

# The New Mode of Housing Production: Gated Communities in İstanbul

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**Abstract:** The city of İstanbul is undergoing rapid socio-spatial transformation due to globalization and neoliberal policies. These policies lead to social segregation by creating unequal income distribution and employment opportunities. This rapid transformation is changing housing demand and supply. Urban elites flee from the chaos and insecurity of the city and start to move into gated communities (GCs) located in the urban periphery. These gated communities are the newest form of housing production in İstanbul. The main reasons for upper income groups to choose to live in GCs are prestige and privacy, while the new lifestyle offered by these projects is more important for the middle income groups. Security is a principle reason for every income group's choice to live in GCs. The local and international housing market continues to produce GCs that advertise security, a new lifestyle and prestige. GCs are determining İstanbul's peripheral urban development and sprawl pattern. Therefore, the inner dynamics of GCs need to be studied to develop optimum planning policies. This study examines the development of GCs in İstanbul, the new lifestyle they offer and their effects on planning.

## 1. Introduction

Gated communities (GCs) emerged as part of the suburbanization process in the US and spread around the world. A variety of spatial, social and economic definitions of gated communities can be found in the literature. They are generally defined as housing areas where entry is controlled and public spaces are privatized (Blakely & Snyder, 1997; Low, 2003). These communities are also considered a stance against increasing risk and uncertainty in urban areas, not only due to crime rates, but also due to rising economic inequality, ethnic diversity and heterogeneity (Gooblar, 2002). Contemporary gated communities are products of the quest for an ideal society in the socio-spatial context (Blakely & Snyder, 1997). From another point of view, gated communities are areas where people take collective responsibility to behave according to shared codes that are characterized by legal agreements (Atkinson & Blandy, 2005). According to Foldvary (1994) gated communities are economically efficient forms of housing development because they allow the private housing market to provide public services.

Synthesizing these definitions, gated communities can be defined as housing developments that:

- are physically enclosed (with walls, fences, bars, natural landscape elements, etc.),
- are managed by private governances,
- offer privatized public spaces,
- limit public access,
- offer a new lifestyle,

- stimulate real estate speculation.

The gated community phenomenon is based on an effort to create a special society in a spatially limited, private area. "Gated" defines the physical form of the space, while "community" indicates a special, organized society. However, it is not possible to talk about a real community in gated communities (Blandy & Lister, 2005). Usually, there is only social cohesion within the walls due to the obligation to obey the private governance's rules. Private governance, as opposed to public management, can evaluate complaints and enforce sanctions immediately. Private governances are considered efficient urban and economic structures for facilitating access to the public system and taking the burden off from local governments in areas where collective consumption good is supplied at optimum quality through the housing market (Foldvary; 1994, Grant, 2005; McKenzie, 1994; Webster, 2002). In GCs there is real shared ownership of property. The shared ownership structure includes public facilities and services as well as the housing itself. This collective ownership structure in economic terms refers to club goods or the club realm. This domain is neither completely private nor entirely public. This is how the concept of "club realm" emerged alongside the traditional concepts of public realm and private realm. Club goods and the club realm serve a certain group, and that group pays for these goods or services and determines how they are served (Manzi & Smith-Bowers, 2005). In short, everything happens under club membership.

Gated communities are areas of clear social and spatial segregation. Atkinson (2010) defines three levels of urban segregation:

- "Incubation" defines the traditional urban fabric where the distinction between rich and poor is not clear. When gated communities are located in a high-income neighborhood the segregation cannot be read clearly.
- "Insulation" defines income level and ethnicity based segregation. Urban gentrification occurs at this level of segregation.
- "Incarceration" typifies GCs.

According to him, when social inequality increases, social insulation increases, too, and when social inequality reaches a climax, people incarcerate themselves in housing areas (Atkinson, 2010).

GCs are criticized by many scholars for socially and spatially segregating the rich and the poor and causing stratification in society (Caldeira, 1996; Davis, 1998; Atkinson, 2010; Manzi & Smith-Bowers, 2005; Giglia, 2003; Roitman, 2005; Low, 2008; Gooblar, 2002; Grant, 2005). Society's major problems today are weak social integration, low levels of connectivity, social clashes and the resulting social segregation. The social effect of walls, which are the effective means of this segregation in GCs, is even greater than their physical effect (Roitman, 2005).

