

N. AYDIN YÖNET¹, F. YİRMİBEŞOĞLU²

¹Department of Architecture , Faculty of Architecture and Design, Bahçeşehir University, Istanbul/Turkey.

²Department of Urban and Regional Planning, Faculty of Architecture, Istanbul Technical University, Istanbul/Turkey.

GATED COMMUNITIES IN ISTANBUL: SECURITY AND FEAR OF CRIME

ABSTRACT

First formed in the 1970s USA, gated communities are one of the consequences of post industrial period which confronts the decentralization of the capital and the employment in the metropolitan area which evidently leads to a need for a new form of housing production in the periphery. The increasing mobility of capital and the radical changes in the labor force have encouraged the invasion of gated communities throughout the world.

Defined as a new type of sub-urbanization, these residential areas has emerged in Istanbul after 1990s. The spatial and social transformation of Istanbul is accelerated by its being the center of service sector due to the development of free market economy. The emerging process of gated communities in Istanbul has a unique quality compared to their peers abroad by defining a process which is directed by the developers of the housing market ignoring the planning policies. By employing the forces of media, developers increased demands for gated communities; so, a rapid rise in this type of residential areas is observed. In Istanbul gated communities determine a new and a present way of house production.

In this study, the reasons of the residents' preference of living in gated communities will be studied particularly in the case of Istanbul. In this context, the aim is to investigate the impacts of fear of crime and security concerns for residents in their preference to live in gated communities in Istanbul metropolitan area.

Exploring the reasons for preference for gated communities, fear of crime and security seem to be the most significant parameters in decision. For this study, as a research method, questionnaires and interviews with residents from selected different types of gated communities will be used. Finally, the purpose is to form a comparison relating the notion of fear of crime and security with the motivation of preference of the gated community.

Keywords: Gated Communities, Istanbul, Income Groups, Security, Crime, Fear of Crime

1. INTRODUCTION

Gated communities first emerged in the United States of America (USA) in 1970s. It is observed that the number of gated communities, which spread to the rest of the world in 1980s, has rapidly increased especially in the developing countries in recent years. Political and economical transformations, the increased mobility of the capital and the marginalization of the labor force in USA (Low, 2003) caused important changes in the cities. All these changes necessitated the creation of middle class residential areas far from the city center (Harvey, 1989). Because of the changes in the cities, the increase of the violent crimes in public areas rendered the fear for crime a primary parameter, and thus, yielded in the formation of fortress societies. Due to all these changes, an expansion from the center to the periphery in the cities draws attention. McKenzie (1994) defines this process, specifically for gated communities, as developing a new caste system behind the miserable areas of the city and becoming gradually distant from the city.

Some statistical data about the gated communities, whose number increases worldwide as abovementioned, are remarkable. Soja (2000) states that 3 million households inhabit gated communities and there are 30.000 gated communities in total in the US. The number of self-managing neighborhoods in the US has increased in the last 50 years. 1 person out of every 6, that is, 50 million people live in the residential areas administered by Home Owner Association (HOA) (Rich 2003). When the developments in Britain are taken into account, it is observed that 50% of the production of the major construction firm in London consists of gated communities (Gooblar, 2002).

Within the scope of this study, first, the concept of gated communities will be explained, the concept of security in residential areas will be scrutinized, and the subject will be evaluated in the light of these concepts through some gated community cases.

The concept “gated communities” refer to a secure form of space by the term “gating”, and an organized social structure by “community” (Blakely and Snyder, 1997). In this respect, gated communities can be described as residential areas surrounded by walls, bars or fences, or embanked, with a secure entrance (Low, 2003) and privatized public space (Blakely and Snyder, 1997). Central to this description is the inside and outside of the settlements in these kinds of areas. Identified as an area that serves only for the insiders, the public space is privatized and transformed into a common area. Thus, the divide between public-private disappears (Hook and Vrdoljak, 2002), and the balance between public and private rights is replaced by the balance between outsiders and insiders (Atkins, 1993).

When the gated community concept is considered in retrospect, it is seen that in principle, it resembles especially medieval fortress settlements. While walled areas in medieval times symbolized the way of security provision by the monarchy and the feudal aristocracy, nowadays it became a symbol of economic power and control (Luymes, 1997).

One of the main characteristics of the gated communities is that they have a special governance model that became vital due to the privatization of the public. McKenzie (1994) labels this kind of communities as “privatopia”. He emphasizes that the multiple power relations between the developer-potential inhabitant and the local authority vectors in gated communities are influential in the creation, development and the continuity of the settlement.

