# Are gated communities an innovation in suburban growth context?

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### Resumo

Este artigo procura fazer uma análise sistémica dos condomínios fechados, como áreas de crescimento urbano, explorando as diferentes estratégias dos actores envolvidos, promotores e residentes. Ambos são responsáveis por decisões que orientam políticas e condicionam estratégias de localização, que conduziram o processo de difusão dos condomínios fechados nos últimos 150 anos nas cidades capitalistas. Comparar tendências de curto e longo prazo no aparecimento e desenvolvimentos destes enclaves ajuda a estruturar um debate sobre o seu significado na paisagem urbana contemporânea e o impacto no processo e práticas de planeamento.

Uma análise histórica, e respectiva tendência de evolução dos condomínios fechados, mostra a ligação entre a sua dinâmica e os padrões e conceitos clássicos de produção do espaço residencial e das paisagens suburbanas, como por exemplo os de exclusividade, comunidade, desenvolvimento residencial e administração privada. Como resultado da crescente procura por mais segurança, os condomínios fechados passaram a liderar a oferta do sector imobiliário, com a sua expansão a ser sempre o resultado de uma parceria entre promotores imobiliários e administração local, ambos concordando que os custos inerentes da expansão deste tipo de desenvolvimento urbano (construção e manutenção das infra-estruturas localizadas dentro dos condomínios fechados) devem ser imputados aos seus proprietários. A infra estruturação do espaço residencial é particularmente valioso nas franjas urbanas, onde o custo da expansão urbana excede os recursos financeiros das autoridades públicas locais.

Assim, estes novos projectos privados de crescimento urbano possibilitam a fixação de novos residentes, pertencentes a classes mais favorecidas, com custos

praticamente inexistentes para as autoridades locais. Como compensação, aos novos moradores destes empreendimentos é facultado, através de vias privadas e exclusivas, o acesso a determinados locais privilegiados ambientalmente e paisagisticamente, valorizados para o recreio e lazer (lagos, praias), privilégios e exclusividade que favorecem a valorização imobiliária destes condomínios fechados. Finalmente, o factor novidade amplifica o seu estatuto de fenómeno global e produz efeitos na expansão do fenómeno urbano ao redor das cidades; geram igualmente externalidades que favorecem os seus residentes, graças à homogeneização social existente com o acesso exclusivo a determinados serviços, em detrimento dos não residentes.

**Palavras-chave:** Condomínios Exclusivos, Expansão Urbana, Segregação, Externalidades, Desenvolvimento Residencial, Parceria Público-privado

### **Abstract**

This paper aims at proposing a systemic analysis of gated communities as generic patterns of urban growth, through the strategies of actors, promoters and residents involved in their development. They all make choices, provide policies and orient location strategies, which have supported the process of diffusion of gated residential enclaves for at least 150 years in capitalist cities. Comparing long-term and short-term trends in the emergence of such enclaves helps structuring a debate about their real significance in contemporary urban landscape and planning practices.

An exploration of the historical threads and lineation of gated communities connects their diffusion dynamic with classical patterns in the production of residential spaces and suburban landscapes such as exclusivity, community, residential developments, private governance. Also resulting of a recent increased demand for security, gated communities are now a leading offer from the homebuilding industry. But their sprawl emerges from a partnership between local governments and land developers. Both agree to charge the homebuyer with the cost of urban sprawl (construction and maintenance costs of infrastructures within the gates). Such a structuring of residential space is then particularly valuable on the urban edges, where the cost of urban sprawl exceeds the financial assets of local public authorities.

New private developments provide local governments with new wealthy taxpayers at almost no cost. As compensation, the homebuyer is granted with a private and exclusive access to sites and amenities (lakes, beaches, etc.). Such exclusivity favors the location rent, and usually positively affects the property

value within the gated enclaves. Finally, their novelty echoes their recent status of a global phenomenon that produces spillover effects in cities. They ultimately produce externalities, favoring their residents through the means of social homogeneity and private operations of services; but clearly detrimental to non-residents and other citizens in their vicinity.

**Keywords:** Gated Communities, Urban Sprawl, Segregation, Externalities, Residential Developments, Public – private Partnership

# Résumé

Les gated communities, une innovation dans un contexte de croissance urbaine? Cet article propose une analyse systémique de gated communities comme des formes génériques de la croissance urbaine, à travers les stratégies d'acteurs, des promoteurs et des résidents impliqués dans leur développement. Chacun de ces acteurs opère des choix, met en œuvre des politiques publiques qui orientent les stratégies de localisation : ceci contribue à structurer le développement des enclaves résidentielles fermées dans les villes capitalistes depuis au moins 150 ans. Une telle comparaison des dynamiques à long terme et à court terme de l'émergence de ces enclaves doit contribuer à structurer le débat sur la signification des gated communities dans les espaces urbains et dans les pratiques d'aménagement.

On relie les linéaments historiques de la genèse des gated communities aux formes classiques de production des quartiers résidentiels et de leurs paysages, qui impliquent la mise en œuvre des logiques d'exclusivité, de lotissements pavillonnaires, de gestion privée en copropriété. Il apparaît que les gated communities émergent également d'une logique sécuritaire plus récente, qui en ont fait une offre importante de la part des promoteurs immobiliers. Néanmoins, leur diffusion émerge plutôt d'un partenariat poussé entre les autorités locales et les lotisseurs, en accord pour faire porter les coûts d'infrastructure liés à l'étalement urbain sur l'acquéreur d'un bien immobilier. Une telle structuration de l'espace résidentiel est alors particulièrement intéressante sur les fronts d'urbanisation où les coûts de l'étalement excèdent largement les capacités financières des autorités publiques locales.

