Fortress Istanbul. Gated Communities and the Socio-Urban Transformation

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Like many other metropolises around the world, Istanbul has become the target of socio-urban transformations, which can also be identified as »neo-liberal urbanism«. In the last decades Istanbul's enormous population growth was to a large extent absorbed by informal urbanization: myriads of uncoordinated and unplanned, small scale building activities, which have shaped the city. Since the 1980s, however, an unprecedented alliance of political, economic and social forces has transferred resources and responsibilities for the production of urban space into hands of the private sector. Within a few years Istanbul has witnessed remarkable changes of its urban fabric, most visible through numerous private large-scale developments: Exclusive urban islands for housing, shopping or business are mushrooming in and around the city. This article will focus on the domestic version of this urban development – the so-called »gated communities« – and its social and cultural implications on everyday life.

Gated communities are residential developments enclosed by walls or fences, accessible only through an entrance gate. Most of them are equipped with security technology (surveillance cameras and alarm systems) and guarded by private security personnel. Gated communities are privately developed and maintained, often characterized by legal agreements, which tie the residents to a common code of conduct. They are either newly developed – mainly at the suburban periphery of cities – or they are based on existing urban structures, which are retrofitted with barriers to control access.

The phenomenon of gated communities emerged in the USA, where they have become a ubiquitous typology of urban development all over the country. But gated communities are no longer just an American phenomenon. They are appearing all over the world, in developed and developing countries alike. Although most gated communities around the world are of striking similarity, featuring an American suburban lifestyle, they are evolving from different socio-historical circumstances and express distinct cultural meanings. [1]

In Turkey, the phenomenon of gated communities emerged in the 1980s, in the course of economic liberalization and the establishment of new building laws. The first gated communities of neo-liberal urban development have been established in metropolises and bigger Turkish cities, although other gated communities have also been emerging in coastal zones as second or summer housing compounds (Baycan/Gülümser 2004).[2]

The number of gated communities in Istanbul was estimated to be around 650 at the end of 2005 and construction of more than 150 new gated development started in the same year (Dani/Perouse 2005: 93). No further research is available indicating the actual numbers for 2007 and 2008, but since then the big corporation construction business has been booming, in particular in the areas adjacent to the second peripheral highway. Within this context, not a single »project« has been completed or planned - no matter at which location or for which target group without bearing the distinctive properties of a gated community. Projects by publicly owned big housing agencies or companies like Toki, Emlak, or Kiptaş make no exceptions.

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1   For further descriptions and definitions of gated communities see: Low 2003, McKenzie 2006 and Snyder 1997.

2   Actually, this is rather a re-export of a residential model to the geography of its humble origins after it has undergone changes in the metropolis: Since the 1960s, summer residential compounds ('sites' in local jargon) constitute one of the roots of the later gated community in the local Turkish context. In these settlements, Turkish urban middle classes had exercised bottom-up community building processes in a non-commercial setup. Construction companies were then at their service for building communities and not vice versa. Security was a natural by-product of social coherence, not yet of technology, and was still not rendered as a professional service of the architectural services, as is the case in the US. The other specific root from within the local context were the republican bureaucratic elite's housing situation in gated compounds, again mostly in the provinces. In particular, the families of military establishment members resided behind gates since the 1930s, where security played a major role in the people's choice to live in these communities.

The application of the recently adapted law »5366«, for the so-called »sustainable use of downgraded historical real estate through protection by renewal« which exclusively applies to areas with historical listed building stock will soon result in the construction of more gated communities in Istanbul's historical core. The projects in historical areas of Süleymaniye – managed by the municipally owned housing company Kiptaş, and by the private sector company GAP İnşaat with projects in Fener-Balat and Tarlabaşı – will soon create yet more gated communities, labeled as protection in ensemble, with historical façades in the very heart of Istanbul.

The emerging typology of upscale residential towers in downtown Istanbul, particularly in the districts of Beşiktaş and Şişli, clearly demonstrate features of »vertical« gated communities.

A new law on »urban transformation« – still to be passed by the Parliament Commission – will help to produce, within the existing urbanized area, a vast number of large scale units. »Erase and rebuild« is regarded as the major strategy for diminishing metropolitan earthquake risks. In the past, Istanbul's building industry was heavily influenced by the existence of smaller plots suitable for the investment and transactions of millions of small actors. The redistribution of power within the urban construction process in favor of large, private actors is likely to produce gated communities in many parts of the city in a business as usual way – unless a u-turn towards sustainable urban transformation is initiated.

The social implications of gated communities has been widely discussed and criticized. Most literature, however, focuses on North American urban conditions, while there is considerably limited research on gated communities elsewhere. This article describes a case in Istanbul: the town Göktürk on the north-western periphery of the city, which has become a gated community hot spot. The article consists of three parts: the first part by Orhan Esen describes the social and historical background of this contemporary socio-urban transformation. Esen argues, that the gated communities are no longer manifestations of the upper class's residential choice, but that the notion of »gatedness« has long become a characteristic of all market segments in the housing sector. He brainstorms about what socio-psychological motives lead to a middle class demand for a built environment »without change«, where segregation of the urban fabric into smaller units simulates a situation »under control«.

In the second part Orhan Esen introduces the case study of Göktürk, locating it within the wider context of Istanbulite production of built environment. The uniqueness of Göktürk is the result of a remarkably early

decision in the early 90s by the town-fathers to adopt a master plan, which prohibited the subdivision of the large estates. Such large plots of land were ideal for the construction of large scale projects which soon followed.

The third part of this paper, by Tim Rieniets, describes everyday life as well as analyzes the particular built environment inside and outside the walls of Göktürk.[3] Whereas most research on gated communities focuses on social and legal issues behind their walls, Rieniets tries to look beyond the gates and to understand the mutual economic, social, and cultural dynamics between the »insiders« and the »outsiders«. Rieniets argues that the recently-established gated communities – despite their strict isolation and their wish for remoteness and stability – have triggered other, sometimes even opposite trends, such as a rapid urban transformation and densification and an influx of new, low skilled migrants.

As Göktürk's development is not representative of Istanbul's development, this article is unable to provide a prognosis on contemporary urban patterns in Istanbul. However, by focusing on Göktürk's example, we provide insight into Istanbul's recent urbanization trends, which are likely be integrated into mainstream practices of urban production and reproduction.