There is a strict relationship between the gated communities and privatism and social polarization (Gooblar, 2002). These two concepts lead to a change in the character of the use of public space, public life and public interaction (Caldeira, 1996). This transformation of the public life could be defined as the increase in socio-economic stratification and dissolution of the local diversity. Deciding on the impermeability of the cities and the location of the residential areas by discriminating social differences (income, ethnicity etc.) is completely contrary to the good city notion (Atkinson and Flint, 2004). The importance of the role of the relationship between the public and the private space has been always underlined in urban planning and design practices (Newman, 1996; Lynch, 1981). Splintering urbanism is depicted as the equivalent of the increase of the gated communities in urbanism (Atkinson and Flint, 2004). These developments taking place outside of the city rendered the previous urban core a complicated and desperate space of residential, industrial, commercial and even agricultural uses (Fishman, 1987). Disintegration of the gated communities from the city is one of the state-of-the-art discussions of the planning discipline.

While the initial gated communities appealed to the certain rich people, the production of gated communities also for the middle and upper-middle class between 1970s and 1990s changed this situation. Owing to all these developments, the type of the gated communities became diverse ranging from single-family detached house to high-density building complexes. Concerns of fear, security, high living standards, isolation, privacy, exclusivity, predictability and real-estate values are the triggering reasons for the development of gated communities (Luymes, 1997; Atkinson and Flint, 2004). However, the location choice for many gated communities in areas with low crime rates and high social attachment could be considered a conflicting situation.

Lawrence (1987) designates the basic needs of dwellers as shelter, security, comfort, social life and basic needs, and aesthetics, and, according to this list, it is particularly interesting that security follows shelter immediately. When taken into account as two concepts, security phenomenon and crime phenomenon, crime defines an important societal problem, whereas

security describes a need that emerges in relation to this problem. Fear of crime, on the other hand, is defined as the feeling of anxiety that emerges before the real crime takes place (Apak et al., 2002). Low (2003) states two different psychological components of fear of crime: 1) Cognitive (risk perception) and 2) Emotional (feeling afraid). In short, the relationship between the cognition of risk/threat and the felt fear is important in defining the fear of crime. Moreover, the remarkably higher levels of fear of crime felt by women, elderly and disabled people than the others is important in this respect (Colquhoun, 2004).

Since their existence, people have always taken physical security measures in the space where they reside in order to avoid dangers and to feel secure. In simple terms, gated communities can be considered the contemporary examples of this kind precaution on a settlement scale. Even though the starting point of the gated communities is security, nowadays it turned out to be a complex structure that includes various factors. Low (2003) states that the security elements in gated communities, such as walls, bars, or gates, have a broader meaning than solely being simple barrier elements. According to him, these elements have social and psychological effects as much as they have physical effects. Low further states that living behind the gates increases the fear of the unknown that is outside. Atlas (1999), too, emphasizes that the gates by no means decrease the crime rates or dissuade the criminals. To him, gates could only make the residents of these areas feel secure, and increase real-estate value of the housing and the environs.

The social perception of threat attracts attention in that it is the main factor in security demands and the statement “irregular-uncontrollable space is dangerous” influences the preferences. It is observed that crime rates are not determinants in this process (Davis, 1992). This way of perception transformed the security concept from a social good to a commodity (Hope, 1995). The fact that nowadays the security sector has a noteworthy share in the economy could be considered an indicator of this process.

Paranoia, personal benefit and expectations of elitism in gated communities are responded with themes such as social control, security and market value. There is a strong link between social control/exclusion, security concerns /fear of crime and real-estate values/marketing themes (Luymes, 1997). Nowadays, wall became an important marketing tool since people feel more prestigious behind the walls (Rosen, 1993). It can be concluded that being hardly accessible has always been a symbol of status and prestige. Walls reflect and support the hierarchy of richness and power.

The border and division elements used in gated communities also reveal many tensions evidently. Some examples could be listed as:

- Exterior sources of fear_ protection of being privileged and civic responsibility values,
- Privatization of public services_ ideal public good and general wealth,
- Individual and societal control over the environment_ perceiving the neighbors outside the area as threatening (Blakely and Snyder, 1997).

The demands for a secure housing environ parallel to the increase in crime rates. The attempts to banish crime with design were developed in line with these demands. When the studies on this subject are examined, defensible space, crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) (Crowe, 2000) and situational crime prevention (2nd generation CPTED) practices are observed. The common point of these studies is using design to provide a secure ambit by preventing crime and minimizing the opportunities to commit crimes in this process. Ease of access to the target, the existence of covert spaces, the ambiguous divide between public-private areas, inadequate lighting, and incorrect use of vegetation are factors that increase the opportunities to commit crime. Physical environment, attitude of the criminal, seeking for a

logical and rational location, diverse crime types (criminal type, motivation, and the structure of the area in terms of opportunities), socio-economic deprivation, many amateur criminals, criminals inhabiting a poor area and committing crime in the environs of his house (the distance between the residential crime and the house of the criminal is within 1 mile range) are salient in terms of the nature of crime (Colquhoun, 2004). In terms of planning and design disciplines, all these parameters should be taken into consideration during the process of producing secure residential areas with crime prevention or limitation measures.

