with private governance and neighbourhood committees, allowed for a more encompassing protection of the residential environment, or indeed, control.
Physical security and gating is thus not the most significant element of private gated residential estates. Control, through restrictive covenants and community management offers order and stability in the residential neighbourhood. The structure of the community is important for controlling the quality of the neighbourhood. Restrictive covenants and community-led management of the estate are very communal tactics for maintaining the private structure and privatism within Macquarie Links. The thesis challenges the assumptions that privatism and community are the anti-thesis to each other. Further, neoliberal, private and individual ‘subjects’ are often coupled together and considered to be one in the same. However, being ‘private’ in Macquarie Links also requires being communal. The individual is a threat to solidarity in the belief in the private structure of the neighbourhood that aids social and communal life. This thesis demonstrates that in the context of private residential estates the private subject is different from the neoliberal subject.

There are a number of emerging concerns regarding the long term economic viability of private residential estates internationally. So as well as providing original and important insights into the lived experiences of life in a private residential estate, the thesis contributes to emergent understandings of the structure, functioning and legalities of privately governed residential developments. This thesis also points to the lack of transparency in the contractual arrangements for purchasing property within a private estate.

Finally, this thesis contributes to key debates in urban geography and urban sociology in three ways. First, through a detailed qualitative study of social life within private residential estates, this thesis contributes to broader understandings of the complexities of urban differences and divisions. Second, this thesis challenges some of the established assumptions regarding the development of private residential estates as purely an outcome of the neoliberal agenda and neoliberalist project in many western cities through an identification of the local nuances and lived experiences of privatism, which demonstrates how privatism, individualism and neoliberalism are subtly different in reality. Finally, this thesis engages with the notion of community through a recasting of theories of community to encompass commonalities and disagreements within community. This thesis demonstrates how this conceptualisation of community creates a space for understanding different types of community within cities.
PRIVATE RESIDENTIAL ESTATES: AN INTRODUCTION

Private residential estates (PREs) are an important part of contemporary residential development in metropolitan Australia. PREs are master planned to coordinate the supply and development of physical and social infrastructure in new residential estates. PREs are developed by private development companies and incorporate a form of micro-urban governance, which determines the nature of the residential development as well as the ongoing management of the residential estate. PREs are the most recent extension of the more generic master planned residential estate that has attracted significant attention in recent times in Australia (see Gleeson, 2006; Gwyther, 2005; Kenna, 2007; McGuirk and Dowling, 2007). The key difference with the most recent extension of master planning for residential development is that PREs depend upon specific legislation that enables the private ownership of land. Further, PREs are developed within already established local municipal council areas.

A private residential estate is commonly defined as a ‘piece of land under single private ownership that may become co-owned by many residents’ (Glasze et al., 2006:2). PREs are residential environments where ‘formerly municipal public services and infrastructure are increasingly privatised and placed under the administration of homeowner and condominium associations’ (McKenzie, 2006a:10). A privately governed residential estate is one with an extensive array of amenities and private infrastructure – owned in common by residents – managed by an organised body, with repairs and maintenance funded in perpetuity by the owners. These private services often necessitate the establishment of a homeowner’s association to coordinate the management of the private structure of the neighbourhood (McKenzie, 2006a:13-14). According to Le Goix (2006:77), PREs represent a ‘form of urbanism where public space is effectively privatised – protected for the exclusive consumption of a spatially and legally defined group’.

The definition of private residential estates, commonly applied in the urban studies literature, generally deals with the development of gated estates (those with gates or
security features), though private residential developments are not always gated. Indeed, the PRE phenomenon is being identified as considerably diverse (McGuirk and Dowling, 2007). A broader definition could be employed to incorporate the development of specific themed or planned residential developments, for example, an over 55s or senior development (see Townshend, 2002), or the recent developments associated with the trend towards the gentrification of urban areas (see Lees et al, 2008; Davidson, 2007). The vast majority of the literature on PREs focuses on outer suburban residential estates, though it is diversifying in scope.

Private residential estates are a prominent trend in cities and regions throughout the world. Much of the focus to date has centred on PREs, often referred to as ‘gated communities’, in the United States. This initial focus makes sense given the extent of the phenomenon in North America but has somewhat hindered analytical and theoretical progress in understanding this trend in urban areas elsewhere. The development of gated residential estates in North America has largely been considered a result of ‘white flight’ to the suburbs, perceived needs for security from rising urban crimes and a result of racial tensions (Blakely and Snyder, 1997, 1998; Low, 2001, 2003; see also Amin, 2002). As a result urban scholars applied the North American understandings to other urban settings with little consideration for local political, economic, social and cultural influences. The importance of understanding the emergence of private residential estates in a broader international context, taking account of differences in form and historical settings, and to encompass the complexity of the phenomenon, has now been noted by a number of urban scholars (Brunn and Frantz, 2006:2; Glasze et al., 2006; McKenzie, 2006a, b).

In recent times private gated residential estates have been the topic of quite intense comment both publicly and academically in Australia. Gated residential developments have been particularly criticised for their security infrastructures at a time when crime rates are apparently down in major urban regions across Australia, or at least there has been a drop in the number of reported incidences of crime (see Australian Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research, 2007). Further, private gated residential estates are thought to ‘shut out’ the rest of society, and are thus thought to divide the urban landscape and contribute to new geographies of exclusion.
The initial emergence of PREs in Australia, from about the late 1990s, triggered a flurry of academic commentary on the issue. Initially it was suggested that residents purchasing property in gated residential estates were ‘refugees from the real world’, escaping some perceived urban dangers or social ills or were ‘elite asylum seekers’ (Gleeson, 2006). Of particular concern were their impacts on democracy and citizenship, and the general social connectivity of the city. These private residential spaces were thought to be the beginning of the end for the public realm and contributing to a redefinition of citizenship – something deemed by many to be undesirable (Davis, 1990a, b; Gleeson, 2003; McGuirk and Dowling, 2007; McKenzie, 1994). Much of this commentary however, was largely reactive and drew on perspectives and experiences from similar residential developments in the United States (see for example *Fortress America*, Blakely and Snyder, 1997). This form of residential development was also deemed undesirable for the Australian urban landscape. One prominent urban policy academic has been so concerned by the emergence of this form of urban residential living in Australia that he called for policy to ban them (see Gleeson, 2006). Understandably, Gleeson’s main concern has been the trend towards growing social polarisation in Australian suburbs and the vast inequities that now exist between neighbouring suburbs in metropolitan Australia. Recently, Gleeson (2008:17) notes, somewhat sensationally, that:

Gated republics celebrating order, similarity and privilege are juxtaposed with the dystopian sinkholes studded with tattoo parlours, payday lenders, sex shops, takeaways and two-dollar bargain bins. The suburban love affair continues but in much more complex ways, and masks pockets of disenchantment and entrapment.

In the early stages of the development and emergence of PREs in Australia, a thorough understanding of this urban form is largely unknown; hence the academic response was fairly reactive with concerns for the socially divisive outcomes being most evident. The suburban love affair, as Gleeson called it, does continue in Australia but in much more complex ways than has previously been the case. The geography of Australia’s metropolitan regions has become much more complex. Australian urban geographer Clive Forster (2006:177) notes that ‘once-working class sectors now contain clearly demarcated areas of rich and poor, sometimes separated only by an arterial road or rail
line’. While divisions in Australian cities are not necessarily new, the landscape of the outer metropolitan regions of Australia’s major cities is beginning to represent a patchwork with quite noticeable differences between places.

The Australian suburbs boomed post-World War II. Indeed, the dominance of the suburban landscape in Australia has often seen Australia termed a ‘suburban nation’ (Stretton, 1978; Gleeson, 2006). For a considerable length of time the suburbs, or the wider metropolitan region, were considered mere dormitories for working families (Mee, 1994; Richards, 1990). The belief that the suburbs are one homogenous landscape is no longer sustainable due to evidence of increasing population differentiation in outer suburban areas. New understandings of metropolitan (suburban) life – the sorts of developments taking place, patterns of sociability within, and the like – are starting to emerge. Recent studies in, and of, suburban areas have encountered diverse realities. Attention has been drawn towards new religious groups (e.g. Mega Churches, see Connell, 2005), ethnic and class tensions (e.g. Sydney’s ‘riots’, see Lee, 2007), the rise of suburban business parks (see Freestone, 1996), and the growing diversity and/or fragmentation of living conditions in cities (see Baum et al., 2005, 2006; Burchell, 2003; Gleeson, 2002; Knox, 1992; Latham, 2003; Peel, 2003).

In recent times there has been somewhat of a lacuna in relation to actual empirical research into Australian suburbs, or contemporary patterns of suburban transformations, despite evidence of growing diversity and differentiation in Australia’s metropolitan regions. This calls into question academic understanding of the suburbs. The suburbs have long been by-passed but it is now time for urban research to bring them back into view. While all of the above suggests complex and diverse metropolitan regions, the claim made by Lyn Richards (1994:115) that there have been only a few empirical studies of Australian suburbs still holds true today. What appears to be missing particularly are narratives of everyday life, of ‘community’, of sociological inquiries into what people do, say and how they are living, as well as how they understand their suburban lives, not to mention a lack of knowledge about the types of new developments taking place in the broader metropolitan region and the forms and functions of these developments, be they residential or commercial.
Coupled with the need to understand the complexities and lived realities of urban differentiation and fragmentation is the need to delve more deeply into private residential estates to understand the diversities between different forms of PREs, but also the lived complexities within these new residential forms. In developing an analytical framework for Australian urban research into the development of master planned residential estates that takes account of the growing diversity of the PRE phenomenon both physically and internally, McGuirk and Dowling (2007:34) argue that an important dimension of this framework is to develop a better understanding of lived realities of both community and neighbourhood. This dimension of the framework is particularly important given that, as McGuirk and Dowling (2007:34) state, ‘Australian research is underdeveloped in this regard’. Further, in regard to empirical fieldwork, McGuirk and Dowling (2007:34) suggest that ‘this dimension demands ethnographic attention to the practices and spaces of social interaction’. Thus, to advance the state of knowledge on community and social life within private residential estates, I conducted in-depth qualitative ethnographic research in a PRE in metropolitan Sydney – Macquarie Links. This thesis aims to develop an understanding of social life and interactions within PREs and contemporary metropolitan regions. This thesis argues that the formation of community in Macquarie Links relies on the identification of commonalities and complexities, consent and disagreement, private and community, which in turn allows for a consideration of the ways in which community forms within a private residential estate.

Recent theorising of urban processes and outcomes within urban geography (Cook and Ruming, 2008; Larner, 2003; McGuirk, 2005), and specifically with regard to private residential estates (see McGuirk and Dowling, 2009), has encouraged scholars to consider these processes and their outcomes as more than neoliberal (Larner, 2003; see also Chapter 2). PREs are generally considered to be indicative of the neoliberalist project in many western nations, such as Australia, through the private provision of housing, services and infrastructure, and the creation of ‘user-pays’ residential environments (see Glasze et al., 2006; Gleeson, 2006; Gwyther, 2005). Scholars such as Larner (2003) and McGuirk (2005) suggest that researchers consider the local nuances of neoliberalism in urban areas, and to further this, I would suggest a thorough excavation of the local nuances of privatism, as the two are often coupled together and considered to be similar ideologies with similar outcomes. Further, in much of the
urban studies literature privatism and community are positioned as the anti-thesis to each other whereby privatism encourages more individualism or individual lifestyles in society rather than community or communal endeavours. However, the promise of community and privatism is marketed and sold by the developers and real estate agents for private residential estates, appearing both contradictory and dependent. So, this thesis explores the local nuances and the residents lived experiences of privatism and community within private residential estates. This thesis contributes to a broader set of literature that complicates some of the more simplistic understandings of urban processes and outcomes (for example Fincher and Jacobs, 1998; Stevenson, 2003), by understanding the ways in which an apparently neoliberal project is lived in reality.

POSITIONING MACQUARIE LINKS
PREs are part of the contemporary transformations taking place in many western cities, particularly the reorganisation of urban residential space. Located in the Sydney metropolitan region 30km southwest of the Sydney CBD, Macquarie Links, Sydney's largest gated residential estate, is the PRE under examination in this thesis (see Figures 1.1 and 1.2). Macquarie Links, like the gated estates of Sanctuary Cove and Hope Island in south east Queensland, Australia, is one of the more extreme examples of gating residential space. Macquarie Links is one of nearly 350 PREs in the Sydney metropolitan region (UDIA, 2008). Australian PREs range in size and style with some incorporating large-scale suburban developments and others being in-fill developments in the inner city (see McGuirk and Dowling, 2007). Macquarie Links is an outer suburban residential estate.

Macquarie Links has also attracted considerable critical commentary in news media from the late 1990s (see Chapter 5 for details of news reporting). This is perhaps a result of its location in the outer south west of the metropolitan region within the Campbelltown Local Government Area (LGA). Campbelltown has traditionally been a low income area for working class families. It also has a considerable number of the large-scale public housing estates that were mainstream in urban planning in Sydney in the 1960s and 1970s (Gleeson and Randolph, 2002a, b; Randolph and Holloway, 2003a,

1 While the case study of Macquarie Links is introduced briefly here, I fully detail the case study in Chapter 5.
b, 2005). Today, Campbelltown as a whole is of a lower socio-economic status than the majority of Sydney. In 2006, the Campbelltown LGA was ranked in the top three most disadvantaged LGAs in the Sydney metropolitan region (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2006a). According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) (2006a) these indices of socio-economic disadvantage are generated by combining indicators such as wealth, residential conditions, health, access to services and language. Further, a ‘riot’ occurred in the neighbouring suburb Macquarie Fields in early 2005, which is one of the most economically disadvantaged suburbs in greater Sydney. During 2007, a drug raid was conducted in the Campbelltown LGA cracking a major drug ring operating in the region (Daily Telegraph, 2007; author unknown). Additionally, in early 2009 ‘riots’ occurred between young people and police in the suburb of Rosemeadow, which is also an economically disadvantaged suburb in the Campbelltown LGA. At the same time as the Campbelltown LGA has some of the most severe examples of social disadvantage in Sydney, parts of Campbelltown are also being renewed with the increased presence of new private and master planned residential developments in the area. Campbelltown LGA is becoming increasingly differentiated socially and economically. It is the contribution of PREs to local differentiation that has seen this urban residential form heavily criticised.

It is no wonder then that the development of PREs in Australian cities, and Macquarie Links in particular, have attracted strong attention. Nevertheless there is a need for research that begins to explore the complexity of this urban phenomenon as experienced at the neighbourhood level. To understand the processes of change and transformation in Australian cities demands an ‘engagement with life in cities and the people who inhabit various urban environments’ (Hall, 2006:2). Research with residents within PREs will better illuminate the social life and interactions there. The desirability of this urban residential form, and the lived realities, are something that needs to be more rigorously assessed.
Figure 1.1: Location map of Macquarie Links as positioned within the surrounding suburbs and Local Government Areas. As the scale indicates, Macquarie Links is located approximately 30km south west of the Sydney CBD.

Figure 1.2: Aerial view of Macquarie Links. The golf course runs through the centre of the houses and extends through to the edge of the estate, in the image. The south western motorway is in the top left of the image and the Campbelltown train line in the bottom right. The red circle indicates the gated entrance (Source: Google Earth, 2009).
UNDERSTANDING PRIVATE RESIDENTIAL ESTATES: RESEARCH AIMS

In seeking to understand the complexities of life within private residential estates I was influenced by new urban geographies of difference and a politics of difference approach to understandings of urban divisions (see Fincher and Jacobs, 1998; Gibson, 1996; Gibson et al., 1996; Stevenson, 2003; Young, 1999). In the introduction of the edited collection Cities of Difference attention is drawn to the ‘complex processes that produce the arrangements of privilege and marginalisation so evident in urban spaces’ and the authors attest that when conceptualised through a politics of difference that such complexity comes into sharp focus (Jacobs and Fincher, 1998:2). My aim in adopting a contemporary approach to theories of difference is to complicate some of the more simplistic explanations of urban processes. Jacobs and Fincher (1998:2) contend that:

The lens of difference does not ignore the way in which persistent power structures can unevenly shape urban lives. But it does highlight the ways in which structures are, in turn, shaped by the contingent circumstances of specific people in specific settings.

The emphasis here is on specificity and local, lived experiences of urban process, rather than broader all-encompassing conceptualisations of urban processes and outcomes. Thus, the research presented in this thesis is positioned within the ‘new’ urban geography (Lees, 2002) that seeks to examine the complexity of urban processes and outcomes through the lens of difference.

The most significant gap in Australian urban research (and internationally) on PREs is related to understanding the social life and lived realities of these residential developments, both of the private governance structures and of the community dynamics. It is precisely this gap in knowledge, related to the complexities of social life within PREs that the research presented in this thesis seeks to address. Specifically, I was interested in developing an understanding of the seemingly contradictory and incompatible notions of the ‘private’ and ‘community’ in the context of Macquarie Links (both of which are marketed and sold, and key to the development of PREs), and how they are negotiated on a day-to-day basis within the estate. The thesis challenges the assumptions that privatism and community are the anti-thesis to each other.
Throughout this thesis I deploy a number of key terms that have broad circulation within the social sciences and are variously described. Before outlining the core aims of the research project, I want to provide brief definitions of the three key terms that are core to the research: community; privatism and neoliberalism. Community is understood throughout the thesis as the neighbourhood-based interactions and associations that occur within the boundaries of the Macquarie Links Estate development. The thesis attempts to provide a sound evidence base to broaden academic ways of understanding the notion of neighbourhood-based community that encompasses not only the commonalities and consent that has traditionally been attached to the notion of community, but also the disagreements and tensions that can form within community and in turn sustain community (see Chapter 3). Privatism is the political ideology that believes that corporate governance is superior to liberal democratic governance (see McKenzie, 1994). These forms of governance place formally public goods and services under the administration of private companies and groups for private interests (see Chapter 2). Privatism and neoliberalism are often coupled together and considered one in the same, yet are subtly different in reality. Neoliberalism is understood as the current political-economic ideology governing many western nations. The neoliberal project seeks to position market interest as predominant, with little government intervention. As PREs are privately developed to suit the demands of the market, these developments have been viewed as a direct outcome of the neoliberal project in Australia (see Gleeson, 2006). As mentioned earlier, PREs are generally considered to be indicative of this neoliberalist project through the private provision of housing, services and infrastructure, and the creation of ‘user-pays’ residential environments (see Glasze et al., 2006; Gleeson, 2006; Gwyther, 2005).

The discussion to follow and the research conducted are driven by the following research aims:

1. To understand the meanings of privatism for the structure and governance of Macquarie Links.

Micro urban governance mechanisms now increasingly incorporated into new private residential estates produce highly privatised forms of residential development. These governance mechanisms determine the overall design and layout of the neighbourhoods
including their physical design, recreational facilities, and housing types and tenure. The use of governance mechanisms in PREs also sees the development of a community association that oversees the nature of social life within planning, management and sociability. Through the payment of levies, these PREs are also intended to be self-sustaining. The lived realities of emerging forms of governance are yet to be fully understood and yet they are integral to these new residential developments.

2. To examine what is meant by ‘community’ in the context of Macquarie Links.

Too often the experiences of resident’s themselves have been poorly understood and under-researched elements of PREs. My aim is to bring resident’s views more substantially into the study of PREs. In this regard, a number of sub-questions need to be considered such as what motivates residents to purchase property in PREs, how has community formed, how does community function, is there social interaction within the estate and what are the resident’s experiences of community governance? Further, in the presence of very rigid structures for social organisation (community governance) does community form? Indeed, for PREs (as discussed in Chapter 2) these developments have very rigid legislated forms of social organisation. Community Studies to date has not yet fully investigated the formalised and structured forms of social organisation that can occur within a neighbourhood, such as those found in the organisation of PREs. Further, understanding the role of disagreement and dissent within the PRE is also important in developing an understanding of what constitutes community. Community is understood as neighbourhood-based interactions and associations formed around commonalities and consent, as well as differences and disagreements (see Chapter 3) to begin to understand what constitutes community in the contemporary era, and to contribute to urban theories of community that encourage the continued utility of the concept of ‘community’.

3. To consider the relationship between the key concepts of ‘privatism’ and ‘community’.

In much of the urban studies literature the concepts of ‘private’ and ‘community’ are viewed as an almost impossible combination, with these concepts often positioned as the anti-thesis to each other – private does not create community and community does not encourage privatism – because the private is grounded in notions of individualism
while community refers to the collective (see Chapters 2 and 3). While these might appear to be contradictory concepts in considering the development of PREs, these residential developments appeal to both ‘private’ and ‘communal’ desires for the residents. PREs are at once marketed as private and exclusive residential developments and these developments are marketed around ‘communal’ infrastructure and lifestyles such as swimming pools, tennis courts and golf clubs. Following the operationalisation of aims one and two, on what the concepts of ‘private’ and ‘community’ mean, and how they are experienced, practiced and understood, aim three seeks to examine how these two concepts come together, are intertwined and negotiated within the estate, having been positioned in the literature as an almost impossible combination.

4. To consider the broader socio-spatial implications of the development of private residential estates.

Concerns are expressed within the literature that PREs contribute to growing societal divisions. Undertaking research on the nature of PREs and private governance of residential neighbourhoods will bring us closer to understanding their potential outcomes and implications, be they related to processes of polarisation and exclusion or community formation and effective social organisation in cities. Of course, concerns with exclusion raise further questions and concerns about who is excluded from these developments and on what grounds. Notions and processes of inclusions and exclusion are at the heart of the construction of both community (boundary marking) and the private/personal/individual. The importance of this aim is to show how private residential estates extend patterns of segregation already visible and established in Australian cities in new and more complex ways than has previously been the case. In understanding the broader socio-spatial implications of these developments, the future viability of PREs will also be considered as this is emerging as an area of concern within the literature.

Ultimately, the research questions and aims were developed to generate information and advance the state of knowledge about collective life in private residential estates, the lived realities of community and privatism (and their involvement with each other), of what constitutes community in contemporary society, and of the potential socio-spatial implications. A single thesis cannot understand everything about social life in every new suburban neighbourhood. But, a thesis can peer through the cracks
and see something deeper. It is my hope that this thesis, and the research presented here, goes some way towards a fuller understanding the socio-spatial patterning of metropolitan space and some way towards understanding social life, interactions, and community formation within contemporary metropolitan regions, particularly those of western nations such as Australia.

THESIS OUTLINE
Following this introductory Chapter, Chapter 2 reviews current research on the emergence of this trend towards privatising residential space internationally. In doing so a number of key themes and theories are covered. This includes developing an understanding of the three broad explanations given in the literature to explain the emergence of PREs – neoliberalism, global preferences and ‘club’ theory – as well as their emergence in alternative socio-political contexts. The Chapter also discusses what is known about the motives (or drivers) for residents purchasing property within these developments, the financial costs associated with private residential living, and some of the perceived dangers of this trend. Finally, the Chapter explores understandings and theories of the ‘public’ and ‘private’ as they relate to residential developments. In this context the so-called ‘club’ realm is considered as an overlapping space between these two spheres of urban life. Chapter 2 points to relevant gaps that have been identified in the urban studies literature.

Chapter 3 considers the ways of understanding community formation and function in urban areas. Here, the different forms of social organisation through formal institutions or common values and kinship are explored in relation to their role in community maintenance. In the same way, ideological communities such as communes and the Kibbutz are considered to reveal their sustenance as a community structure. Significantly, this Chapter considers the more positive contributions of city diversity to community formation in suburban areas. Urban ways of life have historically been viewed as contributing to the decline of community and popularised the discourse of community ‘lost’. The Chapter canvases alternative ways of thinking about the city and its more positive contributions to the development of community, particularly through a conceptualisation of community as both common and complex.
Chapter 4 is dedicated to a discussion of the methodology that was undertaken for this thesis. I begin with a discussion of the current methodological approaches in geography and the social sciences and their applicability to current urban research. My research relied on a case study approach and adopted a qualitative framework. The ‘experiences’ with the residents during the interview phase of the research provided the material for a rich description of the people and their community and contributed to the development of an ethnographic context, even though I was not able to deploy traditional ethnographic approaches due to access restrictions.

Chapter 5 establishes what the ‘private’ means in the context of Macquarie Links, as well as how Macquarie Links has been constructed both physically and socially. In this Chapter the legislative framework – Community Schemes Legislation – for the development of a private residential estate in NSW, Australia, is introduced. Here I examine how this legislation determines the structure and governance of Macquarie Links. Drawing on interview and questionnaire data, the lived realities of the structure and governance of Macquarie Links are explored demonstrating how the residents consider and negotiate the various tensions that arise for them from the private structure of their neighbourhood. The demography and socio-economic characteristics of the Macquarie Links residents are also discussed. Further, Chapter 5 reports on the diverse representations of Macquarie Links in Australian newspapers revealed from a content analysis of newspaper articles reporting on the development of a private residential estate and the residents’ responses to negative stereotypes – the solidarity of community in response to the demonising of the private.

The nature of social life, interactions and community dynamics within Macquarie Links is the subject of Chapter 6. Data from household questionnaires found that 86 per cent of respondents stated that they felt part of a community in Macquarie Links. This Chapter draws on findings from the questionnaires and in-depth interviews with residents from Macquarie Links to interrogate what ‘community’ means for these residents, how it is understood, practised and sustained. The research found that the private structure of neighbourhood (community association meetings and committees) played a central role in community formation and social interaction. Ultimately, this Chapter considers ‘community’ as complex, diverse and dynamic, and based around
practices and spaces of social interactions directly related to the private structure of the neighbourhood of Macquarie Links.

Private residential estates such as Macquarie Links have attracted criticism from media and academic commentary for ‘shutting out’ the rest of society and locking themselves away from social ills. Chapter 7 considers the importance of security infrastructure within Macquarie Links and findings from research with the residents suggest that this infrastructure has little meaning to the residents as crime still occurs within the neighbourhood. However, protection of home, family, investment, quality of life and lifestyle is important to the residents and this is achieved through the successful balance of both community relations and the private neighbourhood structure, particularly the management of restrictive covenants. Protection, order and stability within the neighbourhood rely heavily on the successful interplay of the private structure and of community dynamics and relations. Chapter 7 demonstrates the intimate relationship between the concepts of privatism and community within Macquarie Links.

In recent times a handful of urban researchers have begun to question the future of PREs. Based on the findings from research in Macquarie Links Chapter 8 discusses some of the future challenges for PREs in Australia, particularly in relation to their long-term economic viability. The Chapter argues that a governmental policy response to the development and long-term management of PREs is required.

Finally, Chapter 9 concludes the dissertation bringing together the themes of privatism and community to suggest a number of key contributions that have arisen from this research into the social life and lived realities of PREs that advance the state the knowledge on community formation in urban areas. Further, the Chapter focuses on the associated outcomes of this emergent urban residential form, particularly the new and more complex ways in which PREs are extending processes of segregation within urban areas. In this concluding Chapter I make recommendations for both research agendas within geography and urban studies, as well as suggested directions for urban policy.
THE EMERGENCE OF PRIVATE RESIDENTIAL ESTATES

INTRODUCTION
This chapter outlines the way in which the emergence of the trend towards privatising residential space is understood in the urban studies literature. In doing so a number of avenues are covered based on the key themes identified. This Chapter will outline the three explanations related to the emergence of private residential estates globally, particularly the ideas that have driven the emergence of the notion of the residential 'clubs'. It also considers the development and emergence of private residential estates in alternative (non-western) socio-political (national) contexts. The motivations and drivers for the development of private residential estates (including lifestyle, security, ordered living environments and community, among others), as well as what is offered to citizens buying into these residential developments are also outlined in the Chapter. Some of the perceived financial costs of and concerns about this trend are also considered. The Chapter concludes by identifying gaps in the state of knowledge about private residential estates.

THE TRANSFORMATION OF RESIDENTIAL GOVERNANCE
The development of PREs is responsible for a significant transformation in the nature of neighbourhood governance in urban areas. In the 1920s Charles Ascher\(^2\) was responsible for finding ‘a legal way to create a private city for the affluent within the borders of an existing political jurisdiction’ in the United States (McKenzie, 1994:29). Ascher (1929a, b, quoted in McKenzie, 1994) considers the questions:

How can a section of a town get what it is prepared to pay for? How can part of a town carry on a more advanced form of living than the municipality as a whole is ready to afford?

\(^2\) Charles Ascher had a background in political science, law and town planning.
Ascher proposed the notion of ‘private government’ for a given residential entity administered by ‘private deed restrictions’ or ‘restrictive covenants’ and first applied the idea of restrictive covenants to North America’s earliest garden suburb (or common-interest development): Radburn, New Jersey (McKenzie, 1994:30). It was here that the contemporary form of private residential governance was born. The very foundations of restrictive covenants and the initial motivations behind their emergence in residential development seem largely elitist and exclusive, or indeed suggest an exclusionary potential (or at least protective potential).

Many contemporary transformations taking place in urban residential governance are a result of the large-scale privatisation of activities, services and infrastructure that were previously provided by the local government, such as facilities development and maintenance, policing and landscaping (Low, 2006; McKenzie, 2006a). Webster et al. (2002:315) note that ‘one of the most striking features of recent urbanisation is the rise in popularity of privately governed residential, industrial, and commercial spaces’. The sheer scale and force of this transformation have resulted in:

   the forced obsolescence of traditional neighbourhoods comprising individually owned suburban homes on public streets with public services. Such places are being gradually – and in some places not so gradually – replaced by privately governed common-interest communities, complete with private streets, services and government. And in many places this replacement is not just permitted, but mandated, by municipal governments. (McKenzie, 2006a:14-15)

This whole ‘experiment’ with privatising local government (see McKenzie, 2006a) is built on ‘the belief that corporate management is superior to liberal democratic governance’ (Glasze et al., 2006:4; see also McKenzie, 2006a). In recent times, ‘an increasingly sophisticated mass market has emerged in entire neighbourhoods comprising homes, community infrastructure, services, and micro urban governance’ (Webster et al., 2002:315). It is this micro urban governance, incorporated into the development of PREs, that sees the social and economic coordination of collective action in regard to the individual neighbourhood (Scott et al., 2002:21). Much of the rationale for the continued growth of PREs is based on the notion of efficiency, particularly the efficient provision of infrastructure and neighbourhood resources.
Chen and Webster (2005:210) note that it is seen as ‘more efficient to pool resources and rights either through traditional municipal government or through co-ownership tenure and community or private governance’ than to provide all the services and infrastructure individually. It appears more effective for a group of individuals collectively to supply services and infrastructure for their neighbourhood if they can afford to, and this is indeed the rationale for the development of PREs and private residential governance. While much of the rationale for the development of PREs suggests that private governance mechanisms are incorporated into residential developments for the efficient supply of infrastructure and services, it also hints at this form of residential governance being a communal endeavour and one that may rely on the ‘collective action’ of the neighbourhood to succeed.

In many countries around the world PREs are changing the spatial form of the city, as well as its governance. PREs constitute a major ‘city changing institutional innovation’ (Glasze et al., 2006:2; see also Chen and Webster, 2005). They are beginning to revolutionise residential development and the organisation of urban residential space. The reason that a ‘revolution’ in the organisation of urban living is being heralded by some is due to the ‘rapid and massive transfer of governmental responsibilities, with attendant power and wealth, into the hands of volunteers who are left largely to their own devices in carrying out their appointed tasks’ (McKenzie, 2006a:16). McKenzie (2006a) was not aware of any historical parallels that could be drawn for such a large scale transformation at the pace at which this transformation has occurred (since the late 1980s in the United States and more recently elsewhere). One parallel that could be considered is the move to market economies in the Eastern Bloc of Europe as this was a rapid shift in ideology that resulted in extensive social transformations. The transformation of urban governance has seen the traditional suburb or neighbourhood in some parts of the United States almost completely being replaced with the ‘privatised alternative’ (McKenzie, 2006a:14). The trend is similar in China where nearly all housing at the higher end of the market is ‘gated and organised under private managerial governance’ (Webster et al., 2006:157). Interestingly though, in China there is no modern history of ‘capitalist-led’ development, yet these institutions are emerging at the neighbourhood scale (Lee and Webster, 2006; Wu, 2005). The scale and nature of the transformations taking place in China is therefore particularly significant given its political structure.
The mass privatisation of local governance has changed the structure and appearance of cities and urban areas throughout the world and as such Lee and Webster (2006:41) note that ‘it will be interesting to see whether or not the urban spatial order can resist such a dominant innovation’. Further, Lee and Webster (2006:41) note that the rise of private neighbourhood governance in places as divergent as China and the US should be of interest to urban researchers because it suggests a ‘convergence in urban society’s … search for effective ways of organising cities’. This is generally thought of as organisation in a physical sense (i.e. order), but the thinking should probably extend to the effectiveness of this form of governance for social organisation. I return to this point below in relation to the notion of residential ‘clubs’. I now want to turn to an examination of the key explanations for the emergence of PREs within the urban studies literature internationally.

THE EMERGENCE OF PRIVATE RESIDENTIAL ESTATES
Before delving directly into a review of the literature on the contemporary development and emergence of PREs in urban areas, I want to briefly note the history of gated ‘community’ development in urban centres globally. Gated ‘communities’, or neighbourhoods, for the wealthy or well-to-do have been part of the landscape of modern cities since the late 19th century. Prior to this period, gated and walled compounds were developed almost exclusively for the nobility. As Blakely (2007:476) notes:

Gated communities in the United States go back to the 1870s and the era of the robber barons, when the very rich built private streets to insulate themselves from the less fortunate masses. … These early gated communities were very different from the gated subdivisions of today—they were uncommon places for uncommon people.

Similar examples of very elite gated residential areas of a city were also evident in London and other major urban centres during this time period (see also Raposo, 2006, Wu, 2005). The research on gated residential estates reviewed throughout this Chapter is indicative of the contemporary forms of gating residential space in cities throughout
the world, specifically those that are increasingly accessible to the majority of the population, or as I discuss later in the Chapter, the middle-class.

The body of literature addressing the development of contemporary PREs generally points to three broad reasons for their emergence:

1. PREs are a result of recent economic restructuring, a neoliberal consensus and growing social polarisation.
2. PREs are a product of global preferences and imagery.
3. PREs privatise and commodify urban public space and services through the creation of residential ‘clubs’ (see Blandy, 2006; Glasze, 2003; Le Goix, 2005, 2006; Lentz, 2006; Webster et al., 2002; Wu, 2005).

While these three explanations for the emergence of PREs are dominant within the literature, they have been criticised for being ‘too universalistic and [failing to] account for the historical and geographical differences in urban developments in different parts of the world’ (Glasze, 2003:82). In the next few paragraphs I will elaborate on what each of these explanations contributes to understanding the emergence of private residential estates.

According to the urban studies literature on PREs there appears to be a growing discontentment and distrust of local and national governments throughout the world. Discussion generally points to neo-liberal policies and state withdrawal from civic affairs. The failure or inability of local government to provide for citizens is a common theme in the literature on PREs. Frantz (2006:73) notes that growing dissatisfaction with politics and public services is a ‘plausible contributory explanation for the rise in the number of people who are opting into private neighbourhoods’. Similarly, Scott et al. (2002:20) argue that PREs are ‘innovative local responses ... in the absence of adequate local government attention to [resident] interests and problems’. Further, Low (2006:58) notes that emergence of private residential estates is linked to the inability of local governments to supply services in rapidly growing areas. This trend is not only evident in the United States as residents in South Africa are increasingly discontented with local politics and are retreating into privacy (Jurgens and Landman, 2006:112). So too in Spain, the rise of PREs can be related to a ‘weak state’ (Wehrhahn and Raposo, 2006:171). One of the reasons for such a rapid increase in the popularity of PREs is that while residents are becoming increasingly discontented and dissatisfied with local
government through their ‘hands-off approach’, private institutions are taking a ‘hands-on approach’ to developing residential environments and ‘communities’ and are thus popular with governments and the increasingly discontented residents (Romig, 2005:85).

Retreat into privacy and withdrawal from public life, or urban life, have long been a concern for urban scholars (Iveson 2007; Mitchell, 2003; Sennett 1978; Watson 2006). These concerns as they relate to PREs have been specifically explored in the work of Atkinson (2006) who speaks to the voluntary movements of the middle class into PREs emphasising the voluntary withdrawal from public life and the public realm, or the general ‘disaffiliation’ of sections of the middle class with city publics (see also Atkinson and Flint, 2004). There is an emphasis on the voluntary nature of PREs, in that residents are voluntarily opting out of more ‘public’ neighbourhoods in search of more stable, private environments where investments are largely protected and where they have more control over their environments.

The growth in social and spatial polarisation in cities across the globe has been well-documented as an outcome of recent economic restructuring (Baum et al., 2005; Sassen, 2001; O’Connor et al., 2001). The rise in inequality is further linked to the new class structure that is considered characteristic of many (global) cities particularly widening the gap between the ‘haves and have nots’, or the emergence of the ‘dual city’ (Marcuse, 1997; Webster and Glasze, 2006). As I argue below the new class structure is expressed spatially through developments such as PREs. Rising inequality and disadvantage in urban areas has also generated a sense of unease or awkwardness for some urban residents and in extreme cases, fear of the other. Some scholars argue that growing fragmentation has created a market for PREs, particularly those that are gated (Manzi and Smith-Bowers, 2005; Scott et al., 2002).

A further outcome of recent restructuring is the shift in ideology that treats urban residents as consumers and transforms the very nature of urban residential environments into consumption spaces. In this vein, Wu (2005:237) notes that the worldwide shift towards entrepreneurial governance is:
rooted in the institutional shift which treats citizens as consumers. ... [which] creates spaces for the emergence of private governance, of which the gated community is just one type.

Essentially, PREs have become a form of commodity housing and are now seen as an 'efficient way of organising new consumption space' (Wu, 2005:252). Economic restructuring has not only made the state seemingly less efficient, but has also transformed the very nature of urban and suburban residential environments.

The notion of state withdrawal from civic affairs has been largely associated with western liberal democracies and the key players in the global economy (see Sassen, 2001). I want to briefly turn the attention towards different conditions experienced in non-western contexts. In research on PREs in Lebanon, Glasze (2006a:133) notes that during the Civil War (1975-1990) PREs proliferated on the outskirts of Beirut because 'the secure supply of water and electricity was guaranteed, in a country where public services had more or less stopped functioning'. Public services had stopped functioning not because of economic restructuring, but because of the effects of war. Further, linked to the effects of war, there has also been a growing distrust amongst the residents of Lebanon regarding the efficiency of the state in recent times (Glasze, 2006a).

The ‘weak-state’ hypothesis is a common theme throughout the international urban studies literature on the development of PREs. However, the weak-state hypothesis, as it is linked to global economic restructuring, is really only a partially valid explanation (Wehrhahn and Raposo, 2006). This is due to the fact that the discontent and dissatisfaction with local government and public services is also felt in alternative political and developmental contexts. For example, service delivery is poor in some developing countries or places affected by war. There is a need to understand the local nuances and complexities of privatism and private governance structures, as the development of PREs may not be purely tied to a ‘weak state’.

While many urban scholars have been critical of commentary that suggests PREs are simply a response to a ‘weak state’ and neoliberal agendas, broader urban and economic geography literature is also troubling the simplistic suggestion that many urban practices are merely outcomes of neoliberalism and state withdrawal from civic affairs.
There remains a need to understand the lived experiences of the privatisation of these public services and desires for collective private pursuits, as evident in PREs. The purpose here is to allow for the complexity of outcomes within PREs to be established, rather than PREs being viewed as merely another outcome of the neoliberal project in western democracies. Recent literature from within urban and economic geography has begun to suggest the hybrid and complex nature of neoliberalism and of its outcomes in urban areas (Larner, 2003; McGuirk, 2005). Wendy Larner (2003:509-51, original emphasis) notes how little attention has been paid to the:

*multiple and contradictory aspects* of neoliberal spaces, techniques and subjects. ... [neoliberalism] arrives at different places in different ways ... takes multiple material forms, and can given rise to unexpected outcomes.

Following Larner, McGuirk (2005:59) argues that ‘neoliberalism should be viewed not as a unified coherent project but as a series of complex and overlapping strategies that produce hybrid and always emergent forms of governance’. Research that identifies ‘the wholly uneven qualities of neoliberalist projects’ has recently attracted a lot of attention as this research complicates neoliberalist outcomes (Cook and Ruming, 2008:211-212). Scholars have recently drawn attention to the diversity of outcomes of neoliberalism. The purpose here is to acknowledge that one of the major consequences of overemphasising the influence of neoliberalism is the possibility of undermining alternative outcomes to urban issues (see McGuirk and Dowling, 2009, forthcoming). For example, neoliberal trajectories and privatisation have given rise to PREs, but research has not yet explored the lived experiences or meanings of this form of urban governance, and indeed, as McGuirk (2005) suggests there may be a hybrid outcome of the development of an apparently neoliberal project and certainly the earlier suggestion that residents are using collective action to privately supply services and infrastructures, hints at a complex lived reality within private residential estates. In addition, there may be a hybrid outcome of what appears to be an apparently ‘neoliberal subject’ (Larner, 2003), whereby the residents themselves are not purely neoliberal individuals – the residents of PREs may seek ‘user-pays’ type residential developments and attempt to provide for themselves, however this activity within PREs is increasingly recognised a collective action not necessarily individual. This needs deeper consideration and reflection in research with the residents of PREs, particularly to
understand whether the private subject and the neoliberal subject are the same, or subtly different.

Webster and Glasze (2006:230) strongly assert that ‘the rapid development of gated housing estates in many regions of the world suggest that there are globally diffused and possible global-scale processes at work’. Of particular importance here is the diffusion of cultural products and lifestyles throughout the world. The shift in the residential housing market away from simply desiring a house, to the desire for a home and associated ‘lifestyle’ options within a residential neighbourhood is becoming global. There are now new imperatives for the residents living in suburban areas: that is, leisure in the home and outdoor leisure spaces in the suburb itself. Residents of suburban areas are exercising preferences for ‘lifestyle’ environments. All encompassing suburbs and dwellings are increasingly preferred. Louise Johnson (2006:260) notes that since the late 1990s in Australia there has been an:

alteration in the design, aesthetics, look and representation of the Australian suburb – such that new styles are emerging to challenge many of the long-held assumptions about the nature of suburban housing and living.

Roitman (2005:305) notes that one of the reasons for the emergence of PREs was for residents to ‘achieve a better lifestyle’. This global diffusion of images and ideals of various lifestyle options that were not previously known or available to them has lead to a greater attraction towards PREs in many parts of the world. According to Lentz (2006:206), PREs represent ‘a sign of a new freedom of choice, in the case of one’s own neighbourhood’ (Lentz, 2006:206), and importantly a freedom that some citizens may never have had. Given that, as much of the literature suggests, the development of PREs is a predominantly middle-class phenomenon at least in the West, then the ability to choose one’s desired residential environment has become a reality for those who have benefited from rising incomes.

Not only are images of lifestyle and choice transmitted readily across the globe, so too are images of the built environment that can lead to a certain level of replication and repetition. From his work in Indonesia, Leisch’s (2002:341) demonstrates that it is evident that modern gated residential developments there are ‘virtual imitations of
those in the US’. The images of PREs in the United States have been utilised in selling a ‘global culture’ or a global residential environment. Given the rise in popularity of private residential estates it is indicative of ‘an accelerated global diffusion of consumer preferences’ (Webster et al., 2002:318-319). However, while it may be that PREs are an international trend influenced by global forces and globalised images it would be simplistic to ignore the way in which local social and cultural influences impact on this urban residential form. While the building and development of PREs may be globalising, their lived shape and meaning are not necessarily global.

From a perusal of the marketing material for PREs internationally a number of similarities have been circulated. With regard to what PREs offer to future residents, many urban scholars have identified that such residential developments offer a ‘lifestyle package’ complete with an extensive array of communal facilities and services (including shops, schools, recreational facilities, etc.), with maintenance staff, a private management body and restrictive covenants to ensure the longevity of the experience (Frantz, 2006:73; Giroir, 2006:148; Glasze, 2006a:128; Jurgens and Landman, 2006; Le Goix, 2006; Raposo, 2006; Stoyanov and Frantz, 2006:74; Webster et al., 2006; Wehrhahn and Raposo, 2006; Wu, 2005:244). The literature also demonstrates that this is an international selling point, as similar marketing images are identified in different parts of the world. In some cases, the marketing products for PREs present the package to future members of the neighbourhood stressing the inadequacy of various local services and facilities (cashing in on the weak-state idea and anti-public discourse). In China for example, the marketing of PREs is a ‘purposeful rejection of the local’ (Giroir, 2006:150). Although, as Frantz (2006:74) notes, in searching for certain selling points for private residential estates, developers often consciously work to differentiate suburbia. In many cases this happens by stressing the ‘otherness’ of the world outside the enclosure of the PRE. Indeed, both a private and a communal lifestyle are being sold to the residents seeking to purchase property within a PRE.

The ideal of ‘community’ or communal living dominates marketing imagery in some parts of the world where developers actively sell ‘community’ as something that will be obtained once a person moves into a PRE. This selling point is most dominant in the United States (Low, 2003, 2006; see also Luymes, 1997; Raposo, 2006). Research by Gwyther (2005) in Australia also finds that the developers and place marketers actively
sell community to the would-be residents. Further, research by Wood (2002) in Perth, Western Australia, demonstrates how the selling of new PREs placed an emphasis on these developments being ‘wholesome communities’, offering elements of lifestyle and nature that would create a residential neighbourhood different to those ‘unwholesome’ neighbourhoods ‘outside’ the PRE. In other parts of the world however, the selling of community is less prominent and not all cities actively sell the notion of community. In Lebanon, for example, Glasze (2006a:135) found that there are very limited ‘statements or pictures of communal activities (other than sports)’. Glasze (2006a) attributes this to the prejudices of many Lebanese towards common housing as it has too often been associated with social housing and poverty. Similarly in the case of England, Blandy (2006:24) notes that ‘marketing materials in England, unlike in America, very rarely refer to the “community” aspect of living in a gated community’. Desires for ‘community’ seem to get little attention in the literature on PREs. This seems odd given that in some instances, for example Australia and the United States, ‘community’ and communal lifestyles and infrastructures are exactly what developers are marketing and evidently selling, along with privacy and private governance structures. Romig (2005:69), in line with Blakely and Snyder (1997), argues that ‘the sense of community in these master-planned spaces is ephemeral as it is based on common interests and income levels’. Indeed, the idea that community is merely a commodity in new PREs – something sold and promised, but not quite real – has had a continued circulation in the urban studies literature on PREs, yet has not received much empirical attention.