Investing in a scenario with an obvious ending

In the mid-1980s new upper classes started to emerge in Istanbul. Orhan Pamuk considers their predecessors, the upper classes of the 1950s to the 1980s, to be the »*nouveaux-riche* without manners« (Pamuk 2006). However, the new upper class of the mid 1980s to 1990s surpassed the old *nouveaux-riche* in their lack of civilized behavior. That older generation had constituted a relatively coherent »republican« elite in itself with common group identity and shared cultural values They were used to sharing their urban space with the middle class positioned just below them, just as they shared their cultural and political values and their ide-

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3   These observations derive from a student's research project of the »Urban Research Studio« (ETH Zurich, professorship Kees Christiaanse. www.urbanresearch.ethz.ch). The »Urban Research Studio« investigates local urban spaces by means of empirical and investigative research methods, such as mapping, photographs, video, and by interviewing experts, inhabitants and other stakeholders. The research in Göktürk has focused on the production and use of urban space under the conditions of social, economic, and cultural polarization. The project was conducted in 2005/06 and was led by Tim Rieniets and Orhan Esen.

als. Hence, they respected the habitually adapted codex of common behavior in a tightly built urban space. Regardless of their wealth, those who had internalized a codex of specific values through education and socialization were accepted as members of the old elites and were granted access to common social space. The recent upper classes lack this ability for several reasons.

Today, wealthy sections of the population, those who can invest in property with ease, are remarkably heterogeneous in terms of origin, cultural, and political background. They are part of a world where background, or better, formerly disregarded clan identities and properties – be they by birth or acquired – often play an important role to access the new elites. The belonging to this New Class that emerged since the mid-1980s is primarily defined by financial capacity. Cultural properties acquired through republican education do not matter anymore: As long as one has the money, he has access. As a result the new elites grew very fragmented, they even split into culturally, socially and politically rivaling groups. Hence their spatial strategies also became fragmented. As shared customs of a common urban space or »cityzenship« dissolved, the urban landscape became disjointed, with the gated communities projecting the fragmentation of the urban space. Permanent, generally accepted patterns and tools of ideological legitimization are missing, due to the incoherence of the New Class. As a result, the security industry took over the role of a temporary »pin«[4] between fragments of a divided urban space. The new money elites proved incapable of differentiating themselves as a class, or better: forming a class »for itself« and therefore its fractions became more and more dependent on products and services provided by the security industry as a tool to distance themselves from the »others«. The term »others« does not necessarily or exclusively refer to lower classes, but as well, or even primarily, includes other fractions of their co-elites with money, whose manners, lifestyle, ideological and political attitude they regard as unbearable or intolerable. They seek immunity from that urban texture, which they consider a jungle. Distancing here is simply an intuitive reaction to the existing situation,

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4   In Turkish, the term »*teğel*« stands for the first, light stitching when the tailor provisorily or temporarily sews the parts of a piece of dress or suit together to see whether it will fit. In the next phase this »pre-stitch« (*teğel*) is replaced by the permanent one. Here the metaphor »*teğel*« is used for the security sector within an urban setup, which entirely consists of gated communities, as it functions here as a replacement for the permanent ties of a society, for instance via public domain. »Pinned together city or urbanism« (*teğellenmis kent/lesme*) refers to this temporary or in-between situation which tends to consolidate and finally simulate »the ›real‹ society as we know it or as it should be«.

rather than a well thought or planned strategy. However, the spatial manifestation of this temporary escape movement out of the legitimization crisis of a new upper class, yet just in itself, threatens to spread out to all segments of society and freeze and dominate urban space permanently.

Pioneered by the detached new upper classes, this »pinned together urbanism« with the gated community phenomenon is spreading at a very high speed. Having emerged a mere two decades ago, these phenomena are yet to be thoroughly studied. We still lack a common vocabulary to begin a meaningful discourse. Yet, this new form of urbanism has rapidly superseded inner urban socio-economic and spatial-topographic thresholds and has affected almost every sector on all social levels. The gated community movement already influenced growing number of new areas with companies of the construction industry active there. However, the phenomenon is likely to expand even more rapidly in the near future as it has turned out a model desired by the middle and lower-middle classes, who covet the gated communities. Construction, automotive, and security industries as well as the mass media have become allies in this ideological attack comprising of aggressive marketing strategies for a gated lifestyle. The society simply turned its other cheek, willingly. The gated communities are now not only restricted to the nouveaux-riche of the neo-liberal era, but many Istanbulites also covet them. The closed-settlement solution is today far from an »unavoidable solution to the housing problem«, as it has grown to be an object of desire for the Turkish middle class, it is the demand. The situation has become so standard and unquestionable that, when an architect fails to include walls or gates in a new project, the landscape architect will make sure to insert them into his design. Would he forget, too, the client or the investor would bring in the foremen to do the job.

Although retreating behind gates became so normalized, the phenomenon has not yet been thoroughly explained. There are some vague justifications in circulation. The need for security is underlined by and connected to the »need« for status and prestige. By creating physical, spatial distance, the nouveaux-riche desire to guarantee social disintegration. The uses of architecture of security (walls, fences, gates), security technology (surveillance cameras, control centers) and services (security personnel) have indeed become indicators of status and prestige. Fences are quickly put up to surround even some residential areas that were built long before the emergence of the gated communities. At the bare minimum, these communities install cheap plastic barriers and prefabricated guardrooms. If trained security personnel cannot be hired, then the old porter is given a serious looking full dress uniform. While

these measures are taken to create an appearance of security, they fail to provide a real security system, considering that burglaries are frequently reported in gated communities. Still, the appearance of security boosts property values and is a matter of prestige.

The security sector has now proven to be an autonomous, self-sufficient business. With an ever-increasing number of seriously competing companies, the number and the variety of the provided services and products has increased. As a result, the price of these products and services has decreased, and to some extent also their quality. Thus, they have become available to a much larger population. The sector was in need of a larger market and this was a logical outcome, with it having developed its own dynamics. However, a serious comparative study would show that among global big cities, Istanbul is not necessarily dangerous. Instead of a real lack of safety throughout the city, there is a subjective feeling of insecurity, which is a result of the relatively increasing crime rate since the 1990s. This feeling has almost certainly been fueled by a systematic manufacturing of urban legends. Marketing strategies of the security sector are built exactly upon this increasing »feeling of insecurity«. These strategies, in turn, are fueling social disintegration and isolation of different social groups. The isolation takes place as not only the *nouveaux-riche* situate themselves against the others, but as all other social groups are also encouraged to confine themselves. In other words, the security sector first needs to disintegrate and dissolve the urban texture in order to aspire to attach the pieces together again. Naturally, it cannot do any better than to create a loose patchwork.[5] Istanbul is a highly dynamic city with intense vertical »social« and horizontal »spatial« movement. It is unimaginable that the upper classes can distance themselves spatially and socially without concessions. When they attempt to do so, »life« or the »city« always gets in the way and such plans tend to fail: what they are running away from follows them, finds them, and settles just next to them. Moreover, their »escape plans« are being imitated successfully for much cheaper rates. It comes as no surprise that the phrase »what a nightmare!« caught on so well as part of an upper class discourse.