Gated communities provide a high life standard with factors such as security, suitable to children, abundant services, guaranteeing real-estate values, rapid access to special public facilities (thanks to the special governance), high quality infrastructure, quiet areas devoid of traffic, and privacy. Alongside these advantages, they are also criticized for their social homogeneity and segregation, lack of diversity, privatized public areas, allocation of traffic from the center to the periphery, reduction of civil involvement, alienation of residents, and relocation of crime (Gülümser, 2005).

Some of the classifications of the gated communities in the literature are as follows:

Blakely and Snyder's (1997) triple classification is composed of: 1. Lifestyle, 2. Prestige, 3. Security zone. The basis of the "security zone" type gated communities in this classification is fear of crime and traffic. Burke's (2001) classification includes these divisions: urban security zone, secure apartment complexes, secure suburban estates, secure resort communities and secure rural-residential estates. The security measures of the gated communities could be taken into account in three parts: entrance control, environmental security and internal monitoring (Colquhoun, 2004). Luymes's (1997) classification distinguishes among the gated communities according to the level of entrance control and the level of environmental permeability.

The chosen cases in Istanbul within the scope of this study fall into the category of the settlements with maximum entrance control and the minimum environmental impermeability in Luymes' classification scheme.

2. GATED COMMUNITIES IN ISTANBUL

Becoming a center of service sector in 1990s, Istanbul faced an increase in the pace of social and spatial transformation. These transformations resulted in people moving away from the center and a rapid augment in the number of the residential areas in the periphery. The first gated communities were villa towns produced for the high income group, with a user profile of married couples with children. The characteristic of these communities was determined by a life style that consists of prestige and quality rather than security (Geniş, 2007). For the abovementioned income group, these qualities are still the primary reasons of preference. For singles and couples without children, the alternative of these communities are the fully serviced condominium flats in the city center. Ünsal Gülmez (2008) found out that the user profile of these fully serviced condominium flats in Istanbul was senior professionals, businessmen, industrialists, senior managers, who mostly live alone, with limited time and come to Istanbul frequently (often for business-related reasons), and newly married couples. In recent years, the gated communities composed of high density apartment blocks for middle income groups were produced in peripheral areas. For the gated communities that fall into this category, security is a vital element.

Levent et al. (2007) have categorized the gated communities in Istanbul. Composed of four different groups, this categorization is composed of the gated towers in the city center that appeal to high income groups; gated villa towns in the periphery that attract high/middle-high

income groups; gated apartment blocks in the periphery for the high/middle-high/middle income groups; and finally mixed settlements in the periphery that address high/middle-high/middle income groups.

When we take a closer look at the distribution of the gated communities in Istanbul (Figure 1), it is observed that the concentration is in Çekmeköy, Pendik, Ataşehir ve Ümraniye districts in Asian Side, and in Başakşehir, Beylikdüzü, Büyükçekmece ve Küçükçekmece in European Side. Figure 1 demonstrates the data of 347 gated communities in Istanbul. Especially the gated communities completed in the last 3-5 years were taken into account for the database. Among 347 gated communities, there are 231 settlements consisting of apartment block, 17 fully serviced condominium flats in the city center, 78 villa towns and 21 mixed (villas and blocks) settlements.