Les nouvelles résidences privées offrent à ces autorités de nouveaux contribuables locaux, sans qu'elles aient à en supporter le coût. Comme compensation de cet investissement financier, l'acquéreur obtient l'exclusivité de l'accès au site, à ses équipements et à ses aménités (plages, lacs...). Une telle exclusivité agit en faveur de la valeur des propriétés situées au sein des gated

communities. Finalement, leur relative nouveauté réside dans leur statut récent d'un phénomène global qui se traduit par une production accrue d'externalités dans la ville : elles favorisent leurs résidents par les biais d'une grande homogénéité sociale et par des services privés ; mais ces aspects agissent souvent au détriment des quartiers situés dans leur voisinage.

**Mots-Clés :** Gated Communities, Étalement Urbain, Segregation, Externalités, Lotissements Résidentiels, Partenariat Public-privé.

"When the architect does not built the city, the developer does" (Rem Koolhas). In a capitalist city, this statement reflects the economical patterns supporting the development of gated communities, which indeed characterize a city built by land developers, where market, speculation and location rent are preeminent forces structuring the urban space. In order to get a better understanding of the significance of privates residential enclaves in contemporary urban landscapes, this paper aims at proposing a systemic analysis of the real estate product called "gated communities", as generic patterns of urban growth, through the strategies of actors, promoters and residents involved in their development.

Since the early 1990's, the discourse about gated communities has acquired a striking amplitude, especially in the US and in Latin America. The media, echoing many social sciences papers, have described the security-oriented and privatized urbanism, the social fragmentation of the city, the aggravation of urban segregations, and even a trend towards a secession, that gated communities are both symbols and symptoms of. According to Blakely and Snyder's definition (1997), gated communities are walled and gated residential neighborhoods. Because security systems and around the clock gates prevent from public access, these neighborhoods represent a form of urbanism where public space is being privatized. They mainly differ from condominiums and secured apartment complexes because they include behind the gates public amenities and public spaces, which can usually be used by everybody, such as streets, parks, sidewalks and beaches. This focus on gating has grown up while every continents were gained by gated enclaves, and proliferating in Latin America (Caldeira, 2000; Carvalho, Varkki George, Anthony, 1997), China (Giroir, 2002), South-East Asia, Australia (Burke, 2001), in Europe (Jaillet, 1999), in former communist Eastern Europe countries and in the Arab world (Glasze, 2000; Glasze, Alkhayyal, 2002). Gating is thus interpreted as a global trend drawn from U.S. models, but developed according to local political, legal and architectural traditions (Glasze, Frantz, Webster, 2002).

Proposing a systemic analysis of gated communities requires focusing on actors, whose choices, policies and strategies, have been determinant in the diffusion of gated residential enclaves for at least 150 years in capitalist cities. Comparing long-term and short-term trends in the emergence of such enclaves will also help structuring a debate about their real significance in contemporary urban landscape and planning practices.

This aim will be pursued through three entries, each of which enlightening or relativizing the significance of the spread of gated communities. First, as a residential form produced by the home-building industry, retracing their place — both in space and time — is a necessity. Second, residential enclaves are to be analyzed in terms of planning, as privately-operated means of provision of residential land-use. This raises the following question: if such development were detrimental to the urban fabric, why public authorities do not restrict them, and indeed support their diffusion? Third there are systemic interactions between residents, each of whom expecting rewards his residential choice to live behind gates (tidiness of the environment, quietness and security, etc.), and other residents from nearby non-gated community, for whom spillover effects produced by gated communities are often detrimental.

# 1. Developers, real-estate markets, and gated communities

Getting a better understanding of both the origin and the status of private and gated communities in the wide array of residential developments requires retracing the history and the processes which have inspired during almost two centuries the morphology of urbanization, the life-styles, the security concerns, in brief every characteristics being synthesized in gated communities. In a world of standardization and global diffusion of life-style models and urbanization practices, it is of interest to focus on the history of gated communities in the United States. First because U.S. models are often considered as a generic model spread by international real-estate developers. Second because it has strong similarities with residential development history, its ideological grounds, and the evolution of juridical principles in homeowners associations.

# 1.1. A long maturation of private urbanization models

A first thread of inspirations for gated communities relates to the romantic suburbs utopias and projects, and Haskell's Llewellyn Park probably was the first gated community ever built in the U.S, continuously operating a gatehouse and a private police since 1854 (Jackson, 1985). Jackson mentions that Davis, the

architect, was inspired by the European romantic architecture, and introduced four main innovations, now standard features in suburban residential developments. First, a curvilinear street pattern emphasized a Jeffersonian pastoral ideal, while connecting the community to a natural setting located in the center of the neighborhood. Olmsted later transposed this pattern to the master planned community of Riverside (Illinois) in 1868. Second, he introduced private governance of public spaces, the central park of the development being preserved as a natural landscape under the private jurisdiction of a *Committee of Management*. Third, a restrictive covenant prohibited any commercial or industrial activity within the residential park. The fourth innovation was the enclosure and a sign posted: "Private Entrance. Do Not Enter". The residential park thus provided its inhabitant with a protected environment, and introduced four basic elements of the contemporary suburb: the street patterns favoring low density and natural setting; the private governance realm; the restrictive covenants enforcing the stability and homogeneity of the neighborhood; the exclusivity of the park. The prototype of the American suburb and master-planned community also was the first gated community, thus linking both phenomena in a kin of urban developments.