In everyday behavior however, nobody seems to mind that gated-ness much. It is more like a situation where everyone is trying to make his pragmatic way through the labyrinth without questioning it much, but also without taking it serious either. As if in internal agreement, every-

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5   Studies on the implications of domestic security measures are rare. However, some of them suggest, that the presence of security personnel and devices are rather increasing the »felt insecurity« (Genis 2007: 773).

body recognizes the spatial disintegration and walling in/off strategies for nothing more than nonsense. »We just take it for granted and accept it as a conventional standard, like many other things in life we don't question much but don't take too serious either. It is how things are.«

So what product or service is really acquired through investment in a gated community? All indications point to the stability and the permanence of the built environment and the attached value of social integrity. In this sense, large-scale projects hold a monopoly. Only they can provide a guarantee that no physical features of the construction will be modified. The offered product most importantly features being »complete«; its defining trait is its built-in »total design«, and completed and final state. Small-scale investments have been shaping the city's familiar urban landscape for the last sixty years and they have never been able to promise this feature even approximately. Even when this traditional small-scale development is fault-free and complete – albeit this is rare – it, by definition, allows or even encourages additions, modifications, and transformation.

The sale conditions of large-scale project housing prevent any modification of its outward appearance. The sale contracts are loaded with intricate regulations, restricting modifications to the outward and sometimes interior appearances. The property right, which would normally grant power of disposition to the owner, seems to be suspended entirely. One should not conclude that this is coercion or simply a fancy of an eccentric architect imposed through the construction company. On the contrary the potential gated community residents aspire to join in, precisely for these restrictions on their property rights. They know that the same rules will apply to their neighbors. What they buy is really more than just a property: it is the finality, the permanence of the property, and the confidence, that the neighbors have all agreed on the restrictions, too. As a result, the investment is primarily made for the permanence of the physical environment and the collective promise to keep it unchanged as well as for neighbors with an according attitude and expectation.

Istanbul is a city where change is the rule. Even moving beyond change, it founds itself anew everyday. For decades, familiar urban surroundings have changed from one day to the next. This intense need for permanence reflects the standards of the middle classes, which lack the ability to cope with this situation. The unresolved collective traumas that led to this situation make up rather a complex topic, that it would take another essay to sufficiently highlight them.

Driven by the new middle classes, the booming demand for a new lifestyle behind gates has created an ever-increasing national consensus.

- The public sector is happy as it charges for services like garbage pickup and cleaning, repairs/renewal, illumination and security, whereas gated people pay a second time for these services directly to their community administrations: areas to be served by the public sector are practically diminishing.
- The private sector has discovered the advantages of marketing built environments that promise full control within a limited space. Marketing material carefully ignores the existing city outside (of the gated communities) and simulates islands of no sorrow.
- Academia and professionals of built environments are euphorically celebrating their comeback into business after 60 years of discouraging exclusion. During that period, the built environment production had largely taken place in a self-service model of the concerned: hence it was perceived so chaotic, so impossible to grasp, or penetrate and re/shape (see Esen 2005). The gated community opens up areas with well-defined boundaries, so that worlds of total design are facilitated and even guaranteed to be endured by sales agreements.

With its forestland and an aqueduct, the town of Göktürk as a whole has a distinct »restricted« or »isolated« quality. It is a restricted space in every sense, be it visual or physical. This is apparently perceived as an additional assurance for the permanence of the town, which will remain after the upcoming consolidation process. Göktürk is perceived as a role model, as an incarnation or anticipation of a neo-liberal Istanbul of anti-urban islands. Mehmet Şenay, the head planner of the community since the 1990s, has spoken enthusiastically of »exporting the Göktürk model.« [6]

Göktürk: The main framework

Göktürk is originally a rural settlement; situated in the near periphery of Istanbul, south of the Belgrade Forest and 8 km north of the second beltway. It is separated from its unlikely twin, Kemerburgaz, by the Uzunkemer, an aqueduct built by Mimar »the architect« Sinan, on a Roman foundation. There used to be two main roads leading to Kemerburgaz and Göktürk. The first is a valley road following the natural course of the Kağıthane River. The Alibeykoy valley was on the second left and over the Hasdal threshold, the former city dump ran parallel. Recently, a semi-legal highway connection from the Hasdal viaduct has

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6   Oral statement during research in Göktürk.

been added, in addition to these two older roads.[7] Indeed, nowadays local real estate agents are confidently boasting to their clients that this connection is none other than the north junction of the third Bosporus bridge to be built.
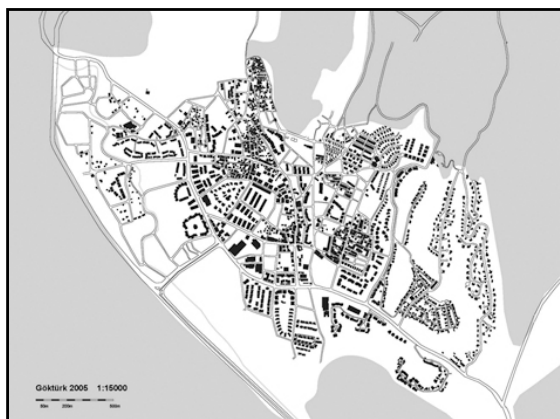

Figure 1: Göktürk (ca. 2005), Urban Research Studio, ETH Zürich

The Göktürk village was originally called Petnahor(a) until 1958. Before the »exchange of populations« between Turkey and Greece in the 1920s, the village hosted a mixed population, including Greeks. The sole historic building in the village though is a 17th century mosque. Until recently, the population consisted of Turkish re-settlers from Thessalonica region. The main source of income throughout this period was agriculture.

