

## Research Article

### The Emergence of the Residential Gated Communities in Jordan

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**Abstract:** Gated Residential communities (GRC) are emerging style in several cities in the Middle East since 1990. The goal of this study is to analyze the styles of GRC's and the locations of their growth in Jordan. The study is based on information gathered from several newly built GRCs. Physical properties of GRCs are studied in details. The trends of developed GRCs show three major types. (i) Horizontal gated developments/gated villa towns, (ii) vertical gated developments and (iii) mixed type gated developments/gated towns. The results of our study demonstrate that gated communities have emerged in Jordan cities on peripheries and new suburbs. As lands on the GRC's out-skirts are suitable for large-volume housing outside the city, their proximity to metropolitan facilities and finally their prices make them suitable if not the best locations. Meanwhile, the expansion of gated communities puts pressure on natural environment.

**Keywords:** Amman, gated communities, Jordan, types of gated communities

#### INTRODUCTION

Gated Residential Communities (GRCs) are part of suburbanization based on creating separate communities with rapid spread of proprietary urban communities of the 21st century.

GRCs are a development in which houses, footpaths, communal space and other communal amenities are privatized (physically enclosed by barriers) (Coy and Pöhler, 2002).

Each gated community has an underlying system of private governance administered by a private governance body comprised of property owners. The governance body often referred to as the Home Owners association (HOA) which acts as a quasi-government responsible for the operation and management of important community affairs and issues.

Given the magnitude of growth of gated communities all over the globe numerous methodologies and frameworks are constructed to evaluate the effect it has on all dimensions of city and urban development. Some of which focus on the impact of gated communities on property value and city economy (LaCour-Little and Malpezzi, 2001), while others on governance and city management (Le Goix 2003; MIVT (Metropolitan Institute at Virginia Tech), 2005; Shah, 2006; Landman, 2007). Another group

focuses on the security and life style dimension (Low, 2004).

The expansion of gated communities in Jordan began in the early 1990s. Since then, several gated communities have been established or are under construction in Jordan. They have controlled access through massive gates, where uniformed guards stop all people seeking entrance.

The gated communities are mostly luxurious settlements. These up-scale settlements have been created with private utopia, such as private spaces, infrastructure, security, streets, etc. These massive and rapid investments are delivered to serve the needs of the powerful whilst basic infrastructural improvements for the majority lag far behind.

The current gated community problem in Jordan revolves around the issue of social and physical planning not only in short term impact but also in long term impact. This is due to the demand for a gated community in Jordan has increased in recent years because of the code created by these communities; the prestige and security.

The appearance of residential gated community in Jordan will be explored beyond the security and life style reasons. Therefore, we will focus on the reasons behind the proliferation of residential gated communities in Jordan, the civil society role in addressing issues within residential gated communities,

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and the types of residential gated communities in Jordan.

## UNDERSTANDING GATED COMMUNITIES

Gating is not a new phenomenon. In England, the earliest gated fortresses were built around 300 B.C by the Romans (Blakely and Snyder, 1997). In Europe, gated towns were built for both the need of protection from attack and the desire for enhanced social and economic control of movement and trade (Mumford, 1961). Similar forms of gated residential developments can be traced across different parts of the world throughout the later stages of human civilization (Leisch, 2002; Grant, 2007).

Additionally, case study research in Portugal, Spain, Turkey and Indonesia confirm the magnitude of such urban phenomena growth during the past 20 years (Roitman, 2008).

Furthermore, the number of gated communities has also been on the rise in developing countries all over the Middle East Region since the early 1970s parallel to the influx of foreign manpower to the region and the oil boom. Leading the pace in the region, Saudi Arabia has the largest number of gated communities' inhabitants in the region with over one third of its population (more than 20 million inhabitants) living in gated communities (Salama, 2009).

**Typology of gated communities:** In the literature, there are four major methods of classifying gated communities. However, all of these methods are based on the research topic and are relevant to the case study that the authors have used in their studies. In this section we will summarize each of the four different typologies.

**Typology of Blakely and Snyder:** Basic typology of gated communities is defined by Blakely and Snyder (1997) and is based on North American gated communities. Blakely and Snyder (1997) identified several distinct development types serving very different housing markets with security guards. Each type of gated community has some system of access control, but differs substantially in how they address the development of a sense of community within their walls. In this typology, there are 3 main categories, viz. "lifestyle communities", "prestige communities" and "security zone communities".