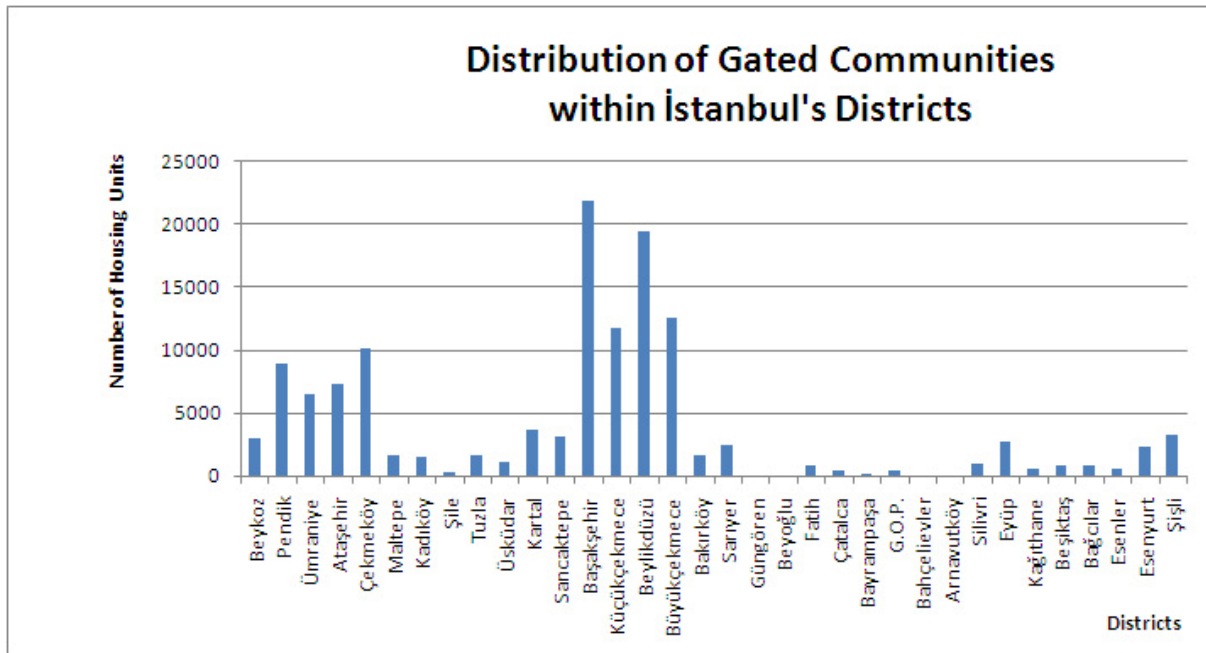


Figure 1: Distribution of Gated Communities within İstanbul's Districts

As seen above, the gated communities became the new type of housing production in Istanbul. This study will investigate the reasons for preferring the gated communities, mostly in the periphery of Istanbul and rapidly increasing in the last ten years, in terms of security and fear of crime. Recently, developers focused especially on the production of gated communities for the middle income group. Thus, Halkalı Avrupa Konutları that reflects the general aspects of the middle class gated communities is examined in detail. In order to provide the ground for comparison, a similar study was conducted in high/high-middle income group gated communities that are in different locations.

First, it is important to observe the relationship between crime distribution and the concentration of gated communities in Istanbul. The districts in which crime concentration is higher are Eminönü (became a part of the Fatih district with new regulations), Beyoğlu, Şişli, Büyükçekmece, Beşiktaş, Fatih and Sarıyer, respectively (Yirmibeşoğlu et al., 2007).

According to Figure 2, when the relationship between the distribution of the gated communities and the crime rates is considered, it is striking that the concentration of gated communities is higher in Büyükçekmece where crime rates are high. However, the concentration of gated communities is high in Başakşehir and Beylikdüzü districts, where crime rates are rather low, shows that we cannot count on an evident relationship between “the concentrations of gated communities –the crime rates”.