From the end of the 1970s on, the spread of the industrial areas from Alibeykoy and Kagithane also affected Göktürk. Consequently, immigrants started coming to the village, mostly from the eastern Black Sea region and from Kastamonu at the western Black Sea coast. Around this period several things began to take place: forestland was cleared for agricultural usage; squatting increasingly became a means of settlement; and agricultural plots of land were sold to migrant workers, who illegally reorganized them into residential areas. This chain of events was happening in almost all other surrounding settlements of Istanbul. Without exception, Göktürk promised to be another Dudullu, Arnavutköy, or Sultanbeyli. These former peripheral villages north of Istanbul are typi-

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7   A »semi-legal highway« means it was authorized by the ministry of public works in Ankara but listed as non-existent to be outlawed by Istanbulite master plans.

cal venues of a second generation of informal land taking for residential purposes since the mid-1980s. This second wave of development mainly targeted agricultural soils that were either privately owned or collectively owned by villages, but was intermediated by »informal developers« (in colloquial terms: »land mafia«). This class was formed as a result of the first wave of informal land taking in Istanbul between the 1950s and the mid-1980s. It was meant to serve mainly the interests of small scale investors, who had a countryside origin, and entailed splitting the land into small plots. Nevertheless, Göktürk took a different course of development because of an atypical intervention, to be explained below.[8] This alteration was brought about by the Kemer Yapı Construction Co. and the originality of the town fathers' reaction to this movement.

Figure 2: Village life in Göktürk, with the new mosque in the background. Photograph by Urban Research Studio, ETH Zürich

Kemer Yapı, a construction company that settled in Göktürk at the end of the 1980s, triggered this unusual situation. They were coined as »the men that came in a helicopter« or, »the helicopter people« by a highly popular local myth. This myth, of which we have heard numerous versions, was based on the information that the investors toured Istanbul from the air in a helicopter to find an appropriate location for their purposes. This works well as a metaphor for the disconnected outsider or the potential harshness of the first confrontation.[9]

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8   Much later, the village Çekmeköy would partly follow the same course as Göktürk.

9   There is a certain resemblance to the myth about colonists of the new world. For example, the Aztecs were first confronted by the Spanish conquistadores on horses. Not having seen horses before, the Aztecs could

In a public relations publication from the municipality, the »event« is referred to as of groundbreaking importance (Göktürk Municipality 2006). The text does not even bother giving details. It is assumed that the reader will already be familiar with the myth from oral sources. Readers are allowed, even encouraged, to embellish the myth as they please, and to join in establishing the myth. »The men that came in a helicopter« serves like a cryptic codeword which only the enthusiast can grasp. Clearly, what matters more is the metaphor itself. If the event took place at all or how it took place is of secondary importance. Hence the story has become a founding myth.

»As the helicopter took off the men inside did not really have faith in finding what they were looking for. Who knew how many more trips it would take them until they would find an appropriate place. So it is easy to imagine how happy they were to discover the village of Göktürk on a forest land northern of Istanbul.« (Göktürk Municipality 2006)

These men laid the foundation of »Kemer Country«, now considered a classic gated community, and what can be considered the beginning of a second generation of gated community development in Istanbul. There were examples before this movement in Göktürk, which we can call the first generation: In the 1980s, the first beltway (1973) defined the city's macro form anew. Some former peripheral areas, like the larger Baghdad street district, Altunizade/Çamlıca, the Ulus/Ortaköy axes, and the hills overlooking Bosporus, were now easily accessible off the junctions of this first highway belt. The first generation of gated communities began to emerge here, often as purely residential developments on a small to medium scale, initially within former *köşk* estates of the Ottoman political elite. They were low-profile on a social platform as inherited from the 1970s. In this sense an exception and a pioneer was Kastelli's Caddebostan »palaces«. Apart from Kastelli's houses, the first generation gated communities tried to attract as little attention as possible. Kemer Country however, came up with the discourse of a new urban role model for the very first time in Turkey. It claimed to offer more than just a new type of dwelling. With its exaggerated dimensions, hosting various functions and boasting new historicist architecture, it presented itself as a lifestyle, an existential choice. »The warmth of human proximity and a closer relationship with nature were all lost to modernization and urbanization« and Kemer Country was to restore that relationship and rec-

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only explain the newcomers in supernatural terms: horse and horsemen being one. In turn, they surrendered easily to this fictive superiority (see Galeano 1971).

reate the feeling of a real neighborhood, and in doing so, rediscover a presumed golden age of the lost *mahalle*. With this attitude, they applied innovative (or depending on your stance, »aggressive«) marketing strategies. As its statement moved beyond marketing gimmicks and was furthermore carried to academic and semi-academic platforms, the gap between Kemer Country and its predecessors widened even more.

The town fathers' reaction to the Kemer Country movement is probably more extraordinary, and thus more important. This reaction differs from the initial vision of the investors and it was more realistic and foresighted.[10] Probably this is the reason why it was the most formative factor in deciding how Göktürk should evolve. The town fathers acted on the presumption that other investors would also act on a similar interest sooner or later. They defined the basic policies that were to conform to the demands of a new generation of big-scale corporate investors. These policies also created the legal infrastructure to support a new master plan, which was necessary in order to supply large-scale plots. In terms of Istanbul's urban development mechanisms, this reaction was revolutionary and it constituted a first.

The business as usual for decades was to split up and divide existing plots prior to construction (be it legal, illegal, or semi-legal) – a result of small-scale actors' hegemony over the real estate market – while holding an insignificant level of capital accumulation. A fundamental belief that profit was only possible through split-and-sell policies reigned and ultimately determined urban development policies. From the 1980s onwards, the big businesses that had previously remained passive in the urban production process began making their moves to get involved. They had found that they could not operate due to the lack of large-scale plots and the inability to acquire such plots. One option was to appropriate the city's green areas like parks at the center, but this could not really work for several reasons. To develop these centrally-located areas was politically very risky, and therefore troublesome and not very cost effective. Additionally, their limited potential was not suitable for housing production. An organized »grassroots initiative« of landlords of large-scale plot production and supply was formed in Göktürk for the first time. The Göktürk experience constitutes a breakthrough in this sense. In accordance with the vision of the neo-liberal ANAP government of

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10 While this text was being edited shortly before printing in April 2008, news about the bankruptcy of the Kemer Construction Co. came to press. According to news, owners of real estate in Kemer Conutry were preparing to buy the company themselves in order to prevent a potential buyer from outside from further investments on those grounds still owned by the company.

the 1980s/1990s, Göktürk gained municipality status in 1993. The newly-formed municipality's first important action was to adopt a construction plan. The new standard was to outlaw the split-and-sell of agricultural land and to reserve it for corporate buyers' large-scale construction operations. This plan has been executed with consistency until today. Modifications were only allowed with further merging of plots and public road removal. Needless to say, the same political party and mayor have remained in power during this whole process. In this light, Göktürk should be seen as the practical execution of the Özal/Dalan[11] vision on an urban scale.