Examining old gated community structures can help us understand current GCs. Looking back at the history of gated communities we can consider ancient settlements surrounded by walls—fortress cities—as the first gated communities in history. Some of the oldest cities known, such as Ur and Jericho are surrounded by walls (Dupuis & Thorns, 2008). The fortified structure of ancient city states (e.g., Troy), the Forbidden City in China (Wu, 2005), the walled structures of the traditional urban fabric in the Arab world (Glasze & Alkhayyal, 2002), medieval cities (San Gimignano, Carcassone, etc.) and colonial cities (Blakely & Snyder, 1997) are all historical forms of the gated community. Thus, throughout history, walled areas have been symbols of control over space, territory and power. While fortified territories symbolized the usual security measures for the monarchs of antiquity and feudal aristocrats in the Middle Ages, today they are symbols of economic power (Luymes, 1997).

Contemporary gated communities are considered to be an extension of the suburbanization trend (Blakely & Snyder, 1997). In the postindustrial period, employment and capital were spread throughout metropolitan areas, and as a result locating housing areas far from urban centers became a necessity (Harvey, 2010). The first examples of contemporary gated communities were planned settlements that allowed wealthy social groups in the US to escape the negative aspects of the industrializing cities. Towards the end of the 1960s gated communities for retirees, and later resorts and country clubs emerged. Since the 1970s middle class suburban communities have begun to be gated (Blakely & Snyder, 1997).

We can define contemporary GCs as a global housing form. Especially since the 1980s, the globalization of capital and accompanying neoliberal policies have led to the social and spatial transformation of cities (Glasze & Alkhayyal, 2002; Keyder, 2006; Atkinson, 2010; Luymes, 1997; Low 2003). In the atmosphere of inequality created by this social and spatial transformation, cities became chaotic and uncertain spaces. Inequality and inadequate public services mobilized the housing market towards the production of privately governed housing areas. The housing market promoted both the new global lifestyle and security services due to fear of crime. Thus GCs are products of the globalized world (Aydın -Yönet, 2011, Fig 1).

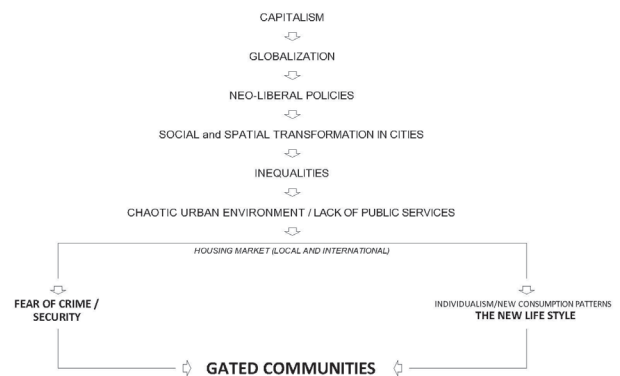


Figure 1. The emergence of gated communities

Blakely and Snyder (1997) group gated communities into the categories of lifestyle communities, prestige communities and security zones. Lifestyle communities have recreation-based segregation, while the purpose of prestige communities' segregation is ensuring and increasing real estate value. Security zones segregate themselves for safety. The design of lifestyle communities is aimed at providing services, while "prestige" communities are designed for homogeneity and stability. Security zone communities are designed to eliminate crime.

The statistics on the rapidly increasing numbers of GCs worldwide are striking. Blakely and Snyder (1997) point out that gated communities constitute one-fifth of all the housing developments in the US. By 1995, 4 million, by 1997, 8 million and by 1998, 16 million Americans were living in gated communities. According to 1997 data, there are 3 million dwellings in a total of 20,000 GCs (Low, 2008). The number of privately governed neighborhood structures has increased rapidly in the US during the last fifty years. One in six, meaning 50 million people, live in privately governed housing areas (Rich 2003). In England, 50% of the housing produced by the biggest development firm in London is in the form of gated communities (Gooblar, 2002).

