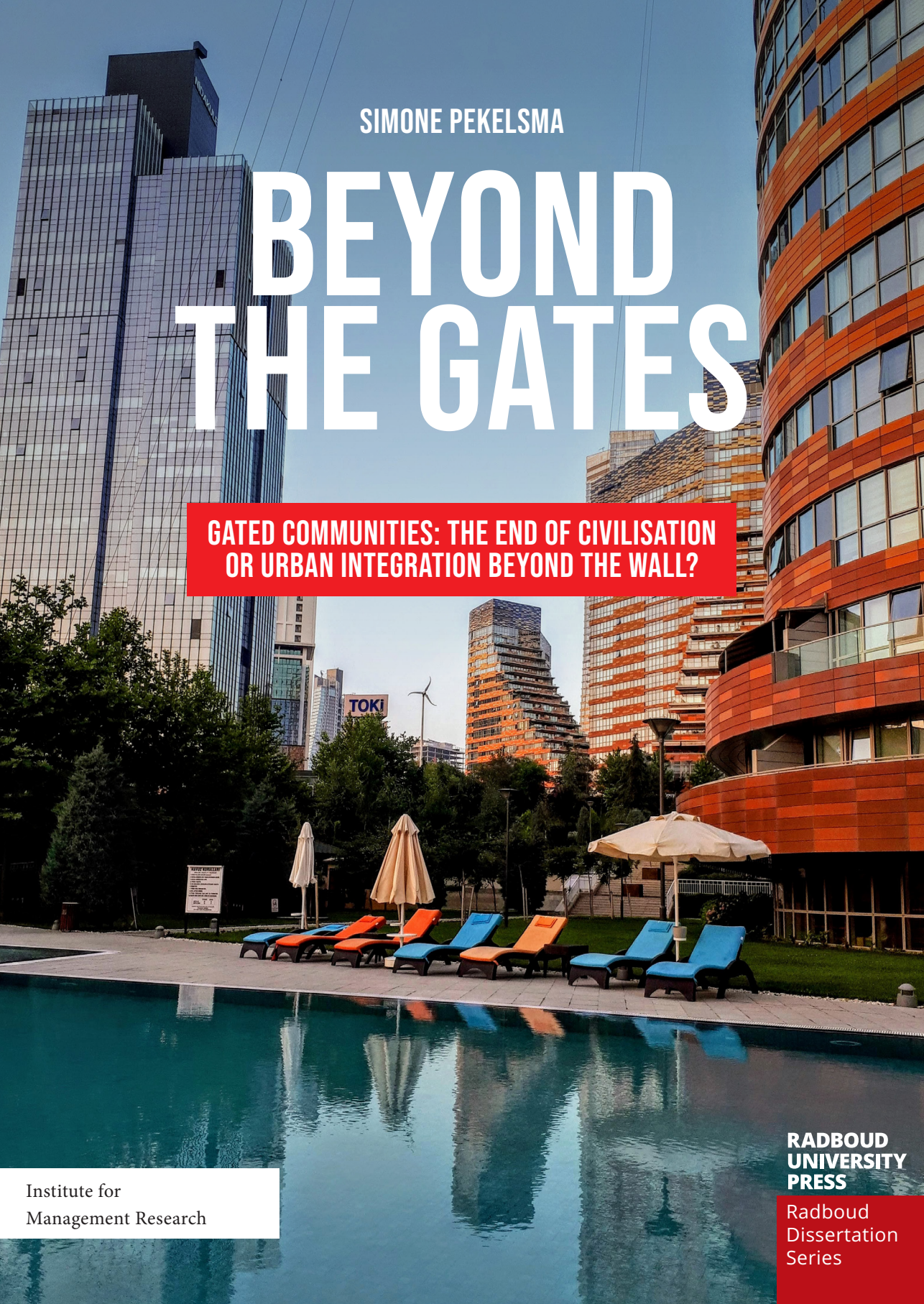




SIMONE PEKELSMAS

BEYOND THE GATES

**GATED COMMUNITIES: THE END OF CIVILISATION
OR URBAN INTEGRATION BEYOND THE WALL?**

Institute for
Management Research

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Beyond the Gates

Gated Communities: the end of civilisation
or urban integration beyond the wall?

Simone Pekelsma

Author: Simone Anna Pekelsma

Title: Beyond the Gates. Gated Communities: the end of civilisation or urban integration beyond the wall?

Radboud Dissertations Series

ISSN: 2950-2772 (Online); 2950-2780 (Print)

Published by RADBOUD UNIVERSITY PRESS
Postbus 9100, 6500 HA Nijmegen, The Netherlands
www.radbouduniversitypress.nl

Design: Proefschrift AIO | Katarzyna Kozak
Cover: Proefschrift AIO | Guntra Laivacuma
Photography: Simone Pekelsma, 2018
Printing: DPN Rikken/Pumbo

ISBN: 9789493296442

DOI: 10.54195/9789493296442

Free download at: www.boekenbestellen.nl/radboud-university-press/dissertations

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Beyond the Gates

Gated Communities: the end of civilisation
or urban integration beyond the wall?

Proefschrift ter verkrijging van de graad van doctor
aan de Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen
op gezag van de rector magnificus prof. dr. J.M. Sanders,
volgens besluit van het college voor promoties
in het openbaar te verdedigen op

donderdag 12 september 2024
om 10.30 uur precies

door

Simone Anna Pekelsma

geboren op 25 augustus 1984 te Leiden

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Dissertation to obtain the degree of doctor

from Radboud University Nijmegen

on the authority of the Rector Magnificus prof. dr. J.M. Sanders,

according to the decision of the Doctorate Board

to be defended in public on

Thursday, September 12, 2024

at 10.30 am

by

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For Félice & Norah

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Acknowledgements

This book is the result of a journey that took over ten years to complete. I could use an endless number of adjectives to describe it, but let me just say that it was 'quite a trip'. At times I thought I would never complete it, but I am truly happy that I finally did. I am deeply grateful to many people who stood by me throughout the years...

First of all, I would like to thank my two beautiful daughters Félice (2015) and Norah (2017) for making the trip so very colourful and lively. And thank you for keeping me grounded. It's easy to get lost on a journey like this one, but you forced me to stay focused on what's important.

Reginald Francois, thank you for seeing this adventure through with me. We experienced both marriage and divorce while I was writing this book, and it was not easy for either of us. With this book now completed, I'm hopeful we can shift our focus to new horizons and fresh beginnings.

Thank you to my family. Lenze Pekelsma and Yolanda Weldring for your endless encouragement and for allowing me to use your home to write. I loved how there was always some nice food and drinks in the fridge to keep me company. Christine van der Zee, thank you for always keeping an eye on me. Marit Pekelsma and Pim Brouwer, thank you for your many kind words of support.

Many thanks also go to my friends Marlies van de Wiel and Merel van Geest. First of all, thank you for sharing many good glasses of wine in Leiden and The Hague and listening to my stories in turbulent times. Marlies, thank you for letting me share in your down-to-earth, humorous, and relaxed approach to everything. Merel, thank you for your loving and supportive kicks in the ass and for always reminding me that life should be embraced, and that it is vibrant and exciting, especially if one dares to go off the beaten track.

Although we haven't seen each other that much over the past years, I would also like to thank my wonderful year club friends. I am so happy that although it has been over twenty (!! Quamdiu ??) years since we met in Maastricht, we are still in touch and that when we meet, it's like time has not passed at all. Thank you Erik Roelofs, Luca van Veen, Noortje van der Hel, Marlies van de Wiel, Marlies Kaal and Janine Nöthlichs for being there. I look forward to our next dinners and fun weekends away..!

Of course, I am grateful to my colleagues at Radboud University in Nijmegen. First of all, thank you Arnoud Lagendijk and Henk van Houtum for being my very, very patient promoters. I always enjoyed our theoretical talks, Arnoud. And attending the AAG in New Orleans together in 2018 was one of the highlights of my PhD experience. Henk, you were my most important writing mentor. After talking to you I would always have faith in sticking to my own writing and research style again. I would always be able to continue working with renewed energy and inspiration.

Thank you Rodrigo Bueno Lacy for meticulously editing my manuscript and helping me to keep the text lively and readable. Thank you Rianne van Melik, Lothar Smith, Kim van Gent, and Freek de Haan for commenting on earlier drafts of my chapters and always providing valuable feedback and friendly support. Thank you Yueyue Zhang for being such a nice roommate. And Hanna Murrey Carlsson, thank you for keeping me company on the endless train rides from Leiden to Nijmegen and for our inspiring and fun conversations about research, academia, and life in general.

In April 2019, I started working for Utrecht University. I would like to thank my former roommates Irina van Aalst and Gery Nijenhuis for their nice chats and encouraging words. Thank you Egbert van der Zee, Masja Kempen, Geertje Speelman, Karin Snel, Prescilla Jeurink, Christian Wicke, Vincent Rijsman, Anje Bakker, Johan Garssen, René Kwant and Ingrid van den Bosch and many others for your input and interest and for sharing many, many friendly pep talks and cups of coffee.

Thank you to my co-authors. Basak Tanulku, thank you for many interesting conversations, your constructive feedback, the experience of editing our two edited volumes on borders, and our nice meetings in Istanbul. Thank you Eduardo de Santiago de Rodríguez and Isabel González García for sharing and exchanging different - sometimes opposing - views and for our lovely gatherings in Madrid.

Also a big warm thank you to Erik Jansen, who suddenly walked into my life on a warm spring night in June 2022. I am very happy and grateful for your presence.

To conclude, I would like to wholeheartedly thank all my interviewees. This research would not have been possible without you. Thank you for letting me share in your worlds. You were a great source of inspiration and you have taught me a lot, far beyond the scope of my research.

Introduction

As the bus drew nearer, we rushed past the Palladium shopping mall. Completed in 2008, this building stood as a harbinger of the revolutionary change that this part of Istanbul — Batı (or West) Ataşehir — would undergo in the years to come. While the bus drove uphill, the first high-rise towers revealed themselves in the distance. The grey-pinkish tones of ‘My World’ contrasted with the light-brown shades of ‘Uphill Court’: both recently completed gated communities of ‘mixed-use’ housing estates that blend their main residential purpose with other zoning types to create one congruent spatial design. Although cars were racing through the streets, the absence of pedestrians made them look deserted. The bus stops were easy to miss, unnoticeable through the wide walls crowned with barbed wire that physically separate these gated communities from the streets. I could not help but feel as if I had entered a new world, completely different from the Istanbul I used to know. It immediately sparked my curiosity. I wanted to know more about this place...

This first visit to Batı Ataşehir must have been around 2010, the year in which the area started to become popular not only because of the many new gated communities under construction but, also, as the site where a novel lifestyle — glorified by the media — was emerging. On a regular trip to my local supermarket in Kadıköy — the centre of Istanbul’s so-called ‘Asian side’ — I spotted the cover of a local magazine completely devoted to the ‘hotspot’ developments in the area. I was familiar with Etiler and Bebek: (upper, ‘bourgeois’) middle class neighbourhoods with historical villas (‘yali’ or ‘kiosk’) and low-rise gated communities featuring shopping malls as well as upscale bars and shops; and located close to both the city centre and the central business district of the European side of the city. Batı Ataşehir, however, was something new. Here, a completely new neighbourhood was developing, including jobs (Turkey’s New Financial Centre), housing, shopping and leisure. Perhaps one could even call it a new, ‘all-inclusive’ lifestyle. A way of living that has since become a blueprint for urban development in Istanbul — and beyond.

The large-scale gated communities that were being built in Batı Ataşehir intrigued me: their rapid rise and their grandiose, over-the-top names like ‘Kentplus’, ‘My World’ and ‘Deluxia Palace’. At first, I felt inclined to interpret these developments through the critical lens on gated communities, with a focus on issues such as neoliberalism, socio-economic segregation and privatisation (e.g. Blakely and Snyder, 1997; Caldeira, 2001; Low, 2003). However, two realisations made me aware that this perspective did not suffice to capture the complex realities I was being faced with in Batı Ataşehir.

First of all, as I was writing my Master's thesis in Turkish Studies at Leiden University in 2011, the interviews I conducted rendered very different stories than I had expected. My interviewees told me about their everchanging neighbours, the student parties and the impersonal atmosphere, but also about how the gated complexes they lived in provided a safe and comfortable haven from where to explore the wider city. After that, as I was doing research for a potential documentary film about these gated communities in 2014¹, I slowly gained more access to some communities and their residents. This is when I especially got the impression that both academic and policy debates on gated communities were being framed within black-and-white arguments that did not do justice to the wide array of shades of grey that I observed in Istanbul. This PhD thesis is the result of this particular observation: gated community living is not a black and white phenomenon, and the ins and outs of everyday life inside gated communities were never really explored. I wanted to take up this task.

In the following chapters, I will dive into the everyday lives revolving around two gated communities: one in Istanbul (Turkey) and another in Madrid (Spain). Both cases represent a contemporary trend of high-rise (or high-density), gated apartment complexes which, although rarely seen from the inside, have become a very common housing trend in cities from London to Shanghai and from Sofia to Buenos Aires. My aim was to provide an insider's perspective into these communities — within the boundaries of my possibilities as an outsider. The result has been a personal journey whose significance to me has been heightened by the birth of my two children (2015 and 2017) who became an essential part of my gated-community experience. We stayed in two gated communities in Istanbul and Madrid, living life as any other family residing there, trying to blend into the most mundane activities. In other words, my study coincided with a deeply transformative stage of my life, in which many of my old patterns, practices and beliefs were turned upside-down, thus forcing me to reconsider previously held ideas. I felt that the subject that I was scrutinising — gated communities — had to go through exactly the same transformative process. This book is an account of that journey. I invite you to see through my eyes what I have seen and to explore what this might mean for our understanding of gated communities in particular and urban gating practices in general, both today and in the foreseeable future.

¹ A project I conducted with Dutch director Remmelt Lukkien in 2014, funded by Creative Industries Fund NL.

Follow the story

My observations of everyday life's unfolding from within the gates yielded two key observations. The first relates to dynamism, transience, multiplicity and porosity. The second concerns time, urban interactions and life cycles. In the following chapters, these observations will be presented in the form of stories about Varyap Meridian and Las Tablas de la Castellana. The first chapter will set the scene: do contemporary (scientific, but also policy-related) perspectives, views and stories on gated communities still represent their multiple realities? Together with Arnoud Lagendijk and Henk van Houtum, I show how this multiplicity might be captured more accurately by approaching gated communities as colourful collections of conceived, practiced, lived and valued spaces. The two subsequent chapters will zoom in on Varyap Meridian. Chapter 3 analyses Varyap Meridian's every life and experiences, shedding light on its fascinating hotel-like qualities, experiences and affects. In Chapter 4, Basak Tanulku² and I explore the dynamic character of Istanbul's gated communities — as well as their potential to influence future developments — by laying bare their differential spaces.

The final chapter will focus on how Las Tablas de la Castellana in Madrid functions as a dynamic time envelope in which multiple layers of time compress the space of its gated community as well as its practices. I join the insights I gained during my fieldwork in Las Tablas with Eduardo de Santiago de Rodríguez (deputy director for urban policies at the Spanish Ministry of Public Works) and Isabel González García (assistant professor at the Department of Urban and Spatial Planning, Madrid Polytechnic University). My data, which puts together a rich mosaic of everyday life in the gated community, is supplemented by De Santiago Rodriguez's policy experience at the Ministry of Public Works as well as by his previous work on recent urban developments in Madrid; and by the research of Gonzalez Garcia, which focuses on the concept of 'urban variety' to examine the characteristics of different urban developments in Madrid and their linkages with urban form.

The conclusion provides an assessment on the future of gating practices in cities as well as on how my research may contribute to understanding and steering this future in a way that contributes to the promotion of social justice. I make a plea to unleash the imagination across the full range of possibilities that these particular forms of urban developments could potentially offer. Personally, I refuse to view gating as the end of our (urban) civilisation and call for a focus on how integration beyond the gates is already taking place in many different ways. The way I see it, a better future lies in

² An independent scholar with a PhD degree from Lancaster University (UK), and one of the first academics focussing on gated communities as processual spaces.

harnessing the untapped possibilities of these developments and unleashing their full potential.

Chapter 1

Gating Communities

Gating Communities

A discussion of gated communities usually starts with reference to Blakely & Snider: two of the key gated community scholars. My story also takes their research and definitions as a point of departure. Not only because their definition is still the most widely used in the gated communities literature but also to be able to illustrate what I argue to be missing in today's debates on these particular communities.

In the preface to the 1999 paperback edition of their classic in the gated communities literature - 'Fortress America' – Blakely & Snyder describe how the debate over walls and gates had spread all around the United States by the late 1990s. Their book illustrates how since the late 1980s, gates had become "ubiquitous in many areas of the country" with "entire incorporated cities that feature guarded entrances" (p. 5). Blakely and Snyder define gated communities as "residential areas with restricted access in which normally public spaces are privatized. They are security developments with designated perimeters, usually walls or fences, and controlled entrances that are intended to prevent penetration by non-residents" (p. 2). In 2005, Atkinson & Blandy made an important addition to this definition, stressing the "legal agreements which tie the residents to a common code of conduct and (usually) collective responsibility for management" (2005, p. 178).

On the basis of this definition, many studies have observed a spread of gated communities over the rest of the world, as for example Wissink & Hazelzet have shown (2016, p. 165). They illustrate how many studies on gated communities start from a universal definition of gated communities that takes the North American gated community as its theoretical model, after which researchers then observe a spread of gated communities over the rest of the world. The effects of this global spread have been widely debated. The most positive interpretation comes from those who view gated communities as 'club goods' (e.g. Webster, 2001, 2002; Manzi and Smith-Bowers, 2005). In this reading, gated communities are viewed as housing developments in which collective ownership and effective management of one's living environment play a central role (Manzi and Smith-Bowers, 2005, p. 357). The idea of gated communities as club goods points towards a discussion that is "guided by the understanding that very little urban space is truly public realm" (Webster, 2002, p. 410). Rather, Webster for example claims that cities consist of multiple consumption-sharing clubs that often have their own spatial delimitation. Following this argumentation, gated communities would not necessarily be very different from non-gated neighbourhoods and the shared facilities they provide. The club goods perspective promotes an urban economics viewpoint of gated communities that

excludes the question of who provides a particular shared good or service, but rather focuses on the manner in which a specific good or service is consumed. A gated community can be built and managed by a private company, but it may be used by a wide variety of users, including users from beyond the gates.

Yet, this club goods perspective represents a minority in scholarly debates on gated communities. The more dominant frame generally understands them as the spatial expressions of global neoliberalism: elitist and segregated housing layouts whose very design promotes privatism and undermines community and social cohesion. A telling and illustrative example is provided by the iconic book *City of Quartz*, in which Mike Davis talks about the unprecedented tendency in Los Angeles “to merge urban design, architecture and the police apparatus into a single, comprehensive security effort.” (Davis, 1990/2006, p. 224). Davis describes a city of fortified mansions and suburban bunkers that depend on “the voracious consumption of private security services” (p. 248). In the urban L.A. he portrays, feelings of threat and insecurity lead to all kinds of residential and commercial segregation that destroy public space and create a spatial apartheid in which interaction between old and new, poor and rich, is obliterated. Along similar lines, Sennett (2018) combines global capital, urban planning, and a general sense of fear into an anti-urban narrative in which he portrays gated communities as bland developments that are closed from the rest of the city. “In the immense urban explosion today in the Global South — in China, India, Brazil, Mexico, the countries of central Africa — large finance and construction firms are standardising the ville; as a plane lands you may not be able to tell Beijing apart from New York... all (developments) are self-contained rather than open to outside influences and interactions” (Sennett, 2018, p. 11), he writes.

These kinds of descriptions fit within a dystopian framing in which gated communities feature widely. Through the lens of this ‘critical’ scholarship – one in which different types of cities around the world are viewed as being repositioned within increasingly volatile, financialised circuits of capital accumulation (Brenner, Marcuse & Mayer, 2009) – gated communities are conceived as being part of a ‘planetary’ interconnectedness of processes and places, through which cities around the world have come to share an inevitable, negative fate (Loftus, 2018). They play a vital role in a global ‘narrative of loss’ (Wissink & Hazelzet, 2016), in which new urban geographies defined by ‘enclavism’ have materialised. This ‘enclavism’ is characterised by a hardening of socio-spatial boundaries with walls, fences and booms and the imposition of sociolegal agreements, and specific governance regimes (Schuermans, 2016, p. 185). The global ‘splintering of cities’ resulting from this ‘enclavism’ is allegedly leading to an increase of class segregation (Wissink & Hazelzet, 2016). As

the physical product of a neoliberal system (Sardar, 2010), gated communities are thus held responsible exerting of all kinds of negative influences on the wider city: disconnection, enclavism, and class segregation being regarded as the most adverse outcomes. Some refer to a transnational 'gating machine' (Vasselinov et al., 2007) that transforms cities worldwide into urban fortresses.

With this analytical context in mind, it is no surprise that the literature on gated communities is almost universally negative. Pow even notes how positive aspects of gating (e.g. Glasze and Alkhayyal, 2002; Salcedo and Torres, 2004; Huang, 2006; Goix and Webster, 2006), are "often seen as exceptions and thus not systematically examined in the overall theorizing of urban gating" (2015, p. 465).

I believe that we — as academics, planners, developers, or politicians — need to tread more carefully here. Although compelling and insightful, the focus on broader global processes and neoliberal systems has obscured an understanding of the gated community as a site of everyday (urban) life. As Forest and Kearns argued, social cohesion in cities – which gated communities allegedly destroy – is (also) about "getting by and getting on at the more mundane level of everyday life" (2001, p. 2127). However, this level is still largely ignored in the literature on gated communities.

Analytical perspectives on gated communities

In order to come to a fuller understanding of how gated communities work and how they influence cities, we need to move beyond the anti-neoliberal frame that currently defines them. Gated communities are not only linked to planetary processes of social and economic transformation. Around the world, thousands, if not millions of people, are living in gated communities. They are living their lives, dreams, and hopes within these communities. Why not take a closer look at what these lives entail? How they take shape, how they unfold. And how they produce gated living, or gating. To come to a closer understanding of gated communities, I think we need to explore them with a detailed and contextual lens, without looking only or predominantly through the gloomy lens of segregation and isolation.

Where to start such an exploration? While most research on gated communities seems rooted in critical perspectives that focus on planetary, neoliberal developments, there are also alternative interpretations, though a lot scarcer. These interpretations have functioned as anchor points for my own journey toward an everyday understanding of gated communities. In the early 2000s, some researchers concluded that the study of gated communities could not be shoehorned into the same history, design, and overall characteristics the world around. "The characteristics that differentiate

enclaves outside the USA are not entirely congruent with those described by Blakely and Snyder”, Grant and Mittelstaedt (2004, p. 914) argued, suggesting that “gated communities show so much diversity that it may be misleading to consider them as a unified set of urban forms”. As a result, gated communities became increasingly viewed not as a unitary phenomenon but as “varying local and regional expressions of a global trend to spatial segregation and social separation between groups” (Rosen and Grant, 2011, p. 778). Thus, the research on gated communities became anchored to the histories bound to their specific geographical context: this implied excavating their historical roots in longstanding imperial traditions or feudal social structures in countries such as Russia, China, and England; or in more recent experiences of gated residential projects constructed in the 1980s in Argentina, Canada, and Portugal (Rosen and Grant, 2011, p. 779). Gating was linked not only to the ‘West’, but also to earlier forms of spatial planning found in traditional African and Middle Eastern settlements (Bagaeen and Uduku, 2010; Tanulku, 2012).

In recent years, the conceptualisation and actual development of gated communities has been expanded even further. An example is the edited volume, *Beyond Gated Communities* (2015), where researchers undertook “a wider examination of the term ‘gating’ and what constitutes exclusion and inclusion in urban spaces within the globalised economies which we engage with today” (Bagaeen and Uduku, 2015, p. 1). This analytical expansion is essential if we look at border studies and its verbing of the term borders – *bordering* – to indicate the processual, the everyday, and the ongoing constructivist character of borders (Van Houtum and Van Naerssen 2002; Van Houtum, 2021).

Looking at *gating* from such a perspective, we are faced with various ambivalences. Not only are gated communities growing in number, but their designs and the types of residents they attract are also diversifying. This is reflected in the pertinent literature, which includes, for example, research on ‘fenced cities’ in Latin America (e.g. Borsdorf, Hidalgo and Sánchez, 2007); ‘master-planned residential developments’ in Australia (e.g. McGuirk and Dowling, 2009); ‘enclosed residential domains’ in the Netherlands (e.g. Hamers and Tennekes, 2014); and ‘porous enclaves’ across Southeast Asia (e.g. Harms, 2015). The latter line of discussion on porous enclaves is exciting as it focuses on the socio-spatial dynamics of movement through gates and walls. This strand of literature has concluded that enclosed residential estates are not necessarily homogeneous and do not always produce socio-spatial disparities or urban fragmentation. Instead, they are “the producers and products of multiple social, spatial, economic and political relations, both symbolic and material

(Fauveaud, 2016, p. 850). In other words, they produce and are produced by their own local forms of power relations.

In addition to the diversification of gated communities, novel yet similar concepts such as ‘co-housing’ are becoming increasingly popular as well. Co-housing is defined as self-initiated and self-managed collective and clustered housing, “often established to strengthen local identities, bring to life new forms of community, *naoborskip* or commons, to combat solitude or to make room for alternative values” (Tummers, 2016, p. 2027). Co-housing initiatives are discussed as the opposite of gated communities, which are assumed to be the brainchildren of large and influential real estate developers catering to fears of insecurity and to aspirational desires of intentional exclusion. However, one could also argue that co-housing and gated communities — along with other forms of private residential communities — belong to the same ‘family’ (Chiodelli, 2015, p.2569). Chiodelli, for example, claims that it is not at all clear that people choose to live in gated communities primarily because of insecurity and fear: it may also be related to the pursuit of communitarian values, which are believed to constitute the main motive driving people to move into co-housing alternatives as well. In addition, Chiodelli also shows that the openness of co-housing communal spaces and services to the outside may be more alleged than effective, with private residential communities showing higher degrees of openness in some of the cases he has explored in Italy. Finally, he shows that co-housing is not — as it is often argued — deprived of any speculative logic and that many co-housing communities are actually, as is the case with gated communities, promoted by real-estate developers (Chiodelli, 2015).

Each of these debates illustrated above — the diversification of gated developments and the rise of co-housing initiatives — fuels new discussions regarding the location of the gates of gated communities. Are these gates solely physical phenomena? How are they rooted in everyday practices? From my perspective, the only way to get a clearer view of the answer to these questions entails looking beyond the walls of gated communities. However, for some reason, contemporary research rarely goes beyond the walls of these controversial developments. It appears difficult to find residents of gated communities willing to be interviewed. As a result, the everyday lives taking place inside gated developments remain obscured. Yet, what do we know about the daily lives and activities that unfold in gated communities? And what do we know about the experiences, thoughts, and inner beliefs of people that live or work there? If we want to craft a ‘real’ perspective of gated communities that goes beyond judgement (“they are bad for cities”) or uncritical promotion (“they are the greatest residential concept ever developed”), we need to take the role of everyday

life into account. We must dive into their regular mechanisms, which are created, lived, and experienced by residents, users, and professionals alike. In other words, we need to move inside.

This research is based on a view of gated communities that conceives such developments not merely as the 'ideal spaces' envisioned by developers, architects, planners and politicians but also as *perceived, lived* and *valued* spaces that are practiced, experienced, felt, and thought about by a richer variety of actors. To be sure, the gates of these communities are being shaped by concrete anxieties about safety and security; however, they are also being configured by daily practices, habits, and an affective search for homeliness and belonging. This research is about the people doing, feeling, and thinking up the gates. It is about these people's *daily life worlds* and how they continuously re-shape the gated community. By paying attention to the daily practice of gated communities, I aim to uncover how the much-criticised privatisation of space can potentially be challenged by common uses and everyday practices.

Gated communities in a double bind

A processual view on gated communities' borders

The term 'gated community' is laden with binary connotations. On the one hand, gated communities provide security: protection from 'the outside' and freedom — say, from worry and stress — on 'the inside'. Much like the medieval walled city, gated communities have been described as either "protected towns" (Mumford, 1961, p. 255) or "free towns" (Pirenne, 1925, p. 217). As Mumford describes, in the Middle Ages, the concept of freedom was strongly intertwined with concepts such as association, patronage and defence: people could be free only by securing either physical protection or the personal bonds to guarantee it. The wall of the city — or, to be more precise, the practice of giving citizens certain rights bound to the city within it — had an emancipatory force: it afforded people a socio-spatial definition, thus asserting their distinctiveness and autonomy (van den Brink, 2019).

Gated communities can arouse similar notions of 'protection', 'security', and 'freedom', but they are usually framed along a more negative interpretation of these terms. People supposedly move into gated communities because they are afraid of the world outside: they seek safety from crime, chaos, and diversity. Security seems to be a central motive for people to move into gated developments around the world (i.e., Caldeira, 2001 (Brazil); Landman, 2002 (South Africa) and Low, 2003 (United

States). Interestingly, there are also some examples of non-gated communities using gating techniques to protect themselves against crime. In the United Kingdom, there are several socially rented housing estates that have been gated to avert crime (Blandy & Parsons, 2003). In relation to Brazil, Vargas (2006) describes how Jacarezinho, Rio de Janeiro's second-largest favela, installed gates and cameras to protect the neighbourhood.

"Given that middle- and upper-class condominiums throughout Rio de Janeiro and in other major urban centres in Brazil were defined by such protective devices, why not adopt the same strategies in an attempt to curb police abuse and drug dealing? The activists who came up with the thought did not even bother consulting the rest of the community. They were sure that the idea of gates and cameras would be approved unanimously, and so they went ahead and installed the security devices at key points in the favela. The cameras, one of the neighbourhood association members told me, had been donated by "a Gypsy who had heard about our work." Hand-held camcorders complemented the strategy. The daring experiment, however, was short-lived. Local activists anticipated negative reactions against the favela-condominium and putting the idea into practice was a calculated attempt at creating public-political facts revealing the dire conditions in a poor and marginalized neighbourhood." (2006, p. 49-50).

The interpretation of gated communities relating to safety and crime can be traced back to Hobbes' negative image of man, in which security was considered as the removal of pain, danger, and unrest (Schuilenburg, 2019). However, if we focus on security alone, we risk missing out on other explanations. "Security is only one service that residents want, and in both conventional and private neighbourhoods it is generally packaged up with other services", Glasze, Webster, and Frantz state in the introduction to their in-depth edited volume on gated communities (2006, p.1)

The desire to live in a gated community could also be inspired by more positive evocations of the concept of security related to loyalty, trust, and friendliness (Schuilenburg, 2019). The dual character of the notion of security associated with gated communities is one of their most controversial traits that greatly influences debates on the specific form of housing that they provide. Gated communities can be simultaneously associated with attributes both positive (e.g. community, neighbourly interaction and self-determination) and negative (e.g. segregation, exclusion, and fear). In other words, gated communities are caught in a complex double bind.

To make sense of this dual complexity, it is helpful to draw on debates in border theory, as shortly referenced earlier. In the past two decades, a remarkable turn has taken place in the analysis of borders. Rather than viewing them as fixed points in space or time, border theory has pushed the conceptualisation of borders towards the continuous practice of spatial differentiation through practices of inclusion and exclusion, leading to the coining of the term 'bordering' by Van Houtum and Van Naerssen (Van Houtum & Van Naerssen, 2002; Van Houtum 2021). This bordering approach towards borders allows us to look at gated communities and their gates not merely as a particular form of urban planning but as concrete manifestations of ideological constructs stemming from larger social processes. They are not mere physical entities devoid of further meaning (Paasi, 2005). The duality of gated communities and their gates as both material and ideological symbols of particular social processes implies understanding that: "The border as a concept is not so much an object or phenomenon, something to erase or install, but rather an ongoing repetitive process that we encounter and produce ourselves in our daily lives (Van Houtum and Berg, p. 1, 2003). Viewing the gates of gated communities as processual thus not only allows for a view of those gates as being actively created but also allows for them to be reinterpreted and reshaped (Van Houtum & Eker, 2015), in other words: to change meaning and direction. An essential question in this respect is who exactly performs this 'borderwork' (Hooper, 2004): who is involved in the creation, maintenance, and development of the gated communities' gates or borders? And how?

Beyond the focus on gating as a practice, border theory also provides interesting input regarding its emphasis on the interaction between the inside and the outside and the opportunities this creates. Currently, gated communities are usually explored as urban phenomena that are produced outside: their borders are drawn by developers, architects, and managers and people supposedly follow and use the borders the way they are designed. However, I would argue that a gated community is a cross-border phenomenon, that is strongly shaped by the interaction between the constructed, imagined, and lived inside and outside the community. Through this interaction, gated communities do not only function to delimit, separate, differentiate or affirm — the characteristics they are most widely associated with —, but they also provide opportunities, in the form of encounter and exchange (e.g. Sohn, 2014; Sohn, 2020) or multiplicity and transition (e.g. Brambilla & van Houtum, 2012). In other words, they do not only function as filters but also as resources that lead to new possibilities.

In order to grasp the various ways in which the gated community takes shape, my work therefore concentrates on the social practices and discourses in which their gates are produced and reproduced in different and perpetually changing ways, thereby functioning as a filter and a resource at the same time, hence - following the paradigmatic turn in border studies towards bordering -, as 'gating'. I believe this specific approach is of paramount importance given the ever-more varied ecosystem of gated communities being built around the world today; thus the diversity of everyday practices producing these communities and being reproduced by them.

Gating communities – linking border theory to everyday life

To summarise, I see at least two key reasons that justify a detailed and in-depth analysis of 'gating' as an everyday process. First of all, the gates clearly do something to both the communities they enclose and to the communities they exclude. Their walls seem impenetrable borders designed to keep unwanted elements out. However, this observation neglects a crucial aspect: gates are part of a continuous process of opening and closing. Gates represent not solely a barrier to entry, but also reveal the underlying criteria that grant access through them. It is important to remember that all gates are open at least sometimes and that this process produces new effects — both wanted and unwanted — and, thereby, new responses (Robinson, 2015). As stated earlier, gates simultaneously function as both filters and resources. Walls and gates are sites where techniques of power are applied and, in reciprocity, where they meet creative forms of resistance. Walls may be sites where war is waged but also the locations where communal identities are transformed, and a multitude of alternative imaginaries are evoked (Stephenson and Zanotti, 2016, p. 2). In other words, gates should be conceived as more than mere static structures: they do something by creating a border whose presence opens opportunities even as it imposes restrictions.

The second reason to talk about gating as a process lies in the connection that the gate represents between the community it encloses and the wider urban space in which it is embedded. Henri Lefebvre pointed out that even though visible boundaries such as walls and enclosures give rise to an appearance of separation between spaces, there is in fact, an ambiguous continuity between them. "The space of a room, bedroom, house or garden may be cut off in a sense from social space by barriers and walls, by all the signs of private property, yet still remain fundamentally part of that space" (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 87). In line with Lefebvre's description, we may think of the gated community as part of the city: severed from its urban spatial context but still a fundamental part of it. Connections are made through the practices, networks, beliefs and 'affects' inextricable to people's everyday lives: by the

very act of gating themselves, communities also make a connection to the wider city. The space of the gated community is produced through dynamic interactions and connections between and among places and social relations.

These observations — the active creation of opportunities and connections — can be seen as invitations to adopt new ways of looking at gated communities. Instead of focusing on permanence, barriers, and isolation, we could approach gated communities in terms of assemblages, connections, and processes. This conceptual shift – one that could be framed as a non-representational (i.e. Thrift, 2007) shift, although I am also perfectly happy with the term ‘more-than-representational’ (Lorimer, 2005) - constitutes an analytical tool that has the potential to open previously neglected avenues to understand both gated communities as well as their meaning in the wider socio-spatial context. Focusing on gated communities as unstable and shifting frames of reference shaped by practice and process, may lead to more interesting insights than insisting on maintaining the dominant frame (Latour, 2005).

Going beyond the paradigmatic knowledge about gated communities may also imply demystifying them. Similar to ‘the myth of suburbia’, preconceptions about gated communities have acquired an almost mythical substance that is eagerly reproduced in the corresponding literature (e.g., Ballards’ *High-Rise* and *Super-Cannes*) and films (e.g. *High-Rise*, *Neighbouring Sounds*). In the 1960s, Bennett M. Berger (1966, p. 171) attempted to unveil the myth of suburbia in the United States by going beyond their stereotypical symbols: patios, barbecues, lawnmowers, tricycles, shopping centres, station wagons, and the trite associations often evoked by intellectuals, which betrayed a complacent, smug, conformist perspective anxious about socio-economic status. Berger claimed that this myth went largely unchallenged because it suited the prescriptive desires of a wide variety of opinions, “from the yea sayers of the Right to the agonizers of the Centre to the naysayers of the Left” (ibid, p. 172). The understanding of gated communities, in turn, is largely restricted to a dichotomic symbolism comprising either villas, swimming pools or golf courts, or fear, status anxiety, and a longing for homegeneity. They have become political vehicles common to debates on segregation and urban inequality, self-management, and self-determination. There is not much in-between. However, this conventional dichotomy cannot account for the inner workings of these gated communities and how their diverse gating processes take shape. Put differently: the debate we need to have to grasp the fuller complexity of these urban phenomena might have more to do with the process of gating than with the material gates.

In line with the work of i.e., Wissink (2013) on urban enclaves in Mumbai, I will focus on gated communities thus not as the sole result of the material actions of dominant social actors but as a converging emergence of objects, actors, and institutions in specific situations (p. 10). The everyday, in Lefebvrian terms, is an interesting perspective from which to approach the gated community. Lefebvre coins the everyday as a phenomenon that moves alongside all the other day-to-day moments. The everydayness does not close-off but perpetually opens up (Seigworth & Gardiner, 2004, p. 142). In terms of actually doing research, this implied the exploration of how the space in and around gated communities is being constantly re-made by the daily routines of their inhabitants, employees, and users, their agency deserving more analytical rigour than being conceptualized as passive subjects of their functional habitat. Lefebvre argued that “the social world is in a perpetual process of creation, which depends on more than the operations of abstract economic laws and social structures, requiring the active potential of human agency” (Butler, p. 18). Although gated communities are products of both local and global interactions, it is crucial to keep in mind that every gated community can be distinguished by its own particular trajectory in the processes that influence the production of space. The agency of inhabitants, visitors, users, and employees cannot and should not be ignored in this respect. The space of the gated community may be a place of urban conflict, but it is also the object of struggle itself, thereby potentially changing the space. “There is work to be done on an understanding of space and how it is socially constructed and used”, as Elden stated (2004, p. 183). The everydayness of the gated community seemed to be a good perspective to start from.

This is what I set out to do in the space of gated communities: to gain a more profound understanding of how it is constructed and used and how human agency plays a pivotal role in this respect.

I aim to understand how the everyday practices, social relations and affects in and around gated communities shape the functioning, experience, and practice of the communities' gates. Two contemporary, gated communities in Istanbul and Madrid form the testing ground for this in-depth exploration.

In answering this research question, I theoretically connect the processual idea of ‘gates’ in contemporary border studies to Lefebvre’s theories on the production of space and the importance of ‘everyday life’ in this process. Lefebvre is interested in gaining an understanding of space that reduces the separation between the mental, physical, and social fields. These fields can only be united if the mental, physical, and social aspects are first identified and then distinguished from one another. Analysed

separately, “each of these fields is never able to form the basis for an adequate analysis of even its own object of enquiry” (Butler, 2012, p. 39). In Lefebvre’s work, the mental, physical, and social dimensions of space are understood as internally related within an open totality: the triad of perceived, conceived, and lived experiences that are in a constant state of co-production and reproduction, driven by the continuous shifts among the three different moments (Schmid, 2008).

Perceived space denotes its physical dimension and its flow of materials, people, and energy: it is space that is generated and used. Conceived space alludes to knowledge and logic: it is the instrumental site where (social) engineers and urban planners develop idealised abstractions. Lived space is socially produced and modified through the use people make of it: it connotes space that is charged with symbolism and meaning (Elden, 2001). The different ‘moments of space’ are not mutually exclusive but fold onto each other in various ways. This definition allows Lefebvre to understand space as an ensemble of relations and networks that make social action possible. Space is then understood as neither a physical container of objects nor an infinite, discursive field. It is both socially produced and an essential precondition for the reproduction of social relations (Butler, p. 42).