Exclusivity, prestige and privacy are key selling points for PREs. Luymes (1997:188) notes that many PREs are ‘consciously designed to create an image of exclusivity and privacy’. These themes in the marketing products for PREs, as in the selling of a ‘lifestyle package’, help to create distinction and differentiation between PREs and other more public residential areas. In China, the notion of privacy (particularly in the post-reform era) has been ‘transformed into a fashionable and marketable lifestyle concept, a mark of social status’ (Pow, 2007:824). Somewhat in contrast to the situation in China, Glasze’s (2006b:86-87) work on private residential compounds in Saudi Arabia demonstrates how PREs sell the concept of ‘openness’. Although, in both cases, they are actively selling different socio-cultural alternatives to those of the majority of the population – Saudi Arabia’s PREs offer a ‘western’ lifestyle, whereas China’s PREs offer privacy from a communal public life.
There are a number of similarities in the types of PREs and lifestyles being sold internationally. This partly relates to the global diffusion of much of the imagery of PREs. One of the key elements of marketing these residential developments is stressing the ‘otherness’ of either the surrounding neighbourhoods of the residential development in question, or the neighbourhood’s otherness from the previous types of residential development the new residents were residing in. In both instances of othering, the images stress that the PRE has something better than the previous neighbourhood to offer residents (community and privacy). New PREs are invariably selling a particular type of lifestyle, specifically a residential environment with all inclusive lifestyle benefits. The selling of PREs also has a strong focus on the private structure (privacy) of the residential developments and of the communal facilities and infrastructures within the developments. However, the local specificities of PREs become apparent when differences in issues, problems or themes, which the local place marketers tap into, begin to emerge, hence the importance of empirical validation. For example, the selling of community is powerful in some western contexts (United States, Australia) and not others (England), while having particularly limited appeal in some non-western nations, such as Lebanon. Exclusivity and prestige were important to the selling of PREs in many parts of south-east Asia where there is a certain status and perception of wealth attached to living in private (gated) residential neighbourhoods. And, in some cases, privacy or the very alternative lifestyle to that offered in the surrounding urban landscape was key to the successful selling of the PREs (e.g. Privacy in a communal and densely populated China, or a western lifestyle in a non-western setting in Saudi Arabia). The diversity of images used in the selling and marketing of PREs, depending on the importance of different local contexts, as well as some overlap in dominant images worldwide, suggests that there are both global and local processes contributing to their development internationally.

An emerging novel contention in the literature is that the rise of privately governed residential developments should be understood through what is termed the ‘club goods theory’ (Chen and Webster, 2005; Glasze, 2005; Lee and Webster, 2006). Here, the idea of membership of a club is used to explain the lifestyle and associated benefits of a homeowners association, or a residential club, with the ‘club’ seen as a new device for organising interactions and residential living environments in cities (Webster and
According to Glasze (2005:224), clubs are generally ‘groups which collectively, but exclusively, share the consumption of specific goods on the basis of ownership-membership arrangements’, and the ‘excludable collective goods’ are known as ‘club goods’. Thus, private self-governing neighbourhoods can be interpreted as the establishment of a new ‘club’ in the city, albeit one that is spatially fixed, with territorial boundaries (see Glasze, 2005). By definition, the very process of establishing a residential club is exclusionary (Townshend, 2006). Such residential clubs define who is eligible to ‘consume’ and who is not (Townshend, 2006; Webster, 2002). This is however, the main aim of any club: to provide services exclusively for its members.

PREs are thought to be part of what is being termed a ‘club realm’ of urban life that sits between the public and private arenas (Wu, 2005). This is essentially because a club is ‘an organisation that supplies local public goods to a membership’ (Chen and Webster, 2005:208-209, emphasis added). It brings public services and facilities to a private realm for members of the residential club. A residential club is thus a ‘hybrid’ model of property ownership (Manzi and Smith-Bowers, 2005:347; see McGuirk, 2005 on hybrid forms of urban governance). At its core, this process is about the ‘transformation of open public realms to realms shared by smaller publics (club realms)’ (Lee and Webster, 2006:29). Essentially the development of local residential ‘clubs’ is about the supply of goods, services, facilities and infrastructure to members (residents) of the club (the new residential development). Certainly, some of the literature on public and private spaces in urban areas notes how this is not a simple dichotomy – public or private – with some spaces being ‘private in one sense and public in another’ (Warner, 2002:30; quoted in Iveson, 2007:9). Even an intensely private structure such as that of a PRE can still host public spaces and public encounters (see Iveson, 2007:9 for further discussion). However, Webster (2002:409) suggests that in larger municipalities, ‘few civic goods are shared equally by all within a city and inclusion and exclusion are facts of urban life’. For example, ‘public’ pools and libraries can exclude to avoid over use, or to people living in a particular municipality, or through entrance fees (Glasze, 2005; Webster, 2002). The obvious distinguishing fact however, between exclusion in the ‘club realm’ and exclusion in the ‘public realm’ is that the local government generally seeks to act in the interest of all citizens, even those with less economic power (see Glasze, 2005:230 for an example of access to local municipal swimming pools).
Of course, the process of establishing a residential club not only excludes non-members; there is a primary exclusion of those citizens who cannot afford to pay for membership (Wu, 2005). PREs work to divide the population into ‘beneficiaries’ and ‘non-beneficiaries’ (Manzi and Smith-Bowers, 2005:356). Other examples, besides residential clubs include sporting clubs, professional associations, trade unions and book clubs. Clubs such as these ‘make a distinction between members and non-members to determine the allocation of benefits and costs’ (Manzi and Smith-Bowers, 2005:357). Thus, residential clubs provide services and facilities exclusively for their members (homeowners) as they pay membership fees to the homeowners association.

While the abovementioned consideration of PREs as residential clubs is a rather novel way of thinking about these residential developments, one of the main concerns with the club theory, as I assess it, is that this way of understanding PREs is primarily economic in its focus and takes little account for the social aspects of club development. Social life within the residential club, or PREs, needs greater attention in the literature and is something explored in the empirical Chapters of this dissertation. I return to possible developments in the club theory in Chapter 9. Having charted some of the dominant reasons for the emergence of PREs globally, as understood in the urban studies literature, I want to briefly look at the specific emergence of PREs in differing socio-political (national) contexts.

**Different socio-political contexts for emergence**

In many parts of the world, gates or imposed physical separation is nothing new. For instance, gates are totally unremarkable in places such as China and parts of Europe (Pow, 2007; Stoyanov and Frantz, 2006; Webster *et al.*, 2006). Similarly, the physical separation of population groups has a long history in South Africa’s urban landscape (Hook and Vrdoljak, 2002:199; Jurgens and Landman, 2006:109; Lemanski, 2006:397). In contrast, gates and walls are more of a novelty in contemporary western democracies, although examples of gated ‘public’ parks have long existed in parts of North America and Europe. The development of PREs in various global contexts certainly provides ‘evidence of the social diffusion of the phenomenon’ (Le Goix, 2006:79). However, the importance of understanding the local contexts for the emergence of gated residential developments is essential given that, as Webster *et al.*
suggest, ‘a development plucked from an international repertoire of concepts and designs may serve a subtly different purpose in Beijing than it does in Baltimore’. On the other hand, as Blandy et al. (2006a:191) suggest, urban researchers may like to consider the idea that ‘similar issues concerning private residential neighbourhoods can arise in contrasting circumstances’. Essentially, the warning from these authors is that urban studies does not yet know if this global phenomenon is converging or diverging so urban scholars should take into consideration both global and local forces (see Glasze et al., 2006). There are a number of implications of these considerations of both the global and the local forces when understanding the development of PREs in Sydney, Australia.

It is necessary to work through four examples of different socio-political contexts that have facilitated the development of private residential estates in parts of the world other than western liberal democratic nations. Here, I will explore the emergence of PREs in China, Saudi Arabia and Lebanon, South Africa and South East Asia. It should be noted that there is also an emerging set of literature on the development of PREs in the post-soviet states (see Lentz, 2006:218).

China presents urban studies with one of the most interesting examples of contemporary residential transformations. As China is a communist nation, residential living, and life in general, is largely ‘public’. This is confirmed by Pow (2007:818) who notes that ‘overall, personal life in urban China under the Maoist regime was intensely public’. At the end of the Maoist period, from about the start of the 1980s, the process of socio-spatial differentiation began in urban China as the private housing market emerged for the first time (Giroir, 2006). In China, the market is now ‘delineating private consumption rights in a way that socialism could not’ (Webster et al., 2006:168). However, at this time no private residential development has really been ‘described’ in China principally because it is a ‘taboo micro-territory in communist China’ and because these developments really only began to emerge in the 1990s (Giroir, 2006:142). The private residential neighbourhoods and developments in China are thought to diverge from the Anglo-American case in that Chinese PREs are:
(semi-)autonomous private spaces that are in the process of forming a new urban spatial order that is relatively free from the interference of the hegemonic Communist Party-state. (Pow, 2007:830)

The private residential developments of China are in opposition to the nation’s dominant political ideology and are really only available to those who can afford to move into them (Pow, 2007). China is in the midst of a radical shift from an intensely public housing system to a privatised alternative. Pow (2007:814) asks: ‘how do gated communities construct a new private lifestyle enclave that departs from communal living patterns and hegemonic state controls?’ In addition, there is the question of who has what power in decision making. In China, the key drivers for these developments appear to be a combination of resistance to dominant political ideologies and a push towards personal and familial privacy, as well as economic considerations such as status and wealth. PREs in China are markers of wealth and power.

In the Arab countries, as in parts of Asia and Europe, the spatial seclusion of social groups into distinct quarters is not new, being traditionally based on religious or confessional separation (Glasze, 2006b:129). Glasze’s (2006a; 2006b) research in both Lebanon and Saudi Arabia makes some interesting contributions to an overall understanding of the emergence of the private residential developments internationally. The government of Lebanon has followed a common path of privatisation since about the 1950s ‘granting the private sector almost unrestricted leeway, and limiting public regulations and supply to a minimum’ (Glasze, 2006b:138). In addition, private residential estates have developed out of sheer necessity as a result of growing civil unrest and instability from the 1970s through to the 1990s due to war (Glasze, 2006a, 2006b). As public infrastructure had largely stopped functioning, these private residential estates were providing services to residents who could afford it. In Saudi Arabia on the other hand, the discovery of oil generated a massive demand for housing by skilled foreign workers, such as engineers, who were employed in the oil industry (Glasze, 2006a). As a result, private residential developments mostly house western professionals (Glasze, 2006a). In Arab countries, ethnicity, or indeed western affiliation, along with the need to be self-supported as governments reduced their civic responsibilities, drove the development of private residential estates
South Africa is a nation with a long history of residential segregation. Historically, this segregation occurred through the Group Areas Apartheid Act. The social dynamics of South Africa are fragile and attempted progress is being made towards reversing the harsh divisions of the apartheid era (Lemanski, 2006). However, in South Africa private residential developments are generating ‘new forms of spatial and social fragmentation’ (Jurgens and Landman, 2006:109). These current divisions are made tangible through the construction of ‘barred-off roads, unpassable walls, electrified fences, booms and razor-wire’ (Hook and Vrdoljak, 2002:199). Lemanski (2006) refers to these recent residential transformations as ‘a new urban apartheid’. In many ways, the old apartheid laws of South Africa have been recreated through private residential estate development, which appears to still be heavily racialised as it is largely shaped by economic power.

In parts of south-east Asia there has been much the same experience as in parts of Central Europe in that walls or gates are not a necessarily ‘new’ phenomenon. As Leisch (2002) notes, gates and walls in this region were part of the urban landscape long before contemporary private residential estates were developed. In the south-east Asian context, Indonesia for example, private residential developments are thought to have increased in popularity for at least three reasons. First, the rapid economic growth throughout the 1980s and 1990s created a new middle class and hence a customer base for private residential estates. Second, increasing globalisation introduced new lifestyles to the south-east Asian countries and hence a space for developers to create demand for private residential estates. The third reason is related to the scale of investment in many south-east Asian countries (Leisch, 2002:348-350). The dynamics at work in the economies of south-east Asia have produced unique housing markets. Interestingly, in Indonesia land where private residential estates are being developed was previously agricultural land (Leisch, 2002), which indicates a rapid urban transformation.

The reasons for the emergence of private residential estates have been explained in terms of three main factors: neo-liberal policies and economic restructuring; the influence of the marketing imagery; and the ‘club’ theory. The importance of accessing a variety of case studies from both western and non-western contexts, suggests that while there appear to be three main reasons for the emergence of private residential
developments globally, there are also local specificities and subtleties that impact upon the development of these residential neighbourhoods and local variations that need to be taken into consideration. Considering both the local and global influences is progressive in that much of the thinking about private residential estate development in recent years has shifted away from views narrowly focussed on North America, particularly that gated residential estates are an outcome of ‘white flight’ to the suburbs and problematic ‘race’ relations, generating a need for high security (see Blakely and Snyder, 1997). North American understandings of private residential estates, while an important contribution to the wider urban studies literature, had overwhelmingly dominated the thinking about PREs, leading many scholars to consider, for example, that private residential development in Australia was going to occur in exactly the same manner as the United States, with similar consequences. It is important for urban researchers to pay attention to global forces and similarities that are apparent in the development of private residential estates whilst also ensuring a thorough excavation of the local social, political, cultural and economic contexts in which these private residential developments emerge, as each private residential estates reports on something subtly different about the trend towards privatising urban residential living environments. It is also necessary to understand the social life that occurs within PREs, and the residents’ views and experiences of community and privatism. The following section outlines some of the motivations of the residents purchasing property within PREs that have been identified in the urban studies literature to date.

THE RESIDENTS’ MOTIVATIONS FOR LIVING IN PRIVATE RESIDENTIAL ESTATES

A number of motivations for residents buying into PREs have been identified globally. Foremost of these is the residents’ desire for control, order and stability over the residential environment. Underlying this motivation is a perception of urban ‘disorder’ and a fear of ‘uncontrolled’ environments. The perceived security and stability of privately governed residential developments promise order and control for residents (Blakely and Snyder, 1997; Frantz, 2006:74; Giroir, 2006:151; Grant et al., 2004:72-76; Janoschka and Borsdorf, 2006:93; Jurgens and Landman, 2006; Lentz, 2006:217; McKenzie, 2006b:90-91; Pow, 2007:819; Romig, 2005:68; Townshend, 2006:104). Control, order and stability are thought to be achieved through community
associations and the private structure of the neighbourhood. Some private residential developments use security to enforce order and peace. For example, the Purple Jade Villas in Beijing, China are ‘watched’ by 40 security wardens, so this ‘quasi-militarised space [has] its own quietly threatening sense of order and peace’ (Giroir, 2006:150). Other private residential developments employ subtler techniques such as governance mechanisms to ensure order and control. Whatever techniques are employed, what is certain is that ‘urban fragmentation is creating a new urban experience of insecurity’ (Wu, 2005:251). In other words, it is the growing differentiation and fragmentation that is part of contemporary urbanisation and current urban transformations that give some citizens a sense disorder and a lack of control over their residential environments and drive them towards a privately governed residential neighbourhood for the perceived benefits of order and control.

Somewhat related to the motivation for order and control over the urban residential environment is the supposed guarantee that comes with the imposition of restrictive covenants and resident fees by a homeowner’s association. These things combined ensure the long-term maintenance of a certain standard or quality of the residential environment, which in turn continues to allow for order and control, and hence motivates residents to purchase property within private residential estates. In many ways, restrictive covenants such as those on the types of residential dwellings, the size of front and back yards, and colours of roof tiles ensure uniformity. The motivating factor of the guarantee of the long-term maintenance of a controlled and ordered urban living environment is widely acknowledged in the urban studies literature (Blakely and Snyder, 1997; Blandy, 2006:24; Frantz, 2006:73; Lentz, 2006; Low, 2006:55; Romig, 2005:69; Stoyanov and Frantz, 2006:60; Townshend, 2006:105; Webster et al., 2006:160).

The motivation to have a certain ‘lifestyle’ that seems to be available in private residential estates also encourages many residents to buy into them. This particular motivation is linked quite strongly to the marketing and selling techniques used for particular residential developments (see earlier discussion on ‘global preferences’). In much of the marketing of new residential developments ‘lifestyle options’ are advertised as being available to residents through the provision of leisure facilities. These may include tennis courts, swimming pools, a golf course and so on. Frantz (2006:66) notes that private residential estates are:
not simply a place to reside, but places where residents can enjoy leisure activities in an undisturbed private atmosphere and where they can follow a lifestyle that they have deliberately chosen.

It is in this context that the notion of a lifestyle community is derived (Blakely and Snyder, 1997; Janoschka and Borsdorf, 2006:92, 104). Images of ‘lifestyle’ within new PREs are also images of communal facilities and infrastructure. So while certain lifestyles are sold, so too are communal facilities and infrastructure. It is evident that lifestyle options are ‘on sale’ in new private residential estates. Although they influence residents’ to purchase property in a PRE they are not yet viewed as the key driver, perhaps because such factors have received limited examination to date.

A few authors mention rising crime, or perceptions of increased crime, as a motivating factor for residents choosing to live in a private residential estate. According to Luymes (1997:190), it is a ‘fear of crime that provides the impetus for the growth of this phenomenon’ (Luymes, 1997:190). Other urban researchers have also attributed the rise in popularity of private residential estate development to perceptions of rising urban crime (Frantz, 2006:72; Janoschka and Borsdorf, 2006:104; Lemanski, 2006). Specifically in the case of Argentina for instance, as Roitman’s (2005:305) data shows, ‘between 1980 and 2000 the crime rate increased 376 per cent’. It is thought that rising crime rates encourage ‘gating’ of residential space. However, in recent times, it appears that the gates on private residential estates are fast becoming more symbolic than practical. This is certainly the case in Indonesia where, as Leisch (2002:341) notes ‘many walls are nowhere near high enough for real protection’. Sometimes ‘gating’ even occurs without the gates and other techniques are employed to generate a more symbolic separation (Rofe, 2006; Townshend, 2006:118). These more subtle techniques usually involve the use of physical boundaries and a variety of design concepts – one entry road only, with trees or hedges surrounding the development, or rail lines or major roads.

Residents purchasing property within new private residential estates appear to be driven by a desire for order and control over their residential neighbourhood, for certain lifestyles and for some haven from rising crime. As Le Goix (2005) argues, urban
scholars still lack solid evidence and a body of empirical data on many of the motives and desires articulated above. The suggested motives remain largely theoretical and speculative. A thorough empirical evaluation, or survey, of residents' motivations and drivers towards private residential estates in a variety of urban locations is still required.

SOCIAL OUTCOMES OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF PRIVATE RESIDENTIAL ESTATES

The main academic concern relating to the proliferation of private residential estates throughout the world is the potential for growing social divisions. Frantz (2006:74) notes that the development of private residential estates might ‘take us a quantum leap forward in the fragmentation of urban space’. This sentiment is not uncommon in the urban studies literature, especially the concerns for the creation of spaces that are different to the urban residential spaces ‘outside’ the PREs and present a challenge to the social connectivity of the urban landscape (Duncan, 2004:37; Glasze, 2006a:139; Grant et al., 2004; Hook and Vrdoljak, 2002:206; Le Goix, 2005:331; Luymes, 1997:190; Marcuse, 1997; Roitman, 2005:319; Townshend, 2006; Webster and Glasze, 2006:224; Wehrhahn and Raposo, 2006:179), or those spaces that are aimed at anti-encounter within cities (Fincher, 2007; Fincher and Iveson, 2008). Related to this concern is the suggestion that the criticism of growing polarisation needs to be linked to government policy as these developments are as much an outcome of policy as they are the desires of citizens (Foldvary, 2006). While urban residential development has been, and still is, developer led in Australia (see Coiacetto, 2007; Stevenson, 1998), this is a new manifestation of this process whereby governments allow for the private ownership of land, which is now legislated. A further reason why this is too simple an explanation of the outcomes of private residential estates, is because socio-spatial segregation is nothing new (see Luymes, 1997:200). In many instances, while the fear of growing social polarisation in cities is an entirely legitimate concern, the contribution of PREs to growing segregation has not been ‘validated by empirical data’ (Roitman, 2005:303), or indeed demonstrated or understood from empirical data.

A further ‘danger’ of the development of PREs that has been identified in the literature is the potential for a reduction in the acceptance of difference and diversity within
cities (see Frantz, 2006:74; Roitman, 2005:307). These concerns are particularly expressed with regard to the development of private neighbourhoods which create a more obvious distinction with the conditions in surrounding public neighbourhoods due to the intensity of inequality and disadvantage in some countries (Giroir, 2006:151 for discussion on China; Janoschka and Borsdorf, 2006:105-110 for discussion on Latin America; Lemanski, 2004; 2006 for discussion on South Africa). Janoschka and Borsdorf (2006:105) summarise this concern stating that: ‘a life behind walls may lead gated neighbourhood inhabitants even further away from the social reality of their ‘home’ society, which for the great majority of the population consists of a struggle for daily survival’. This is a view which resonates with Iris Marion Young's (1999) concerns for the development of blind privilege and unnoticed advantage that are thought to be the product of residential segregation. In regard to the process of residential segregation, Young (1999:242) argues that:

The very same process that produces these relations of privilege, moreover, obscures that privilege from that awareness of those who have it. In order to see themselves as privileged, the white people who live in pleasant neighbourhoods must be able to compare their environment with others. But this comparison is rarely forced upon them because those excluded from access to the resources and benefits they themselves have are spatially separated, out of sight; another place defines their lives.

This is what Young terms ‘blind privilege’ whereby those who have privileged lives can think of their lives as normal and average (Young, 1999). Thus, according to Young (1999:242) segregation ‘makes privilege invisible to the privileged in a double way: by conveniently keeping the situation of the relatively disadvantaged out of sight, it thereby renders the situation of the privileged average’ (Young, 1999:242). The fostering of blind privilege has serious implications for awareness of social (in)justice. By allowing privilege to be invisible, the effect is an inoculation against any sense of (in)justice they may have because ‘the everyday separation of the lives of the more and less privileged ... makes it unnecessary for the privileged to think about social injustice except in the most abstract terms’ (Young, 1999:242). Thus, exclusivity and privilege go unnoticed. Socio-spatial justice remains a major challenge throughout the world, and especially in cities and urban areas with a historical legacy of overtly discriminatory
practices, such as South Africa (see Lemanski, 2006). Clearly, greater empirical attention is needed to consider the impacts of the development of private residential estates on urban landscapes globally. The current concerns, while valid, are at best speculative.

The research to date on PREs internationally points to these developments causing increased segregation in the urban landscape. However, there is very little comment or research being undertaken that examines whether any of these developments have attempted to limited their impact on the urban landscape. Recent research by Lemanski (2006) in South Africa examines whether the spatial proximity of divergent socio-economic groups can facilitate social integration and understanding, or whether they resist mixing and tolerance. The particular residential development being studied was encouraging mixed use development, with poorer and wealthier areas side by side, which could potentially become a blueprint for future development (Lemanski, 2006). From research within the two neighbouring developments, Lemanski concludes that if either of the areas provided something necessary for the other's continued existence, then this would be the most sustainable method of ensuring long-term integration, although this currently is not the case (Lemanski, 2006:416). One could potentially be optimistic that more common or shared resources could generate greater interactions between neighbourhoods. Lemanski (2006:415) on the other hand, is less optimistic and concedes that ‘even with a more inclusive spatial design, interactions would have been limited’. Of course it is important to bear in mind here the local context of these developments and the history of segregation in South Africa.

THE FINANCIAL COSTS OF LIVING IN PRIVATE RESIDENTIAL ESTATES

The dominance of the middle income groups in the demographics of private residential estates is evident in different socio-political contexts throughout the world. The movement of this middle income group into PREs can be found in the United States (Frantz, 2006; Le Goix, 2006; Low, 2006; Romig, 2005:67), Lebanon (Glasze, 2006a), China (Giroir, 2006:144-150; Wu, 2005:247), Spain and Portugal (Wehrhahn and Raposo, 2006:177; Raposo, 2006), Russia (Lentz, 2006:217), Australia (Gwyther, 2005; Kenna, 2007), Argentina (Roitman, 2005:304), Bulgaria (Stoyanov and Frantz, 2006:58) and Indonesia (Leisch, 2002:342). In some of these countries the middle class had never
really existed until recently. Clearly, the potential impact of sections of the burgeoning middle class on the urban spatial structure should not be underestimated and probably has not had enough attention to date. The trend appears to be one that is paving the way for privately managed middle-income spaces and the privatisation of sections of middle-class family life (Pow, 2007; Webster et al., 2006). These middle income groups who are buying into private residential developments are a distinct segment of the newly emerging middle class who are able to enjoy greater levels of consumption. The segments of the middle class generally thought to consume PREs are distinct from the wealthier upper middle class of the inner city, particularly those engaged in the gentrification process, or ‘the gentrifying new middle class’ (see Lees et al. 2008:94), especially given that PRE development is largely suburban in nature. In Australia, the middle class of the suburban PREs are more popularly considered the ‘aspirationals’ (see Gwyther, 2005) as opposed to the gentrifiers. The new middle class is indeed differentiated and the spatial practices of the differing segments vary. A certain level of income also suggests that there are considerable costs involved in buying into PREs.

Alongside the discussion in the literature about the levels of income of residents living in PREs (predominantly middle income), there is little discussion about the associated financial costs of buying into a private residential estate or a residential ‘club’. For example, there is little indication of the quarterly costs paid to the Homeowner Association. This may be linked to issues of privacy and the information may not be readily disclosed, or it may just be that urban researchers, and others, have yet to follow this line of questioning in research to date.

Without a thorough understanding of the financial costs associated with private governance it would appear from the limited set of literature available that the costs of living in a private residential development is premium. Research by Giroir (2006) in urban China indicates the significantly high costs of living in PREs. Aside from Giroir’s mention of financial costs, there are also a few examples from the US. More generally the cost of living in a private residential estate reduces housing affordability in these residential developments, which in turn reduces the accessibility of these neighbourhoods to a variety of income groups. Foldvary (2006:43) notes that in the United States:
private communities have to pay the same taxes to government as non-private communities, even when private communities have their own services, such as streets, which taxpayers then do not have to finance. This makes private communities much less affordable by the poor. If the members could deduct such internal costs from their tax liabilities, and if their assets other than land were tax free, as are the assets of government, there would be no financial handicap in forming private communities, and the poorer neighbourhoods would then be empowered and able to afford to privatise and communitise their services. The trend could then well be, ‘all power to the private neighbourhoods’.

At present, as Foldvary notes, and is the case in Australia and elsewhere, the residents of private residential developments pay fees to the resident or community association (or for membership at the club), as well as local municipality fees on top of other costs of living, such as mortgages and schooling. Of course, residents actively choose this costly lifestyle option for reasons already covered in this Chapter. Essentially, when private residential estates are established the infrastructure is for the private use of residents which means that all costs for its maintenance is paid by the residents association. Maintenance gets more costly with time as repairs and replacements are required within the neighbourhood, and the costs of living in private residential estates rises as a result (see Le Goix, 2006). In this vein, Webster and Glasze (2006:223) note that ‘once individuals discover just how costly it is in real terms ... popularity may wane’ (see also McKenzie, 2006a). If public money was to be spent within a private residential estate then public access would need to be granted and the whole idea of private governance becomes redundant (Le Goix, 2006:86). Essentially, residing in a PRE is relatively costly and accessible to those who can afford to pay. In many instances, two incomes are required.

CONCLUSION

There is an expansive urban studies literature on the growing development of private residential estates. The development of PREs is accompanied by a private governance structure, usually a homeowner or community association which manages the residential development and enforces the restrictive covenants. There are three main
reasons presented within the literature to explain the emergence of PREs: the notion of a ‘weak state’; the contributions of various marketing imagery; and the idea of the residential ‘club’. PREs are marketed towards residents’ desires for privacy and private property, exclusivity, lifestyles and communal facilities, as well as order, stability and control. However, research on PREs generally suggests multiple realities forming out of a combination of global or local forces, which encourages researchers to understand that PREs engender diverse outcomes and are more than neoliberal neighbourhoods. Further, differing socio-political and/or local contexts generate different development trajectories and outcomes. Private residential estates predominantly cater to middle income groups who are able to afford the costs of living there. The fact that PREs are relatively exclusive on the basis of income has been a cause for concern within urban studies with scholars warning about the potential for growing fragmentation in urban areas, which may often go unnoticed or be ‘blind privilege’ (Young, 1999).

While studies to date have provided insights into the reasons for the emergence of PREs, their selling and marketing strategies and the desires of residents purchasing property within them, few studies have explored the lived experiences and outcomes in private residential estates in Australian cities. Indeed an understanding of social life within PREs is absent from the literature. What is known is that both privatism (and privacy) and community (and communal facilities and lifestyles) are at the centre of the marketing and promise of the PRE. But there is a need to understand how these are negotiated and experienced by the residents once they actually live in a private residential estate – to examine the lived realities of privatism and neighbourhood governance, as well as the residents’ experiences of collective or communal actions to manage and maintain the private structure of PREs. Importantly, the private structure of the neighbourhood, managed collectively, is thought to ensure order, stability and control for the residents. Such an outcome of PREs draws attention to the complexities and contradictions of neoliberalism. The next Chapter seeks to examine the notion of community that lies at the heart of the promise of life within the private residential estate.
Chapter 3

UNDERSTANDING URBAN COMMUNITY

INTRODUCTION

The study of community, as well as its theorising, has been a vexed endeavour. The term community means something to just about everyone and is imagined in one form or another by most people. Given the nature of the circulation of popular discourses of community, different uses of the term community are going to be more or less unavoidable (Delanty, 2003). Community is indeed something that even scholars themselves are unsure about – unsure about what community means in contemporary society, unsure about how to research or approach community, and unsure if community even exists. However, scholars continue to insist on deploying the term community. As Hobsbawn (1994:428) notes, never has the word ‘community’ been used more ‘indiscriminately and emptily than in the decades when communities in the sociological sense became hard to find in real life’. Given my research aims to understand social life, interactions and meanings of community for the residents in Macquarie Links, this chapter is primarily concerned with developing an understanding of what constitutes community, or what might constitute community, in the contemporary era. Understandings of what constitutes community have been slightly vague, mixed and disparate, which has perhaps contributed to the ambiguity that appears to surround this term.

In this Chapter, I examine some of the commonly-held assumptions and beliefs about community formation and existence, and the relevance of these understandings to the study of private residential estates in an urban context. I explore the role of the urban environment, or the city, in actually encouraging the development of community, as opposed to the commonly held belief that the city is a hostile setting which destroys community. Here, I consider the role of common values, social organisation and ideology in the formation of community. This Chapter also charts the importance to urban social research of continued engagement with place-based communities and with the notion of community in the social sciences literature. Part of the purpose of this Chapter is to spend time fleshing out some of the findings of community studies because the notion of
Community forms a central part of the research presented in this thesis. It is important to reflect on those studies that precede this research and to avoid what Herbert Gans refers to as ‘sociological amnesia’, whereby many researchers choose to forget what has come before them in their field. Certainly, there is a considerable legacy of community research which this contributes to, extends, and in many ways attempts to revive. This Chapter also considers some recent literature that looks at the complexities and differences regarding the formation and experience of community as a means of developing contemporary theories of urban community.

COMMUNITY LOST?

The city and the urban have long been considered hostile environments for community formation. This view was heavily influenced by the thinking of the Chicago School of Urban Sociology. From the early work of Tonnies (1957, reprint) (pre-Chicago School) through to Wellman and Leighton (1979), progressive urbanisation of society and increasing economic complexity has been viewed as detrimental to community development and formation as these processes weakened social ties and connections. Smaller rural settings were the spaces of community formation. More recently however, this thinking has been somewhat challenged within sociology particularly, where due consideration has been given to alternative types of social bonds and ties that rely less on kinship, as has traditionally been the basis for community formation, with much of the concern of community scholars being ‘the decline in the strength or quality of social ties’ (Curtis-White and Guest, 2001:240). The ‘community lost’ tradition is often associated with rapid and increasing urbanisation (Delanty, 2003; see also Curtis-White and Guest, 2001; Stevenson, 2003:20; Wirth, 1938).

For Tonnies (1957) Gemeinschaft (community) characterised the cohesive nature of life found among preindustrial societies and Gesellschaft (society) described the haphazard or unknown conditions within communities of industrialised societies. Gemeinschaft society was ‘small, isolated, homogenous communities in which the fundamental building blocks are common goals and common backgrounds’, with a strong emphasis on kinship ties (Curtis-White and Guest, 2001:240). Similarly, Durkheim (1964), who popularly referred to the anomie inherent in modern society, drew similar attention, as did Tonnies, to the loss of bonds and commonality within the increasingly urbanising
and industrialising economies and societies. In much of the thinking about community being lost, there was an implicit assumption, according to Wellman and Leighton (1979:371), that:

human beings are fundamentally evil (or easily capable of being driven to evil by industrialism, bureaucraticism, or capitalism), and that where restraining communal structures have been destroyed by the Industrial Revolution, riot, robbery, and rape have swept the city.

The city, or the urban environment, was thus seen as a place hostile to community formation and development. The urban condition was viewed as detrimental to attempts at building social ties, or finding those with common values. Further, the continuing assertion that community is lost in urban areas is quite strongly linked to a romanticising, or idealising, of the notion of community by many urban scholars following Tonnies’ description of Gemeinschaft society as small, homogenous, consenting and isolated, with close-knit ties amongst community members, often found in rural areas. Many scholars have since been influenced by this understanding of community within urban areas and yet the diversity of urban life surely requires a theory of community that considers complexity, dynamism and contradictions. I will return to a discussion of urban theories of community in the final section of this Chapter.

One of the reasons urban scholars thought developing social ties in urban areas would be difficult was due to the fact that many people in the city are strangers to each other. As Wirth (1938) argues, the interaction with strangers in urban areas can lead to the application of ‘impersonal methods’ of social interaction. Wirth considers that the relationships formed in the urban are at best transitory and superficial. Further, Wellman and Leighton (1979:256) argue that a ‘common refrain of the community lost tradition is that, if urban life is segmented, it must also be superficial and fleeting’. However, there has not yet been a thorough analysis of the nature of social ties in urban areas in recent years (see Curtis-White and Guest, 2003). Curtis-White and Guest (2003:243) argue that urbanisation does not necessarily destroy social ties; rather it is the nature of the social bonds that potentially differ between urban and rural settings.
Sociologist Georg Simmel (1971, reprint) has an interest in the socio-psychological effects of urban life (and modernity) and recognises its inherent complexity. Simmel (1971) considers the city as providing a space for the interaction of people with diverse interests. He believes that the urban environment provided a space for people to develop much wider social interactions. Essentially, to Simmel, the loss of community was not necessarily negative, as the city’s diversities also present residents with a source of freedom. Some of the more recent concerns related to community lost in urban areas have related to the impacts of globalisation (Delanty, 2003). According to Delanty (2003:51), the big question is ‘whether cities have totally lost their connection with community, having become absorbed into the global society, and as a result the last vestiges of locality have been destroyed in the revanchivist world of the global city and its gated communities’. The romanticised ideal of community however, and associated theories of community, is perhaps contributing to the continued suggestion that community is lost or destroyed in cities. Thus, a new framework for understanding urban community is required.

The question that emerges is whether in industrial urban societies common goals are still the fundamental building blocks of social life. Similarly, the very nature of social organisation has changed – churches do not play the same roles that they used to in urban society, but have perhaps been replaced by other types of social organisation. Fischer (1975) extends the arguments made by Simmel, when speaking on the formation of subcultures within the city, suggesting that the city provides the space for meeting people with very specialised interests. As Curtis-White and Guest (2003:255) note, ‘urban dwellers use the variety of city life to build a widely varied network of individuals who are important to them’. This is perhaps an element of community studies that has been somewhat overlooked in recent years. Curtis-White and Guest (2003:256) acknowledge that the theorising of someone like Simmel probably ‘underemphasised the variety of urban life as creator of new social opportunities’ – that being, the potential of urban individuals coming together for communal purposes within the city – groups of individuals with common interests and common goals.

Some of the more recent ideas of community ‘lost’ are linked to perceived effects of growing individualism and neoliberalism on private lives. There is an emergent theme in the community studies literature that suggests community is somehow the opposite
of privatism and individualism (and vice versa), and that the two cannot exist together, or even more forcefully, that privatism has caused the collapse of community in western society (see Pawley, 1973; Gleeson, 2006). Pawley (1973:52) announces the decline of community as a result of the retreat into private lives. The critique of privatism and the neoliberal agenda that has dominated western society, according to Silk (1999:6), is that ‘liberalism promotes atomistic tendencies, including increasing rootlessness and alienation, callous individualism, and the ignoring of communal and social obligations’. Further, Warner (1968) notes how the development of cities in North America had long been influenced by privatism rather than community action. It is the individual and private nature of these ideologies that are seen in direct opposition to community and public life. Indeed, in many instances, private interests have controlled public life. Kurt Iveson’s (2007) Publics and the City highlights such struggles over public space in light of private pursuits, with the installation of CCTV in inner city Perth an example of private over public interests. However, suggestions that privatism and individualism have generated a decline in community are speculative at best, largely because privatism and individualism are subtly different, though often conflated (see Chapter 2). A belief in privatism – the belief that private supply of services and infrastructure is superior to public – does not automatically correlate with that being an individual pursuit. Certainly, the communal efforts for private goals, or private communalism, have not been considered in research to date.

In The Private Future – causes and consequences of community collapse in the West (1973), Pawley links the decline in community to private pursuits, or indeed, privatisation. Pawley (1973:12) argues that:

Western society is on the brink of collapse – not into crime, violence, madness or redeeming revolution, as many would believe – but into withdrawal. Withdrawal from the whole system of values and obligations that has historically been the basis for public, community and family life. Western societies are collapsing ... from a voluntary, almost enthusiastic abandonment of them [values] by people who are learning to live private lives of an unprecedented completeness.
This resonates with many of the concerns of Australian urban policy academic Brendan Gleeson who in *Australian Heartlands* (2006) is mostly concerned with the detrimental consequences of privatisation of the social life of Australian cities and their hinterlands. The withdrawal from public life is an apparently damaging result of privatisation (Gleeson, 2006; Pawley, 1973). The affluent suburbs of outer metropolitan regions are described as ‘privatised, isolated, and alienated’ (Wellman and Leighton, 1979:371; see also Popenoe, 1977).

According to Pawley (1973:20), the growth of large suburbs on the outskirts of the metropolitan region hosts ‘nuclear families lacking any blood relationship with each other that pursue their isolated economic fortunes’. There needs to be better consideration in contemporary urban social research of the neighbourhoods which strategically realise that it could be more efficient to pool their ‘isolated economic fortunes’ within a neighbourhood based on the same ideology of privatism for the benefits they believe will accrue. Here lies some of the local inflections of privatism, which remain somewhat unexplored (see Chapter 2). Certainly one of the premises of this thesis is that an understanding of social life within PREs could trouble the view that privatism and private interests cause the decline of community (see Wirth, 1938 who argues that cities caused the collapse of community). Individualism has apparently caused the collapse of community, but the communal effort of urban residents working together on individual pursuits and aspirations has not yet been considered. Given that community and privatism are integral to the ways in which PREs are sold and represented, one of the questions this thesis seeks to understand is how the residents understand these concepts (privatism and community) and what they mean to them in terms of their day-to-day lives.

Private affluence, according to Pawley (1973:178), conceals atomisation of society and that ‘only a myth of community remains in the west’. Further, Pawley (1973:179, original emphasis) notes:

> If the goal system of Western affluence breaks down, what lies beneath it is not a renewed sense of community through scarcity, but an absolute social collapse without the security of interpersonal and inter-family support. Affluence is vital
to the social organisation of the Western world because it has supplanted all the old systems of mutual obligation.

While somewhat dramatic, Pawley’s speculations on community are interesting as he posits affluence as critical to holding society together, and in particular, private affluence. So then, perhaps, private interests and private affluence can create some form of community, if skilfully organised and managed.

Studies of urban community require a more positive theorising of the urban condition, and of the potential of cities and urban areas to generate and host successful communities. The city does create spaces for the coming together of diverse groups of people, diverse lifestyles, interests, agendas and ideologies, among other things. Rather than viewing the city, urbanisation and urban diversity as destroying community (community lost), perhaps scholars could begin to view the city as actively participating in people’s desires for community, in the making of new communities (be they place-based, ideological, or otherwise), albeit these communities will be different from the types of communities that urban scholars have described and understood prior to the contemporary era (see Hubbard, 2006 for understanding the city as an ‘active participant’). Indeed, the reality is that while many urban theorists purported the loss of community in urban areas, or indeed the non-existence of community in urban areas, many studies have actually described community in urban areas. Despite the persistence of the notion of community ‘lost’ in urban areas, community is potentially very active and real in urban areas. Ways of understanding what might constitute community in urban areas then, demands some attention. The following section charts the ways in which urban community has been found and understood in the literature that counter many of the assumptions of community ‘lost’.

**UNDERSTANDING URBAN COMMUNITY: COMMONALITIES, SOCIAL ORGANISATION AND IDEOLOGY**

Common values and co-presence have long been considered the core to community foundation in urban areas and in many instances singularly responsible for the persistence of the idea of community. The term community, as Thorns (1976:15) notes has traditionally had one fairly core theme: that of a ‘cohesive group of people, held
together by different things which they share'. The common things people share may include, for example, territory, ideas, work, or skills.

The success of new communities, and the persistence of the idea of community, according to Thorns (1976:146) rely on a number of factors, with the first being some ‘unifying element’. For a community to be successful there must be something in common that holds people together. For example, when he was researching the development of squatter communities in urban areas, Thorns found that the squatter communities demonstrated that it was a necessity in new community formation for there to be in existence ‘a common system of values and goals shared by those intending to create a new community’ (Thorns, 1976:112). For the squatters, it was a common goal of successfully making the transition from rural to urban society and forming a common value system that could be the basis of community allowing them to be successful in their endeavour.

In other instances of community formation, common values and goals were based around familial relations, primarily family and kinship. The most influential studies in this regard were Young and Willmott (1957) investigating the role of family and kinship in the social life of the east end of London, and Gans’ (1962) study of the urban villagers in the slums of the west end of Boston. Here, common values and goals, through peer or kin groups were important to the establishment and long term functioning of community.

In *Family and Kinship in East London*, Young and Willmott (1957:105) note that what is key to the community of the east end of London was that they had the ‘associations of a lifetime in common’. One particular story of a female resident of the East End highlighted how she had ‘built up a series of connexions with people she had known in school, work, or street, and, even more forcefully, how her mother and other kin acted as a means of communication between herself and the other people in her social world’ (Young and Willmott, 1957:107). Young and Willmott (1957:187) conclude that the sense of belonging that residents of the East End of London experienced could not simply be explained by long residence; it was ‘so deep because it is rooted in a lasting attachment to their families’. Not only are common values or goals important, but kinship or family connections were important in the development and persistence of
this community in the East End of London. A particularly important finding from this research was the importance of the common bond, or closeness, between mother and daughter, and the women of the neighbourhood in general, given the women spent considerably more time associating with neighbours than did men.

In the concluding pages of their book, Young and Willmott reflect on the importance of common values, kin and family in the development of community. They note:

...even when the town planners have set themselves to create communities anew as well as houses, they have still put their faith in buildings, sometimes speaking as though all that was necessary for neighbourliness was a neighbourhood unit, for community spirit a community centre. If this were so, then there would be no harm in shifting people about the country, for what is lost could soon be regained by skilful architecture and design. But there is surely more to a community than that. The sense of loyalty to each other amongst the inhabitants of a place like Bethnal Green is not due to buildings. It is due far more to ties of kinship and friendship which connect the people of one household to the people of another. (1957:198-199, original emphasis)

The people of the area had something in common, so much stronger than the physical structures they inhabit. They have a common spirit, common values and common goals in regard to familial ties that sustain their community and social relations. These ultimately sustained the community.

Conversely, Gans’ (1962) research presented in Urban Villagers on Italian-American’s performances of neighbouring in light of imminent slum clearance in the west end of Boston, was concerned with the role of common social institutions in community formation. According to Gans (1962:104), the term community is generally used when referring to ‘an aggregate of people who occupy a common and bounded territory within which they establish and participate in common institutions’. However, Gans presents a greater concern for the use of the term community in regard to the social life of the west enders of Boston, through their involvement in their neighbourhood’s common institutions. Gans found that the neighbourhood common space mattered little to the residents of the west end, as while the institutions were located in the
neighbourhood, the role of these institutions in the lives of the residents had very little to do with the fact that they were located within the neighbourhood. It was not until the neighbourhood became threatened (by slum clearance) that it became defined and defended as a spatial unit. Even when threatened, Gans found that the residents rarely spoke of the West End as a whole – they expressed concerns about losing their own apartment or moving away from the people they had grown close to over many years. The spatial unit was not centrally important. Gans (1962:105) concludes that:

Rather than the boundaries of the neighbourhood being significant, it was the specific institutions that constituted community – the church, the parochial school, formal civic, social and political organisations, some of them church-related, and some commercial establishments.

The common institutions played a significant role in the social life of the residents of the west end of Boston and were an important part of the formation and sustenance of the community.

More recently, with increasing global interconnectedness, people communicate with one and another via means that hitherto did not exist. Prior to the developments in information technologies of the previous few decades, daily communication was much more local. According to Delanty (2003:187), the insecurities and uncertainties of modern society have enabled ‘the experience of communicative belonging’ whereby global citizens use the internet to connect with those who have common values and interests. In this sense, ‘global forms of communication have facilitated the construction of community’ (Delanty, 2003:193).

Having something in common – be it rural-urban migration for the squatters, familial values for the east enders of London, or social institutions for the west enders of Boston – has proven important to the formation of communities and of their longevity over time. When considering the development of community in contemporary PREs it is important to question whether common goals and values are still important to community formation. In research on new suburban residential neighbourhoods in Australia, the importance of having things in common such as lifestyle or life stage with other residents of the neighbourhood is emerging as important (see Gwyther, 2005;
Kenna, 2007). It will be important to determine the extent to which commonalities amongst residents of PREs will be influential in the formation of community, and the subsequent success of the community. The importance of common values will be a particularly significant area of consideration as research suggests that commonalities (such as affluence) are important to the residents of new PREs but the place of common values specifically has not yet been fully considered.

As previously noted, some of the founding community studies concluded that the key to community formation was common values or common goals, and this way of thinking about what constitutes community has had an enduring legacy. Proceeding community studies have extended the view of community beyond common values to consider the role that social organisation plays in community formation and persistence. The role of boundaries also complicates and extends this view of community beyond merely common values. The consideration of the role of boundaries is particularly important for those communities which are place-based or based on propinquity, such as contemporary suburban neighbourhoods. In analysing relationships and associations based on propinquity or neighbourhoods, Hall et al. (1984) recognise two important aspects in the development of a sense of community: boundaries and local social organisation. According to Hall et al. (1984:205) ‘without boundaries it is difficult for the local population to articulate a collective identity’, and key institutions aid the drawing of the boundaries and social organisation for relations of propinquity, such as churches, schools and retail.

Delanty (2003:2) notes that for sociologists, community has ‘designated a particular form of social organisation based on small groups, such as neighbourhoods, the small town, or a spatially bounded locality’ (emphasis added). Similarly, Gottdiener and Hutchison (2006:194) in The New Urban Sociology, define the concept of community ‘as a socio spatial environment that possesses an organized social institution that deals specifically with local matters’ (emphasis added). It is commonly viewed that the organised presence within a community is what generates a sense of identity for the community, as well as cohesion for the community. Gottdiener and Hutchison (2006:195) go on to emphasise the importance of social organisation stating that ‘when the local area possesses an organized social presence, such as a block association, homeowners association, political ward, or similar organisation, residents are better
able to deal with the issues and problems of metropolitan living'. The existence of such social organisations forms the basis of community, and it is the presence of some form of social organisation for a community that generates identity and cohesion. Without such social organisation, ‘a sense of place beyond the local neighbourhood simply does not exist, and residents of such areas are left to fend for themselves when faced with environmental problems’ (Gotttdiener and Hutchison, 2006:195; see also Jane Jacobs, 1961 for more serendipitous elements). Importantly, in understanding the role that social organisation has played in community formation and its persistence over time, one of the legacies of field-based community studies has been the documentation of the ‘order created out of urban chaos by city residents’ (Gotttdiener and Hutchison, 2006:183). For example, in Urban Villagers, Gans (1962) found that the working class was highly organised around peer groups. The organised presence emerges as a key base for community in terms of formation, identity, cohesion and longevity.