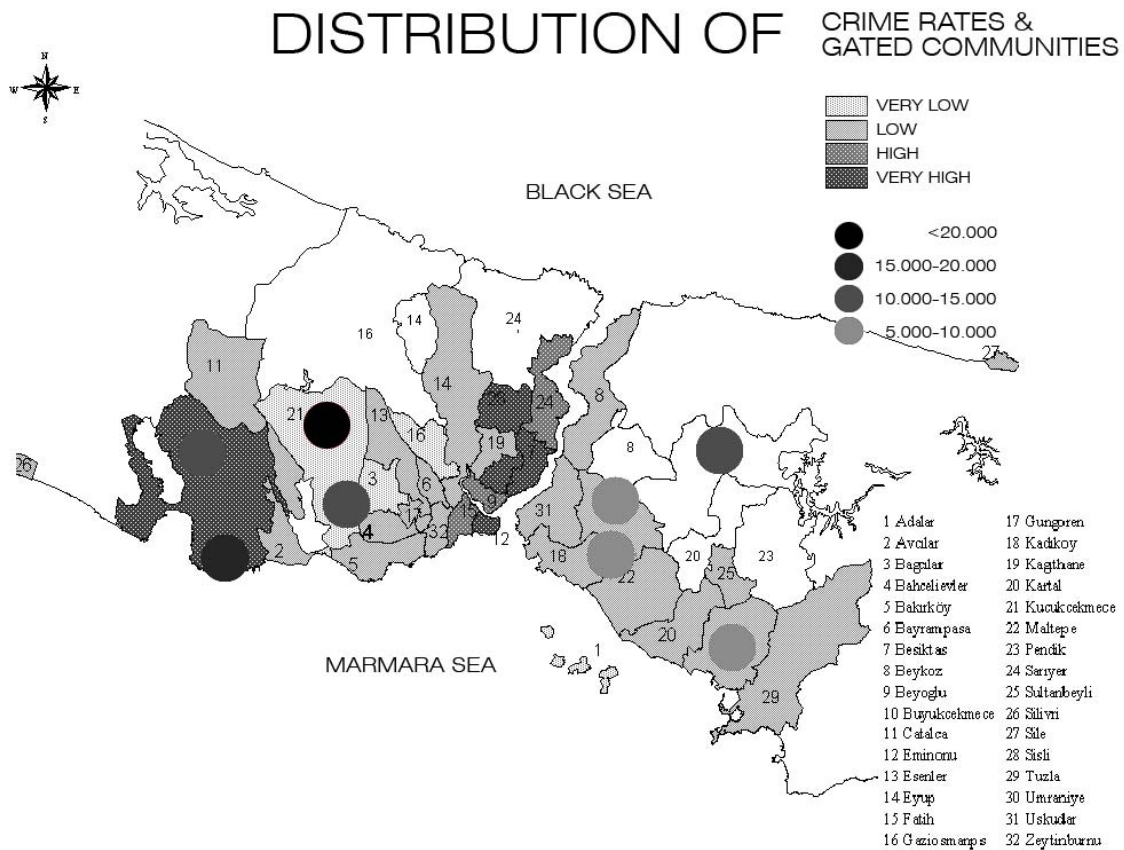


Figure 2: Distribution of Crime Rates and Concentration of Gated Communities within Istanbul's Districts

3. FIELD WORK

GATED COMMUNITIES FOR HIGH/HIGH-MIDDLE INCOME GROUPS

Among 20 different gated communities (10 high and 10 middle-high income groups) randomly selected in Istanbul, 67 households were surveyed. The questionnaire questions were prepared in six different sections. These are

1. Socio-demographic structure (gender, age, place of birth, marital status, educational background, occupation)
2. Income (job, homeownership, car ownership)
3. Household mobility (period of residence in Istanbul, from where they moved to Istanbul, from where and when they moved to the housing complex)
4. Transportation (transportation preferences and house-work distance)
5. Contentment (the reason to move to the housing complex, willingness to move to another area, problems of the housing complex)
6. Security (security of the housing complex, security of the environs of the housing complex, criminal past of people).

When the surveyed people are considered socio-demographically, we observe that

- 24,5% are in 31-40 age range and 42% in 41-50 age range,
- 44% were born in Marmara Region (77% Istanbul) and 24 % in Blacksea Region,
- 67% are married with children (90% of the children born in Istanbul),
- 38% are high school and 55% are university graduates.

In terms of income,

- 67% have an occupation that provides income and 4% are retired,
- 80% are homeowners,
- 60% have another residential property in Istanbul,
- 51% have a summer house, and
- 99% are car owners (60% own two cars, 28% one car, 9% three cars).

In terms of household mobility,

- 65% have lived in Istanbul for more than 30 years (among which 59% were born in Istanbul),
- Those who come to Istanbul from Blacksea and Middle Anatolia Region (mostly Ankara) are the majority.

In terms of transportation, the rate of automobile dependency is 66%. For what regards other transportation means, 10% prefer taxi, 9% service vehicles and 15% prefer bus, minibus, sea transport means etc.

In terms of contentment,

When the reasons to move to the housing complex are considered, the results are as follows:

- Security 17,3%
- Abundant green areas and clean air 11,5%
- A well-kept, clean and comfortable environment 9%
- Privacy 8,5%
- Aesthetic environment 7,5%
- A prestigious neighborhood _feeling privileged 7%
- Activity areas 7%
- Site administration services 7%
- The life style in the Site 7%

In terms of security,

- 94% consider the housing complex in which they reside secure during daytime and 92% in the night. Those who find it insecure state that it is mostly due to the flexibility of the entrance control and the low quality personnel.
- 40% of the housing complex residents feel themselves secure everywhere within the housing complex boundaries as if they are in their dwellings. 97% of the households are very content with living in a gated community.

When criminal past is tackled, the rate of being previously subject to crime is 25% and 96% of these are crimes against property. Among the crimes against property, 65% took place in the streets, whereas 35% happened in homes. The rate of having a close person who was subject to crime is 24% (83% were offenses against property, among which 23% in homes, and 60% in the streets). During the interviews, it is observed that the level of fear of crime is higher for females than for males. Especially those who were subject to crime or who have a close person subject to crime pay special attention to security issues. In this group, the fear of crime is higher than the group who was not subject to any previous crime.