It may seem a paradox to mention that the original conception of private cities and master-planned communities, as forecast by Howard 1898 *Tomorrow: A Peaceful Path to Real Reform* (Howard, 1902) was inspired by planned socialist communities, like Fourier's *Phalanstère* and 1804 Ledoux's industrial utopia of Arc-et-Senans (Schaer, Claeys, Sargent, 2000). Garden-cities also became a source of inspiration both for an ideal master-planned community implemented in the US in 1924 in Radburn (Jackson, 1985), and a quasi-private local governance that McKenzie describes as "a democratically controlled corporate technocracy" (McKenzie, 1994, 5), paving the way for the rise of homeowners associations.

A second thread links gated communities to the historical process that brought Common Interest Developments (CIDs) and exclusionary restrictive covenants juridical background from Europe to the U.S.. McKenzie (1994) explores the long European history of restrictive covenants and residential associations. Common ownership of a structure started in the 12th century with the *Stockwerkseigentum* (common property of a building) in German cities. The notion of shared property then appeared in France in 1804, in the early 20th century in other countries in Europe before being transferred in 1928 in Latin America, in Porto-Rico en 1951 and finally in the U.S. in 1961 under the legal concept of Condominium. Property-owners associations and restrictive covenants are distinct from the structure of ownership. It originated in Great Britain after the XVIe century enclosures and the abandon of collective usage of communal lands, which raised the necessity for a body of law setting usage restrictions and rights of ways on private properties. The first restrictive covenants for parks and leisure amenities appeared in the XVIIIe

century in Great Britain: since 1743, a fee has been levied on property owners around Leicester Square in London, and they were granted an exclusive access to it (McKenzie, 1994). McKenzie reports the same usage of restrictive covenants was later used the same way in Manhattan's Gramercy Park, managed by a trustee of homeowners. The first homeowners association per se was created in the US in 1844 in Boston's Louisburg Square; Llewellyn Park and Roland Park (1891) were the first large privately owned and operated luxury subdivisions, exclusive neighborhoods. They set the basements of private urban governance: "to maintain the private parks, lakes and other amenities of the subdivisions, developers created provisions for common ownership of the land by all residents and private taxation of the owners. To ensure that the land would not be put to other uses by subsequent owners, developers attached 'restrictive covenants' to the deeds." (McKenzie, 1994, 9). In the first half of the XXth century, this kind of subdivision became quite common (Mission Hills, Missouri in 1914, Kansas City Country Club District in 1930s, and Radburn in 1928). The main goals of CIDs are to protect property values through various design policies and the application of Covenants, Conditions and Restrictions (CC&Rs). Meanwhile, the application of restrictive covenants to residential neighborhoods has been instrumental in selecting the residents, especially on a race basis (Fox-Gotham, 2000; McKenzie, 1994), and both developers and governments have backed such a discrimination (Massey, Denton, 1993). Since the Supreme Court declared racially-based residential segregation illegal in 1948, restrictive covenants and POA membership have focused on age limitation (for retirements communities, the owner's age must be older than 55) and on required membership (i.e. cooperative housing or country-club), the membership being subject to the approval of the board of directors (Kennedy, 1995; Webster, 2002). Although no reference to race or color can be made during the membership application process, the issuance of the membership is discretionary, based on the principle that any club may regulate its membership (McKenzie, 1994, 76), as far as the criteria for selecting prospective buyers remain reasonable. So far, sociability and congeniality have been considered reasonable criteria by courts (Brower, 1992). Along with landscaping and architectural requirements, subjective criteria of social preference are common in many CIDs, thus helping to maintain a homogeneous social environment in the neighborhood.

A third level of analysis connects to the exclusiveness of the site, brought by gates, walls and private security services. In order to be "peaceful", the usage of a property should indeed be exclusive. Two different kinds of exclusiveness shall be discussed. First, the "golden ghetto", also dubbed "exclusive enclaves" (Blakely, Snyder, 1997), where the gates protect the quietness of the rich, wealthy and sometimes famous from the busy crowds. It can be compared to a club realm and a drive towards private streets. Second, the quest for exclusiveness behind

gates seeks to protect the sense of community. Both principles are present in contemporary middle-class and lifestyle gated communities.

Like in the early gated developments previously discussed, the main reason for gating relates to the exclusive use of a private site and amenities, in order to prevent any free-riding and unwanted visitor. Gated enclaves are operated like a club, its members paying for its private services. In Saint-Louis (Missouri), 47 streets have been progressively closed between 1867 (Benton Place) and the early 1920s (University Hills, Portland Place, Westmoreland Place). Built in 1922, University Hills is a 187 units subdivision with nine manually-operated gates, only one of them being opened each day according to a planning only released among the residents. If entrance was not completely prohibited, through traffic was diverted to other streets. The private streets system has then been extended to several early suburbs in Saint-Louis. It was reported that residents chose to privatize the streets and gate them in order to locally control zoning and land use and to protect property values. It furthermore appeared that the municipality of Saint Louis was unable to provide the residents with correct infrastructure, thus raising the need for local private arrangements (Newman, Grandin, Wayno, 1974). It clearly appears that the exclusiveness is originally designed to protect an infrastructure paid in common by associated private property-owners. Defined as a club realm (Webster, 2002), this association is neither a complete private realm (with complete exclusiveness of property rights) nor completely public (with collective consumption rights and free-riding). In a club, Webster explains that property rights over a local public good (roads and infrastructure) are shared within a group, and denied to all external person. When purchasing a house within a gated community, an association membership is required. Being a member of the association is the condition to use the collective goods and "public" spaces included in the development. Being part of the club is a first step toward being part of the community.