The local adaptation of the global city varies by region. Therefore, it is impossible to talk about a single type of GC in the globalized world. Although the main motives behind GCs around the world are similar, local internal dynamics differ. Therefore, GCs vary from one continent, one country, one city and even one neighborhood to another.

It is possible to categorize the driving forces behind these developments in the US as developers, local governments and residents (McKenzie, 2005).

1. Developers aim to increase their profits by developing higher density housing due to increasing land values.
2. Local governments aim to increase their tax revenues while minimizing public expenditures.
3. Many upper and middle income groups who have lost faith in local governments and fear crime seek privatized housing areas with security systems, homogeneous populations and private governance.

The reasons demand for GCs is increasing include rising fear of crime, urban violence, and an atmosphere of insecurity in chaotic metropolises (Gooblar, 2002; Blakely & Snyder, 1997; Low, 2003; McKenzie, 1994; Manzi & Smith-Bowers, 2005; Grant, 2005; Caldeira, 1996) as well as new lifestyle and consumption patterns driven by globalization that prioritize self interest (Caldeira, 1996; Keyder, 2006; Öncü, 1999).

This study examines the development of İstanbul's gated communities, the new lifestyle they offer and their effects on planning. The section on their development describes the political, economic and social forces that led to the emergence of gated communities. The social and spatial effects of globalization on İstanbul are also examined in the context of gated communities. The section on lifestyle addresses the internal dynamics that determine gated community lifestyles and the reasons and effects of choosing these lifestyles. The final section evaluates the effects of gated communities on urban planning.

## 2. Gated Communities in İstanbul

Gated communities are among the most visible examples of İstanbul's spatial and social transformation by globalization. They will be examined in detail in this section.

### 2.1. DEVELOPMENT

Developments in communication and transportation technologies have diminished the significance of distances and national borders are losing their importance. These are two effects of globalization. With globalization: "Capitalism as a common lifestyle became widespread, and international capital expanded its hegemony over the biosphere" (Keleş 2008: p. 57). The flow of international capital into İstanbul dates to the post-1980 period.

Since the 1980s rising oil prices and the development of transportation and communication networks have replaced industry with the service sector, allowing new sectors to enter the scene in İstanbul. Electronics, communications, service and real estate sectors took the place of electricity and oil. This is how the mechanical industrial system was replaced by an electronic industrial system (Hacısalıhoğlu, 2000; Keyder, 2006). İstanbul entered the globalization process as a city where flows of money, capital, people, ideas and information intensified (Keyder, 2006). Since the 1980s the changes that Turkey went through made İstanbul a finance center. These changes were all led by globalization and neoliberal socioeconomic policies. The neoliberal globalization of İstanbul is one where the state, developers and international actors took part in the political and economic imposition of the global urban on the local. Foreign firms which avoided investing in Turkey during the national development period began to invest in Turkey after the state began making liberal pronouncements (Keyder, 2006). These firms mostly targeted İstanbul. This post-1980 period was when private capital real estate investment gained momentum. Real estate investments made the private sector influential in the planning of urban space and in public life (Bilgin, 2006). Another important reason for spatial transformation in this period was the ambition to offer the historical riches of İstanbul to the global tourism industry (Öncü, 1999).

Keleş (2008) mentions that the worldwide liberalization of commerce has a significant effect on cities, and that public service is rapidly changing in the globalized world. In this new order, public services were no longer necessarily offered by public institutions and were privatized. In this context, the notion of public interest began to indicate not the interests of the society, but the interests of individuals, private entrepreneurs and capital owners. With the global industry looking out only for its own interests as a result of the reduced influence of the public sector (depreciation of the nation state structure), inequality and injustice in urban İstanbul flourished (Keleş, 2008; Hacısalıhoğlu, 2000). According to Keleş (2008), the ambition of globalization

to create world cities filled them with five-star hotels, skyscrapers and big business and trade centers, while the urban and environmental values that would have hindered these developments were ignored. In the process of becoming a globalized world city, İstanbul is filling up with modern office buildings, five-star hotels, shopping malls, high-income GCs and luxury consumption areas that offer world famous brands. The avenues in the high-income districts now reflect globalization (Keyder, 2006). These were all factors that diverted real estate investments towards the housing sector, which is considered the most profitable investment in an inflationary environment. Therefore, the number of large construction firms rapidly increased (Keyder, 2006; Bilgin, 2006). Despite the fact that economic planners see the housing sector as an inefficient and unfavorable investment for sustaining economic development (Keleş, 2008), housing is considered to be a consumption good or an investment tool in Turkey. At this point income level is the fundamental determinant of demand for housing.