- 80% of the participants consider the vicinity of the site secure. When the factors that create insecurity in the vicinity are considered, 22% of the reasons are the profile of people in the vicinity, 24% are deteriorated areas, 20% is insufficient street lighting, 20% is the solitude of the surrounding area, and 13% is negative land use in the vicinity.

HALKALI AVRUPA KONUTLARI (MIDDLE INCOME GROUP GATED COMMUNITY)

For a more detailed study, Halkalı Avrupa Konutları is chosen as the case area. We observe that the location of the chosen settlement adjacent to the squatter areas in the periphery and close to the industrial areas and embodiment of social and spatial conflicts are the appropriate qualities for investigating the relationship between the reasons for user preference and security are the chosen settlement (Figure 3).

Halkalı Avrupa Konutları project was assigned to the joint venture of ÖZSAYA Construction Tourism inc. and GÜN-ER Construction Ind. co. Ltd. by the Housing Development Administration of Turkey and was completed in November 2006. Located in the Küçükçekmece district, the settlement covers an area of 82.000m² and is close to the Atatürk Airport and the Olympic Stadium.

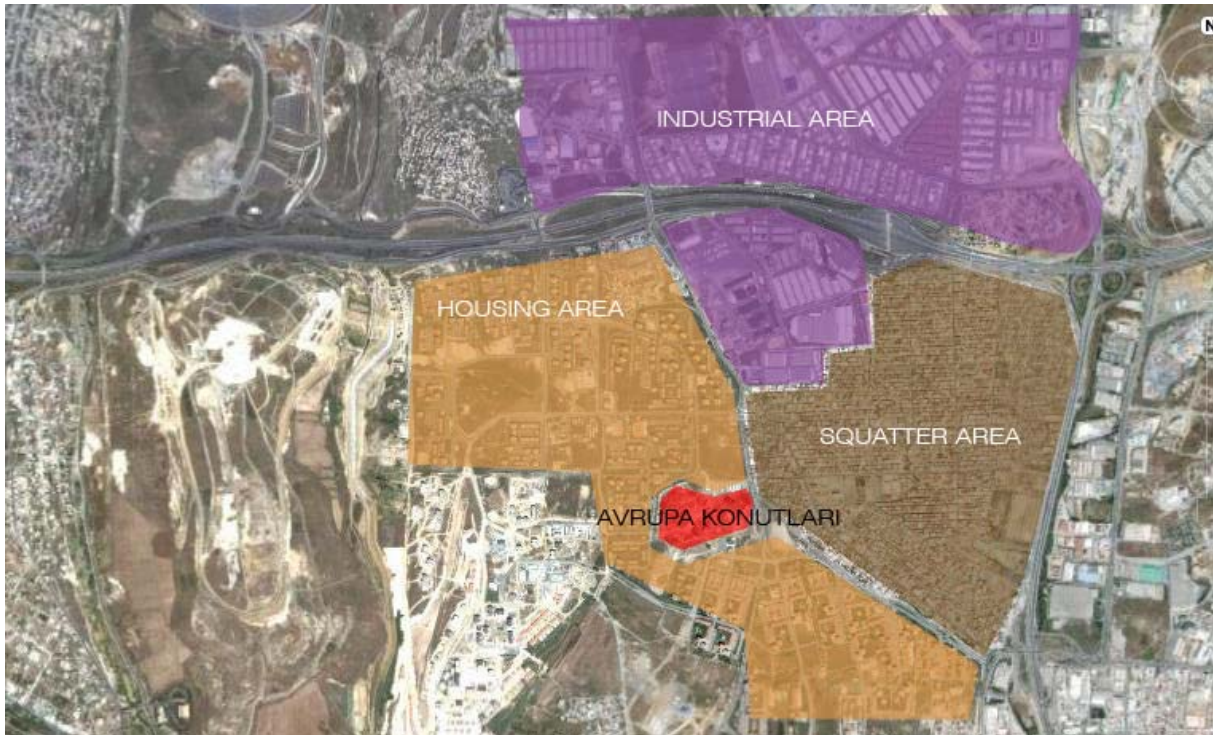


Figure 3: Location of Avrupa Konutları

Avrupa Konutları gated community has three different entrances with guards and the security guards work for 24 hours at these entrances. For the residents of the housing complex, there is an entrance system with card at the entrance. The visitors coming from outside could enter the area only by the approval via telephone from the flat that they want to visit. There is a video intercom system in the apartments. There are many facilities in the completely walled settlement: Amphitheater, social facilities, cafeteria, open and closed parking, open and closed swimming pool, fitness center, basketball and volleyball fields, mini football field, trekking and jogging tracks, tennis courts, squash saloon, children playgrounds (1-12 age range). There is a technical service active for 24 hours in the settlement. With all these aspects, Avrupa Konutları reflects the general characteristics of the middle income gated communities in Istanbul (Figure 4, Figure 5).