In The Quest for Community (1976) sociologist David Thorns explores the formation and longevity of different types of communities: new towns, transitional (e.g. squatters) and ideological communities (e.g. kibbutz). I will specifically take up Thorns’ discussion of ideological communities below, but for now I want to focus on one of Thorns’ key conclusions, that one of the critical ingredients for community formation and sustenance is social organisation and key community roles. When researching squatter communities, Thorns (1976:112) found that the ‘organisation of the community both before and after its physical foundation emerges as important to the eventual success and secure establishment of the community’. While social organisation is seen to be important in community formation, so too is the active involvement of many community members in the functioning and organisation of the community. A case in point in this regard is the Kibbutz. In understanding the sociology of new communities, and the process of community development, the role of key position holders in new communities is an important dynamic to consider. For example, in the Kibbutz of Israel there are key positions such as farm manager, secretary, treasurer and the like (Thorns, 1976). Indeed, the ease with which these positions are filled within a community is indicative of the overall vitality of the community (Thorns, 1976). Thorns (1976:129) found evidence to suggest that it was becoming increasingly difficult to fill some of these responsible positions and in response posed the question: ‘Does this mean that the commitment to the Kibbutz has weakened, hence a different type of motivation will
be needed in the future for position holders? Research with squatter communities and
the Kibbutz highlighted the importance of social organisation and the active
involvement of community members in community development and progression, as
well as an internal dynamic for community.

As discussed above, a good deal of community studies has linked community formation
to the availability and proximity of various institutions, such as churches, schools, and
the like. Research by Herbert Gans (1962), in The Urban Villagers, notes how the Catholic
Church played a pivotal role in the community. The Catholic Church provided a space
and setting for social and political meetings, bowling leagues, women’s societies, among
other things (Gans 1962:110). Further to the role of the Catholic Church, the
commercial establishments of the neighbourhood – taverns, store and restaurants –
were all part of the community, providing hangouts and spaces for socialising (Gans,
1962:117). According to Gans (1962) adult social life in the west end of Boston was
based on peer group sociability. For the residents of the west end, sociability was a:

Routinised gathering of a relatively unchanging peer group of family members
and friends that takes place several times a week ... [with the] meetings of the
group being the vital centre of West End life. (Gans, 1962:74)

Institutions were an important part of social organisation. More recently, the text
Cracks in the Pavement (Sanchez-Jankowski, 2008) undertakes a detailed ethnographic
analysis of the role of institutions such as schools, hair dressers, and locally organised
‘gangs’ in poor neighbourhoods in the United States. Sanchez-Jankowski notes the key
role played by institutions in the establishment of social order and neighbourliness. The
community formation that occurs through these various institutions is evidence of
social organisation that is perhaps in some ways unspoken, more informal or not stated.

Various forms of social organisation within communities are not always successful
however and can be prone to problems or threats. Nevertheless, documenting the
problems, conflicts, tensions and threats in the ‘experiments’ of community formation
and functioning (organisation) can ‘provide valuable insight into the nature of
community structure and efficacy of different types of social organisation’ (Thorns,
1976:115). Problems and tensions could potentially be both internal and external.
Internal tensions could arise due to leadership failures or the degree of managerial competence of those managing the Kibbutz, a loss of community members, lack of faith in the leadership of the Catholic Church, for example (see Thorns, 1976). These problems and tensions potentially threaten cohesion and stability within a community. However, these problems and tensions are two-fold in that working together to deter any threats is an important part of building community cohesion. For example, many communities have often developed out of some sort of conflict, such as local Resident Action Groups who work to maintain boundaries when faced with external threats (see Costello and Dunn, 1994). Further, these tensions and conflicts suggest that within communities people are not always consenting and groups are not always homogenous, and that there is an internal dynamism to community that needs to be managed. Indeed this dynamism within community is something the research presented here on PREs, seeks to engage with as it has been poorly acknowledged in community studies to date.

Further, conflicts between the community and wider society can also generate a sense of identity and community cohesiveness. Delanty (2003:186) argues that ‘in recent times disappointment with the promises of the modern state has led to many calls for the revival of community as a basis of politics’. Hence, there has been the development of organised, ideological, political communities (e.g. new social movements).

The role of social institutions and formal structures in shaping community is clearly important. If effective social organisation is the successful foundation and constituent for community, then it has become apparent that social organisation can occur in a number of ways: there are both spoken and unspoken forms of social organisation (e.g. churches, school, kin, family); informal or ideological communities have spoken and unspoken rules and ways of life, which match with their ideology – for example, farmers, alternative lifestyles of the Kibbutz or a commune. It is important to understand whether the absence of social organisation would still generate community. In previous decades kin and familial relations sustained communities, but society today is quite different from that of the past and both kin and familial relations appear far less evident and important, as are various social institutions (e.g. some religious institutions). Further, it is important to understand the reverse side of this and whether the presence of very rigid structures for social organisation aids community formation. These sorts of associations and encounters were what Herbert Gans understood as
‘quasi-primary’ relationships between neighbourhoods – those less intimate and not formed around family or kinship necessarily (Gans, 1962; see also Stevenson, 1999). Indeed, for PREs (as discussed in Chapter 2) these neighbourhoods have very rigid, legislated, forms of social organisation. Community studies has not yet uncovered the impact of formalised, stringent and structured forms of social organisation within a community, such as those found in the organisation of PREs (community associations and private governance). The question remains as to whether such structures aid the development and formation of community over time, and how effective this type of social organisation will be in contemporary neighbourhoods and urban society. Further, it will be important to understand how community dynamics and complexities are negotiated within a structured form of social organisation.

In recent years, and specifically after the cultural-turn in the social sciences, there has been a shift away from the traditional emphasis on ‘community as a form of social interaction based on locality to a concern with meaning and identity’ (Delanty, 2003:3). An influential work in this regard was Anderson’s *Imagined Communities* (1983) that envisions communities as imagined rather than as a form of social interaction. The impact of the cultural turn on the study of community has seen such studies become concerned with ideology, identity and meaning. However, Delanty (2003:3) argues that community is:

both an idea about belonging and a particular social phenomenon, such as expressions of longing for community, the search for meaning and solidarity, and collective identities. In other words, community has a variable nature and cannot simply be equated with particular groups or a place. Nor can it be reduced to an idea, for ideas do not simply exist outside social relations, socially structured discourses and a historical milieu.

Thus, community is both social and cultural – it is at once imagined and constructed, and based around social practices, performances and institutions. While the ideal of community has enduring appeal, for community to exist, it has to be tied to social relations and broader structures, as well as discursive constructions.
In his study of community formation and persistence, Thorns focuses on ideological communities and in particular the Kibbutz. Thorns (1976:133) concludes that for the communities that were created with some kind of ideological base, in all cases it was ‘the ideology which gives coherence and structure of the communities’. Ideological communities have traditionally been ‘created outside the ‘public’ system of planning and development by those who accept alternative values to those predominant in the society’ (Thorns, 1976:145). While driven by a certain ideology, this community was experienced in a social context. Ultimately, following a certain ideology places the ideological communities (those based around an alternative ideology to the mainstream) at conflict with the rest of society in which they are situated (Thorns, 1976). It is these conflicts that create identity and cohesion. As noted in regard to social organisation, conflict, is also an important part of the community building process. Conflict is important within the community – that is between the community and individuals – and between the community and society (see Thorns, 1976).

Some of the more traditional community studies have suggested some common themes in community formation and its persistence over time. Commonalities through kin and family have been significant in community formation, as have certain ideological bases, such as those adopted by people in communes or the Kibbutz. Forms of social organisation either through churches and social institutions, or through rigid forms of social organisation such as community associations, are certainly key components to the development of community and of its persistence in urban areas. Certainly, the findings presented in this section suggest that community does form in urban areas, contrary to the persistent notion of community ‘lost’. While suggestions have been made that city diversity and difference, and privatism and affluence have hampered community formation in urban areas, the studies of sociologists such as Gans, Young and Willmott and others, have continued to demonstrate the diversity of communities that can be found in urban areas once engaged in ethnographic and qualitative research within local neighbourhoods. The community ‘lost’ arguments have also had considerable longevity due to the conflation of neighbourhood with community, as the following section explores.
NEIGHBOURHOOD, MOBILITY AND COMMUNITY

To counter many of the community lost arguments, a vast array of community studies appeared post World War II, carefully documenting social life in urban neighbourhoods (Wellman and Leighton, 1979). As Strickland (1979:391) notes:

During the fifties and sixties a rash of books and articles appeared detailing almost every imaginable facet of life in neighbourhood settings: marital affairs in suburbia, organized gangs in ghettos, social organization in slums, neighbourly relations in ethnic neighbourhoods, associational life in new communities, extended kinship relations in urban areas, street-corner cliques, and so on.

The purpose of many of these studies was to demonstrate that ‘urbanites still neighbour, still have a sense of local community, and still use neighbourhood ties for sociability and support’ (Wellman and Leighton, 1979:373). However, a result of this has been the confusion of neighbourhood with community. According to Wellman and Leighton (1979) urban sociology had more or less become neighbourhood sociology and the study of community was firmly rooted in the study of neighbourhoods.

In writing the book *Community*, Delanty (2003) notes that society is increasingly global and mobile, both of which had an impact on the very nature of community. In seeking to move the notion of community away from the popular imaginings of community as neighbourhood-based, drawing on the work of urban theorist Manuel Castells (1996, 1997, 1998, 2001), among others, Delanty (2003:187) advances the argument that:

contemporary community may be understood as a communication community based on new kinds of belonging. ... The communities of today are less bounded than those of the very recent past. The communicative ties and cultural structures in the contemporary societies of the global age – as opposed to the industrial and traditional societies – have opened up numerous possibilities for belonging based on religion, nationalism, ethnicity, lifestyle and gender. It is in this world of plurality rather than of closure that the new kinds of community are emerging. The persistence of community consists in its ability to communicate ways of belonging, especially in the context of an increasingly insecure world.
Essentially, Delanty is concerned with the rise of information technologies which enabled the development of communities that are not placed-based, and not necessarily based on kinship or local familial relations. Delanty views the internet, and increased global mobility, as playing a key role in the development of communities, particularly transnational communities, taking the focus away from place and location. Increasing mobility, socially and otherwise, had the result of giving a greater force and legitimacy to community lost arguments, especially given that neighbourhoods and community were viewed as one in the same. Wellman and Leighton (1979:372) argue that because community was seen as only existing in neighbourhoods, increased mobility became interpreted as a loss of community.

The importance of ‘place’ or the ‘local’ was reasserted into the social sciences literature during the 1970s and 1980s (Massey and Allen, 1984), following primarily from the concerns for how places were being affected by global processes. However, much of this thinking about place or location, reasserted the local but not necessarily the social aspects of place. For instance, Australia’s metropolitan regions have been unevenly affected by the process of globalisation and the rise of the services economy, or deindustrialisation, with some being ‘winners’ or ‘losers’ in the global economy. The study presented in Fault lines Exposed (Baum et al. 2005) categorises the local suburban areas of Australia’s metropolitan regions ranging from the affluent through to the very disadvantaged. While examinations of the urban landscape such as these are important in and of themselves, they tell us very little about the actual lived experiences of these places, of neighbouring, of community formation, of social life broadly. The sociology of urban life needs greater consideration in local place-based accounts of urban areas.

Post cultural turn in the social sciences, much of what constituted social research or social studies have been replaced by cultural studies of meaning and identity. In light of some of the changes taking place, Philo (1991:37) urges scholars to:

keep an eye open to the processes – what we might call the more material processes, even if they are not directly observable in the fashion of, say, trees, roads and libraries – which are the stuff of everyday social practices, relations and struggles, and which underpin social group formation, the constitution of social
systems and social structures, and the social dynamics of inclusion and exclusion. More concretely (or even more materially), it is to continue paying urgent attention to the mundane workings of families and communities (however we understand such phenomena); ... to cope with the neighbours, to walk down the street without being afraid; it is to take a stab at sharing the happiness and the sadness of being people with or without friends, ... it is to pay attention to the child crying in the road, the old man shuffling to the pub, the young mother and her pram negotiating kerbstones; and so on and so on ... what I am getting at [is] ... a wish to access some kind of ‘gritty’ real social world.

Philo is cautioning against the possibility of ignoring more mundane aspects of social life as disciplines in the social sciences such as geography undergo various ideological transformations. Philo is generally concerned with the idea that researchers were no longer ‘patiently excavating the grain of component social lives, social worlds and social spaces’ (Philo, 1991:37). Understanding the dynamics of communities and neighbourhoods is by no means an easy task but it is something that should be continually engaged with over time. Further, the decline of some of the aspects of social relations is possibly linked to the increased engagement with ‘everyday life’ or the spaces of everyday lives, which may well mask the social (deCerteau, 1984; Hubbard, 2006).

A contention that has emerged in the community studies literature recently suggests that place-based communities, or specifically neighbourhood communities, do not exist. According to Delanty (2003:188) ‘neighbourhood communities, such as those in soap operas ... do not correspond to ‘real’ communities’. These neighbourhood communities however, are those which play the most crucial role in the construction of the popular discourse of community. Neighbourhood communities may appear not to correspond with ‘real’ communities (whatever that may be), but this is more likely a result of urban scholar’s lack of engagement with the notion of community, particularly those that are placed-based. Further, I realise that a common contention in the literature is that the growing fragmentation of urban society, and subsequently the urban landscape, is leading to the development of ‘gated communities’ – that are thought to destroy community (see Delanty, 2003; Gleeson, 2006). As Delanty (2003:63) pointedly notes, ‘only ‘make-believe’ community identities exist in gated or
affluent communities’. Given that contemporary suburban neighbourhoods are thought to be increasingly affluent and an increasing number are gated in many western and even non-western cities, it is even more important to reflect on the social dynamics within these newly formed neighbourhoods and understand the formation (or not) of community, similar to Gans’ work in *Levittown* (1967), or Young and Willmott’s (1957) understanding of new post-war suburban residential developments. Rather than suggesting that neighbourhood communities are not real, there is a need for greater research and theorising, particularly because many new residential estates are sold on the basis of being “communities”. More importantly, it is necessary to understand what community means in the context of neighbourhoods, and how community operates to legitimate the choices of residents to reside in a given neighbourhood and/or how community frames the residents’ management of their neighbourhood and any internal politics.

One of the first studies of suburban community was William Whyte’s *The Organisation Man* (1957). Whyte’s research focuses on the development of a new planned suburban estate in the outer metropolitan region of Chicago. As Gottdiener and Hutchison (2006:183) note, Whyte’s research depicts:

> the classic suburb of the early post-war period as a place where nuclear families were housed in single-family, detached homes, where women did not work but spent their time in housekeeping chores and chats over coffee with neighbours, and where men commuted into the city to corporate, professional jobs.

Images and descriptions such as these of the suburban landscape have had considerable longevity. Suburban areas, particularly in Australia, have been popularly viewed as bereft of social life, as commuter suburbs, or mere dormitories (see Powell, 1993). As noted in Chapter 1, research into the outer metropolitan areas of major cities in Australia has not been particularly extensive.

Many urban sociologists who studied community formation in suburban areas, found communities very different to those of the inner city areas, which in turn contributed quite significantly to images and constructions of suburbs as somehow lacking community. In Young and Willmott’s (1957) study of a new suburban development in
outer London, they conclude that the majority of residents in the new suburb felt their neighbours were unfriendly. Further, they depicted very different types of relations between neighbours than they had found in the inner city:

People do not treat others either as enemies or as friends. They are wary, though polite. They pass the time of day in the road. They have an occasional word over the fence or a chat at the garden gate. They nod to each other in the shops. Neighbours even borrow and lend little things to each other, and when this accommodation is refused, it is a sign that acquaintance has turned into enmity. (Young and Willmott, 1957:149)

While mostly suggesting that social life in new suburbs is vastly different from that of the inner city, these conclusions suggest alternative types of social interaction and social ties have formed in the suburbs.

In the 1960s, Herbert Gans championed the cause for urban community sociology and ethnographic field research. Gans’ research in Levittown sought to determine how a new community comes into being, and how people live and relate to one another in a new suburb (Gans, 1967). Gans’ conclusions, similar to those of Young and Willmott, were also fairly different to his prior research into community in the inner city slums of Boston’s west end. Gans found that the social ties of the community were related less to peer groups or family relations, and more to the neighbourhood institutions. Although Gans (1967) notes that just because the community that is uncovered is different to that which has previously been found does not mean that it is not community. These differences in community formation and sustenance should be documented and reported to ensure that they are not viewed negatively because of their differences. What should be important is understanding what community means to the residents of a given neighbourhood, and not necessarily judging a neighbourhood community to be good or bad. Differences both within and between communities can be a legitimate part of understandings of cities and societies. Community has traditionally been considered as homogenous and anti-difference, following the early theorising of Tonnies (1957). However, considering community as messy, complex, contradictory and dynamic could in fact progress urban theories of community.
UNDERSTANDING URBAN COMMUNITY: COMPLEXITIES AND CONTRADICTIONS

The notion of community, however perplexed, has a strong legacy and a continued utility for the social sciences. The persistence of the notion in the various social science literatures suggests the need for a continued engagement with the notion and continued research into community development, formation and function. In urban theory, cities have long been considered chaotic and diverse, so perhaps then academic understandings of community should account for diversity, chaos and complexity. As previously noted, the ideal of community as homogenous and consenting has potentially hindered the progress of theories of urban community. The anti-difference and homogenous nature of community led Iris Young to conceptualise urban social relations through a politics of difference rather than as 'community'. Young (1990:300) notes that:

Community is an understandable dream, expressing a desire for selves that are transparent to one another, relationships of mutual identification, social closeness and comfort. The dream is understandable, but politically problematic, I argue, because those motivated by it will tend to suppress differences among themselves or implicitly to exclude from their political groups persons with whom they do not identify.

Young generally asserts that community oppresses difference and that scholars should do away with the notion of community and instead scholars should adopt the notion of 'together in difference'.

Conversely, Secomb (2000:134) argues that community can be reconceptualised without doing away with the notion of community altogether:

Disagreement … holds a space open for diversity and for freedom. It is not disagreement, resistance, and agitation that destroy community. It is rather the repression or suppression of difference and disagreement in the name of unity and consensus which destroys the engagement and interrelation of community.
Secomb (2000:137) further argues that ‘instead of insisting on consensus, community needs to be open to disagreement, resistance, and fracture’. The point of understanding disagreements and diversities within community will be important for scholars as ‘searching for disagreement or dissonance within community will be as informative as identifying consensus’ (Panelli and Welch, 2005:1593). Following the work of Nancy (1991), Panelli and Welch’s (2005:1593) research into urban communities in New Zealand demonstrates the utility of conceptualising community not as ‘comfortably uniform, complete, or blessed with consensus or agreement’. Panelli and Welch (2005:1593) argue that:

Community is constantly performed as a process rather than a product; a collection of contradictions rather than a singular agreed notion; a series of voices rather than a unified, substantive object.

The argument presented in this work is that understandings of community as singular, homogenous and consenting, do not allow for understandings of internal dynamics within communities. Differences and diversities, tensions and contradictions within communities are perhaps the markings of contemporary urban communities.

In a study involved with an examination of the impact of migrant labour involved in the construction of landfill facilities for oil and gas on the small town of Peterhead (Scotland, UK), sociologist Robert Moore (2008:123) discovered a ‘community held together by a network of mutual hatred … [and] what emerged was that people’s shared hatred of, or conflict with, others actually united them’. Indeed Moore’s research, similar to that of Secomb’s (2000:148) with Indigenous and non-Indigenous groups in Australia, suggests that ‘disagreement, difference, and passion mark the living community’. Certainly, in both instances, community is continually sustained by difference and disagreement (Secomb, 2000). A conceptualisation of contemporary urban community as dynamic, contradictory and complex will no doubt go some way towards progressing urban theories of community and probably aid urban scholars in uncovering a diversity of urban communities within cities.
CONCLUSION

Notions of community lost in urban areas have had enduring appeal within urban studies. This is in part related to the continued ideal of community as small, homogenous, consenting and rural as presented by Tonnies (1957). More recently, some scholars have considered the growth of privatism and private affluence to have been detrimental to the formation of community, in that society is increasingly individual and rarely reliant on the communal or the collective. Here, privatism and community are positioned as the anti-thesis to one another. Running parallel to these notions of a loss of community in urban areas was the urban sociology and ethnography of communities and neighbourhoods that engaged with city residents to undercover their experiences of community and neighbouring, and to understand exactly what community meant to urban residents and how community had formed. Based around these studies, urban communities have been thought to emerge, and subsequently be sustained, through the commonalities of community members. These commonalities have often included common kinship or family, common ideological beliefs, and various forms of social organisation. These understandings of community still largely insisted on consent and solidarity as key to community. Some recent articulations and conceptualisations of community have suggested that urban researchers should consider difference, diversity, complexity and contradictions within communities as a way of progressing understandings of community in urban studies and being able to uncover a diverse range of communities within cities and broader metropolitan regions. Indeed, understandings of both commonalities, and differences and complexities, within communities will strengthen understandings of urban communities. The notion of community has a continued utility in the social sciences and certainly in research on private residential estates, so there remains a need to engage with meanings of community in place-based neighbourhoods, as well as to consider a re-conceptualisation of community as hosting commonalities and contradictions so as not to do away with a key concept within the social sciences.

Having identified a gap in the understandings of social life and community within private residential estates in Australia, community became a key concept for this thesis and for the research. Troubling the assumptions that private residents estates are a product of the neoliberal project and that privatism and affluence do not create community, this thesis set out to understand whether community forms within private
residential estates, how it forms and certainly what community means for the residents of my study. The next chapter explores the ways in which I directly engaged with the residents of Macquarie Links.
INTRODUCTION
Over the past few years I have often been asked how I gained access to the ‘gated community’ and what the people were like inside. This Chapter is primarily about just that – detailing the experiences of actually doing research with the residents within a private (gated) residential estate, Macquarie Links. Loretta Lees (2003) notes that contemporary urban geographers do not spend enough time talking about their research methods or research approaches, nor reflecting on them, and both aspects are important in ensuring the quality of urban research. In this Chapter I outline the research approach, positioned within a qualitative framework, and the various methods utilised in the field. My underlying aim in using a qualitative approach was to generate a detailed view of life within a private residential estate, to understand the experiences of the neighbourhood structure and of community. The primary aim of the fieldwork was to engage with the residents within a private residential estate to begin to understand their experiences of the place, the lived realities, and their motivations for living in a private residential estate, and this Chapter reflects on this process of community engagement.

APPROACHING URBAN COMMUNITIES
The study of community is part of a long sociological tradition in urban research (see Chapter 3). The beginnings of the earliest detailed ethnographic studies of community date back to the Chicago School. The legacy of the Chicago School sociologists was that the undertaking of fine-grained ethnographic studies revealed the rich and varied nature of urban life. According to Loretta Lees (2003:108), one of the defining features of the Chicago School was their ‘shared methodological commitments’. The first hand field observations ‘marked the inception of a genuinely humanistic methodology and rich ethnographic tradition’ in urban research (Lees, 2003:108). The work of the Chicago School, while not without its critics, is valuable today because it was upfront about methods and methodology in their research (Lees, 2003). Lees’ celebrations of the
Chicago School’s commitment to methodology was to encourage contemporary urban researchers to be explicit about our research practices, as being open about our research approach and design, ‘forces us to be reflexive about them’ (Lees, 2003:108). For example, it is important for urban researchers to acknowledge why we undertook research in a particular way, why we designed the research the way we did, or why a particular data set was deemed appropriate to use. Of course, the research question also determines our approach. A transparency in the methods of urban researchers is also important for ensuring its quality (Lees, 2003). In this section I want to spell out the relevance of qualitative approaches to urban research and urban communities, before considering my direct approach to the neighbourhood of Macquarie Links.

Qualitative approaches to urban research are now part of mainstream urban studies. Such approaches however, did hold a more marginal place in urban geography / urban studies where qualitative approaches were slower to be accepted than somewhere like urban sociology where these approaches have long been integral to the discipline. As Jacobs argues (1993:828), ‘qualitative approaches to understanding the urban have long been overshadowed by the hegemony of positivism within mainstream urban studies’. Urban geography specifically has a long tradition and greater attachment to quantitative and applied work (Lees, 2002). This attachment has resulted in urban geography, probably more than any other sub-discipline, being split between differing approaches to understanding and researching the city. The uptake of new methodological approaches was met with criticism throughout the 1980s and 1990s (Fincher and Jacobs, 1998; Jacobs, 1993).

Today, there is a greater acceptance within urban geography on the utility of qualitative approaches to the city. Recent articles by prominent urban geographers internationally have paved the way for discussion of a new urban geography and for ethnographic approaches to understanding the city (Fincher and Jacobs, 1998; Jacobs, 1993; Lees, 2002, 2003, 2004). A special issue of the journal Urban Policy and Research on ‘Qualitative research and urban policy analysis’ (Maginn, 2006:1) showcased some of the recent approaches to qualitative research in urban studies within Australia. These publications have collectively assisted the progress of urban geography and its methodological tools for analysis. It is within the qualitative research approaches of a
new urban geography that this research is positioned (see Chapter 1 for discussion of
new urban geography).

However, some of the original ethnographic approaches to the urban have now been
‘superseded by an explosion of studies which analyse the city using an expanded set of
qualitative and interpretative methods’ (Jacobs, 1993:830). This overshadowing of
ethnographic approaches has been termed the ‘ethnographic void’ in urban geography
(Lees, 2003). Lees advocates for continued ethnographic research to ‘investigate the
ongoing social practices through which urban space is continually shaped and
a more widespread adoption of ethnographic approaches to urban research. According
to Lees (2003:110), the attractiveness of an ethnographic approach for the new urban
geography is that:

It addresses the richness and complexity of human life and gets us closer to
understanding the ways people interpret and experience the world. It is well
able to deal with complex concepts like culture. It believes in the socially
constructed nature of phenomena and the importance of language, and it
reminds us that the researcher only ever gains partial insight.

For me, an ethnographic approach is about situating ourselves amongst real people in
cities (following Lees, 2003). It is about representing the voices of those who are living
in gated residential estates, especially for what they can tell us about contemporary
cities, urban society and community. There needs to be a continued commitment to
describe the urban experience from the bottom-up, to ethnographically represent the
voices of those within the private residential estate. Qualitative ethnographic
approaches to the urban draw on methods that ‘reveal and interpret the complexities,
context and significance of people’s understandings of their lives’ (McGuirk and
O’Neill, 2005:147). A qualitative approach for my research on the experience of living in
private residential estates, favoured questions concerned with the intricate details of
life within these private neighbourhoods and with unpacking the very nature of private
residential estates – the lived experiences of community and of the governance
structures that support these residential developments, and in thinking through
possible outcomes. This is not to suggest that quantitative techniques are absent from
this research, as they are not, but rather to acknowledge a predominantly qualitative framing of the project. Qualitative methods are best suited to begin to understand the inherent complexity of urban social phenomenon.

THE CASE STUDY APPROACH
Case studies are a rigorous method of research within the social sciences (Yin, 2003). A ‘case’ can be anything from the individual to a group such as a family unit or co-workers in an office, through to a large-scale community, and the case study investigates one of these cases as a means to answering specific research questions (Gillham, 2000; Stake, 2000; Yin, 2003). For the purpose of this research, the case is a private residential estate – Macquarie Links – and the study is of social life and interactions in private residential developments and the formation of community within such private spaces. The utilisation of a case study approach allows the researcher to focus on a specific locality as a way of developing our understanding of particular phenomena (e.g. shift towards private residential developments and the nature of social life and interactions within these private residential estates). The act of isolating particular case studies allows the researchers to ‘focus on something more manageable in order to make an explanation and then lifts it out of the mass of information’ (Bennett and Shurmer-Smith, 2002:200). Case studies often demand a fine grained and in-depth analysis of the given case to understand its complexities and location within broader processes and phenomena (Stake, 2000). Hence, research on the specific instance of a phenomenon is used as a way of articulating a point within an overall conceptual framework. The purpose here is to use a case study private neighbourhood – Macquarie Links – and go beyond one locality and demonstrate a broader societal shift towards privatised urban residential developments and new versions of urban community in Australian metropolitan regions.

Using a case study was not aimed at restricting this analysis to a given location, rather to demonstrate the broader processes that are at work within the case study neighbourhood, as applicable to private residential developments in metropolitan Australia. Macquarie Links Estate (the case study location) provided the context for the study of the geographies of private community development. It is perhaps through the use of a case study that researchers are able to better understand both the urban
processes at work within the city and the outcomes of such processes on people’s lives, or neighbourhoods. The strength of the case study approach is that ‘real lives of real people are at the centre of explanation’, and thus the exceptional and peculiar can emerge through an apparent normality (Bennett and Shurmer-Smith, 2002:201). Case studies are particularly useful in allowing reflection on human experiences (Stake, 2000). Further, Jacobs (1993:830) notes that the use of intensive methods, such as case study research, with extensive methods (interviews and surveys) will ‘highlight the link between broader structures and processes in local settings’.

Given the diversity of private residential developments internationally and here in Australian cities, I sought to avoid comparisons between different types of private residential developments and focus on one private estate, at the extreme end of the spectrum on new private residential developments (see McGuirk and Dowling, 2007) and specifically a private gated estate, being an intense urban residential form that has emerged in the Australian urban landscape. The case study area taken at the centre of the research is Macquarie Links Estate, located in the Campbelltown Local Government Area (LGA) (as introduced in Chapter 1). Macquarie Links was developed during the 1990s, with the first house released to the market in the second half of the 1990s. Macquarie Links was a project of Monarch Investments, who are a small family-owned development firm, established in 1955 (see Monarch Investments Website, 2005). I had consulted census data from the 2001 and 2006 Australian Census to develop suburb-scale socio-demographic profiles for the Sydney metropolitan region as a whole (see Chapter 5). Ultimately, this analysis of Australian Census data showed a stark juxtaposition between Macquarie Links and the surrounding suburbs within the Campbelltown LGA. Macquarie Links is immediately bounded by the suburbs of Macquarie Fields, Ingleburn and Glenfield. This made Macquarie Links an increasingly important case study as the south west region of Sydney is one of change and transformation (see Chapter 1). The south west is one of the Sydney Metropolitan Strategy’s ‘growth centres’ (Department of Planning, 2005) and can expect the development of new houses and communities in the next few years due to recent and pending land releases. The south western Sydney region also contains some more established suburbs, and is home to a number of large scale public housing estates (developed through state government initiatives in the 1960s and 1970s) (see Randolph...
In addition to this, the social dynamics and complexities of the outer suburban reaches of the city are a personal research interest of mine.

Aside from south western Sydney being a region for growth and the release of new land for housing over the next few decades, Macquarie Links possessed a number of desirable characteristics, which presented the suburb as a good case study. Macquarie Links has been developed on community title. Community title is an increasingly popular form of localised community governance (discussed at length in Chapter 5), resulting in the formation of a private residential estate with a residents association. These transformations taking place in the nature of urban governance were a key concern for this research, and much research internationally (see McKenzie, 1994). Macquarie Links is also a gated suburb. This urban residential form has attracted significant amounts of attention in recent times (Blakely and Snyder, 1997; Gleeson, 2006) and the emergence of this highly privatised gated urban residential form was worthy of investigation in the Australian context. Macquarie Links is also a suburb in its own right, making the scale and size of the development an important characteristic. These things combined presented Macquarie Links as an appropriate case study development for the investigation of private residential estates in the Australian urban context.

Drawing on the research knowledge and experience of the Chicago School sociologists, through to the new urban geographers undertaking urban research today, a variety of research methods were chosen. The first method employed was a case study approach, as noted above. The research phases that directly engaged with the residents of Macquarie Links relied on a variety of research methods. The methods chosen for this research were informed by recent qualitative research that had been undertaken on private residential estates in cognate disciplines, such as sociology, environmental psychology and anthropology, as well as geography (see Caldeira, 2000; Gwyther, 2004; Kenna, 2007; Low, 2003). Although their aims were different to that of this thesis, these studies were some of the most contemporary studies of private suburban residential developments in various urban contexts, which had engaged directly with residents living within private residential estates. Extensive reading of these research projects made obvious some of the strengths and weaknesses of various methods and approaches when dealing with residents within private residential estates. Of course,
each of these research projects had different levels of funding and occurred over different time frames. Resident questionnaires and interviews within case study residential developments was the common approach across these research projects.

The research presented in this dissertation was concerned with understanding the social life and lived realities of the ‘private’ and ‘community’ within private residential estates. Thus, the research was concerned with the lived realities for residents within private residential estates in relation to motivations and intentions, social interaction, costs of living, governance and community formation, and the use of questionnaires and interviews was deemed the most appropriate methods through which to operationalise the research question. I considered that this would also aid the consistency of research within an emerging field of urban research, as well as aid the relevance of this research internationally. Interestingly though, I was also tied to certain qualitative methods due to the nature of the case study development. Given that the case study was indeed a ‘gated’ residential estate I was limited in my ability to employ some of the more traditional ethnographic approaches to community studies. Certainly, I could have moved to Macquarie Links and rented a property within the residential estate for 6-12 months. However, such an approach to this residential neighbourhood was a largely unviable research approach financially for a PhD student (rental properties were available for close to $500 per week in 2006/7). Further, renting a property within the neighbourhood would have allowed me to develop certain insights into everyday life, but as a renter, I would not have been able to participate in the neighbourhood functioning of the private structure of the estate, through neighbourhood committee meetings and the like, as homeownership is a necessity for involvement in these meetings (see Chapter 5).

Social research has long held a concern with gate keepers – those who control the access to information or informants (Broadhead and Rist, 1976). Common examples of the hurdles imposed by gate keepers are found in research on children and young people or other minority groups (see Matthews et al., 1998; Valentine, 1999) and educational research (see Denscombe, 1995; Wanat, 2008), among others (e.g. medical or public health research). In this research into private residential estates, I was challenged by gate keepers, but not in the traditional sense (i.e. that someone is stopping me from accessing the people I seek to involve in the research: the residents).
Rather, the residents themselves limit the availability and accessibility of knowledge and information that can be gathered during the course of the research process. Essentially, the residents controlled the types of information that I was able to obtain about this particular residential development.

Related to the notion of ‘gate keepers’ in research, is the emerging set of literature on the interviewing of elites. A special issue of the journal Environment and Planning A (1998, Vol.30, No.12), was dedicated to ‘Researching elites and elite spaces’ (Hughes and Cormode, 1998). Much of this set of literature deals with experiences of interviewing the Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) of various companies, or business executives and the like (see Odenahl and Shaw, 2002 in the first instance). In the book chapter ‘Interviewing Elites’, Odenahl and Shaw (2002:229) note that the ‘barriers to reaching elites are real and include the difficulty of ... getting past gate keepers such as personal assistants, advisers, lawyers and security guards, and accessing exclusive physical spaces’. Popular research methods for understanding suburban neighbourhoods, both new and established, commonly include more ethnographic approaches, such as participant observation (see Caldeira, 2000; Gwyther, 2004; Low, 2003; Stevenson, 1999). In this particular research on a private suburban residential estate, I was unable to employ some of the more traditional ethnographic approaches. Participant observation and ethnographic understandings of Macquarie Links were limited to the short periods of time I spent within the estate before and after interviews with residents. Although, as discussed later in this Chapter I was still able to develop a rich and grounded ethnographic context for this research nonetheless (see Minichiello et al., 2008). Aside from having restricted access to the suburb and households, I was also limited in the repertoire of methods from which I could select. Given the nature of Macquarie Links (private and gated), to gather the primary data, two phases of data collection occurred: household questionnaires and in-depth interviewing. The design of the research using these main methods is discussed in the following section. The application of these methods is explored in later sections. A field diary was kept throughout the fieldwork stages to keep track of important personal communications, incidences or experiences.
RESEARCH DESIGN

As mentioned above, this research was designed around two key methods: household questionnaires and in-depth interviews. Full details of the research design are presented in Table 4.1 below. The following section details the process of engagement with the residents of Macquarie Links.

Table 4.1: Description of the research design including specifics of the methods and sample sizes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>METHOD</th>
<th>TIME PERIOD</th>
<th>SPECIFICS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Household questionnaires                  | Pilot: Feb.-March 2007 Main: March-June 2007 | - 200 questionnaires distributed via postal service direct to households.  
- Address details obtain from Electoral Roll.  
- 52 questionnaires returned.  
- 25% response rate.  
- Data entered into SPSS for analysis. |
| Interviews with residents                 | March – October 2007 | - 30 residents volunteered to be interviewed and were recruited via completed questionnaires (see Appendix 1).  
- 27 interviews conducted in households within the estate; 1 interview conducted at the Macquarie Links Golf Club; 1 interview conducted at informant’s workplace; 1 interview conducted at my office on campus.  
- Length of interview varied between 1-3 hours.  
- Interview data manually coded using thematic coding framework (see Appendix 4).  
- Residents were given pseudonyms throughout thesis to ensure anonymity. |
| Interviews with local members of parliament (MP) | March 2007 | - 1 interview with local MP for Campbelltown, 45 minutes.  
- 1 interview with local MP for Macquarie Fields, 1 hour. |
| Interview with Campbelltown City Council | July 2007           | - Telephone interview, 20 minutes.                                                                                                       |
| Interview with property developer for Macquarie Links, Monarch Investments | July 2007 | - Telephone interview, 20 minutes.                                                                                                       |
| Content analysis of newspaper reporting on Macquarie Links | October 2008 | - Newspaper search using FACTIVA for key word: “Macquarie Links” in major Australian news publications.  
- 35 key articles returned.  
- Articles analysed using thematic content analysis. |
| Review of Community Title Legislation     | 2006-2009            | - Legislation that allows for the development and management of community title residential developments in NSW  
- Community Lands Development Act, 1989  
- Community Lands Management Act, 1989 |
APPROACHING MACQUARIE LINKS RESIDENTS

One would be forgiven for driving right past Macquarie Links and not knowing it even existed. The entry to Macquarie Links is somewhat hidden, particularly in recent years as the trees surrounding the gated entrance have matured (see Figure 5.3). As you approach the Ingleburn exit on the M5 (south western motorway), heading south west from inner Sydney, you can just see the top floor of *The Peak* apartments in Macquarie Links. The immediate surrounds of Macquarie Links is the Ingleburn Industrial estate which one finds themselves in after leaving the motorway. You enter Macquarie Links Estate from Williamson Road, Ingleburn (which is the road that services the neighbouring industrial estate) and you are stopped and greeted by a security guard at the gate. The security staff then ask who you are here to see, take down these details on the record sheet attached to the clipboard, along with the registration details of your vehicle, and proceed to open the boom gate to allow you to enter, or direct you out if your business in the estate is not deemed appropriate or legitimate. However, once through the gates one drives along Macquarie Links Drive (main road) passing perfectly manicured gardens. To your left you notice the tennis courts and to your right the international golf course. Once you approach the first roundabout the residential streets of the estate take you in different directions.

Numerous reconnaissance trips to Macquarie Links occurred throughout 2005 and 2006 to get a sense for the suburb of Macquarie Links. It is often considered useful, especially when employing qualitative research methods, to get a grounded sense of the research case study, and make some preliminary observations of a given location, to guide the planning and execution of the research methods (Monk and Bedford, 2005). The first time I visited Macquarie Links, my experiences with the security were interesting. As I was there purely for a reconnaissance trip, wanting to become familiar with the estate, I had no real ‘business’ being there. Initially when pulling up to the gate house at Macquarie Links I refrained from identifying myself as a researcher from a University, not sure of how it might be received. I instead indicated my interest in learning more about Macquarie Links and getting a sense for the place. I was automatically directed to visit the sales office within the estate. The security guards had assumed I was interested in purchasing property in the estate. I went along with the facade. The sales manager was not working that day, but I asked the security guard if he would mind if I drove through the estate regardless. He was more than happy for
me to do so, handing me a flyer for one of the houses that was for sale, took down all my
details – name and car registration – and also took my driver’s licence\(^3\) from me as some
form of insurance. I drove around for about half an hour making myself familiar with
the place and its amenities, and taking various photographs of the houses, golf course,
and the other recreation facilities available (see Chapter 5).

Upon returning to the gate house to pick up my driver’s licence, I had a bit more of a
chat with the young security guard who I had been dealing with. When I asked the
young man at the gate what the demographic was like that lived here he told me it was
very diverse. This was soon confirmed in interviews with the residents. He then asked
me what I thought of the estate and I responded saying how nice everything was, being
well maintained, and I commented on the extensive range of facilities available to the
residents. And he responded by saying ‘yeah, we basically do everything for them
around here, except wipe their arses’ (Field diary entry, 2005). Further to these
exchanges about the nature of the estate, the demographics, facilities and so forth, I also
learnt that no materials were hand delivered to households within the estate. All junk
mail and local newspapers were delivered to the gate house only and residents could
pick these up from there if desirable. This, along with the gated entrance, was going to
prove a challenge to undertaking research within Macquarie Links.

When recruiting participants for research from within a secure, private estate,
overcoming any hurdles with access is an initial step. Due to the private nature of
Macquarie Links (gated entrance and private roads), the residents do not directly
receive local papers or junk mail to their letter boxes – all materials are left at the front
gate and people can collect from there if interested. This essentially ruled out any hand
delivering of resident questionnaires. To counter this, I used the New South Wales
electoral roll to ascertain the residential addresses of households within Macquarie
Links. This meant that surveys could be sent direct to households, which is generally
more advantageous in questionnaire research anyway (Agyrous, 2005; McGuirk and
O’Neill, 2005; Neuman, 2000). I trawled through thousands of enrolled voters
registered on the electoral roll for the Macquarie Fields electorate (the electorate
within which Macquarie Links is located) to generate a resident database for

---

\(^3\) I’m not entirely sure if taking ones drivers licence is ‘legal’, but went along with it regardless. Macquarie
Links is not necessarily ‘above the law’ but does have its own community by-laws that govern and
regulate life within (see Chapter 5-7).
Macquarie Links. As of 2003, the most recent version of the electoral roll I could access, just over 400 residents were registered on the electoral roll, which equated to about 200 households, all of which received questionnaires. Two hundred households effectively became the sample size for the research. There was a response rate to the questionnaire of just over 25 per cent (n=52). The household questionnaires were completed by both owners and renters within the estate.

As of 2007, the electoral roll ceased to be publicly available. This does not automatically mean that private residential estates, specifically those with gated entrances, are impenetrable. It simply means that we have to be more inventive with our approach to the delivery of questionnaires, and perhaps gain permission first. For example, if coordinated correctly, community associations meet regularly enough for a proposal to hand-deliver a questionnaire within the residential estate to be put forward to members of the committee, or for residential addresses to be made public (though this may be a more time consuming option). I would expect such an approach to have a fairly high success rate, albeit one that is dependent on how the research is perceived by the residents, given that residents are fairly happy to speak of their experiences, their homes, their choices, and the like. Additionally, having the support and/or endorsement of the community association could potentially be quite beneficial in terms of maximising the response rate and gaining access to information not otherwise available.

To gain initial insights into the lived experiences of residents within Macquarie Links, a private residential estate, a resident questionnaire was developed. Resident questionnaires are often used for gathering original data on people’s behaviour, attitudes, opinions, levels of social interaction and the like (McGuirk and O’Neill, 2005; McLafferty, 2003; Neuman, 2000; Parfitt, 2005). McGuirk and O’Neill (2005:148) suggest that a resident questionnaire can be utilised as a ‘powerful and practical research method’. Given the infancy of research on private residential estates in Australia, the questionnaire was designed to cover wide-ranging issues including some basic socio-demographic characteristics, the nature of previous residential environments, motivations for moving to a private residential estates, advantages / benefits / disadvantages to living in a private estate, opinions on aspects and features of the development, local community governance, questions on level of community and
social interaction, the place of children and young people in the development, preferences for private residential estates into the future and general views on private residential developments (see Appendix 1). Given that not all these issues could be covered in-depth, within a questionnaire that would be manageable for the residents, follow-up in-depth interviews were undertaken.

I administered a pilot questionnaire (or pre-test) in Macquarie Links, sending the questionnaire to twenty households. I received five responses to the survey (25%), three of whom volunteered to be interviewed. Undertaking a pilot study is quite common in social research and often recommended as an initial step required for ‘testing’ questions and responses. According to McGuirk and O’Neill (2005:155) pre-testing a questionnaire helps to ‘assess the merits of its design, its appropriateness to the audience, and whether it does in fact achieve your aims’. For the purposes of this research, a pilot study did two things: a) tested the resident’s responsiveness to the study itself, and b) tested the types of questions used and the likely responses. I had mixed feelings regarding research with the residents of Macquarie Links before commencing the fieldwork. I was partly confident that residents would be quite willing to talk about their place of residence, but I was also concerned for negative reactions by the residents to this research. Before sending out the questionnaire proper, I conducted interviews with the three residents who had volunteered to be interviewed following the pilot questionnaire. It was during the second interview that I became acutely aware of the potential for residents to be defensive about their private neighbourhood and not respond to the questionnaire. This particular informant cautioned that given the rather ‘touchy’ nature of the subject of private gated residential estates for the residents of Macquarie Links – a result of some negative press coverage on the suburb (see Chapter 5) – residents may not respond particularly kindly, or at all, and the way this research is presented to residents would be crucial. This particular informant’s reactions and advice follows:

Angela: Did you get much of a response?

Therese: So I did an initial stage to see what the response was like, and you’re part of that, you’re one of the first. So 20 went out first, and I got 5 come back from 20, so that’s about 25% so that’s fine, so the rest are going out this week and I’ll see what comes of them after that.
Angela: It’ll be interesting.
Therese: I think, from what I’ve done in the past, people are generally quite willing to talk about their lives, and …
Angela: Unless people get defensive...
Therese: Yeah that’s what I’m worried about.
Angela: Because I have to say, and I have to admit, I should actually have read [the letter], I was really annoyed, I’ll be honest with you, when I got the survey, and I think you can tell by some of the stuff that I wrote. I thought why do I have to justify again where I live? Why do I have to?
Therese: I wondered that, because it’s a tense issue, and I didn’t know [how people would respond], you word it [cover letter] because you just want to tell people what you’re doing, but not in a way that they’re going to go, bugger that...
Angela: That’s right, do I have to defend my home again. It’s none of your business why I live here ...

It was not until the end of the interview that she said: “I can see now what you’re trying to do and I think it’s a good thing” (Angela; Female; 40-50; 3.5 years). Having experienced this conversation about my intentions with this research, and hearing her initial reactions to the research, I reflected on the cover letter and the way the research project was being introduced to the residents, and wondered if all residents would have similar reactions. The other two ‘pilot’ interviewees did not mirror these sentiments and appeared more or less OK about the research. Nonetheless, I made alterations to the cover letter for the final mail-out and ensured that it was clear that residents were aware that my intentions in this project were not to find out information that would further harm the image of this place, rather to learn, in a more balanced sense, of the nature of this residential environment, the formation of community and so forth (see Appendix 2). Being mindful of such sensitivities, borne out of fairly negative media treatment (canvassed in Chapter 5) of such residential developments was important for me to note.

After the pilot surveys had been returned a few minor alterations to the survey were made. This mostly included slight changes to the wording of some questions to offer greater clarity and a change in the final open-ended question from asking about the
surrounding suburbs, to asking more specifically for reflections of their own neighbourhood. This was in response to some feedback I had received from an interviewee who completed the survey during the pilot stage. An excerpt follows from the interview with Angela (Female; 40-50; 3.5 years):

**Angela:** ... I think one of the questions was how do I think about Macquarie Fields, or do I interact and my first reaction was I don't interact with them. I don't interact not because it's a gated area, I don't interact because it's not physically in my... I don't drive through there to go to work; you know there's a railway line and a golf course separating us. Sometimes I shop there, but not very often.