Applying Lefebvre’s spatial triad to gated communities allows for an investigation of the physical, social and affective components that shape them while giving equal importance to all three dimensions — which are always in interaction. Lefebvre’s conception of space as socially constituted thus allows for the analysis of the wide range of components associated with the dynamic character of gated communities. In addition, it provides an illustration of the spatial practices at play in gated communities, which result from complex struggles and conflicts between conceived spaces and perceived and lived spaces. Within these conflicts, gated community residents, users, visitors, and workers are not passive recipients of the space designed for them or the rules imposed on them, but they take an active role in shaping their environment (Hubbard & Sanders, 2003).

Non-representational theory and affect

Lefebvre’s spatial triad and his theoretical exploration of everyday life shift the focus of gated communities’ grand designs and urban plans (conceived space) to a lot of messy nitty-gritty and everyday practices (perceived space) and experiences (lived space). To quote Thrift, “so much ordinary action gives no advance notice of what it will become” (2004). At the same time, Thrift contends, it makes critical differences to our experiences of space and place. “The focus falls on how life takes shape and gains

expression in shared experiences, everyday routines, fleeting encounters, embodied movements, precognitive triggers, practical skills, affective intensities, enduring urges, unexceptional interactions and sensuous dispositions" (Lorimer, 2005, p. 84).

In terms of my focus on gated communities, I was particularly intrigued by a realisation that Anderson & Smith had in 2001. They describe how "emotional relations tend to be regarded as something apart from the economic and/or as something that is essentially private and does not substantially infuse the public/policy sphere" (p. 7). However, they state that social relations are strongly mediated by feelings and sensibility (p. 8). I take this argument one step further towards a focus on the mediation of not only social relations but also materials and practices. To grasp the messy complexity of gated communities, I do not only wish to take on Lefebvre's idea on the production of space through the triadic relations illustrated earlier, but I also turn to nonrepresentational theory's incorporation of 'affect' to expand Lefebvre's triad and add 'valued space' into the process. Though I will dive into the theoretical underpinnings and implications of focusing on affect and valued space in detail in chapter 3, I would like to discuss its importance here as well.

Since the early 2000s, emotions and affect have (re)appeared as major focal points for human geographical research. Pile (2010) gives a concise overview of the development of emotional and affective geographies over the past decades, showing how they evolved from the humanistic geographies of the 1970s and 1980s and the psychoanalytic geographies of the 1990s (p. 5). Throughout the formation of these 'affective theories', there has been a lot of scientific debate about what 'affect' is, and there are multiple circulating definitions and interpretations. Thrift distinguishes between three dominant translations of 'affect', including 1) affect as a set of embodied practices that produce visible conduct as an outer lining, 2) affect as associated with psychoanalytic frames and based around a (Freudian) notion of drive. 3) affect as naturalistic and as adding capacities through interaction in a world that is constantly becoming, a view associated with Deleuze's and Guattari's reinterpretation of Spinoza (p. 60-61). According to their reading of Spinoza, 'affection' is a state, while 'affect' is a transition from one state to another. They are, in other words, becomings. This interpretation gives us "via their emphasis on defining individuals through the affects of which they are capable...a more nuanced and viable understanding of the kinds of being we might inhabit through the affective relations we enter into" (Uhlmann, 2020, p. 168). In my research, I take up the third interpretation. This implies I embrace the notion that affect does not reside in a subject, body or sign but that the process of being affected or affecting (two sides of the same coin) emerges from "a processual logic of transitions that take place

during spatially and temporally distributed encounters in which powers to affect and be affected are addressable by a next event and how readily addressable they are" (Massumi, 2002, p. 15).

Focusing on the gated community as 'gating' communities that are in a constant state of production, movement, and change and combining this notion with a focus on everyday life and affect allows for the uncovering of new stories about how it is that gated communities come to be (seen). Or perhaps I should say, how they 'become' and 'change' and produce 'potential' for something else. Affect is of great importance here. My experiences with and observations in gated communities had always rendered strong affective responses from interviewees, often related to wider, shared affective notions of 'nostalgia', 'fear' and 'insecurity'. They often remained under the surface – people did not necessarily clearly express that they were feeling fearful or insecure -, but by zooming in on people's experiences, stories, and explanations as well as their everyday practices and activities -, I came to realise there was a world of 'unconscious' affects to all kinds of broader moral and ethical considerations. I also realised that these affects were part of the everyday production of gated communities. Extending Lefebvre's triad to include affect renders interesting insights and sheds light on how gated communities are produced not only by design or economic incentives, but also by social relations, experiences *and* affects – all of those elements being constantly mixed and stirred into new constellations.

How (gated) space is encountered, sensed and experienced depends on our individual and collective affects. In case of collective fear, a space may be experienced as more hostile or dangerous. At the same time, practice also depends on the affective setting of a specific space. Within fearful settings instigated by collective fear – as described above – gates are likely to be more heavily restricted and policed. This is a continuously moving and shifting process in which the constant conversion between concrete (lived, perceived) and abstract (conceived, valued) space allows for alternative interpretations and possibilities.

With this work, I aim to not only uncover the dynamic processes of becoming 'a gated community', but also to show how this process gives rise to infinite possibilities and change. The gated communities I spent time in show similarities, yet, they are not the same. They each inhibit their own processes and outcomes, as do other gated communities worldwide.

Chapter 2

Seeing gating at work

We arrived at Varyap Meridian on Wednesday 22 July 2015 at around eight o'clock in the evening. The gated community had been easy to find. A security guard was sitting in a white booth. I told him in which block and in which apartment we would be staying. He asked us where we would get the key, and if the owner was going to be inside. I told him the owner wasn't there, but that he had informed us that we should pick up the keys at the reception desk. The guard said we could go ahead and check, but we had to park our rental car outside the gates, because we did not have a specific sticker yet. I asked him if it would be safe to leave the car outside the gates, because all the surrounding streets looked as if they were part of a construction site. He replied it was very safe and nothing would happen to our car. "Someone will be here in the booth too," he assured us. We offloaded our luggage and went inside the building to get the key. However, nobody was there. The lobby was completely deserted and there was no one sitting at the reception desk. I went back to the security guard and meanwhile called the owner's assistant whose phone number I had been given. Unfortunately, the line was busy. The guard then checked whether the keys might be in his booth. To everyone's surprise, they were. He handed them over to me with a little note containing the apartment number and our date of arrival. No name. I walked back to my husband and daughter and meanwhile called the assistant once again. I informed her that we were not allowed to park our car in the parking garage inside the gates yet, because we didn't have this particular sticker. The assistant asked if she could talk to the guard, because we should be able to park in the parking space belonging to the apartment. However, the guard had said something about people frowning upon cars without stickers being parked in the parking garage. They talked on the phone for a while and after that we were allowed to park inside after all. We left the car outside the building for a bit and decided to take our luggage upstairs and settle down first. The apartment was exactly as in the pictures on the Airbnb website.

After we had unpacked our suitcases we ordered food at the on-site restaurant, Café Pion, owned by Okan, who could – to my husband's delight – speak English very well. The restaurant itself was basic, like a regular cafeteria. The owner delivered the two chicken dürüm we ordered to our apartment, where we could pay on the spot with our debit card. Okan informed us that there were two Swedish families staying in our building and that last year, an American family had been staying in our

apartment. After dinner, my husband went to the on-site supermarket to buy a few things like milk and yoghurt. Also this shop was nothing fancy and looked like the type of grocery store you would find everywhere around Istanbul. Unfortunately, our debit card did not work in the store. My husband called me on my mobile and I talked to the lady working at the shop. I told her which apartment we were staying at and asked her if we could pay cash the next day. She asked me at what time we would pay and then agreed. At around 10 o'clock in the evening we went back to park the car in the garage. We asked the guard if he could show us the parking spot, but the guard said he had to stay inside his booth. We found the parking spot, but it was quite a long drive, a few floors down. We immediately noticed there were not that many cars parked. The whole place felt slightly deserted.

In the previous chapter, I stated that my research aimed to uncover the dynamic, everyday processes of becoming 'a gated community'. Because the word 'process' implies movement, I present my work as a journey, as an exploration of practices, relations and affects in and around gated communities that shape the functioning and experience of the community's gates. This exploration lays the ground for a reconceptualisation of gating: what is it? How does it operate today and how might it develop in the future? My ambition is to unleash a range of original ideas that may inspire others to re-imagine how gated communities may be rethought and re-assembled in contemporary cities.

While the theoretical foundations for my exploration have already been outlined in general terms (and they will be further elaborated on in the chapters ahead), the methodological framework of my study still warrants further explanation. In this chapter I will outline and explain the methodological choices and directions I decided to take on my journey towards reaching my research goals, being

... to understand how the everyday practices, social relations and affects in and around gated communities shape the functioning, experience, and practice of the communities' gates. Two contemporary gated communities in Istanbul and Madrid form the testing ground for this in-depth exploration.

This aim asks for a thorough examination of the taken-for-granted fundamentals of gated communities. This implies taking a critical look into the daily experiences, patterns, prejudices, and beliefs surrounding them and therefore requires an

exploration of the everyday lives of the people living and working in these communities. More simply put: I am focusing on seeing ‘gating’ at work. ‘Seeing gating at work’, in turn, requires being inside a gated community and joining in on its day-to-day affairs. This is why I have chosen to apply a qualitative, ethnographic focus relying strongly on a mixed-methods approach, including participatory observation and semi-structured interviews.

My intellectual goal of “identifying unanticipated phenomena and influences” concerning the gating of gated communities and “reaching a deeper understanding of this process” makes a qualitative approach the most logical and natural choice (Maxwell, 2012) in my opinion. It would have been tough to gain an in-depth understanding of the everyday workings of the gated communities I studied through questionnaires or even through interviews alone. Instead, my research was an ethnographically inspired exploration in which I conducted semi-structured interviews. Still, these were combined with more informal conversations, observations, interactions, and data from local magazines, social media, and materials such as advertisements and notifications on notice boards. Taking an ethnographic approach also fitted my research goals because I wanted to go beyond the realm of ‘attitudes’, which are often distilled from interviews, and move into the realm of ‘behaviour’. There is a gap between what we say and what we do (Gobo, 2008, p. 21), and research on gated communities tends to focus on what we say we do, rather than the actual behaviour and practices that people display. Combining interviews and observations allowed me to reflect on this contradiction.

All in all, the study I undertook formed a reflexive process (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995), during which data collection and analysis led to further development of my theoretical angles and research questions. Based on my first data collection, my core questions for example, shifted from a genealogical enquiry into a more process and practice-oriented exploration.

This book is the result of that exploration and provides a journey into the everyday of two contemporary gated communities: one in Istanbul and another in Madrid. I will apply fresh, theoretical lenses focusing on everyday practice, perceptions, and affect. I had a great curiosity for the interaction between the material gates and walls and people’s actions, behaviours, thoughts, beliefs, and emotions. These interactions will become visible through observations of mundane activities such as swimming pool dynamics, informal chats with locals and everyday experiences with elevators, car parks, and dogs, for example. Through the interplay

between theory and everyday routines, I will try to uncover the inner workings of gated communities.

But before we start the journey, let me first illustrate the routes I have decided to take in further detail, explaining how I designed my exploration and why I decided to take specific turns or directions.

2

Lived experiences and everyday routines

To get close enough to the lived experiences that characterise gated communities, I needed to experience life inside their gates not just for the duration of an interview but for an extended period. I had to take part in the everyday life of this 'gating' process. Being part of the daily experience of the gated community was a crucial methodological ambition. The fieldwork on gated communities I have personally come across seems to replicate the same limited methodological approach: researchers go into these communities to conduct interviews, after which they return home. I was curious to see whether being part of the gated community as a short-term 'resident' — or at least a visitor spending several consecutive days and nights — may render new perspectives on these particular spatial assemblages of communal living. This conviction was beefed up by an incident with a researcher who has produced interesting and relevant work on gated communities yet — when visiting me in a gated community where I was staying for my research — revealed that this was their first time in an actual gated community. The statement baffled me. Yet, what truly alarmed me was the subsequent criticism of the flat's design and furniture and the allegedly 'tasteless' atmosphere it exuded. I later discussed this incident with Başak Tanulku, co-author of chapter five. We both agreed that we wanted to distance ourselves from these types of generalising and condescending statements. Research on gated communities is often unflattering about them; a stand based on *a priori* notions that they are inherently bad for cities and their inhabitants. Although I am well aware that it may be impossible to carry out a research project free of prejudice, since the start of my research, I have consciously tried to conduct my research inside the gated communities with as open a mind as possible.

These research objectives persuaded me to take a methodological approach based on on-site observations, semi-structured interviews, and more informal interactions that allowed me to submerge myself in two gated communities. These were supplemented by accounts from my journal, social media, news reports and official

documents. I examined people's daily interactions and paid particular attention to common patterns, including events, rhythms, and themes (Creswell, 1998). I explored the everyday functioning of gated communities by being part of them and doing what other insiders were doing.

At Varyap Meridian in Istanbul, I would follow the rhythm of the gated community by, for example, having tea at the on-site cafeteria in the morning. I would encounter the empty elevators, the receptionist ("how are you today?"), the taxis that always seemed to be waiting for someone at the main entrance, and the busy but friendly staff of the cafeteria. I would see people at the pool, creating their own social groups: the young and trendy, families with children and small groups of middle-aged men. They would chat, listen to music and fidget with their phones, meanwhile being served a cup of tea in the relentless August sun.

In Madrid, I followed the friends (husband and wife with a small daughter) I was staying with. They allowed me to follow their routines: breakfast, work, late afternoons at the swimming pool with other families, Sunday lunches outside, grocery shopping, hot summer night with children playing outside way past midnight. They would introduce me to their neighbours, allowing me to mingle, exchange and observe at the swimming pool.

In my observations, I was always looking for everyday details, rituals, and recurring events: the empty lobby, the guard who would open the gate without looking at who entered, the great number of food deliveries throughout the day, the times at which the gym was crowded, the electricity bills that were on display showing very low energy use. I took it all in on my everyday explorations of the two sites.

My interviews also came about through my everyday routines. I met the receptionist because I passed his desk every day. I started talking to the community manager after visiting the on-site management office. I would get in touch with people at the swimming pool, tell them about my research, and then ask them if I could interview them. I even got in touch with some people by contacting them through social media. Usually, the people I interviewed would lead me to new respondents. Sometimes people did not want to be interviewed. One interviewee told me: "I have a friend living here who also rents out an apartment to students. She has encountered quite some problems. Let me give my friend a call". It sounded potentially interesting, but 'the friend' refused to talk. In addition to my interviewees, I also met a lot of people with whom I shared shorter, more informal exchanges: the owner of a local kebab restaurant, a real estate expert on the boat

to Büyükkada, an architect, people just having a cup of tea with whom I had a brief exchange. I noted all of these formal and informal encounters in my field diary, expanding on both content and (emotional) impressions.

Despite the strong ethnographic focus in my geographical gating study, I would describe my work not as a full ethnography but as 'ethnographically inspired', mainly because of the relatively short time I spent inside the two gated communities that I examined in this work. Financially, staying at Varyap Meridian for a month struck a blow in my PhD-budget. This means I had to limit my fieldwork to six weeks at Varyap Meridian (which I divided by staying once in 2015 and twice in 2018) and just over two weeks in and around Las Tablas de la Castellana (in 2016 and 2018). However, I already had quite some experience with research on (and inside) gated communities, especially in Istanbul. I had already written my thesis for my Master's degree in Turkish Studies in 2011 and had conducted preparatory research for a documentary film on gated communities in Istanbul in 2011 and 2012.

To make sure that my observations and findings reflected the multiple realities my interviewees were facing, I had my findings double-checked by them. Even though I was financially restricted and did not have much time to spend inside these complexes, I collected relevant and insightful data, allowing me to better understand the experiences and lives in the gated communities I studied. In any case, my findings opened good avenues to challenge the foundations on which the academic debate on gated communities is currently based.

I analysed my rich data throughout the research process using a classification method described in Gobo (2008, p. 243-244). I classified my notes on events, actions, interviews, and conversations using both terms employed by local actors and creating my own. Every night I would go over my notes and discuss them with my husband or a resident if I had the opportunity. This resulted in an initial classification of data using codewords such as 'children', 'conflict', or 'easy living'. I would take up these initial classifications in interviews, checking their validity and asking people to respond or elaborate. Thereby I created a new, more elaborate framework of concepts on the basis of which I consecutively created the key storylines used in the chapters to come, i.e., Varyap Meridian as a hotel and Las Tablas de la Castellana as a space-time envelope.

Positioning myself in the gated community

Since my family facilitated many of the contacts that I made, this aspect of my methodology warrants further explanation. My husband and eldest daughter (who was at the time between 6 and 18 months old) joined me to live in both of the gated communities where my field research took place so that we could experience the gated community as a family. Being there as part of a family — and not just as a researcher — allowed me to splice into people's daily rituals and flows with much more ease. I could become part of everyday life rather than solely being a passive observer looking, as an outsider, at life unfolding around me. The immersion that my family afforded my research allowed me to 'float' within the gated community. Sudhir Venkatesh coined this metaphor in his book *Floating City* (2013), where he elaborated on his experiences in the underground world of New York City. This book was a great source of inspiration for me. Venkatesh described a new world of porous borders, bricolage, and the art of combining fragments of existing things to make a new order, which he could only explore on the move — by floating — which implied following the spontaneous path where things took him. "Good sociology is always a mixture of close focus and long shot. You dial in and pull back, dial in and pull back, a delicate dance over the data gaps," Venkatesh wrote (p. 26). In my research, I have attempted to follow the same floating technique, although I do admit that I did not have the time and practical freedom to dive as deep as Venkatesh did, unfortunately. In that sense, being in these gated communities as a family was also a limitation at times. Overall, I would say it was a benefit, though. When I first arrived at Varyap Meridian, I was engulfed by feelings that evoked the movements of a dance, feelings that Venkatesh had also experienced: this was not a stable and uniform housing development but a contradictory, changing and multi-layered experience that transgressed material gates and walls. Staying at these two gated communities as part of a family allowed me to tap into this complex experience more efficiently and naturally. I could blend into the playground or swimming pool but also take a spot on the open-air terrace. Having a baby with you also makes you more approachable in a way; it opens up avenues for all kinds of conversation.

Throughout my fieldwork and further research, I was keenly aware that, as a middle-class family member, I was precisely the sort of resident to which these gated developments I studied try to appeal. Many of the residents I met were comparable to me in terms of socio-economic status: people with university degrees, full-time jobs, and families with young children. They were project managers, financial controllers, postdoc researchers, civil servants, architects, and ICT professionals.

Many of their concerns were also mine: childcare, education, holidays, the nearest supermarket, or doctor, or simply how to get from A to B. Overall, I understood their motivations. Especially in Istanbul, where I lived for three years between 2004 and 2011, I could understand why people were moving into the gated community. Life in Istanbul is chaotic, exhausting, and intense. I could perfectly imagine that life with small children would be more manageable inside a gated development. However, I could also understand the criticism levelled against gated communities, the construction of which has often involved the dire displacement of socioeconomically disadvantaged local populations.

In particular, this dual understanding of my position was an aspect of my research that I had to navigate. In all my dealings with people ‘like me’, I attempted to be close while keeping an observational distance. This may have been an impossible task, considering the problematic balance between involvement and detachment described by Norbert Elias, or the impossibility of being a scientist and a participant simultaneously, as stated by Schwartz and Jacobs (Gobo, 2008, p. 22). Still, it was something that was at the back of my mind all the time. It was not easy at times trying to be part of people’s daily lives and meeting them for coffee or a beer — having a good time — while simultaneously preserving some space to reflect more objectively. In that sense, I aimed to be somewhat ‘neutralistic’ rather than neutral (Rapley, 2007). Sharing a similar background posed the danger of desensitising my awareness. Yet, this common background also afforded me a degree of closeness and trust I might not have gotten otherwise. For example, I aimed to build on this closeness by allowing interviewees to choose the interview location because, by subordinating my research to their daily routines, I wanted to make them feel as normal and comfortable as possible. Remarkably, I conducted all interviews and informal talks in Istanbul — apart from those with officials, which were held at their offices — in the community’s common areas: at the community’s restaurant, at the swimming pool, or in the lobby. In Madrid, on the other hand, I conducted most interviews inside people’s apartments.

During the interviews, I tried to create a natural atmosphere, involving myself with my own experiences and thoughts. “As we treat the other as a human being, we can no longer remain objective, faceless interviewers, but become human beings and must disclose ourselves, learning about ourselves as we try to learn about the other” (Fontana and Frey, 1994, pp. 373-4). I approached my interviews as mutual interactions and collaborative exchanges in which the interviewee and I explored experiences, views, and ideas together (Rapley, 2007). This resulted in detailed descriptions, which allowed me to analyse a broad and colourful spectrum of

gating practices and experiences. All the interviews were semi-structured with the aim to leave some room for the unplanned and unexpected. Especially in Istanbul, the degree of uncertainty turned out to be relatively high, mainly because the everyday practice of the community was different from what I had anticipated. Thus, the questions I had initially prepared turned out to be unfit. This was one of the reasons I decided to return to the community again in 2018, so that I could further reflect on and look back at the 'unexpected' elements I had encountered in 2015.

The observations I gathered in and around the two gated communities were based on unstructured and mundane movements around the communities. I tried to do what other people were doing: grocery shopping, swimming, drinking tea at the community's restaurant and going to the playground. Even more common things like parking the car, separating waste, and taking the elevator were part of my observations. My role was not passive, for I was carefully watching and busy *doing* something myself. I felt that I blended into the community while I engaged in these activities, especially in the case of Varyap Meridian. Short-term tenancies were common there, so nobody paid particular attention to me. I was simply someone who happened to be there, just like so many others.

I included all my observations, ideas, and reflections in a field diary. In terms of the actual analysis, I followed Bogdan and Biklen (1992), which implied applying an analysis strategy based on "jotting down ideas in the margins of fieldnotes, writing memos and observer's comments and trying out themes on subjects" (Creswell, 1998, p. 141). This effort involved a great deal of going back and forth: talks with colleagues, matching results from interviews with social media accounts, and comparing ideas and findings to previous work I had done on gated communities. It was a continuous process of self-review. Throughout my fieldwork, I shared ideas generated from my notes with interviewees, my husband, friends, and colleagues. We exchanged thoughts about the possible meaning of what I had written down, thereby allowing for respondent validation (Creswell, 1998).

The experiences and formal reflections I had enabled me to process my relationship with research participants, examining my positionality towards my research and interviewees along the way. It also allowed for the kind of 'kitchen table reflexivity' Kohl and McCutcheon describe in their work on the negotiation of positionality through everyday talk (2015). Kohl & McCutcheon show how everyday talk "can bring to light the relationship between the power structures within which we are embedded and how we make sense of our research at multiple scales" (p. 758).

They claim that through everyday talk, we can help each other see situations from a different perspective, “pushing our understandings of ourselves and our situated, fluid, and relational positionalities” (p. 758).

The chapters ahead should be read as detailed accounts of the everyday experiences of the people living, working, or simply staying inside the communities I explored — peppered by my reflections on them. They are akin to ‘impressionistic tales’ (Van Maanen, 1988, p. 7): personalised accounts of my fieldwork stemming from my interpretation of their sensorial composition and from my immediate memory. Put differently; it is a participatory work that left me no choice but to be part of it. I have attempted to be “sensitive to issues of power, the plurality of meanings and interpretations and (...) the emotional, social, spiritual and political dimensions” of the people I interacted with (Ladkin, 2007, p. 478), giving a voice to the middle classes — lower and upper as well as everything in-between — and to the impressive diversity and complexity that lies at the core of everyday existence in gated communities.

Navigating emotions and positions

Before moving on, there is one particular area that I need to address. It was also an important topic of my ‘kitchen table reflections’ with colleagues and friends: my emotional state throughout the fieldwork. This state had much to do with gaining access to the communities. Yes, I was physically inside, but gaining access to the inside of people’s everyday experiences, practices and beliefs turned out to be a much more frustrating affair than I had anticipated.

I want to revisit 26 July 2015 in this respect and share my notes of that day:

For the first time, the pool was more crowded this afternoon. We watched the pool area from Cafe Pion. There seemed to be a division: on the left side there were, what I would typify as “single young (25-35 years old) students or young professionals”, looking as if they were into (mainstream) fashion. They were well-trained. Girls were wearing big sunglasses. One of the girls had a small dog with her, ‘Paris Hilton style’. On the right side of the pool, families were sitting next to the children’s section of the pool. We didn’t get the impression there was a lot of interaction. People also did not seem to notice us. At least they didn’t pay any attention to us. It was very different from other experiences I’ve had

in Turkey. People usually come up to say hello and tend to be interested. None of that here. So far, we have only been approached by personnel. Today the personnel was pretty busy delivering food and drinks (water, tea, beer) to people sitting around the pool. Still we felt most recognised by them. We were quite surprised that nobody even said hello. Only when we left and I said 'iyi günler' to the men sitting next to us, they responded 'iyi günler'. The general impression was that these were wealthy people, with high cell phone usage, and image seemed important (sunglasses, accessories, well-trained bodies). We both felt a bit lonely. It also made me realise I might have to change my strategy. I was expecting to be approached by people. However, I am wondering now if this expectation is maybe based on other types of environments. Are people really this disinterested, or are they a bit afraid of us? What is going on?

After spending a week at Varyap Meridian – a week of saying hello to people (in Turkish) and not getting a response – I noticed I was getting somewhat frustrated. Why was everybody so distant? Why did nobody greet each other? Why did nobody ever start to chat? Why did I feel ignored? My initial feeling of being with somewhat similar people began to change, and I felt more and more like an outsider. In the two years I had lived in Istanbul, I had never felt this much of an outsider. I did not want to be just another researcher coming into a gated community and leaving straight after the interview, leaving my interviewees with subjective questions about security, fear and segregation. But as the interviews finally started to transpire after about a week, I did feel I had to suppress my annoyance increasingly. Why did things not go according to plan? Why did I feel ignored? Why could I not establish contact more easily?

Casual 'kitchen table conversations' with friends and colleagues allowed me to reflect on these feelings. Maybe it was me who was interested only in herself? I was the one with a research agenda, with a purpose. Local actors did not owe me anything, of course. Nevertheless, I felt personally ignored, and it was hard to keep that emotion inside. Luckily, after spending a few days at Varyap Meridian things started to move. I was meeting people willing to talk and direct me to other residents and staff. I was finally getting in touch with 'intermediaries' and 'gatekeepers' (Gobo, 2008) who were helping me ahead. However, it was a complicated process of continuous negotiation and (re)construction of identities: insider/outsider, local/non-local, Turkish/non-Turkish. During this process, I felt that my identity and that of my subjects were most strongly and reciprocally constructed (Gobo, 2008, p. 132). While I was negotiating my feelings of being an insider or outsider, my interviewees

seemed concerned about giving me 'the right impression', of being 'modern', 'European', of being hard-working and righteous people. Perhaps of 'being European', like me.

Upon my return to the Netherlands, I wrote in my field diary: *"I had expected people to talk to us, to invite us to their homes, to invite us to dinner, to meet at the pool, or go out for breakfast together or something, but none of that happened. The people I interviewed were amicable, but none of them ever proposed to do something together, something more personal or fun. I had expected that because that is what I always experienced in Istanbul."*

Looking back on that statement, it feels somewhat naive. People were generally quite happy to answer my questions and have long conversations with tea or coffee. I was at Varyap Meridian as a researcher. I was a researcher hoping to build relationships, to give a voice to residents of a gated community and to show their reality, but why did I expect people to be inviting me to do that? Why did I think I would get or deserve more? In retrospect, I might have been showing the same kind of 'moral superiority' as my respondents showed towards other residents.

Looking back, my research inside the gated communities was an emotional journey, full of annoyance, anger, and disappointment, but also surprise, astonishment and humour. Little turned out to be the way I expected or anticipated. It was an experience testing my flexibility and resilience, constantly pushing my emotional buttons. In Istanbul, I sometimes felt annoyed, ignored, and alone. In Madrid, I encountered a whole different set of emotions. At some point, I had spent a few consecutive days in and around the gated community in Las Tablas. I had not been into town: just inside the compound or in the direct vicinity. Then on the weekend, we went to a street market. It was crowded, hot and loud. People were sweaty, pushy and all around me. And I felt uncomfortable. After spending a few days inside the gated community - by the pool - I suddenly felt utterly overstimulated. The feeling passed after a while. We had a cup of coffee nearby, and it was like I got used to my surroundings again. I turned back to my usual self, who would be completely fine with a crowded, urban environment like that. But I was astonished: is this what three days within the walls of a gated community do to me? I wanted to retreat, go back, and have more space.

These kinds of 'emotional' moments happened regularly during my research. Because of that, I felt I had to be continuously on guard, reflecting on my feelings and thoughts while keeping my eyes open to the world around me and the things

people were doing or saying. During my interviews, I tried to include my emotions as well. I have shared them and reflected on them with interviewees. In that sense, my research became very personal and honest. I wanted to dive into the life worlds, thoughts and beliefs of gated community residents. In the process, I also shared my own inner feelings and reflections. But perhaps it is only fair that an ambition of diving into inner life worlds is combined with an inward journey of the researcher and that the researcher shares this journey with their subjects.

Istanbul: Varyap Meridian and Madrid: Las Tablas de la Castellana

The stories I will tell in this book take place in two cities: Istanbul and Madrid. To get access to the everyday experiences I was looking for, I spent a total of six weeks inside 'Varyap Meridian' (2015 and twice in 2018), a gated community in Istanbul and a total of just over two weeks in and around 'Las Tablas de la Castellana' (2016 and 2018), a gated community in Madrid. I also spent one week in a gated community in London ('Elephant and Castle'). Still, the results of this stay have only indirectly contributed to my findings, and thus, I will not discuss this case separately.

The two gated communities that my research focuses on were selected based on two critical criteria. First of all, I wanted to do research in cities where gated communities are widespread, common, and to some degree 'accepted' as being part of the urban environment. I also wanted to move away from the 'upscale villa type' projects – the quintessential gated community in gated community research – and instead focus on larger middle-class communities, consisting of apartments and facilities such as swimming pools, parks and playgrounds. The gated communities I researched are located in cities that have been familiar with gated communities for a while and have seen these types of housing developments grow significantly over the past decades. Both Varyap Meridian and Las Tablas de la Castellana are illustrative of contemporary shifts in gated community living, which now often includes high-rise and mixed-use forms of housing.

Secondly, I wanted to be able to live inside the gated community, allowing me to be part of everyday life. So, it had to be a community in which I could rent an apartment or where I knew people that I could stay with.

It is important to stress that my research aimed not to compare Istanbul and Madrid. My primary purpose was to dive into untold stories, to illustrate and

thereby uncover new ways of dealing with gated communities, gated living, and gating practices in cities. The two stories do share a similar physical context (high-rise, large-scale, middle-class, newly planned neighbourhoods mixing housing and office space) and a somewhat similar target audience (middle and upper-middle-class residents). Still, we will come to see that they each have their own everyday realities, practices and discourses shaped by both internal and external dynamics.

Gated communities in Istanbul and Madrid

In Istanbul, gated communities have rapidly diversified in the past few decades (i.e. Perouse & Danis, 2005; Dundar & Ozcan, 2003; Kandiyoti & Saktanber, 2002). Visiting the city, one now finds extensive mixed-use high-rise developments. This is comparable to developments in large cities in India and China, for example (i.e. Hamama & Liu, 2020). Comparably, Istanbul has witnessed the growth of secluded yet semi-gated, new mixed-use towns featuring guarded towers designed to house around 60.000 people, such as Maslak 1453, developed by Ağaoğlu. These developments are becoming increasingly diverse in terms of residential composition, which is very much in line with developments in South East Asia, for example, where “upmarket, seemingly homogeneous and avowedly exclusive master-planned, mixed-use housing and commercial developments” are being constructed in large numbers” (Harms, 2015). Yet, on closer inspection, these developments “are not in fact hermetically sealed from the surrounding world... yet they may be productively understood as ‘porous enclaves’, spaces marked not only by exclusion but by social interaction that cuts across the interfaces of inside and outside, public and private, city and country and local and foreign” (Harms, 2015). Varyap Meridian fits this new typology. Moreover, the development has become an architectural icon well-known throughout the city. Search for #VaryapMeridian on Instagram or Twitter, and you will get thousands of hits: people showing off their gym bodies, a window cleaner playing his guitar suspended from one of the community’s towers and nail salons, moving companies and dentists promoting their businesses. Varyap Meridian forms the background of a wide variety of social media posts.

Geographically, Varyap Meridian is located in an up-and-coming, central area on the Asian side of Istanbul that is part of Turkey’s new financial centre (see Figures 1 and 2). ‘Istanbul Finance Centre’ or ‘Istanbul Finans Merkezi’ as the development is called in Turkish, is to become “a full modern financial services ecosystem, including public and private sector banks, insurance companies, regulators, intermediary institutions, professional service companies and national and international businesses from across the industry’s sub-sectors. The IFC will deliver

growth to the Turkish economy and international investors by promoting increased regional and global capital flows,” the IFC website boasts.

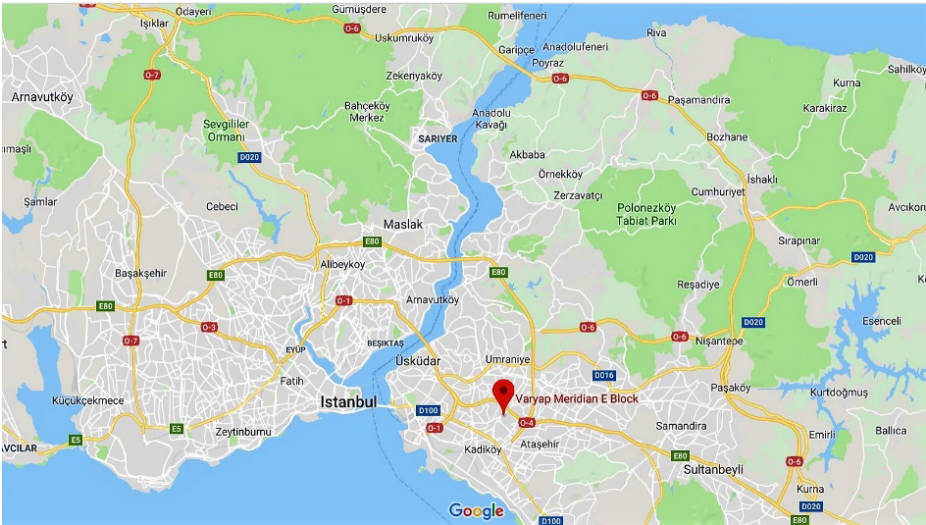


Figure 1 | Location of Varyap Meridian in Istanbul (Google maps) Accessed spring 2020.

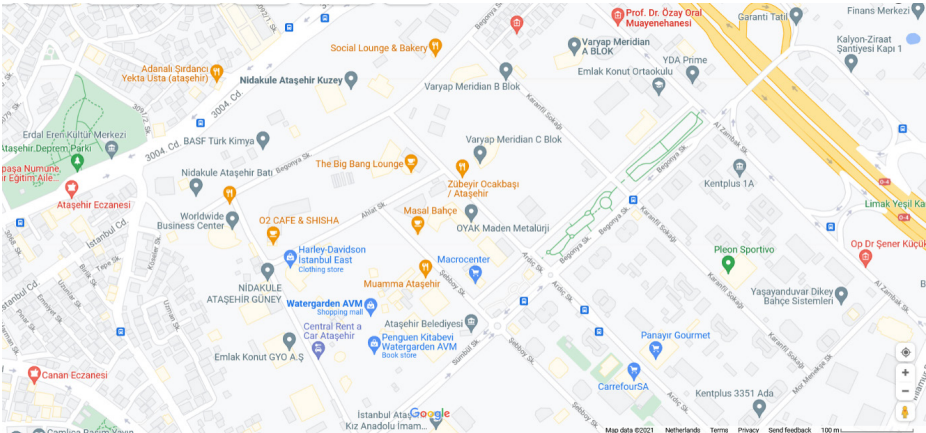


Figure 2 | Location of Varyap Meridian in the Batı Ataşehir (Google Maps) Accessed spring 2020. Varyap Meridian is bordered by a highway, several other gated communities, a variety of shops, bars and restaurants, a shopping mall and a gecekondu neighbourhood.

In the Spanish capital, gated housing developments are also widespread, and have generally become the rule for urban living (Wehrhahn, 2003, Wehrhahn & Raposo, 2006). Like other countries such as Chile (e.g. Borsdorf, Hidalgo and Vidal-Koppmann, 2016), Spain has a long tradition of secluded residential units within neighbourhoods, which has accustomed the local population to the concept of gated communities. Thus, besides the wide availability of gated living, Madrid's attitude also offers an interesting perspective detached from the predominantly negative attitude towards gated communities found elsewhere. Las Tablas de la Castellana, the gated community I stayed at in the summer of 2016, is located in the Northern part of Madrid in a neighbourhood called Las Tablas. (see Figures 3 and 4). Just like Batı Ataşehir in Istanbul, Las Tablas is a relatively new, up and coming area that houses both large national and international company headquarters (i.e. Telefonica, Dragados y Construcciones BMW, Renault, Huawei, Capgemini and BBVA Bank), shopping malls, schools and gated communities.

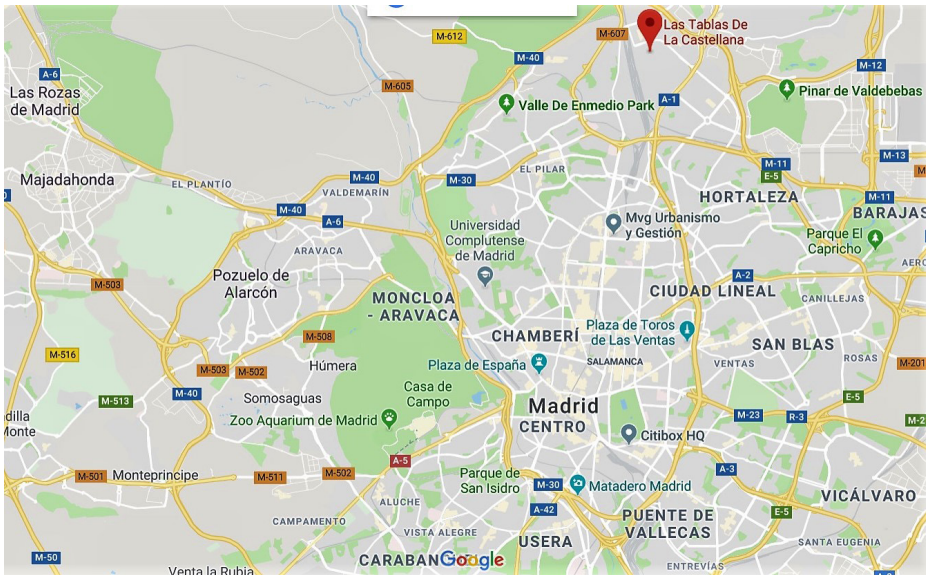


Figure 3 | Location of Las Tablas de la Castellana in Madrid (Google Maps) Accessed spring 2020.