Figure 4: General View from Avrupa Konutları

In the settlement with 20 blocks and 1350 apartments, 66 households participated to the questionnaire. The questionnaire questions were prepared in 6 different sections (explained in detail above). The evaluation of every section is as follows.

When the participants are evaluated in terms of socio-demographic variables,

- 67% are composed of young and young-middle aged people of 20-40 age range.
- 87% are married couples among which 48% are with children. Most of the couples without children are newly married and have the possibility of having a child. The suitability of this kind of gated communities for raising a child is specifically underlined by the couples who participated to the questionnaire.
- 37,5% of the single people consist of single mothers. Security is the major reason for preferring to live in this area for single mothers.
- When the age range of the children is tackled, 41% are children belonging to 0-5 age range, 36% are children belonging to 6-10 age range. 89% of the children were born in Istanbul. Those who have another place of birth are elder (older than 20), students or employed children.
- When place of birth of the parents is observed, it is seen that most of them were born in Marmara Region (mostly Istanbul). The rate of people born in Istanbul is 31%, followed by Middle Anatolia Region, Blacksea Region, respectively.
- When educational background is considered, the group with university and graduate education draws attention with a rate of 70%.

In terms of income,

- 73% have a paid job and 7% are retired. The housewives constitute the unemployed group. Most of the housewives are young mothers. It is observed that in general university graduate young mothers have a tendency of not working for a certain time (average 3-4 years) for taking care of the children.
- 77% are homeowners.
- 34% own a residential property in another area of Istanbul and all of these residential properties are in the European Side. The other residential property that is generally in a close area is the family's first residence and first property.
- The rate of the households with a summerhouse is 29 %. 83% of the summerhouses are in Marmara Region. The reason for this choice is the preference of the close areas that could be reached during weekends.
- The rate of car ownership is 95%. 80,5% of the households have one, and 18% have two cars.

In terms of household mobility,

- 35% of the households have lived in Istanbul since birth. The rate of people of 21-50 who live in Istanbul is 60%.
- Among the ones who moved to Istanbul, 31% is from Middle Anatolia Region and 65% of these people came from Ankara, followed by Marmara Region and Blacksea Region. Most of the people coming from Ankara took their graduate degrees in the same city.

19% of the respondents moved to the housing complex from Halkalı (the neighborhood in which the housing complex is located), and 17, 5% from Bahçelievler . 4% moved to this housing complex from the Asian Side and 5% from other cities. The rest of the respondents moved from nearby environs such as Bakırköy, Sefaköy, Başakşehir, Esenkent, Ataköy, Yenibosna and Bahçeşehir. It can be concluded that there is a tendency to move to this area from the same environs.

In terms of contentment;

When the reasons to move to the housing complex are considered, the results were as follows:

- Security_%17,40
- A well-kept, clean and comfortable environment _ %13,29
- Abundant green areas and clean air _ %11,39
- Activity areas_%10,12
- The life style in the Site_%10,12
- Site administration services _%8,86
- Aesthetic environment_%8,22
- Social homogeneity_%5,06
- Privacy_%5,06
- A prestigious neighborhood, feeling privileged _%3,79.
- A good investment _%3,79, and

- Presence of relatives and/or friends in the housing complex_%2.21 are also observed. According to these results, security is the most influential factor, whereas the importance of the environmental aspects is also significant.



Figure 5: Common Area in Avrupa Konutları

The rate of the people who plan to move to another area is 21,5%. Some of the reasons behind this motivation to move can be listed as inhabiting a more central area, ease of transport, a bigger flat, a detached house, a house with a view over the sea, a housing complex with more green areas and facilities, and a housing complex in which the inhabitants obey the rules.

When the respondents were asked about the major problem of the housing complex, it is striking that 30% of the answers pointed out the lack of parking. For the inhabitants who did not anticipate facing this problem, emergence of this problem when the housing complex reached its capacity created a disappointment. If we consider that 80,5% of the households own one car, it is evident that this situation is a planning error.

In terms of transportation,

It is observed that approximately 50% of the workplaces of the households are within an accessible distance of 10-30 minutes with a vehicle. 55% of the households prefer automobiles for daily trips. 15% of the inhabitants use service vehicles, 18% use bus-minibus-metrobus and 12% use taxi. Alongside automobile dependency, the preference of other transport means is noticeable.