**Therese:** It's a hard question to ask, it's really hard. I think about it, I live in St Peters, I don't spend any time in Marrickville, but I spend more time in say Newtown, not because I don't like Marrickville, or it's a bad place, just because you don't go there.

**Angela:** That's right. Life takes you in that direction. But I think because of the conflicts that's been generated between Macquarie Fields and Macquarie Links, are we too scared to go in there, it's not, it's just that my life doesn't venture that way. ...

**Therese:** It's not a prejudice thing.

**Angela:** It's not. It's not we're saying ‘I can't possibly be seen in Macquarie Fields’. It's not.

The question this interview informant referred to in the pilot questionnaire was not specifically asking for their opinions about Macquarie Fields. The pilot question had asked residents of their opinions of Macquarie Links in relation to the surrounding suburbs and the names of the surrounding suburbs were provided (e.g. Ingleburn, Macquarie Fields, and Campbelltown). Given this informant's automatic defensiveness about Macquarie Fields and Macquarie Links, I changed this question to ask for more detailed reflection on their own suburb. Changing this open-ended question generated lengthier responses on the residential environment of Macquarie Links. The survey had other questions which asked for information on residents’ daily movements and interactions (school, work, shopping, etc.) so this line of questioning, about the surrounding suburbs and levels of interaction, was not totally absent from the data
gathered, just not as overt as it had been in the pilot questionnaire. The question was shifted to the in-depth interviews were I would be able to explain and discuss the issue more appropriately.

These exchanges with one of the residents regarding the design and presentations of the research itself and the resident questionnaire became an important part of the piloting and pre-testing of this survey. This is, then, perhaps an important consideration for researchers who intend to undertake interviews following an initial questionnaire. Gaining direct feedback from residents (from the pre-testing or pilot phase of the research project) who have completed the questionnaire, during the follow up in-depth interviews, may prove integral to the testing of questions and responses, and important in the process of reflection on the design and delivery of resident questionnaires. Ultimately, this will also assist in determining whether or not the questionnaire is adequately operationalising the aims of the research project – an important consideration for any researcher with any method.

Given some of the reactions from this early informant, I was nervous about any likely reactions to the questionnaire once delivered more broadly, and particularly the impact on the response rates. I need not have been as there were no further hints of dissent towards the research. After the delivery of the household questionnaire proper I received one phone call from a former resident of Macquarie Links who had had his mail redirected to his new address. He rang one afternoon to let me know that he was no longer living in Macquarie Links, had moved house just a few weeks prior to that phone conversation, and would not participate in the questionnaire, but that I might like to resend one to his old address without his name on it. He continued to inform me that the reason he had moved away from Macquarie Links was that he had been sued for having the wrong colour roof tiles on his house. The building committee for Macquarie Links had approved a certain colour roof tile for his house (black) and when he went to purchase the roof tiles they were apparently out of black roof tiles and so he purchased dark brown roof tiles. Because the change of roof tile colour had not been approved, he was taken to court and told he had to have his roof tiles sprayed black. He thought the rules were absurd and sold his house. He wished me well in my research, was pleased to be living elsewhere, although was still slightly disgruntled (Field diary
Chapter 5 through 7 take up many of these concerns with building covenants and by-laws in Macquarie Links.

To counter some of the gaps in knowledge that I anticipated would result following the completion and return of resident questionnaires, a result of some inherent weakness of questionnaires being too structured and not generating enough in-depth qualitative information (see McGuirk and O’Neill, 2005), I sought participants to be involved in an in-depth interview phase for the research project. According to academic literature and experiences, some of the strengths of interviewing as a method lie in its ability to fill gaps in knowledge that some other methods cannot, to investigate motivations and behaviours, and to collect detailed information of experiences, meaning and opinions (Dunn, 2005; Minichiello et al., 1995). Semi-structured in-depth interviews are particularly useful for generating rich data sets on people’s experiences, feelings, opinions, impressions and the like. Given that one of the primary aims of this research was to develop an understanding of the lived realities of private residential estates in Sydney, interviewing residents about their experiences of their residential environment was deemed an appropriate method for furthering this aim. The questions for the interview schedule were developed to ascertain responses related to social life within Macquarie Links (see Appendix 3).

Interview informants were recruited at the end of the resident questionnaire where there was a section available for residents to indicate their willingness for further involvement in the project. These residents were asked to supply names, telephone numbers and nominate appropriate days and times to be contacted to initiate the setting up of an interview (with confidentiality being assured). Of the fifty two questionnaires returned from households within Macquarie Links, close to two thirds volunteered to be interviewed and were subsequent informants (n=30). All interviewees were home owning residents of the estate with the exception of one interview that was undertaken with a woman who was renting a property within the estate. Residents who had volunteered to be interviewed were contacted as soon as possible after I had received their returned questionnaires to set up a time for an interview to take place. Residents were contacted over the phone and thanked for their willingness to be involved in the project. I offered a brief summary of what I was hoping to achieve in the interviews, to give participants a sense of what to expect. Here, I commented on my
willingness to learn about community and social interactions, their experiences within Macquarie Links, the benefits of community title, and the like. I kept these initial introductions quite simple and friendly to help build rapport between myself and the residents and to ensure that they would feel comfortable about me coming into their homes, as well as my intentions with this research. Literature on the experience of interviewing has noted the importance of building rapport with research participants, especially developing a fairly easy-going and positive relationship with informants (Dunn, 2005; Minichiello et al., 2008; Warren, 2002). Often these phone conversations were quite lengthy as residents began speaking about Macquarie Links and offering some good advice, which became a rich source of data for the field diary. The residents’ enthusiasm for speaking about Macquarie Links also provided me with some comfort ahead of the interviews. Interviews were set up at times convenient to each individual resident. Often this meant that only one interview could be set up on a given day and the interviews stretched over a number of months. However, I worked this to my advantage and used these numerous trips to help develop a sense of the residential environment. The interviews were set up at different times during the day and going into Macquarie Links at different days and times also aided my more ethnographic understandings of the neighbourhood and social life within, making me more aware of various comings and goings, the uses of recreational facilities – golf course, tennis court, swimming pool – and assisted me in gathering a general sense of daily movements, both during the day and in the evening.

All of the initial phone conversations with the interview informants were very open and friendly, with the exception of one interesting phone conversation that I had with a potential interview informant when ringing to arrange a time for an interview. I dialled the number provided at the end of the questionnaire and when the man I was ringing answered I said, ‘Hi, is that John?’. The man responded saying, ‘no, sorry, this is ‘David’’. I proceeded to apologise and explain that I had this number down for John Smith and that the number must have been written down wrong, and then ended the conversation. No more than about a minute later ‘David’ rang me back. I had called him from a mobile phone so he had a contact number for me, hence a returned call from him almost instantly. He said to me, ‘are you the person from the University doing the survey in Macquarie Links?’. I said yes. He then proceeded to tell me that he was ‘John Smith’ and had put down a fake name on the survey because ‘you just don’t know who
you’re giving your information to these days, can’t be too sure’ (Field diary entry, 2007). We both laughed at this point, but perhaps for different reasons. Funnily enough, for someone who did not want to reveal their name, he happily gave me his home address and invited me to come for an interview that same week. In the end, he was a very welcoming and open informant – just a little protective of his identity.

On average the whole interview experience with the residents lasted nearly two hours, with the longest being close to three hours. I was not concerned about the length of the interviews as this was the main opportunity I had to engage with the residents given that other methods were almost impossible to execute (i.e. participant observation). The majority of the interviews occurred in the homes of the residents being interviewed with the exception of three: one occurred at the workplace of one informant in Liverpool (in nearby south west Sydney), another occurred in the golf club in Macquarie Links as household renovations were taking place, and the other occurred on campus at the University of New South Wales. I want to now reflect a little on some of the spaces of the interviews, both within households and the broader neighbourhood. At certain stages throughout the interviews with residents in Macquarie Links, usually at the end, some of the informants would suggest we take a walk through the house, or into the back garden, or out on the balcony, to show me around their homes, or around the neighbourhood. Many of these conversations were not formally recorded as it would have been a little awkward, not to mention inappropriate, to follow the interviewees around with a voice recorder in hand. While all of the interviews were formally recorded, some sections of the broader interview experience (the whole experience of being in the households with the residents), were not recorded. For several decades, it has generally been accepted practice in an interview for it to be recorded (see Dunn, 2005; Warren, 2002). However, as Warren (2002:92) notes, when conducting qualitative interviews, there are many ‘on and off the record’ conversations and associations with informants. Further Warren (2002:92) suggests two reasons for this: the first is that the respondent might want to talk about his or her own concerns rather than the researchers, or secondly that the informant does not want dangerous or damaging things to be ‘on the record’. Field diary entries were made at the end of each day of interviewing to recall the various events that follow.
‘I’m having renovations done to my house can you meet me at the Golf Club?’

Conducting one of the interviews in the golf club was a great experience for me as a researcher exploring the nature of private residential estates. The golf club is a rather prestigious and exclusive venue within Macquarie Links. I met the resident I was interviewing that day at the entrance to the golf club. I needed to be signed in as a guest. The person I was interviewing was well known by the golf club staff and friendly exchanges occurred upon his arrival. He suggested to one of the staff members that we could use the bar room for a meeting [interview] that was going to take place and we were promptly directed towards that room. On our way to the bar room we passed through the restaurant where many residents and guests who had finished a morning of golf were having lunch. We initially sat and admired the view, overlooking the golf course, and began speaking a little about his home renovations. We were waited on by bar staff who offered tea, coffee or other beverages. The furniture in the room had a sort of old world charm – the chairs we were sitting on were made of highly polished brown leather, studded, and with high backs. It was the sort of atmosphere you might see in an old fashioned movie with men sitting around in a gentleman’s club, smoking cigars. It was a darker room, but with a magnificent view over the golf course. It was somewhat surreal and I needed to remind myself I was in the outer south-western suburbs of Sydney – the uniqueness of the neighbourhood became quite apparent at that point, more so than ever before.

The ‘tour of the garage’

I interviewed one man who was living in The Peak apartments in Macquarie Links. He was exceptionally passionate about Macquarie Links and enjoyed so many aspects of his life in the neighbourhood. He spoke so highly of the neighbourhood and just how wonderful life was in Macquarie Links. He appreciated even the small aspects of the development, such as things like the fine hedging of the plants, the location of the garbage bins, and the car spaces. At the end of the interview, he suggested to his wife, ‘why don’t you take Therese down for a tour of the garage’. The wife responded saying ‘I’ve got some rubbish to take down too, what a good idea’. I enthusiastically followed his wife into the apartment’s lift which she proudly displayed, along with all the various buttons and functions in the lift. In the lift I was excited about the impromptu excursion and a little anxious: what’s in the garage, I suddenly thought. Images of garage scenes in the TV show Desperate Housewives flashed before my eyes – where
murders take place in the garages within the ‘gated community’. We entered the garage area for the apartments and all was fairly innocent, of course. The woman showed me around and pointed out to me the two matching Lexus’s (cars), ‘his and hers’, that her husband had been telling me about during the interview. And, that was about it – cars in garages. She then took me over to see the garbage area, where the bins were contained in a little enclave. Both her and her husband like this set up – keeps the bins orderly and out of sight, tucked away behind the garages. After farewelling the woman, I thought about just how excited these residents were over some of the very mundane aspects of their neighbourhood. To these residents, having order in the simple things like garages and garbage bins improved their residential living experience.

Having a chat over the back fence and on the front driveway

One of the female informants, who I ended up spending the longest amount of time with, was keen to give me a tour of her house and show me around the place once the ‘formal’ part of the interview was coming to an end. This particular informant had been open and helpful from the start. My initial phone conversation with her lasted about half an hour as she wanted to talk a lot about all sorts of things related to the research. After moving through the kitchen and bedrooms on our tour of her house, she took me through to her backyard, where she drags me over to the fence, peers over and starts pointing around at the various houses caught up in the drug raid that happened in Macquarie Links earlier in the year (see Chapters 6 and 7). We eventually moved through to her front yard and out onto the front driveway where I realised that not only did I have a lot of questions for her, she also had thought of things she wanted to speak with me about (see Warren, 2002 on informants wanting to ask questions of the researcher). She asked all sorts of things like whether I think the value of her property is going to be maintained over time, whether her child should go into public or private schooling, the issues of Macquarie Fields (neighbouring suburb), and the state of play in Glenmore Park – a master planned estate where she owned an investment property (she knew I had done some research in Glenmore Park), and her own job. Both the tour of her house and the various conversations in the front and back yards gave me a deeper insight into this particular informant, and a little more knowledge of her everyday life, concerns, work, family, and the like.
The view from the balcony

In any tour of the house, a stop off on the balcony was a must, to appreciate the view and have a look over the suburb. In one case, as soon as the voice recorder was out of range, so to speak, the informant dragged me out onto the balcony and pointed out all the properties within the estate that were in possession of drugs and/or guns. It all seemed a little surreal. The woman who was pointing out the houses loved that it was such a scandal within the community and was very good humoured about it all. Hearing this woman’s fairly laid back reaction to some of the ‘scandals’ within the community further aided my understanding of the people living in Macquarie Links.

I interviewed a middle-aged man in one of the grandest houses within Macquarie Links. He had built a large two-storey house on a corner block, with a full view over the golf course from the second floor balcony that wrapped around the entire house. After moving through the various rooms in the house, we came out onto the balcony and even my breath was taken away. It was an incredible view over the golf course, and he said to me, ‘when I wake up in the morning, this is the first thing I see, life could be worse’ (Field diary entry, 2007). Similar to the interview that took place in the golf club, standing on this balcony overlooking the golf course at sunset, with golf buggies driving around, with the informant saying ‘isn’t this just wonderful’, I had to again remind myself that I was in the outer south western suburbs of Sydney. The uniqueness of the suburb in front of me was once again apparent. Further, the affluence in the neighbourhood was also evident at that moment.

Importance of ethnographic context

Undertaking the majority of the interviews within people’s households gave me a greater sense of these people’s everyday lives and residential environments (homes). I was often struck by the newness of everything within people’s homes – their new furniture, appliances, and the ordered nature of their homes (clean and structured). However, given the infancy of the estate, some of these elements of ‘newness’ are perhaps not surprising. Interviewing residents within their own environment was a grounding experience for me as a researcher. Being able to understand both the sensational (the golf course views and golf club experience) and the everyday aspects of neighbourhood life (garbage bins and car spaces) helped me develop a better picture of the residents of Macquarie Links that I would otherwise have not obtained. These
experiences are, ‘one of the many points in qualitative interviews when the interview becomes ethnographic’ (Warren, 2002:93). By spending extended periods of time with residents in their home environments, I was able to generate a real sense of the people themselves, rather than undertaking interviews that were quicker, and just in and out. The more ethnographic understandings of the residents daily lives, demonstrated the importance of different aspects of the development of Macquarie Links, even the small things, and how many of these residents make sense of their everyday lives within Macquarie Links.

These exchanges, while at first glance appeared a little ordinary and mundane tell us something about social life not contained in an interview transcript. The use of photography was also important in this regard, being able to graphically represent the many aspects of this neighbourhood. The contribution here is the importance of understanding an ethnographic context in urban research on communities and social interaction in cities. As Warren (2002:92) notes ‘it is a hallmark of qualitative interviewing that “unrecorded” data ... are as important as those derived from tape recording’. The research undertaken in Macquarie Links may not be ‘traditional’ ethnography, but alternative means of developing an ethnographic understanding of the neighbourhood have been employed, making full use of the ethnographic components of qualitative interviewing. One of the key benefits of interviewing the residents within their own neighbourhood, the place I sought to understand, was the ability to establish ethnographic context. As Minichiello et al. (2008:70, original emphasis) argue:

The researcher is not usually in the situation of being able to directly observe the informant in his or her everyday life. Thus they are deprived of the ethnographic context which would give a richer understanding of the informant’s perspective.

Developing a very ethnographic understanding of the residents’ lives and everyday experiences in Macquarie Links also highlighted the ‘necessity of using ethnographic linkages to flesh out the social contexts of meaning making’ (Warren, 2002:98).

One potential advantage of in-depth interviewing within a smaller neighbourhood, like Macquarie Links, was the word-of-mouth discussions taking place about this research.
Fortunately, this appeared to work in my favour. I had heard through various conversations with residents either pre- or post-interview, or over the phone, that some of the neighbours were encouraging others to respond to questionnaires and volunteer to be interviewed, especially once they had met me. In one instance, I was informed that residents were collectively reflecting on their intentions for moving to Macquarie Links and on the nature of the suburb and social life within whilst at a neighbourhood BBQ (Field diary entry, 2007). Another man greeted me at the door and said he had been speaking with his neighbour following my interview there a few days prior to our meeting and was happy to do anything to help out with the research (Field diary entry, 2007). This was encouraging as it displayed the residents’ willingness to be involved in the research and their genuine interest and passion for their residential environment. Arguably then, this too is a research finding related to the depth and extent of community and social interaction (discussed in Chapter 6).

**ANALYSING THE DATA**

Upon having completed all the interviews I had a gender balance between the numbers of male and female informants. This was quite a significant outcome as much research from within suburban neighbourhoods, particularly from urban sociology and geography, tends to report on a gender imbalance and usually an over-representation of female participants (see Gwyther, 2004). Feminist scholars in particular have noted the ease at which many women open up and are willing to participate when the researcher is female and this has been highly valued in hearing the multiple voices and experiences of women within the city (Preston and Ustundag, 2005). My position as a female researcher seemed not to deter the participation of men, or women, and interviews were equally sociable with both males and females. That is not to suggest that there were no female-specific tangents or conversations in any of the interviews with women, because of course there were, but to note that there were similar levels of rapport developed between myself and all participants, regardless of gender. I had no measures in place to counter any potential gender imbalance, rather was mindful of the possibility of female informants being over-represented and the pending need for alternative approaches to be employed to include men in this research. Interestingly, this suggests the active involvement of men in constructing knowledge about their suburban residential environments, something I will reflect on in greater detail in a
I suspect that the gender balance is also a reflection of the higher levels of tertiary qualifications within Macquarie Links (see Chapter 5).

The data gathered from the resident questionnaires were coded and entered into the statistical package for the social sciences (SPSS) for analysis. This produced statistical outputs for a wide range of variables, particularly those that could be easily quantified. From here a variety of charts and graphs were generated to visualise and diagrammatically represent the data from the resident questionnaires. However, many of the questions, even the more simple tick-box questions, offered space for short open responses, or asked respondents to elaborate on why they had responded either yes or no to a question. Each of these qualitative responses were typed into word documents and analysed using content analysis. The data gathered from the resident questionnaires is discussed principally in Chapters 5-7. Data from the Macquarie Links Estate (MLE) household questionnaires is referenced in the text of this dissertation as: MLE #, 2007, as each of the questionnaires was numbered sequentially upon receipt.

All of the interviews were recorded using a digital voice recorder. The digital files were transferred to the computer after each interview. A process of continual reflection on the questions being asked during the interviews was undertaken after each day in the field. Interviews were transcribed as close to the interview taking place as possible, to be able to assist this process of reflection on the interview questions. This occurred, not for the sake of consistency in the questions being asked, rather to ensure that the questions being asked were understood by the participants and yielding appropriate information, whilst displaying appropriate levels of sensitivity to various issues (see earlier section on potential for sensitivities to the research). When transcribing and reflecting on the interviews in the early stages, I noticed that informants were particularly conscious of the way the residential estate had been, and was being, constructed and perceived by the media and broader community, among others. Towards the end of the interview schedule I added an additional question on perceptions of the development of Macquarie Links. I personally transcribed all of the interviews undertaken in Macquarie Links and, aside from it being a time-consuming, lengthy and arduous task, it was of immense benefit to do this part of the research process myself as I was immersed into my data and able to develop a very strong sense
of the nature of the responses and of potential themes that were developing. Ultimately, this aided the analysis of the interview transcripts.

The interview transcripts were analysed using content analysis. Content analysis, simply defined, is the systematic examination of texts to determine themes or trends within those texts. The qualitative nature of content analysis acknowledges that the overriding aim is ‘to reveal as many layers and as wide a spectrum of meanings as one can access’ (Shurmer-Smith, 2002:126). Content analysis can be used to determine the ways in which places and spaces are represented or imagined (Forbes, 2000). According to Shurmer-Smith (2002:131):

Representation is never just cold reporting; it influences the ways in which people encounter spaces and places. Places acquire personalities, reputations, stories as a consequence of the ways in which they are depicted and then react to knowledge of their image.

Thus, content analysis allowed me to deconstruct the various representations of places and spaces to determine the selectivity of representations, and the influence of such selectivity on current experiences and/or opinions.

The analysis of the interview transcripts necessarily involves developing a coding framework – a set of themes into which material can be coded (Dunn, 2005; Hannam, 2002). An extensive coding framework was developed for analysing the interview data (see Appendix 4). Themes created for content analysis may end up with several codes, and be of varying length (Hannam, 2002). My experience with content analysis and the coding of written text proved this to be the case. The coding framework developed for the interview transcripts is of considerable length. Whilst navigating the text, numerous themes continued to emerge. According to Hannam (2002), it is a strength of content analysis to have an exhaustive list, whereby all relevant text is allocated to a theme and avoids the use of the ‘other’ category. Content analysis was applied to all interviews undertaken with residents of Macquarie Links. Each relevant sentence of each transcript was coded, and many sentences were multiple coded. Thus, the overriding objective of content analysis, and coding frameworks, is to establish
dominant themes in the residents lived experiences of Macquarie Links, as well as themes that were not represented.

The analysis of the interview transcripts, using content analysis, occurred manually\(^4\). For me personally, I sought to remain as connected to the data set as possible and valued the idea of reading and re-reading the transcripts, coding and re-coding the transcripts myself. According to Hannam (2002:196), using computer programs can often generate feelings of ‘distance from the immediacy of the material’. Additionally, I had already accumulated vast quantitative outputs from the resident questionnaires (through SPSS outputs) and was using interviews as a way of complementing and supplementing the questionnaires and some of the more quantitative elements. Discussion of these results occurs in the proceeding chapters. Each of the interview informants have been allocated a pseudonym and their quotes are referenced throughout the text of this dissertation with a name, gender, age group, and length of time spent residing in Macquarie Links (for example, ‘John’: Male; 60-70; 7 years).

CONSIDERING MEDIA REPRESENTATIONS OF MACQUARIE LINKS

As I have noted throughout this thesis, Macquarie Links has attracted significant attention in the media since the inception of the development in the later 1990s. To develop a better understanding of the various representations of this private residential estate I searched for newspaper articles on Macquarie Links through the FACTIVA search engine. FACTIVA is the Dow Jones Interactive search engine for news reports. The search criteria was for articles with the words ‘Macquarie Links’, in ‘Australian Publications’, for ‘all date ranges’, which included news publications from the year 2000 onwards. This search returned 35 articles of utility for this thesis, as some of the news articles were simply advertisements selling houses, others reported on results of golf played at Macquarie Links. The content of the newspaper articles were then analysed for key themes. A discussion of these representations principally occurs in Chapter 5.

---

\(^4\) There are certain debates surrounding the use of manual or computerised coding for interview transcripts. Using a program such as N6 or NVIVO produces statistical outputs and quantitative results as part of the coding process. This computerised approach to the analysis of interview data is more for researchers who set out to undertake manifest content analysis.
INTERVIEWING STAKEHOLDERS

Interviewing the residents of Macquarie Links estate was a major component of the interviewing stage of this project. Additional to the residents, four key stakeholders were also approached for interviews. A representative from Campbelltown City Council, one from Monarch Investments (the developer of Macquarie Links) and two local 'public officials'. The 'public officials' were the most helpful and willing to be involved in the research and chose these names as the way in which they were to be identified in this thesis and subsequent publications. These names were preferred for identification purposes as their job description would have almost automatically revealed their identity. Phone conversations, or phone interviews, were conducted with Campbelltown Council and the developer as formal face-to-face interviews were declined. None the less the telephone interviews provided some necessary insight into the development of private residential estates. The reasons for their unwillingness to be involved became apparent – Campbelltown Council did not think there was anything to meet about and it could be done over the phone and the developer may have been over-interviewed about Macquarie Links as the suburb has been a fairly ‘hot’ topic. The purpose of these interviews was to supplement the other data sources and to clarify points of ambiguity.

RESEARCH ETHICS

Ethics approval for this research was obtained in early 2006 from the Human Research Ethics Advisory Panel for Behavioural Sciences, within the Faculty of Science, University of New South Wales (Approval No. 568). All fieldwork was approved without need for revisions or alterations. In accordance with ethics policy at the University of New South Wales, interviewees were asked to sign participant consent forms (see Appendix 5). While informants had, in principle, consented to being involved in the research, often through invitations into their homes to conduct interviews, there was a need for informants to once again consent to be part of the research once a fuller explanation of the research and its intentions were given. No one declined at this stage. I recorded all interviews and the participant consent form was another way to confirm their willingness to be involved and also recorded (see Appendix 5). Participants were offered the option of having transcripts of the interview sent to them, either for them to review and change, if required, or for their own files.
When this research project was in its initial stages, I had a strong interest in the place of young people, particularly those aged between 15 and 25, in new private suburban residential developments, and particularly within the overall master planning process. My interest in the place of young people, and admittedly concerns for the lack of attention given to young people, had driven me to endeavour to incorporate the multiple voices, with the potential to speak about Macquarie Links in different and diverse ways. I was interested in the very structured nature of both the design of the residential environment and recreational facilities, and the extent to which young people had been considered in this structure and how they were meant to ‘fit’ into this private and ordered urban residential form. I sought to establish an equal validity for the voices of children and young people, and to understand how patterns of sociability and lived experiences may be experienced differently by those across different age groups (Iveson, 2007; Sibley, 1995; Winchester, 1991; Wyn and White, 1996). To attempt to fulfil this research agenda (a PhD topic in itself), I had thought that for those interview informants with young people living in their household, I would discuss the potential for interviewing their child and whether they thought their child would be interested in being involved. I had received ethics approval for research and interviews with young people in Macquarie Links aged 15-18, but required parental consent for those under 18 years of age and this seemed an appropriate means of gaining parental consent, especially given the parents would have met me during the interviews. One of my initial interviewees thought this was a great idea and was happy to pass on information about the research project to her children. I had contacted both young adults in her household, with no successful response. As it turned out, the people I subsequently interviewed either had children that were too young to be involved in this project or children not living at home.

In an attempt to rectify this lack of contact and/or engagement with young people, I made contact with a former student of mine from the University of New South Wales, who I knew was living in Macquarie Links with his family. He was willing to help out and volunteered to be interviewed. He was 23 at the time of the interview. I had hoped that potentially he would have some contacts within the neighbourhood that I could then make contact with and start snowballing – a sampling technique employed to use existing participants to recommend other people who might be appropriate and willing.
to be involved in the study (Hay, 2005). With this technique in mind, I had hoped that this interview would snowball from one interview onto others, however his interactions with other young people within the suburb were low and based mainly around those living in surrounding suburbs such as Ingleburn. Unfortunately, time constraints made it hard to pursue this line of research further.

The analysis of young people plays an important role in the analysis, and overall understanding, of private residential estates. One thing of crucial importance in understanding private residential estates is a detailed ethnographic analysis of the dynamics within these new residential developments, especially the forms of sociability that are engendered. An examination of the places and spaces for young people within private communities through direct engagement with young people would help further our understandings of these issues. Regardless of the lack of success of this research arm of the project, the experiences of children and young people are not absent from this research, rather they are understood through questionnaire and interview data gathered from adult informants, and through analysis of legislative and planning processes. Nonetheless it is important for researchers to begin to understand the place of children and young people in new suburban developments.

CONCLUSION
The research presented here was positioned within a qualitative framework. By employing qualitative techniques, I was able to engage with the lives of those living within the case study neighbourhood to understand the realities and lived experiences within a newly developed private residential estate in suburban Sydney. Qualitative techniques, and the use of a case study, allowed me to thoroughly unpack the development of a private residential estate and understand the formation of these neighbourhoods and associated transformations and workings of localised community governance. Resident questionnaires and in-depth interviews within a case study neighbourhood were the most appropriate methods for operationalising the research aims. The research process uncovered a number of important and interesting findings related to undertaking research within private residential estates. The first of those is that the residents within private (gated) residential estates are themselves gate keepers to knowledge. They are the ones that control the access to the information about their
residential estate, and will continue to control access into the future (i.e. permission from homeowners associations). At the same time, once access is granted, working within a closed residential neighbourhood can help word-of-mouth knowledge about research projects and generate greater acceptance of the research project. The emerging body of literature on researching elites in society is useful for assisting urban researchers to evaluate the possible power imbalances that could result from research of this nature.

The use of questionnaires and in-depth interviewing with residents within a case study community remains a successful means for understanding the development and lived realities of private residential estates in urban contexts internationally, following the work of Caldeira (2000) and Low (2003). But to further these methodological approaches to private residential estates, and particularly those that undertaken research with the residents within these neighbourhoods, is to acknowledge the importance of developing ethnographic context when working with residents within private residential estates, and to ensure that all ‘off the record’ conversations, observations and activities, however mundane and ordinary, are taken as important to understanding the everyday lives of the residents and the social context in which knowledge is produced.

The methodology used allowed for the research question (on the social interaction and lived realities of private residential estates) to be thoroughly operationalised. The methodology also allowed for me to engage the residents of the case study neighbourhood, and unlock the private residential development, the findings of which are presented in Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8.
INTRODUCTION
This Chapter is concerned with establishing the process by which a contemporary residential estate development becomes ‘private’ and how this is initially managed by the residents. First the Chapter draws attention to some of the developmental mechanisms, particularly the legislation that constructed Macquarie Links as a privately governed, gated, residential development managed by a community association. Macquarie Links has been developed using what is commonly referred to as Community Schemes Legislation, a combination of two different legislations in New South Wales (NSW), Australia. The Chapter provides an overview of the Community Schemes Legislation, and the establishment and management of the scheme in Macquarie Links. In doing this, I set up a number of discussion points related to the development of private residential estates in Australia, which are dealt with more substantially in Chapter 8. The construction of Macquarie Links as a private neighbourhood has also enabled the construction of communal facilities and infrastructure. Second, in this chapter I present the demographic data for this neighbourhood. In doing so I highlight how the residential development is constructed for a certain income group – the affluent middle class – and how the development excludes on the basis of income. The various constructions of the neighbourhood more broadly, particularly through the media, are also explored in this Chapter, as well as the outcomes of these various constructions of the Macquarie Links residential development, particularly in terms of what the private structure means for the residents of Macquarie Links and how this private structure is managed and negotiated by the residents themselves. This management and negotiation is a communal action.

CONSTRUCTING THE PRIVATE RESIDENTIAL ESTATE: COMMUNITY SCHEMES LEGISLATION
The growth of private residential neighbourhoods is an international phenomenon now occurring in Australian cities. The spread of private communities has been
accompanied by rapid transformations in urban residential governance, specifically the rise of private community governance, or community associations (as outlined in Chapter 2). The private development industry has undoubtedly changed the metropolitan mosaic in Australia in recent years through the adoption of master planning for residential developments. Since about the 1980s there has been an increase in the development of master planned estates in metropolitan Australia, with a master plan being used as a tool for developing an entire parcel of land with different uses (i.e. residential and recreational). Large-scale, private-sector driven, integrative residential developments with facilities and infrastructure, are now mainstream products in residential development in Australia (for examples from south east Queensland see Minnery and Bajracharya, 1999; Rosenblatt et al., 2008; for Sydney see Gwyther, 2005; Kenna, 2007; McGuirk and Dowling, 2007; and for Melbourne and Victoria see Goodman and Douglass, 2008). The master planned estates of the 1990s and early 2000s differentiated suburban areas through product competition and differentiation (Coiacetto, 2007). The most recent extension of the master planned estate is the private residential estate (PRE) enabled by community schemes legislation.

Community title, or a community scheme, is the most recent form of product differentiation in urban residential development. Community title allows for the subdivision of land for residential developments with shared property (e.g. swimming pools and tennis courts), where that property is maintained by residents rather than by the local municipal council. A report by the Urban Development Institute of Australia (UDIA) notes that community title is essentially a ‘market niche and a marketing device’ used to differentiate suburban neighbourhoods (UDIA, 2008:1). In recent years, developers in Australia have been attracted to community schemes as these schemes allow for a master planned development with resort-style facilities (NSW Department of Land and NSW Office of Fair Trading, 2006), which are the types of residential environments increasingly desired by residents (see for example Johnson, 2006). In the consultation paper Review of NSW Community Schemes Legislations the NSW Department of Lands and the NSW Office of Fair Trading (NSW Department of Commerce) anticipated that the interest in community scheme development will continue to grow, due to the various attractions of this form of property development (NSW Department of Land and NSW Office of Fair Trading, 2006).
Community title is often referred to as ‘a horizontal form of strata title’ (UDIA, 2008:1). Essentially, the community schemes concept, where residents own their individual land, and share common facilities with their neighbours, is considered ‘an extension of the strata scheme model introduced into NSW as a pioneering legislative framework in 1961’, which governs the development and management of shared commons, usually found in apartment buildings and complexes (NSW Department of Lands and NSW Office of Fair Trading, 2006:18). The ‘commons’ of strata developments can include such things as the management and financing of access lifts within apartment buildings. The community title legislation was first introduced in New South Wales (NSW), Australia in 1989 as a result of a number of pressures, including the shortcomings of Strata title legislation in dealing with ‘horizontal’ subdivisions (low density suburban residential developments with common property), as well as:

the desire of developers to maintain control over the integrity of the design and construction in large-scale developments, the desirability of master-planned communities in the housing market and the potential to ease the financial pressures placed on local councils to provide public infrastructure. (UDIA, 2008:2)

This community schemes legislation is a combination of both the NSW Community Land Development Act 1989 and the NSW Community Land Management Act 1989.

The Community Land Development Act 1989 (CLDA) allows for shared ownership of land and amenities. Communal ownership is managed through a corporation, known in NSW as a ‘community association’, which is formed when the subdivision plan, or community plan, is registered with the NSW Department of Lands (NSW Department of Lands and NSW Office of Fair Trading, 2006; UDIA, 2008). The CLDA deals with ‘plan requirements, plan registration, changes to subdivision boundaries and dealings with lots’ (NSW Department of Lands and NSW Office of Fair Trading, 2006). A community plan can be used as a master plan dividing the overall development parcel into areas which will be developed in different stages, as the community plan is registered over the entire parcel of land to be developed (NSW Department of Lands and NSW Office of Fair Trading, 2006; UDIA, 2008).
The Community Land Management Act 1989 (CLMA) covers management and financial matters relating to community schemes. It is administered by the Office of Fair Trading (NSW Department of Lands and NSW Office of Fair Trading, 2006; UDIA, 2008). The CLMA provides a mechanism for the day to day management of the common property areas and individual dwellings/lots, as well as setting means to deal with financial issues and the resolution of any disputes that may arise (NSW Department of Lands and NSW Office of Fair Trading, 2006; UDIA, 2008). The day-to-day management of a community scheme is the responsibility of the community association (which is comprised of home owners) and is responsible for the overall development concept (e.g. the architectural guidelines) as well as general community issues (e.g. roads, security and landscaping) (NSW Department of Lands and NSW Office of Fair Trading, 2006; UDIA, 2008). For an estate such as Macquarie Links, the community association is comprised of home owners who are responsible for the day-to-day management of the estate, as well as forward planning for many aspects of the estate’s development.

For Community Scheme developments in NSW this automatically presents a concern as these schemes are administered and managed by two separate pieces of legislation within two different Departments of the NSW State Government. In 2006 the NSW Government conducted a review of the Community Land Development Act 1989 and the Community Land Management Act 1989. Given that these two pieces of legislation are so integral to the development of community schemes, or PREs, it appears odd that both are separately managed and administered – the former by the Department of Lands and the latter the Department of Commerce (Office of Fair Trading). The review was undertaken jointly, to ‘enable development and management issues to be reviewed concurrently’ (NSW Department of Lands and NSW Office of Fair Trading, 2006:2). Given the increased interest in this style of living it would seem timely to review the legislations together. The findings, or amendments to the legislation, are not yet known. I return to this point in the conclusion to this Chapter and in Chapter 8.

In NSW there has been quite considerable growth in the number of community schemes in the two decades since the inauguration of the schemes (see Figure 5.1). To date there are near to 500 community plans registered with the NSW Department of Lands (NSW Department of Lands and NSW Office of Fair Trading, 2006). This number is small in comparison to the number of strata schemes in NSW (unit blocks).
However, many of these community schemes are large, being the size of small villages or suburbs in their own right. Macquarie Links is defined as a ‘state suburb’ with its own boundaries by the Australian Bureau of Statistics and Department of Lands. The report produced by the Urban Development Institute of Australia (2008), Common Ground, suggests that near to 150,000 people are estimated to live in community title schemes in NSW and near to eighty percent of the registered developments are in metropolitan Sydney. In the last five years between 40 and 50 community schemes were registered per annum with the Department of Lands highlighting the considerable growth of this form of urban residential development and suggesting the continued popularity (see Figure 5.1). Examples of community schemes can be quite readily identified throughout the Sydney metropolitan region and the community schemes are being applied by a number of major property developers. Bingara Gorge, in Wilton (Delfin Lend Lease) in south-western Sydney is an example, as is Panorama, the Mirvac development at Glenfield and Ingleburn Gardens Estate (Monarch) in Ingleburn, to mention a few. Community title developments in Sydney are generally recognisable by their restrictive entrances or signage to indicate that the developments are private property (see Figure 5.2).

Figure 5.1: The number of community schemes registered in NSW since 1990.

Source: NSW Department of Lands, 2007
Macquarie Links is constructed using the community schemes legislation, is run by a community association and designed around a master plan, which incorporates swimming pools, tennis courts, a diversity of housing styles (apartments, townhouses and free standing homes), a golf course, landscaped streets and common gardens. In considering the development of this community title residential estate, I want to draw attention to two areas initially. The first of these is in relation to the structure and establishment of a community title scheme, and the second to the financial costs associated with living under a community title scheme and the related impacts on housing affordability. There are further areas for discussion related to community title developments that I address in Chapters 6, 7 and 8.

Macquarie Links Estate is divided into seventeen stages, all of which have their own sub-committee of the broader Macquarie Links Community Association (MLCA). Each stage has a precinct manager and each household pays community levies for the maintenance and supply of communal facilities. Essentially, each of the households has a vested interest in the long term development and maintenance of the estate. The idea of a community association found here draws many similarities to the international style of developments with homeowner associations (Blakely and Snyder, 1997; McKenzie, 1994). Macquarie Links estate is comprised of approximately 232 blocks, which equates to 10,000 unit entitlements. The numbers of unit entitlements are determined by the developer who then allocates the number of unit entitlements per block (Chair, MLCA, 2007). On average, there are about 25-30 unit entitlements per block, with an average price per unit entitlement set at around $80 per year (Chair,
An average block then is said to pay between $2000 and $2500 a year to the community association fund for the everyday maintenance and upkeep of the residential estate. That said, ‘everyone’s paying different sort of rates, and it’s on an independent valuation basis’ (Chair, MLCA, 2007). Further, each of the seventeen stages have been valued differently with some residents paying less, and some paying significantly more than the average levy per year. As an example, the Chair of MLCA pointed out:

If you look at the square metres, stage 1, the first stage, in effect they’re paying $1.59 per square metre. Look at the last stage, located up here [pointing to map], and they’re paying $3.50, 150% more than them. (Chair, MLCA, 2007)

At the time of the interview, according to the Chair, the general consensus from within the estate was:

When the development’s finished, the unit entitlement process should probably be revisited, because the last one here, for example [referring to final stage of development on the development plan], they’re the smaller blocks in the estate, probably the worst located and are paying like a 50% premium on unit entitlements. (Chair, MLCA, 2007)

With the development of Macquarie Links occurring in different stages it has generated inequities in the payment of community levies as the development itself has been valued differently at different stages. There are certain legal considerations for revaluing such payments, which I consider in Chapter 8.

A number of the resident informants spoke of the need to revalue unit entitlements and community title fees due to the inequity in payments across the estate.

I’m on the community council and as the stages were developed the land was valued so you’ve got some people up there that were paying $500 a quarter and some people are paying $200 ... so there’s a big push to have it all revalued as one estate, but some people are going to have to pay a lot more and they won’t be happy. So to find that balance with equity across the estate, I don’t know
why they did it that way, I don’t know why they just didn’t value the whole thing. (Angela: Female; 40-50; 3.5 years)

... what we have suggested to the board is to revalue the whole area and everybody pay their proper share, as some people pay less and some people pay more. (Peter: Male; 50-60; 6 years)

Of course, as both the Chairperson and these residents suggested, some households within the estate are paying more than others and there is a general inequality in community payments.

Further, there are legal aspects associated with revaluing unit entitlements for the development that cannot be overlooked due to some of the potential legal ramifications. For example, the Chair of the MLCA (2007) commented that:

There are some people saying that if I revalue all these unit entitlements these people that have been overpaying could sue because they’ve been overpaying for 5 years, these people who are underpaying, well they could be sued because they’ve been underpaying.

It is certainly a tricky and tedious arrangement to work through, especially for the precinct managers and Chair who are largely untrained volunteers (see McKenzie 2006a). The report by the Urban Development Institute of Australia (2008:3) suggests that when the common property of a community title development is managed solely by the community associations that issues regarding the functioning of the schemes are more likely to arise with the committees for the neighbourhoods:

Comprised of residents who are usually able to contribute only a few hours a week and who often do not have the specialised skills required for the effective management of community infrastructure, which may be valued at millions of dollars.

Indeed, these sentiments are similar to those expressed by McKenzie (2006a, see Chapter 2). In order to reduce the likely impacts of residents managing their own
neighbourhoods and community schemes, both McKenzie and the UDIA suggest that community associations employ more qualified professionals, such as property lawyers, to oversee the management of the neighbourhood. The employment of qualified professionals is common practice in strata developments. However, there are two important considerations here. The first is that employing professionals to manage a residential development is going to be an added cost to the community association and hence further reduce the accessibility of these PREs by increasing the costs per household required for the maintenance of the neighbourhood. Secondly, community schemes can be tools for developing social interaction in the neighbourhood (see Chapters 6 and 7) and as is the case with Macquarie Links, the residents effectively run their own neighbourhood with little help from professionals. Employing professionals could reduce some of the more affective and communal aspects of these community schemes. Given the infancy of these community schemes in NSW, many of the issues and outcomes emerging in practice are largely unknown as yet and require further documenting.

With Macquarie Links being a gated residential estate everything within the bounds of the residential estate is private and thus paid for privately by the residents. No public monies are expended in this development. According to the Chairperson of the MLCA (2007), ‘the concept [community title] is workable and councils love it because they save costs on infrastructure’. Research by Goodman and Douglas (2008) in Victoria, Australia, suggests the obvious benefits that accrue for councils approving developments based on community schemes legislation, particularly in a monetary sense. The residents of Macquarie Links Estate pay for large infrastructure (roads, electricity, street lighting), for recreation facilities (pools, tennis courts, open spaces, golf course), landscape maintenance, 24 hour security and a community bus ‘The Link’. The Chair of the MLCA noted that for a 12 month period, ‘our budget is going to end up being about a million bucks to run the thing’.

The following few images best represent the various neighbourhood infrastructures and features of the development that must be supported by the Macquarie Links residents through the payment of community fees or levies. These images also give a sense of the affluence and exclusivity of this suburban neighbourhood.
Figure 5.3: Gated entrance to Macquarie Links with a palm tree as the centre piece. The gates are in the centre of the image, with the gate house behind the palm tree, 2006 (Source: Therese Kenna).

Figure 5.4: Tree-lined streets and hedging along the road into and out of Macquarie Links, 2006 (Source: Therese Kenna).
Figures 5.5: Lifestyle and recreational elements of the Macquarie Links development, the tennis courts, main swimming pool and golf course embedded amongst the houses of the estate, plus estate advertising promoting the idea that ‘life doesn’t get any better than this’, 2006 (Source: Therese Kenna).
Figure 5.6: Large houses, well maintained tree-lined streets in Macquarie Links, 2006 (Source: Therese Kenna).

Figure 5.7: This image captures the diversity of residential dwellings in Macquarie Links with the free standing homes to the left, the town houses on the right, and the apartment building in the distant centre of the image. The image also captures the landscaped roundabout and its centrepiece, a palm tree (Source: Therese Kenna).

In the household questionnaire, respondents were asked to identify the importance of the various amenities and features of the Macquarie Links development, such as those identified in the above Figures (see Table 5.2). The way in which the residential
development has been constructed, using community schemes legislation, has enabled the developer to offer key features to the residents such as private use of amenities (92%), 24-hour security with a concierge (96%) and well-maintained landscapes (98%), which all rated as highly important. These important features of the estate are able to be provided to the residents using community title legislation, although these added-extras come at a cost, as discussed below.

Table 5.1: Resident’s responses to the importance of features of the Macquarie Links Development in terms of amenities and facilities (Source: Macquarie Links Resident Questionnaire, 2007).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Very Important</th>
<th>Important</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Low Importance</th>
<th>Not Important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>There is a golf course in the estate</td>
<td>53.1</td>
<td>24.5</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(77.6)*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The estate has a mix of housing styles</td>
<td>30.6</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(79.6)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is a tennis court in the estate</td>
<td>30.6</td>
<td>46.9</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(77.6)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amenities in the estate are for private use by residents only</td>
<td>65.3</td>
<td>26.5</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(91.8)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The estate is soon to be home to an international hotel</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>24.5</td>
<td>30.6</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>20.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(34.7)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The estate is close to the M5 motorway</td>
<td>40.8</td>
<td>42.9</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(83.7)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The estate is close to a train station</td>
<td>42.9</td>
<td>40.8</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(83.7)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The estate has 24 hour security</td>
<td>81.6</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(95.9)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The concierge at the gate knows everyone that passes through the estate</td>
<td>70.8</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(95.8)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The entrance to the estate is gated</td>
<td>73.5</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(89.8)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighbours are friendly to each other in the estate</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>54.8</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(88.1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The estate is well-maintained</td>
<td>76.2</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(97.6)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Note: the bracketed percentages are the combined values for the responses to strongly agree and agree.
The current costs to the community for general maintenance and upkeep are extensive, with the annual budget for Macquarie Links Estate falling just shy of $1 million. This budget covers security ($250,000 per year), gardeners ($220,000 per year), the community bus ($100,000 per year), and a grounds manager ($50,000 per year), among other maintenance costs undisclosed in the interview (Chair, MLCA, 2007). As noted above, households in Macquarie Links pay on average $2500 a year to the community association fund, which provides the money for the above expenditure. Additionally, there are council rates to pay per household – an average of $2,500 per year, and for those who took up membership at the golf club, $3,000 per year in fees. The Chair of the MLCA (2007) noted that:

Probably only 20% of the residents would play golf here, because that’s expensive as well. When they own a block of land they actually get a membership, a resident membership, but it costs about $3000 a year in fees to be a member so… [Therese: It’s expensive …] Yeah, $3000 for that, $2500 in council rates, $2500 in community levies, so you’re talking close to $10,000 a year and you’re talking 200 bucks a week… [Therese: Before you even think about mortgage repayments or whatever else] Yeah and there would be some big mortgages in here.