İstanbul's transformation into a service sector center in the 1980s accelerated spatial transformation. Due to inadequate physical infrastructure in the city center (insufficient road network for the traffic volume, insufficient parking and public transport services, etc.), decentralization of the central business district towards the periphery was one of the most important consequences of İstanbul's transformation into a service sector center (Dökmeci et al., 1993). The globalized city is a city of value added services, and İstanbul has a developing service sector in the fields of marketing, accounting and management, telecommunication, banking and finance, transportation, insurance, computers and data processing, legal services, consulting, advertising, design, engineering and more (Keyder, 2006). As one of the provinces with the highest rate of urban population increase (35%) between 1990 and 2000, İstanbul's 6-7% annual population increase in urbanization brings 150,000 people to the city every year (Keleş, 2008). İstanbul's population in 2000 was 10,018,735, while in 2013 official records reported it to be 14,160,467 (TÜİK, 2013). This means a population increase of approximately 4 million over 13 years. The negative effects of this rapid urbanization lowered the quality of life in the city. Especially the 1990s was a period when high-income groups in İstanbul sought to meet their demand for global standards of quality of life in GCs located in the periphery (Öncü, 1999; Pınarcıoğlu & Işık 2009; Bali, 2009; Keyder, 2006; Hacısalıhoğlu, 2000). With this exodus from the city center, the number of gated communities in the urban periphery began to rise rapidly. Between 1990 and 2000, the population density in İstanbul's periphery increased by 73.2% (Berköz, 2010).

According to many researchers, there is a strong correlation between the consumption centered lifestyle adopted by the rising middle classes, or the new urban elite, and the ever increasing number of GCs in İstanbul. Today, globalization imposes a new lifestyle by means of media and communication tools and the type of housing that corresponds to this consumption centered lifestyle is gated communities. Gated communities promise a life that is safe, privileged, prestigious, different, healthy, comfortable, clean, confined and disconnected from the city and its others (Bilgin, 2006; Keyder, 2006; Kurtuluş, 2005; Öncü, 1999; Erkip, 2003; Bali, 2009; Hacısalıhoğlu, 2000).

Consumption centered global culture threatens the continuity of local cultures, and its assimilation of cultures homogenizes the spaces it produces (Hacısalıhoğlu, 2000). İstanbul's GCs, malls, office buildings, hotels and other new developments are very similar to examples from anywhere in the world. These spaces are considered to be indicators of globalization. In İstanbul, old neighborhoods are being replaced with GCs, old urban subcenters are being replaced with malls

and the old central business district is being replaced with high rise office buildings. The current development of shopping malls, where the global and the local merges, as alternatives to city subcenters (Erkip, 2003) explains their increasing number near GC developments.

Consumption culture turns certain meanings and values into purchasable products using the media. According to Öncü (1999), one of the most important consequences of the cultural dynamics of recent years has been the adoption of a mythology of the ideal home by the upper and middle-income groups in Istanbul. The apartment block that once symbolized the modern lifestyle has been replaced with the ideal home which offers a homogenous life in sterile spaces with a dreamland scenario—in other words, GCs. Since the 1950s, it has been a status indicator to be living on the Bosphorus coast. Today GCs located in the periphery or in the center more commonly symbolize status (Öncü, 1999). In the early 1990s, the wealthy lived on the coast, the poor lived in the periphery, and middle-income groups occupied the areas in between (Pınarcıoğlu & Işık, 2009). However, the movement of urban elites towards peripheral GCs has dramatically rearranged this picture. Perhaps the most obvious proof that GCs are considered a status symbol is the fact that GC residents in Istanbul give the name of their GC, rather than their neighborhood, when asked for their address (Eren & Dolmacı, 2006).