Although a quite blurred and complex notion involving political history, nostalgia, and religious connotations, the word "community" can nevertheless be defined according to five components: a common territory bounded by identified limits (a neighborhood, a village...), shared values defining an identity (religion, ethnic identity...), a shared public domain providing spaces for encounters and socialization, and a common destiny or a common interest (such as the protection of property values in Property Owners Associations) (Blakely, Snyder, 1997). This sense of community, rooted in local politics and attached to the notion of citizenship nevertheless need to be protected against physical aggressions. In 1869, the community of Ocean Grove promoted an original way of avoiding detrimental effects against its sense of community by erecting a gate. Founded in 1869, Ocean Grove was a seaside resort where membership was based on faith and religion

(Parnes, 1978). New York businessmen, along with Methodist-Episcopal clergymen focused on founding a community providing a leisure and vacation retreat in adequacy with faith and morality. Residents and planners developed an urban idealism where faith defined regulations, landscape, and leisure activities. Like in a congregation the rule overwhelms the secular city as described in a 1881 Annual Report: "First a religion [religious community] and then a town... It is a town, but town and all its secularities are subsidized to the religious thought". (Quoted by Parnes, 1978, 34.). Ocean Grove gate was the material protection for a secular community breed in leisure and faith. Surrounded by two lakes and the Atlantic Ocean, the west gates and a bridge were the only accesses to the community, and were to remain closed on Sunday.

Then, gating and fencing a development reify a common territory encompassing shared values and identities. It also helps protecting a sense of community, as well as it probably helps creating this sense of community. In the 1930s, the mix of exclusiveness and lifestyle were already commercial arguments. In Rolling Hills gated development, commercial materials promoted in 1938 the lifestyle of a ranch estate near the already growing city of Los Angeles, advertising on themes emphasizing the uniqueness of the architecture, the affordability of housing, and the exclusiveness of the neighborhood: "A slice of Old Virginia is being reborn in Rolling Hills... the exclusive suburb of Long Beach and the Harbor District! (...) Remember, only fourteen families can buy the homes which are priced no more than ordinary homes on ordinary communities." (Hanson, 1978, 77). Rolling Hills is now home for 2076 inhabitants. Lifestyle was at the same time promoted: "own your own dude ranch in Rancho Palos Verdes... not for profit but for pleasure". (Hanson, 1978).

All these examples share a quasi-utopian suburban vision. But all are resulting from financial land developer strategies. In the 1930s Rolling Hills planning was close enough of a real-estate commodity to emerge as a model for modern gated communities. It is based on lifestyle, an urban setting maintaining rural amenities and romantic references, a scenic location which exclusiveness was guaranteed, and last but not least, the development was backed by powerful financial institutions, as the developer, the Palos Verdes Corporation, belonged to Vanderlip, a New York banker (Hanson, 1978). Exclusive lifestyle developments then became common by the turn of the 1960-70s, designed as mass-consumption real estate developments, financed by large corporations attracted by potential profits and backed by the Government trough the Department of Housing and Urban Development (McKenzie, 1994).

# 1.2. Increased demand for security vs. Supply-side economy

The enclosure of exclusive and lifestyle gated communities previously discussed is inherited from the club-realm, the exclusiveness of a site and its amenities, and shared community values. As an effect of contrast, the fourth and last lineage is far more recent and relates to security concerns in residential areas. In Argentina and in Brazil (Caldeira, 2000), in the US, in Europe (Querrien, Lassave, 1999), in Mexico (Low, 2001), gating is associated with a lack of confidence in the public security enforcement. In the U.S., the necessity of a "well regulated militia", the uninfringeable rights to bear arms and to be secure in their houses, persons and belonging are granted under the IInd and the IVth amendment of the Constitution. The main theorization of gated streets as defensible spaces was developed by Newman (1972) and the Institute for Community Design Analysis. Results from these researches have been widely publicized and incorporated within public policies through urban design guidelines to prevent crime (Newman, 1996). Based on an empirical observation of legacy private streets of Saint Louis, this is a set of theories and architecture practices called Crime Prevention through Urban Design and designed to increase safety in residential areas by acting over the perception of space, controlling the public circulation, and increasing the sentiment of property. In order to prevent urban decay, social control by the residents over the environment is improved especially by the means of gating streets. The diffusion of defensible space guidelines gave a wide publicity to gated enclaves, as it promotes to implementation of "mini-neighborhoods", and experienced them in Dayton (Ohio). The erection of street barriers in retrofitted residential neighborhoods became a way to enforce public safety, to control gang activities, and was developed in several low-income and public housing subdivision, such as Mar Vista Gardens and Imperial Courts in Los Angeles South Central (Leavitt, Loukaitou-Sideris, 1994). Newman's set of guidelines was also exported abroad, and was used in France through various improvements of public space in decaying public housing (Lefrançois, 2001).

A demand-side analysis assumes that homebuyers consider security, social cohesion, fear of the others and sense of community as key motivations for living in gated communities (Carvalho, Varkki George & Anthony, 1997; Caldeira, 2000; Low, 2003). This demand-side analysis for lifestyle communities offering leisure facilities and other amenities along with security features does not completely explain the diffusion of this model. But gated communities are not an isolated trend towards an improved urban security and crime prevention. Derivates are policies involving the population in crime prevention (such as Neighborhood Watch programs), and community policing theories. In this global trend of community involvement to prevent crime in residential areas, the public authorities often back

these programs. Although the fear of urban crime is not specific to gated community residents, recent streets gating are clearly motivated by the fear of crime, among other factors, as demonstrated by several empirical researches (Low, 2003; Wilson-Doenges, 2000).