Data from the most recent National Population Census in Australia undertaken in 2006, found that for the suburb of Macquarie Links, the median housing loan repayments were $2,500 per month, equating to around $30,000 per year (ABS, 2006b; see Table 5.1 below). Living in Macquarie Links Estate would not be affordable for those on average, or below-average incomes. Income data from the 2006 Census noted that average (gross) weekly household earnings in the suburb of Macquarie Links are $2,299, which is twice the average for Sydney as a whole at $1,154 (ABS, 2006).

The financial requirements of a community scheme residential development, such as Macquarie Links, are considerable, which in turn constructs an exclusive and indeed exclusionary residential development. As argued in Chapter 2, the main problem with the sheer cost of living in PREs lies in the reduction of housing affordability in these residential developments, which in turn reduce the accessibility of PREs for a variety of income groups (see Foldvary, 2006). Of course, residents actively choose this costly
lifestyle option, but the point is more who this process excludes: those who are less economically powerful. The cost of living in PREs is thus high – compared to the surrounding region – making this form of urban residential development less accessible to the general population. A further outcome of a residential development constructed using community schemes legislation is the increased costs associated with living under such a scheme (those for neighbourhood facilities and infrastructure). Due to these considerable costs, as noted later in Chapter 8, there are court cases underway in Australia where residents of community schemes are urging for local council rate reductions or rebates given the residents of Macquarie Links pay full local council rates and pay to fully maintain their own neighbourhood.

The fiscal reality of PREs has become evident to some of the residents within Macquarie Links. The UDIA (2008:4) report warns that it is critical that the development of community scheme takes into account ‘the average income of projected residents with respect to their ability as well as their willingness to pay levies to maintain local shared assets’. In the resident questionnaire conducted for this thesis, respondents were asked whether there were any disadvantages to living in Macquarie Links. Sixty five percent of respondents identified disadvantages, with the overwhelming majority indicating that one of the main disadvantages of living in Macquarie Links was the cost of community fees:

Paying council rates and strata rates. Council does nothing. (MLE 9, 2007)

Cost of running the estate – garden, security, bus. (MLE 13, 2007)

Levy too high. (MLE 14, 2007)

We pay a levy to benefit the privileges of having 24/7 security and use of amenities. (MLE 24, 2007)

Community levies; cost of maintaining infrastructure; little support and services from local council; scale of council rates to services supplied; control and interference from developer. (MLE 31, 2007)
In the interviews with residents, informants further discussed the high costs of living in PREs:

Oh levies can be $2000 a year. The bulk of the cost of the covering is the security and the landscaping of the common areas. (John: Male; 60-70; 7 years)

For an extra two grand a year, I get the amenities and the use of the facilities that I have. (Angela: Female; 40-50; 3.5 years)

The levy is obviously the sore point to a lot of people I would imagine. It’s not much money provided there are 2 income earners in the house or if you have a good income there, but if you are a pensioner, then obviously it’s too much. (Richard: Male; 50-60; 2.5 years)

The paying of community fees is only a ‘sore point’ as residents pay both community levies and local council rates but they receive no value from their council rates, in that Campbelltown City Council contributes very little to the suburb of Macquarie Links. The extent of the Council’s contribution to Macquarie Links is through weekly collection of their garbage. Following the caution of the UDIA in regard to planning neighbourhood infrastructure that can be maintained in reality by the residents themselves, it is important to also note that the level of infrastructure provided determines the costs associated with living in these residential estates (i.e. the more elaborate the facilities, the more costly it is to reside in a given residential estate). As noted earlier in this Chapter, property developers are always looking for new marketing angles and niches, and having the greatest array of the latest neighbourhood facilities and infrastructure could ultimately create residential neighbourhoods that are increasingly less accessible to diverse income groups. The development of private residential neighbourhoods, constructed through state legislation and for specific income groups (see following section on demography of Macquarie Links) in Australian cities certainly poses a threat to attempts to generate greater social equity in the city, particularly through the creation of inequitable diversities in the city (see Fincher and Iveson, 2008). There are important considerations here for urban planning in Australia, which I will return to at the end of this Chapter.
In Chapter 8, I return to the issues surrounding the long term financial viability of community schemes and I consider the economic sustainability of this urban residential form. The costs associated with owning a property in a private neighbourhood such as Macquarie Links, means that a certain level of income is required. Now, I move on to explore the demography of this type of residential development – those wanting to buy into a community scheme.

THE DIVERSE DEMOGRAPHY OF MACQUARIE LINKS

Research on private residential developments, both in Australia and internationally, has drawn attention to the perceived homogeneity of these new PREs in terms of socio-demography, lifestyles/stages and aspirations. Research on private master planned residential estates in Sydney also suggests that new suburbs house mostly upper middle class Anglo-Australians (Gwyther, 2005; Randolph and Holloway, 2003a; Gleeson, 2006). In order to develop an understanding of the social, cultural and economic characteristics of Macquarie Links data from the most recent Australian census of population and housing (2006) were consulted, together with the residents understandings of the perceived mix within the estate in terms of income, age (and family type) and ethnicity. Diversity of various kinds within new private suburban developments is generally thought to be low (see Randolph and Holloway, 2003a).

When speaking on the age composition of the neighbourhood, many respondents commented favourably on the mix of age groups within the estate, but then invariably made reference to young families as a dominant group, which was somewhat surprising within a neighbourhood such as Macquarie Links.

Um, there’s a mixture. There are some young families, quite a few. (John: Male; 60-70; 7 years)

There’s a lot more families in here than I expected there to be, I thought there’d be a lot of empty nesters. But it’s just a normal community mix – couples in the unit, empty nesters, people with young families, older families, it’s across the board. I don’t think it targets any one demographic. (Tracey: Female; 40-50; 4 years)
I've got a standard real estate report somewhere that looks at a breakdown of all the ages, and I think there’s a good cross section across young families with young children … to older couples, late 50s, early 60s, retired, that type of thing. (Harry: Male; 40-50; 3.5 years)

We would definitely be the youngest people in this estate... In the estate, its families, we’re a couple, no kids, two dogs [laughing]. (Kathryn: Female; 30-40; 1 year)

Macquarie Links has been designed to incorporate a diversity of housing styles from free standing homes to villa / townhouse style housing and most recently the final stage, the ‘Peak Apartments’. The villas and the apartments also have their own pools, separate to the main swimming pool within the estate. These different housing styles and options are intended to cater to diverse age groups and the demography of the estate reflects this.

Interestingly, some of the respondents spoke of ‘age segregation’ between different precincts within the estate.

In the villas, there’s more of an elderly demographic I think – there’s not too many kids, actually, no there’s not many kids... I may be wrong on that but in the estate itself, there are definitely families with younger kids – you see them around the place. (George: Male; 40-50; 2.5 years)

Generally there are a lot of families in the houses, the house where people bought land and built it themselves and in the villas it tends to be more couples. (Chris: Male; 50-60; 6 months)

I think there’s a broad mix. In the villas there’s more people who have downsized, the empty nesters and things and business people, but mainly in the homes there’s lots of children, like our neighbour have teenage children and the people next door to them have about a 10, 12/13, 14/15 year old. Our children are 8 and 13, and there are older children down the road and there’s a
retired couple next door. There’s, behind us here the children are 7 and 10/11, 12/13. (Jennifer: Female; 40-50; 3 years)

The suburban landscape has not traditionally been viewed as a place to downsize. This is largely because suburban neighbourhoods in Australia have not traditionally contained a mix of housing styles and were usually focused on the quarter acre block. On the contrary, suburbs are usually places for space and expansion (see Blunt and Dowling, 2006; Dowling, 2008). The style and structure of this neighbourhood has considerable appeal to diverse groups and allowed for a diverse demography amongst the inhabitants, as related to an age mix. As noted in Chapter 6 many respondents were attracted to Macquarie Links for the opportunity to downsize. While initially this apparent spatial separation of age groups within Macquarie Links might appear to present a form of age segregation within the neighbourhood it is probably more indicative of the diversity of age groups and housing styles, as well as personal housing preferences, within the residential development, rather than a division of groups per se.

The diversity of age groups and housing preferences is further represented in the residents’ indication of a diversity of housing styles. As mentioned above, a number of the informants were attracted to Macquarie Links for the opportunity to downsize to a smaller property, which is not a particularly well-acknowledged trend within the urban studies literature to date. The desires for smaller homes were expressed:

I kept wanting a smaller place. (Susan: Female; 60-70; 4 years)

I have a bad leg, I had Polio when I was 6, so mowing the lawn, looking after a pool, and I’ve retired so we started doing a few holidays so it was a bit hard, we go on holidays and come back and the pool was full of rubbish, the pump would blow up, and then they built this block. (Herbert: Male; 50-60; 6 months)

Well we needed to move, we had a big house in a very nice area, didn’t have a problem with that, but we wanted to downsize. (Lesley: Female; 50-60; 2 years)
We had a corner block and ... a corner block gives you an awful lot of work to do ... Don [husband] turned 82 yesterday and as you can see I survived a stroke – having a house with a garden and pool could get too much. (Anne: Female; 70-80; 1.5 years)

The general focus in the literature is on the building of larger and more spacious suburban homes often labelled McMansions (see Allon, 2005; Dowling, 2008; Johnson, 2006). Certainly, the houses being built in Australian suburbs during the latter half of the 20th Century gradually increased with size (Johnson, 2006:264).

The new suburban houses are often two storey and detached on a ‘range of block sizes, lesser amounts of private open space and more public open space in an increasingly master planned ... neighbourhood’ (Johnson, 2006:264). The sheer scale and size of these houses is growing with ‘new rooms [to] accommodate leisure activities [within the home] ... [that] flow to the outdoor room that has replaced the rear garden [as a space for entertaining]’ (Johnson, 2006:264). With an expansion in the amount of interior space, ‘internal domestic space seems to have become ... related less and less to the number of people in the household and more to their leisure activities, ‘lifestyle’ and affluence’ (Johnson, 2006:264). Many of the respondents confirmed this shift towards more spacious suburban homes:

We just got to the stage where you know, it was our first house and we’d renovated it and sort of outgrown it, and it was time for something new and we stumbled across this place. Our previous house was 125 square metres and our garage now is 122 [laughing]. (Jack: Male; 40-50; 4 years)

We had 15 people stay [for Christmas] and no one was in each other's face. It was good. We’ve got 3 bathrooms so you could almost allocate each set of people a bathroom. (Tracey: Female; 40-50; 4 years)

We wanted a bit of room and stuff because my brother and sister were getting older and stuff. (Ryan: Male; 20-30; 9 years)
The diversity of age groups, housing styles and housing preferences within Macquarie Links reflects diversity within the residential landscape of this contemporary urban form. Residential developments such as Macquarie Links are generally considered homogenous in a demographic sense (i.e. young families with children), as well as in terms of the landscape features (e.g. the houses are all identical). Macquarie Links suggests some diversity in these senses.

According to the most recent Australian Census of Population and Housing (2006a), near to forty percent of residents within Macquarie Links were born overseas (refer to Table 5.1 below), which is comparable to the averages for Sydney as a whole, the state of NSW and all of Australia, and demonstrates a certain diversity within the local neighbourhood. This finding also goes somewhat against the literature that assumes homogeneity and sameness in population characteristics for smaller areas, as opposed to a greater diversity achieved in larger population groups, such as those who inhabit cities, states or nations (see Tobler, 1970; Johnston et al., 2001, 2002). The ethnic mix of the residents within the estate was also confirmed by the informants. Invariably, when asked about the mix in relation to age, ethnicity and socio-economic status, interview informants discussed the levels of ethnic diversity, particularly the presences of people of Filipino or Indian origin. For Macquarie Links Estate the first largest country of origin for those born overseas was the Philippines (just over 10% of the population), and India ranked third (ABS, 2006a). This finding is interesting in that when the overseas born figures for those living in new private suburban residential estates from the Australian population census are interrogated further, the large majority of the overseas born population are from Anglo-origins, particularly the United Kingdom (see Randolph and Holloway, 2003a, 2005). Respondents were acutely aware of the ethnic diversity within their neighbourhood.

Lot of, um, Asian, Indian, Filipino seems to be, there’s a fair few Filipino around, Indians yeah, Chinese, they seem to have bought in, but you know, probably 60% Anglo. (John: Male; 60-70; 7 years)

Definitely, you see Asian people, Middle Eastern, Aussies, you know. In comparisons with Cabramatta [informant’s previous suburb] there’s more sort
of Anglo people around, but there’s Indian people, there’s a mix. (George: Male; 40-50; 2.5 years)

If I look at my neighbours I have Serbians, Croatians, and Mauritians... And there’s lots of Filipino people here, Chinese people, Indian people, it’s a very mixed group of people. (Stephen: Male; 60-70; 5.5 years)

There is a reasonable Asian influence, Europeans, good cross sections of multicultural Australian society. (Harry: Male; 40-50; 3.5 years)

Many of the respondents (90% of the survey) are previous residents of south-western Sydney, including the Local Government Areas of Campbelltown, Camden, Bankstown, Fairfield and Liverpool (MLE Resident Questionnaire, 2007). The south western Sydney region is one of the most diverse parts of the Sydney metropolitan region (see Darcy, 2007; Dunn, 1993), so it is perhaps not surprising that Macquarie Links is also an ethnically diverse suburb. Nonetheless, these findings challenge the notion of homogeneity within private residential estates. This diversity also has potential implications for ‘community building’ – those activities that aid social interactions (see Chapter 6). The development of private (gated) residential neighbourhoods is often linked in the international literature to the phenomenon of ‘white flight’ (Amin, 2002; Blakely and Snyder, 1997; Low, 2003), a notion borrowed heavily from the American experience. The case in point however, suggests that the link is somewhat tenuous in Sydney. Further, ethnic segregation within Sydney or other major cities in Australia has never mirrored the levels of ethnic segregation in cities internationally, nor has ethnicity proven a key driver of socio-spatial differentiation (Dunn et al., 2007; Johnston et al., 2001; Kenna, 2007). It has always been the class divisions in Australian cities that have been of greater concern to urban scholars (Badcock, 1997; Forster, 2006).

Private residential estates throughout the world are thought to attract mostly middle income residents (see Chapter 2). The dominance of the middle-class in the demographics of PREs is evident in a diversity of urban centres. As noted previously, these residents are not the ‘super rich’ as popularly referred to in the recent gentrification literature (see Davidson, 2007; Lees et al., 2008; Watt, 2008), but rather those households with two incomes and a reasonable disposable income (to be able to
afford the added costs of living in PREs). The census data in Table 5.1 suggest that Macquarie Links is reasonably affluent, with median household incomes being twice that of all households in Sydney (ABS, 2006). Informants generally considered Macquarie Links to consist of middle to high income earners, and probably two-income households.

I’d have to say mid to high [incomes], well you have to have a fairly good disposable income I guess to live here. ... you’re looking at $15/1600 a year in strata fees, depending on where you live, you’ve got council rates on top of that so you’re looking at a couple of thousand dollars a year just to live there before you pay your mortgage, before you pay anything else. ... probably the one category that there’s not many of, that I know of, are first home buyer type, young married couples, there’s maybe, by the time they’ve had their kids, they’re 2nd home buyers, but I doubt very much, it’s not a first home buyers market in here. (Angela: Female; 40-50; 3.5 years)

I’d be lying to you if I didn’t say that, you know there’s a lot of Mercedes around here, BMWS and that sort of thing. You can see it, and manicured lawns. (George: Male; 40-50; 2.5 years)

[Laughing] No question that it is [higher income]. The guy next door’s the head of a big international company, one that we all know, so he must be alright. Wayne’s a builder. Bill’s CEO of a, he’s actually just sold his company, a chemical company. (Chris: Male; 50-60; 6 months)

Yeah, I’m looking around and there’s this lady here, and her and her husband both have matching black BMWS – his and hers. (Kate: Female; 40-50; 3.5 years)

The reflections by the informants suggest that Macquarie Links is a fairly affluent neighbourhood. Near to ninety percent of the questionnaire respondents within Macquarie Links own their home and of that ninety percent, fifty percent are holding a mortgage. Further, fifty percent of the households surveyed have two people working fulltime (MLE Resident Questionnaire, 2007).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Macquarie Links</th>
<th>Sydney</th>
<th>NSW</th>
<th>Australia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total persons</td>
<td>911</td>
<td>4,119,190</td>
<td>6,549,177</td>
<td>19,855,288</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian-born</td>
<td>539</td>
<td>2,486,709</td>
<td>4,521,152</td>
<td>14,072,944</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(59.2%)</td>
<td>(60.4%)</td>
<td>(69.0%)</td>
<td>(70.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language (English only)</td>
<td>554</td>
<td>2,635,998</td>
<td>4,846,672</td>
<td>15,581,333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(60.8%)</td>
<td>(64.0%)</td>
<td>(74.0%)</td>
<td>(78.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Couple families with children</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>523,813</td>
<td>792,685</td>
<td>2,362,582</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(70.5%)</td>
<td>(49.3%)</td>
<td>(46.2%)</td>
<td>(45.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median gross household income ($/weekly)</td>
<td>$2,299</td>
<td>$1,154</td>
<td>$1,036</td>
<td>$1,027</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median housing loan repayment ($/monthly)</td>
<td>$2,500</td>
<td>$1,800</td>
<td>$1,517</td>
<td>$1,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenure type</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>472,796</td>
<td>745,336</td>
<td>2,448,205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Being purchased, i.e. mortgagee)</td>
<td>(68.1%)</td>
<td>(31.1%)</td>
<td>(30.2%)</td>
<td>(32.2%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PREs such as Macquarie Links also constitute part of Sydney’s ‘mortgage belt’ (Darcy, 2000) and as evident in Table 5.1 the households of Macquarie Links pay quite considerable mortgages – well above the average for Sydney as a whole (ABS, 2006a). Essentially, two incomes are required for the payment of the mortgage, and more specifically, for the residents to be able to buy ‘private’ residential living and ‘community’ (see Chapter 6). In addition, the fees paid to the community association further deter those on lower incomes making these neighbourhoods essentially exclusionary. As McGuirk (2008:262) states:

The trend towards planned community title developments, where communal facilities are privately owned and regulated, is one market response to an apparently burgeoning demand among Australia’s urban middle classes.
As much of the literature suggests (see Chapter 2) this is a fairly middle-class phenomenon. The ability to choose one’s desired residential environment is a reality for some who have benefited from rising incomes. Macquarie Links evidently presents a diverse demography (in terms of age and ethnicity), as evidenced by both the available census data and the residents’ understandings and perspectives. The informants’ level of knowledge about their own residential neighbourhood hints at a certain level of social engagement and interaction taking place in Macquarie Links, and indeed, an identifiable ‘community’ with identifiable boundaries. Further, the diverse demography evident through both national statistics and grounded understandings suggest a certain level of diversity in private neighbourhoods in Sydney, Australia.

The available literature on the demographics of private residential developments in outer metropolitan regions in Australia, particularly Sydney, generally suggests that the residential environments are fairly homogenous culturally as they cater to a mostly Anglo-Australian population (see Gwyther, 2005; Randolph and Holloway, 2003a). In the case of Macquarie Links, the ethnic backgrounds of the residents are diverse and not simply of Anglo-Celtic origin. The residents of Macquarie Links also represent a spectrum of the different age groupings from the Australian national population census. While Macquarie Links is a residential location attractive to families and young children, it also presents a certain appeal due the diverse housing styles to older residents looking to downsize their residential properties. However, the similarities amongst the residents are certainly more strongly related to incomes, and indeed the incomes of the households in Macquarie Links are twice that of the average household incomes for Sydney as a whole. Private residential developments are exclusive on the grounds of income (high incomes).

SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONS OF MACQUARIE LINKS: “OH, YOU CAN IMAGINE”

During the first few interviews with the residents of Macquarie Links, the residents’ awareness of the various ways their estate was perceived and viewed beyond the boundaries of the neighbourhood were made clear (see Chapter 4). There are diverse

---

3 Chris: Male; 50-60; 6 months.
constructions in circulation about the nature of the Macquarie Links development, which have produced both positive and negative imagery and representations of the neighbourhood. In considering some of the constructions of Macquarie Links, my concern is with the outcomes of particular constructions – what the various constructions mean in reality (following Jackson and Penrose, 1993). These constructions and depictions of the Macquarie Links residential development have been generated from a number of sources. The diverse constructions have appeared from the politicians, council, locals and the media, and these have all contributed to the various imaginings of this neighbourhood.

Given that Macquarie Links was the first ‘gated’ residential development in Sydney, and the largest of its kind, it has become a popular reference point for all contemporary suburban neighbourhoods in the news media. A search for news articles referencing the suburb ‘Macquarie Links’ via the FACTIVA search engine (Dow Jones Factiva news media search engine) generated a diversity of articles and representations of the suburb (see Chapter 4 for details of search criteria). For a feature article on the attractiveness of golf course estates, Macquarie Links was the reference point (Casella, 2003, *Daily Telegraph*; Cencigh-Albulario, 2008, *The Australian*; Chesterton, 2006, *Sunday Telegraph*; MacMillan, 2006, *Sunday Telegraph*; The Australia, 2008). For articles dealing with issues of growing polarisation in the Sydney metropolitan region, Macquarie Links was used as an example of the sorts of developments creating greater social division between the ‘haves’ and ‘have nots’ within cities such as Sydney (Australian Associated Press, 2006; Casella, 2004, *Daily Telegraph*; O’Sullivan, 2005, *Sydney Morning Herald*; Pace, 2006, *Daily Telegraph*; Randolph et al., 2007, *Sydney Morning Herald*; Rowlands, 2000, *Daily Telegraph*; Saleh and Rowlands, 2001, *Daily Telegraph*; Totaro, 2006, *Sydney Morning Herald*; Verghis, 2001, *Sydney Morning Herald*). Macquarie Links was referenced in feature articles on gated estates in the newspaper, as was the perceived need for security to shield residents from perceptions of rising crime (Carswell, 2005, *Daily Telegraph*; Skelsey, 2005, *Daily Telegraph*). When considering the successes of the ‘aspirationals’ in western Sydney and the desire for lifestyle choices in the outer suburbs, Macquarie Links is used as an example (Huffer, 2004, *Daily Telegraph*; Sheehan, 2002, *Sydney Morning Herald*; Singer, 2006, *Sun Herald*; Cica, 2006, *The Age*). If the search for ‘community’ or communal living in cities was the topic of debate, Macquarie Links was again a reference point (Creer
One would be forgiven for reading mixed messages about the positioning of the development of Macquarie Links, and of private gated residential estates more broadly. Of course, the nature of this search drew attention to the development of Macquarie Links specifically, and a broader search of gated estates in Sydney and Australia more broadly could have generated broader responses and depictions. Essentially, the media have presented Macquarie Links as a favourable form of residential development in terms of the trend towards ‘lifestyle communities’ (see Blakely and Snyder, 1997) with the inclusion of golf courses and other recreational features that are making the outer suburbs of metropolitan regions more desirable to the ‘aspirational’. These developments are also viewed favourably for their communal facilities and infrastructures. Overwhelmingly however, is the depiction of gated residential developments, such as Macquarie Links, as: exclusive and exclusionary; evidence of a widening gap between rich and poor within Australian cities; having superior infrastructure to the rest of the city; and ‘disconnecting’ from wider urban social life and activities.

The more negative articles and news reports have generated the strongest response from the residents. The local newspaper for the Campbelltown region, *The Macarthur Advertiser*, published a news report about the development of Macquarie Links. The newspaper article particularly pursued the issue of the gated nature of the development, and that the facilities within the residential neighbourhood are not ‘open’ to all residents of the surrounding suburbs (see Figure 5.8). Further, Figure 5.9 highlights the residents response to this criticism in the media and hence their solidarity in response to criticisms.
Figure 5.8: Newspaper article from the Macarthur Advertiser, 12th July 2006, showing the entrance way to Macquarie Links, suggesting that the gating of residential space divides the community (Bowie, 2006a).

Are gated suburbs ruining or enhancing the Aussie ethos of a fair go? Alicia Bowie reports.

MACQUARIE Links has been caught up in a debate over gated housing estates with an academic calling for them to be banned.

Professor Brendan Clouton from Brisbane's Griffith University said gated estates created "elite asylum seekers" and posed a threat to Australia's well-being.

However, Peter Flood, CEO of the Monarch Investments Group which is responsible for Macquarie Links, said the residents chose the gates.

"I don't know where the gated [description] came from," he said.

"What we had was a concierge there 24 hours a day, seven days a week, so if residents heard a funny noise, or someone driving around, they could ring him and he'd call the police."

"It's the residents who put the boom gate in. It's all about choice."

"If the residents wish to do that, and they democratically get together to decide, then that's their right."

"By doing that, it's also taking pressure off the local police. There hasn't been an incident in that estate since it opened in 1997."

'Gated estates are bad public policy'

Campbelltown MP
Graham West

In his maiden speech to State Parliament in 2001, Campbelltown MP Graham West (ALP) called the estates the "enemy of community".

Today he feels the same way.

"While recognising that there are many reasons behind people moving into these estates, and that the vast majority of people in them are good citizens, gated estates are bad public policy," he said.

"Just as the government has recognised that public housing estates have created problems, and that integration is the path to follow, so is the same with gated estates.

"Communities are made richer by having a range of people from all walks of life sharing facilities, experiences and working together to overcome problems."

John and Jan McLaughlin moved to Macquarie Links after more than 30 years in the Campbelltown area, and not to barricade themselves from society.

"The estate suited our changing needs as we moved into retirement mode," Mr McLaughlin said.

"The gardens, tennis courts, community barbecue area and pools are maintained, leaving us with extra time for recreational and family activities."

"There is also a community bus that we use to commute to the railway station and Ipadburn for shopping."

"When on holidays, we leave with the security of knowing that the concierge at the entrance to the estate monitors who is coming in and out."
Gates just great say residents

MACQUARIE Links residents have railed at criticism of their estate in last week’s Advertiser.
A report highlighted both sides of the debate over gated estates – a call for them to be banned and the right of residents to live where they choose.

University academic Professor Brendan Gleeson called residents of gated estates “elite asylum seekers” while state MP Graham West said such estates were “bad public policy”.

Macquarie Links resident, former mayor Les Patterson, said it was unfortunate the debate had resurfaced.

“Most people up here are hard-working people,” he said. “It’s not like ‘them and us’ up here. It’s a little bit tiresome that people continually try to make the inference that there are the haves and the have-nots.

“I don’t see that people see themselves any differently to a person inside or outside of the gate.

“I’d be disappointed in anyone that did.”

Michelle Abbott, who has lived in Macquarie Links for three years, said she took offence at Mr West’s comments that “the ability to use community facilities should not be dictated by your address”.

Mrs Abbott paid a $565 quarterly levy for the estate’s facilities, such as the tennis courts, swimming pool, walking track and bus. She paid $1883 council rates for nothing more than a garbage and recycling service.

“Yes, we do have great facilities in Macquarie Links and we do not ask that anyone else pays for them,” she said. “We pay for them. I don’t have a problem with sharing the facilities if people want to pay for them too.”

Mrs Abbott predicted there would be more estates like Macquarie Links in the Campbeltown region.

She defended the estate having a security guard, as residents had a right to protection and the estate had not had a break-in since 1997.

- Alicia Bowie
The local depiction of Macquarie Links as a new residential development dividing the ‘community’ of Campbelltown has been particularly critical in developing the residents’ awareness of the portrayal of their residential neighbourhood, and of their defensiveness to such criticisms. The residents’ (communal) defensiveness to such criticisms is a method of negotiating and managing the private structure of their residential estate, as well as justifying it. In the resident questionnaire, respondents were asked how they felt Macquarie Links was perceived in the local area. They all spoke of the mixed reactions to this community.

I think it is perceived by the locals as ‘upper class’ snobs. A typical attitude of the lower socio-economic types in the area who believe they are entitled to use our facilities without contribution. The Labor ‘socialist’ government do nothing to promote the estate. They would rather ‘bash’ our community in the local media. (MLE 2, 2007)

All different perceptions – prestigious, like a jail, living in a bubble. (MLE 7, 2007)

People either love it or hate it. (MLE 10, 2007)

I think Macquarie Links is perceived as being somewhat elitist but others have a measure of respect for the estate and are actually in awe of the residents. (MLE II, 2007)

Locals believe it is ‘upmarket’ and exclusive. There is a lot of misunderstanding in the local area about the estate. (MLE 25, 2007)

The media, both local and national, have played a considerable role in depicting the Macquarie Links neighbourhood as distinct, elitist, and as generally ‘other’ to the south west of Sydney. Hence, the residents’ knowledge and awareness of the various constructs of their residential neighbourhood.

During the interviews, informants reflected in depth on the perceived constructions of the neighbourhood. The residents understand their environment to be constructed as
prestigious and more exclusive than other suburbs or neighbourhoods, particularly those in the surrounding areas.

I don’t normally tell people where I live. [Therese: Oh you don’t?] Very rarely do I tell people where I live. [Therese: Because?] Because of the perception. (Angela: Female; 40-50; 3.5 years)

I think a lot of people would see the concept, forget the golf course, but the concept of a secure estate with lavish houses, like you’ve got to admit that when you drive around they are lavish big houses. ... the fact that it’s a closed community, which goes in the same sentence as people going ‘oh you live in Macquarie Links, they won’t even let me in there’ [snobbish voice], this sort of thing. (George: Male; 40-50; 2.5 years)

But it is viewed as elitist in the western suburbs, which is what, if you look at it from the outside in, that’s what it is. We’ve dropped something in the middle of labor party, western suburbs, and housing commission just across the creek, and we’re putting in $800,000 homes. It just doesn’t stack up does it. All within an industrial area. (Harry: Male; 40-50; 3.5 years)

There’s a definite illustration of wealth, nice palm tree. (Kathryn: Female; 30-40; 1 year)

The cognisance of their own level of wealth or affluence, or indeed the perception of their wealth and affluence, is high and demonstrated in these informants’ responses. The ways in which these residents express an acceptance of the levels of affluence within their neighbourhood is a way of justifying their private affluent lives.

The media, locally in newspapers, on talk back radio, and through television programs, have drawn attention to some of the more elite aspects of the Macquarie Links neighbourhood and essentially generated a fairly negative construction of this location over the past few years. As these residents commented:
it all started from the riots, the Macquarie Fields riots, and Today Tonight just hammered us, they just absolutely hammered us. You know here are all these ‘haves’ sitting up in their ‘McMansions’ looking out across the riots, making out as if we sat up there with our wine and bikkies and our binoculars and we... It was dreadful. ... and one of the stupid talk back radio people decided that they’d latch onto that [apparent report of noise complaints due to Police helicopter presence during riots] and so with the riots the worse thing that could happen was that they were keeping the ‘haves’ awake, while the have nots are rioting on the street and getting beaten by police, the rest of us were complaining because it was keeping us awake. You know, that kind of thing was really unfair and unfortunate. (Karen: Female; 40-50; 3.5 years)

We’ve had an incident recently in the Macarthur Advertiser – there was a report made about Macquarie Links – it was quite a negative report written by the editor and he says that we have facilities here, everyone should be able to use them – people from Macquarie Fields, Glenfield, Campbelltown, and Ingleburn should be able to use them. (Kate: Female; 40-50; 3.5 years)

[The place does not have a good image] with the editor of the Macarthur Advertiser (laughs!). He hates this place. ... He thinks it’s like the 3rd world. (Ray: Male; 50-60; 4 years)

Particularly from the newspapers they stir up the people from Macquarie Fields, think we’re all up ourselves you know, we have all these facilities and they don’t realise how much we pay for that sort of thing. (Joanne: Female; 50-60; 6 months)

The newspapers and other media outlets can generate a very negative image of the place. The public, negative, representations of the Macquarie Links development through the media, has made residents very aware of both the exclusive nature of their residential development, and of their position within the surrounding residential landscape. The media’s construction of Macquarie Links, in this instance, has assisted in countering what Iris Young (1999) termed ‘blind privilege’ (see Chapter 2) in that these residents have been exposed to broader concerns about the affluent nature of the
residential development and that it excludes certain groups unable to afford to pay for private services.

In recent times, urban studies academics in Australia have been quick to comment on the concerns of the trend towards the gating of urban residential space. Much of this commentary has appeared in local and national media and newspapers (see Figures 5.8 and 5.9), and been a reaction to some of the more divisive outcomes evident in North America, and a concern for a replication of that trend here in Australia (see Chapters 1 and 2). A well known quote referenced by the residents was that they were ‘elite asylum seekers’ (Australian Urban Policy Professor Brendan Gleeson quoted in Macarthur Advertiser, Bowie, 2006a). These reports and articles have appeared in the popular press and many of the residents were acutely aware of the academic representations of their neighbourhood as largely negative following the international experiences of gating residential spaces, particularly those of North America (see Chapter 2).

Yeah, don’t quote the United States because that’s completely different. And you’ve got this guy, what’s his name, Burke, or whatever from Queensland, who’s writing a paper, part of his thesis was on people who live in gated estates and their pedestrian habits are weird, because we get used to walking down the streets in gated estates because there’s no through traffic. So when we get out into the real world, the big world and we have to actually face a street, we just can’t cope. ... And he uses words like fortification... I just think there’s an element of ignorance in that we are no different, we’re not a cult, we’re not refugees from the real world, we’re just people who chose to live in this area and we want to stay in Campbelltown, we want to stay in that area, we had the opportunity... but yeah until such times as they put machine guns at the front gates. (Angela: Female; 40-50; 3.5 years)

I know a few academics who are not part of the real world! [Laughing] I mean, a man’s got a view ... but on the other hand, if we said a lot of the guys here are tradespeople, that are on trades type income, business, small engineering businesses, those sorts of things, they’re part of the real world. (Chris: Male; 50-60; 6 months)
The residents are quick to deny any similarities between their residential estate and those in the United States or elsewhere, and to suggest that they are very much ‘ordinary’ and connected to the broader citizenry. The comments made by some academics partly attributed to the hostility I was met with when attempting to gain informants for the research project (see Chapter 4). The solidarity of the residents in response to these, and other, criticisms presents a collective defence to the private structure of the neighbourhood. Further, following Thorns (1979; see Chapter 3) these responses by the residents to an external threat to the nature of the community are a way of creating unity within communities that are guided by certain ideologies.

One of the negative outcomes of the construction of Macquarie Links is its impact on the children who live within Macquarie Links and whether they ultimately socialise more widely than the neighbourhood itself. Some respondents spoke of the stigmatisation of children from Macquarie Links in schools as a result of the way that Macquarie Links has been constructed and portrayed as elite.

It’s unfair, and I know that some of them, I’ve heard this come up at strata meetings [community association meetings], that some of the kids cop hell in school. You know there’s been people who have been forced to take their kids out of the local public school and put them in a private school, at considerable financial hardship because that wasn’t what they’d planned to do, but the kids cop hell in school, oh you live up there you’re one of the rich, and there’s a stigma with it. (Lesley: Female; 50-60; 2 years)

Back when I moved here, I went to High School at Mac Fields [neighbouring suburb] so, there was this whole thing anyway because it’s half selective and half local, so the locals are like these poor arse dero kids or whatever [economically disadvantaged], there was that kind of thing, so I wouldn’t go around advertising the fact that I was you know Macquarie Links, just because people go yeah good one, you think you’re better than us because you’re on that side of the tracks, if you know what I mean. (Ryan: Male; 20-30; 9 years)
One of Gleeson’s (2006) concerns with the development of gated residential estates was that children would grow up in more insular urban environments than had previously existed within the suburbs of Australia’s metropolitan regions. Evidently, while living in a reasonably ‘protected’ residential environment (see Chapter 7), the children residing in Macquarie Links are still part of the broader neighbourhoods through the schooling system and also through sporting and other local associations, which points to the need to develop more nuanced understandings of these neighbourhoods. This is a further example of the complexity of factors which many of the residents deal with when choosing private residential living. What is fascinating are the ways the residents collectively negotiate many of the complexities of living in a private residential estate, which includes the negotiation of stereotypes and constructions.

CONCLUSION

Private residential neighbourhoods, now a mainstream product of the residential development industry in Australia, are undoubtedly diversifying the residential landscape of the major metropolitan regions. Private residential developments such as Macquarie Links are constructed as exclusionary. State legislation in New South Wales allows for the development of private residential estates based around a community scheme and managed by a community association. The community schemes provide residential facilities and infrastructure that are privately provided and paid for by the residents of Macquarie Links. Only those able to afford the costs of living in private neighbourhoods are those able to reside there. Developments such as Macquarie Links are thus exclusionary on the grounds of income and exclusive as they house those on considerable incomes. There are a handful of rental properties within Macquarie Links and I turn to a discussion of their particular inclusion/exclusion during Chapters 6 and 7.

In the case of Macquarie Links, the residents are acutely aware of their place in the urban hierarchy (this unfolds in greater detail in Chapters 6 and 7), of the nature of their surrounding residential environments (as most of them have previously resided in surrounding areas), and that their own circumstances within Macquarie Links is deemed exclusive, exclusionary, and elitist. The media’s constructions of this
neighbourhood have worked to develop awareness for these residents of the perceptions and opinions of Macquarie Links. Thus, the story of residential differentiation becomes somewhat complicated. While the development has restricted access and has more subtly excluded people on the grounds of income, the residents of the neighbourhood of Macquarie Links know all too well what the ‘other’, or the life ‘outside the gates’, is like. The collective solidarity of the residents works to defend the neighbourhood from these criticisms – to build community as a reaction to attacks on the private. This solidarity in response to stereotypes is an important communal justification of privatism and private residential development.

While is Chapter has largely set the scene for the construction and development of private residential estates in NSW, Australia, there are a number of suggestions throughout about some very communal and collective activities within, and responses to, the nature and structure of private estate living. The following Chapter explores the meanings, negotiations and realities of community within Macquarie Links.
COMMUNITY IN MACQUARIE LINKS

INTRODUCTION
One of the main aims of this thesis is to understand the nature of social life, interactions and community formation within a private residential estate. Of particular interest is the ways in which community is understood by the residents and how this community is managed and negotiated. I am interested in understanding the role of the private structure in the formation, negotiation and management of community. With the concepts of privatism and community being actively marketed and sold to residents of PREs by developers and real estate agents, they appear at once both contradictory and dependent. The main purpose of this Chapter is to continue to develop a deeper understanding of the extent to which community formation relies on the private structure of the neighbourhood, and the extent to which the two are intertwined, rather than contradictory or mutually exclusive. To deal with this apparent complexity an understanding of community as a complex, contradictory and dynamic form of neighbourhood interaction and association emerges. This Chapter then examines the meanings of community in Macquarie Links. Understanding community in Macquarie Links involved an exploration of the residents’ experiences, as well as the ways in which social encounters and community are organised in the neighbourhood. These are examined in this Chapter while I also consider how the formation of community relies on the identification of commonalities and complexities which in turn allows for a consideration of the ways in which community and privatism are intertwined.

COMMUNITY IN MACQUARIE LINKS
In the resident questionnaire respondents were asked to identify whether they felt part of a community in Macquarie Links. Eighty six percent (86%) of respondents stated that they did. The purpose of this Chapter then, is to consider what community means for the residents of Macquarie Links, how community is understood, managed and negotiated within the neighbourhood. In a brief open response section following this question, respondents were asked to identify why they felt part of a community. What
was surprising was that many of the interactions that the residents identified were not based around everyday interactions and connections usually associated with ‘community’ (see Gans, 1962, 1967; Young and Willmott, 1957; Chapter 3), but around more formal processes and interactions associated with the community association. They are more formalised interactions. Many of the responses were linked to the structure and nature of the community, particularly the meetings and common goals and agendas amongst the residents. A selection of such responses follows:

Most everyone in the estate are very friendly, attending community meetings, acknowledgement of you by gatehouse staff. (MLE 6, 2007)

We can suggest things / ways to improve the estate through neighbourhood committee and then to the executive committee. (MLE 24, 2007)

Neighbourhood in each stage – you work together for the goodness of the place, so our family can enjoy a resort lifestyle living. (MLE 26, 2007)

Neighbourhood watch; neighbourhood meetings; facilities and concierge. (MLE 37, 2007)

In these responses from the residents, the key themes here in relation to the residents’ sense of community or neighbourliness, are that the residents have something in common, but that common thread appears to be the formal private structure of the neighbourhood. In Macquarie Links, the sense of community seems to have developed out of the formal structure of the residential development where residents have the chance to connect with, get to know, and form relationships with other residents in the neighbourhood.

Commonalities amongst the residents of Macquarie Links were identified during the research, both in relation to common goals and values, and common lifestyles and life stages. In the household questionnaires, residents were asked to identify three motivations behind their decision to purchase property in Macquarie Links, or three features that attracted them to Macquarie Links. The two dominant common goals were the desire for the communal lifestyle and amenities of the neighbourhood, and the
gates and security (privacy). Close to eighty percent of residents identified gates or security features as a main reason behind their decision to move there and the same percentage of respondents also noted the available amenities (swimming pool, golf course, etc) as motivations for moving to Macquarie Links (refer to Figure 6.1). These findings suggest that PREs appeal to both private and communal desires of residents (see McGuirk and Dowling, 2007) and that both contradictory elements are marketed and sold. In the interviews, I raised this issue further to qualify the responses. Interestingly (as identifiable in Figure 6.1), the respondents did not actually rate community very highly as a main attraction for moving to Macquarie Links, yet community is evidently a reality for the residents once residing within the estate. Further, community was not associated with social interaction as only half of the questionnaire respondents agreed that there was social interaction within the estate (53%, see Table 6.1). Community is perhaps something that is nurtured – not an instantaneous outcome of the development of a private residential estate. Thus, understanding community requires an in-depth analysis of its meaning for the residents of the neighbourhood, as does an understanding of the meanings of gates and security, and lifestyles amenities (see Chapter 7).

Figure 6.1: Residents stated attractions to Macquarie Links (Source: Macquarie Links Estate Resident Questionnaire, 2007).
Table 6.1: Respondent’s agreement with various statements about the Macquarie Links development (Source: Macquarie Links Resident Questionnaire, 2007).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>There is a lot of social interaction in the estate</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>39.5</td>
<td>30.2</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(53.5)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residents in the estate have similar values to you</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>51.2</td>
<td>30.2</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(65.1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The estate is safer than surrounding areas</td>
<td>62.8</td>
<td>37.2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(100)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is a stronger sense of community than other areas</td>
<td>37.2</td>
<td>39.5</td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(76.7)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The estate is more prestigious than other areas</td>
<td>39.5</td>
<td>48.8</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(88.4)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The quality of housing is very good</td>
<td>37.2</td>
<td>58.1</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(95.3)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Note: the bracketed percentages are the combined values for the responses to strongly agree and agree.

As discussed in Chapters 2 and 5, the shift in the residential housing market away from seeking a house to the desire for a home and associated ‘lifestyle’ options within a residential neighbourhood is global and both fostered and satisfied by private developers. The residents from Macquarie Links spoke to me about their desires for the sort of ‘lifestyle’ offered in Macquarie Links.

Well for us, it’s probably the most relaxed place we’ve ever lived in that we’ve got, well there’s everything there that we would need … this offers all the amenities that we need within easy reach without having to get in the car and drive to the swimming pool, drive to the tennis courts, drive to the golf course. So it sort of gives us that, it’s a very comfortable kind of lifestyle and we’re one block away from the actual golf course so we have views right across the golf course and horizon views, so from like just an aesthetic point of view, in summer I sit out there in the morning and I have the most glorious view, and I’m thinking, this is okay, this is alright. (Angela: Female; 40-50; 3.5 years)

It’s just a lovely lifestyle with the pools here and things. (Chris: Male; 50-60; 6 months)
No, I've lived on Golf Courses before and I actually like the quietness, there's nobody on a Golf Course after it gets dark, it's very peaceful, very quiet, and it's very attractive to look at. (Stephen: Male; 60-70; 5.5 years)

The communal lifestyle amenities offered to the residents were key factors in their decision to purchase property within Macquarie Links. Indeed, it was a common goal amongst the residents. This finding links with the international literature that suggests that private residential estates address desires for certain 'lifestyle' pursuits (Blakely and Snyder, 1997; Roitman, 2005). Additional to this literature however, based on research from Macquarie Links, is the acknowledgement that these communal lifestyles are enabled and managed (or protected, see Chapter 7) through the private structure of the neighbourhood. These communal lifestyles and desires are reliant on the community schemes legislation and a private structure through which they are maintained.

As discussed in Chapter 2, the international literature on the development of private residential estates has noted that one of the common desires of residents moving into these developments is for control, order and stability over the residential environment. Underlying this motivation is a perception of urban 'disorder' and a fear of 'uncontrolled' environments. It is the security and stability of privately governed neighbourhoods that are thought to ensure order and control for residents who buy into them (see Chapters 2 and 7). For many of the informants in my study, security and gates (key aspects of privacy) were important considerations when they decided to move to Macquarie Links:

This [estate] stood out and then we saw the golf course, I thought we were going to get some views, and then we heard about the security. Security is good, especially these days because there are a lot of problems. (Peter: Male; 50-60; 6 years)

I just said to Narelle [wife] one day, come and have a look at Macquarie Links, there’s this new security estate, that’s just being developed, and as soon as she
came in she said oh I love it. The security aspect grabbed Narelle straight away. (Jack: Male; 40-50; 4 years)

At that stage, back in 1999, I'm in IT so I work for a US software company and travelling a lot overseas and regionally, and just the concept of going away, knowing the family would be safe, was a big seller for me. (Harry: Male; 40-50; 3.5 years)

Security, in terms of physical security, was an initial attraction shared by many of the residents. For community to exist it requires some form of privacy, security, and/or protection (see Chapter 7). Community succeeds through the management of externalities and the security infrastructure, enabled by the private structure of Macquarie Links.

As previous community studies have shown, social interactions within neighbourhoods has occurred amongst peer groups, kin or familiar relations – there is something in common that binds people of a neighbourhood (Gans, 1962; see also Chapter 3). A fair amount of the everyday interactions taking place in Macquarie Links were described as being centred on children and dogs. These everyday commonalities are what bind people and what initiate some of the interactions amongst neighbours. As these residents noted:

Yeah, but then you just get to meet people as you're walking around, you know walking your dogs, or the kids playing, my youngest used to play tennis down at the tennis court so we got to know a whole lot of people through that. ... a couple of the kids used to have a little business where they'd walk peoples dogs, because there's the walking path that goes up behind, runs down near the M5, up the hill at the back, so they walk dogs. (Angela: Female; 40-50; 3.5 years)

You know I walk the dog everywhere and I'm talking to people all the time in the dog squad. (Stephen: Male; 60-70; 5.5 years)
You know people are out walking their dogs and stuff and they’ll stop and have a chat, so it’s pretty casual that way. (Harry: Male; 40-50; 3.5 years)

Like dogs, children generally seem to initiate forms of social interaction between neighbours. As these residents explained:

... Sometimes we car pool – they take the kids for us or we'll pick up their kids and bring them home [from school]. (Tracey: Female; 40-50; 4 years)

Now since James is in Year 1 this year, there's interaction between the kids now because they're all going to school together. (Harry: Male; 40-50; 3.5 years)

I think the kids make that [neighbourhood interaction]. When you've got children and they're all playing together and you have closer ties. (Herbert: Male; 50-60; 6 months)

Having things in common aids neighbourhood social relations and builds community. These more intangible neighbourhood social events are harder to analyse and understand as aspects of community in Macquarie Links. These are no doubt part of the activities that give residents a stronger sense of community that in other experienced in other areas (77%, see Table 6.1). Additionally, many of the community studies in Australia that have analysed the processes of neighbouring and community development or engagement have largely found that a particular group, usually women (and often children), form the basis or core of the community and community building initiatives (Mee, 1994; Richards, 1990, 1994; Stevenson, 1999). The prevalence of animals and children in community interactions in Macquarie Links, while fairly common sorts of interactions in urban areas more broadly, suggests that the current formations of community, at least for this private neighbourhood, are not necessarily gendered and are focussed on age (children) and human and non-human interactions. As research by Gans (1962) notes, common bonds have always been an important part of developing neighbourhood based social interactions and community associations. Further, common themes, such as children of the same age, or animals, brings people together in a community (Delanty, 2003; Young, 1990). The various forms of interaction
are based around commonalities. What is interesting here though is that the stories of those who experienced community – in the sense of these neighbourhood based interactions – actively work to deny the myth of urban ‘non-community’ (Knox and Pinch, 2005; Richards, 1990) and the idea of community ‘lost’ (see Chapter 3). These findings assist in understanding residents’ experiences of community within gated neighbourhoods which are largely empirically absent (Low, 2003).