The income inequality and employment opportunities created by post-1980 neoliberalization were accompanied by social segregation. The distinctive social and physical dynamism, the continuous structural production and destruction of Istanbul differentiated its response to globalization from that of Western cities. Istanbul's geographical location, its polycentric structure and its division into three sections (the Asian side and the two European sections divided by the Golden Horn, Dökmeci & Berköz, 1994) influenced its style of segregation. Pınarcıoğlu and Işık (2009) discussed segregation based on poverty. Poor people rapidly recognized the advantages of the informal economy and the real estate market and adapted to them rather than juts sitting by and watching. This is an important factor in understanding Istanbul's distinctive social dynamics. Segregation in Istanbul is socioeconomic, and ethnicity is not an important factor. Economic, social and spatial transformation in Istanbul together with GCs began to define a new urban context oriented towards segregation. The society was divided into two by the increasing inequality of consumption opportunities, the lifestyles and consumption patterns of these two groups were segregated spatially and this distance is still growing (Keyder 2006; Kurtuluş, 2005; Pınarcıoğlu & Işık, 2009; Hacısalihoğlu, 2000; Erder, 2006). The segregation in housing areas became even more visible with GCs. According to Kurtuluş (2005-2011) gated communities, socially and spatially separated from their surroundings, are a disconnected and alienating setup. GCs are located next to each other, but are not connected to each other. This creates a fragmental urban structure. The rapid increase in the number of gated communities leads to the emergence of an introverted new social class that does not relate to the city, does not care to know or perceive the city, that is and that isolates itself from the city (Erder, 2006).

In the post-1980 period, big capital has replaced small entrepreneurs and property developers. When small developers and illegal housing production failed to meet the demand for housing, large scale housing development projects were launched (Tekeli, 2000). With the new Mass Housing Law in 1984, the private sector was encouraged to participate in housing production (Keleş, 2008). This type of housing was produced by both the state and the private sector. However, state initiatives

targeted middle-income groups, while the private sector targeted upper- income groups to achieve higher profit levels.

The production of gated communities in the urban periphery for upper-income groups by local and international private developers gained momentum in the 1990s (Keyder, 2006).

## 2.2. THE NEW LIFE STYLE

The first gated communities in Istanbul were villas built for upper-income married couples with children (Fig 2). These communities were characterized by a lifestyle that focused on prestige, privacy and quality, rather than security (Geniş, 2007).



Figure 2. Kemer Country (retrieved from study tour presentation of A. T. Altiner, ENHR 2010, İstanbul)

The alternative to these for upper-income singles and couples without children was gated towers in the center of the city. Gated tower residents were offered secretarial, food, cleaning and laundry services as if they were living in a five-star hotel (Bali, 2009). According to Ünsal-Gülmez (2008) the users of Istanbul's gated towers ("rezidans" in Turkish) are mostly high level professionals. They tend to be single, very busy and visit Istanbul often (mostly for work). They are businessmen, industrialists, senior executives and newlywed couples (Fig 3). The companies that build gated towers define their potential customers or tenants as "financiers, brokers, architects, civil engineers, famous businessmen and artists who work more than 12 hours a day" (Bali, 2009; p.122).



Figure 3. Polat Tower (retrieved on 20.02.2015, <http://www.polattower.com/tr/sanalur>)

In recent years, the trend of living in gated communities has begun to include middle-income groups as well (Aydın-Yönet 2009; Aydın-Yönet & Yirmibeşoğlu, 2009; Görgülü, 2011). Gated communities established on smaller plots with denser

development consisting of apartment blocks are proliferating and have become more accessible for these groups (Fig 4). Thus, peripheral gated communities consisting of high density apartment blocks for middle-income residents started to be developed. Research shows that security is a major concern in the gated communities of this type (Aydın-Yönet 2009; Aydın-Yönet & Yirmibeşoğlu, 2009). Studies reveal that the main notions that are used to promote these projects are security, fear of crime, amenities, a privileged (although fictive) lifestyle, belonging, privacy and prestige (status).