A *supply-side analysis* leads to a better understanding of the nature of the "gated community" product, a package deal of cutter-cookies and glamorous properties along with a bunch of services (leisure and security) that generates at least a 10 % added-value (according to interviews with real estate agents in 1999). Indeed, property pricing in gated communities is not only the sum of square footages, number of rooms, features and services included in the real estate product (i.e. leisure facilities, cable TV, DSL Internet, and security services), but also a "snob value" which has a cost for the owner. Indeed, the industry generates a more comfortable margin when selling a house with a lot of services for which the added value is higher (whereas the financial benefits of building a house are low) : security companies and other service providers gain new customers who pay an annual fee instead of paying the raw house only once.

# 1.3. Developments designed to fit each market segment

In the U.S., the percentage of people living in gated communities is now estimated, according to the latest 2001 American Housing Survey up to 11.1% in the west, 6.8 in the south, and less than 3% in other regions (Sanchez, Lang, Dhavale, 2003).

In order to analyze the extent of the market, a set of 219 gated communities built before 2000 have been identified in 7 counties of the Los Angeles area (Los Angeles, Riverside, Orange, Ventura, San Bernardino, Santa Barbara and San Diego). This database is derived from the same sources as a prospective homebuyer would use (realtors' listings, advertisements) and has been implemented with materials from interviews with local officials, and data from assessment maps and 2000 Census data.

Their locations tend to maximize location rents and are both in the outskirts of the city and within older urbanized areas. Ocean fronts in Santa Barbara, Malibu, Newport Beach or Dana Point in Orange county, secluded hill areas in Palos Verdes peninsula or in Malibu Mountains, and finally desert and resort sites (Palm Springs) are the favorite locations. But social context determines their location (Figure 1). As real-estate commodities, it is assumed that they are tailored to fit to specific prospective buyers and located within a consistent social environment. For example, a white and wealthy gated community such as Manhattan Village is located within the mostly white and wealthy municipality of Manhattan Beach. A cluster analysis of census tracts in 2000 shows that gated communities are located

within every kind of middle class and upper-class neighborhoods, and are now available for every market segment: half of them are located within the rich, upper-scale and mostly white neighborhoods, and one third are located within the middle-class, average income and white suburban neighborhoods. As an evidence of the social diffusion of the phenomenon, 20% of the gated communities surveyed are located within average and lower income Asian or Hispanic neighborhoods, especially in the northern part of Orange County and in the North of San Fernando Valley (Le Goix, 2003).

In the sample for which the size is accurately known in the database, the number of dwelling units located behind gates could be estimated in 2000 to 80,000 (an estimate of 230,000 inhabitants), 1.5 % of the total housing stock in the Los Angeles areas, and increasing at a fast pace. In 2001, according to the New Home Buyers Guides, this market represented a 12 % average of the new homes market in Southern California, but 21 % in Orange county, 31 % in San Fernando Valley and 50 % in the desert resort areas of Palm Springs: gated communities develop in fast growing areas of the urban edge.

This raises a major issue in terms of planning: to what extent can gated communities be considered as easy means of private provision of residential landuses and urban infrastructure in fast growing areas?

# 2. Planners and gated neighborhoods

# 2.1. Private streets and residential gated estates in city planning: a long term trend

I wish to proceed further with an argument that has little been expressed in the literature, but which should be of interest in order to understand the context of gated communities development. Some early gated developments in the fast growing XIXth century suburb of Paris were not only aristocratic gated estates but also blue-collar gated developments. I argue that these enclaves were developed where gates and fences were already present in the landscape and urban patterns. This statement leads to discuss the genuineness of gated communities in the American suburban context of the late XIXth century. It furthermore connects to the notion of a resilience of the enclosure, the condition of appearance of gated communities being associated to former gating and fencing in the landscape, as an heritage of land use patterns in fast growing suburban areas.

Because of the industrial revolution and the early developments of railways in the 1840s, the development of the outskirt of Paris was fast during the 19th century, and residential subdivision were common patterns (Marchand, 1993;

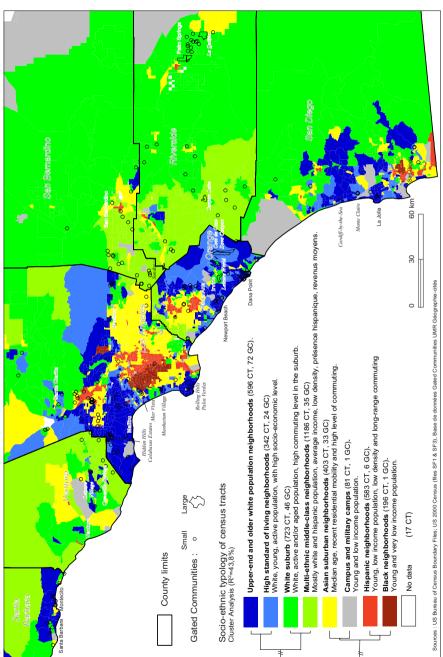


Figure 1. Gated communities in their socio-economic environment.

Roncayolo, 1980). Private subdivisions were mostly a business for the rich and successful persons. The general pattern are the same than in the U.S. as depicted in Llwellyn Park and other early suburbs, emphasizing the bucolic image of manors, villas, hunting-lodges and cottage residences, the builders had preferences for locating in woods, or in the former park of a castle. Some of these developments were in fact gated, and all of them used to be part of an aristocratic fenced domain, sold and later developed.