While residents within Macquarie Links have some common goals and agendas, I want to now consider the depth of social life and interaction within Macquarie Links as it relates to and is framed around the positioning of the private structure of the neighbourhood – the Macquarie Links Community Association – within this social life and interaction. As discussed in Chapter 5, Macquarie Links was planned and designed in accordance with the Community Schemes Legislation (CLDA 1989 and CLMA, 1989) and as such is on Community Title and run by a community association. Essentially, this means that residents own, maintain and pay for their own neighbourhood – the infrastructure, services, facilities and amenities. The Macquarie Links Community Association (MLCA) effectively manages the estate with a Chairperson, executive committee, and a neighbourhood committee for each development stage. This is a fairly structured form of social organisation, with formal committees and other local neighbourhood institutions (e.g. golf club). Respondents were cognisant of the structure of the neighbourhood of Macquarie Links.

The place was built in stages, around 13 of them, and each stage, this is run like a body corporate for an apartment development, so each stage has a little group and person that represents them on the executive committee. ...it's a fairly sensible sort of, I think Community Title, was something that was quite new to NSW and there's perhaps some things that need fine-tuning because it isn't the same as an apartment building it's sort of different, but overall there's always going to be some dramas. You get two people together you get dramas, you get 1000 people you got a lot more [laughing]. (Stephen: Male; 60-70; 5.5 years)
Insights into how this neighbourhood is structured and organised are important for determining if it aids and/or works against neighbourhood based interactions and associations and (ultimately) the formation of community.

I questioned the interview informants about the nature of the community meetings to establish a general sense of the sorts of issues that were being addressed by the various committees. Most of the informants noted the general community issues that arise and need to be dealt with such as gardening, maintenance, use of pools and the like.

Community issues, nothing major. (Chris: Male; 50-60; 6 months)

The gardeners, the noises, the cars – just your standard strata stuff really. You have good neighbours and bad neighbours. (Kathy: Female; 40-50; 6 months)

AGMs on tonight ... will end up being one person having a bitch about their own problems – Charlie Brown’s looking over my fence. (Anne: Female; 70-80; 1.5 years)

Further to some of the everyday challenges and issues of Macquarie Links, the committees are also in place to deal with the structure of community title (the by-laws, covenants, and the like). As one informant noted:

We need to change some by-laws shortly, and there’ll have to be a general meeting to approve those. (Lesley: Female; 50-60; 2 years).

The structure of community title allows the residents to be involved in shaping the development of the estate, be consulted on changes to the neighbourhood and be actively involved in their own residential neighbourhood and developing its agenda for the future – a participatory hands-on approach to the development of neighbourhood social relations (McKenzie, 2006a; see also Chapter 5 and 7). The private structure of the neighbourhood through the neighbourhood committees allows for the management and negotiation of community and social life within Macquarie Links.
In the interviews, some of the informants spoke at length about their various levels of involvement with the community committee and the community relationships and networks that have developed out of this neighbourhood structure.

I went to a meeting the other night and a lot of the residents were there, and you’d think there’s normally a handful of diehards who give up their own time to do things like that, but there was a good role up, most of the villa people. (George: Male; 40-50; 2.5 years)

I actually joined, became the secretary of the neighbourhood committee so that I would find out and meet some people and I can say hello to people. (Susan: Female; 60-70; 4 years)

You tend to meet a lot of people that you wouldn’t do if you were living in a normal suburban street. I know everybody that lives in my stage and I know lots of people that live in other stages, because I’ve been here a long time. ...it’s a community rather than, I don’t know, just a suburb. (Stephen: Male; 60-70; 5.5 years)

This level of involvement suggests an ‘active participation’ in community affairs and that a level of community interaction is generated through the committees or the private structure of the neighbourhood (see McKenzie, 1994). The levels of community involvement are encouraged by some of the formal activities of the neighbourhood structure, which is an important finding when considering some of the more social and community orientated aspects of the club theory (see Chapter 2). The idea of ‘clubbing together for a common purpose’ can be extended beyond simply economic viability or success of this neighbourhood to the acknowledgement of more socially relevant outcomes (Chen and Webster, 2005; Glasze, 2005; Lee and Webster, 2006). It is clear however, that the private structure of this neighbourhood and the need for the residents to maintain the neighbourhood over the local council, at the very least initiates social relations amongst neighbours, through neighbourhood committee meetings. The findings above suggest that the private structure also builds and develops social relations further. The place of the private structure within community building processes bears similarity to the work of Gans and more recently Sanchez-
Jankowski who note the key role played by local neighbourhood institutions in these processes of community and neighbouring (see Chapter 3).

While the committees provided a space for interaction and community building, so did, it was revealed in the interviews, some of the key actors or figures in the private neighbourhood. The formal ‘gate keepers’ (i.e. the security guards) of this neighbourhood played a key role for many in the processes of community building (i.e. the development of neighbourhood relations) – evidence of a key interface between the private structure and the community in Macquarie Links. These informants suggested the significance of these formal figures or actors in the neighbourhood:

I leave a key at the gate if I have a service person coming. [The security lets them into the house] That promotes a sense of community that you wouldn’t otherwise have. (Lesley: Female; 50-60; 2 years)

There was a guy who worked every night, he still does, 6 nights a week, Jimmy, he’s an old Irish guy, back when we were younger we’d come home from the Catho [Catholic Club] or something, we’d get dropped down there and go eat our KFC in his gatehouse and stuff and have a laugh with him and then he’d drive us home. It was awesome, but that doesn’t really happen anymore. For no real reason, we just grew up probably. I don’t think it’s necessary to eat with the security guard anymore. Um, yeah, I don’t stop for a chat, a lot of people do and I wonder what they’re talking about because you get stuck behind them [when entering the community] and you’re like what are they talking to the security guard for 5 minutes about, and they’re having a great time. (Ryan: Male; 20-30; 9 years)

The security team are really ‘public’ figures in this residential estate and well known to the residents. This plays a pivotal role in the development of a sense of community for many residents and in community building (those activities that encourage social interaction) more broadly. In Setha Low’s (2003) study of gated communities in North America, she found experiences of community to be low and notes that ‘gates and guards do not necessarily make a group of people conform to your idea of what a community should be’. My study found however, that these figures can actually become
sites for community building and the generation of a sense of community. In this example, the ‘private’ and ‘community’ are not in tension with one another; rather the private structures (security infrastructure) and private figures (security guards) are integral to the formation of community within Macquarie Links.

Macquarie Links was designed around the Golf Course and the Golf Club with the intention that these spaces would provide some sort of centrepiece or hub for the neighbourhood's social interactions. The informants acknowledged that the golf course is the centrepiece, but did not overwhelming support this planned social hub or centrepiece as a social space, when questioned about the types of events planned for the residents within the neighbourhood.

So when Macquarie Links was established the hope was that you'd have a community of golfers who would support the golf club, who would use it, a lot of money go into it, and with every residence there was a membership offered as part of the deal with the land... But that hasn't happened and a lot of the ethnic groups that live in there aren't traditionally big golfers so you have all these vacant memberships that are sitting there and that money's not supporting the club, so they're not frequenting the club, their annual dues aren't going into it... I think it's 48% or something that took up memberships. The rest just didn't bother. (Angela: Female; 40-50; 3.5 years)

They do have carols by candlelight but it was washed out last year, unfortunately, but yeah they have, there's a St Patrick's Day dinner at the club on a Friday night close to St Patrick's day. They have a father's day lunch, mother's day lunch, those types of things, and they have a Christmas in July lunch, or dinner, so they have lots of things down there and you try to support it, but it depends on how busy you are. (Jennifer: Female; 40-50; 3 years)

Only through the golf club. There's no other organised sort of events around the community. (Harry: Male; 40-50; 3.5 years)

The golf club has been provided as a major centre for the neighbourhood interactions and activities, but this has not been viewed in an overwhelmingly positive manner by
the residents, or used solely and exclusively by residents themselves. As has been found in previous community studies, the built forms of community (e.g. neighbourhood centres and community halls) do not always create community (see Young and Willmott, 1957; Chapter 3). Some of the more unexpected features of neighbourhoods and communities can have a greater influence over the community building process, as is the case in Macquarie Links.

Some of the shortcomings of the golf club appear to be that the residents’ use of and access to the communal facilities is restricted and monitored, as well as the more ‘high brow’ nature of the ‘club’, a more exclusive feel. As these informants suggested:

We have no facilities other than the community centre, and the glitch on the community centre which I disagree with immensely, we have to pay a hire fee – $200 during the week; $1000 on the weekend to hire the community centre. Yay, the community centre! (Kate: Female; 40-50; 3.5 years)

Nah, like me and my friend who lives in here we wouldn’t go down to the Golf Club for a beer or something because it’s a bit too... well you know high brow. Well it’s a golf club of rich people, we’re going to sit there and watch the footy or something and that wouldn’t really work. We had a drink there after we played golf once and I felt under dressed. (Ryan: Male; 20-30; 9 years)

The nature of the golf club, and the levels of outside patronage, can devalue its role for this community and be a reason for the lack of community engagement. Some of the alternative, less tangible elements of the formal community structure can prove more useful to overall community building than the planned space of the golf club. The limited engagement with the golf course and golf club was not what was intended in the planning and development of the estate. The golf club has not necessarily become a focus for community identification and belonging but, on the other hand, the security guards did. Elements of the more formal or planned (expected) community mean very little in the residents lived experiences of community but some of the elements of community enacted through the private structure have created unexpected community – the intangible elements of community borne out of the private structure of the neighbourhood are important in making community very real for the residents of
Macquarie Links. As Figure 6.1 demonstrated, the attraction of community rated fairly low for the residents when compared with the security infrastructure and available amenities, but community has become a reality for many of the residents once residing in Macquarie Links. Thus, meanings of place-based community must be understood from the resident’s perspectives of the everyday spaces of urban community and social interaction and this demands ethnographic attention.

Research by Rosenblatt et al. (2008) suggests that some of the more affective aspects of community need to be considered by private developers as sometimes the infrastructure alone are insufficient. The notion of planning a community around a hub or centrepiece, such as a golf course or golf club, a planned form of social organisation is good when it works, but as Young and Willmott (1957) argue (see Chapter 3), urban planning needs to consider that simply constructing a community centre does not automatically create community, and that community formation requires something more than bricks and mortar. In the case of Macquarie Links, forms of social organisation are important, but some forms of social organisation are more important than others. For example, the community association for Macquarie Links appears to play a more significant role in social organisation for this community than does the golf course and golf club – it creates the unexpected community. Further to the need to consider some of the less tangible aspects of community development and formation, is that the hyper-exclusivity of the ‘club’ (paying additional fees to use community facilities) in the case of Macquarie Links promotes a broader role for the fostering of community formation within the estate, as residents can collectively negotiate tensions with the use of facilities within the private structure, which allows them to be involved in the nature of the neighbourhood and social life within.

The ideology of privatism has been largely successful with the majority of Australians as even the working class aspire to home ownership (see Chapter 3). Following from this success, one of the most striking findings of the research with residents in Macquarie Links is how unremarkably ordinary they consider their residential neighbourhood. While the residential landscape of Macquarie Links is fairly representative of contemporary middle class suburbia, the private governance structure of the residential neighbourhood is remarkable and was unknown to the contemporary Australian urban landscape until fairly recently. Additionally, the facilities and services
offered within Macquarie Links are not common throughout the majority of the Sydney metropolitan region (e.g. the golf course as the centrepiece of a private neighbourhood; see Figures 5.3 – 5.7 in Chapter 5).

Nevertheless, the informants from Macquarie Links regarded their residential environment as ordinary. At the same time as they identified their neighbourhoods’ ordinariness however, they also acknowledged the facilities and benefits of living in Macquarie Links.

Ah, people deem you as being wealthy, because you live here and I mean to some degree I suppose you’re somewhat affluent in the eyes of persons, I suppose, but I just see us being ordinary. (Karen: Female; 40-50; 2.5 years)

It’s just another suburb that just happens to have gates at the front, 24 hour security and a beautiful GC in the middle of it. You take all that away, it is just another suburb, with two storey homes. The land size is a little bit bigger but the quality of the estate is high and you know it’s a great place to live. (Harry: Male; 40-50; 3.5 years)

It’s just another place to live. No different. ... It’s just like any other area. That’s what I can’t understand, why the perceptions are as they are. ... Just ordinary, very ordinary. It’s just another suburb, probably with more amenities than most. (Anne: Female; 70-80; 1.5 years)

The residents’ perceptions of their residential environment as ordinary and unremarkable are indeed examples of the pervasiveness of the ideology of privatism (already successful in other areas of Australian social/economic life). However, this is exactly the sort of ‘danger’ of social segregation that Iris Young alerted us to (see Chapter 2). Young (1999) notes that the clustering of affinity groups, or the grouping together of the wealthier residents of the city, keeps the alternative living conditions and circumstances of the city more-or-less out of sight. The problem here, according to Young, is that the privileged can think of their environment as average or normal. The perception of the residents of Macquarie Links of their residential environment as normal and ordinary is indicative of such an attitude. As I argued in Chapter 5, the
media’s constructions of Macquarie Links have made the residents acutely aware of their surroundings and their overall place in the urban hierarchy (so to speak), but the generally pervasive ideology of privatism has allowed them to still consider their environment as a fairly ordinary residential neighbourhood – the collective solidarity in the face of negative criticisms and the collective belief in the private structure of the residential neighbourhood.

Further to the above discussion, the residents justified the development of and their residence in a PRE on the grounds that they fund and pay for their own services and facilities. According to one informant, the residents of Macquarie Links are ‘self-funded’, which translated to this form of private residential development being acceptable:

It’s not our fault if we’re here. ...we don’t need assistance from anybody, you know, we are self funded, we don’t care about anything else. ...if you want to succeed in life you have to work. There’s nothing free in this world. (Peter: Male; 50-60; 6 years)

The belief that PREs are acceptable and justifiable is very much an expression of the successful infiltration of a neoliberal or private ideology that has been so pervasive in Australian society in recent decades, which is coupled with the equally pervasive ideology of home ownership in Australia. These informants clearly reiterate the neoliberal rhetoric. Being ‘self-funded’ and providing for themselves is a result of the residents’ lack of faith in the public systems, in particular the local council. However, in the case of Macquarie Links, the user-pays, self-funded residential development relies on the collective and the communal to be successful and it is not purely a neoliberal environment (see Larner, 2003; McGuirk, 2005).

Many of the residents however, have desired this form of private governance due to their dissatisfaction with council services and maintenance generally. In response to the question of whether they would accept their local council controlling and maintaining this area (public control and maintenance), residents responded as follows:
Ah! Well then it would go to the dogs wouldn’t it! I don’t know what Campbelltown City Council are like, they do good on their gardens and that, but actually maintain... look councils in general they just don’t do good jobs [laughing], do they, let’s face it. They don’t really have council workers, they contract everything now, so everyone takes shortcuts and nothing’s maintained properly. (Karen: Female; 40-50; 2.5 years)

... As I say we own other properties in Campbelltown. I have gone down the streets and seen the footpaths – a foot and half high in grass, especially in summer time, Campbelltown is a snake area. We’ve had brown snakes out the front, we’ve had red belly blacks, so it is an issue and you ring the council and say look the footpaths overgrown, and their response is ‘it’s on our list’. (Kate: Female; 40-50; 3.5 years)

... if it was reverted back to council control, then you’re completely out of control in terms of the value moving forward. (Harry: Male; 40-50; 3.5 years)

As outlined in Chapter 2, one of the dominant explanations for the emergence of PREs in the urban studies literature is that the ‘weak-state’ has not provided adequately for its citizens through its withdrawal from civic affairs ‘forcing’ residents to provide for themselves (see also Kenna and Dunn, 2009). The failure or inability of local government to provide for citizens is a common theme in the literature on private PREs (Frantz, 2006; Scott et al., 2000). Indeed, the residents of PREs buy into private residential developments to have greater control over (privatise) these communal services (see Chapter 7). The residents of Macquarie Links expressed levels of dissatisfaction with local governments and thus, the desires to provide for themselves emphasise the success of a neoliberal ideology, which is complicated by the estates communal management. A lack of adequate resources and place-maintenance in metropolitan regions is actively part of the development of private residential estates. Further, in the case of Macquarie Links, the social relations, coupled with the private structure of the neighbourhood allow for ‘private communal’ control over the neighbourhood (and not the work of a purely individual or neoliberal subject). I return to a more in depth discussion of this issue in Chapter 7.
As discussed in Chapter 3, Thorns (1976) research found that the formation and sustenance of ideological communities, relies on threats to the ideological basis of the community, or externalities, to build social relations within that community. Thorns notes how the members of the community often rallied together to deter any threats to the order and stability of the community. Many of the residents I interviewed revealed some of the conflicts or incidents that were taking place in the community in response to questions about community disharmony or ‘conflicts’ more generally – essentially, those who were anti-ideology. As Angela noted:

I think some people have a bit of a problem with an estate like that, and it’s not just Macquarie Links, but there’s common areas and there’s common space so it doesn’t belong to you, it doesn’t belong to me, it belongs to everybody, and our common space starts at our front retaining walls or whatever and it includes the, what we call, the council strip in the front. There are people up there, and I have never known anyone else to do this, they fence off their little council strip so if you’re walking down the street, you get to their block of land and you have to go out onto the road, because they have these little chain fences across the road [council strip], apart from the fact that it’s illegal because someone could trip and break their neck... we have this ongoing thing where I go out and I pull it out and as soon as I’ve walked down the street he’s put it back in. There are people there who are obsessive about their properties and about their homes... I don’t know whether it stems from that but there are some people who don’t share common space, and to live somewhere like Macquarie Links you have to be able to share your space because it’s our space, it belongs to all of us, and if you can’t then you go and live on 100 acres out the back of Burke or somewhere where it doesn’t matter, no one’s going to walk on your front grass. So you know, some of those, to live in a community like that, you need to be able to share your space. (Angela: Female; 40-50; 3.5 years)

Space sharing appeared to be an issue for the resident identified in this response and much of this is related to the communal nature of the residential development. In some senses though, neighbourhood ‘dramas’ such as these can actually generate discussions and encourage community relations. Essentially, this discussion of being able to share ones space within a private residential development is a key point where the private or
privatism is not necessarily neoliberal or individual. As discussed in Chapter 2, neoliberal, private and individual ‘subjects’ are often coupled together and considered to be one in the same (see Larner, 2003). However, being ‘private’ in Macquarie Links also requires being communal. The individual is a threat to solidarity in the belief in the private structure of the neighbourhood that aids social and communal life. The private subject is different from the neoliberal subject.

Anything that threatens the nature or structure of the neighbourhood of Macquarie Links brings out community – the residents will fight for this community. This resonates with some of the literature on NIMBYISM or Resident Action Groups (Costello and Dunn, 1994), whereby residents of local areas join forces to combat any threat to their way of life and the maintenance of their neighbourhood. As Susan explained in an interview for this project:

Well I was going to say the other thing that brought the neighbourhood together was a letter that came out from the head of the Golf Club saying that we weren’t allowed to walk on the cart tracks of the Golf Course which caused a great deal of angst, and I wrote a very nice letter [laughs] straight to him, and got a very nice reply and he did phone back the next day and virtually said that when the houses were sold, Monarch said, you know it’s wonderful to live here you can walk on the Golf Course which meant that they’d invited people to walk on the Golf Course and if people have been invited to, then they are liable, if there’s an injury, they are liable for paying the thing, so they’ve now uninvited us and we’re not allowed to walk on it. So I said to them now that you’ve not invited us, that’s okay now is it, and that’s virtually what it was so people are back walking on the Golf Course but for a week or so people were walking around saying what did you think about that. So we talk to a lot more people that way. It’s a wonderful way to get to know people. That’s the way I would have made more friends in this estate, by a robbery and a letter telling me I wasn’t allowed to walk on the tracks. (Susan: Female; 60-70; 4 years)

Interestingly, some of these events and ‘disturbances’, or changes to the neighbourhood, can then generate a sense of community and communal purpose. Events that threaten
the structure and order of the neighbourhood can actually bring the community together and enhance social interaction (see Chapter 7 on unwanted groups and activities). Communities built on strong mutual bonds (ideology) can resolve their own conflicts, internally (see Thorns, 1976; Panelli and Welch, 2005). Hence, the structure of Macquarie Links allows the residents to address conflicts collectively, which strengthen social interaction and cohesion. Any threats to the way of life in Macquarie Links, or any threats from externalities, are managed by the residents themselves, through the structure of the neighbourhood – the community association. Further, the solidarity in response to negative stereotypes of Macquarie Links (introduced in Chapter 5) are also important in terms of managing community, and justifying and negotiating the lived realities of the private structure of the neighbourhood. Identifying dissonance and diversity opens up a space for community to exist in urban areas (see Panelli and Welch, 2005). Community can thus form and be sustained by difference and disagreement as well as commonalities (see Secomb, 2000).

As discussed in Chapter 1, one of the criticisms levelled at residents within PREs is that these spaces are essentially undemocratic and house socially and politically disconnected and disengaged citizens (see McGuirk and Dowling, 2007 for review of critiques). A key argument is that a healthy and flourishing public realm is crucial to the functioning of a liberal democracy, and private spaces such as gated residential neighbourhoods threaten democratic practices more broadly (see also Gleeson, 2006 for Australian critiques; see Fincher and Iveson, 2008 for discussion of unjust practices / diversities in cities). Much of the literature and commentary on PREs has taken a fairly negative view of these residential developments. Rather than suggesting a disengagement from politics or a withdrawal from public life, my research suggests that these PREs are actually producing a redefinition of citizenship, and that perhaps these places represent a new form of localised democracy – one premised on the intersection of the private and the communal.

Here, I draw on some of the literature that looks to the changes and transformations taking place in the city, and the associated transformations of local citizenship, particularly how we understand local citizenship and its lived realities (see Isin and Wood, 1999; Lash and Urry, 1994; Young, 1999). Residents of PREs, including those in Macquarie Links, have been described as an emerging and powerful segment of the
middle class (Chapter 2). Knox (1993) broadly described this ‘new’ middle class (of which PRE residents constitute one part), and their place in the emerging global city, about 15 years ago. According to Lash and Urry (1994), it is important when understanding the new classes and their spatial representations, that researchers also develop an understanding of how they now engage in urban politics. Much of the outer suburban areas of the Sydney metropolitan region were traditionally viewed as ‘working class battlers’ and part of the Australian Labor Party’s ‘heartland’ (Burchell, 2003; Latham, 2003; Powell, 1993). Isin and Wood (1999:97) provide a concise explanation of this stating that:

...advanced capitalism has engendered new types of social differentiation, new types of occupation and the formation of new groups and classes. Understanding these new forms of differentiation is key to the development of a new conception of citizenship.

It becomes apparent that we require a new understanding of citizenship in the city as related to new class identities and urban residential transformations. The argument can be made that the residents of PREs have an active engagement in local politics, just not the politics of the public realm. Further to this, as evident from the above discussion, many of these residents are actively engaged in a form of localised democracy – they have elected committees and councils, they have input into local neighbourhood development and they actively vote and have a voice in decision making concerning the neighbourhood. Certainly, the private structure of the neighbourhood of Macquarie Links allows for the active participation in communal decision making and neighbourhood developments, and an active role in community formation. It is a privatised community.

Community title has been termed the fourth tier of government and identifying it as such perhaps supports that claim (Community Builders NSW, 2007). McKenzie (1994) referred to the residents of the new private residential developments as ‘interested citizenship’ – those that are interested in participating in the long term development and management of their neighbourhood. This is perhaps reflective of the residents generally feeling either unable to participate, or that their participation does not matter in more public neighbourhoods, or via local municipal councils. A high level of
involvement in the management of the neighbourhood is indicative of the very communal way in which the private structure of Macquarie Links is negotiated and managed by the community of the neighbourhood. This discussion is continued in Chapter 7 where many residents identify a lack of control over their residential environments where they had resided prior to Macquarie Links, and how the structure of Macquarie Links allows for active engagement in the affairs of their neighbourhoods.

SOCIAL INTERACTIONS: THE REALITY OF COMMON VALUES, SOCIAL ORGANISATION, IDEOLOGY AND DIFFERENCES

It is well established that common values, (structured) social organisation (private structure) and ideology are important constituents of community (see Chapter 3). While common values, social organisation and ideology might be the basis of community, the question still remains as to whether these elements of community combined, actually work to increase levels of social interaction within neighbourhoods or whether they are more symbolic. Interviewees for my study were asked if they interact with their neighbours. Many of the residents appear to have very positive, everyday interactions within the estate. The collegiality through dinner parties and informal neighbourhood events seems to be high.

Uh huh, yeah, all the time. ...Tonight we're going to somebody's birthday, and my wife went back to Wales at Christmas time on her own and I spent 3 weeks dining out [at the neighbours' places]. My wife comes back and said you had a better time than I did. But yeah, it is a very sociable place. (Stephen: Male; 60-70; 5.5 years)

Yes [laughing]! We've been known to have a glass of wine out the front. Christmas on the front lawn with a bottle of wine! (Tracey: Female; 40-50; 4 years)

Yes, yes, yes, we have dinner. Last Saturday we had dinner next door, Bob's place, BBQ, a few neighbours. We had dinner here on 16th November and we had about 30 people in this big room, so we associate and communicate with
neighbours a lot more than what we did before. (Richard: Male; 50-60; 2.5 years)

They’re lovely people. … Couldn’t have met, honestly, lovelier people, and such an assortment. Like the two next door they’re teachers and they’ve got twin boys, the older people are very nice. People across the road they work all the time, but they’re just such really nice people. (Karen: Female; 40-50; 2.5 years)

My mum speaks to all the mums on our streets, goes and borrows sugar, have a chat – she goes I’m going down to Val’s for a coffee and walks down the street. (Ryan: Male; 20-30; 9 years)

The neighbours are friendly, they acknowledge that you exist, like in a lot of suburbs, you don’t even know who lives near you, but here we do, because you see them at meetings, you see them at functions, and sometimes they invite you over to their houses. Like here, when we celebrate birthdays we all get invited. (Peter: Male; 50-60; 6 years)

These interactions suggest a certain level of neighbourliness and communication and interaction amongst the residents. This presents a successful social and communal angle for the ‘club theory’ (see Chapter 2). Community, in the sense of neighbourhood based interactions and associations, is very real for these residents. This extends our understandings of private residential estates as serving economic and governance functions only. Importantly, these findings also demonstrate that privatism and community are not mutually exclusive but co-exist in the neighbourhood of Macquarie Links.

In Behind the Gates Setha Low (2003) provides one of the most comprehensive accounts of life within gated communities in North America to date. After conducting many in depth interviews with residents within the case study gated communities, Low concludes that ‘the jury is still out as to whether gated communities provide a greater sense of community than non-gated neighbourhoods’ (Low, 2003:70). Low’s findings suggest that many of the residents did not find the gated residential neighbourhoods very friendly nor did they feel a greater sense of community. The findings from the
Macquarie Links residents however suggest that there is a tangible sense of community in Macquarie Links and that residents are actually experiencing and creating community engagement and social interaction. As noted above, past community studies have found that a given group, usually women, are the core of social interactions (see Mee, 1994; Richards, 1990, 1994; Stevenson, 1999). In Macquarie Links, the community association – the formal structure of the community – is more-or-less the community core at the same time as being a mechanism for managing the private structure of the neighbourhood. The structure of the neighbourhood of Macquarie Links with its active community association encourages the development of high levels of neighbourhood social interaction.

There are evident everyday social interactions within Macquarie Links. Some of these interactions involve activities such as dog walking right through to car pooling and dinner parties. The formal Macquarie Links community association and neighbourhood committees have encouraged initial interactions and associations amongst neighbours as the residents get to know one another and meet people through neighbourhood meetings. The private structure of the residential estate gives the residents a sense of common purpose and common goals. The structured form of social organisation allows for order and stability within the residential neighbourhood, but also allows for stronger, or deeper, social relations to form whereby residents have BBQs, or hold social events together.

While the economic and political, or governance rationales behind the ‘club theory’ have been well rehearsed in the literature, the social or communal aspect of the ‘club’ are underrepresented and under researched in studies of PREs. As I argued in Chapter 2, clubs, by their very nature are a social scene and social space, yet this is an under recognised element of the ‘theory’ of the development of a residential club realm in urban areas. This gap is somewhat odd, given that social interaction and community building is exactly what ‘clubs’ (be they book clubs, sports clubs, or country clubs) are meant to generate and encourage – something which those managing the club wants. Further, community, according to Young (1990:300), is about ‘relationships of mutual identification, social closeness and comfort’, many of the things promised by ‘clubs’. Throughout the interviews with residents for my study a range of questions were asked to understand their level of social interaction and community engagement. The types of
interactions and their nature were teased out. As discussed in Chapter 2, Romig (2005:69), in line with Blakely and Snyder (1997), argues that ‘the sense of community in these master-planned spaces is ephemeral as it is based on common interests and income levels’. This suggests a need to understand how residents themselves understand community, how they manage community and what their lived experiences of community are. The findings from the research in Macquarie Links, somewhat challenges the views that community is merely a commodity within gated residential estates, and that it is something not quite real, or mythic. Indeed, community for Macquarie Links is both real and imagined – the communal is marketed and sold by the developers and real estate agents and through the private structure community is given meaning from the residents’ having the ability to manage and negotiate community.

There are possibly some further potentials of community schemes in terms of community building within urban areas that could be considered within urban planning and policy. I noted earlier that sometimes the more planned spaces of residential neighbourhoods such as a golf club or community centre do not automatically generate neighbourliness through their mere existence. It is often the unexpected community through the neighbourhood meetings and active involvement in neighbourhood affairs that appears to play a more important role in forming social relations in contemporary suburban neighbourhoods. There may be other important forms of development within neighbourhoods such as Macquarie Links, that also generate neighbourliness and social interactions. One particular informant spoke at length about some of the perceived shortcomings of the structure and design of the neighbourhood of Macquarie Links, especially in relation to harnessing this concept for better community development outcomes.

I often think, gosh, it could be a great concept if there was a theology behind this component of it that was actually about, you know, community living, and maybe all over 55s, or if there was some kind of thing that binds them other than beige aesthetics, like a community vegetable garden. There’s so much space here, there’s so much collection for water, like it’s 2 years old and they’re not environmentally friendly at all these houses, at all. There’s no water collection, nothing at all, and they’re freezing or they’re hot. It’s just bizarre, but it could be amazing. ... I don’t think the facilities are actually conducive to
anything in terms of forming relationships. It doesn't actually facilitate it, I think people have to go out and seek it, and then because the Golf Club is very dull, and I think it has a really high proportion of corporate memberships – they're actually people who come to the Golf Club from out of here. ... and people don't know how to do those sorts of things [community vegetable gardens]. They don't – they just think hippy, scary, warm fuzzy, too hard. And then there's also the whole group dynamics and a lot of things just have to naturally click to be community. Or over 55 or some other driving theme, or maybe its eco, maybe the developer says this is eco, our thing is eco, and how do we get eco as a group. There needs to be something more than we don't want strangers in our street. (Kathryn: Female; 30-40; 1 year)

What is interesting about this informant's discussion is the possibilities of these residential developments and the potential for positive outcomes. In an era where researchers and policy makers, as well as members of the general public, are increasingly concerned with the pressures of population growth on the environment, creating more communal, common interest residential developments could prove particularly fruitful. While there are many scholars, including myself, concerned with the socially divisive nature of these PREs, if harnessed in an effective manner there may be potentially useful and sustainable outcomes of this form of development. This style of development shares many of the philosophical underpinnings of 'co-housing', where residents voluntarily share communal lands for vegetable gardens whilst maintaining private home spaces (see Blunt and Dowling, 2006:262 for discussions of co-housing; Crabtree, 2005). Although, these sorts of initiatives probably require a policy response to the development of private residential estates, and as I explore in Chapter 8, there has generally been a policy silence on private residential developments.

CONCLUSION

For the residents of Macquarie Links there are some common threads: desires for communal lifestyle environments and amenities; desires for security; and common interests such as raising children and dog walking. The community association for Macquarie Links has allowed for a fairly structured form of social organisation within the neighbourhood. This social structure has encouraged neighbourhood interaction
and allowed for residents to get to know one another. An ideology of privatism certainly underpins the development of Macquarie Links and the residents’ belief in this structure is their strongest common bond. To return to the questions set out in Chapter 3 and the introductory paragraph to this Chapter, common values, social organisation and an ideological basis constitute community and in turn have generated a certain level of social interaction within Macquarie Links. The notion that developers build community infrastructure and then community will automatically follow is false. It is the people and their associations and interactions that make the place a community. The unexpected community means more than the expected and planned aspects of community. Indeed, levels of informal everyday community interactions are high in Macquarie Links and were evidently based around children and animals, and not necessarily gendered as has previously been found in community studies. Further, the golf course and the golf club were intended by the developer as a common space for the residents of Macquarie Links though it turned out that the golf club was not a common space for the residents and that neighbourhood meetings and committees, and the community association more broadly (the private structure) were the common tie that binds and organises the residents of Macquarie Links. Essentially, social interactions have been aided by the existence of a community association with the combination of both the private and community being integral to the development of Macquarie Links and to the formation, meaning, management and negotiation of community. The disjuncture between the unexpected and expected forms of community can be linked to the urban studies literature that sees community as merely a commodity in private residential estates (see Chapter 2) and as something not quite real, when in actual fact community has not been planned for appropriately and has not been well understood in reality. Academics, developers or planners understandings of community do not always fit with the local residents views of community. Thus it is important to ask what community means to the residents of the neighbourhood. For instance, Herbert Gans’ commitment to detailed ethnographic fieldwork with residents of urban neighbourhoods in the United States allowed for an understanding of the different types of communities that can form in urban areas and how these communities are understood and experienced by the residents. Thus, Gans overturned the idea that community has been and will be ‘lost’ in urban areas. An engagement with social life in Macquarie Links allowed for diverse understandings of community formation and function.
Understanding community as dynamic, complex and contradictory has assisted in understanding the complexities of the interactions and interfaces between the private structure of the neighbourhood of Macquarie Links, and of community. Further, grounded understandings of these concepts assisted in determining the lived realities of these key concepts in contemporary urban areas and specifically in Macquarie Links. Belief in the common structure and ideology of the neighbourhood, as well as internal disagreements and tensions with this structure and its management, have allowed for the formation of a new version of urban community. Privatism and community do not run parallel in this private residential estate – they are complexly intertwined. Chapter 7 demonstrates the intimacy of these two concepts.
COMMUNAL TACTICS: THE SECURITY AND PROTECTION OF PRIVATE RESIDENTIAL ESTATES

INTRODUCTION
Popular imaginings of private gated residential estates position them as heavily secured to combat fears of ‘rampant crime’ within cities and wider metropolitan regions. The reality of the security infrastructures within Macquarie Links will be explored in this Chapter. Following an initial discussion of the importance of gates and security to the residents of Macquarie Links, I move this Chapter beyond a simpler examination of the physical boundaries and private security patrols (and essentially beyond the findings of extant literature, for example Blakely and Snyder, 1997; Caldeira, 2000; Low, 2003), broadening the notion of security to one more encompassing – protection. Protection in this sense relates to the protection of the community and the protection the private nature of the residential development of Macquarie Links through private property. Here, I draw on the governance structure for the neighbourhood in my study and the functioning of this community to highlight how the restrictive covenants and management statement for this residential development (communal tactics) offer an ordered and protected residential environment, which appears more important than actual physical security. Protection is offered to the residents through their collective, careful negotiation of the private structure of the neighbourhood. To do this, I analyse the importance placed by the residents on the ability to protect their home, their investments and lifestyles, and to protect themselves from any ‘unwanted’ activities or groups. Ultimately, the discussion in this Chapter demonstrates that for the residents in my study, residing in a secure residential neighbourhood is less about the role and place of physical security and security services, and more to do with protection and community control that is available through the construction of the neighbourhood around neighbourhood committees and restrictive covenants – an outcome of the Community Schemes Legislation.
THE DESIRE FOR GATES, SECURITY AND PROTECTION

Most researchers of gated PREs are interested in understanding why people have moved into this type of residential neighbourhood (Blakely and Snyder, 1999; Caldeira, 2000; Low, 2003). There are a number of suggested motivations of residents that are driving the development of PREs. The foremost of these motivations is the residents’ desire for control, order and stability over their residential environment. Underlying this motivation, as noted by various urban scholars, is a perception of urban ‘disorder’ and a fear of ‘uncontrolled’ environments. It is security and stability of PREs that are thought to ensure order and control for residents who buy into these residential developments (Blakely and Snyder, 1997; Frantz, 2006:74; Giroir, 2006:151; Grant et al., 2004:72-76; Janoschka and Borsdorf, 2006:93; Jurgens and Landman, 2006; Lentz, 2006:217; McKenzie, 2006:90-91; Pow, 2007:819; Romig, 2005:68; Townshend, 2006:104). In the resident questionnaire for my study, the respondents were asked to identify three reasons why they were attracted to Macquarie Links. Initially, the emphasis of the development and the marketing for the estate was the international golf course which lies within the neighbourhood boundaries. As noted in Chapter 6, the available amenities within Macquarie Links, such as swimming pools and tennis courts, were a major attraction for the majority of the respondents (80%). Security also rated highly with the respondents, as near to eighty percent of respondents referenced the gates and/or security provided for this development as a main motivation for purchasing property in Macquarie Links (Resident Questionnaire, 2007).

In their comprehensive study of gated residential developments in North America, Blakely and Snyder (1997:126) reveal that security was a primary concern for those who bought into gated neighbourhoods and that seventy percent of the respondents indicated ‘security was a very important issue’ in their decision to move to a gated residential estate. When the questionnaire respondents of Macquarie Links were asked to describe the benefits of living in the estate, the desire for, and emphasis on, security was reiterated:

Security, bus link to station, facilities such as the pools, tennis courts, walkways, kept gardens. (MLE 6, 2007)

Security – restricted access to the estate, no cars ‘hooning’ past your house, less crime (break-ins). (MLE 45, 2007)

The emphasis on security continued in the responses in the resident questionnaire. Resident’s were asked to indicate the importance of certain features of the estates development. The fact that the entrance to the estate is gated (96%); the concierge at the gate knows everyone who passes through the estate (96%); and the estate has 24 hour security (90%), all rated as features of high importance to the residents (Resident Questionnaire, 2007).

Near to the end of the resident questionnaire, residents were asked if they would have a preference for living in a gated residential estate again in the future. Eighty two percent of respondents said yes. When asked to indicate why, the security aspect of such developments was again reiterated:

Security issue, feeling secured all the time. I am at peace that kids can go and walk safely within the estate. (MLE 26, 2007)

Because we like to have peace and quiet and feel safe in our home. We hate car hoons, drunken and destructive teenagers. We also hate noisy neighbours. (MLE 47, 2007)

Security infrastructure was evidently a significant factor in these resident’s decisions to purchase property in Macquarie Links. To understand this desire for security in more depth, both the questionnaires and the interviews sought information of the resident’s housing backgrounds and histories. Nearly ninety percent of questionnaire respondents moved from LGAs in south western Sydney. Forty percent moved from within the Campbelltown LGA (the LGA within which Macquarie Links Estate sits, see Chapter 1), and close to fifty percent moved from the neighbouring LGAs of Liverpool, Camden, Fairfield and Bankstown. The movement into this PRE is thus quite localised. These findings are not necessarily surprising and have been reported in other research into the
previous residential locations of residents moving into new residential developments in Sydney, Australia (Gwyther, 2005; Kenna, 2007). One of the local Members of Parliament (MPs), or ‘public officials’, in south western Sydney thinks this trend is:

...a fantastic thing. Isn’t it great to think that people have lived in this area for 20 years and now chose a different form of housing and are able to afford a different form of housing. ... you find that people are accessing a home and quality of lifestyle that they may not have been able to previously access in south-western Sydney and stay in south-western Sydney, and that’s important. (Local MP, 2007)

Many of the resident’s in Macquarie Links have well established social and family networks within the region. This is an important trend in relation to these new developments, as residents are clearly not ‘giving up’ on the south western Sydney region as has been assumed (e.g. ‘asylum seekers’, Gleeson, 2006). Many of the residents’ had the opportunity to upgrade to a different style of neighbourhood within the south-western Sydney region. This opportunity was presented to them in Macquarie Links. These findings suggest that the movement into a PRE is not quite so easily described as shutting out the rest of society as frequently suggested (see criticisms in Chapter 1 and 5), rather this finding suggests something which complicates our understandings of exclusion, exclusivity and separation.

Some recent commentary on secure residential developments in Sydney has criticised the residents’ desire for security in light of the reported decrease in criminal activity throughout Sydney in the last few years. Some suggest that these resident’s have a ‘fear’ of crime, but not necessarily lived experiences of crime (Gleeson, 2006; see also Caldeira, 2000; Low, 2003). The spatial distribution of certain criminal activities throughout Sydney has a bearing on the types of crime that residents experience in a given location. For the residents in south western Sydney crime is a motivation for choosing a gated residential location. While there has been a marked decrease in criminal activity throughout NSW over the past few years, there has been an increase of just over four percent in one of the sixteen major categories of crime, as defined by BOCSAR (Australian Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research, 2007) – Malicious damage to property – including homes, graffiti and damage of public places and physical
structures (e.g. walls, monuments, etc.). The areas of Sydney that recorded an increase in malicious damage to property were the south western Sydney LGAs of Canterbury, Bankstown, Fairfield, Liverpool, Campbelltown and Camden – the region within which most of the respondents from Macquarie Links previously resided. So while many argue that the ‘fear of crime’ is imagined, not necessarily experienced (Caldeira, 2000; Low, 2003; Gleeson, 2006) – and in large part it may well be true – for the resident’s in south west Sydney there has been an increase in some of the more annoying types of criminal activity. Interestingly, all of the questionnaire respondents (100%) agreed that Macquarie Links was safer than surrounding areas. In an interview, the Chairperson of the Macquarie Links Community Association also confirmed that ‘security is a high priority for them [the residents of Macquarie Links]’. In light of this, a lot of time was spent in the interviews teasing out the resident’s previous housing experiences, particularly in relation to security breaches, crime and changes over time to the nature and appearance of the previous neighbourhood or suburb.

The interviewees were questioned on crime and insecurity in their previous residential locations. Many recalled incidents of break-ins, theft or petty crime (damage to property, etc.).

... my boat got stolen off the front yard there. Yeah, it was just before Christmas, 17th of December, about 1999 or 2000. ... and we got broken into once there too, via the garage. We got robbed 3 times, we were at Carramar before, and we were renting a townhouse. We got robbed 3 times and that was the end of it. (Jack: Male; 40-50; 4 years)

At our old place we had our creepy crawly stolen out of the pool, we had our front hose reel stolen from the front of the house, we were down on holidays somewhere and our neighbour rang and said there was a prowler in our house and the police came and saw him. We had constant beer bottles on our property, we had a car chase and the car went across our corner and dug up big holes, and another time a motor cycle was being chased by police and he went across our lawn and he was going 100 miles an hour. ... Every time we went away we were worried someone was going to break into our house, which happened in 1983 and we had to spend a fortune on an alarm and stuff,
and then we've had all this stuff stolen from outside, pot plants, etc. ... People would come up to our corner, we had a lot of young people down the bottom, and they'd all do wheelies as they came out of our corner and they'd be spinning the car, occasionally cars would spin and you'd go oh. But we just put up with that for years. (Herbert: Male; 50-60; 6 months)

Plus party goers on Saturday night you know yahooing down the streets. (Joanne: Female; 50-60; 6 months)

These informants recalled criminal acts and general 'disturbances' that reduced the quality of their residential environment and generated feelings of insecurity.

According to Blakely and Snyder (1997:101) fear is something that is very real: 'whatever the actual threat of crime, fear in and of itself negatively affects families, neighbourhoods, and quality of life'. Coupled with the informants experiences of actual break-ins or criminal occurrences were the anxieties or ‘talk’ of crime that seemed to contribute to their feelings of insecurity.

[Therese: was there an increase in any sort of trouble?] Oh yes. I lived in an area that was pretty well removed from it so I didn't really experience it firsthand. ...I didn't feel unsafe in my own home. I will say that I felt ... put it this way, I was happier when my husband was home. When I was in the house on my own, we backed onto a reserve and you'd get kids gathering in the reserve and they'd drink and the bottles would come over the fence and there were people that had windows broken, who were broken into. So I was conscious of that issue, which I hadn't really been before. (Lesley: Female; 50-60; 2 years)

You know there was one night she [daughter who lives in Ingleburn a neighbouring suburb] rang me up hysterically at 2 o'clock, she's got sensor lights out the front, all the sensor lights had come on, she looked out the window and there was a guy trying the door knob, and you know these are not isolated incidences that are happening once every blue moon, they're happening every night, and every week. (Anne: Female; 70-80; 2 years)
The above responses are indicative of both a ‘talk of crime’ and lived experiences of crime. From the analysis of the household questionnaires and interviews, crime for the residents’ of Macquarie Links was both real and imagined in their previous residential location. Anthropologist Teresa Caldeira, who wrote the book City of Walls (2000), undertook a large study of gated communities in Brazil and other parts of South America. From the findings of her study Caldeira (2000) articulates the notion of the ‘talk of crime’ – the narratives and everyday conversations about crime that work to generate a wider anxiety about crime through the continual circulation and proliferation of discourses about crime that generate greater fear of disordered spaces. Coupled with this ‘talk of crime’ in Sydney is the continual circulation of wider moral panics, particularly centred around the activities and behaviours of young people, or specifically youth gangs, in Sydney and elsewhere in Australia (Poynting and Morgan, 2007). The four recent ‘riots’ in Sydney since 2004 has further reinforced this ‘panic’ or anxiety about groups of young people. Glassner (1999) also notes the contributions of media reports to the creation of a culture of fear and there is a general ‘fear of crime’ that is generated by the continual circulation of commentary on criminal activities.