From these 3 categories, 9 sub-categories are derived. The first category, "lifestyle communities" have gates that provide security and separation for the leisure activities and amenities offered within.

There are three distinct types of lifestyle community: the "retirement community"; the "golf and leisure community"; and the "suburban new town". The second category is "prestige communities". These are amongst the fastest-growing forms of gated communities. Their gates symbolize distinction and prestige and through this they create a secured and

private space on the social ladder. They lack recreational amenities of the lifestyle communities, often differing little from a standard residential subdivision only by their gates. The gates are motivated by a desire to project an image, protect current investments and control housing values. The however, the third category of Blakely and Snyder's typology, "security zone community", concerns existing developments.

**Typology of Burke:** A second typology is that of Burke (2001). Burke (2001) has defined 5 types of gated communities in the American, British and Australian context. His classification is based on both physical and social characteristics of the gated communities and their Location. These 5 types include both existing and newly built gated communities. The first type "urban security zones" are existing communities which are gated in order to resolve social and traffic problems. The second type "secure apartment complexes" block pedestrian or vehicular entry of non-residents, but do not have private open spaces for the dwellings and do not have communal outdoor areas and facilities available to the use of all residents. The following type "secure suburban estates" are the ones most commonly perceived to be gated communities.

Most of them consist of low-rise villas or town-houses and are developed in the suburbs. In these settlements lifestyle features are absent, but a small communal pool or gymnasium will exist. The fourth type "secure resort communities" include within their walls one or more lifestyle features such as a lake and golf course. They also contain a variety of elements that are indicative of resort style living, such as gardens, pathways and elaborate lighting.

The last type is "secure rural-residential estates". These are ex-urban estates, located most often at the edge of the rural fringe of major centers, which incorporate a gated entrance and other security features within a rural residential subdivision. They exclude explicit lifestyle features other than the rural landscape and the range of features that are indicative of resort-styled living.

**Typology of Grant and Mittelsteadt:** The third typology is the typology of Grant and Mittelsteadt (2004) is based on the basic typology of Blakely and Snyder (1997) and adds considerations of the characteristics of amenities and facilities, the level of affluence and the type of security features and spatial patterns. Their reason to develop this typology was the need to elaborate and refining the simple classification of the existent typologies which were primarily developed on the basis of American examples. Grant and Mittelsteadt (2004) classified gated communities in 8 types, viz:

- Ornamental gating
- Walled subdivision
- Faux-gated entries

Table 1: The main areas of interest of different typologies of gated communities

Interest	Physical characteristics	Sense of community	Location	Security type	Security level	Security reason	Method of typology
Community	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Blakely and Snyder (1997)
Function	Yes	Yes				Yes	Burke (2001)
Security level	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes			Luymes (2007)
All components mainly physical components	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Grant and Mittelsteadt (2004)

- Barricaded streets
- Partially gated roads
- Fully gated roads
- Restricted entry, bounded areas
- Restricted entry, guarded areas

For Grant and Mittelsteadt (2004), their classification reflects the degree of enclosure identified in gated projects. Each of the categorizations of their classification has some utility in.

This typology offers a limited picture of the varieties of gated communities that exist. There is no common focus on aspects such as location, social and physical characteristics (Table 1).

**Typology of Luymes:** Another typology of gated communities has been developed by Luymes (1997). Luymes (1997) has formed an urban matrix and classified residential enclaves through control of access and the solidification of their perimeters. His basic typology is based on access control and perimeter control and he obtained his data from field surveys and a review of marketing information. For Luymes (1997), the physical “typology of control” in contemporary enclave communities is often established along socio-economic lines.

For example, amongst the four typologies discussed, only Blakely and Snyder’s typology is focused on describing the social characteristics of gated communities in terms of a sense of community. In contrast, the typology of Luymes (1997) is focused only on the security features while the typology of Grant and Mitellsteadt (2004) is concerned about physical features of gated communities. Therefore, the typologies of gated communities differ between researchers according to their interests and approaches and of course in terms of the urbanization pattern of the city itself.

## OVERVIEW OF THE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT IN JORDAN

The design of residential areas cannot be considered without their surroundings. In addition to serving as a sheltering facility for the households, the housing units must also fulfil their other fundamental needs. Maslow ranks the humans' needs (Maslow, 1943) as Self Actualization Needs (full potential), Esteem Needs (self-respect, personal worth, autonomy), Love and Belongingness Needs (love, friendship and comradeship), Safety Needs (security; protection from

harm), Physiological Needs (food, sleep, stimulation, activity).