On a scenic hill, overlooking the Seine River, the Parc de Montretout in Saint Cloud is a pioneer. The private estate was part of the royal domain of Saint-Cloud, and was used as residence for guards and officers. In 1832 the domain was partially dismantled and sold to a private developer, and a homeowner association was created. The first development was planned for 37 properties, and there are today almost 50 distinct units housing about 400 persons. In 1855 restrictive covenants set several restrictions enforced to protect the property values. Housing units were to be built within the three years following the purchase of a lot, and businesses, cafés and ballrooms are prohibited in the subdivision. In 1932, the regulations were amended in order prevent any lot to be subdivided below a 1000 m2 surface, and to restrict the building of temporary structures, of apartment, commercial and industrial buildings. Two apartment complexes have nevertheless been built in the 1970s.

The development has always been gated (Figure 3), but security was not a preeminent goal in the original concept: the restrictive covenants only mention the janitor and its housing unit near the main gate. There is no reference to the gate itself in the covenants, and walls and gates are physical relics of the former park enclosure. The gate can be considered as a resilience of a former usage: it used to be a gated residence for officers and royal guards... and it remained gated even if the land use has changed.

Montretout was a very early example of a private gated development, but this is not an isolated case in Paris. When the city of Paris had annexed adjacent faubourgs in 1860 to extend the built-up area under the jurisdiction of the city, many developers had started to built up private streets and gated "villas" to provide new housing in these fast growing areas. The last known survey (1978) estimated that about 1,000 private streets and residential villas remained aside of the public domain (Direction de l'architecture, 1978). Indeed, many apartment buildings and small individual houses are indeed located in closed private streets around a private square (Villa Adrienne, 14th arrondissement) or in small streets where public traffic is banned. In these villas, property owners associations are in charge of the exclusive streets. The Villa Montmorency in the upper-scale Western side of the city (16th arrondissement) is one of the archetypal examples of gated residential villas in Paris and was built in 1853 with the completion of the Auteuil railway (Restrictive

covenants were set up in 1853; all lots were sold by 1857) (Pinçon, Pinçon-Charlot, 2001). Although sources are unclear whether the Duchesse de Montmorency or the Comtesse de Boufflers was the last owner, the land used to be a former gated aristocratic property: another resilient enclosure.

Gates and private streets in the early 19th century are not restricted to the upper classes. Working-class villas and small private developments were also built, especially near the Southeastern industrial outskirts of Paris along the Seine River. In Athis (nowadays near Orly airport), the Villa des Gravilliers was built in 1897 for 75 inhabitants and was the property of a cooperative mutual society of factory employees in Paris. The mutual society built the private streets and fences, and a lottery was organized to designate the future occupants. The residents were given a 7 years lease with an option for purchasing the lot (Bastié, 1964). In the early XXth century, villas were small private residential developments, at a time when property ownership for the working class was favored by a public policy allowing preferential loans (Ribot & Loucheur laws). It must be mentioned that this kind of mutual society were then very close to the socialist thinking found in the utopian socialism, and later in Howard's Garden City. This thread is shared in common by the early suburban developments inspired by the Garden City models. The diffusion of private streets and enclosure within the working class started early around Paris, and some of them are still inhabited.

# 2.2. The interest of private streets in growing areas

The Parisian context previously discussed highlights two sets of arguments. First, gated and private enclaves are more likely to appear were gates and walls have already be constant features in the built landscape. Second, in a context of increased speculation and strong pressure on land resources in the late XIXth century around Paris, gated residential enclaves develop where the demand for housing units is increasing at a fast rate, in the growing parts of the city.

From this point of view, a comparison with the Los Angeles area is instructive. The first gated neighborhoods were developed in 1935 in Rolling Hills and in 1938 in Bradbury, and some well known gated communities were built early after World War II. These include Hidden Hills (1950) and the original Leisure World at Seal Beach, housing veterans and the retired (1946). Before 1960, about 1,700 housing units were gated in the Los Angeles area. This increased to 19,900 in 1970 through the development of major enclaves like Leisure World (1965) and Canyon Lake (1968). After 1970, new developments were usually smaller and the growth rate decreased: 31,000 gated housing units existed in 1980; 53,000 in 1990; and 80,000 in 2000. In year 2000, this market represented approximately 12 per cent of the new homes market in Southern California. Like in Paris, some of them

were built in areas where former land-uses were originally fenced and gated: Rolling Hills, Hidden Hills used to be farm and ranching land, meaning gated areas to control the cattle. Developers even kept and reconditioned the former gated entrance of the ranch to make it their own. Canyon Lake used to be a summer camp and trailer park, a gated land-use. It became a 9,500 persons gated residential development in 1968.

The diffusion of homogeneous residential suburban communities is related to suburban growth; to the anti-fiscal posture; and to the municipal fragmentation dynamics that have affected the Los Angeles area since the 1950s. This is a process that has progressively lowered the fiscal resources available for local governments. while the urban sprawl produced an increased need in financing public infrastructures (roads, freeways) in a low-density urban region. In Los Angeles, the anti-fiscal posture has been associated with the incorporation<sup>1</sup> of numerous cities – the first of which was Lakewood (1954). These new municipal governments were designed to avoid paying costly county property taxes - which after incorporation were replaced by lower city assessments and better local control over local development and other municipal affairs (Miller, 1981). A second step is the 1978 "taxpayers' revolt" - a homeowner-driven property tax roll back known as Proposition 13 (Purcell, 1997). Passed in 1978, the Jarvis Grann Initiative introduced a 1 per cent limit of the assessed value for property taxes; annual increase is allowed up to 2 per cent a year. This tax limitation increased the need for public governments to attract new residential subdivisions, especially those that would bring wealthy taxpayers into their jurisdiction. A third influence on the spatial diffusion of gated enclaves is the rapid growth of the Los Angeles area, sustained by massive population flows driven to the Sun Belt cities during the 1980s (Frey, 1993).