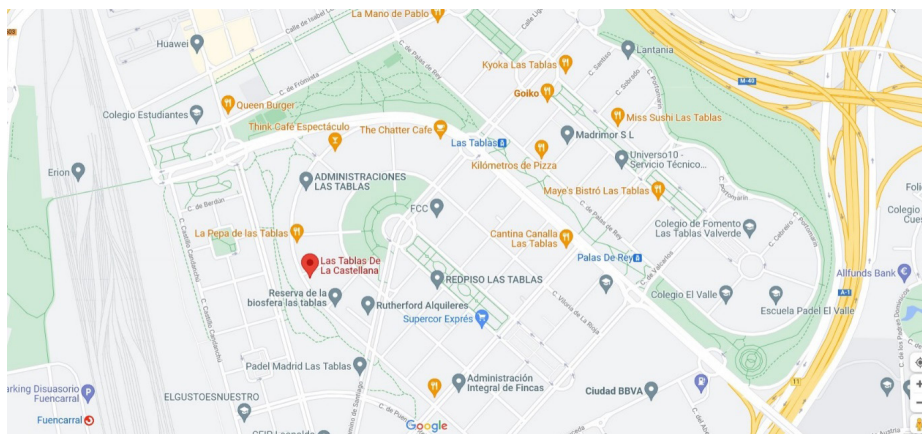


Figure 4 | Location of Las Tablas de la Castellana in Las Tablas. Google Maps, Accessed spring 2020. The gated community is bordered by other gated communities, shops, restaurants and has nearby parks, shopping malls, offices and a metro and train station.

Both gated communities in Istanbul and Madrid are part of new suburban developments with urban characteristics that mix residential purposes with leisure, business and employment opportunities. The gated communities are located at the centre of two master-planned neighbourhoods. They are both embedded within a multifunctional suburban location providing a broad set of services and facilities, thereby actually servicing ‘central’ roles in their location.

In many ways, the contexts of Varyap Meridian and Las Tablas de la Castellana are thus comparable. Both gated communities are modern, contemporary examples of gated living. However, I could have selected other communities with similar traits in other countries or cities to pursue my research aims. My key goal was to dive into gated communities - into their inner workings and experiences - to show how they are gated through everyday life: through practices, beliefs, behaviour and interactions. These two particular cases allowed me to do so. Varyap Meridian provided direct access because it was listed on Airbnb, making it possible for me to actually stay there. The fact that I already had experience with the area because of my MA thesis Turkish Studies (2011) and a research project for a documentary film about the Ağaoğlu My World gated communities (of which one is located Batı Ataşehir) made this choice even more logical. Las Tablas de la Castellana was accessible to me because of two friends of a friend (who became our friends as well...) who lived in this community and were happy to have me over and facilitate my research. These two communities allowed me to connect directly and personally, in the way I intended to conduct my research.

Chapter 3

Beyond the dystopian gaze on gated communities: the affective resource of gating

Simone Pekelsma, Henk van Houtum & Arnoud Lagendijk

However reluctantly, he now had to accept something he had been trying to repress - that the previous six months had been a period of continuous bickering among his neighbours, of trivial disputes over the faulty elevators and air-conditioning, inexplicable electrical failures, noise, competition for parking spaces and, in short, that host of minor defects which the architects were supposed specifically to have designed out of these over-priced apartments. The underlying tensions among residents were remarkably strong, damped down partly by the civilized tone of the building, and partly by the obvious need to make this huge apartment block a success (J.G. Ballard, High-Rise, p. 17).

I said nothing to Jane as we drove into Cannes for dinner, but a dormant part of my mind had been aroused - not by the cruelty, which I detested, but by the discovery that Eden-Olympia offered more to its residents than met the visitor's gaze. Over the swimming pools and manicured lawns seemed to hover a dream of violence (J.G. Ballard, Super-Cannes, p. 75).

There's nothing new to stimulate your curiosity or your enthusiasm in Utopia. Nothing changes. Sometimes it seems to me that we are prisoners, and the people outside are the free ones. It reminds you of the Nazi concentration camps you see in war movies. Utopia, the isolated colony that the rich created on the North Coast to protect themselves from the sea of angry poverty outside, and that now fences in everything they might want (A. Khaled Towfik, Utopia, p. 11).

Introduction – The rise of ‘dystopian’ gated communities

Although gated communities still form a contested urban phenomenon in the view of many observers, it is a truism to argue that this form of gating within urban contexts is a rapidly expanding phenomenon. Most major cities in the world host at least one gated community — and have more in the pipeline. In some countries, like Dubai, South Africa and Turkey, gated communities have even become a normalised and integral part of urban society. One could even argue that many city-states and urban conglomerations in classic and medieval times were already gated and fortified to border themselves off other cities and immediate non-urban surroundings. Examples are the study by Glasze and Alkhayyal (2002) on Riyadh and Lebanon; as well as analyses by Breitung (2012); Douglass, Wissink and Van Kempen (2012); and Yip (2012)

on China. However, the ways in which more affluent neighbourhoods have been segregating themselves from the rest of the city since the 1980s seems to constitute a new development in their history — as argued by Smigiel (2014) in his study of Sofia; Kovács and Hegedűs' study on Budapest (2014); Grant and Rosen's study on Canada and Israel (2009); and Geniş' study on Istanbul (2007).

What is also new is the geographical scale and rapid proliferation of this form of inner-urban settlement. Considering the scale and momentum of this urban phenomenon, it is only logical that an abundance of scholars has been trying to explain the exponential rise of gated communities around the world. Among them, we have been following the debate and, after studying the vast majority of explanations, we noticed that one narrative in particular stands out: the dominant discourse on gated communities is characterised by a remarkably critical view that sees them as symbols of the unforgiving, capitalised and financialised forces of 'neoliberalism'. According to this paradigmatic portrayal, gated communities are driven by desires of commercial segregation and self-exclusion afforded through wealth in the pursuit of comfort. Within this influential stream of literature, gated communities are depicted as vehicles of privatisation that allow the commodification of otherwise public resources ('commons') (McGuirk & Dowling, 2009). Some authors have even argued that this form of exclusion should be seen as a dystopian manifestation of the urban 'evil paradises' or 'dreamworlds of neoliberalism' (e.g. Davis & Monk, 2007). They follow on the steps of the British novelist Ballard who, in his book, *Super-Cannes*, depicted gated communities "as physical manifestations of the ideology of global capitalism", a picture that he beefed up by constantly referring to the "dystopian nature of gating, through the analysis of the violence perpetrated by community residents against outsiders, which functions as a metonym of the systemic violence of global capitalism and its new spatial order conceived as a space of exception" (Di Bernardo, 2018, p. 83). In a similar vein, in May 2014, UN-Habitat chief Joan Clos sent out a fervent warning against the global spread of gated communities. "The ideal city is not one with gated communities, security cameras, a futuristic scene from *Blade Runner*, dark and dramatic, with profound unhappiness", he said. "We need to at least build a city where happiness is possible and where public space is really for everybody" (Provost, 2014).

A smaller group of scholars, like Manzi and Smith-Bowers (2005) and Webster (2002) explain the phenomenon of gated communities with the help of Buchanan's (1965) club goods theory. Gated communities then constitute a kind of private club formed to enjoy a kind of living as members that no one person unilaterally

could finance. In a similar vein, some see gated communities as a private response to collective issues of crime, vandalism and anti-social behaviour, as recounted by Landman and Schönteich (Landman & Schönteich, 2002) for gated communities in South Africa and Brazil.

This chapter consciously deviates from the tendency to reduce the mushrooming of gated communities to a single set of explanations. To be sure, we are not blind to the detrimental impact that gated communities can exert on cohesive and equitable urban development. Yet, that is precisely our point here: blindness implies turning a blind eye to the complex reality of these urban phenomena in all their variety. Instead, we consciously disregard the widespread reputation of gated communities as the poster child of neoliberal brochures and pamphlets — so to speak — in order to zoom in on the actual practices (i.e., the evidence) that assemble their social meaning. The reason for this open-minded approach is simple: while gated communities may be entangled in global webs of capital accumulation and in processes of pervasive socio-economic segregation, they also manifest their own particular trajectories and circulation in the production of space. Neither capitalism, neoliberalism, the craving for comfort nor the security-related panic exhaust the explanations necessary to account for the growing gating phenomenon — not even in combination. New realities are emerging within and through gated communities, each defined by their own characteristics, perspectives and practices. Gated communities are sites of everyday life and commonly experienced - and perceived - spaces that may go far beyond the narrow interpretation of them as a phenomenon of 'closed' political economy.

With an aim to craft a Lefebvrian approach to the study of gated communities, we follow Lilliendahl Larsen and Brandt (2018), who built upon Lefebvre's argument regarding the transformation of 'the urban' into a 'blind field' that is reductive of its emerging reality as a result of us seeing "it with eyes, with concepts, that are shaped by the practices and theories of industrialisation" (Lefebvre, 2003, p. 29). Rather, we should emphasise the inseparability of space from ceaseless socio-economic flux and "continuously interrogate different trajectories between (if we simplify it) space, people and society" (Koch, 2018, p. 71).

It is clear that the gates of gated communities also *do* something — as part of these trajectories — but what this is, specifically, depends to a great extent on the specific character they adopt through the process of 'becoming'. We tend to view the gates of these communities as impenetrable borders that are successful at keeping 'unwanted' elements out while allowing 'desirable' elements in: they

b/order and other (Van Houtum and Van Naerssen, 2002; Van Houtum, 2021). However, a study of the everyday practice of gating reveals a form of bordering that rather tends to put together new assemblages which, in turn, may evoke novel atmospheres and meanings altogether. In other words, the gates function as both filters and resources. In some cases, they even exert counterproductive effects on gated communities themselves. It is important to keep in mind that gates cannot keep everything and everyone out. They may interrupt flows and restrain access but not halt the underlying practices. Gates often simply shove undesired phenomena to other points and modes of access. Gates are permeable, depending on who tries to enter, at what time, where and in which context; they may even have reverse effects: instead of keeping unwanted people, goods, or ideas out, gates may actually lure some of these unwanted elements in — a phenomenon on which we will elaborate later on.

In this chapter we consciously embrace an “open theory of the space of political economy”, grounded in the work of Lefebvre which — despite its pessimism — also reveals the possibilities inherent within urbanisation (Charnock, 2010). This chapter also builds on what is commonly known as a ‘third wave’ of Lefebvre studies, which are characterised for moving beyond narrow political economy interpretations and exploring Lefebvre’s open-ended and committed theorisation of the urban (Kipfer, 2013; Goonewardena, 2008). Drawing on this new stream of research, we aim to present an alternative, wider and richer perspective on gated communities that goes beyond the immediate normative and ideological judgement that seems to overwhelm it. Our contention is that the urban question, in addition to its focus on interpreting and explaining current urbanization processes, should also address the possibilities of what they could become, which requires an exploration of how they may be differently constituted, and thus a deeper understanding of ‘differential space’ (Lefebvre, 1991; Pinder, 2015).

Our argument progresses in four steps. After introducing our take on Lefebvre’s notion of spatial production, we explore how gated communities, conceptualised as ‘lived spaces’, confront their widespread stereotype about themselves. To better interpret this confrontation, we propose an extension of Lefebvre’s framework followed by a discussion on ‘differential space’.

Gated communities as emerging reality and practice

Our perspective starts with the observation that, notwithstanding the lively dynamics and variety that characterise gated communities’ construction and daily

use, the dominant view on them tends to typecast them as objective spaces, 'dead places' produced by generic, 'planetary' forces.

We take issue with this reductionism. As emerging realities, no urban form presents a dead place. While suburbs may look deserted and lifeless, they are nonetheless sites swarming with the aggregated uniqueness of human life and the myriad everyday practices that derive from it: "The suburb is not a dead thing. It's organic and subject to all the things that living things are subject to" (Waldie, 2011, pp. 228-249). Similarly, while gated communities may give the superficial impression of being bastions of spatial separation and social segregation, in practice, their gates show all kinds of porosity through which external conflicts and encounters become absorbed by the 'community' and entangled with it — as the literature on 'porous enclaves' has illustrated (e.g. Harms, 2015). The ways in which places are 'lived' — i.e., socio-materially shaped, embraced and enacted — endow each of them with their own trajectory or, as Massey (2005) so aptly put it: 'stories-so-far'.

In his well-known work on the production of space, the French philosopher Henri Lefebvre recognized the tendency of common theories and perspectives on urban development to be 'reductive of the emerging reality' of the city and stressed the importance of evaluating the *in situ* capacities and meanings of concrete physical objects and forms (Lefebvre, 2003, p. 29). To grasp the emerging realities that result from the dynamic 'production of space', Lefebvre adopted the perspective of material practices (Stanek, 2008). This means that, rather than a simple reference to daily activities, practice presents a fundamental site of investigation to understand the co-emergence of objects and subjects as well as their relations in wider webs involving more objects and subjects. Practices capture processes of being, performing and, hence, the shaping of realities: they shed light on the actual *doing*, i.e., the materiality of our everyday lives as a process of continuous renewal, emergence and falling apart (Schatzki, 2002; Shove, Pantzar and Watson, 2012).

From this perspective, each stage of the perennially-evolving essence of gated communities seems to stem from multitudes of practices, namely design, financing, marketing, construction, management, maintenance, gating, etc. "(Social) space is a (social) product," Lefebvre states early on in *The Production of Space* (1991, p. 30): it is actively produced, infused with history and potential. Merrifield powerfully describes how, through Lefebvre's lens of space as actively produced "space becomes reinterpreted not as a dead, inert thing or object but as organic and alive: space has a pulse, and it palpitates, flows, and collides with other spaces" (Merrifield, 2006, p. 105). Lefebvre denotes three "moments" of space. Perceived space marks its

physical dimension as well as its flow of materials, people and energy: it is space that is generated and used. Conceived space alludes to knowledge and logic: it is the instrumental site where (social) engineers and urban planners come up with idealised abstractions. Lived space is socially produced and modified through the use people make of it: it connotes space that is charged with symbolism and meaning (Elden, 2001). Relations among conceived, perceived and lived are never stable, nor should they be thought of as either artificial or linear. Such a perspective — defined by everyday practices to a great extent — reveals how Lefebvre's "moments" converse and produce space beyond gated communities' 'conceived space' — which dominates their designs, marketing and brochures — but also beyond academic discourse on their development and significance by embracing actual practices, affects and feelings.

A painting of daily relational life in gated communities should account for the details of encounters taking place in driveways, service areas, swimming pools, elevators, apartment layouts and all other (non)human bodies present in a compound: all these mundane elements are as important as seemingly 'larger' factors and actors, such as real estate developers, governmental institutions or international investors (DeLanda, 2006). This will reveal an image of gated communities not just as mere abstractions but as real, performing entities that are more than the sum of their parts. It is the peculiar, unexpected and constantly changing practices and relations — as well as the coming and going of actors — that define daily life inside gated communities and around them. For instance, the interaction between elevators and residents leads to a certain type of social conduct that may change when these machines break down. The malfunctioning of an air-conditioning system may deteriorate the relationship between real estate developers and residents, which might be potentially instigated by, say, an already existing feeling of mistrust; yet, this relationship can heal once the system is repaired. The rules to use the swimming pool might provoke heated debates among its users that may reflect wider societal tensions prevalent outside the gates, etc. This attempt to expose the capacities of materiality thus implies, to use Dovey's apt expression, that we "enter (...) into the difficulty of things" (2011 p. 11).

Lefebvre's preoccupation with the production of urban space led him to develop insights into the role of materiality in practices. However, a crucial question here is not only how materiality shapes practice and is simultaneously shaped by it, but also how the emerging material form allows (or not) for entanglements of other objects and subjects. Stanek (2011) explains how Lefebvre's initial study of suburban forms prompted him to distinguish between *lived space*, recognisable

by its emergent capacities, and *conceived space*, defined by premeditated notions about the use of spatial objects: “ (...) even if the daily speech of the [suburban] *pavilionnaires* is permeated by conservative discourse grounded in decades of French debates around the housing question, the widespread preference for the *pavilion* cannot be explained as a projection of these debates on everyday life; rather, the preference stems from the *pavilion* lending itself to a set of practices that were not supported by the rigid layout of the collective housing estates as built until the mid-1960s” (Stanek, 2011, p. 83).

In more general terms, Lefebvre’s work was very much concerned with the conceptual and therefore political autonomy of the urban, in that it “assumes that the city (...) has been a place for creation and not simply a result. It stipulates that the urban can become ‘objective’, that is, creation and creator, meaning and goal” (Lefebvre, 2003, p. 28). He placed this dynamism in a wider notion of the general condition of space in which certain material practices and representations become dominant and thus give way to the creation of urban centralities and peripheries (Lilliendahl Larsen, 2018). According to Lefebvre’s (1991) work, much of the conceptual and political autonomy resides in peripheralised spaces like suburbs, vacant areas and, we could add, decaying inner-city districts as well as gated communities. While certain gated compounds may be associated with ‘urban centrality’ due to their location, proliferation and close entanglement with dominant financial and urban practices, they also feature many characteristics of suburban *pavilions*.

Lefebvre’s ‘trialectics’ of conceived, perceived and lived space constitute a semiotic analytical tool capable to account for how similar urban artefacts acquire different meanings and functions that do not depend on the properties inherent to them but, rather, on their function within particular interpretations and enactments. This semiotic approach explains why gated communities may be designed with a certain image in mind yet, once in place, turn out to project a very different one — as we will show through several examples in what follows. It is important to note that, while an emphasis on material practices has been primarily linked to ‘lived space’ (also in Lefebvre’s work), it does not have to be confined to it. As Pierce and Martin (2015) have argued, Lefebvre’s spatial triad presents moments of place-making that should be analysed hand-in-hand. In essence, ‘conceived’, ‘perceived’, and ‘lived’ space are not ontological distinctions but analytical means to understand the multiple moments inherent to space production - what in assemblage theory is known as ‘multiplicity’, which evokes a process of continual conversion (Buchanan, 2015). From imagining, planning and designing to living

and settling in, each practice influencing the production of space runs across the whole triad - although with different intensities and orientations. Hence, beyond simple notions of progress and doom, space as an emergent reality does not only take shape as a result of how 'lived' space supersedes conceived space, but also as a result of planning, calculation and design stages with stronger affinities to conceived and perceived space.

Conversation: talking about living in a conceived space

So, how to address this multiplicity and continual conversion between 'moments'? Gated communities are not exactly a 'happy' subject: except for real estate advertising, they are often depicted as one-dimensional symbols of the unforgiving forces of neoliberalism that would coincide with the critical view of Amin and Thrift on shopping malls, which they have called 'battleships of capitalism' — i.e., the alleged siblings of gated communities (Amin, 2002, p. 40). These bordered forms of urban planning have become generalised as products and vehicles of neoliberal privatisation responsible for commoditising previously public resources or a general sense of 'commons' (McGuirk, 2009). The question is whether such generalisations do justice to the diverse and flexible ecosystem of gated communities rising in contemporary cities all around the globe. In Lefebvre's conception of urban space, the triad of 'conceived', 'perceived', and 'lived' *moments of space* underpin the production of place. Although these moments can vary enormously in scope, intensity and timing, urban places essentially evolve as never-ending trajectories of triad conversion, which shape them as practice-based 'stories-so-far' (Massey, 2005). This implies that the current view on gated communities, which primarily sees them in terms of their 'conceived' moments, is unable to capture the practices, relations and forms resulting from interactions with other 'moments'. In other words, in order to get a holistic understanding of gated communities, it is crucial to go beyond their 'conceptual moments' (e.g., landscape designs, financial interests, political considerations, marketing strategies, advertising aesthetics, etc).

Let us turn to a well-known developer of gated communities in Turkey to illustrate our point. Ali Ağaoğlu is one of Turkey's most (in)famous real estate tycoons who has heavily invested in gated communities and he also has a straightforward opinion about the significance of his products: "People should live in gated communities (...) *Site*¹ life provides the right environment for children. This image is

¹ Site or kapalı site is the Turkish word for gated community.

often criticised, but it's the truth" (Cumhuriyet, 11 October 2010). One of his major real estate concepts is the 'My World' brand, a set of mixed-use gated developments in Ataşehir and Küçükçekmece, on the Asian and European side of the city, respectively. Ağaoğlu's advertising of My World Ataşehir (2010) was remarkable: "You will find the life you are looking for in this perfectly planned community. Leave the past behind as a fond memory! You will rebuild your life in the colourful and lively world of My World. You are the centre of the world from now on", the project's brochure boastfully proclaimed. Ağaoğlu's gated communities are conceived as wonderful, high-quality worlds of endless opportunities and carefree futures. The design of the buildings, which is promoted as superior, top quality and modern, is complemented by the promotion of appealing indoor services such as gyms, hair salons and coffee bars. However, once the idealised advertisements have acquired physical shape, the way space is perceived and lived often tells a different story.

As a resident of Moontown, a family-oriented section of MyWorld Ataşehir explained:

There are many people living here, it's very crowded. There are about four hundred people in this building alone, but you never meet anyone. Maybe you say hello in the elevator, but that's it. Ağaoğlu may market its developments saying that you can live with similar people in a high-quality environment, but in the end it's not like that. The green space is not even enough for the thousands of people who are living here. The commercials sell unrealistic dreams. There are just too many people here. I think this development should have one block less. There's a tennis court and a basketball court, but too many people have to share them. In Ağaoğlu advertisements you see fathers playing football with their children. But this doesn't occur, because you're not even allowed to play football here. (Nuri, an interviewee quoted in Pekelsma, 2011).

If we only looked at My World Ataşehir in terms of its 'conceived' moments, we would be likely to see its architectural design and business model as a profitable real-estate development supported by both public (urban planning) and private (commercial) interests. We would probably see an ideal world marketed by flashy advertising campaigns and pompous advertorials. Yet, this would provide us with no information about residents' actual use and experience of space. We would not see the cramped places of My World, the lack of personal contact across its space or children playing football, who have been driven out by the community's management. We would not see people watching movies screened in open-air cinemas outside the gates while seated on their own private balconies inside. We

would not see the swimming pool restaurants attracting visitors from beyond the gates (examples from Lukkien and Pekelsma, 2014). We would remain blind to the ways in which the gated community is produced through interaction and through the conversion of Lefebvre's moments in everyday practice. A simple exercise of deconstruction that reveals the discrepancy between conceived and everyday moments involves comparing the sharp contrast that often exists between the imaginaries depicted by architects and developers' of gated communities and the 'intimate' moments sprouting from actual urban life in these bordered compounds.

An exclusive focus on gated communities' conceived moments would desensitise us to how conceived space offers an inadequate abstraction of 'perceived space' - e.g., through the transformation of traffic patterns or user flows into design models. Perceived spaces entail gated communities' daily uses and flows, which includes the metabolism of goods, people, energy, money, data and how that transforms into materiality and functionality: in order to unearth a gated community's lived space, it is crucial to re-establish a conversation between its perceived spaces and its everyday experiences and affects. Tezel (2011) describes how the building blocks of a gated development similar to Moontown (My World Ataşehir) are located around a common large courtyard and connected by a service road which was designed for emergencies and granting access to the trucks people use when moving in or out. One disabled resident was even allowed to use this road to get to his apartment. However, this design, inspired by perceived uses and flows of traffic, turned out differently in daily practice, mainly because of a design flaw restricting direct access to the building blocks from the parking lot. Many residents ignored the rules restricting the service road from daily use and started using the service road to get to their blocks by car. Because this road also connects the main facilities for children, the use of this road raised anxieties and fears amongst parents who let their children play either in the designated areas or on the service road. More than half of the parents stated that vehicle intrusion had become a serious safety issue that had forced them to keep an eye on their children (Tezel, 2011). Tezel's example shows how the perceived use of a road designed with a specific purpose in mind influences the way in which its use is experienced by residents of a gated community. Many parents are now afraid that their children may get hurt and in consequence, have changed their behaviour towards their children's playing routines. This particular experience may eventually give rise to new practices such as joint complaints to either the management or the developer about people moving out; or attempts by residents to change their fellow-residents' behaviour.

Another striking example comes from India, where gated communities report the highest concentration of unidentified people. Intelligence reports say that such communities are slowly turning into safe havens for illegal activities, including drug deals and flesh trade (Thomas, 2016). The privacy afforded by high-rise gated communities consisting mostly of apartments has provided a space to sex rackets that used to operate in isolated houses, hotels and tourist homes in the city. Top floors are particularly popular because of their higher degree of privacy and coveted views of the surroundings. This practice radically deviates from the idealised conception of gated communities, yet it does flow directly from its material qualities and the way these are used and experienced.

We do not know much about either the feelings or responses of local residents about these illegal activities being nested in their apartment blocks. “Residents hesitate to help identify occupants or provide information” - according to the Times of India (Thomas, 2016). However, the article does highlight an important factor in terms of gated communities’ potential, ‘internal’ actions. In the case of Ağaoğlu’s gated community, Moontown, we know that the embodied experience of the gated community as a material object spawned feelings of disappointment, deception, and anger. In many gated communities studied in Istanbul, these affective charges have given rise to self-organisation initiatives that fuelled the formation of digital and physical groups and forums and, in some cases, even to protests against the developer. In the case of My World Europe, for example, residents turned against Ağaoğlu for the low-quality and expensiveness of services for which they paid a monthly service fee. Residents set up their own residential management and demanded Ağaoğlu to place the management of their community in their hands. The creation of the resident association (2015) gained widespread media attention because Ali Ağaoğlu visited the gated community by helicopter while the resident association was officially being set up, and then - even though he denies to have done so himself - verbally and physically assaulted the president of the association. After the incident, the president filed a claim against Ali Ağaoğlu and the management was turned over to the residents, who now manage the community themselves. Although Ağaoğlu received a 40.000 TL penalty (8229 Euro at that time) in March 2018, according to the leader of the resident association. Ağaoğlu is still involved in several court cases against other resident associations - some of which were forced to disband (Aktif Haber, 2019).

Abstracting lived space: 'valued space'

"Mahalle² culture has disappeared. We grew up with this culture, but today you can't let your child go out and play in the streets anymore." In an interview with Turkish newspaper Cumhuriyet (2010), Ali Ağaoğlu, cleverly draws on sentiments that are widely experienced, vented and circulated among middle class Istanbulites. He smartly mixes a sense of *huzün* - a Turkish word with Arabic roots denoting a feeling of deep spiritual loss but also a hopeful way of looking at life recurrently referred to in Turkish literature, film etc. (see, for example Orhan Pamuk, *Istanbul*) - with contemporary concerns about out-of-control urban growth.

When I was a child, I used to go out and play at the backside of our apartment, between the cars and on the streets. We were jumping, climbing, playing ball, everything. We had real neighbourhoods at that time. We were playing outside until eight or nine o'clock in the evening. I was going to school on foot. Now it's impossible to do that, because you don't know anyone in the area and you don't know what people are like. Personally, I think people are getting worse. It's not like in the old days anymore. I have never left my son to play outside alone, neither in Göztepe, where I used to live, nor within the gates of my gated community (Begüm, interviewee quoted in Pekelsma 2011).

The individual and collective histories and memories of many Istanbulites are shaped by daily rhythms of visits to the local grocer (*bakkal*), walks to the neighbourhood school and long days of playing outside on the streets, a lifestyle nostalgically recalled by many middle class Istanbulites as 'the good old days'. These imaginations form a space going beyond concrete, lived space, in which daily experiences are merged with other affects, such as the fear of earthquakes, the idea of housing as an investment in a financially secure future or the desire for urban organisation. Moreover, these imaginations are fuelled by the way such sentiments are constantly reproduced in media, movies and literature.

In a group conversation over lunch at My World Europe, Mustafa, his wife Fusun and his friend Mehmet, express how these collective feelings are expressed through their motivations to live at My World Europe. "For me, it's mainly because of real estate prices. If you live closer to the city centre, apartments are twice as expensive as over here," Mustafa explains. His wife claims that, for her, the main reason to move into 'My World' is their children, who have more safe space to play.

² Mahalle is the Turkish word for 'neighbourhood'.

Mehmet agrees. “In a regular urban neighbourhood, it’s very hard for children to play outside. In terms of space and costs, life here is more attractive.” In addition, Mustafa expresses his frustrations with the way Turkey is organised. “Everything here is so badly organised. We want organisation, order. That’s why we come here.”

Another example comes from Lukkien and Pekelsma (2014). Seda, a single mother whose son is studying abroad, lives alone in a gated community in Batı Ataşehir. She explains that, for her, it is mostly about safety. “I don’t like the way that I am looked at in Beyoğlu,³ for example. It’s also convenient to live here, because I work a lot and I have everything I need within reach. Still, I would prefer to live in a gated community in Etiler or something, in an apartment with fewer floors.”

The exploration of the production of space has much to discover by understanding these kinds of experiences and feelings as well as the way they interact with concrete, physical space which, in turn, draws on other feelings floating in the background. How (un)safe, (un)comfortable, (dis)graceful, (un)hip, (a)social we encounter a place depends on both our individual and collective affects. The way space is encountered, sensed and experienced depends on what is taken to heart and valued — e.g. the longing for an intimate neighbourhood life.

Such a shared affective space is populated by an ongoing exchange of emotional and normative references to lived spaces. In terms of conversion, the move from lived to shared-affective entails a process of converting from concrete to abstract (Buchanan, 2015). Like perceived space is abstracted into conceived space, moving from counts and observations to models and symbols, lived space is conceptualised as what we could call ‘valued space’, a spatial experience that involves moving from experiences and affects to wider discursive and emotive trajectories (Walkerdine, 2013). These trajectories, in turn, help to transform the particular experience of a place into a point of reference and valuation, deepening and signifying our ‘stories-so-far’ in moral and ethical terms. This is also a matter of referencing and territorialising. Just like perceived space draws on conceived space to define attributes for counting and observing, valued space provides key referents and anchors for encounters in lived space. The way the quotes provided so far frame particular encounters within gated communities in wider terms and valuations, continually undertake the journey from direct affect to broader moral and ethical considerations. What is more, ‘valued space’ adds a useful step in the triad conversion between lived and conceived moments (Figure 1.1). Not only does

³ The neighbourhood that could be described as the nightlife, shopping and entertainment centre of Istanbul, located on the European side of the city.

this conversion entail a move between The Concrete (the experience of daily life) and The Abstract (modelling of life in action) but it also separates a more affective form of disembodied, abstract space from its coded, conceived form, thus inserting an essential moment between lived space and conceived space. Since concrete space is divided into perceived (coded) and lived (affective) space, abstract space can be broken down into conceived and valued space, adding a fourth dimension to the triad (cf. Guattari, 1995).

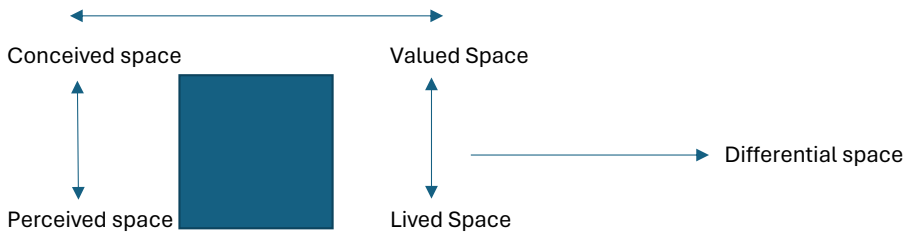


Figure 1.1

The significance of how lived space is experienced from a perspective of valued space can be recognised in many of our respondents' utterances. Taylan, the 'international sales and marketing region manager' for a well-known Turkish real estate developer explains that life is not all rosy in the gated communities they built. "We have had this incident with a single lady whose behaviour was disturbing others. There are people using their BBQs, which disturbs people because of smoke, smells and noise. We have also seen this case of an Arab family with a man with six children and two wives, which Turkish residents considered to be offensive. It was difficult for them to accept this Arab family as their neighbour and member of the community." Aysun, who lives in the community that Taylan was responsible for, agrees. "The profile of people living here is very different from what the developer told us. There are a lot of Syrian people living in this development. My own neighbours are from Syria too. The smell in our shared hallway is terrible. It always reeks of herbs and garlic when I come home. It's terrible." (Lukkien and Pekelsma, 2014).

Or listen to Melike about her life in a high-rise tower - 'Andromeda' - that is part of the My World development in Ataşehir: "If you live in a place like this, you don't really see anyone. You just take the elevator, go down to the garage, get into your car and leave." Even neighbours often remain a mystery. "There are many firms that have flats here that they rent out to visiting customers. My right-side neighbour

always changes. Sometimes from India, sometimes Turks, sometimes Germans. It does not feel right. It's not their home. After I graduate, I am getting the hell out of here. This place is like a luxury dorm. You know, in this place if you make noise, the neighbours don't knock on your door. They just call security and they call you. You can't even argue with your neighbour. Security does that for you" (Pekelsma, 2011). Such encounters acquire sense and meaning, and hence shape affects at the level of a community and beyond.

For gated communities, a telling example of the role of affects also comes from the practice of gating. As physical objects, gates only work through the way they are practiced, through the way people perform and encounter them in their everyday lives. Such practice, in turn, depends on a compound's broader affective setting. Within fearful settings, gates are likely to be heavily restricted and policed. Their key role is to register who is entering. In more relaxed settings, gates serve mainly for orientation and perhaps to prevent children from wandering off unattended. In both cases, guards will be active even though they will perform very different roles and experience very dissimilar encounters: a compound's different kinds of gating determine whether it will be experienced as hostile or welcoming. Such experiences, in turn, influence how a gated community is perceived - in accounts of what actually happens - conceived - as an abstraction of space framed within the wider context of urban development; and encountered - in terms of how it contributes to shape collective affects. In other words, the physical barrier of the gate, which channels and regulates the flow of bodies, vehicles, and goods, instils a certain arrangement of affect and behaviour which, in turn, modifies the actual material practice of gating. Subsequently, as it moves from the concrete to the abstract, it connects the lived practice of gating to values of safety, conviviality and identity as well as of separation, seclusion and monotony. This, in turn, produces an economy of the gate, which may be transformed into a generic model that can be commercially exploited.

What does this mean for our theorisation of space? For Lefebvre, everyday life is an important location for the analysis of affect. These examples show that the lived space of gated communities possesses a decisive affective dimension in which 'encounter' plays a central role. For humans, affects consist of affinities with other subjects and objects as well as fear of others; noise disturbances from neighbours; the excitement of feeling part of a new type of urban living; or the feeling of a 'home'. For Lefebvre (1991), lived space, as the site of intimate encounter, contains an 'affective centre' with the "possibility of ever new moments of the urban" (Lilliendahl Larsen, 2018, p. 67). It is a social space that is produced and changed through its actual use and that may always lay the conditions for transforming

itself into a novel space characterised by other unexpected uses. “In doing so, the production of space shapes the subjects moving around in it and endows them with symbolism and meaning” (Elden, 2001, pp. 815-816).

A crucial aspect of the affective dimension is its political meaning and implication. The examples of gated communities and the process of gating that they undergo show that the significance of intimate encounter should not only be read merely in positive terms. Quite the contrary, intimate encounter often presents the root cause of violence, polarisation, and trauma, which exerts a strong impact on valued space. Ballard’s terrifying novel, *High Rise* - quoted at the outset of this chapter - speaks to this argument. The affective, creative power of lived space may set a place on an irreversible trajectory of irritation, escalating conflict resulting in violence and destruction, as also testified by inner-city districts and older suburbs across the globe. However, we should keep in mind that the opposite may also occur: through its affective centre, lived space opens the possibility for new developments, for alternatives, for change that might be either positive or negative.

In conclusion, the valued space described here warrants explicit theoretical recognition – at least in our view. To do so, we may need to add another moment in Lefebvre’s production of space, extending the triad. In terms of multiplicity, valued space presents an abstraction of lived space, through the way daily experiences and senses are captured by shared valuations and emotional references. Valued space becomes the affective counterpart of conceived space through the encounter of the imaginary spaces imagined by architects, developers, and planners with the deeply felt sentiments, valuations and sense-making springing from socio-material practices. Moreover, valued space - as so well illustrated by the earlier quotes on the actual functionality of gated communities - endows the flows of people, goods, decisions, etc. with broader meanings and expectations. Bringing these quotes to the fore in order to enrich a wider debate contributes to the ambition to transform place conversion into a fruitful and open conversation. To do so, this extended moment will be used to further understand and substantiate Lefebvre’s notion of ‘differential space’ — the topic of the next section.

Utopian gated communities? Exploring ‘differential space’

Currently, the dominant perceptions of gated communities do not leave much room for alternative interpretations or possibilities. In the academic literature,

gated communities seem to be endowed with a rather fixed permanence, with limited scope for any changes or adaptations. In previous paragraphs we have seen that this fixed image fails to represent the everyday practices, experiences and affects of gated communities. A closer look into them reveals a dynamic everyday life which triggers surprising conversions between conceived, perceived and lived moments of space, infused by a broad variety of affects and broader references. In time, material components overflow their actual practicing and expression. The significance of lived spaces thus resides in their capacity to unleash the affective power of the material in ways that cannot be expressed within the realm of perceived - let alone conceived - space. As argued above, the key moment here is that of 'valued space'.

Lefebvre illustrates this conversion and overflowing with the re-appropriation of the *Halles Centrales*, Paris's former wholesale produce market, in 1969-71. "For a brief period, this urban centre, designed to facilitate the distribution of food, was transformed into a gathering-place and a scene of permanent festival - in short, into a centre of play rather than of work - for the youth of Paris" (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 167). This example shows that urban transformation is not a linear historical process but rather one characterised by shifting tendencies, orientations, continuities, ruptures or discontinuities which challenge the 'blind fields' that prevent the emergent reality of the urban from being adequately understood (Pinder, 2015, p. 33). Thus, "rather than turning 'fact into law' (induction) or going from 'affirmation to implication' (deduction), Lefebvre calls for a move 'from the (given) real to the possible.' (Lefebvre, 2003, p. 117) via the 'construction of virtual objects' (Lefebvre, 1976, p. 55), moving 'towards the concrete...to a practice, urban practice, that is finally or newly comprehended" (Lefebvre, 2003, p. 5).

The embrace of transformation also harmonises with Lefebvre's outlook on urban society not as an 'accomplished reality' but as 'a horizon, an illuminating virtuality' (Lefebvre, 2003, pp. 16-17). Such an orientation thus actually allows for a certain degree of utopianism, rooted in the "utopian impulses at play within urban plans and schemes, the visions of the good life and the good city that they depend upon and promote. This included schemes whose utopianism was denied; indeed, especially those cases" (Pinder, 2015, p. 35). Here we side with Chatterton (2010) who, talking about gentrification, makes a call "to develop a much wider political imaginary to intervene in the unfolding story of the city and engage in the building of an equalising participatory democracy to realise radically different urban futures and values". Scholars should overcome a persistent lack of imagination, and seek to use their work to dream the urban impossible and harvest that future in the

present" (Chatterton, 2010, p. 235). As we have argued here, this warrants a solid anchoring in a shared, disembodied notion of affective and valued space.

So, we may ask, where is the utopia of gated communities? Can we reserve a place for gated communities within our contemporary realm of urban possibilities? According to Lefebvre, the possible should be a theoretical instrument for exploring the real. He presented this critique as attempting "to open a path to the possible, to explore and delineate a landscape that is not merely part of the 'real', the accomplished, occupied by existing social, political and economic forces" (Pinder, 2015, p. 32). Besides his utopian visions (e.g. *Right to the City*, 1967), Lefebvre also allowed space for 'the possible' through the production of differential space from abstract space. According to Lefebvre, abstract-conceived space is an instrumental space, manipulated by 'authorities' that aim to silence the 'users' of this space (Lefebvre, 1991). Its goal is homogeneity. "The outcome is a reduction of the 'real' on the one hand, to a 'plan' existing in a void and endowed with no other qualities, and, on the other hand, to the flatness of a mirror, of an image, of pure spectacle under an absolutely cold gaze" (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 287). Despite this rather bleak picture, Lefebvre does leave room for alternatives. "Abstract space harbours specific contradictions...which are liable eventually to precipitate the downfall of abstract space", he states "The reproduction of social relations of production within abstract space inevitably obeys two tendencies: the dissolution of old relations on the one hand and the generation of new relations on the other. Thus, despite - or rather because of - its negativity, abstract space carries within itself the seeds of a new kind of space" (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 52).

Lefebvre calls this a new kind of "virtual object within the 'illusory transparency' of abstract space itself" (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 393). Building on our earlier discussion on the role of the affective, differential space may find inspiration and motivation in shared affective moments related to the production of space. In more concrete terms, a closer look at the daily habits of inhabitants and visitors may reveal that the number of gated communities that are porous and diverse to the extent that they induce their residents and users to negotiate their daily lives to a degree that we would find surprising in other 'regular' urban neighbourhoods. The residents of gated communities may not encounter each other every day, but through the availability of gyms, swimming pools, restaurants and bars, new relationships are formed and supported, thus laying the grounds for new socio-material practices. Some of these relationships acquire a political dimension when residents unite against the developer of their gated community to demand a more just, democratic and accountable management of their communities. In conversion

terms, differential space thus emerges from the productive tensions between conceived and perceived space as well as between valued and lived space and their combinations. The first tension (conceived-perceived) captures how observations, through changes in interpretation and selection, can inspire novel ideas and models which, in turn, can prompt new ways of seeing and sensing the city. The second tension (value-lived) refers to the way in which similar experiences become variably embraced and appreciated in different discursive and, particularly, emotive positions, which modify our modes of encounter and hence our experiences and affects. Differential space thus finds dynamism at the heart of space conversion.