Speaking on the situation in the United States, Setha Low (2008:47) notes how post-9/11 the Bush administration had ‘mobilised a discourse of insecurity’ and in urban centres, such as New York City, there has been an increased presence of ‘camouflaged soldiers carrying rifles at all transportation centres’. The political manipulation of terrorism and threat is generating fear and paranoia amongst the American population, according to Low (2008). These ‘fear and insecurity discourses’ (Low, 2008:47) have manifest within Australia as in many other nations. In particular, many urban centres in Australia are now patrolled by newly introduced ‘Public Order and Riot Squads’ following major ‘riots’ in Sydney throughout 2005, and early 2009, some racially motivated, and others borne out of economic circumstances (e.g. on public housing estates; see Lee, 2007). The circulation of moral panics, discourses of fear and insecurity, and images of urban unrest would have had an impact on the residents of Macquarie Links many of whom previously resided in south western Sydney, an area which has witnessed an increase in certain crimes and the scene of Sydney’s most intense ‘disturbances’ or ‘riots’ in the past few years. Low (2008:48) argues that one of the responses to the ‘production of insecurity’ has been ‘residential fortification,
including the building of gated communities. Interestingly, this ‘legitimates the practices of social exclusion, fortification and racialisation of space that mark current socio-spatial politics’ (Low, 2008:48). Essentially, the public discourses of crime, fear and insecurity that continue to circulate, encourage the protection of personal spaces, such as the home or neighbourhood from any perceived threat, as well as providing a useful marketing niche for private neighbourhoods (see Kenna and Dunn, 2009). Indeed, the marketing of PREs plays on many of these fears.

In addition to understanding the previous experiences of crime and insecurity, informants were questioned about the changes taking place in their previous neighbourhoods or suburbs. Many spoke of a deterioration in their previous residential environment and the changes taking place were generally viewed as negative, which lead to the desire for alternative, ordered, residential environments.

For a long time, Glen Alpine was the place to live. It’s not any more, and I think the value to Glen Alpine has deteriorated because you’ve got all these other areas that are coming up around that are, you know, newer – the homes might not be as big, or whatever, but they’re you know, in these planned estates. (Angela: Female; 40-50; 3.5 years)

I used to take Casper [dog] out in Ingleburn and I was always getting attacked by stray dogs. (Joanne: Female; 50-60; 6 months)

I worked in the area; I taught at Ingleburn High School, so you know, was I in fear of my life walking down the street of Ingleburn? No. But had the area changed? Yes. It had become, and I really don’t care whether this is recorded or not, but Ingleburn was the suburb between the suburbs of Macquarie Fields and Minto, both of whom had high public housing. When we moved in here, both of those estates already existed, but they were not a problem, but the sort of people that the Public Housing authority moved into those homes changed over a period of time. ... So that changed your sense of security within the neighbourhood. Not that I ever felt dreadfully insecure or anything like that but it certainly did change the nature of it, you know and you sort of got to the point where you’d drive around and see piles of rubbish on the sides of the
street, and these are things that you hadn’t had in Ingleburn prior. Vandalism increased, all over a period of time, the nice little community shopping centre that was Ingleburn changed in character to 23 hairdressers and 16 real estate agents and not much else. So you know we lost all of our little cafes and shops and things like that and the place started to get dirty. (Lesley: Female; 50-60; 2 years)

I lived in Ingleburn for 20 years. [Therese: wow, you must have seen some changes to this area over time then?] Unfortunately, yes. [Therese: Unfortunately, how so?] Well when we moved to Ingleburn, we did it because we really liked the area, it was a small village, it was pleasant, we actually shopped in the area for fresh fruit and vegetables and Chinese food, we’d actually come to the area to do that and we enjoyed living there. Um, the changes to the area never affected us a great deal, but the atmosphere in the village itself changed enormously. When we went down there, there was a green grocery market, fruit and veg market, we had lots of little craft stores, we had all sorts of things that were attractive – they’re no longer there. (Anne: Female; 70-80; 1.5 years)

A general deterioration in the quality of residential neighbourhoods over time and their desires for ordered environments seemed to have been a factor in the residents’ decisions to move, and their desires for ordered environments. It is now becoming acknowledged in the literature that urban change and urban fragmentation is generating feelings of insecurity (see Wu, 2005). Growing differentiation and fragmentation gives some urban residents a sense of disorder and a lack of control over their residential environments that then drives them towards privately governed residential estates where they will have order and control. For the residents of Macquarie Links changes in the nature of local environments such as shopping centres, a deterioration in the quality and maintenance of the neighbourhood through piles of rubbish, as well as some general incivilities such as dog walking incidents (the changing nature of the city), all contributed to the residents desire to reside in Macquarie Links. Many of the residents of Macquarie Links had previously experienced incidents of crime, or knew of incidences of criminal behaviour, however neighbourhood change (incivilities) and a declining public realm was the most
important ‘security’ issue for these residents, hence the residents are seeking greater order and stability – that which is sold to them in PREs.

THE REALITY OF GATES AND SECURITY

While a significant proportion of the research into PREs has focussed on understanding why residents desire to live in these residential developments, less attention has been afforded to the reality of the security infrastructure and its place in the lived experience of the estate. The actual experiences of crime within a gated estate are not well understood. Anthropologist Setha Low (2008:56) believes that ‘policing, video surveillance, gating, walls and guards do not work because they do not address the basis of what is an emotional reaction’. Similar to the unexpected community, there are also unexpected securities and protections in private residential estates. Here, Low refers to the fact that gates and security themselves cannot necessarily address fears of crime and cannot stop other incidences such as quality deterioration – the gates can only control certain activities. In the case of Macquarie Links, the gates and the levels of security do not stop criminal activities altogether. Many residents of Macquarie Links spoke of the acts of crime or vandalism that have occurred within the estate. Two specific events continually referred to were: the spate of petty crimes and a drug bust within the estate.

A couple of weeks ago there was [break ins], they think it was kids but we don't really know, again people having their doors unlocked, people walked in and just picked up mobile phones and wallets and stuff that were laying around, while people were home. (Angela: Female; 40-50; 3.5 years)

There was an incident here a few months ago in the villas where there was a petty break-in and petty theft or something. (George: Male; 40-50; 2.5 years)

It’s not very officious. Mostly during the day the gates are left open, closed at night. ...We've had some drug barons get arrested up here not very long ago. (Stephen: Male; 60-70; 5.5 years)
I think the most exciting incident was those two young girls and two boys having sex up here, the security caught them, in one of the new houses. They were residents of the estate. (Herbert: Male; 50-60; 6 months)

Many of these residents spoke of the smaller criminal activities taking place within Macquarie Links, and also of the tenuous nature of the security itself, particularly that the security is not entirely impenetrable.

Blakely and Snyder (1997:120) pose the question: do the barriers work? They acknowledge that the role of gates and barricades in reducing criminal incidents is largely unproven in research to date. Even in instances where crime has decreased since the development of a gated residential estate there is no real evidence of a correlation between these two events. Further, in Setha Low’s (2003:130-131) work on gated residential estates in North America, she concludes that there ‘is not a great deal of evidence that gates in fact deter criminal activity’. Likewise, in Australia, or in the case of Macquarie Links, there is no real measure of the success of gating residential space in relation to the actual incidents of crime.

While it is hard to ascertain the effectiveness of gating residential space in terms of reducing criminal activity, the level of criminal activity within Macquarie Links as identified by the residents is certainly well-below that of the surrounding suburbs in the Campbelltown LGA. The Local Government Area Crime Report for Campbelltown in 2007 showed that the LGA overall rated high in terms of assaults, robberies, break and enters, and malicious damage to property, in relation to other LGAs in NSW, of which there are 143 (see Table 7.1). One of the major concerns for the majority of residents when moving into Macquarie Links was to be removed from the petty crimes taking place within their previous residential locations or, as formally recognised, ‘Malicious Damage to Property’. Figure 7.1 below highlights the ‘hotspots’ where such criminal acts were taking place within the LGA, again bearing in mind that the surrounding suburbs are those where most of the current residents of Macquarie Links previously resided.
Table 7.1: Number of incidents recorded in the Campbelltown LGA, 24- and 60-month trend change and NSW ranking (2007) for the 17 major criminal offence types (Source: BOCSAR, 2007:11).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Offence Type</th>
<th>Jan-Dec 2007</th>
<th>Jan-Dec 2006</th>
<th>% Change over 24 months</th>
<th>60-month trend change</th>
<th>% Change over 60 months</th>
<th>NSW ranking</th>
<th>% Change 2007 LGA Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Murder</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-2%</td>
<td>Up</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Stable</td>
<td>-2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assault - domestic violence related</td>
<td>1,005</td>
<td>1,094</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>Up</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>Stable</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assault - non-domestic violence related</td>
<td>1,396</td>
<td>1,338</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>Up</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>Stable</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual offences</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>Up</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>Stable</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indecent assault, act of indecency, and other</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>Up</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>Stable</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robbery without a firearm</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>Up</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>Stable</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robbery with a firearm</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>Up</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>Stable</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Break and enter - non-dwelling</td>
<td>2,099</td>
<td>1,590</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>Up</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>Stable</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Break and enter - dwelling</td>
<td>4,399</td>
<td>2,372</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>Up</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>Stable</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motor vehicle theft</td>
<td>1,466</td>
<td>1,121</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>Down</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>Stable</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steal from motor vehicle</td>
<td>1,471</td>
<td>1,365</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>Up</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>Stable</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steal from retail store</td>
<td>1,499</td>
<td>1,499</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>Stable</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>Stable</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steal from dwelling</td>
<td>573</td>
<td>573</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>Stable</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>Stable</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steal from vehicle</td>
<td>542</td>
<td>542</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>Stable</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>Stable</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fraud</td>
<td>630</td>
<td>630</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>Stable</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>Stable</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Trend information is not calculated (or if trend is stable, or if trend has not been calculated.

** No annual percentage change is given if the trend is stable, or if trend has not been calculated.

Table note: The table above presents data on the number of incidents recorded in the Campbelltown LGA for the period from January to December 2007. The data includes information on murder, assault, sexual offences, indecent assault, robbery, break and enter, and theft, among other categories. The table also provides information on the percentage change in the number of incidents over 24 and 60 months, as well as the NSW ranking for the 17 major criminal offence types.

Source: BOCSAR, 2007:11.
Figure 7.1: Hotspot map for malicious damage to property incidents in Campbelltown LGA (Source: BOCSAR, 2007:33).
While these crime statistics represent the levels of criminal activity taking place within the Campbelltown LGA overall, and are significantly higher and more divers than the levels of crime and criminal acts taking place within Macquarie Links, the effectiveness of the gating is best understood by the residents' through their sense and perceptions of safety. This is the most detail we have on the reality of the security. As these residents explained:

There’s some very suss people that the gate people secure in. I think security works both ways. I think the security at the gate gives a perception of safety which I don’t think necessarily exists because it’s very easy to get over the side fences. ... I don’t think having a gate makes you anymore secure. (Susan: Female; 60-70; 4 years)

Just the ones that are cruising past looking for a bit of trouble, they keep them out, not the professionals. If they really wanted to get something, they could get in. (Joanne: Female; 50-60; 6 months)

During the day there’s also pensioner-ville up here who see everyone who comes in and out. Sorry, they’re bored out of their minds and there’s only so much golf you can play... Well they let everyone in, like how easy is it to get in here? I think it’s just show and tell. If you turned up looking like a hoodlum in an unregistered vehicle and you’re about to do a break and enter, as opposed to my friends who turn up in their Volvos with their dachshunds on their lap – come on in! (Kathryn: Female; 30-40; 1 year)

The residents present a picture of the gates and the security features of Macquarie Links as fairly flexible and not overly strict or stringent. Ultimately, this suggests that the gates and security do not really deter any criminal activities or disturbances. Further, these sentiments from the residents – a general acceptance of the flexible nature of the physical security for the neighbourhood – hint at the residents desires for other forms of security or protection, not simply the physical gating of the residential space. This apparent laxity with the actual security infrastructure suggests that the residents’ desires for security are more related to private control and exclusivity. The
The following section explores some such incidences that occurred within the boundaries of Macquarie Links.

**The Macquarie Links ‘Underbelly’

One of the bigger scandals or incidences to hit Macquarie Links was the drug bust that occurred in the estate in early 2007. The bust targeted an active drug ring in operation in south west Sydney over a number of years. Raids on properties occurred throughout south west Sydney with those in possession of drugs being taken into custody (*Daily Telegraph*, 2007 author unknown). One of the key drug labs itself appeared to be operating out of Macquarie Links, with one of the key actors in the ring being a resident of Macquarie Links. The residents recalled stories of the drug bust, guns and loud birds:

We’ve got the druggies inside the gates keeping nicely. I can tell you another family that the police have confiscated four guns from. (Susan: Female; 60-70; 4 years)

Yeah, we’ve got the monstrosity next door that’s semi built, well you wouldn’t know, did they tell you, have you heard the gossip about that one? In that big drug bust, it’s that one... It’s been seized, as far as I know, and she the wife, they live up in the villas. I don’t know much else I just know that... but they have to prove where the money came from. ...they were tracking him, the police, undercover; they were tracking him, following him, because he’s been in it for years. What do they call it, they rebirth cars and all of that. In with the rebels, rebirth cars, drugs, you know... [Therese: so they’re still around in the estate then?] Sshh. I reckon they’ve got hides thicker than rhinos. (Karen: Female; 40-50; 2.5 years)

Other side of the golf course there was a big drug raid, they were building it, and its proceeds of crime or something, we haven’t heard what’s happened in the court case. (Herbert: Male; 50-60; 6 months)

---

*Underbelly* was an Australian drama that aired during 2007 and explored the underground ‘gang-land war’ occurring within Melbourne, Australia over the period of a decade, with an emphasis on the illicit drug trade. The second series, which aired in early 2009, explores the underground drug scene in Sydney, Australia.
I think there was an amphetamine lab in here. Kind of makes sense though doesn't it, it's probably not a bad idea. They've probably been dobbed in or alternatively everybody knows everybody's business I'm not sure. (Kathryn: Female; 30-40; 1 year)

The drug bust and all the associated events was a fairly lengthy discussion point for many of the informants who were up to speed with all the latest ‘gossip’. Indeed, the drug bust was just that, gossip, and many of the residents were fairly relaxed about it happening within the neighbourhood and evidently quite good humoured about the events.

Related to the activities and scandals associated with the drug bust itself were some of the incidences that occurred within the neighbourhood with other residents of Macquarie Links who were ‘involved’ with those in the drug scene. A number of residents spoke of the wife of the man arrested on drug charges and her household pet. People did not want to speak out against some of the activities taking place within the estate:

They've got loud birds! You've heard that one? (Kathy: Female; 40-50; 6 months)

At our neighbourhood meeting last week people were complaining about the lady with the bird, because there's a parrot in the middle of all this that screams, and she's also a known, she's one of the druggies, and her husband's just out of jail so I'm not going to say anything, and there's no way anyone's going to push her into getting rid of the bird – well you just keep the bird love that's fine. (Susan: Female; 60-70; 4 years)

Many of residents did not speak out against the woman (and her bird) who is supposedly ‘married to the mob’ due to fear of being victimised, as had happened to the neighbouring resident of the ‘busted’ property. To my mind, this is quite a significant finding in relation to the importance of security guards and security services for this neighbourhood, as many of the residents were not particularly bothered by the some of
the insecure events taking place within the neighbourhood. Again, this acceptance of the laxity of the security infrastructures and mechanisms within the estate suggest that the core safety and securities within the estate are related to private communal control of the estate and, because in these examples, their property and their community was not threatened or vandalised and this is the type of crime that the residents were retreating from.

One resident did note however, that the drug bust generated a sense of community, encouraged talking amongst neighbours and brought them together.

There’s a fair few people that know about it. That was really good, that encouraged a huge amount of neighbourhood talking. The people who walk in the morning stand and gossip about it now – it’s great! I’ve met so many people since the drug bust! Because I was actually walking down the hill as the police were putting him in and I was like oh, what’s going on, so I walked back up the hill too instead of going my normal route! And that person, and the lady who lived next door to that person, was victimised terribly badly, you know I wouldn’t say anything about her because she ended up with soy sauce thrown on the windows of the house, and I didn’t know but if you throw soy sauce on windows and if you don’t get it off straight away it leaves a white film that’s almost impossible to remove, so she’s been soy sauced. The back lawn was torched one morning – she got up and the whole back lawn was burnt. She didn’t dob them in. (Susan: Female; 60-70; 4 years).

As soon as the voice recorder was switched off at the end of the interview, this particular informant hurried me outside her property where she pointed out all the drug-related houses and the properties where guns had been confiscated.

Illegal practices such as these can find a place within PREs, especially if they are more-or-less outside the surveillance of the law or making use of private security or private policing. This finding resonates somewhat with the recent studies of private gated residential developments in China, in that these private developments appear to be essentially ‘above the law’. In China, residents are enjoying the privacy and anonymity
that comes from residing in a gated estate (Giroir, 2006; Pow, 2007; Wu, 2005). These private households are able to avoid state controls (Pow, 2007). For example:

personal satellite television dishes that receive programs from Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan and even the USA, Russia and Europe are commonly found in the private homes in Shanghai's gated communities. ... This is despite state regulations that forbid the installation of personal satellite dishes at home. (Pow, 2007:282)

Further, in China there have been a number of difficulties with the enforcement of family planning, or one child only, policies in some gated developments. As research by Pow (2007:829) notes, the website of the Chinese Family Planning Association has several articles that highlight that ‘government officials and local residential committee members have been denied entry into some private gated communities’. These private residential developments can thus allow for the occurrence of illicit activities and generate largely autonomous residential spaces. The lived reality of the security and gates within Macquarie Links shows that crime does occur within the boundaries of the neighbourhood and that the security itself is quite tenuous and residents appear to be fairly accepting of the flexible nature of the security. This perhaps suggests something of broader importance in relation to this neighbourhood: protection.

Protection, through control, is a very important aspect of the development of private residential estates. As Blakely and Snyder (1997:125) note:

Some people are drawn to gates for prestige, image and status. Some are looking for privacy. Some want to privatize by buying and controlling their own common space and services. Some want a country club, an exclusive place to enjoy their favourite forms of recreation. Some want to protect themselves from crime and traffic. All want control – over their homes, their streets, their neighbourhoods. Through gates, guards, and walls, they seek this control in the ability to exclude outsiders from their territory.

Control, to Blakely and Snyder, in whatever form, is perceived of as an outcome of the physical security. The gates provide the control and order. Also, control through gating
is only assumed to control the entry of those unwanted (outside the residential development), and does not take into account the unwanted or undesirable activities within these neighbourhoods that have the potential to threaten order and stability of the neighbourhood. Nor does this perspective take into account other mechanisms through which PREs are being ‘protected’, such as private governance structures, restrictive covenants and community actions. With the introduction of private residential estates and new forms of governance, conceptualisation of control and protection need to be recast and expanded, as I explore in the following section.

**PROTECTING MACQUARIE LINKS**

The work of Evan McKenzie, a political scientist in the United States, has without doubt been some of the most influential work in research on the development of PREs to date. As discussed in Chapter 2, McKenzie’s book *Privatopia* (1994) charts the rise of privately governed residential neighbourhoods and homeowner associations, particularly in the United States, and is one of the seminal texts in the field today. *Privatopia*, along with some of McKenzie’s more recent work on private governance in California and Las Vegas (2006a, b), has been crucial in developing understandings of privately governed neighbourhoods as protected and controlled environments (often enforced by law), and not just as security developments. It is here that the role of community governance and restrictive covenants take a central place in the examination of the desires for privately governed gated residential estates. In Macquarie Links protection is regarded as more than physical security – it encompasses feelings of protection and control over one’s home and family, over one’s investment and lifestyle, and over the unwanted or undesired elements of the broader community residing outside the gates. Essentially, the governance structure of the community allows residents to feel protected and in control.

The physical security, offered in part by the fees paid to the community association and a result of the governance structure of the neighbourhood, gave many residents a greater feeling of protection over home and family. Many of the respondents spoke of the peace of mind they felt knowing there was security around and available to them. They were offered a sense of protection for their homes and their families.
We told them on Friday night that we were having a party, they drove past quite a few times, they came past just to check and they came to the door at one stage and just sort of said is everything okay... I just didn't want all these unexpected kids to come in. It also meant that there were no gatecrashers. (Angela: Female; 40-50; 3.5 years)

We were broken into at Mt Annan and that freaked us all out, especially our daughter, who was only 4 then, so this is really good. You do feel a lot more secure here. (Jennifer: Female; 40-50; 3 years)

I didn't feel unsafe when I lived in Hinchinbrook. Do you know what I mean, I don't feel unsafe in society! [Laughing] My husband aspired to live here ... he liked the safety because at the time, he had a 24 hour 7 day a week business so he sometimes wasn't home a lot at nights, you know. (Karen: Female; 40-50; 2.5 years)

The protection achieved here was through the knowledge that homes and families would be protected in Macquarie Links. According to Blakely and Snyder (1997:101), ‘it is natural and understandable that people want to do whatever they can to insulate themselves from threat and to relieve their fear’. Similarly, Low (2008) notes that secure developments such as Macquarie Links are in response to new emotions of home, specifically the need for peace, order and stability within the home, as wider urban society appears disordered and fragmented (see also literature in Chapter 2). These privately managed neighbourhoods offer greater peace of mind for families and hence improve the overall quality of life for the residents and their families.

Some PREs use security to enforce order and peace. Examples of such residential developments are increasingly found in urban China (see Giroir, 2006). Other private urban residential developments employ subtler techniques to ensure order, control and protection, such as governance mechanisms or restrictive covenants, or even design features and physical landscaping (see Rofe, 2006). Macquarie Links is designed in accordance with Community Schemes Legislations and around a community management statement (see Chapter 5). The management plan sets out the constitution for the neighbourhood and incorporates the design and maintenance
guidelines, often termed restrictive covenants. Restrictive covenants are in place to ensure the standard and quality of residential developments and have become increasingly popular with planners and developers. Restrictive covenants are quite common in regard to landscaping and design features of PREs (Gwyther, 2005; McGuirk and Dowling, 2007). In Macquarie Links, covenants are in place to ensure standards and amenity are maintained throughout and apply to housing (colour of roof tiles, letter boxes, size of driveway, colour of paint), as well as landscaping (types of plants, grass, fencing). Ensuring common designs and landscaping within Macquarie Links is a point at which private becomes communal and where the private structure is influenced by the community – the community makes the private work by enforcing restrictive covenants, and the private gives the community meaning and identity by creating order and stability. During the interview with the Chair of the MLCA, we discussed the level of restrictions on development:

Yeah there are [restrictions] and that’s all part of the 100 page management statement. ...There are some building covenants: you’ll notice there are no paling fences through here. That’s part of the contract. The grass you have to have one type of grass – same as the golf course. You have to have a light on the letter box. That’s all part of the management statement. But all that stuff I think is good stuff, it keeps things in uniformity.

All of the prescriptions for the Macquarie Links development were set out in the management statement for the residential development, which was drafted and decided upon by Monarch, the developer. These very restrictions however are communal in their nature rather than individual or even neoliberal. McKenzie (1994:30) notes how ‘decisions concerning the painting of houses, the planting of trees, and the building of fences ... the look and feel of communities, increasingly is predetermined by private developers who plan, build and restrict from the outset’. The developers have a considerable amount of control over the nature of PREs and the restrictions on the development. It is however, the executive committee and the wider Macquarie Links Community Association who are the enforcers of these restrictions. As part of the Community Lands Management Act (1989) a community association is formed to manage the day to day running of the community scheme (see Chapter 5). Ultimately, the residents have little control in the planning and design of the community scheme, but they do
have the control over the management of the scheme and the enforcement of particular rules, and with what effect. Changes can also be made to the management statement by the community association if desired.

These restrictive covenants on the development and design of Macquarie Links are thought to not only maintain quality and standards within the estate, but also maintain property values. Many of the residents were very aware of the nature of the covenants for Macquarie Links and the variety of restrictions on the development of the neighbourhood itself, as well as the implications for the development of their own properties. As these informants explained:

I think the other thing is making sure the estate maintains its standards; it’s not just a lot of promises that they give away – that they stick with the building standards, the size of houses, so the estate stays at a level. (Kathy: 40-50; 6 months)

I’m actually part of the building committee ...It’s very flexible but in some areas, we’re very stringent and strict, so you can’t build a little shack say for example, on a beautiful block of land, and houses have to be up to a certain standard. As you drive around you can see architecturally designed houses that vary in all shapes and sizes so the flexibility is there. (Richard: Male; 50-60; 2.5 years)

The committee actually has a sub-committee, which is the planning committee – all the plans, prior to going to council, have to go to the planning committee to be approved. Your landscaping has to be approved. There are certain plants which are forbidden, thank goodness, within this estate. [Therese: Like?] Cootamundra wattle is one of them. [Therese: [laughing] okay!] Thank god! If you’ve ever seen asthma and allergy sufferers near that wattle. (Kate: Female; 40-50; 3.5 years)

The residents however, were fairly supportive of the level of restrictions on the development, specifically because it ensures a certain standard is maintained throughout and this is thought to protect their investment. As noted in Chapter 3,
community has historically been thought to form out of elements of commonalities and sameness (see Gans, 1962; Thorns, 1976), and while privatism is thought to be in tension with the formation of community as it is considered too individual and neoliberal (see Chapters 1, 2 and 3), these very private structures and restrictions on the development of Macquarie Links are inherently communal, seeking to establish common designs, aesthetics and the like, as well as relying on the community (residents) of Macquarie Links to manage and control the private structure through restrictive covenants. The ‘subjects’ of privatism are very communal in their approach – they rely on the collective. Community and privatism are interdependent in the control and protection of PREs.

Apart from speaking about the actual realities of the planning committee and the restrictive covenants, many interviewees spoke of the importance of restrictive covenants in regard to the value of their properties and particularly in relation to maintaining and ensuring their investment.

Yeah, there’s a lot of restrictions on building, like you can’t just put car ports up or fences and you can’t do all those things to decrease the value. (Karen: Female; 40-50; 2.5 years)

Nothing worse than walking down the street and everyone’s gardens, except two are well looked after and then there’s two dirty things, I mean it effects the value of your property and all sorts of things. It’s a very personal sort of effect it has on everybody else in the street and I think you know to sort of have a rule that basically you can enforce if you wish, is not a bad thing. (Stephen: Male; 60-70; 5.5 years)

I think for a lot of people who’ve invested a lot of money in here, and you know, they want to ... protect their investment. (Angela: Informant 2; Female; 40-50; 3.5 years)

So here’s why I like gated estates... In an average suburb anywhere you park a rusty old sigma [car] on the property, it negates the value of the adjoining
properties, it reduces them. ... The bottom line is money value. (Kate: Female; 40-50; 3.5 years)

There were covenants on the types of housing and the standard of building so, you know this is a huge investment you make when you do these purchases, and so if you've got some guarantee on the quality of what's going to be next door to you, I think that's a major driver in the purchase decision. (Harry: Male; 40-50; 3.5 years)

The role of restrictive covenants in ensuring property values and maintaining ones investment has long been acknowledged as a key outcome of this form of residential governance. Of course, restrictive covenants do not necessarily maintain property values in reality, but the notion that restrictive covenants might maintain property values is nonetheless part of the discourse of PREs. According to McKenzie (1994), restrictive covenants are intended to protect property values and the promise of protected/secure property values through restrictive covenants is also commonly used as a marketing angle. Further, McKenzie (1994:122) likens PREs to corporations, in that they are dedicated to a narrow private purpose – ‘protection of property values’. From the earliest application of restrictive covenants to housing developments, these covenants have been considered a means of ensuring property values for those within private residential estates (see Ascher, 1929a, b). However, whilst PREs and restrictive covenants are assumed to have a private purpose and fit with the neoliberal agenda or ideology, these covenants are in fact a non-private means of property investment in PREs. Restrictive covenants represent a communal tactic to ensure that the private structure of the neighbourhood works to maintain property values and maintain a certain standard and appeal to the residential development.

There is limited data available on whether or not restrictive covenants do actually enhance or at least maintain property values, but the residents themselves certainly anticipate that their property values will be protected and maintained by residing within a neighbourhood like Macquarie Links. In a survey of over 600 gated residential developments in Arizona, Frantz (2000) found that residents are taking advantage of gating to stabilise their housing values and guarantee the provision of services, as the residents believed that they had the power to control the physical and social quality of
their neighbourhood and they could ensure that the neighbourhood would not drastically change over time, hence ensuring and protecting their investment. The CEO of Monarch Peter Icklow (the developer for Macquarie Links) has been quoted a number of times in newspaper articles suggesting that the property values within a private neighbourhood are higher than those in surrounding neighbourhoods and maintained with time, some even experiencing capital gains, with houses bought in 1997 for $395,000 sold for $850,000 in 2004 (Casella, 2004, *Daily Telegraph*). This was however, a high point for Sydney’s property market which would have an obvious impact on sale prices for homes within Macquarie Links, as much as anywhere. However, the link between gating, covenants and property values would be a hard thing to assess given there is a variety of externalities and the link between them is tenuous. Certainly, the idea of property values being maintained drives ‘neoliberal subjects’ or those seeking a user-pays system into a communal tactic, whereby these residents rely on each other, the community, to both maintain these values and the private neighbourhood itself.

Blakely and Snyder (1997:3) note that ‘gates and fences around our neighbourhoods represent more than simple physical barriers’ – gated PREs are manifestations of the ‘protection of privilege’ and of ‘the need for personal and community control of the environment’. The community has engaged in a means of ensuring that the standard and appearance of the neighbourhood is maintained. Essentially, the private residential structure does not work without community. In relation to privately governed neighbourhoods, McKenzie (1994:43) has termed this ‘participatory community’. Here, the private structure allows for the community to be actively involved, and participate in, the development and progress of the residential neighbourhood. The residents are actively involved in taking measures to ensure the protection of their residential environment. An example of this is a restriction of pamphlet and newspaper deliveries within the neighbourhood of Macquarie Links. The delivery of pamphlets, newspapers and junk mail is considered too messy and reduces the quality and amenity of the neighbourhood. Such materials are delivered to the gatehouse of the residential development and hence controlled.
Local papers at the gate and get one if you want so they’re not lying on the road, and they don’t let junk mail people in. You don’t have them flying all over the place. (Joanne: Female; 50-60; 6 months)

But we’re not allowed to have like pamphlet deliveries. I was going to say here you don’t see the papers all over the lawn in the suburbs and stuff, and it rains on them, and they stay there till they rot. You don’t tend to get that here, but then we’re not allowed to have any deliveries are we. (Karen: Female; 40-50; 2.5 years)

Restrictions on the activities of the neighbourhood such as these are decided upon by the community association. It is this level of participation that is linked quite strongly to the residents’ sense of community (see Chapter 6) and their involvement in an active localised democracy and decision making process. Again, the private structure relies on the community to be successful. McKenzie (1994:42) has coined the phrase ‘interested citizenship’ to relate to those residents who take an active interest in the nature of their residential environment and are proactively involved in decision making for the progression of the community over time. This notion of interested citizenship is largely related to the aforementioned notion of participatory citizenship whereby residents have a genuine interest in participating in the long term development of their residential environment. Private residential estates through their private governance structure allow for this level of communal involvement whilst at the same time the private structure relies on that communal involvement to be successful.

Admittedly, much of the focus of the protection afforded by private governance, and restrictive covenants, is on the protection of property values and the protection of investments. The place of some of the more intangible aspects of protection in relation to community governance and restrictive covenants are under acknowledged in the literature. The protection of elements of private residential developments such as aesthetics, lifestyles and the like, has not been fully considered. Further to the benefits perceived with respect to investment, many residents of Macquarie Links spoke also of seeking to protect their lifestyle and the associated benefits available to them in Macquarie Links. To these residents, the governance structure and restrictive
covenants would ensure the maintenance of their lifestyles and communal desires, as these informants noted:

There were people who did the wrong thing, who put great big antenna things in their back garden looking over somebody’s fence. I mean here was a rule that said you shouldn’t do that, and you shouldn’t do that. Why should you spoil someone else’s outlook. Why put an 8-foot diameter antenna in your back garden, so those sorts of things are good. People having houses that are sort of strange colours and stuff like that, I mean there are enough odd colours here as it is, but you know having some control over those sorts of things I think is a good thing. It helps the aesthetics of the place. (Stephen: Male; 60-70; 5.5 years)

Yeah. You have constraints on types of pergolas, etc. But I think it keeps the amenity going. (Ray: Male; 50-60; 4 years)

The fact that covenants ensure that a certain landscape, lifestyle and amenity are maintained for the residents is seen as a form of protection of the environment and a further protection of their investment. Informants were pleased that the aesthetic appeal of the neighbourhood would be maintained. The maintenance and protection of the estate’s aesthetics is also linked to the maintenance of property values as presentation of the property and the estate in general is an important factor in determining the value of a neighbourhood, but also has a deeper benefit regarding quality of life and quality of the neighbourhood, and general feelings of control over the residential environment.

Evidently for the residents of Macquarie Links security is the protection of privatism through community. Privatism however, does not easily conflate with neoliberalism or individualism. The communal tactics in place within the private structure of Macquarie Links, particularly the restrictive covenants and communal design features, are considerably contra neoliberalism and individualism. Privatism in this instance relies on community and communalism to be successful.
In searching for more ordered and protected residential environments the residents of Macquarie Links are quick to address any ‘problems’ or ‘unwanted’ behaviour. Of course, community has always had a fairly exclusive element in that community has always defined in and out groups (see Thorns, 1976; Chapter 3). The nature of the residential development and the structure of the neighbourhood committees means that residents are able to raise concerns with aspects of the development or ask for problems to be resolved ensuring the order and amenity of the neighbourhood is preserved, and essentially have considerable control over the residential environment.

The pool is the problem ... kids were getting up there and garbage was thrown in the pool and the BBQs, there’s 2 BBQs up there and they were costing money to keep repaired. I think it’s settled down a bit now, they’ve got CCTV back to the gatehouse on the pool area. ... I know they were having similar difficulties in the golf, in the community centre with parties on a weekend and a couple of the guys at our meetings had to go over and try and quieten them down. So what they did was put a $1000 bond on the room rental and that generally sorted that problem out. (John: Male; 60-70; 7 years)

Being able to ‘fix’ problems such as these within the neighbourhood presents itself as a way of controlling their residential environment and a way of ensuring it is protected from the unwanted. According to Blakely and Snyder (1997:99), controls such as these (e.g. CCTV) that are enforced through governance mechanisms, are a way of defending the residents ‘existing way of life’. Kurt Iveson’s work on the regulation of activities in public space in inner Perth, Western Australia, bears some resemblance to these actions occurring in Macquarie Links. Iveson (2007:148) notes that to secure a given (public) space for a particular form of sociability (usually the accepted form of sociability for the space), those thought to threaten that sociability are excluded. The consequences are that these activities and groups are then deemed ‘anti-social’ rather than part of the community mix (Iveson, 2007:149; see also Toon, 2000; White, 1996). The implementation of CCTV into an already secured and controlled community entertains the idea that residents within Macquarie Links seek to control and protect the residential environment from unwanted or undesirable behaviour within. As I noted in Chapter 3, community has always defined in- and out-groups and been homogenous, but identifying accepted forms of sociability within a community
suggests that there is a certain dynamism within the community of Macquarie Links and that community is not, nor does it have to be, consenting and homogenous. Fractures or cracks within community can aid community formation and identity (Secomb, 2000; Panelli and Welch, 2005). Community is thus dynamic, messy and at times contradictory. These differences and disagreements create and sustain community.

While some of the behaviours of young people within Macquarie Links are deemed to be out of place there too are those who reside in rental properties within Macquarie Links. The renters are perceived as having different standards and values and not quite ‘fitting in’ with the wider community. This is not an uncommon view on the place of renters in suburban neighbourhoods. Research on suburban neighbourhoods in Australia has shown that acceptance within a neighbourhood has often been granted through home ownership. Home ownership has been viewed as a ‘prerequisite for inclusion’ in a given neighbourhood or community (Stevenson, 1999:215; see also Richards, 1990). Not surprisingly then, renters within Macquarie Links were somewhat on the outer of this community based on some of these residents’ sentiments:

I think, like any apartment, you’d like higher owner / renter ratios, more owners less renters, but that’s anywhere you go, you’d like that owner / renter ratio higher because owners actually take more pride, that’s probably it. (Kathy: Female; 40-50; 6 months)

Renters tend not to look after things as much as people who own it. Got better things to do. (Stephen: Male; 60-70; 5.5 years)

When I first purchased in here, rent was zero, there were no renters, this was all owner-occupied. Now we are starting to get a much more increased percentage of renters. … you tend to get people who don’t adhere to the guidelines as strictly as an owner would – the attitude is, it’s not my property, I don’t care, it’s not mine. I’ll park my truck on the footpath if I want because it’s not mine – if I’m damaging it, no problem. So you tend to get that as well, we are starting to find that a little. (Kate: Female; 40-50; 3.5 years)
Our problem will be, and it's starting to appear now, we're getting more and more renters in here. [TK: is that a negative trend, do you think?] Yeah, because they don't own it, and I actually really wouldn't have expected that, not with the sort of rentals that they're paying up here, I thought you'd get people who would take pride in where they live, but that's not happening. [...] Just yesterday I finished a resident's information sheet that is going to be given to anyone that comes in to rent. ...the information sheet will also have, don't throw your cigarette butts over the balcony, and pick up after your dog. While we just had owners here we didn't have that sort of issue, but now we're starting to and I think that's ridiculous. I talk about cigarette butts and dogs, but I could keep going – garbage bins that go out and don't come back in, you know things like that, that just change the character of where you're living. (Lesley: Female; 50-60; 2 years)

These views of the home-owning residents within Macquarie Links towards the renters are demonstrative of the somewhat negative attitudes towards those in the rental properties held more broadly within Macquarie Links. Essentially, neighbourhood life, safety and order depend on certain conditions prevailing. In the case of Macquarie Links a certain tenure is required for the maintenance of order and stability (i.e. home ownership) – the home owners are important for protection and control while others, the renters, pose a threat to order and stability within the neighbourhood. The renters do not have a formal place in the governance structure of the neighbourhood as only home owners are able to be elected onto the neighbourhood committees. Disagreement between these groups within the neighbourhood gives meaning to the private structure and the community.

One of the interviewees for this research, Kathryn, was residing in a rental property. Kathryn had experienced some of the hostility first hand:

I get into trouble for my bins and that's about it. I get dirty letters. I don't know who's in charge of the body corporate but they don't like my bins, I'm tardy. ...No, it's stupid, but the side of the house – they expect me to carry the bins all the way down the stairs and have them in this courtyard so that when they're up on their balconies looking at their pristine golf course, and Macquarie Fields [Laughing],
because if they could they’d probably blow it up, they don’t like seeing my bin along the side. But the problem is that it’s all gravel so I can’t drag a wheeled bin through gravel, it’s just stupid, and I’m not leaving it in the garage it can just happily stay there. So they gave up that fight after a while. (Kathryn: Female; 30-40; 1 year)

Again, the residents find a way of dealing with or ‘fixing’ the unwanted. Further, this demonstrates that while community is often considered exclusive, community can also be messy, complex and often contradictory. The private structure of the residential neighbourhood however, assists the community in making sense of complexities and disagreements within the residential development – a coalescing of community and privatism. The residents can rally together to have their issues addressed usually through the neighbourhood committees of Macquarie Links (see McKenzie, 1994) – a stringent form of social organisation (see Chapter 6).

There are plans underway for a hotel development to be attached to the golf course in Macquarie Links. The developer, without consultation, proposed to grant hotel guests full access to the Macquarie Links estate, which was not well received. As these informants explained:

We don’t want them to access Macquarie Links, I mean visitors or whoever it is, otherwise it will be a security problem and it will be more cost to the residents. (Peter: Male; 50-60; 6 years)

[The hotel plans are currently] at the Land and Environment Court at the moment. Developer changed a lot without telling who it affects, and it really encroached on the common lands [within Macquarie Links]. (Jack: Male; 40-50; 4 years)

The developer had changed the plan to make one of the internal roads connect up to the hotel. ...And we’re here to have the security of our homes maintain and if you’re having 500 people just waltzing through, they’re going to be able to walk through, but if they walk through they’re only going to be able to take your telly, not your whole house. (Tracey: Female; 40-50; 4 years)
The residents are generally cognisant of changes taking place within the neighbourhood and this probably reflects the vested interest that many residents have in Macquarie Links. They can ensure that the standard is maintained. It is a further means of protecting their investment and controlling the nature of their residential environment (McKenzie, 1994). Again, order is to be maintained through the community committees.

Protection then, for a neighbourhood like Macquarie Links, implies something deeper than physical protection and security. The privately governed nature of the development with its restrictive covenants allows for a more encompassing protection of the residential environments. Ultimately, security in the case of Macquarie Links is about protection through privatism and community. The communal tactics enabled by the private structure bring community into privatism and privatism into community. There is an apparent mutual dependence between community and privatism in Macquarie Links. Further, the residents are able to manage their own private residential environment and neighbourhood by controlling the threats to order and stability (the unwanted or the undesirable – i.e. CCTV at the pool), as well as being able to ensure the standards and aesthetics of the neighbourhood are maintained over time to avoid any deterioration in quality or appearance. Residents are able to fix any problems that arise, suggesting that community excludes, but the pre-text to these suggested changes to the nature of the neighbourhood (i.e. CCTV) is the complex and contradictory nature of community. Community is not always consenting and homogenous, and community can occur through privatism and private structures.

CONCLUSION

Many of the respondents noted that they were attracted to Macquarie Links because it was a secure residential development, but security from crime appears to matter very little once residing in Macquarie Links. The need for security, however, appeared to differ between residents. Some had experienced actual criminal acts while others had developed more of a fear of crime and as a result felt the need for a greater level of security in their residential neighbourhood. Many of the actual or perceived problems of living in cities have impacted upon the desires of residents of Macquarie Links to
reside in a gated residential environment. An increase in experiences of urban insecurity and instability – piles of rubbish, graffiti, drunkenness, break-ins, thefts and petty crimes – as well as a lack of adequate policing, and general changes to the feel, aesthetics and nature of suburban areas in Sydney’s south west (changes in public housing and the like), have contributed to the creation of demand for private residential neighbourhoods like Macquarie Links. The gates and security infrastructure however, have not necessarily stopped all criminal activities with various petty crimes still occurring within Macquarie Links, as typified by a significant drug bust happening during 2007. It is hard to make an assessment as to whether or not the physical gating of a neighbourhood reduces criminal activities, but gated residential estates are not necessarily impenetrable as demonstrated through the criminal activities and the spate of petty crimes within Macquarie Links.

So what then are the residents really protecting? It lies deeper than the physical self, the family and the home. The residents of Macquarie Links, it appears, are seeking to protect their investment, the quality of the residential environment and their lifestyles. It is the restrictive covenants on the residential development that allow for this level of protection to appear a reality. The governance structure of the neighbourhood allows residents to address, deal with, or fix anything that threatens the perceived order and stability of the neighbourhood (for instance the parties at the pool). Governance and restrictive covenants have a key place in this neighbourhood and protection is sought more than for the physical gates – it is the control and protection over the neighbourhood that comes with the governance structure of the residential development and the restrictive covenants that are most desired by the residents of Macquarie Links. Security is ultimately about the protection of privatism through community. The communal tactics employed in the management of the estate secure the private structure – community and privatism rely on each other – and difference and disagreement is required to sustain the private structure of the neighbourhood and ensure order, protection and control. Conceptualising control as something more than exclusion through gating (as Blakely and Snyder, 1997 suggest) allows for a fuller understanding of the nature of social life, protection, privatism and community, as well as their workings, meanings and negotiations.
THE FUTURE VIABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY OF PRIVATE RESIDENTIAL ESTATES

INTRODUCTION
Given the infancy of community schemes and of research into community title residential developments in NSW there are a lot of unknowns about the realities of community schemes and of their future. Questions such as ‘who is responsible when...?’, and ‘what happens if...?’, appear to increasingly confront community associations. While a lot of these questions and concerns remain unanswered or unresolved, in this Chapter I draw on data from the research in Macquarie Links, and elsewhere, to document some of the emergent concerns with the long term economic viability of contemporary private residential developments, as well as the lack of transparency in the residents’ contractual arrangements when purchasing property within a PRE. I am cognisant of the fact that this Chapter diverges somewhat from the main argument of this dissertation, which has predominantly considered social life within Macquarie Links and the lived realities of the private structure and of community. However, many of these concerns to do with payment of community levies, as well as some of the broader concerns for planning and policy, are important to document here in the building of knowledge on the internal workings and lived experiences of community title residential developments in Sydney, and more broadly in metropolitan Australia. Many of the negotiations between public and private, and residents and local municipal councils that are discussed in this Chapter, provide information on the nature of community formation and of communal negotiations of the public and private.

CONSTRUCTING UNSUSTAINABLE NEIGHBOURHOODS?
One of the key concerns emerging in the academic literature is related to the long-term economic sustainability (viability) of private residential estates in Australia (see Goodman and Douglass, 2008). Given that the entire residential estate for Macquarie Links is private, the residents own, and essentially have to maintain, everything within the bounds of the development. All costs for maintenance, general upkeep and
infrastructure requirements, among other things, are borne by the residents (see Chapter 5 on construction and development of a PRE). Similar to concerns of the academic literature, the Chair of the MLCA expressed concerns regarding the longevity of the development, and stated:

One of the issues here is because we have a gate house with private roads, we have to maintain the roads as well, so when this thing needs re-bitchumening, it’s going to be our cost, and it’s just not sustainable. ... Eventually, there’ll be a huge re-bitchumening job, a million bucks, and we won’t have the money. And that’s the bit that worries me. (Chair MLCA, 2007)

The Chair continued ‘even now when we patch cracks, you know, it’s three grand a day just to get the bitchumening guy in and we probably have 4 days of that a year’. Further the Chair of the MLCA noted the expense of other big infrastructure, aside from the roads, such as electricity: ‘if we lose a substation here, $100,000, we have to pay. We own the substation’ (Chair, MLCA, 2007). Here the Chair of the MLCA is talking through some of the long-term costs that are borne by the residents living in this intensely private residential development.

As with Macquarie Links, the research commissioned by the UDIA (2008) notes that the costs of maintaining infrastructure (some publicly accessible) was raised by community associations and local municipal councils for some of the more established case study developments in their study, for example Liberty Grove and Balmain Cove in Sydney’s inner west. The UDIA notes that the costs of maintaining infrastructure is likely to become a greater issue with time, particularly five or ten years into the development when ‘infrastructure requires re-investment or upgrading’ (2008:14). As yet, the community schemes legislation does not require forward planning for expenditure on community infrastructure or projected expenses over time, such as planning for a ten year sinking fund, as is required under strata title legislation effective in NSW in mid-2009 (UDIA, 2008). As the UDIA states, this issue needs to be addressed (2008).

Residents were cognisant of their level of financial responsibility for the major infrastructure within Macquarie Links.
...if something breaks on the road, we repair, it's not the council. You can see a lot of cracks. (Peter: Male; 50-60; 6 years)

The only thing that may be a problem is what if we have a major burst main or, that, I think is the community here look after that. Like the water board don't come in and say, oh you've got broken main we'll fix it for you. It's, Macquarie Links, you've got a broken main so fix it and I would think that the estate management would have contingency funds for that sort of thing, but it's fairly new so you wouldn't really expect too much to happen, but that is a possibility. So major things like a road starts to crack up and all, what else like a flood, because we're pretty high up and all that sort of thing, but that sort of thing would be a bit of an unknown. (George: Male; 40-50; 2.5 years)

It [Macquarie Links] has nothing to do with council. We do not have council changing our street lights or fixing our potholes or our curb and gutter – all of that is maintained by community title. (Kate: Female; 40-50; 3.5 years)

All the infrastructure and roads, street lighting, all of that, it's all ours and an asset of the estate and we have to maintain it. (Harry: Male; 40-50; 3.5 years)

These residents articulated the various maintenance requirements for the Macquarie Links development, particularly the costs borne by the residents. This is indicative of the residents' awareness of their financial responsibilities in regard to the development of the residential estate. Further, there is a hint of pride in residents' acknowledgement that they pay for their own services and infrastructure through community levies. The residents appear fearful yet proud.