This set the scene for gated communities to become the perfect "cash cow" (McKenzie 1994). In this context of fiscal quagmire, the interest of public government for gated communities, compared to other non-gated residential developments, lies in their gating: it provides the public authorities with wealthy taxpayers at barely any cost (McKenzie 1994). Indeed, access control and security features represent a substantial cost for the homeowner, not only the capital cost of infrastructure, but also ongoing maintenance costs that otherwise would be borne by the wider tax paying public. As compensation, the homeowner is granted with private and exclusive access to sites and to former public spaces. The resultant

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Incorporation is the legal process by which unincorporated land (under county's jurisdiction) becomes a city, once approved by the State (in California, the LAFCO, Local Agency Formation Commissions are in charge of supervising the process) and by 2/3 of the voters. A new municipality can either be granted a charter by the State as large cities are, or be incorporated under the general law, which is the common case.

exclusivity enhances location rent and positively affects the property values (Lacour-Little and Malpezzi 2001; Le Goix 2002).

As a consequence, the diffusion of gated communities tends to blur the limits between the public realm of municipal governance and the private realm of homeowner association management. Indeed, the status of a Common Interest Development (a residential development operated by a homeowner association) is instrumental in transferring the cost of urban sprawl from the public authority to the private developer and ultimately to the final homeowner (McKenzie, 1994). The enclosure movement has presented many interesting dynamics in regard to the financial situation of public governments since the 1978 tax limitation. For example, to the extent that gating favors property values, it helps increase the property tax basis. The erection of gates also transfers the cost of maintaining urban infrastructure to the association and the homeowner.

Table 1. A dominant market share in the fastest growing areas of the Los Angeles region

	Subdivision	% of gated enclaves among new residential developments		
County		APR 2000	DEC. 2000	DEC. 2001
San Diego	Total	4,7	7,2	5,1
	South S.D. County	. 0	0	6,7
	North S.D. County	5,8	9,3	4,8
Riverside	Total	5,9	5,9	14,3
	Desert and Resorts living	23,1	60,0	50,0
San Bernardino		0,0	3,2	5,9
Orange	Total	7,5	9,0	20,2
	North Orange Co.	10,0	9,5	21,4
	South Orange Co.	3,4	9,7	21,2
	West Orange Co.	8,5	8,1	18,9
Los Angeles	Total	9,1	10,3	11,9
	San Fernando valley	25,0	40,0	30,8
	Santa Clarita / Lancaster	2,4	2,0	4,2
Ventura	Total	7,3	11,8	13,3
Total number of developments		432	417	381
% Gated Communities		6,5	7,7	12,9

Sources: Advertisements in New Home Buyer Guide, Southern California, April 2000, Decembre 2000, Decembre 2001.

Consequently and as shown in table 1, gated communities represent a major share of the market in the fastest growing areas of the Los Angeles region: especially in Orange and Riverside counties where population has boomed since the 1960s (average rate of growth are: + 36 % between 1960 and 1970; + 19 % in the 1970s; +29,5 % in the 1980s). Since 1990, the rate of growth remained quite high and raised above an average 14 % between census 1990 and 2000.

This trend is confirmed by other observations in Phoenix (Arizona): 12 % of the population lives behind gates in an area which experienced a 85 % population growth between 1970 and 1980, +54 % in the 1980s, +58 % in the 1990s (Frantz, 2000).

Although not exclusive neither full explanation *per se*, two factors highly contribute in the location and diffusion of gated enclave. First, gated communities have been a long-term trend in suburban landscapes, and tend to appear where former gated land-uses were already present (ranches, aristocratic properties). Second, municipal government have strong financial interests in the development of private and gated enclaves where the pace of urbanization is too steep to be supported by public authorities dealing with lower tax-bases.

# 3. Citizens vs. Residents of gated communities

# 3.1. A private management of urban sprawl: "the user pays" paradigm

Accordingly with previous sets of arguments, when developing private neighborhoods the homeowner pays for the provision of public services. Like every Common Interest Development or residential association, they are public actors because of the nature of their provision of a public service to the residents and their right to collect a regular assessment. They act at the same time as private governments, based on a private contract (Covenants, Conditions and Restrictions, CC&Rs) enforced to protect the property values (Kennedy, 1995; McKenzie, 1994). The sprawl of gated communities is not, however, to be understood as "secession" from the public authority, but as a public-private partnership, a local game where the gated community has utility for the public authority, whilst the Property Owners Association (POA) is granted autonomy in local governance, and especially in financing the maintenance of urban infrastructure (roads, sidewalks and utilities) and local services (leisure facilities, security services). But this user-pays paradigm creates a high cost for the homeowner, charged with the property taxes, the districts assessments (there usually are water and school districts) and homeowners' fees. This higher 'entry-fee' contributes to protecting property values, socio-spatial selection, and increased social differentiation.

To what extent this structuring of territorial governance is efficient? On the one hand, private firms, developers and homeowners, operating optimal location decisions, produce social costs and generate spillovers effects, such as pollution, sprawl, congestion, competition for land uses, land speculation, free-riding. Interpreted as a market failure (Bator, 1958), such externalities represent a cost for the society as a whole. Following this thread, gating a neighborhood can be conceived in a first instance as a private pre-emptive solution of market failures. It supplies the residents with their own private governance effort to avoid the spillovers of urban residential and industrial developments (crime, traffic, congestion and decay). In so doing, gated communities also produce spillover effects on their neighbors.