To make this emergence more specific, differences endure or arise at the margins of the homogenized realm, either in the form of resistance or in the form of externalities. “What is different is, to begin with, what is *excluded*: the edges of the city, shanty towns, the spaces of forbidden games, of guerrilla war, of war” (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 373). However, the mere presence of different social groups and networks is not sufficient for the emergence of urban possibility. “What matters, rather, is the way they interact and the quality of these interaction processes. Differences must always be understood dynamically. Is the outcome an open exchange, or are differences curtailed and domesticated? Such questions also pertain to the immaterial conditions of communication — the values, rules and norms governing urban spaces (Schmid, 2012, p. 51). Seeing current and future material practices of gated communities in the light of these immaterial conditions of communication presents a key condition for the production of and engagement with differential space. Chapter four will engage in differential space in further detail.

Conclusion

Throughout this chapter, we have seen various gated communities ‘at work’. We have witnessed how residents negotiate their daily lives, expectations, and emotions in gated communities through an assortment of everyday practices, imbuing them with sense and meaning through connections with wider values and emotional references. We discovered that gated communities are sometimes providing hidden havens to illegal activities embedded in the wider city, country or world. We saw happy and unhappy people and perceived that people moved in and out for the most diverse motivations including their (broken) dreams and desires. Through this, we have observed gated communities as processes of composition that are being practiced and which allow for contingency, open endings and imagined, new futures.

The relational approach we have presented is an extrapolation of Lefebvre's production of space and which has been useful in providing insights into the eminent question of how gated communities are held together and perceived as consequence of the daily practice and experience of living together in a material place – an exercise that involves considering how these communities might be otherwise. As a physical place, a gated community may resonate with an ample variety of practices, relations, images, or feelings that instil an equally varied development of forms of gated living. Affect plays an important role in this process as an intrinsic moment in the continual conversion of space-production.

More specifically, we signalled a constant conversation/conversion between affect and conceived space (e.g. nostalgia becomes part of Istanbul's gated communities' sales narrative), and affect and lived space (e.g. the way the material gated community is experienced/lived is significantly different from the way it was imagined based on valued space). In this reading of Lefebvre, affect is grounded in how the material is experienced and reproduced by people in ways often unconscious yet dramatic. Affect covers, as we have argued here, a broad spectrum spanning the concrete (i.e., daily experiences in moments of lived space) and abstract (i.e., the assignment of significance and values in moments of valued space). Affect also influences space conversions and conversations, particularly regarding the flow of people, goods, money, information, etc.; and the meaning and expectations with which they are imbued. From this perspective, we can perceive how gated communities evolve through the ways in which their inhabitants, visitors and other observers experience them as well as through how its gating is practiced and registered in daily time-space patterns and in the conceptions and designs of gated communities.

We would like to stress once more that gated communities are instrumental to some of the most deplorable urban transformations — e.g., social polarisation is reinforced and fixated through spatial polarisation; the articulation of 'lawless' ghettos; poorer inhabitants' reduced access to jobs; and the expanding marginalisation of large swathes of the population from global circuits of capital and knowledge. Yet, by applying this novel focus to the case of urban gating practices, we conclude that gated communities simultaneously are much less and much more than the core vehicles of urban polarisation, capitalism, and globalisation. They can be investment vehicles without a strong 'gating' effect; hiding places for people involved in clandestine or criminal activities; or safe havens for young families who wish to live more efficient lives in safety and in closer proximity to others. What is important to keep in mind is that gated communities do not fit a universal

dystopian image: they are, like many urban structures, the diverse conduits of many urban goods and evils.

Gated communities are not the sole driver of urban polarisation either, nor are they the outcome of isolated structural processes - such as the neoliberalisation of cities. Urban polarisation also occurs without the construction of gated communities and the proliferation of gating is also the result of many other social-urban processes - e.g., demographic developments, ethnic struggles, the search for a peaceful existence in a rapidly 'metropolising' city or the wish to live the suburban dream in a dense urban area. Gated communities form a golden opportunity - as developers like to stress - for a wide - and widening - range of city lifestyles, socio-material practices and urban encounters. To understand how this plays out, functionally, conceptually, affectively and spatially, it might be necessary to apply an extended interpretation of Lefebvre's notion of space production. This endeavour requires our openness to the possibility that gated communities may evolve into more hopeful forms of communities rather than the pervasive prejudice that assumes them as dystopian urban phenomena that need to be eliminated. We should continue to follow differential space conversions and, most importantly, embed that firmly within open-minded conversations free from our own biased spatial conceptions.

Chapter 4

Negotiating difference. The contemporary mixed-use gated community in Istanbul as a transient hotel

Simone Pekelsma

It's a hot summer morning at Varyap Meridian. A taxi driver enters through the gates and parks his car in front of the main entrance of the D-Block, waiting for his customer to come down from his apartment. Meanwhile, a man breaks a sweat as he carries a large, heavy demijohn full of refreshing water into the lobby. Apart from the receptionist that the man kindly greets, there is nobody here. The white lounge sofas stand empty in what is supposed to be a lively and welcoming hall. Some people are drinking tea outside Café Pion, the gated community's on-site restaurant. Others are lounging by the pool, fidgeting on their smartphones - a popular activity in contemporary Turkey, where the average citizen allegedly checks their smartphone every 13 minutes (British Chamber of Commerce Turkey, 2018).

Just like many other days, there is a moving truck loading furniture and boxes. The proliferation of construction projects around Varyap Meridian has persuaded many tenants to leave.¹ Okan, the owner of Café Pion, says he knows around forty people who moved out of Meridian because of construction noise. Burak, the receptionist of the D+E Block, shows me selfies on his Facebook profile that he has taken with famous international sports players who have temporarily stayed at Varyap Meridian. The gated community is a few minutes away from the Ülker sports arena operated by Fenerbahçe Sports Club, making it a popular accommodation for sportsmen. In the four-storey parking garage, our rental car is surrounded by dozens of other rented vehicles: nearly all white sedans with the name of the rental company printed on their licence plates...

It was in August 2015 that I spent my first month living at Varyap Meridian; a gated community on the so-called 'Asian side' of Istanbul, in the neighbourhood of Batı Ataşehir (West Ataşehir). It is one of the many high-rise, mixed-use gated communities that have been and are still being constructed in high numbers around the city. This variant of gated community – in Turkey also referred to as *yaşam merkezi* ('living centre') includes underground car parks, 24-hour camera surveillance and a diverse assortment of in-house entertainment such as shops, fitness and spas.

Batı Ataşehir is home to many gated communities of this type. The neighbourhood is the product of an impressive urban renewal trend in Turkey that took off in the first decade of the 21st century. I remember this period very well as it coincided with when I first started living in Istanbul in 2004. It was a time of rapid and intense urban development characterised by the construction of impressive numbers of shopping malls, office projects, roads, metro lines and residential towers. Let us

¹ Nidakule Ofis, a business centre completed in 2016 by real estate developer Tahincioğlu.

take a quick look at this intriguing period in Turkey's modern history. It will also allow us to better understand the context and position of gated communities like Varyap Meridian.

Setting the scene: urban development in Istanbul

Those familiar with daily life in Istanbul know this as a fact: every day in this city is potentially different. Suppose you do not visit a specific neighbourhood or location for a couple of months or even weeks. In that case, you may encounter a completely different place once you finally happen to be around again. Surprises are always around the corner.

Looking at Istanbul's modern history - roughly from the late 1940s or early 1950s until today - we also see a period of significant physical and sociocultural change. This immense change was not limited to Istanbul, though. Turkey itself was going through profound transformations. In the 1950s, Turkey's strictly controlled and autarkist economy slowly changed into a liberal free-market economy. Many liberalisation policies were implemented, supported by large-scale American aid (Zürcher, 2009, p. 224). In the 1950s, the first five-star hotel opened in Istanbul: the Hilton Hotel (Keyder, 1999). Nevertheless, Istanbul was relatively uncomplicated compared to the complexity that currently characterises the city. Businesses were protected from international competition as the national government controlled imports, foreign capital, and exchange. This national economic policy resulted in a rapid growth of industry and an increasing immigration of workers from Anatolia to Istanbul. (Yardımcı, 2004).

Turkish prime minister between 1950 and 1960, Adnan Menderes (DP) responded to these developments with force and enthusiasm, stressing the importance of Istanbul, which had lost all its administrative functions to Ankara in 1923, when the Turkish Republic was founded. The DP administration that Menderes led put the city central stage in the form of *Istanbul'un imarı*: the 'redevelopment of Istanbul' (Gül, 2012). This grand plan was to solve the problems arising from Istanbul's rapidly increasing population due to immigration from the countryside. The growing population had led to an increasing number of *gecekondu* (literally 'built overnight', shanty or shack) and motor vehicles, leaving the city with pressing questions of urban planning. Influenced by "the magic of highways", Menderes' redevelopment programme for Istanbul was primarily based on opening up large boulevards throughout Istanbul (Gül, 2012, p. 146). As a result, thousands of properties were expropriated and

demolished to make space for large boulevards and roads that still greatly define the city today. Menderes' redevelopment of Istanbul left a significant imprint on the city, yet it is deeply controversial. "In the eyes of many academics...he is held personally responsible for the demolition of many historical buildings and much of the destruction of Istanbul's historical character" (Gül, 2012, p. 161).

In the late-1980s, Istanbul entered another transformative era of urban development. Once again, the changes in the city were part of broader political, economic and social developments in Turkey. This was the time of prime minister (and later president) Turgut Özal, who came to power following the military coup of 1980. Under his rule, the slow process of Turkish democratisation continued, while the economy was further liberalised (Zürcher, 2009), this time in close cooperation with IMF and World Bank (Öniş, 2004). Özal is also described as a supporter of neoliberal populism, promoting neoliberal reforms in a top-down manner "often launched by surprise and without the participation of organized political forces" (Öniş, 2004, p. 126). In 1984, Istanbul was established as a metropolitan municipality, of which Özal's fellow party member Bedrettin Dalan became the first mayor. The Özal government had opted for political and administrative decentralization for metropolitan areas to solve their typically urban issues more efficiently (Heper, 1989).

It was decided that Istanbul would receive funds from the state, which Dalan used to restructure his city. Istanbul started to be presented as a world city, attractive for tourists, foreign investment and modern living. Under Dalan, massive and controversial projects were undertaken, including the clearing of large parts of the downtown district of Beyoğlu and the restyling of Sultanahmet - where the famous tourist attractions of Hagia Sophia and the Blue Mosque are located - into a tourist-friendly area and the creation of wide boulevards and parks along the Golden Horn. (Keyder, 1999)

During this time, a new middle class also started to develop. Until the 1980s, Turkey's middle class was constructed based on a combination of state-owned and state-guided enterprises. Like in other countries, the core of the middle class consisted of salaried workers who enjoyed the stability of a regular income, state health services, state education and state pensions (Rutz & Balkan, 2009, p. 17). With the dramatic waves of privatisation and liberalisation in Turkey in the 1980s, the composition of the middle class rapidly changed. The government started to favour the service sector - a sector firmly embedded in international networks of finance and trade - over its traditional manufacturing and heavy industries. The service sector - banks, insurance companies and consulting firms - had a strong

demand for high-skilled labour and thus paid their employees very well. These people greatly benefited from the expanding Turkish service sector. However, at the same time, de-industrialisation also led to greater unemployment of low(er) skilled people, who saw their jobs disappear and did not qualify for this new labour market. The service sector jobs they did have the right qualifications for, such as cleaning or sales, did not pay enough to sustain their former (lower) middle-class status. Istanbul thus became a city characterised by growing inequalities among its inhabitants. Rutz & Balkan describe how the existing middle class was hollowed out and polarised, resulting in a small but growing urban, professional, highly educated and globally linked fraction: the new middle class (Rutz & Balkan, 2009, p. 19).

Meanwhile, Turkey's new middle class became a very diverse and divided group in which two particular strands have been most widely debated: the Islamic and the secular. Vali Nasr describes how the flourishing of capitalism in Muslim countries has gone hand in hand with the resurgence of traditional Islamic belief, creating a flourishing market for Islamic goods such as halal food, headscarves, Islamic housing, haute couture, baking, education, entertainment, media, tourism and consumer goods (Nasr, 2009, pp. 14). In Turkey, the same development took place. Under Turgut Özal, the Turkish economy did not only open up to the world but also became increasingly linked with identity politics. Muslim companies started to develop alongside the existing secular ones, creating their own multinationals and conglomerates operating in a global market. Consumer culture became more diversified and related to specific cultural choices. While one section of Turkish businesses started to produce expensive overcoats for Muslim women, other companies produced clothing that they believed fitted a 'secular lifestyle and civilised identity' (Navaro-Yashin in: Kandiyoti & Saktanber, 2002, p. 228).

Let us take this all in. In just over fifty years, Istanbul's population increased tremendously. The city's population grew from around 1 million in 1950 to 5 million in 1980 and 10 million in 2000 (Keyder, 2005). In 2021, the city counted over 15 million inhabitants (Turkish Statistical Institute). This represents a massive growth that urban planners have found difficult to keep up with. At the same time, the push towards a neoliberal regime enabled the rise of a new middle class pursuing diverse and new lifestyles, each having their own housing demands.

In terms of housing, one more characteristic of Istanbul must be mentioned. The city has one substantial topographical disadvantage that makes urban planning even more complicated: its location is close to the North Anatolian Fault Line. As a result of this location, the possibility of a humbling earthquake looms large over

the city. For many of Istanbul's inhabitants, fearing a future earthquake is not purely imaginary. In 1999, the Marmara region, where Istanbul is located, was shaken by a strong earthquake that took over 17.000 lives. The destruction and fear caused by the catastrophe generated an atmosphere in which the structural safety of buildings became both a personal and a political concern that has directly influenced the city's urban planning and transformation strategies (Angell, 2014). One consequence of this new awareness has been a dwindling trust in the building quality of older properties, while the demand for high-quality housing - away from the crowds and density of the city centre - has surged, particularly among the urban middle classes.

Keeping these rapid developments in mind, let us explore Turkey's first years of the 21st century. Those years were a period of great economic boom. After 2001 that is, because, in that year, the country was still witnessing a dramatic economic crisis. However, between 2002 and 2007, it showed exceptional economic growth: an average rate of seven per cent, which was almost three times the previous ten years' average (Islam, 2010). Istanbul was the main powerhouse of this economic machine: around 60 per cent of foreign trade was realised in Istanbul and the city absorbed around 90 per cent of foreign direct investment. Under Kadir Topbaş, mayor of Istanbul between 2004 and 2017, the city undertook several major projects - comparable in scope, size and controversy to those of Dalan in the 1980s. These projects were typically designed to enlarge the appeal of the city. Examples are the expansion of the public transport system (metro, light rail and Metrobus), the restructuring of the famous downtown avenue İstiklal Caddesi and the regeneration of neighbourhoods such as Sulukule, forcing local residents to relocate to the outskirts of the city to make space for urban renewal. This was the time of 'urban transformation' or *kentsel dönüşüm* in Turkish (Islam, 2010), a transformative period that was strongly politically motivated. It was a time of looking outward and re-establishing Istanbul as the great city it used to be in Ottoman times. Tayyip Erdoğan, prime minister of Turkey in those days, had been Istanbul's mayor between 1994 and 1998. He thus had a solid and personal connection with the city. His party, AKP, wanted to use Istanbul as a showcase for Turkey's renewed power and attraction, showing tourists and investors that Turkey was the place to be: a leading, modern international hub for culture, finance and tourism. The AKP government had - and still has - immense entrepreneurial ambitions for Turkey and Istanbul and introduced many important (and controversial) reforms regarding urban development and housing.

Gated communities in Istanbul

In this context of rapid urban development, privatisation, internationalisation and diversification, the rise of Istanbul's gated communities took place. From the beginning, gating has formed an integral part of the urban developments sketched above. Today, divisions and gates are so prevalent that they seem to have become a key design principle (Islam, 2010). Although exact numbers are lacking - as is the case in most cities and countries - gated communities have become unremarkably common in contemporary Istanbul. Based on estimates from 2005 (Pérouse and Danış) one may conclude that there should be well over a thousand gated communities in Istanbul today.

4

It should, however be stressed that gated housing is something familiar in Turkey. The 1980s are generally regarded as a turning point in Istanbul's housing market, but Istanbul's gated communities can be traced all the way back to the 1930s. Perouse and Danis (2005), for example, locate the first gated communities in this period, which they describe as *site*² inhabited by people working in the same sector (e.g. cooperatives of doctors, lawyers and teachers). The second wave of gated community construction started in the late 1960s and early 1970s (Perouse and Danis, 2005; Dundar and Ozcan, 2003). It was characterised by second homes or *yazlık* (summer houses) constructed in Turkey's Marmara and Aegean coastal regions. Even though these properties were used as seasonal or temporary homes, almost all of them featured characteristics of conventional gated communities.

In the 1980s, the third wave of gated community construction took off. As described earlier, this was a time during which the Turkish economy was liberalised, which brought larger global development companies into the real-estate sector (Isik and Pinarcioglu, 2005; Keyder, 2000; Öncü, 1988; Sonmez, 1994). This same economic transformation brought about a transformation in the labour market that laid the grounds for the emergence of new middle and upper-middle classes which, in turn, created a demand for new lifestyles that reflected their newfound socio-economic position (b, 2002; Bali, 2004; Bartu, 2002; Danis, 2001; Özkan and Kozaman 2009; Perouse and Danis, 2005; Simsek; 2005). The favourable position of the salaried middle classes eroded and gradually shifted to the 'new middle classes' consisting of employees of multinational firms and working for private, corporate and financial sectors (Kandiyoti and Saktanber, 2002). This shift caused a diversification within the middle classes, which started to define their identities by associating their

² In daily speech, 'site' is still the most common term people use to refer to a gated community. The official term *kapalı site* — closed community — is rarely employed.

socio-economic position to a wider variety of factors including consumption, housing, education, religion and lifestyle: all of which Istanbul's new urban facilities and services are designed to fulfil.

This period was also accompanied by significant changes in Istanbul's Metropolitan Planning regulations (view i.e. Heper, 1988). Regulations became more flexible and, as a consequence, turned sizeable areas of land around forests, water basins and the Bosphorus available for real-estate development (Ekinci, 1994; ia, 1996). This process saw the establishment of new suburban municipalities that acted independently from the Metropolitan Municipality, thus facilitating the further construction of new housing developments (Inal Cekic and Gezici, 2005; Perouse and Danis, 2005). Particularly, gated communities located far away from Istanbul's city centre, such as Istanbul Istanbul and Kasaba - both of which will be discussed in further detail in chapter 5 - developed in this context. They are located away from the city and are usually regarded as being opposed to city life given their privacy and individualised lifestyle (Alver, 2007; Ayata, 2002; Isik and Pinarcioglu, 2005; Öncü, 1999; Perouse and Danis, 2005), safety and security (Ayata, 2002; Bali, 2004; Oncu, 1999) and various social facilities (Cinar, Cizmeci and Koksall, 2006; Danis, 2001; Oktay, 2002; Oncu, 1999). The gated communities developed in this period can be regarded as the first modern generation of gated communities - built as low-rise and low-density projects targeting middle class and upper middle class families.

In the 2000s, gated communities morphed into large-scale, mixed-use, high-rise developments. Today, their ongoing transformation includes semi-private towns with a population of 60.000 inhabitants such as *Ağaoğlu Maslak 1453*. In a way, the gated community - known as *kapalı site* in Turkish - is now turning into a gated district, or *kapalı semt*. This transformation was enabled by the introduction of several further legal reforms implemented by the AKP government, including for example the *gecekondu* reform of 2004 (making it a criminal offense to construct slum housing) and the new Municipality Law in 2005 (allowing district municipalities to implement 'transformation projects' in derelict areas that were considered an earthquake risk). At the same time, the Mass Housing Administration (TOKİ) was given increased power, making it the only agency able to regulate the zoning and sale of almost all state-owned urban land, excluding military land (for a detailed description of reforms implemented in this period view Kuyucu & Ünsal, 2010). Another important measure was the introduction of mortgages in 2007, which allowed increasing numbers of people to purchase their own homes.

Apart from these more regulatory, economic and political urban developments, it is of great importance to also look at public opinion on cities. The economic, political and social developments of the 1980s and 1990s led to significant changes in the understanding of cities, which started to be increasingly regarded as places to be either avoided or escaped. The city acquired a predominantly negative meaning (Alver, 2007; Bali, 2004; Keyder, 2000; Öncü; 1999). Cities also became the sites of increasing tensions between socio-cultural groups, particularly secular Turks and Islamists, as political Islam rose and large-scale migration from rural Anatolia started to change the configuration of cities (Bali, 2004; Bartu, 2000; Keyder, 2000).

Developers of gated communities tapped (and still tap) into these feelings of insecurity. This is also where the fear of earthquakes re-appears, as it is used as a key selling point in Istanbul. Contemporary gated communities are marketed as modern, high-quality, safe buildings that can resist a potential future earthquake very well. At the same time, developers address Istanbul's socio-cultural tensions by selling their housing projects as 'neighbourhoods' (*mahalle*) that evoke an environment propitious for the cultivation of 'neighbourly relations' and 'a sense of belonging' in a 'new civil society' (Bartu, 2002, p. 84). The marketing of Istanbul's gated communities tends to emphasise shared values anchored in a western, secular, middle-class way of life - which is purposefully positioned as a rejection of Islamism and lower-class culture (Geniş, 2007; Ayata, 2002). A focus on the professional backgrounds of potential residents and a family-oriented way of life are also popular selling points employed by gated communities' marketing strategies (Bali, 2004; Perouse and Danis, 2005, p. 111). However, it is worth mentioning that the rise of political Islam has also convinced some developers about the profitability to also target the Islamic middle and upper classes (Çavdar, 2013).

At the same time, the rise of gated communities in Turkey has met the same critical academic approach as in other parts of the world. "Istanbul's urban landscape continues to be littered by new residential compounds trapped behind gates or walls...", Candan and Kolluoğlu for example, state (2008, p.6). In line with the dominant literature and discourse on gated communities, Istanbul's gated communities have mainly been analysed within a framework of political economy and neoliberal urbanism (Geniş, 2007; Candan and Kolluoğlu, 2008). This paradigmatic approach has stressed the role of the state, real estate developers and global capital flows, who promote gated communities as the opposite of older slum neighbourhoods - or *gecekondus*, which have a reputation for being inhabited by 'the urban poor'. Through this stark contrast, these poor neighbourhoods fall victim to the hunger for development and financial gain of powerful public-private partnerships

operating on behalf of 'the rich'. Gated communities are described as "luxury collective accommodation in which inhabitants are protected and locked within their own living spaces, with outsiders excluded" (Erdi-Lelandais, 2014, p. 5). According to this familiar narrative, the inhabitants of gated communities are fearful residents searching for security, peace, quiet and community away from the daily chaos of the city.

Even though some scholars have moved beyond this alarming discourse on gated communities - e.g., Tanulku (2012) focuses on the way gated projects are embedded in external everyday realities - most research on gated communities in Istanbul revolves around politico-economic analyses of the neoliberal city in which the gated community takes the role of an evil force that will irrevocably destroy urban life. This chapter and the following take on an alternative perspective. By diving into Istanbul's gated communities, this chapter will explore the everyday life of a contemporary gated community in a newly constructed neighbourhood in Istanbul by applying a Lefebvre-inspired relational approach. The next chapter, in turn, combines insights from the work of both Başak Tanulku and my own to explore the potential and possibilities of gated communities in Istanbul.

A relational perspective on the everyday life of gated communities

By carefully dissecting everyday life in and around Varyap Meridian this chapter aims to push the debate on gated communities away from the binary view that prevails in today's academic debates (e.g. good vs bad, segregated vs integrated and isolated vs social). This is an attempt to avoid assuming what life is like inside gated communities in order to bring to light the invisible inside of gated communities with the ultimate aim of promoting a more nuanced view of modern, gated living that leaves some room for open-ended future engagements with the urban.

This more comprehensive examination places Lefebvre's work on the production of space - and his writings on the spatial triad, particularly - within a relational framework. By positioning Lefebvre's triad in 'relational place-frames' (Pierce and Martin, 2015), this chapter explores the various and often overlapping 'moments' of a gated community. These moments may take place at the same time or not and they may clash or oppose each other, but in the end, they have the potential to transform the gated community. This analysis aims to demonstrate that a gated

community is not a mono-dimensional unity but a vibrant and ever-changing assemblage inextricably connected to the city.

My exploration starts with the assumption that the gated community does not exist *by* and *in* itself. It is a place that is actively practiced, produced and thus woven into the daily lives of its residents, visitors and surroundings in a wealth of complex and surprising ways. The gates are part of wider stories and discourses (i.e. urban development, earthquake risk) that reinforce one another while encouraging specific practices and discouraging others. The dynamic relations between actors, practices, images, beliefs, and affects that flow through the community yield forms of gating that are in the perpetual making. Therefore, I view gated communities as assemblages constantly being made, remade or falling apart.

This perennial flexibility makes it difficult to conceptualise the gated community. Instead of a frozen conceptualisation, I would rather stay close to gated communities' spongy character by providing a definition that can analyse and visualise the various ways in which they unfold. With this objective in mind, I take a dual perspective inspired by Lefebvre's work on everyday life and the production of space, on the one hand, and also a relational approach focused on relational place-frames.

Everyday life and the production of space

Paraphrasing Lefebvre, Stuart Elden states that "Everyday life may be familiar to us, but this does not mean that it is understood" (2004, p. 111): this is a fair characterisation of the daily spatial behaviour, thoughts and affects of residents, visitors, employees or users of gated communities — which tend to be overlooked or simply assumed. Lefebvre placed great importance on the study of everyday life because he held the conviction that, by delving into the atomic structure of life as it is truly lived, you could understand the whole structure of the human universe (Merrifield, 2006, p. 5). Thus, exploring gated communities through a Lefebvrian lens may render a clearer picture of how everyday life — in its banal yet rich commonality — unfolds inside and outside the gates. In addition, such a lens may shed light on the everyday ways gates connect the inside with the outside world and mediate their interactions.

Lefebvre's conception of space as socially constituted allows for analysing the wide arrange of components associated with the dynamic character of gated communities. Lefebvre breaks down space into a triad of perceived, conceived and

lived experiences, which are in a constant state of co-production and reproduction driven by the continuous shifts among the three moments (Schmid, 2008). Perceived space denotes its physical dimension and its flow of materials, people and energy: it is space that is generated and used. Conceived space alludes to knowledge and logic: it is the instrumental site where (social) engineers and urban planners develop idealised abstractions. Lived space is socially produced and modified through the use people make of it: it connotes space that is charged with symbolism and meaning (Elden, 2001).

In the particular case of gated communities, Lefebvre's spatial triad allows for an investigation of the physical, social and affective components that shape them while giving equal importance to all three dimensions —always in interaction. However, even Lefebvre states that his spatial triad should not be used as an abstract model. "The perceived-conceived-lived triad loses all its force if it is treated as an abstract 'model'", he writes, stressing that they do not necessarily form a coherent whole (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 40). Additionally, despite its prominent theoretical and conceptual appeal, the operationalisation and visualisation of Lefebvre's spatial triad pose an critical epistemological and empirical challenge. His work is primarily an ontological engagement with what space is that is focused on the nature of social space and how that space is produced; it does not provide any clear guidance on how to identify this space empirically. Although many scholars have aimed to operationalise Lefebvre's spatial triad, they have tended to split his three moments of space into independent spaces (Pierce and Martin, 2015), whereas "Lefebvre explicitly viewed social space as a unitary phenomenon" (Pierce and Martin, 2015, p. 1283). "Empirically exploring conceived, perceived and lived spaces, separates each spatial moment from the others, neglecting how they are produced together" (Pierce and Martin, 2015, p. 1290).

Pierce and Martin, therefore, suggest adopting a relational place perspective, which would make it possible to stay close to Lefebvre while encouraging methods designed to assess different kinds of evidence about the city, including affect and experiences. Such an approach also allows for the increasingly hybrid and multiple ways of knowing space and place that have become increasingly commonplace in critical geography (Pierce & Martin, 2015). These approaches articulate place as ontically hybrid and multiple: "places are made up of many kinds of components which are sutured together through processes of place-framing into an emergent object (Martin, 2003; Pierce & Martin, 2015). A relational place perspective enables an understanding of the gated community as a 'complex adaptive assemblage'

(Dovey, 2010; 2012), irreducible to 'imperatives of base or superstructures (Amin & Thrift, 2017).

Let's make this more explicit. By focusing on the analysis of relational place-frames, Pierce and Martin show how a relational approach can effectively splice into Lefebvre's triadic approach to study how space is co-produced by the interaction among different stages. They illustrate how the analysis of place framings over which actors continuously compete is materially, relationally and emotionally constituted as different versions of the same place, each with their own economic, social or political influences and implications. Different place-frames of the same place are constituted by complex assemblages which may or may not be present in competing frames. They illustrate this by looking at the redevelopment of the industrial riverfront of Pittsburgh (PA, USA). "Thinking of Pittsburgh's waterfront from a relational place perspective emphasizes the different ways that the city has been framed and re-framed over the last several decades", they state, showing how Pittsburgh has simultaneously been framed as "a dormant industrial powerhouse", "an emptied infrastructure to be repurposed", a "northern Appalachian mountain metropolis" and "an industrial empire homeland" over the past few decades (Pierce & Martin, 2015, p. 1291). They then show how these various place-frames have shaped political-economic action.

What is remarkable about Pierce & Martin's perspective on place-frames is that it "includes physical, social, economic and experiential components both of historical and contemporary Pittsburgh", yet at the same time, it "reflects processes that are not human-induced or produced" (Pierce & Martin, 2015, 1292).

"Their ahuman physical processes cannot be adequately described within a unitary and coherent space that is (social), despite having huge significance to the human establishment, operations, and experiences city. Similarly, the experiences of urban residents, or of Pittsburgh expatriots who fondly imagine the city in its former glory as an ideal of what cities ought to be, also contribute to the impact of the place even though their imaginations may not be expressed through any explicit, local social relationships" (Pierce & Martin, 2015, p. 1292).

In applying Pierce & Martin's relational place-frames, I aim to reveal how the gated community I studied – Varyap Meridian – is framed through material flows, designs, practices, behaviour, experiences and affects. I discovered that, in the case of Varyap Meridian, various place-frames are actually shared by multiple groups with

varying interests, which in turn compete over frames based on both minor and major differences. These negotiations take place on the basis of widespread, everyday practices, such as the sub rental of flats, the pursuit of love affairs or the use of the swimming pool. Let us dive in and immerse ourselves...

Analysing Varyap Meridian

We are at Varyap Meridian, a modern gated community on the Asian side of Istanbul. Constructed in 2012 in the new neighbourhood of Batı Ataşehir (West Ataşehir), it is an interesting example of a novel type of gated community — the mixed-used high-rise community — in a neighbourhood that is supposed to showcase and symbolise the future of the city. Varyap Meridian consists of 1500 residential units (ranging from studios to luxurious penthouses), offices, a five-star hotel, conference facilities and underground parking for 2500 vehicles. Around 5000 people live on the premises of Varyap Meridian, which are divided into several blocks (A, B+C, D+E) that are separated by gates and walls, and managed individually.

In July-August 2015, my family and I lodged in Varyap Meridian for one month to undertake a participatory, ethnographically inspired study of this housing project and its residents.³ Through Airbnb, we rented a studio apartment on the fifth floor of the D-block. We also rented a car to fully experience the various forms of entering and exiting the gated community but also to allow us to be connected to the rest of the city in the same way most residents are.

During our stay, I conducted fourteen in-depth, semi-structured interviews with residents, former residents, on-site employees and professionals who worked on the Meridian project. Although most of the residents I talked to were home-owners, I have also included a tenant and a homeowner who has now moved to another gated community yet is subletting his flat at Varyap Meridian. My interviews were based on random encounters, targeted contacts and snowball sampling. For example, I met the receptionist of my block through our day-to-day interactions, which happened while taking the elevator to our floor, coming back from the supermarket, asking questions about the nearest bus stop, and so forth. I specifically targeted the manager of the block I stayed in, while many of the residents were referred to me through others. Interviews were held in both English and Turkish. In addition, I kept notes on my more informal, daily conversations with residents and staff and also with outsiders in the neighbourhood. I also kept an extensive diary,

³ View the introduction for full details on the methodological approach.

took photographs and collected newspaper and magazine articles related to Meridian, its development and daily functioning.

What follows is an analysis of my temporary life at Meridian. All names of interviewees have been changed except those of official representatives of Varyap. Staying at Meridian was a fascinating experience — and very different from what I had initially expected. Inspired by the dominant image of gated communities as middle-class enclaves, I thought I would stay in a closely-knit, family-based community characterised by warm daily encounters and exchanges. However, my daily experiences of this housing project turned out to be much more diverse, revealing both contradictory, conflicting and complex realities. Based on earlier research and my personal experience of having lived in Istanbul, I also expected that getting in touch with residents would not be hard. This turned out to be much more complicated than anticipated. Moreover, whereas Turkish research on gated communities — which, curiously, is mostly conducted by female researchers — recurrently mentions the difficulty of getting in touch with men (e.g. Candan and Kolluoğlu, 2008, p. 11), as a non-Turkish female researcher I experienced the opposite: I found getting in touch with women particularly difficult.

The mosaic I put together to craft the image of Varyap Meridian is made of a wide range of components that include actors, materials, practices, dreams and images that interacted on a daily basis. In order to visualise these components and make Varyap Meridian legible, I will discuss them as part of particular yet multiple place-frames of this gated community — through which elements that may be categorised as part of conceived, perceived or lived space continuously circulate.

Welcome to Hotel Varyap Meridian

We enter Varyap Meridian and encounter a curious mix of silence and commotion. There is a constant influx of people and goods, yet the place also appears calm and quiet. It has a peculiar yet, unmistakable, hotel-like quality. “This place is like a hotel!”, an older, stylish-looking woman exclaims to an estate agent showing her around the premises: Ozan, a resident of the D-tower, shares this image. “Varyap Meridian is like a social club, a sports club and a flat in one,” he explains.

Like hotels, there is no selection ‘at the gate’ of Varyap Meridian. If you can afford it — and because of the variety in prices at Varyap Meridian, more and more people can — you can live or even work there, for there are also offices for rent. Mehmet,

another resident, informs me that people known for owning several apartments — as a financial investment — supposedly even rent out their apartments for a price including the monthly service fees so that it does not cost them anything to hold on to their flats.

The hotel-like place-frame of Varyap Meridian is shaped by perceived, lived and conceived moments - in Lefebvrian terms - and produced by a large variety of actors ranging from residents to Varyap, the developing company itself. This gated community features dynamic practices. There is security staff, concierge services and 24-7 technical support. Bodies are in constant motion. Because of all these services that provide aid and assistance all day round, Varyap Meridian offers an affective image of ease and flexibility that resonates well with residents' wishes and experiences.

Varyap Meridian is the result of smart economic reasoning by Varyap and the outcome of RMJM's architectural design. The development boasts 450 different spatial layouts ranging from studios to luxury penthouses: a feature intrinsic to the project's curvy design. As Umut Kerem Yakar, deputy general director of Varyap, explains: "Because of the curves in the design of the towers, we were forced to have different types of apartments [...] It was quite a challenge, but our sales team did a good job as we were able to turn this diversity into a selling argument." Potential buyers were given a broad spectrum of choices concerning apartments' size and spatial distribution. The diversity in apartment types, combined with many rental apartments, has cultivated an equally diverse collection of residents at Varyap Meridian.

On average, 57% of all units intended for residential use are short- and long-term rental flats (Varyap Meridian on-site management, 2015). People can rent an apartment at Varyap Meridian from real estate agents, private individuals or through websites like Airbnb or Booking.com. In reality, this means that people are constantly moving in and out. "Many people here are renting, and the average rental period has become shorter and shorter. Here, at the D and E blocks, I think it is like a month, or you know, even a week," Vedat, a local architect and former resident himself, explains. He recalls looking for a tenant and one particular man approaching him to offer "dirty, cash lira bills" hoping to secure a short tenancy. Vedat declined the offer.

The high availability of rental apartments combined with the widespread practice of renting and sub-renting — among private individuals and companies alike — has configured a temporary type of hotel-like living. Just like hotels, Varyap

Meridian attracts a diverse range of residents. Unlike one would expect when talking about life inside a gated community (Blakely and Snyder, 1997; Le Goix, 2005; Roitman, 2010), the residents I talked to regularly made allusions to the great diversity of people living at Varyap Meridian. The development is home to a miscellaneous community of residents featuring an equally diverse set of backgrounds, lifestyles and aspirations. This motley crew includes types of residents that would not readily be associated with gated-community living and who were described by interviewees as 'highly educated high-earning professionals'; 'middle-range professionals aspiring to climb the socio-economic ladder'; 'Anatolian students with wealthy parents'; 'middle-class families'; and 'professional sports players'. Also, 'high-end criminals', 'adulterous males' and 'escort girls' were regularly mentioned.

This colourful vaudeville of residents exposes the widespread appeal of a hotel-like lifestyle provided by gated communities such as Varyap Meridian, which is characterised by an existence furnished with plenty of services that include sports and laundry and on-site shopping amenities. Residents describe themselves as well as those living around them as very busy. The design of Varyap Meridian is not only purposefully conceived to cater to this hectic lifestyle, but it also facilitates it as betrayed by the almost-decorative kitchens found in studio apartments and 1-bedroom flats: they are so small as to suspect that their design aims at discouraging home-cooking and maybe even, indirectly, at promoting the delivery of food from the outside. One always finds advertisements of local restaurants placed in special noticeboards in the elevators, and their menus are regularly slid under apartments' doors.

The place-frame of Varyap Meridian as a hotel — both in its conception, practice and lived image — is interestingly ambivalent. On the one hand, it functions as an open, flexible and service-minded space that caters to the needs of busy urbanites. On the other hand, this flexible character seems to clash with the notion of 'gating': the transient hotel-like reality of Varyap Meridian has resulted in stable flows of people, goods and behaviours, expectations and views. The people living there seem to be fully aware that the physical gates cannot keep out the high number of desirable and unwanted regulars who come from beyond the walls as a result of these flows.

To quote Vedat:

If we didn't have the gates, we would have many problems. We would have a hundred problems. With the gates, we have fifty. We'd have

Syrians sitting here. At least it keeps the Syrians, or whatever, the gypsies, out. But then of course you have the rich guy who is a drug dealer or has a mistress, he can still come in. It's like a prison. Some things pass the boundaries and other things don't. It just depends on what you can tolerate. If you are rich enough and you don't want to tolerate anything, then you go to Zekeriyaköy and build your own house.⁴

Meridian residents are thus aware of the fact that their physical walls, barriers and gates — as well as the official security rules and procedures associated with them — cannot filter out all unwanted individuals, behaviours or activities, precisely because of the compound's flexible, hotel-like atmosphere. Residents describe the community as 'safe, but not perfectly secure', which seems good enough. Sometimes visitors quarrel with security guards about getting in. Roma children from neighbouring areas try to climb the walls and, reportedly, even attempt to swim in the pools and shout at residents lounging around the pool — who generally remain indifferent to their attention-grabbing antics. However, especially when unwanted elements from the 'outside world' are brought into the community by residents themselves, the gates become largely ineffective and superfluous. Since access is perhaps more flexible than it appears and it is particularly dependent on situation and context, what do material gates, in the form of barriers, walls and security guards, filter out then?