When considered in terms of security,

When criminal past of the inhabitants of the area is taken into account, 14% were subject to criminal activity previously. 90% of these were offenses against property and 80% of the incidents took place on the streets. The rate of having a close person who was subject to criminal offence is 28% and 88% of these were also offenses against property. 54,5% of these took place in homes and 45,5% on the streets. It is remarkable that in general the group that was subject to criminal offenses or has a close person subject to criminal offenses is more sensitive towards the issue of security. During the fieldwork, it was found out that fear of crime is often related to crimes against property in homes (burglary) and on the street (pick pocketing). The rate of fear of crime is much higher among females than males.

67% of the households find the environs of the housing complex insecure. The presence of the squatter areas in the vicinity (22%) and the profile of the people (22%) were the main factors for causing insecurity, followed by 20% as the land use in close areas (industry). The solitude environment (18%) and inadequate street lighting (17%) are the other reasons that cause insecurity in the proximate areas to the housing complex.

In general, the housing complex is considered secure during day and night. The rate of the inhabitants who consider the area insecure is 9% daytime and 8% nighttime. Some

respondents stated that it is easier to enter the housing complex during the day due to a more flexible entrance check, whereas during the night the check is stricter. This statement could explain the difference between the rates of daytime-night. It is noteworthy that the divide between daytime and night is not of importance for both who consider the housing complex secure and who consider it insecure. The factors that cause insecurity are underlined as the presence of shops in the housing complex that serve users coming from outside and inadequate number and skill of the security personnel.

Finally, it can be concluded that the inhabitants who prefer to live in this housing complex are composed of middle-income young professionals, married with children or with the potential of having children, having a tendency to inhabit a familiar area, a paid occupation, and a preference for a comfortable and secure life, and who benefit from the opportunities provided by the community life in terms of time-saving. It could be considered an expectable situation that this group, who feels the effect of the metropolitan life intensely, prefers the areas that provide ease of life in many respects. The fact that all respondents are very content with “living in a gated community” (100%) explains this situation.

4. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Gated communities are developments that increase in numbers worldwide. They cause significant changes in urban morphology. The integration process or not integrating with the city is one of the most discussed topics nowadays. They receive many criticisms for triggering social and spatial segregation.

It is after 1990s that the gated communities were intensely observed in Istanbul. The concentration of the service sector in the metropolitan area accelerated the development of the gated communities. The process that commences after 1980s with villa town projects nowadays focuses more on the gated communities composed of apartment blocks. There is an increase in the amount of the fully serviced condominium flats in the city center and mixed settlements (apartment blocks and villas) in the periphery, as well. In recent years, the trend of living in gated communities became valid also for the middle income group. With a dense structure in a smaller land and composed of apartment blocks, gated communities turned out to be affordable for the abovementioned group.

The user profile of the middle income group, who live in gated communities composed of apartment blocks, is young couples married with children, educated and having a profession. It is observed that security is as important as the lifestyle for this group. For this group with limited time, living in a gated community that provides many opportunities for rendering their life easier (especially for the children) became a demanded phenomenon.

When the reason for moving to a gated community is investigated for different income groups, “security” criterion is important equally for all groups. It is observed that middle-income group is more sensitive about a well-kept, clean and comfortable environment, the lifestyle in the housing complex, and the presence of activity areas, whereas the high/middle-high income group is more sensitive about status and privacy.

The conducted survey showed that fear of crime is much higher among females than males. The primary reason why women prefer the gated communities is security, followed by providing a comfortable environment in which they can raise their children. Security is not a determinant factor for males as it is for females. The presence of activity areas and abundant green areas are factors that are more important.

The studies demonstrate that almost all of the users are content with living in a “gated community”. The importance of the user contentment could not be neglected in the attention

drawn to the gated communities as the new type of housing production specifically in Istanbul.

As a result, the gated communities became a rather demanded housing production type in Istanbul. In many areas of Istanbul, access to public and local services is not easy. The gated communities safely provide these services in their autonomous structures. The basic reason why this kind of areas is demanded is this reality. However, it is clear that the abovementioned areas yield in social and spatial segregation. The solution to the segregation problem could be integrating the gated communities with the city. The fact that most of the gated communities are located adjacent to the squatter areas in the periphery triggers the social and spatial segregation. Moreover, as a result of the distrust towards the environs, “security” becomes a stronger determining factor in the gated communities located in these areas.

It was observed that gated communities agglomerate in Büyükçekmece district where crime rates are high and in Başakşehir and Beylikdüzü districts where crime rates are low. In the light of these data, it was concluded that there is no significant relationship between the gated communities and the crime rates.

Finally, the problems could be solved by considering all these together, avoiding location decisions that are independent of planning and the decisions that are oriented solely by the market. The local administrations could obtain the supply-demand balance in the relationship between the developer and the user only with a correct and comprehensive planning approach.

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