As already stated, the town fathers' presumption was more to the point than the Kemer Yapı Construction Co.'s naïve approach. In the first half of the '90s that first gated community in Göktürk was not yet complete, the village had not yet grown with new waves of immigration, and the third generation of investors was not yet effective. The initial dream of the investor was for the gated community and the village to exist side by side in a low-density, rural environment. Although deeply divided, they would depend on each other to some degree. It would be a utopia for these two villages to live next to each other amidst the greenery. With the investors' initiative, an »Association for the Beautification of the Göktürk Village« was created. This organization mainly dealt with the village houses' aesthetic appearance, such as their façade. It was predicted that the village would maintain a low density with detached, one- or two-story houses. They would »not let the village become a concrete jungle«. In Göktürk, »back to nature« would become the catch phrase for the marketing campaigns. The organization attended the Habitat II Conference 30 May to 14 June 1996, organized by the UN Center for Human Settlements (Habitat), and made an appearance on the civic arena. They formulated the problem as »how to prevent the cementing and the vertical growth of the village in future«. On one side there would be an idealized/romanticized, relatively poor, but peaceful village, and on the other side, suburbia with all the same attributes but with the exception of wealth. This naïve-utopian vision – that these two could symbiotically live next to one another – disintegrated rather quickly. Kemer Country had already abandoned the villa model with its third development phase and began constructing high-density adjoined houses and blocks. The town fathers saw through the maneuver and were prepared for this change of course. They had an adaptable con-

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11 Responsible political leaders of ANAP, the »Motherlands Party«: Turgut Özal, founder of the party, prime minister, and later president (1989-1993) and Bedretti Dalan, mayor of the Greater Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality (1984-1989).

struction mechanism ready, and the village began its transformation to a town. The 1999 earthquake solidified the new upper-middle classes' belief in the »northern earthquake-safe zones« myth. The construction sector began producing and marketing real estate in so-called geologically-safe lands, which were further away from the fault line south of the city. They targeted these marketing campaigns at an enthusiastic demand profile of the middle, and the process ultimately played a major role in the accelerated development of Göktürk. Today it is a complete boomtown, with content citizens as long as the growth continues. Currently, Göktürk offers people from every status, origin, or qualification – be it the eastern construction worker or the white-collar, high-rank employee from the central finance district Levent – a place to live. Disputes on socio-economic matters and inequalities in this town do not exist for the time being, but will most likely – although not desired – come in the future. This collective suppression of potential conflicts keeps the town politics in order, in strictly neoliberal terms.

Figure 3: Walls (black lines) surrounding gated communities in Göktürk (2005), Urban Research Studio, ETH Zurich

Approximately 20 years after the municipilization, in the aftermath of the 2002/2003 crisis, Göktürk saw the most intense execution of its new construction plan. The results are now clear: the final form of the built environment is visible. The outcome can be summarized in two main, and six sub-categories:

Physical spaces produced by »Big Capital«

- On the eastern part of the settlement, the Kemer Group project takes up roughly one third of the overall land. This project can be called a town within a town.
- The larger plots, which were formerly the villagers' fields, host a-bout three dozen medium-scale gated communities. Most of these are situated on the plain, while a few are also on the hillside or on the fields inside the village. They all contain some common (green) space, as far as the land permits, and a unit they call »social facilities«. Every one is gated, without exception, with private security, and offer in-house parking. These communities, especially those closer to the former village center, are all in close contact with the residents of the town to some degree. The walls, gates, and the security systems define their borders.
- On the edge of the plain, the main transit road (Istanbul Street) runs parallel to the former village center. Along that road, old industrial facilities have been transformed into so-called »plazas« and »agoras«. These take up relatively smaller plots than those mentioned above. They are either solely shopping malls or blocks with shopping malls on their ground floors, and upper-middle class residences on their upper floors. These areas are the densest in Göktürk. The Istanbul Street side of their ground floor hosts shopping areas, which do not exist in the gated communities. Especially for those living »behind« the gates, this strip serves as a common public space. Because of its transit route character, Istanbul Street is only accessible with a car. Car ownership serves as a filter for accessing these places. A second, linear public space has been created with the agoras along the street.

These first three categories consist of organized large-capital projects. They take up roughly three quarters of the total land that was formerly agricultural and industrial plots. The remaining quarter consists of former village houses and their gardens, being overtaken by the structures of an emerging *kasaba* or township. In this second category, we can observe three different settlement/spatial organization categories:

Physical spaces produced by »Small Capital«

- The old houses and their gardens along the main streets of the former village were transformed by small-scale building contractors. Here we find the usual adjoined / attached apartment blocks of a

town. These arteries follow the main topographical ridges of the village.

- This structure is getting densified at central points. Buildings with a shop on the ground floor and apartments on the upper floors dominate. Consequently, these areas become the townships central trade areas. For those living outside of the »gates«, these are the common public spaces and they are easy to reach, also on foot.

- On the western side there are areas opened illegally from the forestland. On these so-called »status 2b« lands, there are no property rights: the state partly tolerates them and partly litigates them. These areas still partly host rural structures with some subsistence horticulture with partly first-generation *gecekondu* type workers' shelters, and partly »popular«-type lower middle class villas. There are also some remains of demolished buildings, all in a detached, low-density setup. In short, it is Göktürk's least densely developed area. Although they are not yet on the legal real estate market, they could be in the future. There will likely be a speculative pressure and a process of gentrification when the »sale of the 2b areas to their possessors« law, which the last president vetoed, passes through under the current political constellation. (For the time being, the law is highly contested, with several environmental NGOs fighting it.) The divided plots will not allow for any large-scale housing complexes – i.e. gated communities within business as usual models – to be built on them.

As explained above, the built environment is far from the initial prediction of the first settlers: a mega gated community and a static agricultural community that are »symbiotically related«. It evolved into a much more fragmented, complex structure. As Tim Rieniets shows in the following chapter, this six-piece structure also provoked dynamics of resemblance and adaptation Accordingly, the dual city model of the first glance has only limited validity.