Officially, there are rules that regulate access to Varyap Meridian. In practice, however, access is often negotiated by personal connections, impressions and coincidence. "Getting access without knowing someone actually depends on the security guard on duty. People working at the neighbouring Halkbank branch are, for example, allowed in for lunch at Pion," Ufuk explains. The receptionist of the D-block points out that security officers are employed by a private company which hires them exclusively on short-term contracts, which means that they never remain long enough to get well acquainted with residents. "They do not know the people, but they also have to work long shifts and fall asleep": undoubtedly, this situation creates more porous gates than officially recognised.

Apart from more mundane, daily encounters with the 'outside' in the shape of visitors, taxi drivers or nannies, residents relayed that Varyap Meridian has also become home to illegal and even criminal activities coming from beyond the gates, which now have found a safe nest at Meridian. "In Istanbul, illegal activities are

⁴ A village in the Northern Istanbul municipality of Sarıyer, known for its high-end residential developments, particularly villas and detached homes.

often hidden inside big buildings, in big projects,” Ozan, a resident, explains. Large-scale projects like Varyap Meridian, characterised by a transient existence, not only allow people to hide among the masses, but are often designed in a way that guarantees the privacy of every leaseholder. The spatial design either discourages encounters or allows residents to avoid interaction with one another. For example, the doors to individual apartments are located far apart instead of right in front of each other; and an elevator is assigned to users based on the floor they indicate they wish to go to, even before they set foot in it. During my one-month stay, I had to share an elevator with others only once or twice. Furthermore, most residents go up to their apartments straight from the parking garage without passing through the main entrance, where the receptionist is seated.

Regarding crime, interviewees - residents and staff - offered unprompted recounts of gambling, drugs and prostitution. This is a phenomenon visible not only in Istanbul. There have been reports of similar activities flourishing in gated communities in India. The Times of India quoted a senior police officer who stated that “gated communities have the highest concentration of unidentified people. Also, intelligence reports say that such communities are slowly turning into safe havens for illegal activities, including drug deals and flesh trade” (Thomas, 2016). In September 2016, a shooting incident involving eight people inside an apartment was reported to have taken place at Varyap Meridian (Haberturk, 5 September 2016).

Intriguingly, however, the illegal activities encouraged by Varyap Meridian's architectural design do not appear to be a central concern among residents. ‘Undesirable social behaviour’ not addressed adequately is a worry of greater urgency. The main concerns raised by all residents I interviewed related to far more mundane frustrations: the private and even sexual lives of single residents; the adulterous dalliances of married men renting studio flats as garçonnieres (or garsonyers in the Turkish cognate); women taking their often-diminutive dogs to the swimming pool to let them on the sunbeds; students organising BBQ-parties at the pool; or people not parking their cars properly. These concerns provide another important place-frame through which life in this gated community is actually experienced, valued and negotiated.

Varyap Meridian: the place where change begins

Before moving on to the place-frame of ‘Varyap Meridian as social negotiation’ that I have illustrated above, I will first address the place-frame of ‘Varyap Meridian as

opportunity'. I suggest that one could view this as the dominant place-frame where the story of Varyap Meridian's history should be traced back to: it combines its development plans of Varyap, the impressive advertising images used for its promotion; and the dreams and aspirations of Istanbulites with whom such images resonated. After all, "we build on the basis of papers and plans. We buy on the basis of images" (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 75-76).

Varyap is a family-owned business founded in 1975 as the real estate development, construction and contracting company of Varlıbaş Group. The land upon which Varyap Meridian was constructed was one of the last large plots of land available in Batı Ataşehir, the western section of the popular district of Ataşehir, which is bound to become Turkey's new financial district. Through a tender, Emlak Konut REIC — Turkey's largest real-estate investment company in which the Turkish government is the majority shareholder — was granted a large plot of land bordering several existing gated housing developments. Umut Kerem Yakar, deputy general director of Varyap, recalls that, since it was the last large plot in the area, Varyap felt that it should do something different with it. "We could have done an Uphill Court 2", he explained, referring to their neighbouring residential project, which, in partnership with Tekniyapı, another real estate firm, was Varyap's first gated community built in 2007. "We wanted to make a difference." Varyap launched an architectural competition to collect novel ideas. Around the same time, coincidentally, Erdinç Varlıbaş, Varyap's CEO, impressed by the work shown to him by a representative of RMJM — an international British architecture and design firm — during a business trip in New York, invited them to take part in the competition.

Varyap provided all competitors with a design call that requested three key elements: the project should have high-rise buildings (because sea views sell well); it would need to include terraces (because people like spending time outside); and both features had to be designed in such a way that the construction area was maximised (guaranteeing maximum profitability). In the end, the design of RMJM, inspired by Istanbul's historical shapes and skyline, was selected and their initial design was further developed into a masterplan for a major mixed-use residential development characterised by distinctive semi-circular shapes, and colourful façades that stand out within the surrounding urban landscape (see Figure 2.1).

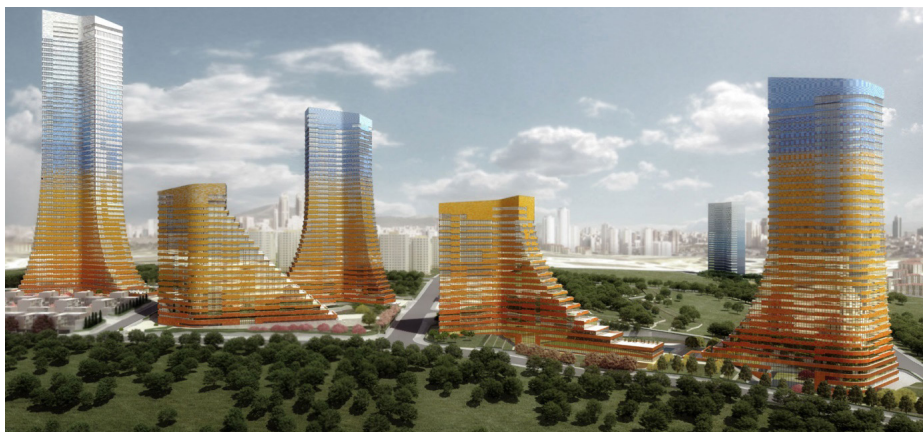


Figure 2.1 | Rendering of Varyap Meridian. Source: Varyap website – www.varyap.com. Accessed September 2016.

Varyap Meridian is a ‘Karma Project’: a mixed-use project consisting of apartments, leisure facilities, shops and offices. These projects are often marketed as modernised versions of the traditional urban neighbourhood or *mahalle*, a compact community that has an established tradition in Turkish cities which evokes nostalgic images of a long-lost urban reality. Meridian is a well-known project in Istanbul that has received multiple architectural prizes, including the 2010 European Residential Property Award for ‘Best High-Rise Development’ and ‘Best Development’ in Turkey.

From its earliest inception, Varyap Meridian was conceived and promoted as a place with potential. The cleverly branded images of Meridian, often accompanied by the company’s slogan, “the place where change begins”, echoed stories of happiness, sustainability, progress and change. Its architectural design and its marketing image have been imagined as forming “a monumental part of Istanbul’s future, designed by a team of 150 people from 14 different countries”, as the project’s website proudly boasts. In the past decade and a half, Istanbul has witnessed the construction of many similar large-scale, gated housing developments — popularly known as *yaşam merkezi* (‘life centre’) — yet Varyap Meridian was publicised as exceptional and significantly different.

Varyap Meridian started as an idea nourished by Varyap’s commercial interests and subsequently strengthened by the historically inspired design of RMJM. Business opportunities and nostalgia for the old Istanbul materialised through the designs of a novel mixed-used project in the form of a gated community that was heavily

marketed. Even before construction started, Varyap Meridian was presented to the public as a site of 'golden lives and golden opportunities'. The advertising of Varyap Meridian unreservedly appealed to people's feelings, memories, beliefs and desires, particularly to their ambitions for positive change, sustainability, greenery and, overall, a better life. "The advertising campaign was fancy and very successful. There was this beautiful song, you know, by Nil Karaibrahimgil.⁵ I had divorced that year, and I wanted to buy a house," Özgür remembers. In the song he describes,⁶ the voice of a little child praises the 'golden' qualities of life at Meridian: as if in a dream, he talks about people living up in the clouds, on lush balcony gardens; "I need to tell my father", he concludes. In another TV commercial,⁷ Varyap Meridian is linked to a range of historic events and iconic world changers, including Mahatma Ghandi, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and Elvis Presley. "Sometimes, someone comes along and changes the world with their ideas," a male voice muses in Turkish, while images of a falling Berlin wall and Martin Luther King fill the screen. "Someone comes along and makes us forget what we know... someone comes along and changes the world."

The way Varyap Meridian was framed as a spectacular, life-changing opportunity — both in terms of its actual design and marketing — resonated well with potential customers. "I liked the architecture, I liked it very much. I did not know Varyap, but they had a really good marketing campaign," Vedat recalls. The fresh and innovative architectural image created by RMJM was a decisive reason for many residents to move in. Meridian is described as new, modern, exciting and prestigious; a landmark project in Istanbul's rapidly changing urban landscape.

The image of Varyap Meridian that was so carefully crafted and successfully disseminated appears to be shared by non-residents. Residents noted that whenever they tell outsiders that they live at Varyap Meridian, they are generally met with admiration. People are impressed. In many ways, it might be hard not to be impressed. The images and representations of Varyap Meridian still in circulation, particularly on social media platforms such as Instagram and Twitter, are known for displaying grandeur, luxury and comfort. Twitter's hashtag '#varyapmeridian' opens a world of beauty treatments, food porn, expensive cars, swimming pools and the development's striking design and views.

⁵ A famous singer in Turkey, known for her creative lyrics. She symbolises the urban, liberal and educated woman.

⁶ The commercial is available on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l4MGbTyaYdk>

⁷ The commercial is available on YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GhDSz8Hy_f8

What is interesting about the place-frame of 'Varyap Meridian as opportunity' is the way that it is actively claimed as the opportunity to be or get away from certain undesirable elements of urban life, particularly Istanbul's daily chaos and the lack of opportunities the city offers to live a quiet family life. However, this place-frame simultaneously stresses this gated community's embeddedness in the city by highlighting its typically urban qualities. "We cool down here, we relax", Kader, a middle-aged housewife explains. She and her daughter, who regularly comes to visit her mother after working hours to use the swimming pool, describe the project as a two-in-one experience: it provides them the opportunity to feel that they are away from the city whilst enjoying a tailored edition of its atmosphere — although an exclusive one. To complement this upmarket urban ambiance, the project offers leisure-related spaces and services that promise to adorn life with the finer luxuries associated with either holiday accommodation or life in the countryside, such as greenery, pools and a gym. "It feels like a holiday village. It feels like you are away from Istanbul", residents harmoniously concurred. The apparent contradiction between urban and countryside lifestyles that Varyap Meridian seems to reconcile may suggest that its appeal derives from a nostalgia for a long-lost Istanbul that was characterised by small neighbourhoods with a diverse yet harmonious population whose children could play unbothered on the streets. "Today, our children are being kidnapped by the organ mafia", Mehmet warns, hinting at the horrific stories covered by various Turkish media outlets to explain his desire to live in a gated community that provides a safe environment for his two children to play and grow up carefree.

Varyap Meridian is framed as an opportunity to escape the 'chaos of Istanbul' while enjoying its more pleasurable sides. At the same time, some residents also employ this place-frame to confess a sense of impending defeat by claiming that Varyap Meridian is 'their only opportunity'. "Basically, you have only two choices besides developments like Varyap Meridian. You can live outside the city in a villa project, which is expensive, and commuting is difficult. In gecekondu neighbourhoods on the other hand, there are no good schools, no restaurants, no bars. If you want a certain lifestyle, you cannot live there," Gökhan shared. During our conversations, residents explained that they would have preferred living in older, classic middle-class neighbourhoods like Caddebostan or Ortaköy, but such neighbourhoods have become unaffordable. "New projects there are around a million USD, you have to pay a fortune for them", Gökhan laments. This is an interesting finding. Conveniently, Varyap Meridian is framed as the cheaper alternative in a market where gated communities are usually marketed as luxurious and expensive.

From spectacular image to lived experience

The place-frame of 'Varyap Meridian as opportunity' offers a landscape of imaginary ideals, dreams and aspirations mixed with promises of a good life and high-quality housing. It portrays Meridian as an attractive living environment that provides the perfect background for the fulfilment of great aspirations — in terms of business, family life and personal development. Even though it may be predominantly seen as a place-frame that incorporates conceived elements of space (e.g. design and marketing images), it also integrates daily urban practices (e.g. of commuting and the availability of nearby services) as well as more affective, lived experiences such as neighbourhood nostalgia. This is a fragile place-frame that, however, people desperately try to maintain, perhaps because it is a difficult one to let go of, particularly for residents who bought into the dream. In their minds, the idea of Varyap Meridian as an opportunity is still very much alive, even if practice reveals a more complex reality in which Meridian is co-shaped by a 'place-frame of negotiation': a lived experience that turns out to be significantly different from the imaginary project residents were promised at the outset.

"The marketing was good indeed, but the inside is empty," Mehmet sighs. He is not the only one who shares this view. Interviewees, for example, repeatedly referred to the low-quality materials used for its construction and to other unpleasant aspects, such as fellow residents who do not behave as expected or the predatory character of the community's management, which is considered to be a money-making machine for the developer. "From the outside, it looks like very high-class living, but it is not. So many different kinds of people are living here. It is not like Yeniköy, Bebek or Etiler,"⁸ Ozan nuanced. Ufuk agreed, "When I tell people outside that I live at Varyap Meridian, they are in awe. However, when you come inside and live here, you notice that it is not that great. It is not as it seems."

After these insights, it quickly became clear to me that life inside Meridian is experienced differently from what residents initially imagined it would be. Gökhan is disappointed: "to be honest, it was a little bit below my expectations. Because what they (Varyap) presented, what they visualised, is different from what is happening at the moment." The way Varyap Meridian was merchandised on spectacular landscape designs marketed on flashy websites and flattering newspaper editorials does not correspond with how the project is materially experienced and perceived by its residents every day. Mehmet draws a very telling picture:

⁸ Istanbul neighbourhoods traditionally known as wealthy, (upper) middle class neighbourhoods.

When the project was sold to us, it was sold as one project, without any roads and traffic in between. But then they divided everything into small parts. Varyap sold this project as a 'life centre', but now it's all divided. I thought I could cycle from one tower to the other, but I cannot. They promised us basketball and tennis courts in the drawings, but today there is nothing. The renderings of the project were very different. For example, that neighbouring construction site. In the drawings, it was a forest. When I bought my flat, I was doubting about buying an apartment with a view of the forest or of the sea, but now I do not even know what will be built there. They shattered our dreams.

4

Mehmet's lamentations illustrate the constant competition between overlapping yet conflicting place-frames. The place-frame of opportunity overlaps with that of 'Varyap as a hotel', which emphasises its services and the possibilities it offers to live an easy life in the city. However, these two place-frames also clash given the impossibility of 'Varyap as a hotel' to gate out precisely the kind of urban experiences, behaviours and practices that many residents, particularly families, were trying to get away from in the first place. As a result of this clash of frames, residents have to continuously find ways to create a sense of belonging by turning this diverse community into 'their home'. However, this is not a one-directional process in which residents simply shape their living environment. In what follows, I will try to elucidate why this involves a laborious process of composition, interaction and competition in which competing behaviours, practices, beliefs and emotions play a central role. The clash between 'Varyap as a hotel' and 'Varyap as opportunity' puts together an overlapping place-frame that needs to be constantly negotiated. I call this place-frame 'Meridian as negotiation'.

Negotiating 'the social' in a transient and diverse community

Varyap Meridian constitutes the background of many internal struggles that can be traced back to its transient and temporary character. Disturbances seem to stem from a deeply rooted socio-cultural conflict, particularly between the traditional middle- and upper-middle classes and the new Anatolian middle classes, on the one hand, and between permanent residents (generally homeowners) and temporary ones (generally tenants), on the other.

"It is clear when people are not from here. With some people, you immediately notice that they are tenants here or that they rent 1-bedroom flats to meet their girlfriends on weekends. You can clearly recognise single men," Mehmet claims. The behaviour of other residents evoked strong feelings in the people I talked to. Because life at Varyap Meridian is both transient and compact, residents encounter many different behaviours and practices, including those that they do not necessarily like or feel comfortable with or would have preferred to 'stay outside'. Mehmet talks about the tenants in the apartment next to his:

Next to our apartment, a young guy was living with his girlfriend. They disturbed us a lot. How? That is a bit private. When they were having sex, they would be very loud. We would be sitting in our living room, but we could not stay there. Our children were with us. We tried to soundproof the walls because they are thin. That is one of the problems of this project... it is a very normal and natural thing, but if you are having guests over (...) when my parents come over and want to pray, the sound disturbs them. These kinds of things are a problem for Turkish families.

Ufuk, the owner of Cafe Pion, is also aware of issues like this. "Some people use this place as a hotel, especially single people.⁹ Sometimes problems occur between families and single residents. They talk to me rather than to the site management."

Gökhan views most of these disagreements and disturbances in terms of a clash of cultures:

you know, in these kinds of properties, you expect people to have a particular education or mindset, but sometimes money is not related to people's education. People can have money and afford to live here, but be so ignorant, arrogant I would say... I understand Turkey is a disorganised country. We are Mediterranean. We do not like obeying the rules. I understand. We like to be disorganised. But what the hell is this? People bringing their dogs to the pool? It is forbidden. This guy over there probably has a university degree, he is probably well educated, but (...) people do not respect the rules.

⁹ In 2015, approximately 40% of residents at Varyap Meridian were married, according to Umut Kerem Yakar, Deputy General Director of Varyap. In contrast, at Uphill Court, another Varyap project nearby, the percentage of married residents was 60%.

Mehmet agrees, stating that “financially, people here are very close to each other, but our perspectives on the world and our cultures are very different. With money, you cannot buy culture. You do not buy education. You can earn money very quickly, but education takes time. You need to see, you need to read, you need to live.”

The ‘deviating’ behaviour that interviewees describe is often disparaged as ‘village mentality’ — ways of doing and thinking associated with a stereotype of Anatolian migrants. Revealingly, the lifestyles of fellow residents are described in strikingly similar terms as those of gecekondu residents, and even Varyap’s failure to create an ideal living environment is judged to be a consequence of the company’s equally substandard mentality: they give jobs to family members; they sell apartments to their friends; they break their promises, and they only care about money, profit and have close ties to the government.

In order to tackle these behavioural issues (besides many more practical, financial and organisational problems that are beyond the scope of this chapter), some active homeowners got together on both LinkedIn forums and discussion groups to, for example, push Varyap to enforce the rules and hand over the management of Meridian to its residents. However, when they met the CEO of Varyap, Mr. Süleyman Varlibaş, to talk about this issue, he told them, “this is an excellent project, so you should be proud to live here and just enjoy the life that we provided”. Cemel, an independent marketing researcher and initiator of the LinkedIn group, recalls laughing. Varyap’s CEO stubbornly held to the unrealistic image that his company created for Meridian and did not budge despite the residents’ manifest discontent. The on-site management of Meridian remained under Varyap’s control.¹⁰ The company set up a website on which the official community rules — described as common-sense rules by the on-site manager, Zafer — can be consulted and the managerial staff is available to residents in case of complaints, problems or disturbances. Residents have come to rely a great deal on this service.

Zafer thinks that these clashes derive from the inexperience that many residents have with living in gated communities, which include regulations — and thus collective compromises — regarding noise, pets and smoking in public areas, as well as proper trash disposal. “As a company, we ask for certain standards, and our rules are displayed in the elevators, for example. We remind people of the rules. However, we cannot identify everyone who breaks the rules. These buildings are

¹⁰ At the time of the fieldwork, management was performed by Varyap itself. In the meantime, on-site elections have taken place and the management of some blocks has shifted into the hands of local, resident representatives.

too big, and we cannot install cameras everywhere. That way, we would infringe upon people's privacy rights. But in a few years, I believe people will get used to living in a *site*. Problems will not be zero, but they will be better." He bases his firm belief on what happened in a gated community nearby, Uphill Court, where he also lives. He thinks that people at Varyap Meridian will increasingly find ways to advocate common causes: "That is the point of living in a gated community. If you do not have any relationship with your neighbours, why live there? If you live further away from the city centre, the advantages of a gated community are social, like a swimming pool. If you do not use these social facilities, there is no point in living here".

According to Okan, the situation is slightly more complex. It is not only about residents' lack of experience with communal life but also about Varyap's failure to equip the place with sufficient social amenities:

If you want to be like a 5-star hotel, you must have certain facilities, like a large à la carte restaurant, an aqua park or something. The municipality or central government should set up rules about that, about the social life of people. If a developer does not plan for any social facilities, it should not get planning permission for the project, or something. There are many apartments in these communities, so a developer should also consider social life. However, everything is about money, and they do not consider people much.

In the meantime, Varyap Meridian's communal life is being gradually but organically organised by individual micro-management initiatives that go beyond complaining to the Management Office. This includes residents paying visits to neighbouring students who are throwing a loud party to ask them to lower the volume; the set-up of informal women's clubs and friendships at the gym; the raise of spontaneous complaints to Okan while having a cup of tea at Café Pion; or sitting with other families at the swimming pool while ignoring bothersome users. Residents are finding ways to negotiate their response to unwanted behaviours and undesirable practices. Sometimes they act directly; sometimes, they complain; yet another time they choose to simply ignore the source of their frustration. Life at Varyap Meridian is littered with constant negotiation and contestation: a very different reality than the peaceful, tranquil life that one would expect to find in a gated community.

Conclusion

It was still dark when we left Varyap Meridian early in the morning. The grounds were deserted, and so were the surrounding streets. The security guard at the entrance booth was the only person we encountered. We handed him our apartment keys; he opened the barrier, and we drove to the airport. We arrived home in The Netherlands feeling puzzled by the experience of living at Meridian for one month. I did not know how to define Varyap Meridian. I had been staying in a different world that did not fit any of my previous templates of either experiences or knowledge. It was like a hotel but with residents instead of guests. It was obviously part of Istanbul and its urban development, yet, at the same time, it seemed to be outside the city. It was alienating yet familiar. Closed yet open. Comfortable yet stressful. New but also ordinary. Either way, it fitted neither my professional nor my personal preconceptions of what a gated community should look, feel or behave like.

Varyap Meridian was a contradictory and multifaceted place that made me question contemporary conceptualisations of gated communities in Istanbul and elsewhere worldwide. As I envisioned this chapter, it aimed to capture this elusive multiplicity by reifying it into words and - despite its complexity - present it coherently. By applying a relational approach of place-frames inspired by Lefebvre's three moments of space, I have attempted to present the various realities of gated living at Meridian in order to do justice to the dynamism and distinct actors involved in shaping this gated project: its physical shapes, imaginary ideals, daily practices and lived experiences.

This endeavour has yielded four key findings that reveal novel and challenging perspectives on gated communities. First of all, it appears that critical literature on gated communities (e.g. Davis, 2006; Marcuse, 1997; Low, 2001; Morgan, 2013; Blandy, 2018) — which is concerned with the supposedly neoliberal roots and segregating effects of gated communities — seems to take issue with their conceived image (as envisioned during the planning and marketing phases) yet largely ignores perceived and lived experiences, which tend to provide their own devastating critiques on the distortion promoted by conceived images. Varyap Meridian's architectural drafts and landscape plans, and its advertisements, depicted it as the ideal image of a community where one can live with like-minded people in an aesthetically fulfilling and predictable environment where neither unsightliness nor uncertainty needs to be a concern for the select few who inhabit it.

However, the place-frames of Varyap Meridian strikingly show that this image is unrealistic. Similar conclusions have been drawn regarding shopping malls, which Chiodelli and Maroni (2015) have found to be more permeable, disparate, unpredictable and far less isolated than initially imagined. A theoretical extrapolation of my case study of Varyap Meridian lends itself to a similar synthesis: it shows that the gated community is not simply a privatised, secluded and segregated residential domain — even though it may have been conceived as such — but it also features a much more adaptable and multiple existence in which gating manifests itself in a variety of forms, roles and interpretations. Therefore, even though the marketing designs of Varyap Meridian resonate with some neoliberal critiques (e.g. secluded luxury living, privatisation of collective goods, etc.), a closer look at the way everyday life unfolds inside and outside its gates — beyond the deceptive realities of lofty brochures — reveals a much more complex picture. Specifically, the relation between the consequences and effectiveness of the gates should make us question the degree to which Varyap Meridian can be considered a segregated ‘enclave’, governed by private interests and closed to a broader public.

This takes me to the second finding: the application of relational place-frames allowed me to take into account perceived and lived ‘moments’, which expose peculiar aspects perceptible in everyday gated living, i.e., this approach shows that the effectiveness of Meridian’s gates strongly correlates with how they are practised. Perhaps more importantly, even though this ‘gating’ practice may be able to filter out people, behaviours or practices to some degree, it surely lacks the power to isolate the community from the rest of the world, particularly because residents themselves introduce the majority of ‘undesirable’ elements found in it. Incidentally, these ‘undesirable’ elements can be directly traced to the compound’s design (e.g. the high number of studio apartments) and to its day-to-day management (e.g. extensive delivery services, frequent use of cabs, etc.), which in turn are closely related to the surrounding neighbourhood and the connections that residents make to the wider city. Meridian is used as a temporary meeting point to conduct business, have lunch or go about daily life’s mundane activities. Sometimes only for a couple of days, other times for a few years. In practice, staying at Varyap Meridian means residing in a networked space that provides easy access to inside and outside services. The outside therefore plays a central role in gated communities’ daily production.

What is most remarkable about the flexibility of the gating practices that I have examined is that they imply that the gated community is a place that needs to be

constantly negotiated. Thus, in addition to the influence of everyday practices, I have made an effort to illustrate the importance of negotiation among residents, users, visitors and professionals from different backgrounds in this chapter. This is relevant not only inside the community but also concerning the outside: its surrounding neighbourhood and the city at large. The selected services offered within the relatively small area of gated communities provide their residents with the chance to take care of their life's practicalities (e.g., food, work, social life, sports) efficiently, and thus they appeal to the desire for a more organised and comfortable, hotel-like urban life — which most residents share. However, even though Varyap Meridian may provide access to plenty of services, it does not provide much else. Its developers conceived it as an ideal image, yet they cannot prescribe how such an image should be brought to life or how its services should be used. As such, neighbourly relations, behaviour within its premises and the proper use of its services are questions open to residents' own interpretations and thus, the answers require negotiation, contestation and debate.

The result of the disparity between concept and praxis was noticed by residents: the disappointing quality of the air-conditioning system, high service fees and incompetent management led residents to create an online interest group that challenges the dominant position of Varyap within the community. Interviewees provided examples of how they started to take matters in their own hands: they brought an end to their frustration with noisy student parties simply by paying a visit to their next-door neighbours and politely asking them to keep down the volume; they tried to put an end to undesirable practices at the swimming pool by displaying new rules devised in cooperation with the on-site management. Yet, other problems, such as the sounds of sexual gratification blasting through the thin walls were not negotiated in practice but only in the mind of those whose peace was disturbed by them: they simply trying to ignore them or to delegate their moral burden to the perpetrators, i.e., the 'others' responsible for them and unrelated to themselves. Ultimately, the lines along which all these negotiations are conducted are the desires and beliefs of a wide range of individual actors that must somehow relate to what I labelled 'valued space' in the previous chapter. For a family, the hotel-like transience of Varyap Meridian may feel threatening, while for someone else, it may represent an opportunity either to break free from social control or to stay safe from outside threats.

A relational focus on place-frames is helpful to expose the multiple realities involved in Varyap Meridian that are simultaneously lived, practised or even challenged. Life at Varyap Meridian is an ideal image, a practical implication and a

lived experience, all at the same time. It is simultaneously closely connected to the outside world yet disconnected from it. To be sure: this is not an isolated abstraction but a concrete and inherently practical phenomenon that is shaped through networks, pathways and relationships (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 81). When looked through such a prism, gated communities appear neither good nor bad but rather grey: complex and messy developments that demand to be viewed as such in order to be fully understood. A pressing question that the analysis of Varyap Meridian brings to the fore is: what does this type of 'gated', 'hotel-like' living mean in terms of 'home', 'community' and 'the urban'. Is Varyap Meridian a hotel, a home — or perhaps something in between? Be it as it may, Varyap Meridian shows that a contemporary gated community in Istanbul attracts an abundant ecosystem of desires, practices and behaviours that cannot be shoehorned into one particular interpretation of what 'home' is or ought to be: depending on the individual, its meaning may or may not evoke notions of practicality, ease, comfort, protection, proximity, interaction, affordability or accessibility. Could it be that many contemporary urbanites are increasingly associating a place where they can sleep while enjoying a sight of the wider city - where they work, play or go to school - with 'home'? What does such an ambition tell us about the development of our cities, especially in terms of the trade-off between the modern conveniences that they offer and the traditional pleasures that their development has brought to extinction? Could it be that the disparity between conceived and practical realities exposed by my study of Varyap Meridian offers a scale model of the broader concept-practice disparity responsible for designing cities that their residents want to escape - not least, to a gated community? What does landscape-related beauty tell us about the lack of it in wider cities and the undeservedly unimportant place governments and landscape developers give to considerations of aesthetic beauty? Does the failure of this gated community's top-down management, together with its residents' subsequent attempt to replace it with self-management, suggest a wider problem of urban development while simultaneously providing a potential solution? What does this mean in terms of 'the urban'? As we have seen, contrary to how gated communities are often portrayed, the city already forms an essential part of them. A thorough exploration of the wide range of interactions, contestations, networks and relations that flow through the gated community might open yet undetected avenues to grasp what we could call 'the new urban' and thus to reimagine what it could be.

Chapter 5

Creating possibilities: Changing perspectives on the socio-spatial dynamics of Istanbul's gated communities

Simone Pekelsma & Basak Tanulku

Introduction

As stated before, many academics have related the development and spread of gated communities to broader global, neoliberal phenomena, including real-estate investment, speculation, and the transformation of local governance. The tendency within academia has been to regard gated communities as symptoms of bad urbanism and the neoliberal economic consensus that created segregated and homogeneous upper-class enclaves exerting a pernicious impact on urban public life in Istanbul (e.g. Aksoy and Robins, 1994; Bartu, 2002; Bartu and Kolluoğlu, 2008). However, even though gated communities are not ideal, it is undeniable that they are being constructed in large numbers, which in turn, feature a mesmerising diversity. Simultaneously, equally staggering numbers of people choose to live in these residential complexes for one reason or another. A bulging proportion of Istanbulites now live in a gated community. Somehow, an academically unpopular and much-criticised form of housing has become the norm for an ever wider and increasingly diverse part of the city's population.

Both our PhD research projects were concerned with making sense of this type of urban residential phenomenon in Istanbul. Tanulku (2009, 2013) has argued that, in spite of their reputation as isolating developments, gated communities are unavoidably ingrained in urban space. Their residents tend to establish reciprocal relations with nearby gated communities, local populations, neighbourhoods and municipalities, a tendency that, with the passing of time, weaves a complex network of interdependencies. By interacting with the outside, gated communities exert all kinds of economic, political, and cultural effects on their surroundings, thus transforming themselves as well as the neighbourhoods in which they are located. In her research, Tanulku placed gated communities within a broader context to understand their wider relations with urban space and their interactions with city life. My focus has been on the particular trajectories that define the production of gated community space, which are responsible for giving way to new alternative realities characterised by their own particular concerns, perspectives and practices. The goal of this effort has been to illustrate that gated communities should not be interpreted as 'closed' political economies alone, also as sites of everyday life and experience.

During discussions regarding our joint work while preparing for a seminar that we arranged at Studio X in June 2018,¹ and a joint session we organised for the RGS

¹ Gates, walls and urban enclosure in a world without borders. New perspectives on gated living in contemporary Istanbul. 7 June 2018 – Studio X - Istanbul

Conference in 2021, Başak Tanulku and I discovered that our methods and findings showed significant and striking similarities. Even though we studied very different types of gated communities in terms of typology, layout, location and period of construction - I focused on high-rise residences completed in 2012 and located in the newly developed financial district of Batı Ataşehir while Basak focused on low-rise, villa type projects completed between 1999 and 2004 in the suburban settings of Göktürk and Ömerli - our approaches were very similar. We both immersed ourselves in the everyday lives and the social and economic practices of the gated communities under our examination. We explored their daily vicissitudes while paying attention to how residents interact with each other, with their immediate environment outside the gates and with the city at large.

Above all, we both wanted to understand gated communities rather than judge them at first sight. We realised that the way gated communities are conceived and thus described in academic debate does not only reduce them to oversimplified objects that bear little relation to the phenomenon they allude to. Yet, this flawed conceptualisation also promotes the misleading stereotypes about gated communities that influence how they are socially produced: as neoliberal enclaves detrimental to urbanity.

Basak Tanulku and I attempt to take a different perspective in this chapter. By adopting a relational approach to space, we analyse gated communities as unfixed, flexible, and multiple developments. To do this, we draw inspiration from Lefebvre's conceptualisation of 'differential space': space nested within the dynamic of everyday life, where spaces and practices of resistance and dissent are formulated against the deployment of abstract space and its purely 'conceived' image and materiality. By focusing on differential space, we aim to show how lived experience could open alternative futures for gated communities. Since everyday life is "the inevitable starting point for the realization of the possible", as Lefebvre wrote (1984, p. 14), we will explore the meaning, scope and scenarios of such 'possibility' within the context of Istanbul's gated communities.

This implies that we will examine gated communities mainly through their inhabitants' and users' eyes and perspectives. We pay attention to the ways in which residents and users actively challenge, mobilise or change their community to make it more compatible with their everyday lives, thereby significantly altering the gated community, the neighbourhood and, potentially, the city at large. Although this change is often driven by internal dynamics, the gated communities we studied also had a close relationship with external forces that included wider urban,

national and global developments. Regardless of the internal or external dynamics underpinning transformative processes in gated communities, what is important to remember is that something was being *done*. It is this act of *doing* with respect to gated communities that we find intellectually fascinating and scientifically crucial: the act of *spatialising* the gated community and the way in which this takes place in close relation with the environment inside and outside the community. As we watched the carefully planned gated communities that were part of our research in action, we realised that the making of their present already contains the seeds of possible futures that have already started to germinate (Osborne and Rose, 2004).

Confrontation and possibility

The academic debate on gated communities is characterised by an unwarranted focus on - what in Lefebvrian terms would be called - their 'conceived' appearance. In particular, the neoliberal roots and segregating effects of gated communities that the critical literature that examines them has concerned itself with, seems to have taken issue with the conceptual imagination derived from planning and marketing imagery that is used to promote and sell gated communities while largely ignoring the perceived and lived experiences that confront, enrich, and sometimes even entirely turn over these conceptual images.

In this chapter, we elaborate on how this 'confrontation' takes shape by building on Lefebvre's conceptualisations of abstract space, differential space and possibility. Within this conceptual framework, 'conceived space' is one of the three 'moments' in Lefebvre's spatial triad of the production of space. There are two aspects to Lefebvre's use of 'moments' that are particularly relevant to our research: the first refers to the capitalist process of abstraction, and the second to the suggestion of temporality, flow, and change.

Let us shortly summarise Lefebvre's 'moments' in the production of space. He combined conceived (e.g., representations of space - how gated communities are designed, planned and promoted), perceived (e.g., social practices such as the daily flows that take place in gated communities and include people, traffic, regulations, etc.) and lived space (e.g., the lived experience of the gated community) into a *trialectic* to "conceptualize the process of abstraction as an intertwining of materiality and representations in relation to the production of space" (Wilson, 2013, p. 367). Lefebvre, in turn, interpreted the concept of abstract space as the essence of 'the capitalist production of space': a process in which "capitalist social

relations and reductive technocratic representations of space are progressively concretized in lived material reality, and through which this reality is itself rendered increasingly abstract" (Wilson, 2013, p. 374).

The capitalist state depends on the production of a lived space in which people cannot realise the multiplicity of their human potential - i.e., alienation. The economic relations that characterise such a state provide incentives to sell unrealistic representations of lived space (i.e. abstract space) to make a profit. It would be impossible for such a state to translate abstract space into its material manifestation, as "the contradictions of capital itself, combined with those that emerge through the projection of abstractions onto lived reality, together ensure that the materiality of abstract space fails to reproduce the rational coherence and social emptiness of its representations, instead confronting us as a space of domination, struggle, and possibility" (Wilson, 2013, p. 374-375). We will come back to this 'differential space' shortly.

Let us first turn to the use of 'moments' that guided our research. 'Moment' suggests temporality, flow and movement in the production of space. "(Social) space is a (social) product", Lefebvre states early on in 'The Production of Space' (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 30): it is actively produced, it has history and potential. Merrifield powerfully describes how, through Lefebvre's view of space as actively produced, "space becomes reinterpreted not as a dead, inert thing or object but as organic and alive: space has a pulse, and it palpitates, flows, and collides with other spaces" (Merrifield, 2006, p. 105). Relations among conceived, perceived and lived spaces are thus never stable, nor should they be assumed to be arranged in either an artificial or linear fashion (Merrifield, 2006).

The moments of space that guide Lefebvre's theory try to capture interrelated temporalities in concepts such as: abstract space/abstraction on the one hand, and process, flow and change on the other. Lefebvre conjugates these notions in the broader concept of 'differential space'.

From abstract space to differential space

"Abstract space is an instrumental space, manipulated by 'authorities' that aim to silence the 'users' of this space" (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 51). Its goal is homogeneity. "The outcome is a reduction of the 'real' on the one hand, to a 'plan' existing in a void and endowed with no other qualities, and, on the other hand, to the flatness of a mirror, of an image, of pure spectacle under an absolutely cold gaze" (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 287). Despite this rather bleak picture, Lefebvre does leave room for alternatives:

Abstract space harbours specific contradictions [...] which are liable eventually to precipitate the downfall of abstract space [...] The reproduction of social relations of production within abstract space inevitably obeys two tendencies: the dissolution of old relations on the one hand and the generation of new relations on the other. Thus, despite - or rather because of - its negativity, abstract space carries within itself the seeds of a new kind of space" (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 52).

Lefebvre calls this new kind of space *differential space*. Thus, abstract space also gives rise to spaces and practices of resistance and dissent - even if unintendedly (Koch, 2018, p. 74) - mainly through lived space and the practices, images, beliefs and emotions that lived experiences resonate with. Following Wilson, we may thus understand differential space as "the possible within the real, the potential post-capitalist space that exists as 'a virtual object' within the 'illusory transparency' of abstract space itself" (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 393). Differential space may open possibilities for change and thus to new realities.

The differential spaces of gated communities?

According to Lefebvre, differences particularly arise or survive at the margins of the homogenised realm, be it in the form of either resistances or externalities. "What is different is, to begin with, what is *excluded*: the edges of the city, shanty towns, the spaces of forbidden games, of guerrilla war, of war" (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 373). However, the mere presence of different social groups and networks is not sufficient to set off the emergence of urban culture — or, at least, the potential for it. "What matters, rather, is the way they interact and the quality of these interaction processes. Differences must always be understood dynamically. Is the outcome an open exchange, or are differences curtailed and domesticated? Such questions also pertain to the immaterial conditions of communication — the rules and norms governing urban spaces" (Schmid, 2012, p. 51).

In this chapter, we look at the interaction among conceived, perceived and lived space to explore how frictions, flows or overlaps among these moments may give way to differential spaces in gated communities. We slightly stretch Lefebvre's conceptualisation of differential space so that it does not only refer to possibilities of post-capitalist, post-productivist revolution but also a more general notion of resistance, dissent, and change, particularly concerning the gated community's conceived space. In all our case studies, we encountered residents, visitors and employees who were not passive users but active players in processes of social, political, or economic contestation - both within and outside the gated community.

We paid particular attention to the borders of gated communities in order to identify the thresholds where they establish new and sometimes surprising relations with both inside and outside, and where new possibilities and realities consequently unfold.

Kasaba, Istanbul Istanbul & Varyap Meridian

Our case studies are examples that illustrate the story of Istanbul's rapid and intense urban development. The gated communities Kasaba (Ömerli, Çekmeköy municipality) and Istanbul Istanbul (Göktürk, Eyüp municipality) were products of the early 2000s. In contrast, Varyap Meridian (Batı Ataşehir, Ataşehir municipality) reflects the trend of the 2010s, when Turkey's housing and real estate sectors became one of the country's key economic powerhouses fuelling a true real-estate boom (Balaban, 2013).