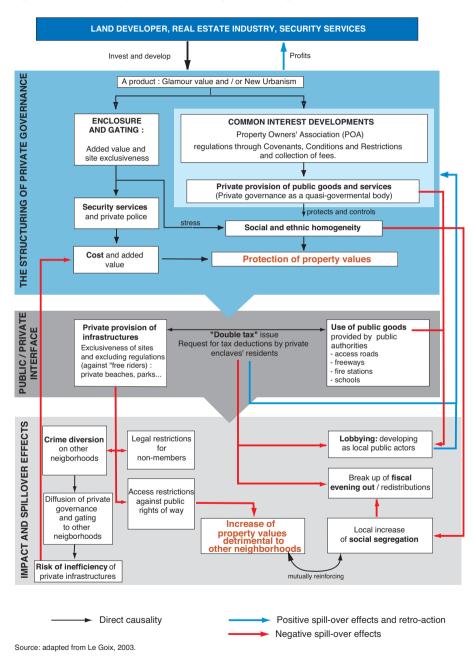
On the other hand, a strong assumption argues that public provision of collective goods and services is inefficient, because of the diseconomies of bureaucracy and the economies of scales allowed by private management and competition between firms. Rejecting the market-failure hypothesis, Foldvary (1994) argues that private communities can provide collective goods by consensual agreement. He rejects the assumption of free-riding being a diseconomy that private communities would be unable to overcome: as a consequence, private communities might be more efficient in providing public goods than public governments. He furthermore argues that private communities (like the private Streets of Saint Louis built in 1867) are actually financing their own collective goods according to the cost/benefits paradigm, whereas public government determines infrastructure investment according to the tax base, thus being inefficient. In this cost/benefits analysis, infrastructures are financed by the homeowners association, and paid for by the location rent which is said to generate for each homeowner enough property value as benefits of the neighborhood improvements (Foldvary, 1994).

# 3.2. A maximization of local interest vs. Negative spill-over effects

For a homeowner, investing in a home located within a gated community has a cost. The debate over the efficiency of private governance efforts has been lively, despite the lack of extensive arguments to sustain it. A convenient way to step in this debate is to analyze the externalities produced by gates and walls around a residential community, as separated and regulated territories. In theory and practice, impact and spill-over effects of public vs. private interactions are often in favor of gated communities residents and the values of their properties, and in disfavor of neighborhoods and non-gated residential communities adjoining a gated community (Figure 2):

- Travel behaviors, for instance, are diverted by gates and walls, thus protecting the tidiness and the quietness of properties (Burke, Sebaly, 2001).
- Regulations for members and legal impact on non-members also clearly favor property values, as CC&Rs are designed to protect physical characteristics and social homogeneity of the development, and to promote under certain circumstances social exclusion. Governing by contractual agreement is formal guarantee that the Association has jurisdiction to impose consensual decision on both members and their property, and on nonmembers (Brower, 1992; Kennedy, 1995).
- Regarding crime, the enclosure has positive impacts for gated community residents and contributes to decrease burglaries and larcenies (Atlas, Leblanc, 1994). But the deterrent effects of gates and walls probably lead

Figure 2. Systemic analysis of externalities produced by gated communities.



to a diversion of crime to other adjacent non-gated communities (Helsley, Strange, 1999). This positive effect for the residents is a massive spill-over for non-resident, and nearby communities might react through the means of building their own gates. The diffusion of security features by mimesis of neighbors is in many cases a diseconomy, hampered by unnecessary security expenditures with regards to the real location of crime in cities, and indeed creating more sense of fear and isolation than really protecting the properties.

- Gated communities produce a noticeable positive on property values (Bible, Hsieh, 2001; Lacour-Little, Malpezzi, 2001). Nevertheless, this price premium appears to be detrimental to properties in non-gated development nearby a gated community (Le Goix, 2002).
- At last, social homogeneity and segregation patterns produced by enclosures also shield property values. Relationship is reciprocal: high property values help selecting residents and create more social (and ethnic) homogeneity (McKenzie, 1994).

Significant differences are measurable between gated communities high level of social homogeneity, and vicinity where more complex social patterns remain vivid. The enclosures indeed contribute to stress local segregation, especially on socio-economic factors and age-criteria. Furthermore, preferential location of gated communities obeys to buffer zones strategies, within homogenous areas regarding ethnic patterns (Le Goix, 2003; Le Goix, 2005).

### Conclusion

Gated communities being not only a so radical and recent change in urban landscape, nor a simplistic trend towards a militarization of society, they are indeed a profound expression of classical patterns in the production of urban spaces and suburban landscapes. Gated communities diffusion usually depends on the will of public authorities to found the urban sprawl by the means of transferring the cost of infrastructures and amenities from the public authority to a private developer. The latter making the final owner to pay for these infrastructures, it indeed justifies gating and privatizing residential space to avoid any "free riding" of non-residents. Such logics were already vivid in the 19th Paris region when land developers actively built out the first residential estates near the railway stations; they are active now in every metropolitan areas where conjoint forces of individual transportation, speculation and land development favor urban sprawl.

The novelty of gated communities in the suburban landscape is their enclosure and its implication for the nature of the territory developed behind the gate.

Theoretically speaking, gated communities are private areas entitled to privately provide public services. The sprawl of gated communities is not to be understood as secession from public authority, but as a public-private partnership: gated communities provide the public authority with new tax payers at little cost, whilst the property owners association is granted an autonomous local governance and assume responsibility for local urban affairs. Consequences are increased diseconomies for nearby residents of non-gated areas, and increased segregation, at least at a local level.

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