In the middle of the settlement, growing along the former village roads, is what we still might call »the village«. In reality, however, 95% of the population here has a very recent immigration background from areas including various parts of Istanbul itself: a group of people and households with very different skills and educational backgrounds. If looking at Göktürk as a whole, which is technically defined as a municipality[12], and as a new typology of a township, we should call this central

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12 Well, not anymore: On April 14th 2008, just during the last review of this article, a new law was enacted and all township municipalities (belde be-

part the »inner or core township«. The inner town's people are united by a common desire to maximize the benefits of an ever-growing economy. The effect is similar to a gold rush, the town could be compared to a mining town. Göktürk is the land of opportunities today. Yesterday's construction worker can become tomorrow's contractor while his son can go from caddy to the national golf team.

While Göktürk appears to be surrounded by impenetrable forests on the map, separated physically from the city, it is not self-sufficient at all. Not only the residents of the gated communities, but also a number of the inner town's people work in Istanbul. Only a part of those, who perform domestic duties for the gated communities live in Göktürk. A large number of people come and go to Göktürk on a daily basis by shuttle buses, public transport, or even chauffeurs transport a number of people. There is an increasing number of people who live in gated communities, but run shops in Göktürk or in the agora. The population today is estimated to be around 15,000 to 20,000. While the municipality anticipates a potential holding capacity of 35,000 to 50,000 people, the investors are estimating around 70,000 to 80,000. As the metropolitan municipality has become the ratification authority after a recent reform[13], it is likely to exercise power in order to limit the potential demographic growth in Göktürk as in all other township municipalities in the northern territories

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belediyeleri), a decentralizing tool invented in the Özal era, were shut down and were incorporated into existing or newly established districts. Hence, the number of Istanbul's districts has increased to 39. Göktürk was expected to be established as a new district together with the neighboring Kemerburgaz and some further Black sea villages into a new district: this would have been the perfect tool »to export the Göktürk model«. Instead, it was incorporated into the district of Eyüp (22 kms away), with shows (post-) industrial character and is dominated by post-gecekondu structures. This decision has been perceived as a conquest by the other, a conquest by those ghosts from whom one was on permanent escape. This decision has fully traumatized local politics and social atmosphere. Outcomes, for example on real estate market development, demographic composition and social structures, will have to be observed. However, it can be stated for sure that that particular era, resulting from a specific amalgamation of economic, social, political and administrative patterns as described in this article, has come to an, at least preliminary, end.

13 This reform is about two years old. Until that time, the ratification authority for development plans of township municipalities was the Ministry of Public Works in Ankara, which was easily lobbied by big construction business. Metropolitan municipality, on the other hand, is stronger influenced by environmental groups and public opinion, as well dominated by a planning bureaucracy, all of which are critical to urban sprawl and hence enforce politics that diminish demographic pressure on the northern territories of the province.

of the province. There is an expectation that all construction and primary real estate marketing activities will end in the next five years, and the physical environment and the demographical structure will be consolidated. All players are betting on that day. The opposition of the losers will be visible on that day.

In spite of what the first glance may suggest, there is no hint of a coarse dichotomy here. On the contrary, there is an ever-changing, complex structure that deserves more in-depth analysis. It is nevertheless meaningful to analyze the basic differences of those parts of the town which are the remnants of produced from former fields or former housing plots. Obviously, the security sector can also find a large market in a community where everyone is a stranger and they stand on guard, suspicious of one another. It would indeed be fruitful to further analyze what the first perspective suggests: a dichotomy defined by security systems. Such questioning, though, should avoid perceiving this dualism as the static rural province versus the active, modernizing dynamic changing it. This analysis will only prove fruitful if these categories are not taken as absolutes.

Denial, exchange and adaption to everyday life

Gated communities and other common interest developments have become the most important project of urban transformation and expansion in the city. An increasingly powerful real estate market, tolerance by politics and planning, and wide acceptance by the public has driven their development. This process is not only changing the general urban and architectural patterns, but also the changes of social and economic structures on local levels. While social and economic structural changes are perhaps of equal importance, they are widely overlooked. Although gated communities are designed as strictly isolated and detached enclaves, they are causing new relations between the »insiders« and the »outsiders«. Additionally, they are causing new and unintended urban dynamics, even though they are marketed as readymade and unchangeable environments. Taking Göktürk as an example, some of these mutual processes going on between the newly established gated communities and the village, can easily be recognized.

As explained in the beginning of this article, mainly two groups with different cultural backgrounds are competing for dominance in the production and use of urban space in Istanbul. One group consists of urban inhabitants, still rooted in a traditional, agriculturally-based village lifestyle. They have immigrated from rural areas to Istanbul in the last fifty

years, and joined the new, emerging urban labor market from Istanbul's rapid industrialization. Nevertheless, they still practice traditional, sometimes semi-rural, forms of urban life. The other group can be described as the *nouvelle riches,* a newly established elite class which emerged in the 1980s and 1990s, and is mainly defined by its income. This new elite class has emerged too rapidly to develop any acquired social gestures or historic narratives in order to distinguish itself from the less privileged groups of society. Thus, this new »uncultivated«, but economically potent class prefers to exclude itself by other means. Instead of social and cultural techniques of differentiation, they have established other techniques which strongly rely on urban space as a stage to express exclusiveness. Equipped with 4x4 jeeps and sunglasses, the *nouvelle riches* make their way through the »impassable« metropolis of Istanbul, a space conceived as chaotic, poor, and insecure. Protected by video surveillance, security services, and barbed walls, they are living in enclosed residences and close themselves off from the rest of the urban world. This sudden and conspicuous presence of the new rich has blasted the traditional boundaries of old class positions in Istanbul (Esen 2005).

It is not surprising that the first high-class American-style gated community of Turkey was established in Göktürk, Kemer Country. This project was unique, not only because it sold the best living conditions, including golf courses, horse riding, and all kinds of individual services spread over a vast and well-maintained territory. For the first time in Turkey, clients of this development did not just by a home to live in, but a carefully designed environment to celebrate a luxurious, western-oriented way of life.