The emergence, expansion, and diversification of gated communities in Istanbul reflect some important changes in Turkey's housing and real estate markets, described in detail in chapter 4. Varyap Meridian and similar high-rise gated developments ushered in a new era in Turkey's urban development characterised by appealing to a new generation of city dwellers with a more mobile and flexible lifestyle. Also, while Istanbul Istanbul and Kasaba reflect Istanbul's intensifying urban sprawl, Varyap Meridian and other gated communities in Batı Ataşehir represent two urban developments typical to Istanbul's city centre: the gentrification of older neighbourhoods (Islam, 2006), which has put these central neighbourhoods out of reach for many middle-class residents; and the creation of new urban centres and Central Business Districts such as Levent, Maslak and Ataşehir, which cater predominantly to the white-collar working force of national and multinational corporations.

Whereas all of our case studies were built during a time when the Turkish economy and the real estate sector were prosperous, the past few years have witnessed a severe decline in the construction sector. Rising interest rates have led to a significantly lower appeal of mortgages which, as a result, made the percentage of vacant housing stock in Istanbul rise to 68% in the last half of 2018. In total, 41% of vacant homes in Turkey were located in Istanbul (EmlakKulisi.com, 19 February 2019). As increasing numbers of residential developments were left either uninhabited or unfinished, Istanbulites were starting to worry about the 'real-estate bubble' and a possible 'real-estate crash'. The bubble did not yet burst, though, and housing prices

are still increasing today (Global Times, 2021). In addition, the substantial devaluation of the Turkish lira has actually made it particularly attractive for foreign buyers to invest in Istanbul real estate.

Keeping this context in mind, let us now explore four key examples where conceived, perceived and lived moments of space interact, clash or conflict.

Redesigning the interior: from ‘ideal’ home to practical everyday use

The advertising of Istanbul’s gated communities presents them as grand and luxurious developments befitting a modern (sub)urban lifestyle granting easy access to everything the city has to offer - either at one’s doorstep or merely a comfortable drive or metro ride away. They are carefully designed by prestigious Turkish real-estate companies, which often employ foreign architects to add an extra dimension to their image of exclusivity and quality. We may refer to this stage of the gated community as the ‘imaginary gated community’ — or its ‘conceived moment’, in Lefebvrian terms (Tanulku, 2009). These imaginary communities are imbued with specific stylistic distinctions intended to evoke associations with desirable housing atmospheres such as Tuscan villas or American suburban life: a strategy that has proven to be very successful at attracting an ever-larger number of residents - both buyers and tenants - in search for ‘ideal homes’.

Ayşe Öncü traced back the historical construct of the ideal home to the late 19th and early 20th centuries, “an era when values and ideals began to fuse with the actual purchase of commodities” (Öncü, 1997, pp. 60). She described how cities in Western Europe and the United States gave birth to a professional and bureaucrat middle class that wanted to distinguish itself from the lower social classes. She argues that the idea of the ‘ideal home’ has developed into a global myth ever since, which has spread through television, film, the internet, all sorts of publications, as well as other globally available media. Also in Turkey, the myth of the ideal home became popular as a result of the advertising sector.

We also believe that the ‘imaginary gated community’ largely coincides with this notion of ‘ideal home’ in which a perfect life is possible. However, we also found that once homes or apartments in a gated community are truly lived in and become part of residents’ daily practices, the gap between the imaginary and the material becomes visible, thus smashing the ideal image of a gated community and opening

the possibility to reimagine it according to the taste and needs of residents. Although the status of gated communities is generally assumed to stem from their symbolic value (Tanulku, 2009), our fieldwork research suggests that what residents truly value is the extent of their functionality: size, services, views and amenities. The 'imaginary communities' of 'ideal homes' that characterise our cases left people feeling disappointed and disillusioned once the realities of their new homes were revealed to be far less glamorous than what their advertisements promised. These feelings of disappointment and disillusionment, in turn, gave rise to new ideas, practices and experiences.

Although the gated communities that we studied may feature a diversity of architectural characteristics, on the inside, they are standardised. For example, Varyap Meridian's apartments are equipped with identical Miele kitchens and the exact same hotel-like bathrooms. Yet, its residents complained about the low quality of materials used to build their homes: some people even soundproofed their walls because they couldn't avoid hearing their neighbours; others bought special curtains to cool down their apartment once the air-conditioning system turned out to be too weak to cool the interior of the glass towers. All these issues were discussed between Varyap - the real estate developer - and residents, with some calling for the establishment of internal management by residents, independent from the real estate developer.

In the case of Kasaba, some residents stated that they did not like their homes because they seemed to have been conceived with an American lifestyle in mind. Contrary to 'the myth of the ideal home' promoted by real-estate advertisements (Öncü, 1997), residents criticised their 'ideal houses' as US imports unfit for a Turkish lifestyle. "The American architect used lots of windows", one resident complained, stressing the dining room had nine windows (Tanulku, 2009, p.230). Neither the open floorplans nor the large number of windows met Turkish standards of privacy and residents complained about open kitchens, which allowed culinary smells to spill into the house. In response, several residents of Kasaba altered their homes to make them more private (Tanulku, 2009).

All these examples show that residents actively challenge and change the conceived image of their homes. Kasaba's architects incorporated 'American designs' to appeal to the middle-class aspirations of potential buyers looking for 'Western standards' and 'Western lifestyles' - images that they thought would maximise their economic returns. However, once settled into their new apartments, residents found themselves irritated by the mismatch between their design and their everyday

lifestyles. Although the apartment may have appealed to them as a representation, its design failed to meet Turkish cultural standards for a place where a family can comfortably live together.

Varyap Meridian's residents were confronted with a standardised design purposefully conceived to maximise returns in a highly competitive real-estate market. The conceived image of Varyap Meridian - of luxury and exclusivity - clashed with residents' expectations as they were confronted with everyday disturbances such as noise and heat instead. Interestingly, this did not only lead to residents making individual modifications but also to them uniting against Varyap to demand full autonomy and residential management - a grassroots insurgency that we have also witnessed in other gated communities in Istanbul (e.g. several Ağaoğlu My World developments; see Chapter 1).

The clash among conceived (ideal), perceived (daily flows and uses) and lived (heat, noise, annoyance) thus opened up the possibility of making changes to the material design of either individual homes or shared facilities in order to make them more compatible with people's demands and expectations. Moreover, this drove an active process of contestation among residents, who started to criticise development companies, their management practices and their profit-making objectives.

Influencing the outside: connectivity, noise and visual pollution

New possibilities arise outside of the privacy of the home as well. They also take shape through interactions with the outside. Gated communities in Turkey tend to be viewed as closed-off entities that have limited interaction with their surroundings and thus have been described as "self-sufficient small towns" enabling a "closed-circuit" life made more comfortable by a variety of amenities such as fitness centres, cinemas, restaurants, and clubs (Bali, 2004, p. 15). Gated communities have also been described as "independent mini-municipalities" isolated from local municipalities (Cinar, Cizmeci and Koksall, 2006, p. 7).

Even though all the gated communities we studied were not necessarily designed in harmony with their surroundings areas and are cut off from them in many material respects (i.e. walls, booms, barbed wire), we discovered close and sustained forms of interaction between gated communities and their surroundings. To us, it thus seemed difficult to define gated communities purely in terms of how closed

they are. Especially because they interact with each other and their surrounding neighbourhoods in various ways: gated communities and their surroundings have an impact on each other's functioning, layout and ambiance.

Kasaba, for example, is located in Ömerli; a former village. Here, some local inhabitants at first truly resented the sale of land to developers of gated communities, because this prevented them from raising their own animals or growing their vegetables. In that sense, the construction of Kasaba did not have a good impact on the neighbourhood. However, the construction of Kasaba also had some positive - or at least more nuanced - effects. Some residents of this gated community for example opened small-scale businesses in the area such as bakeries or pizza parlours, thus bringing about remarkable aesthetic and cultural changes, particularly regarding the provision of familiar products and services to gated community residents, while at the same time introducing local inhabitants to new worlds. The residents of both gated communities have also established relationships with the locals through their local shopping activities at markets, shops, tailors and barbers. Fruits and vegetables of local provenance were generally considered higher quality, yet significantly cheaper than those sold in the city centre. Some women from Kasaba also assumed active roles in local development, such as volunteering for the local town municipality and providing free computer classes to local children (Tanulku, 2012).

Residents of the gated community were not the only ones reaching out to the community. Local people from the neighbourhood also started to venture into the gated development as they were employed as gardeners, babysitters, or domestic workers. Although these were low-skill jobs, they seemed to have an emancipatory effect on women, who could start earning their own incomes or continue their education at the private school inside Kasaba.

The residents from both of Tanulku's case studies also established relationships with other gated communities, for example to attend school or birthday parties. Also, they would strike agreements with other gated community residents to use each other's facilities. "We had permission to use Optimum Houses' tennis courts last year", a resident of Kasaba said. "This year, we will probably be allowed to use them again and, in return, they may use our swimming pool" (Tanulku, 2012, p. 117).

In the case of Göktürk, the influence of gated community residents stretched into politics as residents of Istanbul actively organised themselves – primarily through online mailing lists - to solve local problems such as traffic, construction,

and road quality. Together with the locals of Göktürk and the residents of other gated communities in the area, they set up an association called 'Göktürk Güzelleştirme Derneği' (Association for the Beautification of Göktürk) and visited the mayor of Göktürk to make a plea for their case. "When we moved here, there were both water and road problems. There were potholes everywhere. Cars could break down. I did not see anything besides work machines. Typically Turkey [...] unfinished sidewalks and roads [...] but in terms of the road, everyone has responsibilities towards our children and ourselves," a resident of Istanbul Istanbul explained (Tanulku, 2012, p. 524). This lack of infrastructure was often linked to class or cultural differences: "I think we are very irresponsible about the state of the local government. Since the locals are mostly from Kastamonu,² the local mayor gives special concessions, you know, the mentality of villagers" (Tanulku, 2012, p. 524), one resident stated, implicitly referring to the differences in mentality between locals and gated-community residents.

These quotes illustrate that the relationships between gated communities, local towns and municipalities and Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality are complex and interdependent rather than purely hierarchical. Sometimes they cooperate to solve problems, and some other times, they quarrel or compete. Either way, gated community residents cannot close themselves off from their wider urban context or Turkey's political tensions.

We identified a similar involvement with the neighbourhood in the case of Varyap Meridian. For example, residents approached the local mosque to discuss the calls for prayer, which they deemed too loud. This initiative was strongly motivated by secular beliefs about how the neighbourhood should look and feel. Residents also negotiated with Ataşehir Municipality to establish a one-way traffic street in front of the D+E Block so that that busy street separating 'Watergarden' - a new and popular shopping mall - would become safer and quieter. Residents have also entered talks with bars and nightclubs in the vicinity to address complaints about noise; as well as with the management of 'Watergarden' about their excessive exterior lighting, which shines directly into the apartments right across the street, thus effectively turning them into nightclubs themselves.

In real-estate marketing and academic literature alike, gated communities are conceived as self-contained, exclusive and isolated developments. Although the adjectives used to describe these characteristics might differ (e.g. 'exclusive' being promoted by marketing and 'segregating' by academic literature), both

² A town in the Turkish Black Sea region located approximately 500 kilometres from Istanbul.

representations are rooted in a similar logic and discourse. However, if we look at the flows of traffic, goods, labour or education circulating through gated communities and their surroundings, we see that these communities are greatly dependent on these dynamics. Gated communities create significant deep-rooted symbioses with external social infrastructures, public services and the wider political phenomena influencing people's everyday lives.

Changing external contexts: from construction site to entertainment hub

The trend among Istanbul's gated community residents to influence their neighbourhoods - beyond their gates - makes sense given their particular urban context. Most gated communities are not self-sufficient when it comes to retail or other services: residents heavily rely on their local environment and the wider city. In 2006, 75% of Kasaba's residents were permanent. In 2016 it seemed to have become more of a summer resort. Given their considerable distance from the city centre, people started using gated communities like Kasaba as their second homes. In winter, such housing developments are practically deserted — they get more crowded only during summer. At the moment (2022), a new (5th) phase is under construction, which may alter the character of Kasaba once again.

Istanbul Istanbul appeared to be confronted by a similar fate when its first residents moved in during the early 2000s. Many initially moved back to the city centre within a short time because of the local unavailability of facilities, such as shops and schools. They still had to travel to the city centre a lot, which forced them to endure Istanbul's insufferable traffic as well as protracted traveling times. Interestingly, this trend was abruptly disrupted when Göktürk gained popularity, which boosted the number of gated communities built on Istanbul Avenue, the main road running through the neighbourhood. This brought new and more services for residents, which meant long commutes to the city centre were no longer necessary. Yet, it also intensified environmental degradation as well as traffic and overcrowding. Ironically, these were precisely the reasons that had encouraged residents to move out of Istanbul's city centre in the first place. Today, Göktürk is known as 'a small Istanbul', 'a European town', 'Monaco' or '5th Levent'. From a far-away and isolated area, it has transformed into a bustling urban environment that is rather well-connected to the rest of the

city. “It used to be a small village in Istanbul, but it has become a new Levent,”³ one resident boasted (Tanulku, 2009, p. 130).

A similar development is taking place in Batı Ataşehir where Varyap Meridian is located. Although it used to be viewed as a ‘construction site’ with few local facilities (fieldwork 2015), it is now talked about in very different terms. “If they had told me ten years ago that I would eat fish and enjoy myself surrounded by skyscrapers, I would not have believed them”, Savaş Özbey, a *Hürriyet* columnist, writes (*Hürriyet*, 17 March 2018). He praised his visit to ‘Cibalikapı’, a restaurant located in the plinth of Varyap Meridian’s A Block that serves classic Istanbul *meze* and fish. Batı Ataşehir used to be viewed as a distant, uninteresting, high-rise suburb, yet it is becoming a centre in its own right, with the city now starting “to perceive it as a defining part of a new ‘self-made’ and authentic form of urban development” (Lilliendahl Larsen and Brandt, 2018, p. 58).



View of Varyap Meridian from Watergarden (June 2018, Photo by author)

³ Levent is an upper middle-class neighbourhood on the European side of Istanbul. The neighbourhood was one of the first areas in which Emlak Bankası constructed villa-type gated communities in the 1960s, which consequently led to a wave of new housing developments in neighbouring areas. Today it is one of the city’s key CBDs, hosting (mixed-use) skyscrapers, offices and shopping malls.

A 3-minute walk from Cibalikapı restaurant, one comes across 'Watergarden,' a shopping and entertainment centre surrounded by a large show pool. It offers a variegated assortment of restaurants, bars, stores, and keen establishments avowed to the provision of leisure activities such as, for example, bowling, indoor skiing and a cinema. The opening of Watergarden in 2016 has changed the neighbourhood significantly. There are far more opportunities now for shopping and leisure. Residents of Varyap Meridian can literally find everything at their doorstep.

In the summer of 2018 - three years after my first round of fieldwork at the community, described in chapter 4 - stories about Varyap Meridians' surroundings had acquired a very different tone,

It was about construction, muddy roads and dogs. Do you remember the dogs? It was terrible. You couldn't get off the bus and walk here because there was this large dog community, which you felt might eat you alive. Today, Watergarden is here. Now, I am very happy to live here, because it takes 5 minutes to decide which cinema to go to or which movie to watch. It takes 2 minutes to go to DasDas and go to a concert.⁴ It takes two minutes to select a restaurant. I am in the middle of all of it. I use it a lot. Watergarden is like my neighbourhood, my mahalle.

Gökhan, who has been living at Varyap Meridian since the beginning, is much happier in his neighbourhood than in 2015. However, he notices that other people might not share his upbeat mood. The increasing popularity of Watergarden has created several problems related to noise and traffic. "Imagine you bought a house here, and you like it a lot, but you don't like to be in the middle of entertainment," he explains. Some residents even claim that the neighbourhoods' attractiveness has discouraged sociability among Varyap Meridian's residents. Instead of spending much time in the gated community, people prefer to go outside. However, Okan, the owner of Café Pion located right next to the D-Block's swimming pool, has not witnessed customer decrease. "People still want to come here to relax outside wearing swim shorts". Okan will even open a second restaurant within the gated community - next to the E-Block's swimming pool.

Varyap Meridian's surroundings have undergone significant changes in the past three years. With the completion of Watergarden and surrounding office projects, this gated community has transformed: from being on the outskirts of the

⁴ Only a few months after this interview, concert venue DasDas actually moved to another location in Ataşehir, supposedly because of technical issues.

neighbourhood, it lies now at its centre of activity. Moreover, the area has become a centre of attraction for the city, with visitors coming from all corners of Istanbul.

Varyap Meridian's changing position raises questions about its borders. Where does its boundary lie? The material gates are in place, yet they can do nothing to keep noise and light at bay. In Kasaba, houses close to its border are the ones that usually get burgled, whereas those more centrally located do not. This raises questions about the differentiated distribution of danger and inconvenience across the gated community's area. Varyap Meridian's residents are confronted with a lot of traffic (which comes with its proportion of accidents, disputes and even violence) right in front of their housing complex as well as a growing number of visitors attracted by the new shops, leisure activities and nightlife that the area now provides. As the neighbourhood's sounds, fumes and energy enter the gated community, its residents are increasingly seeking to escape beyond its gates. This phenomenon has an impact on internal flows and dynamics. Some people find this new situation desirable; others are more critical.

Varyap Meridian's residents' life-worlds are actively challenged by others' life-worlds (e.g. mosque/religious activity or Watergarden/leisure activity), each with their own prejudices and ideals. In conceived - or perceived - space, these frictions are avoidable, but in lived space, they are unavoidably challenged or negotiated. For example, Varyap Meridian's residents espouse varying conceptions of the neighbourhood: some believe it should be a quiet family spot; others enjoy its transformation into an entertainment hub. In practice, both Batı Ataşehir and Varyap Meridian function as family homes, party hubs and business headquarters. These practices come together to form one experienced lived space, i.e. a space that needs to be constantly contested and negotiated. With time, a more or less dominant image takes hold of the development and tends to stabilise its reputation to some degree. "Now, if you buy into Varyap Meridian, you more or less know what you are buying. It has become 75-80% predictable", Gökhan explains. "But five years ago, it was only 30% predictable, let's say, because you had no idea about the bad air-conditioning, there were no reviews of the development on the Internet and the area was still under construction". However, total predictability has never been possible, and new developments (e.g. new residents, facilities, real-estate projects etc.) are constantly forcing residents to deal with eventualities requiring novel processes of negotiation.

Changing internal dynamics: new residents and new relations

In addition to gated communities being part of increasingly diverse and changing neighbourhoods outside the gates, we also found that they are part of transformations within their gates. Gated communities are characterised by increasingly mixed socio-economic, educational, ethnic or cultural backgrounds. In addition, they fulfil a growing number of commercial, recreational and educational functions for whichever more staff is needed. Their complexity has rendered the usual dichotomies between insiders and outsiders - as well as between safety and danger - that are used to analyse gated communities unworkable and, as a consequence, made them more challenging to interpret. Residents, visitors and staff interact in an abundance of different and often surprising ways that reveal dynamic relations, problem-solving mechanisms and negotiations among them.

In all the communities we researched, residents complained profusely about the behaviour of other residents. The grievances they mentioned included quarrels, a failure to greet neighbours, anti-social behaviour and speeding. Interestingly, in all gated communities - even those with similar age groups and income levels like Istanbul Istanbul and Kasaba - complaints about fellow residents revealed pervasive class conflict - often detonated by differences of 'morality' (Tanulku, 2016). "Honestly, here people are from an economically high level, but this does not mean that money equals culture," a resident of Istanbul Istanbul laments. "Sometimes people show attitudes towards staff that you would never expect. You might not expect it, but it still happens" (Tanulku, 2009). Also, in Kasaba, residents mentioned the inconsistency between having money and culture, complaining about neighbours with "high incomes", but "low education". At Varyap Meridian, families especially lamented the attitudes of their fellow-residents whom they identified with the new Anatolian middle classes. "They go to the swimming pool wearing very luxurious clothing, but they spit out their sunflower seeds on the ground," Mehmet complains.

Mehmet was the site manager of two of Varyap Meridian's blocks for a year and had been living at Meridian since the very beginning. He illustrates how the divisions between inside-outside and danger-safety have also become blurred through the presence of professional crime nested within the community.

There is mafia inside. Two guys left; one is still here. We know. It's clear. They don't approach the people very much, but we know. For them, it's safe to be here, inside. Why? There's a building, there's security. The security guards inform you who's there [...] These guys rent from real estate agents. They don't really care about who they rent to, as long as they find a tenant. No problem. But the problem becomes ours, because we live with them. Last summer, the pool was open; they were sitting over there with their men, with cut-up watermelons; they were swearing a lot and families didn't want to sit next to them. That's what we experienced. Hopefully, this summer, it won't happen again, but we lived that. There are still some mafia figures inside, but we talk to them now."

What we identify in Mehmet's stories is a growing difficulty in drawing the line between visitors and residents and thus also in answering whether disturbances are either 'part of Meridian' or imported from the 'outside'. The fact that a large number of short-term tenants inhabits Varyap Meridian makes this problem harder to solve: are they residents or visitors? "Next to me, there is a studio apartment, and in the past six years, we have maybe had six different neighbours, six tenants. Sometimes we get to know them; sometimes we don't", Mehmet stated.

Visitors add yet another dimension to this already complex equation. In all our case studies, there were concerns about the use of internal facilities by visitors from the outside. At Kasaba and Istanbul Istanbul, residents explained that outsiders used their facilities and that this was generally good for forming social networks and friendships. They were also using the facilities of other gated communities. However, this fact also stirred feelings of unfairness and anger. A much-heard complaint goes something like this: "Why did I move here? I pay the service fees, but visitors from the outside are disturbing my privacy" (Istanbul Istanbul).

Swimming pools tend to get particularly overcrowded - especially on the weekends - because residents invite friends and family over. This has encouraged the formulation of all kinds of new rules and regulations. At Varyap Meridian, for example, Mehmet tried to establish a 30 TL fee for visitors to use the swimming pool in 2015.⁵

It's not that much I think, but people started fighting about it, saying they already pay high service fees. But I think this pool should be for the people living here. It should be clean and nice. It is forbidden to bring

⁵ Around 7 Euros according to exchange rates in August 2017, the summer Mehmet refers to.

drinking glasses to the pool, so we bought special plastic glasses. If they break, it's not dangerous for the children. But people then started bringing their own glasses. Unfortunately, there are these kinds of people living here as our neighbours. Now there is a new management, and they have lifted some of the rules I enforced because they thought they were too strict.

These examples illustrate that relations among neighbours at Varyap Meridian are contractual rather than strong personal relationships. However, two recent events have temporarily increased the intensity of relations within the community. First of all, a fire incident at Varyap Meridian made residents aware of their buildings' unsafety and inadequacy to weather such emergencies. Residents were shocked and united against Varyap, which they consequently took to court. The fire imbued the community with a great affective charge. In her book *Ordinary Affects*, Stewart describes these kinds of events as "sort of opening up a we in the room, charging the social with lines of potential" (Stewart, 2011, p. 11). The event triggered talks among residents about fire hazards, building quality, safety and responsibility. Even though it only lasted for a short while, the event united residents in a joint effort to hold Varyap accountable for unnecessarily exposing them to harm in their very own homes.

5

Conclusion

In this chapter, we adopted a relational, Lefebvrian approach to space to shed light on the dynamic socio-spatial qualities of gated communities. Based on our research, we feel that the debate on gated communities needs novel perspectives more willing to accommodate the dynamics that characterise these communities both in Istanbul and elsewhere.

We aimed to trace the shifts that characterise the internal and external relations of gated communities, with a particular focus on everyday practices and experiences and how they might lead to contestation and adaptation, which, in turn, might open up new paths that may lead to these communities' change and development. We explored several socio-spatial levels of gated community living, including the individual home, the gated community, the neighbourhood and the wider city: all of which are in constant interaction. The relations among these different levels reveal a dynamic process of unexpected twists and turns that take gated communities in new and different directions, leaving traces in places and practices within and

beyond their boundaries. Gated communities are not consistent spaces that exist in isolation, but rather they are assembled through interaction, negotiation and communication among different realms, actors, images, and affects.

Thus, the way we see it, gated communities - in their multiple relations materials, practices and people inside and outside - should also be viewed as sites of mobility and change which, although not necessarily positive, should not be assumed to be necessarily negative either. The image we present reveals a much more nuanced perspective that leaves room for alternatives. Gated communities are in movement. Sometimes fast, as in the case of Varyap Meridian; and sometimes slow, as in the case of Kasaba. Either way, they are 'on their way', creating opportunities and potentialities in their process of becoming. Especially through their gates and borders — or, to use a nomenclature we would favour, through their 'gating' and 'bordering' practices — friction is created on multiple levels. Even the most solid gates cannot keep the inside away from the outside and vice versa. Instead, gates open up opportunities for wanted and unwanted encounters that may lead to surprising experiences and new prospects.

Theoretically, we located these opportunities in Lefebvre's concept of differential space: the space of resistance and change that abstract space inevitably produces through lived space and the practices, images, beliefs and emotions that lived experiences resonate with. In this chapter, we have highlighted three key 'moments' — or interactions between moments of gated communities — where differential space may unfold.

First, the emergence of such differential space can be detected in the tensions between conceived space (the gated community as an ideal imaginary community) and the everyday demands and desires of lived experience. All the gated communities we studied started as 'imaginary' (Tanulku, 2009) or conceived spaces, which developers, architects and advertisers designed in dazzling superlatives to entice residents to buy their dreams of better futures. However, once people started living inside these communities, they were confronted with practices, behaviours, ideas and hopes that directly challenged their imaginary ideal, thus forcing them to rethink and reshape the gated community. This means that even if gated communities may be designed well and offer a wide range of services and amenities that modern urbanites appreciate, this "holds no guarantee that dwelling occurs in them" (Heidegger, 1987, p. 348). Planners, developers and architects may be pretty pleased with the standards they provide, but this does not mean that residents find their 'urbanistic rationality' equally satisfactory in their everyday lives

(Lefebvre, 2003, p. 83). Our data show that residents of gated communities show strong responses to conceived space once confronted with its materialisation in the form of their homes, the gated community, the wider neighbourhood and the city. The mismatch between conceived and lived space (i.e., differential space) is enough to get residents involved in local politics. Be it as it may, although forms of contestation and adaptation might unfold over weeks, months or years, what is clear is that the conventionally technocratic conception of gated communities belies a wide range of alternative practices, images and material outcomes.

Secondly, this also means that lived experiences (e.g., desires, ideals and affects) impact on the wider perceived spaces with which they interact. Gated communities influence local communities, for example, through the new relations that their residents and visitors establish with them. Although these interactions may be threatening, they may also represent opportunities such as new businesses or the possibility of economic, political, social or spatial emancipation. An interesting aspect of this ambivalence is its overlap between positive and negative representations of the same lived space: what a person may find desirable might be undesirable for another. While one resident may enjoy the neighbourhood around Varyap Meridian becoming increasingly vibrant, others may perceive it as a threat to their family life. Mehmet referred to Varyap Meridian not as a gated community but as a city in which he has some limited impact while being mostly powerless. Gated communities may be designed and marketed to cater to people's wishes and desires, but this does not guarantee that they will unfold into desirable lived spaces for everybody.

Thirdly, differential space may arise from the conversion among various 'moments' and a sense of unpredictability — which seems particularly intense in a city like Istanbul. Although this unpredictability may be at its highest right after the gated communities has been constructed, their inherent position within Istanbul's and Turkey's insecure politico-economic dynamics means that they probably will always retain some degree of unpredictability. All the gated communities we studied needed some time right after completion to get used to themselves. Eventually, with time, they acquired a certain reputation, projecting a particular image that is a lived experience of the wider city. In this regard, Kasaba's process was slow and relatively even, but Varyap Meridian's development was quicker yet bumpier: at first, residents did not have a clear idea of what they were buying into, both in terms of the gated community itself - which was brand new - and in terms of the wider neighbourhood, which was teeming with major construction sites. However, over the past few years, its community has stabilised and become far more predictable

(though not entirely). Residents still experience a serious degree of unpredictability, particularly as a consequence of: 1) the financial and real-estate crisis that has slowed down the completion of Ataşehir's Financial Centre; 2) the growing popularity of the area thanks to its shopping and leisure-related opportunities and; 3) the blurred lines between visitors and residents, inside and outside, safety and danger. These issues demand years of negotiation to settle, and once they are, they will be replaced by new problems demanding negotiations. Gated communities could thus be regarded as "places that are always in the process of becoming, seething with emergent properties, but usually stabilised by regular patterns of flow that possess particular rhythmic qualities whether steady, intermittent, volatile or surging" (Edensor, 2010, p. 3). Because gated communities are flexible, multiple and dynamic - both in terms of their socio-spatial production and the practice of their borders, which assume numerous material, practical and symbolic shapes - they play a mixed role in urban development. As in the case of Manchester's Castlefield, for example - explored by Leary (2013) - the gated communities we studied may display characteristics of differential space while simultaneously maintaining elements of abstract space.

Does this exploration render new perspectives on the role of gated communities in contemporary urban settings? Our illustration of differential spaces in gated communities sheds new light on their potential to create new forms of urbanity rooted in the interactions afforded by a particular urban space (Schmid, 2012, p. 50). Schmid stresses that "the mere presence of different social groups and networks is insufficient for the emergence of an urban culture. What matters is the way they interact and the quality of these interaction processes." Our examples show that gated communities and their residents, users, visitors and staff interact with their inside and outside worlds in many — often surprising — ways. The nature of these interactions sometimes blurs the line that distinguishes the 'inside' from the 'outside'. These mutually constitutive relations also illustrate that gated communities are not necessarily isolated islands but elements finely integrated into local urban dynamics that play a decisive role in urban development. In the case of Varyap Meridian, the gated community works as the vanishing point of a new central neighbourhood that attracts more visitors from around the city than many more centrally located urban neighbourhoods. In the case of Göktürk, the arrival of gated communities underpinned novel interactions among residents from either the village or from gated developments, thus opening up new urban development pathways that the municipality could build on.

To be sure, it would be a mistake to assume that all these relations, connections and interactions are necessarily positive or friendly. However, contestation and

conflict in particular, have a way of steering the production of gated communities and their interrelations with the city in new directions. Thus, although gated communities may cultivate segregation in some aspects, they also promote new forms of inclusion in others. Gated communities may be isolated in some ways, but in other ways, they might be far more integrated into urban dynamics than other places. We do not argue that gated communities herald Istanbul's brightest future. Still, we do stress the importance of keeping our eyes open to keep track of their evolution, with a particular focus on the relationships and contestation they inspire in everyday life. Taking these everyday practices and experiences into account not only opens up a broader understanding of gated communities but also encourages us to think about how their connections with the city may be further encouraged.

Chapter 6

(Con)temporary Las Tablas: Living, playing and planning the gated community in Madrid through time and space

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& Isabel González García

Introduction

At first glance, the gated communities in the neighbourhood of Las Tablas, Madrid, manifest themselves as contemporary, five-to-eight-storey blocks of gated residential developments. Their façades — facing the street — accommodate shops, restaurants and other establishments such as pharmacies, English schools and nurseries. The wide avenues that separate the compounds are lined with parked cars while cars drive through their middle. Grandparents pushing strollers and hurried residents running errands dominate the equally spacious pavements. Las Tablas is not particularly impressive, lively or outstanding. Located approximately fifteen kilometres north of Madrid and seat to the headquarters of several companies, it is a typical new middle-class commuter neighbourhood located at the periphery yet ceaselessly connected to the wider city through steady flows of people and cars moving in and out during rush hours twice a day.

A livelier atmosphere unfolds inside Las Tablas' many gated communities. Families, children and friends chat, play and interact around a swimming pool. It's loud. On summer nights, after the swimming pools have been long closed, one still hears the cries of children or the chatter of people's animated conversations as they return from dinner or a night out.

The gated communities in Las Tablas belong to a typology of suburban living that has become increasingly popular in Madrid and that one could call 'gated condominiums'. They are located within street networks that are part of the public realm and thus are entirely open yet demarcated blocks of collective housing accessible through a single gate staffed by a porter. Gates grant access to courtyards (*patios*) equipped with communal facilities such as swimming pools, padel courts and playgrounds. We could describe Las Tablas as a 'gated neighbourhood' consisting of a collection of gated compounds that are very similar in terms of size, layout and services provided. It is hard to say whether such gated condominiums define the streets or vice versa. Since nearly all buildings are part of a gated condominium and many of their apartments face the street, it is hard to tell where *the inside* begins and where *the outside* ends.

This makes Las Tablas an exceptional case to analyse gated communities. The haziness between the inside and the outside of its gated condominiums is so salient that it invites us to expand our conceptualisation of gated communities by adopting a more comprehensive approach to the study of both practices of urban gating and their relation to the wider city. In addition, Madrid's long history of gated

urban housing may have the potential to upend alarming notions of ‘increasing segregation’ and ‘enclave urbanism’ that plague the debate on gated communities. Although Las Tablas is an entirely new neighbourhood that has risen on former rural lands over the past twenty years, it is also firmly rooted in Madrid’s history of urban planning, which is familiar with various forms of gated living.

This historical dimension of gated communities, which is part of a more extended history of urban gating, has been addressed by, for example, Bagaeen and Uduku’s (2010) edited volume on the social sustainability in contemporary and historical gated developments. However, we should remind ourselves that the past is not the only temporal dimension that interacts with the gated communities of Las Tablas (see Figure 6.1).



Figure 6.1 | A look inside one of Las Tablas’ gated condominiums (June 2016, photo by author)

The picture above shows one of the two swimming pools of Las Tablas de la Castellana, a popular gated community in Las Tablas. In 2016, many of its residents were enjoying a last evening swim as the atmosphere cooled down after a hot summer Sunday. It was around 19:30 when a boisterous tempest of towels, slippers and toys hit the tiled floor and grass surrounding the pool. Children ran around while their parents were chatting and their grandparents were lounging. A mother was getting ready to take her child back home in a stroller — dinner time, perhaps. Even though we were in the middle of summer, most people probably had to work the next day. The lifeguard seemed to be having a quiet time; he needed to remain in his post until closing time anyway — a couple of extra hours.

This mundane scene at the swimming pool opened our eyes to the intimate relationship among practices, people, materials, habits and designs that compose the everyday lives of Las Tablas' residents. It also revealed the interaction among multiple temporal layers: cyclical or natural such as diurnal and seasonal rhythms but also biological rhythms and social time, including work schedules, swimming pool opening hours, school holidays and siesta times, for example. While discussing our work, we concluded that the way these temporal layers interact with the space of the gated community, the neighbourhood and beyond has not received much attention. Atkinson and Flint (2004) take up the concept of time-space to show how gated communities provide a refuge that is part of social networks of leisure, education and work. Each of these spaces segregates its occupants from social contact with different social groups, leading Atkinson and Flint "to suggest that the impact of such residential division resembles a seam of partition running spatially and temporally through cities", which they term "time-space trajectories of segregation" (Atkinson and Flint, 2004, p. 877).

We produce an alternative argument here. In the previous chapters — as in the example quoted above — we have seen that the debate tends to be dominated by alarming discourses of splintering urbanism and elite enclaves, which frame gated communities as products of an inescapable neoliberal system that encroaches upon the city. Although we are sensitive to these 'critical' approaches to the study of gated communities, we also argue that there is a need to question them by diving into some relatively unexplored relations of everyday gated living as dynamic *timespaces* that mediate their (social) existence (May and Thrift, 2003; Schatzki, 2009). By applying this lens, we aim to show how compounds such as Las Tablas de la Castellana are shaped through the timespace interaction with elements lying beyond the gates and rooted in wider urban uses, experiences and developments. The intensity of both use and experience of the gated condominium and its relationship with the wider city, are shaped by a multiplicity of temporalities — including seasonal, social and biological rhythms — but also by the pace of Madrid's urban development.

Gating communities in time and space

By applying a perspective focused on the interaction between space and time, we aim to build on two theoretical assumptions: 1) the importance of everyday life and; 2) understanding the experience of 'timespace' by analysing the interdependence between time and space. We view gated communities as sites of everyday life that

may go far beyond the narrow interpretation of 'closed' political economy (view chapter 1). Previous chapters have illustrated how gated communities in Istanbul are actively practiced, produced, and woven into the daily lives of residents, visitors and their surroundings in complex and often surprising ways that often go beyond the borders of the gated community (view chapters 2 and 4). In this chapter, we examine these insights with a focus on temporality and the interdependence between time and space — or timespace, as it has been conceptualised by May and Thrift (2003). We take a dynamic and relational approach to study gated communities and, in the particular case study that concerns this chapter, explore the multiple temporal relations that connect space and time in Las Tablas's gated condominiums, which we view as 'inextricably interwoven' (Massey, 1994, p. 260-1).

The everyday life of these communities is constituted by a continuous interplay of past, present and future through the timeframes imposed by calendars and clocks but also through the natural rhythms of day and night, summer and winter, and personal life cycles. Simultaneously, these temporal layers are connected through various spatial levels, which include, for example, the gated community, the neighbourhood and the wider city. We thus analyse the gated condominiums of Las Tablas as dynamic 'timespaces' in which multiple social practices, temporalities and spatial levels come together to shape both space and time. We also loosely follow Lefebvre's method of *rhythmanalysis*, which he promoted as a way of thinking time and space together (Lefebvre, 2004), which, in turn, offers a way to analyse how rhythms shape the human experience in timespace and pervade everyday life and place (Edensor, 2010).

Timespace and Rhythmanalysis

Why is it relevant to apply a 'timespace' approach to the analysis of gated communities? Because gated communities tend to be framed as fixed spaces that produce permanent adverse effects on the city: once built — the assumption goes — they seem unable to change. In other words, time does not appear to alter the character of gated communities.

May and Thrift (2001) took issue with analyses of space and time that consider them either separate or antagonistic elements — pervasive in much of social theory. Many accounts have failed to "acknowledge the extent to which time is irrecoverably bound up with the spatial constitution of society (and vice versa) or recognised the implications of this for a more developed understanding of social meaning and action" (May and Thrift, 2001, p. 3). They coined the concept of 'timespace' to

capture the multidimensional networks of time and space that shape the nature and experience of them both as part of a permanent relations and interaction.

Through his method of rhythm analysis, Lefebvre illustrated that there is no regular abstract urban temporality; rather, the urban is where multiple temporalities collide. He showed how the linear (e.g., working day, school times) and the cyclical (e.g., day-night, seasons) exist in a 'dialectical relation, their multiplicity interpenetrating one another' where one temporal layer can never completely dominate the other. From the relationship between the linear and cyclical flows a hybrid 'polyrhythmia' (Simpson, 2008, p. 14): an ecological multiplicity of interrelated rhythms functioning independently yet influencing one another. This implies that Lefebvre's rhythm analysis allows us to move beyond the ordering of timespace through state and capitalist processes by including other — potentially disordering — rhythms into our analysis.

Lefebvre emphasised the rhythms of the everyday as a multiplicity with the ability to form distinctive harmonies. "Instead of being a solid thing, the city is a becoming, through circulation, combination and recombination of people and things. This is a seductive vision where the urban field becomes an object in motion, or rather an object with time" (Lefebvre, 1995, p. 223). Although Lefebvre stressed that there is no rhythm without repetition in time and space, he also added that there could not be an indefinite identical repetition. At some point, something new is introduced (Edensor, 2010).

This chapter explores the dynamic timespaces of Las Tablas' gated condominiums. Inspired by Lefebvre, we have traced some of the dominant condominium rhythms that structure the uses and experiences of these communities and thereby constitute the 'beating heart' of these compounds. We zoom into the everyday rhythms of community life to then slowly zoom out in order to capture the broader level of urban development and city life. We offer an insider's perspective to answer how various rhythms or diverse temporalities — located inside and beyond the gates — collide in the gated condominiums of Las Tablas, thus rendering multi-dimensional timespaces that form part of a dynamic urban experience.