Figure 4. Avrupa Konutları I (photograph by N. Aydın Yönet, 2009)

Pelin Tan (2008) mentions that, as the number of GCs in İstanbul increases, the concepts of public space, privatization, urban community, security, identity and citizenship have taken on new meanings, and belonging to the city has been replaced by belonging to the GC. Bali (2009) defines belonging to GCs as belonging to a lifestyle, rather than to a place, and calls it “town citizenship.” According to him these developments try to construct a social club atmosphere where the members live in a world of privileges.

Social and spatial segregation play an important role in the lifestyle offered by gated communities. Fridin-Özgür (2006) identifies the most important reasons for moving into GCs as security, well kept landscapes and prestige. The lifestyle here is family-centered. GCs are significantly disconnected from the rest of the city. Although their residents do not want to relate to the surrounding neighborhood, in the end they are forced to do so to obtain services such as housecleaning and baby sitting. The weakness of neighborly relations and residents’ unwillingness to participate in management and collective activities lead to a dearth of community life in GCs. This study, in which spatial and social segregation was demonstrated clearly, education and income levels were found to be the main components of segregation. The disapproval of income group diversity found among the households in the İstanbul sample, with pretenses such as security or communication difficulties, supports the claim that there is a demand for living in a homogenous income group (Ünsal-Gülmez & Ulusu-Uraz, 2010). Economic homogeneity characterizes the GCs in İstanbul.

The activities and facilities offered in gated communities focus on women and children (Erder, 2006). Metropolitan women prefer to live in gated communities for reasons such as security, feeling of freedom, reduced fear of crime, escape from the moralistic pressures of neighbors, saving time and having more time for themselves, their children, spouse and home (Aydın-Yönet, 2010). Women face a variety of difficulties in public space. These include insufficient street lighting, insecurity on public transportation, poorly built sidewalks (hard to walk with strollers, etc.) and planning approaches that try to reduce commuting times, but disregard the way stations (Oguz &

Atatimur, 2008). These factors are eliminated in GCs. The changing economic, social and cultural structure leads to changes in family structures. Today, the number of women who live alone and the number of single mothers are increasing (Çetin, 2007). Gated communities are highly favored by women who live alone (especially single mothers) due to the facilities and feeling of security they provide. Gated communities offer many advantages, especially to career women who are in the working mothers group. However, mothers who are educated and have a profession but are not working due to economic crises are being pushed towards living in these disconnected housing areas, and this is another dimension of this subject. In the case of İstanbul, the fact that the urban planning approach ignores women and forces them out to these communities leads us to question whether this is really a solution (Aydın-Yönet, 2010).

Looking at the factors of security and fear of crime as the driving forces of GC development in İstanbul, we find that the media is promulgating anxiety and paranoia. Aydın-Yönet and Yirmibeşoğlu (2009) conducted studies that show that there is no significant relationship between gated community density and crime rates in İstanbul. On the contrary, they claim that GCs are becoming targets for crime (Erkip, 2003) and mobilizing criminals to the periphery. The total number of GCs in İstanbul is unknown, and insufficient data limits research in this field.

According to Karasu (2008) the rate of increase in crimes against public order in İstanbul between 2000 and 2006 is 216%, and this value ranks thirteenth among the fifteen most populous cities in Turkey. According to official the Turkish Statistical Institute’s 2008 data, crimes in İstanbul made up 15.5% of the crimes in Turkey, and this ratio is fell to 12.5% in 2012 (TÜİK, 2013). Known for its very low crime rates in the ranking of the world’s metropolises, İstanbul’s crime rate is also lower than expected among Turkish cities. However, it needs to be remembered that the fear of crime develops independently from real crime (Aydın-Yönet, 2011).

The satisfaction levels of residents of gated communities in İstanbul generate even more demand for gated communities. A study by Özkan and Kozamaz (2006) shows that the top three factors of user satisfaction are high environmental quality, activities and facilities and sufficient security. In order of importance the problems indicated by users are insufficient public services (infrastructure problems), distance to the city center, increasing population and urbanization, lack of public transport, high payments for housing maintenance and infrastructure, traffic jams and weak neighborly relations.

Berköz (2010) conducted a study on the housing and environmental satisfaction of households living in upper-income group GCs consisting of single family villas in İstanbul. The results showed that the most important reasons for user satisfaction were open spaces and green areas, security and social relations.