This model gained so much attention, that there was a common interest to imitate the Kemer Country concept and to benefit from Göktürk's qualities: Many villagers sold their land to investors in order to ensure their share of the emerging real estate boom, and the investors launched new projects feeding the growing appetite for luxurious residences. Since then, more than 30 such gated communities have been constructed, the population rose from 1500 in 1993 to approximately 15,000 to 20,000 in 2006, and land prices skyrocketed. Within a few years this urban gold rush entirely changed the spatial and socioeconomic patterns of Göktürk. And ironically, this boom has engendered urban conditions similar to those which the newcomers had originally fled from: urban density, permanent changes of the environment, and close proximity to underprivileged classes.

Today, the former village has reached an »urban« density. Nevertheless, situations usually associated with urbanity, such as unexpected encounters, mutual exchanges, or a free flow of information are seemingly

absent between the villagers and the new residents of the gated communities. Instead, Göktürk's newly built urban structures are designed in order to control, restrict, or even avoid the mixture of people, goods, or information. Instead, two different towns with different social, economic and spatial features are occupying the same territory today, but living in separated worlds. There is, on the one hand, an archipelago of urban islands, staging West Coast suburban living conditions. These islands are large-investment developments, designed and constructed in one go according to the requirements of the upper class real estate market. Their inhabitants have their social and professional roots in Istanbul, commuting to the metropolis every day to go to work, enjoy shopping and leisure facilities, or bring their children to school. For them, living in Göktürk is a financial investment into the real estate market, into status symbols, and into a prefabricated way of life.

On the other hand, there is the heterogeneous urban fabric of the village, an accumulation of hundreds of uncoordinated small-scale building activities, designed according to individual needs and possibilities. Their inhabitants stem from rural areas, maintaining traditional and familiar social networks celebrated in public space. For most of them, living in Göktürk is an ongoing financial investment, and gives them social and practical resources for the improvement and consolidation of their traditional village life.

Figure 4: Public roads (grey) and private roads (black) in Göktürk (2005). Urban Research Studio, ETH Zurich

Today, the gated communities are covering the majority of Göktürk. However, instead of adapting to the existing public infrastructures, they

have established their own infrastructures wherever possible. New private access roads are built, sometimes just a wall-width apart from the existing public roads. Private security guards in black uniforms are playing the role of a permanent presence of police (although they are not authorized to apply force); gardeners and housekeepers are maintaining houses and public spaces, replacing insufficient municipal utilities. However, private infrastructures are not just a matter of comfort: they used to pretend to be independent from the insufficient public sector, and to symbolize social distance. Fashionable logos or city arms in retro design ornament front gates, uniforms of private service personnel, and public outdoor furniture. Even covers of the (publicly owned) sewage system are decorated with the corporate identity of the (private) housing companies. These privately maintained and represented urban spaces seem to have fulfilled a promise which the public sector has failed to keep: a life in security, beauty, and stability.

In spite of the carefully designed lifestyle of the gated communities, villagers are practicing their own strategies of identity building. However, in contrast to their gated community neighbors, they are showing their identities in public space: women wear scarves, man celebrate faineance in tea rooms, gardens are used for subsistent agriculture, and domestic animals are kept in all kinds of open spaces and so forth.

The most striking urban intervention, however, are the newly built mosques, which oppose the western-oriented lifestyle represented by the gated communities. The biggest one is by far exceeding the size of the historic mosque in the village center. Their minarets have established new landmarks in Göktürk and their loudspeakers penetrate the walls of the neighboring gated communities. Evidently, some inhabitants of gated communities also visit the village. However, the real estate market has already adjusted to the needs and desires of potential costumers and has recently begun to plan a Muslim gated community with an integrated mosque.

Thus, all social groups living in Göktürk have a coded urban space with all kinds of attributes which allude to social status, ethnicity, or religion. Tendencies of segregation have not just divided urban space into gated communities and remaining villages, but have also generated a multi-faceted space of identities.

Although segregation seems to be the dominant pattern of Göktürk's recent urban development, complete denial of the »other« is impossible. Instead, a thin but indispensable network of economic, social, and cultural interaction is at work, connecting the seemingly separated fragments of the town. However, these exchanges are mainly a matter of mutual economic advantages, rather than a will of social integration.

Most frequented places of exchange are patrol stations, supermarkets, or pharmacies – places where generic products are sold that do not allow exclusiveness or expression of life-style. Mutual exchanges between villagers and gated community inhabitants, however, are mostly taking place inside the gated communities, as a side effect of hierarchic employer-employee relationships: many villagers bnefit from job opportunities in the emerging service sector of the gated communities. There, they are employed as gardeners, housekeepers or nannies, and have regular excess to the otherwise-inaccessible everyday life behind walls. Ironically, some villagers work as security guards, protecting the gated communities from the seemingly dangerous environment, where they have their own homes and families.

In Göktürk, we can observe on a local and domestic level what was long ago identified as a global urban trend by theorists like Saskia Sassen. There is an economic alliance between a growing financial elite and the demand for low paid services, and the low skilled workers who are attracted by this new urban labor market (Sassen 1994). The result is a spatial concentration of rich and poor and – as we can see in Göktürk – the evolution of new social, economic, and spatial patterns on a local scale. Even the trend towards a new migration of low skilled work, as described in Global City theory, has happened in Göktürk. New inhabitants from the Black Sea region have moved to Göktürk to work in the new local labor market and live in informal settlements on the edge of the village.

The exchanges between different groups are no contradiction to the tendencies of segregation, but rather the opposite: social and economic differences are exploited from both sides for mutual benefit. The village provides a large pool of low paid workers to serve the gated communities, whereas the increasing demands for services inside the gated communities offers attractive job opportunities and a new source of income for the villagers.

Social and economic differences have stimulated a local economy, which offers benefits for both sides - the gated communities as well as the village. Because the economic boom in Göktürk is taken for granted, the win-win situation caused by strict segregation is not questioned. The individual benefits of this economy seem to still outweigh the negative effects of segregation. Yet, what happens, if in the future not everybody can benefit from the added value generated in Göktürk? What if all construction sites are completed and no more building land is available? What if villagers have to compete with other low skilled workers for jobs in the service sector? And what if the *nouvelle riches* and their capital leave Göktürk in favor of another place?

