Research Seminar

Gated Communities in High Density Hong Kong: Not a Controversy?

Prof. Rebecca L. H. Chiu

Professor
Department of Urban Planning and Design
Faculty of Architecture
The University of Hong Kong

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Abstract:
Regarded as a way of life because of its long existence and wide adoption, the urban and social implications of the estate-type residential organization in Hong Kong have been seldom questioned. This paper aims to explain this lack of criticism on residential gatedness by comparing the Hong Kong case with international prototypes. The presentation will initially compare the proliferation of gated communities in Hong Kong and other cities, focusing on the underlying social processes. It will then compare the characteristics of the residential enclaves, focusing on features which are contentious in the gated community literature: security, privatization and governance of public space, socio-spatial segregation, community development, and accessibility to public and social services. Finally, it will compare the institutional contexts and processes shaping diversified socio-spatial outcomes as a way of explaining for the strong acceptance of gated communities in Hong Kong.

Key words: Hong Kong, high density, residential gatedness.

About the Speaker:
Rebecca L.H. Chiu is Professor of the Department of Urban Planning and Urban Design, and Assistant Director of the Centre of Urban Studies and Urban Planning of The University of Hong Kong, specializing in housing and urban studies, especially housing policies in Asia. The sustainability of housing and high-density cities in Hong Kong and China is one of her recent research interest. She has been appointed to government committees and boards related to housing, planning and environmental issues in Hong Kong. She is also the Founding Chairman of the Asia Pacific Network for Housing Research and the Founding Director of the Affordable Housing Research Network of the Faculty of Architecture, HKU.