GCs for upper-income groups market themselves for prestige and privacy (İnal-Çekiç & Gezici, 2009; Geniş, 2007; Aydın-Yönet 2009; Aydın-Yönet & Yirmibeşoğlu, 2009) while middle income group projects emphasize lifestyle (İnal-Çekiç & Gezici, 2009; Aydın-Yönet 2009; Aydın-Yönet & Yirmibeşoğlu, 2009). However, security is an indispensable for all the income groups that choose gated communities (Aydın-Yönet, 2011).

Gated communities in İstanbul can be categorized as horizontal and vertical developments (Görgülü, 2011). Levent and Gülümser (2007) elaborated this typology and described four main groups of GCs in İstanbul:

- Gated towers in the city center that appeal to upper income groups, in the form of vertical developments,

- Gated villa towns in the periphery that appeal to upper and upper-middle income groups, in the form of horizontal developments,
- Gated apartment blocks in the periphery that appeal to upper, upper-middle and middle income groups, in the form of vertical developments,
- Mixed areas in the periphery that appeal to upper, upper-middle and middle income groups.

It would be helpful to add another group to this typology to include developments that were gated after they were established.

### 2.3. THE EFFECTS ON PLANNING

Istanbul's geographical location is advantageous in terms of international connections and is an important factor in attracting global investments. The 1999 Marmara earthquake was an important turning point for Istanbul's housing market. Gated community production by local and foreign housing investors for upper, upper-middle and middle income groups kept its pace. Urban sprawl in the periphery is determined by GCs. Gated towers with their vertical neighborhood effect arose in the center of the city. Gated communities stand out as a new form of housing production in Istanbul.

First, the effects of GCs on planning should be considered in terms of site selection decisions. Site selection decisions need to be evaluated in terms of their burden on the existing infrastructure. The private governance of the township municipalities ("belde belediyesi" in Turkish) have had an encouraging rather than preventative effect on the uncontrolled increase in the number of gated communities in Istanbul's urban periphery. The powers of township municipalities have been intentionally increased by the national government (Keyder, 2006). The power to make plans independently from master plans led to an increase in the number of GCs within these municipalities in the periphery. Upper income groups' residence in peripheral GC's serves the economic interests of municipalities by reducing infrastructure expenditure, and therefore township municipalities encourage gated community developments. Moreover, new employment opportunities created by these developments have a positive effect on the surrounding neighborhoods (İnal-Çekiç & Gezici, 2009). As a result developers continue gated community production with the pretense that they are creating more livable environments, providing new employment opportunities and preventing illegal urban development (Levent & Gülümser, 2007).

The fact is that most township municipalities (according to 1997 data, 47%) are located within drinking water catchment basins (Özçevik, 1999) and private forests have been opened for development accelerated gated community production (Berköz, 2010; Özçevik, 1999; İnal-Çekiç & Gezici, 2009). GCs in Istanbul are built by cooperatives, the Housing Development Administration, local governments, private entrepreneurs and Türkiye Emlak Bankası (Berköz, 2010). Currently, the peripheral urban development of Istanbul is determined and directed by GCs.

The fact that plots of desired size and price can be easily found in the periphery drove developers to these areas, and they in turn attracted potential buyers or users here with the diversity and quality of the facilities their projects offer. Due to land scarcity and high prices in the city, central gated communities are much more expensive than peripheral ones. However, land prices in certain peripheral areas where GCs are concentrated (e.g., Gokturk, Halkali, Atasehir) have been rising in recent years.

İnal-Çekiç and Gezici's (2009) study of the Gökürk township questions site selection decisions by examining the effects of GCs on spatial development. Areas where important

GCs are located became attractive to more developers, and becoming a famous brand is a principal motivation for developers. Becoming a brand makes it much easier to get a bigger piece of the pie.

Urban transformation projects in Istanbul have a significant effect on the development of GCs. One of the pretenses for urban transformation projects is to prevent socioeconomic polarization. One method of transformation is the gated communities produced for upper and middle income groups and built in rural areas or forests. Since the year 2000, polarization increased even more due to the legalization of urban transformation and incentives given to this type of development (Ataöv & Osmay, 2007). Urban transformation projects defeated their purpose in the context of GCs.