Daily rhythms and social intensity

The gated condominiums of Las Tablas have recognisable daily rhythms that are shared by most of its inhabitants. On weekdays, the rhythm of the community is

primarily dictated by working and school times, which makes inhabitants conform to what Adam referred to as a regular collective beat of socio-economic obligations (1990). The compound is left empty for most of the day. On Sundays, one sees families leaving for church. The community follows the rhythms of children's naptimes and siestas on summer weekends. Christina told us that, when she did not have children yet, she would go to the pool between 14:00 and 17:00 hours:¹ "Now I have to go between 11:00 and 12:30. Then I go upstairs, so my daughter can eat and rest, and then I go again between 18:00 and 20:00 or so. We follow the rhythm of the other children because, of course, I want my daughter to be with other children, you know."

In summer, the complex continues to buzz well into the night. One may get easily woken up at random times during the night by sudden screams of joyful children still playing outside. Night-time does not reveal a collective rhythmic beat but instead produces sudden ruptures. Karen, a young expat mother, was at first amazed at the different bedtimes of Spanish children living in the compound. "Zac goes to bed at 20:00 or 20:30, but most kids here are up until 22:00 or 22:30. Some of the children are still out there playing when we go to bed. This is a big difference for us. I love being around Zac, but I also love it when he goes to bed. However, I also like that kids play outside in the evenings. It's nice to hear." Although residents agree that it is excellent for children to be able to play outside — even in the evenings — many find a limit to what is acceptable. Sometimes you can still hear children play at 01:00 in the morning. "We think that is ridiculous", Angelina says. "Children do not have to go to school now, that is fine, but people still have to go to work." Noise, especially noise at night, is the only thing residents collectively complain about. Predominantly in the summer, when children are out until late or people return home late after a night out. Although this is a problem that the management addressed by leaving notices at all apartment entrances, it is also a problem that seems to be more or less accepted as part of living in a gated condominium. Summertime in the compound is rather intensive, both in terms of temperatures and unavoidable social contact with others.

Men seem to find the impossibility to escape this intensity particularly difficult at times. According to Angelina: "The problem is that you cannot be anonymous here. You know a lot of people, and everybody knows you. You cannot just go to the swimming pool, read a book and not talk to anyone." Angelina explains that her husband, who is not Spanish, misses this a bit. "Today, we celebrated my daughter's birthday, for example. We went to the forest with a group from the compound,

¹ All names of interviewees have been changed for privacy reasons.

where I organised a concert. Then we came back here, went to the pool and ordered some pizzas. We were together all day, so at some point, my husband was like ‘uhm... I am going upstairs’. It can be really intense, life inside the *urbanización*.” Jaime agrees. “I like to live a little by myself, and I do not want to speak to people when I don’t want to. I choose to be alone sometimes, but it is not that easy.”

Living in a gated community in Las Tablas means it is difficult to avoid the community’s social intensity, its noise and daily rhythms of work, school and play. Even if you stay inside your apartment, you will still be confronted with the murmur and screams of playing children, the splashing of the pool’s water and the chatter of adults in the courtyard. The sounds are intensified by the echo produced by the walls surrounding the compound, which means that noise is effectively designed to be kept inside. For example, during our stay at Las Tablas de la Castellana, all residents received the following notification in their mailboxes (see Figure 5.2).

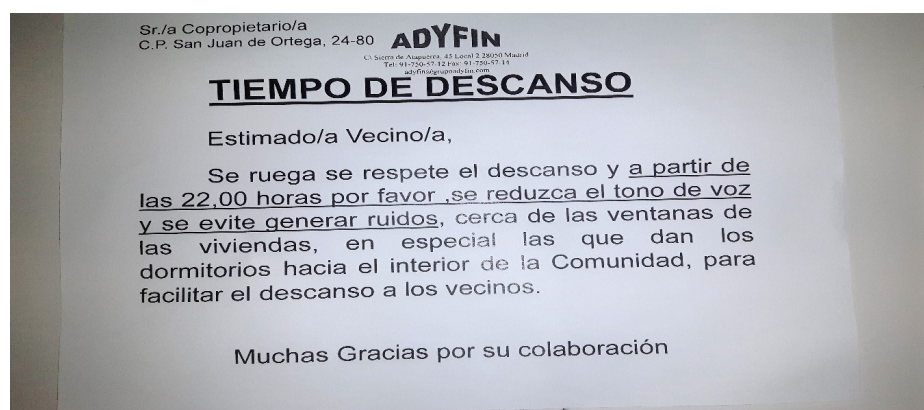


Figure 6.2 | “Dear neighbour, please respect the peace and quiet and, from 22:00h onwards, please reduce your tone of voice and avoid making noise near the windows of homes, particularly near those facing the community’s interior, in order to guarantee the neighbours’ peace. Thank you very much for your collaboration.” (June 2016, photo by author)

The compound’s management has tried to regulate nocturnal noise by applying rules that must be discussed and decided by the residents’ association. Interestingly, however, such meetings can only be attended by homeowners — not by tenants, even if they have been living there for years. In practice, this means that those who might be most disturbed by issues such as noise (e.g. expats without children who are housed at Las Tablas by their company) may have the least power to change it.

This raises questions regarding the rules and procedures determining how social life inside the *urbanización* is structured (Adam, 1990).

The rhythms of working families with children strongly dominate social life inside gated condominiums. Their work schedules, school times, holidays and moments of leisure tend to dictate the compound's everyday beats, which coexist with more culturally contextual rhythms such as siesta and church times. It is difficult for people living in a gated condominium at Las Tablas to escape these powerful rhythms. It is something that needs to be actively strategized or negotiated. Alternatively, one needs to move out or not move in in the first place...

Personal life cycles and living with young children

Moving into a gated condominium is often a conscious choice primarily based on the life phase in which most residents find themselves. "Our lifestyle was very different from the one we have now," Christina recalls the flat in which she and her husband lived in before they got married, located in Madrid's city centre, next to where they both worked. "It was this kind of building without a garden or swimming pool or anything like that. However, how you socialise and interact with other people changes a lot once you have children. Obviously, I want my daughter to be with other children, you know."

Las Tablas owes its existence to children. Residents make abundant references to them while talking about the *urbanización* as the ideal solution to a carefree life with small children. "These compounds are a good place to live with kids", Vicente explains. "You can be here, talking to your wife and know that they are safe, playing." The gated community provides safety, comfort and a protective sense of community. The gates are also interpreted as guarantors of a safe playground rather than protection from crime — which people often do not even address; unless specifically asked about. Residents exude a generally relaxed stance towards crime: it does not appear to be a big concern. Rather than keeping crime at bay, the purpose of gates at Las Tablas is much more related to 'allowing' or 'making possible' a comfortable lifestyle that offers children a safe place to freely play. In the words of Jaime: "It is like a village inside the city, for me. It is very comfortable - a place to have children without risk. Playing in the street is impossible if you live in the city centre. Here it is possible, and that is what we wanted. His wife Ariana agrees: "Yes, in the city centre, there would be many cars". According to Jaime: "Nobody would

do something to our daughter, but she would not be able to just go out and play. This is like a little town where you really can play and have friends”.

The gated condominium allows people to put their personal conceptions of family life into practice within a safe environment free from traffic. The key feature of the compound is the communal courtyard, which is considered to be the main spatial appeal. Residents’ widely shared expectation that children should be able to play outside and make friends is fulfilled by the community’s gates, which keep children safe from the dangers of busy streets. Interestingly, residents with children tend to make a clear distinction regarding life cycles in this respect. Living in a gated community at Las Tablas is nice if you have small children. “If you do not have kids, it is not so good because there are a lot of them who are not yours”, Vicente jokes. “And, of course, it is clearly noisy.” Angelina agrees: “It is very noisy here. In summer, it is terrible. If you want to watch TV, you need to close the windows. No, if you do not have children, it does not make sense to live in Las Tablas at all.” Karen shares this opinion: “I don’t know if I would move here if I did not have a child because it is very family oriented, isn’t it?”

Thus, the appeal of the gated community seems to be primarily related to a life phase — that of having young children. This is suggested by residents expressing severe doubts about their stay at Las Tablas once their children are older, or move out of their parent’s house. Although a particular life phase seems to pull people into Las Tablas, it may also be what ends up pushing them out eventually. Many residents are certain about their time at Las Tablas depending on their children growing older. “When Elena gets older, she will probably want to go to the city centre to go out, and yes, from here, it is quite far away.” Vicente thinks about the future in similar terms. In fifteen years, my girls will be 21 and 22. I mean, they will go wherever they want. Maybe they will move to the city centre. We have a metro, but you know, at night, for girls, you have to be careful. Here it would be difficult for them. And for me, too, it would mean having more problems living here than living in the city centre, for example.”

Even though people are not sure about staying in Las Tablas once their children are older, there is also another scenario. “My husband and I always talk about the future of Las Tablas in about ten years. If we had much money, we would start opening lots of discos or trendy pubs because I think that is the future here in Las Tablas,” Christina said. Either way, the eagerness to move out or stay put in Las Tablas remains motivated mainly by the age and development of children and the way the neighbourhood may adapt to the changing needs of this age group. This puts Las

Tablas and its gated communities in a position where its timespace is continuously mediated by the demands of specific age groups and life phases.

Having children, for example, is determined by biological temporalities but also by social rhythms, including working times, school times or travel times, which can be complicated or eased by everyday living arrangements such as both the gated condominium and its position within the neighbourhood's surrounding amenities such as transportation and other local services. In the case of Las Tablas, the gated condominiums provide safe havens where children can grow up in accordance with middle-class ambitions of 'the ideal childhood' (e.g. being able to play outside and interact with other kids), which, in turn, shape how gated communities are practised in terms of rituals, habits and expectations — which further strengthen their 'children-oriented profile'. At the same time, this profile is unstable: as children grow up, their social, spatial and temporal demands will also change. Teenagers will want to be able to hang out or go out with their friends beyond their parents' supervision and travel to high school and other places on their own. These elements are currently not well accommodated by Las Tablas. Under the influence of shifting life cycles and biological development, Las Tablas — and its gated condominiums — will face either fundamental adaptations or waves of old residents moving out — and new ones moving in.

Upstairs, downstairs

Many people with small children were attracted to live in Las Tablas by the imagination of enjoying the summer outside in the courtyard, where they could spend endless afternoons and evenings at the swimming pool — the heart of the community. The pool — which is open between approximately June and September — forms an interesting timespace in which diurnal, seasonal, somatic and social rhythms collide. "In the summer, we use the pool a lot. It is so hot. Where else would you go? You cannot really go into town to have a walk or something. And the kids have more fun here anyway," Angelina stated. It is a banal fact, but Madrid tends to get very hot in the summer. The bodily desire to escape this heat is great and perhaps even greater amongst families with young children. When residents go to the swimming pool, they collectively talk about going 'downstairs'. Once there, they organise themselves in neighbourly cliques that have organically formed over time. Sitting on the lawn surrounding the swimming pool, residents spend most of their free time outside in the courtyards. This pool time-practice takes place according to well-established hourly rhythms. Karen was amazed at first. "On weekends, you

will see certain times that the whole compound is empty because everyone goes for their lunch and siesta between 14:00 and 16:00, and then everyone comes back collectively around 17:00 or 18:00." Around 20:00, the crowds have mostly disappeared. On weekdays, another rhythm unfolds as most people visit the pool in the company of their children after coming home from work.

The temporal rhythms of the swimming pool constitute defining elements of the condominium's community. Even though the pool is open only four months a year, that limited timeframe is enough to exert a crucial influence on community formation. Residents praise Las Tablas de la Castellana for its warm and close neighbourly relations, mostly formed during leisure time around the pool. The swimming pool is a familiar place where individual lives intersect spatially and temporally. It is the central meeting point of the gated condominium that provides communality and continuity through coordination and synchronisation of activities (Edensor, 2010). The swimming pool reveals a spatial and temporal intersection that coordinates social activities and is coordinated by them. Residents indicated that they structure their free time around the swimming pool's opening times and the popular hours of the day (these, in turn, are also mediated by long-standing and culturally defined siesta times and the working hours of parents' working hours, for example). People also adjust their swimming-pool times to the members of their little cliques, with which they coordinate through WhatsApp to organise meetings and social activities — many of which take place around the pool.

As soon as October comes, the swimming pools close down for winter, thus changing the whole atmosphere of the gated condominium. "It is like everybody disappears, and people just stay in their apartments," Christina claimed. According to Karen — who moved into the compound in winter after an expat life in the Middle East — it felt like people were hibernating. "It was quite difficult when we first arrived here. It was freezing. Nobody was around. It was empty." In winter, the individual homes of the gated community gain more importance. Residents predominantly divide their time between school, work and 'upstairs' — i.e., home. Besides spending more time at home, people also seem to leave the compound in larger numbers. According to Angelina: "In winter, we meet other people. We go and see friends or my parents. Or we go to the cinema or the theatre. Sometimes I do not see people here for weeks. Because everybody is doing other things in winter. The *urbanización* does not have much priority then, so to speak. Only if you have nothing to do, you go downstairs." Christina tells a similar story: "In winter, I work, and when I come home, I run some errands with my daughter because obviously, it's cold, dark or rainy, so I might take her to a shopping centre like El Corte Inglés or something, depending on what I

have to do. Alternatively, I go to my mom's house, or she comes to our place. In winter, we also go to the surrounding parks and playgrounds because there are no children inside." This is also when families feel more confronted with the dangers of their children playing outside. "You can chat with a friend of yours while your kids are playing in the park, but, simultaneously, you have to be very careful. You have to look around," Christina complains (see Figure 6.3).



Figure 6.3 | The exterior of Las Tablas de la Castellana, a gated condominium in Las Tablas. (June 2016, photo by author, 2016)

The intensity of both the gated condominium and its relationship to the wider city is thus shaped by a multiplicity of temporal rhythms: e.g., seasonal, somatic (e.g., being hot), social (e.g., work, school) and cultural (e.g., siesta). However, the difference between summer and winter is particularly striking regarding the gated condominium's uses and experiences. Even though this might be logical, considering the differences in temperature or the absence of long school holidays in winter, we also need to engage with the temporal layers of urban planning in this respect. The way the gated condominiums of Las Tablas are designed — i.e., centred around a communal courtyard with a swimming pool — is also rooted in decisions, shifts and the overall evolution of Madrid's urban development.

Gated communities in Madrid

The gated condominiums of Las Tablas are all new buildings constructed in the first two decades of the 2000s. Their bricks and mortar are at most twenty years old. However, in terms of their conceptual history, Las Tablas' gated condominiums evoke crucial gradual developments in Madrid's urban planning history, especially the transformation of dominant ideas of quality housing for the middle classes.

During Franco's dictatorship (1939-1975) Madrid's upper classes had two very distinct 'styles of living' (Sambricio, 2004; López de Lucio et al, 2016). The traditional aristocracy and bourgeoisie preferred living in the so-called Ensanche — the late 19th-century extension of the medieval city centre following a strict grid of streets and blocks characterised by large and luxurious apartments in majestic collective housing. Each apartment block has its own concierge to ensure that unauthorised people cannot enter and take care of the condominium's daily affairs. A concierge or portero in apartment buildings has been a very common sight in Spanish cities for over a century — just like in New York or Paris.

Inspired by the American way of suburban life, the professional upper middle classes that emerged from the country's economic development started to flee the city and urban problems such as noise and pollution. They chose to live in newly built detached houses in suburban areas — particularly in the north-western part of Madrid's metropolitan area, by the Guadarrama mountains, where extensive oak tree forests remained unspoilt by urban growth. These low-density suburban developments are also known as urbanizaciones. In these suburban developments, members of the new upper middle class could afford larger homes and enjoy the luxury of having their own facilities, such as swimming pools, tennis courts or private back gardens. Parallel to this development, Madrid's urban periphery grew extraordinarily fast as it provided housing for the vast contingent of middle and working classes that left the declining Spanish countryside to be employed in Madrid as blue- or white-collar workers. They found housing in the apartment blocks of the typically anodyne Modern Movement districts (Sambricio, 2004; López de Lucio et al, 2016).

Some of the new suburban developments characterised by their detached houses for the upper classes were designed as 'conventional gated communities', like Santo Domingo and Montepíncipe. These are also referred to as urbanizaciones cerradas. All the studies about gated communities in Madrid have focused on this typology to highlight that — despite their general resemblance to other gated communities in the world — Madrid's are characterised by inner streets that are never privately

owned (Canosa Zamora, 2002; Wehrhahn, 2003; Wehrhahn and Raposo, 2006). These streets are part of the public realm and belong to the municipality. This is a consequence of specific legal provisions in Spain related to urban development, which state that streets always need to be public. This means that fences, gates and security controls along the streets of these urbanizaciones are just props of an expensive scenography which is paid by the residents of these gated communities, yet cannot perform a legal function to stop anybody wanting to cross them.

In the late 1970s, developers started to offer a new hybrid product for the upper middle classes, merging 19th-century apartment living with the luxury of additional private facilities. They began constructing gated condominiums built around a shared courtyard, private gardens, a swimming pool or a sports field. Outside the gates, facing the streets, there would be shops, restaurants, and bars. These developments were built in suburban areas like Majadahonda, close to low-density developments of detached houses across big plots for the very wealthy. However, one can find examples of this type of gated condominium in more centrally located neighbourhoods, eventually becoming the most desirable template for middle-class housing during the late 1970s and 80s.

A feature that sets these gated condominiums apart from the 19th-century *ensanche* blocks is their common inner courtyards, which are closed off from the public realm by controlled access (gates). Developers soon discovered that, apart from a garden, the courtyard could also house other communal facilities for residents. With the passing of time, the entrances to individual buildings moved from the street to the inside courtyard, making the whole block accessible through one single entry point: a gate operated by a concierge. This was made possible by a historical transformation: unlike 19th-century developments, these blocks were built by a single developer. Fragmented developments built on small plots of land did not have enough space for a common courtyard — but for several small backyards instead — and were unsuitable for the establishment of either a shared garden or joint facilities. However, just like their 19th-century predecessors, concierges were a common feature of these communities. Portereros would be manning the entrance of each apartment building, thus fulfilling the same tasks as their 19th-century colleagues. Since the 1980s, this concierge system has been extended across a broader range of middle-class housing, including large modernist housing estates erected in the 1960s and 70s. Thus, it was not the presence of concierges that represented an essential difference but the possibility of having one common courtyard isolated from the streets and accessible through a controlled gate. Madrid's real estate market wiped out small developers and led to

a preference for larger and stronger developers who could buy and develop entire urban blocks (Lopez de Lucio et al., 2016; Tamayo Palacios, 2011). This development has had substantial implications for Madrid's urban form.

Gated communities as part of Madrid's urban future

In 1978, three years after Franco's death, the first democratically elected municipalities approved new urban plans for the capital of Madrid and several other cities of the metropolitan area, many of which had more than 100.000 inhabitants by that time (López de Lucio 2006; De Santiago, 2012). These new urban plans introduced Spain to ideas that were already common in the European planning of the mid-1970s, and a few years later, they inspired the 'New Urbanism movement' in the United States. This movement criticised the architecture and urbanism of the Modern Movement while promoting the merits of the traditional 19th-century city (Rossi, 1966; Krier, 1979; Panerai et al, 1977; Bentley et al, 1985; Gregotti, 1999). In particular, this movement praised the density, urbanity and mixed-use character of 19th-century architecture as well as the traditional urban pattern of streets and blocks, which they viewed as solutions to the illegible and confusing urban space of open blocks floating in the *tapis vert* proposed by Le Corbusier.

Designed after 1980, Madrid's new urban developments reproduced the same 19th-century features (López de Lucio, 2012; De Santiago, 2007): a reticular urban layout inspired by the grid and perimeter blocks defining corridor streets — not a new feature in the Spanish context. Developers soon realised that the perimeter block typology that had been widely applied throughout the 1970s and 1980s (referred to as *urbanización en manzana cerrada* which roughly translates as 'closed block urbanization') was perfectly suitable for a much wider spectrum of middle-class residents. The result is once again the development of apartment blocks divided by streets, featuring shops, restaurants and services on ground level as well as a generally mixed-use character.

Inside, the blocks close to the perimeter gave way to inner courtyards featuring communal facilities such as gardens, playgrounds, swimming pools and padel courts. Originating in the 19th-century Spanish city and alluding to the apartment blocks of the 1970s and 1980s, this type of housing was considered much more familiar to Spanish urban culture than the Anglo-Saxon suburban garden city. And yet, it is the suburban garden city that is considered a predecessor of the quintessential gated community (McKenzie, 1994). In the case of Madrid, however, the most common form of gated housing is rooted in communal apartment living.

The most significant difference between new gated developments of the 1980s and their predecessors was that, instead of one concierge per block of apartments, they placed one concierge at one main entrance that provides the only access along a fence surrounding the street block. Today, this latest version of the gated condominium has become the standard template for new (upper and lower) middle-class housing construction in Madrid. It has also been applied to social housing blocks. Given the normalcy of their controlled access to apartment buildings, these complexes are generally not even explicitly advertised as 'gated', which suggests the widespread acceptance of this kind of gated development.

Our conversations with current residents of Las Tablas showed us that familiarity with the concept of 'gated community' — urbanización — is widespread. "These types of houses are very normal in Spain. They simply exist. Especially in the past ten years, they have not built anything else in this city," Angelina explained. It is interesting to note that residents' personal histories are often intertwined with the official planning history of gated communities. Some people grew up in gated communities; others had family members or friends living in similar places. People's experiences were generally characterised by warm and familiar feelings of happy childhoods, and positive memories. Many people felt inspired to move into a contemporary gated community in Las Tablas by their personal experience.

In the case of Madrid, the city's urban fabric has essentially been woven by negotiation between time and gating practices from which gated living has ultimately become a standard template. The design of gated apartment blocks featuring shops and facilities at ground level has become a standard model of urban living in suburban and centrally located areas. Gated condominiums such as Las Tablas de la Castellana had common courtyards and facilities added to this concept, which turned it into an attractive form of housing, particularly for families (see Figure 6.4).



Figure 6.4 | The inner courtyards of Las Tablas gated condominiums. Source: Google Maps. Accessed fall 2018.

This was not a contested process but a subtle and fluent development in which new forms of gated housing kept bringing back elements of previous models to incorporate them into their visions of the future. This relative fluency allowed the practice of gating to become part of people's daily lives gradually. The history of urban gating has become its present and, through its daily routines, it keeps leaving its traces on both the urban fabric and its residents. As shown by television, urban gating has also become part of people's affective memories and references. In the popular TV series, *Aquí no hay quien viva* ('Nobody can live here'), which has run since 2003, the main characters lived in a historical building in Madrid's city centre. In the spinoff that aired a few years later — called *La que se avecina* ('What is yet to come') — many of the characters had moved into a suburban gated condominium called 'Mirador de Montepinar'. Through the stories of its colourful residents, the series addressed housing problems as well as the frustrated desires that characterise contemporary gated condominium living in Spain.

Las Tablas

Even though gated living is an established urban tradition of Madrid's city life, Las Tablas charted a new place in many Madrilenians' mental maps. Sitting in a restaurant outside her gated condominium, Angelina recalls her first experiences at Las Tablas.

I think this complex was completed in 2004. We were some of the first residents. In the beginning, many apartments were empty, but in time, we saw more and more lights turning on. In the beginning, it was quite a shock for me. I did not even know Las Tablas existed. I am actually from Madrid, but while this area was being constructed, I lived abroad. I used to come to Madrid regularly to visit my parents though, but I didn't know this was here. My parents live in West Madrid, and I had no idea they were building homes here. But, of course, Madrid is huge.

Angelina remembers that living in Las Tablas was not a pleasant experience at first. "It was terrible", she laughs. "The whole neighbourhood was filled with construction cranes and dust. I felt really alone".

Two elements stand out in Angelina's recollection: the development of Las Tablas as one of Madrid's new residential areas and the discomfort of living there as some of its first residents. Today, Angelina values her life in Las Tablas much more — particularly in terms of facilities and connectivity — while the neighbourhood also appears to be more seamlessly integrated into Madrid's urban fabric, mainly through its metro station, light-rail stop, shops and restaurants. The neighbourhood has undergone a stabilisation process that has now reached a certain equilibrium. However, the current status of Las Tablas as a middle-class residential neighbourhood is the result of a long, fragile and dynamic urban planning process that invokes past, present and future (Degen, 2018, p. 1089). Its urban planning was characterised by conflicting temporal frames ranging from imaginative futures to shorter policy cycles and immediate political decisions (Abram, 2014).

Las Tablas is one of Madrid's most recent urban districts. It was designed as part of Madrid's 1997 Master Plan, which in turn was the synthesis of several urban development plans known as PAU (Programa de Actuación Urbanística) that began to take shape in the early 2000s. Through the PAUs, the municipality allocated land for a total of 210.000 new dwellings for over 600.000 inhabitants. It was an intentionally disproportionate figure for a city that had around 2.867.000 inhabitants by that time. The intention was to create an oversupply of land following the assumption that this would immediately decrease the price of land for developers and reduce the selling price of housing, thus making it more affordable for a wider range of people (de Santiago Rodríguez, 2012; de Santiago Rodríguez and González García, 2014).

By providing financially accessible housing, Madrid's local government aimed to avoid an exodus of the city's young population to so-called 'dormitory cities' in surrounding municipalities while simultaneously mobilising the property sector that was key to the regional economy in those years. However, despite these intentions, housing prices rose unimpeded from 1997 to 2007 — the decade of the Spanish housing bubble — and then calamitously crashed as the financial crisis struck in 2008. As a consequence, the *PAU* in the Southern part of Madrid has not yet been completed. Streets have been built and urban infrastructure provided, but the plots remain empty with no buildings to show.

The *PAU* of Las Tablas has fared significantly better, even though not all elements of the initial plan have been realised yet. The urban development plan for Las Tablas covered an extension of 362,3 Ha featuring a total of 12.272 homes. Sixty per cent of them were considered 'social housing' to a certain extent, given their maximum selling prices and a good blend of mixed uses. Several plots were defined as offices by zoning ordinances. Having a good connection to the airport as well as a privileged location near some of the most exclusive residential areas north of the city and in the Central Business District around Castellana, several large international firms chose to establish their headquarters in Las Tablas or close to it: Telefónica, BBVA, Mediaset, Caser, Huawei and British Telecom. Telefónica and BBVA each employ over 20.000 workers in their offices at Las Tablas (de Santiago Rodríguez, 2007).

The layout of Las Tablas exemplifies the typical post-modern urban design inspired by 19th-century models in which gated condominiums feature prominently. It combines the reticular grid typical to Madrid's *ensanches* topped by a Georgian Bath's crescent. Although the municipality formulated strict rules regarding the façade of the perimeter blocks, it did not have any influence on the aesthetics of individual housing projects. Nearly all plots have been developed with perimeter blocks of collective housing consisting of five-to-eight-storey-high gated condominiums. Most of them consist of fifty to two hundred homes with their own leisure facilities, private parking options, security staff, and management. The typical apartment is a three or four-bedroom flat of around 80-120 m² — a usual size for family homes (see Figure 6.5).



Figure 6.5 | The gated condominium of perimeter blocks in Las Tablas, Madrid). Source: Google Maps. Accessed fall 2018 - updates map to be included in print?

What is striking about Las Tablas - and other neighbouring *PAU* areas - is its very low density (33,87 dwellings/Ha), especially considering that it is an area where collective housing is the standard. In comparison, Madrid's housing developments of the 1960s and 70s used to have around 75 dwellings/Ha. Las Tablas' low density results from a high number of wide boulevards, streets, and public green spaces. Even though there are many shops, restaurants and other services available - either along the street-level façade or more centrally located in shopping malls - the low density of the area, with its oversized street system and vast empty green spaces makes it feel rather un-urban. Nevertheless, residents can find daily necessities close to home, including restaurants, takeaways, *cervecerías* (bars), supermarkets, bakeries, hairdressers, pharmacies, English language schools and nurseries. Due to the financial crisis, some services that were supposed to have been built were never realised. Residents are keenly aware of this. Although the vacant land is there, reserved by urban planners, "there is no library, no hospital, no police station. There are no cultural facilities either and no swimming pool. Things like that. These were all planned, but then the crisis happened, and everything was stopped," Jaime and Ariana explained. "We hope that these services are still going to be provided in the future."

Las Tablas is well-connected to the M40 - Madrid's ring road – and, has its own metro and light-rail station. Residents use the neighbourhood intensively and greatly value its atmosphere. “95 per cent of our activities occur here in Las Tablas,” Jaime said. “The rest of Madrid does not really exist”, he laughs. “I really do not like going to the city centre because of the car. There are traffic jams, and I have to think about where to park, and you have to pay. I can go by metro but, in the end, I don't know, the metro takes time, and the car takes money. I prefer to stay here. If I want a glass of wine or something, I can do it here without any problems.” Vicente shows a similar attitude towards his neighbourhood and the city centre: “In El Corte Inglés and Las Tablas combined, you have almost everything. I work here, and school is here I live in Madrid, but honestly, I have only been to the city centre three or four times in the past few months because I don't need anything there. Okay, if I want to go to the theatre or something, but how often can you do that anyway with two small children?”²

Urban planning, financial crisis and mortgage cycles

Like many others in Madrid, Las Tablas and its residents also suffered the consequences of the financial crisis, which hit Spain particularly hard. Financial-economic cycles represent the last rhythm affecting urban practices. In the case of Las Tablas, the crisis impeded the completion of the official urban plans for the neighbourhood, showing how that urban development is a vulnerable process susceptible to temporal influences. Las Tablas remains unfinished today, lacking the facilities and services once envisioned by its initial design.

Simultaneously, the financial crisis has forced people to reinterpret parts of the neighbourhood that had already been finished, particularly those who bought into Las Tablas through a mortgage. Even though the number has considerably shrunk during the past decade, the lasting influence of Franco's housing policies from the 1950s and 60s means that Spain is still a nation of owner-occupiers (Hooper, 1995; Eurostat 2017), which means that a large majority of Las Tablas' residents are home-owners with mortgages. As a consequence of the financial crisis, many residents fear that they would make a loss if they sold their homes today. This unfortunate fact is directly related to shifting economic and political conditions at the national and global levels as well as to the amounts and duration of personal mortgages. These factors seriously restrict residents' ability to leave Las Tablas and relocate elsewhere.

The temporal layers of planning, financial crises, mortgage maturity dates and personal life cycles have shaped everyday life in Las Tablas, not only in terms of its

² A popular department store chain in Spain.

material character (e.g. the building of a hospital or a library) but also in terms of personal hopes and dreams (e.g. the potential of selling one's own house at a profit) and how these are materially and immaterially expressed in people's apartments and gated communities. This is particularly relevant considering that gated communities such as Las Tablas were designed as an affordable alternative for young families desiring to stay and live in Madrid. However, the financial crisis has shown that urban projects of this sort depended on an upward financial-economic cycle. However, an examination of residents' everyday lives at Las Tablas suggests that the planning-related ambition behind it has been fulfilled — although it did take time to stabilise. The neighbourhood has spliced into many middle-class families' daily routines and needs. This stability, however, could be challenged by future events looming beyond the gates: another financial crisis, unemployment and wider socio-economic eventualities exerting an impact on business prospects, public funding and, unavoidably, local life. The boom-and-bust rhythm of modern economies and the political force of real-estate capital so vigorously described by Stein (2019) bear heavily on the future of Las Tablas, its gated condominiums, the neighbourhood itself and the lives of people currently living there.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have explained the morphology of Las Tablas' gated condominiums based on their everyday uses, experiences and rhythms. We have illustrated how the neighbourhood's compounds splice into fast-paced daily rhythms of school, work and leisure time, yet are also strongly intertwined with slower seasonal rhythms (e.g., summer and winter), biological rhythms (e.g., having children), rhythms of urban development (e.g., urban plans), and financial-economic boom-and-bust cycles. Gated communities are intimately connected not only with linear temporalities but also with cyclical time. This perspective renders significantly different images regarding the position that Madrid's gated condominiums occupy in the flows that characterise its urban life: they are not just the manifestations of wider, structural forces, but their spatio-temporal relations - practised through 'everyday' rhythms - make them intrinsic parts of urban dynamics and the beginning of new possibilities (Crang, 2001).

Las Tablas is a middle-class neighbourhood well suited to the various temporal and spatial needs of families, particularly those with small children. Las Tablas was conceived with this type of resident in mind. Although Las Tablas is considered a modern neighbourhood, it draws on 19th-century architectural ideals of city living,

which have been deemed appropriate for Madrid's urban population, particularly families, which were increasingly leaving the city due to typical urban ills such as traffic, crowds and pollution but also as consequence of skyrocketing real-estate prices within Madrid's urban ring. Las Tablas thus forms a space where temporal layers of past and present come together to form a contemporary interpretation of an older, historical form of urban living.

In Las Tablas, middle-class families find the compact life that residents of the *ensanche* used to - and still do - in their centrally located neighbourhoods. Services such as schools, shops and leisure-related establishments are in the vicinity, conveniently reachable by car or on foot. Within the compound's gates, middle-class families find an even more compact life characterised by intensive social contact between neighbours, families, friends and children. Close social interactions among residents are not merely convenient. However, they resonate with their conviction that, as parents, they should provide their young children with the opportunity to meet other children in a safe place that allows them to play freely. When residents talk about their community's gates, they do not address their efficacy to keep them safe from the dangers of the outside world except when it comes to children, for whom a safe recreational environment is enormously valued. The gates, combined with the proximity among residents, make the compound have its own rhythm creation and enforcement. These particular rhythms – i.e. going downstairs to meet at the swimming pool - hold families and neighbours together, thus promoting a sense of 'familial becoming'. The gated condominium offers a secluded space that, like a monastery, creates a community that flourishes as it negotiates the time and space of its temporal rhythms. Nonetheless, this also means that such a community is also hard to escape, especially in terms of avoiding noise, spending time alone or dodging social obligations.

Escape becomes easier in winter when the collective beat is weakened by the inability to use the swimming pool and time becomes more individually managed. In winter, people pursue their own agendas while simultaneously being forced to engage more with the city's tempo. However, the general mood towards the wider city is positive. The outside and, particularly, Madrid's city centre, is regarded as dangerous and thus as inconvenient. Although people do not seem to be opposed to Madrid's urban life per se, they describe it as inadequate for their life phase, given its greater difficulty to navigate. Residents do not seem very confident about the future, yet many of them say they will probably not live in Las Tablas all their life. Once the children are older or move out of the house, they will reconsider their housing options and preferences.

What does this mean in terms of our understanding of gated communities? We may be critical of the gated condominium and how it provides a relatively self-sufficient world. Atkinson and Blandy (2017) refer to life within the walls and gates as 'autistic': they make the outer world increasingly irrelevant by killing the qualities of urbanity and the public realm. Inside the gates, one finds a lively community. Outside, streets are deserted, parks empty, and public spaces desolated. The real estate developers that have constructed Las Tablas' gated condominiums seem to have listened to their buyers very well, offering them housing products that fulfil their desire to live in a small social sphere with people that are more or less undergoing the same life phase. However, even if this image may partially portray condominium life in Las Tablas, the multiple temporal rhythms in which local condominiums are involved also leave room for alternative interpretations.

First, the desire to live in these developments is temporary and attached to the specific life phase of people with young children. Residents explicitly stated that life in a condominium in Las Tablas might not be ideal once their children are older, particularly in terms of facilities and services, but also in terms of connectivity and lifestyle. Thus, gated condominiums do not seem to be 'middle-class enclaves' but also promote qualities and possibilities that match the lifestyles of middle-class families with young children. They open up the possibility of safe play among children, socialisation with other parents and positive relationships among neighbours - characteristics that are of importance 'now' but may change in the future. As children grow, job perspectives change, family relations transform and other urban-development possibilities emerge across Madrid, the gated condominiums of Las Tablas may change shape according to residents' evolving demands and desires. Or they may eventually house a whole new set of residents instead.

Gated condominium life - in its most tightly-knit, secluded and therefore perhaps its most 'autistic' form - is particularly salient during the summer. In winter, a different everyday life unfolds as residents spend much more time outside their compound and their neighbourhood. In this period, residents are particularly confronted with their public spaces' lack of quality. In order to incentivize Las Tablas' residents to use their urban space more intensively - particularly during winter, when its use could be much higher - it might be critical to increase the quality of their surroundings. Gated-condominium residents are not necessarily opposed to going outside, but the quality of urban space beyond their gates does not match that of the inside. Some older gated condominiums in the area are located around small streets with shops, bars, restaurants and, overall, a livelier urban setting (see Figure 6.6).



Figure 6.6 | A square featuring a cafe in the neighbourhood around Las Tablas de la Castellana, Madrid. (June 2016, photo by author)

The residents of Las Tablas who were interviewed for this research described their lives in very happy terms. We may discard such assessments as a middle-class privilege, but - taking Lefebvre as inspiration - we may also rethink Las Tablas and its gated condominiums as 'successful' places that promote happiness (Lefebvre, 1995). Through the investigation of the compounds' everyday rhythms inscribed and prescribed in space, we might even conclude that the gates help support an active community life which parents, in particular, find attractive and convenient. Is this perhaps an image that urban planners can experiment with to create urban areas that display a similar potential yet feature a physically more open character?

Conclusion

In cities, people were unnaturally packed together. It was easier to keep the enemy out of the city than to remain friends inside the city. Safe from your enemies, but not safe from each other. Life in cities – with countless cohabitation arrangements, endless forms of activity, countless social movements and political factions – places high demands on the capacity of urban dwellers to form well-functioning collectives. (René Gude, Comenius lecture 2014)

Gating without a gate

Ask people what they think of when hearing the word ‘gated community’, and you will get responses like ‘fences’, ‘walls’, ‘booms’ and ‘guards’. Often, these images are translated into framings of exclusivity and exclusion. These frames are also actively used by architects and real estate developers – caught in the dynamics of competitive local governments and global capital – that aim to transform cities into more spectacular and attractive places, catering to the desire for comfort and seclusion. In academic literature, the images of gated communities and the way they are framed as exclusive enclaves are often related to a ‘narrative of loss’ (Wissink & Hazelzet, 2016): a nostalgic argument that claims that cities have lost many of their original qualities, such as encounter and social exchange. As the physical product of a neoliberal system (Sardar, 2010), gated communities are held responsible exerting of all kinds of negative influences on the wider city: disconnection, enclavism and class segregation are regarded as the most adverse outcomes. Some refer to a transnational ‘gating machine’ (Vasselinov et al., 2007) that transforms cities worldwide into intra-urban fortresses.

This particular interpretation of gated communities leaves little room for alternatives or different possibilities. However, when I started observing gated communities in Istanbul myself – already back in 2004 -, I was confronted with new perspectives that made me question whether reading gated communities only as exclusionary and segregating phenomena, still does (sufficient) justice to the increasing diversity of gated communities and forms of gating in contemporary cities.

There are exclusive small-scale villa-type gated communities, but there are also many high-rise, mixed-use mass-housing projects gated by walls. Moreover, what to think of individual high-rise residential flats, which are also not accessible to non-residents and increasingly offer private services and facilities such as gyms and playgrounds? Or the increasing number of social housing complexes closed off

from the streets where residents share a common courtyard? With such diversity in terms of gated forms – on top of a great diversity in geographical location and historical context – should we not broaden our scope and explore gating (gated communities) from a wider and more nuanced perspective? One that leaves room for aspects such as potential (new possibilities that may arise in and from gated communities), multiplicity (different forms and shapes of gated communities and gating sometimes even existing at the same time), diversity (of residents, activities, images, dreams), and complex contextuality and contingency: the idea that gated communities are actually part of and shaped by the dynamics of their environment and what goes on there.

Throughout my research, many people have asked me if I thought they lived in a gated community. People living in regular apartment buildings, co-housing communities, historical courtyards and residential cul-de-sacs recognised my stories about the gated communities that I studied in Istanbul and Madrid. During informal talks with respondents, but also after lectures I gave at Lux (Nijmegen), Lumen (Delft), or Rotary Leiden, people approached me to talk about how they recognised my stories about and experiences in gated communities. It was remarkable to see that stories about a scientifically and politically controversial space — the gated community — resonated with so many people living in contemporary cities. Many communities that do not necessarily fit the definition of a gated community do include elements of gating to some degree: restricted access, camera surveillance, general warnings, regulations, or more subconscious sensations of ‘feeling like you are not supposed to be there’. There are practices or processes of what could be called ‘gating’ - a neologism derived from the processual turn in border studies, that sees border no longer as a noun, but as a verb: bordering (Van Houtum and Van Naerssen, 2022; Van Houtum, 2021) - at work, even when there is no physical ‘gate’.

