



Gated Communities as Dialectics in the Relationship between Urban Transformation and the Society

H. Özge TÜMER, Research Assistant, PhD Student
Uludag University, Faculty of Engineering and Architecture, Turkey
ozgetumer@yahoo.com

Urban transformation is a field that stays at the intersection of many disciplines such as urban planning, architecture, sociology, psychology, geography and anthropology. In consequence of this multidimensional condition it has physical, social, economical, cultural and political inputs and outputs. When the attention is explicitly focused upon the relationship between urban transformation and the society, the theme can be discussed as dialectics: social inclusion - social exclusion, social justice - social injustice (inequity) and the urban poverty - urban wealth. If the theme is dealt with these dialectics, thus we can examine gated communities as a case study.

Gated communities, which resemble big castles, are enclosed by walls; and entrances are protected by security guards. These settlements generally consist of similar income groups. With the holistic approach to urban area, it can be seen that gated housing developments, which are planned as fragments, can cause to social and physical segregation. Social segregation means, social isolation for themselves (gated communities) and social exclusion for the others. Physical segregation occurs with urban land use. The continuity of public areas is also being affected by physical segregation.

With these arguments in mind in the first part of this paper, concepts taken as dialectics will be discussed to constitute a general theoretical framework. It will be pointed out that gated communities can be dealt within this framework such as a case study. In the second part the aim is to examine the concepts, which are developed through the theoretical framework, in gated communities. The basic question to be answered is, how social and physical segregation affect people by gated communities. With this question, a case study is undertaken in Bursa, Turkey, where a mixture of survey, observational data and questionnaires are used. In Bursa, upper income groups preferred to live in Altıparmak and Çekirge, which are planned neighborhoods near the city center, until 1980s. With industrialization and increase in the ownership of cars, as in Europe, people have started to live in suburbs, the most popular being Bademli region. Since then, many housing estates have been planned in that region and some of them indicate signs of gated communities. Examining of these gated housing developments in the city will expose how gated communities affect the urban land use.

In short, this paper aims to explain the relationship between urban transformation and society through gated communities. Qualitative and quantitative methods are used for developing the subject and the research provides several interesting findings about theme.

KEY WORDS: Urban transformation, society, segregation, gated communities.