Tailoring this hierarchy for the residential design, Cooper (1975) ranks the needs as sheltering, security, comfort, socialization and self-expression and aesthetic. The needs re-categorized by Cooper (1975) are very much fulfilled in today's design of gated communities. Gated communities, with all the facilities integrated, also serve for the affluent' need for self-expression, esteem and status. Gated communities are delivered and promoted as status symbols, which serve as means for showing wealth and status.

And this is actually a direct translation to what is called conspicuous consumption. In other words, by possessing a housing unit in that community, individuals acquire a social environment that would contribute to their social status.

Veblen (2007), analyzed the relation between class differences and consumption patterns, argues that wealth by itself would not be an indicator of status and in order to serve as a sign for status, wealth should be used in a conspicuous way. In his book *The Theory of Leisure Class* he suggests that a small number of new rich in America followed the lead of the European aristocrats, trying to imitate them through the goods they consume. On the contrary, a similar attitude was not valid for the European aristocrats. Veale’s theory helps explaining the roles of the social classes in the emergence of new products in today's marketing world. In Veale’s theory, imitation appears as a motive. As the lower classes try to emulate the leisure class, the leisure class starts to search for change. Viable argues that when the individuals start defining their identity through their possessions, they need to display this wealth and consume them persistently for the sake of their symbolic benefits. For that purpose, symbolic and conspicuous consumption appear as motives for consumption, aside from the fundamental needs.

Gated communities may be seen as a sign of embedding housing in a consumer rationale: the transaction entails much more than the real product, i.e., the dwelling. Besides the house’s features and its location, it is also awarded a status symbol whereby the neighbours have certain characteristics and safety, leisure facilities, clubs and open spaces are part of the package.

This new forms of housing reflects changes in the socio-economic structure that has impacted on land use. Their growth is related to the economic restructuring and social changes of the last few decades and the emergence of wealthy new upwardly-mobile social groups. These groups need to express themselves and



Fig. 1: Example of mixed type gated community in Amman, Jordan



Fig. 2: Example of horizontal gated community, Daboaq, Jordan

affirm their position signposting their distance from other groups, underlining their success in material and symbolic terms, along with an infill of consumer values in all spheres of life.

**Types of gated residential communities in Jordan cities:** The evolution of gated community scheme in Jordan is influenced by experiences of other countries. The idea of prestige, safety and privacy has become a main idea to develop the new housing schemes. This trend however is accepted within peoples with different background of income.

Observations and analysis of the site visits and advertisements (in media such as newspapers, internet sites and retail magazines) show that new residential patterns of gated residential developments emerging in the capital's suburbs. Analysis of these new urban developments allows one to differentiate four types:

- Vertical gated developments (Fig. 1)
- Horizontal gated developments/gated villa towns (Fig. 2)
- Mixed type gated developments/gated towns

These types of gated communities in Jordan are different in terms of their physical characteristics. They differ essentially in terms of their selling price, minimum lot size, built-up area (BUA), provided amenities and road networks.

**Vertical gated developments/gated towers:** The first and distinctive type of gated communities, vertical

gated developments/gated buildings has developed in capital area since the late of 1990s for professional urban elites, mainly, from the private sectors. Gated buildings in Amman are generally located within the old city limits where office blocks and shopping malls are spreading rapidly. However, in the last few years, gated buildings are spreading on the periphery, located in the sub-business districts and in the new residential zones.

Gated buildings are developed as mixed-use zones, usually integrated with a shopping mall or office blocks. They constitute one residential high rise building of more than 10 stories mostly within a complex. Their verticality provides a solution for uncontrolled urban growth since they can house between some hundreds to 1000 people. Vertical gated developments provide a wide range of services from entertainment such as sport or fitness centres, to social centres, education facilities, medical centres, etc.

These services are on offer to enhance the social life of residents; however, of the available services the most important one is security which is the fundamental characteristic of a gated community.

The security features of gated buildings are different from those of other gated developments. Gated buildings can be partially open to public access where there are complexes without a strict wall or boom surrounding the whole plot. However, access to the units and building is prohibited and it is only possible with the permission of residents.