It is this practice of ‘gating’ in gated communities that my research focused on. The idea that gating is widespread in contemporary cities is alarming to many. After all, debates on ‘gated communities’ are littered with fears of dystopian cities split by the cruel hands of global capital and scarred by socio-economic segregation. The question I addressed is whether this celebrated portrayal can capture the complexity of gated communities. Or would a research focus on the actual practice of ‘gating’ and ‘becoming a gated community’ produce alternative interpretations? By highlighting the everyday practices and trajectories of gated communities – including their master plans, daily patterns and lived experiences, but also their hopes, dreams and affects - I wanted to find out if these everyday processes also give rise to new possibilities and change. Could it be possible to rethink and re-

assemble gated communities in ways that contribute to producing more socially just cities?

In the heated debates on gated communities, segregation and exclusion, one tends to forget that gated communities are also sites of everyday life and commonly experienced and perceived spaces whose realities may go far beyond the narrow interpretation of political economy. By exploring how the gates of gated communities are practised, experienced, and dreamed up by the variety of people living them as part of their everyday existence, I have tried to expose their inner workings and show that besides functioning as filters (successfully or unsuccessfully) they are also important resources, creating novel opportunities and realities. My ambition throughout this work has been to show how contradictory terms such as 'outside' and 'inside' are debatable, flexible, and in a continuous process of interaction. Some people practice and 'live' the gates on a daily basis simply because their home is inside a gated community. Others encounter the gates as a consequence of either their jobs as guards or managers or their role as visitors, designers or developers. Either way, their daily life worlds and the way they are connected to broader practical, emotional and affective contexts ceaselessly shape the gated communities I have examined in various and often surprising ways.

Besides the interaction between inside and outside, this research has stressed the diversity of gated living and how common uses and practices challenge exclusive 'gated' spaces. The gated community, it turned out, is not just about the materiality of walls and gates. The gates are shaped by a wealth of gating practices characterised by the activities, goods, beliefs, and thoughts flowing through them. Gates cannot block everything and everyone out. They may interrupt flows, yet cannot keep the inescapable need for access at bay.

Also, time, location and context may have counterproductive effects. Instead of keeping unwanted people, practices, and ideas out, gates may lure unwanted elements in. Therefore, the boundaries of gated communities do not divide black from white but produce different shades of grey manifested in flexible, changing and adapting physical and immaterial boundaries. In addition, life inside the gates is not uniform either, as the quote by René Gude at the start also suggests. It is an illusion to think that within the gates of a gated community lies some garden of Eden, isolated from the wider city. Instead, my research has shown that life inside gated communities consists of diverse, changing, dynamic and sometimes even clashing worlds that need to be mediated on a daily basis.

By zooming into daily life and, particularly, into the practices, mundane activities, frictions and expectations that define everyday life in gated communities — which shape their gates — this research represents a contribution to a line of thought and previous findings on the ‘porosity’ of gated communities (e.g. Harms, 2015). In this concluding chapter, I will highlight how my research theoretically and conceptually contributed to the general debate on gated communities and then point out three key findings that supplement the ‘porosity’ debate in particular. I will show that rather than being detached from the wider city, gated communities may take forms that teach us about urban interactions. These urban interactions take place through materials, practices, discourses, dreams and affects, all perpetually circulating and travelling from the inside to the outside of the gates and vice versa.

Gating communities as a double production process

In searching for broader and more inclusive perspectives on gated communities, I have taken on a relational approach moving beyond the surface of the material gates and walls into the deeper affective and processual layers of gating communities. I explored ‘gating’ as a – what I refer to as - ‘double-production’ process. I derived the idea of ‘double-production’ from a combination of two theoretical lenses: 1) that of Lefebvre’s ‘production of space’, which I extended with affective and place-framing components (Lefebvre, 1991; Pierce & Martin, 2015; Buchanan, 2015; Walkerdine, 2013; Guattari, 1995), and 2) the idea originating from border studies that borders equal process and productivity (Van Houtum & Berg, 2003; Van Houtum & Eker, 2015; Brambilla & Van Houtum, 2012; Sohn, 2014, 2020). I aimed to render visible the new realities (and possibilities) springing from these two parallel processes – hence double production process - by looking at everyday life practices in and around gated communities, focusing on their contingency (potential) and contextuality.

Let me summarise the added value of combining these two theoretical angles. First of all, focusing on affective settings - which I have conceptually attained by adding a fourth space to Lefebvre’s triadic theory of the production of space - allows for an in-depth exploration of wider affects such as ‘comfort’, ‘safety’ and ‘nostalgia’ that are shared between residents, but also architects and developers, for example. These affects, in turn, influence the wider design process, urban development and urbanisation. The concrete interests and practices of developers, builders and politicians are woven into this affective setting, translating into the idea for gated communities and how they are gated. In other words, affective components (shared expectations, sentiments...), along with everyday practices and conceptions, lead to

the design of specific gated communities. This is not the end of the spatial process, though. These spatial settings, imbued by affective components, are transformed through spatial practices and lived experiences, leading to new affects, practices, and spatial developments.

In the case of Varyap Meridian, for example, my research has shown how the wider affective setting of 'comfort' translated into a hotel-like design of the gated community. However, this design, in turn, triggered its own (unforeseen) practices, leading to new affective responses and changes in design and management. Through this everyday interplay between affect, lived experience, practice and design, the borders of gated communities – in all their forms, shapes, practices, and processes – are continuously redrawn and reshaped. This way, gated communities are in a constant state of (re)production. They are 'gating' in all kinds of different and often even unexpected ways. This is a significantly different conception of gated communities than the one dominant in the literature. Instead, it hints at the potential and possibility that lies within gated communities: a transformative potential that may ultimately alter its design and functioning within a city. In addition, it also leaves room for perspectives of social, and spatial justice: integration, diversity, and interaction.

The spatial production approach that includes affective processes sketched above adds to the idea from border studies that borders are an ongoing repetitive process that we encounter and produce ourselves in our daily lives (Van Houtum & Berg, p. 1, 2003; Van Houtum, 2021). Viewing the gates of gated communities as processual (Tanulku, 2013) thus not only allows for a view of those gates as being actively created but also allows for them to be reinterpreted and reshaped (Van Houtum & Eker, 2015). In other words: to change meaning and direction. This approach on borders also provides interesting input regarding its focus on the interaction between the inside and the outside and the opportunities this creates. A gated community is a cross-border phenomenon strongly shaped by the interaction between the constructed, imagined, and lived inside and the outside. It is a place whose gates are shaped through an ontological, political, and emotional, cognitive process (Scott, 2021). Through this interaction, gated communities do not only function to delimit, separate, differentiate or affirm - the characteristics they are most widely associated with - , but they also provide opportunities in the form of encounter and exchange (e.g. Sohn, 2014, 2020) or multiplicity and transition (e.g. Brambilla & van Houtum, 2012). In other words, they do not only function as filters but also as resources that lead to new possibilities.

The gated community as a home, hotel, or hideout?

The contemporary gated community in Istanbul could be described as the embodiment of a 21st-century city. On the one hand, it symbolises the increasingly ordered and planned urban environment that can provide a comfortable life. On the other hand, the gated community reflects the chaotic and unpredictable character of Istanbul. The everyday of Varyap Meridian offers a rich arrangement of practices that would remain hidden were one not to move inside its gates to cast a curious eye into the daily activities that take place in these communities: design, financing, marketing, construction, maintenance, regulation, management, grocery shopping, going to work or visiting friends. Varyap Meridian allowed people to make friends at the gym and meet new people at the swimming pool, yet it was also a place where people were involved in illegal gambling, drugs and unexpected activities such as prostitution. Anti-social behaviour, adultery and parties were the main annoyances relayed particularly by family-oriented residents, yet somehow the gated community seemed conducive to these activities. What to make of such a seemingly schizophrenic place?

The research on Varyap Meridian was largely inspired by Lefebvre's views on "(social) space as a (social) product", which he laid out in *The Production of Space* (1991, p. 30). Space is actively produced; it has history and potential. Lefebvre talked about the production of space in terms of 'moments' that converse and produce. Research on gated communities has predominantly focused on what Lefebvre would call the 'conceived space' of gated communities - dominated by architectural designs, urban plans and marketing brochures. However, an embracement of everyday practices, affects, beliefs and feelings has the virtue to highlight how 'conceived' as well as 'perceived' and 'lived' space are simultaneously assembled. They form a spatial triangle in which each 'moment' is configured alongside the others. A fourth moment of space - valued space - may add another dimension to this continuous process (as discussed in Chapter 3). The experiences and feelings of residents, visitors, users, and staff interact with concrete, physical space and thereby draw on other feelings floating in the background: a longing for a long-last past, anger about political developments or an eagerness to be part of a specific lifestyle.

An approach that focuses on how gated communities are practiced – taking into account the various 'moments' of space - is of critical relevance because it not only implies simultaneity, multiplicity and potential, which open possibilities for the reconceptualisation and reorientation of gated communities based on their interaction with the wider city. Yet, such a focus also creates an openness in

which similar urban artefacts can acquire different meanings and functions. It is, however, empirically difficult to employ Lefebvre's 'moments' without taking them apart. That is why I have drawn on Pierce and Martin's concept of 'relational place-frames': joining Lefebvre's work with a relational approach that allows the analysis of 'multiplicity', i.e., the multiple moments of place production (Massey, 2005). In the case of Varyap Meridian, this approach led to the emergence of various place-frames shared by multiple groups of people with varying interests. Families, visitors, students, expats, escorts, taxi drivers etc., compete over frames in the pursuit of both minor and major differences. These negotiations take place on the basis of widespread everyday practices such as the use of the swimming pool, the subletting of flats or the pursuit of love affairs in contemporary Istanbul.

This exercise produced four different place-frames: 1) Varyap Meridian as a hotel; 2) Varyap Meridian as a new starting point in life; 3) Varyap Meridian as a space of disappointment and; 4) Varyap Meridian as a space of negotiation. Unlike the case analysed by Pierce and Martin, whose place-frames are shared by single interest groups, the dominant place-frames of Varyap Meridian were shared by multiple groups who, in turn, negotiated frames based on prevalent everyday practices. This negotiation process reveals how the classic view of gated communities as exclusive, safe and private family arrangements sealed off from the outside world does not hold in the case of Meridian.

In large cities like Istanbul, gated communities provide a structured, organised life that allows direct access to a wealth of services while protecting residents from the chaos of the outside world. However, the first question that arises from the various place-frames identified relates to whether such an environment appeals to middle-class families only. Spending time inside a large gated community like Varyap Meridian is useful to realise that the desire to live in a gated community is neither confined to middle-class families nor does it stem from purely 'positive' demands such as the desire for luxury or a sense of community. It is also about invisibility (privacy, secrecy) and affordability, aspects, which contradict the usual portrayal of gated communities as high-end developments. Varyap Meridian offers different housing options - from studio flats to family-size apartments or penthouses - and options within a range of budgets. Rental prices at Varyap Meridian are either lower or comparable to rental prices in more centrally located neighbourhoods. Besides affordability, the choice for gated living is often related to privacy and the potential to interact with others at the same time. People want to be able to be left alone and go about their everyday business while also having the opportunity to socialise with others, either inside or outside the gated community. In the gated

communities I studied, living was about intimacy, ease, proximity, and distance — all at the same time. The gated communities housed an exuberance of people, each with their spatial imaginaries, memories, and life trajectories. People relate to the gated community as a place in diverse ways that underpin an equally great diversity of practices that flow from these imaginaries.

Interestingly, Varyap Meridian is rarely imagined or framed as a 'home'. Although people live their daily lives at Varyap Meridian, residents often only describe it as the place where they spend time away from work or school. When they talk about 'home', they either talk about their experiences with friends or family — often outside their homes or gated community — or they speak in terms of their personal imaginaries and memories of detached houses in historic middle-class neighbourhoods where children could play out in the streets all day. While some middle-class families may try to revive these memories by moving into Varyap Meridian, others choose to live there because it is close to work; because they will only stay in Istanbul for a couple of months; or because they like the high-rise, urban environment of Batı Ataşehir. The personal relationship with Varyap Meridian as a 'home' seems weak and vulnerable. Instead, the gated community seems to present itself as either a club or a hotel: it is transient and temporary, and whenever it is described as 'home', it might not necessarily evoke the traditional associations most people would relate to this concept. One resident provided a fitting portrait of Varyap Meridian while describing his experience as being "like a social club, a sports club and a flat in one".

Taking the frame of Varyap Meridian as a hotel one step further makes for an interesting thought experiment. After all, Varyap Meridian is not the only gated development that functions as a hotel. Many of Istanbul's rental houses and flats advertised on Airbnb or Booking.com are located in gated communities. Indeed, this phenomenon is not limited to either Istanbul or Turkey. "Airbnb nightmare... Residents say gated communities being overrun by industry", a Jamaican newspaper decried (11 August 2019). "In Hilton Head (South Carolina), a gated community decided to ban all Airbnb rentals because of concerns about lowering home values (16 October 2018). A similar proposed ban in Long Island (New York) provoked an intense debate in which proponents of short-term rental said they need the rental money as an extra income to get by (29 April 2019). Short-term rentals seem to inject a dynamic of transience and unpredictability into gated communities by literally opening their gates to the wider world.

It is an interesting paradox to see that the worlds of big tech and real estate – key players in today's capital city (Stein, 2019) – also endow the gated community with a flexible dynamic that could be characterised as very 'urban'. Whereas gated communities tend to be regarded as highly 'anti-urban', inhabited by people trying to escape encounter and interaction, the reality of living in a gated community like Varyap Meridian means that people need to interact with 'others' more than middle-class residents of more 'urban' neighbourhoods. The transience of Varyap Meridian's hotel-like ambience requires residents to continuously adapt to new tenants, temporary visitors and unexpected elements, including mafia activity, student parties or culturally different customs. In that sense, it requires a high degree of tolerance, interaction and negotiation.

The rhythm of the gated community

Varyap Meridian's morphological qualities nurture hotel-like practices that promote interaction both within and outside its walls. The case of Las Tablas de la Castellana - a smaller scale and more family-oriented type of gated community consisting of mid-rise apartment blocks - in Madrid showed a different dynamic of interaction with the city. The dominance of one group of residents stood out as soon as I arrived at the gated community during summer: children. Young children, to be precise: playing outside, swimming, running around the swimming pool. In turn, the swimming pool's opening hours appeared to dictate the everyday flow of the community. These first two observations opened my eyes to the importance of time and the interaction between time and space.

This interaction clearly follows various urban rhythms: the fast-paced rhythms of school, work, and leisure time but also slower seasonal rhythms (summer and winter), biological rhythms (having and raising children), and rhythms of urban development such as urban plans and economic crises), for example. Through his method of rhythm analysis, Lefebvre illustrated that there is no regular, abstract urban temporality but that the urban is where multiple temporalities collide (Lefebvre 1995, 2004)). He showed that the linear and the cyclical exist in a symbiotic relationship and that one temporal layer can never completely dominate the other: instead, they influence one another. I drew on Lefebvre's perspective on rhythm because I suspected that it could allow me to move beyond the ordering of timespace through state and capitalist processes, especially by including other — potentially disordering — rhythms into my analysis. My analysis produced significantly different images about the position of gated condominiums in Madrid's

flows of urban life: they are not just the causes or effects of wider, structural forces, but their spatio-temporal relations - practised through everyday rhythms - show how they may also be interpreted in terms of (in)stability and the emergence of new possibilities (Crang, 2001).

Gated communities in Las Tablas are part of a longstanding development that smoothly splices into a popular Spanish imaginary of the ideal family life. Freedom and safety to play are considered much more relevant ambitions than freedom from either crime or strangers. Gated communities are also a response to biological rhythms (e.g., having children) and structural rhythms (e.g., hectic city life, double earners, commutes) - each, in turn, also affecting the rhythms of the community's family life. However, gated communities also respond to quicker temporal rhythms, such as the change of seasons. For example, the gated community is much more inwardly focused in summer, when residents meet in the courtyard for a swim or a chat. During this time of the year, the gates produce a tight and protected community life characterised by small children playing outside until late in the evening. In winter, when the swimming pools are closed, the gates become the gateway to the outside as residents turn their attention outwards and internal relations lose much of their intensity.

Winter is when more intensive connections are struck with the wider neighbourhood and city, thus exposing Las Tablas' shortcomings — which locals relate to the financial crisis that struck Spain in 2008, making it financially difficult for the City of Madrid to complete Las Tablas as it initially planned. Residents complain about the lack of recreational areas, parks and facilities for children. In the summer, people can neglect this shortcoming by moving inward, but in winter, such alternatives are limited. Another exciting aspect that my study of Las Tablas uncovered is related to the profile of the area and the way it is intertwined with biological, familial rhythms. At the moment, Las Tablas is a neighbourhood primarily inhabited by families with young children, but what will happen once these children grow up and their parents grow older? Will the area's facilities adapt to its residents' evolving demands (e.g. cafes, nightclubs and hang-out spots for teenagers), or will families move out as new, young families move in? This dynamic is characterised by intense interaction between the gated communities and the neighbourhood as they surf the wave of one of the most critical developments in life: ageing. All these insights point to the overlapping temporal and spatial dimensions of urban planning, everyday life, family culture and bodily rhythms. They also stress the importance of having an eye not only for gated communities as conceived spaces but as perceived, lived, and valued spaces as well. These gated communities are the stages on which actual

human lives take place and shape. People in these gated communities ponder life and the choices they need to make; both for themselves and for their children. This is not an isolated process, but a dynamic practice influenced by space and time. Simultaneously, it influences the space and time of the city as well.

Gated communities in an urban world

What could be the implications of these findings for cities? As cities increasingly deal with questions of growth and densification, residential gating will remain high on the urban agenda. Gated communities are the most popular form of new residential development throughout the world, Sennett alerts (2018). At the same time, however, he questions how urbanists and planners should respond to this phenomenon. "There is no straightforward way to translate justice into physical form", he states. "Should urbanism represent society as it is, or seek to change it?" (Sennett, 2018, p. 3-4).

The gated communities that I have studied as part of this research project may provide interesting cases to think about these critical questions and may provide crucial insights for future cities' development. The global urban future will be - to some extent, whether we like it or not - a gated future. Apart from the 'hybrid' housing types that include some form of gating but do not necessarily qualify as gated communities, there is a large number of factually gated communities around the world. Many have already been constructed, and an equally large number is currently being built. Even though they are perhaps not ideal, they are and will remain part of our cities. This makes the debate on 'gating' in an urban context particularly urgent.

I would specifically like to address three levels of interaction related to 'gating': interaction within the gated community, interaction with the wider neighbourhood and city, and interaction through social media and the sharing economy.

Throughout my research, I encountered many different forms of interaction within gated communities. The gated community in Las Tablas presented a loud, vibrant community of children and parents who interacted daily, either by the side of the swimming pool, or virtually on WhatsApp - at least during the summer. Varyap Meridian was a contradictory community that displayed significant differences of lifestyles, backgrounds and sociocultural norms. Varyap Meridian was interesting to me because, strangely and unexpectedly, it squarely fitted Richard Sennett's

notion of the city as a place where strangers meet and must tolerate differences. People living at Meridian were continuously confronted with new neighbours, temporary residents (international expats, sports players, Airbnb users), a constant influx of visitors and diverting lifestyles. We might thus argue that a mixed-use gated community with a large variety of flats and services may actually stimulate a sense of urban-ness - much against what the dominant literature on gated communities proclaims.

In relation to the interaction between the gated community and the wider neighbourhood or city, my findings were also far less alarming than what the dominant literature had made me expect. My research shows that residential segregation or fragmentation does not necessarily lead to cleavages between gated communities and the city. In many ways, gated communities form active parts of the city and life inside them is not isolated from that of the city. People living inside the gated community still need the city for work, school, and leisure. The quality of neighbourhood facilities is still important to connect the gated community with the city and strengthen their interaction. Gated-community residents in Batı Ataşehir and Las Tablas actively use their neighbourhood while their neighbourhood attracts visitors from beyond. Neighbourhoods are essential places of work and office life. Batı Ataşehir even attracts tourists. The number of non-residents in Batı Ataşehir is expected to increase even further once the Financial Centre and the local metro station are completed. Critics may say it is still a segregated space given the profile of people living and working in the neighbourhood or visiting it. However, as observed in Batı Ataşehir, the profile of people in the neighbourhood may be far more diverse than one would expect at first glance.

Gated communities do perhaps provide relative privacy and seclusion, yet the interaction with the neighbourhood is still of great importance. There is an increasing number of urban and suburban neighbourhoods around the world that could be described as 'neighbourhoods consisting of gated communities'. How do we ensure these neighbourhoods do not become collections of gated islands? The examples investigated in this study show that connections between the gated community and the city emerge organically: through shops, traffic and restaurants, the sounds of calls to prayer, stray cats or crime. None of these connections is inherently positive or negative. If we value connections and want to see them strengthened, we might not even have to do much other than make sure that facilities are available and around. The city will then find its way in, for example through services, people, goods, sounds, smells, money, ideas and beliefs. The opposite is also true: the gated community will find its way out through the exact

same material and immaterial objects. Academics, architects, city planners, and real-estate developers could, however jointly think about how these connections can be strengthened, i.e. through the incorporation of lived and valued space. We should actively address how people experience their home and surroundings and how they use the space they live in or around. Real estate or housing is about money, politics, and planning. However, it is also very much about people's everyday lives, their life trajectories and the affective encounters they have on their life journeys. These aspects should not be overlooked, even when it seems that particular economic or political interests overshadow them. Based on my research, I would thus argue that planning for diverse gated communities while at the same time maintaining a good quality of urban space outside the gated communities should allow for an urban life in which people can mingle, meet and interact on a level that might be higher than in traditional urban neighbourhoods.



Photo collage composed by author, using pictures from Foursquare & Twitter (fall 2016).

Social media and the sharing economy are also exciting developments to explore in terms of increasing flows, encounters, and lived and affective experiences relating to gated communities. Both may play an increasingly important role in opening up the gated community to the broader city. Discussions about Varyap Meridian take place on LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, where the outside world can follow almost everything. On these social media platforms, a cornucopia of new messages and photos of Varyap Meridian and its surroundings are posted from both within and outside the community. There are online groups of residents that discuss the future of the community with Varyap, but also forums like Foursquare where people give

their frank opinion on the project, ranging from “Everyone run away from this project and save yourself”, to “It’s 2014 and people are still having sex in the parking garage” (Foursquare: Cihat Ç., January 27, 2014) or “the best project in Ataşehir, my home” (Foursquare: Hakan Kibar, July 7, 2012).

The closed community of the ‘gated community’ is thus meeting and presenting itself online. The physical gates that close off the development also make space for an open yet virtual interaction with the city. In addition, the platform economy (e.g., Airbnb) and the delivery of food and goods (e.g., Amazon, Yemeksepeti) may increase the flow of materials and information between the gated community and the outside, thus laying down the infrastructure for new connections, encounters, and practices. As the city is becoming increasingly digitised, the community’s gates may be becoming more fluid even as they become ever more controlled.

Rather than being locked, the door of the gated community is a resource that creates new forms of gating, leading to new practices and new responses. It is a continuous process that may at times, be more open or more closed. If we want to bolster our understanding of gated communities and their future, we have to keep our eyes focused on that process. Thus, an essential question for us to keep in mind as we go forward regards the role of urban social design: urban planning, architecture, and city’s visions for urban development.

How could connective practices be effectively encouraged? Rosen and Walks already signalled that a key question in the research on gated communities is not whether condo-ism will continue but how it might be reoriented towards more socially just ends (Rosen and Walks, 2015). The answer to this question probably lies in practice rather than in morphology. The gated community is usually presented as a morphological concept. Yet, this research shows that the way the gated community is practised is of equal or arguably even greater importance: what do people do, think, feel, and dream and how are these actions, thoughts, feelings, or dreams produced through or – despite material, morphological contexts.

We need to keep our eyes open to this diversity and the multitude of practices embedded in equally diverse political, social, cultural, religious, emotional, and affective contexts. Indeed, the design of gated communities - high- or low-rise and everything in-between - is being replicated worldwide. Analyses of how gated communities are conceived reveal many similarities. However, this does not mean that these gated developments produce the same types of communities and everyday lives on the ground. By shifting our focus towards a more open

and inclusive understanding of gated communities as simultaneously conceived, perceived, lived, and valued spaces, we may be confronted with a comprehensive and surprising variety of gating practices and experiences. In acknowledging this diversity, multiplicity, and potential, we may also find clues that help us create more open, interactive and inclusive gated communities. Moreover, in developing gated communities, we may be able to better plan for meaningful interactions and negotiations. This makes good on-site management a crucial component to consider. In many gated communities, on-site management is first organised by a real estate developer but soon outsourced to specialised management companies or placed into the hands of residents. The latter seems to be the route that residents prefer because it allows them to fully organise themselves and their direct surroundings, making them feel in charge of their living environment. Often this on-site management run by residents is not easy, and it regularly leads to intense debates or even conflicts. However, it does create powerful outlets for self-organisation and self-determination. We could think of extensions of on-site management of gated communities beyond the gate organising meetings amongst residential on-site management teams. This is already happening in many gated communities, and various communities are in touch with each other. It is a practice that could be further stimulated (i.e. by local governments) to strengthen resident participation in cities.

Nevertheless, perhaps the most important thing we should first do is to overcome our “persistent poverty of imagination and instead use our work to dream the urban impossible while harvesting that future in the present” (Chatterton, 2010, p. 235). In many academics and policy makers’ minds, gated communities seem to be a one-dimensional dystopian phenomenon. I hope to have shown that gated communities are much more than that. They are lived spaces where actual people’s dreams, hopes and desires unfold every day. They are dynamic places full of surprises for those who take the time to look closely. They are full of potential and possibility. Gated communities are not static, material objects sitting in an urban landscape, rather, they are processual, dynamic and imaginative, and they have the potential to change and transform. Not only in terms of their design but also when it comes to the practices, experiences and affects that unfold across their walls and gates. This wider perspective does not necessarily deny or ignore criticism of gated communities and the potentially negative impact they may have on cities. However, it does provide a more layered, nuanced view, including voices and stories that are not often heard. It includes life in all its diversity and complexity. Its beauty, roughness, turns of devastating disappointment, confrontational encounters, and everyday ‘boring’ rhythms shape our existence.

Throughout my research, I have shown gated communities as living entities with living people. Gated communities are the stages where actual lives unfold. Where people are born and raised, spend a specific phase of their lives, and feel depressed or in love. Where they get sick, where they might also die. The fences and walls and the booms are not dead materials that close off a homogeneous people. They provide distinctive meaning and context in different gated communities through the various people living in, working for or visiting the community. My goal was to make gating visible as a true lived, spatial practice that is neither inherently good nor bad. It is the result of practices and experiences shaped by actual people trying to live as best as they can: through failure and success, struggle and ease, depression, and happiness: through the everyday practical and affective roller coaster that we call life.

I want to finish with an open invitation to everyone to re-imagine 'gating' communities in all their diversity, to re-think the many different forms of gating and to harness the potential for encounter, possibilities and change that lives within communities. All communities are gated to some extent. Gates may be physical, legal and/or symbolic. But all those gates are resources that are shaped by materials, practices, and affects while also shaping each other at the same time. The fact that they are shaping and creating means that they are active and sourcing new, potential outcomes and forms. And we – as academics, policy makers, citizens, investors, developers, or architects - can influence those, as long as we allow ourselves to imagine.

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Interviews

Formal interviews Varyap Meridian

Nuri, 26 July 2015

Kemal, 27 July 2015

Gökhan, 2 August 2015 & June 2018

Emin, 3 August 2015

Emre, 4 August 2015

Ozan, 5 August 2015 & June 2018

Vedat, 6 August 2015

Umut Kerem Yakar, 6 August 2015)

Cemal, 8 August 2015

Bahar, Kadriye and Tulay, 9 August 2015

Zafer, 13 August 2015

Ufuk, 13 August 2015

Mehmet, 16 August 2015

Burak, various dates in August 2015

Formal interviews Las Tablas de la Castellana

Christina, 3 and 7 July 2016

Vicente, 4 July 2016

Jaime & Ariana, 5 July 2016

Angelina, 11 July 2016

Karen & Michael, 11 July 2016

**Names of interviewees have been changed to guarantee anonymity, except for those with official jobs at Varyap Meridian or Las Tablas de la Castellana*

Appendices

Samenvatting

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Samenvatting

VOORBIJ DE MUUR

Gated communities. Het einde van de beschaving of stedelijke integratie voorbij de muur?

Gated communities vormen een sterk omstreden stedelijk fenomeen. Ondanks hun betwisting in zowel de wetenschap als de beleidswereld (bijvoorbeeld lokale overheden, maar ook de Verenigde Naties), nemen ze snel in aantal toe. De meeste grote steden ter wereld herbergen minstens één gated community, en naar verwachting komen er alleen maar meer bij. In veel landen zijn gated communities ondertussen zelfs een min of meer geaccepteerd en integraal onderdeel van de stedelijke samenleving geworden. Om een andere term te gebruiken: in het stadsleven lijken gated communities steeds meer 'genormaliseerd' te worden.

Als reactie op deze groeiende trend wijzen wetenschappers voornamelijk op één verklaring voor de opkomst van gated communities. Het dominante discours over gated communities is zeer kritisch, en gated communities worden doorgaans gezien als symbolen voor de meedogenloze, gekapitaliseerde en gefinancialiseerde krachten van het 'neoliberalisme', gedreven door commerciële segregatie en zelfisolatie op basis van rijkdom en comfort. Er is een kleinere groep wetenschappers die het fenomeen van gated communities met behulp van de 'club goods theorie' van Buchanan (1965) verklaart. Binnen deze theorie worden gated communities gezien als een soort privéclub, opgericht om leden een leven te bieden dat niemand individueel zou kunnen financieren. Volgens een zelfde soort redenering, zien sommigen gated communities als een particulier antwoord op collectieve problemen zoals criminaliteit, vandalisme en asociaal gedrag.

Dit onderzoek neemt een stapje terug en bekijkt de neiging om de opkomst van gated communities terug te brengen tot één enkele reeks verklaringen van een afstand. In plaats daarvan worden gated communities bekeken als 'opkomende realiteiten' die voortdurend vorm krijgen via een 'dubbelproductief proces'. Het bekijkt gated communities door een Lefebvriaanse bril, en beschouwt ze derhalve als proces. Op basis van deze redenering wordt gesteld dat gated communities niet alleen geanalyseerd moeten worden als ideale projecten ontworpen door vastgoedontwikkelaars, architecten, stadsplanners en politici, maar ook als projecten die ervaren, gevoeld en geleefd worden door diegenen die leven, wonen of werken in of voor de gated community. Bovendien wordt ook benadrukt dat de gated community vorm en waarde krijgt door gedeelde, affectieve ladingen.

Het onderzoek is gebaseerd op twee hoofdvragen: 1) hoe bepalen de dagelijkse praktijken, relaties en affecten van lokale bewoners van twee hedendaagse, gated communities in Istanbul en Madrid het functioneren en de ervaring van de muren en poorten van de gated communities? en 2) kunnen gated communities, gezien deze inzichten, op een andere manier worden voorgesteld of geproduceerd, als het gaat om ruimtelijke ontwerpen die bijdragen aan de bevordering van sociale interactie en rechtvaardigheid?

Dit zijn vragen die een grondige blik onder de motorkap van gated communities vereisen, en waarvoor in de dagelijkse ervaringen, patronen, opvattingen en overtuigingen van bewoners en andere betrokkenen gedoken moet worden. Het vereist een verkenning van het dagelijks leven van de mensen die in deze gemeenschappen wonen en werken of deze bezoeken. In dit onderzoek wordt deze verkenning gerealiseerd door middel van etnografisch geïnspireerd veldwerk in twee gated communities in Istanbul en Madrid. Door middel van semigestructureerde interviews, informele gesprekken en participerende observatie, aangevuld met verslagen uit een persoonlijk dagboek, sociale media, nieuwsberichten en officiële documenten, bekijkt het onderzoek de dagelijkse interacties van mensen, waarbij wordt geprobeerd gemeenschappelijke patronen te ontdekken met betrekking tot gebeurtenissen, ritmes en overkoepelende thema's. De conceptuele toepassing van Lefebvre's drie *moments of space* binnen een relationeel *placeframe* werpt licht op de kleurrijke realiteit van Varyap Meridian, een hedendaagse gated community aan de Aziatische kant van Istanbul. Las Tablas de la Castellana, een gated community in Las Tablas, Madrid, wordt geanalyseerd als een dynamische *timespace*, waarin meerdere sociale praktijken, temporaliteiten en ruimtelijke niveaus samenkomen en zowel ruimte als tijd vormgeven.

Het veldwerk in Istanbul en Madrid illustreert hoe de muren en poorten van de gated community worden gevormd door concrete kwesties zoals veiligheid en geborgenheid, maar ook door dagelijkse praktijken en gewoonten, en een meer affectieve zoektocht naar gevoelens van huiselijkheid en verbondenheid. Door de dagelijkse praktijk van gated communities van dichtbij te observeren, concludeert het onderzoek dat de veel bekritiseerde privatisering van de ruimte in gated communities feitelijk wordt uitgedaagd door diverse gemeenschappelijke gebruiken en praktijken, zoals bijvoorbeeld sociale interacties, misdaad en dagelijkse irritatie, maar ook door gezinspatronen en biologische ritmes. Dit betekent dat zelfs wanneer de ontwikkeling van gated communities voortkomt uit de gefinancierde krachten van het neoliberalisme, we in de manier waarop gated communities in de praktijk worden gebracht ook aanwijzingen vinden

over hoe ze potentieel kunnen worden ontwikkeld tot meer open, interactieve en inclusieve gemeenschappen. In de praktijk kan dit toekomstige ontwerpen en praktijken van gated communities inspireren, en deze wellicht ombuigen naar meer sociaal rechtvaardigere doelstellingen en uitkomsten. Theoretisch brengt het onderzoek het (alledaagse) leven terug in de gated community, waardoor de levendigheid ervan wordt benadrukt.

Summary

BEYOND THE GATES

Gated Communities. The end of civilisation or urban integration beyond the wall?

Gated communities form a strongly contested urban phenomenon. Despite this contestation in both academia and policy (e.g. local governments, but also the United Nations), this form of gating in an urban context is a rapidly growing phenomenon. Most major cities in the world host at least one gated community, with many more on the way. In many countries, gated communities have today become an accepted and integral part of urban society. To use another term: in urban life gated communities appear to become more and more 'normalised'.

In response to this trend, scholars explaining this rise in gated communities around the world have come forward with one dominant narrative. The dominant discourse on gated communities is a very critical one, in which gated communities are seen as symbols for the unforgiving, capitalised, and financialised forces of 'neoliberalism', driven by commercial segregation and self-exclusion based on wealth and comfort. A smaller group of scholars, however, explain the phenomenon of gated communities with the help of Buchanan's (1965) club goods theory. Gated communities then constitute a kind of private club formed to enjoy a kind of living as members that no one person unilaterally could finance. In a similar vein, some see gated communities as a private response to collective issues of crime, vandalism, and anti-social behaviour.

This research takes a step back from the tendency to reduce the rise of gated communities to a single set of explanations. Rather, it approaches gated communities as emerging realities that continuously take shape through a 'double-productive process'. Combining a Lefebvrian lens with a border studies approach to gates as productive and processual, it argues that gated communities should not only be analysed as conceived, ideal spaces designed by developers, architects, planners, and politicians, but also as perceived spaces that are practiced, and as lived spaces that are experienced, felt and thought notably by those directly involved and affected by the phenomenon. In addition, gated communities are also valued through shared affective charges.

The study is based on two key questions: 1) how do the everyday practices, relations and affects of local residents of two contemporary, gated communities in Istanbul

and Madrid shape the functioning and experience of the communities' gates? and 2) given these insights, could 'gated communities' be differently imagined or produced, with respect to spatial designs that contribute to the promotion of social interaction and justice?

These are questions that require a thorough look under the bonnet of gated communities, diving into their daily experiences, patterns, conceptions, and beliefs. It requires an exploration of the everyday lives of the people living and working in, or visiting these communities. This exploration is realised through ethnographically inspired fieldwork in two gated communities in Istanbul and Madrid. Through semi-structured interviews, informal talks, and participant observation, supplemented by accounts from a personal journal, social media, news reports, and official documents, the study examines people's daily interactions, seeking to detect common patterns in terms of events, rhythms, and themes. The conceptual application of Lefebvre's three moments of space within a relational place-frame sheds light on the colourful realities of Varyap Meridian, a contemporary gated community on the Asian side of Istanbul. Las Tablas de la Castellana, a gated condominium in Las Tablas, Madrid, is analysed as a dynamic 'time-space', in which multiple social practices, temporalities, and spatial levels come together, shaping both space and time.

The fieldwork in Istanbul and Madrid illustrates how the gates of the gated community are being shaped by concrete issues of safety or security, but also by daily practices and habits and a more affective search for feelings of homeliness and belonging. Through the daily practice of gating gated communities, the research concludes that the much-criticised privatisation of space in gated communities gets challenged by common uses and practices, including social interactions, crime and common annoyances, but also by familial patterns and biological rhythms, for example. This means that even when the development of gated communities may stem from financialised forces of neoliberalism, in the way gated communities are practiced, we also find clues as to how they could potentially be developed into more open, interactive and inclusive communities. Practically this may inspire future gated community designs and practices, reorienting them to more socially just ends. Theoretically, it brings (everyday) life back into the gated community, stressing its liveliness.

About the author

Simone Pekelsma was born in Leiden, The Netherlands, on August 25th, 1984. She was always interested in new and faraway worlds, both real and imagined. Her move from Leiden to Maastricht to study European Studies marked her first leap into new international experiences. While studying in the birthplace of the European Union, she also joined the European student association AEGEE-Maastricht, of which she was president in 2003-2004. During her Erasmus semester abroad in 2004, she enthusiastically dove into the hustle and bustle of everyday life in Istanbul, Turkey, studying political science at Boğaziçi University. These six months would leave a lasting impression and have greatly impacted Simone's academic and personal life.

Her thesis for her first master's degree 'Polis: European Urban Cultures', a joint programme of Vrije Universiteit Brussel, University of Tilburg, University of Art and Design Helsinki (now merged into Aalto University), and Manchester Metropolitan University – analysed the preparations for Istanbul's European Capital of Culture year in 2010. Her thesis for her second master's degree in 'Turkish Studies' at Leiden University, focused on Istanbul's new middle classes and their housing preferences. Both theses already included the ingredients - (cultural) consumption, middle-class housing, urban living, and public/private space - that her PhD research would continue to build on.

Simone always combined her broad, interdisciplinary academic interests with a practical approach and a love for writing and storytelling. This combination did not necessarily speed up the academic process, but it did create a versatile and deepening experience of how science interacts with other fields. While studying Turkish Studies, she worked as a researcher and consultant for Nicis Institute and the European Urban Knowledge Network (EUKN) in The Hague (2007-2010). Before starting her PhD – a trajectory that was a rather accidental yet highly desired outcome of a networking meeting on Radboud University Campus in 2014 – she worked as a freelance urban researcher and advisor involved in a wide range of urban questions.

In 2019, Simone started working for Utrecht University as a knowledge broker for the Department of Human Geography and Spatial Planning. She discovered that she loves to create connections between science, education, and the world of practice, linking the three through meaningful collaborations and exchanges. In 2021, Simone became managing director of Future Food Utrecht, a role that she currently still holds. She is the proud connector between the researchers and

students of Utrecht University's seven faculties and a wide range of policymakers, companies, and NGOs all dedicated to creating sustainable, healthy, and fair food systems. In 2024, Simone also became the new team leader of the Science Faculty's Project Management Team.

Simone lives in The Hague with her two daughters.



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