When interviewing the chairperson of the MLCA I asked if residents could expect increases in their community levies overtime to off-set some of these expected, yet considerable, costs. The Chair responded: ‘basically we're budgeting for a 13% increase, and I think that will be every year for the next 3 years. And I think that will pretty well be the norm [continual increases in levies]’. In terms of community levies, I probed the Chair of the MLCA about residents' knowledge of community fees prior to purchasing
property, as well as their knowledge of potential levy increase, to which the Chair responded:

When you come in you're not aware of all these things, you know the developer says the outgoings are roughly, say when we bought here probably $300 a quarter, now they're $700. The people in ‘The Peak’, they were told, they've just increased their levies in this high rise, by 80%, so people buy in there, you're talking $600 a quarter to $1200 or something. [Therese: Some people have said to me they moved in, weren't fully aware, they knew they were paying levies, but of what they were going to be...] I don't think anyone knew what it was going to be.

This discussion points to a lack of transparency in the contractual arrangements that residents sign when purchasing property within a residential development under a community title scheme. The residents’ responsibility in the payment of community levies is not overtly explained or marketed in the selling of PREs. This lack of transparency has also been noted in research in New Zealand and Britain (Blandy et al., 2006b; Blandy and Lister, 2005). In many cases, the lack of transparency left residents unaware of their responsibilities, both financially and otherwise (i.e. managing the estate and the assets).

A number of problems with privately governed residential developments are beginning to be identified by planners, developers and academics. The vast majority of identified problems relate to the severity of the rules and regulations governing life in PREs. Such problems relate to the lack of transparency displayed in the contract up-front when purchasing property, conflicts of interest about aspects of the development or changes to individual properties, and the generally tedious nature of these contractual arrangements (Blandy et al., 2006b; Foldvary, 2006; McKenzie, 2006a, b; Romig, 2005). Complementary to the above discussion, many of the informants spoke of the limited knowledge they had of the real costs of the community fees for living in Macquarie Links, as well as the unexpected fee increases. There was a general consensus about a lack of transparency regarding community levies when purchasing property in Macquarie Links. As these residents noted:
… we were conned a little bit about security because they said your costs wouldn’t be more than $100 a quarter but it’s not, it’s $500. That’s how much we pay now. (Peter: Male; 50-60; 6 years)

Initially the real estate guy told me, oh it’s only $15 a week, $20 bucks a week. I should have researched it, but it’s more like $50. (George: Male; 40-50; 2.5 years)

… we had our meeting and everyone was all upset, see Monarch set the fees at $1000 a quarter [for the Peak Apartments] and then after we’d been going for 12 months we realised that was ridiculous, we weren’t covering the cost. (Herbert: Male; 50-60; 6 months)

… we pay a hell of a lot, and no we didn’t expect to pay that amount before we moved in so that’s become quite an issue too, but that was thanks to the strata management company that well and truly underestimated what fees were required to run places like this. (Lesley: Female; 50-60; 2 years)

The lack of transparency and limited knowledge about the real costs of living in Macquarie Links points to possible threats to the development and longevity of PREDs. Limited transparency, of various forms and dimensions, continues to be a problem that concerns those researching private residential estates both in Australia and internationally (Blandy et al., 2006b; Foldvary, 2006; Goodman and Douglas, 2008; McKenzie, 2006a, b). This clearly needs to be addressed in the buying and selling of property in private residential estates primarily because these financial requirements are not overtly stated in the marketing of private residential developments.

While there appeared to be a general lack of transparency for the majority of informants relating to the community levies, for some residents, the costs of living were unknown and became too cumbersome almost instantly. The UDIA (2008) cautions about the need to ensure costs of infrastructure maintenance and community fees more broadly matched the income grouping of the residents buying into the community title developments. As a result of the limited knowledge of the real costs of living in
Macquarie Links, there was a degree of movement in and out of the estate as these residents identified:

Um, that’s a mortgagee in possession, and the one after that’s been a mortgagee in possession and the one for sale across the road is a mortgagee in possession.

(Susan: Female; 60-70; 4 years)

[There was an] initial turnover of people once they realised they might not be able to afford it, but once they’re in, they’re in for the long haul. They don’t have financial problems, they can pay the strata fees and everything’s looking lovely.

(Jack: Male; 40-50; 4 years)

The residents’ identification of the financial hardship that is being experienced within the residential estate further exemplifies the lack of affordability of private residential developments and the dangers of the lack of transparency. Residents purchasing property within these residential developments need to be aware of the actual costs of these developments. In this vein, Webster and Glasze (2006:223) note that ‘once individuals discover just how costly it is in real terms ... then popularity may wane’ (see also McKenzie, 2006a). Alternatively, these residential developments could become more exclusionary and more forcefully segregate the urban landscape along class lines.

Until the development is complete, the developer (Monarch) still has some control over the development, and of course, a vested interest. At the time of the interviews, the developer still had ten percent of the unit entitlements for the development⁷, and thus ten percent of the vote, but before selling the golf course the developer had fifty percent of the vote (Chair, MLCA, 2007):

[Therese: You’re getting a bit more control now then?] Yeah, we’re controlling our own destiny. And really that’s what it’s going to come down to, the people will have to make some choices down the track, like can we afford a bus, can we afford 24 hour security. They’re going to have to make that choice. Or if they want it then they’ll have to pay for it.

⁷ Monarch has since withdrawn from the Macquarie Links development and the community now governs itself.
Essentially, what the Chair of the MLCA considered to be the outcome for this development is that 'you'll either pay the privilege of living here or the gate will go and these roads will revert back to just being a public road' (2007). Of course, an important consideration under this scenario is what will happen to community if the private structure is gradually dismantled. Longitudinal studies of the negotiations, management and interactions within private residential estates should focus on any potential changes in the private structure of the neighbourhood and the likely impacts on community and social life. It will be particularly interesting for researchers to understand the nature of the negotiations that may take place regarding changes to the private structure. For example, resident’s may volunteer to self-monitor a gate house if security if too expensive.

When private residential developments are established and infrastructure is for the private use of residents it automatically means that all costs for maintenance of urban infrastructure are paid for by the residents association. As noted earlier, maintenance is set to get more costly with time as repairs and replacements are required within the bounds of the neighbourhood, and the costs of living in private residential estates will likely continue to rise (see Le Goix, 2006). There are alternative governance arrangements that are being trialled by local councils in Australian cities that could generate a more sustainable residential development long-term. These alternatives are essentially non-gated to allow for public roads and thus public expenditure. As the Chair of the MLCA (2007) noted:

I know Camden council was looking at a couple with Medallist [private development company] and they’re actually going to keep the roads, which makes more sense and then the people will look after their parks and pools and tennis courts and stuff like that. And that’s probably achievable … but then they’re saying, what happens if a truck comes on our road, drops oil, it runs down the drain onto the golf course and destroys the green – who’s liable? … But see, they [council] are saying to the developer you go build the roads, we don’t want to do it, it costs too much, you build it to our standard and our engineer will sign off on it and then there'll be some sort of warranty season, you maintain it for a period and then we'll take the asset.
This option presented above is potentially a more sustainable option for residents of community title developments, in an economic sense anyhow, to avoid placing added stress on the ‘public’ system if costs become too steep for residents to afford (see Goodman and Douglas, 2008; and UDIA 2008 for further examples of public and private ownership arrangements in private residential developments).

There has been an evident lack of transparency for many of the residents in the fee requirements for the maintenance of the estate. A further area where residents have identified a lack of transparency is in the structure of the neighbourhood and the severities of the rules and restrictive covenants that govern life within Macquarie Links. A number of the interview informants discussed some of the problems with the structure of the neighbourhood:

When we first moved in this garden here was, the lawn went out further, and then there was a timber retaining wall, you know those pine logs, but within a couple of months of being here we got a letter from the developers solicitors saying that we were in breach and that the copper logs were not allowed and neither was the wooden fence we have there, and we were asked to attend an arbitration meeting to solve the problem, which we knew nothing about. (John: Male; 60-70; 7 years)

You can’t have any other fence than wooden fence, that’s one of the conditions when you build. ... Even the driveway, you can have, most of the things here have 2 garages, but 2 cars sorry, and the entrance to your garage has to be 3.6m, if you, your concrete can’t be more than that. There are a lot of people who did more, and they had to cut it – they went to court and they had to pay the costs of cutting it. It has to be according to the plan. (Peter: Male; 50-60; 6 years)

There have been issues and it has been addressed with a lot of the local real estate agents, selling land, now they haven’t told the people that when you purchase land on any Community Title development, even if you do not build for 10 years, you must pay those levies, even on a vacant block of land. People aren't being told that. We've had people go to court – they've been taken to...
court because they’ve owed levies and said well my real estate agent said I didn’t have to pay until we build, and we’ve said no – the moment you signed the contract to purchase the block of land in a Community Title development, you must pay those levies, even if you never build. Even if you hold it for 5 years and sell it, during those times, you must pay and if you don’t, a caveat can be taken out against your block of land, which is what’s happened over there. (Kate: Female; 40-50; 3.5 years)

For these residents the lack of accurate information was most strongly experienced in regard to the management statement for the development and the restrictive covenants that are imposed on the neighbourhood. Recent research in Victoria, Australia consulted with local government planners regarding the possibility for conflicts and any reporting of such incidences so far. Some of the documented conflicts that arose after the establishment of the residential estates included issues related to ownership and maintenance of neighbourhood property (questioning the role of local council), as well as issues relating to the management of assets within a neighbourhood and the costs of maintaining such assets (Goodman and Douglas, 2008; see also Chapter 9). However, the internal management of the neighbourhood’s private structure is important for the formation of community (see Chapter 6). Certainly, these tensions between neighbours also suggest that community is at times complex and fractured, and not necessarily consenting as some of the residents work against the private structure and communal tactics that intend to protect the neighbourhood. This dissonance seems to aid community relations, at least in this context.

As the Chair of the MLCA noted above the restrictions imposed ensure the uniformity and amenity of the place, and that is partly the initial attractiveness of this form of residential development. So while there are complaints, many of the residents are happy to comply. As these informants noted:

I think too, we all want the same thing. We’re all proud of living here and we like the way that we maintain the place, and you don’t mind paying the strata fees for what you get. (Jack: Male; 40-50; 4 years)
I think the majority of people, when we had the AGM, majority of people don’t mind paying the levy providing the estate looks good and is maintained to a high quality. (Richard: Male; 50-60; 2.5 years)

Many of the residents all expressed concerns about the nature of the management statement and stringent guidelines for development, but ultimately said they were happy that the structure is in place to ensure that the standard of the neighbourhood is maintained.

Research on the legalities of private residential developments, particularly in the United States (McKenzie, 1994; 2006a, b) and the UK (Blandy et al., 2006b) has highlighted that many residents find that there is a lack of transparency in the contracts they sign when purchasing properties within these estates and that there are quite a considerable number of court cases taking place due to residents being in breach of the development’s by-laws. In the Australian context, a thorough examination of the legalities of these developments and of the legal proceedings following those who are found to be in breach of the covenants or bylaws for the development would make a significant contribution to the research into the socio-legal implications of private communities. The extent and severity of some of the legal implications, and the legal costs associated, are largely unknown in Australia, though some initial scoping of this issue in Victoria, Australia, is currently underway (see Goodman and Douglas, 2008).

FAILURE OF PRIVATE RESIDENTIAL ESTATES: CAN THE LOCAL MUNICIPAL COUNCILS PICK UP THE PIECES?

The question as posed by Brunn and Frantz (2006:3) remains as to whether neighbourhoods can revert back to a ‘public’ structure if needed? And of course, to follow this, at what cost to the public purse? The issue is whether it is plausible for local governments to take over the responsibility of the private neighbourhoods within their municipality should the institutional arrangements fail. Following on with the discussion about the uncertain economic viability of this form of urban residential development, the Chair of the MLCA (2007) noted that ‘time will tell whether the community ends up with it anyway. It will be interesting to come back … in 15 years time’. In some places, reverting back to a public structure might perhaps be more
readily done than others, depending on the extent of PRE development in a given local municipality.

Some of the residents of Macquarie Links have approached council and sought local council rate reductions. However, the likelihood of rate reductions is low, given it requires a change of legislation. The UDIA (2008:11) explains:

In NSW, the provision of rate reductions to community associations would require a change to the *Local Government Act (1993)*. While s493 of the Act states that the categories for ordinary rates (including the residential category) can, at council’s discretion be divided into sub-categories, this is only possible in accordance with s529 of the Act, which states that a sub-category of the “residential” category can only be determined “according to whether the land is rural residential land or is within a centre of population”. This means that it would not be possible to determine a sub-category for community title land without a change to the *Local Government Act* which would have to be passed by both the lower and the upper houses of State parliament. A large lobby group would be required to support this change. Further, the option of having special rates for community schemes would not enable the provision of rate reductions under the current system as special rates are levied *in addition to* the base rate. Rate rebates, however, may be a possibility.

The Urban Development Institute of Australia has essentially ruled out any possibility of rate reductions for residents in private neighbourhoods due to the nature of local government legislation in NSW. In their research the UDIA did not uncover any examples of local rebates occurring to residents of community title developments in NSW, but the local council in Victoria responsible for the Sanctuary Lakes development provided rebates of $171.70 per rateable property for 2007/2008 (Goodman and Douglass, 2008), with the figure being ‘equal to that which would normally be spent by Council in providing public works and services within Sanctuary Lakes to the standard that Council applies across the municipality’ (UDIA, 2008:12; see also Wyndham City Council 2007:31, quoted in UDIA, 2008). However, as Goodman and Douglas (2008:525) argue, while this outcome might be a good thing for the residents within the private residential development, it ‘increases the extent to which the estate
has removed itself from its surrounding community’. It is precisely this kind of ‘financial trade-off’ that could ‘exacerbate the sense of exclusivity and separation from other residents of the municipality’ (Goodman and Douglas, 2008:531). In regard to the development of Macquarie Links and the residents seeking rate reductions, one of the local MPs said it was something he would never support because:

... the parks inside Macquarie Links are maintained by the Macquarie Links community association and that is the massive difference, and there’s no rate reduction for them for that. So their rates, like my rates and everyone else’s rates contribute to every other park in the city, and they pay very expensive rates, and I have received representations that either council should do more in the area in terms of maintenance or their rates should be lowered, and I don’t support either of those because they have to pay for, like everyone else, for the common good and it’s up to people like me to ensure that people see value in paying for the common good. (Local MP, 2007)

In NSW, or at least in the case of Macquarie Links, there do not appear to be too many overt supporters of possible rate rebates for the residents of Macquarie Links. This may be a result of the perceived risks of these developments such as growing social division and the antipathetic media attention afforded to the neighbourhood of Macquarie Links. The residents’ requests for rate reductions are, however, an expression of community solidarity in the face of the (external) threats to the viability of the private neighbourhood (see Chapters 3 and 5). Rather than struggling financially to pay fees (community and local council), rate reductions or rebates are a way of ensuring they can collectively protect the private structure and functioning of the neighbourhood and invest further in Macquarie Links.

Discussions of rate reductions or rebates with regard to the Macquarie Links development is likely in the near future, and are already underway to a certain extent. The residents of Macquarie Links still pay full council rates, with many seeking justification for the full payment and wanting rate reductions or more council services within the closed neighbourhood.
The management took the council to court over it, because we pay the equivalent of 2 lots of rates and we maintain our own roads, we do all our own stuff, all services, parks, and they said, well we use the roads in the Campbelltown district so that’s why we have to pay rates, so you know, what can you do? (Tracey: Female; 40-50; 4 years)

So we are in negotiations with them right now [to either do more or cut rates]. (Herbet: Male; 50-60; 2.5 years)

We pay double – I pay just over $2000 in levies and I pay $2000 in rates and I’m not getting any value for my money from the rates. The council says but you are using the road outside the estate, which is fair enough, and amenities, council amenities, but we feel that we should be getting something a bit more from the council, like for example they should maintain the road, look after the road. If there are any cracks, whatever, they should pay for patching up the road, resurfacing and all that. (Richard: Male; 50-60; 2.5 years)

I have spoken to Campbelltown Council and taken rate notices from my other Campbelltown properties and said to them – in my other properties in Campbelltown, I see justification in my rates. The street sweeper comes and cleans, the street lights are changed, curb and gutter is maintained, all those types of things. Within this estate, I said to them, due to the fact that were paying $2300 a year in community title levies as well as in excess of $2000 a year in rates, I cannot see justification for the rate charges. We do not get our streets cleaned, we do not get our curb and gutter maintained, street lights maintained our footpaths mowed, all of that is done under the community title out of our levies. I’ve spoken to Campbelltown Council and requested a change in rates and they’ve said no! (Kate: Female; 40-50; 3.5 years)

The fact that these residents are questioning their rate payments and seeking additional services from council, or rate reductions, draws a question mark around the notion of the ‘club’. Will this ‘club’ be one that is funded by members, for members (see Webster et al., 2006)? The collective protests of the residents (via the community association) regarding local council rate reductions and rebates certainly demonstrate a very
communal solidarity within the neighbourhood – through the negotiations of the private structure and private governance, the residents of Macquarie Links form stronger communal bonds.

While there appear to be ‘obvious benefits’ to local council with the increase of community title schemes across Australia (see Goodman and Douglas, 2008), two long term issues emerge for local councils. The first is in regard to potential rate rebates and debates associated with that, and the second, is the failure of an entire residential estate. The negotiations of the public and the private are important considerations into the future. According to the UDIA, ‘dedicating land and infrastructure to council is only possible for publicly accessible infrastructure that meets council standards and is of the type usually provided by councils’ (UDIA, 2008:12). In Victoria, Australia, Goodman and Douglas (2008:534) noted that community title developments are ‘complex forms of ownership’ that are ‘very difficult to alter, and almost impossible to dismantle’.

The trend towards privately governed residential developments in Australian cities is increasing, and thus deserves academic attention, particularly for the potential transformation of urban governance and the re-organisation of urban residential space. The infancy of these developments means that there are likely to be many teething problems – this may or may not hamper the enthusiasm for this urban residential form. Researchers, planners and policy makers do, however, need to be aware of the tedious nature of these legal arrangements and the potential for quite costly settlements. The design of PREs – gated or non-gated – will likely determine the associated costs of living in these new developments for the residents within, and this in turn will determine the long-term economic viability of this form of residential development, and one that may or may not need to be reverted back to a public structure if costs are too cumbersome for the residents. Indeed, as research from within Macquarie Links demonstrates, the public and private are negotiated by the community. Finally, we must bear in mind this process of developing PREs is inherently exclusionary. That is, those who can afford the membership costs at the residential ‘club’ are those who can share in the benefits on offer in new private communities. Those who cannot afford such costs are excluded. While social divisions in cities are nothing new, PREs allow for the private ownership of land, which is legislated. Understandings of one of the
most recent manifestations of social division in cities is important to document. Further, there is a need for policy responses to assist with the development and management of these residential estates. There has been a policy silence on this form of urban residential development in Australia which needs to be rectified given many of these emerging concerns.

CONCLUSION
There is still a lot that is not known or understood about PREs, both in Australia and internationally, in terms of their form, function, sociability, lived experiences and broader outcomes. Frantz (2006:65) notes that very little fieldwork has been done on the subject of PREs and as a result ‘urban research has a great deal to catch up on’. Goodman and Douglas (2008:534) suggest that ‘planners and policy makers need to carefully consider the potential implications of this practice [private residential estates] and proceed with caution’. Indeed, continued research into current urban residential development practices, as well as policy responses to this urban residential form which are now becoming mainstream in Australia. From research within Macquarie Links, it is evident that there are emergent issues for the residents in terms of the management of the residential estate, and particularly a lack of transparency in the level of finance required to maintain the neighbourhood and everything within its bounds, as well as a lack of transparency in the details of the management statements restrictive covenants concerning building and landscape guidelines. The negotiations of these issues to do with estate management are handled by the community and are a key interface between privatism and community. Further, some of the internal tensions are examples of the complexities of communities. The community is also negotiating the public/private tensions, in terms of requests for rate rebates, as the solidarity from within hints at a strong communal bond. Ultimately, a policy acknowledgement of, and response to, some of these issues that are beginning to be identified in research is required given key concerns such as who is responsible for insurance and possible failure, the evident lack of transparency in property contracts, and the questions around the payment of levies and the increased costs of living in private residential estates over time.
LEAVING THE PRIVATE COMMUNITY: REFLECTIONS AND KEY CONTRIBUTIONS

The success of private residential estates is a result of the careful negotiations and management of both privatism and community – two apparently contradictory notions that are marketed and sold to the residents of private residential estates. This thesis uncovered the meanings and lived experiences of privatism and community in the context of Macquarie Links finding that community and privatism were interrelated as being private also benefits from being communal. It is the private structure of the neighbourhood that becomes a focus or impetus for social and community life in Macquarie Links.

Following a review of the urban studies literature on the development of private residential estates (Chapter 2), I found that the place of resident perspectives, or research on the internal workings (community, sociability, and internal neighbourhood politics) of private neighbourhoods, and many of the perceived desires of residents were speculative rather than grounded in empirics. Following from this was the evident need for empirical, qualitative fieldwork into the internal dynamics of private residential estates. Further, there was an Australian gap in this urban studies literature, and the lived experiences of this contemporary urban residential form in cities and urban areas across the world were beginning to be documented, with the Australian experiences largely absent from this body of work. This thesis has examined the nature of private governance mechanisms that produce, govern life within, and sustain private residential developments, as well as the lived experiences of neighbourhood and community life, and security and protection, within private residential estates. It has also contributed to an understanding of the broader socio-spatial implications of these residential developments, as well as the workings of their legislative frameworks. By using a case study neighbourhood, I addressed these overarching aims and uncovered the local complexities of new private residential estates. The research in Macquarie Links found that the private structure of private residential estates has had a central
place in the formation of community within the estate, and the community have been responsible for the management of the private structure – both relied on each other.

In approaching and researching private residential estates, a number of methodological considerations became evident, most obviously the role of gate keepers (see Odenahl and Shaw, 2002). In the case of private gated residential neighbourhoods, there are physical boundaries that a researcher needs to negotiate, though researchers should resist the temptation to suggest that gated neighbourhoods are impenetrable, a hindrance to qualitative research within such neighbourhoods. Researchers should, on the other hand, thoroughly scope out the private residential neighbourhoods, gated or non-gated, and remain flexible in their approach. Of course, making initial contact with community associations would be a useful way of being granted access not just to the neighbourhood, but to information otherwise unattainable. The second consideration for researchers, particularly in gated PREs, is to be mindful of, and sensitive to, residents’ defensiveness (see Chapter 4). As I discovered, the way the research is presented to the residents within these neighbourhoods will have an impact on their acceptance of the research and willingness to participate. Piloting both questionnaires and interviews is important for uncovering any such hurdles or problems. Finally, one of the most significant methodological considerations when researching private gated neighbourhoods is the importance of developing ethnographic context. Developing ethnographic context benefited from quite lengthy field visits (e.g. up to 3 hours with some informants), as well as spontaneity on the part of the researcher when being invited on tours of the house and garages, and to take part in some activities that may appear mundane initially, but assist in developing a deeper understanding of the lives and circumstances of those living in private residential estates. Indeed, the importance of keeping detailed field diaries when undertaking qualitative research is important in this regard, particularly when some of the best conversations happen once the voice recorder has been switched off (see Warren, 2002). The research approach allowed for detailed ethnographic understandings of community, especially unexpected community, by engaging with the meanings of community and neighbourhood as told, experienced and managed by the residents of Macquarie Links.
TOWARDS A NEW THEORY OF URBAN COMMUNITY

Community has been a fairly uncertain notion in the social sciences over the past few decades. Current phases of globalisation and increased mobility has seen a reduced importance of place-based communities, whereby communities are said to have become more ideological, or imagined (following Anderson, 1983), and make use of new information technologies to connect with those with similar interests (see Castells, 2000; Delanty, 2003). The research in Macquarie Links reconnected with community in the form of neighbourhood based interactions and associations. The literature from community studies and urban sociology identified common themes in community formation, function and persistence historically: common values; social organisation; and ideology. Traditionally, however, urban scholars have viewed urban environments or cities as hostile to community formation. The urban was in opposition to the rural where community was thought to exist (Tonies, 1957). The assumed anomie and individualism of modern society – the city – was seen as detrimental to the development of social relations, and only superficial relations were thought to form amongst urban inhabitants (Durkheim, 1964; Simmel, 1971; Wirth, 1938). The development of a private residential estate, such as Macquarie Links, has allowed for the coming together of those urban residents sharing similar goals (i.e. collective effort to achieve individual pursuits and aspirations). However, the findings about community formation in urban areas go some way towards illustrating what constitutes community in contemporary residential neighbourhoods and metropolitan regions. For the residents of Macquarie Links it was important that the common thread between them was the belief in the private structure of the neighbourhood (and the ideology of privatism) that underpins the residential development. The formal structure of the neighbourhood, through the community association, allowed for residents to get to know one another and form social bonds and relationships, leading to more broader social interactions within the neighbourhood, such as BBQs and other social gatherings. A structured form of social organisation that developed around an ideological agenda (i.e. privatism) formed the basis of the neighbourhood interactions and associations in Macquarie Links, encouraging both a sense of community and social relations amongst neighbours. Essentially, these findings deny the ‘myth’ of suburban non-community.

Considering commonalities within communities is important (see Chapter 3). Equally important however, is a wider conceptualisation of community as complex, different
and not always consenting (Moore, 2008; Panelli and Welch, 2005; Secomb, 2000). Drawing attention to the homogenous elements of community as well as the differences within, allows community to be a space where both harmony and disharmony occur. Common bonds and disagreements have continually sustained the community of Macquarie Links, such as those between owners and renters, adults and young people, the community and the individual. These disagreements, differences and ‘dramas’ within the estate are in turn managed by the community association (through the private structure), thus sustaining (reinforcing) community. Privatism and community do not run parallel within Macquarie Links; rather they are complex and intertwined in a relationship of dependency. To understand this within Macquarie Links required an understanding of community as complex and contradictory. Theories of urban community that take into account commonalities and differences, consent and disagreement will certainly provide urban scholars with a space for continuing to engage with the notion of community in urban areas and progress urban theory. Essentially, a new version of urban community pervades these private residential developments.

The structure of the neighbourhood (and its ideological base), which incorporates a community association which effectively manage the residential development is important for controlling the residential environment, and that control enables protection both within, and from certain external threats. An increase in experiences of urban insecurity and instability – piles of rubbish, graffiti, drunkenness, break-ins, thefts and petty crimes – as well as a lack of adequate policing, and general changes in the feel, aesthetics and nature of suburban areas in Sydney’s south west (changes in public housing and the like), have contributed to the creation of demand for private residential neighbourhoods like Macquarie Links. Having control over their residential environment allows the residents to protect their investment, quality of life, lifestyle, family and home. However, while many of the residents of this gated residential neighbourhood appeared to be searching for security, the actual security infrastructure did not seem to matter very much to the residents interviewed, as it did not stop criminal acts within the estate. Control, order and stability over the residential environment were, on the other hand, paramount. The structure of the neighbourhood and community relations, with private governance and neighbourhood committees, allowed for a more encompassing protection of the residential environment, or indeed,
control. Physical security and gating is thus not the most significant element of private residential estates. Control, through restrictive covenants and community management offers order and stability in the residential neighbourhood. The structure of the community then becomes important in a number of senses. Restrictive covenants and community-led management of the estate are very communal tactics for maintaining the private structure and privatism. The apparent communal nature of privatism also suggests that private residential estates are not a direct outcome of neoliberalism and do not house purely neoliberal ‘subjects’ (Larner, 2003; McGuirk, 2005). An apparently neoliberal act – developing a private residential estate where wealthy residents can pay for and maintaining their own services and infrastructure in a user-pays system – is complicated by the communal nature of the estate’s management and the residents’ reliance upon each other. Indeed, the neoliberal urban resident and the private urban resident are different – the former more individual, and the latter more communal. Being private requires being communal and the individual poses a threat to the structure and community of a private residential estate. This demonstrates that the neoliberal subject and the private subject, while often considered one in the same, are different in reality. The importance of understanding the lived realities of privatism and private residential estates is evident in this regard.

Overall this thesis advances a new way of understanding urban community. The urban studies literature has traditionally viewed community as a largely romantic ideal based around a fairly narrow set of inclusive criteria – commonalities, consensus, morals – which, given the complexity and diversity of modern cities, has been an almost impossible reality. The work of urban sociologists such as Herbert Gans and Young and Willmott during the 1950s and 1960s continued to show a range of different types of communities that can form. Yet, even in showing difference and diversity, these scholars still appeared to search for some ideal type of community – there were often problems within the community that were seen to weaken social and communal ties rather than strengthen them. This was further exemplified by the work of urban theorists such as Wirth and others who believed that the chaos and complexity of cities was so overwhelming that community could not form – social relations were at best only ever superficial (see Chapter 3). More recently urban scholars have considered the complexities in community to be important in understanding the very nature of community in that difference and disagreement can often provide knowledge of how
community forms and with what purpose and intent. Based on my empirical data I have demonstrated that urban community continues to require commonalities and consent – common ties that bind residents of a neighbourhood need to endure to sustain community. Beyond this, I have demonstrated that the differences and disagreements within community do not work to weaken community; rather they are integral to the formation of community and of its sustenance long term. Further, private governance has allowed for the residents to collectively negotiate such disagreements. Thus, I argue that community should be understood through both the commonalities and consensus evident in a neighbourhood as well as through the evidence of dissonance and disagreement. To advance this claim more overtly I suggest urban studies adopt a vision, or theory, of community that encompasses consent and disagreement, commonalities and differences as a way of theorising contemporary forms of collective activity in cities and metropolitan regions.

THE ‘CLUB’ REALM IN URBAN SOCIETY

In Chapter 3 I outlined the emerging contention in the urban studies literature that suggests that private residential estates should be considered as residential ‘clubs’ and understood using a ‘club theory’ (Chen and Webster, 2005; Glasze, 2005; Lee and Webster, 2006). This theory has formed out of parallels drawn to other types of clubs within cities and societies who exclusively provide services for the benefit of their members, who pay fees to access and use facilities and services, such as sporting clubs and country clubs. I have argued that while the literature on residential clubs draws attention to the exclusive nature of ‘clubs’, one of the shortcomings of the club theory is that it has been too focussed on the economics of club membership and financing of club facilities. Many of the social aspects of these residential clubs have been somewhat overlooked. Research to date has not uncovered whether the club provides a space for social interaction and community formation.

I suggest that the ‘club’ theory should be expanded to better conceptualise the complex interactions of privatism and community within private residential estates. In the literature on residential clubs, the private and user-pays elements of clubs are well rehearsed, as are arguments about their exclusivity. Drawing on the notion of a ‘club’ in understandings of private residential estates does suggest that sustaining and managing
a private residential estate is a collective action – ‘clubbing together’ for the private benefits (Glasze, 2005; Webster and Glasze, 2006; Wu, 2005). As evident in the research in Macquarie Links, the private structure of the residential neighbourhood relies heavily on the collective and communal actions of the residents. So too then, the residential ‘club’ will rely on its members for financial maintenance, as well as their collective efforts to maintain the structure and management of the club and its functions. If progressed and perhaps re-cast through further empirical research on the internal dynamics and social life within private residential estates, the club theory could be a useful way to consider the private/community nexus in the development of private residential estates.

THE SOCIO-SPATIAL IMPLICATIONS

Private residential estates, developed in accordance with community schemes legislation offer complete lifestyle packages to their residents, with swimming pools, tennis courts, landscaping and even golf courses. These facilities come at a cost to these residents and these developments are exclusive and exclusionary, housing those with considerable incomes and excluding those unable to pay the cost of living in private residential estates. Whilst a finding of this nature – that private residential estates are exclusionary on the basis of income – is not particularly surprising, it is important to note, that the way this exclusion is occurring has not previously existed in residential development in urban Australia. The development of private residential estates intensifies exclusionary land use practices in metropolitan regions. Private residential estates extend patterns of segregation already visible and established in Australian cities in a new and more complex way than has previously been the case.

This form of residential development is passing more-or-less without comment, in policy circles in particular. As outlined in Chapter 5, this is largely a result of the fact that community title has been normalised by the existence and acceptance of strata title in apartment developments in metropolitan Australia. The ‘horizontal’ version of strata title, community title, is thus viewed as an acceptable practice in urban residential development in Australia. The aim of uncovering the various outcomes – both just and unjust (Fincher and Iveson, 2008) – of current planning and urban development practices (community schemes legislation) is to acknowledge that with
the increased presence of private residential developments in Australian cities, that the practice of spatial segregation is now mainstream. This thesis evaluated urban development practices such as the development of a private residential neighbourhood that appear to threaten social justice efforts in the city. Due to the fact that developments on community titles can be the size of entire suburbs and contain major infrastructure that needs considerable funds to sustain it, the separation of community title from strata title in planning, policy and academic circles is needed. Only through continued research into the formation, function and outcomes of private suburban residential developments will researchers be able to encourage changes to urban policy (see also Goodman and Douglas, 2008).

At present, there appears little reason (in policy and planning circles) to deny the development of private residential estates due to the obvious benefits of these developments to local municipal councils and private developers. However, the findings of this thesis suggest that the development of private residential estates requires a policy response to curtail the development of urban residential spaces which are a potentially financially unviable urban residential form as residents of these private estates are responsible for the costs of maintaining all major infrastructures. Any policy response however, must be mindful of the importance of community associations in building social relations and community within private neighbourhoods. And the question which emerges is will the community bonds that formed through the processes of governing the estate be fractured once the governance is no longer required or viable? This is certainly an area for further research.

WHERE TO FROM HERE?
It is evident that continued research into the growing phenomenon of private residential estate development in metropolitan regions, in both Australia and elsewhere, is required. Questions surround the long term financing of major infrastructure, responsibility, legalities, and viability of this urban residential form. Future research must be critical of the urban practices giving rise to these residential developments in the first place and counter some of the attitudes in planning, policy and academia that uncritically accept this new form of residential development. Clearly, a policy response of sorts is also required. But, this would need to be sensitive
to some of the positives and less tangible aspects of these developments. While private residential developments are exclusive and exclusionary, they do also develop a sense of community and allow for residents to be actively involved in the planning, development, and ultimately control of their neighbourhood which is considered to be important at least for the residents of Macquarie Links. This thesis adds to the stock of knowledge about both the problems and possibilities of private residential developments in metropolitan regions. I would encourage urban scholars to continue to unpack the complexities of private residential estates in Australia and elsewhere, and to be mindful of the importance of context as different private residential estates are likely to have different outcomes and impacts.
REFERENCES


Ascher, C.S., 1929a. ‘How can a section of a town get what it is prepared to pay for?’, The American City, 98-99.


226


Kenna, T. and Dunn, K., 2009. ‘The Virtuous Discourse of Private Communities’, Geography Compass, 3(2), 797-816.


Le Goix, R., 2006. ‘Gated communities as predators of public resources: the outcomes of fading boundaries between private management and public authorities in


Stevenson, D., 1998. Agendas in place: urban and cultural planning for cities and regions, Rural Social and Economic Research Centre, Central Queensland University, Rockhampton, Queensland.


233

Urban Development Institute of Australia, UDIA, 2008. *Common ground – the costs and provision of community infrastructure in community title schemes in NSW*, report produced by the City Futures Research Centre, UNSW.


MACQUARIE LINKS RESIDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

1. How long have you been living in Macquarie Links Estate? ______________________________________

2. What is your current residential status?
   - Home owner (i.e. own property outright)
   - Home purchaser (i.e. mortgagee)
   - Renting (private)
   - Renting (public)
   - Other (please specify) _____________________________________________________

3. Which suburb were you living in previous to Macquarie Links Estate? _________________________

4. How long did you live in the previous suburb? __________________________

5. What are three (3) main differences between Macquarie Links and your previous suburb?
   i. ______________________________________________________________________
   ii. _____________________________________________________________________
   iii. ____________________________________________________________________

6. What are the ages in years of all the people residing in your household?
__________________________________________________________________________

7. How many members of your household are:
   a. Employed full-time
   b. Employed part-time
   c. Students
   d. Student & employed part-time
   e. Not employed
   f. Retired / pensioner
   0 1 2 3 4 5+

8. Did you look at other residential areas before you decided on Macquarie Links Estate?
   - No
   - Yes (please specify which areas) ________________________________

9. What were three (3) main things that attracted you to Macquarie Links Estate?
   i. ______________________________________________________________________
   ii. _____________________________________________________________________
   iii. ____________________________________________________________________

10. Do you think Macquarie Links Estate is a unique development in south-western Sydney?
    - Yes*
    - No

    * How do you feel about the uniqueness of your residential area, especially from its surrounding suburbs?
    _______________________________________________________________________

11. Do you think there are benefits to living in Macquarie Links Estate?
    - Yes*
    - No

    *What are some of these benefits?
    _______________________________________________________________________
    _______________________________________________________________________
    _______________________________________________________________________
12. Do you think there are any disadvantages to living in Macquarie Links Estate?

☐ Yes*    ☐ No

*What are some of these disadvantages?
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

13. Do you feel part of a community in Macquarie Links Estate?

☐ Yes*    ☐ No

* What makes you feel part of a community?
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

14. Which mall / centre do you do most of your shopping at? ______________________________________________________________

How often do you shop there?

☐ Very often (daily)    ☐ Often (weekly)    ☐ Sometimes (fortnightly)
☐ Rarely (monthly)

15. If you have children, which school(s) do they attend? ______________________________________________________________

16. Which local corner store or convenience store do you go to for bread, milk, etc.?

How often do you go there?

☐ Very often (daily)    ☐ Often (weekly)    ☐ Sometimes (fortnightly)
☐ Rarely (monthly)

17. Are you and your family involved in any sporting clubs or community groups?

☐ No    ☐ Yes (please specify which clubs / groups you are involved with, and your level of involvement, i.e. coach, manager, player, etc.)

______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

18. How much of your spare time do you usually spend in Macquarie Links Estate?

☐ All of your time    ☐ Most of your time    ☐ Some of your time

19. Would you say that most of your social activities are:

☐ Based around people from work/family/sport groups
☐ Based around people from within Macquarie Links Estate
☐ Both
20. The following is a list of statements regarding Macquarie Links Estate. Please indicate whether you: strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree or strongly disagree with each statement by placing a circle around your answer.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Agree (SA)</th>
<th>Agree (A)</th>
<th>Neither Agree/Disagree (N)</th>
<th>Disagree (D)</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree (SD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>There is a lot of social interaction in the estate</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residents in the estate have similar values to you</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The estate is safer than surrounding areas</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is a stronger sense of community than other areas</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The estate is more prestigious than other areas</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The quality of housing is very good</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

21. Using the table below, please indicate the nature of your interactions with other households in Macquarie Links Estate by placing a tick in each column that corresponds with your answer. You may tick more than one column for each of the interactions. For example, if you have BBQs with neighbours in your street and neighbours elsewhere in the suburb, you place a tick in both columns. If you only have BBQs with the neighbours next door, then you only place a tick in the ‘neighbours next door’ column.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interactions</th>
<th>Neighbours next door</th>
<th>Neighbours in street</th>
<th>Neighbours elsewhere in suburb</th>
<th>Neighbours in other suburbs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Daily greetings whilst moving in and out of house</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You invite each other in regularly for coffee / drink</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your children interact with neighbours children</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You borrow things from neighbours</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You have BBQs / Dinner together</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You help each other with home maintenance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other interactions (please specify):</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
22. Young people tend to spend a lot of time in their local area. Do you think the young people in Macquarie Links Estate have appropriate spaces outside the home where they can spend time?

☐ Yes  ☐ No

23. Could you briefly explain the types of spaces available for young people in Macquarie Links Estate or where young people in Macquarie Links Estate spend most of their recreational time?

_________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

24. How important are the following elements of the Macquarie Links Estate development? Please circle the number that corresponds with your answer, with 1 = very important through to 5 = not important.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Very Important</th>
<th>Important</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Low Importance</th>
<th>Not Important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The estate only has a small number of homes</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is a golf course in the estate</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The estate has a mix of housing styles</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is a tennis court in the estate</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amenities in the estate are for private use by residents only</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The estate is soon to be home to an international hotel</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The estate is close to the M5 motorway</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The estate is close to a train station</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The estate has 24 hour security</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The concierge at the gate knows everyone that passes through the estate</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The entrance to the estate is gated</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighbours are friendly to each other in the estate</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The estate is well-maintained</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
25. If you were to move house again, would you have a preference for living in a gated community in the future?

☐ Yes *  ☐ No

* If yes, why? __________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

26. Please describe how you feel Macquarie Links Estate is perceived in the local area.
_________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

27. Any further comments of Macquarie Links Estate or gated communities in general?
_________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

Future participation in this research project

I am also seeking anyone who would be available for an interview to discuss aspects of living in Macquarie Links Estate in depth. On average, an interview will take around 45 minutes. If you decide to participate further, I will make contact with you shortly after I receive this returned survey form to arrange a time for the interview at your earliest convenience. Please select one of the following by placing a tick in the box which corresponds with your answer:

☐ I do not wish to participate further in this research project.

☐ I would like to be involved in the research project. I am happy for you to contact me and organise a time to conduct an interview (please provide contact details below):

Name: ______________________________

Contact phone number: __________________

Please indicate the best day and time to contact you: ___________________

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Your input is much appreciated. Please return the survey in the postage paid envelope provided.
Dear Resident of Macquarie Links Estate,

In recent times gated communities have attracted a significant amount of attention. Your residential area, Macquarie Links Estate, seems to be a popular reference when the topic of gated communities in Sydney arises. While there are a lot of differing comments circulating about the good and bad of gated communities, there have been few attempts to talk to the residents within new residential areas, like Macquarie Links Estate, to find out first hand their experiences of their residential location, be they positive and/or negative. I am currently involved in a research project through The University of NSW that hopes to shed light on the experiences of people living in new outer suburban areas of Sydney. By gaining an understanding of people’s experiences in Macquarie Links Estate I hope to be able to present a fairer, more substantiated picture of resident’s experiences in gated communities than what currently exists.

I am hoping that you, or someone in your household, would like to be involved in this research project to help represent the views of residents within Macquarie Links Estate. I have included with this letter a questionnaire. This questionnaire will begin to give me an insight into the experiences of residents in Macquarie Links Estate. The questionnaire should only take about 15 minutes to complete. I have also included a reply paid envelope for you to return the questionnaire to me at your earliest convenience.

I am also seeking anyone who would be available for an interview to discuss aspects of living in Macquarie Links Estate in depth. For those that are willing to participate, an interview participation form has been included at the back of the questionnaire.

Your participation in this research is greatly appreciated. If you have any questions about the research, please don’t hesitate to contact me at any time on:

Ph.: (02) 9385 8270
Email: t.kenna@unsw.edu.au

Yours sincerely,

Therese Kenna

Complaints may be directed to the Ethics Secretariat, The University of NSW, Sydney, Australia, 2052
(02) 9385 4234, ethics.sec@unsw.edu.au
MACQUARIE LINKS RESIDENT INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Introduce research topic.

You were previously living in ________________. What was it like living there?
- Description of people, neighbourhood, area, etc.

Why did you decide to move?

Could you give me a sense of what attracted you to MLE?

Are you pleased with the decision to move to MLE?

How do the two residential areas compare?
- Previous / current suburb

Could you tell me a little bit about MLE?
- What's life like here?
- The good; The bad; Advantages; Disadvantages; Things to be improved

How would you describe the type / mix of residents in MLE?

Do you feel part of a community in MLE?
- What is the community life like?
- Do people generally seem to interact with one another?
- Levels of interactions amongst residents in the suburb
- How does this compare to previous suburb

Are there local community events?
- Do you participate?

Are there any conflicts in the neighbourhood that you're aware of?

You noted that you have some interaction with neighbours in MLE. Could you please describe for me the nature of these interactions?
- With whom
- How often

What about life for the young people in MLE?
- What do they tend to do?
- Where do they go?
- Do you think the lives of young people in MLE are different to those in other suburbs, say Macquarie Fields?

How does MLE compare to the rest of Sydney/Campbelltown/outer suburbs?
- What is your knowledge of surrounding areas
- Do you think your area is different from its surrounds and in what sense
Do you have contact with residents in other areas – family, friends in Ingleburn, Campbelltown, Mac Fields?

What are your daily movements like?
- Inside / outside the estate
- Beyond MLE
- For work / sport / etc.
- How often do you move beyond MLE and nature of these visits

I’m getting the sense from the surveys that residents pay a lot for services in the suburb and general maintenance. What sorts of fees do you pay for living in MLE?
- What are the levies, rates, etc.?
- What’s the price of living in Macquarie Links?
- Is it worth it?

What do you think about community title?
- How does it work for you as a resident in MLE?
- A good initiative?

MLE is a gated residential area. What do the gates on this area signify for you?
- What do they mean / represent?
- Would you live in this area without gates?
- Do you feel you need them?

Is MLE generally a safe place to live?
- Are the surrounds safe?

Statistics and research show that MLE and other similar new private suburban developments are reasonable affluent areas. Do you feel this is the case with MLE?
- Have you gradually over time, had to work towards living in an area such as MLE? In terms of income levels, etc.
- If someone of lower socio-economic status resided in MLE, do you think they’d fit in?
- Could they afford it?

What is the image of Macquarie Links? How do you think this place is popularly perceived?
### CODING FRAMEWORK FOR INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. People</th>
<th>2. Neighbourhood governance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Age</td>
<td>a. Active governance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Ethnic mix</td>
<td>b. Need for neighbourhood governance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Affluence</td>
<td>c. Legalities and rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Friendly</td>
<td>d. Levies, costs and expenses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Unfriendly</td>
<td>e. Transparency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Mortgagee</td>
<td>f. Available services and infrastructure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Home buyers (1st, 2nd, 3rd)</td>
<td>g. Council rates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>h. Housing and landscape styles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>i. Covenants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>j. Higher property values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>k. Negatives</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3. Interaction</th>
<th>4. Motivations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Golf course and golf club</td>
<td>a. Services and amenities in estate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Dogs</td>
<td>b. Previous housing experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Children</td>
<td>c. Dissatisfied with local council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Families</td>
<td>d. Proximity to work/schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. Neighbours</td>
<td>e. Fear and crime</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. Neighbourhood committees</td>
<td>f. Other</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5. Perceptions of Macquarie Links</th>
<th>6. Positives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Respected</td>
<td>a. Lifestyle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Affluent 'snobs'</td>
<td>b. Unique</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Exclusive</td>
<td>c. Size of development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Dividing 'have's and 'have nots'</td>
<td>d. Restricted access</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Ignorance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Defensiveness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Expectations not met</td>
<td>a. Needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Problems with structure and fees</td>
<td>b. Flexible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. ‘Otherness’ within (unacceptable behaviour)</td>
<td>c. Security breaches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Hotel development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Housing stress</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>9. Viability</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Costs to residents</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Major infrastructure costs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Liability</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Transparency (or lack of)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Gates or no gates long term</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

You are making a decision whether or not to participate in this research project. By signing the below Consent Form, your signature indicates that you have decided to participate and that you are happy for the conversation to be recorded.

..........................................................  
Signature of Research Participant

..........................................................
Please PRINT name

..........................................................
Date

..........................................................
Signature of Chief Investigator

..........................................................
Please PRINT Name

* Please initial if you want a copy of the interview transcript

Complaints may be directed to the Ethics Secretariat, The University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia, 2052
(02) 9385 4234, ethics.sec@unsw.edu.au