**Mixed type gated developments:** Mixed type gated developments/gated towns constitute of a variety of unit types. In other words, these are a mixture of two or three of the other gated development types as shown in Fig. 1. The variety of units can be seen in any of the gated towns. Gated towns are a relatively new kind of town or self-contained satellite city addressing different income levels with different facilities and characteristics.

## A COMPARATIVE EVALUATION OF GATED COMMUNITIES IN JORDAN

A gated community has become an important factor which affects the urban development and spread of the city of the Capital Area since the late of 1990s. The urban pattern shows that there are 3 types of gated communities with undeniable distinctions and similar characteristics with an attractive landscape, 24 h security, social amenities and administrative systems. The extensive demands of the affluent and the desire to be located out of the old city center, to fly away from dirt, crowding, crime are the main determinant of the characteristics of the gated communities.

And the later, that is fear of others and crime, is the most determinant factor that is associated to the different types of gated developments. Developers of gated communities create alternative lifestyles to residents by offering technological solutions that afford

Table 2: Summary of typology of gated communities in Jordan

	Unit type	Target profile	Location
Gated buildings	Apartments less than 10 Flats	Urban elites	Mid city/sub-urban
Gated villa towns	Single units	Upper/middle class	Sub-urban/periphery
Gated apartment blocks	Low-mid rise apartment complexes	Middle class	Mid city/ sub-urban

not just safety and security. Gated apartment blocks, on the contrary, which are more affordable than gated villa towns differ from each other by the diversity of their locations. Also, gated towns are in the outskirts while there are still exceptions which utilize the last available large lands in city. Not only the choice but the location creates the differentiations between developments in terms of the cost and environmental characteristics which also have an impact on the increase of property values. For example, gated towers and gated apartment blocks which are integrated in the city, use natural factors such as panoramic views.

The increasing demand and changing life standards during time support the fast production and spread of these communities and they support the idea of developers.

Additionally, there is a change in the market strategies from new lifestyle to concept project, in the context of projects from neighbourhoods to towns and in the target profile from upper to middle income families. By contributing to the Society, gated communities strengthen their place in the housing market.

There is increasing demand for gated communities in the market. This demand open door for further research on social needs that drive this demand.

### CONCLUSION

Gated communities have become a new development trend as a result of socioeconomic changes in the recent decade in Jordan. The types of gated community in Jordan are listed in Table 2. Gated communities increase by number and area, they transform urban environment in both the developed and developing countries.

Gated communities in the Amman Region emerged as a demand of a new social class composed mainly of high and middle class population. The rich are abandoning the crowded old city of Amman and moving to luxurious, western style (mainly American) gated communities.

Gated communities address the demands of upper and middle income families. Gated developments in Jordan often use the archetype of gated communities, such as the American and European examples and therefore these developments physically resemble their American and European counterparts. Taking into consideration the distinction of culture, community living and values, we surveyed gated communities on the basis of physical characteristics and locations.

If gated communities in Jordan are compared with other examples in the world, they carry some reflections. For example, because of their reason for development and the amenities available, they can be classified within the categories of lifestyle and prestige communities from the typology of Blakely and Snyder (1997). Although they have similarities with Blakely and Snyder's typology, all categories are not matched. The typology of Burke (2001), on the other hand, is more suitable and adaptable for the Jordan case. Meanwhile, the typology of Luymes (1997) is based on the security level of gated developments and does not have a large spectrum in Jordan. Security is not a very distinctive aspect for classification since all gated communities have controlled access entrances or walls. The typologies explained previously, have found some categories in Jordan but not for all their categories. This study investigated the characteristics and development processes of gated communities to define a typology for the case of Jordan.

The results of our study show that in the capital region there exist three types of gated communities, gated buildings, gated villa towns and gated apartment blocks. Their spread in the outskirts of the GCR and in the new suburbs is encouraged due to the availability and suitability of land for upscale housing projects.

The gated community locations have detrimental effects on the natural environment and on the social environment. The communities located in the outskirts of Amman create a class division between rural and upper class families. The spread of gated communities affects both the lives of the people who live in and around them.

Gated communities has mixed effects on the community, they create new job opportunities, secured areas, better infrastructure and utilizing inactive lands. However, the large demand for these settlements leads to decrease in the size of natural resources.

However, this existing trend in the housing development and market shows the lack of strategic plan that could regulate the gating and fencing of community boundaries.

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