Figure 5: Villa of a gated community in Göktürk (Göktürk Municipality: Dream to Reality 2006: 74)

Nevertheless, one can find tendencies today, which are eroding the economic, social and aesthetic differences, which are the bases of the system. The booming local economy – based on the construction and maintenance of gated communities, and on other directly or indirectly related services – is making it possible for many Göktürk villagers to financially catch up with their new neighbors, and potentially giving them the opportunity to share a similar lifestyle. For the time being, the process of mutual adaptation is mainly played out by architectural design, especially in gated communities. Given that gated communities are one of the most important ways for the new wealthy class to express their social status and to exclude themselves, they unintentionally became a subject of mutual assimilation. The better paid jobs, whether directly or indirectly linked to the gated communities, enable villagers to invest in their own built environment, and to imitate architectural styles of the gated communities. Villagers, who work at one of the numerous construction sites, import their technical know-how from the gated communities to their own construction sites. Others just admire the modern and well-constructed buildings from a distance and try to imitate it. Some old houses are decorated with new details, and new constructions are incorporating architectural features from the »other side«. Thus, the village is steadily upgrading its architectural appearance, sometimes professionally, sometimes just as a clumsy bricolage.

However, while the village architecture periodically shows signs of aesthetic upgrading, the architecture of gated communities, which is being constructed after the pioneering development of Kemer Country, shows general tendencies of downgrading. In the need to feed the real estate market, investors are constantly lowering the standards of their

developments, targeting new costumers at the lower income levels. As a result, most of the newly built gated communities in Göktürk are far less luxurious and spacious than their predecessors. Recent developments are even exceeding the urban density of the village. Thus, the real estate market has triggered a paradox dynamic of mutual assimilation: villagers are slowly catching up with their new neighbors while the average standards of gated communities are decreasing. The once distinct differences between the luxurious estates on one side and the underdeveloped village on the other side are becoming obscured.

Figure 6: Decorated village house in Göktürk. Urban Research Studio, ETH Zürich

Conclusion

Master-planned gated communities – similar to those described in this article – are still confined to the peripheries of the metropolis today and occupy only a negligible percentage of land. However, the peripheral land will soon be scarce. Like in Göktürk, the construction of more suburban developments will only be possible at the cost of public forest-lands and will stress the already overused ecological resources of Istanbul's environment.

In the last two decades, gated communities have been built devoid of any ecological considerations. Local municipalities like Göktürk fostered them as the settlement of new upper and middle classes. The gated communities brought new wealth, controlled the building processes, drove up real estate prices, and diminished overall expenses of the municipalities. The metropolitan area's worsening environmental situation, however, has generated awareness for the problems of urban sprawl and has reflected poorly upon gated communities. Suburban gated communi-

ties are increasingly perceived as »decadent« and »ecologically intolerable«. Such views dominate planning circles around the metropolitan administration.

A very recent reform of administration and planning has finally put the entire province of Istanbul (roughly around 8000 sq km), with all its conurbations, under the jurisdiction of the metropolitan administration. Previously, the metropolitan administration had only planning authority for approximately 70 % of the built-up area (total built-up area about 1800 sq km). A new strategic development plan for greater Istanbul has been created in accordance with the new planning framework, which was designed by the Istanbul Metropolitan Planning agency (IMP) and has been approved by the city council. This new development plan has clearly addressed ecological sustainability problems. If this plan is implemented, the sprawl of gated communities would be restricted due to ecological reasons. However, such an implementation would not be easy: the construction and automotive industries as well as the land speculation lobbies work through the ministries of public works, industry, and transportation in Ankara, torpedo metropolitan plans and use a »national priority« planning for a third »northern« Bosporus passage as a major strategic tool.

As shown in this article, ecological sustainability is not the only problem which arises with the establishment of gated communities. Even if the ecological implications of the neo-liberal urban transformation were realized, the social implications as well as the quality and type of civic life of the metropolis are still unclear.

There are also additional major guidelines of the new plan:

• The transformation of Istanbul into a service-dominated, white collar metropolis.
• Reduction of the earthquake risks by large scale reconstruction works, mainly implemented through the abovementioned law for urban transformation of the inner city, drafted in the IMP and still awaiting approval of the national assembly. This guideline calls for vast expropriation and replacement of illegally constructed and unsafe buildings. Forty-eight areas have already been declared regeneration projects,[14] and one million buildings will be demolished, with repairs being carried out on another 200,000 buildings in Istan-

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14 Murat Diren from Istanbul Municipal Planning Agency as a panel speaker at the conference: »Urban Design: Public Domain, Political Tool or Consumer Choice? New Forms of Urban Segregation in Istanbul«, KAHEM, Istanbul, November 3, 2007.

bul (Alp/Sentürk 2007). Inner city areas around the new planned extension of the Central Business District, particularly on the European side – the so-called western corridor – are due for cleansing. While these areas have been affected by the manifestations of an urban space dominated by labor-intensive production processes, after cleansing they will be transformed into residential areas acceptable for white collar population groups. The new planning paradigms proclaimed by the metropolitan authorities, have to be critically examined concerning their social implication: these might be catastrophic if Göktürk's model is exported to a metropolitan scale.

Under the new official planning guidelines, the real estate industry will be urged to allocate resources from the periphery to the inner city. Instead of building urban exclaves outside the city, an increasing number of exclusive urban enclaves will be build inside the city: islands for upper class housing, modern office space, and commercial programs. Although different in typology, density and style, these urban enclaves are using the same mechanisms to generate the exclusiveness of their suburban counterparts, namely master planned design, high living standards, extra services, restricted access, and security measures. Unlike suburban gated communities, these projects are not composed of detached houses, but rather they are either designed as »vertical gated communities« (condominiums), or as enclosed city blocks.

In comparison to suburban gated communities, which are increasingly perceived as irresponsible elitist projects, the urban gated communities are presented as having common advantages. They will not only help to increase the earth quake safety of the city, but they will also improve urban living conditions and enhance the image of Istanbul as a modern metropolis. These projects are legitimized as a counter model to the existing city, at the same time indirectly criticizing it as being backward, chaotic, and insecure.

With this process of urban reconstruction, tendencies similar to those observed in Göktürk will enter the inner city. Like Göktürk, the new urban islands will attract both high-skilled professionals – mostly from the international business sector – and low-skilled workers who are attracted to the emerging local service sector. But unlike »the island« of Göktürk, a boomtown within strict physical boundaries, not all of the local inhabitants of a vast metropolis will be able to participate in this process. Many of them will get marginalized in their neighborhoods, and possibly have to move to other areas where they can still afford to live.

Was Göktürk the inevitable anticipation of an Istanbul in the upcoming future, or shall we succeed in learning from the recent experiences of

self-service urbanization? If we have learned from these experiences, we should steer the processes of urban transformation into socially and economically sustainable paths, building upon the interactive qualities of a unique public space.

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