With the help of the global capital, GC production in Istanbul targets the international market as well as the local. The more different the architectural concepts of new projects, the more expensive they are. In this sense, housing became a brand (Görgülü, 2011). An interview with architect Emre Arolat, who designed numerous GC projects in Istanbul gave important clues for evaluating GCs' architectural concepts. According to Arolat, the postmodern wave of the the 1980s affected Istanbul, and a kitsch development trend that disregarded architectural design and style emerged (Arolat, 2011). Under current conditions, the products of architecture are consumed by upper income groups. According to Arolat the most important motive for gated communities is the lack of high quality urban space. The fact that gated communities are rarely found in neighborhoods that have plentiful and well maintained public spaces supports this claim (Akyol-Altun, 2011).

Gated communities are also favored as investment tools because they offer secure real estate value. It is known that GCs' neighborhoods and their distances to the city center determine prices. It is estimated that the prices fall about 3% for each kilometer of distance from the city center. The size and number of rooms also affect prices. The variety of activities and facilities offered by the gated community increase prices, too (Altınay-Cingöz, 2010).

From the developers' point of view, GCs in Istanbul can be categorized as lifestyle communities and prestige communities. Northern sprawl towards forests and water catchment basins proximity to natural resources and minimal seismic risk (an important criterion all lead to increasing GC density in the north. However, these developments threaten natural resources and pose important problems for urban sustainability (Levent & Gülümser, 2007; İnal-Çekiç & Gezici, 2009; Berköz, 2010).

Another criticism of GCs claims that their private capital driven planning process is rendering public sphere obsolete (Bilgin, 2006; Keleş, 2008; Kurtuluş, 2005; Erder, 2006). Privatization of public spaces is undesirable for the idea of the city.

Since 2010 more than 1000 large scale GC projects have been initiated in Istanbul (Kurtuluş, 2011). This number is increasing every day, and Istanbul continues its uncontrolled growth while urban rent concerns prevent the creation of appropriate strategies.

### 3. Conclusion

Gated communities in Istanbul are socioeconomically homogeneous. Spatial homogeneity is ensured by restricting unwanted land uses in the area. This is how private governance structures are insuring real estate values.

Private governance is usually supported by local governments because it reduces public service costs. These

private governance structures are considered to be a new micro scale governance model (Giglia, 2003).

Contrary to expectations, GCs are not increasing community interactions and are actually reducing them. Gated communities in İstanbul therefore should be considered “gated residential developments” rather than “gated communities.”

Gated communities meet certain expectations by socially and spatially segregating themselves from their surroundings. Separating insiders and outsiders, life inside the gated community is predictable, safe, privileged, high quality, private and prestigious, close to nature, ordered, organized and comfortable. The social cohesion provided by the rules of the private governance ensures tranquility and serenity. The new global lifestyle desired by the new urban elite is also attained in gated communities. However, the belonging felt by residents is not to the place, but to the lifestyle.

Gated communities in İstanbul have been criticized for privatizing public spaces and sweeping away public life, for their closed structure as opposed to the open structure of the modern city, for their homogeneity as opposed to the inherent heterogeneity of the city, for mobilizing crime in the city and for causing social and spatial segregation. Gated communities are located close to nature (generally horizontal type of developments) and striving to use natural resources, which are harmed by their uncontrolled growth. Their socially segregating design has a negative effect on sustainable society, their close proximity to natural resources has a negative effect on sustainable development and their privileged services for a privileged group has a negative effect on a sustainable economy.

Housing is an economic development issue as much as a social issue. Rehabilitation of the existing housing stock by reinvesting in it and reinforcing this process with policies that encourage households to reinvest in their homes would uplift neglected sections of the city. These efforts are very important in terms of housing policies, and they could significantly reduce the need for GCs.

Appropriate policies that address GCs, which are directing urban growth in the periphery, are urgently needed. These policies need to take İstanbul’s urban identity into consideration, be based on sustainable development, revitalize the public sphere and resist urban rent speculation.

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